



# Word Play: Building Vocabulary Across Texts and Disciplines, Grades 6-12

*Sandra Whitaker*

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*I could have done a much better job of empowering my students with language had I had this book as a young teacher.*

**- Carol Ann Tomlinson**

*Author of *The Differentiated Classroom**

Vocabulary is key - to comprehension, to deep academic understanding, to communication. But with so many words and so little instructional time, how can teachers ensure that students do more than merely memorize word lists? That they make words their own and use them well in all their reading, writing, and speaking activities? In *Word Play*, Sandra Whitaker, a National Board Certified Teacher, leads the way to effective, meaningful vocabulary instruction that helps students in every subject area.

With *Word Play* you'll teach so that students don't just what know what words mean, but how they convey meaning and what their appropriate uses are. Three aspects of learning must work together for successful vocabulary instruction, and Whitaker details what they are and how to teach them:

- **Morphemic structure** - where words come from, how they are formed, and how they can be changed to form new words
- **Conceptual meaning makers** - the small but important group of context-specific terms that support meaning making within assigned texts but are rarely used outside those texts
- **Academic vocabulary** - cross-discipline and discipline-specific words that support learning by helping students determine meanings in relation to the subjects they study and use precise language to communicate their thinking.

Whitaker makes the theoretical practical, presenting the theory and research behind high-quality instruction, then following up with engaging, interesting ways for students to practice all three aspects of vocabulary. You'll replace monotonous memorization with enjoyable activities that capitalize on adolescents' natural interest in words and language. Illustrating her strategies with student samples and stories from real classrooms, Whitaker even presents ideas for differentiation that make vocabulary instruction accessible for all students.

Give the gift of language. Put away the boring word lists and teach in ways that promote usage, not memorization. You'll encourage a deeper understanding of texts across the curriculum and provide avenues for students to express their thinking more precisely. Put joy into words with *Word Play*.

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