

# Word Walls

**A word wall is** a visual display of words students have learned. It acts as an immediate classroom dictionary. Frequently used words should become automatic so that students can spend their time and energy decoding and understanding less frequently used words.

Five words per week could be added to a classroom word wall, depending on your grade level of course, so that the wall will comprise 200 to 220 words by the end of the year. **Words can be displayed** alone, with a picture-sentence clue, or with a picture-sentence-poster displayed in the room.

Words selected for the word wall are those students commonly misspell, confuse with other words, meet (i.e. recognize on a word list), or need in their reading and writing. Word walls, which are **useful from grades 1-5 and higher** are **arranged** alphabetically on different colored pieces of construction paper.

**Activities** - in addition to adding new words to the wall, students can read and write the words each day through clapping, chanting, rhyming, and spelling activities. Other word wall activities include:

1. adding endings (s, ing, ed) to words
2. handwriting
3. making sentences using the first letter and cloze to select a word that makes the most sense. Ex.) Did you eat the w\_\_\_\_\_ pizza yourself?
4. making sentences from wall words
5. mind reading, in which the teacher thinks of a word and then gives five clues to guess the word
6. teacher says/signs the word, calls out or fingerspells the first few letters and the students finish spelling the rest of the word
7. sorting words based on features (all words starting with " t ", all words ending with " b "

**Word walls for older students** can include words related to current events or topics they are studying in other courses. In this context, word walls can resemble webs as words relating to shared topics are linked.

(see next page for classification suggestions for word walls)

## **Classification Suggestions for Word Walls**

alphabetical order

double letters (e.g., daddy, mommy)

compound words (e.g., goldfish, cowboy)

unusual letter clusters (e.g., aardvark, vacuum)

prefixes (e.g., in, de)

suffixes (e.g., tion)

root words

two-, three-, eight-, and twelve-letter words

silent letters (e.g., ghost, knock)

rhyming words (e.g. hear, fear, near)

homophones ( e.g., their-there, hour-our,)

plurals (regular and irregular)

contractions

abbreviations

synonyms

functions (nouns, verbs, adjectives...)

joining words (glue words - e.g., and, but, however)

Reference: Booth, David ( general editor). Literacy Techniques, For Building Successful Readers and Writers. Markham, Ontario: Pembroke, 1996.