

Brief Focus Lesson Template

Use Dictionaries, Thesauruses, and Glossaries as Tools

Text: *Teacher Selected Text*

CAFE Goal	Expand Vocabulary
CAFE Strategy	Use Dictionaries, Thesauruses, and Glossaries as Tools
Observe/Relate	<p>My dad used to have a small tool shop in the basement of our house. He had a lot of tools, and he always knew which one was best for a certain repair. Often he would remind me how important it was to have the right tool to do the job. He always said, “Using the right tool makes a job easier and faster.” When I remember my dad’s words, I think about how readers and writers have special tools, too. Three of these important tools are a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a glossary.</p>
Teach and Reinforce	<p>Establish purpose – Today we are learning that dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries are tools that can help us with our reading and writing. Occasionally readers come across a word that they do not understand. Or, they might want to look for a more colorful, or exciting word to use in their writing. Readers and writers can usually find tools like dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries in their library or in their classroom. These tools are frequently available both as print books and as online resources.</p> <p>Create urgency – Everyday, good readers and writers need access to many extraordinary words. Now and then, we need just the right tool to find the meaning of a word or locate a more interesting word to use. Tools like dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries can give us the extra help that we need.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling –I’ve been reading a book by an author who really loves words--she uses so many that are unusual and vibrant. Listen to this sentence that has an example of one of those remarkable words. (Read a preselected sentence to the students and write the word you want to target on the board). Now, if I cannot figure out the meaning of this word from the other words around it, I can just go to an online or print dictionary. (Demonstrate how to find the word in either a print or online dictionary).</p>

A dictionary is one terrific tool that helps readers and writers, but there are others, too! Another tool is the glossary. Authors sometimes add a glossary to their books. A glossary tells the meaning of the difficult or unusual words in that book (Display a book that has a glossary and show children where it is located).

A third tool is a thesaurus. If I know the meaning of a word and only need to find a synonym for it, the best place to look is a thesaurus. (Show students how to find a word in a thesaurus, and share some synonyms for the target word with them). Sometimes thesauruses list antonyms, or opposites, too. As you can see, dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries are very cool and useful tools!

For reinforcement, draw a chart like the one below. Read the purpose of each tool and ask students to provide its name (answers in red).

Name of Tool	?	?	?
Purpose	This tool gives the meanings or definitions of most words in a language. (dictionary)	This tool gives the meanings of some important words that are used in a book. (glossary)	This tool gives synonyms and sometimes antonyms of a target word. (thesaurus)

Practice

Today you will work in small groups. I will give each group the three tools we have been learning about: a dictionary, a book with a glossary, and a thesaurus. I will also give each group a very interesting word. Find the word in each of tools and share the definitions from the dictionary and glossary as well as synonyms from the thesaurus. Talk about each tool with your group. *(In advance, check that the words you give to students appear in each tool. Students can also use laptops to do this activity using online dictionaries and thesauruses; some electronic children’s books also have glossaries.)*

Encourage and Plan

You just learned that using the strategy of “Use Dictionaries, Thesauruses, Glossaries as Tools” can help you to find the information that you need about a word. When you find this information about a word, you will understand it better and can use the word in your writing and speaking. Soon it will become one of your own!

Common Core Alignment

Like most strategies, *Use dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries as tools* is applicable to all grade levels. Find the standard that aligns with your grade-level on our [CAFE Menu/ CCSS Grade Level Matrix](#)