

Brief Focus Lesson

Tune In to Interesting Words and Use New Vocabulary In Speaking and Writing for Grade 5

Text: Miss Alaineus, A Vocabulary Disaster by Debra Frasier

CAFE Goal	Expand Vocabulary
CAFE Strategy	Tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in speaking and writing.
Observe/Relate (1 – 2 min.)	How you ever wondered what makes someone a fascinating writer or speaker? For me, the answer is simple—it’s words, along with the unique way that those words are put together. The more interesting the words are, the better! Good writers don’t just choose any words—they use the most precise and colorful words they know. They look for words that will help create pictures in the mind of the reader. They might search for words that sound musical or unusual. Often, they try out a word to see how it sounds. Words are their best friends, and they want readers to make friends with those words, too.
Teach and Reinforce (2 – 3 min.)	<p>Establish purpose—Today we are learning to tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in speaking and writing.</p> <p>Create urgency—We are learning to tune in to interesting words because learning them helps us to grow as readers, writers, and speakers. To really know a word, we have to use it many times when we speak and write.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling—Today I want to share a very funny book, <i>Miss Alaineus, A Vocabulary Disaster</i>. It is about a girl named Sage who loves words. She is so good with vocabulary that her dad even calls her “wise girl with words.” In fact, her name “Sage” means a wise person. But one day she makes a mistake. This causes a vocabulary disaster for her. Let me read you the first two pages of the book that will give you a hint about her disaster. It begins with her getting sick (read pages 2-3). <i>As you are reading, call attention to some of the interesting words that Sage uses.</i> Listen to the clever way she uses words. On page 3, she talks about her friend, Starr in this way: “On Tuesday afternoon I called my best friend, Starr, who is not a luminous celestial object seen as a point of light in the sky, but a very smart girl who listens perfectly on Vocabulary Day.” Wow! In this sentence Sage uses words like <i>luminous</i> and <i>celestial</i>—those are unusual words, aren’t they? I think these words are describing a real star rather than her friend. I want to use them, too!</p>

On the side and bottom margins of the text, Sage writes sentences with wonderful words that describe how she feels. A sample sentence that she wrote on page 3 is “What did I tell you? This berserk bacteria has bulldozed me badly. Help!” You’ll notice that she doesn’t just say “I have a cold and a sore throat; instead she uses interesting words: “berserk,” “bacteria,” and “bulldozed”!

Ask students if the word “Miss Alaineus” sounds like any other word they have heard. Explain that the name “Miss Alaineus” has something to do with Sage’s vocabulary disaster to pique their interest and encourage them to read the book on their own.

Practice
(2 – 3 min.)

When you read or listen to a story, what kinds of words do you think are interesting? Think of some characteristics of interesting words. For example, the word might be so unusual that very few people know what it is. Or, it might be a word that sounds beautiful to say. On your whiteboard, (or as a class chart) make a list of the kinds of words that you like to tune in to. Then you’ll share your ideas with the class.

Possible Responses

I like to tune in to words that:

- are unusual
- are compound words
- have many syllables
- have many letters
- make sound effects
- have silent letters
- create pictures
- are difficult to spell
- come from different languages
- have multiple meanings
- are fun to say
- are challenging to pronounce
- have rhythm
- sound like music
- are brand new
- are popular

Encourage and Plan

(1 – 2 min.)

Tune In to Interesting Words and Use New Vocabulary In Speaking and Writing is a valuable strategy. Remember to use it when you are reading good-fit books at home and school. Add new and interesting words to your word collector, and then use them in your writing and speaking. Unique words grab people’s attention and make your readers and listeners want to learn more.

**Common Core
Alignment**

Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Tune In to Interesting Words and Use New Vocabulary in Speaking and Writing aligns with Standards **RI.5.4** and **L.5.6** on our [Grade 5 CAFE Menu](#) and [CCSS Grade Level Matrix](#).

Tune In to Interesting Words Exit Slip

Everyone wants to have a vocabulary victory, *not* a vocabulary disaster! Describe how you will tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in your speaking and writing. Jot down a few of your ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Tune In to Interesting Words with an ABC Sentence Challenge

In *Miss Alaineus, A Vocabulary Disaster*, the narrator Sage writes descriptive sentences that tell about her feelings and observations. She chooses words that begin with the same letter, which is called alliteration, because she likes the way they make her writing sound. Look at some of her sample sentences for each letter that are written on the margins of the pages. Challenge yourself to write a sentence modeled on Sage's writing for every letter of the alphabet in your journal or during Word Work. Here's an example: For the letter *M*, you could write something like "Sage made a mistake that brought her much misery." Underline the words in your sentence that begin with the target letter.