Use Word Tools
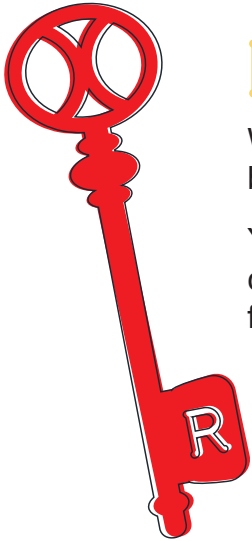
Keys to Vocabulary

Ruby Reader

Use Word Tools

Keys for the Teacher

Word-learning tools support recognition and understanding of words for beginning readers.

Young children need ready access to correct models of words. Seeing words continually in a rich environment filled with text helps build "mental memory" for instant recognition.

Keys for the Children

Good readers use word tools to learn and remember words.

Lesson

The first word tool to introduce is a class list of names. Add a photo by each name for easy recognition. Names can be used as the basis to teach alphabet, rhyming, stretching and blending, digraphs, beginning/middle/ending sounds and more. Make a small, printable version of class names and photos to go along with word work folders. Also, send the photo list home with each student. The children will learn the names of their classmates at a quicker pace while discussing their friends and events of the day with their parent.

High Frequency Word Walls provide a storehouse of words that children can use when they read and write. Have a big celebration when adding the first word to the wall. New words can be added at a slow but regular pace, giving students time to assimilate new information.

Having an ABC wall chart for reference is a handy tool during whole class lessons. Include smaller versions of charts in reading suitcases and writing journals.

Word work tools can help children practice writing and reading high frequency words in various kinesthetic ways. Have multiple leveled word lists ready. As students master the words on one list, they can begin working on the next list immediately.

Picture dictionaries are fascinating to beginning readers. Collect many different versions for student use.

Notes...

1 Struggling students may need a role model sitting next to them demonstrating word-learning tool processes.

2 Word walls with science and social studies vocabulary can be especially helpful as students read and write on these topics.

3 No classroom has wall space to permanently display every chart. Store past charts in a file students can access when they need to find a particular word.

4 Demonstrate how to use online word tools such as dictionaries or thesauruses whenever the opportunity arises.