

Core Vocabulary

- ★ Small set of ~400 words
- ★ Makes up ~80% of what you'll say, write, hear, or read throughout your lifetime
- ★ Includes pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, question words, demonstratives, prepositions, etc.
- ★ Not very good picture-producers because they are multi-meaning and abstract
- ★ Required to express a variety of communicative functions such as requesting, commenting, directing, asking, protesting, etc.
- ★ Allows the individual to grow/build language skills in a natural progression from single words to phrases to sentences, etc.

Some Frequently Used Core Words	
Interjections (social words)	yes, no, please, thank you, hi/hello, good-bye
Pronouns	I, me, my, mine, you, it, he, she, we, they
Question Words	what, when, where, who, why, how
Preverbs (helping words)	be, is, am, are, was, were, do, did, can, have, will
Verbs (action words)	go, stop, turn, make, look, see, find, put, open, close, eat, drink, get, help, want, need, say, tell, come, read, like, feel, color, let's, work, play, finished/all done
Adjectives (descriptive words)	more, one, big, little, fast, slow, some, different, pretty, red, blue, yellow, good, bad, new, old, happy, sad
Prepositions (placing words)	on, off, in, out, up, down, to, for, under, with
Determiners (pointer words)	this, that, some, all
Conjunctions (connection words)	and, but
Adverbs (tell when, where, how)	not, don't, now, here, there, away, again

*This word list is based on

- Banjee List of Toddler Vocabulary
- Dolch Pre-Primer & Primer
- Gal VanTatenhove's First 50 Words
- LAMP Starter Words
- PRC Core Starter Sets
- Clinical Judgment



How many combinations can you make with these core words?
In what contexts/environments will they be useful?



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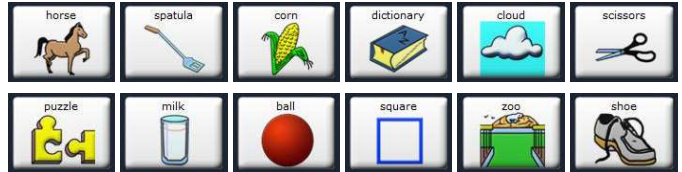
Fringe Vocabulary

- ★ Large set of thousands of words
- ★ Makes up ~20% of what you'll say, write, hear, or read throughout your lifetime
- ★ Always changing as you age, acquire different interests, etc.
- ★ Mostly nouns and content words
- ★ More specific and often single-meaning which makes them easy to depict
- ★ Cannot be easily combined into phrases and sentences

Some Frequently Used Fringe Words

people, history, way, art, world, information, map, family, government, health, system, computer, meat, year, music, person, method, data, food, understanding, theory, law, bird, literature, problem, software, control, knowledge, power, ability, economics, love, Internet, television, science, library, nature, fact, product, idea, temperature, investment, area, society, activity, story, industry, media, oven, community, definition, safety, quality, development, language, management, player, variety, video, week, security, country, exam, movie, organization, equipment, physics, analysis, policy, series, thought, bases, boyfriend, direction, strategy, technology, army, camera, freedom, paper, environment, child, instance, month, truth, marketing, university, article, department, difference, gold, news, audience, fishing, growth, income, marriage, user, combination, failure, meeting, medicine, philosophy, teacher, communication, night, chemistry, disease, desk, energy, nation, road, role, soup, advertising, location, success, addition, apartment, education, math, moment, painting, politics, attention, decision, event, property, shopping, student, wood, competition, distribution, entertainment, office, population, president, unit...

*This word list is based on <https://www.talkenglish.com/vocabular/top-1500-nouns.aspx>



How many combinations can you make with these fringe words?
In what contexts/environments will they be useful?

Resources:

- Banjee, M., DiCarlo, C., & Sticklin, S. (2003). Core Vocabulary Determination for Toddlers. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 19, 67-73.
- Beukelman, D., Yorkston, K., & Naranjo, C. (1984). 500 most frequently occurring words produced by five Adult AAC Users. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*, 49, 36.
- Brown, R. (1973). *A First Language: The Early Stages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Marvin, C., Beukelman, D., & Bilyeu, D. (1994). Frequently Occurring Home and School Words from Vocabulary-Use Patterns in Preschool Children: Effects of Context and Time Sampling. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 10.
- Van Tatenhove, G. (2005). Normal Language Development. *Generative Language & AAC*. revised October 2007 <http://www.vantatenhove.com/files/NLDAAC.pdf>
- Van Tatenhove, G. (2009). *The Pison Project Kit*. Wooster, OH: Prentice Romich Company.
- Dolch Sight Words. See <http://www.dolchhighways.org/>
- Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP). See www.aacandautism.com



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Language Functions & Early Generative Language Production

Top Words Used by Toddlers

all	it	some
done/finished	mine	that
go	more	the
help	my	want
here	no	what
I	off	yes/yeah
in	on	you
is	out	

These words make up
96.3% of the total
utterances by toddlers,
ages 24-36 months.

Banjee, M., DiCarlo, C., & Buras-Sticklin, S. (2003). Core Vocabulary Determination for Toddlers. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 2, 67-73.

CLINICAL APPLICATION: by Gail VanTatenhove, Speech-Language Pathologist and AAC Specialist (www.vantatenhove.com)

First 8 Words:

all done	more
help	stop
want	that
mine	what

First 15 Words:

all done	I	stop
away	it	that
go	like	want
help	mine	what
here	more	you

First 30 Words:

again	get	it	off	that
all done	go	like	on	there
away	help	little	out	up
big	here	mine	put	want
do	I	more	some	what
down	in	my	stop	you

First 50 Words:

again	drink	in	now	tell
all	eat	it	off	that
all done	feel	like	on	there
away	get	little	out	turn
bad	go	make	play	up
big	good	me	put	want
come	happy	mine	read	what
do	help	more	sad	where
don't	here	my	some	who
down	I	not	stop	why
				you

Adding to the First 50 Words to get to 300+ Core Words:

red	did	it	love	problem	surprise	very
ting	different	hot	maybe	ready	swim	walk
+s	dress	how	much	ride	take	way
after	fall	hungry	myself	same	thank you	we
almost	fast	idea	name	say	these	when
another	favorite	is	need	she	they	win
any	for	job	nice	sick	think	with
ask	fun	know	of	silly	thirsty	work
be	give	later	one	sing	those	wrote
before	goodbye	leave	other	sit	time	wrong
body	guess	let	over	sleep	tired	your
can	have	listen	place	slow	together	all pronouns
cold	he	live	please	sorry	try	more adjectives/adverbs
color	hear	lose	pretty	start	under	expand verb tense



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Stages of Language Development

www.aacandautism.com

Language Stage 1

- Approximate Vocabulary Size: up to 85 words
- Utterance Length in Morphemes: single words
- Examples: go, that, help, more, stop
- Language Objectives:
 - ✓ Speak using single words
 - ✓ Increase the number of words he or she uses meaningfully
 - ✓ Speak single words to direct another person's actions
 - ✓ Speak single words to express negatives
 - ✓ Speak single words to express requests

Language Stage 2

- Approximate Vocabulary Size: 75 to 200+ words
- Utterance Length in Morphemes: 1.5-2.5 (avg 2.0)
- Examples: want more, need help, all done, stop, don't
- Language Objectives:
 - ✓ Combine two and three words to make phrases
 - ✓ Increase the number of words he or she uses meaningfully
 - ✓ Increase the number of phrases he or she uses meaningfully
 - ✓ Speak two and three-word phrases to direct another person's actions
 - ✓ Speak two and three-word phrases to express negatives
 - ✓ Speak two and three-word phrases to express requests

Language Stage 3

- Approximate Vocabulary Size: 200 to 1,000 words
- Utterance Length in Morphemes: 2.5-3.0 (avg 2.75)
- Examples: mom coming in, dad helping, man riding, look it going, my car
- Language Objectives:
 - ✓ Speak in simple complete sentences
 - ✓ Increase the number of words used meaningfully
 - ✓ Speak plural nouns correctly
 - ✓ Use simple complete sentences to direct another person's actions
 - ✓ Use negatives in simple sentences
 - ✓ Use simple complete sentences to express requests
 - ✓ Use ing verbs to show action continuing in the present
 - ✓ Use prepositions to show position
 - ✓ Combine verbs ending in ing with prepositions
 - ✓ Use simple pronoun + verb phrases
 - ✓ Use infinitives (to+verb) to complete statements

Language Stage 4

- Approximate Vocabulary Size: 1,000 to 2,000 words



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- Utterance Length in Morphemes: 3.0-3
- Examples: I saw bird, Daddy's car, I fe
- Language Objectives:
 - ✓ Continue to speak in simple complete
 - ✓ Increase the number of words he or it
 - ✓ Ask simple with questions
 - ✓ Ask questions using pronoun-verb ph
 - ✓ Continue to use negatives in simple se
 - ✓ Continue to use simple complete sent
 - ✓ Use common irregular past tense verb
 - ✓ Use linking verbs & and are correctly
 - ✓ Use adjectives in simple sentences to
 - ✓ Use negative pronoun + verb phrases

Language Stage 5

- Approximate Vocabulary Size: 2,000-3
- Utterance Length in Morphemes: 3-7/3
- Examples: mom is coming in, dad will mine
- Language Objectives:
 - ✓ Continue to speak in simple complete
 - ✓ Increase the number of words he or it
 - ✓ Continue to use simple complete sent
 - ✓ Use articles a and the appropriately
 - ✓ Use past tense linking verbs was and v
 - ✓ Use past tense verbs ending in ed cor
 - ✓ Use verb ending in s to agree with cor
 - ✓ Add s to nouns to show possession
 - ✓ Express future actions by using going t

Language Stage 6

- Approximate Vocabulary Size: 3,000+
- Utterance Length in Morphemes: avg
- Examples: That's the box they put it in
- Language Objectives:
 - ✓ Continue to speak in simple complete
 - ✓ Increase the number of words he or it
 - ✓ Continue to use simple complete sent
 - ✓ Use subordinating conjunctions to se
 - ✓ Use reflexive pronouns correctly
 - ✓ Use indefinite pronouns correctly
 - ✓ Ask negative questions using pronoun
 - ✓ Use contractions such as isn't and wa

Beth's 80 Core Words (Gail's First 50 + Beth's Favorites)

<input type="checkbox"/> again	<input type="checkbox"/> drink	<input type="checkbox"/> hungry	<input type="checkbox"/> on	<input type="checkbox"/> tell
<input type="checkbox"/> all	<input type="checkbox"/> eat	<input type="checkbox"/> I	<input type="checkbox"/> orange	<input type="checkbox"/> that
<input type="checkbox"/> all done	<input type="checkbox"/> fast	<input type="checkbox"/> in	<input type="checkbox"/> out	<input type="checkbox"/> there
<input type="checkbox"/> away	<input type="checkbox"/> feel	<input type="checkbox"/> it	<input type="checkbox"/> pink	<input type="checkbox"/> thirsty
<input type="checkbox"/> awesome	<input type="checkbox"/> finished	<input type="checkbox"/> like	<input type="checkbox"/> play	<input type="checkbox"/> tired
<input type="checkbox"/> bad	<input type="checkbox"/> funny	<input type="checkbox"/> little	<input type="checkbox"/> purple	<input type="checkbox"/> turn
<input type="checkbox"/> big	<input type="checkbox"/> get	<input type="checkbox"/> look	<input type="checkbox"/> put	<input type="checkbox"/> up
<input type="checkbox"/> black	<input type="checkbox"/> go	<input type="checkbox"/> love	<input type="checkbox"/> read	<input type="checkbox"/> want
<input type="checkbox"/> blue	<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> make	<input type="checkbox"/> red	<input type="checkbox"/> what
<input type="checkbox"/> brown	<input type="checkbox"/> green	<input type="checkbox"/> me	<input type="checkbox"/> sad	<input type="checkbox"/> where
<input type="checkbox"/> cold	<input type="checkbox"/> happy	<input type="checkbox"/> mine	<input type="checkbox"/> same	<input type="checkbox"/> white
<input type="checkbox"/> come	<input type="checkbox"/> hard	<input type="checkbox"/> more	<input type="checkbox"/> sick	<input type="checkbox"/> who
<input type="checkbox"/> different	<input type="checkbox"/> hear	<input type="checkbox"/> my	<input type="checkbox"/> sleep	<input type="checkbox"/> why
<input type="checkbox"/> do	<input type="checkbox"/> help	<input type="checkbox"/> not	<input type="checkbox"/> slow	<input type="checkbox"/> work
<input type="checkbox"/> don't	<input type="checkbox"/> here	<input type="checkbox"/> now	<input type="checkbox"/> some	<input type="checkbox"/> yellow
<input type="checkbox"/> down	<input type="checkbox"/> hot	<input type="checkbox"/> off	<input type="checkbox"/> stop	<input type="checkbox"/> you

Personalized or Customized Vocabulary

Name:		Medical or Personal Care Needs (medication, positioning, equipment, etc.)	
Nickname:			
Birthday:			
Age:			
Address:			
City/State/Zip:			
Phone:			
Email:			
Diagnosis:			
Allergies:			
Names of People and Pets (family, friends, caregivers, doctors, therapists, teachers, colleagues, pets, etc.):			
Places (community, school, home, work, restaurants, vacation, etc.):			
Activities (community, school, home, work, sports, teams, etc.):			
Multimedia (music, TV, movies, video games, apps, etc.):			
Food or Drinks (favorites, instructions for preparation, etc.):			
Social Language (slang, jokes, swear words, greetings, etc.):			
Miscellaneous or additional vocabulary to be included:			



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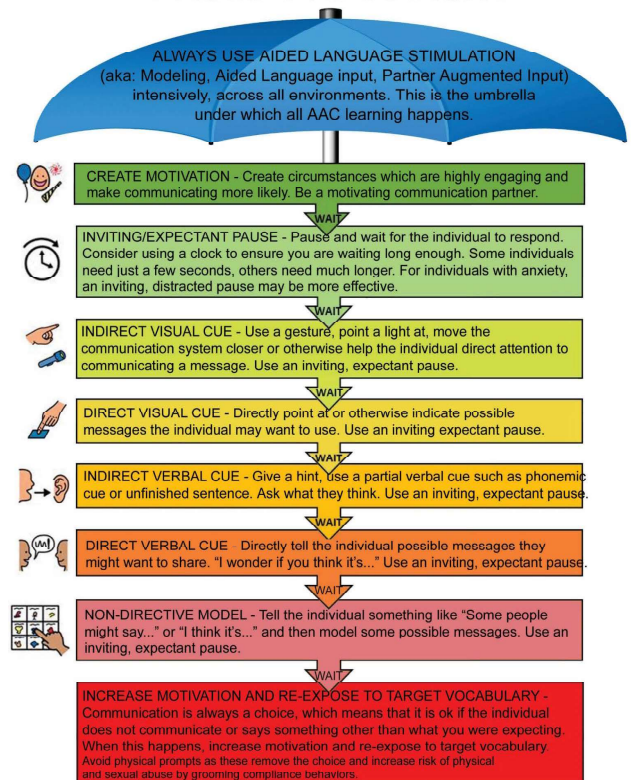


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Partner Augmented Input Self-Assessment Adapted from Senner & Baud 2015

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
When I'm working with students who use AAC systems...				
I touch symbols while I'm speaking to model words, phrases, or sentences throughout an activity.				
I talk about what the student is doing as he/she is doing it and touch corresponding symbols on his/her AAC system.				
I pause to give him/her time to take a conversational turn.				
I speak in a slow and clear manner.				
I use the AAC system to make several different types of messages such as asking questions, commenting, protesting, and requesting.				
I repeat target words and phrases throughout an activity.				
When the student activates a single symbol on his/her AAC system...				
I build up the message by selecting 1-2 more symbols to make a more complete message.				
If a student I'm working with uses a gesture (i.e. point) or word approximation that I understand...				
I point out the words/symbols with the same meaning on his/her AAC system while I'm talking.				
I respond without making him/her say it again on the AAC system.				

PROMPT HIERARCHY





PRC Words for Life® (WFL) Vocabulary Quick Reference Guide

PRC device support: www.prcfrom.com

iPad® app support: www.prcapps.com

LAMP™ Approach Training: www.ascaeducation.com

Terms you need to know:

Core Vocabulary – Words that are most commonly used in English – they are used regardless of situation, communication partner, or age/ disability of the communicator. Individuals must have access to core vocabulary in order to get their message across!

Fringe Vocabulary – Generally nouns that vary according to the situation. Fringe words might be different if we are talking about a basketball game versus doing an art project. They might also be different from communicator to communicator.

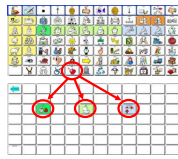
LAMP Words for Life Vocabulary Files

A vocabulary level DOES NOT need to be mastered before transitioning to the next vocabulary level. The decision on where to start will be influenced by factors such as ability to attend to sequenced steps, need for immediate reinforcement, and access to vocabulary. Always start at the highest level where the user demonstrates a moderate level of success.

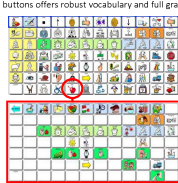
One-Hit – 82 pre-stored words that require selecting one button to hear the word. Also, includes "mom" and "dad" which are routinely used by beginning communicators, but require selecting two buttons before the word is spoken.



Transition – 205 frequently occurring words. Offers more vocabulary and introduces verb tenses. Most words require selecting two buttons before a word is spoken; however, these motor patterns are easy to follow.



Full – Access to thousands of words by selecting three or less buttons offers robust vocabulary and full grammar.



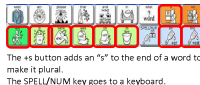
TIP: Vocabulary Builder is an excellent tool to temporarily limit the number of words available on the display. It allows an individual to focus on a small set of target words while maintaining consistent motor patterns for those words. Use it during teaching moments, but remember to allow ample time for access to all vocabulary for independent exploration and learning!

Guiding principles of LAMP WFL language system:

1. **Word-based program:** A priority is placed on core vocabulary with access to fringe.
2. **One motor plan per word:** allows for the development of quick effortless communication. No repeating words based on category; homonyms not present until the full level.
3. **No motor plan changes as language develops:** Motor plans can grow but not change.
4. **At the LAMP 84 full level, EVERY word can be accessed in 3 hits or less.**
5. **At the full level, the initial core word appears as a label on the first button.**
6. **No carrier phrases:** "You do not have to hear a word to get a word"
7. **First 4-5 spaces on the second row are empty in the transition and full levels.** Storing personalized words here allows for the motor plan for these words to remain constant across levels.
8. **No triple hits on one icon. No double hits on an icon before going to a third icon.**

Organizational Structure: LAMP WFL is based on "Unity", the language system in PRC devices. However, there are some differences based on LAMP principles. The rules governing the language structure are for the benefit of the individual teaching the language. We recommend that words be taught by emphasizing the motor pattern. The basic structure is described below:

1. LAMP WFL is organized in layers. The top layer or home screen is always the starting point. This allows for the pattern of a given word to remain consistent.
2. The home screen of LAMP WFL has several high-frequency words that can be said with 1-hit. These are: **up/ down/ to/ in/ the.**
3. The **+** button adds an "s" to the end of a word to make it plural.
4. The **SPELL/NUM** key goes to a keyboard.



VERBS, ADJECTIVES, CATEGORY NOUNS

1. Select any icon on the home screen (for example, eat). When selected, you gain access to another layer with words related to that icon (in this case, words related to eating such as "eat," "hungry", and "food").
2. Colors are important:
 - a. GREEN = verb
 - b. BLUE = adjective
 - c. ORANGE = category noun
 - d. YELLOW = pronouns
3. Placement is important in the 2nd layer! Try another icon (for example, play), and notice the verbs, adjectives, and category nouns are color-coded and always end in the same place.
4. Sometimes there will be a 3rd layer. After you push "eat", you not only see the word "eat" at the verb location, you also see "GROW," "BITE," and "CHEW." You can tell there is a third layer because the 2nd button is in all caps. Choosing one of these buttons will take you to a third layer with forms of that word.

PRONOUNS

1. Pronouns can be found on the left-hand side of the screen.
2. Pronouns are color-coded yellow.
3. At the full level, you have the option to reduce keystrokes by using pronoun phrases.

To follow the LAMP approach, we recommend that pronoun phrases not be used until the person can access each word individually, particularly if there are auditory processing concerns. So initially, instead of teaching the phrase "I want," teach each word separately "I" + "want".

GRAMMAR WORDS (Interjections, Determiners, Conjunctions, Prepositions, Question Words, Adverbs)

These words start with the black and white icons on the 2nd row.

1. **INTERJECTIONS:** Start with These words pop into conversation like fireworks pop into the sky (for example, awesome/ yuh/ hello).
2. **DETERMINERS:** Start with The wizard is using his wand to point to 'this/ that/ those/ these'.
3. **CONJUNCTIONS:** Start with Conjunctions join words together like the trains are joined together (it also gives us some quick access to numbers/ math words) – for example, and/ but/ because.
4. **PREPOSITIONS:** Start with The cloud can go over/ under/ through the bridge.
5. **QUESTION WORDS:** Start with Words like who/ what/ when/ where/ why.
6. **ADVERBS:** Start with Words like very/ ever/ ready.

NOUNS

Nouns are typically found in the top two rows after pushing an icon on the home screen. In the transition and full vocabularies, the first four to five buttons on the second row are blank. These buttons are for storing favorite items. If a word is stored in the transition level, it should be stored in the same location in the full level to maintain consistent motor patterns.

	names
	body parts
	clothing
	subjects/grades
	games/toys
	jobs/ tools
	money
	feelings
	things you read
	music players
	sports
	family
	animals
	time
	stores/community
	nature/ places
	colors/art supplies
	toiletries/sick
	rooms/ buildings
	people
	vehicles
	food
	holiday/shapes
	weather
	drinks
	TV
	dishes/appliances
	furniture/linens

TIP: Search for a word using **WORD FINDER**. Type a word and it will show you how to say it in LAMP WFL.

OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE
and we don't expect them to be fluent speakers
YET

If AAC learners only see symbols modeled for communication twice weekly for 20-30 minutes, it will take **84 YEARS** for them to have the same exposure to aided language as an 18 month old has to spoken language.
Statistic from Jane Korsten - QIAT Listserv 2011
photo by Rachael Langley - AAC Specialist

2.5 minute YouTube video

AIDED LANGUAGE STIMULATION EXPLAINED
by Christopher Bugge

<https://ociaclanguage.com/blog>

The "Model, Model, Model" Mantra

Here's what it looks like... that's why it's a 2.5 minute video! (8:00) The video shows how the Model, Model, Model mantra is used to teach a new word. It's a simple, easy-to-follow video that shows how to use the Model, Model, Model mantra to teach a new word. It's a simple, easy-to-follow video that shows how to use the Model, Model, Model mantra to teach a new word. It's a simple, easy-to-follow video that shows how to use the Model, Model, Model mantra to teach a new word.



in

out

open

close

who

What do we mean by...?

Engineer:

Immersive:

Environment:

Other Ways to Engineer the Environment



Descriptive vs. Referential Teaching

Written by Beth Browning for the "Stories and Strategies for Success" blog on the AAC Language Lab in August 2017

It's time to take a test. Answer these questions:

- Which planet is sixth from the sun, is very big, spins fast but moves around the sun slowly, and has large rings?
- What do we call the time between 1760-1840 when life was changed by how things were made?
- Name a type of housing that Native Americans used.

The answers to these referential questions are *Saturn*, *Industrial Revolution*, and *Teepee*. Did you get them right?

Imagine you are a Person Who Uses AAC (PWU AAC). Would you be able to answer those referential questions with the words available in your device? Or would someone have to spend time programming those words into your device and teaching you where to find them before you could answer? Do you think taking the time to program and teach words like *Saturn*, *Industrial Revolution*, and *Teepee* is a good use of time? Are they words you will use over and over again all throughout your life?

Now for a different kind of test. Answer these questions:

- Tell what you know about satellites.
- Describe natural resources.
- Contrast an author with an illustrator.

The answers to descriptive questions like these will contain a lot of core vocabulary such as "something little goes around something big" (satellite) or "things that come from water or earth" (natural resources) or "person who writes and person who makes pictures" (author vs. illustrator). Hopefully, these core words are already programmed into your device, you're already using them in other contexts throughout your day, and they are words that you'll continue to use throughout your life. For these reasons, it is a much better use of everyone's time to implement a Descriptive Teaching Model!

There is a misconception that one-word responses are easier for PWU AAC – but that's not true if the key words must first be identified in the lesson, then programmed into the device, then taught to the student! Who has time for all of that? Who is responsible for making sure these words are available in the device? Is it worthwhile to have hundreds of "temporary" words programmed when they are not likely to ever be used again? No! Therein lies the problem with the Referential Teaching Model.

Descriptive Teaching allows communication partners (teachers, para-professionals, parents, therapists) to model core language while teaching content-specific vocabulary. The idea is that we use core words to define and describe the key vocabulary in the lesson. Here are some examples:

- Plot – story about
- Setting – where
- Conflict – problem in story
- Orbit – to go around something in a circle
- Gravity – the Earth pulls things to itself
- Tide – water goes up and down
- Fuel – makes things go/work/run
- Economy – the way money is made and used by people

Is there a time when curriculum words should be added to a communication device? Sure! Certain academic vocabulary will be used frequently throughout a person's schooling (i.e. author, angle, president). Words like these will be used over and over again throughout a person's life and would make sense to program into the device.

What if teachers still want to assess whether or not a student knows the name of a concept? Well, there are several alternatives to programming curriculum words into the device such as spelling, true/false, multiple choice, and post-it notes.

Here are three fun resources for boosting your use of descriptive teaching:

1. Watch ["The Language Stealers" video](#)



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2. Try describing a word with [The Upgoer5 Text Editor](#). If you use a word that is not included in the 1,000 most frequently used words, it will flag it. You can then try to use different core words to describe that one until you have no red flags!
3. Check out the [Expanding Expression Tool](#) for a multi-sensory approach to improve oral and written language skills through defining & describing, making associations, comparing & contrasting, and categorizing.

The EET and AAC: Expanding Language with a Multi-Sensory Approach

Written by Beth Browning, Summer 2017

"Tell me everything you know about an apple" I asked my verbose 4-year-old daughter.

"You eat it, it's red, and it tastes good!" she replied enthusiastically.

"Do you know anything else about an apple?" I probed.

"It's a fruit that grows on a tree" she stated.

"Is that ALL you know about an apple? Is there anything else you can tell me?"

"Nope that's all I know, mommy."

Five attributes. That's all she could generate on her own. But I knew she knew more, so I taught her a strategy for defining and describing vocabulary called the Expanding Expression Tool (EET). It took 2 minutes to teach her the song while walking through the different colored beads on a chain – each representing a different language element.

Sung to the tune of *Skip to My Lou*:

♪ Green group ♪ Blue do ♪ What does it look like? ♪ What is it made of? ♪ Pink parts ♪ White where? ♪
What else do I know? ♪



"Now tell me what you know about an apple. Start with Green Group. What is the category?"

"Food or fruit."

"Okay, Blue Do – what do you do with an apple?"

Excitedly and with wide eyes, she said, "You eat it, bake it, bite it, pick it, cut it, peel it, dip it!"

"Yep! What does an apple look like?"

"It's round and smooth. It's small. It's yellow, red, or green."

"Okay, but what is it made of or where does it come from?"

"A tree! It grows from a seed into a tree and then you pick it at the orchard!"

"Fantastic! Now, what are all its parts?"

"It has a stem, seeds, peel, and juice."

"Where do you find it?"

"In the grocery store, in my lunchbox, on the teacher's desk."

"What else do you know about apples?"

"They are healthy. They taste good with peanut butter or caramel. They are sometimes sweet, sometimes sour. They are crunchy and juicy."

"You sure do know a LOT about apples!"

"Yep!"

From 5 attributes to 30+ in a time span of about 5 minutes. That is the **magic** of the EET! Now imagine the possibilities of using this tool with students who use augmentative-alternative communication (AAC) for expressive language!

With the EET you can start at a single word level or advance to phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and even reports which makes it an ideal tool for students of all ages and abilities who use core vocabulary based AAC systems. You can break it down into each component (categories, functions, attributes, parts, places, etc.) to teach the different language elements and then put it all together to define and describe words. There are endless ideas for implementing the EET and all can be adapted for use with an AAC device: riddles, secret object guessing game, show & tell, language webs, compare & contrast, biographies or autobiographies, writing from prior knowledge, summarizing... It will not only increase your students' verbal expression, but their written expression as well! Use the



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EET to write with the AAC device - it's a great way to target syntax and morphology with kids who are putting 3+ words together in phrases and sentences!



You might be thinking, "But a lot of the language created with the EET is noun-based. How does that help my AAC student build their use of core vocabulary on the device?" First, I recommend you read this [blog article I wrote on Descriptive vs. Referential Teaching](#). It will help explain how to take a content or academic word and break it down into a core word description. This is an important skill for AAC users because if a particular word is not stored in their device or if they don't know where to access it, they can use core words to "talk around it" by defining and describing it. And the EET gives them an organized and systematic way of doing so! For example, if I were trying to tell you something and the word wasn't in my AAC device, could you guess what I'm talking about if I said, "animal, magical, looks like horse, thing on head, in stories"? Likewise, in the example above, if my daughter didn't know the word "peel" when she was explaining the parts of an apple, she could have substituted it with "part on the outside that is shiny and red". An AAC user at the 1-2 word level might just say "outside" or "shiny stuff" which would then give me an opportunity to model other vocabulary in the device to build on what they've said.



The [Expanding Expression Tool](#) was created by Sara L. Smith, speech-language pathologist (SLP). It is a multi-sensory approach to improve oral and written language skills through defining & describing, making associations, comparing & contrasting, and categorizing. It is an awesome tool for general and special education teachers, literacy coaches, reading specialists, parents, and SLPs to build language with students of any age or ability level. Although the [EET Kit](#) comes with a manual, I highly recommend attending a full-day training for a thorough explanation of the research behind the technique and the methodology to implement it correctly in a fun variety of ways across subject matter and age groups. If you have questions about the EET, contact Sara directly at seismiths@gmail.com or (989) 225-0436.



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