

“Spotlight on Strategies” is a weekly digital media integration challenge that provides a variety of simple strategies for educators to implement in conjunction with their current curriculum.

Words are a powerful force, but yet often we do all the talking. Sometimes what is best is to allow the words to reveal their own hidden message. Wordle.net is often considered a “fun” tool, but not an instructional instrument. Through a simple cut and paste we can reveal what’s most important in a text and use that as an opportunity to build background knowledge for solid understanding of content.

The image above is a snapshot of a Wordle created from the reading passage [Getting to Know Energy in Ecosystems](#). Depending on a student's history, passages like these can sometimes be challenging. By creating the Wordle and sharing before students read, we can review the most important concepts and ensure that the class has foundational knowledge and address any misconceptions.

Select a reading passage that would interest your students from DE. Cut and paste the text into Wordle. The larger a word looks in the Wordle, the more times it appeared in the passage. Have students discuss what words are most important to know before reading the passage and review the definitions. Before students read the passage, have them go through the document and highlight the reviewed vocabulary words.

Have students summarize a reading passage. Take a group of their summaries and cut and paste into Wordle.net. Discuss which words were most common. Have students re-write their summary to reflect the most important concepts.

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SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGIES

A variety of simple instructional strategies that incorporate the use of digital media in meaningful, effective, and practical ways.

20 QUESTIONS



BACKGROUND

The game “20 Questions” is a widely known game that helps to encourage questioning and deductive reasoning. “The act of questioning actually has a physiological impact on the human brain. The neurons make more connections because of the body’s need to deal with a question.” (*Leading With Questions*, Michael Marquardt) Creating a questioning culture within the classroom helps to improve problem solving, self-confidence, and individualized learning. This strategy takes a spin on this traditional game as a way to help students think through and articulate questions they have about a unit or topic of study.

EXAMPLE

- * Explain to students that they will be learning about a new topic or unit of study, such as the causes of the Revolutionary War. Explain to students that it is their job to figure out why the colonists risked their lives to fight for independence from Britain.
- * Place images around the room such as:
 - [Political Cartoon of King George III](#)
 - [George Washington \(CDN Subscriber\)](#)
 - [Join or Die \(CDN Subscriber\)](#)
 - [Americans vs. British at Lexington \(CDN Subscriber\)](#)
 - [The Boston Massacre \(CDN Subscriber\)](#)
- * Have students examine the images in small groups or individually. As they look at the images, students should begin to develop a list of questions they have about the Causes of the Revolutionary War. For example,
 - What role did the Boston Massacre play in leading to the Revolutionary War?
 - Why was George Washington willing to fight for independence?
- * As a whole group, come up with a list of 20 questions. Print the questions and place them in the room so students can refer back to them as they learn throughout the unit.

CHALLENGE

- * Select images that match your current curriculum.
- * Have students analyze the images to come up with questions.
- * Develop a list of “20 Questions” as a whole group.

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MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES



BACKGROUND

Understanding a situation from multiple perspectives is an important skill for students to master. The theory of Multiple Intelligences (proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983) has been leveraged in classrooms across the world as a way to differentiate instruction and appeal to students' strengths and interests. This week's strategy uses images as a way to engage students in multiple perspectives of a topic in a way that plays to their unique learning styles.

EXAMPLE

- * Show students the large-size image of [Federal Troops At Rest](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#)).
- * Have students look at the image through multiple perspectives and give them an activity to complete based on the perspective. For example:
 - Look at the man in the upper right hand corner. He is reading a newspaper. Take on the perspective of a news reporter from either side of the Civil War and write an article that might be found in that newspaper. (Verbal/Linguistic)
 - Look at the men in the middle of the image. They are playing a game. What types of games could you create and play in large open fields with limited supplies that you can carry and take along with you? (Kinesthetic)
 - Look at the man in the lower right hand corner. He is reading a letter from home. Take on the perspective of his wife, his child, or a sibling and write the letter; or take on his perspective and write a response. (Intrapersonal)
 - Look at the man in the middle of the image towards the top. He is sitting on a drum. Take on his perspective on the war and write a song about what life is like as a Federal soldier. (Musical)
- * Have students work individually or in small groups to complete the activities above.
- * Share their work with the class.

CHALLENGE

- * Select an image or video segment that matches your current curriculum.
- * Have students analyze the image or watch the segment.
- * Give students multiple perspectives to think through and multiple activities that address a variety of learning styles.
- * Have students share their work with the class.

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HALF THE PICTURE



BACKGROUND

In essence, the active processing theory rests on a principle of "use it or lose it" (Kaufeldt, 2010). This means that students must be actively involved in what they are learning. This strategy leverages the use of Interactive Student Notebooks. These notebooks have a "left-side" (output), "right-side" (input) orientation to help students actively record, organize, and process new information. By completing half the picture, students are actively engaged in their learning and can have an opportunity to share what they've learned in an Interactive Student Notebook.

EXAMPLE

- * Watch and listen to this video on the [Water Cycle \(CDN Subscriber\)](#) without the audio.
- * Use only the right half of this [water cycle image \(CDN Subscriber\)](#) and glue it onto the right side of an Interactive Student Notebook page.
- * Ideally, students will watch and listen to the video a second time, independently or in pairs, pausing to accurately label and complete the image on the left side.
- * As a whole group, watch, listen, and pause to discuss concepts and keywords.
 - [00:25-00:56] introduces water cycle
 - [1:00-1:34] evaporation - pause to discuss and label as needed
 - [1:35-1:55] condensation - pause to discuss and label as needed
 - [1:56-2:21] precipitation - pause to discuss and label as needed
 - [2:22-2:45] collection - pause to discuss and label as needed
 - [2:45-2:55] review water cycle - pause to discuss and label as needed (can stop video here)!
- * Watch and listen to the video a third time to add details to labels and drawing.
- * Add rigor by asking students to cite evidence from the video to support each label.
 - * In the collection phase of the water cycle, water seeps into or runs over the ground collecting in oceans, lakes, and rivers.

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HALF THE PICTURE CONT.



CHALLENGE

- * Review the characteristics of a good [Interactive Student Notebook](#).
- * Select an image file that summarizes your lesson topic. Use only the right half of the image glued onto the right side of the Notebook page.
- * Select a video segment that explains your topic and selected image. You may want to download the image and video media files for access offline.
- * Have students glue only the right half of the image onto the right side of their Notebook page.
- * Have students listen to and watch the video a number of times with multiple opportunities to accurately complete the image, label all parts, and discuss the image as a whole group.
- * Add rigor or extend the lesson the following day by watching the video segment again and citing supporting evidence for each label.