

Describe the Word

In this activity, students use language and logic to describe new vocabulary words. They use higher order thinking skills and also think creatively to find relationships and multiple meanings among words and concepts.

For each vocabulary word, think of 3-4 different professions that could relate to it. Then write each task on a different numbered index card (see the example). You can also include an open-ended question to describe the new word.

For example: **ISLAND**

1. Tell your partner why you would or would not like to live on an **island**.
2. Describe an **island** to your partner as if you were a pilot.
3. Describe an **island** to your partner as if you were an artist.

Procedure

1. In a **Think Aloud**, demonstrate the kind of logic you use, and questions you ask, to describe one of the words. For example:

“Well, a pilot would see an island from his plane in the sky, so what would it look like? It would have water all around it, and it would look pretty small from so high up.”

“If I were an artist, I would probably use lots of adjectives that describe how the island looks, maybe as if I were painting it. So I might say that it looks like a brown and green circle surrounded by all blue. But I know that the waves that are near the sand make the water look white. So I would say that it looks like a brown and green circle with white around its edges, and then surrounded by all blue.”

2. After you have done the **Think Aloud**, assign the descriptions for homework. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Give each group a different word, and each group member a different number - the index cards with the description tasks.

3. Remind them that they must think about the language and logic required for each description. They should research the professions if they aren't familiar with them. They can NOT use illustrations or visuals.

4. The next day, share the descriptions and discuss how they vary. Some suggestions are:

- a. Share one group at a time. Discuss the multiple meanings of the word, and how words/concepts can be thought of from multiple perspectives.
- b. You might find similarities among different words described from the same profession's point of view.
- c. If students do not use the vocabulary word in their descriptions, then the class can guess the word being defined.