



Strategies for Learning

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Helping students overcome hurdles

Summer Strategies

SHADES OF MEANING:

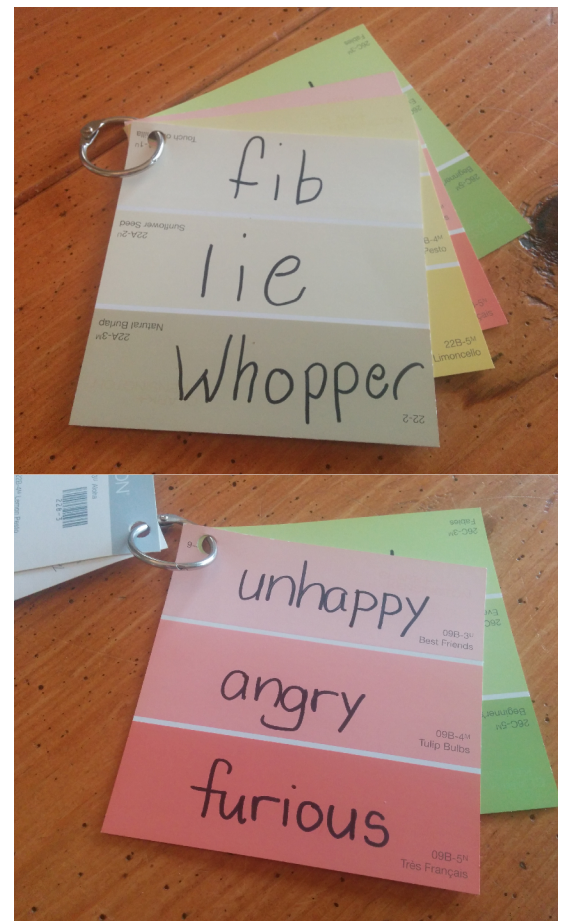
A visual way to teach vocabulary

Shades of Meaning is one of our favorite ways to teach vocabulary and variations within synonyms. First, gather paint swatch samples from a local hardware store; we prefer to pick shades that are light enough so writing is visible.

Next, work with your student to pick a word to explore. Maybe it's a new word taken from a recent reading or an overused basic word such as "fun" or "sad." Brainstorm synonyms for the key word and then arrange those synonyms by degree or severity. Finally, pick three examples which illustrate the range of variation possible to write on a paint swatch.

Using the concept of rain as an example, on the lightest color your student might write, "drizzle," on the medium shade, "showers," and on the darkest shade, "downpour."

Take it further: Cards can be displayed in a central location or students can compile several cards on a key ring to use for studying or inspiration when writing.



CHECK YOUR BED

Younger students often confuse the lowercase b and d when reading and writing. One way we have our students independently check for accuracy is to have them place their hands in a "thumbs-up" position with their knuckles together. When students need support in correcting a reversed b or d or struggle to know if they should be sounding out the letter b or the letter d, we remind them to "check your bed."