

Core Vocabulary

Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert

The core vocabulary consists of the 4,000 simple word families which account for 90% of the words in written English. Function words (e.g., the, of) and general academic words (e.g., compare, relate) are prominent in the core vocabulary but there are also many concept words which can be pictured. A goal of Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert's TextProject is to provide Word Pictures for many of the concept groups within the core vocabulary.

Here are fourteen concept groups within the core vocabulary:

Transportation: There are lots of words that describe the way we move from place to place. We've sorted them into four groups.

Water, Water Everywhere!: Water is all around us. We have lots of words to describe water and the things we do with water.

Places and Dwellings: Everyday we go to places and enter buildings. There is an abundance of words that describe the different places we go and the different types of dwellings we enter.

Machines and Tools: Everyday machines and tools make completing different tasks a little easier. There are lots of different kinds of tools and machines, from simple to complex tools.

Plants and Where Plants Grow: Plants grow all around the world. There are lots of words that describe the types of plants, parts of plants, where plants grow, and the types of land plants grow on.

Fashion and Design: The various types of clothing and accessories to choose from allow people to create their own sense of style that reflects their unique personality.

Health and the Human Body: There are lots of words used to describe humans as organisms, the parts of the body, the brain and the body's senses, health and nutrition, and the injuries and illnesses the body may experience.

The Arts: Art is the creation of beauty through different types of materials. Anyone can be an artist. There are lots of core vocabulary words that describe the arts.

All About Money: Everyday people use money to buy things that they need and want. There are lots of words that describe money, earning and spending money, and the economy in general.

The Food We Eat: Everyday we eat food in order to give our bodies energy to play, work, and do the things we need to do. There are lots of words to describe where our food comes from, what our food tastes like, and the different types of food that we eat.

Elements, Minerals, and Rocks: Earth is made of elements, minerals, and rocks. There are many words used to describe different elements and minerals. There are also many words to describe different kinds of rocks and their different sizes.

All About Books and Other Written Texts: There are many types of written texts, and what you find inside of each one may be different.

Animals: All around the world there are big animals, small animals, and all sizes in between. Mammals, fish, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, and other critters are all animals living on Earth. Let's take a look at some of the core vocabulary words describing the types and characteristics of animals.

Sports: To play is to do something fun. Adults and children all around the world play. Some people play a sport by themselves, like running a marathon. Others play sports on a team, like on a soccer or water polo team.

For more details and further examples of Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert's research on Core Vocabulary, please visit [TextProject.org](http://textproject.org):

<http://textproject.org/classroom-materials/textproject-word-pictures/core-vocabulary/>