Classroom Strategies

List-Group-Label

List-group-label is a form of semantic mapping. The strategy encourages students to improve their vocabulary and categorization skills and organize concepts. Categorizing listed words, through grouping and labeling, helps students organize new concepts in relation to previously learned concepts.

Share your examples!

Why use list-group-label?

- It helps students organize their understanding of specific vocabulary and concepts.
- It builds on students' prior knowledge about a topic.
- It actively engages students in learning new vocabulary and content by activating their critical thinking skills.
- It teaches categorizing and labeling skills.

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How to use list-group-label

1. Select a main concept in a reading selection.
2. List: Have students brainstorm all the words they think relate to the topic.
   - Visually display student responses.
   - At this point do not critique student responses. Some words may not reflect the main concept, but hopefully students will realize this as they begin grouping the words in the next step.
3. Group: Divide your class into small groups. Each group will work to cluster the class list of words into subcategories. As groups of words emerge, challenge your students to explain their reasoning for placing words together or discarding them.
4. Label: Invite students to suggest a title or label for the groups of words they have formed. These labels should relate to their reasoning for the grouping.
Examples

Science

This example shows how the list-group-label strategy can be used with learning about living and non-living earth systems.

See earth systems example > (48K PDF)*

Social Studies

This website shows an example of a Native American list-group-label activity.

See social studies example >

Children's books to use with this strategy

- **Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?**
  by Marla Frazee (Dial, 2006)
  Picture book
  Fourteen artists answer the age-old question in their unique style. Results are humorous, serious, silly, and downright outrageous. Readers/viewers can come up with descriptions for each double page spread (each by a different artist) and then come up with their own responses to the question.

- **Face to Face with Polar Bears**
  by Norbert Rising & Elizabeth Carney (National Geographic, 2007)
  Nonfiction
  Norbert Rising finds himself in dangerous situations in the Arctic as he studies polar bears. This book connects children with the consequences of global warming, and gives practical advice on how to help save our white-furred friends.

- **On Beyond Zebra**
  by Dr. Seuss (Random, 1955)
  Picture book/fantasy
  Describe in real words the fantastic things that the ignored alphabet - the one that goes beyond Z - present.

Differentiated instruction

for second language learners, students of varying reading skill, and younger learners

- Ask students to return to lists it as they read through and the text related to the major concept they brainstormed about. They may find they should add words from their reading
or re-label the groups of words they created.

- Encourage students to discuss lists with others outside their initial small group.
- Have students write the lists or type them using a word processing program.
- Provide students with pre-established categories to use to group words.
- Create graphical representations of words in order to help students connect to prior knowledge.
- Ask students to create their own drawings to accompany the words.

See the research that supports this strategy


Strategy Swap

Teachers, have you used any of the strategies from our library in your lessons — especially in science, social studies, and other content areas? We'd love to share some of your real-world examples with our readers.

Submit your examples here >
(select "Classroom strategies" from the subject dropdown list)

http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/list_group_label?theme=print

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