

Pulling Vocab Words from Writing Passages with ChatGPT

Why?

In this lesson, students use ChatGPT to locate and define grade-appropriate vocabulary words from a given text. By engaging with this lesson, students not only learn new words but also become adept at using technology as a learning tool. They are introduced to innovative methods of learning, harnessing the capabilities of AI to enhance their vocabulary. This approach exemplifies how technology can be integrated into traditional learning paradigms, offering a fresh perspective on text analysis and language acquisition. The lesson goes beyond rote memorization of words; it involves understanding the context in which these words are used, thereby deepening comprehension and retention.

Materials Needed

- Computers with internet access
- Access to ChatGPT
- Digital texts of stories
- Projector or large screen for demonstration

Time needed

Approximately 60 minutes

Objectives

- Students will be able to use an AI text generator (such as ChatGPT) to identify and extract vocabulary from text.
- Students will be able to use new words in context.
- Students will be able to utilize context clues and word roots to understand new vocabulary.

Key Concepts & Vocabulary

- **Context Clues:** Hints within the surrounding text that help define unfamiliar words.
- **Public Domain:** Texts that are not protected by copyright and can be freely used.

Lesson

- Introduction to ChatGPT:
 - a. Briefly explain what ChatGPT is and its capabilities in processing text.
- Selecting the Text:
 - a. Choose a story, with text you can copy from a digital source, appropriate for the students' grade level. This could be a story already being studied in class.

- b. (If applicable) Discuss the importance of copyright and why to use **Public Domain** texts for this activity.
- Extracting Vocabulary:
 - a. Prompt ChatGPT with a request to locate vocabulary words in the story that are appropriate for the grade level of the class. Ask for a list, and definitions of the words.
 - b. (For example: "I am going to paste some text from a short story. Please locate 10 vocabulary words that would be appropriate for students at the __th grade level. Make a numbered list of these words, and provide brief definitions for each word in the context of the story.")
 - c. ChatGPT will likely respond by saying it understands the task, and to please paste the text.
 - d. Demonstrate how to copy and paste a passage of text from the story into ChatGPT. (Select the text on the source page. Type Control-C to copy the text. Then type Control-V into ChatGPT to paste the text.)
 - e. Note that ChatGPT may be limited in how much text it can process at once. Look up the current character or word limits to know how much text you can paste. (If your story is longer than the limit, you can paste it in sequential prompts.)
 - i. Claude (claude.ai), another AI text generator, is a useful alternative because it can process large texts.
 - f. Looking at the list, you may determine that the words need to be more or less challenging than the initial output. You can further prompt ChatGPT with a request for easier or harder words.
 - g. See an example of this process at the end of this document.
 - h. This example is an excellent way to show how ChatGPT provides definitions that match the context of the story, essentially using **context clues**, a useful feature, especially given the possible variety of definitions for words such as lustily, spruce, and pathos. This eliminates the situation where students choose the wrong definition from a dictionary and misunderstand the meaning of the word in the text.
- Student Activity:
 - a. Students work in pairs or individually using ChatGPT to extract vocabulary from assigned texts.
 - b. The prompt could be modified to ask ChatGPT to provide the vocabulary list first by itself, so the students can find the words in the text and make their own inferences about their meaning. After that, students could ask ChatGPT for the definitions in context.
 - i. Example prompt: "Please locate 10 vocabulary words that would be appropriate for students at the __th grade level. Make a numbered list of these words."
- Application:

- a. Share findings with the class, discussing any interesting words or difficulties encountered.

Discussion Questions

- How does using ChatGPT for vocabulary building compare to traditional methods?
- Can the use of AI in education, like ChatGPT, change the way we approach learning other subjects? How?

Supplemental Activity Ideas

- **Creative Writing Challenge:** Use the newly learned vocabulary to write a short story or poem.
- **Word Origin Exploration:** Research the roots of the most interesting words and present findings to the class.
- **Vocabulary Game Day:** Create games like crossword puzzles or word searches using the new vocabulary.
- **ChatGPT as a Tool for Other Subjects:** Explore how ChatGPT can assist in understanding vocabulary in texts from subjects like history or science.

Sources to Learn More

- Using ChatGPT to explain complicated vocabulary - <https://weaverschool.com/blog/how-to-chatgpt-learn-english-vocabulary>
- www.etymonline.com - Online Etymology Dictionary of word and root and histories
- Other ways to use ChatGPT as a study aid - <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365-life-hacks/writing/using-chatgpt-to-generate-flashcards-study-aids>

Sample ChatGPT Search

This conversation with ChatGPT was based on the story "The Minister's Black Veil," by Nathaniel Hawthorne. (The whole story was 5,161 words, or 29,390 characters, long, so only a portion of it was pasted into ChatGPT.)

User: I am going to paste some text from the short story "The Minister's Black Veil," by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Please locate 10 vocabulary words that would be appropriate for students at the 9th grade level. Make a numbered list of these words, and provide brief definitions for each word in the context of the story.

ChatGPT: Certainly! Please go ahead and paste the text from the short story, and I'll identify and define ten vocabulary words suitable for 9th grade students.

User: [pasted approx. 1500 words of the story "The Minister's Black Veil," by Nathaniel Hawthorne]

ChatGPT: Based on the excerpt from "The Minister's Black Veil," here are ten vocabulary words appropriate for 9th-grade students, along with their definitions:

1. Sexton: An official of a church who is responsible for its maintenance and often for its use of bells and the churchyard.
2. Lustily: With vigor or enthusiasm.
3. Spruce: Neatly dressed; smart in appearance.
4. Throng: A large, densely packed crowd of people or animals.
5. Semblance: The outward appearance or apparent form of something, especially when the reality is different.
6. Meditative: Of, involving, or absorbed in meditation or considered thought.
7. Swathed: Wrapped in several layers of fabric.
8. Crape: A type of thin crinkled cloth, usually black, worn as a symbol of mourning.
9. Pathos: A quality that evokes pity or sadness.
10. Venerable: Accorded a great deal of respect, especially because of age, wisdom, or character.

These words are selected for their level of challenge appropriate for 9th graders and for their relevance to the text, enhancing students' understanding of the story's tone and themes.

User: Can you replace #2 and #6, which seem like words a 9th grader should already know?

ChatGPT: Certainly! Here are replacements for #2 and #6:

1. Perturbation: A feeling of anxiety or agitation; disturbance.
2. Iniquity: Immoral or grossly unfair behavior.

These revised words provide a more challenging vocabulary appropriate for 9th-grade students and are relevant to the context of "The Minister's Black Veil."