

## VOCABULARY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

**Dr. Mariela M. Pérez**

### Model Lesson

Among the most effective strategies for teaching vocabulary words to students is through read-alouds of interesting and culturally appropriate books. This lesson presents an example of a read-aloud with the classic picture book *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. The lesson incorporates activities for English language learners to enhance their vocabulary learning.

The lesson plan includes pre-reading activities, during reading, and post-reading review activities. You can select words that are salient in the text and that would be useful words to know. Then you can pre-teach the words prior to reading the book, reinforce the meaning of the words in the book, and finally review the words at the end of the week. Think about this plan as a model for developing lessons that are effective with English language learners.

### About the Book

#### Story Summary

*Where the Wild Things Are* is about a boy named Max who makes mischief one night and is sent to bed without any supper. In his room, Max imagines that the walls turn into a great forest and he sails away to the land of the Wild Things. When Max meets the wild monsters who live there, they try to scare him with their terrible claws and loud roars. But Max uses the magic trick of “staring” to calm the wild beasts and they make him their king. After some time, Max grows lonely and wants to return home. So he sails back to his room where his dinner is waiting, still hot.

#### Potential Misconceptions

Students may be confused about whether or not Max’s room is actually transformed into a forest, or whether or not he actually traveled to a land where wild things are. The concept of imagination or dreaming may need to be addressed. Try to connect this to students’ background knowledge – have you ever played make believe? Have you ever dreamt something you thought was real?, etc.

#### Materials

- Book: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- Create cards with pictures for the Basic Words (Vine, Forest, Roots, Flower)
- Create cards with pictures for the Key Words (Wild, Tame, Terrible)

## Preparation

1. Read through the entire story before beginning the week's lessons.
2. In addition, read through the script for each day before beginning the lesson. The lesson should take about 20 minutes. It is very important that you stick to the activities in the script. However, if you want to add additional information, feel free to do so.
3. Make sure you have the basic and key word cards handy prior to starting the lesson.
4. Before beginning the lesson, assign children buddies. Every child should know his or her partner before the lesson begins, to enhance the student-to-student discussion during partner talk. When possible, assign children at the early stage of English oral language proficiency with children of intermediate or advanced oral English proficiency as buddies.

## Basic Words

- Vine
- Forest
- Roots
- Flower

## Activating Background Knowledge (estimated time: 3-5 minutes)

- *Have you ever played make-believe?*
- *Have you ever dreamt something that you thought was real?*

Ask one or two students for their response(s). (Anticipated responses: Open)

## Basic Vocabulary (estimated time: 5 minutes)

*Today we are reading a story about a boy named Max. He goes on an adventure where he experiences a lot of interesting and exciting things. But before we learn about what happens to Max, let's look at some pictures of things that you might see while Max is on his adventure.*

1. This is a **vine**. (Show the vocabulary card for vine.)

*A vine is a kind of plant that grows on trees and other plants. A vine grows by winding around trees and plants. I am going to say vine and then I want you to repeat it with me: vine...vine... vine.*

2. This is a **forest**. (Show the vocabulary card for forest.)

*A forest is a large area of land where trees grow close together. I am going to say forest then I want you to repeat it with me: forest...forest...forest.*

3. These are **roots**. (Show the vocabulary card for root.)

*The roots are usually underground, below the tree. They are stringy parts of a tree that drink in water and minerals from the ground and bring them up to the tree. I am going to say roots and then I want you to repeat it with me: roots...roots...roots.*

4. This is a **flower**. [Show the vocabulary card for flower]

*A flower is the colored part of a plant. Some flowers grow on trees in the spring. Flowers are beautiful, and you can smell them. I am going to say flower and then I want you to repeat it with me: flower... flower... flower.*

*Now we are going to review all the words we just learned. First, I am going to say the word for the picture and then we are all going to say it together. We are going to go very quickly. Ready?*

Quickly mix up the vocabulary cards and show them. Say the word, then have the children repeat the word as a group.

### **Pre-Teaching Key Vocabulary (estimated time: 10 minutes)**

Add all the words for the week to your word wall, and display the picture cards for the basic words in your pocket chart, where they can be seen by all students. Introduce the syllable clapping only after you have covered it in class.

*Before we start reading our book for today, Where the Wild Things Are, I want to teach you three new interesting and important words.*

#### **Wild**

- A word in this story is **wild**.
- We call animals that live away from people wild animals. When children are very excited and run around, we call them wild, too. Wild means something that lives away from people, like wild animals. Wild can also mean something that is not controlled, like wild children.
- Together, let's say the word wild three times: wild...wild...wild.
- Now let's look at a picture that demonstrates, or shows, the word wild. (Point to the picture and reinforce the meaning.)
- The word wild begins with the /W/ sound. Let's all say the /W/ sound together. Ready? /W/. Let's try it one more time, /W/.
- Now let's see how many syllables wild has by clapping with our hands as we say the word. Ready? Wild. One syllable. Can you say wild three times with me, clapping the syllables with your hands?

#### **Tame**

- A word in this story is tame.
- Tame means to turn a wild animal into an animal that can live with or be useful to people—like a pet rabbit or a horse that helps on a farm.
- Together, let's say the word tame three times: tame...tame...tame.

- Now, let's look at a picture that demonstrates, or shows, the word *tame*. (Point to the picture and reinforce the meaning.)
- The word *tame* begins with the /T/ sound. Let's all say the /T/ sound together. Ready? /T/. Let's try it one more time, /T/.
- Now let's see how many syllables *tame* has by clapping with our hands as we say the word. Ready? *Tame*. One syllable. Can you say *tame* three times with me, clapping the syllables with your hands?

## **Terrible**

- Another word in this story is *terrible*.
- *Terrible* means something that makes you scared, like wild animals in the woods. *Terrible* may also mean something very bad or unpleasant, like a big storm.
- Together, let's say the word *terrible* three times: *terrible...terrible...terrible*.
- Now, let's look at a picture that demonstrates the word *terrible*. (Point to the picture and reinforce the meaning.)
- The word *terrible* begins with the /T/ sound. Let's all say the /T/ sound together. Ready? /T/. Let's try it one more time, /T/.
- Now let's see how many syllables *terrible* has by clapping with our hands as we say the word. Ready? *Ter-ri-ble*. Three syllables. Can you say *terrible* three times with me, clapping the syllables with your hands?

## **Interactive Reading (estimated time: 10 minutes)**

Note: If possible, have students sit on the floor near the teacher during the read-alouds so they can see the pictures.

Below are some examples of how you can reinforce meaning through the read-aloud and ask questions to promote understanding and comprehension of the story. If you plan on reading the book several times during the week, you can select a few of these examples for each day.

- Read page 5, when the word "wild" appears in the text: *Max's mother thought he was wild. That means he was acting rough around the house.*
- Read page 13, and ask a prediction question about Max in the boat: *Where do you think Max is going?*
- Read page 18, when the monsters roll their eyes and show their terrible claws: *The monsters look terrible, or very mean.*
- Read pages 19–20, and reinforce the meanings of *tame* and *wild* when Max does the magic trick of looking into their eyes: *The magic trick tamed the wild things. Now that they are tamed, Max can feel safe with them. The wild things were tamed, or made safe for Max to be around, by the magic trick.*
- Show the pictures on pages 27–28: *See, they are really acting wild. They are jumping and screaming, hanging on the tree branches, and stomping together.*
- Read pages 29–37 and ask, at the end of the story: *Why do you think he went home?* Ask one or two students for their response(s). (Anticipated responses: because he missed his mommy, he was lonely, he wanted to eat.)

## Review Activities

Below are some examples of how you can review the vocabulary and comprehension of the story. These activities should be implemented after the read-aloud.

### Book Discussion (estimated time: 5 minutes)

*This week we have been reading the book Where the Wild Things Are. Today we are going to talk about some of the things we liked or did not like about this book.*

Partner Talk: *First I want you to share with your partner some favorite moments and some parts of the story that you did not like.*

*Now I want you to share with the class some of the things you just discussed with your partner*

Call on one or two pairs for their response(s). For each response, go back to the book and read and discuss the part of the story. When possible, highlight key vocabulary in the story.

*Now I want you to show me—with a thumbs-up for yes, or a thumbs-down for no—the answer to some questions.*

- *First, did Max decide to stay with the Wild Things? Give me thumbs-up for yes, or a thumbs down for no. (no)*
- *Next, did Max use a magic trick to tame the Wild Things? Give me thumbs-up for yes, or a thumbs down for no. (yes)*

## Review Vocabulary (estimated time: 10 minutes)

Show the students the page in which the vocabulary word appears and encourage them to act out the words with the following prompts.

### Page 5

*Max's mother thought he was wild. Remember, we talked about the word wild. Now I want you to make a face like a wild animal...grrrr.*

### Pages 17—18

*The Wild Things were making terrible faces at Max. Can you roll your eyes for me? Can you show me your terrible claws?*

### Page 19–20

*Let's tame our partners' terrible faces by staring at them so they will be calm. Now let's pretend we are the Wild Things and we are frightened by Max's stare. Make the most scared face that you can.*

This lesson is part of an intervention project the *Kindergarten Language Study* directed by Mariela M. Páez, Principal Investigator and Associate Professor at Boston College. This project is supported by Grant Number 5P01HD039530-08 from the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*. Used with permission.

