

This vocabulary strategy helps students with their understanding of word meanings and key concepts by relating what is unknown, to other concepts already familiar to the students.

1. Introduce the graphic organizer to the students.
2. Place the targeted word or concept in the middle of the graphic organizer.
3. Have the students list the essential characteristics for the word in the appropriate area. For example, the essential characteristics for the word mammal would be; have hair on their bodies, feed their young with mother's milk, and give birth to live babies. These are characteristics of mammals that separate them from the other animal groups.
4. Next have the students list the non-essential characteristics. These would be attributes that mammals share with other types of animal groups. For example, breathe air, come in different sizes, have teeth, make sounds, etc.
5. Have the students then list several examples of the key concept. For mammals, some examples would be dogs, horses, whales, humans, etc.
6. Have the students list some non-examples next. Using the example of mammals, some non-examples would be sharks, birds, snakes, etc.

Reference

Miami-Dade Public County Schools. (2000). Wild about words: A teacher's desktop vocabulary handbook. Bureau of Elementary, Secondary and Workforce Development Education, Division of Language Arts/Reading.