

Twelve Powerful Words for Academic Success

These words, taken from Larry Bell's book, "12 Powerful Words", give students the skills needed to achieve higher success in the classroom and on standardized tests, while providing college and career readiness. On this page, you will find each of the words, along with a simple definition and ways you can help build your child's understanding of the word at home. If you have questions regarding the 12 Powerful Words, please contact your student's building principal.

Week 1

Trace- to list in steps

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Have your child trace the steps in their new math problem or trace the importance of a new unit in history.
- Encourage your child to listen for the word "trace" in their favorite TV show, or look for it in their favorite book. How is the word used?

Week 2

Analyze- to break apart

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Ask your student to analyze their dinner. What are all the different parts of the meal on their plate?
- Analyze their favorite football or basketball team. Who is the lead scorer? Rebounder? Rusher?

Week 3

Infer- to read between the lines

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Have your student infer how a historical event would have affected everyday life of student's their age.
- Ask your child to infer the motivation and feelings of a character in their favorite book. Why did they do what they did? How did they feel when it happened? They can then go back and find evidence from the story either supporting or discounting their inferences.

Week 4

Evaluate- to judge

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Have your child evaluate their food choices for the day. Did they get plenty of fruits and vegetables? Compare their choices with the guidelines at www.choosemyplate.gov.
- Students can evaluate their school work. Did they do as well as they wanted? Do they need extra help on a specific problem?

Week 5

Formulate- to create

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Formulate an answer to their essay question from English.
- Formulate a drawing

Week 6

Describe- to tell about

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Describe your favorite video game, toy or book.
- Have your child describe their day. When describing something in written form, details are important, so they should talk to you in detail, also. Have them include details like what color was their jello at lunch or how did their teacher discuss the science experiment.

Week 7

Support- to back up with details

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Ask your child to support why they think they should get a certain privilege.
- After reading a paragraph or article, ask your student what the main idea is, then have them give you 2 or 3 supporting details of that idea.

Week 8

Explain- to tell how

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Have your child explain to you how to do their math homework.
- Ask your child to explain the differences of two foods on their dinner plate.

Week 9

Summarize- give me the short version

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Ask your student to summarize what they did at school today.
- Can your student summarize a show they just watched on TV or a book they just read.

Week 10

Compare- all the ways they are alike

Contrast- all the ways they are different

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Compare and Contrast the Disney Princesses or the characters in Cars.
- Compare and Contrast name brand jeans, food, etc with a cheaper brand.
- Compare and Contrast your day today with yesterday.

Week 11

Predict- what will happen next

Ways to incorporate this word into everyday activities at home:

- Have your child predict what the weather is going to be like today.
- Can they predict what the character in their favorite show or book is going to do next?