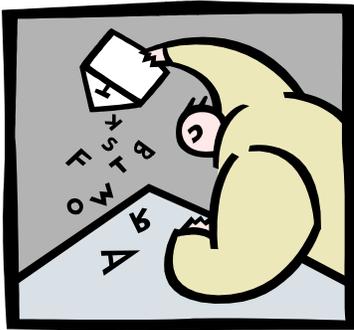


# STRATEGIES FOR STRUGGLING READERS



## Meet the “Word-Caller”

The “word-caller” reads orally with accuracy and fluency. Silent reading appears rapid, attentive and purposeful. These students can respond to “right-there” questions when they are allowed to reread but their responses are disorganized and tenuous; they cannot generalize, summarize, synthesize, analyze, infer or evaluate. They do not grasp the relationship of ideas or their importance or relevance. “Word Callers” need support to realize that reading is about constructing meaning and to develop and apply those tools.

The “word-caller” also:

Provides minimal written responses; their work lacks elaboration.

Seldom volunteers responses; or raises hand to answer but “forgets.”

Performs poorly on tests that require comprehension or understanding.

Prefers group work for answers.

Exhibits poor comprehension skills; may read widely and frequently but without understanding.

Has limited language and vocabulary: does not grasp multiple meanings, connotative meanings, or figurative language.

Can decode words that are not in oral vocabulary .

Appears attentive when “reading” but disengages when response is required.

## What the “word-caller” says about reading and themselves:

“I can read it, but I do not know what it says.”

“I can read it, but I do not know the answers to these questions.”

“I understand more when someone reads to me.”

“I don’t understand what is expected of me.”

“The book says ..., but I don’t know how to explain it.”

## What you can do to help the “word-caller.”

- Evaluate for listening comprehension level versus reading comprehension level to assess comprehension skills.
- Provide intensive pre-reading activities to activate their thinking about the subject of the reading.
- Model reflection in think-alouds with stress on active reading: predicting, visualizing, clarifying, questioning, summarizing.
- Provide “fix-up strategies” to be used when comprehension breaks down.
- Provide guided practice in accessible material with specific feedback.
- Require quality independent reading and detailed response focused on specific but open ended reading comprehension purposes.

- Focus on the thinking aspect of reading and de-emphasize the word level or word recognition aspect of reading.
- Ignore miscues that do not affect text meaning or comprehension. Connect comprehension expectations to existing knowledge/experience.

### **Strategies you can use to help the “word-caller”**

- Model and coach pre-reading strategies: previewing text to activate thinking, set purpose, and predict topics / essential ideas / themes.
- Tie learning to comprehension rather than rote memorization: visualizing vocabulary meanings, relating words to synonyms, antonyms and examples
- Analyze fiction and expository text structure/organization (sequence, cause/effect, problem/solution, evaluation, description) and literary techniques (flashbacks, foreshadowing, figurative language) to guide and support comprehension.
- Engage in rehearse activities (group or individual) before reading and after reading to “cement” reading comprehension purposes firmly in the reader’s mind
- Model open-ended questioning and predicting to guide reading and monitor comprehension
- Provide structure of text-tagging, marginal notes, think-marks to read actively.
- Provide structure of note-making to track comprehension and signal the reader when meaning breaks down.
- Scaffold reading support to release responsibility for comprehension to student and gradually release responsibility to student as comprehension emerges
- Skim and scan layout of reading assignment to quickly list and share first impressions and first facts based on headings, visuals, first and last paragraphs. Clarify comprehension by collaboratively predicting what important point or questions the reading will answer.
- Use QAR (question-answer relationship) to answer questions based on three places they can find information. “Right there answers” to information explicitly stated in text, “Think and search answers” to information suggested by text, and “On your own answers” to information in the reader’s background knowledge.
- Use videos to enhance comprehension through auditory and visual modes.
- Institute presentation into writers’ workshop so “word-callers” have a “voice”. They have the words but need opportunities to connect them. With some help to organize their thinking, they are able to make connections and tell their story. Create various opportunities for students to express their understanding in multiple modalities.

Reference: *Differentiated Instructional Strategies for Reading in the Content Area*, Carolyn Chapman and Rita King

**Learning Strategies are tools.  
What's in the toolbox for the "Word-Caller?"**



7. Envisioning words
8. Three Things I'd Like to Know
9. Cornell Notes
10. You Be the Jury
11. I Believe
12. Alike But Different



## Teacher's Toolbox

Class:  
Unit:  
Date:  
Source Reading:

## Tool 7: Envisioning Words

Frayer or 4 Square

### Use this tool:

- ▶ Pre-reading
- ▶ While reading
- ▶ Post-reading

### This tool will help my students:

- ▶ Define
- ▶ Summarize
- ▶ Compare

**How to use this tool:** Research shows that information is more meaningful and easier to recall when it is dually coded by language and non-linguistic representations. Images help students replay, reflect on and understand information as they create connections between the learning and their interpretation.

- Provide students with key terms, have students brainstorm essential terms or have students select boldface or italicized terms from a text or reading selection.
- Have students define a term by paraphrasing a text, dictionary or glossary definition.
- Have students draw a quick picture, symbol or diagram to represent the work.
- Ask students explain why the picture is a good representation of the word.
- Students can also compare their understandings of the terms (definitions and representations), which will extend everyone's understanding.

<p><b>Definition</b> (in student's own words): Plant that lives three or more years Plants that last year after year</p>	<p><b>Picture or Illustration:</b></p>
<p><b>Term</b> perennial</p>	
<p><b>Characteristics</b> of word and usage: Noun – The common buttercup is a perennial. Adjective – Perennial herbs last many seasons. per- (throughout) + annus (year) + -al (adj suffix)</p>	<p><b>Examples</b> (things it is) Trees, shrubs, herbs, grasses</p> <p><b>Non-Examples</b> (things it is not) Annual, biennial</p>

### To Increase Rigor and Relevance:

1. Have students work in teams to design a "Field Guide" for a selected list of terms for a project or area of study. (You might use a Birder's Handbook as a model.)
2. Let students design a matching activity where they match each other's images to the terms.
3. Have students illustrate a guidebook or design an ABC book of the terms and for a group of younger students.



## Reader's Toolbox

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

## Tool 7: Envisioning Words

Frayer or 4 Square

### I can use this tool:

- ▶ Before I read
- While I read
- After I read

### This tool will help me:

- ▶ Learn new words
- Summarize what I read
- Compare information and ideas

How I use this tool: With help from my teacher I will select my target term. Then I will use a dictionary or glossary definition to write my definition of the term. I will look for the part of speech of the word and may write a sentence showing how the word is used. I will draw a sketch, symbol or diagram of the term that helps me to remember what it means. I will think of some examples of the word or some non-examples. That forces me to think deeply about the word.

<b>Definition</b> (in your own words):	<b>Picture or Illustration:</b>
<b>Term</b>	
<b>Characteristics</b> of word and usage:	<b>Examples</b> (things it is)  <b>Non-Examples</b> (things it is not)

Here's something I learned by using this tool:



## Teacher's Toolbox

## Tool 8: Three Things I'd Like to Know

Class:

Unit:

Date:

Source Reading:

### Use this tool:

- ▶ Pre-reading
- While reading
- Post-reading

### This tool will help my students:

- Define
- ▶ Summarize
- Compare

How to use this tool: Active engagement is essential for comprehension. If students develop questions prior to reading they activate their prior knowledge and create a purpose for reading. This process creates strategic and independent learners.

1. Model using the first three steps of the PQ3R process with a reading selection. It might include an introduction to the subject matter.

**Step 1:** Preview the reading in advance with attention to subject matter, layout, illustrations, bold face, and beginning sentence of each paragraph. In this step students activate their schema, or prior knowledge, and begin to connect to the text.

**Step 2:** Turn the preview into Questions to guide thinking while they read. Research shows that the human mind processes questions most actively. Ask students to generate a list of “three things they’d like to know” after reading the assignment.

**Step 3:** Read with attention to finding answers to the questions. Make notes as they find information in the text. Notes should reflect their understanding (paraphrase) rather than copying text.

2. Following the reading, Ask students to reflect on what it was in the preview that triggered their questions. Ask students to compare common questions and answers. Did they recognize the same text features? Did the features raise the same questions? Discuss how the text met their needs or interests in the topic.

Three things I'd like to learn about by reading this assignment		
Questions:	What I found out	Where I found it
1:		
2:		
3:		

### To Increase Rigor and Relevance:

1. Complete the PQ3R process:
  - Step 4: Students **R**ecite by covering their notes and answering questions from memory.
  - Step 5: Students go back and **R**evise their initial questions and notes as the foundation for a written summary or oral summary with a peer.
2. Write a summary
3. Have students reflect on what questions they should have asked given the information they encountered in the text.

Reference: *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*, Janet Allen



## Reader's Toolbox

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

## Tool 8: Three Things I'd Like to Know

**I can use this tool:**

- ▶ Before I read
- While I read
- After I read

**This tool will help me:**

- Learn new words
- ▶ Summarize what I read
- Compare information and ideas

**How I use this tool:**

After I preview a text I can identify questions I'd like to have answered by the reading. This helps me set a purpose for and focus my reading. While I am reading, I look for answers to my questions. As I find answers I record them in the table below.

Three things I'd like to learn about by reading this assignment		
Questions:	What I found out	Where I found it
1:		
2:		
3:		

Here's something I learned by using this tool:



## Teacher's Toolbox

## Tool 9: Cornell Notes

Class:  
Unit:  
Date:  
Source Reading:

**Use this tool:**

- Pre-reading
- ▶ While reading
- Post-reading

**This tool will help my students:**

- Define
- ▶ Summarize
- Compare

### How to use this tool:

Recording relevant information is an essential study and research skill. Note-making is not an end in itself but a tool so students must always do something meaningful with their notes.

- Guide students in a survey of the text to identify topics and subtopics.
- Assist students in converting topics and subtopics into questions what will help them probe for details.
- Ask students to fill in details and main ideas as they emerge during reading. You may wish to model the process.
- Give students time to review and refine their notes when they finish.

<b>Questions:</b> Students convert topics and subtopics into questions	<b>Details:</b> As students read, they stop and fill in the details	<b>Main Idea:</b> Students summarize the main idea for each subtopic
Question 1:	Details for question 1	Main idea for question 1

### To Increase Rigor and Relevance:

1. Use the tool for review. Ask students to cover up the details and main ideas to see if they can answer their questions. They should use notation such as “Know this” or “Need more work here” to track their understanding.
2. Ask students to compare Cornell method notes with other styles to determine which format is most helpful – including outline, pictures / diagrams, and concept maps. A fourth column can be added for students to record a visual.
3. Invite students to use the Cornell method during a class lecture or video. You will need to first preview the main ideas to be covered.

Reference: *Reading for Academic Success*, Richard Silver

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For more resources: "Content Reading Strategies that Work" | [www.edteck.com/read](http://www.edteck.com/read)



## Reader's Toolbox

## Tool 9: Cornell Notes

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

**I can use this tool:**

Before I read

- ▶ While I read
- ▶ After I read

**This tool will help me:**

Learn new words

- ▶ Summarize what I read
- ▶ Compare information and ideas

**How I use this tool:**

Working with my teacher I identify some questions that I think I can answer from the reading. I write down details from the reading that answers the question. When I've completed the reading and my list of details for question 1, I go back and write one main idea statement that uses the details to answer the question.

<b>Questions:</b> I work with my teacher to identify guiding questions for my reading.	<b>Details:</b> As I read I think about the questions and fill in details below that answer it.	<b>Main Idea:</b> When I've completed reading the section, I write a main idea below that summarizes the details.
Question 1:	Details that answer question 1	A main idea based on question 1 and the details I found

Here's something I learned by using this tool:



## Reader's Toolbox

## Tool 9: Cornell Notes

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

**I can use this tool:**

Before I read

▶ While I read

After I read

**This tool will help me:**

Learn new words

▶ Summarize what I read

Compare information and ideas

Questions	Details	Main Ideas
Summary		



## Teacher's Toolbox

## Tool 10: You Be the Jury

Class:

Unit:

Date:

Source Reading:

**Use this tool:**

- ▶ Pre-reading
- ▶ While reading
- Post-reading

**This tool will help my students:**

- Define
- Summarize
- ▶ Compare

### How to use this tool:

As students read they must think about their thinking – metacognition – to both become strategic and independent and to process information at deep levels of understanding by filtering and processing the text, finding and evaluating information, supporting and refuting arguments, and building thoughtful interpretations.

1. In advance, create three to five statements, keyed to essential information in the reading, that require interpretation (inference, synthesis, judgment, evaluation) by the reader.
2. Review the purpose of the tool with class. Model its use with a sample reading.
3. Introduce the target reading to the students. Ask students to read the passage carefully, collecting information to support or refute the statements on the organizer.
4. Assign students to work in small groups to share their responses and the thinking they used to guide those responses.
5. As a large group, discuss the information gathered; ask students to reflect on what they've learned about both the subject matter and the use of the tool.

Teacher produced statement: Example: The author of this reading states that .....	
Agree	Evidence from reading:
Disagree	

### To Increase Rigor and Relevance:

1. Modify the task to focus the students on whether they personally agree or disagree with the statement. They can still use information from the reading. Probe further to discern what evidence it would take to change their thinking.
2. Have groups of students read different reading selections that discuss divergent opinions on the same subject. So they can compare and contrast their conclusions.
3. Use this tool to support critical skills in evaluating a variety of source material, example - advertising, speeches or the news.

Reference: *Reading for Academic Success*, Richard Silver



## Reader's Toolbox

## Tool 10: You Be the Jury

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

**I can use this tool:**

- ▶ Before I read
- ▶ While I read
- ▶ After I read

**This tool will help me:**

- ▶ Learn new words
- ▶ Summarize what I read
- ▶ Compare information and ideas

### How I use this tool:

I will use a reading assignment and some sample statements about it. I will see if the reading agrees or disagrees with each of the statements the teacher gives me. I should look for quotes from the reading to prove if the statement agrees or disagrees with the reading. When I find a quote in the reading, I will write it down in the organizer below and tell if it agrees or disagrees with the statement. I will need to be ready to explain my thinking as I made my decisions.

Statement:	
Agree	Evidence from reading:
Disagree	

Statement:	
Agree	Evidence from reading:
Disagree	

Here's something I learned by using this tool:



## Teacher's Toolbox

## Tool 11: I Believe

Class:  
Unit:  
Date:  
Source Reading:

- Use this tool:**
- ▶ Pre-reading
  - ▶ While reading
  - ▶ Post-reading
- This tool will help my students:**
- Define
  - ▶ Summarize
  - ▶ Compare

### How to use this tool:

This tool helps students to filter and process the text, find and evaluate information, support and refute arguments, and build thoughtful interpretations.

1. In advance, create three to five statements keyed to essential information in the reading.
2. Review the purpose of the tool with class. Model its use with a sample reading.
3. Ask students to review each statement and decide if it is true or false. They should record their answers in the “Before” column.
4. Introduce the target reading to the students. Ask students to read the passage thoughtfully to collect information about the statements on the organizer. During the reading they should decide if each statement is true or false based on their thinking as they are reading. They should be sure to collect evidence from the reading to support their thinking. This promotes active and strategic reading.
5. After the reading, students should reflect on their thinking and record their answers in the “After” column.
6. In a small or large group guide a student discussion of how their opinions changed during the course of their reading. Compare the evidence they cited to support their thinking.

Before	Statement and Evidence	After
	Statement 1:	
	Supporting Evidence:	

### To Increase Rigor and Relevance:

1. Have students rewrite false statements as true statements and provide the evidence that supports their position
2. Use this tool as an advance organizer to review various sources for evidence. It's especially effective with digital resources.
3. Use the tool as a foundation for an oral debate or a “Stump the Experts” game.
4. Present students with the same questions but a variety of readings from different perspectives. Have them discuss the multiple perspectives of the authors.

Reference: *Reading Strategies in the Content Areas*, ASCD



## Reader's Toolbox

## Tool 11: I Believe

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

### I can use this tool:

- ▶ Before I read
- ▶ While I read
- ▶ After I read

### This tool will help me:

- Learn new words
- ▶ Summarize what I read
- ▶ Compare information and ideas

### How I use this tool:

1. I read each statement to decide whether I think it is true or false. I record T or F in the "Pre" column at the left.
2. I read the assignment, looking for evidence about the "truth" of the statement. I record the evidence in the box below the statement.
3. After I have reviewed the evidence I recorded, I decide if I now think the statement is true or false and record T or F in the post column. I will be ready to explain and defend my decisions.

Before	Statement and Evidence	After
	Statement 1:	
	Evidence:	
	Statement 2:	
	Evidence:	
	Statement 3:	
	Evidence:	

Here's something I learned by using this tool:



# Reader's Toolbox

## Tool 11: I Believe

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

**I can use this tool:**

- ▶ Before I read
- ▶ While I read
- ▶ After I read

**This tool will help me:**

- Learn new words
- ▶ Summarize what I read
- ▶ Compare information and ideas

Before	Statement and Evidence	After
	Statement 1:	
	Evidence:	
	Statement 2:	
	Evidence:	
	Statement 3:	
	Evidence:	
	Statement 4:	
	Evidence:	



## Teacher's Toolbox

## Tool 12: Alike But Different

Class:

Unit:

Date:

Source Reading:

### Use this tool:

- Pre-reading
- While reading
- ▶ Post - reading

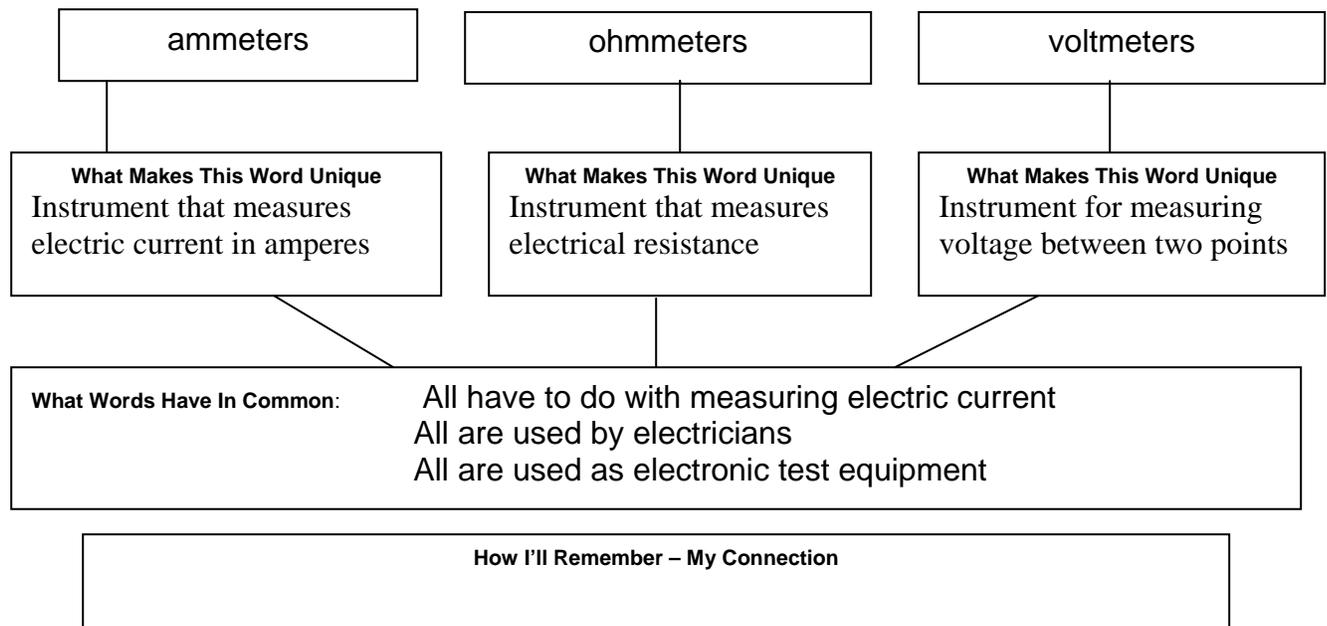
### This tool will help my students:

- ▶ Define
- Summarize
- ▶ Compare

**How This Tool Works:** Understanding specialized vocabulary in most texts is a challenge for students. This tool provides a process to analyze essential vocabulary and classify the vocabulary into a meaningful structure. This structure will deepen the student's understanding of the terms.

**How to use this tool:**

1. Select three words critical to a student's understanding of a required reading selection.
2. Read the text containing the words to the students. Stress the pronunciation of each word.
3. Repeat the target words in the context of the reading selection. Stress the pronunciation.
4. Help students identify the commonalities of the words to complete the graphic organizer.
5. Assist students to identify the differences in the meanings of the three words.
6. Have students express in words or visuals the ways they will remember the three words.



**To Increase Rigor and Relevance:**

1. Require students to use the words when writing responses to questions or a summary.
2. Have student provide a personal connection to each word.
3. Let students design their own graphic organizer and explain how it helps them.

Reference: Nagy – *Teaching Vocabulary to Improve Reading Comprehension*, 1988.



## Reader's Toolbox

## Tool 12: Alike but Different

Student Name:

Class:

Due Date:

Reading Assignment:

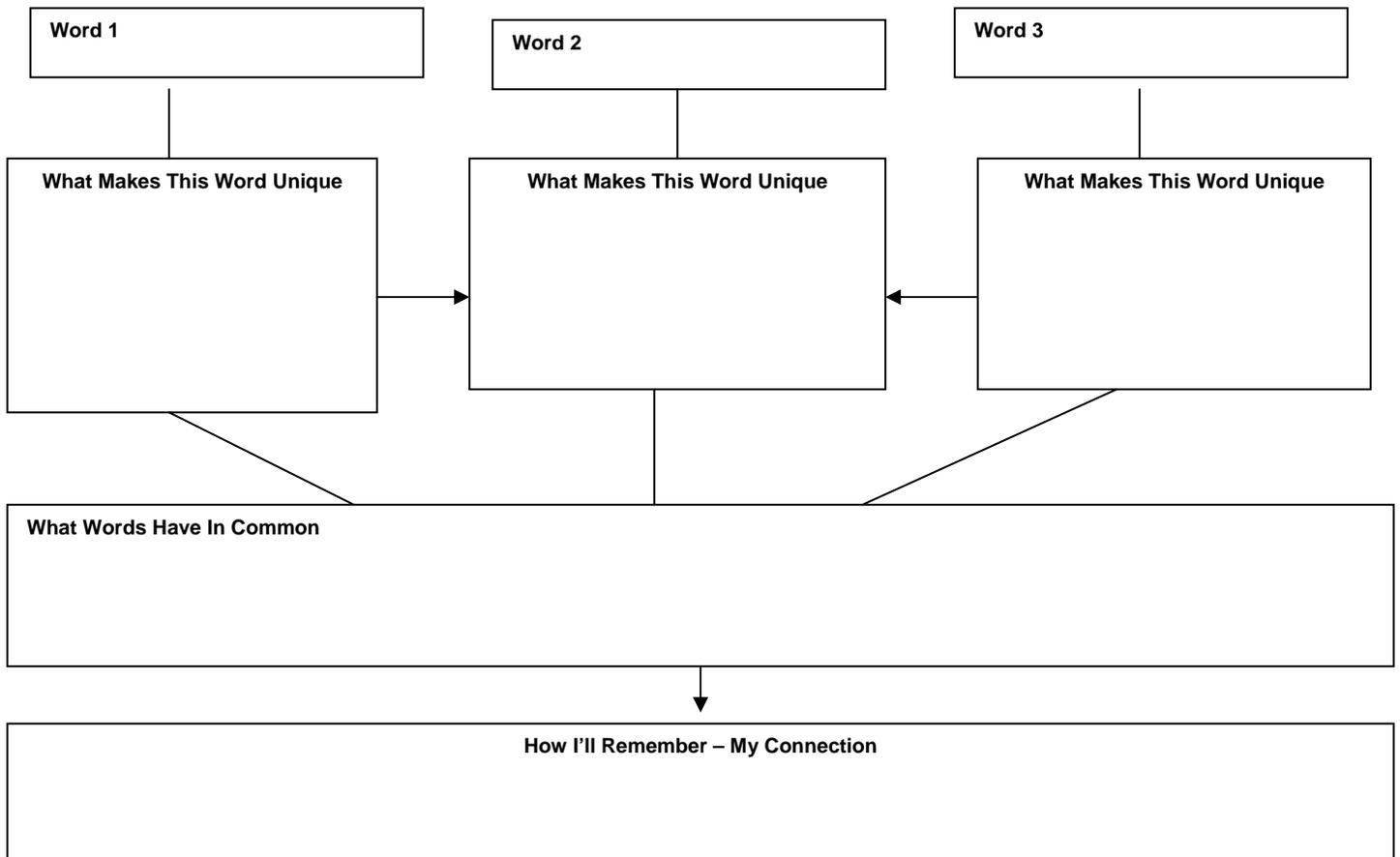
### I can use this tool:

- Before I read
- ▶ While I read
- After I read

### This tool will help me:

- ▶ Learn new words
- Summarize what I read
- ▶ Compare information and ideas

How I use this tool: Deciding how words are alike yet different will help me see how the words are related to each other in meaning. Deciding how the words are different will deepen my understanding of each word.



Here's something I learned by using this tool: