Roots Activities

Rationale

To facilitate a review of word roots as well as introduce new roots and their meanings, a variety of activities can be integrated with existing classroom routine. While it has been a tradition to hand out a list and ask students to memorize them and use them in sentences before the administration of a test, hands-on experiences with those same roots helps even the weakest students show growth in vocabulary.

Materials

Roots Slide Show

Cornell Notes Page if needed

Roots Graphic Organizer (gummy worms for fun association with worms/roots aerating soil/vocabulary)

Big copy of Slide #3

Handouts of roots to facilitate vocabulary growth of differentiated students

Word Sort Bags (copy in two different colors so that the headings are different colors Samples to show students. (I run copies in hot pink and neon orange. When I cut the parts, I make sure I have hot pink headings with orange roots/meanings and orange headings with hot pink roots/meanings. I number all the parts and put them in plastic bags with the same number written it. I run 12 sets for a classroom of 24 students so that students do the word sorts in pairs. You can give each student their own sorts to do at home, but seventh grade students tend to prefer group work.) To help students reach mastery sooner, we like to set a timer and have students try to beat their own sorting times and still be accurate.)

Steps

Explain to students that they will get a mini-review of personification. Ask what they know about personification.

Show the slide show. Have students take Cornell notes if desired.

Distribute roots lists according to student differentiation practices.

Demonstrate how to complete the roots graphic organizer.

After students are finished with graphic organizers, they can share their knowledge in small or whole group settings.

Hand out the Word Sorts bags. Explain that students need to use the Slide #3 handout to check answers and set up the columns. With a partner, students practice the sort by mixing up the definitions stack and the roots stack. One partner puts down the definitions or the roots while the other partner attempts to match them up by sorting the opposing stack. For instance, if Partner 1 sets down the definitions, Partner 2 has to match the roots to the definitions as quickly and accurately as possible. The partners may talk to and coach each other. They can come up with mutual strategies or tricks to remember which roots belong to which definitions. Students are to practice this over and over until it is no longer challenging. (Toward the end of this sorting exercise, we sometimes have a face-off to see which partners can get the sort done fastest. We continue until every pair has finished and recorded their time on an index card.)

Hand out lunch bags, cardboard inserts, leaves, glue sticks, scissors, and other essential art supplies.

Explain to the class that they are going to make individual (or group) Root Trees. Show pictures of the finished product.

Demonstrate step-by-step and have students follow along. (This is a good following directions activity if you want to document how well students pay attention and do the task accurately.)

Allow each student to choose a root. Write the root on one side of the finished tree base and its definition on the other side.

Ask students to search for words that have their chosen root. They can use reference materials, smart devices, and other digital means to complete the task. The words are written on leaves and then glued on the tree branches. Trees can remain on display until you are ready to send the work samples home.

Another activity that will give students plenty of practice is the game “I Have Who Has” (basic set provided). You can add more cards to make enough for the class so that everybody gets to play. If you have students who are absent, you may need to play or give some students more than one card as a form of challenging more advanced stuldents.

Make notes on how well each student completing the tasks. Decide who needs more instruction or intervention.