### Intervention Name:
**Keyword Mnemonics**

#### Common Core State Standards Domain Areas: (check all that apply)

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#### Setting: (check all that apply)

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#### Focus Area: (check all that apply)

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#### Function of Intervention: The purpose of keyword mnemonics is to teach students definitions of new and unfamiliar vocabulary words by linking these new terms to information and knowledge that is familiar to the student.

#### Brief Description: Mnemonics are strategies and techniques that aid in memory. A mnemonic keyword connects a new vocabulary word to students' prior knowledge by using a visual depicting the definition to the new vocabulary word.

New vocabulary terms are introduced through a similar sounding word (keyword). This keyword is illustrated in such a way that the keyword interacts with critical attributes of the definition of the new word. Lastly, a sentence is created to connect the keyword to the new definition.

The four steps for mnemonic keyword instruction include:

**Step 1:** Link the new, unfamiliar word with a familiar work (keyword).
**Step 2:** Create a visual where the keyword is interacting with key attributes of the new term.
**Step 3:** Create a sentence that describes the visual in a way that explicitly makes the link between the keyword and the definition of the new word.
**Step 4:** Explicitly teach students to (a) connect the new word with the keyword, (b) visualize the picture, and (c) repeat the sentence that describes the definition of the new word.

**Example 1: Parallel lines**

![Parallel Lines (Pair of Elves)](image_url)

Lines that are the same distance apart and will never intersect

The Pair of Elves are the same distance apart and will never intersect.

The Pair of Elves are on Parallel Lines
Step 1: “This is a good way to remember what parallel means. Parallel lines are linked to the keyword (pair of elves)”
Step 2: “The picture illustrates the pair of elves walking on lines that are the same distance apart, so that the pair of elves will never cross.”
Step 3: “The Pair of Elves are the same distances apart and will never intersect. The Pair of Elves are on Parallel Lines.”
These sentences explicitly link the keyword (pair of elves) to the definition of the new vocabulary word (parallel lines).
Step 4: Students are taught to explicitly make these links and visualize the image when they hear the word parallel lines: “When I think of what parallel means, I think of a pair of elves. I picture these pair of elves walking on two straight lines that will never cross or intersect. They are walking on parallel lines.”

Example 2: Ray

Step 1: “This is a good way to remember what ray means. The word ray is linked to the keyword, run away.”
Step 2: “The picture illustrates a person starting at a point and running as if there is no end point.”
Step 3: “Start here! Run away and never stop running, Ray.” These sentences link to the definition, “a line that has a starting point, but no endpoint.”
Step 4: Make sure students are explicitly taught to make the connections and practice the new word by visualizing the image: “When I think of the word ray, I think of run away. I picture a guy named Ray starting to run away on a line that has no ending. This line with a starting point, but no ending point is a ray.”

Examples taken from Riccomini, Smith, Hughes, and Fries (in press).

Procedures:

- **Duration**: The time it takes for students to master each keyword may vary, but explicit introduction of each term should take between 3 to 10 minutes.
- **Teacher training**: Teachers can use keyword mnemonics that have already been created, create their own, or teach students to follow the steps listed above to create their own keyword mnemonics. While formal training is not necessary, it is recommended that teachers read one of the articles in the references.
- **Instructional practices**: With a whole class, small group, or individual student, teachers explicitly introduce the word and link the word to the key word, the picture of the keyword interacting with the definition of the word, and the sentence linking the picture to the definition.
- **Monitoring system**: During the learning process, teachers should ask students to recall and apply the steps of keyword mnemonics. Teachers can monitor students’ ability to recall the definition of the vocabulary word through application of the term or typical vocabulary assessments.
Critical Components (i.e., that must be implemented for intervention to be successful): The keyword must be auditorily similar (i.e., sound the same) to the new word. They keyword must be a term that is familiar to students, so they can link it to their background knowledge. Teachers must explicitly teach students how to connect the new word to the keyword to the visual picture to the definition of the new word.

Critical Assumptions (i.e., with respect to prerequisite skills): Vocabulary terms that are taught using keywords should be purposefully selected because students are having difficulty learning the definition. Teaching too many vocabulary words via keyword method may confuse students.

Materials:
Vocabulary words
Visual image of vocabulary word interacting with definition (teacher made or previously published)

References: