

## Instructions for NEW WORDS – NEW FRIENDS

The purpose of the activity, New Words – New Friends, is two-fold.

The first objective is to invite students to negotiate the many levels of understanding new vocabulary. There are many ways to know a word. For example, sometimes when we see a new word, we just don't have a clue what it might mean. Or, at other times, we might have only a vague idea. Or perhaps we know the word, but we just could not explain it to anyone. Finally, sometimes we know a word, and we can tell someone what it means.

For example, how well do you know the word, hegemony?

The activity, New Words – New Friends, is designed to encourage students to recognize that there are many ways of understanding new words. This activity is based on the Vygotskian notion of the relationship between thought and language. For Vygotsky, our words and our thoughts are inherently interrelated. As we develop more language (words), we deepen our thoughts. Our thinking informs our language, and visa versa. Thinking and speaking are a dynamic and interactive process.

The second objective is for students to discover that as they talk about word meanings with students, whom they didn't previously know too well, they also have the opportunity to make new friends. This is based on the Vygotskian notion of the importance of the sociocultural context in our learning.

I like to use NEW WORDS – NEW FRIENDS sometime during the same day or week, as students will discover that they have learned a lot about new words and new thoughts by simply visiting with their new friends.

Good luck and enjoy!  
Joan