

**INSTRUCTOR:** "Vocabulary." Your vocabulary is the body of words you understand and know how to use. A strong vocabulary helps you read more quickly with greater comprehension. A strong vocabulary also helps you write more precisely.

You can build your vocabulary by looking up words you don't know and by keeping a log of unfamiliar words that you've looked up. You can also improve your vocabulary by paying attention to boldface words and definitions that appear in the margins and footnotes of your textbooks.

Words are often made up of prefixes, roots, and suffixes, and figuring these out can help you understand an unfamiliar term. The word biographer is made up of the prefix bio, which means life, the root graph, which means right, and the suffix -er which means one who. From the prefix, root, and suffix, we can tell that a biographer is one who writes about someone's life.

In addition to the parts within a word, you can get hints about a word's meaning from the words nearby. These surrounding words may provide context clues which either restate a word in a different way that you understand, give examples of a word, or contrast the meaning of a word.

Writers sometimes restate a term in different words to help clarify its meaning. Here, the author helps readers understand the social scientists term "highly routinized" by using the more familiar explanation, highly structured.

Writers sometimes use examples to further explain a word's meaning. Here, the author helps readers understand the word minute by giving examples of minute details in the sentences that follow.

Writers sometimes use contrasts to show what a word does not mean, thus helping readers understand what it does mean. Here, the author helps readers understand the word initiative by claiming that these jobs, by contrast, are breeding grounds for robots.

Remember, a strong vocabulary helps you read more quickly with greater comprehension, and it helps you write more precisely.