

**Semantic Maps: adapted from: [www.learningpt.org](http://www.learningpt.org)**

**A Semantic Map is one type of graphic organizer. It helps students visually organize and graphically show the relationship between one piece of information and another. This strategy has been identified by researchers as an excellent technique for increasing vocabulary and improving reading comprehension. As a prereading activity, Semantic Mapping can be used to activate prior knowledge and to introduce key vocabulary words. As a postreading activity, words, categories, and new concepts can be added to the original maps to enhance understanding. If the strategy is used during both prereading and postreading instruction, it is suggested that different colored pens be used as ideas are recorded.**

**Major Focus:** Vocabulary

**Target Reading Level:** Elementary – Secondary

**Procedure:**

1. The teacher decides on a topic for instruction and the new words that are important to be taught. The topic or concept is briefly introduced, and a key word is written on the chalkboard, overhead transparency, or chart paper.
2. Students are asked to think of other words that come to mind when they read the key word. It is also appropriate for the students to write down a list of these words to be shared with the class.
3. The students share their recorded words. If any of the teacher's "new words" are not suggested, the teacher presents them for discussion.
4. After the list of words is completed, the words are grouped by category. Students discuss why certain words go together. Category names are assigned.
5. A class map of the words is created by putting the information on a large sheet of paper. The map is discussed. At this time, students are encouraged to add items to the categories or even to suggest new categories.
6. As other new words that relate to the topic are discovered through the reading of the text, additions are made to the map.

**Note:** In the beginning, the teacher may choose to write down not only the key word to be considered but also some categories. As the students become more adept at using this strategy, the categories will be determined by the class.