

# ***Preface: To the Instructor***

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The problem is all too familiar: *students just don't know enough words*. Reading, writing, and content teachers agree that many students' vocabularies are inadequate for the demands of courses. Weak vocabularies limit students' understanding of what they read and the clarity and depth of what they write.

The purpose of *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* and the other books in the Townsend Press vocabulary series is to provide a solid, workable answer to the vocabulary problem. In the course of 30 chapters, *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* teaches 300 important basic words. Here are the book's distinctive features:

**1 An intensive words-in-context approach.** Studies show that students learn words best by reading and using them repeatedly in different contexts, not through rote memorization. The book gives students an intensive in-context experience by presenting each word in eight different settings. Each chapter takes students through a productive sequence of steps:

- Students infer the meaning of each word by considering two sentences in which it appears and then choosing a brief definition from multiple-choice options.
- On the basis of their inferences, students identify each word's meaning in a matching activity. They are then in a solid position to deepen their knowledge of a word.
- Finally, they strengthen their understanding of a word by applying it in five different words-in-context passages, including sentence-completion activities and high-interest fill-in-the-blank passages.

Each encounter with a word brings it closer to becoming part of the student's permanent word bank. *No comparable vocabulary book gives such sustained attention to the words-in-context approach.*

**2 Abundant practice.** In addition to the extensive practice in each chapter, a crossword puzzle and a set of unit tests appear at the end of every five-chapter unit. The puzzle and tests reinforce students' knowledge of the words in each chapter. In addition, most chapters reuse several words from earlier chapters (such repeated words are marked with small circles, like this<sup>o</sup>), allowing for more reinforcement. Last, there are supplementary tests in the *Test Bank* and the computer software that accompany the book. All this practice means that students learn in the surest possible way: by working closely and repeatedly with each word.

- 3 Controlled feedback.** The opening activity in each chapter gives students three multiple-choice options to help them decide on the meaning of a given word. The multiple-choice options also help students to complete the matching exercise that is the second activity of each chapter. A limited answer key at the back of the book then provides answers for the third activity in the chapter. All these features enable students to take an active role in their own learning.
- 4 Focus on essential words.** A good deal of time and research went into selecting the 300 words featured in the book. Word frequency lists were consulted, along with lists in a wide range of vocabulary books. In addition, the authors and editors each prepared their own lists. A computer was used to help in the consolidation of the many word lists. A long process of group discussion then led to final decisions about the words that would be most helpful for students reading at a basic level.
- 5 Appealing content.** Dull practice materials work against learning. On the other hand, meaningful, lively, and at times even funny sentences and selections can spark students' attention and thus enhance their grasp of the material. For this reason, a great deal of effort was put into creating sentences and selections with both widespread appeal and solid context support. We have tried throughout to make the practice materials truly enjoyable for teachers and students alike. Look, for example, at the selections on page 15 that serve as the Final Check in Chapter 1.
- 6 Clear format.** The book has been designed so that its very format contributes to the learning process. Each chapter consists of four two-page spreads. In the first two-page spread (the first such spread is on pages 10–11), students can easily refer to all ten words in context while working on the matching activity, in which they must choose a clear meaning for each word. The other two-page spreads allow students to see the words in a variety of contexts as they work through the fill-in activities.
- 7 Helpful supplements.**
- a** A convenient *Instructor's Edition* is available at no charge to instructors using the book. It is identical to the student book except that it contains answers to all of the activities and tests.
  - b** A combined *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank* is also offered at no charge to instructors who have adopted the book and ordered at least 20 student copies. This manual contains a general vocabulary placement test as well as a pretest and a posttest both for the entire book and for each of the six units in the text. It also includes teaching guidelines, suggested syllabi, and an answer key, as well as a "Related Words" activity and an additional mastery test for each chapter.
  - c** Finally, *computer software* accompanies the book. Available in Windows or Macintosh format, the software provides a general placement test and two additional tests for each vocabulary chapter in the book. Free with adoptions of 20 or more copies, the software tests contain a number of user- and instructor-friendly features, including actual, audible pronunciations of the words; brief explanations of answers; a sound option; mouse support; frequent mention of the user's first name; a running score at the bottom of the screen; and a record-keeping file.

Instructors who have adopted *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* can obtain these supplements by calling our toll-free number, 1-800-772-6410, or by writing, e-mailing, or faxing Townsend Press at the numbers shown on the copyright page.

- 8 Realistic pricing.** As with the previous editions, the goal has been to offer the highest possible quality at the best possible price. While *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* is comprehensive enough to serve as a primary text, its modest price also makes it an inexpensive supplement.
- 9 One in a sequence of books.** The most fundamental book in the Townsend Press vocabulary series is *Vocabulary Basics*. It is followed by *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* (a slightly more advanced basic text) and then by the three main books in the series: *Building Vocabulary Skills* (also a basic text), *Improving Vocabulary Skills* (an intermediate text), and *Advancing Vocabulary Skills* (a more advanced text). The most advanced book in the Townsend Press vocabulary series is *Advanced Word Power*. There are also short versions of the *Building*, *Improving*, and *Advancing* books. Suggested reading levels for the books are included in the *Instructor's Manual*. Together, the books can help create a vocabulary foundation that will make any student a better reader, writer, and thinker.

### NOTES ON THE THIRD EDITION

A number of changes have been made in the third edition of *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary*:

- Thirteen words have been changed, and an entirely new Unit Six, teaching fifty additional words, has been added. *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* now contains 300 words, as do the higher-level TP vocabulary books.
- To make room for Unit Six, the “Related Words” activities in each chapter have been moved to a special section in the *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank*. Instructors who have adopted the book may photocopy these activities (or anything else in the IMTB) for classroom use.
- A new section, “Topics for Discussion and Writing,” contains the “Questions for Discussion” and “Ideas for Writing” that formerly concluded the vocabulary chapters. Each of the seven high-interest items uses one or more of the vocabulary words in the chapter in a brief scenario suitable for class or small-group discussion, writing, or both.
- Finally, many practice items throughout the book have been revised or updated to ensure that each item works as clearly and effectively as possible with students.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the enthusiastic comments provided by users of the Townsend Press vocabulary books over the life of the first two editions. Particular thanks go to the following reviewers for their many helpful suggestions: Barbara Brennan Culhane, Nassau Community College; Carol Dietrick, Miami-Dade Community College; Larry Falxa, Ventura College; Jacquelin Hanselman, Copper Mountain College; Shiela P. Kerr, Florida Community College at Jacksonville; John M. Kopec, Boston University; Belinda E. Smith, Wake Technical Community College; Daniel Snook, Montcalm Community College; and William Walcott, Montgomery College. For help with the third edition, we are especially grateful to Terri Amici of Baltimore, Maryland. We appreciate as well the writing, editing, and proofreading assistance of Lisa Barsky in helping us make *Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary* even more effective and user-friendly than before.

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