

Personal Clues

What is Personal Clues and why is it important?

Personal Clues (Carr, 1987) is a strategy that helps students understand and remember the definition of an unfamiliar word, by linking it to their personal experiences. These links help students remember the meaning of new vocabulary words.

How can I use Personal Clues with my students?

Before reading, introduce the new vocabulary words from the text. Discuss the meanings of the words with students and encourage them to give examples of what the words mean. For instance, you might discuss the meaning of the word *enormous* and define it as *very large* or *huge*. Some examples could be the Empire State Building, a whale, or even an 18 wheeler. Read the text with students and discuss the meanings of unknown words. Then have students complete their Personal Clue cards, which can be used to study the definitions.

Making a “Personal Clue” Card:

1. Write the vocabulary word on a card.
2. On the back of the card, write the definition of the word or a word that means the same thing.
3. Encourage students to think of a word or phrase that will help them remember the new vocabulary word. (For example, enormous might be linked with the clue “dinosaur” or “T. rex.”)
4. Write the clue on the front of the card under the vocabulary word.

Front of Card:

Word:	enormous
Clue:	dinosaur; T. rex

Back of Card:

Definition:	very large, huge
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Studying with “Personal Clue” Cards:

To study the vocabulary word, students look at the word (with the clue covered) and try to define the word. If they need help remembering the definition, students can uncover the clue. The Personal Clue acts as a hook to help students retrieve the meaning of the word. The meaning of the word can always be checked by looking at the back of the card.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Personal Clues

<p>Word:</p> <p>Personal Clue:</p> <p>Definition:</p>	<p>Word:</p> <p>Personal Clue:</p> <p>Definition:</p>
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