

Word Generation

Intervention Snapshot | English Learners Topic Area

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™

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Improving vocabulary and reading comprehension is critical to students’ academic success, particularly for English learners who may have less exposure to academic language than native English-speaking students. *Word Generation* is a supplemental program that aims to improve students’ reading comprehension by building students’ vocabulary, academic language, and perspective-taking skills through classroom discussion and debate. *Word Generation* was designed for all students; however, English learners in particular could benefit from its focus on academic language. *Word Generation* consists of a series of interdisciplinary units with daily lessons focused on a high-interest topic to increase student engagement. Each unit targets a small number of academic vocabulary words that are integrated into texts, activities, writing tasks, debates, and discussions across content areas. Several *Word Generation* programs exist. In the *Word Generation Weekly (WordGen Weekly)* and *Word Generation Elementary (WordGen Elementary)* programs, units are designed to be used across English language arts, math, science, and social studies in grades 6–8 and grades 4 and 5, respectively. In the *Science Generation (SciGen)* and

Social Studies Generation (SoGen) programs, units can supplement or be used in place of regular science and social studies curriculum units in grades 6–8. The different *Word Generation* programs can be implemented separately or together.

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC’s English Learners topic area, explores the effects of *Word Generation* on English language proficiency and reading comprehension for English learners. The WWC identified nine studies of *Word Generation* that focused on English learners. One of these studies meets WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report is from one study of the impact of *Word Generation* on English learners in a range of grades—4th through 7th—and in a variety of school settings, including elementary, middle, and K–8 schools in urban, suburban, and small town districts.

Findings on *Word Generation* from the one study that meets WWC standards are shown below. The table reports an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention’s effect on an outcome.

What Happens When Students Participate in *Word Generation*?

The WWC found that implementing <i>Word Generation</i> :	Effectiveness rating	Study Findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
May result in little or no change on English language proficiency	No discernible effects	+9	1	241
May result in little or no change on reading comprehension	No discernible effects	+1	1	241

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. A positive improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant.

FINDINGS ARE BASED ON:

1 study with 241 students in the Northeastern United States covering grades 4-7



STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS:

English learners: 100%

What Does *Word Generation* Cost?

The student materials and teacher resources for implementing *Word Generation* can be downloaded for free and then printed and distributed for noncommercial purposes from the program’s website (wordgen.serpmedia.org). *Word Generation*

can be adopted without professional learning support from the developer, Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP). However, SERP does offer professional development to improve implementation fidelity. Trainings range from one to three days in duration. Costs range from \$3,000 to \$12,000 (excluding travel and materials).

LEARN MORE



Read more about the *Word Generation* intervention and the studies that are summarized here in the [Intervention Report](#). Contact [Strategic Education Research Partnership](#) for additional information on implementing *Word Generation*.