

Rebecca Sitton's APPLESEED



PLANT THE SEEDS TO GROW SPELLING AND WORD-SKILL LITERACY.

A Word-Collection Strategy

Kids are collectors. They collect rocks and leaves and stamps—all kinds of things. In their Sourcebook activities, they collect words—all kinds of words. Through their word collections, they learn about words and how they work. They become discriminating observers of words, and it's fun!

Here is a word-collection strategy. This strategy is one that results in an abundance of words over time. Let's say that one Sourcebook activity suggests that students collect words spelled with the vowels *ou*. By the way, this vowel combination is the most erratic in English—it spells more sounds than any other vowel letters.

So, what is one way students might contribute to this *ou* word collection? Post a blank chart on the wall (perhaps two or three!) with the title, Words Spelled with the Letters *ou*. Place a pad of colorful sticky notes next to the empty charts and ask students to write an *ou* word on a sticky note and stick it to the chart as they encounter words spelled with this vowel combination.

Play the sticky-note word collection game in teams. Assign each team a different color pad of sticky notes. It is easy to glance at the chart's sticky note colors to see which team is on task!

Later, you can write the sticky-note words on the chart with a marker. Over time, you have an abundance of words. Now what?

Ask students to sort the *ou* words by the sound of *ou*. Then they write how many different sounds they've discovered the vowel pair can spell. This will lead students to the declaration that this collection of words is a "Tough Group"! When the sounds in a word provide little direction to the letters spelling the sound, then they're tough to spell!

Next, you might conceal the words and ask students to write from memory those they can recall. Then reveal the words for self-checking.

And here are more ideas to use with any word collection—have students add suffixes, add prefixes, identify homophones, find the nouns or verbs or words that can be both, point out the ones that have more than one meaning, write antonyms for those that have opposites, use the words for a crossword puzzle—follow-ups are endless! Have fun!