

Semantic Feature Analysis

What is Semantic Feature Analysis and why is it important?

Semantic Feature Analysis (Johnson & Pearson, 1984) is a strategy that helps students define vocabulary words and discover the unique characteristics of related words.

How can I use Semantic Feature Analysis with my students?

Select a category of words familiar to students, for example, ways of walking. Guide students to think of words that fit that category, such as stride and saunter, and to list these words across the top of a page.

Then list some descriptors of the category down the left side of the page, creating a matrix. Ask students to fill in the matrix by using plus (+) or minus (-) signs to indicate whether the type of walking includes a particular feature. Students can then study the different patterns of pluses and minuses and discover the uniqueness of each word.

Following is an example of a Semantic Feature Analysis for the concept, ways of walking.

Ways of Walking	Stride	Strut	Amble	Saunter	Promenade
Fast	+	+	-	-	-
Dignified	+	-	-	-	+
Relaxed	-	+	+	+	+

Name: _____

Semantic Feature Analysis

Date: _____

Topic:						



Name: _____ Date: _____

Semantic Feature Analysis

Topic:				

