

TEACHING ELA TO MLs

Semantic Feature Analysis

Language Objective: I can list traits of aspects of a text.

SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS: HOW-TO

Before the Activity

1. Select a passage of text for students to read. Choose a topic that students will analyze in the text.
2. Write words that name concepts or objects related to the topic in the left-hand column of a grid.
3. Add characteristics or traits of the category across the top of the grid.

During the Activity

1. Have students read the assigned text.
2. As they read, have students place a + sign in the matrix when a concept in the left-hand column aligns with a feature across the topic and a - sign when it does not.
3. After reading and completing the matrix, students analyze by:
 - a. sharing their observations;
 - b. discussing differing results; and/or
 - c. writing a summary

HELPFUL LINKS TO LEARN MORE

- [Semantic Feature Analysis](#) article on Reading Rockets
- ["Building Vocabulary: Semantic Feature Analysis"](#) from Keys to Literacy
- [Semantic Feature Analysis template](#)

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR MLs

Use concrete words and concepts. Use visual representations of items or traits.

Begin with items that are fairly dissimilar before moving on to related words with more subtle differences.

Allow students to work in small groups.

EXAMPLE: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

LT: I can identify and match character traits to the characters in a text.

Teach students vocabulary words related to character analysis (for example: insecure, furtive, inadequate, etc.). As students read a text, they chart which characters show the character traits on a Semantic Feature Analysis matrix. Students then discuss and justify their decisions before writing about one or more characters.

