Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

"The importance of direct vocabulary instruction cannot be overstated. Vocabulary provides essential background knowledge and is linked to academic achievement. Effective teachers select terms for direct instruction, use a research-based process to teach those terms, and assess and track students' progress with new terms" (Marzano Research - http://www.marzanoresearch.com/vocabulary)

Ideally students should be taught vocabulary in the context of the text. As they read the text, they should ask and answer text-based questions about the meaning of words and phrases and use context clues to uncover the meaning.

The previous module provided many text frames and examples of questions that you may provide students during a first, second, or third read of a text to uncover the meanings of words and phrases and be able to identify the craft and structure of the text.

A few examples include:
1. Why did the author use the phrase _____ in paragraph _____?
2. When _____ says _____ how does that affect _____?
3. What does the author mean when, he/she uses the word _____?
4. What does the author mean by _____ in paragraph_____?

However, some students may need more explicit instruction in order to learn context clues. https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/context-clues-as-a-reading-strategy provides a short video and a few slides that you can use to introduce students to context clues.

Kathy Glass shares 7 strategies to teach context clues based on the different types of context clues http://www.teachthought.com/literacy/7-strategies-using-context-clues-reading/

OPTIONAL Resource Review
   Read Write Think Offers a Complete Lesson in Teaching Context Clues
   http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/solving-word-
   meanings-engaging-1089.html?tab=4

Using context clues requires the skill of inference. We will cover strategies for inferring more in-depth in the next module.
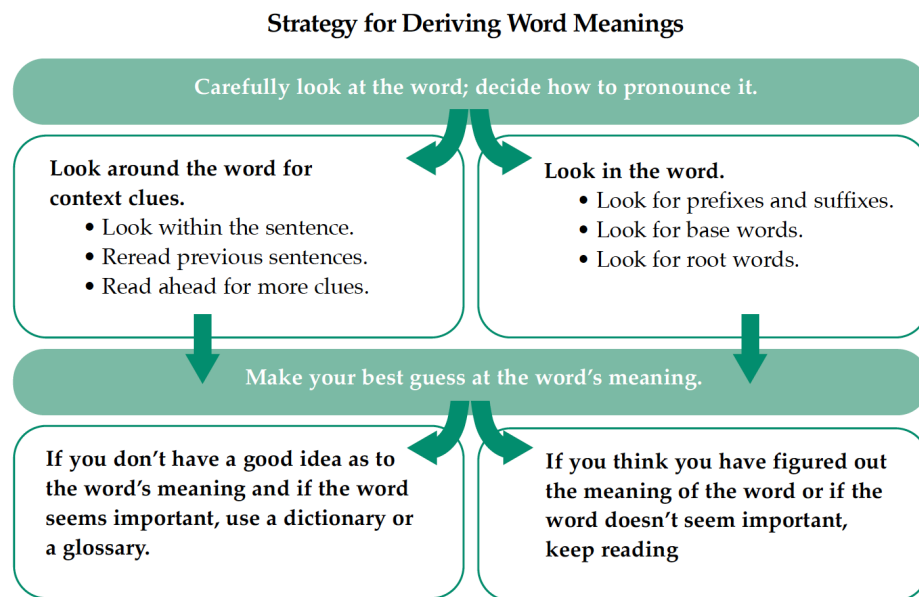
Marzano offers a six-step strategy for building academic vocabulary.
http://www.altonschools.org/media/pdf/Marzano_Vocab.pdf

The following are a few more graphic organizers you may want to use to teach academic vocabulary (Insert Vocabulary Graphic Organizer PDF)

Tips:

1. When conducting the qualitative analysis of text, identify difficult words and phrases.
2. Determine which words and phrases can be determined by context clues.
3. Identify which words should be pre-taught due to difficulty and lack of context clues (i.e., hypothesis, independent variable, historical words and phrases).
4. Provide students with text-based questions to identify the meanings of the words and phrases that can inferred from context clues.
5. Pre-teach the words that are common in the subject area, however, are not easily determined through context clues using one or more of the vocabulary strategies listed above.
6. Teach students the process below:

Strategy for Deriving Word Meanings

Carefully look at the word; decide how to pronounce it.

Look around the word for context clues.
- Look within the sentence.
- Reread previous sentences.
- Read ahead for more clues.

Look in the word.
- Look for prefixes and suffixes.
- Look for base words.
- Look for root words.

Make your best guess at the word's meaning.

If you don't have a good idea as to the word's meaning and if the word seems important, use a dictionary or a glossary.

If you think you have figured out the meaning of the word or if the word doesn't seem important, keep reading

Optional Resource Review

Observe a 2-minute video of a teacher using a Marzano vocabulary strategy.
https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-hard-vocabulary-words

http://www.uefap.com/vocab/select/awl.htm is an academic word list of tier two words that you can use to identify words that may need to be explicitly taught.