

Grade 3 Playlist: Words That Signal Time and Space

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.6*:

- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., *After dinner that night we went looking for them*).

Welcome

Read these two sentences: *I listened to music. I finished my homework*. These sentences describe two actions. However, it is not clear when these actions happened. Did they happen at the same time? Did they happen on different days?

Now read these two sentences: *Before dinner, I listened to music. Later that night, I finished my homework*. These sentences have more details. They have phrases that refer to time. These phrases help readers better understand the relationship between the two actions.

Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- use words and phrases that describe relationships of time and space.

Review

Key Terms

- A **temporal** word describes *when* something happened.
- A **spatial** word describes *where* something happened.

Exploring the Standard

Words describe many types of relationships. Two of these relationships are time and space. **Temporal**, or time, words tell when an event is taking place. *Before, after, now, and later* all tell about time. **Spatial** words tell where something is. *Between, across, and above* all tell about space.



A Closer Look: Temporal Words

Temporal words and phrases help readers better understand the plot in a fiction passage or the order of events in a nonfiction passage. Temporal words are frequently used in directions and cookbooks. Common temporal words and phrases include *first*, *next*, *then*, *finally*, *second*, *later*, and *before long*. Try to find the temporal words in the sentences below:

We were waiting for our dinner, but the waitress brought it at last!

My dad said I could invite Suzette over to play, but first I had to clean my room.

On Saturday morning, I played in a soccer game. Meanwhile, my brother took dance lessons.

The words and phrases above that show temporal relationships are *at last*, *first*, *on Saturday morning* and *meanwhile*. Without them, the reader would not know when the action happened or the order in which the actions took place.

Watch!

Watch this video and look for the temporal phrases in each sentence. Then write your own sentences using these phrases.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAeahr40i1U>

Practice!

Choose the Instruction Sequencer activity and look for temporal words in the short passage. Then use temporal words to write your own instructions.

- <http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks2literacy.html#teaseq>

A Closer Look: Spatial Words

Spatial words and phrases tell readers where something is or where something happened. Writers use spatial words to describe a setting or explain how characters are interacting. Common spatial words include *above*, *below*, *beside*, *around*, *over*, *beyond*, and *across*. Try to find the spatial words in the sentences below:

When setting the table, Marnie always places a knife next to each fork.

The playground is across the street from the grocery store.

Jackson placed a sheet on top of the table and is now hiding underneath.

The words and phrases that show spatial relationships above are *next to*, *across*, *on top*, and *underneath*. These spatial words are very important. Without them, readers would not understand where the knife is placed, where the playground is located, or where Jackson is hiding.



Teaching Notes: Words That Signal Time and Space

The goal of L.3.6 is for students to recognize spatial and temporal words, then use them accurately to describe the relationships between objects or events. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Have students discuss a typical school day. What comes first? How does it end? Write the sequence of events on the board. Show the relationships between each of the events using temporal words like *first*, *then*, and *after*. Ask volunteers to make sentences using the temporal words to signal relationships between events.
2. Give each student a blank piece of paper. Have students draw simple shapes and color them in any way they would like. Then, pair the students up and have them sit back-to-back. Have one student give instructions to his or her partner about how to draw what is on his or her paper (e.g., “Draw a red star in the upper right corner. Then draw a blue square below the red star”). The partner should listen to the spatial and temporal clues while drawing. Have students compare the two drawings to see how clear their spatial and temporal clues were.
3. Set up a small obstacle course indoors or outdoors. Blindfold one student and have another student be the “caller.” Have students do tasks blindfolded by listening to the caller. The caller should give directions, such as “turn right,” “grab the ball under the bush,” “climb over the balance beam,” “place the marker under the piece of paper,” or “place the books beside each other on your desk.” This activity will help students develop an understanding of just how important spatial clues are in everyday language.

Writing Prompts

1. Have students write or type instructions about something they know how to do well (how to build a LEGO structure, how to fly a paper airplane, how to put hair in a ponytail, etc.). Make sure they include descriptive temporal words to help clarify their instructions.
2. Have students draw a space plan of their bedroom. Then, have them write a paragraph that describes where the furniture is, where they place their clothing, where the windows are in the room, and so on. This will help them practice using spatial words correctly in sentences.

Additional Resources

Consider this additional resource when teaching L.3.6:

- **Spatial and Temporal Vocabulary Words:** This resource shows dozens of words that help signal spatial and temporal relationships:
<http://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/transition%20words.pdf>

