



a day of words

Integrating Word Work
in the Intermediate Grades



VIEWING GUIDE



max
brand

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Excerpt from *Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash: Poems About Growing Up*
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Word Savvy (Max Brand 2004) is available at www.stenhouse.com

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INTRODUCTION

A Day of Words is a series of two video programs from Max Brand's fifth-grade classroom at Eli Pinney Elementary School in Dublin, Ohio. Max teaches 25 fifth-graders in a self-contained classroom. While all students are fifth-graders, their performance on standardized reading examinations varies from a range of second- to eighth-grade proficiency. The program presents a rigorous and thoughtful literacy curriculum in which students share a series of core experiences central to word work—including reading, writing, speaking, and listening—that also allow Max to differentiate among the needs and abilities of these students.

The series chronicles word work throughout one day in Max's classroom. Taping was completed in mid-November, after the class had approximately three months together to learn routines and expectations.

A Day of Words is divided into two programs. *Morning*, the first program, includes the content-based curriculum from the first part of the day. Max begins each day with work in social studies, math, and science, finishing the morning with poetry before lunch. *Afternoon*, the second program, features the literacy workshops which comprise the afternoon curriculum. The DVD version of the series includes two additional segments: an extended-play version of the social studies whole-class discussion from Program 1, and a conversation between Max Brand and Cathy Mere on mentoring colleagues. Viewers will observe Max and his students in reading and writing workshops, as well as the short daily word work session. Throughout the day, students use a variety of notebooks to record, analyze, and savor an amazing variety of words.

This guide is designed to help you use *A Day of Words* in workshop settings. The plans provided are flexible and make it possible to tailor viewing to group needs. We've divided suggestions for viewing each program into six sections:

1. Writing While Viewing. Suggestions and sample forms for taking notes while viewing to help focus group discussions.
2. Notes for Facilitators. Background information from Max's classroom that you might want to provide to participants.
3. Questions for Discussion. Options for guiding conversations before or after viewing individual segments within each of the programs.
4. Workshop and Classroom Extensions. Activities designed to help teachers learn how to use concepts from the video with their students.

5. Short on Time? Tips for using shorter segments from the programs when time is limited, especially in settings like faculty meetings or curriculum development planning sessions where the core agenda involves more immediate school issues.
6. Further Reading. Connections to specific chapters in the companion text *Word Savvy* (Stenhouse, 2004).

PROGRAM 1: MORNING

The first program in the series introduces viewers to Max Brand, fifth-grade teacher and author of *Word Savvy*. In this program, Max describes his philosophy for teaching words. Throughout the series, viewers will see how word work is integrated naturally throughout the curriculum, regardless of the texts students are using.

Much of this integration comes from the students' use of a series of individual notebooks. [For further information on the notebooks, see Max's description on page 23 of *Word Savvy*.]

Notes for Facilitators

Max quickly describes student notebooks and how words and sentences are chosen for placement on the wall. Participants in workshops who want more detailed descriptions of wall displays can refer to *Word Savvy* Chapter 7, "Building Walls of Words." You may want to distribute copies of the following:

Figure 1 Schedule for the Day

Figure 2 Two-Column Notes for Program 1
Similarities and Differences

Figure 3 Social Studies Student Writing Samples

Figure 4 Student Inquiry Notebook: Notes on Portuguese Navigation

Figure 5 "The Firemen" by Donald Graves

Writing While Viewing

As participants watch the program, have them use the Two-Column Notes form to think about the similarities and differences to their classrooms.

Questions for Discussion

Segment 1-1 Introduction

- a. What routines do you have built into your day to ensure there is time spent analyzing and understanding new words?
- b. How do you use the walls of the classroom to help students learn words?
- c. What is the role of notebooks in your classroom for word study?
- d. How can teachers guide students to use their notebooks in a variety of ways?
- e. What are some of the ruts students get into while using notebooks in your classroom? How do you keep the notebooks fresh?

Segment 1-2 Social Studies: The Portuguese Exploration

- a. Max says that he wants students to “become excited about words.” What evidence do you see that students are invested in learning the meaning of words from their social studies textbook?
- b. The students create a chart with Max as a scaffold to use in writing about the social studies textbook they have just read. What ways do you use writing to support textbook learning?
- c. Two students meet with Max in order for him to read the text to them, because the text is too difficult for the girls to read on their own. How do you differentiate instruction with textbooks?
- d. Max describes his role as he circulates, observes, and confers as looking for student insights and examples to share with the whole group. What do you see as your role as you move among students completing independent reading and writing tasks? How does your role vary in different content areas?
- e. There are a number of times when students all talk at once. Max talks about the importance of letting conversation patterns evolve naturally among the students, so that they are not always dependent upon him for response. Talk about the benefits and drawbacks of this approach to whole group discussion, considering how and when Max does weigh in to lead the group.

Segment 1-3 Science: *Time For Kids* Article

- a. The “Reaching Out” groups developed from students’ interest in environmental issues. How can word work support the unique interests of intermediate students?
- b. Max highlights again the way a student organizes her thinking, this time through the use of highlighters. What is the value of using student work as examples for other students?

Segment 1-4 Math and Working Snack

- a. Max talks about running out of time by late morning, and having to abbreviate the math lesson. What instructional times are sacred in your classroom? What times are flexible, changing from day to day depending upon what comes up with students?
- b. Max is helping students understand language specific to understand geometric principles in math, including terms posted on a word wall. How do you get students to refer back to and use words on walls?

Segment 1-5 Poetry Sketch to Stretch

- a. Sketching is important to many students, especially boys. What do you do to help students make visual connections to words?
- b. Have participants look at the Sketch to Stretch lesson on page 162 in *Word Savvy*. How might they use or adapt this lesson in their own classroom?

Workshop and Classroom Extensions

1. Ask participants to bring in any notebooks they have students use—one from a student who is very capable, and one from a student who struggles with the notebook task. What differences do they see? What does this demonstrate about the value and limits of notebooks? How might the notebook task be redefined or restructured to support more students? What are possibilities for changing notebook requirements to include more word work across the curriculum?

2. Distribute copies of “The Firemen” (Figure 5) poem with wide margins and ask teachers to write and sketch in the margins while you read it (read poem aloud twice, slowly, to allow plenty of time for sketching). What did participants choose to sketch? What language or connections did they make in the margins?
3. Have everyone read Chapter 7, “Building Walls of Words,” silently for 15 minutes. Distribute blank pieces of paper, and ask participants to sketch out a diagram of their classroom, noting how they use the wall space. Where are words displayed? What word displays might they change or allow students more control over?

Short on Time?

Mini-Workshop: Making the Most of Textbooks

Cue the program to Segment 2, Social Studies (05:25-17:40) and watch. Distribute copies of a social studies textbook used in your school, or have participants bring in the social studies textbook used in their classroom. Ask participants to read through two or three pages from the textbook, and discuss ways charting and word work could be used to build textbook reading skills.

Further Reading

“A Day of Words” Chapter 8 in *Word Savvy*

“Introduction” Chapter 1 in *Word Savvy*

PROGRAM 2: AFTERNOON

Notes for Facilitators

It is helpful for participants to read ahead in *Word Savvy* to get a full sense of how word study is integrated into the literacy curriculum. The chapter that is most helpful for understanding Program 2 is “Planning for the First Six Weeks of School,” because it shows how Max sets up the literacy program and expectations through a series of anchor lessons and experiences.

You may also want to distribute copies of the following:

Figure 6 Two-Column Notes for Program 2

Figure 7 Student Word Work Notebook Excerpt

Figure 8 Word Observation Chart

Figure 9 Max’s Notebook Excerpt: “Insomnia”

Writing While Viewing

While viewing the program, participants might record their observations on the Two-Column Notes for Program 2 (Figure 6). This chart is designed to help viewers sort through the different notebooks in Max’s literacy curriculum, and how they are used to support word work. You can also refer participants to page 23 in *Word Savvy*, which describes different notebooks used by Max’s students.

Questions for Discussion

Segment 2-1 Read-Aloud: *Pictures of Hollis Woods*

- a. Max frequently stops the read-aloud for questions and discussion by students.
Do you stop during read-aloud for discussion? Talk about the benefits and drawbacks of discussion in the midst of read-aloud.
- b. Max discusses his reasons for choosing *Pictures of Hollis Woods* as his read-aloud because there are challenges in it best grappled with by the whole class. What criteria do participants use for selecting read-aloud books? How do they help students understand new words through read-aloud?

- c. Max jots down student responses throughout the day, and notes for his teaching in his own journal. What anecdotal records do you keep of student responses? [You might also refer participants to Figure 9, an excerpt from Max's journal.]

Segment 2-2 Independent Reading

- a. Max confers with individual students during independent reading. What connections do both students make between their reading and writing? What connections are made to word learning in the individual conferences?
- b. What is the purpose of the writing fluency group? This takes place during seven minutes of the 45-minute independent reading period. How do you select students for groups during reading instruction periods?
- c. How can teachers support students who are below grade level expectations in reading or writing proficiency, yet still keep them fully involved as part of the classroom community?

Segment 2-3 Word Observation: “Pollute”

- a. What are the benefits of having students track questions, words and issues in word work notebooks over time?
- b. What word concepts are still difficult for your students?
- c. How can you assess and determine concepts worth exploring in a word work period?
- d. What words might be pulled from the social studies or science curriculum for analysis during word work?

Segment 2-4 Writing Workshop

- a. What is the value of teachers sharing their writing with students?
- b. What connection does Max make between writing and word work in his conference with Alyssa?
- c. Read the journal page Max shared with the class (Figure 9). How does Max use his writing to build connections between home and school?

Workshop and Classroom Extensions

1. Distribute copies of a textbook or nonfiction piece used in the social studies curriculum in your school. Have participants highlight key words, and then in small groups talk about what word they might have chosen instead of “pollute” for the word observation task. With each word selected, have groups note what key spelling concept or concepts could be taught.
2. Ask participants to bring in class lists of students. Have each participant identify five or six students who might benefit from a fluency group like the one led by Max during the independent reading period. As a group, brainstorm what would be needed to attempt these groups, including:
 - a. materials
 - b. procedures/goals
 - c. words or concepts studied
 - d. assessment
3. Cue Program 2 to 07:21, the reading conferences with TJ and Hailey. Then fast forward to 28:41, the writing conference with Alyssa. As participants watch the three conferences, have them jot down the questions and comments by Max. How does Max lead the conferences? What are common elements of all conferences Max has with students?

Short on Time?

Mini-Workshop: Charting Ideas and Words with Students

Have participants silently read pages 47-51 in *Word Savvy*, which is the explanation of how word observations work. Cue Program 2 to 21:52 and watch the word observation segment on “pollute.” As a group, discuss similarities and differences in Max’s charting activities with students. You can also ask participants in advance to bring in examples of class charts they have completed in a whole-group setting. Discuss how these charts are used in word learning.

Further Reading:

Chapter 2, “Planning for the First Weeks of School” and Chapter 3, “First Lessons” from *Word Savvy*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR DVD EXTRAS

Social Studies Extended-Play Whole-Class Discussion

1. How is the way Max leads the charting exercise different than your whole-class discussions? What is similar?
2. Do you think the talk about students is balanced between boys and girls? Why or why not?
3. Choose one response from a student you thought was interesting. Why did that response grab your attention?

A Conversation with Max Brand and Cathy Mere on Literacy Coaching

1. Max and Cathy talk about the importance of following a teacher's lead when they mentor colleagues. Think of an important mentor you know. How does he or she support your work?
2. Are you comfortable with colleagues observing and coaching you in school settings? Why or why not?
3. What connections do Max and Cathy make between working with children and working with peers?

Figure 1 Schedule for the Day

9 a.m. Morning Arrival and Social Studies: Portuguese Exploration textbook reading, discussion and writing

10 a.m. Science: *Time for Kids* essay, notes and discussion about Jane Goodall

11 a.m. Math: Discussion of vocabulary definitions of geometric shapes

11:15 a.m. Physical Education (outside of classroom)

12 p.m. Poetry Sketch to Stretch for Donald Graves's poem "The Firemen"

12:15 Lunch and Recess

1 p.m. Read-Aloud *Pictures of Hollis Woods*

1:45 p.m. Independent Reading from student chosen books and writing in reading notebooks; Conferences and small-group sessions with teacher

2:30 p.m. Word Study: Word Observation of "Pollute"

2:45 p.m. Writing Workshop

3:30 Dismissal

Figure 2 Two-Column Notes for Program 1

Similarities to My Classroom	Differences

Figure 3 Social Studies Student Writing Samples [Student Errors Uncorrected]

Catherine "Two Worlds"

June 5, 1400

I've set my goal, to trade with Asia. Gold, for spice and taperestry. We have built our Caravels, and are ready to launch into the horrible, monster-filled sea. We will trave to India. On the way we will stop every once in awhile. (More like they will stop every once in awhile.) We are still in good need of another sailor.

January 12, 1434

One of my ships have finally made it to Cape Bojador (which is along the west coast of Africa). We have stopped at least seven times to trade with the Africans. We have now become far away from Civilization.

February 2, 1460.

We have now captured Africans and made them Slaves. Now we have got a salt holder of Ivory.

March 22, 1498

Vasco da Gama has now reached India. Yeah for me! Sincerely, Bartholomue Dias

Nathan "Are There Two Worlds?"

In the 1400's there was a man named Prince Henry from Portugal. Prince H. wanted Portugal to be rich with goods from India and Africa, and he believed that the quickest way to get there was by sea. But it was said that the ocean was filled with dangerous unknown creatures.

In 1419 Henry sent out fifteen of his ships but none of the ships reached Africa or India because they were all scared. But finally in 1434 a Portuguese ship reach their goal to go around Cape Bojador. Then in 1460 the Portuguese ship came back with ivory, gold and salt.

When he returned he created a navigational school and invited Europeans, Africans and Middle Easterners to work for him. Soon Henry had a crew ready to go, but in that same year Henry passed on. Henry though also had other captains working for him and they were going to fulfill his goal. A man Named Bartholomae Dias in 1488 reached the Cape Bojador and soon after another man named Vasco Da Gama sailed all the way to India.

Figure 4 Student Inquiry Notebook Notes on Portuguese Navigation



There was a supse that bad things
on the route of trade.

Europe and Americans met by accident.

15 ships failed to get to Cape Bojador
because they turned away in fear.

Portugal set up trading posts
along the west coast of Africa.

Portuguese Enslaved African
people taking them into slavery

Bartholomeu Dias became the first
European to sail around the
South Coast of Africa.

Figure 5 "The Firemen"

The Firemen

We have a red fire engine
with a bell on the front,
ladders on the side;
it's a toy you can sit in,
work the pedals,
but big enough to dream dreams
of fighting real fires.
We use hoses from Mother's washing
machine to put out blazes
in the shed, auto, and backyard.

We take turns being fire chief
and direct the others
in rescue operations,
pulling each other
to safety when the building tumbles,
We even save pets and babies from danger.

But we grow tired
of the imaginary
and in our dreams
we are more than kids at play.
We load sand into buckets
on the engine's tail
and my little brother
pedals the red machine
to Gorman's grassy field.

I light the match
while the crew waits
leaning over buckets of sand;
their eyes narrow
like seasoned fighters
to snuff out the flames,
but a gust of wind
whips real red fire

past our buckets,
and the dry grass snaps
us awake, flowing now
like an angry red wave
toward the open field.
We beat on the flames
with our jackets.
Tears mix with soot
in the first burst of wind.
We cough and sputter
racing from one finger
of flame to another,
around a tree, along a wall.
We feel stupid
and imagine our parents' words,
the fire chief's anger.
The wind stops. We beat
out the last curling
licks of fire, slump down
to the ground, black
toasted field at our backs, and
begin the stories.

"Remember when it headed
for the big field?"
"Look at the holes in my jacket."
"I thought we were done for."
"Now that was a real fire."
"Your eyebrows
got burned white, Jim."
We giggle and roll
on the ground, punch
and poke our victory
until our stories
extinguish our fears.

Figure 6 Two-Column Notes for Program 2

	Literacy Component	Notebook Used/Expectations
Read-Aloud		
Independent Reading		
Word Study		
Writing Workshop		

Figure 8 Word Observation Chart

When you look at a word and notice different features of that word you could notice:

- The number of letters in the word

- The number of consonants in the word

- The number of syllables

- Compound words

- Are the syllables open or closed?

- What part of speech is the word?

- Does the word have a root or base word?

Figure 9 Max's Notebook Excerpt: "Insomnia"

The Night Before Taping

Buried under a comforter,
twisting, flipping, flipping
trying to find comfort from
a rock hard pillow

2:00 AM

Jan bursts from his sleep,
sprints to relieve himself
from an abundance of dinner
milk. Flushing
a very worried

2:45 AM

Tomorrow twists over
and over and over, deliberating
my next, not knowing
what will happen.

3:30 AM

Joel coughs over and
over and over, what if
they all phone in sick,
Camera shy, cat holding tongues.

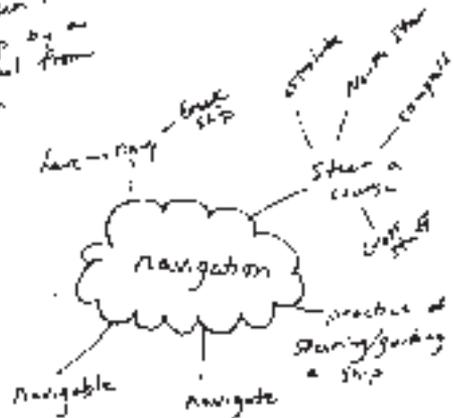
5:00 AM

Boyle rolls over and over
and over, I rise, retreat
to morning rituals, stretch,
run, think and think, unwinding,

Taping Day

Couch Trassel
has insomnia in
thinking about the
Michigan game he
was taken from
his sleep by a
phone call from
his son

"Teach sailors
not spelling"



intentionality?
intentionally crafting decisions

Notes