

## Exclusion Brainstorming

Exclusion brainstorming helps students activate and build prior knowledge of topic as a way of learning new words or phrases that connect to a larger concept.

The example in the box below was used by a high school social studies teacher who was beginning a study of factory reform in this country. The teacher chose words that appeared in the material (textbooks, resources, audiovisual aids) the students would be encountering. After talking briefly about the Triangle Shirtwaist tragedy, in which over one hundred women dies in a fire in a garment factory where they worked, she asked her students to work in pairs or small groups and decide which words they expected to find in selections related to factory reform and which they didn't.

Regardless of their choices, thinking and talking about why a word might or might not appear enlarges students' thinking about language as it relates to a specific event. Students can revisit the words after they've read the material to see whether their guesses held true. Talking about what words fit, how words they didn't anticipate made their way into the text about the topic, and ways that common words took on uncommon meanings in relation to the topic are all rich learning experiences.

### Exclusion Brainstorming Example *factory reform*

hate	investigation	rules
reparations	safety	acquittal
disaster	insurance	locked doors
fairness	floor	quiet
humanitarian	survivor	unharmed
fire	employees	

*Directions: Cross out the words you don't think will be found in this selection and circle those you are likely to find.*

## **Procedure:**

- Prepare an exclusion brainstorming list that includes new words and phrases related to the key concept.
- Students work in groups to identify words they think will appear in the selection and those which will not.
- Students mark a line through words and phrases they think will not appear in the selection, and be prepared to explain why.
- After students read the selection, they will compare their choices with the actual text.
- Discuss with students how the process helped them as they read the selection.