Word Webs/Maps
(Semantic Mapping)

Why?

- To set a purpose for reading and increase motivation for reading
- To expand cognitive effort and deepen understanding of text
- To increase understanding of word meanings in informational text
- To develop and support a visualization of important ideas, points and concepts
- To help students see the interrelationships among ideas

How?

- Select a key word or words from the assigned text/passage. Provide chart paper and marking pens or use a prepared organizer. Students may work in pairs or in small groups to complete and share their newfound understanding of the key words.
- Students generate synonyms to answer the question, "What is it?"
- Brainstorm a list of properties or features to answer the question, "What is it like?"
- Make a list of examples of the key word to answer the question, "What are some examples?"
- Discuss which characteristics or features go with each example. (You can do this in a think-pair-share format or as a whole class discussion, depending upon your presentation.)
- Note: Be sure to model and practice this strategy and explain its value as a prereading activity.