Background Knowledge: 12 Ways to Activate

**Alphabet Mnemonic**
Relate words to the topic that begin with each letter of the alphabet. Say, “The topic is bats. What word begins with the letter A and relates to bats? Air. Bats fly in the air.”

**Picture Introduction**
Show several pictures related to the main topic. Ask questions to generate discussion.

**Think You Know, Want to Know, Learned**
Use a graphic organizer to collect students' thoughts on what they think they know, determine information they want to know, and discuss what they have learned after reading about the topic.

**Give a Pre-Quiz**
Assess the prior knowledge that students have about the text before reading.

**Illustrate Your Knowledge**
Students draw what they know about the topic and describe their drawings.

**Partner Share**
Students partner with a peer and “teach” their prior knowledge to one another.

**Rate Your Knowledge**
Students will rate their prior knowledge about the topic on a scale of 0–3, with 0 being no knowledge and 3 representing a strong understanding of the topic.

**Scavenger Hunt**
Assign a scavenger hunt that engages students in finding specific information related to a topic. Students could use the internet, peers, texts, or any other sources.

**Map the Associations**
Complete a spider or bubble map with information from students' prior knowledge.

**Charades**
Students will act or illustrate a character, object, or concept for other students to guess the answer.

**Questioning**
Teacher asks probing questions about a topic and students also generate their own questions.

**Solve a Challenge**
Expose students to a real-life problem or challenge. Students use their prior knowledge to generate solutions.