

Vocabulary Activities for your Classroom

1. Majority Rules- Divide students into teams or partners. The smaller the team's size the better because more students are doing the work. Give each team different color sticky notes. **Generate approximately 10 questions/categories;** I like to use a combination of "fun" questions and our vocabulary words. If this is the first time you are doing this, I recommend starting with the "fun" categories so students can get the hang of it like I did below. Here are some of my questions. Our vocabulary words are underlined:

1. Scariest movie ever.
2. Ways to ask someone to prom.
3. Things teens consume.
4. Someone who is a bad influence on teens.

Give teams one minute to come up with an answer and hand the sticky note to you. I put the answers under the document reader. The teams that get the most "popular" answer receive points.

2. Synonym Continuum- Divide students into groups of 3-5. Provide each student with a synonym on a large notecard. For instance, if your vocabulary word is "superior." The synonyms could be "good, exceptional, remarkable, fine, superior." You want to choose words that your students are familiar with because the goal is to fit the new vocabulary word into their current schema.

3. Password- Played like the TV game show. One student comes to the front of the class (or small group). The student turns their back to the board, and the teacher writes the vocabulary word on the board. The rest of the group gives the student clues to try and get them to guess the word. This works well if students have a word bank and if there is a penalty for guessing. If you are doing this with a whole group I prefer the student waits to guess until they have received clues from the following categories (written on the board) *draw a picture, act it out, give an example, given an explanation, provide a sentence with a blank.*

4. Around the World- Students are seated in rows or a circle. One student is standing. Student A stands behind student B. You can ask a question that calls for a word, definition, antonyms, synonyms, etc. The first student (A or B) to answer moves on to stand behind the next person. If student A is standing and student B answers correctly, student A takes B's seat and student B moves on to stand behind Student C. The object is to get all the way "Around the World" by answering the vocabulary questions. Each student keeps track of the number of his/her moves and the one with the most moves at the end of the game wins. Tip for success: if extra support is needed provide a word bank.

5. Round Robin Concentration Tournament- Concentration is a game frequently used for vocabulary instruction (also called memory). In this game you insert a table if you want to review 8 vocabulary words make it a 4x4 table. Put in vocabulary, definitions, pictures, and/or sentence frames. Students uncover two squares each turn. If they get a match they get a point. Students participate in a round robin tournament and that way you can use this as a review for weeks, just change the sheet to reflect the current words you want to review.

6. Initial Letter Game (Text Talk)- Students are given text style initialisms, such as "Pimff!" Underline one letter and tell them what it stands for: "pizza." They must come up with a sentence "Pizza is my favorite food!" Not only do they have to come up with a sentence, but also it must be grammatically correct, and they must report it to the class with the correct inflection called for by the punctuation. This works well in teams of four. Here is another possible example with the vocabulary word "unaccustomed" "uautgue." Possible Answer: "I am unaccustomed to getting up early." Tip for success: start simple with 3-4 word sentences. You will be surprised how quickly our text-crazed students can figure out these sentences!

7. Taboo- The class is divided into teams. A student from the first team comes to the front of the class and is given a word card. The student must then try to elicit that word from her team, giving a description/definition, but never using that word or any form of that word. This is one of the very best activities for reinforcing newly learned vocabulary. The game can be made more difficult by giving the vocabulary word and selected other words (2 or 3) that may not be used.

8. Celebrity Divide the group into two three-four teams of about three to six players per team. Place your vocabulary words on small slips of paper in a bag. Aim for one word per player. This game takes place in three rounds, so it can be played over three days:

- **Round 1 (Verbal clues):** Team 1 begins by choosing a volunteer to start. The 1-minute timer begins and he or she grabs a slip from the bag. He or she uses verbal clues to describe the vocabulary word and tries to get his or her team to correctly guess the word. Once the name is guessed correctly, 1 point is earned. He or she sets the slip aside and quickly grabs another slip. He or she tries to get as many points as possible before time expires. If the volunteer does not know the celebrity name, he or she can “skip” and move onto the next slip, but this causes a -1 penalty for each slip that is skipped. Repeat with team 2, 3, and 4. This process continues until all slips are correctly guessed and no more slips remain in the hat/bag. Add up all the number of slips for each team, and subtract any penalty points. This is the score. Tip for success: The clues must be meaning based, no “Rhymes with ____, sounds like _____, starts with _____.”
- **Round 2 (Acting out the words and/or drawing)** Get all the slips from Round 1 and place them back into the bag. Round 2 is similar to round 1, but instead of verbally describing someone as clues, players act as the celebrity. They must simply gesture and use non-verbal clues. You can also include drawing or substitute a Pictionary style round for charades.
- **Round 3 (One-word clues):** The final round uses the same words as Round 1 and 2 again, but this time, players can only say one word per slip. Thus, the challenge is thinking of a descriptive, helpful clue in one succinct word. After all three rounds, add up the points. The team with more points wins the game.

9. Vocabulary Bingo <http://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator> Enter your vocabulary words into this free (no sign-in required) bingo generator, and it creates 30 different cards for you to print! As the caller, you can provide students with definitions, sentences with blanks, or simply call out the word to make sure they can read it. For an extra special bingo game use M&M’s for markers.

10. What’s my Word This game is similar to **Password** (#3) conceptually, but it involves the entire class. You want to write as many vocabulary words as you have students and teachers on name tags. Stick the name tags on the students and teachers backs and remind them not to tell each other the words. They then go around to their classmates and interview them to find out what their word is (using the What’s My Word? Form below). The best thing about this game is that they must go in order, so sometimes they think they know their word, but they can’t guess until #7, so as one of my students said, “Oh, it’s about the process not just the answer.” Exactly!

What's My Word?

1. Ask a friend about your word.
2. Have the person write their name.
3. You can only go to a person once.
4. You must go in order 1-7!
5. Fill out everything before you guess.

1. A picture of my word:
Name: _____

2. Where can I  or  my word?

Choose only 1:

1. A TV show about _____.
2. When _____ is talking about _____.
3. A book about _____.
4. In a _____ store.

Name: _____

3. This means the same thing as my word:

Name: _____

4. My word in a sentence:
(Put a _____ where the word should go)

Name: _____

5. **Choose only 1:**

- a. Prefix _____
- b. Suffix _____
- c. Root _____

Name: _____



6. Tell me an example of my word.

Name: _____

7. I think my word is _____.

8. ✓ one: Correct _____ Incorrect _____

My Name: _____