



Appendix F

Vocabulary Games*

Academic games are an effective way to help students engage with academic content. Ideally, games should present challenges that are appropriate and manageable for students, arouse students' curiosity, and prompt students to imagine different circumstances and situations. This appendix presents twenty-eight games that are specifically geared to help students review and revise their knowledge of vocabulary terms that have been the subject of direct instruction. Each entry describes a game, suggests appropriate grade levels for play, and indicates the source of the game.

Alphabet Antonyms

Students write down a number of vocabulary words that all begin with the same letter; a student might choose *addition*, *area*, *angle*, *arc*, and *adjacent*. Then he or she writes an antonym for each word. For example:

- *Addition—subtraction*
- *Area—perimeter*
- *Angle—side*
- *Arc—point*
- *Adjacent—opposite*

The student then presents only the antonyms to the class (that is, *subtraction*, *perimeter*, *side*, *point*, and *opposite*). The class tries to guess the correct antonyms, all of which start with the same letter—a in this case (for middle and high school students; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2008).

Classroom Feud

Students work in teams to answer questions about vocabulary terms (for all grade levels; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

*Source: The content of this appendix is from Marzano, R. J., & Simms, J. A. (2013). *Vocabulary for the Common Core*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research (pp. 37–40).

Create a Category

Students work together to categorize a list of terms in a limited amount of time (for upper elementary through high school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Definition, Shmefinition

Students try to identify the correct description of a vocabulary term out of a group of student-invented definitions (for upper elementary through high school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Digital Vocabulary Field Trip

Teachers collect and annotate a series of websites that pertain to a vocabulary term or group of terms. Students then explore the websites to answer a series of teacher-designed questions (for upper elementary through high school students; Dalton & Grisham, 2011).

Draw Me

Modeled after *Pictionary*, this game involves one student drawing pictures of terms in a predetermined category (for all grade levels; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

Magic Letter, Magic Word

Students try to identify the vocabulary term (beginning or ending with the “magic letter”) that is the correct response to a teacher-provided clue (for elementary and middle school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Motor Imaging

Students create gestures for vocabulary terms. For example, for the word *consensus*, students might decide to stretch their arms wide and slowly bring them together until their fingers are interlaced to signify that consensus involves finding common ground from a wide range of views (for all grade levels; Casale, 1985).

Name It!

Students use vocabulary terms to express what they see in various photographs (for lower elementary students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Name That Category

The teacher provides a secret list of categories, and a designated student tries to help his or her teammates guess each category by naming vocabulary terms that fit in it. As soon as his or her team guesses one category, the clue-giver starts naming terms in the next category. The first team to name all the categories correctly wins (for upper elementary through high school students; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

Opposites Attract

Students work together to pair vocabulary terms with their antonyms (for elementary students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Possible Sentences

The teacher selects six to eight words that students are not likely to know and four to six words that students are likely to know. Using that list, students create sentences, each of which must contain at least two of the words from the list. The teacher displays these sentences, and students discuss whether each one is correct, incorrect, or partially correct and modifies them as needed so that they are all correct (for middle and high school students; Stahl, 2005).

Puzzle Stories

Students construct a puzzle and then use vocabulary terms to describe the scene that the puzzle depicts (for upper elementary and middle school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Root Relay

From an array of prefixes, suffixes, and root words written on separate cards, students work in teams to construct words. One student from each team runs to the assortment of affixes and roots, selects one, and brings it back to his team. The next student does the same. The first team to form a complete word wins (for upper elementary and middle school students; Scott, Miller, & Flinspach, 2012).

Secret Language

Two students try to communicate the meaning of a vocabulary term to the class by using it in context over the course of a day or class period. At the end of the designated time period, the class tries to guess what the secret word was and explain its meaning (for upper elementary through high school students; Manzo & Manzo, 2008).

Sentence Stems

The teacher creates a sentence stem that requires students to explain the vocabulary term in order to complete it. For example, “The *amplitude* of a trigonometric function can be determined from its graph because . . .” or “A *line segment* has two *endpoints* because . . .” (for middle and high school students; Beck et al., 2002).

Silly Questions

Students answer questions created by combining two vocabulary terms, such as “Can a *whole number* be an *integer*?” “Would an *integer* be *complex*?” and so on (for middle and high school students; McKeown et al., 1985).

Talk a Mile a Minute

The teacher prepares cards with lists of terms from different categories. The teacher passes a card out to one member of each team who is designated the talker. The teacher starts a timer and, similar to the games *Taboo* and *Catch Phrase*, the talker tries to get his teammates to say each word in the list without saying any of the other words on the card or in the heading (for upper elementary through high school students; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

Two of a Kind

Students match up homonyms in this *Memory*-style game (for elementary school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Vocabulary Charades

Students try to guess which vocabulary term their teammate is acting out (for all grade levels; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

Vocab Vids

Students create sixty-second videos that exemplify the meaning of a vocabulary term (for middle and high school students; Dalton & Grisham, 2011).

What Is the Question?

In this *Jeopardy*-like game, students have to come up with questions that describe teacher-provided vocabulary terms (for upper elementary through high school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Where Am I?

Students give clues to help a student guess his or her “secret location” (a vocabulary term referring to a specific place, such as *western hemisphere* or *Bering Sea*) (for all grade levels; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Which One Doesn't Belong?

Students try to identify the vocabulary term that doesn't belong with the other three words in a group (for all grade levels; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Who Am I?

Students give clues to help a selected student guess his or her “secret identity” (a vocabulary term referring to a specific person, such as *Robert E. Lee* or *Sally Ride*—for upper elementary through high school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Word Associations

After explaining several new vocabulary terms, the teacher selects words and phrases and asks students to figure out which vocabulary term goes with which word or phrase. For example, if the teacher presents *infer*, *quote*, *explicit*, and *implicit*, the he or she might ask, “Which word goes with *assumptions*?” or “Which word goes with *quotation marks*?” Students should then explain the relationships behind their answers (for middle and high school students; Beck et al., 2002).

Word Harvest

Students “pick” words off of a construction paper tree or bush and sort them into baskets with different category labels (for lower elementary school students; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

Word Wizzle

Students make contrasting statements about words based on a rule. For example, for the rule *three-dimensional* a student might say the following.

- “I like spheres *but not* circles.”
- “I like prisms *but not* squares.”
- “I like pyramids *but not* triangles.”
- “I like cylinders *but not* rectangles.”

The class tries to figure out the rule using the fewest clues possible (for middle and high school students; Scott et al., 2012).

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