

## Three Tiers of Vocabulary and Education

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Vocabulary consists of the words we understand when we hear or read them (*receptive vocabulary*) and words we speak or write (*expressive vocabulary*). We build vocabulary by picking up words that we read or hear and through direct instruction from teachers or other professionals. Knowing a variety of words is important for language development and reading comprehension. A limited vocabulary is usually a “red flag,” indicating a possible language learning disability and reduced literacy skills.



Most children begin first grade with about 6,000 words of spoken vocabulary. They will learn 3,000 more words per year through third grade. However, not all words have equal importance in language instruction. So, how do we know which words we need to teach? We consider three types of vocabulary words—three tiers of vocabulary—for teaching and assessing word knowledge. A word’s frequency of use, complexity, and meaning determines into which tier it will fall. Those with mature vocabularies and age-appropriate literacy skills understand and use words from all three tiers. This handout discusses the three tiers of vocabulary, Tier 1—Basic Vocabulary, Tier 2—High Frequency/Multiple Meaning, and Tier 3—Subject Related.

### Tier 1—Basic Vocabulary

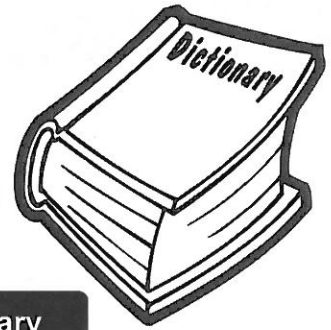
Tier one consists of the most basic words. These words rarely require direct instruction and typically do not have multiple meanings. Sight words, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and early reading words occur at this level. Examples of tier one words are: *book, girl, sad, run, dog, and orange*. There about 8,000 word families in English included in tier one.

### Tier 2—High Frequency/Multiple Meaning Vocabulary

Tier two consists of high frequency words that occur across a variety of domains. That is, these words occur often in mature language situations such as adult conversations and literature, and therefore strongly influence speaking and reading. Following is a list of standards for tier two words:

- Important for reading comprehension
- Contain multiple meanings
- Used across a variety of environments (generalization)
- Characteristic of mature language users
- Increased descriptive vocabulary (words that allow students to describe concepts in a detailed manner)

Tier two words are the most important words for direct instruction because they are good indicators of a student's progress through school. Examples of tier two words are: *masterpiece*, *fortunate*, *industrious*, *measure*, and *benevolent*. There are about 7,000 word families in English (or 700 per year) in tier two.



### Tier 3—Low-Frequency, Context-Specific Vocabulary

Tier three consists of low-frequency words that occur in specific domains. Domains include subjects in school, hobbies, occupations, geographic regions, technology, weather, etc. We usually learn these words when a specific need arises, such as learning *amino acid* during a chemistry lesson. Examples of tier three words are: *economics*, *isotope*, *asphalt*, *Revolutionary War*, and, *crepe*. The remaining 400,000 words in English fall in this tier.

It is important to remember that tier two and three words are not all clear-cut in their tier classification. There is more than one way to select the words. Word knowledge is subject to personal experience.

### Students with Limited Vocabulary

Students may struggle to increase vocabulary because of poor memory skills, difficulty using word learning strategies, or lack of instruction. This may be a result of a language and/or learning disability, or poor instruction. Under these situations, schools can administer a response to intervention program (RtI). RtI will then determine if the student requires additional instruction or special education services. Contact your school district to find out its current response to intervention program.

#### Resources

Beck, Isabel L., McKeown, Margaret G., and Kucan, Linda. (2002). *Bringing words to life*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press

Montgomery, Judy K. (2008). *MAVA-Montgomery assessment of vocabulary acquisition*. Greenville, South Carolina: Super Duper Publications, Inc.

Montgomery, Judy K. (2007). Vocabulary Intervention for RTI: Tiers 1, 2, 3 Retrieved October 28, 2008, [http://74.125.45.104/search?q=cache:VjfiwE6PJYEJ:convention.asha.org/2007/handouts/1137\\_1757Montgomery\\_Judy\\_106716\\_Nov05\\_2007\\_Time\\_122121AM.ppt+three+tiers+of+vocabulary&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=6&gl=us](http://74.125.45.104/search?q=cache:VjfiwE6PJYEJ:convention.asha.org/2007/handouts/1137_1757Montgomery_Judy_106716_Nov05_2007_Time_122121AM.ppt+three+tiers+of+vocabulary&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=6&gl=us)

3 Tier vocabulary words. Retrieved October 28, 2008 [http://t4.jordan.k12.ut.us/cbl/images/CBL\\_Documents/3tiervocab.pdf](http://t4.jordan.k12.ut.us/cbl/images/CBL_Documents/3tiervocab.pdf)

## Marzano's Six Step Process Teaching Academic Vocabulary

1. Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term. (Include a non-linguistic representation of the term for ESL kids.)
2. Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words. (Allow students whose primary existing knowledge base is still in their native language to write in it.)
3. Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the word.
4. Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their notebooks.
5. Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another. (Allow in native language when appropriate)
6. Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms.

**1. Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term.**

- Looking up words in dictionaries is not useful for teaching vocab
- Provide a context for the term
- Introduce direct experiences that provide examples of the term
- Tell a story that integrates the term
- Use video as the stimulus for understanding information
- Ask students to investigate the term and present the information to the class (skit, pantomime, poster, etc.)
- Describe your own mental picture of the term
- Find or create pictures that explain the term

**2. Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.**

- Monitor and correct misunderstandings
- Must be student's original ideas, not parroting the teacher

**3. Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the word.**

- Model, model, model
- Provide examples of student's drawings (and your own) that are rough but represent the ideas
- Play "Pictionary"
- Draw an example of the term
- Dramatize the term using speech bubbles
- Let them find a picture on the internet, if necessary

**4. Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their notebooks.**

- Highlight prefixes, suffixes, root words that will help them remember the meaning of the term
- Identify synonyms and antonyms for the term
- List related words
- Write brief cautions or reminders of common confusions
- Translate the term into another language for second language students
- Point out cognates to words in Spanish
- Write incomplete analogies for students to complete
- Allow students to write (or draw) their own analogies
- Sort or classify words
- Compare similarities and differences

**5. Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.**

- Think-Pair-Share
- Compare their descriptions of the term
- Describe their pictures to one another
- Explain to each other any new information they have learned ("aha's")
- Identify areas of disagreement or confusion and seek clarification
- Students can make revisions to their own work

**6. Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms.**

- Pictionary
- "Oops" (formerly known as "Bang")
- Upset the fruit basket
- Memory
- Jeopardy (vocab words are on the board, players make up a question to define)
- Charades
- Name that Category (\$100,000 Pyramid)
- Password
- Talk a Mile a Minute (like Catch Phrase)
- Bingo (you give definition, kid marks the word)
- Create a skit (assign groups of 3-4 kids 3 vocab words to make a skit out of)
- Swat Game (post 2 sets of words, kids on 2 teams compete to find words first and swat with fly-swatter)

## BEFORE you begin your next UNIT of INSTRUCTION:

1. What Power Indicators (standards) are included in this Unit? List indicators.

-  
-  
-

2. What is the key academic vocabulary needed in this Unit? List words.

-  
-  
-  
-  
-  
-

### Plan for direct vocab. instruction: (Marzano's 6 Steps for Teaching Vocab.)

1. YOU provide a description, explanation or example. (story, sketch, powerpoint)
2. Ask students to re-state or re-explain meaning in their own words. (journal, community circle, turn to your neighbor)
3. Ask students to construct a picture, graphic, or symbol for each word.
4. Engage students in activities to expand their word knowledge. (add to their notes, use graphic organizer format)
5. Ask students to discuss vocabulary words with one another. (collaborate)
6. Have student play games with the words. (Bingo w/definitions, Pictionary Charades, )

### 3. Plan to provide or activate background knowledge:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study Trip               | <input type="checkbox"/> Guest Speaker (expert)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bring In Live Sample     | <input type="checkbox"/> Bring In Actual Artifacts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme Day ("Indian Day") |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video (United Streaming) | <input type="checkbox"/> Show Photos               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posters                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Models of Actual Items    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Organizer        | <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Circle Topic   | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Aloud (story)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |  |

4. Now you are ready to plan your Unit's lessons, activities, and assessments.

Tier Two Vocabulary Words by Categories (Vocabulary for the Common Core by Marzano and Simms)

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1. Add To</b><br/>         combine<br/>         deepen<br/>         improve<br/>         incorporate<br/>         integrate<br/>         introduce</p>             | <p><b>4. Compare/Contrast</b><br/>         associate<br/>         categorize<br/>         classify<br/>         compare<br/>         connect<br/>         contrast<br/>         differentiate<br/>         distinguish<br/>         link<br/>         match<br/>         relate</p>  | <p><b>7. Define</b><br/>         define<br/>         delineate<br/>         determine<br/>         discern<br/>         establish<br/>         exemplify<br/>         identify<br/>         interpret<br/>         label<br/>         locate<br/>         name<br/>         recall<br/>         recognize</p> | <p><b>10. Execute</b><br/>         advance<br/>         calculate<br/>         compute<br/>         conduct<br/>         employ<br/>         execute<br/>         navigate</p>  |
| <p><b>2. Arrange</b><br/>         arrange<br/>         list<br/>         organize<br/>         sort</p>  | <p><b>5. Create</b><br/>         accomplish<br/>         achieve<br/>         build<br/>         compose<br/>         construct<br/>         create<br/>         develop<br/>         draft<br/>         form<br/>         generate<br/>         initiate<br/>         produce<br/>         publish<br/>         record<br/>         stimulate</p> | <p><b>8. Elaborate</b><br/>         broaden<br/>         derive<br/>         elaborate<br/>         enhance<br/>         expand</p>   | <p><b>11. Explain</b><br/>         answer<br/>         articulate<br/>         clarify<br/>         communicate<br/>         convey<br/>         describe<br/>         explain<br/>         express<br/>         inform<br/>         narrate<br/>         present<br/>         recount<br/>         report<br/>         respond<br/>         retell<br/>         state<br/>         summarize<br/>         synthesize</p> |
| <p><b>3. COLL Collaborate</b><br/>         collaborate<br/>         contribute<br/>         engage<br/>         interact<br/>         participate<br/>         share</p> | <p><b>6. DEC Decide</b><br/>         choose<br/>         decide<br/>         select</p>  | <p><b>9. EVAL Evaluate</b><br/>         assess<br/>         check<br/>         critique<br/>         evaluate<br/>         judge</p>  | <p><b>12. HYP Hypothesize</b><br/>         anticipate<br/>         approximate<br/>         conjecture<br/>         consider<br/>         estimate<br/>         experiment<br/>         explore<br/>         hypothesize<br/>         pose<br/>         predict<br/>         test<br/>         conclude<br/>         deduce<br/>         generalize<br/>         infer</p>  |

Tier Two Vocabulary Words by Categories (Vocabulary for the Common Core by Marzano and Simms)

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>13. Infer</b><br/>conclude<br/>deduce<br/>generalize<br/>infer<br/>reason</p>                              | <p><b>16. Prove/Argue</b><br/>argue<br/>assert<br/>challenge<br/>claim<br/>confirm<br/>defend<br/>disagree<br/>justify<br/>persuade<br/>promote<br/>prove<br/>qualify<br/>specify<br/>support<br/>verify</p> | <p><b>19. Reference</b><br/>acknowledge<br/>cite<br/>consult<br/>plagiarize<br/>refer<br/>reference<br/>trace</p>   | <p><b>22. Symbolize</b><br/>act out<br/>chart<br/>conceptualize<br/>demonstrate<br/>depict<br/>diagram<br/>graph<br/>illustrate<br/>imagine<br/>map<br/>model<br/>represent<br/>symbolize<br/>visualize</p>  |
| <p><b>14. Measurement</b><br/>gauge<br/>measure<br/>quantify</p>   | <p><b>17. Pull Apart</b><br/>analyze<br/>decompose<br/>decontextualize<br/>diagnose<br/>examine<br/>grapple<br/>investigate<br/>partition<br/>probe</p>  | <p><b>20. Seek Information</b><br/>acquire          listen<br/>ask                note<br/>capture          notice<br/>compile          observe<br/>detect            question<br/>elicit             request<br/>encounter        research<br/>evoke             search<br/>find out          seek<br/>gather            study<br/>observe</p> | <p><b>23. Think Metacognitively</b><br/>Appreciate<br/>Attend<br/>Design<br/>Monitor<br/>Persevere<br/>Plan<br/>Prepare<br/>Reflect<br/>self-correct</p>   |
| <p><b>15. Problem Solve</b><br/>figure out<br/>overcome<br/>problem solve<br/>resolve<br/>solve<br/>surmount</p> | <p><b>18. Redo</b><br/>redo<br/>repeat<br/>reread<br/>revisit</p>  | <p><b>21. See the Big Picture</b><br/>comprehend<br/>contextualize<br/>orient<br/>understand</p>  | <p><b>24. Transform</b><br/>accentuate      shape<br/>adapt             shift<br/>adjust            simplify<br/>alter              strengthen<br/>apply             substitute<br/>conform          tailor<br/>convert          transform<br/>edit                translate<br/>emphasize        update<br/>manipulate        rewrite<br/>modify            revise<br/>paraphrase        replace<br/>rearrange         refine</p> |



## Vocabulary Strategies and Games

| <b>Strategies</b>   | <b>Games</b>                          |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Cognitive Content Dictionary (CCD from GLAD)</b>             | <b>Alphabet Antonyms</b>              |
| <b>Four Square</b>  | <b>Classroom Feud</b>                 |
| <b>Partner Chatter, Paired Thinking, Inside-Outside Circle</b>  | <b>Create a Category</b>              |
| <b>Role Cards, Root Words, Affixes, Word Origins</b>            | <b>Definition, Shmeinition</b>        |
| <b>Multiple Meaning Map</b>                                     | <b>Digital Vocabulary Field Trips</b> |
| <b>Definition Formula</b>                                       | <b>Draw Me</b>                        |
| <b>Semantic Features analysis, Explaining Features of Words</b> | <b>Magic Letter, Magic Word</b>       |
| <b>Grammatical Role, Sentence Patterning Chart</b>              | <b>Motor Imaging</b>                  |
| <b>Kick it up a notch</b>                                       | <b>Name It</b>                        |
| <b>Select and Connect</b>                                       | <b>Name that Category</b>             |
| <b>Description vs. Dictionary Definition</b>                    | <b>Opposites Attract</b>              |
| <b>Chants/Poetry</b>  | <b>Possible Sentences</b>             |
| <b>Comparing and Contrasting</b>                                | <b>Puzzle Stories</b>                 |
| <b>Classifying, Word Sorts</b>                                  | <b>Root Relay</b>                     |
| <b>Creating Metaphors</b>                                       | <b>Secret Language</b>                |
| <b>Creating Analogies</b>                                       | <b>Sentence Stems</b>                 |
| <b>Vocab Notebook, Vocab Note Taking Guide</b>                  | <b>Silly Questions</b>                |
| <b>Sketch nonlinguistic representation</b>                      | <b>Talk a Mile a Minute</b>           |
| <b>Picture File Cards</b>                                       | <b>Two of a Kind</b>                  |
|   | <b>Vocabulary Charades</b>            |
|   | <b>Vocab Vids</b>                     |
|   | <b>What Is the Question</b>           |
|   | <b>Where Am I</b>                     |
|   | <b>Which One Doesn't Belong</b>       |
|   | <b>Gradable antonyms</b>              |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
|   |                                       |
| <b>Marzano, GLAD, Brassell, Moats (LETRS)</b>                   |                                       |



# Vocabulary Strategies/Activities

The following strategies have been collected from several sources to make it easier for you to use a variety when teaching vocabulary. Slight variations of each strategy/game may be used depending on the grade level and/or content area.

**First and foremost remember: Characteristics of Effective Direct Vocabulary Instruction:**

- Frequent exposures to the words!
- Encounters in multiple contexts!
- Deep or active processing of the words! (McKeown et al.,2010, p.1)

**Cognitive Content Dictionary (From GLAD For Tier Three Words):** Done as whole class on poster paper later transferred to personal or team CCD.

Day 1

1. Say the word multiple times (say it to the ceiling, floor, hand, neighbor etc.)
2. Tally how many students have heard this word and how many have not.
3. Break it into sounds and syllables.
4. Predict the meaning (as a team) Report out predictions and provide a synonym (word or phrase).
5. Create a gesture for the word and its synonym or word or phrase.
6. Sketch to clarify the meaning or synonym.
7. Use the word repeatedly that day.

Day 2

1. In teams, determine a final meaning.
2. Record final agreed upon meaning on the poster.
3. Put in a sentence.

Day 3

Create a Chant or Song to explain meaning.

**Four Square:** Students work with 4-square template.

1. Write the target word in the center of the 4-square.
2. Define the word. (Left top square)
3. Add examples and non-examples of target word. (Right top examples, left bottom non-examples)
4. State important characteristics or attributes of the target word OR draw picture. (Lower right square) (Moats, 2009)

**Partner Chatter, Think -Pair-Share, Paired Thinking, Inside-Outside Circle.** Opportunities to use new WORDS in conversation.

1. Pair students.
2. Talk using targeted vocabulary (list on board or from notebooks)
3. Possible sentence starters: When might you \_\_\_? How might you...? Why might you...?
4. Teacher circulates to monitor conversations and provide feedback.
5. Inside circle faces out. Outside circle faces partner inward. Share. Outside circle takes one step to the left. Inside circle stays stationary.
6. Students add to notebook new details and correct misconceptions. (Moats, 2009) (Marzano, & Simms. 2013.)

**Role Cards, Root Words, Affixes, and Word Origins:** Deepen and extend knowledge of vocabulary term. Four student roles.

1. Etymology expert – look up word origin and how it came to have current meaning.
2. Root researcher – identify roots and affixes and find examples of other words with similar roots or affixes.
3. Synonym/antonym explorer – Student finds synonym and antonyms for the word.
4. Discussion leader – Student makes sure everyone has a turn to talk and summarizes the group’s discussion for the class. (Marzano, & Simms. 2013.)

**Multiple Meaning Maps:** Visual graphic organizer of multiple meanings for one word

1. Put key word in a circle in the middle of page. Example: Lap
2. Put arrows out to boxes that have written meanings or description of the word examples: to run around a field, cats and dogs lap up their water with their tongues, she sat quietly waiting with her hands folded on her lap. Etc.
3. Pictures may be added inside the boxes. (Moats, 2009)

**Definition Formula:** A helpful way for students to formulate a useful definition of a word. WORD = category or synonym + attributes

Examples: A **darkroom** is a room for developing photographs that has very dim, special light and running water.

To **plunder** is to rob or pillage, usually by an invading or conquering group.

**Semantic Features Analysis, Explaining Features of Words:** Compare aspects of meaning of words that they have in common but they still differ in several respects. These are NOT synonyms but they are related enough to be in the same category or have associated uses. (Moats LETRS 4 and Marzano Vocab for CC p. 17)

Example:

|                  | Natural gas | Oil | Trees | Fish | Iron |
|------------------|-------------|-----|-------|------|------|
| Natural Resource |             |     |       |      |      |
| Renewable        |             |     |       |      |      |
| Fossil fuel      |             |     |       |      |      |
| Food             |             |     |       |      |      |

Also look at semantic overlap in groups of words. Tangible vs. abstract nouns, countable and not countable, which adjectives are used with each type, some verbs require an object (transitive verbs such as borrowed, gave) and some do not require a verb (intransitive verbs such as thought, slept).

**Grammatical Role, Sentence Patterning Chart (GLAD):** Vocabulary words have certain properties that govern how they are used in sentences. These properties need to be explicitly taught. Part of teaching a word explicitly is explaining its part of speech and showing how it must be used in a sentence. (Nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs, prepositions etc.,) GLAD incorporates a chart with columns for adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositional phrases etc. and uses colors to help students identify the part of speech.

**Kick it up a notch:** Deliberately use unusual words in conversation. “Let’s amble to lunch.” “Let’s stroll to lunch.” “Let’s meander to lunch.”

**Select and Connect:** Great for review of previously taught vocabulary words.

- Provide two columns of vocabulary words from previous lessons.
- Have student choose a word from column one and a word from column 2 that can be connected in some way.
- Draw a line to connect the words.
- Have students verbally explain how the words go together.
- Follow up with a written explanation in their vocabulary notebooks.

**Description vs. Dictionary Definition:** Reading a short, incomplete dictionary definition does NOT tell us HOW a word is actually used. Being able to define a word is an end result of knowing the word well. Most dictionary definitions do not explain concepts but uses a classical structure. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) suggested the descriptions are more effective than definitions.

Several recommended dictionaries.

*Collins COBUILD Illustrated Basic Dictionary* (Roehr & Carroll, 2010). <http://dictionary.reverso.net/>

*Basic Newbury House Dictionary of American English.*

*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*

*Longman Basic Dictionary of American English.*

*Merriam-Webster Online:* <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

[www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com) OneLook's reverse dictionary lets you describe a concept and get back a list of words and phrases related to that concept.

<http://www.etymonline.com/> Etymologies are not definitions; they're explanations of what our words meant and how they sounded 600 or 2,000 years ago.

**Chant/Songs/ Poetry:** Use a familiar song to help describe or explain a term or concept. Gestures may accompany the song or chant. Original poems may also help students learn vocabulary concepts. Words from Tier Three CCD include a Chant or Song.

**Comparing and Contrasting:** Think about ways terms are similar and different by using sentence stems provided by the teacher. 1. Venn diagrams are another way to compare and contrast characteristics of two or more terms. 2. A double bubble diagram compares two terms. 3. A comparison matrix can be used to compare more than two terms. (Marzano)

**Classifying, Word Sorts:** Classification activities help students to group terms or concepts into categories. The teacher can provide the categories or allow students to generate the categories. Can be structured with teacher providing words and categories or open ended with students identifying both words and categories to sort. (Marzano, D.Bear)

**Creating Metaphors:** Identifying similarities and connections between words at a figurative, abstract, or nonliteral level. Not only create the metaphor but also explain WHY they grouped the two terms together. May provide a sentence stem: \_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. (Marzano)

Example: "Common denominators are the dating websites of math because common denominators make it easier to add fractions and dating websites make it easier for couples to pair up." (Marzano; Vocabulary for the Common Core p.28)

**Creating Analogies:** Students must identify and describe a relationship between two items or concepts. Requires a fairly deep examination of the relationship between the terms. 1. Teacher may provide the first term and have student fill in the second term. Example: big is to \_\_\_ as little is to \_\_\_\_ Or 2. Teacher may provide both of the first terms in first pair and have students provide the

second pair. Example: Prefix is to suffix as \_\_\_ is to \_\_\_. 3. Students label the relationship between the two sets of terms. (Using a visual diagram is useful. (Marzano)

**Vocabulary Notebook, Vocab Notebook taking guide:** A place students can write and revise information about vocabulary terms. A changing document that students revise as their knowledge about a topic or term grows and deepens. Organization will vary. The following elements are suggestions from several sources. (Marzano and Moats)

- Write the term/word.
- Academic subject the term is associated with i.e.: Science, ELA, Mathematics
- Indicate word's part of speech.
- Definition OR description of the word/term.
- Non-linguistic representation of the word/term. (Picture, symbol)
- Synonyms and or antonyms
- Sentence to show mastery
- Rate level of understanding

**Sketch nonlinguistic representations:** Terms may require different types of representations including (Marzano)

- Actual object
- Symbol
- Example
- Cartoon or vignette with a character
- Graphic

To help struggling students a teacher might:

1. Model
2. Provide past student's examples
3. Allow a group to come up with representation THEN an individual one.
4. Look on internet

**Picture File Cards:** Collection of pictures, which can be sorted, to help describe or define a term or relationship between terms.

#### **Additional resources:**

<http://www.marzanoresearch.com/reproducibles>

Vocabulary for the Common Core: Source List for Terms (must sign in)  
Activities and Games: Teaching Argumentation  
Vocabulary Games for the Classroom

[http://www.isbe.net/common\\_core/pls/level2/html/vocabulary.htm](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pls/level2/html/vocabulary.htm)

Scroll to bottom for vocabulary workshop power point from Illinois State  
Handout #2 has Marzano's 6 Steps for teaching Academic Vocabulary

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/8-strategies-teaching-academic-language-todd-finley>

8 strategies for teaching Academic Vocabulary

# Vocabulary Games

**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).

Modeled after *Family Feud*, this game has students work in teams to answer questions about vocabulary terms (for all grade levels; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

**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, Shmeinition:** 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 Trips:** Using an outline program like TrackStar ([trackstar.4teachers.org](http://trackstar.4teachers.org)), 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 while other students try to guess the terms (for all grades; 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 teammate guess each category by naming vocabulary terms that fit in it. As soon as his 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 depicted in the puzzle (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 her 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, as shown below.

**Revise and Edit**

topic  
draft  
peer review  
audience  
proofread  
focus

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 of four (for all grade levels; Carleton & Marzano, 2010).

**Who Am I?:** Students give clues to help a selected student guess his or her “secret identify,” 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 *infer*, *quote*, *explicit*, and *implicit* had been presented, the teacher 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).

**Wordle:** Teachers use this electronic tool ([www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)) to help students create visual representations of various vocabulary terms. When a block of text is pasted into the tool, Wordle produces a “word cloud” with high-frequency words from the passage appearing larger and lower-frequency words appearing smaller. Students can manipulate the way the cloud looks and which words are included using different colors and configurations (for upper elementary through high school students; Dalton & Grisham, 2011).

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

- “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).

Source of above list:

Marzano, Robert J., and Julia A. Simms. *Vocabulary for the Common Core*. 1st ed. Denver: Marzano Research Lab, 2013. Print.

**Gradable Antonyms:** Allows for discussion and depth of understanding of words. Arrange students in groups (2-6). Choose one gradable antonym pair. (ie. Hot-Cold, hideous-gorgeous) Brainstorm related words OR use thesaurus. Arrange words on a continuum. Write words down and share with the group. Variation 1: One group may create the list and put individual words on index cards and have another group arrange words on the continuum. Variation 2: Give multiple groups the same words on cards and race to see which group can arrange on a continuum the fastest. This leads to DISCUSSION about WHY the group arranges the words on the continuum. (LETRS Module 4, Louisa Moats)

Visit these sites for more activities and ideas!

[www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com)

[www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com)

[www.visualthesaurus.com](http://www.visualthesaurus.com)

[www.teachingchannel.org](http://www.teachingchannel.org)

[www.myvocabulary.com](http://www.myvocabulary.com)

[www.vocabgal.com](http://www.vocabgal.com)

[www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)