



## 11 fun vocabulary games to try with your class!

### 1. Charades

Time to prepare: 2 minutes

Resources: 2 lists of vocabulary (recently studied)

**How to play:** Split the class in to teams. Each team has a word list. Players take it in turns to act out each word for the rest of their team to guess. Even though you might think 'photosynthesis' is impossible to act out, asking students to do this will really test their understanding of the term! Give it a go!



### 2. Taboo



**Time to prepare:** 15 minutes to make cards. These can be edited & reused throughout the year.

**Resources:** Approx. 40 cards for a 10-minute game.

**How to play:** - split the class into 2 teams. Write the new word at the top of a piece of paper and below write 5 obvious words that describe your new word. These words are taboo; the students cannot use them. The student must describe the new word in another way. Their team guesses the word. Each time the team correctly guesses the word, they win the point.

### 3. Bull's eye

**Time to prepare:** 15 minutes to prepare word balls (students could do this to save you time)

**Resources:** Target on whiteboard or wall, word balls.



**How to play:** This one is fun because students get to throw things at the board! Write your new terms on different pieces of A4 paper. Scrunch the paper into balls and place in a big pot. Bring the image of a bullseye up on the board, or draw one on a whiteboard. The different rings of the bull's eye represent different challenges and a different amount of points up for grabs. Students throw the word ball, teacher notes where it landed on the target, then the student goes and opens the ball up to see which new word they are working with. The tasks get progressively harder as you move towards the centre. So, for example, if the student throws a word ball and it lands in the outer ring, they would have to come up with a sentence that uses that word, if the word ball lands right on the bull's eye, they must come up with a definition or description for that word. You can play this in teams and add up the points as you go.

### 4. Bingo



**Time to prepare:** 5 minutes to prepare the bingo cards using online generator. Again, students could make their own with pen and paper to save you time.

**Resources:** 1 bingo card per student

**How to play:** Students have a bingo card with 9 new words on. As you give clues (a mixture of descriptions, images, metaphors etc.) they cross off the words on their card and shout bingo as soon as they have crossed off all their new words!

## 5. Jeopardy

**Time to prepare:** 15-20 minutes to prepare questions

**Resources:** Question cards or questions on powerpoint

**How to play:** You give the answer and the students must buzz in with the 'correct' question. You've got two options for your answer. You could say the newly learned word, e.g. "heterogeneous" and the students would have to say something along the lines of "which adjective describes something that is different?" OR you could say "this adjective describes something that is different" for which the correct question would be "what does heterogeneous mean?" You can play this in teams and award points for each correct question.



## 6. Categories

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes. Again, get those students to do it for each other if you want to save time!

**Resources:** Create 4-8 lists of 15-20 words each

**How to play:** in teams or individually



You give the word lists to the students and ask them to devise categories of 3+ words.

Points can be awarded for the most categories generated, or for the most imaginative. Nouns generally work best, but you can make lists with just verbs or adjectives. Whilst this seems like a

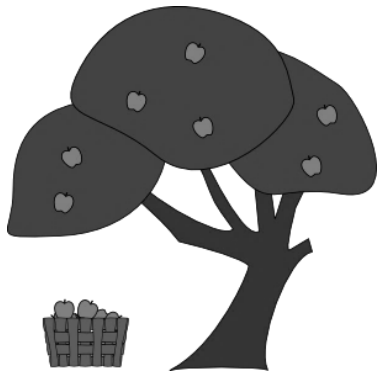
simple activity, it encourages deep thinking about the qualities of words.



## 7. Word harvest (This works best with younger students)

Time to prepare: 20 minutes but resources can be reused and/or edited

Resources: Illustration of a tree on wall or powerpoint, 2 buckets or baskets, note cards of vocabulary terms.



**How to play:** Attach a category label to each bucket, attach terms to tree (2 categories of equal numbers). For example, you could have one team looking for words that were in the category of change (alter, adjust, modify, amend, edit etc) and one team looking for words that were in the category of keeping the same (maintain, preserve, retain, prolong etc) or one team could look for verbs, one for adjectives.

Write the newly learned vocabulary items on the cards and 'hang' these on the tree using blu-tack.

2 teams lineup by their basket and take turns to run to the tree and "pick" a word from their category and return it to their team category. Next student goes until all appropriate terms are picked.

You can have more than 2 teams, but just think about how much space you have at your 'tree!'

## 8. Opposites attract!

Time to prepare: 5 minutes

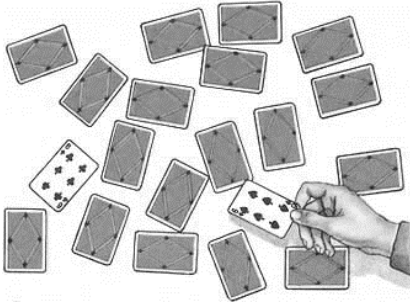
Resources: Cards and tape

**How to play:** Each student is given a card with a new vocabulary item on it and the student tapes this to their shirt. The students must find their opposite - the antonym of their word. The teacher gives the cue to find the other half of the antonym. If you have a noisy class, this game can be played in



silence and within a time limit! You can award points for the pairs that find each other first.

### 9. Two of a kind



**Time to prepare:** 5 minutes

**Resources:** Cards with new vocabulary items on them

**How to play:** this game can be played in pairs or groups. Students lay the cards out face down. They take it in turns to flip over 2 cards. If they are synonyms, students can

keep the pair and continue, earning themselves 1 point. If not, the opposite team or student takes their turn. It's useful for students to explain the meaning of each word they turn over before they go for their second card.

### 10. Name it!

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes

**Resources:** Images depicting vocabulary items (these can be as literal or as abstract/metaphorical as you like). 2 mini whiteboards.

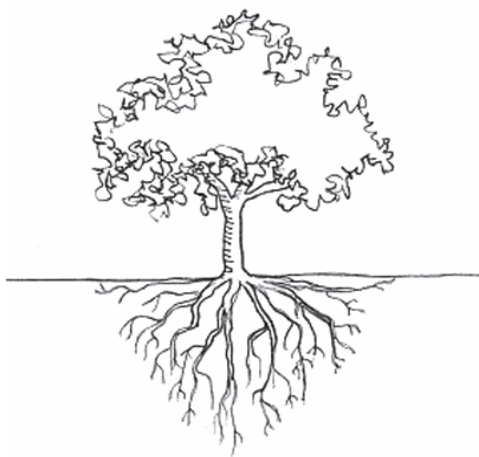
**How to play:** Place the images, face down in a container. Divide the class into 2 teams. One person from each team comes up, takes a picture, looks at it, and hands it to the teacher. The student then writes the word or phrase on their team's mini whiteboard. If it's correct, the teacher gives the OK sign and gives the team a point. The player then returns to their team and tags the next player. The team who gets the most points at the end of the allocated time wins!

### 11. Root relay

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes to build bank of roots and affixes

**Resources:** Card (selection of 3 different colours)





**How to play:** Split the class in to 2 teams. At the front of the class, place 3 different groups of cards - roots, prefixes and suffixes (on different colours if you want to make it easier). One member of each team must dash to the front and collect one card, then another member must collect a second card. The teams keep collecting cards until they have made a word. The first team to have made a word wins the points.

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### References:

Marzano, R. (2013)

Scott, Miller & Flinspach (2012)

