

Vocabulary Games for Middle School

By [Bryan Cohen](#), eHow Contributor
updated: May 27, 2010

Learning vocabulary can be fun.

There are many challenges these days for the [educator](#) attempting to teach vocabulary. With the new social focus on brevity in text messages, Facebook and Twitter, students may be relying on fewer words to explain themselves than they have in the past. This means that a teacher must [work](#) twice as hard to reinforce vocabulary and to stress its importance. To supplement standard memorization drills, vocabulary [games](#) can help to keep a student engaged in the lesson.

Bluff

2. Divide your class into two different teams. Write a vocabulary word on the board. The [students](#) who think they know the answer can stand up. Also, students who are bluffing that they know the answer can also stand. The teacher calls on a student at random to define the word. If the student gets it, his team gets points for every team member that is standing. If the student does not get it, the team loses points for every team member standing. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Back Words - variation of "Kick Me"

3. Create enough sheets of paper with a vocabulary word on each for every member of the classroom. Tape them to the backs of all of [your students](#). The students must go around the room asking only yes or no questions to determine what their words are. At the end of the activity have everyone sit back at their desks and guess their words. You can discuss how each student came to find his word as additional practice.

Password

4. Divide your classroom into two teams and prepare a stack of index cards with vocabulary words on them. Each team sends one member to the front of the classroom. A member of one team takes an index card and attempt to get his teammate to guess by giving one-word synonyms of the vocabulary word. The other team does the same and the first team to guess their vocabulary word correctly gets a point. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Drawing Pictures

5. Separate your class into two different groups and provide each member of one set with a sheet of paper and a pencil. Also, give each person in that group a vocabulary

word. Have that group draw a picture of a vocabulary word and then give the picture to a member of the opposite group. The student must guess what vocabulary word the picture corresponds to. There should be no words or letters drawn into the picture. You can have each correct answer equal a point for that player if you wish.

Eliminator

6. Eliminator is a game of speed and it can get your class really excited about vocabulary. Have two students come to the front of the class and sit in chair. You read them a word and the players race to see who can get their hands up the fastest. The player who gets his hand up first gets to answer. If he answers correctly, he gets a point and stays up and a new challenger comes up. Give a new word and if the person who got the first one right gets another he gets 2 points. The point total keeps doubling the longer the winner stays up. If the challenger wins, he gets one point and a new challenger comes up. At the end of the class, the student with the most points wins.

Middle School Vocabulary Activities

By [Ann Wolters](#), eHow Contributor

updated: March 24, 2010

Reading is a great vocabulary-building activity.

A large vocabulary, an asset in all areas of communication, helps [students](#) throughout their educational [career](#) and beyond. [Educators](#) play an important role in helping middle [school](#) students build their vocabulary, which in turn improves students' [confidence](#) as well as their academic performance. When teachers find ways to fully engage students in the learning process, vocabulary learning becomes more enjoyable.

Three Questions

2. Rather than just asking students to look words up in a dictionary, help them to understand the word on a deeper level by asking them to answer three questions about each new word: **What is it? What is it like? What are some examples?** By coming up with analogies and examples, students can see the word in a broader context and demonstrate whether they have a good grasp of the word. As learners think more deeply about a word and make connections between familiar and unfamiliar terms, they solidify their learning.

Vocabulary Bingo

3. **Games** like bingo provide an interesting and motivating way to review and reinforce vocabulary words. Provide students with a blank bingo card, with a five-square by five-square grid. Ask each student to fill in the spaces with vocabulary words he has recently studied (from a provided list of 25 or more words). Once each student has a prepared game card, the teacher calls out a definition of one of the words. Students mark the corresponding word on their bingo card or place a square of colored paper on it. When one player has a row of five words down or across, she calls out, "Bingo."

Password

4. This fast-paced motivating game offers a competitive (or cooperative) way to review vocabulary. Divide the class into two teams, and explain that they need to help their classmates identify a specific vocabulary word without saying the word or any part of it. One student from the first team stands facing the front of the class as the teacher writes a vocabulary word on the board. Students on that team take turns providing a definition or explanation of the word in an effort to have the student guess the word within one minute. Then, the second team gets a turn. Teams alternate having a player at the front of the room until the class has reviewed all words or time is up.

Reading

5. "Drop Everything and Read" is an example of what can be a school-wide initiative to provide students and teachers alike with time for sustained silent reading. With such a program, educators can add more reading to the school day, providing children a chance to gain new vocabulary through reading. The International Reading Association confirms that readers develop knowledge of new words through incidental contact. Thus, the more new words students encounter in their reading of texts rich in new words, the more their vocabulary increases. (Of course, texts need to be comprehensible and not too far above the reader's level.)

Vocabulary Card Games

By [Rebecca Bagwell](#), eHow Contributor
updated: July 22, 2010

Students creating their own vocabulary cards learn new words more quickly.

Creating vocabulary cards to learn new words helps [students](#) to independently study new vocabulary. Use these self-made vocabulary cards in class for interactive review [games](#) to prepare [your students](#) for quizzes. Play matching games and bingo as a class or in pairs to check your students' progress in learning their vocabulary words.

Matching Game

2. Divide the class into two teams with each team receiving one set of vocabulary cards. Each team should pass out the cards until all gone. The students should place the vocabulary word up and the definition down. Pass out another set of vocabulary cards with the definition up, placing one card on each desk so that each student has one vocabulary definition and one or two vocabulary words. Instruct your students to cover the cards with their hands so that their neighbors cannot peek. Start with a student calling out his definition. The team player who calls out the right vocabulary word gets the point for their team. Alternate the teams calling out the vocabulary definition. The team with the most points wins the game.

Card Bingo

3. Pick 25 vocabulary words from their cards. Each student should line up her vocabulary cards five across and five down on her desk to make a bingo grid. Pass out pennies so each student can mark her vocabulary words as you call out definitions. Your students should match the right word with the definition you call out. After they have a chance to mark their cards, call out the correct word to check their answer. They do not mark the word after you call it out and must remove their penny if they marked the wrong card. The first student who gets five across, down or diagonally wins the game. Play several times to review the vocabulary words adequately.

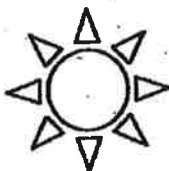
Stand Up Game

4. Place one vocabulary card on each student's desk. Instead of calling out definitions to the words, use alternative ways to identify the vocabulary words. For instance, call out synonyms to each of the vocabulary words. If the student's word matches the synonym, he should stand up and share his word. Encourage your students to write down on a scratch piece of paper any of their vocabulary words and synonyms they could not identify to study later. Continue until everyone has had a chance to stand up with her word. Alternatives to playing with synonyms include using root words, word origins or parts of speech.

Expository Vocabulary Teaching Tips

1. **Concept Maps:** On a large sheet of chart paper, have students work in pairs to map key terms from a chapter using categories. Post maps around room. Have groups circulate and learn from each others' maps.

2. **Picture Words:** Have students draw pictures or graphics that represent vocabulary words. **EXAMPLE:**



Celestial



3. Have students work in pairs to rewrite vocabulary words from their text in a way that a much younger student could understand.

EXAMPLE: 8th grade science word: Resistance; 2nd grade definition: When you don't want to do what your mommy wants you to do.

4. Play "Vocabulary Bingo." Develop a bingo card with key vocabulary written on it. Read out "cloze" sentences that leave out the vocabulary. Have students fill in their Bingo card as you read. When students shout, "Bingo" have them read out the complete sentences so that the class can hear the correct answers each time you have a winner. Winners get rewarded, of course. This is a good way to review for a test.

5. **Create vocabulary anticipation guides.** Have students predict whether they agree or disagree with your definitions. Discuss context clues and word clues such as prefixes and suffixes and root words. After reading the text, redo the guide, and rewrite incorrect answers.

6. Have students act out vocabulary. Put them in groups of two or three and have them come up and do charades of their vocabulary words.

7. Create vocabulary matching cards on laminated cut outs or card stock

8. Set up 3-4 different learning stations with a different vocabulary strategy at each station. Have students rotate through the centers in groups. Help students to find the strategy that works best for their learning style.

