Vocabulary Game Directions

Trading Cards: Use the templates given or 3x5 cards and have students write their own definition, illustration, and any other link they choose (antonym, synonym etc.) Once they are finished students can trade cards.

Musical Spelling: Have students write spelling or vocabulary words. When the music starts the students move around their desk/table groups (dancing). This will allow them a brain break between thinking and writing.

Stomp/Clap: Students stomp and clap out a beat to their vocabulary words (and even the definitions). They can perform it and/or teach other friends. This works amazingly well with musically inclined students.

Cup Stacking: Write the definition on the bottom of the cup and the definition on the inside of the cup (along the rim). When a student knows the definition they can stack the cup. This can work well when 2 teams of students are working to try to build the highest tower. You can have a person from the opposite team checking the definition as they go.

What’s My Word? (Headbands/Lanyards): If you are using headbands – put words and definitions on 3x5 cards. You can clip the word/definition to the sentence strip and attach them around the student’s heads. The students walk around the room describing what the others are without saying what they are (this allows them to use antonyms/synonyms in real life – and their own words to describe). Once they find what they think is their match they come to check with the teacher. You can also have them write it down as a match (on a clipboard). Switch up as many times as you have time for. This can also be done with lanyards. I like putting the clear nametag holders on lanyards and hanging them on the back of students (so they can’t see it). It’s played the same way as the headbands.
High Five Me: I like to use a loose rubber band and a dye cut hand. Some hands have the vocabulary words and others contain the definition. You put the dye cut hand in the hand of the student and lightly put the rubber band around it. The band holds the hand in place. Students wander around the room to find their vocabulary match. When they find each other they high five! When you hear the “slap” you know someone needs to be checked. You can also have these students write down their match prior to getting another word/definition.

Lily Pad Jump: laminate lily pads (or frogs) so they last longer. Use marker to write on the pads (vocab/definition). At each lily pad they have a choice to jump one way or the other depending on the definition. This takes some set up time, but it’s really fun and helps the students who really have difficulty with vocabulary words.

Rolling Dice: Use a rolling box and put prompts in each side (synonym, antonym, definition, illustration, a real life experience using the word, a sentence using the word). Allow students to roll the cube and write/draw (depending on the roll) for the vocabulary word they are working on. You can do the same with regular dice but have each item linked to a number (1-6).

I have who has? Students sit in a circle. They all have either a vocabulary word or a definition (with a link to the next card). Again this takes set up but it’s really fun. The first students says something like, “I have gregarious. Who has happy?” “I have happy! Who has sullen?” and it goes on and on until their all done. This is perfect for an end of the quarter review.
Lunch bunch wordies: This is one of my reward systems. When students use vocabulary words throughout the day they get something (I used pompoms – you can do tally marks etc.). The student with the most at a certain time (weekly, monthly, etc.) gets to have lunch with the teacher. You could pick the top three students etc.

Awesome analogies: I would put an open analogy up every morning. Students put their guess in a jar in the morning. The first correct answer I would pick prior to lunch would get a candy to bring to lunch with them. (you can see an example on the slide show)

Awesome Analogy Match Up: This is the same as the Awesome Analogy but you allow multiple answers so that there is choice. These are great for teaching cloze sentences too!

Proclaim Your Vocabulary: (pom poms) This is another behavior management system that I use to get them to use words throughout the day. This uses a shoe holder, clear cups, and pom poms. When students use vocabulary they get a pom pom. At a certain time of the week/month etc. the student with the most pom poms gets a prize.