Handout 7.2: Vocabulary Games

TWENTY QUESTIONS

Directions:

1. Choose one person to start. This person must think of a content word or phrase. To make the game easier, he or she can classify the object as animal, vegetable or mineral.
2. Have another player ask a question about the word or phrase that can be answered by “yes” or “no”.
3. The person who has the word or phrase in mind should answer the questions with a simple “yes” or “no”.
4. After hearing the answer, the questioner is allowed to guess the word or phrase. The players are allowed to ask a total of 20 questions.
5. If a player correctly guesses the word or phrase, the winning questioner now thinks of a new word or phrase and the game begins again.

For students to successfully participate in this game, the teacher may need to model the process for the class using a small group of students. The teacher may wish to brainstorm with the class, appropriate content-based words or phrases. Before the game begins you may ask each player to write down a question they might want to ask.

CHARADES

Charades is a game of pantomimes, meaning that you have to "act out" a phrase without speaking, while the other members of your team try to guess what the word or phrase is. The objective is for your team to guess the word or phrase as quickly as possible.

Materials:

- stopwatch
- notepad and pencil for scorekeeping
- vocabulary cards
- envelope

Directions:

Divide the players into two teams, preferably of equal size. Divide the blank slips of paper between the two teams. Select a neutral timekeeper/scorekeeper, or pick members from each team to take turns. Agree on how many rounds to play. Review the gestures and hand signals.
The teams temporarily adjourn to opposite sides of the room, to come up with content vocabulary words or phrases to put on their pieces of paper. The slips of paper are then placed in the envelope.

Each round of the game proceeds as follows:

- A player from Team A draws a phrase slip from Team B's envelope. After he/she has had a short time to review the slip, the timekeeper for team B notes the time and tells the player to start. Team A then has three minutes to guess the phrase. If they figure it out, the timekeeper records how long it took. If they do not figure it out in three minutes, the timekeeper announces that the time is up, and records a time of three minutes.
- A player from Team B draws a phrase slip from Team A's envelope, and play proceeds as above.

Normally the game continues until every player has had a chance to "act out" a word or phrase. The score for each team is the total time that the team needed for all of the rounds. The team with the smallest score wins the game.

**Gestures:**

To act out a phrase, one usually starts by indicating how many words are in the phrase. From then on, the usual procedure is to act out the words one at a time (although not necessarily in the order that they appear in the phrase). In some cases, however, it may make more sense to try to act out the "entire concept" of the phrase at once.

- Number of words in the phrase: Hold up the number of fingers.
- Which word you're working on: Hold up the number of fingers again.
- Number of syllables in the word: Lay the number of fingers on your arm.
- Which syllable you're working on: Lay the number of fingers on your arm again.
- Length of word: Make a "little" or "big" sign as if you were measuring a fish.
- "Sounds like": Cup one hand behind an ear.
- "Plural": link your little fingers.
- "Past tense": wave your hand over your shoulder toward your back.

**PICTIONARY**

Materials:

- Vocabulary cards for each group
- Chart paper or dry erase boards for drawing
- Markers
- Timer or watch
Academic Language Learners Workshop

Directions: Divide the class into groups of four, two players for each team. Make sure each team has blank paper and a pen or pencil. Distribute the vocabulary cards to each foursome and ask a student to shuffle the cards and place them word side down on the table. Advise students that each two-member team will have one minute to draw and guess the word or term. Once the team member actually guesses the word, then that person has 15 seconds to say something meaningful about the word or term. If the team guesses the word correctly before the time is up, that team is awarded one point. A watch or a timer can be used to monitor the one minute rule. Depending on the vocabulary terms given the teacher needs to decide if the student who is drawing should be able to use symbols, numbers, or letters to convey the meaning. Decide how many points a team needs to win the game based on the time available for the activity. The game continues until all of the terms have been guessed or until time runs out.

PYRAMID CATEGORIES

Materials:

- Large sheet of butcher paper on which a triangle is drawn following this model

Directions:

- Divide the class into two teams - A and B
- A pair of students from team A comes to the front of the classroom and places their backs against the butcher paper which is hung in front of the room.
- The teacher then writes in the names of various categories within a content area such as literary terms, in an LA class (metaphor, simile etc.). The members of team A who are sitting at their tables, have a designated amount of time (about one or two minutes) to
have the pair at the front of the classroom name the category. The teacher points at the first category, and the team members shout out examples that belong in that category. When the pair up front guesses the category, the teacher points to the next category, and so on until either time is up or Team A has completed all of the categories in the pyramid. Team A then adds up and records its score. The teacher then creates another pyramid with categories for Team B to play.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Materials:

- Content word or phrase cards arranged in “clusters”
- Survival of the Fittest template

Directions:

- The teacher creates several “clusters” each with 6 word or phrase cards. Each cluster should have 5 related words or phrases and one unrelated word or phrase.
- Select one student to read a cluster of word cards and write them on the board.
- Students work in pairs to determine which word does not fit with the other words in the cluster. They eliminate that word and then create a word or picture label to describe all of the remaining words in the cluster. Then the pair must generate a new word to replace the eliminated word that fits with the remaining words in the cluster to fill in the Survival of the Fittest template.
- The pair to complete these tasks first wins the round.
- Repeat with another cluster of word or phrase cards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survival of the Fittest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What label would you write or draw to describe how these words are alike?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. (your replacement word)

**PASSWORD**

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.

Downloaded from http://mnwelementary-daily5andcafe.wikispaces.com/file/view/Vocabulary+Games+for+Middle+School%5B1%5D.pdf

**SEVEN-UP VOCABULARY**

Seven-up Vocabulary is a twist on the classic classroom game Seven-Up, Heads-Up. Seven students are "it" and are given index cards with a vocabulary word written on them. Everyone puts their heads down on their desks and holds out their hands. Each "it" student places a vocabulary card in a student's outstretched hand. When the teacher says, "Heads-up, seven-up," the students with the cards in their hands stand and guess who picked them. If the selected student guesses the correct person and is able to define the vocabulary word on her card, she gets to be “it” in the next round. Downloaded from http://www.ehow.com/info_8093520_vocabulary-game-ideas.html 8/28/12