

Course Topic: Teaching Vocabulary**Course Instructor:**

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Course Synopsis:

When teaching vocabulary we want to reinforce the information we are giving students verbally and in writing with visual information. This allows us to provide further visual information that visual learners can process to go along with the verbal information for auditory learners. We can also address the needs of tactile and kinesthetic learners by using activities that require student interaction with the learning materials. We can accomplish all of these goals through the use of flash cards. This session will present 20 flash card activities that allow us as teachers to meet the needs of students with all language learning styles.

Course Agenda:

1. Using Flash Cards Effectively
2. Sources for Flash Cards
3. Activities for Using Flash Cards to Teach Vocabulary

1. Using Flash Cards Effectively

Flash cards add a visual element to vocabulary learning, and can be motivating for visual learners.

Here are some things to think about when using flash cards to teach vocabulary:

1. Flash cards should be bright, colourful and visually appealing
2. Flash cards should be large enough for all students in the class to see, unless they are cards for students to use only in pairs
3. Flash cards can be used in conjunction with word cards (with the vocabulary words spelled out)
4. Flash cards are useful at any stage of a vocabulary lesson; they can be used to present, practice and recycle vocabulary
5. Flash card activities should involve a lot of repetition, so that students can automatically associate the pictures with the words

2. Sources for Flash Cards

1. Buy them
2. Make them
 - a. Use pictures from magazines
 - b. Draw simple pictures and colour them in
 - c. Use clip art from the internet
 - d. Print out free flash cards from the internet
3. Have students make them

Visit these websites for free flash cards to download and print out:

- <https://www.eslflashcards.com>
- www.mes-english.com/flashcards.php
- www.free-clipart-pictures.net

3. Activities for Using Flash Cards to Teach Vocabulary

There are many flash card activities to use to teach vocabulary. Here is a small sample.

1. Drills: The teacher shows the flash card and says the word. Students repeat the word after the teacher. This gets repeated several times. The teacher puts the flash card on the board and writes the word underneath. The teacher introduces all of the words in the set this way. The teacher then drills all of the words together several times. The teacher then erases the words underneath the cards one by one and asks the students to say the words.

2. Running Drill: The teacher places the flash cards around the room. The teacher says a word and students run to stand next to or near the card that the teacher says. Students repeat the word as a class. The teacher then says the next word, and the activity is repeated.
3. Point To: The teacher arranges the flash cards on the board or around the room. The teacher says to the class "Point to..." and the word for something on a flash card. All students have to point to the correct flash card for the word the teacher said.
4. Guessing Game: The teacher shows the top or bottom or a small portion of a flash card, using paper or another card to hide the rest. The students guess what is on the flash card. If students can't guess, the teacher gradually reveals more and more of the card. As an alternative, the teacher shows the flash card very quickly and students have to guess what is on it.
5. Flash Card Whispering Telephone: The teacher places the flash cards on the board. The teacher divides the students into two teams. The two teams each form a line moving backwards from the board. The teacher tells the first student in each line a word from one of the flash cards. Those students whisper the word to their teammate behind them. That teammate then whispers the word to the student behind them, and so on down the line. The last member of the team runs to the front of the class and grabs the correct flash card from the board. The first team to grab the correct flash card wins the point. Repeat the process until all students have had a chance to be at the end of the line.
6. Drawing: Students work in pairs. One partner gets a flash card and the other gets a blank sheet of paper. The student with the flash card describes what is on their flash card for their partner, but cannot say the word. The other student has to draw what their partner describes until they guess the word. Students then switch roles with a different flash card. For a variation, the teacher describes a card and all students draw what the teacher describes until one student guesses the word.
7. Odd One Out: The teacher puts a set of four flash cards in a group on the board. One card doesn't go with the others. Students have to tell the teacher which card doesn't belong in the group and why. Repeat the activity numerous times so that every card in the set gets singled out for not belonging to a group.
8. Charades: Students take turns coming to the front of the class to select a flash card and then act out the vocabulary word on the card. Other students have to guess what is on the flash card, based on the actions of the student.
9. Flash Card Grid: The teacher puts nine cards on the board in a three by three grid. The teacher traces the grid around the cards in chalk or a marker, to make squares around each flash card. The teacher says each word, going across the grid and then on to the next row. Students repeat each word after the teacher. After completing the grid several times this way, the teacher takes one card away, but continues to drill the words, so students have to remember what was in that now empty space on the grid. The teacher continues to take cards away and drill the class until all of the cards have been taken away.
10. Memory Games: The teacher places all the cards on the board or on the floor. The teacher gives students time to memorize the cards. Students close their eyes. The teacher removes one or two cards.

Students open their eyes and have to figure out which card is missing. As an alternative for older students: the teacher places all of the cards on the board. The students are given several minutes to memorize the cards. The teacher removes all of the cards. The students then have to write down all of the words they remember from the flash cards.

11. Guess What You Are: Each student gets a flash card on their back. They should not know which card they have. They mix with other students, asking questions “Is it a ...?” in order to guess what is on their back. The activity ends when all students have guessed what they are. As an alternative, use pairs of flash cards. Two students get the same card on their backs and they have to ask questions to find out if they have the same card. The activity ends when all students have found their partners.

12. Flash Card Speed Competition: Each group of students gets a set of the same flash cards. Students put the flash cards face up on a desk and stand around the desk. The teacher says one of the words for a flash card. Students compete with the other members of their group to be the first student to grab the correct flash card.

13. Story Writing: Students choose 5-6 flashcards. They have to incorporate those flashcards into a short story or description.

14. Similarities and Differences: Show the students two flashcards and ask students to write how these two things are similar to each other. Then have them write how these two things are different from each other.

15. Impromptu Speeches: Have a deck of flashcards and tell your students they will take turns choosing one and then speaking about the card for 30 seconds or a minute. They can say whatever they want as long as it is somehow related to the flashcard.

16. Concentration: You need two sets of flashcards for each small group. Students place both sets of cards face down on a desk, making sure they have first mixed all of the cards up. Students in the small group take turns turning over two cards and saying the words represented by the cards out loud. If the two cards match, the student keeps the cards. If the cards are different, the cards are turned back over again in their original places. The student in the small group with the most pairs at the end of the game is the winner.

17. Four Corners: Hang one flash card in each of the four corners of the room. Students stand in the middle of the room. The teacher calls out one of the words represented by the flash cards. Students run to stand in the correct corner of the room.

18. Correct or Incorrect: Put a line of tape on the floor and designate one side of the room as correct and the other side incorrect. Hold up a flash card and say its word. If students think you have said the correct word they move to the correct side of the room. If they think you have said the incorrect word, they move to the incorrect side of the room.

19. Pictionary: Divide the students into two teams. One student from each team comes up to the board. Show a flash card only to those two students. The two students have to draw the flash card, at the same time, so that their teams can guess what they are drawing. The first team to guess the word gets a point. The team with the most points is the winner.

20. **Speed Lines:** Students stand in two lines facing the teacher. The first students in each line are the players. Show a flashcard to the two students. The first student to correctly guess the word is the winner and gets one point for their team. The process is repeated with the rest of the students. The team with the most points at the end is the winner.

Remember: Flash cards are a great tool to use when you're teaching your students vocabulary. Flash cards can be used at all language proficiency levels, all ages and at all stages of your lesson.

Thanks for participating!

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