

Vocabulary

Keep in mind these suggestions when teaching vocabulary.

1. Use as many flash cards, objects (realia), and pictures as possible in order to reinforce the words visually. This will help hold interest and aid students in remembering new vocabulary.
2. Define the words and also give many contextual examples in sentences, expressions, and situations. Also help define and contrast the new vocabulary with synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms.
3. When selecting vocabulary, concentrate on practical, high frequency, functional vocabulary and expressions.
4. Do not overburden your students with too many vocabulary items at any one time. Introduce ten or so new words per lesson.

Suggested Activities

1. Flash Cards: Write new words on 5x8 index cards and use them in your lessons. Daily add a few new words. Mix them up and use them for review. Continually add to them until you have developed a valuable word bank. Use the cards for pronunciation practice, drills, recognition (i.e. Have students make complete sentences with the words.) dictations, spelling bees and other word games.
2. Conversation Practice: Cut out pictures describing every-day life from newspapers and magazines and paste them on construction paper. Then, on the back of each picture, write four or five vocabulary words represented in the picture (a noun, a verb, an adjective, and a preposition.). Even if many more words could be added, limit the number. Divide the class into pairs or small groups and distribute the pictures. (See the section on pairing and grouping.) Tell the students to use the vocabulary on the back of the pictures to identify the objects and discuss what is happening. As a variation, write a list of question words on the chalkboard and have students use them in asking one another questions. Walk around the

classroom, listening, and correcting errors and spending time with the weaker students. Let groups exchange pictures to continue the exercise.

3. Tic-tac-toe: Draw a tic-tac-toe grid and fill it in with vocabulary. Divide the class into two teams, each team assigned the symbol "X" or "O." Then flip a coin to determine which team begins. Have the students take turns in an orderly fashion by going down the rows. Tell the first student of the first team to use any word from the grid in a sentence. If the sentence is correct, replace the word with the team's symbol (X or O), otherwise, leave the word. Go on to the first person on the other team. Continue in this manner until one team wins by having three consecutive X's or O's in a row vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Keep score by giving one point for each game won. After each game, replace all the words in the grid with a different category of words each time, such as all prepositions, all verbs, all antonym pairs, etc.

4. Crossword Puzzle: Draw a grid and words on the chalkboard. Divide the class into two teams and flip a coin to determine which team goes first. Have the first student of the first team go to the chalkboard and write a word that uses one letter of an existing word in the crossword. If the word fits and is correctly spelled, then give one point for every letter of the new word. Then, go on to the first student of the other team. If the word is incorrect, erase it and go to the opposite team.

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