

# What is VOCABULARY?

*Vocabulary* refers to students' knowledge of and memory for word meanings. This includes:

- *receptive vocabulary* (words students understand when they are read or spoken to);
- and**
- *expressive vocabulary* (words students know well enough to use in speaking and writing).

Having a large receptive and expressive vocabulary assists students with their reading comprehension. A strong vocabulary improves all areas of communication – listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

# Vocabulary

## Activities

### Everyday Vocabulary Activities

- ❑ Read aloud to your child! Even after your child is able to read on their own, continue to read to him/her. Choose books above your child's reading level, which typically have a broader vocabulary. Through read alouds and talking about the book using words from the text, you are actually teaching your child new words and how they are used.
- ❑ When cooking, have your child help you read the recipe out loud. Pause to introduce and explain new words. Ask questions about what you're doing to support vocabulary development.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/PKvOlv30H8Y> <https://youtu.be/y2uEltfyfM>
- ❑ Have conversations with your children during dinner. Talking about your child's day at school, weekend plans, or family memories can help grow your child's vocabulary.
- ❑ Play Bingo with your child using common contractions. Create a Bingo sheet with completed contractions, and choose from a stack of cards with the broken up contractions. For example, if you drew the card "did not", you would look for the contraction "didn't" on your Bingo sheet.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/KfFadqUFYjM>
- ❑ Talk as much as possible about what you see, wherever you are. Have a conversation with your child at the store, describing the items you see. Using words such as first, next, and last, describe the process for pumping gas at the station. Talk about what you taste, smell, feel, and see as you follow a new recipe to make dinner.
- ❑ Watch favorite movies and television shows with your child with a focus on listening for big words to start using at home. Add these words into your everyday conversations with your child.  
Example: "Remember how in Power Rangers they *morphed*, and that meant they changed into superheroes? Can you *morph* into your school clothes?"

# Learning Word Meaning Activities

- Use pictures from magazines, advertisements, and newspapers to create word collages to show the meanings of new and difficult words. Having a picture to think about will help your child remember the meaning of the word.
- Write targeted vocabulary words on sticky notes and place them on a checkerboard. Play checkers together. When you land on a space with a vocabulary word, give the definition of the word and use it in a sentence to claim it.
- Before reading a book aloud, introduce any challenging or new words. Explain what the words mean and ask your child to say each word. While reading, point out the words and explain their meaning again.  
Examples: <https://youtu.be/F1h6xPV98JY>, <https://youtu.be/ibFW6nXYIkY>,  
<https://youtu.be/CwtaMw1Jgoc>
- Using a ball or soft stuffed animal, play “Vocabulary Hot Potato.” The person starting with the “potato” will call out a word, passing the “potato” while music plays. The person who ends up holding the “potato” when the music stops must give a definition and use the word in a sentence.

# Synonym and Antonym Activities

- Create a family “Bad Word” jar. Pick a few commonly overused words to go in the jar, such as *good* or *sad*. Listen for family members using the “Bad Words,” and encourage your child to think of more specific words to replace the “Bad Word.”

Example: “I had a *good* day; I made a 100 on my vocabulary test!”

“Don’t use that bad word! Use another word!”

“I had an *excellent* day; I made a 100 on my vocabulary test!”

- Name a word. Take turns brainstorming words that mean the same thing as the word that was named.

*Alternate version:* Play the game brainstorming words that mean the opposite of the word that was named.

## What are synonyms?

a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase

Example: *close* and *shut*

## What are antonyms?

a word opposite in meaning to another

Example: *good* and *bad*

# Word Connection Activities

- Play a word association game with your child. Call out a category name, and take turns brainstorming other words that make you think of the category word.

Example: “The category is ‘places to go on vacation.’”

“The beach!” “Theme parks!”

*Alternate version:* Write down the words as they are brainstormed. Afterward, have your child sort the words into other categories, based on their similarities. Have him/her explain what is similar about all of the words in their new categories.

Example: “I put *train*, *monorail*, *boats*, and *strollers* in the same category because they are all types of transportation people use at theme parks.”

- Practice vocabulary in the kitchen! Pick an ingredient and brainstorm as many words as you can to describe what it looks like, tastes like, feels like, and smells like. Discuss what other recipes use the same ingredient.

# Affixes Activities

- Using newspapers, magazines, cookbooks, or storybooks, have your child hunt for words with the targeted prefix or suffix, writing the words your child finds on a piece of paper. Once he/she has found several words, have your child break the words into the affix and the root and explain what the word means.

Example: "I found the word *unthinkable*! If I break it into the root and affixes, it is *un-think-able*. That means that if something is *unthinkable*, you are not able to think of it."

## The Most Common Prefixes

anti-, de-, dis-, en-, em-, fore-, in-, im-, il-, ir-, inter-, mid-, mis-, non-, over-, pre-, re-, semi-, sub-, super-, trans-, un-, under-

## The Most Common Suffixes

-able, -al, -ation, -ative, -ed, -eous, -en, -er, -es, -est, -ful, -ial, -ible, -ic, -ing, -ion, -ious, -itive, -ity, -ive, -less, -ly, -ment, -ness, -or, -ous, -s, -tion, -ty, -y

- Use craft supplies and items found around the house to make a tree. It can be drawn or 3D. At the bottom of the tree, have your child write or attach a card with a prefix or suffix on it. Write or add cards on the branches with words that have the targeted affix in it. Have your child explain what each word on the tree means, using the affix as a clue.

Example: "My prefix is *mis-*, and it means 'wrong.' So then *misjudge* means to judge wrongly, and *misbehave* means you behaved wrongly."

- Create a list of words with common suffixes that change the meaning of a word when added (these are inflectional endings). For example: "s" means plural, "ed" means something that already happened. Help your child work through the list to identify the base word and inflectional ending. Talk about how the meaning changes when a certain ending is added to the word.

Example: <https://youtu.be/bwJ0tnRTQZU>

- Talk about common prefixes and suffixes with your child. Ask them to read a word from a stack of cards and determine if the word has a prefix or a suffix. Help them underline the base word and circle the prefix or suffix on the card. Ask your child to sort the words with prefixes and suffixes into separate piles.

Example: <https://youtu.be/j8L7QZc7Zel>, <https://youtu.be/MULUBiHkE6Q>

- Write different roots, suffixes and affixes on building blocks. Have your child piece together different blocks to make words using different pieces. Have him/her write the complete word on a larger building block.

