

Help Increase Student Vocabulary

In Only 5 Minutes a Day

Subject: English, Vocabulary

Grades: 7 and up

True or False: In general, people with a larger and more developed English vocabulary earn more money and are promoted faster in business than people with a lesser developed vocabulary.

The answer, of course, is true. A good vocabulary is one of the keys to a successful career. And that belief isn't based on just anecdotal assumptions. There is, today, a wide body of research that irrefutably supports that claim. In fact, according to the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has been engaged in aptitude and vocabulary research since 1922, a larger vocabulary is not only an indicator of success in business, it is also "the best predictor of overall success in school and performance on the SAT-Verbal and other similar tests."

John J. Pikulski, Professor of Education at the University of Delaware, and Shane Templeton, Foundation Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Nevada, agree. "Our ability to function in today's complex social and economic worlds," they write, "is mightily affected by our language skills and the word knowledge."

Given the importance of vocabulary, then, how can teachers and parents alike motivate their children and students to continue to increase and improve their vocabulary — and maybe even develop a love for words — beyond the elementary grades?

One answer just might be WordTeasers: College Prep — an innovative new educational game that is as perfect for the classroom as it is for the dinner table. WordTeasers is designed to make learning and using new words fun and enjoyable — one word at a time — both in and out of the classroom.

The idea behind WordTeasers is simple: challenge players to answer a provocative, amusing, or thought-provoking question or statement that uses a new word. For example, a WordTeaser game card might challenge someone to "**bloviate** about your best friend

for 30 seconds”; “make a sound you might hear in an **aviary**”; or “name a **salubrious** activity you do every day.” The back of the card provides a definition of the word, word function (or part of speech), and pronunciation guide.

According to Susan Flora, founder of WordTeasers, the game incorporates many of the vocabulary building strategies that researchers say are important in the development of a strong vocabulary. “WordTeasers promotes active engagement in learning; it presents new words in rich and varied contexts; and it promotes group learning,” she says.

“I’ve seen several lively debates develop,” says Flora, “with the WordTeaser challenge question: “Is there every a good reason to **prevaricate**?” as well as some friendly squabbles with the question, “Who is the most **loquacious** person in your family?” And in every instance the words “prevaricate” and “loquacious” are now a permanent part of the players’ vocabulary.

WordTeasers can be used to help to improve vocabulary in as little as five minutes a day. It can be used in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. It can be used as a game among small groups; as a discussion starter at the beginning of a class; or as the basis for ideas for writing assignments.

The bottom line, says Flora, is that WordTeasers is a great way to get kids talking, laughing, thinking...and learning new words. And, according to Professors Pikulski and Templeton, building a strong vocabulary is critical to any student’s education. As they conclude: “Perhaps the greatest tools we can give students for succeeding, not only in their education but more generally in life, is a large, rich vocabulary and the skills for using those words.”

For more Teacher Lesson Plans and Resources go to www.wordteasers.com.