

# Vocabulary Activities

## No to Low Prep Activities

### Vocab Race

This is a very simple activity where you split students into teams and have them take turns writing vocabulary words on the board. Within the teams students take turns coming to the front and writing one word each. You can ask them to choose words from a theme, such as animals or sports, choose any word they know, or choose words from a premade list, such as the vocabulary from the chapter they are on. You can score based on the number of words, number of correct words, or even give bonus points for long words.

\*You can also have them do this on a whiteboard/poster at their desks if you have students with mobility limitations

### English Shiritori

Split students into teams. The students from each team take turns writing words on the board. Each word must start with the last letter of the word before it. Set a timer for your desired time. The winner is the group with the most correct words by the time the timer goes.

### Hot Seat

Have one student come to the front of the room. Show the rest of the students the vocab word. They need to describe the word (without using it) until the person at the front gets the word right. This can also be done in teams. You can make it a taboo game by adding words the students aren't allowed to use. You can also make it the student at the front giving the hints.

### UFO

A variation of hangman. Draw a stick figure on the board and ask a volunteer to draw their face on it. Draw a UFO above the figure (draw as many windows on the UFO as rounds you intend to play, eg. 3). The class must guess letters to fill in the letters of the word (or phrase), which should be vocab taken from the current unit. Each incorrect guess removes a limb from the figure, and at 5 incorrect guesses, the aliens abduct the student (ask them to draw their face again in one of the windows). If the word/phrase is guessed correctly, the figure's limbs reappear and the aliens move to a new target (ask for another student volunteer). Repeat for as many rounds as you like.

## Moderate Prep Activities

### BINGO

Prepare an A3 size Bingo sheet. My JTE always includes a list of the vocab they can choose from at the top, with about 8 choices per letter. The students fill the Bingo sheet with the words they would like, then the ALT reads out the words and the students circle the ones they have written. For example: B-hello I-world N-...

We usually do 6 rounds (6 Bs, 6 Is etc.).

### Jumbled Letters - Whiteboards

Create a powerpoint with your vocabulary words, one word on each slide. Duplicate each slide so that you have two of each, one after the other. On the first one, change the vocabulary word so that the letters are in the wrong order. That way, you can show the students the jumbled word first. They can write the word they think it is on their whiteboard. Then, show them the next slide with the unjumbled word to check the answer. (You can also use the Powerpoint Transitions Morph function to make the letters move from their jumbled position to their correct position.)

### Telephone Pictionary

Split the students into teams. Each student gets a booklet with a word (or phrase) on the first page. They draw a picture to match the word/phrase and fold the book to hide the word/phrase. The next student looks at the picture and then writes a word/phrase to match it. They then hide the picture and hand it to the next person, who draws a picture. This pattern continues until the last person. Give the students time at the end to share the pictures and words with their group.

### Charades

Divide players into groups of 3-5. Prepare several bundles of vocabulary cards and pass out a set to each group. In each round (1-2 minutes), Guessers hold up a vocabulary card to their forehead (without looking at it) while all other group members give them hints (without saying the keyword), completing as many cards within the time limit as possible. The difficulty of this activity varies drastically on the types of hints the team can give the guesser. The easiest format lets the team use Japanese and gestures to express the vocab word. A more difficult format is limiting hints to only English, and banning gestures. The goal is getting students to practice rephrasing new/difficult words with words already in their vocabulary.

### **Interview Bingo**

Prepare a bingo sheet with your vocabulary items. Have each student secretly choose one of those vocabulary to be their word. The students go around asking each other's words until they get bingo. You can add a phrase to add some grammar practice. You can also have the students fill in the vocabulary themselves from a vocabulary list to add writing practice.

## **High Prep Activities**

### **Jumbled Letters - Envelopes**

Type and print the vocab words. Cut each letter apart and put all the letters from one word into an envelope. Students work in groups of two or three to unscramble the word in the envelope. Once they are successful, they write the word and the Japanese translation on a worksheet, then exchange the envelope for a new one.

### **Apples to Apples**

Prepare two sets of cards for each group. Prepare a small set of 'green cards' with adjectives (words that describe nouns). About 15 should be enough. Prepare a set of 'red cards' with your target vocabulary. About 30 is enough for groups of 4. Each student gets 3 red cards and one student becomes the 'judge'. The judge flips a green card and the other three students anonymously submit a red card. The judge picks the red card that is best described by the green card, and the person whose card it was gets the green card. The first one to 3 green cards wins.

### **Shiritori Mad Libs**

Write a very short story (5-10 sentences), leaving several blanks (look up 'Mad Libs templates' for inspiration). In groups or as a class, do small rounds of shiritori for the different categories of blanks in the story (ie, locations, adjectives, past tense verbs, nouns, etc). Students fill in their story worksheets and can volunteer (or you can select a few students who've written especially unique or interesting stories) to present their stories in front of the class.