

Guess My Word: A Vocab Game

The key to learning new vocabulary doesn't lie in rote lists, sad to say. Research is clear: for new vocabulary to stick, kids need to connect new *words* to their *world*. Here's a thought-provoking activity to make new vocabulary words "stick" in the mind of your youngster.

What You Need:

- Two players
- Your child's vocabulary list.

*Feel free to think outside of the box, too. You don't need to limit yourself to lists of words from the language arts folder; you could use new words from your child's new math unit in measurement, such as volume, capacity, length, height, width, weight, and temperature. Often, teachers will provide vocabulary lists at the beginning or ending of units for the purpose of studying at home. Check with your child's teacher for a list of words your child is learning.



What You Do

1. Start by explaining to your child that you will be playing a guessing game together. Let her know that you will be giving her three clues to try to guess which vocabulary word from the list you are describing. It may be helpful to have the list of vocabulary words available for your child to look at when playing the game. As your child begins to feel more comfortable with the vocabulary words, she can try to guess words without the list.
2. Give your child three clues to describe the vocabulary word you have in mind. For example, when thinking of the word "weight," the first clue may be: "You use a scale to measure this word." Your next clue may be: "A pound is one unit of this type of measurement." The third clue may be: "Ounces is another unit of this type of measurement." If your child is unable to guess the word at this point, give her additional clues as needed.

Variation: For a fun twist on the "Guess My Word" game, switch roles. Let your child give you three clues to describe a word, as you try to guess. This strategy will allow for a deeper understanding of the vocabulary words, as your child will need to generate her own clues to describe the word. And kids will love getting to play the "teacher" by giving you clues.

What's going on? You're helping your child move beyond the overwhelming and often tedious job of sifting through lists of words, and you're building strong foundations of language development that can last for years to come. So guess those words, and remember them, too!