

Tool:	Having a Blast with Vocabulary
Category:	Classroom
Urban Specialist:	Daphne Odom
School Level:	Elementary Education
Target Audience:	3-5th Grade Teachers
References:	Max Thompson, the Learning Focused Schools Notebook, and Daphne Odom

**Rationale:** These activities improve vocabulary and reading comprehension.

**Description:**

Have a blast promoting vocabulary and reading comprehension with your students. My students love our vocabulary activities and continue to create their own vocabulary games and activities! Try these in your classroom.

First, go through your lessons in all subject areas for the week and make a list of all vocabulary words you want the students to be familiar with. Write those words down on sentence strips and post on a bulletin board in your room. These are your words to know for the week. At the end of the week take the sentence strips and move them to your word wall. Keep them posted all year. Each week add new words to your bulletin board and continue to move those words to the word wall.

Second, take a three ring binder and label this your "Great Vocabulary Book of Ideas". In this book the students are encouraged to find our word wall words in their outside reading books (Accelerated Reading). When the students come across a word wall word in their reading they write the word down in the book, the name of the book they were reading, the page number where they found the word, and in their own words the definition of the word. The students receive bonus points in my class for every five words they find in their outside reading books.

Once a week we have a journal writing activity where the students create short stories using ten words off the word wall. The students will also beg to participate in vocabulary challenges. Here I randomly select ten word off the word wall and one lucky student will try and give in his own words the definition to the word wall word. The students will also try and come up with synonyms and antonyms to the words.

By having the word wall visible in my room, the students are always aware of words we have used in the past. They love to impress me with their vast vocabulary. Often, if a student runs across a word in his reading he is unfamiliar with, he will look up the word, teach it to the class, and post it to the wall.

The possibilities are endless when you use a word wall in your room. By using the words each week they are required to know, you create a tool in your classroom that is extremely useful and effective!