

Vocabulary.com Classroom Starter Kit

Step 1: Getting Set Up on Vocabulary.com

In just 15 minutes, you can have all your classes set up and ready to roll with Vocabulary.com. Following these simple steps will empower your students to take ownership of their vocabulary learning. Go ahead and get started!

Create your educator login

1. If you don't have a Vocabulary.com login, go to: <https://www.vocabulary.com/signup/educator/> and create one now.
2. Identify your country, state, and school so that you can enter your school into this year's Vocabulary Bowl.

Set up classes and invite students



1 Create Classes.



2 Invite Students.

1. Follow the instructions to create Vocabulary.com classes for each of your current classes.
2. Follow the instructions to invite all of your students to join your classes.

Confirm that your students have joined

1. Login to Vocabulary.com, and you'll see a summary of all your classes.
2. Click on each class to verify that all your students have created accounts and have joined the appropriate class.

Step 2: Introducing Your Students to Vocabulary.com

The best way to introduce students to Vocabulary.com is to have them dive right in and start playing. Following these steps will help students understand how Vocabulary.com works, so that they can better take advantage of the resource.

Objectives

Students will:

- play Vocabulary.com and master ten words
- consult the Vocabulary.com Dictionary to help them teach a word's usage to their classmates

Getting to Know Vocabulary.com

If your students have devices in the classroom, ask them each to log in to Vocabulary.com. Otherwise, demonstrate the following using a projector/whiteboard in front of the classroom. Have them play one round of ten questions and make a short list of observations of what happens as they are playing:

- What happens when they get questions right?
- What happens when they get questions wrong?
- What do they see at the end of their first round?

Ask students to share their observations about playing and establish the following:

- It's **adaptive**: As they get questions wrong, the game will get easier; as they get questions right, the game will serve up more challenging words.
- It's **rewarding**: As players get questions right, they earn points and achievements.
- It provides **feedback**: As players encounter unfamiliar words and miss questions, the program explains the unfamiliar word using very familiar and friendly language.

Exploring the Vocabulary.com Dictionary

Explain that the word explanations they read while playing the game also live in the Vocabulary.com Dictionary.

- Ask students to go to the Dictionary page and click "Random Word" until they encounter an unfamiliar word.
- Have students click "Start learning it now" on the dictionary page to add that word to their learning program.
- Explain that the next time they play, they will begin learning that word.

Keeping Track of Progress

- Ask students to click on “My Progress” in the upper right corner of the screen.
- Explain to students that they should see their current level on the left side of the screen: Novice.
- Point out that on the right side of the screen, they can see their “Trouble Words.” These are the words for which they have missed the most questions.
- Have students click on your class in the central “My Classes” section and see the class leaderboard featuring the top five students and their individual ranking.¹
- As students complete their first assignment, they will be keeping track of their level, their trouble words, and the words they have mastered.

Assignment

Give your students a week to complete the following assignment.

Student Directions:

- Play until you master ten words. (You can keep track of the words you have mastered by going to “My Progress,” clicking on the “Words” tab, and then clicking on “Words I’ve Mastered.”)
- Choose one of the words you mastered this week that you think your classmates might not know and prepare to teach that word and how it is commonly used to the class. Start by looking it up in the Vocabulary.com Dictionary. Read several of the Usage Examples for the word and then draw some conclusions about how writers tend to use the word. Write a short paragraph explaining how to use the word to a classmate.

¹ If the students does not see the class in “My Classes” or there is no “My Classes” section, he hasn’t joined the class yet. See Step 1 for instructions on inviting students to your class.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

★ Getting Started with Vocabulary.com ★

Join your teacher's class:

- You should have a special url from your teacher that looks like this:
<http://vocab.com/join/??????> (with the question marks replaced with a code).
- Go to that URL and follow the instructions.
- If you don't have the code, go to <https://vocabulary.com/signup/> (Then make sure to ask your teacher for the invitation link so you can join the class.)
- Identify yourself as a student, pick your country, state, and your school.

Play Vocabulary.com until you have mastered ten words, and list the words below. (You can see the words you have mastered by going to "My Progress," clicking on the "Words" tab, and then clicking on "Words I've Mastered.")

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Check out your profile by clicking on **"My Progress."**

Did you level up yet? What is your current level? _____

What is your top trouble word? Write it here: _____

Visit this trouble word's dictionary page to review its meanings and usage examples. Write yourself a tip for remembering this word's meaning:

Choose one of the words you mastered this week that you think your classmates might not know and prepare to teach that word and how it is commonly used to the class. Start by looking it up in the Vocabulary.com Dictionary. Read several of the usage examples for the word and then draw some conclusions about how writers tend to use the word. Write a short paragraph explaining how to use the word to a classmate.

Step 3: Previewing Vocabulary by Playing Word Lists

What are you teaching? The best way to set word-learning goals for your students is to tie vocabulary instruction to reading. Have your students work on mastering the words they will encounter in the texts they will be reading.

Objectives

Students will:

- preview reading vocabulary by practicing a text-based word list
- note trouble words in the context of their reading
- identify context-dependent meanings of words using the Vocabulary.com Dictionary

Searching our List Library and Creating Text-Based Word Lists

Visit the [Vocabulary Lists page \(vocabulary.com/lists\)](https://vocabulary.com/lists) and use the search box to find the fiction and nonfiction titles you are teaching. Can't find what you're looking for? Then use [Vocabulary.com's user-friendly and lightning quick list maker \(vocabulary.com/lists/new\)](https://vocabulary.com/lists/new) to create your own lists by following these steps:

1. Find the digital text your students will be reading.
2. Select and copy the text.
3. Go to vocabulary.com/lists/new
4. Paste the text into the box and click "Next Step."
5. Vocabulary.com will select the 10 most relevant words for you.
6. If you want to select different words, use the gear icon in the upper right corner of the list to see your options. You can also manually check or uncheck the box next to each word, depending on which words you'd like to choose.
7. Scroll down and give your list a title.
8. Click "Assign These # Words" to access the url you can share with your students.

Previewing Vocabulary before Reading

- Assign the word list url to your students and instruct them to practice the list until they reach 100% completion.
- This pre-reading activity should be completed before students do the assigned reading that corresponds to the word list. (For example, students should reach 100% completion of a practice session for a chapter of reading before they read the chapter.)

Going over the top Trouble Words in Class

- Have students complete the assigned reading related to the word list for which they previewed the words.
- Log in to Vocabulary.com, and review each of the classes you're teaching.
- For each class, click on the assigned word list, and review the top three words your students were having trouble with.
- Write the three words on the board.
- Hold a brief "scavenger hunt" where students locate the three trouble words in the context of their reading and then write those three sentences on the board.
- Ask student volunteers to explain the meanings of the three words in context.

Modeling "Interviewing a Word"

- Visit the Dictionary page for one of the class's trouble words, and point to the Word Family and Usage Examples section of the word's page, emphasizing that words can take on different forms, meanings, or connotations depending upon context.
- Distribute the "Interviewing a Word" handout to students and model answering the questions based on the word's meanings and usages. Here is a sample interview with the word *vain*:

Q and A with *Vain*

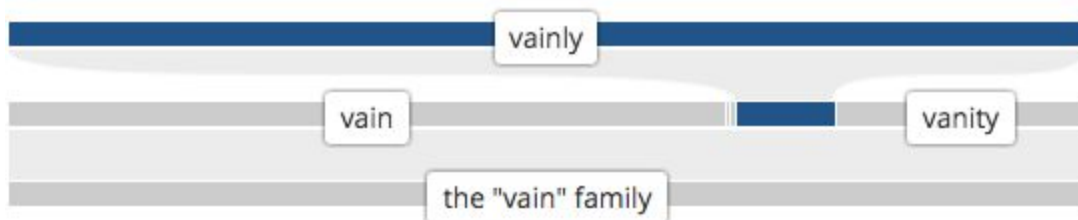
Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself?

A: Sure, people tend to think of me as either snobby or worthless. If I'm used to describe a person, it's not a compliment. It means that the person is conceited and full of himself. If I'm used to describe an action, it usually means that things didn't go according to plan.

Q: Do you come from a big family?

A: Not really. I have two siblings – vainly (adv.) and vanity (noun) – but most people are familiar with me – the adjective of the family.

Word Family



Q: What about your friends? With whom do you have a lot in common? To whom do you relate?

I have lots of friends – *conceited*, *swollen-headed*, and *egotistical* – to name a few. They are all in my clique.

I am also often spotted with my friend, the preposition “in.” When we are together (“in vain”), people think we are useless and get frustrated with us since we aren’t productive.

Usage Examples

 All Sources

 Fiction

 Arts / Culture

 News

 Business

 Sports

 Science / Med

 Technology

Louie sat by, listening as his bride was excoriated for marrying him, trying in **vain** to get her to hang up.

Unbroken

The merchant’s attempts to convince Siddhartha that he was eating his, Kamaswami’s, bread were also in **vain**.

Siddhartha

Kwasi held her hand tighter and they ran even faster, Amari trying in **vain** to be as invisible and swift as the wind.

Copper Sun

Q: What are some of the highlights of your life?

Well, I made it big in biblical times by working my way into the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.”

It was hard to top that, but I have impressive staying power. Famous poets like Emily Dickinson discovered me (“If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain.”), and even pop songwriters (“You’re so vain you probably think this song is about you...”).
(sources: Brainyquote.com, thinkexist.com, and songlyrics.com)

Q: Is there anything else we should know about you?

I don’t know. You should try me out. I’m only one syllable, I rhyme well with others (e.g., gain, pain, train, explain, disdain, etc.), and you can make good use of me when insulting others.
(source: Vocabulary.com dictionary’s advanced search rhyming function)

Interviewing a Trouble Word

- Ask each student to review his or her own top three trouble words by visiting their “My Progress” pages.
- Instruct students to choose one of their own trouble words and find that word in the context of the related reading and to then “interview” that word using the handout and the dictionary page for that word.
- If time permits, have students share their completed interviews in partners or small groups.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

★ Interviewing a Trouble Word ★

Practice the word list that your teacher assigned you this week until you reach 100% completion on the list.

Go to your “My Progress” page and identify your top three trouble words. List the top 3 trouble words here:

Trouble Word 1: _____

Trouble Word 2: _____

Trouble Word 3: _____

Complete the assigned reading related to the word list you just practiced and choose one of your Trouble Words to interview. Write the sentence from your reading containing that word below:

Interview Your Word (hint: go to the Vocabulary.com dictionary and look it up)

Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself?

Q: Do you come from a big family?

Q: What about your friends? With whom do you have a lot in common? To whom do you relate?

Q: What are some of the highlights of your life?

Q: Is there anything else we should know about you?

Step 4: Using Team Competition to Drive Word Learning

The beauty of Vocabulary.com is that it's not just a game for individual learners; it's a game that can ignite a class-wide or a school-wide competition for learning words. Here are a few fun ways that you can engage students in a Vocabulary.com team competition within your classroom and beyond your classroom.

Objectives

Students will:

- review key vocabulary related to class content
- compete in teams to practice a Vocabulary.com word list

Note: If your students have individual access to devices in class, try the first mode of competition. If you only have access to one computer and a means of projection in your classroom, follow the directions for staging the first competition.

To keep word learning relevant to your classroom content, first find a word list for your competition. To make sure that your students don't run out of words during game-play, choose a list that is at least 25 words in length.

I. Vocabulary Beat the Clock

To play the Vocabulary Countdown, your students will need individual access to computers or devices.

1. Have each student log in to his or her Vocabulary.com account.
2. Select a list relevant to the content your students are reading or learning in class, and share that list url with the class.
3. Signal each student to click "practice" on the list at the official start time of the contest.
4. You can monitor the class's progress and overall trouble words while they are doing this by logging into your account, going to the appropriate class, and clicking on the list you have assigned. (Just click reload to see it update.)
5. The first team that reaches 100% completion on the practice session yells "complete" and is declared the winner.

II. Team A vs. Team B Vocabulary Smackdown

The Vocabulary Smackdown requires one classroom computer with internet access and a means of projection.

1. Divide the class in half, each half constituting a team.
2. Instruct each team to come up with a team name.

3. Appoint a timekeeper.
4. Determine a “batting order” for the players on each team.
5. Have one student from each team approach the front of the room with either a sheet of paper or a small dry erase board and marker. They should remain with their backs facing the class, to ensure their team members cannot give them clues.
6. Click “practice” on the list you have selected for the competition and display the first question.
7. Read aloud the question and students will have no more than 20 seconds to write down their answers.
8. The two competing students each write the answer to the question, shielding their paper or dry erase board from the competition. Instead of writing out the complete answer, they can write A,B,C, or D to represent the four answer options. For spelling questions, students will need to spell out the word.
9. The time keeper should shout “TIME” at the end of the 20 seconds.
10. After the 20-second time limit, have the students reveal their answers to the class and then reveal the correct answer to the question by clicking it.
11. If one student gets it right, his or her team is awarded a point
12. If both students get the question right, both teams will be awarded a point.
13. Steps 7-11 are repeated for as many rounds as required to reach 100% completion on the practice session or until you run out of time.
14. The team with the most points at the end of the session wins.
15. Assign the students to each practice the list on their own for homework.

III. Spreading Competition Beyond the Classroom:

● **Class rivalry:**

Since you can see the word mastery total for each of your classes, you can pit your classes against one another to see which class can master the most words in a specific period of time. Come up with a time period for competition (a week, a month, a semester, the school year) and at the end of the designated time, declare the winning class and reward them with a special event (pizza party, anyone?!).

● **School rivalry:**

Does your school have an ongoing sports rivalry with another school? If so, throw down the word gauntlet and challenge that school to a local Vocabulary Bowl competition. You set the rules of engagement: maybe you will pick a particular month and see which school can master the most words in that month, or maybe you will choose to mirror the national Vocabulary Bowl and compete from October through April, seeing which school masters the most words during that time. Whatever the case, the winning school should get more than bragging rights. Let us know if you set up a local rivalry, and we'll publicly acknowledge the winner on the Vocabulary.com site!

Step 5: Rewarding Achievement

Make expanding your vocabulary a reason to celebrate! Keep an eye on which students are racking up the most words in their classes and in your building and give them the credit they deserve. Frequent shout-outs on the morning announcements and in classroom or hallway displays can go a long way in sending the message to your school community that your school values the power of words.

Celebrating Success in Your Classroom

Who's on top of the Class Leaderboard?

Every one of your classes has its very own leaderboard that you and your students can view. As you begin each class, display the class leaderboard and reward the student on top with a special privilege for the day — such as serving as Vocabulary Guru for the day or earning a get-out-of-homework pass.

Here's how you can access and display your **class leaderboard**:

- Log in to Vocabulary.com
- Click on "My Classes" in the upper right of your screen.
- Click on the class title in the left half of your screen.
- Click on the "Student View" tab to reveal the "Class Leaders" leaderboard.

Make word mastery a tangible achievement:

Another way to take advantage of the class leaderboard is to award individual students who make it into the top five with personalized certificates to acknowledge their success. You will find an award certificate that you can customize and print at the end of this document!

Celebrating Success Throughout Your School

Your School's Vocabulary.com Achievement Page

Make sure that your school community has bookmarked your school's achievement page on Vocabulary.com so administrators, teachers, and students can keep an eye on all of the achievements your school is earning and where they rank on the state and national leaderboards. Create a display in your school's entryway to proudly tout your school's achievements.

Here's how you can locate your **school's achievement page**:

- Login to Vocabulary.com
- Click on "My Account" in the upper right of your screen.
- Click on your school's name in "My Profile."
- Check out your school achievements on the left, your state ranking in the middle, and your national ranking on the right.

Create School-wide Word-Learning Events

Make Martin Luther King Day an opportunity to learn the words from the “I Have a Dream” speech or break out FDR’s “A Date that will Live in Infamy” word list on December 7th. The runner-up in the 2014-15 Vocabulary Bowl, [Midlothian Middle School \(vocab.com/articles/tasty-morsels/4667\)](http://vocab.com/articles/tasty-morsels/4667), even celebrated snow days and NCAA March Madness with word learning. Find an excuse every day to learn some new words!



vocabulary.com

VOCABULARY BOWL

CLASS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

THIS **CERTIFICATE** IS **PRESENTED** TO

_____ for finishing _____

in _____.