

# Personalized Vocabulary Lists (page 1 of 2)

## A Mechanism for Focused Vocabulary Study

- If you feel the need to pre-teach important vocabulary for an activity (e.g., for exploring a text), then consider using this resource. It encourages students to be deliberate in their word study.

## Age Group

This activity works best with older students, Grades 7 to 12.

## Materials and Resources

- Two highlighters for each student, each of a different colour
- Personal copies of the targeted vocabulary list (10-word minimum, but it works best with 15 to 20 words); if there is a chance for a false cognate on the list, you might want to mark it with an asterisk
- A bilingual dictionary
- A monolingual dictionary, appropriate for age level (could be a picture dictionary)
- A thesaurus of the target language
- Poster paper and markers, if desired
- A Personalized Vocabulary Chart, if desired

## Procedure

1. Distribute copies of the vocabulary list and the highlighters.
2. Direct students to highlight the list according to the following rules:
  - Colour 1:* Words they know and could easily use in speech and writing
  - Colour 2:* Words they think they know or that otherwise look like words they knowThey are *not* to highlight words that are unfamiliar to them.

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3. Students share which words they did not highlight. These words are tracked on the board. It is possible that some students will still know some of the words on the board. The idea is to list which words are the least well known among the class as a whole. These words will be the primary focus of any activities designed to build word knowledge.
4. Invite students to learn the meanings of the words. The activity can be done in groups or individually.

*Group directions:* Break students into groups of three. Assign each group a few of the words to look up. Using the provided resources, students create a definition for the assigned words. The definitions *must* be in the target language and/or include visuals that convey meaning. Groups share their definitions with the class and answer any questions other class members may have. Students can record the definitions in the Personalized Vocabulary Chart. They need to record only those terms they did not highlight in Step 2. Add any clarification or support as needed.

*Individual directions:* Using the same resources as those available during the group version of the activity, students generate their own definitions for any words they did not highlight; they also can record them in the Personalized Vocabulary Chart. Again, the definitions must be in the target language and/or use visuals to help convey meaning. You could collect the charts to confirm accuracy of definitions and to familiarize yourself with students' language base.

5. If desired, collect the students' highlighted lists so that you can do a general assessment of student familiarity with the targeted vocabulary. If you find that some students have highlighted most of the words, consider adding one or two other words that are linked to the content, for example, less common synonyms or antonyms of the words on the list.

**Note:** Collecting the students' highlighted lists can be a very effective way to figure out which words you need to emphasize during instruction.