

SYnonym iN Cup - SYNC

Vocabulary Development Game by Bev Nye

Preparing for Activity

1. Find words in student text that you feel will need explicit vocabulary instruction. Note the context within the text and also the location (page or paragraph number). A suggested number of words to begin this activity is three. Finding one noun, one verb, and one adjective seems to work well.
2. For each vocabulary word, create a list or table of synonyms. Try www.thesaurus.com. Also write down an equal number of words that are not synonyms. Create a list or table for each of the three main vocabulary words,
3. Make flash cards of each synonym and each not-a-synonym. If your plan is to make a competitive activity in your classroom, then you will need more than one set of flashcards, a different color for each set.
4. Make a larger card with larger font of each main vocabulary word. This main card will sit atop a headband. Also find a cupholder (auto section of a store?) to hook onto each headband.

On Day of Activity

1. Thoroughly analyze each word together as a class. Q & A. Look at each word in context in the text. Write down the sentence or sentences from the text on the board. Ask for other context sentences. Ask for synonyms. Look word up officially in a dictionary and thesaurus, if you'd like. Ask them what they see mentally when they think of the word. Call on quiet students. Call on as many students as you can before going on to the next word.
2. Decide teams and roles. Three students will need to be headband-with-cup wearers at the front of the room, a safe distance from each other. Place a larger bucket or two for throwaways in an accessible site. Decide if just one team of sorters will participate or if more than one team will compete against each other. Pass out rubber-banded set of cards.
3. Set timer - a suggested time is 4 minutes. Say "GO." Participants decide if each word on each flashcard is a synonym or not. Synonyms are place inside the cup. Other words are "thrown away" in a bucket. When buzzer sounds, all sorting ceases.
4. Scoring: After sorting cards from the cups, one point is given for each correct synonym. One point is subtracted if a correct synonym is thrown away. Show table of correct answers and wrong answers. Students can help with the scoring.
5. Complete next round (new words? new groups of students?) if time.

Debriefing or SYNCing at very end of Activity

SYNC is the name given to this vocabulary game. It stands for SYnonym iN Cup. Also, "sync" is short for synchronize. It means to "merge the data." Take time to have students reflect on what new words they have learned. It will be more words than just those three. It will be many new words. Tell them that they are syncing the outside information (flashcards, etc.) to the best computer in the world, their brain. Ask them to explicitly, purposefully send the new information to their long-term memory spot in their brain. Give them 30 quiet seconds to merge

that information, to sync. Then play some crazy robot sounds after 30 quiet seconds, if you'd like.