

10 Vocabulary Activities — Quick Reference Card

A grab-and-go card for your next vocabulary lesson. From Post 8: 10 Vocabulary Activities That Actually Work for Adult Beginners.

1. Word + Picture + Sound

Present each word with an image AND say it aloud. Cover the image, then cover the word — test recall both ways.

2. Vocabulary Card Race

Cards face-down on desks. Learners say the word + meaning to keep the card. Most cards wins.

3. Word Sorting

Give 10–15 words; learners sort into their own categories. Discuss WHY afterward.

4. Sentence Auction

Pairs 'buy' sentences they believe are correct with a 100-point budget. Reveal & explain.

5. The Definition Game (Taboo-style)

Explain the word without saying it. Partner guesses. Great for circumlocution practice.

6. Collocations Web

Build a web of natural word partnerships around one central word (e.g. WORK).

7. Vocabulary Story Chain

Each learner has one word; the class builds one continuous story, word by word.

8. Spaced Repetition Review

Open every lesson with a 3-min review of vocabulary from 1, 2, and 7 lessons ago.

9. Real-Life Vocabulary Hunt

Learners find target words in the real world (labels, signs, WeChat) before next lesson.

10. Word Journal

Word + own-language definition + a personally true sentence. Review fortnightly.

The Core Principle

Learners need 10–20 meaningful encounters with a new word before it becomes genuinely usable. No single activity achieves that — vary your approach and keep the encounters personally meaningful.