Egg Vocabulary

A Simple, Effective, Low-Cost Activity to Use in Your Classroom

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The activity

This is a hands-on vocabulary building activity that could be used as a warm-up to develop schema in any content area, but for the sake of specification, this particular activity outline serves as a reinforcement of vocabulary in relation to a novel. Depending on the grade level or content area, there are specific competencies aligned with specific terminologies.

The goal for this activity is for students to understand specific vocabulary terms in preparation for GED, college prep or high school diploma curriculum. Students will also build classroom culture by working together with their peers.

Students will learn

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
Here’s what you do

Resources needed:  
- Plastic Eggs
- Students used phones if dictionary definitions are needed

Approximate time:  
2 hours

Instructions

1) Pre-Step:

- Select specific terms and type the contextual sentences/definitions you want your class to understand (you could also do this with character/historical figure matching), and insert one or the other in plastic eggs. I also included a piece of candy in each egg.

- Type student accessible definitions and sentences with the vocabulary word highlighted in the context it appears in the novel (I also included the page number) on paper to insert in eggs. Each category should have its own color of paper to limit confusion.

2) Activity:

- Students will all choose eggs and open them at the same time. Once the inside is revealed, they must determine who else in the class has the matching definition. Have students share their findings with the class and create a hand gesture that represents their understanding of the term; all students will participate in the new gesture as reinforcement. This activity can serve as a precursor to more elaborate vocabulary enriching work, but this is a unique way to introduce the terms, which is the immediate goal.

- After students have opened eggs, divide the room so that students can visualize who should be looking for whom as a partner.
- Find your match! This is when the craziness ensues!

- Share definitions and gestures. Provide time for entire group to learn/discuss each gesture.

**Success Tips**

- Group size has a major impact on the outcome of participation – especially during the gesture portion. My initial application consisted of 26 students (13 terms/sentences). I definitely wouldn’t try it with a much larger group than that.

- I initially tried the activity with balloons, and students suggested a less noisy, messy way to complete the activity, which is why plastic eggs it is! Candy makes everything better, too.