

## Vocabulary Intervention Strategy – Four Square Vocabulary

**For:** Any student in Grade 1 or above who is not performing satisfactorily on vocabulary components of classroom curriculum assessments (i.e. Houghton Mifflin “Journeys” unit tests/vocabulary section), or any student below benchmark/target on a selected vocabulary assessment (i.e. MAP or MCA).

**Materials:** list of vocabulary words used for instruction; a Four Square handout for each word (or paper that can be divided into fours by the student)

**Recommended Duration and Frequency:** This intervention should be conducted at least 4-5 times per week for at least 15 minutes using words from the student’s language arts or content area curriculum. Words used for the intervention can be those previously taught in the classroom, or the interventionist may choose to pre-teach words from the student’s curriculum for the intervention. The intervention should be conducted until a student begins and continues to score at an acceptable level on curriculum vocabulary assessments, or until the student achieves a grade level-appropriate score on a selected vocabulary assessment.

### **Steps for Intervention:**

1. Select 5-6 words from the student’s language arts or content area curriculum. These are the words you will use for the intervention **for the week**. The words should be high-utility words that will be useful to the student in the future and that the student may often encounter in personal reading.
2. For each word, select a Four Square template (see attached, or just use paper the student has folded into 4 pieces) that will be the most useful for the word. For example, some words don’t lend themselves to a pictorial representation or a listing of antonyms. Find the template that is the most applicable to the word.
3. Introduce 1 or 2 words a day to the student, but introduce them one at a time. When introducing a word, do the following:
  - a. Say the word for the student.
  - b. Find out what the student may already know about the term. Ask, “Where have you seen this word before? Do you have any idea what it means?” (If the student already knows the word and can define it, discard the word and select another.)
  - c. Build an initial understanding of the word for the student. Do this by:
    - i. Finding a picture or concrete object that exemplifies the word.
    - ii. Describe your own mental picture of the word.
    - iii. Provide a direct experience with the word. (Let the student use the object or act out the word.)
    - iv. Tell a story that integrates the word.

4. Assist the student in completing the Four Square sheet for the word. **It is vital that the student use his or her own words when coming up with a definition for the word (for the “What is it?” box). Do not use a dictionary for this activity.**
5. At least once a week, have the student engage in one of the following activities to practice and review the words learned during the week:
  - a. **Free Association** – Name a vocabulary term, and have the student name all the words s/he thinks of that are related to that term (i.e. “pasteurize” might elicit: milk, clean, safe, germs, bacteria, process...). You can stop the free association at any time and ask a student how the word s/he named is related to the term.
  - b. **Comparing Terms** – Using sentence frames/stems, Venn diagrams, or a Semantic Feature Analysis, have the students compare and contrast two or more vocabulary terms that are somewhat related.

*Example of Sentence Stems:*

“Upset” and “irate” are similar because \_\_\_\_\_.

“Upset” and “irate” are different because \_\_\_\_\_.

*Example of Semantic Feature Analysis:*

	French Horn	Oboe	Flute	Tympani
Brass	X			
Woodwind		X	X	
Percussion				X
Blow into to play	X	X	X	
Musical Instrument	X	X	X	X

- c. **Classifying Terms/Open Sort** – Give the student cards with the vocabulary words written on them. There should be different connections between/among some of the words. Have the students sort the words and identify what the title of the sorting category would be. Question students regarding why they placed certain words into the categories they did.
  - d. Allow students to pair up and discuss their words, show their Vocabulary Journals, etc. to each other.
  - e. Play a game, such as Charades or Pictionary, with vocabulary words learned so far.
6. Also at least once every two weeks, quiz the student on the words introduced so far by asking the student to either give a definition of the word or use it in a sentence. Score a “+” or “-“ on the Record Sheet (attached) for each word quizzed. Review any words the student misses.

**Four Square Vocabulary #1**

<p><b>Word</b></p>	<p><b>What are some examples?</b></p>
<p><b>What is it? (Define in your own words.)</b></p>	<p><b>What is it like?</b></p>

**Four Square Vocabulary #2**

**Picture**

**What is it?  
(Define in your own  
words.)**

Blank box for the word being studied.

**Antonyms or  
Synonyms**

**Antonyms -**

**Synonyms -**

**Your sentence with  
the word:**

**Four Square Vocabulary #3 (also known as the Frayer Method)**

**Definition in your own words:**

**Characteristics (What is it like?)**

Blank box for a central note or word.

**Examples**

**Non-examples**



## Four Square Vocabulary Intervention – Integrity Check

**Interventionist:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade Level:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Tier** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Integrity Monitor:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Descriptor - Student</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Student is performing poorly on curriculum-based vocabulary measures or is performing below grade level on a vocabulary measure such as the MAP or MCA.			
Student is in Grade 1 or above.			

<b>Descriptor - Materials</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Student has access to a variety of Four Square templates or paper to be folded.			
Interventionist has access to a word list containing words from the student’s reading or content area curricula.			
Interventionist has selected high-utility words to use for the intervention that will be useful to the student in the future.			
Interventionist has a recording sheet.			

<b>Descriptor - Interventionist</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Interventionist maintains an environment conducive to task completion (quiet, manages behavior issues, engages student, etc.)			
Interventionist has selected a Four Square template that is appropriate for the word being studied.			
Interventionist says the word for the student, finds out what s/he already knows about the word, and introduces the word to him/her according to guidelines.			
Interventionist assists the student in completing the Four Square template, ensuring that the student uses his/her own words when creating a definition.			
At least once weekly, interventionist reviews all words the student has learned during the week using one of the indicated activities or another appropriate one of choice.			
At least once every two weeks, interventionist quizzes the student on words learned previously, reviewing missed words.			
Interventionist accurately records the student responses to the word quiz.			
Interventionist maintains all of the student’s completed Four Square templates in a folder.			
Intervention is conducted for at least 15 minutes 4-5 times per week.			

Four Square Vocabulary Intervention Integrity Check Summary: \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ applicable components are observed.

Notes: