



VOCAB DICE GAMES



Looking for a quick filler when your students are finished their work? Looking for a way to introduce new words but perhaps as well to assess them “in action”? Then why not try a dice game! The example below provides you with a basic process for selecting words and suggestions for what to do with them, and is easily adaptable to any age, language, or level of learners.

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This dice game does not exclude working with a text in other ways (skimming, scanning, re-writing, writing questions) but it can well accompany work with any listening transcript or reading passage.

1. Have the text you'll be working with ideally in digital form so you can copy / paste the text into step 2. For this example, to start a unit on poetry, I have chosen the article “National youth poet laureate finalists found confidence and friendship through words” on Newsela with a Lexile Level of 420 (the simplest) though for upper-level classes, a higher Lexile Level could well be chosen.
2. Copy-paste the text into WordSift and hit “sift”. There are many options with this tool, but generally, I mark the words in the New General Service List (see Figure 1). There are many other options with WordSift (such as sorting the words from common to rare) but to create my list, this general word cloud is fine.
3. I eyeball the word cloud and select a list of words. My general criteria are that the words the learners play with should not be too specific (thus transferrable to other contexts) nor should they be cognates (parallel words) of the local language (here German), they should offer a mix of parts of speech, of abstract or concrete, or simply be fun to spell or say. Whilst I might also do a quick introduction to words such as 'laureate' or 'inauguration', these words are not ones I care so much about having the learners actively learn. In the list in step 4, I might also include different forms of the verbs, but for simplicity's sake, here I do not.

