

VOCAB—WORD WALL

Preparation

- Download [the Unit 1 Vocab Guide](#)
- Vocab cards (using index cards—or sticky notes—create one card for each unit vocabulary word in the Unit Vocab Guide)

Purpose

Vocabulary has to be more than just a list of words students memorize and bemoan. These words represent big (sometimes medium-sized) concepts critical to the unit. And, it turns out, just memorizing the definition doesn't necessarily help students understand what the word means. To really get the ideas behind each word, you need to see it in a variety of contexts. In this unit, as in each one in the course, there are three types of vocab activities. Early in the unit, there's a word wall (such as the one here), which gets students familiar with the words for each unit. Later in each unit, there's a second activity that is a deeper exploration of some of those words. In this unit, for example, that second activity is live concept mapping. Finally, every unit includes a vocab tracking activity, which has students keeping a personalized list of words that are new to them.

Practices

Reading, writing

This activity is focused on helping students learn course vocabulary, which is partly a way to ensure that students are able to fully engage with the BHP course content. This is especially true for the readings: If students aren't familiar with or able to understand the words they're reading, they won't be able to glean the main ideas of texts, and therefore will miss out on important aspects of the course. Additionally, as students build up their vocabularies, they will become even better writers.

Process

In this activity, the class will work together to create a word wall using the Unit 1 vocabulary.

First, assign each of your students a word. Note: There are only 14 vocab words in the Unit 1 Vocab Guide, so you may want to add more words or make sure students are working in pairs or groups. Some additional words you might use in Unit 1 are: authority, claim, evidence, intuition, logic, scale, and threshold. However, before diving into any unit vocab activities, we suggest that you review the words provided. They might not work well for your class, and you might need to focus on different words. It's up to you. The most important thing is that you are constantly attending to vocabulary throughout the course.

Tell students that for the first part of this activity, they will pretend that the word they've been assigned is the MOST important word for understanding Unit 1, and they're going to have to argue why that is. Tell them they're going to be creating a class word wall, and in this first unit, the words will be added one at a time. We recommend you review and add a word to the wall every few days, so that students have been exposed to all of the word wall words before the end of the unit. This slow trickle of words should give them time to understand and internalize each word.

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Have students look at their vocab card and give them a few minutes to first find their word in the Unit 1 Vocab Guide, and then click around Unit 1 to see where in the unit their word might be most applicable. Once they feel confident about their word's definition, they can add it to their vocab tracker.

Once they're ready, have students argue for why their word is the "best" one to start with—that is, why it's most critical to an understanding of the unit. Take a class vote (or narrow down some other way), then let the student or students who "won" add the first word to the wall. You might want to have them transfer their word to a larger piece of paper before adding it to the wall to make sure it's visible from around the classroom. If you don't have a place to do this, you can have students create a smaller, personal word wall to keep on their desks.

Let students know that any time a word from the wall is mentioned in class, they have permission to call it out. You can have them do that in whatever way works best for your class: they can stand up, shout the word, or even do a little dance. This can be a fun game where you have a word of the week or word of the day, depending upon how you decide to add words to your wall.

Try to have all the words on the wall before you hit the concept mapping vocab activity later in the unit.



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Practices

Reading, writing

This activity is focused on helping you learn course vocabulary, which is partly a way to ensure you're able to fully engage with the BHP course content. This is especially true for the readings in the course – if you don't understand the words you're reading, you won't be able to glean the main ideas of texts, and therefore may miss out on important aspects of your learning. Additionally, as you build up your vocabulary, you will become an even better writer.

Process

In this activity, you'll work with your class to create a word wall using the Unit 1 vocabulary. You're going to do this throughout the unit by adding one word at a time so you don't get overwhelmed with a big list of new words all at once!

Your teacher will assign a vocab card to each of you. Once you get yours, pretend that you have the MOST important word to help you understand Unit 1, and prepare to argue why that is. Look at your vocab word and take a few minutes to look it up in the Unit 1 Vocab Guide and then examine the unit itself (click around and quickly skim the content) to see where in the unit your word might be most applicable. Once you've done your research, get ready to argue for why your word is the “best” one to start with. After everyone has given a pitch on their word, you'll all decide which word should make it onto the wall first.

Your teacher may add some fun twists to this assignment, so be sure to listen closely for directions!

