

LanguageBURST™

A Language and Vocabulary Game

by Lauri Whiskeyman

Skills	Ages	Grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none">languagevocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8 through adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3 and up

Evidence-Based Practice

- A systematic approach to teaching vocabulary, including direct and indirect instruction, teaches students that vocabulary is important for learning language and for reading (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).
- Effective vocabulary instruction strategies actively engage the student and require higher-level cognitive processing. These strategies include using new words in novel sentences based on connections to prior knowledge, identifying synonyms and antonyms, and analyzing word features (Kester-Phillips, Foote, & Harper, 2008).
- Vocabulary instruction is a cornerstone of reading comprehension (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986).
- Special educators, including speech-language pathologists, need to engage children with language arts activities that are nonthreatening and appealing in order to facilitate student motivation (Sanacore, 2005).

LanguageBURST incorporates these principles and is also based on expert professional practice.

References

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- Sanacore, J. (2005). Increasing student participation in the language arts. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 41(2), 99-104.
- Stahl, S.A., & Fairbanks, M.M. (1986). The effects of vocabulary instruction: A model-based meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 56, 71-110.



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About the Author

Lauri Whiskeyman, M.A., Ed.S., CCC-SLP, has been an editor and writer with LinguiSystems for over 10 years. She received her B.S., M.A., and Ed.S. from Kent State University. Before joining the staff of LinguiSystems, she worked as a speech-language pathologist in a public school and in a private practice with children ages pre-school through high school. She also worked as a clinic supervisor at the university level. *LanguageBurst* is Lauri's third publication with LinguiSystems.

Dedication

To all the students who provided answers during the development of this game; to my LS family for all their support; and to Dave, Rachel, and Danny with love

Components

- 100 double-sided game cards
- 4 category divider cards (Fill-in-the-Blank, Categories, Attributes, Comparing and Contrasting)
- Attributes Hint Card
- instruction manual
- two-minute timer
- vinyl card sleeve
- grease pencil

Rationale

The ultimate goal of language expansion therapy is to improve and broaden language skills. *LanguageBurst* offers guided practice in four key language areas which will expand language and build vocabulary.

Fill-in-the-Blank (cards 1-25)

Fill in the blank to make words or phrases that make sense. For example, for “check _____,” you might say “checkers, check it out, checkmark,” or “checkup.” For “_____ way,” you might say, “driveway, Milky Way, on our way” or “wrong way.”

Categories (cards 26-50)

List items in a category. For example, you might list *Specific Bodies of Water* (e.g., Atlantic Ocean, Great Salt Lake, Mississippi River) or *Crunchy Things* (e.g., apples, dry leaves, ice).

Attributes (cards 51-75)

Describe an item, listing as many things as possible about the item. Think about category, color, function, parts, shape, size, smell, sound, texture, what goes with it, what it's made of, when it might be used, and where it might be found. For example, to describe a butterfly, you might respond with the following answers: “insect, flies, has wings and antennae, started out as a caterpillar, goes through metamorphosis, makes no sound, ranges in size, comes in many colors, many different types,” and “short life span.” A Hint Card listing attributes (e.g., category, shape, what it's made of, etc.) is included in this game. You can display it to help players who are having difficulty describing an item.

Comparing and Contrasting (cards 76-100)

List five ways two items are alike and five ways they are different. For example, you might compare a *hurricane* and a *tornado*. They are alike because they are both natural disasters, have high winds, and cause lots of destruction. They are different because a hurricane happens over water and a tornado happens over land, hurricanes last longer, and hurricanes are easier to predict.

Note: The stimulus items are taken from the curriculum and everyday life. Higher-level items have been included in each language area to challenge older players. There are a variety of answers on each game card, providing a wide range of possible responses.

Guidelines for Play

LanguageBurst is played in teams. Divide the players into two teams. It doesn't matter if the teams have the same number of players. (For alternative ways to play, see the Variations section, page 6.)

Object

- to improve and broaden language skills and vocabulary
- to be the team with the most points at the end of a predetermined time period or to be the first team to reach a predetermined score

Preparation

Prior to game play, review the tasks involved in the language areas as described under Rationale. Players should clearly understand each language area and should be able to provide examples of each. If necessary, use the game cards to help the players understand the areas.

Have the players decide whether to give credit for appropriate answers not listed on the game cards. During play, you can either have the players decide if an answer is reasonable or you can be the judge.

Have each team select their first presenter to give the game card information to the opposing team. This person will also keep score during the game. Players should take turns being the presenter.

Game Play

The team with the youngest player is the first team to receive clues (Receiving Team). The first presenter for the other team (Delivering Team) takes the top game card, inserts it into the card sleeve, announces the language area and the stimulus item, and starts the timer; for example, "The language area is Fill-in-the-Blank. The item is *air* _____."

The Receiving Team gives answers as the presenter on the Delivering Team keeps track of the responses. If the Receiving Team says an answer listed on the card, the presenter puts a checkmark beside it with the grease pencil.

The score is tallied once all the responses are given, the Receiving Team cannot think of any more responses, or the timer has run out. One point is given for each correct response. The reproducible score-sheet on the back cover of this booklet may be used for team tally. For reinforcement, have the presenter read the correct answers aloud. Wipe off the checkmarks on the card sleeve with a tissue or paper towel before continuing play. The Delivering Team now takes the role of the Receiving Team. Play alternates between teams.

To Win

The game is over when the predetermined score or time is reached. The team with the most points is declared the winner.

Modifications for Younger Players or for Players Having Difficulty

1. Don't use the timer.
2. Turn the timer over as many times as needed to allow for ample response time. Time challenge can be increased at any point.
3. Have players give just five responses for a given item. Award two points for each answer (10 points per game card).
4. Have players list subcategories as responses. For example, one answer listed on Things On a Map is *bodies of water*. You could allow players to list oceans, rivers, etc. as separate answers.
5. Score the Comparing and Contrasting section differently. Players can list five ways the items are alike and different overall, using any combination of responses (e.g., two ways the items are alike and three ways they are different). Players can also just list five ways the items are alike or five ways the items are different.

No Answers or Ideas

If a team is unable to come up with any answers or ideas on a given item, you or the presenter can:

- define or explain the item (e.g., for *Island Countries*, explain what an *island* is)
- read one of the answers on the game card as an example (No points are awarded for the clue.)
- provide the letter a response begins with (e.g., for *zebra*, you might say, "Zebras live in a place that begins with the letter A." [*Africa*])
- provide a clue about a specific item (e.g., for *fire station*, you might say, "There is one next to the public library.")

Variations

(Note: For items 1 – 3 below, you may want to set a time limit, depending on the players' abilities.)

1. If only one person is playing, see how many answers he can give for each card. If necessary, provide additional cues for missed responses.
2. If two or three people are playing, they can play against each other or work together as a team.
3. Have players work in teams or alone to write as many answers as they can for a given item, beyond what is listed on the game card. The winner is the team or person who lists the most responses.
4. Allow players to use reference books before, during, or after play. Give players items to research before playing the game. See how many of their answers match the responses on the game cards. Let players look through encyclopedias or dictionaries during play to enhance their scores. After playing, have players choose items of interest to research. Post answers around the room and encourage players to add to the lists periodically.

Here is an example of how to use the scoresheet to tally points.

Team	Fill-in-the-Blank	Categories	Attributes	Comparing and Contrasting
1	<i>6/10</i>	<i>5/10</i>	<i>4/10</i>	<i>5/10</i>
	<i>6/10</i>	<i>6/10</i>	<i>5/10</i>	
	<i>8/10</i>			
Total	<i>20/30</i>	<i>11/20</i>	<i>9/20</i>	<i>5/10</i>
2	<i>6/10</i>	<i>5/10</i>	<i>6/10</i>	<i>8/10</i>
	<i>8/10</i>	<i>8/10</i>	<i>5/10</i>	
	<i>9/10</i>			
Total	<i>23/30</i>	<i>13/20</i>	<i>11/20</i>	<i>8/10</i>

Score points received under the appropriate language area.

Scoresheet

Team	Fill-in-the-Blank	Categories	Attributes	Comparing and Contrasting
1				
Total				
2				
Total				

Score points received under the appropriate language area.