

Play Action Word Charades

In first grade, kids commonly learn to tell the difference between nouns and verbs. While they may learn quickly to tell you the “definition” of each—by saying something along the lines of “a verb is an action word,” a full understanding usually takes more time. Here's a fun skill-boosting game to try at home, or even at a party.

What You Need:

- Pile of blank index cards
- Pen or pencil
- Imaginative, fun-loving kids and adult helpers—as few as four, as many as twenty!

What to Do:

1. Set up your game. Start by reviewing the definition of verb, and then ask everyone to help brainstorm as many cool action words as possible. You'll want to provide some helpful guidance—avoiding words like “kill,” for example, but thoroughly endorse ones like “slam,” “leap,” and “jiggle.” Write each verb on a separate index card, and put them in a basket or box face down.
2. Create your teams. Divide kids into two teams. Make sure each team has at least one adult or older kid helper. Now you're ready to play. Here's how: One kid from the first team picks an action word, shows it to her team, and then passes it over to ONE kid on the other team. That other kid reads the word and then silently acts it out for the rest of her team. Can they guess? No spoken clues allowed, but plenty of zany action is encouraged. When that round is done, repeat this sequence with Team 2. Play as long as you like; you can do it just for laughs, or you can keep score based on how long each team takes to guess each word—shortest total time wins!

For their first few times, make sure that your first grader can read each word, or that there's an adult helper on deck to provide quick, discreet help. As kids get more advanced in this game, you can also build in multi-syllable words and word clues; or try using nouns as well as verbs. Whatever you choose, though, don't forget to compliment kids on what they're learning, and let them know that this is a writing toolkit they can keep building for years to come.

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