

About the Author

JoAnne Abrassart, M.S., CCC-SLP, received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Redlands in Communicative Disorders. Her professional experience of more than 32 years includes public school, home health, and 21 years of college teaching in speech-language pathology.

Recently retired from the public school system, JoAnne maintains a private practice in speech-language pathology and serves as an educational consultant to private schools.

In her spare time, JoAnne and her husband, Rich, also an SLP, look for new places to travel.



Dedication

Joe
(1980-2004)

Acknowledgments

Clinical skills do not develop in a vacuum. I am indebted to the scores of children and their parents who, over the years, have helped me become the clinician I am today. One student in particular, Joseph, at Warm Springs Middle School, required that I find a way to meet his needs while playing “. . . only a card game” while at the same time providing him with a way to monitor his success without feedback from me. These language cards are the result.

I am further indebted to my husband, Rich, who has generously and patiently shared his considerable clinical knowledge and insights with me so that I can better serve my students.

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Introduction

Children with language problems frequently process word meanings at concrete levels. As a result, they often have difficulty with higher-level linguistic word relationships, including antonyms, synonyms, multiple-meaning words, and idioms. In addition to restricting spoken language, this deficit in semantic knowledge impacts reading comprehension. *Language Card Games* provides a format for students to self-teach, practice, and apply knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, multiple-meanings words, and idioms.

Language Card Games is made up of four decks of playing cards — one for each of the four word relationships listed above. Each deck contains 54 cards (26 matched pairs plus two Jokers). The unique feature to the matched pairs is that hearts only match diamonds (red to red) and spades only match clubs (black to black). For example, if a synonym pair has the number 9 on both cards, it is a correct match only if the cards are the 9 of hearts and the 9 of diamonds or the 9 of clubs and the 9 of spades.

This format is used to allow students to self-teach in the initial stages of learning and still be engaged in a game-playing context rather than direct instruction or drill. As students become more knowledgeable about the various word pairs, the matchup of hearts to diamonds and clubs to spades becomes a built-in reinforcer. Students will know that the pairing is correct (or incorrect) without needing feedback from the instructor.

As students become more proficient in their word knowledge, decks can be combined for the games. At this level, students should be able to match word pairs or definitions (in the case of antonyms/synonyms/multiple-meaning words) and state the category in which they belong. In addition to the words used in the decks of cards, students could be asked to generate their own words or definition pairs, possibly drawing information from their classroom textbooks. Whenever possible, provide concrete examples of word/idiom pairs to further enhance comprehension.

The words and idioms on these cards come from a variety of sources, including the curriculum, educational assessments, educational activities on the Internet, and professional experience. Of the words used on the Antonyms, Synonyms, and Multiple-Meaning cards, 87% are vocabulary words that are most likely to be encountered by students through printed language interactions (Zeno et al. 1995)¹.

¹ Zeno, S.M., Ivens, S.H., Millard, R.T., & Duvvari, R. (1995). *The educator's word frequency guide*. Brewster, NY: Touchstone Applied Science Associates (TASA), Inc.

Some of the multiple-meaning words have additional definitions that are not included on the cards (e.g., *chest*, *diamond*, *grade*). Discuss the other definitions with your students, and accept all appropriate answers. And, depending on your students' level, you may decide to use the Jokers as Wild cards.

Within each deck, the words/idioms begin with easier items on cards with lower values (e.g., twos, threes) and progress to more difficult items on cards with higher values (e.g., Kings, Aces). The items on the pre/posttests in this manual are in the same order as the items on the cards.

No matter the level of your student's proficiency, these cards can easily be adapted to meet the individual needs of each student. You can also use them for a variety of activities including articulation and fluency. A pre/posttest for each area has been provided to track student progress. Have fun!

JoAnne

How to Play

Games 1 through 3 can be played with any of the four decks. Modifications for the Idioms deck are included. Game 4 is for the Synonyms and Antonyms decks only.

Game 1: Make a Match (Go Fish)

Players: 2 or more

Object: to accumulate the most pairs

Setting Up

Choose one of the four decks. Shuffle the cards and deal five cards to each player.

Playing the Game

Before playing the game, have each player identify any matched pairs in his hand and place them faceup on the table. Each student must tell what the matched pair is (verifying to the other players that the number and suit match) and, depending on the level of the student, use the words in a sentence or description to indicate understanding of the words.

Play then proceeds to the dealer's left with each player in turn asking one other player for a card to match one in his hand. For example, each player must understand that if he has a 9 of hearts, he must ask for a 9 of diamonds. Once he becomes familiar enough with the vocabulary itself, he can ask for the actual synonym, antonym, or multiple-meaning word that matches the card he holds in his own hand.

Play continues until one player runs out of cards or all cards are used. The player with the most pairs at that time is the winner.

Modification for *Idioms* Deck

Proceed with the basic instructions above, however, instead of matching word pairs/definitions, students match each idiomatic expression with its intended meaning. Until the students become proficient with matching the idiom to its intended meaning, they can rely on the matching of numbers and suits.

Game 2: Concentration/Memory

Players: 2 or more

Object: to accumulate the most pairs

Setting Up

Choose one of the four decks and select any number of matched pairs from it. Shuffle the cards and spread them out facedown on the table so no card is touching another. Determine who is first.

Playing the Game

The first player chooses one card, turning it over for all players to see. When the card is turned over, the student should say the word or definition. Ask the student, "Which one are you looking for?" indicating a response of either the number and suit or the matching word or definition, depending on the student's proficiency.

The student then turns over a second card in hopes of matching the first card. When the second card is turned over, make a determination about whether or not a match has been made. If not, ask, "What would go with this one?" (indicating one of the unmatched cards) and "What would go with this one?" (indicating the other unmatched card). If the player does not know the answer to these questions, other players should be encouraged to participate. If no player knows the answer, offer two possible choices, with one being correct and the other presented as a foil.

If the player makes a match, she takes the two cards, places them faceup in front of her, and continues to play until she turns over two cards that do not match. If the player has not made a match, return both cards facedown to the table. Play then proceeds to the player's left.

Play continues until no cards are left on the table. Each child then shares her words or definition pairs with the other players. Prompt for further discussion as needed. The player with the most pairs is the winner.

Modification for *Idioms Deck*

Proceed with the basic instructions above, however, lay out the cards with idioms facedown on one side of the table and their matches (intended meanings) facedown on the other side of the table. Have students choose one card from each set. If a match is not made between the two upturned cards, have the student identify which idiom would go with the intended meaning card and which intended meaning would go with the idiom card. If this is too difficult for the student, have her match numbers and suits instead of the idiom and its meaning. Then discuss the idiom and its meaning.

Game 3: Face-Off (War)

Players: 2 or more

Object: to accumulate the most cards

Setting Up

Choose one of the four decks. Shuffle the cards and distribute all cards in the deck evenly among the players. Place each player's cards in a stack facedown in front of him.

Playing the Game

Each player takes the top card off his deck and turns it faceup in the middle of the table. The card with the highest value is the winner of that hand. Before the player with the highest card value can claim the cards as his, he must either use the word on his card in a sentence or name its synonym, antonym, or multiple-meaning. If a player turns up a multiple-meaning card with no word on it, he must identify the word before using it in a sentence or naming its synonym, antonym, or multiple-meaning. The winner then takes all of the cards from the middle of the table and places them in a separate stack.

Depending on your students' level, if the player with the highest card cannot use the word in a sentence or tell the antonym, synonym, or multiple-meaning, you can allow another player to "steal" the pile by using it in a sentence or naming its antonym, synonym, or multiple-meaning.

If two or more players turn up cards with the same value, a face-off occurs. The players with cards of the same value each place three cards facedown, turning the fourth card faceup. Again, the card with the highest value wins all of the cards in the middle. And again, the winner of the face-off must use the word on the turned-up card in a sentence or name its synonym, antonym, or multiple-meaning before claiming the cards as his.

Play continues indefinitely unless a player loses all of his cards or a preset time limit is met. The player with the most cards at that time is the winner.

Modification for the *Idioms* Deck

Proceed with the basic instructions above, however, the player with the highest card must try to tell either the idiomatic expression of his card or the intended meaning for his idiomatic expression, depending on which card is turned faceup. (Note: This requires a proficiency that may take some time to develop.)

Variation

Combine decks for greater exposure and practice for those students who have mastered individual decks.

Game 4: Go Together

Players: 2 or more

Object: to accumulate the most points

Setting Up

Sort the cards in the Synonyms deck into their matching pairs. Do the same with the Antonyms deck. You may choose to keep score with paper and pencil.

Playing the Game

Present three cards faceup to the first player. One of the cards should be an antonym and the other two a pair of synonyms (or vice versa).

The player must identify which cards go together and which card doesn't belong. Once that is done, the player must explain her decision. If she correctly identifies the cards that go together, she gets one point. If she correctly identifies the card that doesn't belong, she gets another point. And if she clearly explains her rationale, she gets a third point for a possible total of three points per turn. Other students can earn points if they can answer any part of the question the player is unable to answer.

Play continues until all cards are used. The player with the most points is the winner.

Antonyms Pre/Posttest

Explain to the student that you will say a word and you want him to tell you a word that is its opposite. As a demonstration item, say, "What is the opposite of *cold*?" If the student answers correctly, proceed to the first test item. If he needs help, prompt with a choice between *chilly/cool* or *hot*. Supply the correct answer, if needed.

Offer additional demonstration items as needed, such as *night—day* or *bad—good*, to make sure the student understands the task.

Administer all test items from Column 1 by asking "What is the opposite of _____?" Place a check mark next to each test item that the student answers correctly. Total the number correct in the space provided at the bottom of the column. Items in Column 2 allow for posttest follow-up to intervention. Criterion for success is 80%.

Column 1

mother
daughter
night
love
stand
right
work
remember
question
backward
clean
awake
sunny
buy
wide
rough
crooked
sweet
innocent
strong
cheap
shallow
morning
liquid
interesting
succeed

Total Correct _____

Pretest Date _____

Column 2

father
son
day
hate
sit
wrong
play
forget
answer
forward
dirty
asleep
cloudy
sell
narrow
smooth
straight
sour
guilty
weak
expensive
deep
evening
solid
boring
fail

Total Correct _____

Posttest Date _____

Synonyms Pre/Posttest

Explain to the student that you will say a word and you want him to tell you another word that means the same thing. As a demonstration item, say, "What is another word for *cold*?" If the student answers correctly, proceed to the first test item. If he needs help, prompt with a choice between *hot* or *chilly/cool*. Supply the correct answer, if needed.

Offer additional demonstration items as needed, such as *over—above* or *baby—infant* to make sure the student understands the task.

Administer all test items from Column 1 by asking "What is another word for _____?" Place a check mark next to each test item that the student answers correctly. Total the number correct in the space provided at the bottom of the column. Items in Column 2 allow for posttest follow-up to intervention. Criterion for success is 80%.

Column 1

noisy
ship
mad
mom
dad
sleepy
home
insect
afraid
gift
friend
rip
yell
tardy
street
talk
begin
toss
fast
sad
imitate
buy
anxious
mistake
remember
confess

Total Correct _____

Pretest Date _____

Column 2

loud
boat
angry
mother
father
tired
house
bug
scared
present
pal
tear
scream
late
road
speak
start
throw
quick
unhappy
copy
purchase
worried
error
recall
admit

Total Correct _____

Posttest Date _____

Multiple-Meaning Words Pre/Posttest

Tell the student that you will say a word that has more than one meaning. As a demonstration item, say the word *cool*. Explain that it has to do with temperature (e.g., *cold*, *chilly*). It also describes the way a person acts or looks (e.g., *calm*, *fashionable*).

Provide additional demonstration items as needed, such as *bat*, *play*, or *ring* to make sure the student understands the task. If the student only provides one definition or explanation, prompt with, "Do you know another way to use the word _____?" Provide answers as needed.

Administer all items by saying, "Tell me two meanings for the word _____." Place a check mark next to each test item that the student identifies correctly. Give one point for each correct answer per item for a possible total of 52 points. Total the score in the space provided at the end of the items. Criterion for success is 80%.

Note: If a student provides an answer that is acceptable but not listed, give the student credit for a correct response. Discuss the listed answer as needed.

Items begin on page 12.

Multiple-Meaning Words Pre/Posttest, *continued*

marble	a type of rock used to make statues a small, glass ball used in games
exam	a test a careful check of someone's health by a doctor
diamond	the infield in baseball an expensive gemstone
date	someone you go out with to get to know better a day on a calendar
chest	the upper part of your body supported by your ribs a piece of furniture with drawers
check	a mark to show that something is incorrect or completed the bill at a restaurant
grade	a class or level in school a mark given to show how well something in school is done
fork	an eating utensil the place where one road splits into two separate roads
jam	a sweet fruit spread on bread or toast a difficult situation
kid	a child a baby goat
lap	the front part of your thighs when you sit down one complete trip around a track or course
pit	a deep hole in the ground the hard seed found in the center of some fruits
pad	many sheets of paper glued together along one side the cushion-like bottom of a cat's or dog's paw
palm	the bottom of a person's hand a tree that bears coconuts and grows in warm climates

Multiple-Meaning Words Pre/Posttest, *continued*

pupil	a student the black part of your eye
sentence	words that go together to make a statement the punishment a judge gives to a criminal
shoulder	the part of your body between your head and your upper arm the edge or side of the road
shower	a brief rain a way to get clean by standing under a spray of water
spot	a stain on clothes a location on a map
trunk	the compartment in a car where luggage is stored the main stem of a tree
pitcher	the baseball player who throws the ball to the batter a container for holding and pouring liquids
row	a line of people or things to use oars to move a boat
pen	a small fenced-in area for animals a writing tool
nail	the thin, hard part at the end of a finger or toe a thin piece of metal that is pointed at one end and is pounded by a hammer
program	a series of instructions a computer follows to perform a task a show on TV or a performance on stage
bluff	a high, steep cliff to try to fool people deliberately

Total Correct _____

Total Correct _____

Pretest Date _____

Posttest Date _____

Idioms Pre/Posttest

Explain to the student that an idiom is a phrase or expression that conveys an idea or a message. As a demonstration item, say, “*Give me a hand.*” Explain that people often say this when they need help with something.

See if the student can come up with his own idiom. If the student is unable to think of one, say, “Try this one for practice. What does it mean if I say ‘*Get off my back*’?” Offer additional demonstration items as needed, such as “*I’m pulling for you*” or “*Why don’t you just chill out?*” to make sure the student understands the task.

Administer all test items by saying, “What does the following expression mean?” Record the student’s response in the space provided. Place a check mark next to each test item that the student answers correctly. Only those answers that appropriately address the meaning of the idiom should be considered correct. Award one point per stimulus item for a total of 26 points. Tally the number correct at the end of the section and record in the space provided. Criterion for success is 80%.

Stimulus Items

Answers

You’re putting me on!

You are kidding.

We had a blast!

We had a lot of fun.

Get a grip.

Control your emotions.

Hang in there.

Keep trying.

She was as sick as a dog.

She was very sick.

He was cracking jokes.

He was telling jokes.

Idioms Pre/Posttest, *continued*

I need to touch base.

I need to let someone know
where I am.

You should stick up for her.

You should defend her.

He is a card shark.

He is a very good card player.

Lend me a hand.

Help me.

Knock it off.

Stop it.

Use your head.

Think carefully.

I am totally wiped out.

I am exhausted.

What a pain!

How annoying!

*She is going to sleep in
on Saturday.*

She is going to sleep later than
usual on Saturday.

You are really pushing your luck.

You are testing the limits.

Idioms Pre/Posttest, *continued*

I give it two thumbs up.

It is really good.

We are just going to hang out.

We are going to be with friends.

It's such a rip-off.

I paid too much for something.

What's up with that?

What's the problem?

Get off my back.

Stop pressuring me.

He is in hot water.

He is in trouble.

She blew it.

She did poorly.

We're going to throw a party.

We're going to have a party.

Keep an eye on things.

Watch to make sure nothing happens.

You are skating on thin ice.

You are just about to get yourself in trouble.

Total Correct _____

Total Correct _____

Pretest Date _____

Posttest Date _____