

Words From Letters



Activity Summary

This activity can be prepared and projected or can be spontaneous and written on a whiteboard or overhead transparency. The goal is to get language learners thinking about spelling and vocabulary and then to model digitally transactive thinking as a way for solving language problems.

- Step 1 - Show students 10 to 12 letters (projected or written on board)
- Step 2 - Ask students to make as many words as possible with the given letters (feel free to use teams, promote friendly competition and gamify)
- Step 3 - Mentor digitally transactive thinking using <http://www.word-grabber.com>
- Step 4 - Discuss the benefits of the digitally enhanced technique

Suggested Letters

Try... TDRNHAIE also known as THE DRAIN

I chose these letters from the most commonly used letters in English. In his classic text "Codes and Secret Writing", Herbert Zim suggests that the most frequently used English letters are "ETAON RISHD LFCMU GYPWB VKJXQ Z," the most common letter pairs are "TH HE AN RE ER IN ON AT ND ST ES EN OF TE ED OR TI HI AS TO," and the most common doubled letters are "LL EE SS OO TT FF RR NN PP CC".

Another technique would be to use long words that can be broken down into smaller words. For example the words agriculture, beautiful, dictionary, international, systematic are all longer words that are part of the first 2000 words of English so they should be recognizable to most second language students. To see more of the most common words of English, check out the following frequency lists. Also, if students study and learn the following lists, K1, K2 & AWL, then they will know about 90% of the words they will come across in any academic text. [Click here for the research supporting this.](#)

- [Click here for the first 1000 words in English \(K1\)](#)
- [Click here for the second 1000 words in English \(K2\)](#)
- [Click here for the Academic Word List \(AWL\)](#)

Extension

To then extend this activity beyond the classroom, Gamify it! Show students the games "Words with Friends" and "Whirly Word"

