

## Vocabulary: Free Online Games

We have reviewed the games below. They are great ways to build vocabulary and early literacy in 4 to 8 year old children. The games all have speech so children do not have to read to play the games.

- **Curious George-** <http://pbskids.org/curiousgeorge/busyday/> This game uses the character Curious George to focus on quantity concepts: counting, more, fewer, plus, minus, take away, add, same, etc.
- **Oscar's Rotten Ride-** <http://pbskids.org/sesame/games/oscars-rotten-ride/> Help Oscar the Grouch collect trash while you learn concepts related to size and position: e.g. first, second, third next to, closest to, in order, shortest, tallest
- **Grover's Winter Games-** <http://pbskids.org/sesame/home/grovers-winter-games/> Teaches patterns and shapes.
- **Make the Cake-** <http://pbskids.org/peg/games/make-the-cake> Teaches the concepts of same, equal, fractions (one half, one quarter, one third, etc.)
- **Hopposites-** <http://pbskids.org/lions/games/hopposites.html> Although the game targets opposites, it also works to some degree on synonyms (words that mean the same). So when you find the opposite to *dirty* (*i.e. you find clean*) it then asks for the opposite of *clean* (*messy*). Then you find the opposite of *messy* (*tidy*).
- **Synonym Sam's Lab-** <http://pbskids.org/lions/games/synsam.html> Teaches the concept of synonyms. Children listen to a word. A cartoon character shows what the word means. The child picks one of three words that is a synonym (means the same) as the first word.
- **Word Girl-** <http://pbskids.org/wordgirl/games/> These games probably appeal more to the upper end of the age range (7-8 year olds). Fun vocabulary building activities with humorous characters.

- **Super Why! Games-** <http://pbskids.org/superwhy/#/games> These games would also probably appeal more to older students (7 – 8 year olds). The focus here is on meaning but students will also develop some word recognition (reading) skills.
- **LearnNowBC - Young Learning Centre-** [www.learnnowbc.ca/learningcentre/](http://www.learnnowbc.ca/learningcentre/) Designed by expert teachers, the Edmark House Series helps teach early learners skills that will help them with reading, math, science and telling time. Children usually love these games!
- **GameGoo - Educational Games –** [www.earobics.com/gamegoo](http://www.earobics.com/gamegoo) These games are fun and help children learn early reading skills. The advanced games target antonyms, synonyms, and poetry concepts and might be better for older children.

Remember, computer games should not take the place of a spending time with your child. Reading with your child is one of the best ways we know to build vocabulary. However, sometimes it is helpful to have some enjoyable activities that your child can do by himself for short periods. The games we reviewed are fun *and* can help your child succeed in school.

