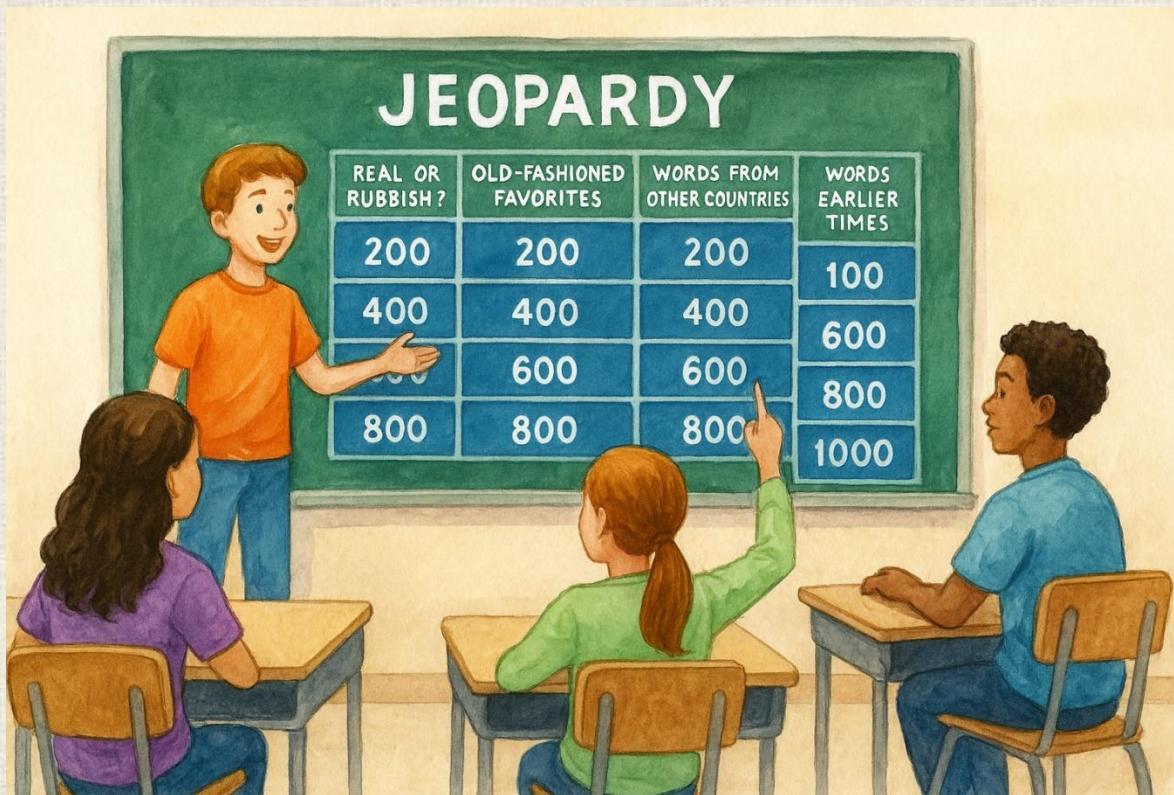


From Word Lists to Game Boards

85 Questions That Turn Vocabulary into Action



This handout accompanies the blog post
“Vocabulary Games for the Classroom.”
[Check it out here](#) for even more ideas.

Get the [Google Slides editable questions](#).

Vocabulary Jeopardy: Quirky Words Edition

Jeopardy is a classroom favorite and with a few playful twists, it becomes a powerful vocabulary tool. In this version, students explore words that have changed meaning over time, words borrowed from other languages, and quirky terms that sound made-up but are surprisingly real. You don't need to build the game board yourself. Just grab one of the free editable templates linked below, and copy-paste the questions I've provided. Students can play in teams, solo, or in small groups either digitally or in person.

How It Works

1. Choose a Jeopardy template (Google Slides, Flippity, PowerPoint, etc.)
2. Copy and paste the questions from the categories below
3. Provide students with the word bank so they can match definitions to terms
4. Optional: Add a timer or buzzer for extra classroom energy!

Categories Included

Real or Rubbish? – words that sound fake but are real

Old-Fashioned Favorites – words we rarely use today

Words from Other Countries – borrowed terms with global roots

Words from Earlier Times – archaic words that once ruled the page

Words That Changed Character – terms that flipped meaning over time

Each category includes five questions, ready to copy and paste. You'll also find a mixed word bank and answer key to make setup easy.

Gameboard Templates for Teachers

Here are a few free options to build your board:

Style	Platform	Link
Colorful & Interactive	PowerPoint	Games4ESL Jeopardy Template
Customizable Themes	Template.net	Template.net Jeopardy Templates
TPT Options	Teachers Pay Teachers	Free Jeopardy Templates on TPT
Simple & Editable	Google Slides	Richard Byrne's Jeopardy Template

Real or Rubbish?	Old-Fashioned Favorites	Words from Other Countries	Category: Words from Earlier Times	Words That Changed Character
100: This word means “to leave abruptly.”	100: A word meaning “former or previous.”	100: A storm name from Chinese meaning “big wind.”	100: A word that means “between.”	100: Once meant “full of awe,” now means “very bad.”
200: A warning cry before tossing waste in old Scottish cities.	200: Two dozen sheets of paper.	200: A fruit name from the West African language Wolof.	200: A word meaning “soon” or “shortly.”	200: Originally meant “blessed or happy,” now means “foolish.”
300: A stomach ache with a silly name.	300: To be eager or excited.	300: A condiment name from Chinese fish sauce.	300: A word for “three times.”	300: Used to mean “shockingly good,” now means “shockingly bad.”
400: A word for “the day before yesterday.”	400: Nonsense or foolish talk.	400: A travel word from Swahili.	400: A word meaning “perhaps” or “maybe.”	400: Once meant “artfully made,” now means “fake or insincere.”
500: An Old English word meaning “named or called.”	500: A mischievous person.	500: Sleepwear from Hindi/Urdu meaning “leg clothing.”	500: A word meaning “listen!”	500: Originally meant “farmhand,” now means “criminal or evildoer.”

Answer Key (Quick Definitions)

Real or Rubbish?	Old-Fashioned Favorites	Words from Other Countries	Category: Words from Earlier Times	Words That Changed Character
100: absquatulate – to leave abruptly	100: erstwhile – former or previous	100: typhoon – from Chinese <i>tai fung</i> (“big wind”)	100: betwixt – between	100: awful – full of awe → very bad
200: gardyloo – warning cry before throwing waste	200: quire – two dozen sheets of paper	200: banana – from Wolof	200: anon – soon	200: silly – blessed → foolish
300: collywobbles – stomach discomfort Yclept – named or called	300: agog – eager or excited	300: ketchup – from Chinese <i>ke-tsiap</i>	300: thrice – three times	300: egregious – shockingly good → shockingly bad
400: nudiustertian – the day before yesterday	400: balderdash – nonsense	400: safari – from Swahili <i>safiri</i>	400: peradventure – perhaps	400: artificial - artfully made → fake or insincere
500: yclept – named or called	500: rapscallion – mischievous person	500: pajamas – from Hindi/Urdu <i>pae jama</i>	500: hark – listen	500: villain – farmhand → criminal

Jeopardy Word Bank (Mixed Order)

absquatulate

poppycock

thrice

banana

typhoon

egregious

rapscallion

collywobbles

betwixt

balderdash

peradventure villain

quire

gardyloo

fusty

anon

pajamas

ketchup

agog

erstwhile

hark

silly

safari

awful

yclept

Would You Rather... With Words You've Never Heard?

What happens when you mix quirky vocabulary with a classic classroom game? You get a “Would You Rather” activity that’s equal parts silly and skill-rich.

Each question pairs two unusual words like *absquatulate* or *collywobbles* and asks students to choose between them. But here’s the twist: they have to look up the definitions before they decide. It’s a playful way to build curiosity, context skills, and word awareness.

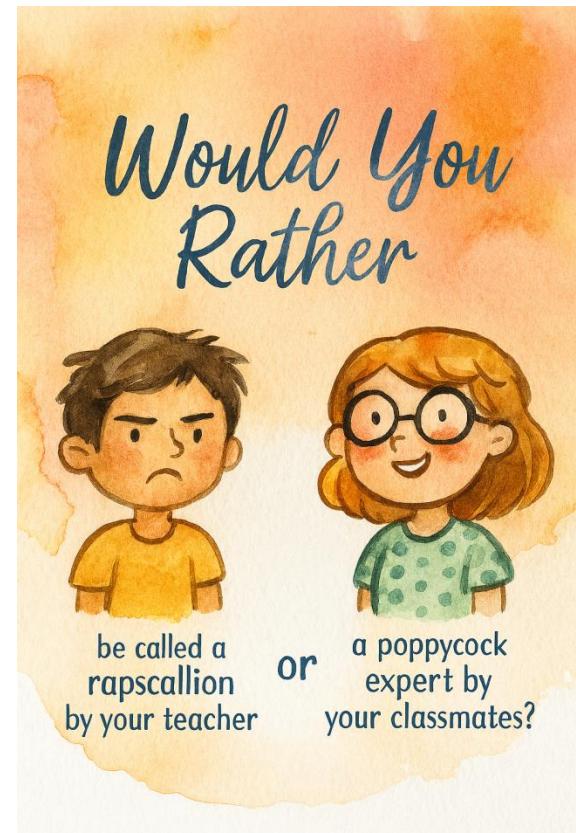
You can use this activity as a warm-up, a brain break, or a vocabulary station. Students can vote, journal, or even write their own questions using the word bank provided.

Free Templates to Build Your Game

Want to play digitally? These free templates make setup easy:

- [Ditch That Textbook Snapchat-Style Template](#)
- [ClassroomScreen Interactive Template](#)
- [Genially Animated Template](#)
- [Create Dream Explore Google Slides](#)

Just copy and paste the questions, share the word bank, and let the vocabulary adventure begin.



Would you rather absquatulate during math class or get the collywobbles before lunch?

Would you rather have a robot do your homework or a villain grade your test?

Would you rather be stuck saying anon instead of soon or peradventure instead of maybe?

Would you rather shout gardyloo before entering a room or be called yclept a silly nickname?

Would you rather be known as a fusty historian or an egregious dancer?

Would you rather use quire in every sentence or shout gardyloo! before entering a room?

Would you rather write your essay on a quire of paper or wait until the nudiustertian day to start?

Would you rather be described as erstwhile cool or agog about everything?

Would you rather cause a kerfuffle in the library or a hullabaloo in the cafeteria?

Would you rather be known for your erstwhile talents or for always being agog about new ideas?

Would you rather carry a bumbershoot on a sunny day or walk widdershins around the school?

Would you rather live with constant cacophony in your neighborhood or have everyone describe you as gaunt?

Would You Rather Vocabulary Answer Key

Would You Rather Question	Teacher Explanation
...absquatulate during math class or get the collywobbles before lunch?	Absquatulate means to leave abruptly; collywobbles refers to a stomach ache or nervous flutter
...be called a rapscallion by your teacher or a poppycock expert by your classmates?	Rapscallion is a mischievous person; poppycock means nonsense or silly talk.
...wear pajamas to school or safari gear to the grocery store?	Pajamas comes from Hindi/Urdu meaning "leg clothing"; safari is Swahili for "journey."
...live betwixt two haunted houses or yonder in a castle with no Wi-Fi?	Betwixt means between; yonder means over there or in the distance.
...have a robot do your homework or a villain grade your test?	Robot comes from Czech for "forced labor"; villain originally meant farmhand but now means a criminal.
...be known as a fusty historian or an egregious dancer?	Fusty means stale or old-fashioned; egregious once meant outstanding but now means shockingly bad.
...be described as erstwhile cool or agog about everything?	Erstwhile means former; agog means eager or excited.
...carry a bumboreshoot on a sunny day or walk widdershins around the school?	Bumboreshoot means umbrella; widdershins means counterclockwise.
...be stuck saying anon instead of soon or peradventure instead of maybe?	Anon means soon; peradventure means perhaps or maybe.
...use quire in every sentence or shout gardyloo! before entering a room?	Quire means two dozen sheets of paper; gardyloo was a warning cry before tossing waste in old Scottish cities.
...cause a kerfuffle in the library or a hullabaloo in the cafeteria?	Kerfuffle means a loud argument; hullabaloo means a noisy commotion.
...live with constant cacophony in your neighborhood or have everyone describe you as gaunt?	Cacophony means harsh mixture of sounds; gaunt means thin or bony.

Vocabulary Trail Games: Question Cards for Any Gameboard

If your students love board games, dice rolls, or movement-based activities, this one's for you. These multiple choice question cards are designed to pair with any trail-style game whether it's a printable board, a classroom floor path, or a digital spinner.

Before taking a turn, students must answer a vocabulary question. Each one features a quirky or time-twisted word. You can print these as cards, use them in stations, or project them for whole-class play.

How to Use the Trail Game Questions

- 1) **Print and cut** the questions into cards
- 2) **Shuffle and stack** near your gameboard or spinner
- 3) **Students answer before moving**—correct answers earn a roll or move
- 4) **Use in pairs or small groups** for collaborative play
- 5) **Optional:** Add challenge cards or “wild words” for bonus turns

Trail-Style Board Games

These are classic path-following games where students move along a trail by rolling dice or spinning. These question cards fit perfectly as a “must answer before moving” mechanic.

- [Let's Play](#)
- [Candy Land with a Twist for Big Kids](#)

Spinner & Dice-Based Games

Use your question cards as the challenge before spinning or rolling.

[Toy Theater Online Spinner](#)

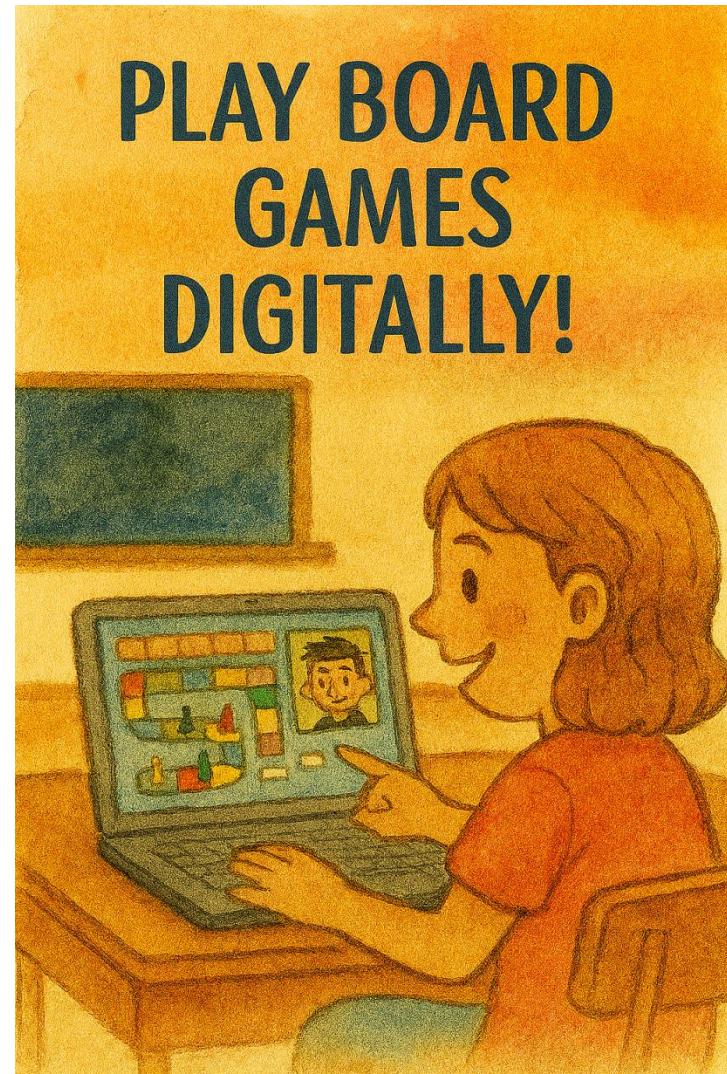
Free, customizable spinner - great for digital play or projecting in class.

[Flippity Randomizer](#)

Create a randomized question selector using your card set.

Flexible Game Formats That Use Question Cards

- **Board Game Stations** – Set up multiple boards around the room, each with a stack of question cards. Students rotate and play in small groups.
- **“Race to the Finish” Floor Game** – Tape a trail on the classroom floor. Students move forward only after answering a card correctly.
- **“Hot Seat” Challenge** – One student sits in the hot seat and answers a card. Correct = move forward; incorrect = stay put.
- **“Roll & Reveal”** – Students roll a die to determine which category of question they’ll answer (e.g., 1 = silly words, 2 = borrowed words, etc.).



Real or Make-Believe?

What does **bumbershoot** mean?

- a) a marching band instrument
- b) a raincoat
- c) an umbrella
- d) a silly dance

A **snollygoster** is...

- a) a clever but dishonest person
- b) a sea monster
- c) a type of sandwich
- d) juggling trick

To **coddiwomple** is to...

- a) speak loudly
- b) dance clumsily
- c) work very hard
- d) travel with a vague destination in mind

A **thingamajig** is...

- a) a tool you can't name
- b) a monster
- c) a candy bar
- d) a chair

Hocus-pocus is usually linked to...

- a) math problems
- b) weather patterns
- c) loud noises
- d) magic tricks

If something is **topsy-turvy**, it is...

- a) very neat
- b) upside down or chaotic
- c) extremely clean
- d) completely broken

The word **hullabaloo** refers to...

- a) a noisy commotion
- b) a type of hat
- c) a serious meeting
- d) a calm discussion

Dillydally means...

- a) to waste time
- b) to work hard
- c) to talk too much
- d) to sleep

What does **absquatulate** mean?

- a) to sneeze loudly
- b) to leave abruptly
- c) to dance awkwardly
- d) to whisper nonsense

What does **flibbertigibbet** describe?

- a) a quiet thinker
- b) silly, talkative person
- c) serious student
- d) sleepy animal

What does **nudiustertian** mean?

- a) type of ancient clothing
- b) forgotten holiday
- c) the day before yesterday
- d) person who avoids the news

What does **bloviate** mean?

- a) to whisper kindly
- b) to sing off-key
- c) to write in code
- d) to speak snobbishly or at length

Silly-Sounding Words

What does **rapscallion** mean?

- a) a brave knight
- b) mischievous person
- c) type of soup
- d) musical instrument

A **collywobbler** is...

- a) a person who loves birds
- b) a stomachache
- c) a juggling toy
- d) a liar

If someone is being **persnickety**, they are...

- a) very fussy
- b) carefree
- c) honest
- d) brave

A **skedaddle** means...

- a) to run away quickly
- b) to eat too much
- c) to dance wildly
- d) to sing loudly

What is a **bumbershoot**?

- a) a trampoline
- b) a raincoat
- c) an umbrella
- d) a backpack

What does **lollygag** mean?

- a) to rush quickly
- b) to waste time
- c) to eat candy
- d) to jump rope

What does **cattywampus** mean?

- a) perfectly straight
- b) slightly tilted
- c) very clean
- d) loud and echoing

What does **quirky** mean?

- a) boring and plain
- b) strange in a fun way
- c) loud and rude
- d) sad and quiet

What does **gobbledygook** mean?

- a) delicious food
- b) a bird's call
- c) a type of dance
- d) nonsense or confusing language

What does **snollygoster** describe?

- a) clever but dishonest person
- b) a type of monster
- c) a sleepy animal
- d) a noisy machine

What does **nincompoop** mean?

- a) a type of snack
- b) a foolish person
- c) a musical instrument
- d) a sleepy animal

What does **hootenanny** mean?

- a) a type of bird
- b) a quiet disagreement
- c) a fancy hat
- d) a wild party or gathering

Old-Fashioned or Forgotten

If someone is feeling **woebegone**, they are...

- a) very happy
- b) very sad
- c) extremely tired
- d) completely confused

The word **ragamuffin** describes...

- a) a neat and tidy person
- b) a child in ragged clothes
- c) a type of dessert
- d) a playful puppy

What is a **nincompoop**?

- a) a foolish person
- b) a shy animal
- c) a funny dance
- d) a sweet treat

The word **malarkey** means...

- a) nonsense
- b) delicious food
- c) a secret plan
- d) a loud party

A **jackanapes** is...

- a) a musical instrument
- b) a kind teacher
- c) a good friend
- d) a mischievous person

If a room is **bedraggled**, it looks...

- a) perfectly clean
- b) bright and shiny
- c) brand new
- d) messy and untidy

A **fuddy-duddy** is...

- a) an old-fashioned, fussy person
- b) a friendly neighbor
- c) a brave hero
- d) a silly pet

A **ragtag** group is...

- a) a marching band
- b) a sports team
- c) a disorganized or messy group
- d) a choir

What does **fusty** mean?

- a) fresh and clean
- b) old-fashioned or stale
- c) bright and colorful
- d) loud and annoying

What does **gardyloo** mean?

- a) a Scottish greeting
- b) warning cry before tossing waste
- c) type of dance
- d) rainstorm

What does **peradventure** mean?

- a) without a doubt
- b) perhaps or maybe
- c) very soon
- d) a type of adventure

What does **anon** mean?

- a) never
- b) later today
- c) soon or shortly
- d) loudly

From Other Countries

Poppycock is another word for...

- a) silly nonsense
- b) a small bird
- c) a flower
- d) a dessert

To **bamboozle** someone is to...

- a) greet them politely
- b) teach them kindly
- c) argue with them
- d) trick or deceive them

Kerfuffle is best defined as...

- a) a type of fabric
- b) a polite conversation
- c) a loud argument
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If someone says they feel **peckish**, they are...

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What does **yclapt** (or "yclept") mean?

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What does **widdershins** mean?

- a) in a clockwise direction
- b) in a zigzag pattern
- c) counterclockwise
- d) very slowly

What does **ketchup** originally refer to?

- a) tomato paste
- b) a Chinese fish sauce
- c) a spicy pepper blend
- d) a sweet fruit jam

What does **banana** come from?

- a) Latin for fruit
- b) Greek for yellow
- c) West African language
- d) Spanish for bend

What does **safari** mean in Swahili?

- a) animal hunt
- b) long walk
- c) journey
- d) wild adventure

What does **pyjamas** (or pajamas) come from?

- a) Hindi/Urdu for leg clothing
- b) French for sleepwear
- c) Latin for comfort
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What does **robot** originally mean in Czech?

- a) machine
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What does **bungalow** come from?

- a) small hut
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Game Cards Answer Key



Real or Make-Believe?

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Links to Online Games

[The Price is Right](#)

[Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?](#)

[Google Slides Clue](#)

PowerPoint Game Templates

If you prefer PowerPoint, there are still many free templates available online. Just be aware that animations and sound effects don't always transfer well into Google Slides. Some favorite sources include:

[Rusnak Creative Game Shows](#)

[Lifewire's 14 Templates](#)

[Kevin Culpepper's Game Templates](#)

[Template.net](#) has 17+ PowerPoint Game templates.

[Ready-to-Play PowerPoint, PDF, Excel and HTML Games](#)

[Free PowerPoint Templates](#)

Ready to build a stronger vocabulary toolkit?

Whether you're teaching word meaning, structure, or usage, the *Beyond the Dictionary* and *Root Prefix Suffixes* series offer skill-rich, teacher-friendly resources that make learning stick. Be sure to download the free sample weeks for each. Your next favorite vocabulary activity might be waiting inside!

Beyond the Dictionary Sample Week

Greek and Latin Roots & Affixes

Sample Week

THE BEST DEAL

Vocabulary Power Pack

Grades 4-6

Games, Word Work, Organizers

2 Power Series in 1 Growing Bundle

Greek & Latin Roots + Affixes

Monthly Themes

- ✓ Digital Games
- ✓ Printable Practice
- ✓ Video Lessons
- ✓ Google Slides + PDF
- ✓ No Prep

Created by
Gay Miller

Gay Miller @ Book Units Teacher



Credits





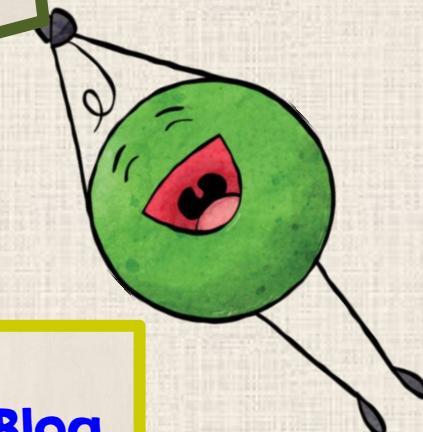
Book Units Teacher Website



Teachers Pay Teachers Store



Pinterest



YouTube



Book Units Teacher Blog