Vocabulary Building Activities for Low Level ESL learners

- Introduce vocabulary with visuals: Real objects (realia) or pictures. Begin orally. Give the learners lots of opportunity to practice the words with you.
  - Put realia around the room. Have learners put pictures of objects with the vocabulary words on them next to the real objects.
  - Put objects or pictures around the room. Give learners strips of paper with the words for the pictures written on them. Have the learners put the labels on or next to the pictures.

- Use flashcards. Begin orally.
  - Show the learners flashcards with pictures of the vocabulary and say the vocabulary words orally. Have learners repeat the words.
  - Post the flashcards on the walls or on the board. Call out the words and have the learners point to the items or stand in front of the items.
  - Have learners work in pairs. Give one flashcards and the other learner labels with the words. Have them match the pictures to the words.
  - Divide the class into teams. Say a vocabulary word and have one member from each team run to the front and point to the correct flashcard posted on the board.
  - Give learners copies of the flashcards. Say vocabulary words and have the learners hold up the correct cards.
  - Give pairs of learners flashcards and have them ask and answer a familiar question related to the flashcards: “What’s this?” “How do you feel today?” “What is he doing?” etc.

- Use flashcards for recognition of written words.
  - Point to each flashcard, ask the learners to tell you what the word is and write it under the card.
  - Remove the flashcards and pass them out to the learners. Have them put them up on the board above the correct word.
  - Erase the words below the picture flashcards. Give the learners flashcards with the vocabulary words written on them. Point to
the pictures on the board and say them one by one. Have the learners hold up the correct word cards.
  o Call out vocabulary words. Have individual learners bring the written word card to the board and copy the word under the picture
  o Have learners label a picture or write simple descriptions of a picture.

- Play charades: Take turns acting out vocabulary words. This works well with verbs or adjectives of emotions, animals, daily routine, and occupations.
- Use worksheets. Create word finds and simple crosswords for learners to practise with. Create matching activities: words to pictures
- Have learners create their own learner dictionary; help them organize words in it. Use it on a regular basis in class so that learners get used to using it.
- Play games: Hangman, memory, board games, BINGO. You can create some of these activities using www.mes-english.com
- Play the fly swatter word recognition game that we saw in the video (http://www.newamericanhorizons.org/training-videos refer to: Building Literacy with Adult Emergent Readers.)
- Create Learner Generated Texts.
  o Go on a field trip to see vocabulary first hand. Take pictures on your fieldtrip to remind the learners of the vocabulary in a later class.
  o In the next class, review the pictures with the learners and write a learner generated story about it. Ask questions about the story and practice using the vocabulary orally.
  o In a following class, review the pictures with the learners to reinforce vocabulary words. Read the story with them again. Have them underline certain words in the story.
  o In another class, have learners read the story to each other. Next, have the learners complete sentence stems with familiar vocabulary words.