Vocabulary Word Squares:
*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
Pocket Books (New York: 2007)

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY
*A Christmas Carol* is full of vocabulary that is difficult on several levels. First, many words are specific to 18th Century London, ex: coal-box, counting-house, Poor Law etc. These words are important to mention as the class reads the novel, but the students will probably not need to memorize these words to use in later circumstances. The vocabulary squares allows students to really learn and integrate into their vocabulary other words that are more commonly used. A great feature of the vocabulary squares is that it allows students to use drawing as well as creating new sentences so the learning is more complete. This vocabulary isn’t just looking a word up in a dictionary.

CONTEXT
This strategy is best as a during or before strategy because you can prepare your students with the vocabulary before they read, or you can reinforce the vocabulary as you read and encounter it in context.

DIRECTIONS
Model the word squares activity in front of your class with a vocabulary word from the novel. I used vocabulary from Stave One, particularly “covetous”.

> Covetous= “marked by inordinate desire for wealth or possessions or for another's possessions, having a craving for possession <covetous of powers>” In my own words, covetous means always wanting something, particularly if someone else has it. This word is used to describe Scrooge’s character.
> (definition from: “covetous”, Merriam Webster Online. 23 November 2009.)

After the students understand the technique of doing word squares, give them the handout with the instructions and selected vocabulary words. Have them complete the word-square activity on their own. Then, once the students have each completed their individual word-squares, have them get into groups and share their word squares with 2–3 others.

Instructions for Word Squares:
For each word square, take a piece of paper and fold it into 4 sections:
In the first section (A), write the word. Be careful to spell it correctly.
In the second section (B), draw a picture of the object.
In the third section (C), write a short definition, in your own words of the object.

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In the fourth section (D), use the word in a sentence, including context clues that help to define it.

ASSESSMENT
Students should be graded on participation and completion of their word squares. Finish the activity by getting one person from each group to present a word to the class. This allows for experience in presenting in a casual setting and also allows the teacher to correct definitions if there are any problems.
**Vocabulary Word Squares**

**Instructions**
Read through the definitions of the following words found in Stave One of *A Christmas Carol*. Then, choose two words from the word box below and make word squares (see below).

**Word Bank**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphatic</th>
<th>Boast</th>
<th>Sympathy</th>
<th>Obscure</th>
<th>Extremity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bestow</td>
<td>Kindred</td>
<td>Idle</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Facetious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Picture</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Definitions

Emphatic: “uttered with or marked by emphasis <an emphatic refusal>, tending to express oneself in forceful speech or to take decisive action”

Boast: “the act or an instance of boasting, brag, a cause for pride”

Sympathy: “an affinity, association, or relationship between persons or things wherein whatever affects one similarly affects the other, unity or harmony in action or effect, inclination to think or feel alike”

Obscure: “to make dark, dim, or indistinct, to conceal or hide by or as if by covering”

Extremity: “the farthest or most remote part, section, or point; extreme danger or critical need”

Bestow: “to put to use, to convey as a gift”

Kindred: “a group of related individuals, family relationship”

Idle: “lacking worth or basis, not occupied or employed, lazy”

Surplus: “the amount that remains when use or need is satisfied, extra”

Facetious: “joking or jesting often inappropriately, meant to be humorous or funny, not serious”