WORD SQUARES

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD
BY TOM STOPPARD
GROVE PRESS, 1968 EDITION
WORD SQUARES

CONTEXT:
As students begin reading the play, they will notice that some words are unfamiliar to them. Before they continue reading any further, ask them what words they did not understand and make a list. Have lists from further readings ready to give to them before they begin reading. Introducing them to the words before they come across them in the text will help because they will already have an idea of what the word is in their schema.

PURPOSE:
Using a Word Squares activity will help students have more information on the words they learn than just the definition. With the word squares, the students will also have an image in their mind that they have created and a practical use.

DIRECTIONS:

MATERIALS NEEDED: Paper. List of vocab words.
TIME:

STEP ONE
CREATING A VOCABULARY LIST
After you have assigned your students to read through the first half of act one, ask them if they came across some words they did not understand. Ask the students to look through their plays and pull out the words they did not understand and create a list on the whiteboard. Here are a list of words from Act One that would prove difficult for tenth graders:
Syllogism (16), gentry, vouchsafe, glean (36), arbitrary, instinctive, plume, comparatively, nomenclature (39), delve (49). (These are page numbers, since this edition of the text does not have line numbers)

STEP TWO
USING CONTEXT CLUES
Ask your students to then look at a few of the words from the list in context and guess their meanings. Have the students work individually on this part (that means no talking), writing down the word and then their guesses on a piece of paper. Give them four or five minutes to complete this task. Ask for the students to offer what they have guessed from the words in context.

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STEP THREE

LOOK IT UP
Once the guesses have been made, look up the definitions to the words together as a class and have the students come up by raise of hand to write an abbreviated version of the definition next to the word on the white board.

STEP FOUR

CREATE WORD SQUARES
Next, have the students pull out blank pieces of paper. The number of pages will depend on how many word squares you want them to create. Ask the students to draw 4 boxes on a page, each box divided into 4 squares. Have the students then write Word, Picture, Definition, and Use It at the top of each square. Ask the students, together as a class, to create a word square for each word. This part can be easily adapted for time constraints: If you don’t want to do each word, ask the students to choose the top four they struggle with. For this part of the activity, the students can work in pairs to generate better ideas for sentence uses and pictures to draw. Walk around the room as they work in pairs to monitor progress.

ASSESSMENT:

The students have chosen their own vocabulary list from words they did not understand in the text. They did six separate activities to remember the words: guessed from looking at it in context, looked up the definition, wrote the word, drew a picture, wrote the definition, and created their own sentence for it. Working in pairs also should have helped generate more ideas.