

Three Simple Steps to Publicize Your School's Vocabulary Bowl Achievements

Schools across the country, like [Margate Middle School](#) in Florida, [Midlothian Middle School](#) in Virginia, and [Chavez High School](#) in Texas, have received great coverage in their local media about their success in the [Vocabulary Bowl](#) (<http://www.vocabulary.com/bowl>). If you're an administrator or educator, you can get your school in on the action by sharing your school's achievements in the Bowl with your local media. Here's how you can make it happen.

Step 1. Identify a Vocabulary Bowl achievement or event for your school.

In your school's participation in the Vocabulary Bowl, there are many opportunities for students, teachers, and the school as a whole to excel. By setting goals that your school can reach, you will have the opportunity to publicize the achievement of these goals with the local press. (Check out our guide, "[Inspire Your Students to Play the Vocabulary Bowl](#)," for ideas on how to drum up enthusiasm at your school through setting goals.)

Is your school celebrating a position in the top 10 for your state? Have you won a state monthly leaderboard? Did you finish the day on top of the Vocabulary Bowl daily leaderboard? Perhaps you have achieved a school goal, such as reaching a words-mastered milestone (say, 1,000 new words). You can monitor your school's achievements on your Vocabulary.com [school profile page](#) by going to your [account page](#) and clicking on the name of your school. No matter the size of your school, you'll be able to find achievements that are worthy of publicity.

One type of goal that is sure to attract local interest is creating a rivalry with another school in your district. After issuing a challenge to a rival school, you can see which school masters the most words in the month. Then at the end of the month, the winning school will have bragging rights and can share the news with the local media.

Another opportunity to publicize Vocabulary Bowl involvement is planning an in-school celebration of student achievement. An in-school event is also a great way to build momentum during the Vocabulary Bowl. Think about celebrating your achievements at an assembly, pep rally or other school-wide event. You can present certificates to your students, which you can find in our [Vocabulary.com Starter Kit](#). You can also invite local celebrities and officials to attend. Then follow the steps below to involve local media.

Step 2. Create a press package.

When you have decided on a Vocabulary Bowl-related achievement or event that you would like to publicize, you can share the news by writing a press release for distribution to local

media. If you need help in creating an appropriate press release, we have created a template for you to use below. Along with the press release, you can create compelling visuals for the media to use, such as photographs of your students using Vocabulary.com or standing in front of a Vocabulary Bowl bulletin board.

Step 3. Send the press release to local media.

Make a list of local media in your community. You may be able to get help from a media relations coordinator in your district, or you can put together your own distribution list. Start with the local newspaper, where you can ask for the name of the Community Editor. Contact your local TV station, community cable unit, or radio station. Is there a local morning news show? Do you have a town [Patch](#)? Are there bloggers who cover happenings in your town? Is there a newsletter for your school district? Make sure to put them on your list as well, and then email (or fax) your press release to all the media outlets on your list and follow up with phone calls.

Winning examples:

- Check out how Margate Middle School in Margate, Florida got their local paper to publish [a short, spirited article](#) on their ranking on the Florida and national leaderboards and their ongoing rivalry with another Broward County school.
- Another example of a district celebrating its Vocabulary.com success with its larger community is this VillageNewsOnline.com article, “[Seven Chesterfield Schools Rank Top 15 Nationally](#)” on Midlothian Middle School’s ranking in the Vocabulary Bowl.
- Chavez High School of Houston TX, winner of the 2014-15 Vocabulary Bowl, received glowing coverage in their local media. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Lisa Falkenberg [wrote about their achievement](#) in the Houston Chronicle, describing how “the students and teachers at Chavez got really fired up once they took on the prestigious Bellaire High School during a monthly matchup.”

When you reach out to your media contacts, you can explain that the Vocabulary Bowl is a nationwide competition with more than 16,000 schools competing. By explaining how the Bowl works and its significance to your school’s larger goals of building vocabulary, you can build community coverage for your school over the course of the year.

If you are planning a Vocabulary Bowl event, make sure to contact local media outlets two weeks before the event. Explain the larger goal of building vocabulary within the school community. Often news outlets do not cover school events because they do not learn about the details beforehand. Designating a staff member at your school for public relations efforts can also help to keep the community updated on planning for an event.

Our press release template follows below.

Creating a Press Release to Publicize Your School's Vocabulary Bowl Achievements

Consider assigning a volunteer committee member or budding writer the task of creating the press release. It should be printed on your school or district's letterhead. Feel free to use the language in the template that follows, or change it in ways to best describe your event or achievement. Whatever you do, the press release should follow this pre-described form:

Headline:

- Mentions your school name and achievement or event you're celebrating

Subhead:

- Expands on achievement. It's a good place to mention number of words mastered so far this year by your school.

Body:

- Start the first paragraph with YOUR LOCATION + the date of the press release
- Begin with a catchy lead sentence, and announces the achievement or event you're promoting.
- Go on to give the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of the event or achievement.
- Includes a quote from your school's Vocabulary Bowl lead teacher or your principal.
- Include a description of the Vocabulary Bowl.

Closing Stand-Alone Sentence:

- Contact information for the publicity point person at your school or district.

About Vocabulary.com:

- This language will help journalists put your students' achievement in context.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Riverside Middle Challenges Elmwood to a Month-Long Word-Learning Challenge

Students at both schools set a goal of mastering at least 2000 words by month's end

RIVERSIDE, NY, Nov 15, 2015 — Students at Riverside Middle School threw down the gauntlet yesterday, challenging district rival Elmwood Middle to a January Vocabulary face-off as part of the yearlong [Vocabulary Bowl](http://www.vocabulary.com/bowl/) sponsored by Vocabulary.com <<http://www.vocabulary.com/bowl/>>.

Students at both schools have pledged to master at least 2000 words during the month of January. A special ceremony will kick off the competition at 2pm on January 5th, including guest speakers from the community and local celebrity and weather person Suzanne Simons.

“The Vocabulary Bowl is transforming the way we approach this important aspect of our students’ literacy,” added Elmwood’s principal Melissa Murphy. “And this shows us that competition can be fun and motivating, even off the basketball court.”

“Our entire school is going to get behind the vocabulary effort,” added Riverside Principal Evan Thomas. “We’re determined to win and in the process, learn a lot of new words.”

In the Vocabulary Bowl, which runs from October 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016, schools vie to see who can master the most words and come out on top of the yearly leaderboard. More than 16,000 schools are competing for monthly leaderboards, state leaderboards, and overall championship honors in both the high school and middle school categories. So far this year, Riverside students have mastered 892 words and students at Elmwood have mastered 1013.

Fast Facts about the Vocabulary Bowl:

- Total students participating: 204,499
- Total schools participating: 16,369
- Total words mastered in last year’s Bowl: 5,587,148
- Students participated from all 50 states in the U.S., Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and 9 Canadian provinces

** All stats based on the 2014-15 Annual Vocabulary Bowl.*

To find out more information, contact Riverside Middle School English teacher Mark McDonald at MMcDonald@gmail.com or XXX-XXX-XXXX

About Vocabulary.com: Vocabulary.com is the most fun and effective way for people to improve their vocabulary. Founded in 2010 and headquartered in New York City, Vocabulary.com is the only adaptive vocabulary instruction program that integrates with any text or curriculum taught in the classroom.

Using a systematic approach to building vocabulary, Vocabulary.com immerses students in a personalized game environment and is used by more than 200,000 students in over 16,000 schools to master new words and improve reading, writing, speaking and thinking skills.

For more information on Vocabulary.com and the Vocabulary Bowl, go to <http://www.vocabulary.com/bowl> or contact Chris Strausser, Chief Marketing Officer of Vocabulary.com, at cstrausser@vocabulary.com.