

## **Matchbook Definitions**

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*Matchbook Definitions* is a meaningful writing strategy used to help students better learn key vocabulary related to specific content or a topic of study. Small groups or individual students synthesize and summarize information into a succinct definition of eight to ten words – a definition that will fit on a matchbook. Students should use language they easily understand to capture the essence of what is being studied; that is, they should “use their own words” to craft the definitions.

Matchbook definitions may be written on index cards or made into foldables that resemble actual matchbooks, then taped into student notebooks or displayed on classroom anchor charts. The strategy is particularly useful for organizing and integrating content *after* input or study. It is *not* intended to be used to simply reword glossary or dictionary definitions prior to beginning a unit of study.

### **How to implement the strategy:**

1. Decide whether students will work as individuals or in pairs/small groups.
2. Describe the nature and quality of a “matchbook” definition: brief, clear, written “in your own words”.
3. Craft a class example.
4. After students have written their matchbook definitions, have them share their work with one another.
5. Provide time for students to revise/refine their definitions.

### **Adapted from:**

- Lipton, L. & Wellman, B. (2004). *Pathways to Understanding: Patterns & Practices in the Learning-Focused Classroom*, 3rd Ed. Sherman CT. MiraVia, LLC.
- Wellman & Lipton, *Data-Driven Dialogue: A Facilitator’s Guide to Collaborative Inquiry*, p. 106-107; MiraVia, 2004; [www.miravia.com](http://www.miravia.com)).