

If you love word games and want to boost your English vocabulary — you're not alone. But a frequent question pops up during our weekly spelling club and ESL tutoring sessions: **How many new words should I write down after a word game?**

Should you scribble every word you don't know? Pick just one or two? Or is there a "magic number" that balances learning with practicality?

As an ESL tutor and after-school spelling coach with over eleven years of experience, I'll walk you through what really works from my own practice and the best digital tools available — especially Spelling Bee Ninja, your go-to spelling bee app for interactive quizzes and vocabulary tracking.

Why Writing Down Words Matters More Than Just Playing

It's tempting to think that simply playing your favorite game—be it Scrabble, Bananagrams, or Spelling Bee Ninja's quizzes—automatically grows your vocabulary. But the truth is far more fascinating:

- **Active recall beats passive recognition.** You might glance at a new word and feel it's vaguely familiar, but unless you pull it out of memory yourself, it won't stick.
- **Writing reinforces learning.** It's not just about seeing or hearing a word; physically writing it down activates multiple parts of your brain.
- **Tracking your vocabulary creates motivation and shows progress.** When you review your list, you witness your own growth rather than guessing.

This is why *vocabulary tracking* — writing a sensible number of new words after each game — is a key *study habit* I recommend.

So, How Many New Words Should You Write Down?

In my experience, the ideal number is **5 words per game session**. Let me explain why:

1. **Five is manageable.** Writing down more than five can feel tedious and lead to burnout or sloppy notes. Less than five and the momentum might fizzle.
2. **Diverse enough coverage.** You get a variety of words — hopefully of different types: nouns, verbs, adjectives, or domain-specific.
3. **Fits well with review cycles.** Reviewing five new words regularly keeps your brain refreshed without overwhelming it.

That said, focus on quality rather than quantity. The **five words** you jot down should be true "keepers," words that challenged you or that you found interesting enough to use yourself.

How to Pick the Five Words?

Not all unknown words are equal. Before grabbing your pen or typing into your app, ask yourself these questions:

- **Did I struggle with the spelling or pronunciation?** Words difficult to spell or say deserve a note.
- **Is this word useful or relevant to my hobbies or conversations?** Specialized vocabulary sticks better when connected to your interests.

- **What's the meaning and register?** The same word may have different meanings or formality depending on context.

For example, you might come across "acreage" while playing a spellingbee.ninja geography-themed game, and you want to note not just the spelling but also its agricultural connotation and informal register.

Using Spelling Bee Ninja to Maximize Your Vocabulary Tracking

One challenge for learners is turning this note-taking habit into an easy, consistent process. This is where Spelling Bee Ninja's features shine:

- **Preparation Tests and Quizzes page:** Pinpoints your weak spots. You can screenshot or export the 5 most tricky words at the end of the session for review.
- **Vocabulary tracking dashboard:** Records all words you flag, automatically building your personalized word bank.
- **Active recall quizzes:** The app doesn't just let you reread words; it prompts you to spell or define them actively, closing the feedback loop.
- **Context-based example sentences.** Seeing words used in different ways helps distinguish nuances in meaning or formality.

If you haven't tried it yet, download Spelling Bee Ninja — it'll change how you interact with vocabulary and take your after-game study to the next level.

Why Repetition Doesn't Have to Be Boring

Some learners give up on reviewing notes because they dread the monotony. But here's a trick I keep in my trusty little notebook:

"Change the way you recall."

- Say the word aloud in a different sentence.
- Try writing a short story using your 5 words.
- Quiz yourself with flashcards — but add a twist by grouping words by theme (e.g., food words, sports terms).
- Record yourself explaining the meaning to an imaginary class.

These variations build a **feedback loop** that strengthens your memory without turning repetition into boredom.

Why Context Changes Meaning and Register

One pitfall I warn learners about is treating dictionary definitions as the whole story. Words can *shift* meaning, tone, or formality depending on where you find them.



For example, take “cool.” In a casual conversation among teens, it might mean “good” or “awesome.” In a weather report, “cool” has a literal temperature meaning. In formal writing, “cool” as a description of an emotion might be rare or inappropriate.

This is why I always test new words by using them aloud in sentences across different contexts — mixing formality, tone, and subject-matter. You should too!

Specialized Vocabulary by Hobby and Game Type

Let’s be honest: you don’t need to memorize every word under the sun. Specializing according to your hobbies and the types of word games you enjoy boosts both motivation and depth of knowledge.

For example:

- **Gaming enthusiasts:** Might focus on tech terms, character names, or action verbs.
- **Sports fans:** Jot down strategic terms, player positions, or common phrases.
- **Nature lovers:** Note flora, fauna, and environmental expressions.
- **Spelling Bee players using Spelling Bee Ninja:** Often encounter rare words with tricky roots, prefixes, and suffixes useful in standardized tests.

This kind of contextual filtering makes your 5-word daily goal both attainable and exciting.

Sample Vocabulary Tracking Table for 5 Words After a Word Game

Word	Meaning	Context & Register	Example Sentence	Notes
Acumen	Sharp insight or skill	Formal, used in business or analysis	Her financial acumen helped the company grow.	Sometimes confused with "accumen" Sycophant
Sycophant	A person who flatters for advantage	Negative, formal or literary	The manager ignored the sycophants and focused on real talent.	Originates from Greek
Bluster	Talk loudly and aggressively but with little effect	Informal, often in speech	He blustered about his achievements without evidence.	Also means strong wind
Guffaw	A loud and boisterous laugh	Informal, humorous	The comedian’s joke caused a loud guffaw in the crowd.	Fun to say!
Loquacious	Tending to talk a lot	Formal, descriptive	His loquacious nature made meetings run long.	Remember: "locu" links to "speech"

Final Thoughts: Keep It Realistic and Consistent

Before wrapping up—please don't fall for fluffy claims like “learn 500 words overnight.” That's a great way to feel overwhelmed and give up. Instead, build a *study habit* around regular, meaningful vocabulary tracking.

Writing down **5 new words after each word game session** balances your cognitive load, gives your brain time to absorb, and lets you connect words meaningfully to your life and interests.

Pair this with tools like Spelling Bee Ninja that offer active recall quizzes, contextual examples, and gamified repetition — and you're not just playing word games, you're truly *learning*.



And remember, mistakes aren't bad — they're feedback. Track those tricky words, say them aloud, and enjoy the challenge.

Happy spelling and writing!