

## the ARTICLE (for instructors)

### Vocabulary: Is it Important?

A beginning English student says, "Go Canada. Homestay. Next month." There isn't any grammar structure, but he will be understood. Likewise, a foreign tourist who is lost in New York says, "Where. Subway. Close?" He should be directed to the nearest subway station. This is the power of vocabulary.

For students who are just beginning to study English, most new words can be used immediately. The words have an obvious use. Because "doctor," "hungry," or "subway" are often used words, for example, they quickly become part of their everyday English. However, at higher levels, many new words are used less frequently. Students encounter the words only sometimes while reading or listening. And so, vocabulary acquisition seems less important. New words are also more difficult to remember.

Does that make new vocabulary less important? No, of course not. But the techniques and strategies used to remember new words becomes more important.

First, and perhaps most important, a student needs clear short-term and long-term goals. How many words will he learn in a month? How many words will he learn in six months? A student often lacks motivation without goals. But keep the goals reasonable!

Second, when a student encounters a new word, it's always best to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence. After guessing the meaning, then he can check an English-English dictionary. This technique helps to improve a student's reasoning ability. And yet, if he is wrong, the student will want to know *why*.

Lastly, it just comes down to hard work. A student should practice writing his own definitions, synonyms, and sentences at home. He should also read or listen to English as much as possible. As a final word of advice: relating new words to personal experience helps.

#### Teacher's Notes:

\* Underlined words in red typeface are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

## WARM-UPS

Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

**1. Define:** What does "acquire" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples? How about "acquisition?"

**2. Brainstorm:** Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "vocabulary acquisition" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

**3. Do you agree or disagree? Why?**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| a. | Studying vocabulary is boring!   |
| b. | I rarely bother to use new vocabulary. If I hear or see it, and understand it, that's all right. |
| c. | It's easier to understand new words when they are written rather than when they are spoken.      |
| d. | I can learn vocabulary for a test, but I usually forget most of the words a week later.          |
| e. | I often write new words in a notebook during class, but I rarely look at the words after class.  |

**4. Self-assessment:** Assess how you study and retain vocabulary. Rate all answers with a score of 1 (not a lot / not very well) to 10 (a lot / very well). Compare answers and discuss.

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | How well do you remember words?                               |
| b. | How much work do you do to expand your vocabulary?            |
| c. | How organized/useful is your vocabulary note-taking?          |
| d. | How often do you check dictionaries, thesauri, etc.?          |
| e. | How much time do you focus on vocabulary each week            |
| f. | How much time do you practice/study English outside of class? |

## VOCABULARY

Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

**1. Vocabulary match:** Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

a. <b>likewise</b>	q. method
b. <b>direct</b>	r. run into
c. <b>obvious</b>	s. ambition
d. <b>encounter</b>	t. framework
e. <b>technique</b>	u. guide
f. <b>strategy</b>	v. similar words
g. <b>motivation</b>	w. plan
h. <b>context</b>	x. furthermore
i. <b>synonym</b>	y. recommendation
j. <b>advice</b>	z. clear

**2. Fill in the Blanks:** Fill in the blank with the correct word.

	techniques	motivation	likewise	obvious	advice
	directed	strategies	synonyms	context	encounter
a.	(                    ), a foreign tourist who is lost in New York says, "Where. Subway. Close?"				
b.	He/She will be (                    ) to the nearest subway station.				
c.	Beginning English words have an (                    ) use.				
d.	High-level students (                    ) difficult words only sometimes while reading or listening.				
e.	The (                    ) used to remember new, difficult words is different.				
f.	The (                    ) used to remember new words becomes more important.				
g.	A student often lacks (                    ) without goals.				
h.	It's always best to guess the meaning from the (                    ) of the sentence.				
i.	A student should practice writing his/her own definitions, (                    ), and sentences at home.				
j.	As a final word of (                    ): relating new words to personal experience helps.				

**3. Define:** Define each word, correctly pronounce it, explain the meaning and/or usage, and offer an example sentence to the class.

a.	<b>likewise</b>	c.	<b>obvious</b>	e.	<b>technique</b>	g.	<b>motivation</b>	i.	<b>synonym</b>
b.	<b>direct</b>	d.	<b>encounter</b>	f.	<b>strategy</b>	h.	<b>context</b>	j.	<b>advice</b>

## WORD RECOGNITION

**1. Word Search:** Find the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

<b>techniques</b>	<b>motivation</b>	<b>likewise</b>	<b>obvious</b>	<b>advice</b>
<b>directed</b>	<b>strategies</b>	<b>synonyms</b>	<b>context</b>	<b>encounter</b>
E P T O B V I O U S D A M Y B Y S O E Y T D I T C E D O H W N L I I C N L R K Q T V T N Z F B R W E H A Y S J C I I N S M S A Y E T N M V U E C V P Y T D G Q E K Y Q P C R E A E J A A C G Y N I C I L I O T I W E H I P O Y L L O U D C I N N R E T N U O C N E N E D O Z I S S Y S A H Z P L X T S N Z S F S M P B U F J Y V H E Y D P C B J M C M D K P I V C X X T R A R U Q C R H Y F O H E T E C S L J A C P T L H S M G D T Z G W M E T L R C P G S Y J D				

**2. Target Word Pool:** Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

<b>techniques</b>	<b>motivation</b>	<b>likewise</b>	<b>obvious</b>	<b>advice</b>
<b>directed</b>	<b>strategies</b>	<b>synonyms</b>	<b>context</b>	<b>encounter</b>
contexts      likeliness      counter      strategy techniques      symbolizes      encountering      advice      director      synonyms motivated      motivate      likable      technique satisfies      enclose      evolve      likelihood      technicolor      textbooks obviously      directing      stratagem      directly advertise      direction      contest      encyclopedia      context      suggests strategies      advised      likewise      multiplication      obtuse antonym      envious      motivating      likeness techno      encounter      technology      advertisement      directed contextual      motivation      sympathize      obvious      synonym advisor				

## pre- or post-COMPREHENSION

**1. Word Association:** Brainstorm words associated with today's topic for two minutes. Present to the class.

**2. Brainstorm Questions:** Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer the questions without looking at the article.

**3. True or False?:** Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) whether the sentence is true or false. If false, give the correct answer.

a.	New words for beginning students have an immediate and practical use.	T / F
b.	Vocabulary acquisition is less important at higher levels than at lower levels.	T / F
c.	Techniques and strategies become more important to remember new words.	T / F
d.	Students should consult an English-English dictionary first when they don't know a word.	T / F
e.	Students should practice writing their own definitions, synonyms, <i>and</i> sentences at home.	T / F

**4. Questions:** Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	Why is vocabulary such a powerful tool for communication?
b.	What problems do higher level students have with vocabulary?
c.	Why is it important to have goals?
d.	What techniques are suggested in the article?
e.	From the information in the article, what does "if you don't use it, you lose it" mean?

**5. Vocabulary:** In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	<b>likewise</b>	c.	<b>obvious</b>	e.	<b>techniques</b>	g.	<b>motivation</b>	i.	<b>synonyms</b>
b.	<b>directed</b>	d.	<b>encounter</b>	f.	<b>strategies</b>	h.	<b>context</b>	j.	<b>advice</b>

**6. Fragments:** Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence from today's article.

a.	<b>For students who are just beginning to study English,</b>
b.	<b>However, at higher levels,</b>
c.	<b>First, and perhaps most important,</b>
d.	<b>Second, when a student encounters a new word,</b>
e.	<b>As a final word of advice:</b>

## post-COMPREHENSION

1. **Vocabulary:** Circle any additional unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the meanings. Present to the class.
  
2. **Class Questions:** Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to discuss in pairs/groups or as a class. Discuss.
  
3. **Summarize:** Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.
  
4. **Discuss:** Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	What strategies do you use to study vocabulary?
c.	What strategies would you like to try to study vocabulary?
d.	Do you agree with the article when it says that higher-level students don't use the vocabulary that they learn in the classroom?
e.	Do you agree with the article's suggestions to retain vocabulary?
f.	Whose responsibility is it to increase vocabulary, the student's or the teacher's?
g.	Which English skill do you think is the most important?
h.	Which English skill is your weakest?
i.	Which English skill would you like to improve?
j.	What short- and long-term goals can you set to help you learn vocabulary?

5. **Role-play:** Student A takes on the role of a teacher, chooses a word (from today's list or another word of his/her choosing), and teaches 1-2 students that word. Be sure to follow the steps given in the article, assign homework, etc. The "students" ask appropriate questions. Switch roles and repeat.
  
6. **Google Search:** Type "vocabulary" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.

## STUDENT HANDOUT (the article)

### Vocabulary: Is it Important?

A beginning English student says, "Go Canada. Homestay. Next month." There isn't any grammar structure, but he will be understood. Likewise, a foreign tourist who is lost in New York says, "Where. Subway. Close?" He should be directed to the nearest subway station. This is the power of vocabulary.

For students who are just beginning to study English, most new words can be used immediately. The words have an obvious use. Because "doctor," "hungry," or "subway" are often used words, for example, they quickly become part of their everyday English. However, at higher levels, many new words are used less frequently. Students encounter the words only sometimes while reading or listening. And so, vocabulary acquisition seems less important. New words are also more difficult to remember.

Does that make new vocabulary less important? No, of course not. But the techniques and strategies used to remember new words becomes more important.

First, and perhaps most important, a student needs clear short-term and long-term goals. How many words will he learn in a month? How many words will he learn in six months? A student often lacks motivation without goals. But keep the goals reasonable!

Second, when a student encounters a new word, it's always best to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence. After guessing the meaning, then he can check an English-English dictionary. This technique helps to improve a student's reasoning ability. And yet, if he is wrong, the student will want to know *why*.

Lastly, it just comes down to hard work. A student should practice writing his own definitions, synonyms, and sentences at home. He should also read or listen to English as much as possible. As a final word of advice: relating new words to personal experience helps.

**Notes:**

## STUDENT HANDOUT (fill-in the blank)

Fill-in the blank with the correct word.

<b>encounter</b>	<b>synonyms</b>	<b>motivation</b>	<b>advice</b>	<b>context</b>
<b>meaning</b>	<b>likewise</b>	<b>experience</b>	<b>directed</b>	<b>reasonable</b>
<b>techniques</b>	<b>remember</b>	<b>strategies</b>	<b>goals</b>	<b>obvious</b>

### Vocabulary: Is it Important?

A beginning English student says, "Go Canada. Homestay. Next month." There isn't any grammar structure, but he will be understood. (a. \_\_\_\_\_), a foreign tourist who is lost in New York says, "Where. Subway. Close?" He should be (b. \_\_\_\_\_) to the nearest subway station. This is the power of vocabulary.

For students who are just beginning to study English, most new words can be used immediately. The words have an (c. \_\_\_\_\_) use. Because "doctor," "hungry," or "subway" are often used words, for example, they quickly become part of their everyday English. However, at higher levels, many new words are used less frequently. Students (d. \_\_\_\_\_) the words only sometimes while reading or listening. And so, vocabulary acquisition seems less important. New words are also more difficult to (e. \_\_\_\_\_).

Does that make new vocabulary less important? No, of course not. But the (f. \_\_\_\_\_) and (g. \_\_\_\_\_) used to remember new words becomes more important.

First, and perhaps most important, a student needs clear short-term and long-term (h. \_\_\_\_\_). How many words will he learn in a month? How many words will he learn in six months? A student often lacks (i. \_\_\_\_\_) without goals. But keep the goals (j. \_\_\_\_\_)!

Second, when a student encounters a new word, it's always best to guess the meaning from the (k. \_\_\_\_\_) of the sentence. After guessing the (l. \_\_\_\_\_), then he can check an English-English dictionary. This technique helps to improve a student's reasoning ability. And yet, if he is wrong, the student will want to know *why*.

Lastly, it just comes down to hard work. A student should practice writing his own definitions, (m. \_\_\_\_\_), and sentences at home. He should also read or listen to English as much as possible. As a final word of (n. \_\_\_\_\_): relating new words to personal (o. \_\_\_\_\_) helps.

## STUDENT HANDOUT (extended listening)

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

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A beginning English student says, "Go Canada. Homestay. Next month." There isn't any grammar structure, but he will be understood. Likewise, a) \_\_\_\_\_ . He should be directed to the nearest subway station. This is the power of vocabulary.

For students who are just beginning to study English, b) \_\_\_\_\_ . The words have an obvious use. Because "doctor," "hungry," or "subway" are often used words, for example, they quickly become part of their everyday English. However, at higher levels, many new words are used less frequently. Students encounter the words only sometimes while reading or listening. And so, c) \_\_\_\_\_ . New words are also more difficult to remember.

Does that make new vocabulary less important? No, of course not. But the techniques and strategies used to remember new words becomes more important.

First, and perhaps most important, a student needs clear short-term and long-term goals. How many words will he learn in a month? d) \_\_\_\_\_ ? A student often lacks motivation without goals. But keep the goals reasonable!

Second, when a student encounters a new word, it's always best to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence. After guessing the meaning, then he can check an English-English dictionary. This technique helps to improve a students' reasoning ability. And yet, if he is wrong, the student will want to know *why*.

Lastly, it just comes down to hard work. e) \_\_\_\_\_ . He should also read or listen to English as much as possible. As a final word of advice: relating new words to personal experience helps.

**STUDENT HANDOUT (activities)**

## ANSWER KEY

### Vocabulary

#### 1. Vocabulary Match:

a.	x	f.	f
b.	u	g.	s
c.	z	h.	t
d.	r	i.	v
e.	q	j.	y

#### 2. Fill in the Blanks:

a.	likewise	f.	strategies
b.	directed	g.	motivation
c.	obvious	h.	context
d.	encounter	i.	synonyms
e.	techniques	j.	advice

### pre- or post-Comprehension

#### 1. True or False:

a.	T
b.	F
c.	T
d.	F
e.	T

#### 2. Fragments:

a.	most new words can be used immediately.
b.	many new words are used less frequently.
c.	a student needs clear short-term and long-term goals.
d.	it's always best to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence.
e.	relating new words to personal experience helps.

### Student Handout

#### 1. Fill in the Blanks

a.	likewise	i.	motivation
b.	directed	j.	reasonable
c.	obvious	k.	context
d.	encounter	l.	meaning
e.	remember	m.	synonyms
f.	techniques	n.	advice
g.	strategies	o.	experience
h.	goals		

#### 2. Extended Listening

a.	most new words can be used immediately.
b.	many new words are used less frequently.
c.	vocabulary acquisition seems less important.
d.	How many words will he learn in six months?
e.	A student should practice writing his own definitions, synonyms, and sentences at home.