

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 answers.

the ARTICLE (for students)

encounter	synonyms	motivation	advice	context
meaning	likewise	experience	directed	reasonable
techniques	remember	strategies	goals	obvious

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.

STEP ONE

Speculate: Write in the missing words for today's article title: "Vocabulary: Is () ()?" Why did you choose these words for the blanks?

STEP TWO

Questions: Read as much of the article as you can in two minutes. Guess the answers to the questions below, then listen to your teacher read the article. Try to confirm your answers.

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?

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Listen to your teacher read the article again. Fill in the blanks with the missing words.

STEP FOUR

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

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

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	What strategies do you use to study vocabulary?
b.	What strategies would you like to try to study vocabulary?
c.	Do you agree with the article's suggestions to retain vocabulary?
d.	Whose responsibility is it to increase vocabulary, the student's or the teacher's?