

IMPROVING VOCABULARY THROUGH MODERN WAYS

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ABSTRACT

This article is about learning vocabulary through modern ways, especially with the help of modern technology. Building your vocabulary is one of the easiest ways to improve the power of your writing and make any writing task that much easier, as you will have several synonyms in your repertoire to pull from every time. Developing your vocabulary need not be difficult or painful. Use a word immediately after you learn it.

Keywords: vocabulary, techniques, games, language, assignments, new words, understand, develop.

INTRODUCTION

A great vocabulary is just one essential tool in a writer's toolbox, along with punctuation, grammar, and many others. Vocabulary can make your writing more powerful and more effective and help you say exactly what you mean. This indispensable tool will help you choose the best word for every job and avoid vague words that do not give your readers a good sense of your meaning.

Building your vocabulary is one of the easiest ways to improve the power of your writing and make any writing task that much easier, as you will have several synonyms in your repertoire to pull from every time. Developing your vocabulary need not be difficult or painful. Use a word immediately after you learn it. Try to make a game out of using a new word as soon as you learn it. Every day, try to slip in a new word into the conversation, a journal entry, an assignment or an email to a friend. Do this as often as possible, and repeat the word to yourself. Once you're out of school, word drills and assigned reading become things of the past. While these were tools for building your vocabulary repertoire while you were young, it doesn't mean you should abandon reading. Try to read a well-written and edited essay, magazine article, book or news article every day. Nonfiction and technical books will quickly teach you new ways to think and speak with words you may be unfamiliar with, but any type of reading will help you along. Learn the roots of words. Most words in the English language are built from a common root, prefix, and suffix, usually with an origin in the Greek or Latin language.

Once you learn a root, you'll begin to understand more words that use the same root. For example, -duc- (Latin root word) means to lead or to make, such as in the words produce or deduce. Keep a thesaurus handy. As you write, keep a thesaurus handy and use it when you find yourself using a word too often, or using a word that you know doesn't quite convey the right meaning. This will help you better express yourself, and you'll also learn a new word in the process. This means you should start by learning words that express what's important to you for the task at hand. A good example of this is learning trade language or words you use often in a hobby or vocation. Rather than immediately turning to clichés or jargon that's tossed around, look for clearer words to express to peers what you're writing about. To improve your vocabulary quickly, make an effort to learn at least one new word every single day. There

are plenty of ways to do this, such as a Word of the Day calendar or email list, or simply picking a word from a thesaurus or dictionary. How often do you come across words that are unfamiliar as you read? Don't just gloss over them; take the time to look them up, and if you don't have the time right then, write them down and look them up later. Journaling won't just help you develop your writing style; it will also help you improve your vocabulary. Try to use new or interesting words you've learned recently into a journal entry for the day or the week. You're probably familiar with empty words in your speech (such as "uh" or "um"), but your writing probably has empty words as well. Look for these empty words in your writing that do not offer any substance to your reader and replace them with something more appropriate. The same principle applies to phrases and sentences, so make sure that you haven't used six or seven phrases to say something that could be better communicated in one sentence filled with carefully-chosen words. If you tend to read the same sort of things day in and day out, you may not be exposing yourself to a wide enough range of vocabulary. Diversify the topics you read to include natural science, 33 Shakespeare, contemporary literature, politics, history, philosophy or any other topics you think you may enjoy. Word puzzles in the newspaper or a magazine aren't just a fun way to fill time, they're also perfect for boosting your working vocabulary. Crossword puzzles are a challenge that get your brain working hard to search your memory for words you do know but don't use, and this can help you move words from your memory banks into your working set of vocabulary which will come across in your writing. There are plenty of word games on the market designed to improve vocabulary and language skills without being a bore. Some of these games you may have played as a child, so it's time to break them out again and get to "work." If you have a friend who could also use some help — or someone with a great vocabulary you think will challenge you — invite them over for a game night. It takes between 10 and 20 repetitions to make a new word a part of your vocabulary. To help the word settle into your mind and memory, write it down (both the definition and a sentence you make up using the word), use it in conversation, include it in an email or any other way you can think of. Start by saying the new word aloud, then relate it to a word you already know. A good example of this is gargantuan, which means "very large" or "gigantic." Say a sequence aloud: small, medium, large, very large, gargantuan. Then list things you think are gargantuan. 34 Mnemonic techniques are memory tricks you can use to remember new words. You may remember a word by sounding it out and thinking of a funny sentence that matches the meaning, such as turning egregious (extremely bad) into "Don't let that smelly rotten egg reach us!" Research shows that visualization is a great way to remember new words and their meanings. A good example of this is the word stratovolcano, which is a high, pointed mountain with a violent explosion. One way to remember this meaning is the fact that the prefix "strato" sounds like "straight-oh," which may make you think of a straight ruler or a "straight-o-volcano," which describes the word's definition. Keep a list of the new words you learn each week and incorporate into writing and conversation. At the end of each week, make yourself a quiz using the words to cement them in your memory. Grab a piece of paper and write it at the top. Next, brainstorm or use a thesaurus to generate a list of ten to twenty new words you can use instead. You can keep these lists in a vocabulary notebook and add to them whenever you learn a new synonym. Try to find a self-paced course that uses assignments and quizzes to help you increase fluency and brush up on your writing skills. Some classes are aimed at essay writing or creative writing, so you

can find a class that will help you improve the style you need the most help with. You actually have two types of vocabulary: one is a much larger set of words you understand, even if only vaguely, and the other is a 35 smaller set of words you actually use to express yourself. Moving words from your comprehensive, but passive vocabulary, to your active, expressive vocabulary is easier than you think. To do this, you'll need to know how to define, pronounce and spell the words. Say them out loud and use them at every opportunity to move them into your active set. There are tons of non-board games that will help you improve your writing vocabulary while you have fun. Try downloading fun word games onto your phone or computer so you can get some practice while you unwind after a busy day. Some games are designed to build vocabulary skills, but there are plenty of others that will help you practice spelling, phonics, and even typing skills. There are even some designed for college students to prepare for testing and vocabulary-rich exams.

Hopefully, this list has given an excellent place to start to build your vocabulary a bit at a time. If you think about it, there are opportunities all around you to develop this important skill, so spend time every day reading and listening to take in new words and then develop a system to incorporate these new words in your writing and speech. Before long, you'll find your vocabulary has grown to a new level and your writing has gained the clarity you need with an ease you didn't think possible.

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