



Improve your Vocabulary

How to Learn New Words?

Improving your vocabulary involves a series of steps that are hardly more difficult than this exercise. Throughout your life, you have been hearing or reading new words. Very often you hardly recognize them as new. Simply seeing them in a situation, you imagine their meaning. Either that, or you look at the way they are made up and rapidly put their meaning together bit by bit.

But there is a difference between ‘understanding’ and ‘knowing’. You may understand – roughly at least – what a word means: it does not necessarily follow that you know how to use it correctly. People know, or can recognize, more words than they use. How often do you hear or use the words ‘*indict*’; ‘*abstruse*’; ‘*covet*’? Probably not often, though you may have an idea what they mean.

Now some Dos and Don’ts for actually learning new words:

Don’t try to memorize lists of new words. Before school exams, you may have sat up half the night trying to get into your head expressions like *clints and grykes*, *capitalization and exponential*. You probably forgot them the next day. Words learnt parrot-fashion simply will not stay in your head. Only words that you learnt in a given situation and that you make real use in speech and writing are likely to become part of your active vocabulary.

There are 3 stages:

First Stage: Use what you know of other words and of the context to make an informed guess.

Second Stage: Check your guess in a dictionary. If you come across the word in speech, for example, you will have to find out how to spell it. If the word came from your reading, how do you pronounce it?

Third Stage: Practise the new word. Make up sentences containing the word and helping to spell out its meaning. Write the sentences down if possible. E.g. your new word is *'Integrity'*. You could write: *'An employee who performs his/ her duties with honesty and integrity is recognized as one of the best employees'*. Try to think of times during the day when you might have used *'Integrity'*, and say aloud to yourself the sentence you might have used on that occasion.

As you practise the word, try to picture in your mind – this will help you to remember it.

With a larger vocabulary, you will be able to express yourself better. Articulate applicants do well at job interviews. Students with a good grasp of language and confidence in expressing themselves get higher marks.

Learning how to express yourself more flexibly and precisely, using a greater range of words, is supremely satisfying!

HAPPY LEARNING! 😊