



## An exploration of teaching english vocabulary for the learners

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### Abstract

Vocabulary enacts an important part of language, it has number of words. We are carried away by the magic of obscure and high-sounding words. Most of us in India study English as a library language (language for reading purposes); in such a situation we cannot choose and limit the vocabulary. For speaking and writing, we can limit the words keeping the level of the learners in mind. About 3000 words are prescribed in the syllabus for active purposes. Reading vocabulary will be much larger. Some of the words have more meanings than one, and also each meaning has to be learnt separately. Some of the words have changed their connotation. The aim is that the learner should be precise in using words. The thousands of words in the dictionary, a careful selection was made for teaching English. About 3000 words were chosen, after chosen the words were graded. The criteria for selection of words were the frequency, usefulness teaches ability and subject range. The most helpful and concrete words were introduced first and later abstract words. Teaching of vocabulary should thorough and systematic. While the students are expected to learn about 3000 words in six years, they know only a quarter of those words. The reasons are clear that vocabulary teaching needs to be improved. The teacher may teach words by showing Objects, pictures, models, charts, drawings and black board meaningful contexts and situations. He may use word games and who suggest the meanings of passive vocabulary and refer them to a dictionary. This paper deals with the skill of discovering meanings are promoted through supplementary readers and also enrichment of the pupils' vocabulary is one of the daily tasks of the English teachers. The teacher helps the children to play with words and enrich their stock of vocabulary.

**Keywords:** Dictionary, vocabulary, language, teacher, learners and skill

### Introduction

The secondary school syllabus lays down a vocabulary limit of 2500-3000 words. But I it proved from some surveys that the school leaver knows only 600 words for active mastery and another 400 for passive recognition. It emphasizes the importance of teaching vocabulary thoroughly and systematically from class to class and stage to stage. Many English Teachers gave the meanings in their mother tongue. By this the students lose the opportunities to listen English words. Listening is an important stage in learning a language. The concept of a word in English is not grasped correctly and entirely, if the mother tongue word is given at the outset. It will interfere with his learning to speak English correctly and fluently. So the use of the mother tongue may be kept at the minimum in the early stage. The broad stage in teaching vocabulary is presentation and practice. It said that visual and auditory memories are very strong and permanent.

### Some of the following ways to present and practice English words

#### 1. Showing Objects

The teacher shows an object in the classroom like chair, table, and window say the word clearly and corrects pronunciation preferably in a known sentence.

Ex: It is a \_\_\_\_\_

This is a \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Models

All the objects cannot be brought into the classrooms. So models can be shown and the words repeated.

#### 3. Charts and Pictures

It is very useful aids for a class room scenario. They are easy to acquire and interesting to the children.

Ex: Pictures of animals in a zoo, Vegetables in the market. Different people at the railway station or bus stop

#### 4. Sketches on the Blackboard

The teacher should know how to draw match stick drawings on the blackboard. Some pupils may be good at drawing.

Ex: Sketches of a fort, a palace, a mountain, a bird, a river.

#### 5. Situations and context

Children easily associate with words and actions. Teacher demonstrates action words like walk, drink, see, write, jump etc, and teach the words in sentences, Pupils enjoy to doing actions themselves, they practice the words, and imitating the teacher. Most difficult words maybe presented verbally through situation.

#### 6. By giving the meanings in simple words

Sentence: In my village, the rice fields extend over a vast area.

Ex: Extend – Spread

Vast - Big and Wide

#### 7. By association

Some words can be taught in association with other word like synonym and antonym

Ex: Bad X Good

Ugly X Beautiful

Brave - Bold

#### 8. When all other devices failed, the teacher may give the meaning in the mother tongue.

Ex: faithful, honest, deceitful

## Selection and Grading of Vocabulary

### Selection

#### a. Frequency

The words are frequently used for speech and writing.

#### b. Structural value

Word helps the forming sentences by connecting content words should be taught early on the course. Every 100 words are counted as 95 structural words.

#### c. Universality geographic area

A word in the final list must be useful.

Ex: Sagar (Hussain Sagar)

#### d. Subject range

If a word can be used in many subject areas and contexts.

Ex: go, get and make are used in numerous contexts.

#### e. Productivity

A word helps us to making more words out of it.

Ex: large, larger and largest

#### f. Teachability

Words are easily demonstrable and teachable should have a high priority with the teacher.

#### g. Simplicity

Words are simple appear before which are difficult in pronunciation, spelling and meaning.

### Grading

Grading the vocabulary of 3000 words as same principles may be followed them class wise over 6 or 7 years. Firstly, words taught in simple and concrete. Difficult, abstract and high-sounding words postponed to later stage.

Ex: on the table should be taught in the early stage  
on fire, on the committee may taught later stage

### Nature of words and word groups

The student should acquire a thorough knowledge of the 2000-3000 words for purposes of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. We enlarge our knowledge of words and sharing with others. Words are not display like medals and prizes. The dictionary gives meanings, grammar categories and sub divisions.

### Reasons for difficulties to master the words

1. Some words belong to two or more parts of speech. (Ex) 'Since' is a preposition, a conjunction and also an adverb in different contexts.
2. Some words have two or more meanings. (Ex) 'Think' it has 8 meanings which has a different equivalent in the student's mother tongue.  
'Carry' used as different context  
Will you carry this bag?  
The sound did not carry far.  
The amount is carried forward.
3. Some words enter into two or more sentence patterns each occupy its own place in the sentence. (Ex) 'wish' as a verb  
Wish for something.
4. Some words have several inflected forms and derivatives  
Ex: Think: Thoughtful, thoughtfully, thoughtlessly

5. Each word became the part of a group and a collection; some of the words have two or more meanings.  
(Ex): at last, give up, carry on, and throw away.
6. Each word component of a compound word the meaning of which cannot be deduced from the units. (Ex) Blackboard, walking stick
7. No two words in English have exactly the same meaning.  
(Ex) right and correct; right hand but not correct hand.
8. There are no exact equivalents between two languages.  
(Ex) Bench; 'flock' only one equivalent word in Telugu.

### Kinds of words

#### Content words

- Things corresponding to nouns
- Actions corresponding to verbs
- Qualities corresponding to adjective

#### Structure words

It is otherwise known as Function words. This is an important for making sentences. They are difficult teach. All preposition, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs in speech and writing.

### Types of Vocabulary

#### Active Vocabulary

It is the number of words which we use in speech and writing. We follow strict economy of words and use one word with one meaning. So synonyms are not necessary here. This is also called as working vocabulary and varies from person to person.

#### Passive vocabulary: (Receptive vocabulary)

When we listen to words used by others or when we read books we come across many words and their meaning. New words help us to guess the meaning from the context and lead us to get the meaning from the dictionary.

### Classroom devices for Vocabulary Expansion:

#### 1. Word chains (keyword)

**Garden:** Plants, leaves, flowers, fruits etc.

**Forest:** Trees, animals, hunting and adventure etc.

#### 2. Families of words

A base word is given and other forms of the word, prefixes and suffixes may be given by pupils.

(Ex): Sense- sensible, sensibly, insensible

True- Truly, Truthful, Truthfully

#### 3. A variety of prepositions are used with simple verbs.

(Ex) Fall- fall down, fall into, fall over, fall out

Take- take from, take off, take on, take up

#### 4. Fill in the blanks with the other forms of the word.

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
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_____	_____	long	_____
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Danger	_____	_____	_____
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#### 5. Word Games

**Fill in the blanks (This can be done orally and as a written exercise)**

A piece of \_\_\_\_\_

A basketful of \_\_\_\_\_

A group of \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_ of cotton

**6. Words of size**

Pool (pond, lake, sea, ocean)

Village (hamlet, town, city, metropolis)

**7. Trades or professions**

\_\_\_\_\_man

**8. Add -ian**

guard\_\_\_\_\_

library\_\_\_\_\_

Ital\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Add -or**

govern\_\_\_\_\_

collect\_\_\_\_\_

act\_\_\_\_\_

direct\_\_\_\_\_

**10. A man who teaches is a \_\_\_\_\_**

A man who sells meat is a \_\_\_\_\_

A man who bakes bread is a \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Add suitable ending: ity, -ility, -city**

An animal with five legs are a rar\_\_\_\_\_

There is a possib\_\_\_\_\_ that we will have a holiday tomorrow.

**12. Make nouns by adding-ness or-ment**

wicked\_\_\_\_\_

blind\_\_\_\_\_

appoint\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion**

In teaching vocabulary, it is important to implement appropriate techniques and teaching aids. The teacher is responsible for choosing the best techniques and methods that will provide his learner's opportunity to gain much knowledge. Selecting the way of teaching vocabulary is based on the class situation and the learners' condition. Therefore, the chosen technique can attract the learner's attention and help them to achieve the learning aims. Mime, Action, Gestures, interaction with words, the translation techniques, classifying items and filling the gaps.

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