

Chunking

'Learning to Learn' Tasks

Book: Outcomes, 2nd Edition

Level: Upper-Intermediate

Time: 20 min

Aims of the lesson: the students will discuss approaches to vocabulary development and form their principled approach to it.

Materials: [Vocabulary Builder](#), Attachments

Stage Time	Content	Resources
Speaking in groups 10 min	<p>Start a lesson by telling the class you're going to be talking about how they try to learn vocabulary. Tell the class they're going to read some ideas about learning. Give out the first worksheet.</p> <p>Let students read through the sheet and ask about anything they're not sure of.</p> <p>Explain any new vocabulary (and maybe give extra examples on the board). Then put students into groups of three or four and give them a few minutes to discuss what surprised them.</p> <p>Monitor and get a sense of what students already believe about vocabulary learning – and what their study habits are. Once the conversation has peaked, stop the class and round up.</p>	Attachment 1. Discussion
Follow-up Speaking 3 min	<p>Ask first if anything really surprised anyone – ask why. Then go through the ideas, asking what students think the implications are, and adding your own comments.</p> <p>BETTER OUTCOMES</p> <p>Ask students if they have come across any other ideas about language learning, or ask them to research alternative theories and ideas as a follow-up activity.</p>	Attachment 1. Discussion
Speaking 7 min	<p>Tell the class they're going to read the series authors' advice about vocabulary development. Give out the second worksheet.</p> <p>Compare students suggestions with the strategy checklist. Use Teacher's Notes to give students more detailed explanations.</p> <p>BETTER OUTCOMES</p> <p>Illustrate strategies with the Outcomes online interactive Vocabulary Builder.</p>	Attachment 2. Checklist Attachment 3. Teacher's Notes

Attachment 1. Discussion

1. Look at the ideas below about learning vocabulary. Then discuss these questions in small groups. Do any of these ideas surprise you?
2. Make notes about how you could use these ideas to improve your learning.

<p>Educated native speakers know around 17,000 word families – base words plus words formed from this base.</p>	
<p>Normally, you have to see / hear and understand a word anything from 6 to 11 times before you can use it!</p>	
<p>You may remember some words more quickly if you link them to a word in your own language or a mental picture.</p>	
<p>People forget 50% of what they learned after an hour – and after a week they forget 80%.</p>	
<p>On average, people remember 7 items at any one time. These items could be pairs of words or expressions.</p>	
<p>People remember more at the beginnings and ends of lists.</p>	

Attachment 2. Checklist

*keep a good
record of
new language
you meet in class*

*try to learn
collocations and
words in context*

*remember that
vocabulary is
MORE
than just
single words*

*be careful
how you use
translation*

*develop revision
strategies*

*get a good learner's
dictionary and pay
attention to
pronunciation*

*learn MORE
language!*

If you are worried
about
vocabulary...

Attachment 3. Teacher's Notes

'If you are worried about vocabulary ...

keep a good record of new language you meet in class'

Ask students to:

- ✓ have a notebook where they will write new language in;
- ✓ bring it to class every lesson;
- ✓ copy what you write on the board.

This is the absolute minimum students need to do.

BETTER OUTCOMES

Ask students to:

- ✓ record whole examples and sentences;
- ✓ spend some time revising them;
- ✓ look back through old vocabulary notes;
- ✓ organize them in new ways.

For example, suggest to make a new page listing all the time expressions students can use and just met – *over the last few months, nowadays, when I was a kid, in a few months' time*, and so on.

The Outcomes online interactive [Vocabulary Builder](#) is a great resource students can use to make their own wordlists, add translations and print them out.

'try to learn collocations and words in context'

Emphasize that it's very important to learn vocabulary in context. Explain that it means learning phrases (or groups of words) rather than single words.

For example, the opposite of *a strong accent* is not a *weak accent* but a *slight accent*. Change the context and the opposite might change: the opposite of *strong winds*, for instance, is a *light breeze*.

'remember that vocabulary is more than just single words'

There are thousands and thousands of multi-word vocabulary items that are also important to learn. These may be made up of several words that students already know, but when used together they take on new meanings. When you translate them into your own language, you might just use one word to express these ideas.

For example, translate *make the most of your time*.

'be careful how you use translation'

Comparing English to your own first language is natural and can be useful. Explain that the translation of a word is totally dependent on context.

For example, take the word *rough*. Ask students to translate sentences:

- 1) *If you're not sure, **have a rough guess.***
- 2) *I think I'm getting a cold. **I feel really rough.***
- 3) *It was a horrible journey. **The sea was really rough.***
- 4) *It's **quite a rough area.** I wouldn't walk around there at night.*

Attachment 3. Teacher's Notes

Point out that it's best to translate words together, or in whole sentences.

BETTER OUTCOMES

Ask students to:

- ✓ write the English phrases or sentences in one column;
- ✓ the translation in another column;
- ✓ add to it every lessons.

Check students' progress together. Ask students to cover the English column, look at the phrase in your own language and see if they can remember the exact English translation.

'develop revision strategies'

Ask students to:

- ✓ to regularly look back at words they have met
- ✓ revise them to help their memory.

BETTER OUTCOMES

Suggest making revision cards. Students can write the new collocation with an example on one side of the card, write a translation on the other side and then revise the those words again a week or so later.

'get a good learner's dictionary and pay attention to pronunciation'

Teach students the phonetic symbols that show them how to say the word. Practise saying a new word – on its own and with other words it goes with. Try whole sentences, too, and pay attention to the way words join together, the linking sounds, the sounds which you don't say in normal-speed speech – and weak forms of words like *am, is, are, have, to* and so on.

'learn more language!'

Emphasize that the more words students know, the easier it is for them to listen to English, to read English – and to speak English!