

Some Suggestions in Vocabulary Learning

There are many ways which can help you learn new words and expressions. Here are some simple and fun ways:

1. Read an article

Find an article in a magazine or newspaper. Read it through quickly once. Then go back to the beginning and underline the words and expressions which you do not understand, and which you think are useful or interesting. Stop when you have underlined 5 to 10 words/expressions. Look up the words/expressions in the dictionary and record the meanings. Continue with the rest of the article at a later date until you have finished identifying all the new words/expressions in the whole article.

2. Tell a story

Learn a simple story by heart. Tell the story to as many people as you can. This will help you memorize the new words and expressions in the story, and will also help improve your fluency.

3. Name 10 things in a picture

This exercise can be done almost anytime, anywhere. Pick up a magazine or newspaper, find a picture, and try to name 10 things in the picture in English. Time yourself. Remember to look up the words that you don't know in a dictionary later on. You will be surprised how many useful new words you can learn this way.

4. Guess 10 words by looking at the title of an article

Pick up a newspaper and look at the title of a news article. Try to guess 10 words that you think will appear in the article. Read the article and see if your guesses are right. This is a way to help you recall, learn, and remember words that are specific to a particular topic.

For example:

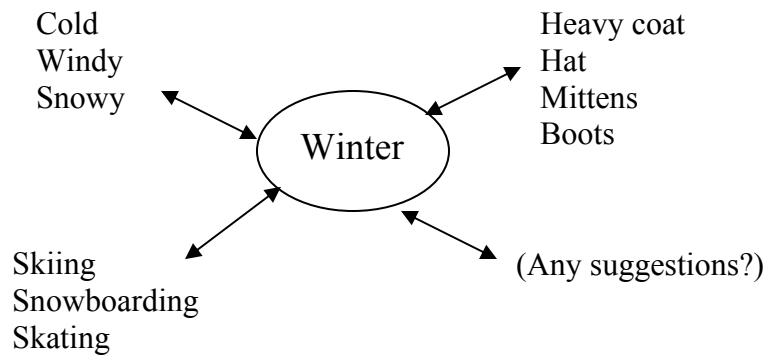
Look at this title – *Car crash killed 4 people in snowstorm*

Can you think of 10 words that will probably appear in the article?

(Possible words: weather; blizzard; slippery; serious; accident; injuries; collision; fatal; dead; ambulance)

5. Use Mind maps

A similar way is to use a mind map. Think of a topic. Then write down as many words or expressions as you can about that topic. For example:



6. Use Flashcards

Buy some 12.5 x 7.5 cards. On each card, write down a new word/expression on one side, and the meaning, usage, and/or its Japanese translation on the other side. Carry the cards with you all the time, and take them out to review the words whenever you have some time (e.g. on the bus; while waiting for your friends; in the washroom!)

7. Organize new words and phrases

During English lessons, many students write down new words and expressions in their notebook but they seldom look at the notebook or organize it. It's useless! You need to organize your notebook so that it is easy and effective for you to review the new words. I will write more on this important idea next time, so stay tuned.