

Vocabulary

Vocabulary means the words that we use in day to day life for giving an outlet to our feelings and thoughts. Word is the smallest unit of a sentence or any piece of writing. John Drink Water says, “Words are the bricks-the bricks with which, by skilful and imaginative arrangement, the poetry and literature of the world has been built”. H. Dippie in his work “Suggestions for Primary School Teachers in India” scientifically considered, “Words are like bottles and contain ideas just as bottles contain medicines. The thing that is important for us in words is the ideas that they embody and not their sounds or shapes when written or printed. They only exist for what they contain.”

Minimum number of words i.e. 3000 is very essential for acquiring mastery over the four aspects of English language. This list of words is termed as the foundation vocabulary. Vocabulary is of two types:

1. Active Vocabulary

2. Passive Vocabulary

1. **Active Vocabulary:** Active vocabulary is a list of those words that are very common with us and we use them very frequently in speaking or writing. It is also called as working vocabulary.
2. **Passive Vocabulary:** Passive vocabulary is a list of those words which lie in our unconscious mind and are rarely used by us. Whenever those words appear before us in spoken or written form, we are at once able to recognise them. It is also called as recognition vocabulary.

Characteristics of vocabulary

1. Active vocabulary varies from person to person e.g. Active vocabulary of one teacher will be different from the active vocabulary of another teacher.
2. Active vocabulary of person ‘A’ may be the passive vocabulary of person ‘B’. in the same way, active vocabulary of person ‘B’ may be the passive vocabulary of person ‘A’.
3. Vocabulary goes on increasing according to experiences. A person having less experiences, has limited vocabulary and the person with rich experiences of life, has more vocabulary comparatively.

Methods of Teaching Vocabulary

A number of methods can be used for teaching new words to the learners. Some of them are briefly discussed here below:

1. **By showing actual objects:** words which can be taught by showing actual objects should be taught that way. e. g. the words ‘fan’, ‘window’, ‘door’, ‘chair’ etc. can be taught to the students by showing the actual objects. This method is quite useful for the lower classes as it brings variety and life into the classroom situations.
2. **By performing actions:** There are some words whose actions can be performed. e. g. walking, talking, writing, jumping, sitting, standing, etc. that type of words should be

taught by performing actions. Thus there is activity in class and the students also love to learn those words by that way.

3. **By showing models:** Sometimes the actual objects are not available. In that case, their models can be shown to the learners and thus the words can be taught. e. g. when we want to teach the words camel, lion, Elephant, crocodile etc. their models can be shown to the learners and thus those words can be taught.
4. **By using charts and pictures:** A chart or a picture can be prepared for certain words—may be nouns or action words. Some situations can be created with the help of charts and pictures. In this way a group of words can be made clear to the students. e. g. Inkpot, Red fort, Buffalo, box etc.
5. **By using a blackboard:** Blackboard is the best type of aid for teaching purposes. If the teacher is an expert in drawing, in that case pictures can be drawn on the blackboard. That way some of the words can be taught to the students. e. g. mango, potato, onion, brinjal, banana etc.
6. **By creating verbal situations:** For teaching some words, visual situations are not possible. In that case verbal situations are created. e. g. we want to teach the ‘forget’. The teacher may speak the names of the students—your name is Mohan, your name is Vandana, your name I ‘forget’. When this type of verbal situation is created before the students, they will be able to understand that word.
7. **By using the mother tongue:** when all sorts of devices fail for teaching a particular word, it is rather advisable that the teacher should tell the meaning of the word in mother tongue.
8. **By associations:** The new words may be associated with the old ones which the child has already learnt. It can be done by asking antonyms, synonyms, past tense, gender, etc. as the case may be. e. g. while teaching the word ‘bad’ the teacher may ask, “What is the opposite of ‘good’? Here it will be presumed that the students already know the word ‘good’.
9. **By using the words in different contexts:** The meanings of the words underwent a change when they are used in different situations. e. g. the word ‘book’ conveys different meanings when it is used as a noun, as a verb and as an adjective. The teacher should frame the different sentences in order to make the students understand these meanings. e. g. I have booked (verb) a ticket for Delhi. She got my book (Noun) yesterday. His father is a book (Adjective) binder.

Methods of Expansion of Vocabulary

Expansion means we have the knowledge of some words and with the help of those words; we want to increase our vocabulary. Words are our friends, acquaintances and strangers. In our daily life, we meet some people as strangers. If we meet them often, we become acquaintances and when we meet them very often, we become friendly and in some cases, relative like contacts are formed. So does it happen in case of vocabulary, It is very necessary that the circle of our friends should go on increasing, acquaintances become friends and more strangers become our acquaintances. Some of the methods of expanding the vocabulary are given below:

1. **Through word Families:** Through word families, related words may be collected together. e.g. Help, helping, helps, helped, helper, helpful, helpless, helplessness etc. In preparing the word families, the use of prefixes and suffixes is made. A few more word families are:
 Enjoys, Enjoyed, Enjoying, Enjoyable, Enjoyably etc.
 Use: Used, Using, Useless, Useful, Uselessly, Usefully etc.
 Use of prefixes/suffixes:
 Un-Unkind, Unfit, Untie, Unfortunate, Unlucky, Unhealthy etc.
 -ful-Useful, helpful, playful, sinful etc.
2. **By suggesting some Heading:** The teacher may suggest some heading like college, hospital, cant etc. and the students are asked to think of the words related with the heading. e.g. 'Hospital'- Doctor, nurse, patient, medicine, needle, syringe, blood, injection etc.
3. **By preparing a special Black-board:** A special black-board may be got prepared for this purpose and one or two new words may be written daily on it. It's a good method for increasing the vocabulary of the students.
4. **Through Games:** Games may be introduced for the expansion of vocabulary. e.g. the class may be divided into two groups. One student from one group speaks a word. Then students of the second group speak the word starting with the last letter of the word spoken by the first group. In this way, the game continues and vocabulary of the students increases. This game is also known as word-ladder game.
5. **By writing a letter on the Black-board:** The teacher may write one letter on the board and the students are asked to speak the word starting with that letter. It will help in the expansion of the vocabulary of the students.
6. **By writing some word on the Black-board:** The teacher may write a word on the black-board and the students are asked to form the words by using the letters of this word. e.g. the teacher writes the word 'teacher' on the black-board and the students may form some of the words by using the letters of this word like tea, reach, ate, eat, rat, race, arch, eater, rate, her, care, hare, hear, car, cheat etc.
7. **Through Homonyms:** Homonyms are the words which have almost the same pronunciation but have different spellings and different meanings. e.g. story, storey-flour, floor- write, right, rite-sight, site, cite etc.
8. **Through Dictionary & Thesaurus:** Dictionary is very helpful in increasing the vocabulary of the students as no one should consider oneself beyond dictionary and it is the dictionary which help the students as well teachers to make clear the meaning of the word. Thesaurus is the book of synonyms and it also helps the students as well as teachers not only in the expansion of vocabulary by also in writing articles, papers, stories etc.
9. **Expansion through Associations:** This is a device which can be used to group words by associating new words with the given idea or sound or context, or some similar way. Examples are: Similar idea:
Begin- start, commence, origin
End- close, finish
Opposite idea:

Good-Bad, Inside-outside, Rich-poor, Day-night
Associating man with his work and his place of work
Doctor-diagnose-hospital
Cashier-Counting-Bank