

MAKING VOCABULARY MEMORABLE

Linguistic level: A2

INTRODUCTION

In this project, students reflect on different ways to recall and retain vocabulary. The more techniques they are familiar with and exposed to, the better they will remember the words they are learning. Students are encouraged to realise that reviewing and consolidating vocabulary will aid memory.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Objectives

- Recognise ways we can retain vocabulary.
- Think about different ways to group words.
- Identify techniques to review vocabulary.

Key competences

- Develop self-reflection skills.
- Linguistic: discuss findings with others.
- Development of habits for lifelong learning.

Collaborative work

- Compare and contrast information with others.
- Interact with others.

LANGUAGE CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOMES

Vocabulary by lexical groups

- **General:** *draw, use, relate, think, make*
- **Method:** *gestures, pictures, graphic organisers, word lists, mother tongue, cards, charts*

Structures

- I think of a gesture for the word.
- I use graphic organisers.
- I make word lists.
- I make cards with the words on them.
- I draw pictures of the word.
- I relate the words to a word in my mother tongue.
- I have a vocabulary notebook.
- I use the word in a sentence.

Cognitive and thinking processes

- Compare and contrast information with others.
- Reflect on ways to improve learning.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Demonstrate capacity to identify methods of remembering vocabulary.
- Understand different ways to record and recall vocabulary.

ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

Materials you will need:

- Worksheet 1
- Sample word charts, word cards, vocabulary notebooks (optional)
- Index cards or slips of paper (optional)

Timing

- One 40-minute class period

Instructions

Starting out

- Invite students to think about why it is important to know vocabulary (to communicate, to be able to read, to do exams, for travel ...). Ask students to discuss how they record, study and recall the vocabulary for the subject they are studying in English.
- If possible, show different resources that can assist students when it comes to learning vocabulary (dictionaries, vocabulary booklets, word cards, word charts...)

- Ask students about their opinion on learning vocabulary in English. Do they find it easy or challenging to remember words? What do they do to help remember the words and phrases from class? What techniques could they use to make it easier to remember English vocabulary?

Step-by-step instructions

- Distribute Worksheet 1. Read the title at the top of the page and ask students if they have ever reflected on how they remember vocabulary.
- Read the sentences at the top of the page. Explain that it is important to try different vocabulary-recording techniques in order to see which one works best. Remind students that combining different techniques can also be beneficial.
- Tell students to keep in mind that they should revise vocabulary regularly and that they should try to make time each day to read through the things they have studied/learnt.

Activity 1

- Ask students to read the sentence and the different options and to decide which answer best applies to them. When they have finished, tally the results of the class and discuss different things students do, or can do, when they do not understand a word.
- Point out that the more strategies and techniques students have to clarify vocabulary, the better.
- In groups of 3-4, ask students to brainstorm additional things they can do when they do not know a word (think of the root of the word, find the word in a different context, ask a native speaker ...). Discuss answers.
- Encourage students to appreciate how reviewing vocabulary in English on a regular basis can help them improve their knowledge of the language.

Activity 2

- Point out that there are many different ways to record and remember vocabulary. Allow time for students to read through the list. Check for understanding.
- Ask students to tick the sentences that apply to them. Encourage them to add any additional suggestions to the list of methods to remember vocabulary (using mnemonics, using songs/raps/chants, multisensory approaches ...).
- Ask students to compare their answers. If time allows, tell them to circle the things they think they might be able to put into practice when learning vocabulary.
- Emphasise the importance of reflecting on what vocabulary or structures they can practise at home.

Activity 3

- Explain to the students that one way to help remember vocabulary is to put words into groups. By grouping words together it makes them easier to recall.
- Place students in pairs or groups and encourage them to think about different ways in which words and phrases can be grouped or organised (using word families/semantic groups such as landforms, animals, colours ...).
- When students have jotted down a few ways to group words, invite them to compare their ideas with another group. Share answers as a class.

Activity 4

- Ask students to look at the cards and charts provided. Explain that they need to choose one of the techniques. Once they have selected the technique they would like to try, they need to find three words or phrases and make either cards or a word chart.
- When they have finished, they compare their choices with another group.
- Ask students to discuss challenges they faced when carrying out the activity and to think about the practical implications of these techniques when they are studying and reviewing.

Answer key

- 1 students' own answers
- 2 students' own answers
- 3 Suggested answers: rhyming words, similar meanings, opposite meanings, alphabetical order, word length, number of syllables, parts of speech, usage (formal, informal, academic, social), word families/semantic groups
- 4 students' own answers

Extension activities

- **PROJECT:** Vocabulary Board Games and Puzzles. Explain to the students that another good way to review vocabulary is by using games or puzzles. Place students in pairs or small groups and check if they can come up with a game or puzzle to review 10–12 vocabulary words on the topic they are studying. The game can be an original creation or it can be based on a game they know (Monopoly, Snakes and Ladders ...). When they have finished, compare the games and puzzles. Which one did the class think was most useful? Allow students to invent a song or rap instead of a game/puzzle, if they prefer.
- **Vocabulary Games.** Play some vocabulary games in class like Taboo or 'Scattergories'.
- **Reflection time.** Ask students to think about the reasons why learning and remembering vocabulary is important (for social interactions, for tests, for entertainment, for travel ...).

Worksheet 1

MAKING VOCABULARY MEMORABLE

There are a lot of different ways to remember vocabulary. Experiment with different techniques and see which ones work best for you!

1 When I don't understand a word, I ...

- a) look it up in a dictionary
- b) ask someone
- c) look it up online
- d) Other:

2 Read and tick the things you do to remember vocabulary.

- I think of a gesture for the word.
- I use graphic organisers (charts, spider diagrams, columns...).
- I make word lists.
- I make cards with the words on them.
- I draw pictures of the word.
- I relate the words to a word in my mother tongue.
- I have a vocabulary notebook.
- I use the word in a sentence.

Can you add to the list?

3 Grouping words. Putting words in groups is another way of making them more memorable. Brainstorm different ways to group words.

Word families: *landforms*

4 Cards and charts. Look at these different techniques to remember vocabulary. Choose three words from the unit you are studying and make cards or a chart.

Word cards with pictures	Word charts (word, definition, examples, parts of speech, opposites)	Four cards (a word, definition, example and picture)
		