

Using Vocabulary.com in Vocabulary Acquisition

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Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is a very important aspect of second and foreign language learning. Though there are many aspects to language learning, it is significant for the learners to acquire knowledge of vocabulary to communicate effectively. In recent times, there is a well-deserved attention on vocabulary building using technology. There is a paradigm shift in the English language teaching scenario where the emphasis is more on learning than on teaching. Technology has played a key role in the changing landscape of teaching-learning. There are many tools that help vocabulary building. I have been using many of these tools in my classrooms. Vocabulary.com is one such tool that is of immense help for learners of English in building their vocabulary.

What is vocabulary.com?

As quoted in the website, “vocabulary.com combines the world's smartest dictionary with an adaptive learning game that will have you mastering new words in no time.” This tool systematically exposes the learner to a wide range of activities and question types that helps them to understand the different shades of meaning of all the words they learn. Even after mastery of a particular word, it reinforces what the learner has learned to make sure it stays afresh in the memory.

Learners can “play the challenge” where the software figures out the words the learners know and the ones for which they need help. The practice continues till the learner masters the lesser known words. Each question in the challenge provides helpful hints and also an explanation of the correct answer. This tool uses an adaptive learning system where

the system gives you questions that are appropriate to your level. The questions are not too easy or too difficult. They sufficiently challenge the learner.

This website can also be used as a dictionary to “lookup” the meaning of a word. The dictionary first gives a “friendly explanation” that is easy to remember. There are many options in the dictionary using which one can add the word to a list. The word in the list can be revisited. Thesaurus is also another option clicking which takes the learner to visualthesaurus.com. More than all these options, the dictionary also gives usage examples based on different areas of specialization including fiction, arts/culture, news, business, sports, science/med, and technology.

Why vocabulary.com?

There are many different tools and technologies that help learners to acquire vocabulary. The following features make vocabulary.com a very dependable tool:

- Learners have complete control of their learning. They can choose a list from the “featured lists”. They can also start a new list based on their lessons or their interests.
- Learners are motivated in the form of badges. As they learn words, they also earn points. As they earn more points, they are assigned a badge that represents the particular level.
- Learners can also share their word lists with other learners who may use them and comment on them.
- Learners can use the website to create an account. They may also log in to the account using their mobile phones by downloading the app (both in iOS and Android).

How can educators use vocabulary.com?

Teachers of English can use this tool to blend technology with classroom learning. Teachers have to “sign up as an educator” to use vocabulary.com as a tool that supplements their teaching. There are many “educator plans” to choose from based on the size of the class. However, if the educators do not want to pay they may still choose the “trial plan” that has no limitation on the number of classes one may create and they may add up to 50 students to each class. Using the “trial plan”, teachers may provide the students with assignments in the

form of word lists. Students can use their login to learn the words in the word lists provided by the teacher.

I would like to share one of my personal word lists that I used to acquire specific vocabulary:

<https://www.vocabulary.com/lists/269563>

References:

www.vocabulary.com