

Introducing the VOCABBUSTERS Methodology

Learning vocabulary does not have to be difficult or dull. VOCABBUSTERS is based on over two decades of research on vocabulary acquisition, retention and usage. The strategies used in this book have been statistically proven to be superior learning devices for building vocabulary. VOCABBUSTERS combines two of the best methods to assist you in learning new words—the Keyword and Semantic-Context methods. The presentation of this information, centered on a cartoon, creates a memorable visual mnemonic. MP3s and kinesthetic activities help to make learning easier and more fun.

Why is having a good vocabulary important?

Vocabulary acquisition is the single best indicator of intelligence and IQ according to Robert Sternberg, an Educational Psychologist at Yale University. Extensive portions of college entrance exams, including the S.A.T. and G.R.E., use vocabulary testing as a measure to predict academic performance. More importantly, simply reading does not guarantee a good vocabulary (Sternberg, 1986), which means that strategies for acquiring vocabulary need to be taught. Unfortunately, most schools do not devote any time for teaching effective techniques for learning vocabulary. When learning new vocabulary words, most students are left to rely on rote memorization, unaware that more efficient strategies are available. Therefore their vocabulary suffers, and in the end, many students remain ill prepared for college, and subsequently become more limited with their career choices.

VOCABBUSTERS is Simply the Best!

There are two simple reasons why VOCABBUSTERS is the best method for learning new vocabulary words. First, VOCABBUSTERS is two scientific methodologies built into one. By combining two of the most empirically validated methods for learning vocabulary into one simple interface, we have significantly increased the learner's

chances for success. Second, we have added visual, auditory and kinesthetic supports to allow learners multiple “brain based” pathways for learning new words. That means you can study with just your strongest sensory style, or you can utilize all three sensory modalities. It all depends on what works best for you. For example, an auditory learner can just listen to the accompanying MP3 files, or he can study the visual cartoons and easily utilize the kinesthetic techniques to quickly find dozens of example sentences online and then write a favorite one down at the bottom of each page. Again, our purpose is to easily provide the tools to allow you to study in the way that best suits your style of learning, thereby increasing your chances for success. Let’s take a look at the two reasons why VOCABBUSTERS is the best in greater detail.

1) Juxtaposing Methodologies

Numerous research articles have been written to prove the veracity of one method over another. It is interesting to note that in these “Battles of the Methods” two methods have been studied in great detail—the Keyword and Semantic-Context methods. In much of the research, the keyword method was shown to be very strong and empirically the best method for learning new vocabulary. However, over time, studies have shown semantic-context to be an excellent method, and in some as good as the keyword approach. A more detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each method led to an interesting discovery. The major strengths of each method complemented and added value to the other method. By combining these two methods, the user will be able to easily remember definitions (keyword strength) and apply them in daily communications (semantic-context strength). For years these methods have been battling it out to see which one is the best. It is almost like comparing peanut butter and jelly. However, by combining the two methods into one new method, VOCABBUSTERS gives students a stronger base of research on which to rely.

The Keyword Method

The first step in using this method is to find a keyword for the word you are trying to learn. For example, let's say you're trying to learn the word *olfactory*. A good keyword for the word *olfactory* is *oil factory* because it follows three rules.

1. The word sounds acoustically similar to the target word.
2. The word is a concrete noun, which makes it easier to draw or visualize.
3. The word is common or familiar to the learner.

The second step is to link the keyword to the target definition. More simply, we need to link the word *oil factory* to “sense of smell.” Visualize watching smoke spewing from an oil factory and smelling really bad. Draw a simple picture that depicts this situation and add the caption “That *oil factory* is bothering my *olfactory* sense.” This visual mnemonic will assist the learner in remembering the meaning of the new word.

The final step is to practice recalling the target word. When you think of *olfactory*, first think of the keyword (*oil factory*), then remember what was happening in the picture (smoke is spewing out and smells bad), and finally that *olfactory* means *sense of smell*.

When tested against other methods, the keyword strategy repeatedly proved to be a superior technique for acquiring vocabulary for subjects of nearly all ages, and with periodic review, one of the best methods for long-term retention. The strength of this mnemonic strategy is in aiding the learner in remembering the definition of vocabulary words. Mnemonic strategies work! In fact, Purdue University researchers' Mastropieri and Scruggs (1991), “never found a ‘type of learner’ who could not benefit from mnemonic instruction.” Additionally, the subjects in these studies not only liked the use of the strategy but expressed greater enjoyment in learning.

Semantic-Context Method

To learn a word using this method, context clues are placed in the sentence to help the learner define the word. For example, try to figure out what *olfactory* means from the following sentence. “His *olfactory* sense told him that someone had been smoking in the room.” Clues within the sentence help the user define the meaning as “the sense of smell.”

The semantic-context method has been identified as one of the best learning devices and has tested as one of the best strategies for delayed recall. Strictly speaking, in this book, only the first example sentence uses the semantic-context method. We created these sentences so that the target words were used within a meaningful context. We added two additional sentences from print sources that demonstrated real life examples. Although some of these sentences could also be considered semantic-context, only the first example sentence was strictly created for that purpose. These sentences as a whole should aid learners in actively integrating these words into their working vocabulary, using them on a daily basis.

2) Study with Style

What's your cognitive style? Do you learn best when you see an illustration depicting the meaning of a new word (visual), when you hear the new word being used (auditory), or when you find an example of the word used in real life and write it down (kinesthetic)? By providing visual cartoons, audio narrations and kinesthetic activities, we allow users to study with their primary learning styles. Keyword mnemonics create excellent visual links connecting keywords to the definitions of the targeted vocabulary word. This visual approach is best for recalling word definitions. We created MP3s from the caption sentences of the cartoons and from each semantic-context sentence (first example sentence for each word). Auditory learners should find these extremely helpful in learning these words. Finally, kinesthetic learners can follow the directions on page 10 to quickly find dozens of example sentences online and then write a favorite one down at the bottom of each page.

Many will certainly find it useful to integrate all three of these approaches into the learning process for each word. By listening to the MP3 recordings while reading over the sentences and studying the cartoon, and then searching through lists of example sentences and selecting one to write down, users will be storing this information in multiple locations of their brain. Proponents of dual coding theory claim that multimedia enhanced lessons can help strengthen the learning process by processing the same information in multiple areas of the brain, including the visual and auditory cortexes. Even more than dual coding, perhaps those that use all three approaches are using triple coding. Either way, every one of these supports is given with the goal of giving learners multiple methods to succeed.

VOCABBUSTERS Caters to all Types of Learners.

Here's how VOCABBUSTERS engages the three primary senses in learning new words.

What's Your Cognitive Style?

Find out free at <http://vak.solida.net>

Visual Learners learn best when they see a visual image or picture. The cartoon illustrations for each word create a humorous and memorable way for learning new words. When trying to recall the

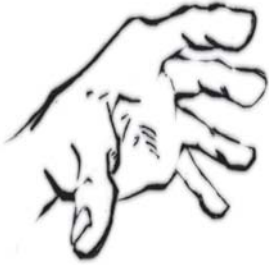


meaning of a word, visual learners should try to remember the keyword and the related cartoon that illustrates the word. Recalling the activity in the cartoon helps visual learners remember the meaning of the target word. Additionally, visual learners might find it beneficial to color the pictures in the book.

Auditory Learners- MP3 audio files increase learning and eliminate the guess work from determining pronunciations. Students no longer need to worry about whether they are mispronouncing words. According to middle school teacher Ginger Lewman, "I've had kids work on words by themselves and come back to me mispronouncing them. For instance, the word facade (pronounced f&-säd) becomes f&-kAd. Now that could be VERY embarrassing on down the road and discourage them from trying to learn new words on their own."



With the audio recordings, auditory learners can easily learn new words independently and pronounce them correctly. Students with auditory preferences can review words by listening to them at any time.



Kinesthetic Learners- Interact with the words by creating additional example sentences for each word. A great way to do this is to use *Google Print*. Google Print is a completely free online search engine that enables users to search inside both books and magazines for pages that include a particular word. Here's how to use this valuable tool:

1. Go to Google's website at <http://www.google.com>.
2. Type the word you wish to look for. Then add the extension **site:print.google.com**

If you are searching for the word **baleful**, type **baleful site:print.google.com** in the Google search window and press the search button. In our search, 117 book and magazines excerpts appeared containing the word baleful (as of this writing). Keep in mind that this database is growing daily.

3. Pick your favorite sentence from this list and write it in the "write your own" section provided at the bottom of the page.

To learn more about Google Print, check out their FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page at <http://print.google.com/print/faq.html>.

For additional kinesthetic activities solve the crossword puzzles and take the matching and multiple choice quizzes at the end of the chapters. Also try to listen to the MP3 recordings while walking or moving about. Additionally you can create your own vocabulary mnemonic for vocabulary words you need to learn using the directions on page vii.

Pronunciation Guide

Many words have more than one correct pronunciation. In this book we have included one or two of the most common pronunciations for each word.

(<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary#>)

\&\ as a and u in abut	\&\ as e in kitten	\&r\ as ur/er in further
\a\ as a in ash	\A\ as a in ace	\ä\ as o in mop
\au\ as ou in out	\ch\ as ch in chin	\e\ as e in bet
\E\ as ea in easy	\g\ as g in go	\i\ as i in hit
\I\ as i in ice	\j\ as j in job	\[ng]\ as ng in sing
\O\ as o in go	\o\ as aw in law	\oi\ as oy in boy
\th\ as th in thin	\[th]\ as th in the	\ü\ as oo in loot
\u\ as oo in foot	\y\ as y in yet	\zh\ as si in vision

By permission of the publisher. From Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary at www.Merriam-Webster.com by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

For more information on this pronunciation guide, visit <http://www.m-w.com/pronguid.htm>.

How to Review

Try to recall as much information about each word before looking at the page. You may wish to cover up the page, with only the target vocabulary word visible. Try to recall each part before uncovering it. To review the word *olfactory*:

1. Recall the keyword [oil factory]
2. Visualize the cartoon picture of the sun inhaling the fumes from the smelly oil factory.
3. Connect the picture to the meaning of the target word [referring to the sense of smell]
4. Think about how the word was used in a sentence or try to make up a sentence of your own.

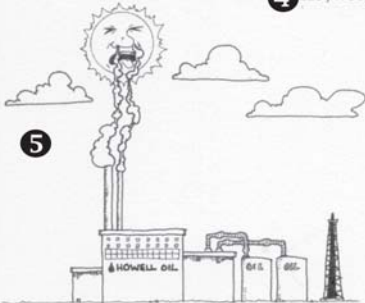
VOCABBUSTERS Sample Overview

1 Olfactory

2 ä'l-'fak-t&-rE, Ol-'fak-trE⁺

3 (Adjective) referring to the sense of smell

4 Keyword: oil factory



5

6 The smelly fumes from the **oil factory** bothered my **olfactory** sense.

7 His **olfactory** sense told him that someone had been smoking in the bathroom.

Little boys have been giggling about outhouses and their accompanying **olfactory** assaults since, well, caveman days.^A

8 Finally, it was my nose that was the judge of land. It came to my **olfactory** sense, full and fresh, overwhelming: the smell of vegetation. I gasped. After months of nothing but salt-water-bleached smells, this reek of vegetable organic matter was intoxicating.^B

9 write your own: _____

© Solids, Inc. <http://www.solids.net/>

- 1 Target word.
- 2 Pronunciations are from the experts at Merriam-Webster. Many words have more than one pronunciation. The + after the last pronunciation signifies that there are additional pronunciations for this word at <http://www.m-w.com/>
- 3 Part of speech and definition.
- 4 The keyword consists of a word or short phrase that sounds similar to the target word.
- 5 Cartoon illustration links the target word to the keyword and definition.
- 6 The cartoon caption ties the target word to the keyword and definition.
- 7 The target word used within a meaningful sentence (Semantic Context).
- 8 Two example sentences taken from leading publications.
- 9 Create your own sentence using the target word. Use the directions on page x to find great example sentences.