

500  
TIPS

*for*  
TESOL

(TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES)

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**10 Tips for...**

**Teaching vocabulary**

## **1 Distinguish receptive and productive vocabulary needs.**

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

## **2 Consider teaching new vocabulary in related sets.**

- hyponyms (eg, names of family relations)
- same context (eg, subjects studied at school)
- verbs + nouns (eg, *study* English/maths/ geography at school, *take* an exam)

### **3 Vary your explanation techniques.**

- definitions
- examples
- visuals
- mimes
- varied techniques
- many ways of understanding and remembering a word

#### **4 Teach the grammar of vocabulary items.**

- the word itself (irregular past?)
- the word in a phrase (verb+preposition?)
- from the text
- understanding how a word 'works'

## **5 Encourage awareness of collocations.**

- words combine in certain ways
- set phrases, such as 'hard work'

## **6 Spend some time on connotative meaning.**

- What are the culturally specific “hidden” meanings of new words and expressions?

## **7 Help learners to be aware of register.**

- Written or spoken language?
- Formal, informal, literary, technical, slang?
- What clues does the context of the word give about its register?

## **8 Look at word formation.**

- Prefixes and suffixes can open up the meaning of many words.
- Review, repeat, rewind, rewatch, retake
- Contact, connect, continue, concurrent

## **9 Use direct translation carefully.**

- Translations can be quick and direct
- However, they reduce the use of learning strategies.
- ‘Translations’ can differ in terms of connotation, register, grammar, collocation.

## **10 Teach conscious vocabulary learning strategies.**

- Learners to apply their own 'techniques' to remember items or work out the meaning.
- Show strategies they can use outside class.
- Keep a vocabulary notebook; classify new words they have seen; revise new vocabulary at intervals.