

The aim of this leaflet

The aim of this leaflet is to offer some suggestions which may be of help if you find that:

- your present method of noting down vocabulary is not systematic or effective; or
- there is too much vocabulary for you to cope with, with more and more to learn and remember as each week goes by

How can I organize the words and phrases that I want to learn?

When considering this problem, there are two main decisions to make:

- **Where do I put the words/phrases I want to learn?**
Notebooks, flash cards, computer files, pieces of paper around your home or room — there are many possibilities.
- **How do I classify the words/phrases I want to learn?**

Most people find that it's useful to organize the vocabulary they write down in some way, either to break the words/phrases into groups for learning, to show relationships between similar words, or to make it easier to find a particular word. Here are some ways of classifying your vocabulary that you might consider: according to alphabetical order; the order in which you found the words; topics; situations; 'families' of similar word meanings; frequency of occurrence (see **V2**); or level of difficulty (see **V4**).

For further advice:

- Read Chapter 7 of *How to Learn a Language* (*Study Skills* shelf), or Unit 5: of *Increase Your Vocabulary* (*Vocabulary* shelf).
- See the examples in Unit 3 of *English Vocabulary in Use* (*Vocabulary* shelf).
- If you would like to make connections between related words, so that you are not learning words in isolation, check out the

Advice Sheet **Learning Vocabulary for Speaking and Writing (V8)**.

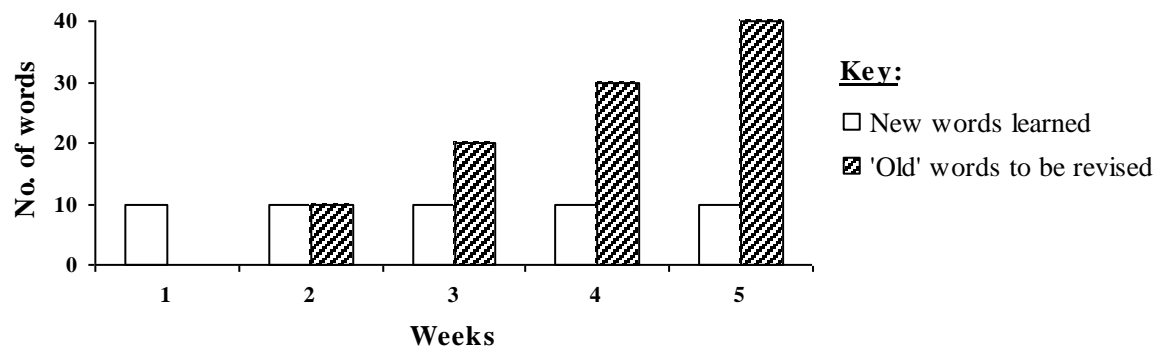
- If you are interested in the frequency of words, check out the Advice Sheet **Deciding Which Words are Worth Learning (V2)**.
- If you are interested in organising words according to how difficult you find them to learn, check out the Advice Sheet **Remembering Vocabulary (V4)**.

N.B. The important thing is to find out what works/does not work for you and why. Do your methods help you to learn effectively? If not, what could you do that would help you to learn more effectively?

There's just too much to learn — how can I cope?

Let's say that you plan to learn 10 words a week (a modest target). Unless you can remember words just by looking at them once, you are likely to face the following problem:

Figure 1: The Increasing Revision Load



As you can see from the Figure above, the first week, you will have no problems. The second week, in addition to the 10 words for that week, you will also have to revise the 10 words from week 1. The third week, in addition to the 10 words for that week, you will have to revise the 20 words from weeks 1 and 2, and so on.

Here are two ways in which you could reduce your learning load:

1. **Try to recycle the vocabulary you learn** as much as possible. If you try to read, listen to, speak about or write about the same topic (e.g. a particular news story) over a number of weeks, you will find that the same vocabulary keeps occurring. If you follow the same topic over several weeks, it is likely that you will meet some of the words you have tried to learn earlier. Meeting the words in context will help you remember them, and will reduce your memorizing load each week. It will also

give you an idea of how the words are actually used in context.

2. **Focus on the words that you find most difficult to learn.** You may be spending time on 'learning' words that you already remember — time that could be better spent on the words that you just seem to keep forgetting. This is covered in detail in the advice sheet **Remembering Vocabulary (V4)**.

For further advice:

- If you are not sure which words you should spend your time on, check out the Advice Sheet **Deciding Which Words are Worth Learning (V2)**.

And now...

If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch - **we are here to support your independent learning!** To contact us:

- Make an appointment to see an adviser. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to <https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/>.
- E-mail your questions to **iLANG** (lcilang@ust.hk).
- Ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

What else can you do?

- Browse the many physical (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources>) and online materials (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-vocabulary/>) for Vocabulary.
- Join a Vocabulary activity or short course (<http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/vocabulary/>).

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