

A RESEARCH IN COMPUTER-ASSISTED VOCABULARY LEARNING

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In communication, the correct choice of words plays an important role in transmitting the meaning we intended to. Poor vocabulary affects the comprehension of a text. Vocabulary plays a higher role in interpreting a text than that of syntax or previous knowledge. Teaching vocabulary also includes the presentation of lexical items in real life contexts or in a learning situation that the learner has to master and it implies:

- recognizing words in their spoken or written form;
- recalling them at will;
- relating them to an item or concept;
- using them in correct grammatical structures;
- pronouncing and spelling them correctly.

The use of computer and information technologies in language learning and teaching has made computer assisted language learning to become a research field on its own. Language teachers and students are becoming more familiar with the use of computers for language learning purposes, as computerized exercises, electronic dictionaries or hand-outs, hypertext and the Internet offer them exciting and innovative vocabulary learning instances. When designed on educational principles, these tools can turn into proper mediums for vocabulary learning and practice.

Computer-assisted vocabulary tools such as on-line dictionaries, hypertexts offer students definitions, examples of sentences, with proper explanations and even pictures and videos to exemplify the given word.

According to Alessi and Trollip², such tools can be divided into:

1. *Tutorials* - guide the learner through the information and present it; they always provide feedback for students

² Alessi, Stephen M., Trollip, Stanley R. (2001): *Multimedia for Learning. Methods and Development*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, pp. 89 - 403

For example, a software/site³ can at first present its learning objectives on a certain topic, then show some examples with further practice through certain exercises and in the end the student has a clear image of what he/she knows.

[Lexical Tutor](#) > Tutorial Guide

You can use this site to expand your English vocabulary **systematically** (and your French vocabulary too). The site has a set of diagnostic vocabulary tests, and a corresponding set of vocabulary lists linked to concordance, dictionary, and quizzes to help you explore the nuances of form, meaning, and collocation of the words on these lists. Here's one way to proceed:

- [Test](#) yourself to determine your areas of vocabulary weakness.
- Go to the [Learn from Lists](#) pages and find the level which you are weak in (note that only 1000, 2000, and University Word lists are available, not 3000, 5000, or 10,000).
- Work your way through the list with the aid of the dictionary and concordance. Develop an approach that suits you—make notes, cut and paste examples and definitions to the [Group Lex. Database](#) provided, or one on your own computer. Also, a set of progress tests is linked to the 2000 and UWL lists at roughly 250-word intervals.
- If you do not like learning from lists, or want to learn more about new words by meeting them in other contexts, then you can paste complete authentic texts into [VP Cloze](#), which will make you exercises for words from the frequency band you are working on.
- Or, if you want to work outside the frequency framework altogether, but not entirely independently, then you can [read a novel!](#) (Jack London's *Call of the Wild* or de Maupassant's *Boule de Suif*) with full click-on lexical support. - or make your own resource-supported texts at [Hypertext Builder](#)

The 1000, 2000, and University Word Lists contain words you need to know - read the [research](#) page to learn why.

2. *Hypermedia* - connects parts of information, showing the relationships between them.

For example, a word⁴ sends the student to its graphic representation or its definition, synonyms and antonyms just clicking on it. This is customary in dictionaries, encyclopedias.

³ <http://www.lex tutor.ca/instructions.htm> retrieved August 26th 2011.

⁴ <http://dictionary.sensagent.com/vocabulary/en-en/> retrieved August 26th 2011.

vocabulary

English > English

search **sensagent**
definitions, synonyms, translations

definitions synonyms phrases semantic net anagrams crosswords conjugation example
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definitions

vocabulary (n.)

1. a language user's knowledge of words
2. the system of techniques or symbols serving as a means of expression (as in arts or crafts) "he introduced a wide vocabulary of techniques"
3. a listing of the words used in some enterprise

Vocabulary (n.)

1. (MeSH) The sum or the stock of words used by a language, a group, or an individual. (From Webster, 3d ed)

synonyms

Vocabulary (n.) (MeSH)
L01.143.506.598.901

vocabulary (n.)
dictionary, document, glossary, lexicon, mental lexicon, printed matter, quotation, text, word list, words

phrases

- ➔ Controlled Vocabulary - Vocabulary Tests - Vocabulary, Controlled - tourist vocabulary
- ➔ controlled vocabulary searching ADBS
- ➔ A Descriptive Vocabulary of the Language in Common Use Amongst the Aborigines of Western Australia - Accelerated Vocabulary - Australian English vocabulary - Bengali vocabulary - BitTorrent vocabulary - Changes to Old English vocabulary - Comics vocabulary - Controlled vocabulary - Critical vocabulary - Defining vocabulary - Differences between American and British English (vocabulary) - Esperanto vocabulary - Estonian vocabulary - Examples of typical Puerto Rican vocabulary - Final vocabulary - Getty Vocabulary Program - Icelandic vocabulary - International scientific vocabulary - Malaysian English vocabulary - Maliseet Vocabulary - National Vocabulary Championship - Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Persian vocabulary -

3. *Drills* - are very used in learning vocabulary. They can have the form of:

- pair associations: students can associate text-to-text information, auditory to text, text to picture, auditory to picture, text to numeric items etc.

Bookmark Grammar reference Listen Hint Submit Retry

THE PARTS OF A CAR
Drag each word and drop it next to the correct letter.

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

windscreen
bonnet
steering wheel
boot
mirror
headlight
wheel
roof

(The parts of a car - text to picture association, content provided by MacMillan and SIVECO România in AeL system)

Bookmark Grammar reference Listen Hint Submit Retry

GOING SHOPPING
Click on a question in Column 1 and click on the correct reply in Column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1 How much is this cheese?	Sorry, we've just run out.
2 What's good for insect bites?	I've read this one and it's good.
3 I want to send this by express delivery.	You need to go to the other counter.
4 Do you have any tomatoes?	This cream works the best.
5 Which of these is the best?	It's just over 1 kilo.
6 Are they fresh?	It's 13 a kilo.
7 How much does that weigh?	Yes, they're still warm.



(*Going Shopping* - text to text association, content provided by MacMillan and SIVECO România in AeL system)

- multiple choice: students have multiple choices to fill in the blanks accordingly

2 / 2 Bookmark Grammar reference Listen Hint

CLIMATE
Key a phrase from this list in each gap: *fossil fuels, tropical rainforests, annual rainfall, ocean current, global warming.*

- The greenhouse effect is caused by gas emissions and the burning of .
- are the lungs of the Earth. They shouldn't be cut down.
- The Gulf Stream is a warm which originates in the Gulf of Mexico.
- The serious damage to the ozone layer of our planet is responsible for .
- A large part of the Earth's surface is desert with a very low level of .



(*Climate*, content provided by MacMillan and SIVECO România in AeL system)

- sentence-completion: students have to complete given sentences or texts with words so as to practice the topic required

Bookmark Grammar reference Read Hint Submit Retry

MY AUNT Words used metaphorically

Click on the Read button and read the first short text. Then read the second which says the same thing in a different way. Now look at the sentences below. Drag and drop the words



1 My aunt is a really special person. She is always invited to everybody's house at birthdays and Christmas. She is the of every party.

2 She is so that she would help anyone who asked for anything.

3 She is never , and is always willing to accept everyone whatever their beliefs and customs.

4 Sometimes, I almost think she's a because she seems to know what everyone is thinking.

soul-destroying
mind reader
narrow-minded
seventh heaven
ups and downs
warm-hearted
blossomed
over the moon

(Using words metaphorically, content provided by MacMillan and SIVCO România in AeL system)

➤ short-answer questions:

EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

Click on the correct answer to complete the conversations.

1 How much are the apples?

- Five apples, please.
- 11.35 a kilo.
- Two kilos, please.

2 I'm hungry.

- Do you want a sandwich?
- I've just eaten lunch.
- Please make me a sandwich.

3 Pass the salt, please.

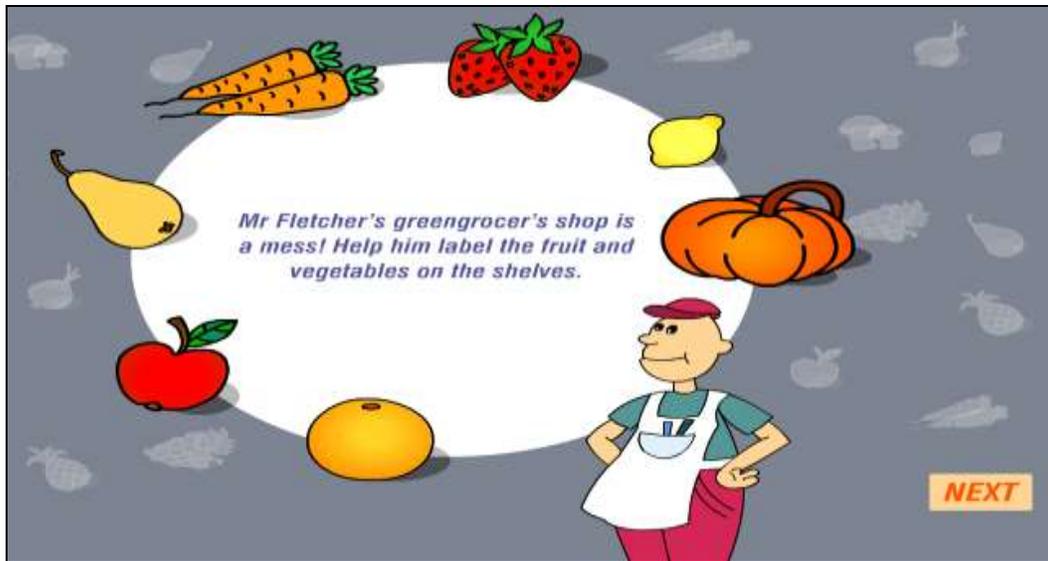
- I don't like salt.
- No, thanks.



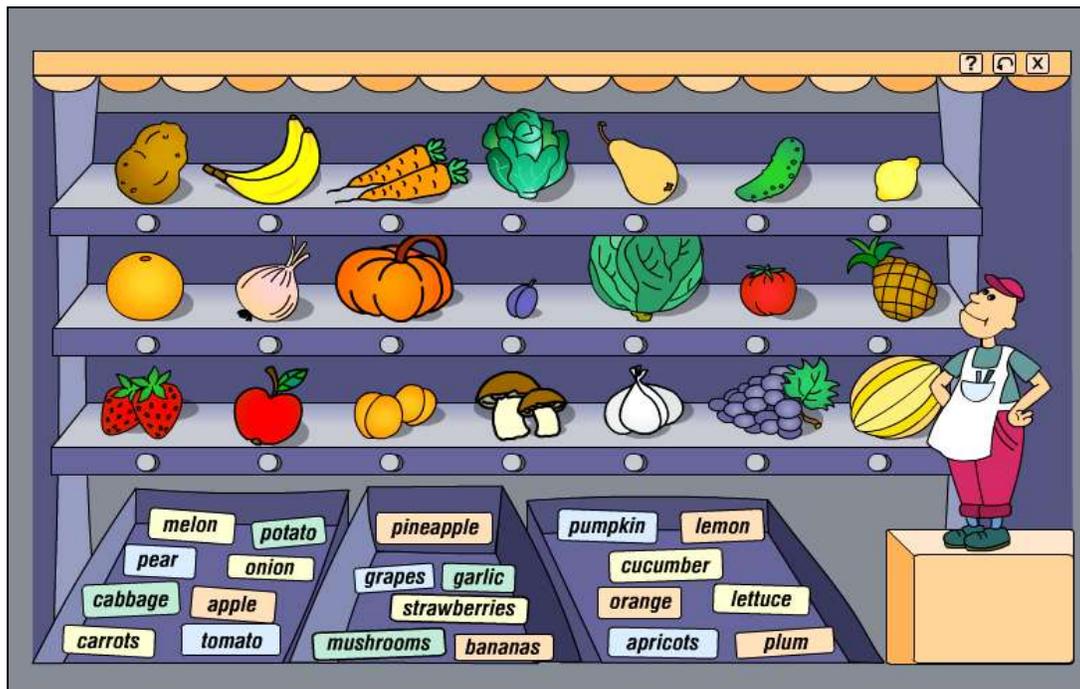
(Everyday Language, content provided by MacMillan and SIVCO România in AeL system)

4. *Educational games* - use the form of playing for repeating vocabulary items learnt. They are motivating for learners and encourage them to understand and learn better things that otherwise they would not want to learn.

For example when revising fruits and vegetables, the following computer game can be played to check understanding of the taught vocabulary. The student can see for him/herself how many words he/she knows and replay the game until full understanding is provided:



(Mr Fletcher's Shop, content provided by MacMillan and SIVCO România in AeL system)



(Mr Fletcher's Shop, content provided by MacMillan and SIVCO România in AeL system)

Using computers to improve the learning process has benefits for both language teachers and students. Teachers have to present language items, help students practice learned language

items and provide opportunities for students to improve reading, listening, writing and speaking skills in the target language. Thus, computers can help teachers in certain areas such as vocabulary learning and revision. Students can be presented vocabulary items using a computer which also offers feedback, in the form of correct answers and explications, and help fixation.