

Introduction

WHY VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT COUNTS

You have probably often heard it said, “Building vocabulary is important.” Maybe you’ve politely nodded in agreement and then forgotten the matter. But it would be fair for you to ask, “Why is a good vocabulary so important? Can you prove it?” Here are four convincing reasons.

- 1** Common sense tells you what many research studies have also shown: vocabulary is a basic part of understanding what you read. A word here and there may not stop you, but if there are too many words you don’t know, comprehension will suffer. The content of textbooks is often difficult enough; you don’t want to work as well on understanding the words which express that content.
- 2** Vocabulary is a major part of almost every standardized test, including reading achievement tests, college entrance exams, and armed forces and vocational placement tests. Test developers know that vocabulary is a key measure of both one’s learning and one’s ability to learn. It is for this reason that they include a separate vocabulary section as well as a reading comprehension section. The more words you know, then, the better you are likely to do on such important tests.
- 3** Studies have shown that students with strong vocabularies are more successful in school. And one widely known study found that a good vocabulary, more than anything else, was common to people enjoying successful careers. Words are, in fact, the tools not just of better reading, but of better writing, speaking, listening, and thinking, as well. The more words you have at your command, the more effect you can have on the people around you.
- 4** In today’s world, a good vocabulary counts more than ever. Far fewer people work on farms or in factories. Far more are in jobs that provide services or process information. More than ever, the tools of our trade are words: the words we use in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition, experts say that workers of tomorrow will be called on to change jobs and learn new skills at an ever-increasing pace. The keys to survival and success will be the abilities to read, write, speak, and learn in a quick and skillful way. A solid vocabulary is essential for all of these skills.

Clearly, there is powerful proof that building vocabulary is a major key to success. The question then becomes, “What is the best way of going about it?”

WORDS IN CONTEXT: THE KEY TO VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Memorizing lists of words is a traditional method of vocabulary development. However, a person is likely to forget such memorized lists quickly. Studies show that to master a word, you must see and use it in various contexts—that is, in different real-life sentences and paragraphs. By working actively and repeatedly with a word, you greatly increase your chance of really learning it.

The following activity will make clear how this book is organized and how it uses a words-in-context approach. In the spaces provided, answer the questions or fill in the missing words.

Inside Front Cover and Contents

Turn to the inside front cover.

- The inside front cover provides a _____ that will help you pronounce all the vocabulary words in the book.

Now turn to the table of contents on pages v–vi.

- How many chapters are in the book? _____
- Four short sections follow the last chapter. The first of these sections is a limited answer key, the second gives helpful information on using _____, the third contains _____, and the fourth is an index of the 300 words in the book.

Vocabulary Chapters

Turn to Chapter 1 on pages 10–15. This chapter, like all the others, consists of seven parts:

- The **first part** of the chapter, on pages 10–11, is titled _____.

The left-hand column lists the ten words in the chapter. Under each **boldfaced** word is its _____ (in parentheses). For example, the pronunciation of *challenge* is _____. For a guide to pronunciation, see the inside front cover as well as “Dictionary Use” on pages 243–244.

Below the pronunciation guide for each word is its part of speech. The part of speech shown for *challenge* is _____. The vocabulary words in this book are mostly nouns, adjectives, and verbs. **Nouns** are words used to name something—a person, place, thing, or idea. Familiar nouns include *boyfriend*, *city*, *hat*, and *truth*. **Adjectives** are words that describe nouns, as in the following word pairs: *former* boyfriend, *large* city, *red* hat, *whole* truth. All of the **verbs** in this book express an action of some sort. They tell what someone or something is doing. Common verbs include *read*, *drive*, *discover*, and *imagine*.

To the right of each word are two sentences that will help you understand its meaning. In each sentence, the **context**—the other words in the sentence—provides clues you can use to figure out the definition. There are four common types of context clues—examples, synonyms, antonyms, and the general sense of the sentence. Each is briefly described on the pages that follow.

Common Context Clues

1 Examples

A sentence may include examples that show what an unfamiliar word means. For instance, take a look at the following item from Chapter 2 for the word *category*:

When Jasmine was in high school, she didn't seem to fit into any **category**. She wasn't an athlete, a scholar, or a rebel.

The second sentence gives three examples of *category*—being “an athlete, a scholar, or a rebel.” To figure out what *category* means, think about those examples. What is the speaker saying that Jasmine doesn't fit into? Look at the answer choices below, and in the space provided, write the letter of the answer you feel is correct.

___ *Category* means A. goal. B. feeling. C. group.

Since the speaker is talking about the types of groups in high school, you may have correctly guessed that answer *C* is the right choice.

2 Synonyms

Synonyms are words that mean the same or almost the same as another word. The words *joyful*, *happy*, and *pleased* are synonyms; they all mean about the same thing. A synonym serves as a context clue by telling the meaning of an unknown word that is nearby. For instance, the sentence below from Chapter 1 includes a synonym clue for the vocabulary word *peculiar*.

My brother thinks my chip-and-dip sandwiches are **peculiar**, but I don't think they're as strange as the peanut-butter-and-tuna sandwiches he eats.

Rather than repeat *peculiar* in the second part of the sentence, the author used a synonym. Find that synonym, and then from the choices below, write in the letter of the meaning of *peculiar*.

___ *Peculiar* means A. attractive. B. unusual. C. innocent.

In the sentence from Chapter 1, *strange* is used as a synonym for *peculiar*. Since another word for *strange* is *unusual*, the answer is *B*.

3 Antonyms

Antonyms are words with opposite meanings. For example, *help* and *harm* are antonyms, as are *work* and *rest*. An antonym serves as a context clue by telling the opposite meaning of a nearby unknown word. The sentence below from Chapter 2 provides an antonym clue for the word *deliberate*.

Manny's pushing me was quite **deliberate**; it wasn't accidental at all.

To emphasize the point, the author used an antonym of *deliberate*. Find the antonym, and use it to help you figure out what *deliberate* means. Then write in the letter of the meaning you choose.

___ *Deliberate* means A. easy. B. fair. C. planned.

(Continues on next page)

The sentence suggests that *deliberate* pushing and *accidental* pushing are very different things. So we can guess that *deliberate* means the opposite of *accidental*. Another word that is the opposite of *accidental* is *planned*, so *C* is the correct answer—*deliberate* means “planned.”

4 General Sense of the Sentence

Even when there are no example, synonym, or antonym clues in a sentence, you can still figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. For example, look at the sentence below from Chapter 1 for the word *surplus*.

More and more restaurants are donating their **surplus** food to homeless people.

After thinking carefully about the context, you should be able to figure out what kind of food restaurants would be giving to homeless people. Write the letter of your choice.

___ *Surplus* means A. strange. B. extra. C. main.

From the general sense of the sentence from Chapter 1 plus your own common sense, you probably guessed that the restaurants are donating “extra” food. Answer *B* is correct.

By looking closely at the pair of sentences provided for each word, as well as the answer choices, you should be able to decide on the meaning of a word. As you figure out each meaning, you are working actively with the word. You are creating the groundwork you need to understand and to remember the word. Getting involved with the word and developing a feel for it, based upon its use in context, is the key to word mastery.

It is with good reason, then, that the directions at the top of page 10 tell you to use the context to figure out each word’s _____. Doing so deepens your sense of the word and prepares you for the next activity.

- The **second part** of the chapter, on page 11, is titled _____.

According to research, it is not enough to see a word in context. At a certain point, it is important to look at the actual meaning of a word. The matching exercise provides that meaning, but it also makes you look for and think about that meaning. In other words, it continues the active learning that is your surest route to learning and remembering a word.

Note the caution that follows this exercise: Do not go any further until you are sure that you know the correct meaning of each word as used in context.

Keep in mind that a word may have more than one meaning. In fact, some words have quite a few meanings. (If you doubt it, try looking up in a dictionary the word *make* or *draw*.) In this book, you will focus on one common meaning for each vocabulary word. However, many of the words have additional meanings. For example, in Chapter 1, you will learn that *challenge* means “a test of one’s abilities,” as in the sentence “My new job is a real challenge.” If you then look up *challenge* in the dictionary, you will discover that it has other meanings. For example, it can also mean “a call to take part in a contest or fight,” as in “Ted never turns down a challenge

to play any kind of game.” After you learn one common meaning of a word, you will find yourself gradually learning its other meanings in the course of your school and personal reading.

- The **third and fourth parts** of the chapter, on page 12, are titled _____ and _____.

The first check consists of ten sentences that give you an opportunity to test your understanding of the ten words. After filling in the words, check your answers in the limited key at the back of the book. (But be sure to use the answer key as a learning tool only. Doing so will help you to master the words and to prepare for the remaining activities and the unit tests, for which answers are not provided.) The second check on page 12 then gives you another chance to deepen your understanding of the words.

- The **fifth part** of the chapter, on page 13, is titled _____. The practices on this page will make the meanings of the words come more alive through the use of vivid examples. Chances are you may find this activity to be one of the most enjoyable in the book.
- The **sixth part** of the chapter, on page 14, offers practice in one of three areas: word parts, synonyms and antonyms, or analogies. Each is explained below.

Word Parts, Synonyms-Antonyms, and Analogies

Word Parts

The first and third chapters in each unit contain practice with word parts.

Word parts are building blocks used in many English words. Learning word parts can help you to spell and pronounce words, unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words, and remember new words.

This book covers twenty-four word parts. You will learn two types: prefixes and suffixes. A **prefix** is a word part that is found at the *beginning* of a word. When written separately, a prefix is followed by a hyphen to show that something follows it. For example, the prefix *sur* is written like this: *sur-*. *Sur-* can mean “beyond” or “additional,” as in *surpass* (to go beyond) and *surcharge* (an additional charge).

A **suffix** is a word part that is found at the *end* of a word. To show that something always comes before a suffix, a hyphen is placed at the beginning. For instance, the suffix *ly* is written like this: *-ly*. One common meaning of *-ly* is “in a certain way,” as in the words *gratefully* (in a grateful way) and *angrily* (in an angry way).

Each word-part practice begins with the meaning of a word part and examples. Fill-in items then help you remember and recognize the word parts. To see what these items are like, try the one below from Chapter 1 for the word part *sur*. On the answer line, write the word that best completes the sentence.

surcharge surface surpass surplus surtax

_____ In addition to the usual taxes, people who earn more than a certain amount will have to pay a ____.

(Continues on next page)

The sentence suggests that people who earn more than a certain amount will have to pay an additional tax. Since you now know that *sur-* can mean “additional,” you probably wrote the correct word on the line: *surtax* (an additional tax).

(There is a third type of word part—a root. You will not be working with roots in this book. **Roots** are word parts that carry the basic meanings of words. For example, one common root is *vis*, which means “to see,” as in the words *visit* and *vision*.)

Synonyms and Antonyms

The second and fourth chapters in each unit contain synonym-antonym practices. You have already learned in this introduction that a **synonym** is a word that means the same or almost the same as another word, and that an **antonym** is a word that means the opposite of another word. These practices will deepen your understanding of words by getting you to think about other words with the same or opposite meanings.

To see what the synonym questions are like, do the example below. Write the letter of the word that most nearly means the same as the first word, *hard*.

___ **hard**

- | | |
|--------|--------------|
| A. new | B. difficult |
| C. far | D. bad |

Since *difficult* is another way of saying *hard*, the correct answer is *B*. Now, to see what the antonym questions are like, do the sample item below. Write in the letter of the word that most nearly means the opposite of *kind*.

___ **kind**

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| A. silly | B. busy |
| C. young | D. cruel |

The opposite of *kind* is *cruel*, so *D* is the correct answer.

Analogies

The last chapter in each unit contains an analogy practice, which is yet another way to deepen your understanding of words. An **analogy** is a similarity between two things that are otherwise different. Doing an analogy question is a two-step process. First you have to figure out the relationship in a pair of words. Those words are written like this:

LEAF : TREE

What is the relationship between the two words above? The answer can be stated like this: A leaf is a part of a tree.

Next, you must look for a similar relationship in a second pair of words. Here is how a complete analogy question looks:

LEAF : TREE ::

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| A. pond : river | B. foot : shoe |
| C. page : book | D. beach : sky |

(Continues on next page)

And here is how the question can be read:

___ LEAF is to TREE as

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. <i>pond</i> is to <i>river</i> . | B. <i>foot</i> is to <i>shoe</i> . |
| C. <i>page</i> is to <i>book</i> . | D. <i>beach</i> is to <i>sky</i> . |

To answer the question, you have to decide which of the four choices has a relationship similar to the first one. Check your answer by seeing if it fits in the same wording that you used to show the relationship between *leaf* and *tree*: A ___ is a part of a ___. Which answer would you choose?

The correct answer is *C*. Just as a *leaf* is a part of a *tree*, a *page* is a part of a *book*. On the other hand, a *pond* is not a part of a *river*, nor is a *foot* a part of a *shoe*, nor is a *beach* a part of the *sky*.

We can also state the complete analogy this way: *Leaf* is to *tree* as *page* is to *book*.

Here's another analogy question to try. Begin by figuring out the relationship between the first two words.

___ COACH : PLAYER ::

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. soldier : military | B. infant : baby |
| C. actor : famous | D. boss : worker |

Coach and *player* have different responsibilities in an organization: a coach gives orders to a player. So you need to look at the other four pairs to see which has a similar relationship. When you think you have found the answer, check to see that the two words you chose can be compared in the same way as *coach* and *player*: a ___ gives orders to a ___.

In this case, the correct answer is *D*; a *boss* gives orders to a *worker*. (In other words, *coach* is to *player* as *boss* is to *worker*.)

By now you can see that there are basically two steps to doing analogy items:

- 1) Find out the relationship between the first two words.
- 2) Find the answer that expresses the same type of relationship that the first two words have.

Now try one more analogy question on your own. Write the letter of the answer you choose in the space provided.

___ SWING : BAT ::

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| A. drive : car | B. run : broom |
| C. catch : bat | D. fly : butterfly |

If you chose answer *A*, you were right. *Swing* is what we do with a *bat*, and *drive* is what we do with a *car*.

- The **seventh part** of the chapter, on page 15, is titled _____. Here you are given two interesting passages where you can practice applying the words in context. The first two such passages, on page 15, are titled _____ and _____.

FINAL NOTES

- 1** You now know how to proceed with the words in each chapter. Make sure that you do each page very carefully. Remember that as you work through the activities, you are learning the words.

How many times will you use each word? If you look, you'll see that each chapter gives you the opportunity to work with each word at least seven times. Each time that you work with a word adds to the likelihood that the word will become part of your active vocabulary. You will have further opportunities to use the word in the crossword puzzle and tests that end each unit. The computer software that is available with the book gives you even more practice.

In addition, many of the words are used again in later chapters of the book. Such repeated words are marked with small circles, like this^o. For example, which words from Chapter 1 are repeated in the second Final Check passage on page 21 of Chapter 2? _____ and _____

Sometimes words related to the vocabulary words are used in the word-parts exercises. Those words are also marked with the small circle (^o). For example, in Chapter 2, *deliberate* is defined as "Done on purpose; carefully planned." In the Word Parts section of Chapter 3, you will see that *deliberately* means "in a deliberate way" (or, in other words, "in a purposeful way").

- 2** At the bottom of the last page of each chapter is a "Check Your Performance" box, where you can enter your score for four of the practices. Note that these scores should also be entered into the vocabulary performance chart located on the inside of the _____ cover.

To get your score, count the number of items that you answered correctly in each section. Then add a zero. For example, if you got seven questions right in Check 2, you would write "70%" in the blank.

- 3** The facts are in. A strong vocabulary is a source of power. Words can make you a better reader, writer, speaker, thinker, and learner. They can dramatically increase your chances of success in school and in your job.

But a strong vocabulary will not be yours without effort. Words must be learned in a program of regular study. If you commit yourself to learning words, and you work actively and honestly with the chapters in this book, you will not only enrich your vocabulary—you will enrich your life, as well.