

Aptitude Advanced

Vocabulary

eBook 01

Table of Contents

Chapter. No.	Topic	Page No.
1	Introduction to vocabulary	
	1.1 Introduction	
	1.2 Relevance in Entrance tests	
	1.3 Types of Questions asked in Vocabulary	1-7
	1.4 How to build strong Vocabulary	
2	Ways to learn Vocabulary	
	2.1 Learning from context	8-15
	2.2 Practice Exercise	
3	Prefix, Suffix and Roots	16
4	Visual Method	20

Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocabulary

1.1 Introduction

The vocabulary of a language is a stock of all the words and phrases that exist in that language. The English language has a very rich vocabulary of over a million words. Words are basic units of a language used to communicate meaning. Within this vocabulary of a language, there is a constant churning with new words coming in (podcast; phishing; internet; blog to cite a few from the era of the World Wide Web) and many words going out of circulation.

Each of us has three vocabularies:

- A speaking vocabulary: the words and expressions we use every day to communicate.
- A writing vocabulary: words that we use when we write a letter or a passage but do not feel comfortable using them in speech
- A listening vocabulary: words and expressions we have read and can understand but have never used in speaking or writing.

Outside this, of course, is the vast universe of words we are unfamiliar with. One of the best ways to increase your vocabulary is to make a conscious effort to get words into your listening/reading vocabulary and move them into your writing and speaking vocabularies. Words you can not only understand but also use.

1.2 Relevance in Entrance tests

Vocabulary questions are asked in various entrance tests. There are 3- 4 questions on vocabulary in most of the competitive exams. Having a good vocabulary is always advantageous in order to crack reading comprehension and other questions in the verbal ability section.

A good vocabulary is also essential for solving questions on sentence completion, analogies.

1.3 Types of Questions asked in Vocabulary

Type I: *Pick the word from the alternatives that are most inappropriate in the given context.*

Specious– A specious argument is not simply false, but an argument that has a ring of truth.

1. Deceitful

2. Fallacious

3. Credible

4. Deceptive

Sol: Option 2

Type II: *Find a word which is similar in meaning to the given word*

Tyranny

1. Tolerance

2. Supra-national government

3. Predominance

4. Oppressive government

Sol: Option 4

Type III: *Find a word which is opposite in meaning to the given word*

Elevated

1. Grounded

2. Raised

3. Excited

4. Lowly

Sol: Option 4

Type IV: *A description is followed by four words. Pick the option that best fits the description.*

One who plays a game for pleasure, and not as a profession

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| 1. Spotter | 2. Playful |
| 3. Amateur | 4. Professional |

Sol: Option 3

Type V: *Give the proper meaning of the idioms given below*

Bend over backwards

Sol: To make every effort to achieve something.

1.4 How to build strong Vocabulary

Building your vocabulary can be done in a cycle of four steps – the 4 R cycle –

- **Register:** acquire new words from your surroundings
- **Reinforce:** work to understand the nuances and usage of these words
- **Retain:** Practice over time to retain these words in your vocabulary

- **Recall:** cultivate the ability to recall these words on demand.

The first step is to register new words that are to acquire new words from your surroundings. This means you should develop a regular reading regimen. When you read, keep a pencil and pad ready. Note all unfamiliar words that you come across – in doing so write down the entire sentence in which the word appears.

Once new words have registered on your minds, you must reinforce your understanding of these words. Equip yourself with a good dictionary. We recommend the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary.

Go back to the sentences that you have noted down with unfamiliar words. Now make sentences of your own using these words so that the usage and meaning of these words become clearer to you.

Use the dictionary to understand the different contexts and usage patterns of these words.

Learning new words is easy. Educational psychologists recommended that the best retention tool is practice. Some pointers to be kept in mind:

- You must go through the words that you acquire every week and every month.
- Make fresh sentences using these words again and again.
- Select five or six words from the list and use them to write a short essay.
- With continuous effort, over a period, you will start using many of these words when speaking to someone.
- One way of doing this is to pick up any paragraph from a newspaper or magazine and substitute as many words as possible with appropriate replacements from your wordlist.
- You can also use word-games like scrabble to help in recalling words.

This is the stage when you can claim that your vocabulary has been enhanced.

Summary

Follow the 4-R cycle of Register, Reinforce, Retain and Recall to increase your vocabulary.

Invest in the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary. You can use an online dictionary too. Make use of the dictionary regularly.

Maintain a diary in which you can record all unfamiliar words that you come across. Always write down the entire sentence and not the word in isolation.

Finally, remember that continuous and sustained efforts even for 30 minutes a day will yield better results than sudden and sporadic bursts of enthusiasm.

Chapter 2: Ways to learn vocabulary

2.1 Learning from Context

In learning a new language, try to go back and remember how you picked up your mother tongue. Most of the learning was from the experience that you had of others speaking and an imitation of using those words in some contexts.

Now we go on to get an initial idea of what the word means. The best way is to use the context in which the word appears to “psych out” their meanings. Most questions in tests examine your understanding of the meaning of word in context. With practice, we can use the clues in the context to understand what a word means. There are four kinds of context clues:

1. **Definition clues:** Where the writer defines the word in the sentence. In the sentences that follow identify the definition clue and see how the definition helps you to understand the meaning of the given underlined word.

Definition clue exercise:

- a. Only he would have the chutzpah, the nerve, to ask her for a ride after insulting her.
- b. He had a wide repertoire, or collection, of musical works to draw on.
- c. After his release from prison, the man remained a pariah, an outcast in the community.
- d. He was rarely seen without his coterie, the group of friends he considered to be loyal to him.
- e. He was an aficionado, a devoted fan, of professional boxing.

2. **Contrast clues:** In which the words are presented as the opposite of the meanings conveyed by the surrounding text. In the sentences that follow, understand the meaning of the given underlined words using the context clues.

Contrast clues exercise:

- a. Though he had good social skills, he nonetheless was remembered for his embarrassing faux pas.

- b. He said the bag was genuine kid skin, but I knew that it was merely ersatz leather.
- c. Though her appearance was sophisticated, her manner showed her real naiveté.
- d. He regarded himself as a professional, but I thought he was more of a dilettante.
- e. Though he tried to dismiss his actions as harmless peccadilloes, I believed that more serious crimes were involved.

3. Example clues: In which the author offers an illustration of the meaning of the word. In the following sentences, the writer uses an example to illustrate word meaning. Identify the examples that help you figure out what the words mean.

Example clues exercise:

- a. The candidate tried to envision a utopian society in which all social problems would be solved.
- b. His outrageous opinion on the place of women in society suggested unbridled chauvinism.
- c. His experience with government corruption had made him cynical about the motives of others.

- d. Broadway is the Mecca of the musical world and draws performers from all over the world.
- e. His concern with his personal appearance a pre-occupation with his problems made him seem too narcissistic for her taste.

4. **Restatement clues:** In which the author clarifies the meaning with a further sentence. In the following sentences, identify the words that help you figure out what the words mean.

Restatement clues exercise:

- a. He was considered a real maverick in the Congress. He refused to follow his party's platform on nearly every issue.
- b. The writer always recalled her college mentor. She said that the professor's advice had always inspired her.
- c. He honed his forensic skills in college. He participated on the debating team and was a speaker at his commencement ceremony.
- d. Unfortunately, he became maudlin when he drank too much. He would weep and tell long sentimental stories of his unhappy childhood.
- e. A titanic invasion of leaf-cutter ants swept over the land. It was a gigantic infestation.

Examples:

Write down the meaning of the underlined word as used in the context of the sentence.

In 1770, the British Parliament passed a law condemning lipstick, stating that "women found guilty of seducing men into marriage by using cosmetic means could be tried for witchcraft."

Sol: The context is indicating that it is a negative word. The hint is 'witchcraft'. Seducing means to trick someone into doing something – especially in the context of women tricking men into marriage.

For each of the words below, a contextual usage is provided. Pick the word from the alternatives that is most inappropriate in the given context.

PARSIMONIOUS – The evidence was constructed from very parsimonious scraps of information.

1. Frugal
3. Thrifty

2. Penurious
4. Altruistic

Sol: Again note that they are looking at inappropriate. Parsimonious means stingy – which is also frugal (judicious use of money), penurious (in a way poor) and thrifty (related to thrift or savings). Altruistic means are selfless, not worried so much about oneself. So option 3 is correct.

2.2 Practice Exercise

Write down the meanings of the underlined words as used in the context of the sentence.

1. Launching a start-up, you need to get a lot done quickly. Every day is different. Everyone pitches in with everything. It's easy for the founding team to say, 'We're flexible. We all help out with everything!' But when it comes to making decisions - that flexibility can spell inefficiency and disaster.

2. I'm a product of a military dictatorship. Under a dictatorship, you cannot trust information or dispense it freely because of censorship. So Brazilians become

very flexible in the use of metaphors. They learn to communicate with double meanings.

3. Never take a person's dignity: it is worth everything to them, and nothing to you.

4. Respect is what we owe; love, what we give.

5. As with the butterfly, adversity is necessary to build character in people.

Answer Key:

Q No Explanation

1. To pitch in – is to participate
 2. Metaphor – is an implied comparison. For example, the road was a ribbon of moonlight. Here the road is indirectly compared. Note if we say that the road was like a ribbon of moonlight, then it becomes a simile.
 3. Dignity – self-respect.
 4. Owe – something that has to be repaid.
 5. Some context: When a young butterfly struggles to get out of its cocoon, the blood is forced into its wings – and then it can fly. If well-wisher cuts open the cocoon, she has doomed the butterfly forever. Hence the importance of a struggle – or adversity.
-

Chapter 3: Prefix, Suffix and Roots

The English language has its roots in several languages, including Greek, Latin, and older forms of English, German, and French. Learning to recognise common roots and affixes (prefixes and suffixes) will help you build your vocabulary and improve your ability to make educated guesses about unknown words you encounter in reading and test-taking situations. Good dictionaries will give you information about the origins of words. Whenever you look up a new word, make a point of reading this information. Some of the roots and affixes that appear in a large number of words. Learning these will enhance your ability to comprehend course readings and learn new terminology.

Examples – Prefixes

- **Anti** (against, opposite of) – antipathy, antidote, antisocial
- **Co** (along with) – coexistent, coworker, co-pilot
- **Dis** (not) – disassociate, disarm, discord.
- **Mal** (lacking in) – maladroitness, malnutrition, malapropism
- **Mis**(wrong) – misbehaviour, misogyny, mislead
- **Mono**(single) – monorail, monotonous, monopoly

- **Neo** (new) – neophyte, neoclassical, neotenic
- **Peri** (around) – perimeter, peripatetic, periscope
- **Poly** (many) – polyglot, polychromatic, polymorph
- **Post** (after) – posthumous, postmodern, postulate
- **Pre** (before) – predestined, premonition, precaution
- **Un** (not) – unassuming, uncouth, unbelievable

Working with Stems

In the same way, a lot of words are made up from the same stems. A few examples are as follow.

Examples – Stems

- **Anthrop** (mankind) – philanthropy, misanthropy, anthropology
- **Rog** (ask) – interrogation, abrogation, prerogative
- **Migra** (move) – migrate, immigrate, emigrate
- **Matri** (mother) – matrimony, maternity, matricide
- **Greg** (herd) – gregarious, aggregate, congregation
- **Nounce** (declare) – pronounce, denounce, enunciate
- **Loqui** (voice) – loquacious, elocution, ventriloquism
- **Veri** (true) – verify, veracity, verdict
- **Scope** (watch) – microscope, periscope, endoscope
- **Ambi** (two) – ambiguous, ambition, ambivalent
- **Lucid** (light) – elucidate, lustre, pellucid
- **Viv** (life) – vivacious, vitalise, survival
- **Habit** (have) – habiliments, habituate, inhabit

- **Hydro** (connected to water)–dehydrate, hydrant, hydrophobia
- **Acer** (bitter, sharp)–acerate, acerbate, acrid
- **Arch** (rule) – monarchy, anarchy, hierarchy
- **Tempo** (time)–contemporary, extempore, tempest
- **Jur** (law)–jury, conjure, adjure
- **Theo** (god)–theocracy, theology, atheist
- **Sophy** (wisdom)–sophism, sophisticated, philosophy
- **Phil** (like)– philanderer, philatelist, philharmonic
- **Scribe** (write) –scribe, circumscribe, inscription
- **Cept** (take, receive)–captious, captive, deception
- **Voc** (voice) –vocal, vocational, viva voce
- **Ridi**(laugh)–ridicule, derision, risible
- **Ambi** (around)–ambidextrous, ambient, ambiguity
- **Tract** (pull)–tractable, intractable, attract
- **Chrono** (time)–chronology, chronometer, synchronous
- **Capit** (head)–captain, capital, decapitate
- **Lic** (permit)–license, licentious, licit
- **Apo** (away from)– apocalypse, apocryphal, apology
- **Cognosc** (know)–agnostic, cognise, cognizant
- **Feder, Fide, Feal** (trust)–fealty, federacy, confide
- **Cred** (belief)–credit, discreditable, incredulous
- **Man, Manu** (hand)–manual, manacles, manicure

Example:**1. What is meant by *solitude*?**

Comes from the root – soli – meaning single. It is the act of being alone, probably using it to introspect and reflect.

2. What does the word *sociopath* mean?

The word *path* means disease. When the *path* is used as a suffix, it indicates something wrong. A *psychopath* has a diseased mind. A *sociopath* is someone who has a deep-seated hatred for society.

3. What is the meaning of *retrospect*?

The prefix retro means to go back. The suffix spect – (as in spectacle) means to see.

Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.

The suffix is spect – to see. The prefix persp is clear, or around. A perspective is a point of view – or a view from a particular angle.

4. What is the meaning of ridiculed?

The root of the word is *risi*– means that which can be laughed at. So to ridicule means literally to laugh at

Chapter 4: Visual Method

A picture paints a thousand words, using pictures is a great way of improving your English, especially if you are a visual learner. So, use pictures to learn vocabulary and grammar. Don't just look at pictures, think about them. Discuss them. See if you can describe what's happening in them. Visual vocabulary will help you to better understand vocabulary by explaining the meaning of the term in own words and creating visual images that represent the word. This method also increases your retention level.

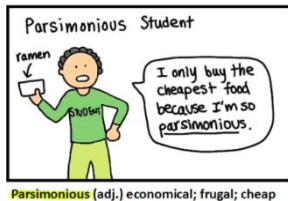
1. Gregarious



Meaning: instinctively or temperamentally seeking and enjoying the company of others

Synonyms: sociable, company-loving, companionable

2. Parsimonious



Meaning: an excessive unwilling to spend.
Synonyms: penurious, stingy, ungenerous

3. Jovial



Meaning: full of or showing high-spirited merriment
Synonyms :gay, jocund, jolly, merry, mirthful joyous
full of or characterised by joy.

4. Spite



Meaning: It implies a grudge, a desire to offend or hurt the feelings of someone by actions or words

Synonyms: cattiness, nastiness, spitefulness

5. Respite



Meaning: pause for relaxation

Synonyms: relief, rest, rest period

Always remember that the brain can capture, register, retain and recall visual images faster than words. So start creating your own pictures from your day to day activities. Or you can use the Pictionary available on the net or on hitbullseye.com.