

Introduction

English is not just another language; it is a language that can help you open a world of opportunities and enable you to communicate with more people and know more about the world more quickly and directly.

When you learn English, there are four language skills that you need for complete communication, and the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all interconnected. As is known to all, it takes time and energy to learn English well. And it can be a real challenge to learn English without an English-speaking environment. Therefore here comes a book that bears the problems of language learning in mind and intend to develop and improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

This book is suitable for college English learners or intermediate learners who would like to improve their English competency. Equipped with those language skills, you may know the dos and don'ts when doing the listening, speaking, reading and writing practices. And you have to understand the fact that without enough practices, the skills will have nowhere to play the roles. Hence, unremitting practices and essential skills should be combined to help you learn more effectively and efficiently. It is our genuine hope that after finishing this book, you will be able to use the skills provided in this book to improve your English learning ability.

May you enjoy your journey with this book!

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Vocabulary

Vocabulary is essential to language learning, because without sufficient vocabulary you cannot understand others or express your own ideas. Undoubtedly, mastering vocabulary is not just important, it is the basis for the development of all the other skills, thus improving your vocabulary has a direct and positive impact on your capacity to build up your language proficiency as a whole.

However, we all know that learning and enlarging vocabulary is a great headache for plenty of English learners. And the most common way for you to enlarge your vocabulary is to recite or memorize new words as many as possible. And you know how it feels when doing this. So have you ever wondered if there are better ways to learn and enlarge your vocabulary?

Generally, vocabulary is often learned through focused and conscious study by our Chinese students, and enlarging vocabulary through knowledge of word formation is encouraged. Actually another equally important way that should be employed is to build up your vocabulary through listening and reading, where you can use context clues to figure out the meanings. Read whatever you are interested in or read around any current topics. In the process of reading, pay close attention to how words are used in the context. The more you read, the more words you will be exposed to.

We hope that you will have a good experience with your vocabulary learning.

1

Unit

How to enlarge your vocabulary by association

This unit is about how to enlarge your vocabulary by association, and what you are going to learn includes the following parts:

- Different ways of association;
- How to use different ways of association to enlarge your vocabulary.

You'll serve your purpose of learning this unit if you know some effective ways of association and how to use them to enlarge your vocabulary.

Pre-reading Activity

Please get prepared to find information about the following points while reading the text in the While-reading Activities entitled "How to enlarge your vocabulary by association".

- What association is;
- How to use association of sound-meaning and form-meaning to enlarge your vocabulary;
- How to use association of contrast, synonyms, and antonyms to enlarge your vocabulary;
- How to use association of a subject/setting to enlarge your vocabulary;
- How to use association of changing/adding/deleting a letter (or letters) and reverse thinking to enlarge your vocabulary.

Bearing the above points in mind, now you can start your reading.

While-reading Activities

Read the following text and complete the exercises in the After-reading Activities.

How to enlarge your vocabulary by association

"Without phonetics and grammar, you can communicate a little information;

without vocabulary, you can do nothing.” From this sentence, you can know how important the role vocabulary plays in English learning. However, enlarging vocabulary in English learning is really a great headache for many English learners. It is not uncommon for English learners to try hard to remember long lists of new words, but more often than not, this turns out not to be an efficient way to improve vocabulary. Here the method of making use of association to enlarge vocabulary will be introduced to facilitate your English learning, and hope you may find it an effective way and benefit a lot from practicing this.

The definition of association

Association refers to the process of psychological activities or the process of bringing ideas or events together in memory or imagination of human beings, that is, reminding of the other related person or thing through a certain person or thing, or drawing forth related concept by a certain concept. By means of association, you can put words that are related to each other together in any way to help remember them better, through which your vocabulary could be accumulated and enlarged gradually.

Different ways of association

In the following parts, you will learn some ways to make association of the words. Please read them carefully.

1. Association of sound-meaning (音—义联想)

Just as its name implies, through association we can build up a kind of relationship between the sound and the meaning of a word, and it can be regarded as the most convenient and effective associative method.

Special sound

The sound/pronunciation of some parts of English words have some special meanings. Please look at the following examples.

FL—[fl] sounds like water flowing, and some words beginning with “fl” give an implied meaning of “to flow lightly”, such as flap (拍动), flash (闪光), flow (流动), flutter (飘动), fly (飞), fluent (流物的), fluid (流体的), etc.

GR—[gr] sounds like squeezing, and some words beginning with “gr” give an implied meaning of “to suffocate tensely or to be nervous”, such as groan (呻吟), grumble (抱怨), grunt (咕噜), etc.

M—[m] sounds like deep muffle, symbolizing something low-key and negative, and some words beginning with “m” give an implied meaning of “to feel sorrow and sigh”, such as moan (呻吟), mortal (终有一死的), mortality (死亡率), mourn (哀悼), etc.

S—[s] sounds like fizz, making you associate it with the similar sound of many things. For example, “s” can be associated with a snake and its activities, such as snake (蛇), serpent (蛇) and hiss (发出丝丝声), etc.

WH—[wh] sounds like blowing out air, and some words beginning with “wh” give an implied meaning of “pumping of air”, such as whip (鞭打), whistle (吹口哨) and wheeze (发出呼哧声), etc.

Partial/Homophonic tone (谐音)

Some Chinese words are derived from words in English or other foreign languages, thus the association of the sound/pronunciation of these exotic words can help us remember words through partial/homophonic tone such as typhoon (台风), bowling (保龄球运动) and sofa (沙发). Please look at more examples in the following.

clone (克隆), gene (基因), tank (坦克), lemon (柠檬), microphone (麦克风), romantic (罗曼蒂克), golf (高尔夫), jazz (爵士乐), sandwich (三明治), Internet (因特网), Olympic (奥林匹克), whiskey (威士忌), chocolate (巧克力), cartoon (卡通), AIDS (艾滋病), café (咖啡馆), cigar (雪茄), tofu (豆腐), amen (阿门), nylon (尼龙), totem (图腾), Coca-Cola (可口可乐), salad (色拉), radar (雷达), coffee (咖啡), caffeine (咖啡因), nicotine (尼古丁), morphine (吗啡), cocaine (可卡因), heroin (海洛因), vitamin (维他命), ballet (芭蕾), sundae (圣代冰激凌), marathon (马拉松), pizza (比萨饼), etc.

Foley (拟音)

The sound/pronunciation of some words can be associated with Chinese pronunciation—foley. However, you’d better handle the relationship between the standardized pronunciation of the English words and its Chinese foley, making sure that you know the difference between them.

Example 1 fantasy /¹fæntəsi/ *n.* [C,U] a pleasant situation that one enjoys thinking about, but which is unlikely to happen 幻想, 想象

The pronunciation of “fantasy” may remind you of a kind of soft drink “Fanta (芬达)”, or a computer game “Final Fantasy (最终幻想)”, or an album named *Fantasy* (范特西) issued by Jay Chou, a famous Chinese singer.

Example 2 ambulance /¹æmbjələns/ *n.* [C] a vehicle that takes people to hospitals
救护车

It sounds like “俺不能死” in Chinese, which may remind you of the function of an ambulance. When you have that association, its Chinese meaning “救护车” will directly come into your mind.

Example 3 ambition /æm'biʃən/ *n.* a strong desire to achieve something 抱负, 雄心

It sounds like “俺必胜” in Chinese, which is closely related to its Chinese meaning, thus you can easily associate it with its Chinese meaning “抱负, 雄心”.

Here are more examples of fokey:

pest (害虫): It sounds like “拍死它” in Chinese.

abolish (废除): It sounds like “啊暴力(须废除)” in Chinese.

boff (狂笑): It sounds like “暴富(而狂笑)” in Chinese.

cackle (咯咯笑): It sounds like “开口儿(咯咯笑)” in Chinese.

2. Association of form-meaning (形一义联想)

Association of form-meaning refers to the act of associating the form of a particular part of a word with the meaning of that word to facilitate remembering. In the following parts, examples will be given to show how to associate the forms with the meanings.

Pictographic (象形) symbols

The pictographic symbols can build up a kind of association of the form of a particular part of a word with the meaning of that word.

“W” seems like the waves of water, such as water, wash, wave, swim, etc.

“C/G” seems like a cross-section of a mouth cavity, such as call, cough, cry, gape (瞠目结舌), grumble, etc.

“ee” seems like the two eyes, such as see, meet, peep (窥视), weep, etc.

Visualized (形象化) vocabulary

We may call a word that resembles another in spelling or pronunciation a “word resembler”. Among all the resemblers of English words, there can be one that also has some sort of semantic association with the word it resembles. When catching sight of them, we may visualize the words by creating mental pictures or even moving pictures, associating them with the visualized meanings. The vivid and concrete pictures in your mind would definitely help you remember the words better. Please look at the following examples.

wind—window: If we open the window, the wind will come in; and if we close the window, the wind won't come in.

familiar—family: The word “familiar” can be associated with the word “family”, in that we are all familiar with our family members.

3. Association of contrast (对比联想)

Many English words are very similar in spelling, and you can easily find that there is only one or two letters different at the beginning, or in the middle or at the end of some words. Through contrast you can keep more words in your mind at once. That is to say, you can contrast the difference of the words with similar spellings, then remember and review them together to consolidate your memory of the words. For example, let's take a look at this group of words: attitude (态度); altitude (海拔); aptitude (才能). With only the second letter of each word different, these three words have all the other letters being the same. If you can tell the little difference in spelling, and make a contrast while learning these words, you won't easily get yourself confused and will learn better. Please look at the following examples.

efficient (效率高的)—sufficient (充足的)—deficient (缺乏的)

attribute (归因于)—contribute (贡献)—distribute (分布)

friction (摩擦)—fiction (小说)—fraction (分数)

adapt (适应)—adopt (采纳)

detect (发现)—defect (缺点)

conversation (对话)—conservation (保存)

status (地位)—statue (雕塑)

desert (沙漠)—dessert (甜点)

petrol (石油)—patrol (巡逻)

stationary (静止的)—stationery (文具)

window (窗户)—widow (寡妇)

rapid (迅速的)—vapid (无趣的)

patient (耐心的)—patent (专利)

4. Association of synonyms (同义词联想)

In English vocabulary, each word has a number of synonyms. Memorizing words

by using this method of similar semantic association can not only expand vocabulary effectively, but also help discriminate the words with similar meaning.

For example, when using the word “fantastic (极好的)”, you can look up some other words in the dictionary with the similar meaning, such as “amazing”, “great”, “sensational (轰动的, 非常好的)”, “excellent”, “incredible”, “super”, “fabulous (极好的)”, “marvelous (了不起的)”, “terrific (极好的)”, “outstanding”, “wonderful” and “awesome”. Remembering as many synonyms as possible will not only enlarge your vocabulary, but also make your language diverse and vivid.

When catching sight of “fat”, you can conceive and memorize the following words: plump (丰满的), weighty, burly (壮实的), podgy (肥胖的) and swollen.

When meeting the word “factory”, you could associate it with words like “mill”, “plant”, “works (工厂)”, “studio (工作室)” and “workshop”.

And you can express the meaning of the word “see” by using “watch”, “look”, “glance”, “stare”, “glare”, “gaze”, and “peep (偷看)”.

There are also a lot of synonyms of the word “speak”, though they may refer to different ways of speaking, such as “say”, “talk”, “tell”, “shout”, “complain”, “blame”, “scold”, “criticize”, “murmur (低语)”, “whisper”, “gossip (闲聊)”, “declare”, “pronounce”, “snarl (咆哮)”, and “snort (发哼声)”.

Try to learn and use new words through association of synonyms, and that will really help enlarge your vocabulary. But you have to know that some of the synonyms, though having quite similar meaning, cannot be used to replace each other in certain circumstances, because words have their own registers. By looking up the synonyms in the English-English dictionaries and paying attention to the contexts in which the words are used, you will gradually know the difference of them. And remember, the more you use the synonyms, the better you’ll understand and remember them.

5. Association of antonyms (反义词联想)

Antonyms are words that are opposite in meaning. They are complementary and interdependent. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions all have antonyms. Similar to synonyms, through association of antonyms, your vocabulary can be enlarged as well. Please look at the following examples.

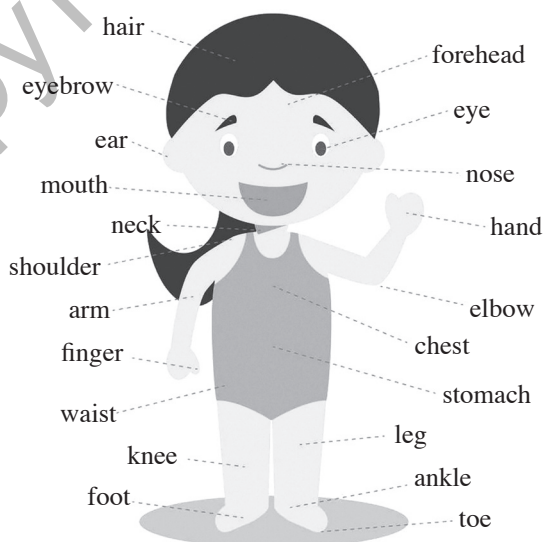
maximum (最大量)—minimum (最小量)	combine (使结合)—separate (使分开)
ascend (上升)—descend (下降)	cruel (残忍的)—kind (仁慈的)

single (单身的)—married (已婚的)	fragile (易碎的)—strong (牢固的)
frequently (经常地)—hardly (几乎不)	absence (缺席)—presence (出席)
up (上)—down (下)	near (近)—far (远)
punish (惩罚)—reward (奖励)	innocent (无辜的)—guilty (有罪的)
permanent (永久的)—temporary (暂时的)	establish (建立)—abolish (废除)
freeze (冰冻)—melt (融化)	adopt (采纳)—reject (拒绝)
neat/tidy (整洁的)—messy (凌乱的)	

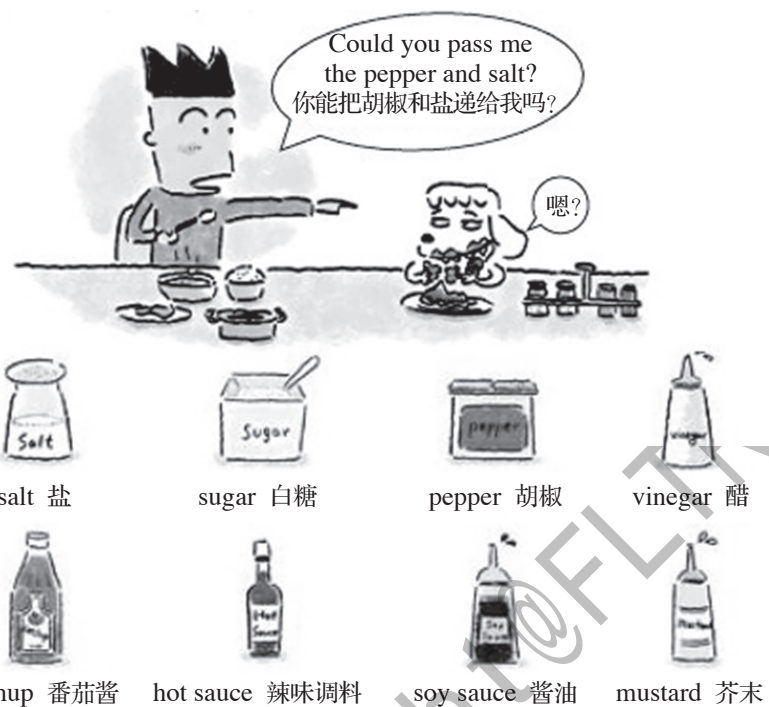
6. Association of a subject/setting (主题/场景联想)

Association of a subject/setting refers to creating a list of vocabulary themes or contexts. Once you've mapped out a few vocabulary subjects or settings, you'll discover yourself thinking in vocabulary groups. When you see a "cup", your mind will quickly associate this word with knife, fork, plate, dish, etc. Associating words of the same subject or setting can improve efficiency of enlarging your vocabulary. By imagining words of a subject or setting you can build up vivid pictures in your mind to get the concrete understanding of the words. Please look at the following pictures and use your imagination to add more words relating to the pictures.

e.g. A subject of body



e.g. A setting of cooking



7. Association of changing/adding/deleting a letter (or letters) (变换/添加/删节字母联想)

Association of changing letters

We can enlarge our vocabulary through association of changing a letter (or letters) in words, that is, changing a letter or letters of one word into another or other letters to make it a new word. Please look at the following examples.

cast (投射; 演员阵容) — fast (快的)

dust (灰尘) — just (刚刚)

wander (漫步) — wonder (奇迹)

band (带子) — bend (弯曲) — bund (堤岸)

air (空气) — aim (目标) — aid (帮助)

bit (一点) — bat (球拍; 蝙蝠) — bet (打赌)

obtain (得到) — contain (包括) — maintain (维持; 主张) — sustain (支撑) — retain (保持)

rare (稀有) — fare (票价) — aware (意识到的) — share (分享) — glare (怒视) — stare (凝视)

Association of adding/deleting a letter (or letters)

We can also enlarge our vocabulary through association of adding/deleting a letter (or letters). Adding/deleting a letter (or letters) in an arbitrary place of one word may creat a new word. Please look at the following examples.

day (白天)—diary (日记)

oil (油)—boil (沸腾)

come (来)—comet (彗星)

swan (天鹅)—swain (情郎)

class (班级)—lass (少女)—ass (傻瓜)

orange (橙色)—orang (猩猩)

barn (谷仓)—bar (酒吧)—ba (BA: 文学学士Bachelor of Arts的缩写)

springe (圈套)—spring (春天)

8. Association of reverse thinking (逆向思维联想)

Sometimes, association of reverse thinking can be used to memorize words. If you change the normal order of a word spelling (from left to right) into a reversed order(from right to left), you may get a new word. Please look at the following examples.

mood (心情)—doom (注定)

but (但是)—tub (浴缸)

pan (平底锅)—nap (小睡)

not (不)—ton (吨)

smart (机灵的)—trams (电车)

raw (生的)—war (战争)

part (部分)—trap (陷阱)

saw (锯)—was (是)

liar (说谎者)—rail (轨道)

tap (水龙头)—pat (轻拍)

loop (环, 圈)—pool (水池)

ten (十)—net (网)

are (是)—era (时代)

desserts (甜食)—stressed (有压力的)

After-reading Activities

I. Questions for discussion

Work in pairs to discuss the following questions based on what you have read above.

1. What is association of sound-meaning and form-meaning?

2. What is association of synonyms and antonyms?
3. How do you use association of a subject/setting to enlarge your vocabulary?
4. How do you use association of reverse thinking to enlarge your vocabulary?
5. Which kind of association do you think is most useful for you to enlarge your vocabulary and why?

II. Questions for group discussion

Work in groups to discuss the following questions and share your answers with your group members.

1. Try to find a new word through association of changing a letter (or letters) in the given words and then give the Chinese meaning of the new words.

gift	beast	carrot	catch
pull	pour	toast	

2. Try to find a new word through association of adding a letter (or letters) in the given words and then give the Chinese meaning of the new words.

motion	article	cute	warm
hell	live	bull	

3. Try to find a new word through association of deleting a letter (or letters) in the given words and then give the Chinese meaning of the new words.

feel	swing	cute	taxi
snail	space	fleet	