

How tutors can help pupils develop vocabulary skills

1. An important focus of the English curriculum is on building vocabulary.
2. At whatever level you are helping pupils with vocabulary ask yourself: "When and where in the real world will this vocabulary come in useful?" e.g.: numbers can be linked to giving a telephone number, clothes linked to shopping; food linked to recipes etc. In this way you will contextualize what they need to learn and help them remember.
3. In upper grades, use transliteration to help your pupils learn new vocabulary or pronounce difficult words correctly. e.g.: 'government' [גה-וה-מינט]
4. Mention that there are English words used in Hebrew which have meanings different from their meanings in English. Examples of some of these are: canyon / tramp.

Suggested session activities

1. A teacher may give you a random list of words and ask you to help your pupil learn these. They are usually key words that have appeared in a course book and often pupils will be asked to translate these from Hebrew into correctly spelled English in a test. Try to make them more 'accessible' to your pupil with some / all of the following:
 - a. Read through the words and eliminate the words the pupil already knows. (This reduces the stress of a long list)
 - b. Group the remaining words in sets of 5 or 6 according to some logical order (all nouns together etc.)

Tip: Usually there are about 5 words which don't lend themselves to any grouping or which are particularly difficult. Leave them to the end or leave them out!
 - c. Ask your pupil to make up and say aloud a sentence or short story using this set of words.

Tip: If your pupil is too weak to do this, make them up yourself. Where possible, make the sentence 'explain the meaning of the word/s. eg: **a pet**: "Jill has a dog and Rick has cat. The name of Jill's **pet** is Fluffy, and the name of Rick's **pet** is Snowy."
 - d. Make a **Crossword Puzzle** using the words. See: <https://crosswordlabs.com>. It's a super easy site to use.

Tip: Save your crossword to a Word document.
 - e. Make a **Word Search Puzzle**. See: <https://tools.atozteacherstuff.com/word-search-maker/wordsearch.php>

Tip: Click on options: Lower case letters only. Comic Sans font. Direction forward only. No diagonal words
2. A teacher may ask you to help your pupil learn words around a given topic: days of the week; numbers; colors etc.

Tip: Use recommended songs from ETP YouTube list to introduce these and check out the worksheets in Part B of "Let's Catch Up".
3. Use **realia** for vocabulary building activities.
 - a. For vocabulary related to fruit and vegetables, bring examples of these with you to class.
 - b. For vocabulary related to learning days of the week, bring the English TV guide from a newspaper where they could find the names of the programs they watch to make your lesson meaningful and memorable.

Tip: Ask pupils to choose / bring their own items of realia. Expand all of the above to include #4 mentioned below.
4. Introduce the use of negatives and questions at every opportunity with whatever vocabulary you are working with.. e.g., Make 'funny' statements which pupils need to contradict by using both types of negative sentences e.g.:
 - **T:** This is **a cup**. **P:** No, it isn't. It's **a plate**. **T:** Today is **Wednesday**. **P:** No, it isn't. Today is **Thursday**.
 - **T:** The book is **on the floor**. **P:** No, it isn't. The book is **on the desk**.
 - **T:** This is a **green** pen. **P:** No, it isn't. It's a **red** pen.
 - **T:** Jon likes **spaghetti**. **P:** No, he doesn't like spaghetti. He likes **pizza**.

Tip: **Pupil plays 'teacher'** Reverse roles so they 'play' teacher. A very good activity to use with more than one pupil.
5. Help pupils build word awareness. Ask: "**Does the word sound like a word you know?**"
 - Ask for word opposites/ synonyms. (If pupils are weak give them these.)
 - Ask them to find the word that doesn't fit in a group of 4-5 words. (Odd Man Out)

Tip: Check for out-of-the-box choices e.g.: "**What's the Odd Man Out : shoe boot sock sandal?**"
You probably intended **sock** to be OMO.
But if a pupil chooses **sandal**, because all the other words have 4 letters, or **boot** because all the other words begin with the letter 's', those are acceptable answers!
6. Play word games e.g.: Memory games or Bingo / I spy with my little eye / Happy Families/ Word Maps etc.

How to help pupils learn words from a random vocabulary list

There will be times you will be asked to help pupils learn vocabulary. Often these are randomized lists as a summary of the words 'learned' in a unit in a course book.

Note:

Many of their tests require them to give the English word for a list of Hebrew words or vice versa. Even if you don't know Hebrew, ask them to complete the Hebrew list of words in Column 3 below. (The translations will appear in their coursebooks.)

This vocabulary list was copied from a course book used in Junior High School. However, almost all coursebooks, even in elementary school, have similar lists.

Vocabulary I Now Know				
• above	• close	• honest	• object	• start
• action	• culture	• hurt	• place	• suddenly
• better	• disappear	• idea	• protection	• through
• catch	• early	• keep	• reason	• tradition
• cause	• effect	• kind	• result	• web
• center	• evil	• luck	• ribbon	
• chief	• garlic	• lucky	• so	
• choose	• hole	• mountain	• spider	

Note:

- There is no 'rationale behind the list of words. They are listed alphabetically with no obvious connection between them.
- The list is problematic since the words are not contextualized. e.g.: is **cause** a verb or a noun?

Suggested activities to learn these words

- Tell pupils to delete the words they know from the list.
- Divide the list into manageable blocks of 5 – 6 words which have some connection and write them in a table as suggested below.

Note: Those selected in the example are all verbs. Choose other categories to make it easier to learn these words.

Tip: Share with your pupils the following strategy to help them learn lists of vocabulary.

- Fold a sheet of paper into 4 columns with headings.
- Copy the English words in Column 2.
- Copy Hebrew words in Column 3.
- Tuck Col. 3 under Col. 2. Then in Col. 4, write from memory, the Hebrew words for the English words in Col 2.
- Open the page to compare the words you wrote in Col.4 with those in Col 3. Mark the ones that were wrong.
- Tuck Column 2 under Column 3 and in column 1, write from memory, the English words for the Hebrew translation.
- Repeat step e. (This time you compare the words you wrote in Col.1 with those you copied in Col.2.) .
- Repeat steps a. - g. till you know all the words!!

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	English word	Hebrew Translation	
	catch	לתפוס	
	cause	לגרום	
	choose	לבחור	
	close	לסגור	
	disappear	להיעלם	

Note:

Step **d**. comes before step **f**. because when learning a 2nd language, we most usually 'know' more words than we can produce.

(So, if you were learning Hebrew, you would use this system by first tucking Col.2 under Col. 3 and then Col 3 under Col. 2!)

- Write sentences / stories with groups of 5 words.
- Use any of the activities on the previous page to review the words as often as possible.