HOW TO TEACH VOCABULARY

MEMORY

short-term store
- limited number of items
- a few seconds
- example
  - telephone number before dialling
  - repeat a word that you've just heard

long-term memory
- filing system
- **has an enormous capacity**
- it occupies a continuum from 'the quickly forgotten' to 'the never forgotten'

working memory
- work bench — information is
  - first placed
  - studied
  - moved about
  - before being filed away for later retrieval
- limited capacity
- about twenty seconds
- **articulatory loop**
  - a loop of audio tape going round and round
  - we can run it by as many times as we need in order to examine it
  - Holding capacity
    - factor in the ability to learn languages
    - the longer the loop, the better the learner
    - it can hold fewer L2 words than L1 words
- *mental sketch pad*
  - images can be placed and scanned
    - to elicit words from long-term memory into working memory

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
The attentional control system.
Modality free. Limited capacity.

PHONOLOGICAL LOOP

ARTICULATORY CONTROL SYSTEM
Verbal rehearsal system
Time-based capacity
'The inner voice'

PHONOLOGICAL STORE
Speech-based storage system
Decay rate: 2 seconds
'The inner ear'

VISUOSPATIAL SKETCHPAD
Spatial and visual information-storage system
Limited capacity
'The inner eye'

Figure 2.2 The working memory model

Learning *is* remembering.

FACTORS FOR LONG TERM STORAGE

repetition
- simply repeating an item seems to have little long-term effect
- organise the material at the same time
- effective — repetition of encounters with a word

retrieval
- **retrieval practice effect**
- activity — use the new word in written sentences

spacing
- **distributed practice**
- distribute memory work across a period of time
- example
  - present the first two or three items
  - then go back and test these
  - present some more
  - then backtrack again
- newly presented vocabulary should be reviewed in the next lesson

pacing
- different learning styles
- give the opportunity to pace their own rehearsal activities
- example — organise reviewing their vocabulary - silently and individually

use
- put words to use
- the best way of ensuring long-term memory
- *Use it or lose it.*

cognitive depth
- The more decisions the learner makes about a word
- the better the word is remembered
- example
  - find a rhyme word
  - deeper — noun, adjective, verb?
  - deeper — use it to complete a sentence

affective depth
- affective judgements
  - *Do I like the sound and look of the word?*
  - *Do I like the thing that the word represents*
  - *Does the word evoke any pleasant or unpleasant associations?*

attention / arousal
- a very high degree of attention
- words that trigger a strong emotional response — very effective

motivation
- key to memory
- spend more time on rehearsal

mnemonics
- The best kinds of mnemonics are often visual
- key word technique

imaging
- most effective
- visualising a mental picture to go with a new word
- self-generated rather than acquired 'second-hand'

personal organising
- personalised judgement
- read sentence aloud — examples
- make up your own sentence — better

How to teach vocabulary

'A word is a microcosm of human consciousness.' (Vygotsky)

A word is a complex phenomenon

All languages have words. Language emerges first as words, both historically, and in terms of the way each of us learned our first and any subsequent languages. The coining of new words never stops. Nor does the acquisition of words. Even, in our first language we are continually learning new words, and learning new meanings for old words. Take, for example, this description of a wine, where familiar words are being used and adapted to express very specialised meanings:
A deep rich red in colour. Lush and soft aroma with plums and blackberries, the oak is plentiful and adds vanilla to the mix, attractive black pepper undercurrents. The mouthfeel is plush and comfortable like an old pair of slippers, boysenberry and spicy plum fruit flavours with liquorice and well seasoned oak. The generous finish ends with fine grained tannins and a grippy earthy aftertaste.
(from web page at www.ewinexchange.com.au)

Here is a sentence that, at first glance, consists of twenty of words:

> I like looking for bits and pieces like old second-hand record players and doing them up to look like new.

Of course, there are not twenty *different* words in that sentence. At least two of those twenty words are repeated: *and* is repeated once, *like* three times: *I **like** looking for bits and pieces **like** ... look **like** new.* On the other hand, the first *like* is a verb, and the other two are prepositions - so is this really a case of the same word being repeated? And then there's *looking* and *look:* are these two different words? Or two different **forms** of the same word? Then there's *second-hand:* two words joined to make one? Probably- the hyphen suggests we treat *second-hand* differently from, say, *I've got a second hand.* But what about *record player?* Two words but one concept, surely?
It gets worse. What about *bits and pieces?* Isn't this a self-contained unit? After all, we don't *say pieces and bits.* Or *things and pieces.* And *looking for:* my dictionary has an entry for *look,* another for *look for,* and yet another for *look after.* Three different meanings - three different words? And, finally, ***doing** them **up:*** although *doing* and *up* are separated by another word, they seem to be so closely linked as to form a word-like unit *(do up)* with a single meaning:renovate. One word or two?

A word is a more complex phenomenon than at first it might appear.
- words have different functions, some carrying mainly grammatical meaning, while others bear a greater informational load
- the same word can have a variety of forms
- words can be added to, or combined, to form new words
- words can group together to form units that behave as if they were single words
- many words commonly co-occur with other words
- words may look and/or sound the same but have quite different meanings
- one word may have a variety of overlapping meanings
- different words may share similar meanings, or may have opposite meanings
- words can have the same or similar meanings but be used in different situations or for different effects

How words are learned

> *Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.'*

'If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words!'

What does it mean to "know" a word?
Knowing a word means:
- having the ability to recognise it in its spoken and written forms.
- knowing its different meanings.
- knowing its part of speech [eg. a noun, a verb]
- being able to pronounce it properly
- being able to use it correctly within a sentence in an appropriate grammatical form
- for technical words, recognizing it in context
- being able to recognise different types of English e.g boot/trunk, lift/elevator [British/American].
  -
Part of knowing the meaning of a word is knowing its gammatical function.

What makes you swerve your car?
The limo surges forward and starts to swerve wildly over the road.
The bus driver swerved to avoid hitting the cyclists
*She is one of those rare politicians whom one can trust not to swerve **from** policy and principle.*
Hitting the brakes would make the bikes swerve more.
The driver made no attempt to swerve out of their path
Nothing could swerve him
Today, Savannah has had a black mayor, you can live anywhere you can afford, and racial relations in this visual candy store of a city are mostly upbeat. Last and surprisingly, for such a small town you can still get your swerve on with the nightlife.
He managed to pass with a perfect body swerve.
*(*pretending to move in one direction, then quickly moving in the opposite direction to fake a defender into going the wrong way; also, this move while dribbling the ball in soccer)
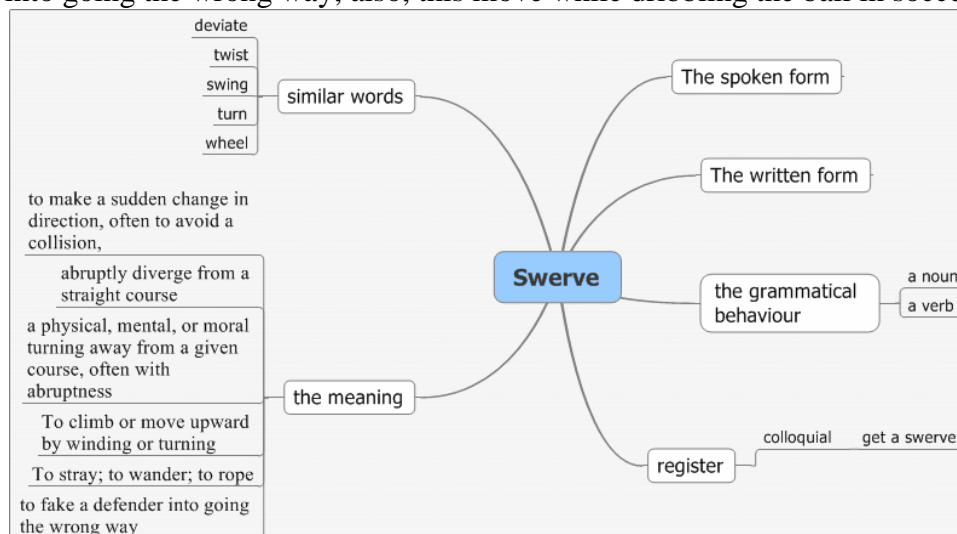
How is the word knowledge organized?

The above mind-map for *"swerve" suggests* that the way words are stored in the mind resembles less a dictionary than a kind of network or web. This is an apt image: the mind seems to store words neither randomly or in the form of a list, but in a highly organised and interconnected fashion — in what is often called the **mental lexicon.**

Our 'mental lexicon' is highly organised and efficient.

One way in which researchers investigate how the mental lexicon is organised is by comparing the speed at which people are able to recall items. It is generally accepted that if certain types of prompts can be answered more quickly than others, then this will reflect the lexical system. Freedman and Loftus (1971) asked testees to perform two different types of tasks: e.g.

1 Name a fruit that begins with a p.

2 Name a word beginning with p that is a fruit.

Testees were able to answer the first type of question more quickly than the second. This seems to indicate that 'fruits beginning with p' are categorised under the 'fruit' heading rather than under a 'words beginning with p' heading. Furthermore, experimenters discovered in subsequent tests that once testees had access to the "fruit" category, they were able to find other fruits more quickly. This seems to provide further **evidence that semantically related items are 'stored together'**. Most researchers appear to agree that items are arranged in a series of associative networks. All items are organised in one large 'master file', and that there are a variety of 'peripheral access files' which contain information about spelling, phonology, syntax and meaning. Entries in the master file are also held to be cross-referenced in terms of meaning relatedness.

Some very interesting experiments carried out by Brown and Mc Neil Principles in learning and teaching vocabulary (1966) exemplify this point forcefully and give us clues about lexical organisation. The experimenters gave testees definitions of low frequency vocabulary items and asked them to name the item. One definition was, 'A navigational instrument used in measuring angular distances, especially the altitude of the sun, moon and stars at sea'. Some testees were able to supply the correct answer (which was 'sextant'), but the researchers were more interested in the testees who had the answer 'on the tip of their tongues'. Some gave the answer 'compass', which seemed to indicate that they had accessed the right semantic field but found the wrong item. Others had a very clear idea of the "shape" of the item, and were often able to say how many syllables it had, what the first letter was, etc**. It seems, then, that these systems are interrelated; at a very basic level, there appears to be a phonological system, a system of meaning relations and a spelling system.**

We can think of the mental lexicon, therefore, as an overlapping system in which words are stored as 'double entries' - one entry containing information about meaning and the other about form. These individual word entries are then linked to words that share similar characteristics, whether of meaning or of form - or both.. The number of connections is enormous. Finding a word is like following a path through the network, or better, following several paths at once. For, in order to economise on processing time, several pathways will be activated simultaneously, fanning out across the network in a process called 'spreading activation.

Knowing a word, then, is the sum total of all these connections — semantic, syntactic, phonological, orthographic, morphological, cognitive, cultural and autobiographical. It is unlikely, therefore, that any two speakers will 'know' a word in exactly the same way.

Dual Coding Theory (A. Paivio)
Overview:

The dual coding theory proposed by Paivio attempts **to give equal weight to verbal and non-verbal processing.** Paivio (1986) states: "Human cognition is unique in that it has become specialized for dealing simultaneously with language and with nonverbal objects and events. Moreover, the language system is peculiar in that it deals directly with linguistic input and output (in the form of speech or writing) while at the same time serving a symbolic function with respect to nonverbal objects, events, and behaviors. Any representational theory must accommodate this dual functionality."
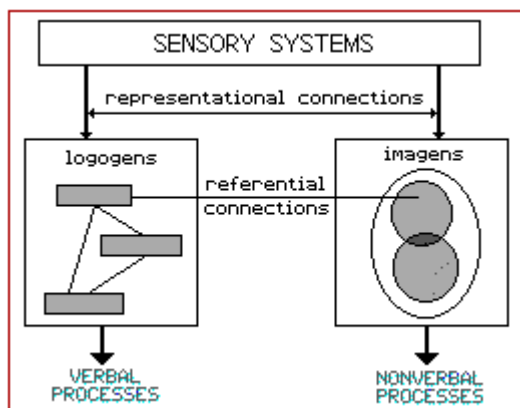
The theory assumes that there are **two cognitive subsystems**, one specialized for the representation and processing of nonverbal objects/events (i.e., imagery), and the other specialized for dealing with language.
Paivio also postulates **two different types of representational units**:
"imagens" for mental images and **"logogens" for verbal entities** which he describes as being similar to "chunks" Logogens are organized in terms of associations and hierarchies while imagens are organized in terms of part-whole relationships.

Experiment:
- Give students a long list of pictures or words to remember.
- Later test memory with either a recall or recognition test.
- Students recall more pictures than words
- The Imagen system has superior memory
- Representing ideas in both systems is superior to representing ideas in only one system.
- Paivio claimed that picture memory was superior because whenever we see a picture we also represent that picture verbally.
- However when we see a word we do not always form a mental image of the word.

How are words remembered?

The learner needs not only to learn a lot of words, but to remember them. In fact, **learning *is* remembering**. Unlike the learning of grammar, which is essentially a rule-based system, vocabulary knowledge is largely a question of accumulating individual items.
Researchers into the workings of memory customarily distinguish between the following systems: the **short-term store, working memory,** and **long-term memory.**
The **short-term store** (STS) is the brain's capacity to hold a limited number of items of information for periods of time up to a few seconds. It is the kind of memory that is involved in holding in your head a telephone number for as long as it takes to be able to dial it. Or to repeat a word that you've just heard the teacher modelling. But successful vocabulary learning clearly involves more than simply holding words in your mind for a few seconds.

Focussing on words long enough to perform operations on them is the function of **working memory.** Many cognitive tasks such as reasoning, learning and understanding depend on working memory. It can be thought of as a kind of work bench, where information is first placed, studied and moved about before being filed away for later retrieval. The information that is being manipulated can come from external sources via the senses, or it can be 'downloaded' from the long-term memory -or both. Material remains in working memory for about twenty seconds. This capacity is made possible by the existence of the **articulatory loop,** a process of subvocal repetition, a bit like a loop of audio tape going round and round. It enables the short-term store to be kept refreshed. Having just heard a new word, for example, we can run it by as many times as we need in order to examine it— assuming that not too many other new words are competing for space on the loop. The holding capacity of the articulatory loop seems to be a determining factor in the ability to learn languages: the longer the loop, the better the learner. Or, to put it another way, the ability to hold a phonological representation of a word in working memory is a good predictor of language learning aptitude. Likewise, any interference in the processes of subvocal repetition - e.g. distracting background talk - is likely to disrupt the functioning of the loop and impair learning. Another significant feature of the articulatory loop is that it can hold fewer L2 words than Ll words. This has a bearing on the length of chunk a learner can process at any one time.

Also linked to working memory is a kind of *mental sketch pad. Here* images - such as visual **mnemonics** (or memory prompts) - can be placed and scanned in order to elicit words from long-term memory into working memory.

Long-term memory can be thought of as a kind of filing system. Unlike working memory, which has a limited capacity and no permanent content, **long-term memory has an enormous capacity**, and its contents are durable over time. However, the fact that learners can retain new vocabulary items the length of a lesson (i.e. beyond the few seconds' duration of the short-term store) but have forgotten them by the next lesson suggests that long-term memory is not always as long-term as we would wish. Rather, it occupies a continuum from 'the quickly forgotten' to 'the never forgotten'. The great challenge for language learners is to transform material from the quickly forgotten to the never forgotten. Research into memory suggests that, in order to ensure that material moves into permanent long-term memory, a number of **principles** need to be observed.
Here is a brief summary of some of the research findings that are relevant to the subject of word learning:

- **Repetition:**
The time-honoured way of 'memorising' new material is through repeated rehearsal of the material while it is still in working memory - i.e. letting the articulatory loop just run and run. However, simply repeating an item (the basis **of rote learning)** seems to have little long-term effect unless some attempt is made to organise the material at the same time. But one kind of repetition that *is* important is repetition of encounters with a word. It has been estimated that, when reading, words stand a good chance of being remembered if they have been met at least seven times over spaced intervals.

- **Retrieval:**
Another kind of repetition that is crucial is what is called the **retrieval practice effect.** This means, simply, that the act of retrieving a word from memory makes it more likely that the learner will be able to recall it again later. Activities which require retrieval, such as using the new word in written sentences, 'oil the path' for future recall.

- **Spacing:**

It is better to distribute memory work across a period of time than to mass it together in a single block. This is known as the principle of **distributed practice.** This applies in both the short term and the long term. When teaching students a new set of words, for example, it is best to <u>present the first two or three items, then go back and test these, then present some more,</u> then backtrack again, and so on. As each word becomes better learned, the testing interval can gradually be extended. The aim is to test each item at the longest interval at which it can reliably be recalled. Similarly, over a sequence of lessons, newly presented vocabulary should be reviewed in the next lesson, but the interval between successive tests should gradually be increased.

- **Pacing:**

<u>Learners</u> have different learning styles, and process data at different rates, so ideally they <u>should be given the opportunity to pace their own rehearsal activities</u>. This may mean the teacher allowing time during vocabulary learning for learners to do 'memory work' — such as organising or reviewing their vocabulary — silently and individually.

- **Use:**

Putting words to use, preferably in some interesting way, is <u>the best way of ensuring they are added to long-term memory</u>. It is the principle popularly known as *Use it or lose it.*

- **Cognitive depth:**

The more decisions the learner makes about a word, and the more cognitively demanding these decisions, the better the word is remembered. For example, a relatively superficial judgement might be simply to match it with a word that rhymes with it: e.g. *swerve.* A deeper level decision might be to decide on its part of speech (noun, adjective, verb, etc). Deeper still might be to use it to complete a sentence.

- **Personal organising:**

The judgements that learners make about a word are most effective if they are <u>personalised</u>. In one study, subjects who had read a sentence aloud containing new words showed better recall than subjects who had simply silently rehearsed the words. But subjects who had made up their own sentences containing the words and read them aloud did better still.

- **Imaging:**

Best of all were subjects who were given the task of silently visualising a mental picture to go with a new word<u>.</u> Other tests have shown that easily visualised words are more memorable than words that don't immediately evoke a picture. This suggests that - even for abstract words - it might help if learners associate them with some mental image. Interestingly, it doesn't seem to matter if the image is highly imaginative or even very vivid, so long as it is self-generated, rather than acquired 'second-hand'.

- **Mnemonics:**

These are 'tricks' to help retrieve items or rules that are stored in memory and that are not yet automatically retrievable. Even native speakers rely on mnemonics to help with some spelling rules: e.g. / i before *e* except after *c. (*a mnemonic used to help elementary school students remember how to spell certain words in the English language. It means that, in words where *i* and *e* fall together, the order is *ie*, except directly following *c*, when it is *ei*.
For example:
ie in words like *siege*, *friend*
ei in words like *ceiling*, *receive*

Unfortunately, in its short form the rule has many common exceptions, e.g.:
ie after c: *science*, *sufficient*, *agencies*
ei not after c: *their*, *foreign*, *being*, *neither*, *weird*
The best kinds of mnemonics are often visual. The most well-attested memory technique is the **keyword technique.**

Motivation:
Simply wanting to learn new words is no guarantee that words will be remembered. The only difference a strong motivation makes is that the learner is likely to spend more time on rehearsal and practice, which in the end will pay off in terms of memory. But even unmotivated learners remember words if they have been set tasks that require them to make decisions about them.

Attention/arousal:
Contrary to popular belief, you can't improve your vocabulary in your sleep, simply by listening to a tape. Some degree of conscious attention is required. A very high degree of attention (called arousal) seems to correlate with improved recall. Words that trigger a strong emotional response, for example, are more easily recalled than ones that don't. This may account for the fact that many learners seem to have a knack of remembering swear words, even if they've heard them only a couple of times.

• **Affective depth:**
Related to the preceding point, affective (i.e. emotional) information is stored along with cognitive (i.e. intellectual) data, and may play an equally important role on how words are stored and recalled. Just as it is important for learners to make cognitive judgements about words, it may also be important to make affective judgements, such as *Do I like the sound and look of the word? Do I like the thing that the word represents? Does the word evoke any pleasant or unpleasant associations?*

What makes a word difficult?
Easiest of all are those that are more or less identical, both in meaning and form, to their LI equivalents. When this is due to the fact that they derive from a common origin, they are called **cognates.** Thus Catalan *vocabulari,* French *vocabulaire,* Italian *vocabolario* and English *vocabulary* are all cognates and hence relatively easily transferable from one language to the other. The global spread of English has also meant that many English words have been borrowed by other languages. Examples of such **loanwords** in Japanese are *shanpu* (shampoo), *shoppingu* (shopping), and *sunakku* (snack). Cognates and loan words provide a useful 'way in' to the vocabulary of English, and are worth exploiting.. However, there are a number of traps for new players, in the form **of false friends.**

Other factors that make some words more difficult than others are:
• **Pronunciation:**
Research shows that words that are difficult to pronounce are more difficult to learn. Potentially difficult words will typically be those that contain sounds that are unfamiliar to some groups of learners - such as *regular* and *lorry* for Japanese speakers. Many learners find that words with clusters of consonants, such as *strength* or *crisps* or *breakfast,* are also problematic.
• **Spelling:**
Sound-spelling mismatches are likely to be the cause of errors, either of pronunciation or of spelling, and can contribute to a word's difficulty. Words that contain silent letters are

particularly problematic: *foreign, listen, headache, climbing, bored, honest, cupboard, muscle,* etc.

• **Length** and **complexity:**

Long words seem to be no more difficult to learn than short ones. But, as a rule of thumb, high frequency words tend to be short in English, and therefore the learner is likely to meet them more often, a factor favouring their 'learnability'. Also, variable stress in polysyllabic words - such as in word families like *necessary, necessity* and *necessarily* - can add to their difficulty.
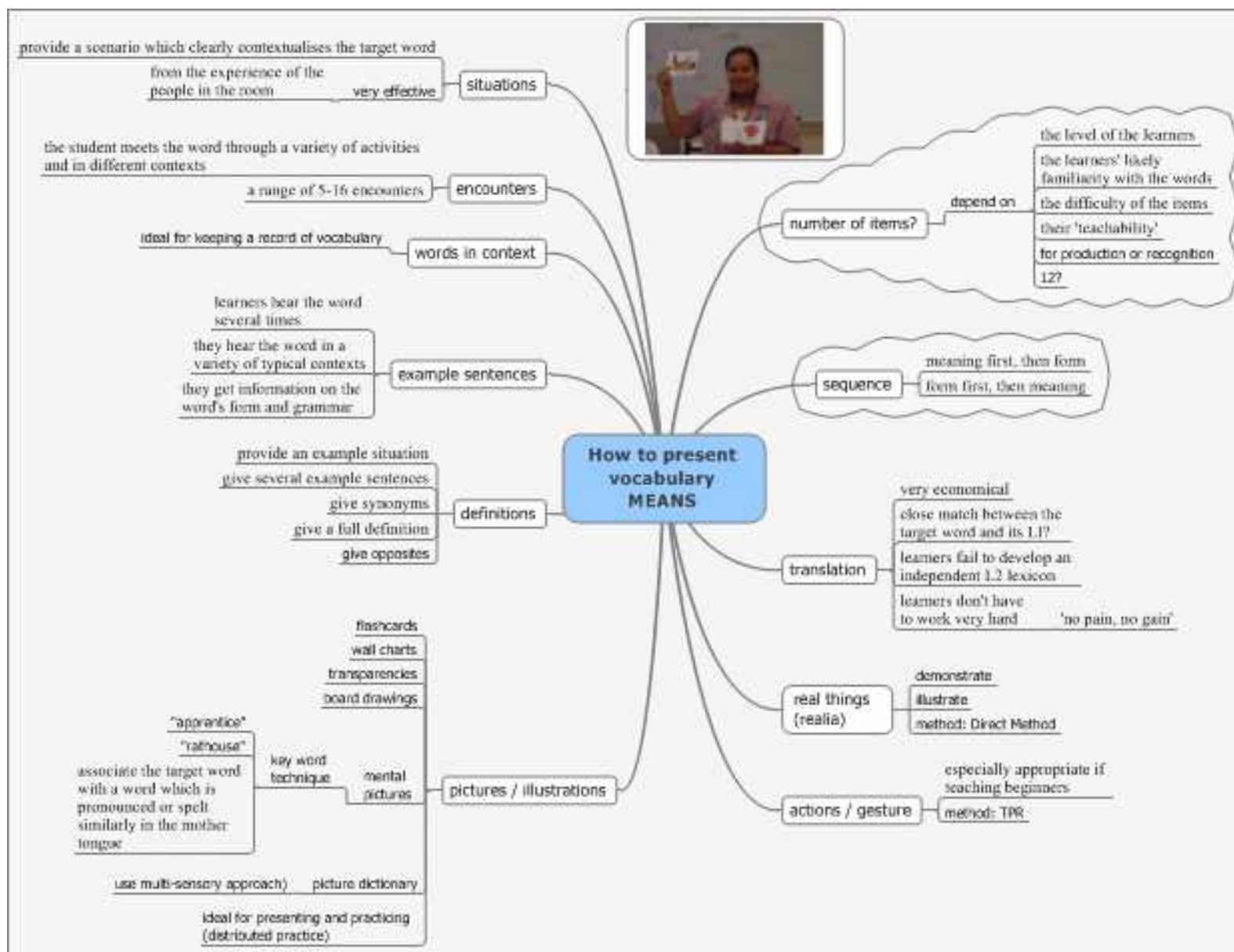
• **Grammar:**

Also problematic is the grammar associated with the word, especially if this differs from that of its LI equivalent. Spanish learners of English, for example, tend to assume that *explain* follows the same pattern as both Spanish *explicar* and English *tell,* and say *he explained me the lesson.* Remembering whether a verb like *enjoy, love,* or *hope* is followed by an infinitive *(to swim]* or an *-ing* form *(swimming)* can add to its difficulty. And the grammar of phrasal verbs is particularly troublesome: some phrasal verbs are separable *(she looked the word up)* but others are not *(she looked after the children).*

• **Meaning:**

When two words overlap in meaning, learners are likely to confuse them. *Make* and *do* are a case in point: you *make breakfast* and *make an appointment,* but you *do the housework* and *do a questionnaire.* Words with multiple meanings, such as *since* and *still,* can also be troublesome for learners.

Implications

- Learners need tasks and strategies to help them organise their mental lexicon by building networks of associations - the more the better.
- Teachers need to accept that the learning of new words involves a period of'initial fuzziness'.
- Learners need to wean themselves off a reliance on direct translation from their mother tongue.
- Words need to be presented in their typical contexts, so that learners can get a feel for their meaning, their register, their collocations, and their syntactic environments.
- Teaching should direct attention to the sound of new words, particularly the way they are stressed.
- Learners should aim to build a threshold vocabulary as quickly as possible.
- Learners need to be actively involved in the learning of words.
- Learners need multiple exposures to words and they need to retrieve words from memory repeatedly.
- Learners need to make multiple decisions about words.
- Memory of new words can be reinforced if they are used to express personally relevant meanings.
- Not all the vocabulary that the learners need can be 'taught': learners will need plentiful exposure to talk and text as well as training for self-directed learning.

How to present vocabulary MEANS

situations
- provide a scenario which clearly contextualises the target word
- from the experience of the people in the room — very effective

encounters
- the student meets the word through a variety of activities and in different contexts
- a range of 5-16 encounters

words in context
- ideal for keeping a record of vocabulary

example sentences
- learners hear the word several times
- they hear the word in a variety of typical contexts
- they get information on the word's form and grammar

definitions
- provide an example situation
- give several example sentences
- give synonyms
- give a full definition
- give opposites

pictures / illustrations
- flashcards
- wall charts
- transparencies
- board drawings
- mental pictures
  - key word technique
    - "apprentice"
    - "rathouse"
    - associate the target word with a word which is pronounced or spelt similarly in the mother tongue
- picture dictionary (use multi-sensory approach)
- ideal for presenting and practicing (distributed practice)

number of items? depend on
- the level of the learners
- the learners' likely familiarity with the words
- the difficulty of the items
- their 'teachability'
- for production or recognition L2?

sequence
- meaning first, then form
- form first, then meaning

translation
- very economical
- close match between the target word and its L1?
- learners fail to develop an independent L2 lexicon
- learners don't have to work very hard — 'no pain, no gain'

real things (realia)
- demonstrate
- illustrate
- method: Direct Method

actions / gesture
- especially appropriate if teaching beginners
- method: TPR

HOW TO PRESENT VOCABULARY

At the very least learners need to learn both the meaning and the form of a new word. It's worth pointing out that both these aspects of a word should be presented in close conjunction in order to ensure a tight meaning-and-form fit. The greater the gap between the presentation of a word's form and its meaning, the less likely that the learner will make a mental connection between the two.

Let's say the teacher has decided to teach a related set of words - for example, items of clothing: *shirt, trousers, jacket, socks, dress, jeans.*

The teacher has a number of **options** available.

Number of items?
This will depend on the following factors:
- the level of the learners (whether beginners, intermediate, or advanced)
- the learners' likely familiarity with the words (learners may have met the words before even though they are not part of their active vocabulary)
- the difficulty of the items - whether, for example, they express abstract rather than concrete meanings, or whether they are difficult to pronounce
- their 'teachability' - whether, for example, they can be easily explained or demonstrated
- whether items are being learned for production (in speaking and writing) or for recognition only (as in listening and reading). Since more time will be needed for the former, the number of items is likely to be fewer than if the aim is only recognition.

Furthermore, the number of new words presented should not overstretch the learners' capacity to remember them. Nor should the presentation extend so far into the lesson that no time is available to put the words to work.
Coursebooks tend to operate on the principle that a vocabulary presentation should include at most about a dozen items. Here, for example, are the items listed in the presentation of clothes vocabulary in a currently popular elementary coursebook

a jumper	*a shirt*	*a T-shirt*	*a dress*	*a skirt*	*a jacket*
a suit	*a tie*	*trousers*	*jeans*	*trainers*	*shoes*
boots					

However, claims for the desirability of much higher vocabulary learning targets have been made, especially by proponents of teaching methods that subscribe to 'whole person learning', such as **accelerated learning** and **suggestopedia.** Teachers following these methods use means of de- suggestion, in order to predispose the learner to massive amounts of input, including literally hundreds of words in a session.
Conventional teaching methods underestimate the learner's capacity to retain new vocabulary.

Sequence of presentation
Having decided on the number of items to teach, there is then the choice of the **sequence** of presentation, either:
- meaning first, then form, or
- form first, then meaning
There is an argument that presenting the meaning first creates a need for the form, opening the appropriate mental "files", and making the presentation both more efficient and more memorable. On the other hand, 'form first' presentation works best when the words are

presented in some kind of context, so that the learners can work out the meaning for themselves.

Means of presentation
The next set of choices relates to the **means** of presentation - whether to present the meaning through:

Translation
Traditionally, **translation** has been the most widely used means of presenting the meaning of a word in monolingual classes. Translation has the advantage of being the most direct route to a word's meaning - assuming that there is a close match between the target word and its LI equivalent. It is therefore very economical, and especially suitable for dealing with incidental vocabulary that may crop up in a lesson.
However, an over-reliance on translation may mean that <u>learners fail to develop an independent L2 lexicon</u>, with the effect that they always access L2 words by means of their LI equivalents, rather than directly. Also, because learners don't have to work very hard to access the meaning, it may mean that the word is less memorable. A case of 'no pain, no gain'.

Real things(realia);
An alternative to translation - and an obvious choice if presenting a set of concrete objects such as clothes items - is to somehow **illustrate** or demonstrate them. This can be done either by using real objects (called **realia)** or pictures or mime. The use of realia, pictures and demonstration was a defining technique of the **Direct Method.** The Direct Method, in rejecting the use of translation, developed as a reaction to such highly intellectual approaches to language learning as Grammar-Translation.

Actions / gesture
Such an approach is especially appropriate if teaching beginners, and with mixed nationality classes, where translation is not an option. It is also a technique that has been reclaimed by practitioners of **Total Physical Response** (TPR), a method that promotes initial immersion in a high quantity of comprehensible input. In making use of the immediate environment of the classroom, and of things that can be brought into the classroom, the intention is to replicate the experience of learning one's mother tongue. A TPR lesson typically involves the teacher demonstrating actions, using real objects, and then getting the learners to perform the same or similar actions in response to commands. Typical classroom commands might be:

Point to the apple.
Put the banana next to the apple.
Give the apple to Natasha.
*Offer the banana to Maxim.*
etc.
(Plastic fruit and vegetables are ideal for this kind of activity.)

Pictures / illustrations
<u>Visual aids</u> take many forms: flashcards (published and home-made), wall charts, transparencies projected on to the board or wall using the overhead projector, and board-drawings. Many teachers collect their own sets of flashcards from magazines, calendars, etc. Especially useful are pictures of items belonging to the following *sets: food and drink, clothing, house interiors and furniture, landscapes / exteriors, forms of transport* plus a wide selection of pictures of people, sub-divided into sets such as *jobs, nationalities, sports,*

activities and *appearance (tall, strong, sad, healthy, old,* etc). Not only can such pictures be used to present new vocabulary items, but they can be used to practise them.

The use of pictures or objects as prompts for vocabulary teaching can be enhanced if some basic principles of memory are taken into account, including the principle of distributed practice .(it is important to keep reviewing the previously introduced items, preferably in a varying order)
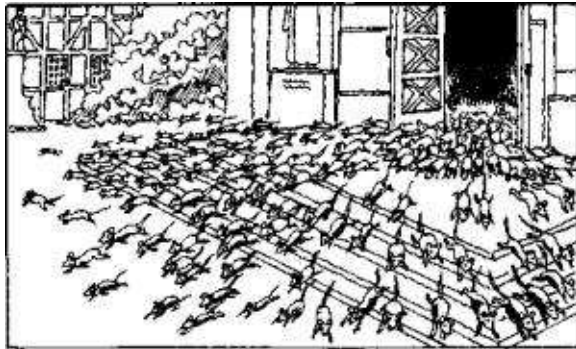

Our ability to produce mental images has led to a memory technique known as the **key word technique**. It consists of associating the target word with a word which is pronounced or spelt similarly in the mother tongue, but is not necessarily related in terms of meaning, e.g. Rathaus (meaning 'town hall') sounds like 'rat house' in English.

The learner then conjures up a visual image of a lot of rats coming out of his local town hall, for instance.

It appears to aid memory if the meaning and the key word are made to interact, as in the case above.

Some claims are also made that the more bizarre the image, the easier it will be to recall, but the evidence for this is unconvincing.
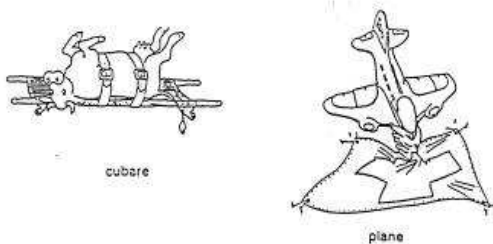
Task: Try o find other images of the key word technique

Another principle underlying effective memorisation is, as much as is possible, to allow learners to work at their own pace. In this way they can form associations and think of mnemonic devices that are personally relevant, and appropriate to the degree of difficulty the word is causing them. This is more likely to happen if they are working on their own or in small groups. But by building pauses into a teacher-led presentation, the teacher can provide learners with time to 'catch up' and to reflect.

Here, by way of example, are some activities using flashcards:

☞	The teacher shows cards one at a time, and either elicits or says the word it represents. As a rule of thumb, about ten unfamiliar words is probably sufficient. Periodically the teacher backtracks and changes the order. Finally, stick all the cards on to the board, and write the words alongside (or ask learners to come up and write them).
☞	Stick a collection of picture cards (e.g. clothes) on the board and number them. (If you are working round a large table, place the cards face up on the table.) Invite learners to ask you about the words they are unfamiliar with. For example: *What's number 6?* Check to see if someone else knows before giving the answer. When students are sufficiently familiar go through them all, asking, *What's number 8?* etc. As a check, turn the cards around, one at a time, so that they can't be seen, and again ask *What's number 8?* Finally, write the words on the board alongside each picture

☞	Stick a selection of cards on the board and allow learners to use <u>bilingual dictionaries</u> to find the words they represent. They can then write the words adjacent to the pictures.
☞	Give pairs or groups of three a selection of cards each. They can use bilingual dictionaries to find out the word for each picture. Then, representatives from each group can 'teach' the rest of the class the words they have discovered, using the visual aids.
☞	Show the class a wall chart or a large picture containing many different items (e.g. a street scene or an airport) for a short period of time, say ten seconds. Individually or in pairs, the learners then have to write down as many words — in English — as they can remember having seen represented in the picture. Allow them to use dictionaries. Show the picture again for another few seconds, to let them extend their lists of words. Reveal the picture for the checking stage: the individual or pair with the most correct words is the winner.

Picture dictionary

In the first two volumes of "THE NEW YOU &ME a great part of the new words are introduced with the help of "Picture Dictionaries". You can find them most likely at the beginning of a new Unit. In some units there are even two "Picture Dictionaries"

Remember to introduce the words the multi-sensory way. The more all senses (visual, auditive, kinesthetic) are involved when introducing the meaning, the pronunciation and the spelling of a word, the more successful the word/structure will be stored and recalled again. Apart from that fact a multi-sensory presentation of new words will also guarantee that you meet the needs of the various learning types in a class.

The Procedure The following steps show a proven procedure of such a multi-sensory approach with the help of a Picture Dictionary.

Legend: V = visual, a = auditive, k = kinesthetic; v^i = visual internal (when picturing an image with the eyes closed), k^i = kinesthetic internal (when imaging a movement – also articulation – as if you actually acted it out)

Ask your students to open their books and look at the Picture Dictionary. **Read** word by word **aloud**. Explain the meaning through mime and gesture – if necessary. Only in exceptional cases it will be necessary to translate the word.	
Ask the students to **close their eyes** and read the words slowly and distinctly again. Ask the students not to repeat the words.	a
Ask the students to keep their eyes closed. Read the words again and ask them **to echo the words** the same way as they have heard them. Vary your voice: One word aloud, the next word you may whisper, the next one at high pitch, the next one slowly, then quickly etc. Ask them to picture the word in the Picture Dictionary in their minds.	a v^i
Read my lips: Ask the students to open their eyes again. Mouth the words without using your voice. The students are asked to guess which word you "said".	v k^i, a
What's the missing word? Pair work: A closes his/her eyes, B covers (with an eraser etc.) the word (not the picture) in the Picture Dictionary. B asks, "What's the missing word?" A names it and ask B now to close his/her eyes. With high ability groups they can even cover two and more words.	k v^i , a
Visual anchoring. Ask your students to take a pencil. Name one word after the other from the Picture Dictionary and link it with a number. (e.g. one…angry, two…late, three…) and ask the students to write the numbers next to the pictures of the Picture Dictionary. The students are asked to memorize the words with the	a v

appropriate numbers. Give them some time to do that. Now ask them to close their books. Name a number. The students name the matching word.	k

Definitions

Of course, reliance on real objects, illustration, or demonstration, is limited. It is one thing to mime a chicken, but quite another to physically represent the meaning of a word like *intuition* or *become* or *trustworthy*. Also, words frequently come up incidentally, words for which the teacher won't have visual aids or realia at hand. An alternative way of conveying the meaning of a new word is simply to **use words — other words**. This is the principle behind dictionary definitions.

Non-visual, verbal means of clarifying meaning include:
• providing an example situation
• giving several example sentences
• giving synonyms, antonyms, or superordinate terms
• giving a full definition

All of the above procedures can be used in conjunction, and also in combination with visual means such as board drawings or mime. Although a verbal explanation may take a little longer than using translation, or visuals or mime, the advantages are that the learners are getting extra 'free' listening practice, and, by being made to work a little harder to get to the meaning of a word, they may be more cognitively engaged. Obviously, it is important, when using words in order to define other words, that the defining words themselves are within the learners' current range.

Situations

A situational presentation involves providing a scenario which clearly contextualises the target word (or words).
Here, for example, is a situation for teaching *embarrassed!embarrassing:*
Catherine saw a man at the bus stop. His back was turned but she was sure it was her brother, so she tapped him on the shoulder with her umbrella and shouted 'Look out! The police are after you!' The man turned around. He was a complete stranger.
SHE WAS TERRIBLY EMBARRASSED. IT WAS A VERY EMBARRASSING EXPERIENCE.

Reinforcing a situational presentation with pictures, board drawings, or gesture makes it more intelligible, and perhaps more memorable. More memorable still is the situation that comes directly from the experience of the people in the room - whether the teacher or students. In other words, the teacher could tell her own story of when she was embarrassed, and then invite the students to tell their own. Again, the extra 'free' speaking and listening practice justifies the relatively long time spent on just one or two items of vocabulary.

Example sentences

An alternative to the situational approach is to provide students with **example sentences,** each one being a typical instance of the target word in context. Here is a teacher giving sentence examples for the *word fancy:*

T:

Listen to these sentences and see if you can work out what the verb *fancy* means:

Number one: He's really nice, but I don't fancy him. [pause]
Two: I fancy eating out tonight. Don't you? [pause]
Three: Do you fancy a cup of coffee? [pause]
Four: Fancy a drink? [pause]
Five: That guy on the dance floor - he really fancies himself [pause]
And six: I never really fancied package holidays much, [pause]

One advantage of this approach is that the learners hear the word several times, increasing the likelihood of retention in memory. Another advantage is that they hear the word in a variety of typical contexts (rather than just one) so they can start to get a feel for its range of uses as well as its typical collocations *(e.g. fancy a drink).* Finally, they get information on the word's form and grammar - whether, for example, it is irregular or transitive (if a verb), or countable (if a. noun).

Words in context

You can find that type of presentation in the Workbook of The NEW YOU&ME at the end of each Unit. There you can find the English word – a sentence using this word in context – the German translation.

1	name	My brother's name is Tom.	Name
	great	My sister is really great.	großartig
	want to	He wants to sing.	wollen
	rest	My brother wants to rest.	sich ausruhen
2	call	They call him Biker.	nennen, rufen
	everybody	Everybody likes him.	jeder

Ask the students to copy the "English word" and the "word in context sentence" into a note book. If the student knows the meaning it is not important to write the German translation as well. The student is supposed to remember the word in the context, not the translation.

Note: Make sure that you check vocabulary the same way as you ask the students to remember them.

Encounters

As the student meets the word through a variety of activities and in different contexts a more accurate understanding of its meaning and use will develop. Various studies create a range of 5-16 encounters with a word in order for a student to truly acquire it.

Therefore, an important aspect of this gradual learning is that the instructor consciously cue reactivation of the vocabulary.

Reencountering the new word has another significant reward. According to theories of human

memory:

- the act of successfully recalling an item increases the chance that that item will be remembered. This is not simply because it acts as another learning trial, since recalling the item leads to better retention than presenting it again; it appears that the retrieval route to that item is in some way strengthened by being successfully used.
- When a word is recalled, the learner subconsciously evaluates it and decides how it is different from others s/he could have chosen. He continues to change his interpretation until he reaches the range of meanings that a native speaker has. Every time this assessment process takes place, retention is enhanced.
- In addition, if the encounters with a word are arranged in increasingly longer intervals, e.g. at the end of the class session, then 24 hours later, and then a week later, there is a greater likelihood of long-term storage than if the word had been presented at regular intervals. According to this concept of graduated interval recall, the length of the word, its frequency, and whether it is a cognate for the learner will affect the number of recalls necessary.

How to highlight the form

The sound of words, as much as their meaning, determines the way they are stored in the mental lexicon. The fact that like-sounding words are often confused *(tambourines* for *trampolines,* or *chicken* for *kitchen,* for example) is evidence of this. This suggests that highlighting the spoken form of a word is very important in terms of ensuring it is appropriately stored. This in turn means drawing learners' attention to the way the word *sounds.*

There are a number of ways of highlighting the spoken form of the word. Essentially these are:
• listening drills
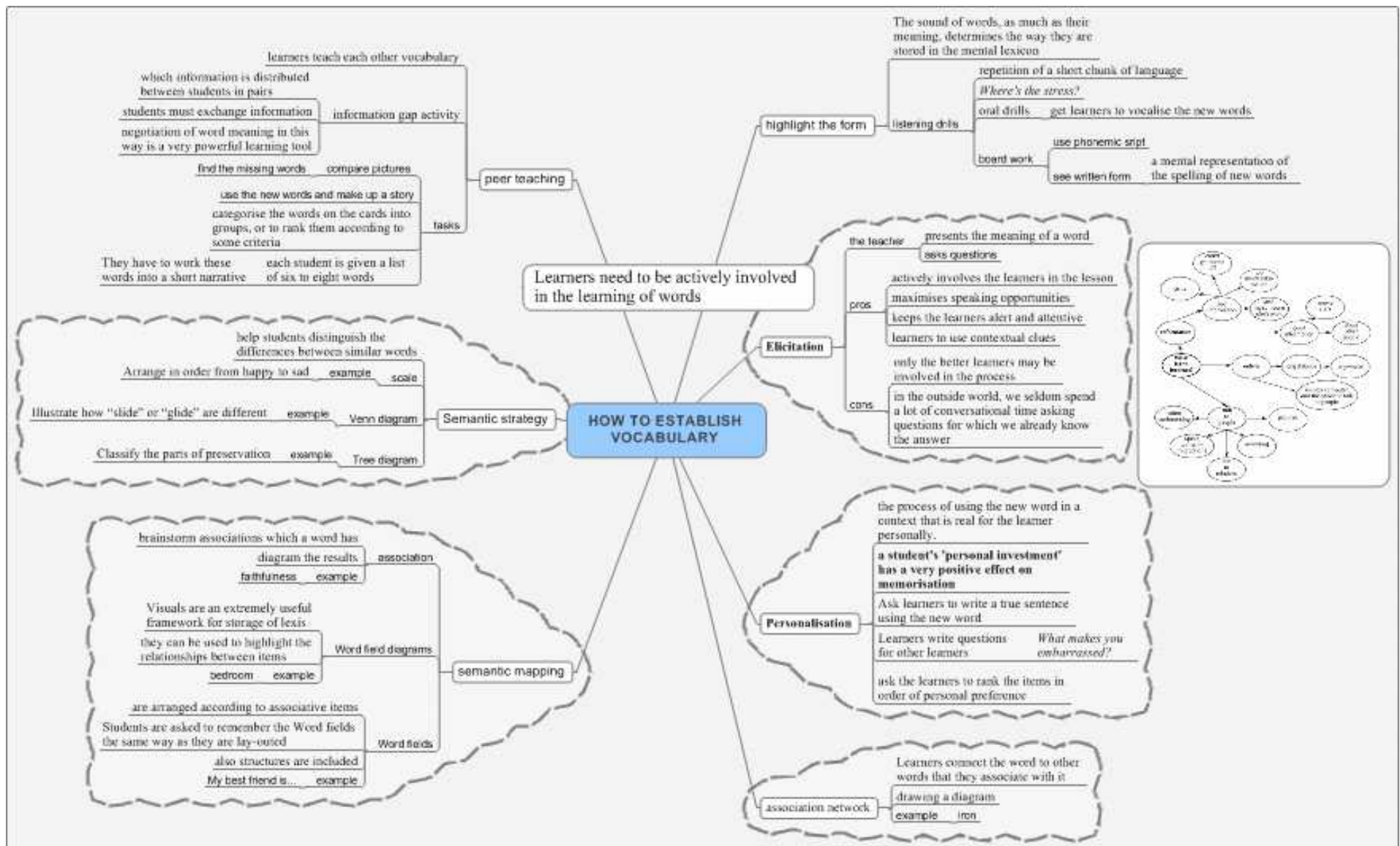• oral drills
• boardwork

Having established the meaning of a new word, the teacher can model it using **listening drills.** A drill is any repetition of a short chunk of language. In this case, it is the teacher who does the repeating, so as to accustom the learners to the phonological features of the word. To draw learners' attention to the syllable structure and stress of the word, this modelling process can be accompanied by some kind of visual stimulus, such as using the fingers of one hand to represent the different syllables.

The teacher can also ask the class to identify the stressed syllable. The question *Where's the stress?* is a good one for learners to get used to. One way of introducing the idea of stress - in the first lesson, for example - is to ask the learners to say how many syllables there are in their own names, and which of these syllables is stressed.

We forget words quickly if there is any interference or interruption of the **articulatory loop** (the process of subvocal repetition on which working memory depends). This suggests that allowing learners two or three seconds 'processing' time between hearing a new word and saying it might have benefits in terms of retention in memory.

However, to withhold production indefinitely is likely to frustrate learners, whose instinct is often to have a go at repeating a new word themselves. And nothing gives learners a better feel for the shape of a word than saying it - even if the teacher's intention is to teach the word for recognition only. It may be appropriate, therefore, to get learners to vocalise the new words, after they have first subvocalised them, by means of choral or individual repetition, i.e. **drilling.**

Features of the word's pronunciation can also be highlighted using the board. Many teachers use some kind of symbol - such as a small box - to indicate where the primary stress is placed. Providing learners with a transcription of the word using **phonemic script** is another way of highlighting the pronunciation visually.

HOW TO ESTABLISH VOCABULARY

Learners need to be actively involved in the learning of words

peer teaching

learners teach each other vocabulary

which information is distributed between students in pairs

students must exchange information — information gap activity

negotiation of word meaning in this way is a very powerful learning tool

find the missing words — compare pictures

use the new words and make up a story

categorise the words on the cards into groups, or to rank them according to some criteria — tasks

They have to work these words into a short narrative — each student is given a list of six to eight words

highlight the form

The sound of words, as much as their meaning, determines the way they are stored in the mental lexicon

listening drills

repetition of a short chunk of language

Where's the stress?

oral drills — get learners to vocalise the new words

board work

use phonemic script

see written form — a mental representation of the spelling of new words

Elicitation

the teacher — presents the meaning of a word

asks questions

pros

actively involves the learners in the lesson

maximises speaking opportunities

keeps the learners alert and attentive

learners to use contextual clues

cons

only the better learners may be involved in the process

in the outside world, we seldom spend a lot of conversational time asking questions for which we already know the answer

Semantic strategy

help students distinguish the differences between similar words

Arrange in order from happy to sad — example — scale

Illustrate how "slide" or "glide" are different — example — Venn diagram

Classify the parts of preservation — example — Tree diagram

Personalisation

the process of using the new word in a context that is real for the learner personally.

a student's 'personal investment' has a very positive effect on memorisation

Ask learners to write a true sentence using the new word

Learners write questions for other learners — *What makes you embarrassed?*

ask the learners to rank the items in order of personal preference

semantic mapping

brainstorm associations which a word has

diagram the results — association

faithfulness — example

Visuals are an extremely useful framework for storage of lexis

they can be used to highlight the relationships between items — Word field diagrams

bedroom — example

are arranged according to associative items

Students are asked to remember the Word fields the same way as they are lay-outed — Word fields

also structures are included

My best friend is... — example

association network

Learners connect the word to other words that they associate with it

drawing a diagram

example — iron

How soon should learners meet the written form of a new word?
Learners are likely to form a mental representation of the probable spelling of new words as soon as they first hear them, so it is better that this mental representation is an accurate one. But there is an even more important reason for being introduced to the written form as soon as possible. Crucial clues to meaning are often much easier to identify in the written form than in the spoken form of the word. In speaking, sounds tend to merge, or are even dropped entirely, such that even in carefully articulated speech a word like *handbag* sounds like *hambag,* and *police station* comes out as *flee station.* In the absence of key morphological information (like *hand-* and *police)* learners have nothing to attach the new word to - or nowhere to 'file' it - and therefore find it difficult to understand and remember.

How to involve the learners

Elicitation
Learners need to be actively involved in the learning of words. How can learners be given more involvement in the presentation phase of word learning?
One technique is **elicitation.**
A standard elicitation procedure is for the teacher to present the meaning of a word (e.g. by showing a picture) and asking learners to supply the form:
T: (showing picture of *waterfall)* What's this?
S: Waterfall
Alternatively, the teacher can supply the word, and elicit a definition, synonym or example:
T: What's a waterfall? Anyone?
s: Like Niagara?
T: Yes, exactly.
This second procedure, going from form to meaning, is typical of text-based vocabulary work. It also occurs when words come up naturally in classroom talk

The rationale underlying elicitation is that:
o   it actively involves the learners in the lesson
o   it maximises speaking opportunities
o   it keeps the learners alert and attentive
o   it challenges better learners who might otherwise 'turn off'
o   it acts as a way of checking the learners' developing understanding
o   in the case of form-first presentations it encourages learners to use contextual clues

If overused, however, many of the advantages of elicitation may be lost.
• only the better learners may be involved in the process
• Prolonged elicitation sequences can end up being very frustrating for learners if they simply don't know the answers the teacher is seeking –
• Finally, if all or most of the teacher's questions are elicitation questions, the quality of teacher-student talk can become compromised. After all, in the outside world, we seldom spend a lot of conversational time asking questions for which we already know the answer (like *What's a waterfall?)* There are times when learners need exposure to 'real' questions, such as *What's the biggest waterfall you've ever seen?*

Personalisation
This suggests that another important way of involving learners is to have them **personalise** the new words. Personalisation is simply the process of using the new word in a context that

is real for the learner personally. 'Memory of new words can be reinforced if they are used to express personally relevant meanings'.

Recent trends in methodology have stressed the need for meaningful activities in the classroom. There are a variety of reasons for this, among them the swing towards realism and authenticity and the need to engage learners in activities which will enable them to be more self-reliant. Equally important here is the fact that more meaningful tasks require learners to analyse and process language more deeply, which helps them to commit information to long term memory. The theory **that a student's 'personal investment' has a very positive effect on memorisation** is one that many teachers and learners will intuitively agree with.

An experiment by Wilson and Bransford provides an interesting insight here. In this experiment, three different groups of subjects were used.

The first group were given a list of thirty words and told that they would be tested on their ability to recall the words.

The second group were given the same list of words and told to rate each word according to its pleasantness or unpleasantness; they were *not* told that they would be tested on their ability to recall the words.

The third group were given the list and asked to decide whether the items on the list would be important or unimportant if they were stranded on a desert island. They too were *not* told that they would be tested on these items.

The results of the tests showed a similar degree of recall between groups one and two, while group three recorded the highest degree of recall. This experiment illustrates several important points:

1 That the intention to learn does not in itself ensure that effective learning will take place.

2 That subjects **are more likely to retain** verbal input (i.e. commit new items to long term memory) **if they are actively engaged in a meaningful task** that involves some kind of semantic processing, and provides a unifying theme to facilitate *organisation* in the memory.

There are many ways of doing this. Here are some ideas:

❖ Ask learners to write a true sentence using the new word, preferably applying it to themselves or someone they know —

❖ Learners write questions for other learners, incorporating the new word. For example: *What makes you embarrassed/frightened?* They exchange questions, write the answers, and then report to the rest of the class.

❖ Ask learners to make an association network centred on the new word.
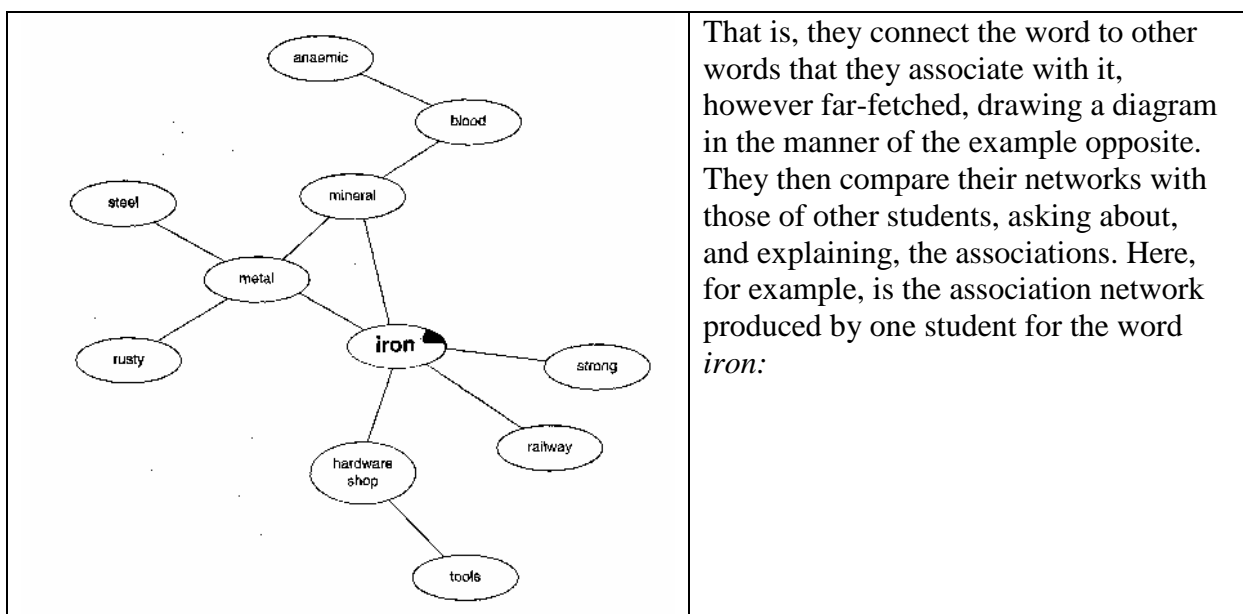
That is, they connect the word to other words that they associate with it, however far-fetched, drawing a diagram in the manner of the example opposite. They then compare their networks with those of other students, asking about, and explaining, the associations. Here, for example, is the association network produced by one student for the word *iron:*

❖ If teaching a lexical set such as food items, or forms of transport, or jobs, or kinds of film, ask the learners to rank the items in order of personal preference — from most preferred to

least preferred. For example, *drama, thriller, musical, western, costume drama, horror movie ...* Then, in pairs, they compare and explain their rankings.

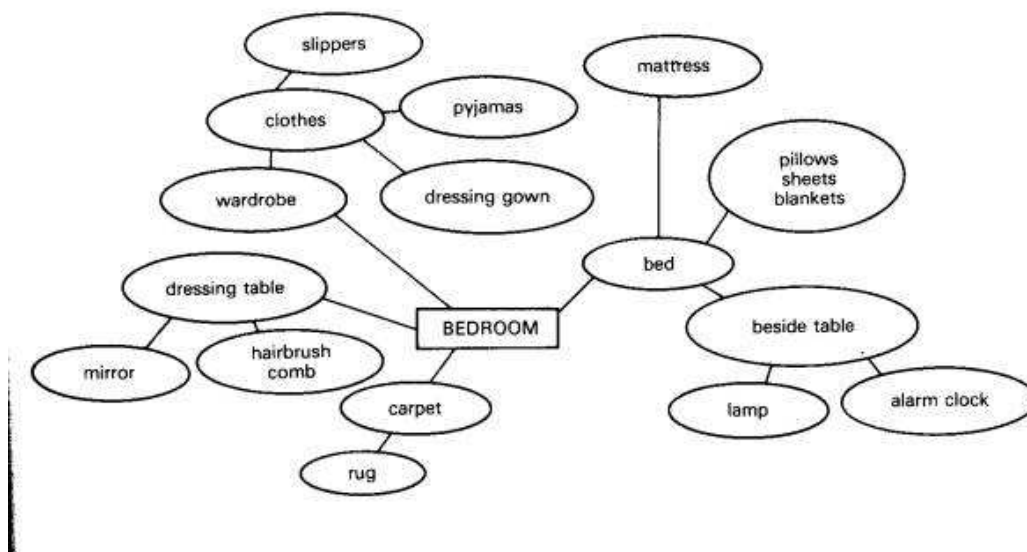❖ **Semantic mapping** - ASSOCIATIONS

Semantic mapping generally refers to brainstorming associations which a word has and then diagramming the results. For example, when asked to give words they thought of when they heard the word "faithfulness", low-intermediate ESL students generated sixteen words or phrases: cat, friend, family, reliance, trust, dishonest, unfaithfulness, believe in friendships, bonds, obey, dog, friendly, sexual unfaithful, gossiping, marriage, love. After clustering words which they felt went together, they mapped the relationships between these words as follows:
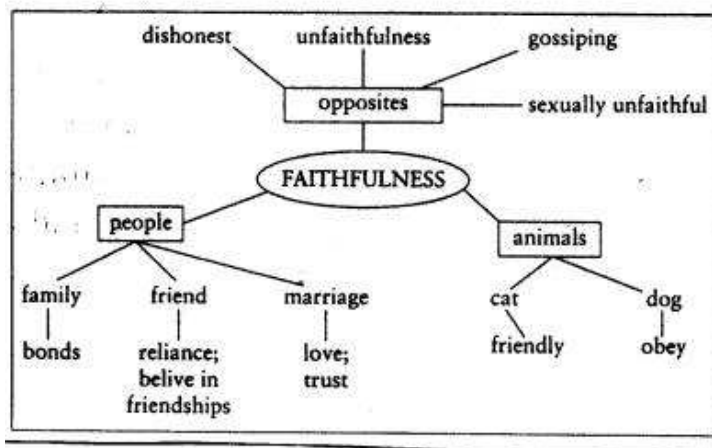
Because it is possible to analyze words in different ways and because features may be difficult to agree upon, semantic feature analysis and semantic mapping promote a great deal of group interaction. Over time, the learners may add new words to then charts and maps. These semantic exercises will then no only be visual reminders of links in the lexicon but of the learner's expanding vocabulary.

❖ **Semantic mapping** - WORD FIELD DIAGRAMS

Visuals are an extremely useful framework for storage of lexis, and they can be used to highlight the relationships between items. Word field diagrams are of interest here and the example below could be used as a testing activity by omitting some of the items. Learners could also be asked to organise their own diagrams of this type.

❖ **Semantic mapping** - Wordfields
At the end of each Unit of THE NEW YOU&ME you can find *Wordfields* in the Workbook.
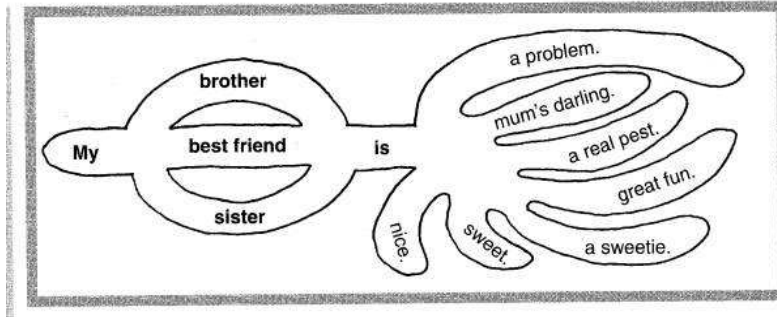
Wordfields are arranged according to associative items. Here also structures are included – when they can be linked with the same semantic field. Students are asked to remember the *Wordfield*s the same way as they are lay-outed in the book.

❖ **Semantic strategy - Pictorial schemata**
Creating grids or diagrams is another semantic strategy. Whether they are teacher- or student-generated grids, these visual devices help students distinguish the differences between similar words and set up memory traces of the specific occurrence. Scales or clines, Venn diagram, and tree diagrams are especially interesting for group work when teachers present words for these pictorial schemata in scrambled order. Students are then asked to unscramble the words by putting them in a logical order.

Scale or cline:
Arrange in order from happy to sad: upset, pleased, overjoyed, broken-hearted, indifferent
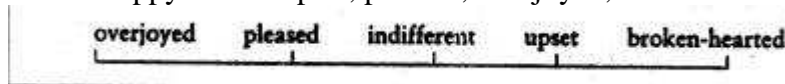
Venn diagram:
Illustrate how "slide" or "glide" are different.
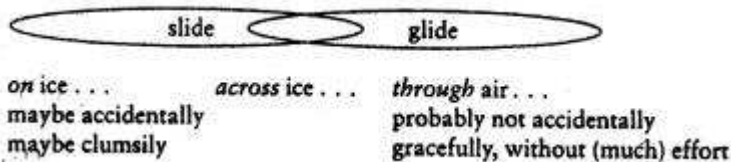
Tree diagram:
Classify the parts of preservation.
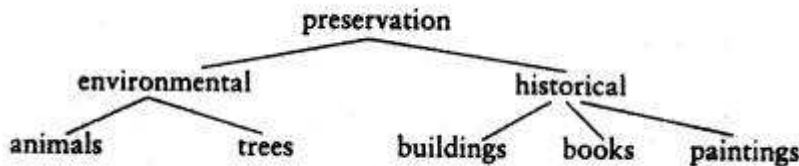
These semantic techniques ask students to deeply process words by organizing them and making their meanings visual and more concrete.

Peer teaching
Finally, an alternative to teacher presentation - and one that maximally involves learners - is **peer teaching,** i.e. learners teaching each other vocabulary. One way of doing this is through an **information gap** activity. This is an activity in which information is distributed between students in pairs or small groups. In order to complete a task, students must exchange information in order to "fill the information gap". If the information also includes words

whose meaning is known only to individual members of the group, the information exchange will require members to teach each other those words.

The aim is to exchange information about the pictures in order to find the ten differences. At some stage this will involve students using the words that have been glossed at the bottom of their picture - for example *jug* in Picture A. Because their partner does not have the word *for jug,* (and in all likelihood will not know it) he or she will have to ask for an explanation. A probable sequence might go like this:

STUDENT 1: Is there a jug on the table in your picture? STUDENT 2: A what?

STUDENT 1: A jug.

STUDENT 2: What is 'jug'?

STUDENT 1: A jug is a thing for keep water or milk.

STUDENT 2: Ah. Yes. I have one - what is called - judge?

STUDENT!: Jug.J-U-G.

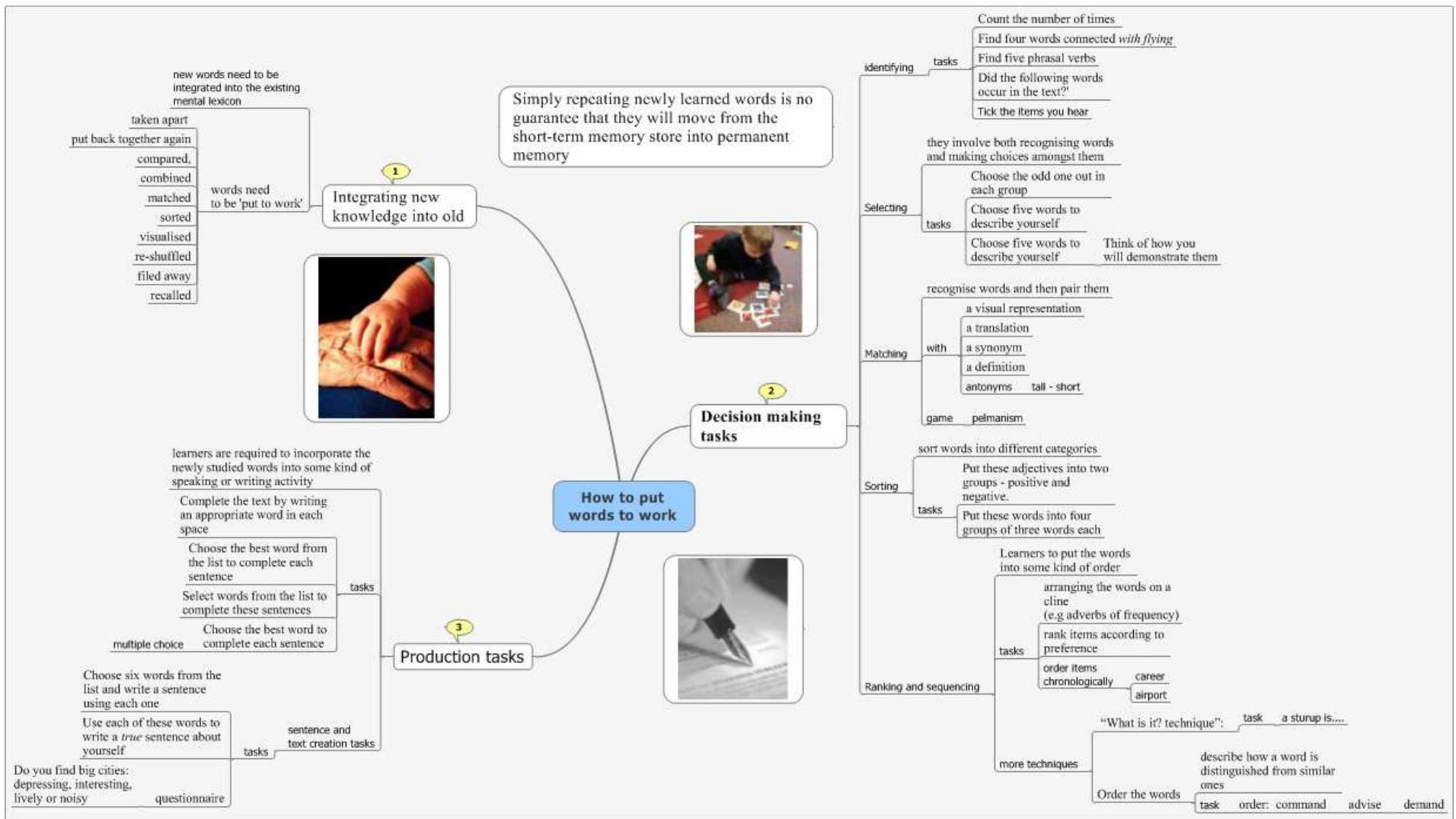STUDENT 2: Yes, there is one jug on the table in my picture.

etc.
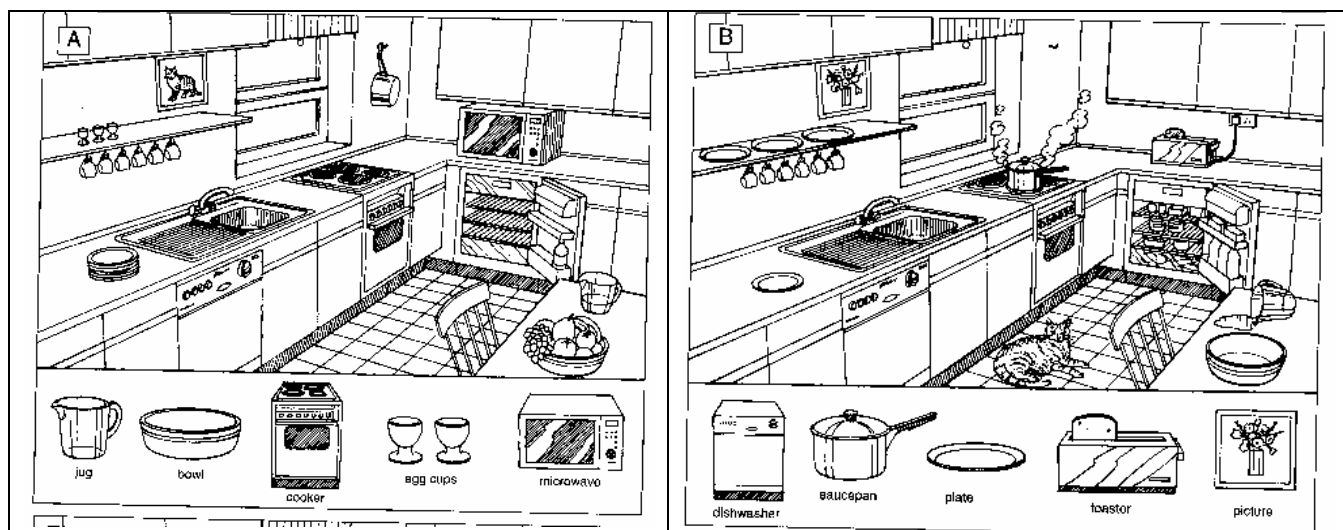
Research suggests that negotiation of word meaning in this way is a very powerful learning tool, and is more memorable, on the whole, than teacher presentation. In order to maximise its usefulness, it may help if learners have been taught some simple defining expressions, such as *It's a thing you use for ... It's made of... It looks like ...*

Other ways of setting up peer teaching tasks include:

- Give each student in a group a card (or cards) with a different word on it, the meaning of the word being provided in the form, for example, of a translation, synonym or picture. Students have to study their card(s) silently and learn their words. Then the group is given a task which involves using the words. For example, it might be a story-construction activity, in which students have to order sentences, each of which contains one of the targeted words. To do the task, each student would have to explain to the other members of the group the words that they have just studied.
- Alternatively, they are asked to categorise the words on the cards into groups, or to rank them according to some criteria. They might, for example, be objects which are ranked according to their usefulness on a desert island. In order to do this task, students will first need to teach each other the words they have learned individually.
- Each student is given a list of six to eight words, with their translations or definitions. For example, one student may get the following: *check in, boarding pass, duty free, luggage, security check, departure gate,* etc. Another may get: *camp fire, frying pan, pocket knife, matches, backpack,* etc. They have to work these words into a short narrative. They then tell each other their narrative, explaining any unfamiliar words as they go along.

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How to put words to work

1. Integrating new knowledge into old

Simply repeating newly learned words is no guarantee that they will move from the short-term memory store into permanent memory

new words need to be integrated into the existing mental lexicon

words need to be 'put to work'
- taken apart
- put back together again
- compared,
- combined
- matched
- sorted
- visualised
- re-shuffled
- filed away
- recalled

2. Decision making tasks

identifying — tasks
- Count the number of times
- Find four words connected *with flying*
- Find five phrasal verbs
- Did the following words occur in the text?'
- Tick the items you hear

Selecting
they involve both recognising words and making choices amongst them

tasks
- Choose the odd one out in each group
- Choose five words to describe yourself
- Choose five words to describe yourself — Think of how you will demonstrate them

Matching
recognise words and then pair them

with
- a visual representation
- a translation
- a synonym
- a definition
- antonyms   tall - short

game   pelmanism

Sorting
sort words into different categories

tasks
- Put these adjectives into two groups - positive and negative.
- Put these words into four groups of three words each

Ranking and sequencing
Learners to put the words into some kind of order

tasks
- arranging the words on a cline (e.g adverbs of frequency)
- rank items according to preference
- order items chronologically — career / airport

more techniques
- "What is it? technique":   task   a sturup is....
- Order the words — describe how a word is distinguished from similar ones
  - task   order: command   advise   demand

3. Production tasks

learners are required to incorporate the newly studied words into some kind of speaking or writing activity

tasks
- Complete the text by writing an appropriate word in each space
- Choose the best word from the list to complete each sentence
- Select words from the list to complete these sentences
- Choose the best word to complete each sentence

multiple choice

sentence and text creation tasks

tasks
- Choose six words from the list and write a sentence using each one
- Use each of these words to write a *true* sentence about yourself

questionnaire
- Do you find big cities: depressing, interesting, lively or noisy

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How to put words to work

A) Integrating new knowledge into old
Traditionally, the presentation of new language items would swiftly be followed by the practice of these items. This practice would typically take the form of some of kind of oral repetition, such as a drill. This notion of mechanical practice underlies the popular belief that 'practice makes perfect'. However, simply repeating newly learned words is no guarantee that they will move from the short-term memory store into permanent memory. **New knowledge - i.e. new words - needs to be integrated into existing knowledge** - i.e. the learners' existing network of word associations, or what we called the **mental lexicon.** There is a greater likelihood of the word being integrated into this network if many 'deep' decisions have been made about it. In other words, to ensure long-term retention and recall, words need to be 'put to work'. They need to be placed in **working memory,** and subjected to different operations. Such operations might include: being taken apart and put back together again, being compared, combined, matched, sorted, visualised and re-shuffled, as well as being repeatedly filed away and recalled (since the more often a word is recalled, the easier recall becomes).

B) Decision making tasks
There are many different kinds of tasks that teachers can set learners in order to help move words into long-term memory. Some of these tasks will require more brain work than others, roughly arranged in an order from least cognitively demanding to most demanding:

Tasks in which learners make decisions about words can be divided into the following types,

B.1 Identifying words simply means finding them where they may otherwise be 'hidden', such as in texts.
Here, for example, are some identification tasks relating to the text *Fear of Flying* . Give the learners the text and ask them to:
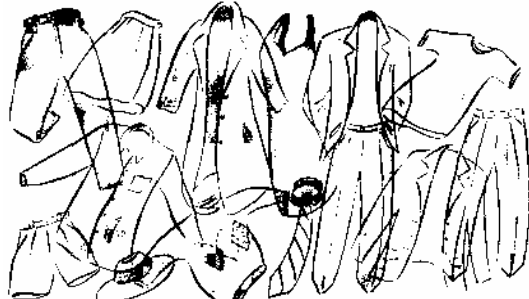
FEAR OF FLYING How can anyone like flying? It's a crazy thing to do. Birds fly; people don't. I hate flying. You wait for hours for the plane to take off, and it's often late. The plane's always crowded. You can't walk around and there's nothing to do. You can't open the windows and you can't get off. The seats are uncomfortable, there's no choice of food and there are never enough toilets. Then after the plane lands, it's even worse. It takes hours to get out of the airport and into the city. I prefer travelling by train. Trains are much better than planes; they're cheaper, safer, and more comfortable. You can walk around in a train and open the windows. Stations are more convenient than airports, because you can get on and off in the middle of cities. If you miss a train, you can always catch another one later. Yes, trains are slower, but speed isn't everything. Staying alive and enjoying yourself is more important!	• Count the number of times *plane(s)* and *train(s)* occur in the text. • Find four words connected *with flying* in the text. • Find five phrasal verbs in the text. • Find eight comparative adjectives in the text. • Underline all the words ending in *-ing* in the text. Ask them to read the text, then turn it over, and then ask: • Did the following words occur in the text?' • busy crowded fast dangerous uncomfortable dirty convenient inconvenient noisy • 'Now check the text to see if you were right.'

Listening out for particular words in a spoken or recorded text is also a form of identification activity. Below is a selection of identification tasks based on this text:

☜	OK, that's Mr Brown. He's wearing a jacket and trousers, no tie, and he's talking to the woman with the long dark hair - she's wearing a black dress. Now Mrs Brown is over there. She's wearing a skirt and a blouse, and she's talking to a tall man with fair hair. And their son, Richard ... yes, there he is, he's over in the corner. He's wearing jeans and a T-shirt - he's the one with very short hair.
	a) List all the clothes items that you hear.
	b) Raise your hand when you hear a clothes item.
	c) Put these items in the order that you hear them:

blouse   tie   skirt   jeans   jacket   T-shirt   dress   trousers

d) Tick the items that you hear:

blouse   shoes   tie   shorts   skirt   socks   jeans   jacket   hat   T-shirt   dress   trousers   suit   shirt

e) Listen for clothes words and write them in the correct column:

Mr Brown	Mrs Brown	Richard

Identification is also the process learners apply in tasks in which they have to unscramble anagrams (such as *utis, snaje, eti* - for *suit, jeans, tie),* or when they have to search for words in a 'word soup', such as the following:

What are these clothes in English? The answers are all in the wordsquare

S	H	I	R	T	O	S	I
J	A	C	K	E	T	H	L
A	T	C	J	N	J	O	T
T	R	O	U	S	E	R	S
I	D	A	M	W	A	T	H
E	X	T	P	U	N	S	I
O	D	R	E	S	S	J	R
S	K	I	R	T	U	P	T
S	U	S	U	I	T	J	E

B.2 Selecting tasks are cognitively more complex than identification tasks, since they involve both recognising words and making choices amongst them. This may take the form of choosing the 'odd one out', as in this task (again, based on the lexical set of clothes):

☜   Choose the odd one out in each group:

1	trousers	socks	jeans	T-shirt
2	blouse	skirt	tie	dress
3	T-shirt	suit	shorts	trainers

Note that with this kind of activity, there is no 'right' answer necessarily. What is important is that learners are able to justify their choice, whatever their answer. It is the cognitive work that counts - not getting the right answer.

Here is another open-ended selection task, with a personalised element:
1 Work in pairs. Choose five words to describe yourself. Use a dictionary if necessary.

careful interesting clever cold confident fit funny Imaginative intelligent kind lazy nervous optimistic patient pessimistic polite quiet calm rude sad sensitive nice serious tidy thoughtful	Think of other words you can use. *honest, friendly...* Discuss your choice of words with your partner. */ think I'm usually optimistic. And I'm always polite!* Does he/she agree with you?	Think of three people you admire very much. They can be politicians, musicians, sports personalities etc. or people you know personally. Choose the person you admire most and think of three adjectives to describe this person. Then choose the second and third person you admire and think of three more adjectives for each person to explain why.

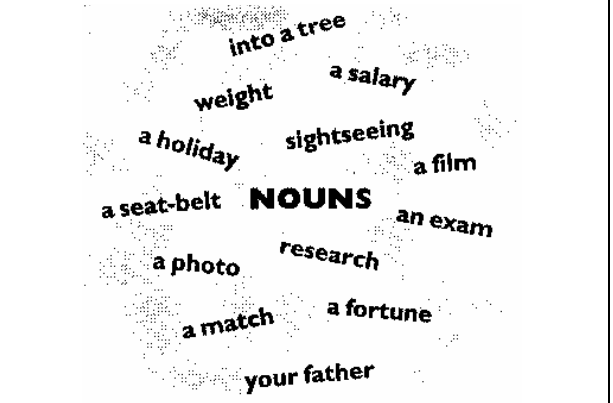Another useful selecting task that can be applied to any vocabulary lesson is:

☺	Choose five words to describe yourself. Think of how you will demonstrate - in the next class - that you have learned them.

The same kind of task can be applied to any text that the learners have read or listened to. And, as a way of recycling vocabulary items from previous lessons, learners can select words from their notebooks to 'test' their classmates at the beginning of each lesson.

B.3. A matching task involves first recognising words and then pairing them with - for example - a visual representation, a translation, a synonym, an antonym, a definition, or a collocate. As an example of this last type, here is a verb—noun matching task:

WORD PAIR RACE
In five minutes, write as many correct pairs of verb + noun phrases as possible.

Pelmanism is a memory game which involves nothing but matching. Word pairs (or picture-word matches) are printed on individual cards which are placed face down in a random distribution. Players take turns to pick up a card and then search for its partner. If they correctly locate the partner (initially by guesswork, but, as the game progresses, by remembering where individual cards are located), they keep the pair, and have another turn. If not, they lay the cards face down where they found them, and the next player has a turn. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game is the winner.
Typical pairs might be:

- antonyms *(tall - short, thick - thin, dark - light,* etc.)
- British and American equivalents *(bill- check, pharmacy - drugstore, lift -elevator,* etc.), or
- collocations *(wide + awake, stark + naked, fast + asleep,* etc.)

B.4. Sorting activities require learners to sort words into different categories. The categories can either be given, or guessed.

Word field: characteristics
Put these adjectives into two groups - positive and negative.

emotional	friendly	good-humoured	outgoing
confident	ambitious	rude	self-centred
offensive	kind	selfish	nice

Here is an activity in which learners (at a fairly advanced level) decide the categories themselves:
Put these words into four groups of three words each. Then, think of a title for each group.

goal   net   piece   club   racket   shoot   board   green court   hole   pitch referee   check   serve   tee   move

Now, can you add extra words to each group?

B.5. Ranking and sequencing activities require learners to put the words into some kind of order. This may involve arranging the words on a cline: for example, adverbs of frequency *(always, sometimes, never, occasionally, often,* etc). Or learners may be asked to rank items according to preference:
B   Imagine you have just moved into a completely empty flat. You can afford to buy one piece of furniture a week. Put the following items in the order in which you would buy them:

fridge   bed   desk   dining table   sofa wardrobe   chair   dishwasher   bookcase cooker washing machine   chest of drawers

Now, compare your list with another student and explain your order. If you were sharing the flat together, would you agree? If not, make a new list that you both agree about.

☜ Classifying knowledge Put the students in threes and ask them to rank the following types of skill/knowledge (a) for their usefulness in everyday life; (b) in terms of the value of qualifications that might be gained through acquiring such knowledge. *tooth care   soil chemistry   surgery   psychiatry   arithmetic micro-computing knitting   geometry   plain cookery darning   league football   literary criticism music nuclear physics   cordon bleu cookery   pop music servicing a motor car ancient Greek   carpentry road safety   filling in tax forms*

Ask the threes to come together into nines and compare their rankings.

Ordering items chronologically is another way of getting students to make judgements about words. For example:

Put the following words in the order in which they typically happen in your country: *graduate   get married   be born   get divorced   get engaged die   retire   leave home have children   re-marry   start school*

Any sequence of activities — from starting a car to buying a home — lends itself to the same treatment. Here, for example, is a task that focuses on the language of air travel

Work in pairs. Think about what people do when they travel by plane. Put the actions below in the correct column.

before the flight	after the flight
Check in	Leave the plane

leave the plane	check in
land	collect your baggage
unfasten your seatbelt	go through passport control
go into the departure lounge	listen to the safety instructions
go to the departure gate	go through customs
fasten your seatbelt	board the plane
go through passport control	go into the arrivals hall

Number the actions in the order people do them.

More techniques
a) "What is it? technique":
An example for learning the word ' stirrup:
A stirrup is silver. A stirrup is strong. A stirrup is made of iron. A stirrup has a flat bottom. We can find a stirrup on a horse. A stirrup is used to put your foot into when you ride a horse. Since the meaning is not quickly given away, the learner has a reason to continue to process all of the input, until it is understood.

b) "Order the words"
Another example of encouraging deeper encoding is asking students to describe how a word, in this case order, is distinguished from similar ones. The directions are to cross out the word in each series which does not belong.
(a) order: command   advise   demand
(b) order: tell   instruct   suggest
In the process of deleting one, the characteristics which categorize the others will emerge. An even richer opportunity comes from having students supply the initial synonyms for this activity.

C) Production tasks

The decision-making tasks we have been looking at are principally receptive: learners make judgements about words, but don't necessarily produce them.
Tasks that are productive from the outset are those in which the learners are required to incorporate the newly studied words into some kind of speaking or writing activity. These can be classified as being of two main types:
• completion - of sentences and texts
• creation - of sentences and texts

Here are some **example** instructions for open and closed gap-fill tasks:

- Complete the text by writing an appropriate word in each space: 'Greta Garbo, the Swedish-born film ___, was born in 1905. She won a scholarship to drama school, where she learned to ___. In 1924 a film director chose her for a ___ in a Swedish film called ..."
- Choose the best word from the list to complete each sentence. Use each word once ...
- Select words from the list to complete these sentences. Note that there are more words than sentences ...
- Choose words from the text you have just read to complete these sentences ...
- Choose the best word to complete each sentence:

When I feel tired, I can't stop __.

a   sneezing
b   yawning
c   coughing
d   weeping
etc.

Note that the last example is a **multiple choice** task. These are very popular with designers of vocabulary tests.

In completion tasks, the context is provided, and it is simply a matter of slotting the right word in.

C.2. Sentence and text creation tasks, however, require learners to create the contexts for given words. Here are some typical task instructions:

- Use each of these words to make a sentence which clearly shows the meaning of the word.
- Choose six words from the list and write a sentence using each one.
- Use each of these words to write a *true* sentence about yourself or someone you know.
- Write a short narrative (or dialogue) which includes at least five words from the list.

Tasks such as these lead naturally into speaking activities - either reading aloud or performing dialogues to the class, or comparing and explaining sentences in pairs or small groups. These activities involve many of the processes that serve to promote retention in long-term memory, such as rehearsal, repetition and explanation.

Not all creation activities need start as writing tasks. Here is a speaking task which requires learners to create sentences using pre-selected vocabulary:

Work in pairs. Ask and say how you feel about your town or village.
I love it.   It's all right.   I can't stand it.

Which of the following adjectives can you use to describe your town or village?
interesting   boring   annoying   depressing   frightening   marvellous   beautiful   peaceful
noisy   lively

Can you explain why?
I find it boring because there's nothing to do in the evenings.

The use of questionnaires is a good way of putting vocabulary to work in the form of question-and-answer exchanges. Many areas of vocabulary lend themselves to some kind of
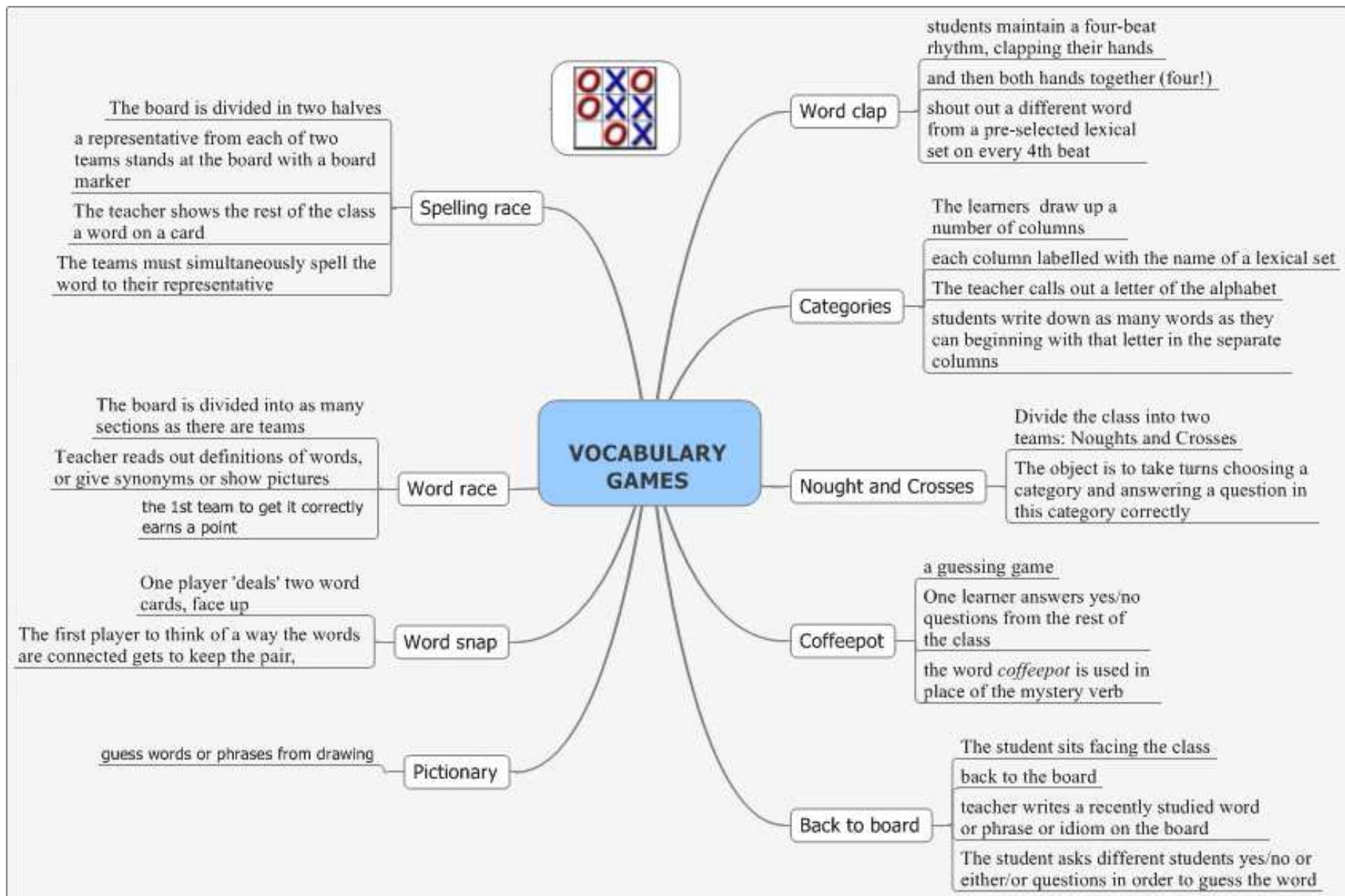
questionnaire or survey. The same vocabulary items in the preceding example could be used as the basis of a questionnaire or survey.

👁 Students can prepare.a survey - using these examples as a model:
1   Is your hometown boring or interesting? Why?
2 ..Do you find big cities: depressing, interesting, lively or noisy? Why? etc.
They then ask each other their prepared questions, and report the results to the class, using full sentences, such as *Maria thinks his hometown is interesting because it has a lot of historical monuments.*

VOCABULARY GAMES

Word clap
- students maintain a four-beat rhythm, clapping their hands
- and then both hands together (four!)
- shout out a different word from a pre-selected lexical set on every 4th beat

Categories
- The learners draw up a number of columns
- each column labelled with the name of a lexical set
- The teacher calls out a letter of the alphabet
- students write down as many words as they can beginning with that letter in the separate columns

Nought and Crosses
- Divide the class into two teams: Noughts and Crosses
- The object is to take turns choosing a category and answering a question in this category correctly

Coffeepot
- a guessing game
- One learner answers yes/no questions from the rest of the class
- the word *coffeepot* is used in place of the mystery verb

Back to board
- The student sits facing the class
- back to the board
- teacher writes a recently studied word or phrase or idiom on the board
- The student asks different students yes/no or either/or questions in order to guess the word

Pictionary
- guess words or phrases from drawing

Word snap
- One player 'deals' two word cards, face up
- The first player to think of a way the words are connected gets to keep the pair,

Word race
- The board is divided into as many sections as there are teams
- Teacher reads out definitions of words, or give synonyms or show pictures
- the 1st team to get it correctly earns a point

Spelling race
- The board is divided in two halves
- a representative from each of two teams stands at the board with a board marker
- The teacher shows the rest of the class a word on a card
- The teams must simultaneously spell the word to their representative

D. Games

Many word games deal solely with isolated - rather than contextualised - words, and often require only shallow processing on the part of the learner, they should be used judiciously. The time spent on a single de-contextualised word in a game of 'Hangman', for example, has to be weighed up against the more productive, contextualised and cognitively deep activities outlined earlier in this chapter.

Here are some word games to try:

D.1 Word clap:

Students stand or sit in a circle, and, following the teacher's lead, maintain a four-beat rhythm, clapping their hands on their thighs three times (one-two-three ...) and then both hands together (four!). The game should start slowly, but the pace of the clapping can gradually increase. The idea is to take turns, clockwise, to shout out a different word from a pre-selected lexical set (for example, fruit and vegetables) on every fourth beat. Players who either repeat a word already used, or break the rhythm - or say nothing - are 'out' and the game resumes without them, until only one player is left. The teacher can change the lexical set by shouting out the name of a new set at strategic points: *Furniture! Nationalities! Jobs!* etc.

D.2.Categories:

Learners work in pairs or small groups. On a piece of paper, they draw up a number of columns, according to a model on the board, each column labelled with the name of a lexical set: *e.g. fruit, transport, clothes, animals, sports.* The teacher calls out a letter of the alphabet (e.g. *B!),* and to a time limit (e.g. three minutes), students write down as many words as they can beginning with that letter in the separate columns *(banana, berry; bus; bikini, blouse; bear, bat; baseball, basketball...).* The group with the most (correct) words wins.

D.3. Noughts and crosses:

Draw two noughts and crosses grids on the board:

One is blank. In the other each square is labelled with a category, or with nine different phrasal verb particles *(up, on, off, in, back,* etc), or nine different affixes *(un-, non-, -less, -tion,* etc). Prepare a number of questions relating to each category. For example (if the class is monolingual): *How do you say 'tamburo' in English?* Or, *What is the opposite of shy'?*

Divide the class into two teams: noughts and crosses. The object is to take turns choosing a category and answering a question in this category correctly so as to earn the right to place their team's symbol in the corresponding position in the blank grid. The winning team is the first to create a line of three (noughts or crosses), either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.

D.4. Coffeepot:

This is a guessing game. One learner answers yes/no questions from the rest of the class (or group) about a verb that she has thought of, or that the teacher has whispered to her. In the questions the word *coffeepot* is used in place of the mystery verb. So, for example, students might ask *Do you coffeepot indoors or outdoors? Is coffeepotting easy or difficult? Can you coffeepot with your hands?* etc.

D.5. Back to board:

This is another guessing game, but this time the student who is 'it' has to guess a word by asking the rest of the class questions. The student sits facing the class, back to the board; the teacher writes a recently studied word or phrase or idiom on the board, out of sight of the student. The student asks different students yes/no or either/or questions in order to guess the word. For example: *Helga, is it a verb or a noun? (A verb.) Dittmar, is it an action? (No.) Karl-Heinz, is it something you do with your mind? (Yes.)* ... etc. To make the game easier, the words chosen can be limited in some way - e.g. all phrasal verbs; all character adjectives, and so on.

D.6. Pictionary:
Based on the commercialised game of the same name, this involves students <u>guessing words or phrases from drawings</u>. They work in teams, each member of the team taking turns to be the 'artist'. If there are three teams, for example, the three 'artists' go to the front of the class where the teacher shows them a word (or phrase) on a card. At a cue, they quickly return to their group and try to get their group to correctly guess the word by drawing it with pen and paper. The first team to guess correctly earns a point, and three new 'artists' have a turn with another word.

D.7.**Word snap:**
Using word cards, students work in small groups, with the aim of collecting as many word 'pairs' as possible. One player 'deals' two word cards, face up, so that everyone can read them. <u>The first player to think of a way the words are connected gets to keep the pair,</u> and two more words are laid down. If no connection can be made, the two cards are shuffled back into the pack.

D.8. Word race:
The class is divided into teams and each team is given a board marker pen (or piece of chalk). The board is divided into as many sections as there are teams. The teacher says a word in the students' language, and the first team to get the correct English translation on to the board earns a point. The game continues for as many words as it is felt necessary to review. A variation of it would be to read out definitions of words, or give synonyms or show pictures, rather than give translations.

D.9 Spelling race:
The board is divided in two halves, and a representative from each of two teams stands at the board with a board marker pen or chalk. The teacher shows the rest of the class a word on a card. The teams must simultaneously spell (not say) the word to their representative, who cannot see the word. The first team to get the word on to the board with its correct spelling earns a point. The game continues with different students taking turns to be the team representative. This game is more difficult than it sounds, especially if words are chosen that include letters which are frequently confused -such as z and *e, v* and *b, j* and *g.* Lots of variations of this game are possible. The word could be displayed as a picture, so that the teams have to decide what the word is before spelling it.

Teaching word parts and word chunks

A) Teaching word formation and word combination

Affixation
Words can be formed by the addition of prefixes and suffixes - a process called **affixation.**

Compounding
Two or more words can join up to make one. Thus: *black + board = blackboard.*

Conversion
New words can be created by a process called **conversion,** when a word that in one context is one part of speech (such as a noun), in another context can be enlisted to serve a different function (such as a verb). Hence, you may have heard the relatively recent term *to board* as in *The teacher boarded the new words and the students wrote them down.*

Cluster
Words can cluster (but not join up) to form **multi-word units**, loosely called **chunks** - that behave as if they were single words.
For example, *black:: black and white, black and blue, black sheep, in the black* and *to black out.* This last is an example of a **phrasal verb.** Many chunks have an **idiomatic** meaning - that is to say the meaning of the chunk as a whole is not directly inferrable from the individual words: *He's the **black sheep** of the family*

A.1. The rule-based approach
A rule-based approach starts by isolating and highlighting any relevant paterns or regularities. Here is an example of a rule – or "rule ofthunb" statement

> Negative **prefixes.** The prefixes *mis-, dis-, ig-,* and *un-* can all be used to give a word a rather negative meaning. The prefix *may* help *you* to guess the meaning of the word.
> *mis-* = 'wrongly, badly' or 'not done' *(mismanage)*
> *dis-* = 'away from, the opposite of, lack of *(distaste)*
> *ig-* = 'not, lacking in" *(ignorant)*
> *un-* = 'not, lack of, the opposite, reversal or removal of *(undo)*
> Here is some advice to help you choose the correct prefix.
> *dis-* can be used to form verbs, eg *dissatisfy;* adjectives, eg *dishonest;* and nouns, eg *disability.* The prefix *ig-* appears only before the letter *n.*

One advantage of knowing the meanings of different affixes is that they may help the learner unpack the meaning of unfamiliar words when reading and listening. So, a reader coming across *dissatisfied* for the first time should have no trouble understanding it if they know *satisfied*'and are dfamiliar with different negative prefixes.

B. Teaching lexical chunks
There are different types of chunks and different degrees of 'chunkiness'. Of the different types, the following are the most important for teaching purposes:
- collocations - such as *widely travelled; rich and famous; make do with; set the table*
- phrasal verbs - such as *get up; log on; run out of; go on about*
- idioms, catchphrases and sayings - such as *hell for leather; get cold feet; as old as the hills; mind your own business; takes one to know one*

- sentence frames - such as *would you mind if... ?; the thing is ...; I'd... if Iwere you; what really gets me is ... '* social formulae — such as *see you later; have a nice day; yours sincerely*
- discourse markers — such as *frankly speaking; on the other hand; I take your point; once upon a time; to cut a long story short...*

The ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones. How is this capacity developed? Probably not by learning rules -. <u>A lexical approach is based on the belief that lexical competence comes simply from:</u>

- frequent exposure, and
- consciousness-raising
- memorising

Classroom language provides plentiful opportunities for exposure to lexical chunks. Many learners are familiar with expressions like / *don't understand* and / *don't know* long before they have been presented with the 'rules' of present simple negation. By increasing the stock of <u>classroom phrases,</u> teachers can exploit the capacity of chunks to provide the raw material for the later acquisition of grammar. Many teachers cover their classroom walls with useful phrases and insist on their use whenever an appropriate opportunity arises. A sampling of phrases on classroom walls includes:
What does X mean?
How do you say X?
What's the (past/plural/opposite, etc.) of X?
Can you say that again?
Can you write it up?
How do you spell it?
I'm not sure.
I've forgotten.
I left it at home.
I haven't finished yet.
It's (your/my/his) turn.
You go first.
Here you are.
Pass me the ...
Let's have a break.
etc.
The repetitive nature of classroom activity ensures plentiful exposure to these chunks. This is vital, because occasional and random exposure is insufficient.

Here, for example, is an extract from a fairly well-known authentic text:
Yo, I'll tell you what I want what I really really want,
So tell me what you want what you really really want
I'll tell you what I want what I really really want,
So tell me what you want what you really really want
I wanna I wanna I wanna I wanna I wanna really really really wanna
zigazig ha
If you want my future, forget my past,
If you wanna get with me, better make it fast
Now don't go wasting my precious time

Get your act together we could be just fine ...
If you wannabe my lover, you gotta get with my friends
Make it last forever, Friendship never ends
If you wannabe my lover, you have got to give,
Taking is too easy but that's the way it is.
What d'ya think about that? Now you know how I feel.
Say you can handle my love, are you for real?
I won't be hasty, I'll give you a try
If you really bug me then I'll say goodbye
(from Wannabe by the Spice Girls)

How could you use the above song text?
• check understanding of text (for example, by eliciting a paraphrase or translation of the text)
• using transcript, set tasks focusing on features of words in combination
Examples of such tasks might be:
• Underline all contractions. Decontract them (i.e. *wanna = want to)*
• Find examples of these sentence patterns in the song: *... tell... what... If you ...* imperative ... *If you ... you have got to ... If you ... then I'll...*
• Write some more examples, using these patterns, that would fit the theme of the song.
• Use examples from the song to show the difference between *tell* and *say.*

Teaching collocations
Here is an example taken from business English on collocations related to the word *sales:*

The word in the centre of the diagram is the keyword. There are different kinds of words in the background words. Use different coloured pens to underline the background words so that you divide them into groups. Find some two-word and three-word partnerships. Look for some partnerships which include the keyword and a verb from the background words. Write four sentences about your own situation. Use coloured pens or highlight the word partnerships so you can check them easily later.

Notice that the focus is not just on noun + noun collocations *(sales volume)* but on verb + noun + noun combinations (e.g. *boost our sales volume).* Chunks of this size require the addition of only a little real grammar to provide much of the substance of typical business text: *We need to boost our sales volume.*
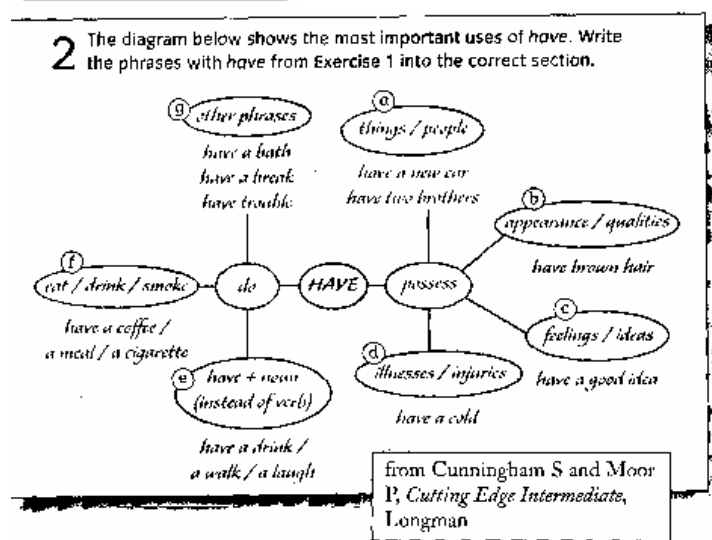
Here are some more ideas for teaching **collocation:**

Learners sort words on cards into their **collocational pairs**
- (e.g. *warm + welcome, slim + chance, golden + opportunity, lucky + break, mixed + reception,*
- *hot and cold, to and fro, out and about, sick and tired}.*
- 'headwords': e.g. *trip (business, day, round, return, boat), holiday (summer, family, public, one month, working)* and *weekend (long, every, last, next, holiday).*

wide	broad	
•		door
•	•	street
•	•	river
	•	smile
	•	shoulders
	•	nose
•		gap
	•	accent
•		world
•	•	range
•		variety
•		apart
•		awake

- Read out a list of words: learners in groups think of as many collocations or related expressions as they can. Set a time limit - the group with the most collocations wins a point. Good words for this include parts of the body *(face, head, back, foot, hand),* colours *(red, green, blue, black,* etc.) and opposites, such as *weak/strong, narrow/wide, safe/dangerous, old/young,* etc.
- Fill in a collocational grid, using dictionaries, to show common collocations. For example, here's a very simple (and completed) one for *wide* and *broad:*

2 The diagram below shows the most important uses of *have.* Write the phrases with *have* from Exercise 1 into the correct section.

from Cunningham S and Moor P, *Cutting Edge Intermediate,* Longman

- Ask learners to prepare 'collocation maps' of high frequency words and their collocates. Words like *have, take, give, make* and *get* lend themselves to this kind of treatment. They are often used in combination with nouns to form an expression which has a meaning of its own, as in *have a look, take a break, give advice, make an appointment,* so that the verb itself has little or no independent meaning.

Finally, as a general approach to the teaching of lexical phrases and collocation, the following advice is sound:

• Become more aware of phrases and collocations yourself.
• Make your students aware of phrases and collocations.
• Keep an eye on usefulness and be aware of overloading students.
• Feed in phrases on a 'little but often' basis.
• Introduce phrases in context, but drill them as short chunks.
• Point out patterns in phrases.
• Be ready to answer students' questions briefly.
• Keep written records of phrases as phrases.
• Reinforce and recycle the phrases as much as you can.

C. Teaching phrasal verbs

Typical exercise types used in the teaching of phrasal verbs include:
- sentence gap-fills
- re-phrasing: e.g. changing the verb in the sentence (e.g. *depart)* to a phrasal verb that has a similar meaning (e.g. *set off)*
- matching: e.g. matching the phrasal verb with its synonym

Example:
Use phrasal verbs with *get* to complete these sentences:
1 I can't _____ how much Julia has changed: it's amazing!
2 Excuse me, I want to _____ at the next stop.
3 The concert was cancelled so I'm going to see if I can _____ my money _____.

The following passage, which comes from a guide to the Cambridge First Certificate in English examination, offers some good advice to students:

1) Whenever you read a book, newspaper or text in English, get into the habit of *identifying* and underlining phrasal verbs ...
2) Write down in a special notebook the sentences in which they appear.
3) Use your English-English dictionary to look up the meaning, and write this after your sentence.
4) Try to write your own sentence using the same phrasal verb in a different context.
5) Get an English teacher or friend to check that your sentences are correct.
6) Limit the number of new phrasal verbs you collect to, say, two or three each day; if you do five or ten minutes' good work with each, you will quickly build up a useful stock of words which you have actually seen used in the English you have read.

(from Naylor H and Hagger S, *First Certificate Handbook,* Hulton Educational)

1 In the listening exercise on page 31 you will hear six new phrasal verbs. They are in bold type in this paragraph. From their context, work out which ones mean:

to leave   to recover consciousness   to finish
to arrive   to begin suddenly   to escape

War had broken out in the desert kingdom and we realized that we had to get away. Amanda turned up at my apartment three hours late, so we immediately got the car and set off across the desert. Soon, our petrol supply ran out, but we managed to beg some from a passing lorry. We were within sight of the border, when there was a sudden, loud bang and everything went black. When I came round, night had fallen and Amanda was watching over me with a worried expression. It was then that I realized we had driven over a landmine.

2 Complete these sentences by using each phrasal verb once.

1 He is still unconscious; I'll call you when he ....
2 She was so unhappy at home that she just had to ....
3 If you .... late, you won't be allowed into the concert.
4 We'll have to .... really early to catch the ferry.
5 Just use a cheque if your cash ... ...
6 A flu epidemic has ... . at work; I hope I don't catch it.

Teachers should also try and include phrasal verbs in their classroom language as much as possible - and draw attention to these from time to time.

Common classroom expressions incorporating phrasal verbs are
sit down,
put your hand up,
turn your papers over,
write this down,
cover the page up,
look it up,
hurry up and
calm down!

By this means, exposure to a rich diet of phrasal verbs can begin on Day 1.

D. Teaching idioms

Idioms present problems in both understanding and in production. They are difficult to understand because they are not easily unpacked, and they are difficult to produce because they often allow no variation. Few errors sound more comical than an even slightly muddled idiom (e.g. / *don't want to blow my own horn,* instead of / *don't want to blow my own trumpet).* Moreover, many idioms have a very narrow register range, being used only in certain contexts and for certain effects. They therefore need to be approached with a great deal of caution, and most teaching guides recommend teaching them for recognition only.
Teach them as they arise, and in their contexts of use. That is, to treat them as individual lexical items in their own right, without making a *song and dance* about them.

In this extract (from *Sugar)* idioms (including idiomatic phrasal verbs) are underlined.
Eastenders
Martin gets a big wake-up call this month when Mark is taken seriously ill. How will he cope knowing his big bro's days could be numbered and will Nicky stick by him through thick and thin?
Home and Away
Tom offers to pay for Justine's courses in the city with the money he earned from acting in the commercial. What a sweetie, eh? However, Justine isn't that impressed, and feels that Tom's cramping her style. How can she let him down gently?
Coronation Street
The Mike, Mark and Linda triangle's still going strong, and sparks are beginning to fly between Linda and Mark's new girlie, Claire. Eeek! Things aren't too good over at the Platt's either.
Emmerdale
Mark is annoyed when neither of his parents make it to the parent's evening ... how embarrassing! Richie lends Sarah a shoulder to cry on after yet another bust-up with Jack. Will those two ever get on?

To use a text like this in class, learners could be set the task of working out the underlined idioms from either their form or their context.

HOW TO TEST VOCABUARY

Why test anything The obvious answer is that, without testing, there is no reliable means of knowing how effective a teaching sequence has been
Testing provides a form of feedback, both for learners and teachers'. Moreover testing has a useful **backwash** effect: if learners know they are going to be tested on their vocabulary learning, they may take vocabulary learning more seriously. Testing motivates learners to review vocabulary in preparation for a test. It also provides an excuse for further, post-test, review when, for example, the teacher goes over the answers in class. In this way testing can be seen as part of the **recycling** of vocabulary generally. In fact, the only difference between many recycling exercises and tests is that only the latter are scored.
Informal testing of this type is best done on a regular basis. Ideally, in fact, vocabulary covered in the previous lesson should be tested at the beginning of the next one. If not, the chances of retaining the new vocabulary are greatly reduced.

Types of tests

Multiple choice tasks

Here is areview activity from a coursebook that could just as well form an item in a test:

	Multiple choice tests are a popular way of testing in that they are easy to score (a computer can do it), and they are easy to design (or seem to be). Moreover, the multiple choice format can be used with isolated words, words in a sentence context, or words in whole texts.

Choose the best word to complete each sentence:
1 The flight attendant asked the passengers to _____ attention to the safety demonstration.
  a give   b devote   c pay   d lend
2 A severe hurricane in the South Pacific has _____ many lives.
  a claimed   b taken   c killed   d destroyed
3 The delegates blamed each other when the peace talks broke _____.
  a off   b up   c on   d down
etc.	

tangle   means   a a type of dance
                   b a tropical forest
                   c a confused mass
                   d a kind of fruit
	Here, for example is a 'word only' example:

CANCER 22 June–22 July Someone else is *[a playing; b calling; c singing]* the tune and for the moment you're quite happy to go *[a along; b around; c away]* with what seems like a reasonable idea. Hobbies *[a make; b use; c take]* up far too much time and children could need support with a new activity. Feelings are *[a going; b running; c climbing]* high so ensure you're getting the affection you need …	Here, on the other hand, is a contextualised multiple choice test:

Gap-fill tasks

- Gap-fill tests require learners to recall the word from memory in order to complete a sentence or text. Thus they test the ability to produce a word rather than simply recognise it. The best-known example of this test type is the **cloze test.**

Tumbu fly In Africa south of the Sahara, another (1) _____ the traveller may encounter is (2) _____ tumbu or mango fly, which (3) _____ its eggs on clothing laid (4) _____ on the ground to dry. (5) _____ larvae hatch and burrow their (6) _____ into the skin, causing boil-like (7) _____. These can be avoided by (8) _____ that clothes, bedding, etc., are (9) _____ spread on the ground to dry.	In a cloze test, the gaps are regularly spaced - e.g. every seventh, eighth, or ninth word. In this way, knowledge of a wide range of word types is tested. Moreover, the ability to complete the gaps depends on understanding the context.
Tumbu fly In Africa south of the Sahara, another problem the traveller may e_____ is the tumbu or mango fly, which l_____ its eggs on clothing laid out on the ground to dry. The larvae h_____ and burrow their way into the s_____, causing boil-like s_____. These can be a_____ by ensuring that clothes, bedding, etc., are not s_____ on the ground to dry.	A variant of the cloze test is one in which, rather than every *nth* word, specifically chosen words are deleted. In this way, the test can be steered more towards content words, and hence become a more valid test of vocabulary.

Tumbu fly In Africa south of the Sahara, another prob____ the trav____ may encou____ is t____ tumbu o____ mango fl____, which la____ its eg____ on cloth____ laid o____ on t____ ground t____ dry. T____ larvae hat____ and bur____ their w____ into t____ skin, caus____ boil-like swel____. These c____ be avoi____ by ensu____ that clot____, bedding, et____, are n____ spread o____ the gro____ to dr____.	A variety of this approach is called the C-test. In a **C-test**, the second half of every second word is deleted as shown overleaf: Researchers have shown that success at doing C-tests correlates with success at other kinds of vocabulary test.
Change the word on the left into a suitable form to fill the gap: 1 *compose* On one occasion the opera was conducted by the _____. 2 *place* Have you seen my keys? I seem to have _____ them.	Another variety of gap-fill tests learners' knowledge of word formation, by asking them to convert words from one form to another so as to fit a context.