

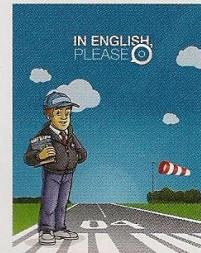
IN ENGLISH, PLEASE



L'anglais pour voler
disponible sur



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Now available on the Appstore, the collection of "In English, please" articles from June 2007 to December 2016, with audio recordings when available.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY WORDS ARE THE BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS OF LANGUAGE

According to many researchers in linguistics, knowledge of vocabulary is essential to master a language. Experts go as far as saying that «words are the starting point» (1).

How many words should you know?

As stated several times in this column, you cannot embark on the journey towards the FCL 055 without a prior, solid foundation in general English. As far as vocabulary is concerned, the number of words an intermediate (ICAO level 4) student is supposed to know varies widely depending on the way words are counted. Is each form of the word differentiated? In this case «fly», «flying», «flyable» are 3 different words. But if only word families are considered, then they would count for only one word. And what about words with two different meanings? «To fly» can mean «to move through the air using wings» or «to flee, to escape». Does it count as two words? As you can see, the whole subject is complex so, when it comes to vocabulary lists, size doesn't really matter. Let's just end the debate with this statement from the Collins Corpus, an analytical database of English that contains written and spoken material from a wide range of sources: «around 90% of English speech and writing is made up of approximately 3,500 words».

Passive and active vocabulary

There are words you just don't know at all. You have never seen them, never heard them. When you first encounter such a word, you

start by checking its meaning - and its use in other contexts - in a dictionary, for example at www.wordreference.com. You can also look for synonyms and antonyms in a thesaurus such as www.thesaurus.com. The word then becomes part of your passive vocabulary: vocabulary that you're able to understand but you're still unsure of how to use. Repeated exposure to this word will move it into your active vocabulary: vocabulary that you can quickly remember and use. The trick is to move the words from your passive to your active vocabulary as efficiently as possible.

4 tips to do the trick

The first vocabulary-building tool that comes to mind is reading. Read everything and anything, in print or online, according to the level best adapted to your needs. If you cannot guess the meaning of a new word from its context, and if you feel that it really interferes with the comprehension of what you are reading, look it up in a dictionary. Keep in mind that if you spend more time in the dictionary than in your book, it might be the signal that you are aiming a little too high. Learning from lists is probably not the most pleasant way of improving your vocabulary skills, but it can be effective. You'll find lists galore on the internet. Just Google «vocabulary lists for English learners» and the choice is yours! www.englishclub.com could be the right place to start.

Sign up for a word-of-the-day email at www.dictionary.com and/or www.merriam-webster.com, to have a word delivered daily in your mail box. It gives you the opportunity to practice a little more regularly, although not all the words sent are for everyday use. www.dictionary.com also has a weekly quiz to check how many of these words stayed with you.

The internet is also awash with word games for students of English. As for the vocabulary lists, www.englishclub.com is a good place to start. www.dictionary.com also offers a wide range of crosswords and word games. The le-

vel is more challenging, but if you choose the 'regular' level, you can ask for hints to solve the puzzles.

From general English to aviation English

The role of «In English, please» is to add an aeronautical layer to your general English, so let's focus now on aviation-related vocabulary. All the methods indicated above can, of course, be applied to aviation English. I am not aware of any word-of-the-day program in aviation English, but many specialized sites offer to sign up for their newsletter. It is the case for www.boldmethod.com, www.pilotworkshop.com, www.flyingmag.com, and www.flyer.co.uk to name a few. These newsletters will be delivered to your mailbox at different times during the week, and even reading only the titles is good practice.

When it comes to aviation vocabulary lists, *L'Anglais pour voler* is a must-have. In the first half of the book, more than 4,000 words and expressions are organized by subjects. The iOS application and the cd-rom also feature the pronunciation in English of these 4,000 entries and an efficient search engine.

You can also create your own high-frequency vocabulary lists. Paste a URL, or a text, in the appropriate field at www.tocloud.com. In the «display» menu, select «by frequency» and tick the «display frequencies» box. Finally, click on «create tag cloud». The result is a list of the words that appear in the text, ranked in order of frequency. Learn a few new words from each list, starting with the most frequent ones, then dig deeper in the lists as you memorize more and more words.

Expanding one's vocabulary looks like hard work, and it is! As always, regularity is the key. But think of it this way: the more vocabulary you know, the easier it becomes to guess the meaning of a new word from its context, and thereby add it quickly to your active vocabulary. ●

(1) Clark E. V. The Lexicon in acquisition, Cambridge University Press.

VOCABULARY

TO WASH WITH.....	rempli de
TO DIG.....	creuser
TO FEATURE.....	être caractérisé par
A FIELD.....	un champ
GALORE.....	à gogo
A MUST-HAVE.....	un incontournable
TO PASTE.....	coller
TO RANK.....	classer
TO TICK.....	cocher
THE TRICK.....	le truc