

SECTION

3

WORDS AND THEIR
USAGE

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READING

Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Hello! You are warmly welcome to this section of the Intervention English Language lesson. This section deals with vocabulary or how words are acquired through reading and conversation. You already know letters, sounds and how they are put together to make a word. Your understanding of how words are used in real-life situations is very important for effective communication. In our everyday life activities, we use words to help us communicate our thoughts, ideas and emotions or feelings. That is why it is important that we just don't only know about words but also their functions or roles in different situations. For you to build your confidence in the use of the English language, you are encouraged to follow the lesson carefully and perform all the activities that come with the lesson.

By the end of the lesson, you as the student will be able to;

Identify real-life connections between words and their usage

Key Ideas

A **word** in many instances refers to a group of letters that makes sense and has its own meaning. The total number of words an individual knows or acquire in a particular language is known as vocabulary. Words are used in different situations and contexts to convey different meanings. A **word web** is a form of mind map that helps students to learn about new words and expand their vocabulary.

REAL-LIFE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WORDS AND THEIR USAGE

A **word** in many instances refers to the smallest meaningful unit of a language that can stand alone. Words are normally separated by spaces in written language and by pauses in speech. Now let us look at how to learn new words to build our vocabulary.

When you are learning words or phrases, you have to start with the simple or basic words then progress to complex or difficult words and then finally uncommon or unfamiliar words.

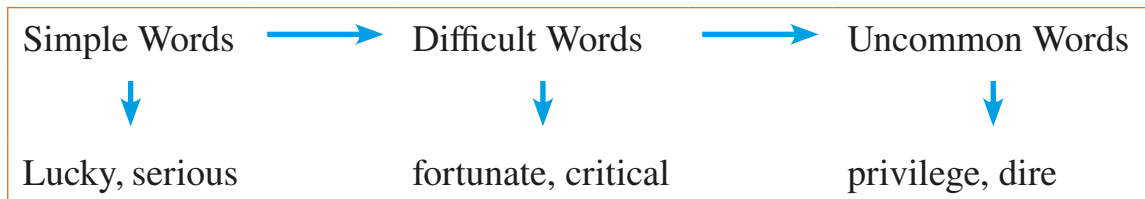


Fig. 3.1: Simple words progress to complex words then to uncommon words

This skill will help you learn the meaning of words easily. There is no need learning the meaning of more difficult or uncommon words when you cannot use them in your daily conversations. However, it is useful to learn the meaning of simple or basic words which can help you communicate easily with others.

Now, read the conversation below:

FATI: Where are you coming from?

ORRISON: From the library. I went to read a story book to *improve* my vocabulary.

FATI: I guess it's interesting.

ORRISON: You're right, it is. '*The Kaya-Girl*' by **Mamle Wolo** is an *exciting* story book and I really enjoyed it.

FATI: You are lucky to have interest in reading *story* books. I don't have that *motivation* at all. How I wish I'm in your shoes.

ORRISON: Well, I am. Reading is very important in the life of every student. Remember, if you want to learn effectively, then you have to read. It's the basic skill to *acquire* more vocabularies for *effective* communication.

FATI: Thank you for the advice. I must read to learn, and it starts now.

How do you feel after reading the short conversation between the two students, 'Fati and Orrison'?

Activity 3.1

Identify five vocabulary used in the conversation above.

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____
- v. _____

Contextual Meaning of Words

The meaning given to words in a given situation or context may be different in another situation or context. That is, the meaning of a word is based on how the word is used. For instance:

1. The teacher has given Shafatu the room to speak.
2. Shafatu has rented a room.

In the first sentence, the word room means ‘*opportunity or chance to do something*’ while in the second sentence, room means ‘*a place or an apartment*’. Therefore, anytime you see a word that you are familiar with in a sentence, you have to consider how it has been used before you come up with its meaning.

Now, let us read the short passage below carefully and find the meaning of the underlined words according to how they have been used.

Kiki My Best Friend

My father’s parrot is a friendly pet. It often takes a walk with me every Saturday morning. I have never seen a beautiful bird like my Kiki. She is so melodious with her morning hymns and her voice is my morning alarm. Most of my peers are jealous of the memorable times I do share with my pink-blue Kiki. Kiki hops from one corner of her cage to the other, just to welcome me each morning. And whenever I open the cage door, she moves out flapping her wings with so much excitement. She flies high to the sky and then comes to land on my shoulders pecking my cheek softly for a good morning message. It has always been a joyful morning with Kiki. At school, I become so lonely among my friends just because I miss Kiki. A life without her is like living without one’s heart. So, as soon as school is over, I go home straight though most of my colleagues are against my sudden disappearance. However, I take time to explain to them about my friend at

home whom I cannot **do without**. They do make a lot of comments about Kiki and me but nothing can separate us. Kiki makes me happy and always put a smile on my face. I feel very warm anytime we are together and this feeling I cannot trade for anything. My Kiki is the best friend in the whole world.

Table 3.1: Contextual Meaning of the Words from the Passage

S/N	Word	Meaning as Used in the Passage (Contextual Meaning)
1.	peers	someone who is the same age, or who has the same social position or abilities as other members of a group
2.	memorable	if an occasion is memorable, you will remember it for a long time because it is so good
3.	flapping	if a bird flaps its wings, it moves them up and down
4.	excitement	a feeling of being very happy and enthusiastic
5.	pecking	if a bird pecks something, it lifts or hits it with its beak

Using A Dictionary

In addition to using the context of words to understand their meaning, you can also use a dictionary to look up vocabulary. It encourages you to analyse different meanings of an unknown word. Let's take a look at some of the dictionary meanings of selected words from the text, *Kiki My Best Friend*.

S/N	Word	Meaning in Dictionary
1	peers	a) in the UK, a person who has a title and a high social position b) to look carefully or with difficulty c) one that is of equal standing with another
2	memorable	a) worth remembering or easily remembered, especially because of being special or unusual b) very good, enjoyable, or unusual

S/N	Word	Meaning in Dictionary
3	flapping	<p>a) a piece of cloth or material fixed along one edge to cover or close an opening</p> <p>b) the feeling of being worried or excited, or a situation that causes someone to feel this way:</p> <p>c) if something such as cloth or paper flaps, the side that is not fixed to something moves around, especially in the wind:</p>
4	excitement	<p>a) something that arouses a feeling of excitement</p> <p>b) the state of being excited: as in abnormal activity of an organism or functioning of an organ or part</p>
5	pecking	<p>a) to give someone a quick, gentle kiss on the face</p> <p>b) to strike or pierce especially repeatedly with the bill or a pointed tool</p> <p>c) to eat reluctantly and in small bites</p>

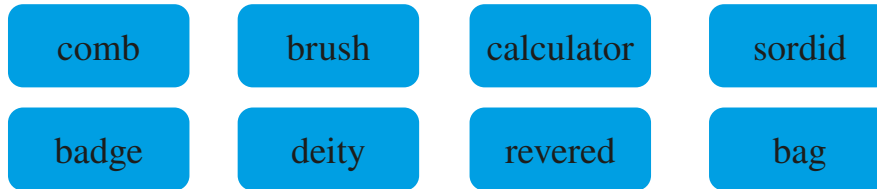
Activity 3.2:

Form two (2) meaningful sentences with each of the following words according to their meaning in the table.

1. peers: _____
2. memorable: _____
3. flapping: _____
4. excitement: _____
5. pecking: _____

Using Flashcards

Another effective way of acquiring vocabulary is through the use of flashcards. It is a small piece of stiff paper with a word, picture, or question on it to aid memorisation. Read out the words on the flashcards below.

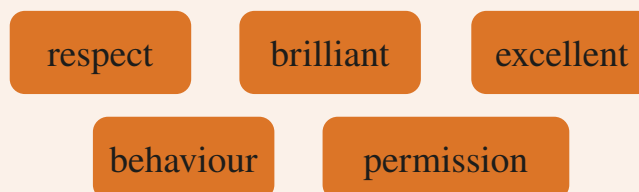


Now, let us study some of the words above with their meaning as indicated in the table below

S/N	Word	Meaning
1	Comb	A toothed implement for grooming the hair or for keeping it in place
2	Brush	An implement consisting of multiple more or less flexible bristles or other filaments attached to a handle, use for any of various purposes including cleaning, painting and arranging hair.
3	Calculator	A mechanical or electronic device that performs mathematical calculations.
4	Bag	A soft container made out of cloth, paper, thin plastic, leather and open at the top used to hold food, books and other goods.
5	Badge	A small nameplate, identifying the wearer and often giving additional information.

Activity 3.3:

Now, match the words in the flashcards below with their meaning in the table provided:



Word	Meaning
	exceptionally good of its kind
	authorisation or consent from someone in authority.
	an attitude of consideration or high regard
	human conduct relative to social norms
	highly intelligent.

Word Collage

The use of word collage will also help you learn different words related to a specific context. For instance, some related words for “emergency” are specialist, hospital, heart, trauma, and orthopaedic. Therefore, word choice is sometimes context specific. Examine the two separate word collages below.



Fig 3.2: Word Collage on words related to environment
Word Collage on words related to medicine

You realise that the first image has words related to “environment”, while the second has a group of words related to “medicine”. The use of word collage is a useful tool in enhancing your vocabulary.

Activity 3.4

Arrange the following words under the headings created in the table, and use the headings to create three separate Word Collages (using paper cut-outs or cards).

Cashier, coaches, consulting room, crops, cultivation, cutlass, defender, fertiliser, goalkeeper, goal posts, health minister, hoe, farmland linesmen,

mulching, offside, outpatient department, pests, referee, skipper, jersey, weedicide, whistle.

Hospital	Farm	Soccer

Word Webs

One fun activity to increase your vocabulary is to develop word webs. Creating word webs will help you identify the multiple meanings of words. This involves choosing a focus word which is placed at the center of the web. Pointing out from the web can be different meanings of the word, the addition of prefixes and suffixes, synonyms and antonyms, sentences, and idiomatic use of the word. Examine the picture of an outline of a word web below.



Fig 3.3: An outline of a word web

The target word is placed in the center, then the outer circles show the various uses and parts of speech. Now, take your time and study the word web for the word “permit” below:

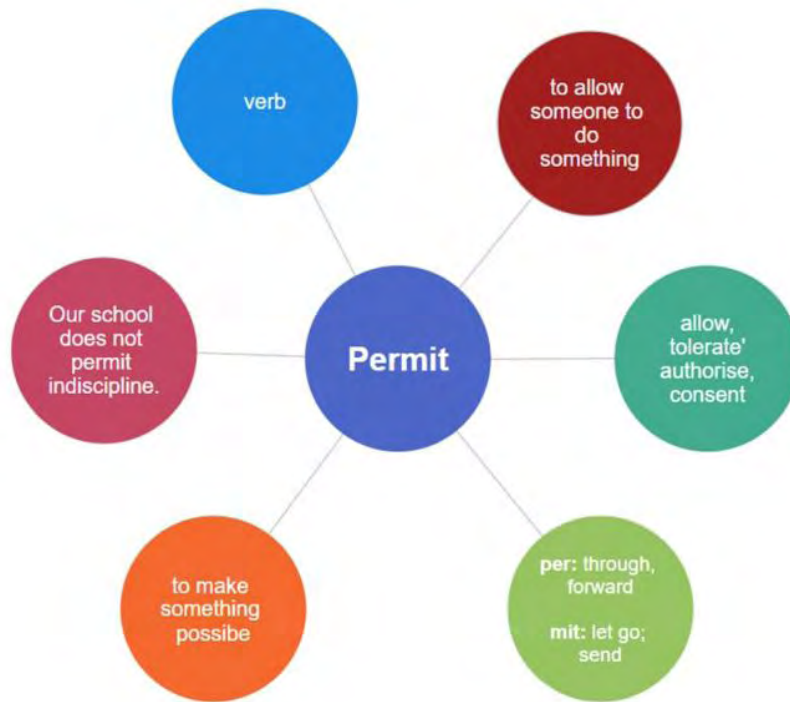


Fig. 3.4: A word web for the word “permit”

Synonyms and Antonyms

Let us examine some other ways of understanding the words from the passage, *Kiki My Best Friend*. We shall look at other words that are nearest in meaning to them and words that are opposite in meaning to them.

Synonyms and Antonyms of the Words

S/N	Word	Synonym (Nearest in Meaning)	Antonym (Nearly Opposite in Meaning)
1	pet	favourite, loved, preferred,	hated, loathed, forsaken, unloved
2	walk	bearing, locomotion, pass	halt, pause, linger, stay, stand
3	beautiful	exquisite, good-looking, comely, fair	ugly, plain, unattractive, grab, dull

S/N	Word	Synonym (Nearest in Meaning)	Antonym (Nearly Opposite in Meaning)
4	peers	colleagues, fellows; associates, partners, co-workers, comrades	stranger, introvert, outsider
5	memorable	unforgettable	unimportant, unimpressive, forgettable
6	flapping	flutter, wave, undulation	Immobility, peace, quiet, calm, tranquillity
7	excitement	joy, fervour, exhilaration	boredom, discouragement, despair
8	pecking	flock, heap, mass	gorging, overeating, swilling, pigging out
9	joyful	happy, jubilant, elated	sad, unhappy, joyless, dissatisfied
10	lonely	alone, solitary, dejected	responsive, amicable, jovial, neighbourly, easy-going, good company

What have you observed about the table above? You can see that; a word may be replaced by other words which are either nearest in meaning or nearly opposite in meaning. To effectively understand the word, you have to carefully find out how the word is used in the sentence that you read. This will be done in detail in week six and seven.

Activity 3.5:

Complete the table below with the appropriate synonyms and antonyms of the words provided.

Word	Synonym	Antonym
1. happy		
2. lazy		
3. smart		
4. real		
5. beautiful		

Congratulations! I hope you have learned that the meaning of a word depends on how the word is used or the role it plays in a sentence. Go ahead and attempt the review questions and read more on words and their meaning in context or real-life situations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Form meaningful sentences with the following words:

- A. train
- B. respect
- C. study
- D. humble

2. Identify three new regions in Ghana from the puzzles.

W	Q	P	T	F	A	P	P	R	T	B	B
N	E	V	Q	F	H	F	S	P	S	Q	O
O	Q	S	P	T	A	S	F	T	T	W	N
R	P	T	T	S	F	Q	S	T	P	P	O
T	P	S	V	E	O	O	S	P	S	S	E
H	Q	F	T	P	R	P	S	Q	S	F	A
E	S	T	R	P	I	N	P	F	T	F	S
A	O	T	I	R	S	G	N	F	T	B	T
S	P	B	V	V	P	Q	T	O	F	Q	T
T	P	S	T	T	S	N	P	S	R	P	S
S	A	V	A	N	N	A	H	G	T	T	Q
Q	S	V	P	T	T	P	F	P	T	S	H

3. Create collages that represent the words below using images cut from magazines, newspapers or printed from the internet.

- A. Ghana
- B. festival
- C. school

ANSWERS TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Model answers
 - A. train: The train will arrive in five minutes.
 - B. respect: I respect everyone.
 - C. study: You need to study hard to get better result.
 - D. humble: The student in very humble.
2. North East, Savannah, Oti, Western North, Ahafo and Bono East.
3. Varied answers from students.

EXTENDED READING

1. Click on any of the links below to learn more on how to use the dictionary:
<https://youtu.be/XZbX0z0P0XY?t=19>
2. MacCary, M. (2021). *Handbook for Reading*. Ebeka Book Production
3. Longman Primary Dictionary for Ghana

GLOSSARY

1. **Antonym:** Antonym refers to a word that means the opposite or nearly the opposite of another word.
2. **Contextual meaning:** Relating to the situation or location (context) in which a word is used.
3. **Flash card:** A card used to aid rote memorisation
4. **Register:** A style of a language used in a particular context.
5. **Synonym:** Synonym refers to a word that means the same or almost the same as another word.
6. **Word Collage:** It is the visual representation of words which represent the most frequently used words in each context.
7. **Word Web:** a form of mind map that helps students to learn about new words and expand their vocabulary.

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