

TYPES OF VOCABULARY ACCORDING TO USE:

○ **Passive Vocabulary**

It includes the words you can recognize and understand, but can't come up with on your own when writing and speaking. For example (English/Urdu) words, terms, expressions and idiomatic expressions you only recognize and know what they mean but you can't use them automatically when writing or speaking. It also includes specific English words whose meaning you can easily guess from the context but you wouldn't be able to use them yourself.

○ **Active Vocabulary**

It includes all words that you can think of and use right away when you're in the process of communicating. For example (English/Urdu) words, terms, expressions and idiomatic expressions you can easily use when writing or speaking without stopping and forcing yourself to remember that word or think of whether it is or it isn't the right word to use.

Conversion of Passive Vocabulary into Active Vocabulary

1. Ditch the Dictionary

What do you do when you've forgotten the words you need to express your thoughts in Chinese, Spanish or whatever language you're learning? You clutch at straws, AKA (also known as) dictionaries.

And what do you do when forgetting a word in your mother tongue? That's right: You'll describe its meaning or use a synonym. You don't stop to open up a dictionary.

We think of enriching our mother tongue vocabulary only when wanting to impress someone, sound smart or beef up a written piece with better language. Only in these situations might we stop to look up a word or two. Most of the time, we find clever ways of talking or writing our way around the missing vocabulary word.

Do this in your foreign language rather than running for the dictionary every time you're missing a word, and your brain will get more adept at searching for the vocabulary you need—and in the worst cases, you'll get better at describing things and maintaining the flow of conversation.

2. Smooth Path

Before you start expanding vocabulary, prepare a place for new words in your mind and speech. That is to say, smooth the path. Until now, you've probably used one common trick when trying to express thoughts but stumbling at verbalizing them: You adopt plague words to fill the gaps.

For example, let's take plague words such as *very* and *really*. Instead of learning more specific synonyms, we attach these to other words. We can say *very big* instead of *huge*, or *very, very big* instead of *enormous* or *gigantic*. We can say the universal, nondescript word *thing* and use it as a substitute for tons of other words, rather than actually having to think of more specific, descriptive vocabulary.

Now, think of which plague words you might be leaning on too much in your foreign language of interest. To expand your active vocabulary, say "no!" to your favorite word replacements. Don't simply paraphrase or plagiarize from others, and don't be lazy about finding that particular noun or adjective to communicate your idea.

How to figure out these words?

- Re-read your messages with friends on Facebook, WhatsApp or whatever messenger you use.
- Make a list of the words you often choose to fill vocabulary gaps.
- Give the list to a friend and ask them to scold you every single time you write or say mentioned words.

After you learn to slow down a little for *very*, *thing*, *amazing* and any other favorite plague words, your memory will know that it can't take the easy way out—and it will start to deliver synonyms from your passive vocabulary.

3. Total Recall

One of the most common pieces of advice for language learners is: *Write new word in a notebook or on flashcards*. Even if you go about doing this, the problem is, words are difficult to remember without context. Instead of reviewing a list of isolated words and phrases bereft of context, make strides towards practicing your words in context and visualizing them in real situations. The best way to do this is to write, write and write some more. Write short stories and messages of all kinds.

Choose your favorite topics and platforms: Write on social media, keep a diary, jot thoughts down in a Word file, whatever. The trick is to insert as many words there as possible, as often as possible. Bring in synonyms, different connotations, new grammar constructions and various writing styles. Revisit and reread your writings from time after time to avoid repetitions.

Okay, some of us are too lazy to write every day. Or, we simply don't like writing and consider it a dull pastime to practice regularly. If you're amongst these non-writers and procrastinators, provide yourself with positive reinforcement to stay motivated:

- take part in a competition
- accept a writing challenge
- make a bet with your language teacher or friends
- reward yourself for achievements—for example, buy yourself a donut after you've successfully written something every day for one week.

4. Read Smart

You know that reading helps to expand vocabulary. That's true because it (reading) forces learners to look at words they might not have heard or seen before, making them search for meanings to understand the content. After all, the language in books is often more sophisticated than that of our everyday conversations.

More than that, reading improves the memory and concentration that's essential for language learners to have. But do you know what and how to read for this trick to work?

○ **Memoirs and autobiographies**

When reading fiction, we get into the plot and don't pay attention to the rich verbal expression of a writer. So try a psychological trick, such as reading first-person stories. Leisurely and thoughtfully. In a perfect world, you'll read aloud.

○ **Poems**

Just like we have plague words, we also have plague grammar constructions that we become reliant on, limiting our lexical diversity. In English, it can be a passive voice, "*there is*, *there are*" sentences or, in Spanish, over-indulging in the easy-to-form past participle.

Read and learn poems by heart to absorb both the vocabulary and syntax of your target language. Poems typically get creative with sentence construction, juggle word order and replace long phrases with shorter, more powerful phrases, so reading them is a great impetus for activating your passive vocabulary and picking up new grammar patterns.

Don't think of active vocabulary expansion as if it were a bloody difficult, time-consuming and many-stage challenge. It's not neuroscience, where you need to spend years to really know your stuff.

Moving passive vocabulary into your active vocabulary is a natural process that all people experience throughout life, and it's within your power to influence it. The first step is being aware of how it works. Then, once you've applied the clever tricks above, you'll be well on your way to boosting your active vocabulary every day.