

Memorizing New Words

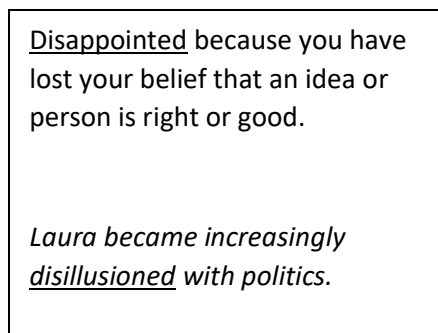
Part of doing well in a new course is finding effective ways to learn the new terminology. The techniques described below all help you memorize new words, but the different methods have different purposes and advantages.

The Cue Card Method (easy to carry with you)

1. On the front of the card, print the word or expression you want to remember.
2. On the back of the card, write the information you need to learn for the word. Useful information to include:
 - A definition of the word
 - A synonym for the word (a word with a similar meaning) or what group or category the word fits into
 - Sometimes, it's useful to include what the word is not so you don't confuse it with a similar word or term (e.g. affect versus effect).
 - At least one sentence using the word



Front



Back

3. Punch a hole in one corner of your cue cards and put the cue cards on a metal ring.
4. Test yourself frequently with your cue cards:
 - Find times to review your cards, such as on transit, while doing chores, waiting in lineups, eating or getting ready for the day, or settling down for the night.
 - Recite the meaning out loud or write the meaning down on paper for deeper learning.
 - Use the word in a sentence that you make up. Learning a word well means learning both the definition as well as how to use it.
5. After you've practiced a word and feel you really know it, take that card off the ring. Add new words to the ring to replace the old ones. Keep your cue card ring manageable and thin to work on new words as they come up in a course.

6. Revisit the old cards from time to time so you don't forget them.

The Column Method (more space to learn detailed information)

Use regular lined paper and divide the paper into columns:

- Column 1: The word to learn
- Column 2: The pronunciation of the word (if the pronunciation matters)
- Column 3: A definition of the word or a synonym
- Column 4: An example sentence with a blank where the word goes.

Example:

Word	Pronunciation	Definition	Sentence
Forgery	Fór-jer-ee	A document, painting, or piece of paper money that is a false copy of the original.	The painting was actually a very clever _____.

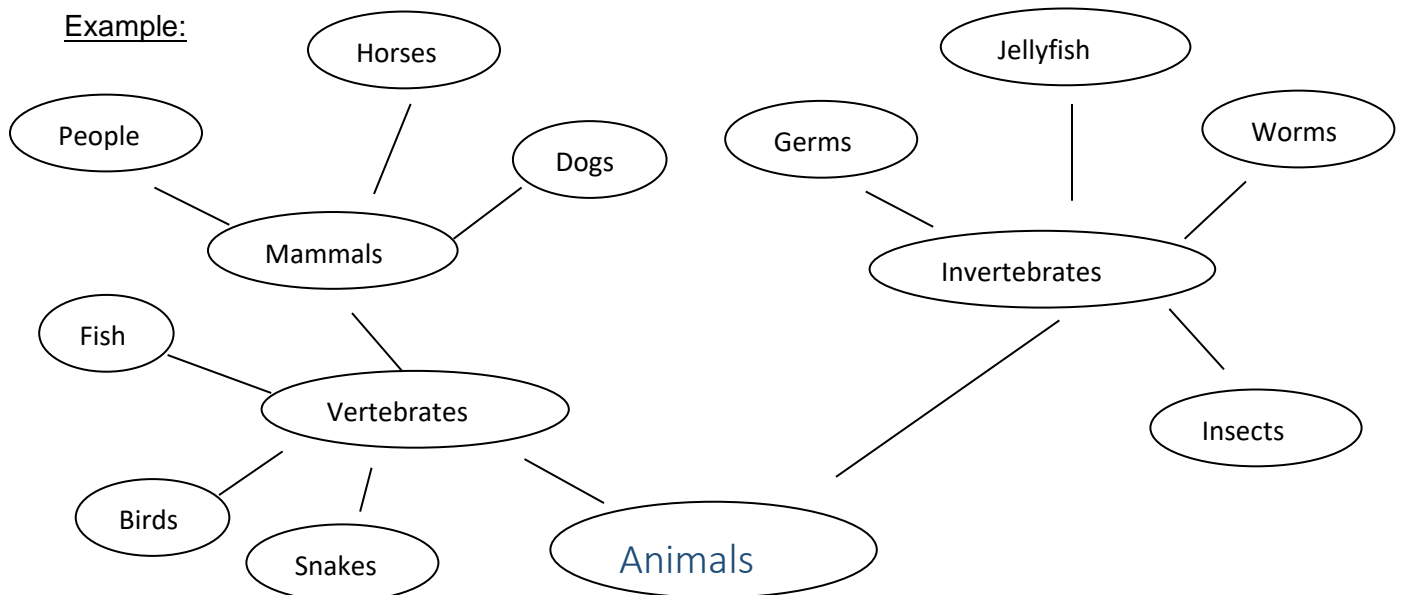
Put ten or twelve words on each page. Then test yourself:

- Cover up different columns with a piece of paper to test yourself with the different columns.
- If you have difficulty with spelling, this approach can help you memorize the correct spelling of the word.
- Cover up all columns except the example sentences column to test yourself for which word goes with which sentence.

The Web Diagram Method (useful for learning clusters of words)

This method helps you learn how new words relate to each other rather than learning words as separate, discrete items. It helps you learn clusters of words and how they fit into groups.

Example:



The Personal Dictionary (to look up troublesome words)

A personal dictionary works well for reviewing the meanings or spelling of words that you need to keep checking. It is easy to forget spellings and meanings of words when you don't use them often enough to remember them well, so it's good to have a personal resource for words you know you have trouble remembering.

1. Use a thin binder that has dividers with the letters of the alphabet on the tabs.
2. Between the dividers, place your columned paper for the dictionary entries. Create as many columns as you need to help you remember and use the words effectively. Below is an example of how you could set up a page:

M – N

Word	Part of Speech	Pronounce	Definition	Sentence
Magistrate	Noun	Má-jis-trayt	A judge for less serious crimes in a court of law.	The magistrate sentenced the thief to community service.