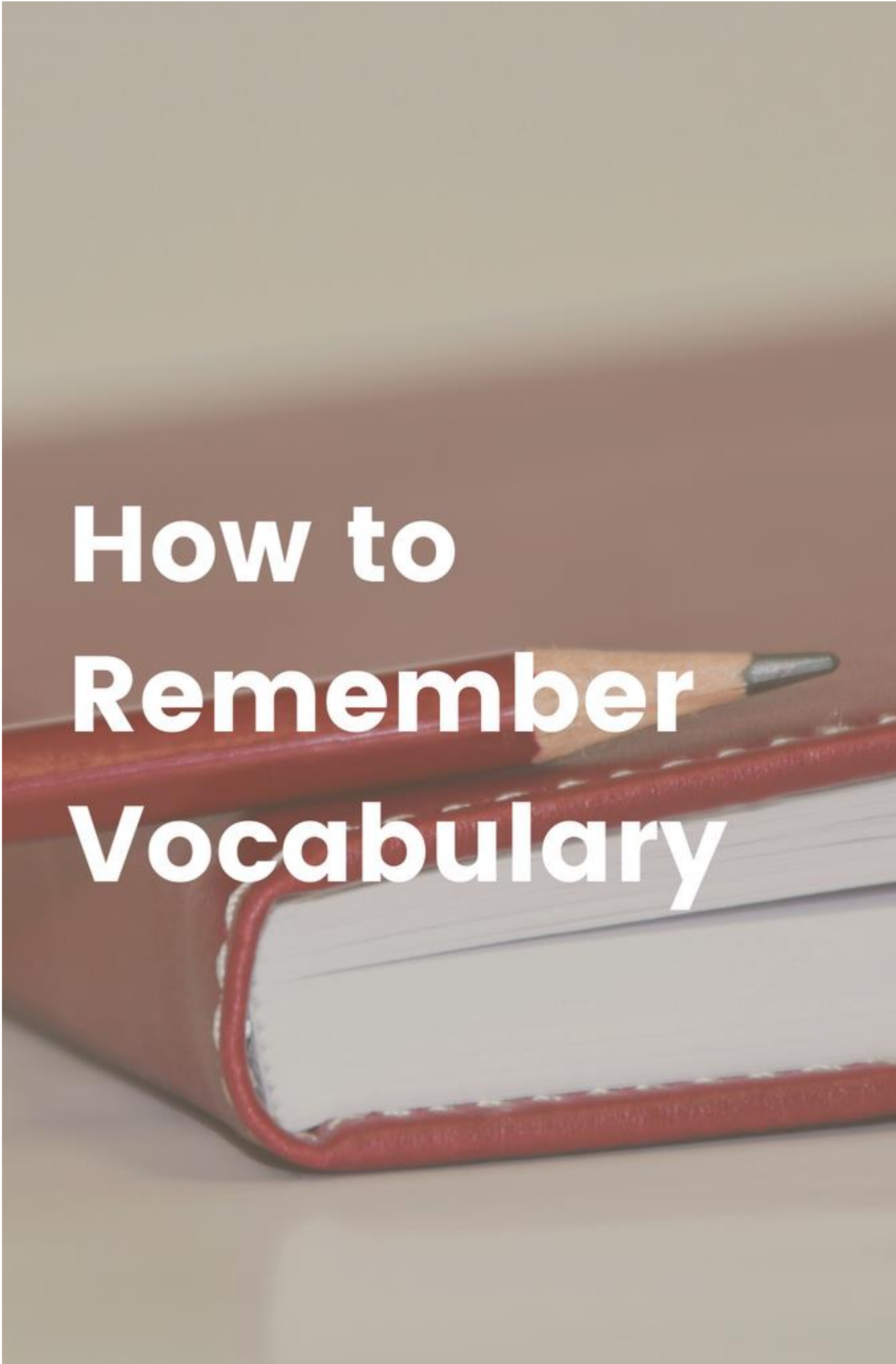


How to Remember Vocabulary



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A close-up, slightly angled shot of a red leather-bound book. The book is closed, showing the spine and the edges of the pages. A wooden pencil with a black eraser and a sharpened lead tip lies horizontally across the top of the book. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light beige color.

This is a very frequently asked question, and for a very good reason. **One of the most difficult parts of language learning is remembering vocabulary.** Trust me, I have trouble with it too.

Unfortunately, there is no step-by-step guide to the best way to learn vocabulary. **Each person has to find their unique way of learning and remembering.**

Studies have shown that to remember new vocabulary, you need to have experienced it at least five(5) different times. **FIVE DIFFERENT TIMES.** What does this mean? It means that if you read it one time, you won't remember it. If you saw it on TV, wrote it down, and searched the meaning in the dictionary, you won't remember it.

Where can you experience the same vocabulary at least five times?

- Read it
 - Blogs, books, articles, magazines, emails, games, etc.
- Hear it
 - TV, movies, podcasts, audiobooks, online videos, music, games, etc.
- Write it
 - Texts, blogs, online forums, journal, etc.
- Say it
 - Conversations (in person or online), in-class, at work, on the street, etc.

In short, just like you learned your native language, you need to be exposed to the same vocabulary again and again before your brain says, **“OK, I will put this in my long-term memory”**.

You might wonder, “why is it that I always remember the basic vocabulary, but all of the advanced vocabulary is hard to remember?”

This is because our brain remembers the first things we learned. Even if you don’t know a language, most people at least know how to say “hello”, “dog”, and “apple”. **Our brains are lazy**. It exists for survival and to give us pleasure. Knowing really basic words gives us pleasure, so we learn them really quickly. I think adults are all just children trapped in adult bodies. **More difficult words take more work, and so our brains forget them if we never use them.**

Of course, if there is vocabulary that resembles your native language, you’ll remember those more quickly because your brain doesn’t have to work hard. These are the best. Otherwise, there are some things that you can do.

1. Flashcards

This is a classic approach and a lot of people still swear that it works. You can make paper flashcards, or use an online flashcard maker. There are tons of apps for this.

2. Watch an easy-to-understand sitcom

I remember watching a French sitcom from the 90s and the more episodes I watched, the more I realized they used the same expressions and phrases over and over again. If I heard something once, I let it go. But

if I heard it again and again, then I would search it in an online dictionary because I knew that I would remember it. You can do the same in English.

3. Read blogs and articles about the same topic

Choose a topic that you're interested in having conversations about and read articles and blog posts in English about it. You'll find the same vocabulary again and again and you'll know which ones are the most important to know.

4. Play games online

Playing games in English will allow you to read the same kind of vocabulary again and again. And because it's a game, you'll have to understand the vocabulary to know what to do in the game!

5. Have real conversations

Of course, NOTHING is better than having real conversations with native English speakers. When you are having a conversation, and you don't know the word for something, then you will know exactly which vocabulary words you need to have the same conversation fluidly next time!

6. Have conversations with yourself

You can also tell yourself stories about your own life in English and see which words or expressions you're missing.

7. Have discipline but also have fun

Remember that your brain doesn't want to work. Your brain wants to be lazy and have fun. So if you really want to learn more vocabulary, you have to trick your brain into thinking it's having fun while learning at the same time. The method of learning you choose has to be something that you are interested in, such as playing an online game, or reading articles that interest you. **If it's not interesting for you, you won't do it.**

