

Vocabulary and Word Finding // Self-Help Strategies

Some students struggle to learn new words. Everyone experiences times when they cannot find the word they want to use e.g. forgetting someone's name. For some people, this happens a lot and it can be very frustrating. You can help to cue yourself in to the word you need by following these ideas:

- Try to think of the word by thinking about the meaning and the sounds in it i.e. you might be able to remember the sound it starts with or what category it is in. Other cues can be:
 - What you do with it
 - Synonyms: words with a similar meaning
 - A word that rhymes with it
- If you cannot cue yourself in, try explaining your idea in another way e.g.
- When you learn new words in a subject, try to link as much information to that word as possible. The more you know about a word, the more ways you will have to think of that word when you need it. As well as thinking about the meaning of new words, you need to think about the sounds. A good way of doing this is to complete a word map.
- It is useful to keep a record of new words and their meanings as you learn them. You can do this at the back of your book or in a separate note book. The best way is to organise it into subjects e.g. Science, History, Geography and topics within each subject e.g. Science → The Human Body, Electricity and Energy, Chemical reactions etc.
- To really know a word you must be able to understand it's meaning, say it, read it, spell it and use it in a sentence.
- Dictionaries can be useful for looking up the meaning of words. Some dictionaries are difficult to understand so find one that suits you. A particularly helpful one is the Collins CoBuild Student Dictionary because it puts the word in a sentence.
- Thesauruses help you find words that have a similar meaning. If you can think of another word that means the same as the word you are trying to think of, you could look it up in a thesaurus or use the thesaurus on the computer.