



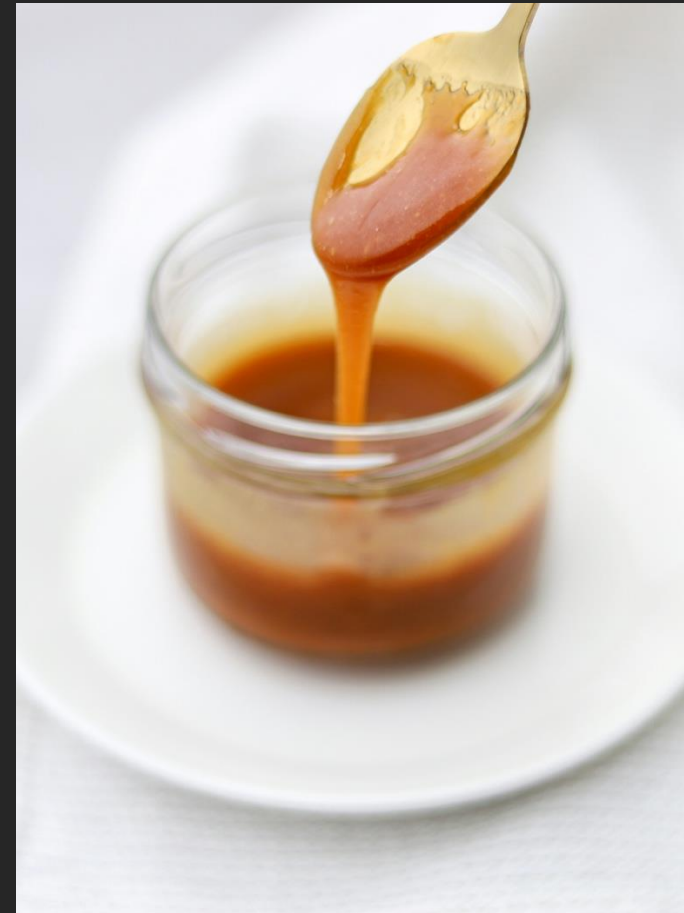
Designing meaningful L2 vocabulary instruction

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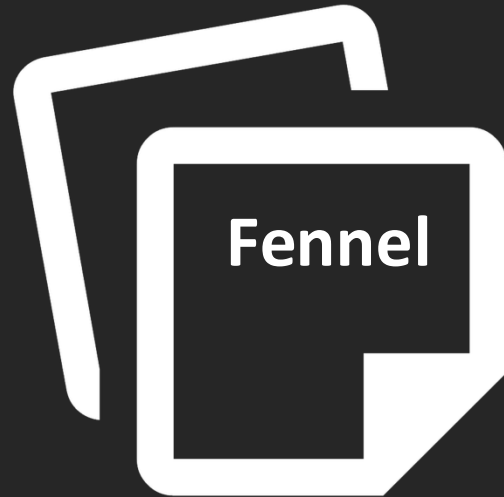
JALT International Conference
Tokyo, Japan
November 2, 2025

**Why is vocabulary important
in learning an L2?**

Why is vocabulary important in learning an L2?



Why is vocabulary important in learning an L2?



Why is vocabulary important in learning an L2?



영수증 주세요

→ Vocabulary is critical for
successful communication!

Academic English Vocabulary

What is academic English vocabulary?

= Words and expressions **commonly used in educational settings**



School



University



Professions

- Unique lexicon: Not General Service List, not highly technical
- Found in texts, lectures, assignments, campus interactions, etc.

How do we select vocabulary to teach?

Focus on words that are **useful, frequent, and relevant**.

Q: What **target tasks** do students need to learn to perform?

→ **Analyze** target tasks

The screenshot shows the TOEFL iBT Writing interface. At the top, there is a teal header with the ETS TOEFL logo, a 'Help' button, and a 'Review' button. Below the header, it says 'Writing | Question: 20 of 40'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains the 'Instructions' for the writing task, which asks the student to write a post responding to a professor's question about advertising. The right column shows a discussion board with two student posts: one from Karen and one from Brad. A yellow callout bubble points to the top right of the interface, and another points to the student posts. At the bottom right, there is a title for the writing task: 'TOEFL iBT® Writing for an academic discussion'.

ETS TOEFL Help Review

Writing | Question: 20 of 40

Instructions: Your professor is teaching a class on business. Write a post responding to the professor's question. In your response you should:

- express and support your personal opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Diaz

We are all exposed to a lot of advertising, especially on the internet. And of course businesses spend a lot of money to create and distribute advertising. Before next class, I would like for you to discuss this question:

Is advertising just a way of manipulating people to buy things they do not need, or is it an important source of information that helps people make informed consumer decisions?

Karen

I don't think most people con... read that in just one year, from 2016 to 2017, the number of computers, tablets and mobile phones using ad blockers increased from 142 million to 615 million.

Brad

People can find out a lot about products from advertising. There's plenty of evidence that people usually begin the pro... looking at ads and right now, but I'm advertisement tha

Cut Paste Undo Re

TOEFL iBT® Writing for an academic discussion

Receptive vocabulary to understand input

Productive vocabulary to express their own ideas

How do we select vocabulary to teach?

Focus on words that are **useful, frequent,** and **relevant.**



Word lists



Ready-made materials



Diagnostics tests

Identify target vocabulary

Official TOEFL Vocabulary Guide

Core List includes ~800 most important words from **TOEFL corpus**, selected by TOEFL assessment developers + corpus linguists

Expanded List includes ~1100 additional words that are next most important



Word selection was also guided by **general academic vocabulary corpuses** (e.g., Coxhead's AWL)

→ Learning vocabulary from this book is beneficial for **students in general** who need EAP proficiency.

**Teaching vocabulary with
the Official TOEFL Vocabulary Guide**

What does it mean to *know* a word?



Explicit word knowledge: Having knowledge about the word (e.g., meaning, spelling, pronunciation, collocations)



Receptive knowledge: Being able to understand vocabulary in context



Productive knowledge: Being able to use vocabulary to express meaning

Developing explicit word knowledge



Goal: Enhance explicit word knowledge, including **form** (e.g., spelling, pronunciation), **meaning** (e.g., definition, L1 translation), and **use** (e.g., collocations, conjugations)

#Memorize words through a vocabulary book



Research findings

- Aim for **~10 repetitions** per word (Webb, 2007)
- **Spaced repetition** > **massed repetition** (within a day) (e.g., Nakata et al., 2023)

0001 □□□

process
[prá:ses]

名	processor	加工業者；処理装置
動	reprocess	～を再加工する；～を再処理する
形	unprocessed	加工されてない

名 **a series of events which produce a result or product** (ある目的に向けた) 一連の行為、過程、作業

▶ Learning Spanish is a slow **process**. It takes a lot of time and energy to master a new language.

出題例 If evolution had been a continuous, gradual **process** that happened in stages, one might expect that each fossil specimen would be slightly different from almost every other one.

スペイン語学習は時間のかかる**作業**だ。新しい言語を習得するには多くの時間とエネルギーが必要だ。

もし進化が少しずつ起こる連続的で漸進的な**過程**であったとすれば、それぞれの化石標本がほかのほぼ全ての標本と微妙に異なっているだろうと思うかもしれない。

Official TOEFL Vocabulary Guide: Sample entry from the Core List



#Check retention across **different dimensions** of word knowledge

<Pronunciation>

🔊 [target word]

- a. level
- b. revel
- c. rebel**
- d. verbal

<Meaning>

Definition: to crash directly into, to come into conflict

- a. compress
- b. challenge
- c. rebuke
- d. collide**

Vocab learning isn't just about memorizing **L1 translations!**

<Spelling>

🔊 [target word]

d **r** **a** **s** **t** **i** **c**

<Collocations>

The word that follows **conscious** is:

- a. problem
- b. decision**
- c. issue
- d. reflection

#Use apps for independent learning

mikanで
『公式TOEFL®英単語』を
効率的に学習しよう!

※2024年11月リリース予定



800万ダウンロードを突破した
大人気の英語学習アプリ!
人気書籍が多数揃っています。



mikan

サクサク楽しく超効率よく学べる英語アプリ

mikan



mikanでの5つの学習方法

- 1. 音声聞き流し**
『公式TOEFL®英単語』に収録されている全ての音声データを再生することができます。
- 2. BookReader**
電子書籍を閲覧しながら、ページに紐づく音声を同時に再生することができます。
- 3. 単語学習**
カード方式または4択方式で単語の学習をすることができます。
- 4. 例文学習**
穴埋め問題方式で単語を学習することができます。
- 5. 英英学習**
英英の定義から英単語を当てる形式で学習できます。

mikanアプリ内で で検索!

※2~5は有料機能になります

Developing receptive word knowledge



Goal: **Recognize** word meanings in **context**, whether in listening or reading.



What **activities** have you used with your students to help them develop **receptive word knowledge**?

Describe: (a) the **students**, (b) the learning **activity** you used, and (c) **how** it went.

#Learn through example sentences



0001 □□□

process

[pró:ses]

名 processor
動 reprocess
形 unprocessed

加工業者；処理装置
～を再加工する；～を再処理する

名 a series of events which produce a result
product

例 (た) 一連の行為、過程、作業

Example sentences

Learning Spanish is a slow **process**. It takes a lot of time and energy to master a new language.

スペイン語学習は時間のかかる**作業**だ。新しい言語を習得するには多くの時間とエネルギーが必要だ。

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#Learn through reading

Find a passage → Identify target words
OR
Select target words → Build a passage

Although it was invented only recently, generative AI has become **indispensable** in our daily lives. It plays a **prominent** role in shaping how we communicate, learn, and work. **Undoubtedly**, generative AI has contributed to recent advancements across a variety of fields. For example, it is used to create personalized treatment plans for patients by analyzing **vast** amounts of medical data, making it **integral** in today's society. While some may view it as **intrusive**, generative AI has enhanced our capabilities in a **myriad** of meaningful ways. For these reasons, I believe that generative AI is the most **pivotal** invention of the past 200 years.

- Ask comprehension questions to help students focus on **meaning**
- **Define** the highlighted words; **guess** the meaning from context
- Incorporate **interactive work** to facilitate SLA

#Learn through listening: Dictation



Listen to a sentence with a focus on **meaning**



Write down exactly what you hear as you listen to the audio
(repeat as needed)



Check the answer with a partner

#Learn through listening: Dictogloss



Listen to a short passage with a focus on **meaning**



Listen again and **take notes** of keywords
(repeat as needed)



Reconstruct the passage with a partner

#Learn through listening: **Dictogloss**

There has been a **shift** in vocabulary learning from memorizing lists to using words in context. This **reflects** the idea that active engagement with words is **core** to vocabulary development. To **obtain** real mastery, learners need to focus on different **aspects** of each word through hands-on activities.

Text-to-speech apps
can be helpful!



#Learn through listening: Dictogloss



- Dictogloss is a great activity for **collaborative, form-meaning-focused** learning.



- Dictogloss can be adapted for different proficiency levels by changing:
 - The **length, content, or linguistic difficulty** of a text.
 - Other conditions—whether to allow **note-taking** and **how many times and how quickly** the text is read.

#Learn through **authentic input**



- Watch with **L1 subtitles** – focus on overall meaning.
- Watch with **English captions** – notice meaning, spelling, and pronunciation.
- Note **new words** – record them with the scene for better retention.
- Watch **without subtitles** – confirm understanding and recall.

Incidental vocabulary learning happens through exposure.



Extensive reading

- **Input flood** (increase frequency)
- **Input enhancement** (increase salience)



Developing productive vocabulary knowledge

Goal: Use vocabulary for **communication** purposes to
express meaning



What **activities** have you used with your students to help them develop **productive word knowledge**?

Describe: (a) the **students**, (b) the learning **activity** you used, and (c) **how** it went.

#Practice with scaffolding

Read aloud

出題例

Stained glass is simply glass that has been colored and cut into pieces and reassembled to form a picture or decorative **design** with intricate patterns.

- Read aloud while paying attention to **meaningful chunks**.
- **Compare** with model audio.

Shadowing

- Listen to audio to understand **overall meaning** first.
- Listen and **repeat** along with audio.

#Practice with scaffolding

Elicited Imitation Task

Directions:

You will hear a series of sentences.

Listen carefully to each sentence.

AFTER THE TONE SOUND, repeat exactly what you hear.

Practice



I actually enjoy eating apple **cores**.

#1



So I **shifted** my weight.

#2



Learning Spanish is a slow **process**.

#3



The arrows **indicate** the direction to the restrooms.

#4



Beans are a great **source** of protein for people who don't eat meat.

#5



Try to **infer** the meaning of the word using clues in the sentence.

#Elicited Imitation Task

= Good **learning** activity

- Vocabulary is presented **in context**.
- Unlike shadowing, learners must **process the meaning** to accurately reproduce the sentence with the target word.
- Learners must produce the sentence **orally** → Good practice for **speaking**

= Good assessment tool to gauge proficiency level

#Elicited Imitation Task

= Good **assessment** tool to diagnose learners' weaknesses

Learners cannot reproduce the sentence because they:

- are not familiar with how (target) words are **pronounced** in context
- cannot catch the meaning of the sentence **orally**
- cannot catch the meaning of the sentence **orally** nor in **writing**

Then, have them:

- Practice **pronunciation** (in context)
- Practice **listening**
- Review word **meanings**

#Elicited Imitation Task: Scoring

- Use TOEFL iBT **scoring rubrics** to help judge the quality of performance.
- Depending on learners' proficiency levels, scoring can be done with a particular **focus on target words**.

<https://www.ets.org/pdfs/toefl/speaking-rubrics.pdf>

*toefl ibt.

Speaking Scoring Guide

Listen and Repeat



SCORE DESCRIPTION

5

The response exactly repeats the prompt.

A typical response exhibits the following:

- The response is fully intelligible and is an exact repetition of the prompt.

4

The response captures the meaning expressed in the prompt, but it is not an exact repetition.

A typical response exhibits the following:

- Minor changes in words or grammar are present that do not substantially change the meaning of the prompt.

For example:

- one or two function words may be missing or changed,
- a content word may be missing (in longer stimuli) or replaced with a related word,
- markers of tense/aspect/number may be missing or incorrect, or
- two words may be transposed.
- One or two content words may be ambiguous because of imprecise pronunciation. The speaker may self-correct, but successfully completes the response.

3

The response is essentially full, but it does not accurately capture the original meaning.

A typical response exhibits the following:

- The response contains a majority of the content words or ideas in the prompt.
- Multiple function words may be changed or missing; one or more content words may be missing or substantively changed.
- The response is a full sentence.
- In some cases, intelligibility issues cause occasional difficulty in understanding meaning. The speaker may struggle over a word or phrase or run words together, reducing intelligibility.

2

The response is missing a significant part of the prompt and/or is highly inaccurate.

A typical response exhibits the following:

- A large portion of the prompt is missing, and important original meaning is left out.
- The speaker may repeat the first part of the sentence. Then the speaker may stop or fill with inaccurate content and/or include the last few words.
- The response is not a self-standing sentence; meaning is fragmentary.
- Intelligibility is low; the response would be difficult to understand for a listener unfamiliar with the prompt.

1

The response captures very little of the prompt or is largely unintelligible.

A typical response exhibits the following:

- A minimal response of a few words is made; most of the prompt is missing.
- The response is recognizable as an attempt to repeat the prompt, but it is mostly unintelligible.

0

No response OR the response is entirely unintelligible OR there is no English in the response OR the content is entirely unconnected to the prompt (or consists only of phrases such as "I don't know").

#Elicited Imitation Task: **Design** tips

- Start with **~5 syllables**. Then, make sentences **gradually longer** up to **~20 syllables**.
- Present target words in a **natural context**.
- **Avoid** technical words or proper nouns.
- Depending on the goal, **incorporate challenging features** (e.g., pronunciation, connected speech) to the sentences.

#Try a target task

ETS TOEFL

Help ? Review Review < Back Next >

Writing | Question: 20 of 40 01:11:45 Hide Time

Instructions: Your professor is teaching a class on business. Write a post responding to the professor's question. In your response you should:

- express and support your personal opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Diaz

We are all exposed to a lot of advertising, especially on the internet. And of course businesses spend a lot of money to create and distribute advertising. Before next class, I would like for you to discuss this question:

Is advertising just a way of manipulating people to buy things they do not need, or is it an important source of information that helps people make informed consumer decisions?

Karen

I don't think most people consider ads to be valuable. I read that in just one year, from 2018 to 2019, the number of computers, tablets and mobile phones using ad blockers increased from 142 million to 615 million.

Brad

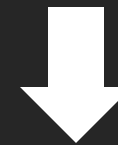
People can find out a lot about products from advertising. There's plenty of evidence that people usually begin the process of making a big purchase by looking at ads and reviews. I have to go to another class right now, but I'm going to post later about an advertisement that gave me a lot of useful information.

Cut Paste Undo Redo Hide Word Count 0

TOEFL iBT® Writing for an academic discussion



Practice **comprehending** and **guessing the meaning** of vocabulary in input



Practice **expressing opinions** in writing, using newly learned vocabulary

#Practice writing **with AI**

- Write a **prompt**, using ChatGPT.
- Check if the **difficulty level** is appropriate.
- **Revise** as necessary.

Give me a prompt that asks me to write about my opinion on a topic, taking one side. This prompt should naturally elicit at least some of the following words: process, research, environment, indicate, source, design, affect, involve, impact, and structure. The response should be about 100 words.

⋮

Prompt:

Take a clear position on whether new technology helps or harms the natural world. Explain your viewpoint and support it with reasoning and examples. Consider how ideas are developed and tested, what factors play a role in innovation, and how human choices shape results. Use evidence to strengthen your argument, and organize your writing so that your main points are easy to follow. Write about 100 words.

#Practice writing **with AI**

Use GenAI to foster **autonomy!**

<Assessment for learning>

Assess your writing by:

- **Comparing** your response **with a model** produced by ChatGPT
- Requesting **feedback** from ChatGPT

This is my response: "I think new technology is killing the planet. Using new technology, like AI, involves the use of a massive amount of electricity, which has great impact on the environment. Research indicates that the average temperature has been rising and the weather patterns are negatively affected as a result." Can you give me feedback on my response?

Absolutely — here's some clear, focused feedback on your response:

✓ Strengths

- **Clear position:** You take a definite stance ("new technology is killing the planet"), which fulfills the prompt's requirement to choose a side.
- **Use of key vocabulary:** You naturally included several of the target words — **involves, impact, environment, research, indicates, and affected**. Excellent work!
- **Concise and coherent:** The ideas flow logically from cause (use of electricity) to effect (rising temperatures and changing weather patterns).

#Practice writing **with AI**

- GenAI feedback has **limitations**.

Suggestions for improvement

- **Expand reasoning:** Add one or two sentences explaining *why* technology uses so much electricity (e.g., data centers, manufacturing, etc.) or *how* this could be mitigated.
 - **Provide evidence or a source:** Mention a specific study, organization, or statistic to strengthen your argument — this adds credibility.
 - **Refine word choice:** Instead of “killing the planet,” which is strong but informal, you could use “severely damaging the planet’s ecosystems” for a more academic tone.
- Critical feedback may be **missing** (e.g., response is too short).
 - Some suggestions may go beyond **task expectations**.

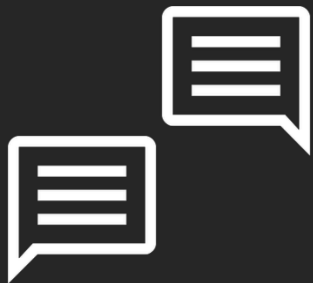
#Practice writing **with peers**



Collaborative idea or
language generation



Collaborative writing



Peer review

- For successful peer review, students need to be **on the same page** about what makes an **effective task performance**.

→ Use **rubrics!**

Rubrics for Discussion Post

	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
Relevance	The response is completely irrelevant to the given topic. It does not answer the question posed by the professor.	The response is partially irrelevant to the given topic.	The response is mostly on topic, but it also contains aspects that are not directly relevant to the given topic.
Acknowledgement	The response ignores the other contributions to the discussion.	The response makes an attempt to comment on the other contributions, but it's not successful.	The response comments on one or more of the other contributions, but it does not build on any of them.
Originality	The response contributes nothing new.	The response has characteristics of both Score 1 and 3.	The response contributes a somewhat distinct perspective on the topic.
Coherence	The response lacks coherence, and it is hard to understand what the author's main argument is.	The response has some parts that are logical, but it is mostly hard to follow due to a lack of coherence.	The response is somewhat logical, but quite a few parts are confusing due to a lack of coherence.
Support	Opinion is not supported at all.	Opinion is partially supported.	Opinion is supported to a large extent, but not fully.
Language use: Academic vocabulary	The response relies entirely on informal or conversational language. No academic vocabulary is used.	The response includes some academic vocabulary, but most words remain informal in tone.	The response contains several academic words, though they are not always used accurately or appropriately in context.
Language use: Pragmatics	The response is pragmatically inappropriate entirely.	Some parts of the response are pragmatically appropriate, but it is uncertain if the author is aware of issues around pragmatics.	The author makes an attempt to use pragmatically appropriate expressions, but they are unable to do so all the time.
Language use: Clarity	The response includes so many mistakes that its meaning is unclear.	The response contains mistakes that obscure its meaning although the overall meaning of the response is clear.	The response is somewhat well-written, but it still requires some improvements in terms of the language used.

Rubrics:

- Provide a common ground that makes peer assessment **easier and more meaningful.**
- Clarify **task expectations** for students.
- Support T in giving **meaningful, targeted feedback.**

some supporting evidence is not concrete, relevant, or persuasive enough to strengthen the case.	by concrete arguments that are maximally relevant and persuasive.
The response uses academic vocabulary effectively in most cases, with minor errors or areas for refinement.	The response consistently uses academic vocabulary appropriately, demonstrating control, precision, and suitability for an academic context.
The author uses appropriate pragmatics most of the time.	The author uses app thr
The response is well written. The meaning is completely clear although it might contain occasional mistakes.	Th

GenAI can help you write descriptors!

To design meaningful L2 vocabulary instruction...

- Identify target vocabulary by analysing the types of **target tasks** students need to learn to perform **in the real world**.
- Use a wide range of activities to help students develop (a) **explicit**, (b) **receptive**, and (c) **productive** vocabulary knowledge.
- Give students plenty of opportunities to use vocabulary **in context for communication purposes**.
- Teach students **AI literacy** to help them use AI tools effectively for building their own vocabulary repertoire.
- Always incorporate **huma-to-human interaction** – it's the key to successful second language acquisition, including vocabulary learning!

Updates to TOEFL iBT



Questions?