

How Do We Memorize Words?

But there is a secret to memorizing vocabulary words! The trick is using your memory in a smart way. Our brains have two different kinds of memory: short-term, and long-term memory.

When you first learn a new word, that word is stored in your short-term memory. But your short-term memory is small. It does not have much room for information. That is because it always must be learning new things!

So, to make sure you remember a new word long after you learn it, **you must move that information from short-term to long-term memory**. Long-term memory has much more room – maybe even an unlimited amount of room! It can store many things.



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Here are some ways to move new words into long-term memory. When you use these methods, you will know the words long after you learn them.

4 Tips to Help You Memorize New Words

1. Put the new word in a phrase or sentence

It can be difficult to remember a single word. You must **know the context** for it! That is, you must know where the word belongs or fits with other words. Find, or make up a sentence or a phrase that has that new word in it, and your brain will be able to remember it easier, because it fits in a larger context. For example, you can learn new vocabulary from idioms, or phrases, or quotes!

Example:

“Play the devil’s advocate” – English idiom

“Life is a long lesson in *humility*.” – James M. Barrie

2. Group similar words together in lists

Make vocabulary lists of words with similar meanings. Your brain will connect similar words to each other when you study the whole list!

3. Write your own definition

Don't just memorize the definition you find in the dictionary for a new word. Make sure you understand the definition, and then write that definition in your own words. You will remember it better!



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4. Practice with a pattern: Practice every day, then once a week, then once a month

At the beginning, review your vocabulary list every day. Then, do not study it for a whole week, and see what you remember! If you spread out the times when you study, you will help your brain find the new words from your long-term memory.

memorize	ghi nhớ	fit	phù hợp
secret	bí mật	list	danh sách
way	đường, cách	idiom	cách diễn đạt, thành ngữ
brain	trí não	quote	câu trích dẫn
short-term	ngắn hạn	advocate	biện hộ, bào chữa, ủng hộ
long-term	dài hạn	humility	khiêm tốn, khiêm nhường
method	phương pháp	similar	tương tự
information	thông tin	connect	liên kết
phrase	cụm từ	whole	trọn, toàn bộ
sentence	câu	pattern	mẫu, kiểu, khuôn
context	bối cảnh (bài văn)	spread out	trải ra, phân bố, tản ra
belong (to)	thuộc về		

Answer the questions below:

1. How many kinds of memory do our brains have?

2. Where is word stored in when you first learn a new word?

3. Is your short-term memory large enough for learning ALL new things?

4. Why do you must move the new information from short-term to long-term memory?

5. Is it easy or difficult to remember a single word?

6. Where can you learn new vocabulary to **know the context of it?**

7. How can you connect similar words to each other when you study new vocabulary?

8. What can you do after you find in the dictionary for a new word and understand it?

9. How do you understand about the sentence "spread out the time when you study"?

Write your own ideas.

10. About yourself: How can you learn vocabulary?
