

# A to Z English



## Quick Chat 20: Tips for learning vocabulary

In this episode, Kevin and Jack talk about some of the best ways to learn more vocabulary. Share your tips and answers to the discussion questions in our WhatsApp group chat! <https://forms.gle/zKCS8y1t9jwv2KTn7>

Website: <https://atozenglishpodcast.com/?p=1809>

With listener mail from episode 16: <https://atozenglishpodcast.com/did-you-go-to-camp/>

If you could take a minute and complete a short survey about the podcast, we would be very appreciative. You can find the survey here: <https://forms.gle/HHNnnqU6U8W3DodK8>

We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions for future episodes.

Intro/Outro Music by Eaters: <https://freemusicarchive.org/music/eaters/the-astronomers-office/agents-in-coffee-shops/>

## Discussion Questions:

1. What's the best way to learn new vocabulary words?
2. What is the most difficult aspect of learning new vocabulary words?
3. What is another way to learn new vocabulary that wasn't mentioned in the podcast?

## Full Transcript:

Jack

You are listening to the A-Z English podcast.

Kevin

Welcome to an A-Z.

Kevin

English quick chat.

Kevin

And today we're going to try something a little bit different.

Kevin

We've got some questions that have come up from our WhatsApp groups, so we're going to talk about one of these and see where the conversation goes with.

Kevin

It remember that you can check the our website for our study guide, vocabulary notes, discussion questions, and more.

Kevin

Also links to our WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media so that you too and join in the discussion.

Kevin

So Jack, which? Which?

Kevin

Question did we want to answer today?

Kevin

So many people ask us so many things.

Jack

Yeah, so on the on the WhatsApp group, somebody asked how do I build my vocabulary in English?

Jack

And so, you know, a lot of our students are, a lot of our WhatsApp group members are interested in.

Jack

Becoming better speakers of English.

Jack

And so one of the ways that you do that is by building up your vocabulary.

Jack

The more words you know, the more clearly that you you can communicate with other people.

Jack

Cool and yeah, so thought.

Kevin

I can I ask you a quick question about this Jack, do you think vocabulary or grammar is more important for for beginners?

Jack

For beginners, I think vocabulary is more important.

Kevin

Yeah, I would agree.

Jack

If you don't.

Jack

Know the words of things.

Jack

Then it doesn't really matter if you got the grammar right, because you have nothing to put into the sentence, you know.

Kevin

Yeah, and I think as long as you have the words, even if the grammar is wrong, if you use the words, then people can usually guess what you.

Kevin

Mean, right?

Kevin

If you're like bathroom where someone will still understand that you mean where is the bathroom so you can you can put it together?

Jack

Yeah, or I could just, I can just say the word bathroom and they probably understand that.

발표자 1

Right.

Jack

I mean, where is the bathroom?

Kevin

Right, yeah, at the beginning level vocabulary.

Jack

But if I if I say where is the, they don't.

Jack

I'm talking about so.

Kevin

Right, yeah, whereas the what?

Kevin

What do you want?

Jack

The other stuff, yeah.

Kevin

Yeah, at the beginning vocabulary is very helpful.

Kevin

Then grammar becomes important.

Kevin

Then grammar or vocabulary again becomes important.

Kevin

So, So what do you think?

Kevin

So how can people best get vocabulary?

Kevin

I think one way.

Kevin

If anyone listened to our interview last week or a couple weeks ago with Layla, she talked about reading books a lot.

Kevin

And I think that's one of the best ways in in any language, in your language and the second language.

Kevin

Because you're just going to find more.

Kevin

And more new words.

Jack

That's right.

Jack

If you want to improve your vocabulary and increase your vocabulary, even if you're just trying to do that in your native language, the best way is to read lots of reading.

Jack

Because when it comes to remembering.

Jack

And being able to hold on to the information, there's nothing better than reading.

Jack

Listening is good too, but we tend to forget what we hear more than we forget what we read.

Kevin

Right.

Jack

And so yeah, reading is a much is probably the best way.

Kevin

Yeah, reading also 'cause.

Kevin

It's slower, so it gives you time to stop and look up the word if you don't need it, or even just to stop and think about it because the word if you don't know it, it's in a sentence.

Kevin

With other sentences there's in context.

Kevin

And so you can kind of figure it out maybe what it is, you've got some time to think about it, take it slow.

Jack

Oh, exactly.

Jack

I would actually recommend not looking up every every word that you don't know, because it's much better to try to figure it.

Jack

Using the context clues of the sentence and and usually if you're reading a page of material and you don't understand a word if you just kind of.

Jack

Plow through it.

Jack

Just keep going.

Jack

You're going to be able to figure out what's going on.

Jack

And if you don't know if there are too many words in, in, in that that particular reading that you don't understand, then you've chosen the wrong reading material.

Jack

You need something that's kind of in your at your level.

Jack

Or a little bit above your level, but not too far.

Jack

Love and so yeah.

Kevin

Yeah, you want to be able to understand most of it, but having a few words here and there that are tough to to understand is pretty perfect for that.

Jack

And if you understand every single word and it's so easy, then then also that's the wrong material for trying to improve because you want to be able, you want to be challenged a little bit.

Jack

And so, yeah, that's why they.

Jack

You know, they say the dictionary is the worst book for learning a language, right?

Jack

Because there's zero context, it's just A to C and you'd have to memorize every word.

Kevin

It's a word.

Jack

And even if you memorized every word in the dictionary, you still wouldn't be able to speak English because you wouldn't be able to organize.

Jack

Those into meaningful sentences without understanding the grammar and you know other other rules of of the language.

Jack

So yeah.

Kevin

You'd be very good at playing like words with friends or one of those vocabulary games, but that's it.

Kevin

OK.

Jack

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack

And what?

Jack

Other strategies do you have for, like for learning vocabulary that goes past just reading?

Kevin

So when I'm studying Korean vocabulary, I I find new vocabulary almost every day that I don't know.

Kevin

I don't do a lot of reading.

Kevin

I need to be like Layla as a better student than I am, but just when I'm watching TV or walking around, I'll see vocabulary words that I don't know.

Kevin

And so I looked them up.

Kevin

And then I have a vocabulary app.

Kevin

On my phone I use Anki.

Kevin

It's a great app, mostly free I think.

Kevin

And it's just, uh, vocabulary app that that's all it is and I make.

Kevin

My own cards.

Kevin

Basically so it has like the front and.

Kevin

The back, but.

Kevin

What I do is I don't just put.

Kevin

The word and the definition on the back of it.

Kevin

So for example, in Korean like the word pop means rice, right?

Kevin

So I don't just have a card that says pop and then you turn it over and it says Rice, right?

Kevin

I put the word, whatever word I'm learning, I put it into a sentence.

Kevin

When I use the app.

Jack

That's a good idea.

Kevin

So I create.

Kevin

Cards with all of the new words that I.

Kevin

Want? And sometimes I'll.

Kevin

Create two or three cards with one word.

Kevin

And then but I put them in a sentence for it.

Kevin

So right like the word rice is the word I'm learning, so it's rice grows in the fields or I like to eat rice so I could get two or three different sentences with it?

Kevin

And then I have all of.

Kevin

Those cards in my app and I go through them almost every day and I just do vocabulary.

Kevin

But again, it's not just word definition word definition.

Kevin

It's in context in a sentence.

Jack

Yeah, that's a great idea.

Kevin

And I think that.

Kevin

Helps a lot.

Jack

I I love that idea because I think more than just understanding.

Jack

Because here's the problem that our students face when you're looking up a word, right?

Jack

If I give you a vocabulary word and I say look it up in the dictionary, and then you look it up in the dictionary, it just gives you another difficult word.

Jack

That has the same meaning as the original word, and so then you have to look up that word and then you get another word that's more difficult.

Jack

And so it's just it.

Jack

The definitions never really capture the the full meaning.

Have it.

Jack

If you use it in a sentence, then you actually have context, and we keep using the word context in this podcast right now.

Kevin

Right, we need examples.

Jack

But I think it's a really important word because context is the is everything else all the other meaning around the word.

Jack

And so how do I use this?

Jack

When do I use this?

Jack

Is this word appropriate in this sentence or this situation?

Jack

So it's basically like.

Jack

What is the situation in which you're using the word?

Jack

And that's what I think our students really want to know, not what is the meaning of the word, but what's the situation where I can use this word?

Kevin

Right.

Kevin

When? How?

Jack

Yeah, when and how.

Kevin

Yeah, I think that that's really important.

Kevin

I'm I'm tutoring a kid these days and we do vocabulary almost every day, and he's when he looks up a word.

Kevin

He's not very good at looking up the context.

Kevin

He just looks up a word and says, oh, it means this, right?

Kevin

So yesterday he looked up the word.

Kevin

Is for example like to look at something gays and he just thought that it meant stare because that's a similar.

Kevin

Word to it.

Kevin

To stare at something, but we use them differently, right?

Kevin

And he doesn't look up the context.

Kevin

So he gave me a couple of examples, sentences, and he said, like, don't gaze at the dog.

Kevin

It will.

Kevin

Be angry at.

Kevin

You and I told him.

Kevin

I was like, I'm like, OK.

발표자 1

You know.

Kevin

That's a good sentence.

Kevin

But it's strange, like we.

발표자 1

Right.

Kevin

Wouldn't use gaze that way.

Kevin

And if he had and he's just, he's a middle school kid, so he's often.

Kevin

Kind of lazy.

Kevin

But if he had looked up some example sentences of the word to get the context of it, then he wouldn't have made that mistake.

Kevin

You'd be like, you know, like I gazed off.

Kevin

I gazed at the scenery, you know, around not gazing at a dog like that's staring.

Kevin

It's a different word.

Kevin

Similar look.

Kevin

It's different.

Kevin

And so that, yeah, getting those examples.

Kevin

Of how to use a word can be.

Kevin

Really, really, really helpful.

Jack

Yeah, there's a big mountain in the middle of soul called Mount Glonek, and you wouldn't climb to the top of the mountain and stare at the skyline of the city.

Jack

You know, you would gaze at that and so.

Jack

Diction on in.

Jack

The dictionary.

Jack

They are synonyms, right?

Jack

They have the same meaning.

Kevin

Right.

Jack

Very similar meanings, but in one situation you gaze and enjoy the scenery, and in the other one it has.

Jack

It could be kind of a negative situation where you're staring at something because it's still.

Kevin

Right.

Jack

So stocking?

Kevin

Here's watching, looking at his.

Jack

Or shot or staring at someone 'cause you're angry?

Jack

Yeah, exactly, yeah.

Kevin

And that's where the context is so important.

Kevin

And that's where, again, just to, I mean there's a lot of different ways that you can practice vocabulary.

Kevin

But I think just to to keep this simple and short, the two biggest ways that we talked about today are and and both are involving the same thing, seeing the word in.

Kevin

Around other words in context to understand it in connection with other things.

Kevin

So reading books when you see a word, you can guess what the definition is if you've never seen it before.

Kevin

And if you look up a word, if you find a new word and you find the definition, don't just look up the definition.

Kevin

Look up.

Kevin

Every dictionary has example sentences, and it has many example sentences, and that's the same as the book.

Kevin

So look at those example sentences and be like, oh, it's used this way and that way and that way.

Kevin

Now I understand what it means.

Kevin

Not just another word for it, but I I understand.

Kevin

The word so.

Kevin

Try and find ways to see the vocabulary that you want to learn.

Kevin

In connection with other words in sentences.

Jack

Right.

Jack

And choose and try to find appropriate material.

Jack

Ask your teacher, ask your, you know, ask us in the WhatsApp group to recommend something that will match your level of understanding.

Kevin

Yep, of course. God.

Jack

And so always try to find something that's just a little bit difficult, a little bit out of your.

Jack

Out of your reach, and that will help you really grow quickly as a language learner and will increase your vocabulary.

Kevin

Yep, yeah.

Kevin

And then come to our WhatsApp chat and use the words that you've learned.

Kevin

And if you use them wrong, great, then we'll help you.

Jack

Yeah, exactly.

Kevin

And if you use them correctly, great.

Kevin

You're using it correctly, so there's there's.

Kevin

Just use it, use it, use it afterwards.

Kevin

But nice.

Kevin

So learning vocabulary.

Kevin

Very important to start.

Kevin

And and.

Kevin

A lot of.

Kevin

Easy ways.

Kevin

It just takes time.

Kevin

So before we wrap up, I think we've got some listener mail for today, right?

Jack

Yeah, we have some listener mail by Julio.

Jack

And yeah, Julio was was listening to the.

발표자 1

Video nice.

Jack

The episode Quick Chat 16 did you go to camp as a kid?

Jack

Ah, cool.

Jack

And his answer to question number one was, which was, did you go to summer camp when you were young?

Jack

He said no, I didn't.

Jack

In my school, in college, we didn't have summer camps, so.

Jack

I feel bad for Julio, he was not able to go to.

Jack

A summer camp?

Jack

He says that he wish he had been at a summer camp like that because it's good to share time with classmates and do things other than just studying, you know?

발표자 1

Yep, nice.

Kevin

Yeah, I agree.

Jack

And with the teacher.

Jack

Yeah, and this lat the.

Jack

Last one.

Jack

Describe your favorite activity.

Jack

He didn't have a favorite activity, but I think he was probably listening to our answers and would have enjoyed doing some of the activities that we described during our podcast.

발표자 1

My God.

Jack

Yeah, like capture the flag.

Kevin

Well, thanks for yeah, those are great.

Jack

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kevin

Well, thanks for writing in Julio and and hopefully you can find maybe some other type of camp or activity that you can do later on.

Jack

There you go.

Kevin

So everybody, thanks for listening in today.

Kevin

Work on your vocabulary.

Kevin

Remember to check our WhatsApp group to tell us what you think.

Kevin

Ask any questions, join in the discussion, and if you've got some time and you're on Apple Podcasts, leave us a review and some comments and that would really help other people get some A-Z vocabulary. Have a good one.

Jack

Bye, bye.