

Language Learning and Teaching

If you want some ideas for how to learn – or teach – English (or Kurdish or French or German, etc.), then read this column every month. I'll write up a suggestion or two each month and then you can try it out in your language learning or in the classes that you teach.

Memorize Vocabulary. When you study a foreign language, it's important to learn a lot of vocabulary. It's usually best to learn vocabulary in a meaningful context:



- (1) Choose words that are related to each other (e.g., *fruit – apple, orange, watermelon, banana, grape*).
- (2) Write your new words on cards or in a list. Memorize the words.
- (3) Add some action words (verbs) that are naturally associated with these words (e.g., *buy, sell, eat, wash, peel, cut, bring, give, like, dislike*). Memorize those too.
- (4) Use all of the words to make meaningful sentences (e.g., *I bought some apples. She washed the grapes. They peeled the oranges. I'll bring you some bananas. We like to eat watermelon.*)

subject	verb	object
I	buy	fruit
you (singular)	sell	apple
he	eat	orange
she	wash	watermelon
it	peel	
we	cut	banana
you (plural)	bring	grape
they	give	pear
	like	
	dislike	

Read. Read children's stories, short stories, letters, email, magazines, newspapers, websites, the Bible, etc. to increase your vocabulary. Try to figure out the meanings of new words by their context before you look them up in a dictionary. Here are some English websites to start with (for advanced learners):

Focus on the Family magazine - <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/>

Reader's Digest magazine - <http://www.rd.com/>

Time Magazine - <http://www.time.com/time/>

Fox news - <http://www.foxnews.com/>



Read and Listen to a text (e.g., the Bible - <http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Mat&chapter=1>).

Write. Write down new words and phrases that you hear your American friends say when you're talking to them or when they're talking to other people. Write a dialog journal with an American who will check your entries. (Write about any topic – just write!)

Use a Dictionary. Use the online Behdini-English dictionary at www.dcklci.com/dictionary or an online English-English dictionary, such as <http://nhd.heinle.com/home.aspx>. Or use a regular dictionary.

