

Tips to Master the Arabic Language

Tip 3: Always Stay on Top of Vocabulary

Bismillaah wal-Hamdulillaah, Assalaamu Alaykum!

The gradual and sustained building of your vocabulary base is crucial to seeing real progress in your ability to read, understand and speak Arabic. This is one of the areas that a lot of people fall short in. By putting most of your time and emphasis in learning grammar rules, you may be **neglecting vocabulary** to a level that is harmful to your progress. Hence, when it comes to reading actual text, whilst you might understand grammatical constructs and rules, you have missing pieces of the jigsaw (the sentence) in the sense that you do not know the meaning of at least one word in the sentence, which means the whole sentence is meaningless to you. Or to put it another way, *the vocabulary has taken you as prisoner.*

So what is a good practical methodology for making sure you learn vocabulary? You should combine traditional methods (pen and paper) along with our innovative methods for putting vocabulary in your long term memory, which are the interactive games on the LearnArabic.Com platform.

So here is a plan of action you should adopt... Put on that military helmet, role up those sleeves, *and get ready to take the vocabulary prisoner instead!*

First: Try to acquire new vocabulary in themed, grouped sets. That is in bunches of related words. For example, names of professions, or household items, or colours and so on. This is

how we have segmented vocabulary at LearnArabic.Com.

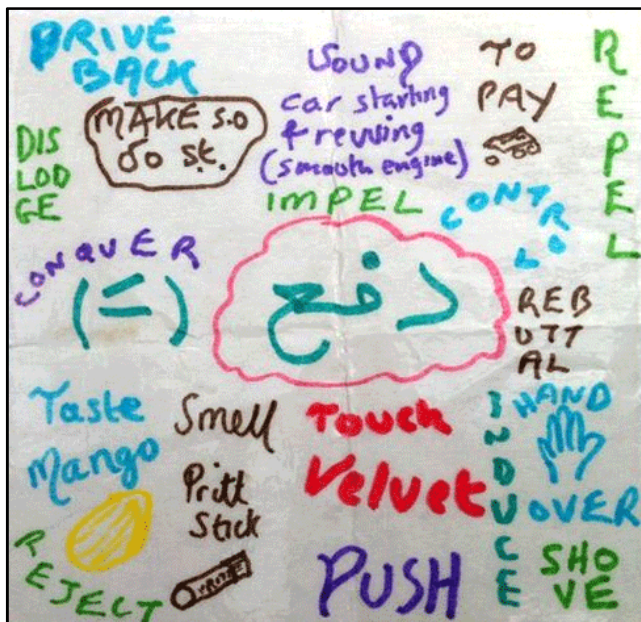
Second: The ideal number of words to learn at a time, or daily, is around 20-25 words.

Third: When you have vocabulary lists (such as the ones you can print off from within your lessons), you should make sure *you write out every word at least a few times*. Use scrap paper first, and then commit these words into your noun notebooks ([see Tip 2](#)) as a permanent record along with a translation. When you write them in your notebook, put the Arabic word on the right side and the translation on the left. Then cover the Arabic side with your hand read down the translation list and see if you can recall the Arabic word. Then cover the translation side and see if you say the translation of each Arabic word from the right column. When you do this successfully, you know that the words have been fixed into your memory, but only softly at this point. You need to make them even more concrete.

Fourth: Go to the "**My Vocabulary**" section in your members area and use the numerous interactive tools which combine audio and visual elements in the form of games. Just by playing with these tools you will find that **the vocabulary sticks like glue**. You will even see your kids picking up vocabulary rapidly!

Fifth: As you ponder over each new word, try to use all of your senses if you can and try to make

associations in your mind. Whatever associations immediately come to your mind when you come across a new word, amplify them a little and use your imagination a little. What happens here is that your mind is creating a greater level of context for this new word and this will make recall a lot easier, and will also make this new word more meaningful to you. If you have an elastic mind then try to bring in all of the senses if you can. Take a look at this (it's 20 years old!):



This is a 10cm x 10cm laminated vocabulary card used to memorize a verb. It combines colour, taste, smell, sound and touch to give context and feeling to that particular verb. It merges the meanings of the verb with the five senses. Now if you have a elastic (twisted) mind like mine :-), you will find ways to give context, sense and feeling to each word you acquire.

Sixth: When you have learned new words, start practising them immediately within sentences. As you follow the grammar lessons at LearnArabic.Com you will discover ways of how to use your new vocabulary within sentences. You can use our special tool, the **SentenceR**, which allows you to drag and drop to create sentences from the currently available range of vocabulary. It is a great way to solidify and cement your knowledge and understanding as well as the ability to recall rapidly.

Hope you enjoyed this tip!

Umar bin al-Khattaab (radiallaahu anhu) said, "Learn the Arabic (language) because it is from your religion, and learn the laws of inheritance because it is from your religion." (Reported by Ibn Abee Shaybah 6/118). Notice here that we have a command to master that which is spoken and written (literacy) and also that which relates to numeracy, the laws of inheritance relate to calculations involving fractions.

Imaam al-Shaafi'ee (rahimahullaah) said, (as occurs in Irshaad al-Fuhood, p. 421): "It is obligatory upon every Muslim to learn from the Arabic language what allows him to make effort in fulfilling his obligations."

Imaam al-Shawkaanee (rahimahullaah) said, "Know that when the Book and the Sunnah have come in the language of the Arabs and knowledge of them is dependent upon knowledge of (Arabic) then knowledge of it is the most important of obligations." (Irshaad al-Fuhood, p. 38).

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