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Technical Vocabulary

Having a good understanding of technical vocabulary is a requirement of many academic disciplines. Often in the fields of Science, Engineering and Medicine, amongst others, there will be a need to manipulate technical language with ease and fluency. In Arts, Humanities and Social science disciplines, there will also be a requirement to use what may be termed '*specialised*' vocabulary, though this will not usually be deemed to be '*technical*'.

What can I do to improve my knowledge of technical vocabulary?

Using technical vocabulary can be a daunting task, and the English tutor may not necessarily be an expert in your subject area. It is reassuring to remember, however, that not even a native speaker can know all the words in his or her own language, and that technical vocabulary is generally used only by specialists in the field, who work within a particular academic community.

One solution to the difficulty of using technical vocabulary is to consult some of the many on-line dictionaries and glossaries of specialized words in the English language.

The most comprehensive web site to help in this area is the dictionaries page of Your Dictionary.com, at <http://www.yourdictionary.com/diction4.html>

Recognizing technical words

Although working with technical language is difficult, there is also some good news.

Despite the difficulty of learning and acquiring technical vocabulary, many technical words have Greek or Latin base forms, and these can be easy to recognize.

Some technical words are the same across a range of different languages.

Many writers provide clues about whether a word is technical or not, for example, they may define the word in the text, write the word in bold, inverted commas or italics, or in a diagram.

Often, technical vocabulary is repeated within specialized text, indicating its importance.

The technical use of a word can be better understood by looking up the full definition of the word, with all its uses, in a good English-English dictionary.

Some technical words are used outside the academic area with little change in meaning.

Extracted from http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/learning_english/leap/voc/tech/



Accumulate Your Vocabulary: *Tips and steps*

One of the most difficult works in studying a language is building and learning the language vocabulary. You should build your vocabulary all your life. But how? On the Internet and numerous English course books you can find ample tips and strategies that may help you in this sense.

In my opinion, based on my own experience and testing advices and recommendations of specialists in this area, the main, principal steps in building your own vocabulary are as follows:

1. It is necessary to focus on several common ways to your vocabulary skills. Generally, building vocabulary goes from passive knowledge to active knowledge – by repeating a word so long until it becomes active vocabulary. This process requires time. So, be prepared for that and arm yourself with patience.
 2. Learning vocabulary in groups of words appears to be much more effective than memorizing random lists. In this case words that are related to each other are more likely to be remembered over the long-term period.
 3. The best way of learning words is to study and read systematically related texts and make a list of words of frequent occurrence.
 4. Focusing on certain topics, which you are most interested in, brings good results, too;
 5. For technical students and professionals such topics are comprised in technical texts typical and ultimate in their branch. Related activities include:
 - building a specialized list of common words appeared with high frequency in technical texts, which attract your attention,
 - building a list of professional words, expressions, collocations used in your branch,
 - building a list of words used in common communication (radio, TV, magazines, journals) to be able to understand discussions on topics that concern you. After building such lists you can memorize them successfully.
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a) Vocabulary Trees

Vocabulary trees provide a solid ground for building your vocabulary and enhancing its level. People, especially students very often learn a new vocabulary by simply writing lists of new vocabulary words and then memorize these words by heart. Unfortunately, this technique generally brings only few positive consequences. Such learning helps you to pass exams, different tests, interviews etc. It leads to open up a kind of “short term” remembering. Vocabulary trees, on the other hand, provide a clue to “long term” memorization by placing vocabulary in connected categories.

b) Vocabulary Tables

Vocabulary tables can help you in enriching your vocabulary based on different forms of a particular word that is known to you. If you build regularly vocabulary tables based on specific topics, namely in our case on technical topics, which you study or work in, you will certainly improve your knowledge of English.

Building tables on specific topics also helps to improve “long term” memory of related words. See below an example of such a vocabulary table:

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS
availability, availableness		available	availably
computer, computation, computerisation, computability	compute, computerise	computable, computerisable,	
change	change	changeable	changeably

implementation	implement	implementable	
improvement	improve	improvable	
recognition, recognisability	recognise	recognitive, recognisable	recognisably
use, usage, usability	use	usable	

c) Use more your Dictionary

Since you can use it not only for finding words, but also in order to explain meanings of words, to improve your pronunciation by hearing words, in order to check spellings of less-known words and spelling variations, to find synonyms and more.

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