

## 7 Worksheet on Vocabulary

Text: *How to be an Alien*, from: David Beal, *Britain in Europe*, Viewfinder Topics New Edition plus (München: Langenscheidt, 2010), pp. 16f.

### A WHY VOCABULARY LEARNING IS SO IMPORTANT

Steve Kaufmann, an American linguist, speaks NINE languages fluently. Over and over he has stressed that vocabulary is more important than grammar and in one of his videos he says: “If you have enough words, you’ll speak.” He doesn’t even do any grammar exercises when learning a new language as he prefers listening and reading tasks (see exercises 1 and 2 in this Viewfinder section).

This may sound great, but he also says that your active vocabulary of a foreign language should be 10,000 words

You can find out more about Steve Kaufmann on his blog “The Linguist”:  
<http://blog.thelinguist.com/>

(Please copy and paste this hyperlink into your browser.)

Before you do the exercises, read the text on pp. 16f.!

## B VOCABULARY LEARNING TIPS AND EXERCISES

### 1 LEARN WORDS FROM CONTEXT

Texts often include clues to the meaning of unknown words.

Find examples in the text for the following:

- a) **text clue "synonym"**  
The author uses one or more synonyms to help the reader understand.
- b) **text clue "antonym"**  
A word with the opposite meaning is used.
- c) **text clue "definition"**  
A definition of a new word is given.
- d) **visual clue**  
A picture gives a hint at a word's meaning. (An example can't be found in this text.)

### 2 REPEAT THE NEW WORDS

Research shows that it takes about 15 repetitions to really memorise something, that's also true for new words. Write down unknown words (e.g. on index cards) and use the words in sentences (e.g. in a definition) to make them part of your vocabulary.

- a) **Which new\* words might you remember because they appear in the text over and over again? (\*new for you)**
- b) **Write down 10 unknown words from the text which you would like to remember. Repeat them with the help of short exercises for 7 days.**

### 3 COLLOCATIONS, PHRASAL VERBS AND IDIOMS

Some words go together, others don't. A *good-looking man* would be called "handsome" but definitely not "pretty". Therefore it's not enough to learn single words but the words surrounding one another.

phrasal verb: a verb plus different preposition or adverb (e.g. *give up/ give away/ give in* etc.)

collocation: the combination of two or more words found more frequently than by chance (e.g. *strong tea/ quick shower*)

idiom: a group of words whose meaning cannot be worked out from the individual words (e.g. *to rain cats and dogs/ to drop a line*)

👉 Don't mix up collocations with idioms: a collocation is mostly compositional and the meaning of an idiom is mostly derived.

**Find three examples for each type in the text and memorise them.**

### 4 MORE TRICKS

Vocabulary learning is more effective if you have some strategies, e.g. ask yourself: "Do I know a similar German word?" or "Does it sound like the thing it denotes?" or "What are the word's roots?". Find examples for the following three categories:

- a) similarity to German words**
- b) onomatopoeia**
- c) root analysis: Latin and French roots**

(Daniela Pröls)