

MORE GRE VOCABULARY HINTS

The best way to build a strong vocabulary is to develop it slowly over a lifetime. Unfortunately, you don't have a lifetime to study for the GRE. To build your vocabulary for the GRE in a hurry, you need to do two things. You need to learn to spot "GRE words" – the kinds of words that ETS tests on the GRE – and you need to find an effective memorization routine that you feel comfortable with.

Your best bet for spotting GRE words is to work with lists compiled by GRE preparation publications, such as the *Princeton Review's* "Hit Parade" list of 201 most frequently-tested words. Once you have mastered this list, you will get a feel for what kinds of words are likely to appear on the GRE.

How will you remember all these words? You'll do it by developing a routine for learning new words. Try this method and then tailor it to your own preferences:

ONE: When you encounter a new word in your reading, try to deduce its meaning from the context. While you may not be able to tell or the context may lead you astray, your mental effort will help imprint the new word in your mind.

TWO: Look it up. If a dictionary is not handy, write the word down and look it up later. If you have somehow managed to make it this far in college without owning a dictionary, the time has come to get one. Go buy one as soon as you finish reading this information.

THREE: When you look up a word, say it out loud, being careful to pronounce it correctly. Saying the word to yourself isn't enough. You'll remember it better if you hear it.

FOUR: When you look up the word, don't assume that the first definition is the one that applies in your case. Scan through all the definitions, looking for the one that fits the context in which you found your word.

EXAPMLE: *pedestrian*: 1. Going or performed on foot. 2. Commonplace; undistinguished

FIVE: Compare the definition of your new word with the meanings of its synonyms, assuming it has some. A thesaurus can be helpful for this. Checking the meaning of synonyms can help you nail down the nuances of meaning that distinguish one word from others closely related to it.

SIX: After learning the dictionary's definition, restate it in your own words. It's easier to remember a word's meaning if you make it your own, but be certain your definition is consistent with the dictionary's.

SEVEN: Use a memory aid, such as a mental image, to fix the new word in your mind. You might remind yourself that *enfranchise* means "to give the right to vote" by picturing people lined up to vote in McDonald's franchise. The crazier the image, the better.

EIGHT: Use flashcards! Write the word on one side and the pronunciation, meaning, and synonyms on the other. Stick five or six cards in your pocket every morning and use them to review whenever you can.

NINE: "Write" the new word on your brain. Many students find that writing something down makes it easier to remember.

TEN: Use the new word every chance you get. Bore your friends! Aggravate your family! The only sure way to master a word is to make it a part of your life. Insert it into your speech at every opportunity. A powerful vocabulary requires lots of exercise!