



# AP DIGEST

An Advanced Placement Program Student Resource  
Advanced Academic Services  
Austin Independent School District

## What are Some Good Ways to Improve My Vocabulary?

Improving your vocabulary can be done at any age and any level of education. Even college students can benefit from an enlarged vocabulary, which will enhance spoken and written communication as well as providing a deeper grasp of any language. Often people are spurred to improve their vocabularies by a major test, but improving your vocabulary can be done for fun as well. There are a variety of ways to improve your vocabulary, most of which are interactive and easy.

One of the best ways to improve your vocabulary is to read more. Reading is clearly linked with a larger vocabulary, especially if you seek out books in unfamiliar genres or about unfamiliar topics. Nonfiction in a wide variety of fields can improve your vocabulary and general knowledge. Literacy in fiction is also highly beneficial. As you read, make a note of unfamiliar words, look them up, and write down the definition.

Another way to improve your vocabulary is to play word games. Games like Scrabble and Boggle will encourage your brain to play with words and letters, as well as learning new ones. If you play Scrabble with an open dictionary, you can encourage people to try out words they might otherwise be afraid of using. Most word games are interactive, so you enjoy company while you improve your vocabulary.

Another way of improving your vocabulary is to do word puzzles. Most newspapers include crosswords, simple cryptology puzzles, and jumbles which get progressively harder throughout the week. Improve your vocabulary by trying to commit to completing all of the word puzzles every day. Word puzzles can also be done in groups, especially if you enjoy competition. You can also purchase books of word puzzles of varying difficulty.

A simple way to improve your vocabulary is to use the dictionary. Create flash cards of unfamiliar words and practice them in the train, on the bus, or when you wake up in the morning. Try to practice words in a variety of environments so that you really learn them, and make sure to use the words in daily sentences as well so that you can grow accustomed to using them correctly. If you hear someone using a word you don't recognize, look it up!

Many websites are dedicated to improving your vocabulary, and you can subscribe to word of the day features, word games, and other fun activities which will improve your vocabulary. In addition, you may find a community of individuals with interests like yours. If you are trying to improve your English vocabulary as a native speaker, you may be able to meet up with study buddies. If you are learning vocabulary in a new language, you can find people to speak and write with you so that you can improve your skills.

Smith, S. E. (2003-2008). "What are Some Good Ways to Improve My Vocabulary?" WiseGeek. Conjecture Corporation. Retrieved 07/02/2008 from <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-some-good-ways-to-improve-my-vocabulary.htm>. Permission requested.

