

Chunking Drill 5

Words and Vocabulary

One of the best methods of firmly entrenching a new word into your vocabulary is by using it, either in conversation or in writing. It is essential, however, that you know the correct meanings of the words before putting them to use. Many people tend to use words loosely, and misinterpret their correct meaning. For example they will use 'exotic' to describe a beautiful and glamorous woman; whereas the true meaning of the adjective is 'of foreign origin or character; introduced from abroad but not fully acclimatised'.

Many words have been taken directly from other languages. From the Spanish, we have words such as cork, adobe, mosquito and cigar; from the French, words such as ravine, chassis, envoy and restaurant; from the German, words such as yodel, kindergarten, semester and poodle; from the Italian, words such as miniature, piano, regatta, motto and umbrella.

The number of words needed to carry on an average conversation is surprisingly small. In speaking and writing, ten words used over and over make-up more than 20% of everything that is expressed. They are:

a and I in is it of the that to.

Increase this number to 49 and you have the words that make up half the entire bulk of writing in our language. The additional 39 are:

all	an	are	as	at	be	been	but	by
dear	for	from	had	has	have	he	her	his
if	me	my	not	one	or	she	so	there
they	this	very	was	we	were	which	will	with
you	your	would						

These are the work-horse words: they appear everywhere. They are constantly repeated and are indispensable to all kinds of writing.

However, they appear together with an astonishing number and variety of other words used in the material you read every day.

Words, Words, Words

For want of a word,	the phrase is lost.
For want of a phrase,	the sentence is lost.
For want of a sentence,	the paragraph is lost.
For want of the paragraph,	the selection is lost.
All meaning is lost	for want of a word.

Record your time here:

First time seconds
Second time seconds
Third time seconds
Fourth time seconds