

21ST
CENTURY
REFERENCE

— 21ST — CENTURY GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR VOCABULARY

- 975 ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR TOP COMMUNICATING SKILLS
- FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES
- CUTTING-EDGE GLOBAL ENGLISH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
- SPECIALIZED WORDS IN MEDICINE, LAW, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS, POLITICS, AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

EDITED BY THE PRINCETON LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

ELIZABETH READ, COMPILER

ELLEN LICHTENSTEIN, SPECIAL CONSULTANT

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Introduction

In the 21st century, rapid and clear communication will be the critical factor in all facets of life—business, government, education, the sciences. Those who succeed and excel will be those with the communication skills that get their message across clearly, succinctly, and thoroughly to every kind of listener or reader. This book will equip you with the tools you need—cutting-edge vocabulary, an understanding of the basic communication process, and approaches to fine-tuning your communication skills.

USING THIS BOOK

The most effective language-learning techniques are used in this book. We provide a regular pattern throughout each section of new material and immediate drills. In the drills, newly introduced material is interwoven with material presented in earlier sections. Answer keys are provided immediately after each drill, to reinforce your increasing self-confidence and retention.

As an added vocabulary-building aid, an Essential Vocabulary list is supplied as the final section of each of the first five chapters. Again, try to learn a few new words from these essential vocabulary lists each time you open the book, and test your

growing skills as you work your way through each section. Along with the specialized vocabulary lists in Chapters 4 and 5, these higher level words are ones you should try to incorporate into your daily communication, thereby increasing your recognition vocabulary naturally.

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1

Dialogue

The Communication Process

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Words are the tools of thought: they are not only the means by which we express specific ideas but also the vehicle through which we express reality as we perceive it. Simply put, the more words you have at your command, the better able you are to express fine facets of reality. And the most dynamic, effective language for expression is English — English has more words, more synonyms, than any other language past or present. So, if you are able to deepen and broaden your command of English, you will be equipped to understand and express the more subtle aspects of life and thought.

Powerful speakers and writers are able to express themselves economically — they say much in few words. They don't need to beat around the bush, talking around the subject because they can't find exactly the right word. They literally

compress meaning into one powerful word choice. They use simple, direct eloquence, not high-blown, intimidating language, to motivate and communicate. Effective communication means being understood by your listener or reader. True genius is being able to express complex thoughts in simple, understandable language, and only someone with true command of the English language can do that.

So, how do you decide which word to use?

- 1. Understand your audience's level of sophistication:**
What is their level of comprehension? You would explain chicken pox to a child much differently than you would to a gathering of physicians. Knowing your audience will guide you in how much detail to provide and how thoroughly you need to explain an idea.
- 2. Understand your audience's frame of reference:**
Talking about "CDs" and "principal" with a banker is going to mean something very different from talking about "CDs" to a musical producer and talking about "principal" to an elementary schoolteacher.
- 3. Understand your audience's relationship to you:**
The exchange of information must be shaped according to the appropriateness of the language. Using slang with your supervisor and using stiff oratorical language with your toddler prevent effective communication.

THE PROTOCOL OF LANGUAGE

According to some communication experts, English has five different levels of formality: oratorical (formal speeches, as in politics); deliberative (large audience, informative content, as in teaching); consultative (one-on-one, but still formal, as with one's doctor); casual (friends, peers); and intimate (close fam-

ily and friends). In these, word choice, emotional content, and delivery style range from cold/abstract to warm/concrete.

It is absolutely essential, if you are to communicate effectively, that you understand the subtleties of the communication process. *How* you say something is sometimes more important than *what* is actually said. Your word choices and delivery “style” must be geared according to your audience’s information needs, comprehension level, and relationship to you personally.

Let’s take a simple example:

1. “She’s hit the sack.”
2. “Gerry’s gone to bed.”
3. “Ms. Conroy has retired for the evening.”

All three sentences are expressing exactly the same incident, but clearly they are expressing very different messages about the audience receiving the information. Number 1 is very informal, highly imagistic, clearly intended for a close relationship. Number 2 is still familiar, but more straightforward, perhaps intended for a friend or neighbor. Number 3 is stiff, impersonal, abstract. A remote business associate calling on the telephone might be given this message, but certainly not a close relative.

In any case, had the wrong message been delivered to the wrong audience, the emotional impact would have been powerful—and the importance of the information would have been lost.

As our communication becomes increasingly international and instantaneous, understanding this simple concept—know your audience—becomes as important as increasing the depth of your recognition vocabulary.

FUNCTIONAL VS. RECOGNITION VOCABULARY

It is a well-established fact that there is a critical relationship between personal and professional success and effective com-

munication skills. This book will reveal the steps and techniques needed to do just that. Listen carefully to powerful speakers—they don't use difficult language and fancy vocabularies. They speak in simple, clear, and precise language. They have the entire language at their command because they know exactly which word to choose to express their thoughts to any audience.

Learn to figure out the meaning of new words by understanding how they are used in a sentence—is it a verb? does it have a positive or negative sense? can you “dissect” the word to learn its meaning? Begin to think visually—by learning the word components and focusing on their visual meanings, you can better remember new words. By learning the techniques of spinning off meanings presented in this book, you can clearly double your functional vocabulary.

What exactly is a *functional* vocabulary? It is those words you use and understand every day, the words you are comfortable with and rely on to express your thoughts. The key is to expand your functional vocabulary to incorporate those words now in your *recognition* vocabulary—those new or higher level words you hear and read, but don't use or understand perfectly. This is the secret of a truly powerful 21st century vocabulary.

As you become more tuned in to the communication needs of your audience, you will automatically choose your words more carefully. To do this, you need to be able to select synonyms and antonyms rapidly and precisely. Learning the inter-related word components presented in this book and the techniques for spinning off new words will give you that capability.

ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY I

A

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| abate | to lessen in amount, degree, or force |
| abbreviate | to shorten |
| aberration | exception or departure from what is true, normal, or correct |
| abet | to tolerate or encourage a criminal act |
| abeyance | temporary suspension or holding-off |
| abhor | to despise, detest, hold in disgust |
| abject | miserable, wretched |
| abnegate | to renounce, deny, and refuse for oneself |
| abolish | to cancel, do away with |
| abominate | to loathe, hate |
| abortive | unsuccessful, fruitless |
| abrasive | annoyingly harsh or aggressive; scraping |
| abridge | to shorten, edit out |
| abrogate | to annul, cancel |
| abscond | to steal and flee |
| absolution | forgiveness; freeing from guilt or obligation |
| abstain | to refrain from or hold oneself back |
| abstruse | difficult to understand; complex or deep |
| abut | joined end to end |
| accede | to attain to or enter upon duties or responsibilities |
| accelerate | to go faster |
| acclaim | to applaud, greet with approval |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| acclivity | upward slope |
| accolade | praise; award |
| accumulate | to gather over time |
| accustom | to familiarize by habit or repetition |
| acerbity | sourness; bitter or astringent |
| acme | the top or highest point |
| acolyte | assistant, usually in a religious ceremony |
| acquiesce | to give in to, agree to without protest |
| acquit | to discharge from obligation; to set free |
| acrimony | bitterness or harshness of temper, manner, or speech |
| actuary | person who calculates insurance risks |
| actuate | to put into action or motion |
| acumen | shrewdness, keenness, quickwittedness |
| adage | proverb, wise saying |
| adamant | hard, firm, inflexible |
| adduce | to provide as a reason or example |
| adept | skilled, expert at something |
| adhere | to stick to, stay attached to |
| adipose | fatty |
| adjunct | something added onto something; secondary but not essential |
| admonish | to warn, caution against |
| adroit | skillful, clever |
| adulation | flattery, servile praise |
| adumbration | obscured, overshadowed |
| adventitious | accidental, serendipitous |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| adverse | contrary, oppositional |
| adversity | misfortune; poverty |
| advocate | to defend, plead, or urge for another's cause |
| aesthetic | artistic; sensitive to beauty and the arts |
| affable | friendly, pleasant, easy to talk to |
| affidavit | sworn written statement |
| affiliation | connection to or association with a group or organization |
| affinity | relationship; kinship |
| affirmation | assertion; solemn vow or declaration |
| affluent | wealthy; plentiful, abundant |
| aggravate | to trouble, make worse or difficult |
| aggregate | the total, whole |
| agitate | to stir up, shake up; to cause dissension |
| agnostic | person who does not think it possible to know whether or not a God exists |
| agoraphobia | fear of open spaces |
| agronomy | science of crop production and soil management |
| alacrity | quickness; liveliness; briskness |
| alienate | to estrange, make unfriendly |
| allay | to pacify, calm, put fears to rest |
| alleviate | to lighten or relieve pain, suffering, or difficulty |
| allocate | to allot, distribute according to a plan |
| allude | to refer to indirectly, suggest |
| aloof | standoffish; removed |
| altercation | argument, dispute |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| altruism | selfless concern for others |
| amalgamate | to combine, unite |
| amass | to pile up, stockpile |
| ambidextrous | able to use both hands with equal ease and skill |
| ambiguous | having more than one possible meaning |
| ambivalent | having simultaneously conflicting or contradictory feelings |
| ambulatory | able to work |
| ameliorate | to improve, make better |
| amenable | agreeable; able to be controlled or influenced |
| amicable | peaceable, friendly; showing goodwill |
| amoral | incapable of distinguishing between what is morally right and wrong |
| amulet | charm worn to protect against evil or illness |
| anachronism | something out of place in time or history |
| analogy | partial likeness, similarity |
| anarchy | complete absence of government; lawlessness |
| animosity | ill will; strong dislike |
| annihilate | to demolish, destroy completely |
| annotation | explanatory note |
| annul | to cancel, do away with |
| anodyne | pain reliever |
| anomalous | abnormal, aberrant |
| anonymous | nameless; unknown person |
| antecedent | coming or happening before |
| anterior | preceding; previous; earlier |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| antipathetic | opposed; antagonistic |
| antipathy | aversion, deep-rooted dislike |
| antithesis | opposing or contrasting thoughts or ideas |
| apartheid | policy of racial segregation |
| apathetic | feeling little or no emotion, unmoved |
| aperture | opening, hole |
| aphorism | witty proverb or saying |
| aplomb | poise; self-possession |
| appease | to pacify or calm by giving in to demands; to acquiesce |
| apposite | appropriate, apt, well-suited |
| apprehensive | uneasy, wary, anxious |
| apprise | to notify, keep informed |
| approbation | official approval or sanction |
| apropos | pertinent, to the point |
| arbitrary | capricious; based on preference, notion, or whim |
| archaic | outdated; used only for special purposes or circumstances, as in rituals |
| archetype | prototype; the original pattern or model |
| armada | fleet of ships |
| arrogate | to appropriate; to claim or seize without right |
| artifice | guile, trickery, deceit |
| ascertain | to discover, find out without doubt |
| ascribe | to attribute to, point to as a cause |
| aseptic | bacteria-free; sterile |
| asperity | harshness, roughness |