

Don't lose it—use it!

Have you ever learnt a great new word only to forget it the very next day? Classic research by Hermann Ebbinghaus¹ showed within an hour of learning new information, people can only remember about 60% and a day later, only around 25%! But he also discovered the secret to remembering information! The trick is to organise the information so you can practise it from time to time. Try these different ways to organise and practise all the new words you learn.

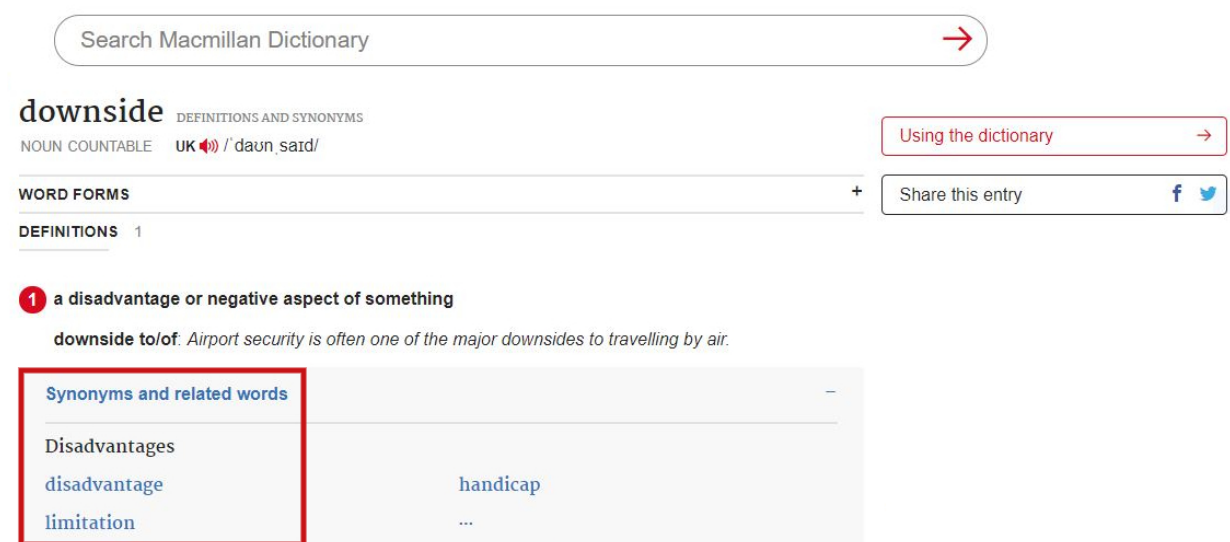
Activity 1

Try organising words in pairs with a similar meaning (synonyms) or pairs with opposite meanings (antonyms). That helps you to connect the new word with a word you know well. For example:

downside = disadvantage

packed ≠ empty

It's easy to find synonyms in your online dictionary. Just look for the synonyms and related words section.



The screenshot shows the Macmillan Dictionary entry for 'downside'. It includes a search bar at the top, the word 'downside' with its definition 'a disadvantage or negative aspect of something', and a section for 'Synonyms and related words' which lists 'disadvantages', 'disadvantage', and 'limitation'. The word 'handicap' is also listed as a related word.

Organise the words in pairs of synonyms and antonyms.

book weird clear sensitive reserve

overcast strange touchy keep get rid of

synonyms

antonyms

_____ = _____	_____ ≠ _____
_____ = _____	_____ ≠ _____
_____ = _____	

VOCABULARY BUILDERS

Activity 2

Another useful way to remember new words is organising them on a scale. Look at the example.

less damp wet soaked drenched → more

Arrange the words in the box along the two scales. Use an online dictionary to help you.

easy hungry tricky ravenous peckish
a piece of cake impossible starving manageable

easier ————— easy ————— → more difficult

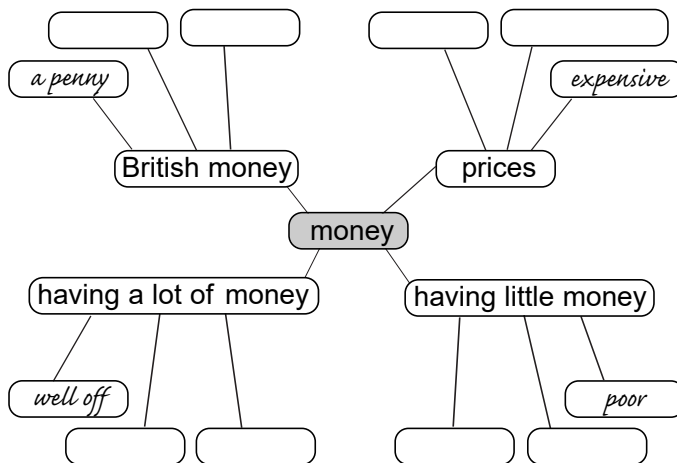
less ————— hungry ————— → more

Activity 3

Are you better at organising information visually? You could put all the related words into a mind map.

Complete the mind map below using words from the box.

a bargain broke costs a bomb hard up loaded pound quid wealthy



Activity 4

Finally, by regularly using your newly learnt words in speaking or writing, you'll remember them more. Try asking and answering questions which use the new vocabulary.

Ask and answer these questions with a partner.

- 1 What do you like to eat when you're feeling peckish?
- 2 Have you ever done a test that was a piece of cake?
- 3 Do you know any shops where you can find bargains?
- 4 What are the downsides of living in a village?
- 5 When did you last get absolutely drenched?
- 6 What would you buy with a thousand quid to spend?