

## 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 Ebbinghaus<sup>1</sup> 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 'disadvantage' and 'limitation' as synonyms, and 'handicap' 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**

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| _____ = _____ | _____ ≠ _____ |
| _____ = _____ | _____ ≠ _____ |
| _____ = _____ |               |

<sup>1</sup> <https://qz.com/1213768/the-forgetting-curve-explains-why-humans-struggle-to-memorize/>  
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# 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

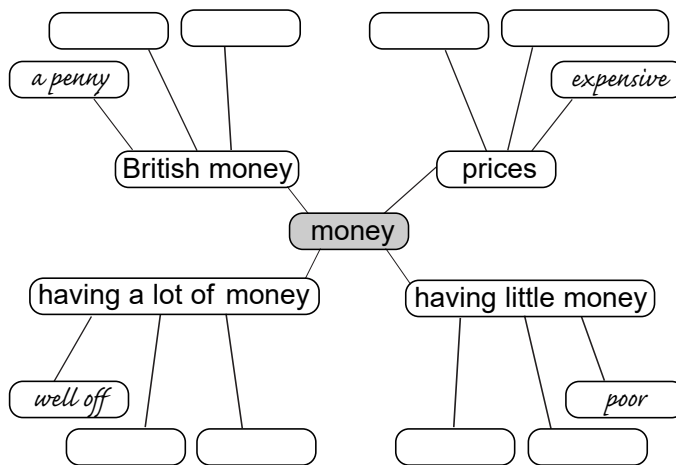
less hungry → more

## 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?