

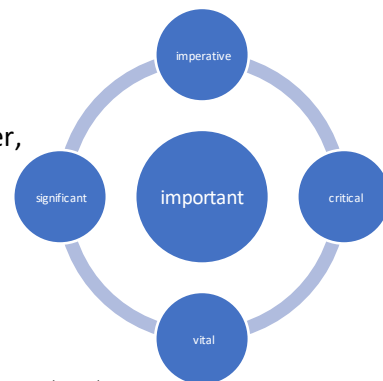
# VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

## Unsure What a Word Means?

Before you Google it, use the context of the sentence to give you clues about what the word may mean. Many words have more than one definition, so immediately Googling the word without context might result in you looking up the “wrong” definition.

## Strategies to Improve your Vocabulary

- 1. Look for positive or negative words or phrases** that could provide a clue to the meaning of the word.  
*Examples of words that provide signals: however, nevertheless, despite, on the other hand, therefore, unfortunately*
- 2. Use parts of the word to help you determine its meaning.** Look at the prefix and the suffix of the word. Learn your Latin and Greek roots. It is suggested that learning 100 of these will significantly help enhance your vocabulary level. *Examples:*
  - *Archaic:* the prefix “arch” means “old,” so this term is referring to something or someone that is “outdated”
  - *Malevolent:* “mal” means “bad,” so this is a negative termSimply knowing the meaning of a prefix or suffix can help you determine the gist or nature of the word.
- 3. Learn a word’s “backstory.”** Understanding the origins of a word not only helps you become interested in learning new words, but it also helps you remember the meaning of that word.
- 4. Use mnemonic devices** to help you retain the meaning of words. *Examples:*
  - *imperative = critical or very important*  
Use the first three letters of the word to help you remember that “imp.” = important, so “**imperative**” must mean something similar
  - *complacent = to be okay with one’s situation; to be self-satisfied*  
Use the root word of the term to help you remember it; “**comply**” = to agree with or to act in accordance with a command
- 5. Use index cards** to create flashcards. On one side, write one word and include if it is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. On the other side of the card, put the word’s definition. If the word has more than one definition, you can include the other definitions or only the one(s) that apply to the context in which the word will be used. You may also choose to include a synonym (something that means the same thing) and/or an antonym (something that means the opposite) to help you remember the word. Example:  
*Front:* Diligent (adj)  
*Back:* Definition: hardworking  
Synonym: sedulous  
Antonym: lethargic
- 6. Make use of word webs.** Put a common, basic word in the center, such as *important*, and branch off that word with other strong words, such as *significant*, *critical*, and *imperative*.



**For more information and support, contact:**

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