

Vocabulary argumentative essay examples

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Learning is a language based activity, and therefore it calls for a high level of proficiency in vocabulary. It is therefore imperative for students to have an understanding of the words that their teachers or instructors use, otherwise there will be no communication taking place. There are different variations of vocabulary and terminologies used to understand it better. A student, for instance, can engage in contextual analysis in an attempt to decipher the meaning of a word based on the context in which it is found. Expressive vocabulary is more complex since it calls for the speaker to identify a particular meaning for a word used; a reverse of this is the receptive vocabulary where the listener or reader is expected to relate a particular meaning to a word either read or listened to. Lastly, a morphemic analysis is needed where the meanings of words can be predicted through an analysis of other significant parts of the word such as the root, the suffix or the prefix. It is widely accepted that an expanse of knowledge in vocabulary is associated with better academic performance, especially in comprehension. This has pushed the necessity for students in the early grades at school to master a significant number of vocabularies (University of Oregon, 1-5). A study in the gap in vocabulary revealed that students who have a few vocabularies find it hard to cope with their counterparts who have a rich background of vocabulary. Their rate of learning new vocabulary also varies sharply, with those without a good foundation in language learning about 2 vocabulary per day and 750 annually. On the other hand, those already equipped seem to learn about 8 words per day and 3, 000 words per day (University of Oregon, 10). With this knowledge, it can be inferred that our command in vocabulary actually does more than communicate our

knowledge of what we can know. This is further discussed in the following paragraphs.

The most important function of vocabulary is its contribution to our ability in reading and comprehension. According to Lehr, Osborn and Hiebert (4), one of the highly persistent discoveries in reading research is that the level to which a student understands vocabulary is directly proportional to their reading of comprehensions and above all their general academic performance. This linkage of vocabulary, reading and comprehension is linear. If a student does not have enough backing in vocabulary, then he will have a problem in reading those words when he encounters them in a text. Since the individual cannot read, then the whole comprehension makes no sense to him owing to the fact that he does not understand. The necessity for understanding vocabulary is expressed in the number of words recommended for an individual. That is, a typical grade 1 student should have an average command of 2, 500 to 26, 000 words. Comparatively, a college graduate is expected to be comfortable with a word knowledge ranging from nineteen thousand to two hundred thousand. It is also believed that students add a rough estimate of 2, 000 – 3, 500 to their vocabulary per annum (Lehr, Osborn and Hiebert, 5). This relationship helps to show the importance of vocabulary. Not only is it for communicating, but it also helps to build self confidence and boost self esteem, since the individual is not afraid that he might fail to impress through speech or any other form of communication. Besides helping us to gain knowledge, word command seems to be a factor in the social class, where those with fewer words seen as incompetent.

Vocabulary knowledge also aids in the learning process. It is the culmination of the words that an individual must master in order to access his background knowledge, communicate with no difficulties, express himself and even gain new knowledge. As Sedita (1) puts it, vocabulary is that which holds together ideas, narratives and content, thereby making the comprehension easy for children to understand. Here, the vocabulary plays a major role in making even the complex issues simplified just by understanding the manner in which it is brought out. The major aspects of vocabulary that an individual should master include phonics and word study, phonemetic awareness and fluency. This not only makes the individual good at communicating and learning, but it also helps in mastering of the pronunciations. Sedita (5) further explains the difficulties that can arise when learning vocabulary. Among them is students who do not read outside the school. As it is, students who take about 21 minutes of off school hours to read adds about two million words to their word command in an year. However, for those who study for less than a minute during out of school hours adds around 800 to 21, 000 words (Sedita, 1). This example shows that the vocabulary can actually tell more than just what we can know. For instance, two children in the same grade can have different commands in the language, just because one takes time to study while the other is involved in bettering their language. In essence, the vocabulary can tell about an individual's character.

Vocabulary mastery determines what social class we are in and the sorts of activities that we can actively participate. Blachowicz, Fisher and Taffe (2) argue that vocabulary instruction is vital for all students. Besides correlating

closely with the overall reading achievement, the student's level of word mastery dictates to which extent the individual can actively participate in the social and classroom activities. The student should therefore receive instructions in their area of strengths so as to make him more socially productive and economically viable. For instance, those interested in arts should be tutored in the areas of comprehension and written communication. This would effectively strengthen him. Similarly, those interested in Mathematics and Sciences should be tutored in vocabulary that would enable them to develop new conceptual frameworks besides aiding in the understanding of harder concepts. This argument indicates that vocabulary is not just related to knowledge gain, but a good command in language helps an individual to express themselves and also explore the world around. The vocabulary also helps to introduce an individual into a whole new world, even when the individual's prior knowledge of the said subject is negligible. The vocabulary will automatically boost the understanding. For instance, a teacher may not know much about the medical field. However, if he encounters a doctor and interacts with him closely, he will learn some of the terminologies used in medicine and thereby get introduced into a new world that he never knew before. From this explanation, vocabulary is depicted as an avenue to more learning. It is not the vocabulary we have that determines what we can learn; rather, it is what we can learn that determines what vocabulary we have.

There is more to what we know than just the vocabulary; vocabulary is just one aspect of what we know, not a measure of all our knowledge and capacity to learn. To analyze this view, Hartsorne (1) cites the words of his

teacher, “ We think in words. The more words you know the more thoughts you have”. This statement tells us that words may not determine what we learn, but the ones we have at any given moment surely do affect the way we think. Hartsorne disputes the argument that humans reason from what they are exposed to. To assert his position, he looks at the case of the Eskimos. If it is true that what we are exposed to affects the way we think, then the Eskimos would have a lot of names for ice given that they are always exposed to it. Surprisingly, the Eskimos don’t have a myriad of words for ice. In his conclusion, Hartsorne (10) observes that words are just important mnemonics that help the human beings to remember some of the things they term as important. He further argues that many words act like acronyms. It therefore may be easier to remember a word just because it is important, not just because we know its meaning. From this point of view, it is evident that words do not exactly tell more about what knowledge an individual can have. Rather, they are just a projection of part of the knowledge that an individual has and deems necessary.

Scott (1) also gives a view that shows that vocabulary is not about much more than what we know. She notes that there are various ways of knowing such as emotion, reason, perception and language. In this case, it is important to note that words are most likely to be correlated to language, which is just one of the many ways of learning. In essence, this would mean that there is more to what we know and understand than is seen in the vocabulary we use. An individual may not be good in language, but has very strong perceptions. On the basis of vocabulary, that individual may be rated low in terms of knowledge. This would be a gross mistake since the person

knows a lot, only that he/she expresses it in a different way rather than through the use of words.

Vocabulary proficiency is not a measure of hidden knowledge. According to Elder and Davies (242), lexical proficiency is necessary for research and education. However, there exists no single test to measure the vocabulary size, but there are multiple-tests. These tests include the controlled productive ability for the active vocabulary, a lexical frequency profile for lexical richness in composition and a vocabulary levels test. This last test measures the passive vocabulary size. An individual with a high score in the vocabulary test levels and a low score in the controlled productive ability test maybe considered to have less knowledge. However, this is not true since the knowledge is there but in passive mode. This proves that vocabulary is not a good measure for the knowledge an individual has or is capable of getting.

As evidenced in the above discussion, it is clear that there is more to vocabulary than meets the eye. Besides affecting the mode of communication, vocabulary has other far reaching impacts in our lives. They affect our ability to learn, socialize and perceive things. Even though there are many different languages in the world, the effect of vocabularies is similar in all the languages. Vocabularies are not just for communication. However, it is important to note that there are always the two sides of a coin. Therefore, there are some arguments, as presented above, that show that vocabulary is just one aspect of what we know. But even if so, then the

expanse of the vocabulary can tell just how well we are versed with a specific brand of knowledge.

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