

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 85

You Understand Everything But You Cant Speak

Key words & expressions · English + Deutsch

10 words

Your English Toolbox

1

passive knowledge

stilles Sprachwissen · verstehen ohne es sagen zu können**DEF**

language that you can understand when you hear or read it but cannot yet produce actively in speaking or writing

Passive knowledge is the first stage of language acquisition — you understand far more than you can say. Most learners have a huge passive vocabulary that needs to be converted to active knowledge through speaking practice.

DE

Sprache, die man verstehen kann, wenn man sie hört oder liest, aber noch nicht aktiv im Sprechen oder Schreiben produzieren kann.

Die erste Stufe des Spracherwerbs — man versteht weit mehr als man sagen kann.

You have passive knowledge of most English you have heard — the challenge is activating it.

You have passive knowledge of most English you have heard — the challenge is activating it. -> Du hast stilles Sprachwissen über das meiste Englisch, das du gehört hast — die Herausforderung ist es zu aktivieren.

She understood English films perfectly but couldn't speak — a classic case of passive knowledge awaiting activation.

She understood English films perfectly but couldn't speak — a classic case of passive knowledge awaiting activation. -> Sie verstand englische Filme perfekt, konnte es aber nicht sagen — ein klassischer Fall von verstehen ohne es sagen zu können, das auf Aktivierung wartet.

2

to activate your vocabulary

Vokabular zum Sprechen bringen · Passives in aktives Wissen umwandeln

DEF

to move words and phrases from passive understanding into active use — making them available for speaking and writing, not just comprehension

Activating vocabulary is the critical step that most learners skip — they understand everything but cannot say it. The bridge from passive to active is output practice: speaking, writing, teaching others.

DE

Wörter und Phrasen vom passiven Verstehen in den aktiven Gebrauch bewegen.

Der kritische Schritt, den die meisten Lernenden überspringen.

You activate vocabulary through output, not input — speak, write, explain, and the passive becomes active.

You activate vocabulary through output, not input — speak, write, explain, and the passive becomes active. -> Du bringst dein Vokabular zum Sprechen durch Output, nicht Input — sprich, schreib, erkläre, und das Stille wird aktiv.

This episode is designed specifically to help you activate vocabulary you already understand passively.

This episode is designed to help you activate vocabulary you already understand passively. -> Diese Episode ist dafür konzipiert, dir zu helfen, Passives in aktives Wissen umzuwandeln.

3

to put into practice

in die Praxis umsetzen · Wissen oder eine Fähigkeit tatsächlich in einer realen Situation zu verwenden

DEF

to actually use knowledge or a skill in a real situation — rather than just knowing it theoretically

Put into practice is the application phrase. In language learning, the gap between knowing a rule or word and being able to use it fluently is bridged only through active, real-world use. 'I know this word but I never put it into practice' describes the passive knowledge problem. Putting language into practice means speaking, writing, making mistakes, and correcting them — not just reviewing notes.

DE

Wissen oder eine Fähigkeit tatsächlich in einer realen Situation zu verwenden — statt es nur theoretisch zu kennen.

Der Anwendungsausdruck.

Put new vocabulary into practice within twenty-four hours of learning it — use it or lose it.

Put new vocabulary into practice within twenty-four hours of learning it — use it or lose it. -> Setz neues Vokabular innerhalb von vierundzwanzig Stunden nach dem Lernen in die Praxis um — benutze es oder verliere es.

She started a speaking partner programme specifically to put into practice the vocabulary she had learned from the podcast.

She started a speaking partner programme specifically to put into practice the vocabulary she had learned from the podcast. -> Sie startete ein Sprachpartnerprogramm speziell um das Vokabular in die Praxis umzusetzen das sie aus dem Podcast gelernt hatte.

4 to look something up

nachschlagen · Informationen über ein Wort eine Phrase oder ein Thema zu suchen

DEF

to search for information about a word, phrase, or topic — in a dictionary, online, or another reference source

Look something up is the research phrasal verb. For language learners, looking words up is one of the core study habits. Key nuances: looking up a word in a dictionary gives definition and pronunciation; looking it up in context gives natural usage examples. The habit of looking up unfamiliar words encountered in reading and listening — rather than skipping them — is a high-yield vocabulary strategy.

DE

Informationen über ein Wort, eine Phrase oder ein Thema zu suchen — in einem Wörterbuch, online oder einer anderen Referenzquelle.

Das Recherchephrasalverb.

Look up new words in context not just in a dictionary — seeing how they are used matters more than the definition.

Look up new words in context not just in a dictionary — seeing how they are used matters more than the definition. -> Schlage neue Wörter im Kontext nach nicht nur im Wörterbuch — zu sehen wie sie verwendet werden ist wichtiger als die Definition.

She kept a notebook beside her whenever she listened to English podcasts and looked up every unfamiliar word the same day.

She kept a notebook beside her whenever she listened to English podcasts and looked up every unfamiliar word the same day. -> Sie hielt immer wenn sie englische Podcasts hörte ein Notizbuch neben sich und schlug jedes unbekannte Wort am selben Tag nach.

5 a vocabulary gap

eine Vokabellücke · ein Wort oder Ausdruck den man versteht wenn man ihm begegnet aber nicht selbstständig produzieren kann wenn man ihn braucht

DEF

a word or expression that you understand when you encounter it but cannot produce independently when you need it

Vocabulary gap is the passive-active divide concept. It describes the common situation where a learner has many words in their passive vocabulary — words they recognise — that are not yet in their active vocabulary — words they can use spontaneously. Closing vocabulary gaps means deliberately moving words from passive recognition to active production through targeted use and rehearsal.

DE

Ein Wort oder Ausdruck den man versteht wenn man ihm begegnet aber nicht selbstständig produzieren kann wenn man ihn braucht.

Das Passiv-Aktiv-Teilungskonzept.

Identify your vocabulary gaps by noticing what you want to say but cannot — then study those words specifically.

Identify your vocabulary gaps by noticing what you want to say but cannot — then study those words specifically. -> Identifiziere deine Vokabellücken indem du bemerkst was du sagen möchtest aber nicht kannst — dann studiere genau diese Wörter.

She discovered a vocabulary gap around business negotiation English and spent two weeks studying and practising exactly those phrases.

She discovered a vocabulary gap around business negotiation English and spent two weeks studying and practising exactly those phrases. -> Sie entdeckte eine Vokabellücke im englischen Geschäftsverhandlungsvokabular und verbrachte zwei Wochen damit genau diese Phrasen zu studieren und zu üben.

to use language in context

6

Sprache im Kontext verwenden · Wörter und Strukturen in realen bedeutungsvollen Situationen zu verwenden

DEF

to employ words and structures in real, meaningful situations — rather than practising them in isolation from a textbook

Use language in context is the communicative learning principle. Context is what gives language meaning. Learning words in isolation — memorising lists — is far less effective than encountering and using words in natural communicative situations: conversations, podcasts, films, real reading, and authentic writing tasks. Context is what makes the language stick.

DE

Wörter und Strukturen in realen, bedeutungsvollen Situationen zu verwenden — statt sie isoliert aus einem Lehrbuch zu üben.

Das kommunikative Lernprinzip.

Always learn new words in a sentence, not in isolation — context is what makes them memorable.

Always learn new words in a sentence, not in isolation — context is what makes them memorable. -> Lerne neue Wörter immer in einem Satz nicht isoliert — der Kontext ist was sie einprägsam macht.

She improved much faster once she stopped studying isolated vocabulary lists and started using language in context through real conversations.

She improved much faster once she stopped studying isolated vocabulary lists and started using language in context through real conversations. -> Sie verbesserte sich viel schneller nachdem sie aufgehört hatte isolierte Vokabellisten zu studieren und anfang Sprache im Kontext durch echte Gespräche zu verwenden.

to recall

7

abrufen · ein Wort eine Tatsache oder eine Erinnerung wieder ins Gedächtnis zu rufen

DEF

to bring a word, fact, or memory back to mind — to successfully retrieve information from memory when you need it

Recall is the memory retrieval verb. In language learning, recall is the final test: not just recognising a word when you see it but being able to produce it independently in the right moment. Active recall — testing yourself rather than just re-reading — is one of the most research-supported vocabulary learning techniques. The question to ask is not 'do I know this word?' but 'can I recall it when I need it?'

DE

Ein Wort, eine Tatsache oder eine Erinnerung wieder ins Gedächtnis zu rufen — Informationen aus dem Gedächtnis erfolgreich abzurufen wenn man sie braucht.

Das Gedächtnisabrufverb.

Test yourself by trying to recall words without looking — recognition is not the same as recall.

Test yourself by trying to recall words without looking — recognition is not the same as recall. -> Teste dich selbst indem du versuchst Wörter ohne Nachschauen abzurufen — Erkennen ist nicht dasselbe wie Abrufen.

She could recognise hundreds of words in reading but found she could not recall them spontaneously in conversation, which showed her the gap in her learning.

She could recognise hundreds of words in reading but found she could not recall them spontaneously in conversation, which showed her the gap in her learning. -> Sie konnte Hunderte von Wörtern beim Lesen erkennen stellte aber fest dass sie sie spontan im Gespräch nicht abrufen konnte was ihr die Lücke in ihrem Lernen zeigte.

to expand your vocabulary

8

deinen Wortschatz erweitern · bewusst die Bandbreite an Wörtern und Phrasen zu vergrößern die man verwenden kann

DEF

to deliberately increase the range of words and phrases you can use — through study, reading, listening, and active practice

Expand your vocabulary is the language growth phrase. It is the meta-goal of most vocabulary learning activities. In English learning, expanding vocabulary is never purely about quantity — 5,000 words used fluently beats 15,000 known passively. The most effective expansion happens through: comprehensible input (reading and listening at a slightly challenging level), active recall, and deliberate use in output.

DE

Bewusst die Bandbreite an Wörtern und Phrasen zu vergrößern die man verwenden kann — durch Studium, Lesen, Zuhören und aktives Üben.

Der Sprachentwicklungsausdruck.

Expand your vocabulary by reading widely — fiction and non-fiction both, at a level slightly above your comfort zone.

Expand your vocabulary by reading widely — fiction and non-fiction both, at a level slightly above your comfort zone. -> Erweitere deinen Wortschatz durch breites Lesen — Fiktion und Sachbücher beides auf einem Niveau leicht über deiner Komfortzone.

She set a goal to expand her vocabulary by learning ten new words every week and tracking her progress in a dedicated notebook.

She set a goal to expand her vocabulary by learning ten new words every week and tracking her progress in a dedicated notebook. -> Sie setzte sich das Ziel ihren Wortschatz zu erweitern indem sie jede Woche zehn neue Wörter lernte und ihren Fortschritt in einem dedizierten Notizbuch verfolgte.

to make progress

9

Fortschritte machen · vorwärts zu kommen und sich zu verbessern — sich einem Ziel durch anhaltende Anstrengung zu nähern

DEF

to move forward and improve — to get closer to a goal over time through sustained effort

Make progress is the improvement recognition phrase. It is one of the most motivating phrases in language learning — recognising that you are moving forward, even if slowly. 'I'm making progress' is both an observation and a motivation. In language learning, progress is often non-linear: plateaus are followed by breakthroughs. The key is to keep the feedback mechanism working: regular output, regular feedback, regular reflection.

DE

Vorwärts zu kommen und sich zu verbessern — sich einem Ziel durch anhaltende Anstrengung im Laufe der Zeit zu nähern.

Der Verbesserungserkennungsausdruck.

Making progress requires both effort and patience — the two cannot be substituted for each other.

Making progress requires both effort and patience — the two cannot be substituted for each other. -> Fortschritte zu machen erfordert sowohl Anstrengung als auch Geduld — die beiden können einander nicht ersetzen.

She looked back at her first attempts to speak English and was moved by how much progress she had made in two years.

She looked back at her first attempts to speak English and was moved by how much progress she had made in two years. -> Sie blickte auf ihre ersten Versuche Englisch zu sprechen zurück und war bewegt davon wie viel Fortschritt sie in zwei Jahren gemacht hatte.

to review your notes

10

deine Notizen durchsehen · die Notizen die du gemacht hast erneut zu lesen um das Lernen zu festigen

DEF

to read back through notes you have taken in order to reinforce learning — ideally shortly after the initial study session and again at spaced intervals

Review your notes is the consolidation study habit. Research on memory retention consistently shows that reviewing notes — especially at spaced intervals — dramatically improves long-term retention compared to a single study session. For language learners, reviewing notes means re-encountering words in the context you originally recorded them, which is more effective than re-reading a word list. 'Review your notes' is both practical advice and a core vocabulary learning strategy.

DE

Die Notizen die du gemacht hast erneut zu lesen um das Lernen zu festigen — idealerweise kurz nach der ersten Lernsitzung und erneut in zeitlichen Abständen.

Die Konsolidierungslerngewohnheit.

Review your notes within twenty-four hours of a lesson — waiting a week means starting from nearly zero.

Review your notes within twenty-four hours of a lesson — waiting a week means starting from nearly zero. -> Sieh deine Notizen innerhalb von vierundzwanzig Stunden nach einer Lektion durch — eine Woche zu warten bedeutet fast von null anzufangen.

She made a habit of reviewing her notes every Sunday evening and found that far more words stayed with her as a result.

She made a habit of reviewing her notes every Sunday evening and found that far more words stayed with her as a result. -> Sie gewöhnte sich daran jeden Sonntagabend ihre Notizen durchzusehen und stellte fest dass dadurch viel mehr Wörter bei ihr blieben.