

1

This just shows you how many words there are to learn to achieve native-like competence! 17,000 word families means something like 50,000 words. Of course, natives have years to acquire all this language. Learners need to make a real effort to consciously learn vocabulary – and as you get better at English, Vocabulary development needs to be your main focus.

2

This means several things for students:

- 1 You need to revise what you study not just once, but over and over again, over time.
- 2 It may help to do something like make revision cards, either on paper or using an online website or mobile phone app (do an online search for ‘online revision cards’), and use these for a fixed period every day.
- 3 You need to read and listen to English outside of class. Ideally, you should be reading graded readers – books written for language learners, as these include and repeat lots of core vocabulary. Reading will help you meet vocabulary time and again.

3

You need to find ways of remembering a lot of language. Translation can help. Maybe translate not just single words, but whole chunks / phrases / sentences. One day, check you remember the meaning of English phrases in your own first language; the next day, start from your first language and see if you can remember the English. With some phrases, pictures might help.

4

The main implication of this is that revision is vital – and that revision is an ongoing process. You need to constantly be going back and looking at what you’ve studied before.

5

This means that it’s no harder to learn phrases than it is to learn single words. It’s better to learn words that go together. It also means you shouldn’t overload yourself. Focus on 7–10 words a day – and revise previous days’ words.

6

If you have vocabulary in a list, make sure you sometimes start in the middle, or at the end. If you’re using an app, randomise the list so you don’t always start in the same place.