



## **What exercises can I do to improve my language skills?**

### **Reading**

Read something interesting every day for 15 minutes or more (news, magazine, book etc).

### **Listening**

We listen to our family and friends in conversation. Continue to be engaged in conversation. Be sure to let your communication partner know when you have not understood something. Listen to the news, a TV program or a movie and then discuss with someone after you have heard the information.

### **Speaking**

We think of speaking as the most common part of communicating every day. If you notice a change in how easily you can think of words in conversation, use these exercises to practice remembering words. You can state these aloud or write them down:

- Make a list of words that begin with a specific letter such as S or A.
  - Start with 5 words in a list and gradually build to longer lists (some letters are harder such as words that begin with 'Q' or words in less common categories).
  
- Make a list of words for categories (specific words such as fruits, or more complicated: yellow fruit; feelings or more abstract ideas: objects that are soft, etc.)
  - For easier lists, try to work to 10-20 words per list.
  - Read your list out loud. Date each list. Keep your lists in a folder to keep track of your progress: can you think of more words, more quickly, over time?

## Writing

You may not practice writing as often! Try writing a grocery list, To Do list, thank you note, or letter to a friend. Many games, such as Scrabble, will help you think of words. Puzzle books with cross words and other word related games may be fun ways to stimulate thinking, memory and language.

## Other strategies to help you recall words:

Take your time	Give yourself a few seconds: this may allow time for the word to 'surface'. Be patient with yourself and let your communication partner know you need a second or two.
Establish the topic	Let your listener know the general idea.
Ask: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How	<b>When trying to recall a person, object, place or reason/idea, tell your communication partner something about:</b> -Who it is -What it is (use, color, shape, etc) -Where it is located -Why (or how) it is important etc. Extra information may allow your listener to guess the word. Let your listener know you need a hint if they feel they know the word. Most listeners will automatically say the potential target word for you, at which time you can let them know if its correct or not.
Make an association	See if you can think of something related; even if the word is not quite right, it may help you come up with the word or help your listener understand your meaning.

Think of the Synonym or Antonym	Think of a word that means the same or something similar. Or, if you can think of the opposite, let your listener know “It’s the opposite of _____”.
Say the first letter	Think of letters in alphabetical order: does a letter help you think of the word? “It starts with ___”
Does a gesture help?	Think of the game ‘charades’: can you show the word with a gesture or by moving your hands or body or by using a facial expression?
Draw	Can you draw a quick picture of an object or if it’s a place, a sketch of a map?
Take a break and try later	If you cannot think of the word or a suitable substitution, and your listener is also not able to help: come back to it later. Change the subject. It may ‘pop’ into your mind later on its own.

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