

Why Develop Your Vocabulary?

In Plato's Dialogs, we read: "What is greater than the word that persuades judges in courts, or senators in council, or citizens of the assembly, or at any other political meeting? If you have the power of uttering this word, you will have the physician your slave, and the trainer your slave, and the money-maker of whom you talk will be found to gather treasures, not for himself, but for you who are able to speak and to persuade the multitude."

What is greater than the word?

"No matter what field a person goes into, if he/she commands the word, ... has a good fluent grasp of the language and can speak it well or write it well, the odds are about 90 to 1 that person will do quite well all the years of his/her life.

"That's one of the reasons why the study of language is the most important subject a person can undertake. No matter what field he/she may ultimately branch off into, medicine, law, engineering, business, agriculture, letters, government, the clergy, the military, labor, it doesn't really make any difference; a good understanding of the ability to use the language is, as Plato knew, of incalculable benefit to a man or woman.

"I've noticed that students tend to hate to study English. That's a pity. And it's also completely unnecessary. The study of English can be an interesting, exciting and enormously rewarding experience. It's the largest, most flexible, most interesting, and most widely used language on earth. It contains in excess of 6,000,000 words and can be a fascinating lifetime study. One studies English for the same reason a person studies anything else, golf, for example, or medicine, or physics ... so that one may learn more about it and become proficient in its use. We don't undertake the study of language so that we can learn a lot of big words, or so that we can impress or confuse others. In fact, the proper use of the language in communicating with others is to use words that are quickly and easily understood; the right words for the right things or situations, or events, or conditions.

"There is a word in English for everything or anything you can think of. A book could be written about any word in the language and many have been written about such words as love, war, hatred, greed, jealousy, ignorance, and death. That's because words are much more than words: they're concepts. One word can cover an entire field of human emotion or enterprise...

"...we take words for granted, but we shouldn't. We should constantly be aware of them. I must dive into my dictionary 20 or so times a day to find the right meaning of a word, or the right word for the meaning I'm trying to express."

If you have the power of the word, you can have anything else your heart desires. And the power of the word is available to anyone. It can be studied for nothing.