

## ***Learning Vocabulary***

- ✓ Listen to the vocabulary CD several times per chapter, starting with the first day the vocabulary is assigned on your syllabus. Remember to link as many senses as possible to this vocabulary: look at the word list in your book as you listen to the word being pronounced. Write the word down in your vocabulary notebook while you visualize the object or idea it refers to and repeat the word several times, trying to mimic the speaker as closely as possible.
- ✓ Use Post-It<sup>®</sup> tabs to mark the vocabulary list page for each chapter. Label each tab with the chapter number, and stagger their placement (the first tab is close to the binding of the book, the tab for the next chapter is a step closer to the edge of the book, and so on) to make them easy to see, and give you fast access to the page you are looking for. If you are in 1102 and are starting in the middle of the book, mark pages for the previous chapters as well, for quick access for review.
- ✓ Keep a vocabulary list separate from your other class and text notes, such as a stenographer's notebook or other small notebook. As we begin each chapter, add the vocabulary from the book to your list: French on one side of the page, English (or even better, a drawing that represents the word) on the other. Make sure to **CHECK YOUR SPELLING!** In a contrasting color pen, underline spelling that confuses you (ie: you might confuse 'ie' and 'ei,' and would underline these combinations in words), circle accent marks you tend to confuse or forget. You want to pay attention to these details and use the colors to call your attention to them to help you remember them (but don't go too wild with the colors and underlining and circling: a little bit helps, too much adds to confusion).
- ✓ You also want to have a very portable form of the vocabulary list, so that you can pull it out whenever you have time (waiting in the doctor's or dentist's office, between classes, etc.) Make your own flash cards with the French word on one side and a picture (or the English word, when unavoidable) on the flip side. (Again, make sure your spelling is correct!) Practice by looking at one side of the card and coming up with the word on the other side. Say it and spell it, then check your answer.

One system that works well, and is both visually and tactilely stimulating, is to take small index cards (the regular 3" x 5" size) and cut them in half, then punch a hole in the corner of each card. Write your vocabulary words on these cards, and link them together with metal loops (you can find these in the office supplies section of Walmart or the bookstore).

As you learn the words, move those you can easily remember to a second ring. You may even have a third ring for words that you find particularly difficult (so you can spend more time on them).

Even better: use three different colors of cards—pink (for feminine nouns—yes it's stereotypical, but it's a long-engrained association that is easy to remember), blue for masculine nouns (both singular and plural forms for those that don't just add an 's'), and a third color of your choice (not too close to either of the other 2) for all other words—verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, etc.

Keep cards for the current chapter grouped together, to help you study the new vocabulary. Once we have finished a chapter, rearrange your cards and group them with cards from previous chapters, keeping verbs on one ring, nouns on another, adjectives on another, and all other words on another. This will help you review the semester vocabulary in a more global way.

These vocabulary lists and cards take some time to prepare at first, but they will serve you well throughout the semester, and preparing them will help you learn and remember the vocabulary.

- ✓ Imagine a picture image or action scene in your mind of the French; don't just think of the word in English. Act out the word as you study it. This will help you develop a more direct association between the word and the object, without having to go through the 'middle man' of English.
- ✓ Use word association and other tricks to help you remember the word. For example, the word "circonflexe" (for this accent mark ^) sounds a bit like "circus tent," and a circus tent has a top that is shaped like ^, which can help you remember which accent mark the word refers to.
- ✓ Be aware that often, French words correspond more directly to less-commonly-used English words than to their more common synonyms. For example: in English, "to watch" and "to observe" are synonyms, and in French, the verb "observer" is used.
- ✓ Keep your textbook with you when you are doing lab work, open to the vocabulary list for the current chapter (which should be quick to find, because you've already marked that page with a Post-It<sup>®</sup> tab, right?). Consult the list often: before listening to an exercise focused on specific vocabulary, when you don't understand what is being said (perhaps because you don't remember some key words?) and when writing answers (there should be NO misspellings of vocabulary on the lab sheets--or on any other homework for that matter--when you hand them in). If you hear something that 'sounds like' 'shayz,' DON'T write "shayz." Consult your vocabulary list, and write "chaise," the correct word. (Misspelling a vocabulary word on homework, whether it's lab work or other written work, is inexcusable, since you have the resources to check spelling. It also will make it harder for you to learn the correct spelling: If you don't make the effort to learn the spelling while you're doing the homework, when are you going to learn it? It won't come by itself: you have to work at it).
- ✓ Label the objects in your room with the French words for them, using Post-it<sup>®</sup> notes.
- ✓ Take advantage of every opportunity you have to use the words—talk to yourself in French, talk to your classmates, use the lab CDs, and of course do the homework every night.