

What are the six key things to do to remember vocabulary of a foreign language?

Claude (1 June 2026): Here are six key strategies for remembering foreign language vocabulary:

1. **Spaced repetition** — Review words at gradually increasing **intervals** (e.g., with apps like Anki or Duolingo). This exploits how memory **consolidates** over time, making recall stick far longer than **cramming**.
2. **Use the word in context** — Don't just memorize isolated words; read, write, and listen to them in sentences. Meaning **anchors** to context much more reliably than to abstract definitions.
3. **Active recall** — Test yourself rather than passively re-reading. Flashcards, quizzes, or simply trying to retrieve a word before checking force your brain to strengthen the memory pathway.
4. **Connect to what you know** — Create associations: link a new word to a similar-sounding word in your language, a **vivid** image, or a personal memory. The weirder or more emotional the association, the better it tends to stick.
5. **Use it repeatedly in real communication** — Speaking, writing, or even thinking in the language **cements** vocabulary far better than study alone. Try to use new words within 24 hours of learning them.
6. **Cluster words thematically** — Learn vocabulary in related groups (food, emotions, travel) rather than **random** lists. Your brain organizes knowledge in networks, and thematic grouping mirrors that structure, making words easier to **retrieve**.

The common thread: **active, repeated, meaningful engagement** beats passive exposure every time.

Intervals: a lapse, a space of time: every day, every week, etc.

Consolidate: to strengthen, to ensure

To cram: to squeeze something into a place. Here it means to work a lot in one session, rather than regularly.

To anchor: to attach, to fix (a ship uses its anchor to stay fixed in the sea)

Vivid: strong, colourful (a vivid image is something very clear, and visually impressive)

To cement: (together): stick together, strengthen (cement is used to stick bricks together).

Random: accidental, arbitrary (a random number is a number picked by chance)

To retrieve: to bring back, to recover, to reclaim.