# English for Uni - Vocabulary Strategies

In English, words can change form and meaning according to their position in a sentence and the context of an idea. Therefore, an effective vocabulary strategy should include activities that teach you how to use the correct form of a word according to its position, as well as how it is used across many different contexts. As you go through your course, it’s a good idea to create your own personal dictionary of key words and phrases. In your dictionary include the meanings, forms and contexts in which these words and phrases can be used. You can then use these notes to create your own sentences and get feedback on whether you have used the word correctly in your sentences.

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|  | Your questions | Your notes |
| MeaningWhat are the many meanings of the word? | What does the word mean in this particular context? | **Variable** as in “economic variable” = Any data accounted for in an economic model. Any measurement that helps to determine how an economy functions e.g. population, poverty rate, inflation.  Economists employ causal modelling to explain outcomes (**dependent variables**) based on a variety of factors (**independent variables**) |
| What other meanings might it have? | Meanings in other contexts differ: inconsistent, shifting, inconstant, changeable, versatile.  In maths = symbol for unknown number. |
| What other synonym could I use in this particular context? | Economic data / measurement |
| Does this word have positive or negative associations? | No |

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|  | Your questions | Your notes |
| FormWhat kind of word is it? | How is it used in a sentence? *noun, verb, adverb, adjective etc.* | Economic variable = Noun  Also used as adjective in other contexts. |
| What other word forms have the same root? Do these help me to further understand the word? | varying variability  various variant  variety variation |
| Are there spelling variations? e.g. US / UK | No |
| ContextWhen/Where do you use the word? | Is the word commonly used or only in certain contexts? Is it technical, academic, colloquial? | Economic term used in both general and academic texts |
| How is the word being used in your readings? Is the word always used in a particular pattern? Is it often used with particular words? | economic variable  elastic / inelastic variables  dependent / independent variables  economic variability  subject to variation |
| Where did I read the word?  Where can I find out more about it? | Jones (2009, p. 124)  Malkovich (2014, p. 5) |
| Writing | How will I use this word in the context of my next assignment? | I will examine the relationship between poverty and macro-economic variables in Pakistan. |
| Pronunciation | Individual sounds, consonant clusters, syllable stress. | var-i-a-ble (say: very – yubble) |