User Interviews

Interview Script

Introduction

Hi [First Name], My name is Tiffany and I'll be asking you a few questions today. I'm trying to understand how people approach learning new vocabulary and/or a new subject. This session should take approximately 20 minutes.

Feel free to speak your mind and honestly. There's no right or wrong answer. If you have any questions as we go along or need to take a break, just let me know!

Our session today will be recorded. This recording will just allow me to go back and transcribe some areas. Are you comfortable with that?

Ok, let's start with some quick questions about yourself and then we will get into project questions about education and learning vocabulary.
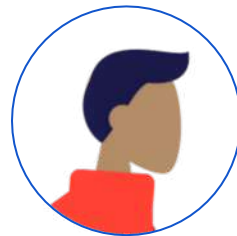
Interviewees

Judy, 39
Financial Analyst and Mom
San Jose, CA

Ryan, 42
HR Benefits and HRIS Specialist
San Diego, CA

Jack, 37
Math Teacher and Dad
Morgan Hill, CA

Interview Questions

1. What does your typical daily routine look like?

2. When was the last time you tried learning new vocabulary? Was it successful? What did you use?

3. What is the best method for you to learn vocabulary? Examples of methods?

4. What keeps you motivated to learn new vocabulary?

5. Tell me about a time you've been frustrated when learning new words. Why? What would make it easier?

6. How much time and when during the day would you devote to learning new vocabulary each day on a mobile application?

7. What features do you think would be most useful to you in a vocabulary app?

Judy, 39

Financial Analyst and Mom | San Jose, CA

1. **What does your typical daily routine look like?**

    I wake up when my kid wakes up and get her ready before her cousins come or we have to leave to her grandparents house. It's just toddler referee until 4. My ex comes and plays with her for 2 hours, while I either work out, or I decompress, and then I feed her dinner and then I go to sleep.

2. **When was the last time you tried learning new vocabulary? Was it successful?**

    A little bit; anatomy terms. Within the last month. I remember one or two of them. It wasn't mandatory, so I didn't devote a lot of time to it. The anatomical names were listed in a workbook and I looked at it while I was doing the associated muscle test and I just said it a couple of times.

3. **What is the best method for you to learn vocabulary? Examples of methods?**

    When I was learning vocab for my major, I involved as many sensory outputs or types as I could. I would have a set of flash cards and I would look at that visually. After that I'd write everything in English and then write it in Japanese next to it and then hide the Japanese and then try to write it out. So the first method was visual to get it into my brain. Second input was kinetic with my hand. Third one was to listen and pick it up through J-Dramas, and identify those vocab words orally.

Judy, 39 (continued)

Financial Analyst and Mom | San Jose, CA

4. What keeps you motivated to learn new vocabulary?

Self interest. I'm very self motivated. If you tell me to do something, I do it. It's my personality type.

5. Tell me a time when you've been frustrated with learning new words? And why? What would make it easier for you?

When the cadence was difficult, like it was an extremely long word and it was difficult to remember the 5 syllables in a row. Hearing it in a native setting would make it easier. Unexpectedly, if it came out in conversation and then I'll be triggered.

6. How much time during the day would you devote to learning new vocabulary on a mobile app?

Probably zero.

7. What features do you think would be most useful to you in a vocabulary app?

I think engaging the user is critical, because if it's not fun, I'm not going to use it. If learning vocab in English, maybe you could show the etymology of the word. But if it was ideograms like Asian languages, similar to etymology, show both how it originated from the root and the modern application of it. It sticks in my mind better when I can link it to other languages. And colors. Colors help.

Judy, 39 (continued)

Financial Analyst and Mom | San Jose, CA

DOING

I am a busy single-mother with little down time.

I learn using different sensory types (flash cards (visual), writing (kinetic), and watching shows (orally)).

I remember words better if linked to other languages.

THINKING

I believe if words are not needed for a goal, I won't use much effort to remember them.

I think hearing long words in a native setting and in conversation will make it easier for me to remember.

I believe if the app is not fun or engaging, I won't use it.

I think showing the etymology, or root origination, and the modern application will help me remember better.

FEELING

I feel very self motivated.

I feel it's difficult to remember words that have long syllables.

I feel that colors will be a useful feature.

I feel I would not spend time using a mobile app to learn new vocabulary.

Ryan, 42

HR Benefits & HRIS Specialist | San Diego, CA

1. **What does your typical daily routine look like?**

   Responding to employee's, vendors, managers about our company's benefits, benefit offerings, any issues/problems that occur HR Informations Systems software. Communicate via phone, mostly through email and a lot of teleconference calls.

2. **When was the last time you tried learning new vocabulary? Was it successful?**

   I would say learning vocabulary is an ongoing process everyday and it's somewhat successful. My main source of definitions and vocabulary is Google.

3. **What is the best method for you to learn vocabulary? Examples of methods?**

   Depends on the situation. If I'm writing out an email, memo, or document, I like to use the synonyms feature in Microsoft Office. Or if I'm reading something and I don't know the definition, I'll Google the word. For me, just knowing synonyms of the word makes me retain the typical definition of what that word means.

Ryan, 42 (continued)

HR Benefits & HRIS Specialist | San Diego, CA

4. What keeps you motivated to learn new vocabulary?

Being in a newer position, number 1, not looking like an idiot and not using the wrong word or sentence in the wrong way. I just want to make sure that I understand everything that I'm reading.

5. Tell me a time when you've been frustrated with learning new words? And why? What would make it easier for you?

I feel frustrated when having to switch screens a lot of times, not having easy access to Google. Most times I don't know the proper way to spell a word and the system I'm using doesn't give me suggestions. Or the suggestions could be wrong because I'm wrong in the spelling. I wish I could just say the word, instead of typing because I'm not a good speller.

6. How much time during the day would you devote to learning new vocabulary on a mobile app?

I'm a morning person. It would be right before I go over emails, maybe learn a couple of words. That would be not even 5 minutes a day.

7.   What features do you think would be most useful to you in a vocabulary app?

The definition, use of it in a sentence, and then synonyms of the word. And being able to say the word, instead of spelling it out. It would be useful for the audio feature for people that don't know the language and also for people like me, that aren't the greatest spellers in the world.

Ryan, 42 (continued)

HR Benefits & HRIS Specialist | San Diego, CA

DOING

I am a working professional that solves problems, communicates and attends teleconference calls.

I use Google for looking up vocabulary and definitions.

I learn by using the synonyms feature in Microsoft Office.

I want to understand everything that I'm reading.

I am not a good speller.

THINKING

I believe learning vocabulary is an everyday ongoing process.

I think having an audio feature, instead of typing, would be easier for me.

I think I would spend less than 5 minutes a day on a vocab app.

I believe having the word definition, use case, and synonyms will be useful for me.

I believe being able to speak a word, instead of spelling it will help.

FEELING

I feel motivated to learn words so I don't feel dumb if I use the wrong word at work.

I feel frustrated having to switch screens when looking up a word.

I feel frustrated not having easy access to Google.

I feel frustrated when the auto suggestions are wrong because I can't spell the word.

Jack, 37

Math Teacher and Dad | Morgan Hill, CA

1. **What does your typical daily routine look like?**

   I teach from 8 to 3. Then have meetings, or grading to do, or lesson planning and then I'm done around 5 or 6. After, sometimes I play video games when the kids are asleep, I'll catch up on some shows, or play with my kids.

2. **When was the last time you tried learning new vocabulary? Was it successful?**

   I learned new vocab while trying to learn woodworking. I watched a lot of videos. It was easier because the vocab was based on how you cut the wood, prepare the wood, and what kind of wood you buy, what kind of power tools to use. It's all tangible and visible to what the words are describing. Yes, it was successful, it definitely improved it. I would have liked a vocab app in this instance, to further my knowledge of woodworking, knowing what to look up, of what things I could use or do. Some things you can't look up because you don't know what the words are, but you've seen it in passing. Reading was hard because it would say something and I would have no idea what that is, until I see a visual of it. Websites show it to you, but it was much easier to watch somebody do it.

3. **What is the best method for you to learn vocabulary? Examples of methods?**

   By context. By somebody else using it organically in conversation. That would make sense why that word was used and how it was used. To have some sort of ground of what that word is helps me understand it and I can use it further ways in the future and grab more context as I use it.

Jack, 37 (continued)

Math Teacher and Dad | Morgan Hill, CA

4. What keeps you motivated to learn new vocabulary?
Definitely to be able to have conversations with people and to understand what things mean when I read them.

5. Tell me a time when you've been frustrated with learning new words? And why? What would make it easier for you?
When I was studying SATs. Vocabulary words were learned at a rapid pace with no context. It was words on a page with the definition. I only made sense of the words that I had slight understandings to in my everyday life. Words used in context help if I have context myself. If I've done things that revolve around it. It doesn't grab me because I have nothing to attach to it. For the SAT, things like prefixes and suffixes definitely helps. Learning those are some ways you can break down a word to get an idea.

6. How much time during the day would you devote to learning new vocabulary on a mobile app?
I don't know, 20 minutes. 10-20 minutes. When I'm driving to work; if it has an audio function.

7. What features do you think would be most useful to you in a vocabulary app?
It would be beneficial to have something where I can filter the field in which the vocab is geared towards. Also maybe even further filter that to subjects, subgenres. Also beyond audio, it accepts audio. If it's going to speak to me, then I can respond back to it. I think having that audio function is good because it makes the app more accessible. I think that's very helpful. Just having different modes of delivering the end solution.

Jack, 37 (continued)

Math Teacher and Dad | Morgan Hill, CA

DOING

I am a full-time teacher and parent with free time in the evenings.

I am a visual learner, so I learn best with videos and someone showing me how to do something.

I learn words best if there's context behind it or in a conversation.

I remember words more if I have done things that revolve around them.

THINKING

I think words learned at a rapid pace with no context will not retain.

I believe studying prefixes and suffixes to words help in remembering.

I believe an audio feature, like Alexa, on a vocab app would make it more accessible. I can use it while driving to work.

I think having filter fields and subgenres for vocab would be useful.

FEELING

I feel videos are more tangible and visible.

I feel frustrated when you can't look up a word because you don't know it, but have seen it in action.

I feel motivated to learn words so I can have conversations and to understand meanings when I read them.