The power of the word – Teacher's guide

Form and function of the language

While **functions** address what we do with language, **forms** are the language structures and vocabulary that are used to support those functions.

Language forms deal with words themselves as well as with the internal grammatical structure of words and phrases. They also include vocabulary: words or phrases frequently used across different content areas.

Language functions refer to what students do with language as they engage with content and interact with others. Functions represent the active use of language for a specific purpose. Students use language functions in order to express ideas, communicate with others, and show understanding of content in a particular setting.

Language learners need to acquire both the uses/purposes: functions and the structures and vocabulary: forms that make up the English language in order to reach higher levels of proficiency. Teachers need to understand the acquisition of a language demands the management of both function and form in order to best support students' language development.

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ACTIVITY 1

"I remember..." - Memory association

General considerations to help students make sense of how our brain works in front of different stimuli related to our senses.

The sensory memory

The sensory memory is, in a way, the first step in the processing of the information ready to be memorized: it is a filter through which all these stimuli pass from outside through our senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste). To avoid being overwhelmed, this memory – which does not require our attention! – must make its selections and empty itself super-fast. To give you an idea, from the sense of sight alone, our brain receives each second the equivalent of 1 Mb of information, which corresponds to reading an entire encyclopaedia in a minute. The information retention time in sensory memory ranges from a few hundred milliseconds to one or two seconds. Without going into details, let us mention that the process that starts here is called "sensory transduction": the sensory receptors transform the stimuli energy – chemical or physical, according to the type of receptor appropriate to each sense – into electrical signals (nerve impulses).

Information, in the form of electrical signals, follows different pathways to activate certain regions of the brain in order to be interpreted accordingly. The information deemed relevant is then encoded – processed to be stored – then transmitted to the short-term memory, a more stable memory, from where eventually it will pass into the long-term memory. Since each sense has its own system, its own circuit, each linked to a specific area of the cerebral cortex, we can speak of visual, auditory, olfactory, taste and tactile memories.

The sensory memory is not circumscribed to a single region of the brain but interconnected to other ones, participating in its proper functioning. By also recording emotions and sensations related to perceived sensory information, this memory not only recognizes our environment but also helps us to make sense of future events.

Adapted from: https://knowledgeone.ca/8-types-of-memory-to-remember/

There are different types of sensory memory:

Iconic memory Associated with the things that you see. It has a large amount of storage but stores the memory for less than a second. The brighter the image, the longer it stays in your iconic memory.

Examples: Iconic memories are visual. When you flip a light switch, the brief image in your memory that remains of what you saw before you turned off the lights is an iconic memory. Or imagine that you're riding in a car and see cows grazing in a field. After you pass the field, the short memory that remains of the cows is an iconic memory. If you pass a row of businesses on a road, your short memory of which businesses were there and what their signs looked like is also an iconic memory.

Echoic memory This is associated with sound and hearing. Your brain takes a few seconds to process echoic memories. Once the sound enters your ear, your temporal lobe processes it. Research shows that echoic memory is essential to learning a language and that people who have trouble speaking may store echoic memories for shorter amounts of time.

*Examples**:*** The ability to listen to a song and recognize it involves echoic memory. Your echoic memory records each note and helps your brain connect the tones, allowing you to recognize it as a song. Another example is the ability to understand language. A similar process happens with speech and echoic memory. This form of memory records each syllable or sound and connects it to the next syllables, helping your brain recognize words and sentences that you can understand.

Haptic memory This type of memory is related to your sense of touch. It can include sensations like pressure, pain, itching, or something that feels good. Haptic memory allows you to identify things you're touching.

Examples: Anything that uses the sensation of touch also uses your haptic memory. For example, when you feel a raindrop on your skin, your haptic memory records that sensation, helping you recognize what 's happening. Haptic memory is also involved when you play a musical instrument. It helps you sense where your fingers are so you can play the right notes. Similarly, haptic memory helps you find the right keys when you're typing on a computer.

Olfactory memory This is associated with smell. Once you take in a smell, it travels quickly to the parts of the brain that help form long-term memories. Olfactory memory helps you identify tastes because molecules from the food you chew go into your nose. Without smell, you would only be able to taste basic flavours like sweetness.

Examples: Your olfactory memory plays a role in taste, but it can also conjure up old memories and emotions. For example, when you smell something from your childhood, it helps your brain bring up other memories associated with that smell. This sense can also convey emotions. When you smell a candle and it reminds you of a peaceful feeling, your olfactory memory is at play.

Gustatory memory Associated with taste; gustatory memory has a close relationship with olfactory memory. It helps you identify foods through the five basic flavours your tongue identifies through the gustatory receptor cells: salty, sweet, bitter, umami and sour.

Examples: Similar to smells, tastes can help you recall old memories. For instance, if you eat something that once made you sick to your stomach, you may have nausea the next time you eat that food. This is an evolutionary advantage that helps you avoid poisonous foods by remembering things that may be harmful.

https://www.webmd.com/brain/what-are-sensory-memory-examples

Exercise 1

- Tell students or show on the screen the different types of sensory memory and their examples. Ask them to associate each of them with their own experiences either based on the examples given or bringing in their own ideas or memories. Get them to write them down in the chart under each label.

Then, they should get in pairs and share with their partners. After that they will join another pair and share the most interesting experiences.

Exercise 2

➢ Ask students: “Have you ever noticed that one memory leads to another, which leads to another?” Sometimes two ideas that have nothing to do with each other can be connected.

For example,

> *Blowing my nose makes me think of the long chess games my brother and I used to play during my frequent flues in my childhood.*

(Write on the board or project)

Blowing my nose makes me think of my childhood long chess games which makes me think of my brother which makes me think of laughing which makes me think of my best friend…

Give them one minute and then say stop.

What do you think of when I say *‘birthday’*? What about ‘tree’?

Give students a time limit to write. During that time, they will write what memories they can associate with those two ideas together. Get them to share it with the person sitting next to them and then ask a couple of pairs to explain how different their stories have turned and ask them why they think that is so. Then let volunteers share with the whole class their story.

Exercise 3

You could mention here the term: Stream of Consciousness as it was used by James Joyce in *“Ulysses”,* W. Faulkner or Virginia Wolf. As the psychological novel developed in the 20th century, some writers attempted to capture the total flow of their characters’ consciousness, rather than limit themselves to rational thoughts. Some writers chose to delve into the minds of their narrators and characters, providing a running monologue of what was happening in their heads. It involves a lot of brainwork, interior monologue, sensory observations, and the character’s psychological state during the observations. This is known as stream of consciousness writing. It uses unusual, often grammatically incorrect, sentence structure full of incomplete thoughts and tangents to illustrate how a character thinks.

We could associate this technique to our exercise now focusing on the use of **sensory words** to help you provide more details and examples in your writing, to add depth of detail to writing.

Sensory words are descriptive - they describe how we experience the world: how we smell, see, hear, feel or taste something.

➢ Write on the board the categories and brainstorm some corresponding adjectives. Add these to the lists.

- Words related to **sight** indicate colours, shape, or appearance. For instance: *gloomy, dazzling, bright, foggy, gigantic.*
- Words related to **touch** describe textures. You can use them to describe feelings and abstract concepts, too: *gritty, creepy, slimy, fluff, sticky.*
- Words related to **hearing** describe sounds. For instance: *crashing, thumping, piercing, tingling, squeaky*. Often these words mimic sounds—that’s when they’re called onomatopoeic.
- **Taste** and **smell** are closely related. Most taste and smell words are easy substitutes for bland words like *good, nice,* or *bad*. For instance: *zesty, tantalizing, sweet, stinky, stale*.
- **Motion** is sensory, too. By using active words or describing movement, you help your readers experience your words. For instance: *vibrating, soaring, mind-boggling, staggering, bumpy*.

https://www.enchantingmarketing.com/sensory-words/

➢ Read the following excerpts with the students and then ask them to underline the nouns being described in each of them. Then, they should write a more simple description of each of the nouns in the context. Get them to compare the results and decide how they influence on the reader's figuring and understanding of the text.

The brothel where Leila worked was among the oldest in the area. A single fluorescent tube flickered at the entrance with the force of a thousand tiny matches catching light and burning one after another. The air was thickened by the scent of cheap perfume, the taps encrusted with deposits of limescale and the ceiling coated with the sticky brown stains of nicotine and tar from years of tobacco smoke. From: *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* by Elif Shafak
Some fish use their swim bladders as a drum, like children who tap out rhythms on their bellies after eating, an unaccountable music we've all made at one time or another. Adapted from: *The Eloquence of the Sardine: The Secret Life of Fish & Other Underwater Mysteries* by Bill François
You could smell ripe strawberries before you saw them, the fragrance mingling with the smell of sun on damp ground…Each tiny wild berry was scarcely bigger than a raindrop, dimpled with seeds under the cap of leaves. From that vantage point I could pick only the reddest of the red, leaving the pink ones for tomorrow. From: *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Exercise 4

https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org

The sounds we hear in our daily life

➢ Ask your students:

Have you ever wanted to describe a sound that you heard but found you didn't have quite the right word for it? Here we will deal with a range of specific words and phrases to refer to the sounds we hear in our daily life.

➢ Show this to them and get them to look through the list and check which words they know and which they don't identify.

urban environment	outdoors	at home and buildings
a hum, a drone or a rumble	tweet, chirp and cheep	creak
roar	twitter and chatter	clatter
deafening	warble	crash
screech or squeal of brakes	rustle howling	gurgle
honking or hooting	shatter or break the silence	clang or clank
wailing	sighs	rattle
blaring (out)	clap of thunder	crackle
ringing out, pealing or chiming	crashing	tick
howl	lapping	patter against / on
barking	burble, babble and gurgle	drum or pound

➢ Choose how you want to present the following information to your students**.** You may want to project it or go through it with them on the board or even try to brainstorm it from them. Then, do the exercises in their worksheets.

You may wish to select some of the words to be taught.

Part 1

We'll start by looking at noises that we hear in an ***urban environment***. As you might imagine, many relate to vehicles.

- What do you hear when you leave your home?

If you live near a main road, you might be aware of the continuous noise of traffic. We describe this – and other continuous low noises – as ***a hum, a drone or a rumble***.

If a continuous sound is very loud, we might use the noun ***roar*** instead. To emphasize how *loud* the roar is, we can use the collocating adjective ***deafening***.

Now and then, you might hear the unpleasant, high sound of a vehicle suddenly stopping. This is often referred to as a ***screech*** *or* ***squeal of brakes*****.**

During the daytime, you might also hear the ***honking*** or ***hooting*** of horns in vehicles.

Another sound that's heard in cities is the ***wailing*** (= long, high sound) of sirens in emergency vehicles.

Music is something that you often hear in an urban setting. If it's unpleasantly loud, you might describe it as ***blaring*** or ***blaring out***.

If you live near a church, you sometimes hear bells ***ringing out*** (=making a loud sound). You can also refer to this as bells **pealing** or **chiming**.

You might also hear dogs ***barking***. If the dog is making a long, sad sound, you can use the verb ***howl***.

Key to exercise:

1. *Ambulances and police cars sped by, their sirens **wailing.***
2. *We could hear very little above the deafening **roar** of traffic from the nearby M6.*
3. *There was a **screech** of brakes followed by a loud bang.*
4. *I couldn't hear him because of all the music **blaring out** from the speakers.*
5. *The bells **chimed** throughout the night.*
6. *Did you hear that dog **howling** last night?*
7. *There was just the faint **hum** of late-night traffic.*
8. *The only sound is the **rumble** of trucks on the nearby highway.*

Part 2

Here we will be focusing on some more pleasant sounds – those often heard **outdoors**, in the country.

Let's start with the nicest sound of all – birdsong. For this, we use several **onomatopoeic** words. For example, for the short, high sound that birds make, we say ***tweet***, ***chirp*** and ***cheep*** (used for the weaker sound of a baby bird.)

> *A bird was tweeting away outside my window. / You could hear the birds chirping in the hedge-row. / It sounded like the cheeping of a baby bird.*

Other birdsong words are ***twitter*** and ***chatter***, suggesting lots of short, high sounds in rapid succession:

> *All is quiet except for the birds twittering. / The only sound was the chatter of birds.*

Finally for birds, the word ***warble*** suggests a continuous sound, with rapidly changing notes: *She loved to hear the birds warbling in the spring.*

Of course, birdsong isn't the only sound we hear outdoors. The wind in the trees may cause the leaves to ***rustle*** (=make a soft dry sound):

> *Leaves rustled in the breeze.*

If the wind blows hard and makes a lot of noise, we sometimes describe it as ***howling*** *and if it* blows more gently, making a long, soft sound, we may say, poetically, that it ***sighs***:

The wind howled and the trees groaned.
I love to hear the wind sighing through the pines.

The sudden, loud noise of thunder is often described as a ***clap of thunder***, while the low noise of thunder in the distance is a ***rumble of thunder***:

She awoke to a loud clap of thunder. / We could hear the rumble of distant thunder.

Let's turn now to water sounds. On a windy day when the sea is rough, you may hear the waves ***crashing*** on the shore. On a calmer day, you might hear the waves ***lapping*** the shore (=hitting it gently, making quiet sounds):

From her bed, she could hear the waves crashing on the shore.
He closed his eyes and listened to the waves lapping the shore.

Rivers and streams have their own sound words. We use the words ***burble***, ***babble*** and ***gurgle*** to refer to the pleasant, low, bubbling sound of water moving along:

We walked by a babbling brook. / A nearby stream gurgled its way down the hill.
At the bottom of the garden is a burbling stream.

If there is a sudden, loud noise in a place that was quiet, we may say that the noise ***shatters*** or ***breaks the silence***:

A sharp burst of gunfire shattered the silence.

Part 3

This time we are staying **indoors**, and we are thinking about sounds that we hear inside our homes and other buildings.

We use the word ***creak*** to describe the long, high-pitched sound that a door sometimes makes when it is pushed, or an old floorboard can make when someone walks on it:

I could hear the creak of floorboards in the room above me. / The door creaked as he pushed it open.

The loud sound of two hard objects repeatedly hitting against each other may be referred to as ***clatter***:

Inside the restaurant, I could hardly hear myself speak above the clatter of cutlery.
We could hear her shoes clattering on the stone floor.

A single, loud noise that is made when a hard thing breaks because it hits another hard thing is often described as a ***crash***. Meanwhile, a single, *low* noise that is made by something *heavy* falling might be called a ***thud***:

I heard a loud crash in the kitchen. / The plate fell to the floor with a crash.
His boot landed with a thud. / The box of books hit the floor with a dull thud.

Water in a building's pipes may sometimes ***gurgle*** (= make a low, bubbling sound) and the pipes themselves might ***clang*** or ***clank*** (=make a loud sound, like metal objects hitting each other):

You can hear the water gurgling in the pipes. / The pipes started clanging when I turned the heating on.

When doors and windows make repeated knocking sounds because they are moving slightly, we say that they ***rattle***:

On a windy night, you can hear the windows rattle in this old house.

If a room is heated by a fire, we may hear the fire ***crackle*** (= make repeated short, sharp sounds as it burns):

A welcoming fire crackled in the fireplace. / I love the crackle of burning logs.

If there is an old-fashioned clock in the room, we may hear it ***tick*** (=make a sound every second):

The silence was broken only by the ticking of a clock.

Of course, not all sounds heard inside a building come from *within* that building. If it's raining *gently* outside, we may hear the rain ***patter against/on*** the window or roof. If the rain is *heavier*, making a *louder* sound, we might use the verbs ***drum*** or ***pound***::

She liked to listen to the rain pattering against the window. I heard the rain drumming on the roof in the middle of the night. / We were woken by the sound of the rain pounding on the tent.

- You may also organise a Bingo the day after with the words presented to revise the vocabulary or present the gapped examples for them to complete individually or in the big group organising a competition in groups.
- Ask them to write a short story using as many of the new words as possible. Peer correct them and try to find out who wrote the story using the highest number of these words. They may want to share their stories with the whole group.

Exercise 5

- This is another directed writing activity. You may want to do it at a different point in the week. It consists of two parts; in the first one, they should take notes answering the questions, you may want to get them to share their ideas in pairs. B you may take it for correction.

After looking at the pictures, the students de Activities 1 and 2 answering the questions

ACTIVITY 2

Topics and Emotions

This is a useful activity for practising intonation. Create two sets of cards: one should have a list of conversation topics, the other a list of emotional states. You can use the list suggested and the image of emoticons provided, create your own or brainstorm it from your students using cards for them to fill in and put them in the box/set afterwards. In pairs or small groups, the students take one card from each set and then have a two-minute conversation about the topic with the chosen emotion (for example '*watching a match'* while being *'sad'*). A tip is to keep the topics simple, so that the focus is on how they are speaking as opposed to what they are saying. The activity can also be done with one pair presenting to the class. In this case, the class could suggest the topics and emotions to be used, giving students ownership over the activity by doing so.

ACTIVITY 3

Does language affect the way we think?

This activity takes the topic "Do you change your mind when you speak English and deals with it in by means of an EVAU model adapted to use in the class. It can be found in the file: Activity 3 - Does language affect the way we think?

Key to exercises:

Exercise 1

a. **TRUE: "**It turns out not having words for numbers doesn't affect their ability to conceive of different amounts of things, but only their ability to remember specific amounts".

b. **TRUE: "**The study, involving Arab and Hebrew bilingual speakers, showed that when speaking Arab, the participants linked certain names with a negative feeling, and when speaking Hebrew, they didn't."

c. **TRUE**: "As a result, they possessed excellent navigational skills, always knowing which direction they were heading."

Exercise 2

a. cognitively

b. conceive

c. prejudice

d. axis

Exercise 3

a. who / to see

b. was studied / to

c, Therefore, As a result , Thus, Hence, Subsequently, … / are said

d. inducing / than