**Unit 12: Digital Tools for Vocabulary Acquisition**

***Why Vocabulary Matters:***

* Vocabulary is the foundation of language learning. A strong vocabulary helps you communicate effectively, understand texts, and express yourself clearly.
* Digital tools make vocabulary learning more engaging, efficient, and accessible.

***What Are Digital Tools for Vocabulary Acquisition?***

* Digital tools are software, apps, or online platforms designed to help you learn, practice, and retain new words. Examples: ***Flashcards, online dictionaries, thesauri, corpus linguistics tools, and spaced repetition systems.***

**2. Digital Flashcard Tools (20 minutes)**

**What Are Digital Flashcards?**

Flashcards are a classic learning tool where one side of the card has a word, and the other side has its definition, example sentence, or image.

Digital flashcards take this concept online, offering interactive features like audio, images, and spaced repetition.

**Popular Tools:**

**Anki:** A powerful, customizable flashcard app that uses spaced repetition.

 -How to Use Anki:

* Download Anki (<https://apps.ankiweb.net/>).
* Create a new deck (e.g., ‘English Vocabulary’).
* Add cards: On the front, write the word (e.g., ‘ubiquitous’). On the back, write the definition (‘present everywhere’) and an example sentence (‘Smartphones are ubiquitous in modern society.’).
* Review cards daily. Anki will show you difficult words more often and easier words less often. Example: Create a card for the word ‘ephemeral’ with the definition ‘lasting for a very short time’ and an example sentence: ‘The beauty of a sunset is ephemeral.’

**Quizlet:** A user-friendly platform with pre-made flashcard sets and interactive study modes.

How to Use Quizlet:

* Go to Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>).
* Search for existing sets (e.g., ‘Advanced English Vocabulary’) or create your own.
* Use study modes like ‘Learn’, ‘Flashcards’, ‘Match’, and ‘Gravity’. Example: Search for a set like ‘Top 100 SAT Words’ and practice using the ‘Match’ game.

**Activity:**

- Have students create their own flashcard set with 10 new words using either Anki or Quizlet.

- Encourage them to include definitions, example sentences, and images (if applicable).

**3. Online Dictionaries and Thesauri (20 minutes)**

***Why Use Online Dictionaries and Thesauri?***

* They provide accurate definitions, pronunciations, example sentences, and synonyms/antonyms.
* They help you understand how words are used in context.

**Popular Tools:**

**Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary:**

Features:

* Definitions and pronunciations (with audio).
* Example sentences.
* Word origins (etymology).
* Synonyms and antonyms.
* Example: Look up the word ‘meticulous’. Note its definition (showing great attention to detail), pronunciation, and example sentence: ‘She was meticulous in her research’.

**Oxford Online Dictionary:**

Features:

* British and American English pronunciations.
* Word frequency (how common a word is).
* Collocations (words commonly used together).
* Example: Look up the word ‘resilient’. Note its collocations: ‘resilient economy’, ‘resilient spirit’.

**Thesaurus.com:**

* A tool for finding synonyms and antonyms.
* Example: Look up the word ‘happy’. Synonyms include ‘joyful’, ‘content’, and ‘cheerful’, while antonyms include ‘sad’ and ‘miserable’.

**4. Introduction to Corpus Linguistics Tools (20 minutes)**

***What Is Corpus Linguistics?***

- Corpus linguistics is the study of language as expressed in corpora (large collections of texts).

- It helps you see how words are used in real-life contexts.

**Popular Tool:**

**Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA):** COCA is a massive database of English texts from various genres (spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, academic).

How to Use COCA:

* Go to COCA (<https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>).
* Search for a word (e.g., ‘innovative’).
* Analyse the results: Frequency: How often the word is used. Collocations: Words commonly used with it (e.g., ‘innovative approach’, ‘innovative technology’). Examples: Sentences showing the word in context.

**5. Spaced Repetition Systems for Long-Term Retention (15 minutes)**

***What Is Spaced Repetition?***

* Spaced repetition is a learning technique where you review information at increasing intervals over time.
* It helps move vocabulary from short-term to long-term memory.

***How It Works in Digital Tools:***

* Tools like Anki and Quizlet use algorithms to schedule reviews based on how well you know each word.
* If you know a word well, it will appear less often.
* If you struggle with a word, it will appear more often.

Example:

- Day 1: Learn the word ‘ephemeral’.

- Day 3: Review ‘ephemeral’.

- Day 7: Review ‘ephemeral’ again.

- Day 15: Review ‘ephemeral’ if you still remember it.