

Introduction for the Learner

Lexicarry is a book of wordless pictures designed to help you build vocabulary in any second language. The pictures represent hundreds of objects, actions, and interactions. There are no words on the pages of pictures. Why not?

To invite you to make personal connections. When you become actively involved in finding the words to describe the pictures and then using these words, you create your own connections between pictures and words. These connections help you acquire vocabulary—words, phrases, communicative exchanges, stories. By using what you already know, your imagination, your sense of humor, and your personal experiences, you can use the pictures to generate many more words and expressions. You can do this on your own, using a bilingual dictionary. You can also work with language helpers, with friends or fellow learners who know the language well, or with native speakers.

There are seven sections in the book:

1. **Functions:**
Brief, everyday conversational exchanges.
2. **Sequences:**
A series of actions that together form a logical chain of events.
3. **Related Actions:**
Collections of actions that are variations of a single action.
4. **Operations:**
A sequence of actions involving objects that result in a predictable outcome.
5. **Topics:**
Collections of items and actions that relate to a particular theme, purpose, or category.
6. **Places:**
Items and actions associated with particular locations.
7. **Proverbs and Sayings:**
Short sayings that express observations about human experience.

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The recommended procedure for using the book

Keep a language notebook: You will learn the words better if you keep a written record of your language learning efforts in a separate document. Divide it into the seven parts of the book. As you work on specific topics, insert your own notes in the appropriate sections of your notebook.

Follow three steps: First, **identify** the language that is represented by the picture, then **practice** the words and expressions, and finally **use** the words and expressions in active communication with another person. Each of these three steps uses the techniques described below for either working on your own or with a language helper.

STEP ONE: Identify the language that is represented by the picture

On your own:

- Guess. Use whatever language you already know.
- Use a bilingual dictionary to look up the words.
- Consult the word list for the language you are learning.
- Put individual words into sentences, for example in English:

This is an electric mixer.

The baby is crawling on the floor.

The plane is taking off from the runway.

With a language helper:

- Have your helper say or write the words, expressions, or sentences for the pictures.
- Ask your helper different kinds of questions to discover the language for the pictures, for example:

Can you tell me what this is?

I'm not sure, but I think it might be _____. Is that right?

What is he saying/doing here?

I think he is _____. Am I right?

- Record your helper's descriptions of the pictures. Play them back and write them down.

STEP TWO: Practice

On your own:

- Describe the pictures without referring to your notes or the word lists. Use sentences.
- Make a recording of yourself describing the pictures. Play it back and listen.
- Circumlocute. If you can't remember the words, use other words to describe the object, action, or interaction. For example:
It's something you use to mix eggs.
The plane is going into the air.
- Say everything you can about the picture. For example:
It's got an electric cord and a handle. It's made of plastic and metal. It's red and blue. It's an electric mixer.
- Describe the picture using different verb tenses. For example:
The baby is crawling on the floor.
The baby crawled on the floor.
The baby is going to crawl on the floor.
- Add detail to your descriptions with adjectives and adverbs. For example:
A small, happy baby is crawling quickly across the room.
- Use alternative words and expressions. For example:
The baby is walking on its hands and knees.
The plane is soaring into the sky.
- Use the words in questions and negative statements. For example:
Is the baby crawling?
The baby is crawling, isn't it?
Why is the baby crawling across the floor?
The baby isn't crawling quickly.
- Practice with other types of sentences. For example:
I wish I had an electric mixer.
If there is no electricity, you can't use an electric mixer.

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With a language helper:

- Have your language helper do the practice activities described above. Record what they say. Listen to the tape and write down their words. Say their words and ask your helper to make corrections.
- Ask your helper to speak spontaneously about the pictures. Listen, write, and say it back.
- Ask two language helpers to have a brief conversation or role play about the picture. Record, listen, and write down their words.
- Role-play the Functions with your helper. Exchange roles. Change the people (age, gender, status) and the social situation. Note any differences in language usage.

STEP THREE: Use the language

On your own:

- Create conversations using the pictures. Record them and write them down.
- Use the pictures to create brief stories. Record them and write them down.
- Personalize the language in the pictures by describing your own life experiences, for example,
When I was a little girl, I went for a walk with my friend. I tripped and fell down and hurt my knee.
- Do the actions (sequences, related actions, operations) as you talk about them. Use gestures with the functions.

With your language helper:

- Select an operation and tell your helper how to do it without using the book.
- Choose a topic or place and talk about it with your helper.
- Discuss the proverbs and sayings. Ask for others that aren't in the book.
- Ask your helper to explain similarities and differences between their culture and the ways the objects, actions, and interactions are portrayed in the book.