



# WHAT DOES 'DIVERSION' MEAN?

### Keywords

language acquisition • confidence • long-term memory

### How long-term memory is activated

It all started when an English teacher, who didn't speak German, was travelling through Germany. While driving, she kept coming across the word *Umleitung* (which means 'diversion') written on yellow road signs showing work in progress.

Although the teacher didn't understand the word, she started to remember it and to guess where she would see it. She understood its actual meaning later on, but in that precise moment something set off a mechanism which then stimulated her visual memory, a **long-term memory**.

### The importance of context

This episode demonstrates how an unknown term, when put into the correct context, is more easily recognizable and, as such, easier to remember. In graded readers, contextualization and the motivation to guess meaning, with the help of images too, works as a guide to memorising a word, or a semantic field.

This in turn produces a positive effect on language learning, since it helps students to **acquire awareness of the language**, to use the vocabulary – and to have more **confidence** in using it –, to memorize

the grammar and finally, something fundamental in the study of language, the constant stimulation of long-term memory.



### Discovering new words

#### 1 Choose the correct meaning of the words from those given.

When they arrived in front of the **cathedral** they found a large stone with a big sword in it. Under the stone were written the words: "The man who pulls this sword from the stone is the true king of Britain." The message surprised them and they all wanted to try. "This is going to be easy," they said, but none of them could move the sword. They soon became angry because they thought that there was a trick. "Never trust that old wizard," they complained. "He made us come a long way, and now he is making fun of us."

The **Archbishop** stood outside the cathedral and watched the knights as they tried again and again to pull the sword from the stone. Finally he said, "The man who will be king is not here today. In one week, on New Year's Day, we will all meet here again. I will organise a **tournament**. The strongest and bravest knights of the land will fight against each other and the winner will be our new king."

Snowing seven days later as many lords and knights rode to London to take part in the tournament. With them went Sir Ector, his son Kay and young Arthur. Arthur was still too young to be a knight but he was happy to watch Kay fight.

"Do you think you will win?" he asked. Kay laughed. "Of course I'll win, little brother. I will be the new king!" Kay reached to take his sword from its **scabbard**. It was not there. "Where is my sword? Arthur, I haven't got my sword!" Kay realised that his sword was still at home. "Don't worry, Kay, I can ride back quickly and get it for you."

Tales from Camelot by Victoria Heward (Green Apple Life Skills, A2/B1)

- 1 **Cathedral**
  - very big and important church
  - Italian-style church
  - mayor's house
- 2 **(to) Make fun of**
  - enjoy an event
  - laugh very loudly
  - joke about someone (in an unkind way)

- 3 **Archbishop**
  - very important priest
  - Mayor
  - Head of the Church of Rome

- 4 **Tournament**
  - round object
  - competition
  - horse race

- 5 **Scabbard**
  - illness
  - bag for the knife
  - special bag for a sword
  - purse

#### 2 Invent a sentence for each of the correct words in exercise 1.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....