

Olivier, a French university student, talks about learning English and the difficulties he has. Listen and try the comprehension activity below.

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY

Which of the following difficulties does the language student mention? **Circle** the ones he mentions. The answers are at the bottom of the sheet.

1. "It's difficult remembering long words."
2. "I often repeat words."
3. "I don't know enough words."
4. "I find it difficult to write letters."
5. "I quickly forget new words."
6. "It's harder to learn general English words than business vocabulary."
7. "It's difficult talking about a subject that I don't know."
8. "I can only talk about music in English."
9. "I don't learn business vocabulary with the young people I meet."
10. "I concentrate so hard on understanding the gist of the conversation that I don't hear individual words."

AUDIO SCRIPT

"I started learning English about erm ten years ago and I think I've learned quite a lot. I can talk about quite a few subjects and I can understand quite well when people talk to me in English. At university I mostly learn business words. I think it's important because I won't learn these words anywhere else. It's not by meeting other young people that I will learn business words. Although it's true that I do learn them too by reading on my own.

I would really like to become fluent and erm I don't like having to look for my words. Maybe one day I could think in English! Why not! I'm interested in grammar but it's not my priority. It's not the most important thing, I think the most important thing for me is er to be understood well and to have good vocabulary. Many words for explaining many things. If you can say what you want to say it's er it's er the important point.

My biggest problem is I don't know enough words. I often repeat the same words. I find it difficult if I'm talking to someone about a subject that I don't know. I just don't have the words I need to explain what I want to say. It's very frustrating and erm I very quickly don't know erm what to say. If we're talking about music or something like that then it's no problem. My teacher tells me I need to expand my vocabulary range.

When I am writing letters I have lots of vocabulary. I find... I have learnt the correct expressions for application letters or CVs so I find them easy now. To improve my vocabulary I try to read a lot too. Sometimes I read English magazines about music because I love listening to English music and American music. I also read British newspapers but because erm I take the time to read I find it easier than speaking.

Another problem I have is remembering words. Sometimes I hear a word I don't understand and ask the person, the person who said it, to tell it to me again. The problem is about five minutes later I have already forgotten the word. But... I... Well I don't know what to do about this problem. Maybe I don't listen well enough. I'm maybe concentrating on understanding the main point of the conversation that I forget the, you know, individual words. I think you need to hear words lots of different times to really remember new ones.

In the future I would like to speak more fluently and to know lots of vocabulary on many different subjects. I have started making my own dictionary and so now when I hear a new word I write it down and try to use it very soon after. I hope this is going to help me improve my English vocabulary. I'm certainly motivated to learn more words"

Answers: 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10