vobot German at home and in class – inspiration for teachers

Using vobot

...in the classroom

vobot is a great tool for personalized learning of German vocabulary. However, it is also an excellent classroom resource that boosts student motivation, particularly among tech-savvy types. In this document you will find a few examples of how to use vobot to spice up your classroom.

    Getting to know vobot
    Story Corner
    Guess the meaning
    Explaining differences

...for homework

Outside of the classroom, vobot is an ideal way for students to practice their interpretive skills. Since no one is observing them, vobot provides a safe place to practice, i.e. they don't have to feel exposed if they make mistakes. But they still get friendly and useful feedback!

vobot can be used at home in a number of ways. For example, while reading it can be an excellent tool for looking up words and saving them for subsequent review. So you will also find a few homework activities to help familiarize students with vobot before they use it on their own:

    Exploring vobot
    vobot for reading and translating

...as inspiration

Keep in mind, many of the activities can be adapted for use as classwork or homework. What we have created here are some suggestions on how to use vobot for classroom and homework assignments, but we encourage you to use these ideas as inspiration for your own original activities.

We'd love to hear more about how you use vobot. Also, please let us know if there is any function we can add to help improve your experience with the app.

Write to us at: info@vobot.me

Getting to know vobot (pairs suggested)

This is a good introductory activity for students to familiarize themselves with vobot. Also see the homework activity: Exploring vobot

Have your students form pairs. Ask them to perform the following steps. They are going to add 20 random, level-appropriate words to their personal learning lists.

1. Tap the double carrot icon in the top-right corner of the screen in vobot to open "Options and settings".
2. Tap "Add 20 random words".
3. Tell them which button to tap according to their level, i.e. "A2 (Intermediate Low)".
4. At the bottom of the screen they can then click "Go to learning list".

They should see a list with the 20 random words.

Ask them to tap a word to view its definition, write down the sample sentence, and translate it as best they can. You can have them do this for all 20 words, or a number of your choosing.

Alternative idea: Have pairs add 20 random words in a higher level, and test each other to see who knows more words. This could be a point-based activity with several rounds.

Note: If you want to use this activity after students have already been using vobot for a while, you'll first have to make sure your students don't have any "new" words in their vobot learning lists. Please have students carry out the following steps to empty their learning list:

1. Tap on "LEARN" in the lower right corner of the search screen.
2. Tap "SHOW NEW"
3. a) If you see: "0 are new", then vobot is ready.
    b) If you see words in the list below, (1) swipe them to left, (2) tap the "Delete" button that appears, (3) repeat until the list is empty.

vobot is now ready for the activity as described above.

Story Corner (groups of 5 suggested)

Have your students form groups of five. Give each student one word and, if necessary, also the meaning you would like them to learn, e.g.

> Word 1: der Zug (noun) = to move, usually a figure in a game such as chess
> Word 2: doch (particle) = filler word expressing irritation or anger
> etc.

Ask each participant to choose one sample sentence from vobot for their word. Next, students share their sentences with each other and collaborate to write a short story using all 5 sentences. They should add their own sentences to bridge the gaps and create a story. Here is an example, the sentences from vobot are underlined:

> <u>Mein letzter Zug war ziemlich dumm.</u> Jetzt ist meine Königen in Gefahr. <u>Das gibt's doch gar nicht!</u> Schon schachmatt! etc.

The students will not only learn the words you assigned them, but also be exposed to the other words in the sentences, as well as grammar, sentence structure and common collocations. By coming up with a story of sorts, your students also become productive, a great way to practice German skills in an engaging way.

If your students enjoy this exercise, they may also be interested in our free WhatsApp broadcast called StoryCorner. Very engaged classes are even invited to submit their own stories! Get all the details here: https://storyplanetgerman.wordpress.com/home-2/storycorner/

Guess the meaning (groups of 5 suggested)

Have your students form groups of five. Tell them that all group members must use vobot to find 2-3 words which they think the other students don't know. Give them five minutes. They should choose words with understandable, full-length sample sentences, rather than short phrases.

After your students have selected their words, have everyone place their phones/tablets <u>face down</u> on their desks. One student picks up his/her device and reads the chosen word, followed by a sample sentence. The other students then have the opportunity to guess the correct meaning of the word:

> Student1: "die Härte. Sie wurde nicht von der Härte des Lebens verschont."
> Student2: "Hardness or something?"
> Student3: "Hardship?"
> Student1: "Yes! It's hardship."

The one who guesses correctly gets a point.

They continue clockwise until all students have had a turn (or multiple turns). The student with the most points wins.

NOTE: You can pre-select vocabulary if you want to control the activity a little more.

Explaining differences (pairs suggested)

Have your students form pairs. Ask all pairs to find 10 examples of words for which the dictionary form of the word ("lemma") and the word in the sample sentence ("flection") are not spelled exactly the same as each other. This usually only occurs with verbs, adjectives and nouns. For example:

>Verb: **essen**
>Sample sentence: "Das **esse** ich nicht!"
>
>Noun: das **Hemd**
>Sample sentence: "Sie kaufte drei **Hemden** mit Spitzeneinsatz."
>
>Adjective: **schnell**
>Sample sentence: "Er kamm mit **schnellen** Schritten auf mich zu."

Ask each pair to write out each word, followed by the sample sentence and a short explanation of why the spelling has changed. Let them use their own, non-technical words. For example:

>*essen*
>*"Das esse ich nicht!"*
>*The word "essen" changed to "esse" because that is the correct form to use together with "ich".*

Optional: Once they have done this in class, you can use it as a homework activity for new vocabulary.

Exploring vobot – individual homework

Although vobot is generally designed to be intuitive and easy to use, it may help to get familiar with the app first. Answer the following questions by exploring vobot on your own:

1. How do you view additional definitions of words?
   _____

2. How do you view additional sample sentences for each definition?
   _____

3. What information is listed for each word?
   _____

4. How do you search for a word in English?
   _____

5. How do you remove a word from your learning list?
   _____

6. How do you view recently added words that you haven't practiced yet?
   _____

7. Is it possible to add the same word to your learning list more than once?
   _____

8. When you have practiced a word many times, it goes in to the "Mastered list". Where can you find it?
   _____

vobot for reading and translating – individual homework

At home, students print out a short German text. It can be anything they like. A website, blog, magazine, etc. Ask them to search for something that interests them (Germans have a lot of the same hobbies as other people in the world).

After printing their text, they should underline every word they don't understand.

Next, they look up all these words and add them to their learning list in vobot.

Please note: since it is based on a learner's dictionary, certain specialized words may not be in vobot, such as types of fish, scientific terminology, etc.

After looking up the words, students make a rough translation into English (or their respective native language).