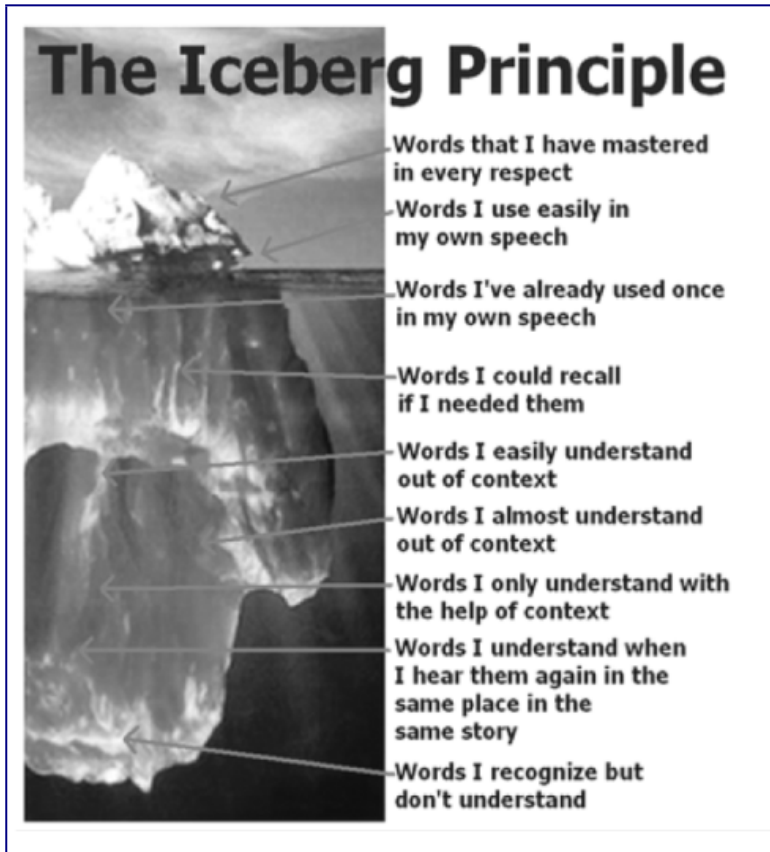


# Growing Your Language Iceberg



As you learn a new language, consider that the mass of new words, concepts, and cultural understandings form a sort of iceberg in your brain.

Near the upper tip of the iceberg, floating effortlessly above the surface of the water, are words that you use regularly and easily.

Down deep, at the base of the iceberg are those words which you recognize as words, but can only understand if you hear them in their original context.

Above them are those words you can understand with some contextual support.

Above them are the words that feel as though they are on the tip of your tongue. Perhaps you have a sense of what the word starts with, how many syllables it has, what

gender it was...

Above them are words you could come up but haven't needed recently.

Above them are words you have spoken once or a few times.

Finally, at the topmost tip of the iceberg, are the words that you can understand before the person finishes saying them.

Words move up in the iceberg through repeated exposure in which they are heard and understood due to context.

## How To Make the Iceberg Work for You

How many times have you been trying to come up with a word or phrase, and just couldn't? Then you heard someone else say it, and immediately said, "Oh, yeah, that's it!" and felt stupid because you hadn't been able to say it! Actually, you shouldn't feel stupid, but should be glad because you recognized the word, so it was in your mind somewhere — now you'll be able to think of it more easily next time!