Organizing a vocabulary notebook

There are many different ways to organize a vocabulary notebook. Here are some possibilities and examples.

A
Organizing words by meaning
Try dividing your notebook into different broad sections, with sections for words for feelings, words to describe places, words for movement, words for thinking, etc. In each section you can build families of words related in meaning.

B
Using various types of diagrams
1. Words can be grouped under a heading, or a more general word can be drawn as a tree diagram (see also Unit 2).

```
FURNITURE
   /       \
   /        \
 living room bedroom kitchen
   /   /     /   /
 sofa chair lamp dresser stool table
```

The dotted lines mean that you can add more words to the tree as you meet them.

2. A bubble network is also useful, since you can make it grow in whatever direction you want it to (see Unit 2).

```
gas    oil  steering wheel  clutch  brake  ?
|       |     |                   |       |
unleaded

CAR
   /   /
 trunk seat belts airbags
   |   |
   ?
```

C
Organizing by word class
Here is how a Spanish learner of English marks word class in her notebook:

* I write phrases in red and also the definition. If they are verbs, in black, and blue if they are nouns... And if I write the Spanish translation I write it in another color. So it's very easy to see... I draw some pictures too.

D
When you find a synonym or an antonym of a word you already have in your book, enter it next to that word with a few notes:

* urban ≠ rural  stop = cease (more formal)
Exercises

3.1 Here is a list of words a Spanish learner of English made in her vocabulary notebook. How could she improve them and organize them better?

- clock - reloj
- tell the time - decir la hora
- office - despacho
- beneath
- under
- drowsy - The room was hot and I got drowsy.
- wristwatch - reloj de pulsera
- What time is it?
- next to - junto a/ al lado de
- hands - the minute hand (minutero)
- Wide awake (completely awake)

3.2 Here is a word map, a variation on the bubble network. What word do you think should go in the middle of the diagram?

3.3 One learner tested himself regularly with his notebook, covering up the word and guessing it from his translation or from his other notes. Here is his system:

- If his translation and notes were clear, but he couldn’t guess the word, he made a small red mark in the margin. Three red marks meant “needs extra effort.”
- If his translation and notes couldn’t help him guess the word, then he made a blue mark. This meant “need more information about this word.”

What is your testing system? If you don’t have a system, try to invent one, or ask other people what they do. Try out your system and decide if it works.

3.4 Making tables for word classes is a good idea, since you can fill in the blanks over time. What would you put in the remaining spaces in the table?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>production</td>
<td>produce</td>
<td></td>
<td>producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>industrial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>export</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>