Frequently-Asked Questions about
Membean

Q: What is Membean?

A: Membean is an online, personalized vocabulary study adopted by Harding and many other schools. Membean manages a differentiated, multimodal learning pace so that students personalize, master, and reinforce large numbers of words. 🌱

Q: How do students learn new words?

A: First, students are calibrated individually so that they may learn new words specific to their own reading and understanding levels. Then they are presented personalized practice; that is, they may choose to study in a way that works for them and makes the best use of their study time. Students may choose to study memory hooks, listen to textual clues, view a video or picture, study common roots and explore word webs and word trees, all which help to establish interconnected knowledge well beyond the memorization of simple definitions. This system of learning also monitors student memory and study behaviors and refreshes previous learning. As a result, Harding students are recalling and using their "Membean" words in their speaking and writing. 🌱

Q: What is the goal of vocabulary study and specifically of Membean?

A: A mature vocabulary improves reading and writing skills necessary in all areas of learning. Even though it's a self-paced program, we expect students to complete nearly a level per year. In addition, Membean words in Levels 4-6 are those tested on the SAT and GRE. Students who push through these levels should see improved ACT and SAT scores. 🌱

Q: What is the requirement for weekly training?

A: Students are required to train for a minimum of 45 minutes each week, and they must divide that time over three different days with sessions of not less than 10 minutes each. Membean research suggests that student gain optimal results with three 15-minute training sessions each week. Students who are constantly quizzed over the words studies should also score over 50–60% in their weekly goals.

Q: May students train for more than 45 minutes a week?

A: Yes. 🌱

Q: Why are sessions limited to 15 minutes each? Why can't a student do one 45-minute session?

A: Membean's plan is research-based and has proven effective in schools across the country. Membean strongly recommends that long training sessions be avoided. Training for more minutes in a single session or closely-spaced, same-day sessions are detrimental to memory and long-term learning. Membean's research shows that *three 15-minute sessions every week is optimal—this adds up to 45-minutes per week.*

This short video explains why doing all of the sessions in one day will not produce long term memory of all of those newly-introduced words.
http://membean.com/educator/remember

Q: How are training sessions graded?

A: Harding's English department has adopted the following grading format for students in grades 7–12:
- Students will study 3 days per week and 45 minutes per week.
- No fewer than 10 minutes per day will count as a session. No more than 30 minutes per session will count.
- If a students does over 30 minutes per day, the time will still count toward only one session.

Study times (training sessions) are valued at 15 points.
- A student who trains both 3 days and 45 minutes earns 15/15.
- A student who trains 2 days, whether or not the 45 minutes is met, earns 10/15.
- A student who trains 3 days but does not meet the 45 minute mark, or who has one day below 10 minutes, will earn 5 points per each 15 minute segment.

Q: Are there tests?

A: Yes. Since students take practice quizzes as a part of their training, they are prepared for the class tests for which grades are taken. Membean generates individualized tests over the words on which each student has trained. Tests are taken and graded online. Students can see their scores and the words missed immediately after the tests. Tests will often be unannounced and may be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly and vary in length. Teachers may also generate make-up quizzes for students who miss a quiz.

Q: Am I understanding that a student's weekly quiz score can be lowered because the student has not done all of the required training?

A: Yes. We divide the number of training sessions a student should have done since the last quiz into the value of the quiz, and that number of points is deducted from the quiz grade for each training session missed. (For example, if students should have done 12 training sessions and the quiz is worth 50 points [50÷12=4.16], then 4 points would be deducted for each missed training session.)

Q: Is this plan new this year?

A: No, we adopted this plan in the first year when some students figured out a way to circumvent the system. (Keep reading to find out what happened.) 🌱

Q: Isn't that a double whammy—lowering both the training sessions score and the quiz score?

A: It might seem that way at first glance. There is definitely a penalty for both. But there is a method to the madness.

Remember that students are quizzed on only those words for which they have trained. An easy way to guarantee a high quiz grade each week would be not to train on any new words! The student would be tested week after week after week on the very same words. Who wouldn't do well on that quiz? But that way of operating defeats the purpose of vocabulary study. We are more interested in our students' learning more words and learning them better than we are in grades. Sadly, though, a number of students are more motivated by grades than by the desire to learn. This method of tying training sessions to quiz grades seems to inspire those students. 🌱

Q: Why can't students be given a chance to be quizzed over new words even if they haven't trained on them?

A: Again, our goal is for students to learn words deeply, not just memorize a word long enough to take a quiz. Anyone can guess at answers on a quiz, but there's little value in doing that. It's not about the grade; it's about the learning. We are committed to the research-based Membean methods which are proving effective for students who buy into them and do their best to learn. 🌱

Q: Are most students really doing the 3 session/45 minutes plan?

A: Yes. And many are going beyond the basic requirement. 🌱

Q: How do teachers keep up with how much time each student has spent in training?

A: Membean gives each teacher a detailed report for each student that includes the number of new words, the number answered correctly and incorrectly, the accuracy rate, number of skipped words, number of training minutes, number of training days, and training minutes per day. It filters out a report of any students who have not met the assigned goals (3 days/45 minutes/10 or more minutes a day). 🌱

Q: How successful do you feel that Membean is for Harding students?

A: We are in our second year with Membean, and we are pleased with the results. Our students have always excelled in verbal sections of standardized tests, but we are seeing not only the high scores there but also a new level of interest among most of the students. Of course, the fact that Membean is on the iPads and not in workbooks doesn't hurt anything! Before Membean, our vocabulary study required students to do little more than memorize words for a test. Students who were good memorizers could cram on Sunday

night and make decent grades on the Monday tests. Rarely, though, did we see vocabulary words appear in students' writing or speaking. With Membean, we are seeing an increased use of the words students are learning. In a nutshell, we believe students are actually internalizing these new words and using them in their daily lives. It's especially encouraging to see students challenge themselves and go beyond the basic requirement.

These links may be helpful.

Membean
membean.com

"Membean for Comprehensive Vocabulary Instruction"
http://www.ccedtech.com/2013/05/membean-for-comprehensive-vocabulary.html#.VCLCbi8tYXw

Membean introduction video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tclfMlwRmw

How to Navigate a Membean Word Page video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTdSkXgSym4

Membean at Brophy College Preparatory (video with students)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loiDPdQgiNU

Membean at Windemere Ranch Middle School (CA) (video by teacher Randy Hart)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B1FRVZWH4A