

## Introduction

Learning vocabulary is a very important part of learning a language. The more words you know, the more you will be able to understand what you hear and read; and the better you will be able to say what you want to when speaking or writing.

### Which words to learn

Every day you hear or read many new English words. You also find them in your dictionary when you are translating from your own language. You cannot possibly learn all these new words, so your first problem is to decide which ones to concentrate on. Here are some suggestions:

- learn the words that are important to the subjects you are studying
- learn the words that you read or hear again and again
- learn the words that you know you will often want to use yourself
- do not learn words that are rare or not useful (your teacher can help you with this)

### How to learn words

Once you have chosen which words to learn, you next have to decide how you are going to learn them. Here are a few ideas:

- write the words in a notebook (with their translations or definitions)
- write the words and definitions on small cards
- say the words many times (if you have an electronic dictionary you can hear how the word is pronounced)
- put the words into different groups (you could use a graphic organizer)
- write them in a file for use with a computer program
- make associations (in pictures or with other words)
- ask someone to test you

- use the words in your own speaking or writing

Some students put a tick or cross in their dictionary next to every word they look up. The next time they turn to a page with a marked word, they quickly check to see if they remember the meaning of that word.

In all of the above ways, you are doing something with the words. It is usually not enough to just read a list of words with their definitions or translations and try to remember them. Most students find that they memorize words better if they do something with them. Even better is to try and learn the word in a typical combination with other words. Learning that **to apologize** means *to say sorry* is a good start, but it is much better to learn a whole expression containing the word, e.g. *He apologized for being late*. Not only is this often easier to remember, but you are also learning some very important information on how the word is used.

### **Learning vocabulary by reading**

The way you learned very many of the words in your own language was by meeting them in the books and magazines you read. The context of a new word in a sentence or story was often enough for you to guess the meaning. Meeting the word repeatedly in your reading helped you learn it for use in your own speaking and writing. Doing lots of extra reading for pleasure - both fiction and non-fiction - is an excellent way to learn new English words, too. Nevertheless, choose books that you find quite easy to read. Difficult stories or texts that you struggle to understand will not help you to develop your vocabulary the natural way. However, remember: to learn new words from reading you have to read **A LOT!**

Nonetheless, as most of IELTS candidates, due to various reasons have lack of time and consider time a crucial and decisive factor, the chiefly academic vocabulary gathered in this book will provide a fast shortcut and assist vocabulary acquisition, while suffering disadvantages of direct vocabulary learning.

### **Active vocabulary vs. passive vocabulary**

The vocabulary you know can be divided into two groups - passive vocabulary and active vocabulary. Passive vocabulary contains all the words that you understand when you read or listen, but which you do not use (or cannot remember) in your own writing and speaking. Active vocabulary is all the words you understand, plus all the words that you can use yourself. Your active vocabulary, in English and your own language, is probably much smaller than your passive vocabulary.

The more you work on learning a word, as suggested above, the more likely it is that it will become part of your active vocabulary.

### **Things to know about the words you learn**

Usually the first things you learn about a new English word are what it means and its translation in your own language. But there are other things you need to find out before you can say that you know a word like a native speaker does. For example, you have to learn:

- how it is spelled
- how it is pronounced
- how it is inflected (i.e. how it changes if it is a verb, noun or adjective)
- other grammar information about it
- how it collocates (i.e. what other words are often used with it)
- if it has a particular style or register
- the context in which it is most likely to be used

**Study tip:** Read each complete entry a minimum of five (5) times, while attempting to memorize the words and the understood messages in each sentence. In addition, writing your personal version of each sentence will aid in the indelible impression that each message can make. Albeit, there is certainly no more productive means of concrete vocabulary acquisition than the actual use of the terms in your daily verbal or written communiqués!

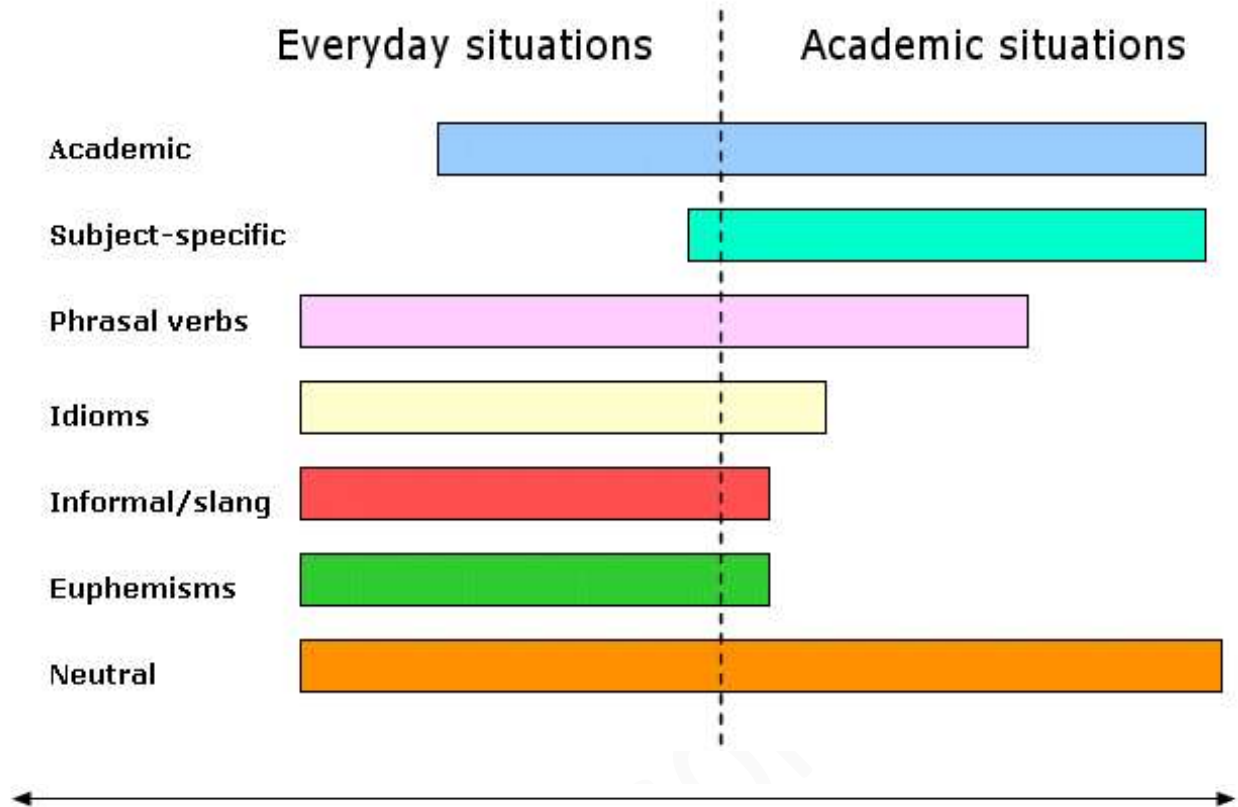
### **Types of vocabulary**

The graphic provided to you in the following page shows the different types of English vocabulary and the situations in which they are likely to be found. The vocabulary types are shown vertically down the left and the situations in which they are used are shown horizontally along the bottom.

Note: The words in the colored boxes above are examples of those that would normally be found only in the situation under which they are placed.

For example: it would be unusual to meet in everyday situations the academic word "hence" (meaning therefore or so) or the subject-specific word "denominator" (meaning the number below the line in a fraction). Conversely, it would be surprising to read the informal word "cops" (meaning police) or the idiom a "piece of cake" (meaning easy) in an academic text. Neutral words (orange box) are of course found in all types of situation.

**Important:** Phrasal verbs, idioms, informal (colloquial) language and euphemisms are useful for learners who want to understand everyday spoken English. However, I do not recommend that students intending to take the **IELTS Exam** spend a lot of time trying to learn these vocabulary types. Much better is to learn neutral and general academic vocabulary, together with the key subject-specific words. Thus, these set of frequently used academic vocabulary have been gathered to aid IELTS candidates achieve their goals and facilitate success in vocabulary learning for foreign language learners.



- Everyday situations**
- chatting with friends
  - talking at mealtimes
  - watching a TV show
  - reading fiction

- In class**
- listening to teacher
  - discussing work
  - giving a presentation

- At home**
- talking about school work

- Academic situations**
- doing written assignments
  - reading internet articles
  - reading subject textbooks
  - reading non-fiction
  - listening to prepared lecture

to get at  
to sit on  
to get into

to rain cats and dogs  
to get your skates on  
a piece of cake

kids  
cops  
cool / awesome

to pass away  
expecting  
to have a pee

think  
large  
slowly

compulsory  
hence  
paradigm

moraine  
denominator  
photosynthesis

A --

**1. Abase (v.) to humiliate, to degrade**

However, Brutus, a twice-held-back bully, tried his best to verbally *abase* Travis and the kids he played with, nothing he said seemed to matter to any of them.

**2. Abate (v.) to reduce or to lessen**

The rain poured down like a broken dike for a long while; then, as the clouds began to move on, it slowly *abated*.

**3. Abdicate (v.) to give up a position, usually one of great power or authority**

When King John realized that his enemies would ultimately win, he *abdicated* his throne and hid himself away.

**4. Abduct (v.) to kidnap, take by force**

During their holy festival, the king's ancient enemies *abducted* the beautiful Princess Kristian from her castle chamber.

**5. Aberration (n.) something that differs from what's normal**

The doctor's ill-tempered behavior was thought to be nothing more than an *aberration*, that is, until it continued for a full calendar year.

**6. Abet (v.) to aid, assist, encourage**

The spy escaped only because he had a secret friend on the inside to aid and *abet* his efforts.

**7. Abhor (v.) hating, detesting**

Because he wound up tripping himself constantly when he tried to play touch football, Ray began to *abhor* his favorite sport.

**8. Abide a. (v.) to put up with; b. (v.) to remain**

a. Normally, Chuck would never *abide* such conduct; but decided to this time because of the strain the girls have been under recently.

b. Despite the beating they have taken from the weather throughout the ages, the grandest of all the mountain chains, the mighty Rockies, yet *abide*.

**160. Blemish (n.) an imperfection, flaw**

Because of a single *blemish* on my driving record, my rates are being doubled.

**161. Blight a. (n.) a plague, disease; b. (n.) a scar or mark of discoloration**

a.) The potato *blight* destroyed the livelihood of many families in Ireland.

b.) His attitude was an ugly *blight* upon his daughter's wedding day.

**162. Boisterous (adj.) loud and full of energy**

The cheerleaders were incredibly *boisterous* during the pep rally last night.

**163. Bombastic (adj.) excessively confident, pompous**

The entertainer's *bombastic* comments caused the audience to boo and hiss.

**164. Boon (n.) a gift or blessing**

The bad weather has erased the *boon* in business that the income tax refunds fueled.

**165. Bourgeois (n.) an upper middle-class person, a successful capitalist**

The *bourgeois* clients of Hampton Province would not wear off-the-rack items.

**166. Brazen (adj.) excessively bold, brash**

The invaders *brazen* attack took the fort by surprise; no one survived.

**167. Brusque (adj.) short, abrupt, dismissive**

The bushman's *brusque* manners offended the host to no end.

**168. Buffet a. (v.) to strike with force; b. (n.) arrangement of food on a table**

a.) The soldiers *buffeted* the prisoners, desperate for information.

b.) I love to eat *buffet* style; the all-you-can-eat expectation suits me to a tee.

**169. Burnish (v.) to polish, shine**

Good swordsmen *burnish* their blades after every bloody use.

**170. Buttress a. (v.) to support, hold up; b. (n.) something that offers support**

- a.) The column was reinforced so that it could **buttress** the roof of the building.  
 b.) A solid granite **buttress** supports the entire structure with no help needed.

C --

**171. Cacophony (n.) tremendous noise, disharmonious sound**

The amateur orchestra created a deafening **cacophony** during their warm-ups.

**172. Cadence (n.) a rhythm, progression of sound**

The throbbing **cadence** that the soldiers marched made them seem even fiercer.

**173. Cajole (v.) to urge, coax**

Frank tried to **cajole** his friend to skip school with him on his birthday.

**174. Calamity (n.) an event with disastrous consequences**

Hurricane Francis created a **calamity** that is still impacting thousands and thousands.

**175. Calibrate (v.) to set, standardize**

I attempted to **calibrate** my car's computer timing system, but failed.

**176. Callous (adj.) harsh, cold, unfeeling**

**Callous** treatment of prisoners is not something that our government condones.

**177. Calumny (n.) an attempt to spoil someone else's reputation by spreading lies**

**Calumny** is a close-to-perfect synonym for the word of slander.

**178. Camaraderie (n.) goodwill, partnership, jovial unity**

**Camaraderie** among teammates is usually a result of joint suffering and survival.

**179. Candor (n.) honesty, frankness**

Brenda's **candor** was a shock to all who heard her speak so freely of theretofore never broached subjects.

**180. Canny (adj.) shrewd, careful**

The **canny** spy gathered all the proof he needed without ever being detected.



Dr. Green committed a *grievous* error in his calculations, and announced that the sun was going to explode in 2010.

**510. Guile (n.) deceitfulness, cunning, sly behavior**

Professional con men use *guile* as easily as others use a straw to drink soda.

H –

**511. Hackneyed (adj.) unoriginal, trite**

After twenty-five straight encores of the new song, though it was beautiful, it became ever so *hackneyed*.

**512. Hallowed (adj.) revered, consecrated**

For lovers of rock and roll, Woodstock is considered *hallowed* ground.

**513. Hapless (adj.) unlucky**

The *hapless* Red Raiders lost every one of their games this year by an embarrassing margin.

**514. Harangue a. (n.) a ranting speech; b. (v.) to give such a speech**

a.) Every student had heard the teacher's *harangue* about late homework at least two dozen times.

b.) Mrs. Shepherd *harangued* her class a full fifteen minutes about their constant talk.

**515. Hardy (adj.) robust, capable of surviving through adverse conditions**

Oaks are very *hardy* trees, able to survive the harshest winter.

**516. harrowing (adj.) greatly distressing, vexing**

Going through that bank robbery was a *harrowing* experience that I shall never forget.

**517. Haughty (adj.) disdainfully proud**

The *haughty* rich kids constantly flaunted their brand name garbs and their sports cars.

**518. Hedonist (n.) one who believes pleasure should be the primary pursuit of humans**

Because he was such a *hedonist*, Brandon spent his every waking hour searching for something that felt good, tasted good, or sounded good.

**519. Hegemony (n.) domination over others**

The seniors' *hegemony* over the underclassmen was a well-documented reality on our campus.

**520. Heinous (adj.) shockingly wicked, repugnant**

The killings were of such a *heinous* nature details were withheld from the public.

**521. Heterogeneous (adj.) varied, diverse in character**

Because we were placed in *heterogeneous* groupings, variety was all we knew from day one.

**522. Hiatus (n.) a break or gap in duration or continuity**

Benjamin's *hiatus* lasted so long everyone concluded that he was not planning to ever return.

**523. Hierarchy (n.) a system with ranked groups**

In the American system of *hierarchy* and power, civil authorities are placed above military authorities, but not by much.

**524. Hypocrisy (n.) pretending to believe what one does not**

It is very difficult for men given to truth to tolerate the *hypocrisy* that liars engage in daily.

**525. Hypothetical (adj.) supposed or assumed true, but unproven**

Many times, the *hypothetical* enters the realm of the real when understanding matures.

| --

**526. Iconoclast (n.) one who attacks commonly held beliefs or institutions**

John protests everything that the establishment offers, in true *iconoclastic* style.

**527. Idiosyncratic (adj.) peculiar to one person; highly individualized**

Joshua's *idiosyncratic* behavior identifies him as the only living descendent of Crazy John Maddox.

**528. Idolatrous (adj.) excessively worshipping one object or person**

The undying devotion that modern day kids have for rock stars and athletes is nothing shy of *idolatrous*.

**648. Mendacious (adj.) having a lying, false character**

The *mendacious* reputation of *Snake* Macready caused everyone to turn down his offer to go into business with him and his brother.

**649. Mercurial (adj.) characterized by rapid change or temperament**

Sally was so *mercurial* before her test results came; no one knew what to say to her.

**650. Meritorious (adj.) worthy of esteem or reward**

All as the perfect peace-making move hailed Bernice's meritorious gesture.

**651. Metamorphosis (n.) the change of form, shape, substance**

The *metamorphosis* that the main character went through is proof positive that sinners can become saints.

**652. Meticulous (adj.) extremely careful with details**

The surgeon was very *meticulous* about the care of the patient's wound.

**653. Mitigate (v.) to make less violent, alleviate**

In an attempt to *mitigate* the squabble between the brothers, their father took blame for most of the problem.

**654. Moderate a. (adj.) not extreme; b. (n.) one who expresses moderate opinions**

- a.) The damage was deemed *moderate* by the adjustor, giving the owners much less, than they expected.
- b.) I consider myself a *moderate*, especially when it comes to social help networks.

**655. Modicum (n.) a small amount of something**

Just a *modicum* of patience will keep a person out of many jams.

**656. Modulate (v.) to pass from one state to another, especially in music**

The technicians are attempting to *modulate* the frequencies of the incoming signals.

**657. Mollify (v.) to soften in temper**

Hank's apology certainly went a long way in *mollifying* Alfred's hostility.

**658. Morass (n.) a wet swampy bog; figuratively, something that traps and confuses**

Wading through the *morass* at a turtle's pace, the hikers took many hours to reach the town.

659. **Mores (n.) the moral attitudes and fixed customs of a group of people.**

Social *mores* affect the development of a society and the expectations of those who live there in.

670. **Morose (adj.) gloomy or sullen**

Jasper's *morose* disposition made him very unpleasant to ever be around.

671. **Multifarious (adj.) having great diversity or variety**

The reason I love Swiss army knives is their *multifarious*, do-everything design.

672. **Mundane (adj.) concerned with the world rather than with heaven, commonplace**

The *mundane* concerns of the uninspired oftentimes seem very trivial to those who visit the muses often.

673. **Munificence (n.) generosity in giving**

The extent of the billionaire's *munificence* astounded even those who knew him well.

674. **Mutable (adj.) able to change**

The decisions of the uncertain thinker tend to be very *mutable*.

675. **Myriad (adj.) consisting of a very great number**

There are *myriad* things to do on an ocean cruise, unless, of course you are a land lover.

N --

676. **Nadir (n.) the lowest point of something**

The *nadir* of my existence came when my one and only love found someone else.

677. **Nascent (adj.) in the process of being born or coming into existence**

The *nascent* genius of the young students in Dr. Einstein's class was evident when some of them actually challenged some of his assumptions on relativity.

678. **Nebulous (adj.) vaguely defined, cloudy**