

Vocabulary in use: 60 words and phrases across six common discussion areas, each with a meaning, an original example and a usage contrast. These are general language tools, not an official IELTS word list or a promise of a band score. Select words that express your intended meaning; do not insert advanced vocabulary into every sentence. Cover the meanings, explain an example in your own words, then answer the retrieval checks before reading their explanations. Examples are fictional and do not establish research findings, legal rules or health recommendations.

Education and learning

tuition (noun)

Meaning: Teaching, especially instruction provided by a teacher or institution. In some varieties of English, tuition also means the fee charged for that teaching.
Example: The programme offers extra tuition in academic writing.
Use tuition fees when the intended meaning is the price. Tuition is normally uncountable; do not write three tuitions for three lessons.

curriculum (noun)

Meaning: The subjects and content included in a course or programme of study.
Example: The curriculum includes research skills as well as subject knowledge.
A curriculum is what is taught; a timetable says when classes happen. The plural can be curricula or curriculums.

assessment (noun)

Meaning: A process of judging a learner’s knowledge, skills or work against stated criteria.
Example: The final assessment includes a report and a presentation.
Assessment can name a process or one task. An assessment result is evidence about the work assessed, not a complete description of the person.

feedback (noun)

Meaning: Information about work or performance that helps a person understand what to improve.
Example: The tutor’s feedback explained which examples needed stronger support.
Normally uncountable: some feedback or a piece of feedback, not a feedback. Useful feedback names a change, rather than only saying good or bad.

attendance (noun)

Meaning: The act of being present, or the number of people present at an event or class.
Example: Attendance increased after the workshop moved to a larger room.
Attendance is not the same as participation: being present does not establish that someone spoke or completed a task.

participation (noun)

Meaning: Taking part in an activity, rather than only being present.
Example: Small-group discussion encouraged participation from quieter students.
Use participate in an activity. Do not use participate to the discussion.

independent (adjective)

Meaning: Able to act or work without relying on another person for every step.
Example: Independent learners check a source before asking someone to confirm it.
Independent study does not mean refusing help. Be independent of something; an independent learner may still work with others.

qualification (noun)

Meaning: An officially recognised achievement showing that a course or examination has been completed to a required standard.
Example: The vacancy requires a relevant qualification and some practical experience.
A qualification is not automatically a guarantee of employment. Qualifications and experience refer to different evidence.

retain (verb)

Meaning: To keep something, including information in memory, over time.
Example: Students may retain new words better when they use them in several contexts.
Retain information means keep it in memory; obtain information means get it. The example is a possible benefit, not a promised effect for every learner.

revise (verb)

Meaning: To study previously learned material again, or to change a piece of writing to improve it.
Example: Before submitting the essay, Mei revised its unclear final paragraph.
The meaning depends on context. Revise for an exam means study again; revise a draft means edit it.

Retrieve before looking: two quick checks

1. A tutor gives advice on a draft. Which term names the advice: feedback or attendance?
2. A document lists the course content, not class times. Is it a curriculum or timetable?
1. Feedback. Attendance concerns being present.
2. A curriculum. A timetable schedules the classes.

Work and employment

recruit (verb)

Meaning: To find and bring suitable people into a job, group or activity.
Example: The repair centre plans to recruit two trainees.
Recruit people, not recruit a vacancy. Recruitment is the process; a recruit is a newly joined person.

vacancy (noun)

Meaning: An available position that is not currently filled.
Example: The notice lists a vacancy for a laboratory assistant.
Apply for a vacancy; a company advertises a vacancy. An advertisement does not mean the job has already been offered to you.

workload (noun)

Meaning: The amount of work that a person or group is expected to complete.
Example: The team’s workload rose when a colleague was absent.
A heavy workload describes the amount or demands of work. A long working day describes time; the two are related but not identical.

flexible (adjective)

Meaning: Able to change or adapt when needs or conditions change.
Example: Flexible working hours could help staff attend morning appointments.
Flexible hours may allow some choice; they do not necessarily mean fewer total hours. Flexible working arrangements is a natural phrase.

productivity (noun)

Meaning: The amount of output produced in relation to the resources used, such as labour time.
Example: The workshop compared output per staff hour to study productivity.
More output alone does not establish higher productivity if resource use also rises. Productive is the adjective; productivity is the noun.

deadline (noun)

Meaning: The latest time or date by which something must be completed or submitted.
Example: The application deadline is Friday, although interviews begin next month.
Meet a deadline means finish on time; miss a deadline means finish too late. The interview date is not necessarily the application deadline.

| promotion (noun)

Meaning: A move to a higher position at work; in another context, activity intended to increase attention or sales.

Example: Her promotion brought greater responsibility for training new staff.

Workplace promotion and a sales promotion have different meanings. Use the surrounding situation to choose the right one.

| redundant (adjective)

Meaning: In an employment context, no longer needed in a particular job because the employer's staffing needs have changed.

Example: Several posts became redundant when the two offices merged.

Being made redundant is not the same as being dismissed for misconduct. Outside employment, redundant information is unnecessary repetition.

| incentive (noun)

Meaning: Something that encourages a person or organisation to take an action.

Example: The employer offered paid training as an incentive to join the programme.

An incentive may be financial or non-financial. An incentive to do something encourages it; it does not guarantee that everyone will act.

| commute (verb or noun)

Meaning: To travel regularly between home and a place of work or study; also, that regular journey.

Example: Ravi commutes by train, and his daily commute takes forty minutes.

Commute to work or commute between two places. A one-off holiday journey is not normally a commute.

| Retrieve before looking: two quick checks

1. A report compares output per hour, not only total output. Which word names the measure?
2. A person travels from home to the same workplace each day. Name that regular journey.

1. Productivity. The resource used is labour time.

2. A commute. Travel by any usual mode can be a commute.

Environment and resources

| emission (noun)

Meaning: A substance or form of energy released from a source; often used in the plural for gases released into the air.

Example: The report compared vehicle emissions before and after the route change.

Use reduce emissions or emissions from vehicles. Emission refers to release; waste can also include solid material that is discarded.

| renewable (adjective)

Meaning: Able to be replenished naturally on a timescale relevant to human use, as with sunlight or wind as energy sources.

Example: The town is considering renewable energy for some public buildings.

Renewable does not mean every installation has no environmental impact. Contrast renewable energy sources with fuels that are used faster than they form.

| conserve (verb)

Meaning: To protect something from loss or use it carefully so that less is wasted.

Example: The hostel asks visitors to conserve water when washing dishes.

Conserve water is a natural phrase. Conservative can describe a cautious attitude and is not a general replacement for conserving resources.

| biodiversity (noun)

Meaning: The variety of living organisms, including variety within species, between species and across ecosystems.

Example: The project aims to protect the area's biodiversity.

Biodiversity is broader than a count of trees or one animal species. Do not infer an increase from a single attractive photograph.

| habitat (noun)

Meaning: The place and conditions in which an organism normally lives.

Example: Removing the wetland would reduce habitat for the birds that feed there.

Natural habitat refers to a living place, not simply any building or enclosure. Habitat loss is a common noun phrase.

| landfill (noun)

Meaning: A place where waste is buried, or the method of disposing of waste by burying it.

Example: The council wants to send less household waste to landfill.

Waste sent to landfill has not necessarily been recycled. A landfill site names a place; the material is waste.

| reusable (adjective)

Meaning: Designed or suitable to be used again rather than discarded after one use.

Example: The café sells reusable cups and provides a washing area.

Reusable and recyclable are different: reuse keeps using the item; recycling processes its material. A reusable item is not automatically reused.

| recyclable (adjective)

Meaning: Capable of being processed so that its material can be used again, under a suitable recycling system.

Example: The package is recyclable, but local collection rules still need checking.

Recyclable does not mean recycled. Capability, collection and actual processing are separate facts.

| consumption (noun)

Meaning: The use of a resource, good or service.

Example: Electricity consumption was recorded in kilowatt-hours each month.

Energy consumption is use, not the price paid. A higher bill may result from a higher unit price without higher consumption.

| deplete (verb)

Meaning: To reduce the amount of a resource substantially, especially by using it.

Example: Repeated extraction can deplete a limited resource.

Deplete resources, not deplete the price. Depletion is the noun. Specify which resource and what process is using it.

| Retrieve before looking: two quick checks

1. A cup can be used repeatedly, but no material-processing claim is given. Is reusable or recycled supported?
2. A bill rises but electricity use is unchanged. Has consumption necessarily increased?

1. Reusable. Recycled describes material that has already been processed for use again.

2. No. Consumption concerns use; a price change can increase a bill.

Health and wellbeing

prevent (verb)

Meaning: To stop something from happening.
Example: The centre uses appointment reminders to help prevent missed visits.
Use prevent someone from doing something. A reminder may help; the sentence should not claim it prevents every missed visit unless that is established.

treatment (noun)

Meaning: Care or action intended to manage a health problem; in other contexts, the way something is handled.
Example: The interview asks how long patients waited for treatment.
Treatment can refer to care generally or a particular intervention. Do not confuse waiting time for care with the time the care itself takes.

symptom (noun)

Meaning: A change experienced by a person that may indicate a health problem.
Example: The form asks visitors to describe their symptoms before the appointment.
A symptom is information about an experience, not a confirmed diagnosis. Language practice does not establish the cause of a symptom.

diagnosis (noun)

Meaning: The identification of a health condition through an appropriate assessment of evidence.
Example: The leaflet explains how a diagnosis is discussed with the patient.
The plural is diagnoses. A diagnosis and a symptom are different; do not use a vocabulary example to diagnose yourself or someone else.

nutrition (noun)

Meaning: The process and study of obtaining and using nutrients from food.
Example: The course includes a unit on nutrition and food labels.
Nutritious describes food that supplies useful nutrients. Nutritional describes something relating to nutrition, such as nutritional information.

sedentary (adjective)

Meaning: Involving a great deal of sitting and relatively little physical movement.
Example: The article discusses breaks during sedentary office work.
Sedentary describes an activity pattern, not a person's complete health. Avoid assuming that a desk worker never exercises outside work.

wellbeing (noun)

Meaning: A person's general condition of feeling and functioning well.
Example: The survey asks staff about sleep, workload and wellbeing.
Wellbeing is broader than one medical measure. A survey response describes reported experience, not automatically a clinical result.

access (noun or verb)

Meaning: The opportunity or ability to reach, obtain or use something.
Example: Residents want better access to local health services.
The noun takes to: access to services. The verb is direct: access a record, without to.

affordable (adjective)

Meaning: Within a person's or group's financial ability to pay for.
Example: The proposal aims to make travel to appointments more affordable.
Affordable depends on who pays and their resources. Cheap describes a low price; even a low price may be unaffordable for someone.

recovery (noun)

Meaning: The process of returning towards a previous or healthier condition after a problem.
Example: The article describes support during recovery after an injury.
Recover from an illness or injury. Recovery may be gradual; the word does not by itself state a date for complete improvement.

Retrieve before looking: two quick checks

1. Which word identifies a condition after assessment: symptom or diagnosis?
2. Complete the noun phrase: better access ____ services.
1. Diagnosis. A symptom is an experienced change that may contribute evidence.
2. To. The noun phrase is access to services; the verb access takes a direct object.

Technology and communication

reliable (adjective)

Meaning: Consistently able to work as expected or provide information that can be trusted for a stated purpose.
Example: A reliable connection matters during an online interview.
Reliable describes consistency or dependability. A useful source can still have limits; identify the purpose for which it is reliable.

accessible (adjective)

Meaning: Able to be reached, used or understood by the intended users.
Example: The museum is testing whether its guide is accessible to visitors who do not use smartphones.
Accessible is not identical to available. A service may exist but remain difficult for some people to use.

privacy (noun)

Meaning: A person's ability to keep aspects of their life or information from unwanted observation or disclosure.
Example: The survey avoids collecting names to protect participants' privacy.
Privacy concerns control and exposure of information. Security concerns protection against threats; a secure system can still collect more personal data than needed.

consent (noun or verb)

Meaning: Agreement to a proposed action, given with an understanding of what is involved.
Example: The organiser asks for consent before publishing participants' photographs.
Use consent to an action. Silence is not automatically consent; a language exercise should not invent permission.

automate (verb)

Meaning: To arrange for a process or task to be carried out by a system with reduced direct human operation.
Example: The office may automate routine booking confirmations.
Automate a process; automated is the adjective. Automation does not mean no person must ever check errors or maintain the system.

innovation (noun)

Meaning: A new idea, method or product introduced into use, or the process of introducing it.
Example: The workshop invites students to test a small innovation in tool storage.
Innovation concerns introduction or new use. An invention is something newly created; the two ideas overlap but are not interchangeable in every context.

digital literacy (noun phrase)

Meaning: The ability to use digital tools and information critically and effectively.
Example: Digital literacy includes checking a source before sharing its claim.
It is broader than operating one device quickly. Evaluating information and recognising limits are part of the skill.

misleading (adjective)

Meaning: Likely to lead a reader or listener towards an inaccurate understanding.
Example: The chart title is misleading because it refers to all residents although only current users were surveyed.
Misleading does not always mean deliberately dishonest. Explain the mismatch between the claim and the evidence.

verify (verb)

Meaning: To check whether a statement, detail or result is correct using appropriate evidence.
Example: The editor verified the event date against the organiser's notice.
Verify a claim against a source. Repeating an unverified claim does not verify it.

| distribute (verb)

Meaning: To give, send or spread something among several people or places.

Example: Staff distributed the updated instructions to all registered volunteers.

Distribute information to recipients. Distribution describes where it goes, not whether recipients understand or agree with it.

| Retrieve before looking: two quick checks

1. A source repeats a claim without checking evidence. Has it verified the claim?
2. A booking service exists but some users cannot operate it. Is availability enough to establish accessibility?

1. No. Verification requires an appropriate check, not repetition.

2. No. Accessibility concerns whether the intended people can reach or use it.

Cities, housing and transport

| infrastructure (noun)

Meaning: The basic systems and facilities that support a community or activity, such as transport and water supply.

Example: The development plan includes investment in local infrastructure.

Normally uncountable in this general meaning. Name the relevant system rather than using infrastructure as a vague word for any building.

| congestion (noun)

Meaning: Crowding that makes movement difficult, especially when roads carry more traffic than they can handle freely.

Example: The study compares traffic congestion at the two main junctions.

Traffic congestion refers to blocked or slowed movement, not every instance of a road being busy.

| pedestrian (noun or adjective)

Meaning: A person travelling on foot; or something intended for or relating to people on foot.

Example: The plan provides a pedestrian crossing beside the station.

Pedestrian crossing describes a crossing for walkers. A pedestrian is a person, not a type of vehicle.

| accommodation (noun)

Meaning: A place or arrangement where someone can stay or live.

Example: The college offers accommodation near its main teaching building.

Normally uncountable in this housing meaning in British English: student accommodation, not three accommodations for three rooms. Rooms or flats can be counted.

| amenity (noun)

Meaning: A feature or service that makes a place convenient or pleasant to use.

Example: Residents value local amenities such as parks and libraries.

Amenities is often plural. A facility is a place or piece of equipment for a purpose; it may also function as an amenity.

| tenant (noun)

Meaning: A person or organisation renting a property from its owner.

Example: The tenant reported the broken window to the landlord.

The tenant rents the property; the landlord owns or manages the property being let. Do not swap the roles.

| landlord (noun)

Meaning: A person or organisation that lets a property to a tenant.

Example: The landlord arranged a repair after receiving the tenant's report.

This example describes a role, not a universal legal duty. Specific rental rights depend on the applicable agreement and law.

| density (noun)

Meaning: The amount or number of something within a specified space.

Example: The report compares population density in residents per square kilometre.

Give the measure and area. A town can have fewer total residents but higher density if its area is much smaller.

| regeneration (noun)

Meaning: A process of improving or renewing an area that has declined or needs change.

Example: The regeneration proposal includes repairs to empty buildings and new public space.

Regeneration does not automatically improve every resident's situation. A balanced argument can examine costs, access and who benefits.

| route (noun)

Meaning: The path followed to travel from one place to another.

Example: The bus route connects the station with three residential areas.

A route tells you where a service goes; a timetable tells you when it runs. A short route is not automatically a quick journey if stops or congestion add time.

| Retrieve before looking: two quick checks

1. A small town has fewer residents than a large city. Must its population density be lower?
2. Which role rents a flat from its owner: tenant or landlord?

1. No. Density also depends on the area over which residents are counted.

2. Tenant. The landlord lets the property to the tenant.

Transfer: use meaning and grammar together

| Choose the word that fits each report

Use each word once: feedback, assessment, deadline, revise, route, congestion, tenant, landlord.

Report 1: The submission (1) _____ is Friday. Our tutor gave specific (2) _____ on the first draft: two examples did not support the main argument. We will (3) _____ those paragraphs before the final (4) _____, which includes a written report and a presentation.

Report 2: A new bus (5) _____ connects the station and the residential area. The council will check whether traffic (6) _____ changes at the main junction; it has not yet recorded a result. Separately, a flat's (7) _____ has reported a broken window to the (8) _____ who lets the property.

Answers: 1 deadline; 2 feedback; 3 revise; 4 assessment; 5 route; 6 congestion; 7 tenant; 8 landlord.

The time limit is a deadline; comments are feedback; the verb revise names the planned change. Assessment names the judged work. Route names a path; congestion concerns crowded movement. Tenant and landlord describe opposite sides of the rental arrangement. The town report proposes a check without inventing its outcome.

| Write a qualified four-sentence recommendation

Choose a learning or community problem. Use two words from different sections of this booklet, with a correct grammatical form. Name a practical change, its possible benefit and one thing you would need to check. Do not invent research results.

Example: A more accessible booking service could help residents who cannot use the current phone app. Staff should ask these residents which method they can use before changing it. The centre could distribute a short printed notice about the trial. Whether the new method reduces missed bookings would still need checking.