

4000 Essential English Words

1

Paul Nation

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Introduction

About the Vocabulary

The 600 words in each book of this series along with the additional target words presented in the appendices included in the first three books of the series are the most useful words in English. They were found by analysis of a collection of English course books from various levels in the primary, secondary and tertiary school systems. The words included in this series were chosen because they occurred many times in different levels of these materials. Because of the way that they were chosen, these words have the following characteristics:

- 1 They are useful in both spoken and written English. No matter what English course you are studying, the words in these books will be of value to you.
- 2 Each word in these books is a high-frequency word. This means that the effort in learning the words is well repaid by the number of times learners have a chance to encounter or use them.
- 3 These books as a whole cover a large proportion of the words in any spoken or written text. They cover at least 80% of the words in newspapers and academic texts, and at least 90% of the words in novels. They also cover at least 90% of the words in conversation.

About the Books

The activities in these books are specially designed to make use of important learning conditions. Firstly, the words are introduced using sentence definitions and an example sentence. The activities that follow in the units encourage learners to recall the meanings and forms of the words. Some activities also make the learners think about the meaning of the words in the context of a sentence—a sentence different from the sentences that occurred in the introduction of the words. Moreover, each unit ends with a story containing the target words. While reading the story, the learners have to recall the meanings of the words and suit them to the context of the story. Such activities help learners develop a better understanding of a common meaning for a given word which fits the different uses.

Illustrations for each target word are provided to help learners visualize the word as it is being used in the example sentence. These word/image associations aim to help students grasp the meaning of the word as well as recall the word later.

It should be noted that words have more than one grammatical category. However, this series focuses on the word's most common form. This is mentioned to remind learners that just because a word is labeled and utilized as a noun in this series does not mean that it can never be used in another form such as an adjective. This series has simply focused on the word in the form that it is most likely to be expressed.

Supporting Learning with Outside Activities

A well-balanced language course provides four major opportunities for learning: learning through input, learning through output, deliberate learning, and fluency development. The highly structured activities in these books support all four types of learning opportunities. In addition, learning can further be supported through the following activities:

- 1 Have students create vocabulary cards with one word from the unit on one side of the card and the translation of the word in the student's first language on the other side. Students should use the cards for study in free moments during the day. Over several weeks, students will find that quick repeated studying for brief periods of time is more effective than studying for hours at one sitting.
- 2 Assign graded readers at students' appropriate levels. Reading such books provides both enjoyment as well as meaning-focused input which will help the words stick in students' memory.
- 3 Practice reading fluency to promote faster recall of word meaning for both sight recognition and usage. Compass Publishing's *Reading for Speed and Fluency* is a good resource for reading fluency material.
- 4 Include listening, speaking, and writing activities in classes. Reinforcement of the high-frequency vocabulary presented in this series is important across all the four language skills.

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○ **afraid** [əfreɪd] *adj.*

When someone is **afraid**, they feel fear.

→ The woman was **afraid** of what she saw.



○ **agree** [əgri:] *v.*

To **agree** is to say "yes" or to think the same way.

→ A: The food is very good in that restaurant. B: I **agree** with you.



○ **angry** [æŋgri] *adj.*

When someone is **angry**, they may want to speak loudly or fight.

→ She didn't do her homework, so her father is **angry**.



○ **arrive** [əraɪv] *v.*

To **arrive** is to get to or reach some place.

→ The bus always **arrives** at the corner of my street at 4:00.



○ **attack** [ətæk] *v.*

To **attack** is to try to fight or to hurt.

→ The man with the sword **attacked** the other man first.



○ **bottom** [bɒtəm] *n.*

The **bottom** is the lowest part.

→ The **bottom** of my shoe has a hole in it.



○ **clever** [klévər] *adj.*

When someone is **clever**, they can solve a hard puzzle or problem.

→ The **clever** boy thought of a good idea.



○ **cruel** [krú:əl] *adj.*

When someone is **cruel**, they do bad things to hurt others.

→ The **cruel** man yelled at his sister.



○ **finally** [faɪnəli] *adv.*

If something happens **finally**, it happens after a long time or at the end.

→ He **finally** crossed the finish line after five hours of running.



○ **hide** [haɪd] *v.*

To **hide** is to try not to let others see you.

→ The other children will **hide** while you count to 100.



○ **hunt** [hʌnt] v.

To **hunt** is to look for or search for an animal to kill.

→ *Long ago, people **hunted** with bows and arrows.*



○ **lot** [lɒt] n.

A **lot** means a large number or amount of people, animals, things, etc.

→ *There are a **lot** of apples in the basket.*



○ **middle** [mɪdl] n.

The **middle** of something is the center or halfway point.

→ *The Canadian flag has a maple leaf in the **middle** of it.*



○ **moment** [məʊmənt] n.

A **moment** is a second or a very short time.

→ *I was only a few **moments** late for the meeting.*



○ **pleased** [pli:zd] adj.

When someone is **pleased**, they are happy.

→ *She was **pleased** with the phone call she received.*



○ **promise** [prəmis] v.

To **promise** is to say you will do something for sure.

→ *He **promised** to return my key by tomorrow.*



○ **reply** [riplai] v.

To **reply** is to give an answer or say back to someone.

→ *She asked him what time his meeting was. He **replied**, "at three."*



○ **safe** [seɪf] adj.

When a person is **safe**, they are not in danger.

→ *Put on your seat belt in the car to be **safe**.*



○ **trick** [trɪk] n.

A **trick** is something you do to fool another person.

→ *His card **trick** really surprised us.*



○ **well** [wel] adv.

You use **well** to say that something was done in a good way.

→ *The couple can dance quite **well**.*

Exercise 1

Part A Choose the right word for the given definition.

1. bad or hurting others
a. afraid b. clever c. cruel d. hunt
2. at last or at the end
a. angry b. clever c. finally d. reply
3. to try to fight or hurt
a. attack b. middle c. pleased d. trick
4. to not let others see
a. agree b. hide c. safe d. well
5. the lowest part
a. bottom b. lot c. moment d. promise

Part B Choose the right definition for the given word.

1. angry
a. happy b. low c. mad d. scared
2. moment
a. a hole with water in it b. a short time
c. at the center d. at the end
3. promise
a. to say "good job" b. to say "I will"
c. to say "the end" d. to say "maybe"
4. reply
a. to answer b. to get to a place
c. to look for in order to kill d. to try to fight or hurt
5. safe
a. fool b. having much or many
c. not seen d. not worried about being hurt

Exercise 2

Check (✓) the sentence with the bolded word that makes better sense.

1. ☐ a. A **clever** person can solve a puzzle easily.
☐ b. When a plane **arrives**, it leaves the ground and goes into the sky.
2. ☐ a. At noon, the sun is near the **bottom** of the sky.
☐ b. If I break my brother's bike, he will be **angry**.
3. ☐ a. It is easy to **hide** in a dark place.
☐ b. Many kinds of fish are **afraid** of water.
4. ☐ a. At night, your parents may say, "**Hide** your eyes and go to sleep."
☐ b. Heavy things will go down to the **bottom** of the ocean.
5. ☐ a. It is **cruel** to keep a dog in a small cage all day.
☐ b. Your mother will be **angry** when you get good grades in school.
6. ☐ a. Animals cannot **hunt** because they do not have hands.
☐ b. It is a good idea to **arrive** early for class.
7. ☐ a. People sometimes **attack** pictures to email messages.
☐ b. Some people are **afraid** of spiders.
8. ☐ a. A **moment** is like a second or two.
☐ b. New shoes are usually not very comfortable or **clever**.
9. ☐ a. Small animals do not usually **attack** big animals.
☐ b. There are twelve **moments** in a year.
10. ☐ a. A **cruel** person will try to help others at all times.
☐ b. You can use a gun to **hunt** in the forest.