

4000 **Essential** **English** **Words**

2

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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○ **anxious** [æŋkʃəs] *adj.*

When a person is **anxious**, they worry that something bad will happen.

→ She was **anxious** about not making her appointment on time.



○ **awful** [ɔ:fəl] *adj.*

When something is **awful**, it is very bad.

→ Her performance last night was **awful**.



○ **consist** [kənsíst] *v.*

To **consist** of is to be made of parts or things.

→ Today's choices for lunch **consisted** of pizza, hamburgers, and hot dogs.



○ **desire** [dizáier] *v.*

To **desire** is to want something.

→ My sister **desires** a big house and lots of money.



○ **eager** [i:ɡər] *adj.*

When a person is **eager** about something, they are excited about it.

→ The man was **eager** to talk about the good news.



○ **household** [háushòuld] *n.*

A **household** is all the people who live in one house.

→ Our **household** is made up of my father, my mother and me.



○ **intent** [intént] *n.*

An **intent** is a plan to do something.

→ Her **intent** is to visit Italy next summer.



○ **landscape** [lænd'skèip] *n.*

A **landscape** is how an area of land looks.

→ The **landscape** of the country is very green.



○ **lift** [lift] *v.*

To **lift** something is to move it higher.

→ The man tried to **lift** the box.



○ **load** [loud] *v.*

To **load** is to put objects into something.

→ The man **loaded** the boxes into a truck.



lung [lʌŋ] *n.*

A **lung** is the organ in the body that fills with air when breathing.

→ *Having strong **lungs** is necessary for a healthy life.*



motion [móʊʃən] *n.*

A **motion** is a movement that someone makes.

→ *The police officer made a **motion** with his hand.*



pace [peɪs] *n.*

The **pace** of something is the speed at which it happens.

→ *I ran the race at a slower **pace** than my friend.*



polite [pəlaɪt] *adj.*

When someone is **polite**, they are acting in a thoughtful way.

→ *The boy was very **polite**: he behaved very thoughtfully.*



possess [pəzéz] *v.*

To **possess** something is to have it or own it.

→ *My uncle **possesses** three sheep, a chicken, a cow and a dog.*



rapidly [ræpidli] *adv.*

When something happens **rapidly**, it happens very fast.

→ *The train moved **rapidly** on the tracks.*



remark [rɪmá:rk] *v.*

To **remark** is to say something.

→ *The teacher **remarked** on how quickly the students were learning.*



seek [si:k] *v.*

To **seek** is to look for something.

→ *If I have a problem, I **seek** my sister's advice.*



shine [ʃaɪn] *v.*

To **shine** is to make a bright light.

→ *The candles are **shining** in the dark room.*



spill [spɪl] *v.*

To **spill** is to have something fall out of its container.

→ *I **spilled** the coffee on the table.*

Exercise 1

Part A Choose the right word for the given definition.

1. a movement
a. pace b. intent c. lungs d. motion
2. to look for
a. seek b. possess c. shine d. desire
3. to pick up
a. eager b. lift c. remark d. spill
4. very fast
a. landscape b. household c. rapidly d. awful
5. feeling worried
a. consisting of b. load c. polite d. anxious

Part B Choose the right definition for the given word.

1. possess
a. to look for b. to own
c. to pick up d. to put in
2. desire
a. to want b. to make up of
c. to have d. to say
3. intent
a. an area of land b. an organ
c. a plan d. a feeling
4. shine
a. to learn b. to make light
c. to have something fall out d. to move fast
5. polite
a. thoughtful b. worried
c. fast d. excited

Exercise 2

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

1. ___ a. It is hard to **seek** for things when it is sunny.
___ b. A **landscape** may have snow during the winter.
2. ___ a. Most children are **eager** to get gifts.
___ b. Good friends are **awful** to have around.
3. ___ a. The **lungs** help move blood through the body.
___ b. People may feel **anxious** when they give a speech.
4. ___ a. It isn't **polite** to take things without asking first.
___ b. You should help **spill** the dishes after dinner.
5. ___ a. If you work at a fast **pace**, things will get done quickly.
___ b. It is important to **lift** your notes before a test.
6. ___ a. People are **eager** to leave when they don't want to go anywhere.
___ b. You should get help when **lifting** heavy boxes.
7. ___ a. Some people live in the **landscape** while others live in the city.
___ b. Everyone has **awful** days where nothing goes right.
8. ___ a. It is good to **seek** advice when you have a problem.
___ b. Students feel **anxious** when they get good grades.
9. ___ a. When you breathe, air goes into your **lungs**.
___ b. Some students **pace** to school every day.
10. ___ a. **Polite** people do not say "please" or "thank you."
___ b. When you **spill** something, you should clean it up right away.