

4000 Essential English Words

4

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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Word List



aroma [əˈroumə] *n.*

An **aroma** is a scent or smell.

→ I love the **aroma** of coffee in the morning.



beverage [bévərɪdʒ] *n.*

A **beverage** is a drink.

→ The waiter brought our **beverages** first. Then he brought our food.



cluster [klástər] *n.*

A **cluster** of things is a small group of them placed close together.

→ She held a large **cluster** of grapes in her hand.



combine [kəmbáin] *v.*

To **combine** is to join together to make a single thing or group.

→ Mina **combined** peanut butter and jelly to make a sandwich.



condensed [kəndénst] *adj.*

When a liquid is **condensed**, it is made thicker.

→ One way to make a dessert thick and sweet is to use **condensed** milk.



contemporary [kəntəmpərəri] *adj.*

When something is **contemporary**, it is related to the present time.

→ **Contemporary** scientists have learned quite a bit about DNA.



cultivate [káltəvèit] *v.*

To **cultivate** plants is to care for them and help them grow.

→ A research company is **cultivating** new kinds of rice to aid poor countries.



divine [diváin] *adj.*

When something is **divine**, it is related to gods.

→ Legends say that music was given to men as a **divine** gift from the gods.



humid [hjú:mid] *adj.*

When it is **humid**, there is a lot of water in the air.

→ It is very **humid** inside of a sauna.



odor [óudər] *n.*

An **odor** is a very distinct smell.

→ He knew there was a leak when he noticed the strong **odor** of natural gas.



palate [pælit] *n.*

The **palate** is the top part of the mouth.

→ You can touch your **palate** with your tongue.



paradise [pæredàis] *n.*

Paradise is the place or condition of happiness where things are perfect.

→ My vacation in Hawaii was like being in **paradise**.



plantation [plæntéifən] *n.*

A **plantation** is a big farm that only grows certain kinds of crops.

→ In the 1800s, there were many cotton **plantations** in the southern US.



rapid [ræpid] *adj.*

When something is **rapid**, it moves or changes very quickly.

→ His mother was surprised by her son's **rapid** growth.



rate [reit] *n.*

A **rate** is the speed at which something happens.

→ Grass tends to grow at a very slow **rate**.



soothing [sú:ðin] *adj.*

When something is **soothing**, it makes you calm or relaxed.

→ The **soothing** music helped the baby fall asleep.



subtle [sátl] *adj.*

When something is **subtle**, it is not easy to see or notice.

→ The handsome man has a **subtle** smile.



texture [tékstʃə:r] *n.*

The **texture** of something is the way its surface looks and feels.

→ The **texture** of a rock found in the water is typically very smooth.



toxic [tóksik] *adj.*

When something is **toxic**, it is poisonous. **Toxic** things are very dangerous.

→ Please check the label to see if the product is **toxic**.



vary [véəri] *v.*

To **vary** means to be different from another thing in size or amount.

→ The heights of the people in my class **vary** by a large amount.

Exercise 1

Choose the word that is the better fit for each blank.

1. rapid / rate

The population growth in the city was incredibly _____. It is quite surprising that people settled there at such a fast _____.

2. contemporary / vary

Many _____ laws make it illegal for business to compete in unfair ways. However, the specific laws in different countries _____ greatly.

3. humid / toxic

Because it is quite _____ on the island, various kinds of plants grow well there. However, some of these plants are _____ to humans.

4. texture / aroma

The cheese has a smooth _____. However, some people find it hard to eat because of its powerful _____.

5. cluster / combined

A _____ of people suggested that nearby cities could fight the invaders if they cooperated with each other. As a result, everyone _____ their efforts and defeated the invaders.

6. soothing / subtle

The artist uses _____ differences of color in her landscapes. This has an overall calming and _____ effect on the viewer.

7. cultivated / odor

A huge garden was _____ in the middle of the city. However, a species of rare plants gave off an unpleasant _____.

8. beverage / palate

During a four or five course meal, one should drink something to clean the _____ between courses. The perfect _____ for this is, of course, water.

9. condensed / divine

I can explain the basic story in a simple, _____ way. A boy is given a _____ message, and he begins an exciting adventure.

10. plantations / paradise

The island of Oahu is not a natural _____ like Maui. However, tourists still have plenty to enjoy on Oahu, from visits to pineapple _____ to traditional celebrations.

Exercise 2

UNIT
1

PART A Match the phrases to make complete sentences.

1. A **soothing** cup of tea _____.
2. The **odor** of the cheese _____.
3. The pot's **texture** _____.
4. The chemical is **toxic** _____.
5. The **contemporary** fiction class _____.
6. The **rate** at which these flowers grew _____.
7. My mother **cultivates** _____.
8. The **plantation** had _____.
9. The thick and **humid** forest _____.
10. That **cluster** of stars in the sky makes _____.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. was surprisingly fast | b. includes work from the 21 st century |
| c. feels so smooth | d. covered almost a third of the country |
| e. was too strong to be enjoyable | f. several species of flowers as a hobby |
| g. to insects and small animals | h. twenty workers who grew cotton |
| i. is good for a sore throat | j. the shoulder of Taurus the Bull |

PART B Match the clauses to make complete sentences.

1. The scientists wanted to find a cure for the sickness, _____.
2. He offered to share his water, _____.
3. I prefer mocha to coffee _____.
4. Many new jobs were created, _____.
5. The report was ten pages long, _____.
6. The doctor asked him to open his mouth, _____.
7. She walked in the door, _____.
8. Because the island is so warm and beautiful, _____.
9. Because patients' bodies are so different, _____.
10. It didn't rain all summer, _____.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. so economic growth was rapid | b. and Jim thought it was a divine message |
| c. people call it a paradise | d. the effects of the medicine will vary |
| e. and she looked at his palate | f. and she smelled the aroma of cookies |
| g. so they combined the chemicals | h. because it has a subtle taste of chocolate |
| i. but I wanted my own beverage | j. but the condensed version was shorter |