

4000 Essential English Words

5

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

**allot** [ə'lɒt] *v.*

To **allot** something means to give it to someone.

→ The coach **allotted** each team five minutes to prepare a strategy.

**appall** [ə'pɔ:l] *v.*

To **appall** means to horrify, shock, or disgust someone.

→ The boy was **appalled** when he saw the accident.

**cache** [kæʃ] *n.*

A **cache** is a hiding place for valuable things.

→ The pirates kept their jewelry in a **cache** hidden in a cave.

**convenience** [kənvi:njəns] *n.*

Convenience is a state of being able to do something with little effort.

→ The Internet allows consumers to shop at their own **convenience**.

**dearth** [dɜ:rə] *n.*

A **dearth** is an amount or supply which is not large enough.

→ There is a **dearth** of money in my bank account. I can't afford a new car.

**deliberate** [dɪlɪbəreɪt] *adj.*

If a thing you do is **deliberate**, you intend to do it.

→ She made a **deliberate** effort to save money each month.

**dire** [daɪər] *adj.*

When something is **dire**, it is terrible and very serious.

→ The tornado created a **dire** situation for the small town.

**elapse** [ɪlæps] *v.*

To **elapse** means to pass, as in seconds, minutes, or hours.

→ A few seconds must **elapse** before you can take another picture.

**empathy** [em'pæθi] *n.*

Empathy is sharing or understanding another person's feelings.

→ The caring nurse had **empathy** for her patients.

**fanciful** [fænsɪfəl] *adj.*

When something is **fanciful**, it is unusual or unrealistic.

→ The girl had **fanciful** ideas about doing well in school without studying.



gripe [graɪp] v.

To **gripe** means to complain constantly.

→ *Lawrence always **gripes** when he has to do chores.*



grueling [gruːəlɪŋ] adj.

When something is **grueling**, it is very hard to do.

→ *The climber faced the **grueling** task of reaching the top of the steep mountain.*



mundane [mʌndeɪn] adj.

When something is **mundane**, it is boring, common, or ordinary.

→ *The man had the **mundane** chore of raking thousands of leaves into piles.*



opt [ɒpt] v.

To **opt** is to make a choice, especially when deciding in favor of something.

→ *My brother likes chocolate ice cream, but I always **opt** for vanilla.*



outrage [aʊtrɛɪdʒ] n.

Outrage is a very strong emotion of anger or shock.

→ *Tommy was feeling **outrage** when his parents said he couldn't go to the dance.*



paltry [pɔːltrɪ] adj.

When an amount of something is **paltry**, it is very small.

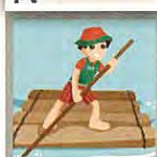
→ *The poor man had a **paltry** sum of money.*



rectify [rɛktəfaɪ] v.

To **rectify** something means to correct it.

→ *I quickly **rectified** the spelling mistakes that I had on my essay.*



resourceful [riːsɔːrsfəl] adj.

When someone is **resourceful**, they are good at dealing with hard situations.

→ *After his boat sunk, Matt was **resourceful** enough to build a raft.*



sustenance [sʌstənəns] n.

Sustenance is food and water needed to keep a person, animal, or plant alive.

→ *Without the proper **sustenance**, the man will starve.*



tedious [tɪˈdiəs] adj.

When something is **tedious**, it is long, frustrating, and boring.

→ *His job involved a lot of **tedious** typing, filing, and organizing.*

Exercise 1

Choose the answer that best fits the question.

1. You would have empathy if you _____.
a. shared sad feelings b. lost in a game c. hurt your arm d. ate a large meal
2. How would you feel if there was a dearth of food?
a. Happy b. Hungry c. Full d. Sleepy
3. If something is a convenience, then it makes _____.
a. you very angry b. you feel sick c. a lot of money d. a task easier
4. How would a resourceful person deal with a problem?
a. Ignore it b. Give up c. Cry and ask for help d. Find a solution
5. If something was deliberate, then it was _____.
a. done with pride b. done easily c. done on purpose d. not done at all
6. How would you describe someone feeling a sense of outrage?
a. Peaceful b. Upset c. Tired d. Arrogant
7. What fanciful idea might a doctor have?
a. Give a patient medicine b. Be kind to them
c. Tell them to rest d. Ask a fairy for advice
8. What would a tired person likely opt to do?
a. Watch a movie b. Exercise c. Finish a book d. Go to bed
9. To rectify hurting your friend, you would _____.
a. say sorry b. laugh at him c. hit him d. ignore him
10. What might appall a teacher?
a. Smart students b. A happy student c. A mean attitude d. A long test

Exercise 2

Choose the one that is similar in meaning to the given word.

1. outrage
a. idea b. anger c. beauty d. personality
2. rectify
a. to correct b. to sadden c. to bore d. to be hard
3. sustenance
a. belief b. flowing c. food and drink d. torn
4. dire
a. terrible b. likely c. large d. small
5. opt
a. to remove b. to yell c. to shout d. to choose

Exercise 3

Choose the one that is opposite in meaning to the given word.

1. tedious
a. fun b. to read c. to shrink d. to love
2. appall
a. to greet b. to lower c. to please d. to create
3. paltry
a. worthless b. large c. ugly d. absent
4. grueling
a. rough b. exact c. easy d. necessary
5. resourceful
a. foolish b. realistic c. impressive d. surprising

Exercise 4

Write C if the italicized word is used correctly. Write I if the word is used incorrectly.

1. ____ I had a big breakfast. Many hours will *elapse* before I feel hungry again.
2. ____ Dan was a nice man, but no one would work for him because of his *fanciful* ideas.
3. ____ I was very grateful for my birthday gifts. I *griped* about them to all of my friends.
4. ____ Because there was a *dearth* of food at home, the family went out to eat.
5. ____ The puppy was happy to learn new tricks. Each one was very *mundane* for him.
6. ____ Mother *allotted* me and my brother the money. Now she had all the money.
7. ____ The boy was proud of his trophies. He displayed them in a *cache* for everyone to see.
8. ____ Because he had planned for the trap to capture his victim, he was very *deliberate*.
9. ____ The violent criminal was on the news this evening. His actions *appalled* most people.
10. ____ That man is very selfish. He has *empathy* for every person he meets.