

Skyrocket Your **C1** Vocabulary

Expand your vocabulary with advanced verbs, adjectives and idiomatic phrases to express yourself precisely and fluently!

Verbs



Adjectives



Idioms

Skyrocket Your C1 Vocabulary

In this lesson, you'll supercharge your English skills so you can express yourself fluently at an advanced level! We'll guide you through a series of advanced vocabulary videos at a mind-blowing C1 level. From learning sophisticated verbs to describing appearance with precision, you'll gain the confidence to articulate your thoughts easily. We'll explore vivid adjectives and idiomatic phrases and even challenge your English skills with an A1 to C1 quiz, all while expanding your advanced vocabulary. So, prepare yourself for an incredible learning journey that will take your English to new heights and help you sound confident and natural in no time!

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20 ADVANCED VERBS

Most English learners reach a point on their English learning journeys where they want to use more advanced vocabulary. This lesson will teach you 20 advanced verbs and how you can use them in context.

to advocate (for) - /'ædvəkeɪt/

to publicly support or recommend a particular policy or action

Present Simple

The celebrity uses her social media platform to **advocate** for a more sustainable future.

Past Simple

The politician **advocated** for greater economic equality for all citizens.

to amplify - /'æmplɪfaɪ/

to make something louder or stronger; to increase the effect or impact of something

Present Simple

The megaphone **amplifies** the speaker's voice and makes it easier to hear.

Past Simple

The digital marketing campaign **amplified** the reach and impact of the brand's message.

to articulate - /ɑ:'tɪkjuleɪt/

to express or explain something in a clear and effective way; to pronounce words clearly and distinctly



Past Simple	The public speaker articulated her vision for the future with passion and conviction.
Present Continuous	The language learner is practising articulating difficult sounds to improve her pronunciation.

to comprehend - /ˌkɒmpriˈhend/

to understand the meaning or significance of something

Present Simple	The student struggles to comprehend the complex theories presented in the lecture.
Future Simple	The reader will have to re-read the passage multiple times to comprehend the author's message.

to convey - /kənˈveɪ/

to communicate or express something to others, often a message or information

Present Simple	The artist uses her paintings to convey her emotions and experiences.
Past Simple	The journalist conveyed the breaking news to the public with accuracy and timeliness.



to corroborate - /kə'ɒbəreɪt/

to confirm or support a statement, theory, or finding with evidence or testimony

Present Simple

The witness is able to **corroborate** the victim's account of the crime.

Past Simple

The scientist **corroborated** her hypothesis with multiple experiments.

to decipher - /dɪ'saɪfə(r)/

to discover the meaning of something written badly or in a difficult or hidden way

Past Simple

The traveller struggled to **decipher** the foreign language on the menu.

Future Simple

The detective will have to **decipher** the hidden meaning behind the suspect's cryptic message.

to differentiate (between) - /ˌdɪfə'renʃeɪt/

to distinguish or recognize the differences between things or people

Present Simple

The sommelier is able to **differentiate** between the subtle flavours in the wine.

Past Simple

The teacher developed lesson plans to help students **differentiate** between similar concepts.



to dissect - /daɪ'sekt/

to analyse or examine something in detail, often by breaking it down into its components or parts

Present Simple

The scientist **dissects** the specimen to study its internal structure.

Past Simple

The literary critic **dissected** the novel to explore its themes and symbols.

to efface - /ɪ'feɪs/

to remove or erase something intentionally so that it is no longer visible or noticeable

Past Simple

The politician tried to **efface** the scandal from his public record with a new campaign.

Present Continuous

The storm winds are so strong that they **are effacing** the markings on the road.

to elaborate (on/upon) - /ɪ'læbəreɪt/

to add more detail or explanation to something; to expand or clarify a concept, idea or thought

Past Simple

The designer **elaborated** on her original concept after receiving feedback from the client.

Future Simple

I can see you didn't understand, so I am going to **elaborate** on my point.



to exacerbate - /ɪg'zæsəbeɪt/

to make a situation or problem worse

Past Simple

The drought **exacerbated** the water shortage in the region.

Present Perfect Simple

The medication side effects **have exacerbated** my existing health problems.

to extrapolate - /ɪk'stræpəleɪt/

to guess, estimate or forecast something use what you already know

Present Simple

The economist **extrapolates** future trends from current economic indicators.

Present Simple

We tend to predict the future by **extrapolating** from the past.

to facilitate - /fə'sɪlɪteɪt/

to make something easier or more convenient to do

Future Simple

The new technology **will facilitate** communication among team members.

Past Simple

The tutor **facilitated** the development of her student's skills.



to galvanize/galvanise - /'gælvənaɪz/

to shock or excite someone into taking action

Past Simple

The tragic event **galvanized** the community to come together and support one another.

Present Perfect Simple

The recent news **has galvanized** the public to demand change.

to integrate - /'ɪntɪɡreɪt/

to combine or blend things together in a harmonious or functional way

Present Continuous

The new employee **is integrating** well with the team.

Past Simple

The architect **integrated** the old and new elements of the building design seamlessly.

to mitigate - /'mɪtɪɡeɪt/

to reduce or alleviate the severity or impact of something, often a problem or negative consequence

Present Simple

The safety measures in place **mitigate** the risk of accidents.

Present Perfect Simple

The environmental policies **have mitigated** the damage to the ecosystem.



to perceive - /pə'si:v/

to think of something in a particular way or become aware or conscious of something through the senses or intuition

Present Simple

She **perceives** that her boss isn't happy with her work because of his constant criticism

Past Simple

The artist **perceived** the beauty of nature and incorporated it into her work.

to reconcile - /'rekənsaɪ/

to make people become friends again after a break up or an argument; to make two conflicting things compatible

Present Continuous

The mediator is trying to **reconcile** the differences between the two parties.

Past Simple

The couple **reconciled** after a period of separation.

to scrutinize/scrutinise - /'skru:tənaɪz/

to examine or inspect something very closely

Past Simple

She **scrutinized** his essay but couldn't find a single error.

Past Simple

His apology was carefully **scrutinized** by his PR team before it was made public.





Activity

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1) The team worked hard to _____ the new software into their system.

- a. advocate
- b. integrate
- c. mitigate

2) My professor was able to _____ the complex maths problem for me.

- a. decipher
- b. efface
- c. dissect

3) The government is taking steps to _____ the effects of climate change.

- a. mitigate
- b. integrate
- c. extrapolate

4) Jamie, who is an archaeologist, was able to _____ the ancient script on the tablet.

- a. elaborate
- b. decipher
- c. dissect

5) The artist used a brush to _____ the colours on the canvas.

- a. articulate
- b. integrate
- c. mitigate

6) Our CEO _____ on the benefits of investing in renewable energy.

- a. elaborated
- b. effaced
- c. dissected

7) The historian _____ the events that led up to the war.

- a. advocated
- b. integrated
- c. extrapolated

8) He _____ his thoughts and ideas clearly to the audience.

- a. elaborated
- b. effaced
- c. articulated

Answers:

1) b 2) c 3) a 4) b 5) b 6) a 7) c 8) c



20 ADVANCED ADJECTIVES

Improving your vocabulary is crucial for expressing yourself accurately and fluently in English. Advanced adjectives can help you to do just that, allowing you to add more depth and clarity to your descriptions. In this lesson, we will explore 20 advanced adjectives, their meanings and example sentences to help you expand and enhance your writing and speaking skills.

ambivalent (about/towards) | /æm'bɪvələnt/

having or showing mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone

I feel **ambivalent** about accepting the job offer because it pays well, but the work is not interesting.

She has **ambivalent** feelings towards her ex-husband, both loving him and hating him.

capricious | /kə'prɪʃəs/

given to sudden and unaccountable changes of mood or behaviour

His **capricious** behaviour made it difficult for his friends to keep up with his moods.

The weather is **capricious** this time of year, with sunny days followed by sudden rain showers.

derogatory | /dɪ'rɒgətəri/

showing a critical or disrespectful attitude towards someone or something

His **derogatory** comments about women angered many people.

The newspaper received complaints about a **derogatory** article they published about a minority group.



esoteric | /,i:sə'terɪk/

intended for or likely to be understood by only a small number of people with a specialised interest or knowledge

The lecture on quantum mechanics was **esoteric** and difficult for most students to understand.

The chef's recipes are **esoteric** and require knowledge of specific techniques and ingredients.

flippant | /'flɪpənt/

not showing a serious or respectful attitude

The politician's **flippant** comments about the pandemic angered many people.

Your **flippant** attitude towards your studies led to these poor grades.

grandiose | /'grændiəʊs/

impressive or magnificent in appearance or style but often lacking in substance

This building is **grandiose** but impractical for our current needs.

Your brother is always making these **grandiose** promises that he never follows through on.

histrionic | /,hɪstri'ɒnɪk/

overly theatrical or melodramatic in character or style that comes off as insincere

Her **histrionic** reaction to the news made her friends doubt her sincerity.

Their **histrionic** speech about clean energy failed to persuade the audience at the climate change rally.



incongruous | /ɪn'kɒŋgruəs/

not suitable or in keeping with the surroundings or other aspects of something; strange

The modern art sculpture looked **incongruous** in the historic town square.

The professor's joke seemed **incongruous** with the seriousness of the lecture.

juxtaposed | /ˌdʒʌkstə'pəʊzd/

placed close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast

The **juxtaposed** paintings showed the contrast between the bright colours of one and the dark shades of the other.

The gallery featured a series of **juxtaposed** images, creating a thought-provoking and dynamic composition.

laudable | /'lɔːdəbl/

deserving praise and commendation

One of his less **laudable** characteristics, not worthy of praise, was his dark sense of humour.

Her decisions may be open to debate, but her manner of speaking is **laudable**.

mercurial | /mɜː'kjʊəriəl/

subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood or mind

This new series we're watching is entertaining, but the constant **mercurial** changes in tone are an emotional roller coaster.

The stock market is often described as **mercurial**, with rapid fluctuations in value.



nonchalant | /'nɒnʃələnt/

feeling or appearing casually calm and relaxed; not displaying anxiety, interest or enthusiasm

Taylor's mother was **nonchalant** about her daughter's recent rise to fame.

The student's **nonchalant** response to her failing grade showed a lack of concern for her future.

pernicious | /pə'niʃəs/

having a harmful effect, especially in a gradual or subtle way

The company's **pernicious** practices harmed the local environment.

The **pernicious** effect of advertising to children is a problem that we cannot ignore any longer.

quixotic | /kwɪk'sɒtɪk/

exceedingly idealistic; unrealistic and impractical

His **quixotic** dream of travelling the world with no money seemed impossible to achieve.

She ran a **quixotic** campaign against her rival but came out ahead!

resplendent (with/in) | /rɪ'splendənt/

attractive and impressive through being richly colourful

The sunset over the ocean was **resplendent** with colours of orange and pink.

Resplendent in white and gold, she walked down the aisle on the arm of her father.



subservient | /səb'sɜːviənt/

prepared to obey others unquestioningly

The assistant's **subservient** attitude towards her boss led to exploitation.

Gloria refused to give up her career and accept a traditional, **subservient** role.

supercilious | /ˌsuːpə'sɪliəs/

behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others

His **supercilious** demeanour towards his audience was met with disapproval.

Her writing often has a **supercilious** tone, which makes it hard to connect with.

tenacious | /tə'neɪʃəs/

tending to keep a firm hold of something or not giving up easily; determined

Her **tenacious** grip on the rope allowed her to climb the steep cliff.

Although he experienced many setbacks, he remained **tenacious** in his pursuit of becoming an MP.

ubiquitous | /ju:'bɪkwɪtəs/

very common or found everywhere

Smartphones have become **ubiquitous** in modern society.

The company's logo was **ubiquitous** on billboards throughout the city.



vicarious | /vɪ'keəriəs/

experienced in the imagination through the feelings or actions of another person

He experienced a sense of **vicarious** nostalgia when he listened to his parents' stories about their youth.

Watching action films allows people to experience **vicarious** thrills and excitement.

Also commonly used as an **adverb**: [vicariously](#)
I'm living **vicariously** through you.



Activity

Choose the correct word to fill in the blanks to complete the paragraph.

ambivalent | capricious | derogatory | esoteric | flippant | grandiose | incongruous

Joaquin was an eccentric performance artist from France in the year 1865. He was known for his _____ performances that often included hundreds of people, which often left his audiences feeling _____. Joaquin's work was often described as _____, as he would frequently incorporate unusual and _____ elements into his shows. He was a _____ individual who could never be predicted, and his _____ comments towards those who did not understand his work did not help his reputation. Despite this, he had a loyal following of fans who appreciated his unique and often _____ approach to art.

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1) With the rise of smartphones, social media has become _____ in our daily lives.

- a. supercilious
- b. vicarious
- c. ubiquitous

2) Her film provided audiences with a _____ experience of what it was like to live during the Great Depression.

- a. subservient
- b. vicarious
- c. ubiquitous

3) Which word means behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others?

- a. supercilious
- b. ubiquitous
- c. tenacious

4) Martin's _____ spirit enabled him to focus on winning the race.

- a. esoteric
- b. vicarious
- c. tenacious

Answers:

1) c 2) b 3) a 4) c

(1) grandiose (2) ambivalent (3) supercilious (4) esoteric (5) incongruous (6) capricious (7) derogatory (8) flippant



VOCABULARY FOR APPEARANCE: C1 LEVEL

I've got another vocabulary lesson that will surely give your vocab bank a well-deserved boost! Today, we're going to explore the exciting world of words and expressions related to appearance. Forget the basic stuff - we're diving deep into the advanced words that'll make you sound positively fluent. And don't worry, I've included a quiz at the end to reinforce all of the vocabulary you are about to learn.

Childhood

I have always had long hair, and my cascade of blonde hair made me look quite **angelic** when I was little. A quick chat with my parents would soon dispel that misconception. My brother was adorable (all children are cute). He had these gorgeous **dimples** that people teased him about sometimes, but I always adored them.

● VOCABULARY

1) **angelic** /æŋ'dʒelɪk/ - like an angel - beautiful, good and kind

Ali had an angelic smile, and no one could stay angry with her for long.

2) **dimple** /'dɪmpl/ - a small crease or indentation next to your mouth or on your chin

Whenever she smiled, her dimples would appear, making her look even more charming.

● EXTRA VOCABULARY

cascade /kæ'skeɪd/ - a waterfall-like arrangement or flow of something

The cascade of autumn leaves from the tall oak tree created a vibrant tapestry on the garden floor.

to dispel /dɪ'spel/ - to make something, such as a belief or fear, disappear

The scientists conducted experiments to dispel the notion that the Earth was flat.



misconception /ˌmɪskən'sepʃn/ - a mistaken belief or understanding about something

There is a common misconception that eating carrots can improve your vision.

The Teenage Years

Like most people, my appearance was quite important to me back then. One of the first things I did when I turned 13 was grab a pair of **tweezers** and **pluck** my eyebrows into submission. I regret it so much!

I also used to compare myself to my friends a lot, and one of the sticking points was my **complexion**. As you can see, I'm pretty pale, and I used to be so jealous of my friends who would come back after the summer holidays totally **sun-kissed**.

I've always been a bit, shall we say, **vertically challenged**, which never really bothered me. On the other hand, my husband, Will, was very **lanky** when he was a teenager, but he's filled out now.

● VOCABULARY

3) **tweezers** /'twi:zəz/ - a small, slim tool used for grasping and removing small objects, such as splinters or hairs

Alex used tweezers to remove a thorn from his finger.

4) **to pluck** /plʌk/ - to pull out hairs with tweezers or your fingers

Jules plucked her eyebrows every week to maintain a neat appearance.

5) **complexion** /kəm'plekʃn/ - the natural colour, texture and appearance of your skin, especially your face

Lots of English people have quite a pale complexion and burn badly in the sun.



6) **sun-kissed** /'sʌn kɪst/ - **tanned** /tænd/ - having a brown skin colour from spending time in the sun

Jane looked like a vision with her summer dress and sun-kissed skin.

7) **vertically challenged** - a funny way to refer to someone who is short

Ruth was only 5 foot tall and often joked about being vertically challenged.

8) **lanky** /'læŋki/ - tall and thin in a slightly awkward way

As a teenager, Benji was lanky and had to grow into his long limbs.

● EXTRA VOCABULARY

sticking point /'stɪkɪŋ pɔɪnt/ - an issue or a problem that causes difficulties or concerns

Price is the main sticking point for us. Can you work with us on that?

to fill out /fɪl aʊt/ - to develop in a way that one's body becomes fuller

After many long days in the gym and calorific meals, he began to fill out in ways I'd never seen before.

Now

I'm 29 now, and my worries about my appearance have nearly faded. I very much believe **it's what's on the inside that counts**. If you saw me walking my dog on a wet January morning, I don't think you'd recognise me. I usually look fairly **unkempt**, with **windswept** hair and **scruffy** clothes.

Don't get me wrong, I try to take care of myself, and I think I **scrub up well**. I like putting on make-up for filming and special occasions. One of the things I'm trying to work on appearance-wise is my **posture**. I believe it can change how you feel and how other people perceive you – **shoulders back, Lucy!**

9) **it's what's on the inside that counts** /ɪts wɒts ɒn ðiː ɪn'saɪd ðæt kaʊnts/ - character and values are more important than looks
She believes that true beauty comes from kindness and compassion; it's what's on the inside that counts.

10) **unkempt** /ʌn'kempt/ - untidy or not properly cared for in appearance.
Tom's unkempt hair and wrinkled clothes made it look like he had just rolled out of bed.

11) **windswept** /'wɪndswɛpt/ - looking like you have been in strong wind, often used to talk about hair
You look a bit windswept! Have you been outside in the storm?

12) **scruffy** /'skrʌfi/ - untidy or dirty in appearance
When I walk my dog, I put on my scruffiest clothes as I know they're going to get muddy.

13) **to scrub up well** /,skrʌb 'ɹp wel/ - to look nice when you make an effort
Pete is usually in shorts and a T-shirt, but he scrubs up well on special occasions.

14) **posture** /'pɒstʃə/ - the position you hold your body in, particularly your neck, shoulders and back when standing or sitting
Grace used to be a dancer, so she has wonderful posture.

Future

Looking far into the future, I can clearly visualise myself and Will. Will's **salt-and-pepper** will be popping, and my hair will be all white! We'll have a lot more **wrinkles**, and there'll be **crow's feet** around our eyes, but I plan to embrace them. They'll tell the story of a lifetime of smiles and laughter and, yes, there'll be frown lines from when our [future!] children do something naughty and stress us out.



15) **salt-and-pepper** /ˌsɔːlt ən 'pepər/ - hair that has two colours mixed together, one dark and one light

Bill's salt-and-pepper beard gave him a distinguished appearance.

Note: we can say **pepper-and-salt**.

16) **wrinkle** /'rɪŋkl/ - a small line on the skin, often caused by ageing

There were fine wrinkles across his forehead that showed the passing years.

17) **crow's feet** /'krəʊz fi:t/ - small lines around the corners of your eyes caused by ageing

Lucy's crow's feet were evidence of a life filled with laughter and joy.

Activity

Choose the correct word from the word bank to complete each sentence.

My family is a blend of unique personalities and characteristics.

First, there's my dad, Bob. His (1) _____ hair makes him look older than he is, and with the few fine (2) _____ that mark his forehead, he exudes an air of wisdom. Those crow's feet around the corners of his eyes become more apparent when he erupts into one of his fits of roaring laughter.

My older sister, Hailey, is the polar opposite of Dad's tall and husky build. She's a bit (3) _____ and scruffy in her appearance, often opting for a laid-back style. But don't let her (4) _____ exterior fool you; she is known to scrub up well when necessary.

Next up is my younger sister, Hannah. She's lanky and in the process of (5) _____ her adolescent frame. With her (6) _____, she meticulously plucks her eyebrows in an attempt to keep up with the latest beauty trends. Her (7) _____ is on the paler side, and she's quick (8) _____ the common misconception that she's sun-deprived.

Last but not least is my mum, Ally. She has an (9) _____ smile that never fails to turn heads. Her (10) _____ appear whenever she smiles, adding to her charm. She has been my biggest role model over the years, and I hope to be half the woman she is when I'm older.

Word Bank

a. wrinkles	b. unkempt	c. salt-and-pepper	d. tweezers	e. complexion
f. vertically challenged	g. to dispel	h. filling out	i. angelic	j. dimples

Answers:

(1) c (2) a (3) f (4) b (5) h (6) d (7) e (8) g (9) i (10) j



21 ADVANCED WORDS AND PHRASES

This lesson will teach you 21 advanced, C1-level words and phrases to help improve your fluency when speaking and writing in English. The words and phrases are broken into three categories to help you speak proficiently in various situations.

LIFESTYLE AND WELL-BEING

- 1) **at face value** /æt feɪs 'væljuː/ - accepting something as it appears to be, without questioning its true nature or authenticity
*You shouldn't take everything you read about nutrition **at face value**; always verify the information is from reliable sources.*

- 2) **to have a crack at sth.** /hæv ə kræk æt 'sʌmθɪŋ/ - to attempt or try something, often for the first time or with great enthusiasm
*Even though she had never tried rock climbing before, Tara decided **to have a crack at** it during the team-building event.*

- 3) **to burn the midnight oil** /bɜːn ðə 'mɪdnɑɪt ɔɪl/ - to work or study late into the night, often to complete a task or prepare for something
*With exams approaching, Sarah found herself **burning the midnight oil** to cover all the required material.*

- 4) **to strike a balance** /straɪk ə 'bæləns/ - to find a compromise or middle ground between two competing factors
*It's essential to **strike a balance** between work and leisure for a healthy lifestyle.*

- 5) **to let off steam** /let ɒf stiːm/ - to do or say something that helps you release some anger or frustration that you feel
*I was so furious that I had to go for a walk around the block **to let off steam**.*



6) **to count one's blessings** /kaʊnt wʌnz 'blesɪŋz/ - to make an effort to be grateful for the good things in your life

*When I'm feeling down, I try to remember **to count my blessings** and be grateful for what I have.*

7) **to bloom** /blu:m/ - to become healthy, happy and confident; to flourish

*Karl **bloomed** during his six-week holiday in the countryside thanks to the fresh air and healthy food.*

Comprehension Check!

1) Which word is missing from this sentence?

I'm going to have a _____ at kayaking today. I'm nervous, but I'm sure it'll be a lot of fun.

a. crunch b. crush c. crack d. crock

2) If I'm really angry, and I decide to go for a run to calm down, what am I doing?

a. letting off steam b. letting out a scream

3) Which of the words I just taught you means to develop healthily and happily?

1) a) bloom 2) c) 3) to bloom

PEOPLE

8) **to stick one's neck out** /stɪk wʌnz nek aʊt/ - to take a risk or expose yourself to possible criticism or danger by doing or saying something

*Despite the controversy surrounding the issue, Jane decided **to stick her neck out** and support the new policy.*

9) **a knee-jerk reaction** /ə ni: dʒɜ:k ri'ækʃən/ - an immediate, automatic response to a situation, often without careful consideration or thought

*When we heard about the increase in crime rates, our **knee-jerk reaction** was to insist on more police patrols in the area.*



- 10) **to split hairs** /split heəz/ - to argue or worry about very small details or differences that are unimportant
*Sometimes, I feel like my husband **splits hairs** over insignificant matters, and it leads to unnecessary arguments.*
- 11) **pecking order** /'pekɪŋ 'ɔ:də/ - a social hierarchy in which individuals in a group are all aware of how important everyone is
*There's a clear **pecking order** in their group of friends, with Sally being top of the pile.*
- 12) **shrewd** /ʃru:d/ - someone who is good at understanding and making judgements about situations and makes decisions that will give them an advantage
*Claire was a **shrewd** businessperson, and she made several wise investment decisions when she was still young.*
- 13) **obstinate** /'ɒbstɪnət/ - refusing to change your opinion or actions despite people trying to make you do so
*Henry was a very **obstinate** teenager, and he consistently refused to admit he might be wrong about something.*

Extra Note: I've seen some students mix up '**obstinate**' with another advanced adjective: **abstinent**, which means to refrain from indulging in a particular behaviour, often related to vices or bad habits.

- 14) **placid** /'plæsid/ - someone who is very calm and isn't easily excited or annoyed
*Despite the hullabaloo around her, Ally remained **placid** and continued with her work.*



Comprehension Check!

1) Which word is missing?

My knee-_____ reaction to hearing my son had been arrested was to be utterly livid.

a. jar b. jam c. jet d. jerk

2. Sometimes it's best to keep your opinions to yourself and not _____ your _____ out.

a. stick - head b. stack - neck c. stick - neck d. stuck - nose

3. And finally, which words that I just taught you are synonyms for these two words: calm and stubborn?

(1) d (2) b (3) placid and obstinate

WORK

15) **to pull some strings** /pʊl səm strɪŋz/ - to use one's influence or connections, often secretly or unofficially, to achieve a desired outcome
*By **pulling some strings**, Tom was able to get his sister a prestigious position at a London-based accounting firm.*

16) **to have a field day** /hæv ə 'fi:ld deɪ/ - to take advantage of a situation, typically for personal benefit, often at the expense of others
*When the news of the scandal broke, tabloid journalists **had a field day** writing sensational stories*

17) **to be privy to** /bi 'prɪvi tu:/ - to have access to or knowledge of secret or confidential information
*The CEO's assistant is **privy to** all the important decisions in the company.*

18) **on the back burner** /ɒn ðə bæk 'bɜ:nə/ - refers to something that is low priority and is not being dealt with at the present moment
*Let's put this project **on the back burner** and focus on more pressing matters.*



19) **cushy** /'kʊʃi/ - very easy, requiring little effort

*Ellen's got a **cushy** job that pays well but allows her lots of free time.*

20) **to get one's foot in the door** /get wʌnz 'fʊt ɪn ðə 'dɔː/ - to enter a

company or organisation at a low level with a chance of being promoted or being more successful in the future

*Lena **got her foot in the door** as an intern, but she worked her way up to department head in just a few years.*

21) **to go belly up** /gəʊ 'beli ʌp/ - often referring to businesses that fail completely and have to close

*The business went **belly up** after just a year of trading.*

Comprehension Check!

1) Which word is missing?

I managed to get my _____ in the door at an amazing company early in my career, and I've worked my way up to management level.

a. head b. foot c. leg d. hand

2) You know the Prime Minister, right? Can you pull some _____ and get me an interview with her?

a. strikes b. strides c. streams d. strings

3) If a job is very easy and doesn't require much effort, how can we describe it?

(1) b (2) c (3) cushy



Activity

Choose the correct answer for each question.

- 1) The team was very hierarchical and operated according to a strict _____.
 a. pecking order
 b. field day
 c. foot in the door
- 2) What is a "knee-jerk reaction"?
 a. an automatic response to a situation
 b. a delayed reaction to a situation
 c. a well-thought-out plan
- 3) She was nervous about performing in front of a large audience but decided to _____ and pursue her dream of becoming a singer.
 a. have a field day
 b. stick her neck out
 c. establish a pecking order
- 4) Jill was _____ in her negotiations and always knew when to make a move.
 a. privy
 b. cushy
 c. shrewd
- 5) What does the expression "to get one's foot in the door" mean?
 a. to enter a company at a high level
 b. to enter a company at a low level with a chance of being promoted
 c. to start your own business
- 6) What does the expression "to have a crack at something" mean?
 a. to give up on something
 b. to attempt or try something
 c. to avoid doing something
- 7) After receiving therapy, Daniel finally began to _____ and enjoy life once again.
 a. bloom
 b. have a crack at something
 c. establish a pecking order
- 8) The scammer realised that the elderly couple he targeted had a lot of money and decided to _____.
 a. make a donation to a charity
 b. offer them a discount on a product
 c. have a field day and swindle them out of their savings

Answers:

1) a 2) a 3) b 4) c 5) b 6) b 7) b 8) c



Challenge Your English

Ready to challenge your English? This lesson will test your skills across three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. You'll answer 12 questions, accompanied by 12 short lessons to explain each answer. Have a go at them all at once or take your time with it. This isn't exactly a 'level test' but it is a fun way to see what you know. Let's put your English knowledge to the test!

Beginner: A1 /A2

Are you ready for your first test?

Before we get started, let me give you a quick introduction to the beginner English level. At this stage, you should be able to handle basic communication in English. This includes exchanging simple greetings, asking and answering personal questions and understanding familiar words and phrases. You should be able to express yourself in simple sentences about familiar topics like your family or daily routines.

Alright, it's time for the first question.

1 Choose the correct option to fill in the gap.

There aren't _____ books on the table.

- a. some
- b. any

The answer is 'any' - **There aren't any books on the table.**

We usually use 'any' in negative sentences with plural or uncountable nouns.

Let's move on to question 2!



2 Fill in the gaps to create a question in the present simple tense.
Use the verb 'to like'.

_____ he _____ olives? (like)

Here's the answer: **Does he like olives?**

Did you get that? To make yes/no questions in the present simple, we often use 'do' or 'does'—we used 'does' here because the subject is 'he'. The verb is in the base form—'like'—not 'likes'.

I often see students at the beginner and pre-intermediate levels confuse expressions with 'like' due to their similarities in wording but differences in meaning:

- **What do/does [sb.] like?** This question asks about preferences or interests.
- **What is/are [sb.] like?** This is a question about personality or character traits. It asks for a description of someone's nature or behaviour.
- **What do/does [sb.] look like?** This question is about physical appearance. It seeks a description of someone's physical attributes.

3 Fill in the gap using the correct form of the word 'easy' to compare English to German.

I think English is _____ than German.

The answer is easier -

I think English is easier than German.



Did you spell that right?

When a one- or two-syllable adjective ends in a **consonant + y**, we usually make the comparative by **removing the 'y'** and **adding 'ier'**:

- **easy - easier**
- **pretty - prettier**

Let's look at sentence 4. This is the last one at A1 and A2.

4

Choose the correct option to fill in the gap.

Oh, no! He _____ that mirror. Watch out!

- a. will break
- b. is going to break
- c. is breaking

Here's the answer: **'is going to break'** - **Oh, no! He is going to break that mirror. Watch out!**

We use **'to be going to'** to make predictions based on evidence we have now - often evidence we can see.

How did you do on that section? Are you ready to move on to B1 and B2-level questions?

Intermediate: B1/B2

At B2, you are expected to understand and engage in conversations on a variety of topics. This includes following the main points in clear standard speech and expressing personal opinions on familiar subjects. You should have the ability to discuss a range of topics with supporting opinions.



5 Find the mistake and correct it.

Have you ever been to Tokyo?

Yes, I've been in 2019.

Did you find it?

The mistake was using **'I've been'**, which is the present perfect simple tense, with a specific time reference - **'in 2019'**. If you want to use a specific time reference, you should use the past simple: **'I went in 2019.'** You could also remove the time reference from the sentence.

- **Have you ever been to Tokyo?**
- **Yes, I've been.**

It would be more natural to say, **'Yes, I have'**, but **'Yes, I've been'** is OK.

Let's look at question 6.

6 Choose the correct option to fill in the gap.

I finally got round to _____ that film you recommended.

- a. watch
- b. watched
- c. watching

The answer is watching. **'To get round/around to'** is a phrasal verb meaning to find the time to do something. It can be followed by a gerund (an -ing verb) or a noun, pronoun or noun phrase.

A **gerund** is a verb form that ends in **-ing** and functions as a noun in a sentence.



Verbs followed by gerunds:

- I **enjoy** **cooking**.
- She **avoids** **going** to crowded places.
- Jasper **suggested** **seeing** a film.

Prepositions are usually followed by a noun or a gerund. You saw this in the example 'get around to', in which 'to' is a preposition. Another example is 'look forward to'.

- We **are looking forward to** **staying** in that hotel.
- I'm **looking forward to** **the film**.

Let's look at question 7.

7

Which word forms the best collocation with 'a reputation for something'?

Colin has _____ a reputation for being very stubborn in negotiations.

- constructed
- gained
- achieved

The answer is '**gained**' - **Colin has gained a reputation for being very stubborn in negotiations.**

'To gain a reputation for something' is a strong collocation. We wouldn't usually say 'constructed' or 'achieved' a reputation. Now, here's the final question in our B1-B2 section.



8 Fill in the gaps to complete the sentence. Use the verbs in brackets.

If the weather _____ (be) better yesterday, we _____ (eat) outdoors. However, it was pouring, so we ate inside.

Answer: **If the weather had been better yesterday, we would have eaten outdoors.**

This is a **third conditional sentence**. The structure is -

if + past perfect, would have + past participle

We use the third conditional to **imagine a different past**. It's a hypothetical conditional because we can't change the past.

Right, that's the end of our B1/B2 intermediate section.

Advanced: C1/C2

Now, at the advanced level of English, you should have a strong command of the language and be able to use it flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. This includes understanding a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognising implicit meaning. You should also be able to express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.

Are you ready for the advanced-level test?



9 Think of one word to fill in the blank in all three sentences. The word must be exactly the same.

- I was at a _____ as to how to help.
- The _____ of his mother hit Erik hard.
- We made a _____ during our first year in business.

Ready for the answer? **loss**

- I was at a **loss** as to how to help.
- The **loss** of his mother hit Erik hard.
- We made a **loss** during our first year in business.

If you are 'at a loss', you don't know what to do or say. That's in the first sentence. In the second sentence, 'loss' means the death of a person. In the third sentence, 'loss' means the money a business lost and is the opposite of 'profit'.

Both 'at a loss' and 'to make a loss' are strong collocations in English

Alright, let's move on to the next one. This is a high-level vocabulary question.

10 Choose the correct option to fill in the gap.

The singer had a wonderfully _____ voice that was perfect for jazz.

- a. gruff
- b. husky
- c. hoarse



The answer is **'husky'**.

The singer had a wonderfully husky voice that was perfect for jazz.

'Gruff', 'husky' and 'hoarse' have similar meanings; we can use them all to describe the sound of someone's voice.

However, **'gruff'** usually has a negative connotation - a gruff voice is low, deep and sometimes unfriendly.

'Hoarse' also has a negative connotation – if someone's voice is hoarse, it's rough and unpleasant, often because someone has a sore throat.

A **'husky voice'** is also low and rough, but it's often in an attractive way. It's essential to know these nuances in meaning when you get to an advanced level in English.

Let's look at question 11. You might recognise this question type from English exams.

11 Use the word 'brink' to fill in the gap and make the second sentence mean the same as the first. Do not change the word 'brink'. You can use between 3 and 6 words in the gap.

Sentence 1: Medical advances should soon produce a breakthrough in gene therapy.

Sentence 2: The medical community is thought _____ a breakthrough in gene therapy. (BRINK)



Ready for the answer?

The medical community is thought to be on the brink of a breakthrough in gene therapy.

Did you get that? If you are '**on the brink of**' something, a new or different situation is about to begin. It implies something is going to happen or someone is going to do something in the very near future. It can be used in both positive and negative situations.

- **Positive:** used with an optimistic or beneficial event, it highlights anticipation and potential
 - *The agency is on the brink of signing in a huge client.*
- **Negative:** refers to a potentially harmful or undesirable event expressing a sense of impending danger or threat
 - *They are on the brink of bankruptcy.*

There was also an impersonal passive structure in that sentence - '**The medical community is thought to be**'. The impersonal passive is used to express general opinions or beliefs without specifying who holds them.

We can form the impersonal passive in two ways:

it + be + past participle + (that) + subject + verb

It is known that the library closes at 8 PM.

someone/something + be + past participle + infinitive

She is believed to be the best candidate for the position.

Now, onto the final question.



12 Change the form of the word in capital letters so it fits in the gap.
The city was _____ by large stone walls. (CIRCLE)

The answer is 'encircled' - **The city was encircled by large stone walls.**

This question was all about word formation. In this case, we took the word 'circle' and made it into a past participle by adding **-d** and we added the prefix 'en'.

To 'encircle' means 'to surround completely'. We wouldn't say 'circled' - that means moving in a circle or drawing a circle around something.

Here are a few more examples:

- The ancient statue was **encircled** by a newly constructed fence to protect it from being damaged.
- Large trees **encircled** the property, giving the garden plenty of shade.
- The man eating a bag of crisps near the water was **encircled** by seagulls.

Activity

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1. Which sentence uses the impersonal passive?
 - a. It is expected that the new policies will improve market conditions.
 - b. The new policies are expected to improve the market conditions.
 - c. They expect the new policies to improve market conditions.

2. Select the correct way to ask about someone's habits in the present simple.
 - a. Does he plays tennis at the weekends?
 - b. Do he play tennis at the weekends?
 - c. Does he play tennis at the weekends?

3. Choose the sentence that correctly uses the third conditional.
 - a. If it rains, we will stay at home.
 - b. If it had rained, we would have stayed at home.
 - c. If it would rain, we stayed at home.

Choose the words from the word bank to complete each sentence.

a. encircled	b. husky	c. on the brink of	d. got around to	e. any
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4. After delaying his visit to the dentist for months, John finally _____ making an appointment.

5. It is believed that the climate summit is _____ achieving a significant breakthrough.

6. The castle was _____ by a vast moat that stopped invaders during ancient times.

7. We haven't seen _____ birds in the garden this winter.

8. When he speaks in a low, slightly rough voice, it sounds rather _____, which is quite appealing.

Answers:

1) a) 2) c) 3) b) 4) d) 5) c) 6) a) 7) e) 8) b)

