

FREE FROM TRACE LEARN

11 Plus Vocabulary Word List

254 original words in three tiers, each with a child-friendly definition, an example sentence and similar words, plus opposite words and the word family where they exist. Tick the box when your child can use the word, not just recognise it.

106 foundation**101 strong****47 stretch****14 themed sections**

Free to print and share for family use. Updated 2026-08-28. Practise every word online at <https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/vocabulary-word-list>

HOW TO USE THIS LIST**Learn the words in the order the exam rewards them**

Most 11+ vocabulary marks come from ordinary words known precisely, not rare words known vaguely. Closest-in-meaning questions put four plausible neighbours next to the answer, so your child needs the exact sense. That is why every word here has a definition, a sentence that shows the meaning, and its close and opposite words: the sentence is the test, and the similar words are the distractors.

The three tiers**Foundation (106)**

Words a confident Year 5 reader meets in class reading. Learn these first: they carry the closest-in-meaning and sentence-completion marks that most children can win.

Strong (101)

The words that turn up as answer options in 11+ closest-in-meaning and synonym questions. Knowing these precisely is what separates a solid score from a competitive one.

Stretch (47)

Less common words a well-read Year 6 child may meet in harder passages or as distractors. Add these once the first two tiers are automatic.

A routine that works: ten words, four dated touches**Day 1**

Read the word, meaning and sentence aloud. Your child writes one new sentence of their own for each word.

Day 3

Cover the meanings. Show only the words. Your child says the meaning; anything missed goes back to tomorrow.

Day 7

Open any book. Could each word replace a word in a paragraph and keep the sense? That is the closest-in-meaning skill.

Day 21

Ten quick questions, a minute each, then tick the box. Missed words rejoin a new batch at day 1.

The tick box and the labels

Tick a word only when your child can use it in a sentence of their own without help. 8 words carry a KS2 spelling label: they are on the national curriculum statutory spelling lists for Years 3 to 4 or Years 5 to 6, so school already expects them and they are a good place to start.

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PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Feelings and moods

How characters feel, from quiet contentment to dread. Comprehension questions ask how a character feels and which word tells you.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ anxious <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Feeling worried and nervous about something that might happen. <i>With the storm rolling in, Priya grew anxious about her dad's boat still out at sea.</i>	Similar: worried, nervous, uneasy Opposite: calm, relaxed Family: anxiety (noun), anxiously (adverb)
☐ content <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Quietly happy and satisfied with the way things are. <i>Curled up by the fire with a purring cat on her lap, Gran seemed perfectly content.</i>	Similar: satisfied, pleased, comfortable Opposite: dissatisfied, restless Family: contentment (noun), contented (adjective), contentedly (adverb)
☐ dread <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A strong feeling of fear about something that is going to happen. <i>A cold dread crept over Amir as the dentist's door creaked open and his name was called.</i>	Similar: fear, terror, foreboding Opposite: eagerness, confidence Family: dread (verb), dreadful (adjective), dreaded (adjective)
☐ envy <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	An unhappy wish to have what someone else has. <i>Chloe gazed at her cousin's shiny new scooter with a pang of envy she tried to hide.</i>	Similar: jealousy, longing Opposite: contentment, goodwill Family: envy (verb), envious (adjective), enviable (adjective)
☐ furious <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Extremely angry, often in a way that is hard to hide. <i>Dad was furious when he discovered the goat had eaten every lettuce on the allotment.</i>	Similar: enraged, livid, fuming Opposite: calm, pleased Family: fury (noun), furiously (adverb)
☐ grief <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	Deep sadness, especially after someone or something is lost. <i>The whole village shared the farmer's grief when his faithful old sheepdog died.</i>	Similar: sorrow, heartache, mourning Opposite: delight, happiness Family: grieve (verb), grief-stricken (adjective)
☐ relief <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A feeling of comfort after worry, pain or danger has passed. <i>Relief flooded through the whole family as the missing tortoise plodded out from under the shed.</i>	Similar: comfort, reassurance, ease Opposite: worry, distress Family: relieve (verb), relieved (adjective)
☐ sulk <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To stay silent and grumpy because you are annoyed about something. <i>Rather than join the game, Leo chose to sulk in the corner with his arms folded.</i>	Similar: mope, brood, pout Opposite: cheer up, brighten Family: sulk (noun), sulky (adjective), sulkily (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ apprehensive <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Slightly afraid and uneasy about something that is coming. <i>The class fell quiet and apprehensive as the rickety rope bridge swayed above the river.</i>	Similar: nervous, fearful, uneasy Opposite: confident, unafraid Family: apprehension (noun), apprehensively (adverb)
☐ bewildered <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Completely confused and unable to understand what is happening. <i>Lost among the identical stalls of the market, the twins looked around, utterly bewildered.</i>	Similar: confused, baffled, puzzled Opposite: certain, clear-headed Family: bewilder (verb), bewilderment (noun), bewildering (adjective)
☐ dejected <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Feeling low and unhappy because something has gone wrong. <i>Walking home in the rain after the fete was cancelled, Sam looked thoroughly dejected.</i>	Similar: downcast, disheartened, glum Opposite: upbeat, hopeful Family: dejection (noun), dejectedly (adverb)
☐ exasperated <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Extremely annoyed, usually because a problem keeps happening. <i>After the printer jammed for the fifth time, the librarian threw up her hands, exasperated.</i>	Similar: annoyed, irritated, infuriated Opposite: patient, unruffled Family: exasperate (verb), exasperation (noun), exasperating (adjective)
☐ fret <i>verb</i> STRONG	To keep worrying about something, often over small things. <i>Auntie Jo tends to fret about the weather every time we plan a picnic on the beach.</i>	Similar: worry, agonise, stew Opposite: relax, unwind Family: fretful (adjective), fretfully (adverb)
☐ mortified <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Extremely embarrassed and ashamed about something you have done. <i>Tom was mortified to discover he had spent the whole assembly with paint on his nose.</i>	Similar: humiliated, ashamed, embarrassed Opposite: proud, unabashed Family: mortify (verb), mortification (noun), mortifying (adjective)
☐ resentful <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Feeling bitter and annoyed about being treated unfairly. <i>Left to wash up alone while his brothers played football, Jamie grew quietly resentful.</i>	Similar: bitter, aggrieved, sour Opposite: forgiving, grateful Family: resent (verb), resentment (noun), resentfully (adverb)
☐ yearn <i>verb</i> STRONG	To long very much for something you cannot easily have. <i>Stuck indoors with chickenpox, Ellie began to yearn for the muddy fields and her pony.</i>	Similar: long, crave, pine Opposite: spurn, reject Family: yearning (noun), yearningly (adverb)
☐ anguish <i>noun</i> STRETCH	Terrible suffering of the mind or body. <i>Her face twisted in anguish as she realised the letter from Grandpa had blown into the canal.</i>	Similar: agony, torment, distress Opposite: comfort, bliss Family: anguished (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ despondent <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Very unhappy and without much hope that things will improve. <i>Weeks of rain had ruined the strawberries, and the growers were despondent about the summer.</i>	Similar: hopeless, gloomy, defeated Opposite: hopeful, optimistic Family: despondency (noun), despondently (adverb)
☐ forlorn <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Sad and lonely, as if nobody cares or nothing can help. <i>A single forlorn puppy sat shivering by the gate, watching every car that passed without stopping.</i>	Similar: lonely, miserable, abandoned Opposite: hopeful, comforted Family: forlornly (adverb), forlornness (noun)
☐ seethe <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To be very angry inside without showing it openly. <i>Hannah smiled politely at the referee, but underneath she was seething at the unfair decision.</i>	Similar: fume, simmer, smoulder Opposite: calm down, forgive Family: seething (adjective)

PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Character and behaviour

Words that describe what people are like and how they act. Passages rarely say "she was stubborn"; they show it, and these words name it.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ arrogant <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Behaving as if you are more important or clever than everyone else. <i>The arrogant new striker told everyone he was the only player on the team worth watching.</i>	Similar: conceited, big-headed, haughty Opposite: modest, humble Family: arrogance (noun), arrogantly (adverb)
☐ loyalty <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	Staying faithful to a person, team or promise through good times and bad. <i>Out of loyalty to her village team, Beth cheered even when they were losing six-nil.</i>	Similar: faithfulness, devotion, allegiance Opposite: betrayal, disloyalty Family: loyal (adjective), loyally (adverb), disloyal (adjective)
☐ meddle <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To interfere in something that is not your business. <i>Gran told us not to meddle in the neighbours' argument, but Josh marched over to give his opinion anyway.</i>	Similar: interfere, tamper, pry Opposite: keep out, refrain Family: meddler (noun), meddlesome (adjective), meddling (adjective)
☐ mischievous <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	Fond of playing tricks and causing small amounts of trouble. <i>The mischievous kitten had unravelled the entire ball of wool across the landing by breakfast.</i>	Similar: naughty, playful, impish Opposite: well-behaved, obedient Family: mischief (noun), mischievously (adverb)
☐ patience <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	The ability to wait calmly or put up with problems without complaining. <i>Fishing from the harbour wall takes patience, as the mackerel may not bite for an hour.</i>	Similar: calmness, forbearance, tolerance Opposite: impatience, restlessness Family: patient (adjective), patiently (adverb), impatient (adjective)
☐ pester <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To keep bothering or annoying someone, often by asking for something again and again. <i>The seagulls will pester anyone eating chips on the pier until every last one is gone.</i>	Similar: nag, badger, hound Opposite: ignore, leave alone
☐ stubborn <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Refusing to change your mind, even when others give good reasons. <i>Too stubborn to ask for help, Uncle Pete drove us around the same roundabout four times.</i>	Similar: headstrong, obstinate, unyielding Opposite: compliant, open-minded Family: stubbornly (adverb), stubbornness (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ tantrum <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A sudden outburst of bad temper, usually by a young child. <i>The toddler threw a tantrum in the supermarket because the trolley had no seat for his teddy.</i>	Similar: outburst, fit of rage Opposite: composure, calm
☐ candid <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Honest and open about what you really think, even if it is awkward. <i>Aunt Ros was candid about the cake: it looked lovely but tasted faintly of soap.</i>	Similar: frank, open, outspoken Opposite: evasive, guarded Family: candour (noun), candidly (adverb)
☐ courtesy <i>noun</i> STRONG	Polite behaviour that shows respect and consideration for others. <i>The bus driver waited with great courtesy while the elderly man folded his walking stick.</i>	Similar: politeness, good manners, civility Opposite: rudeness, discourtesy Family: courteous (adjective), courteously (adverb), discourteous (adjective)
☐ deliberate <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Done on purpose, after thinking about it, rather than by accident. <i>Knocking over the paint pot was no accident; it was a deliberate attempt to end the lesson early.</i>	Similar: intentional, planned, calculated Opposite: accidental, unintentional Family: deliberately (adverb), deliberate (verb), deliberation (noun)
☐ impulsive <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Acting suddenly on a feeling, without stopping to think first. <i>One impulsive leap off the harbour wall left the birthday boy soaked and grinning in his party clothes.</i>	Similar: rash, hasty, reckless Opposite: cautious, careful Family: impulse (noun), impulsively (adverb)
☐ meticulous <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Paying very close attention to every small detail. <i>Being meticulous, Grandad labelled every seed packet and lined them up by the month of sowing.</i>	Similar: thorough, painstaking, exact Opposite: careless, slapdash Family: meticulously (adverb), meticulousness (noun)
☐ reluctant <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Unwilling to do something and hanging back from it. <i>The pony was reluctant to cross the stream, planting its hooves firmly on the bank.</i>	Similar: unwilling, hesitant, loath Opposite: eager, keen Family: reluctance (noun), reluctantly (adverb)
☐ resilient <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Able to recover quickly after something difficult or upsetting. <i>Even after the flood wrecked their shop, the resilient bakers were serving bread again within a week.</i>	Similar: tough, hardy, strong Opposite: fragile, vulnerable Family: resilience (noun), resiliently (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ sceptical <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Doubting whether something is really true or will really work. <i>Kai was sceptical of his sister's claim that a fox had eaten her homework.</i>	Similar: doubtful, unconvinced, suspicious Opposite: convinced, trusting Family: sceptic (noun), scepticism (noun), sceptically (adverb)
☐ vanity <i>noun</i> STRONG	Too much pride in your own looks, cleverness or importance. <i>The peacock in the fable, full of vanity, spent all morning admiring his reflection in the pond.</i>	Similar: conceit, self-importance, pride Opposite: modesty, humility Family: vain (adjective), vainly (adverb)
☐ conscientious <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Careful to do your work properly and to do what is right. <i>A conscientious monitor, Ravi checked every window was shut before leaving the classroom.</i>	Similar: diligent, dutiful, thorough Opposite: careless, negligent Family: conscientiously (adverb), conscientiousness (noun)
☐ earnest <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Very serious and sincere, meaning every word you say. <i>In an earnest voice, Maya promised she would feed the guinea pigs every single morning.</i>	Similar: serious, heartfelt, wholehearted Opposite: flippant, half-hearted Family: earnestly (adverb), earnestness (noun)
☐ fickle <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Changing your mind or your likes very often and without good reason. <i>Our fickle cat adores the salmon flavour one day and turns her nose up at it the next.</i>	Similar: changeable, unpredictable, flighty Opposite: loyal, constant Family: fickleness (noun)
☐ haughty <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Proud and looking down on other people as if they are beneath you. <i>With a haughty sniff, the duchess in the play refused to sit on the wooden bench.</i>	Similar: snobbish, disdainful, superior Opposite: humble, modest Family: haughtily (adverb), haughtiness (noun)

PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Help, support and generosity

Kindness, comfort and looking after others. Common in stories about friendship and family, and in synonym questions.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ charity <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	Giving money, food or help to people who need it. <i>Every autumn the school collects tins for charity so that nobody in town goes hungry at Christmas.</i>	Similar: generosity, goodwill, kindness Opposite: meanness, selfishness Family: charitable (adjective), charitably (adverb)
☐ comfort <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To make someone feel less sad or worried by being kind to them. <i>After the rabbit escaped, Grandma sat on the step to comfort Leah and dry her tears.</i>	Similar: console, soothe, reassure Opposite: upset, distress Family: comfort (noun), comforting (adjective), comfortable (adjective)
☐ donate <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To give something, such as money or clothes, to help a good cause. <i>Please donate any outgrown wellies to the box in the porch for the nursery children.</i>	Similar: give, contribute, hand over Opposite: keep, withhold Family: donation (noun), donor (noun)
☐ generous <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Happy to give more time, money or kindness than is expected. <i>A generous neighbour left a whole box of apples from her tree on our doorstep.</i>	Similar: giving, open-handed, kind Opposite: mean, stingy, selfish Family: generosity (noun), generously (adverb)
☐ rely <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To depend on someone or something to do what is needed. <i>Islanders rely on the little ferry to bring their post, milk and newspapers across each morning.</i>	Similar: depend, count on, trust Opposite: distrust, doubt Family: reliable (adjective), reliance (noun), reliably (adverb)
☐ sacrifice <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	Giving up something you value in order to help someone else. <i>Missing the cup final to look after his little sister was a real sacrifice for Marcus.</i>	Similar: surrender, giving up, forfeit Opposite: selfishness, greed Family: sacrifice (verb), sacrificial (adjective)
☐ sympathy <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A feeling of care and sorrow for someone who is having a hard time. <i>The postman had real sympathy for Mrs Kaur, stopping to carry her shopping up the steps.</i>	Similar: compassion, understanding, pity Opposite: indifference, coldness Family: sympathetic (adjective), sympathise (verb), sympathetically (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ volunteer <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To offer to do a job freely, without being made to or paid for it. <i>Half the class chose to volunteer at the beach clean, filling twelve sacks with litter by lunchtime.</i>	Similar: offer, step forward Opposite: refuse, shirk Family: volunteer (noun), voluntary (adjective), voluntarily (adverb)
☐ compassion <i>noun</i> STRONG	Deep sympathy for someone who is suffering, together with a wish to help. <i>Filled with compassion, the children carried the injured hedgehog to the wildlife rescue centre.</i>	Similar: sympathy, kindness, mercy Opposite: cruelty, indifference Family: compassionate (adjective), compassionately (adverb)
☐ console <i>verb</i> STRONG	To try to make someone feel better after a loss or disappointment. <i>The coach tried to console the goalkeeper, reminding him of the six saves he had made.</i>	Similar: soothe, cheer, sympathise with Opposite: upset, torment Family: consolation (noun), consoling (adjective)
☐ hospitable <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Friendly and welcoming to guests and strangers. <i>Our hospitable hosts at the farmhouse insisted we stay for a second helping of crumble.</i>	Similar: welcoming, friendly, warm Opposite: unfriendly, cold Family: hospitality (noun), hospitably (adverb)
☐ nurture <i>verb</i> STRONG	To care for someone or something young so that it grows well. <i>Miss Okafor helped nurture the seedlings on the windowsill until they were sturdy enough for the garden.</i>	Similar: nourish, foster, cultivate Opposite: neglect, stunt Family: nurture (noun), nurturing (adjective)
☐ reassure <i>verb</i> STRONG	To say or do something that takes away someone's worries. <i>The vet spoke gently to reassure us that the hamster's limp would mend in a few days.</i>	Similar: comfort, calm, encourage Opposite: alarm, unsettle Family: reassurance (noun), reassuring (adjective), reassuringly (adverb)
☐ selfless <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Caring more about other people's needs than about your own. <i>In a selfless act, the lifeguard gave her own coat to the shivering boy pulled from the sea.</i>	Similar: unselfish, altruistic, generous Opposite: selfish, self-centred Family: selflessly (adverb), selflessness (noun)
☐ bolster <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To support or strengthen something so it does not fail. <i>A cheer from the crowd helped bolster the tired runners as they climbed the final hill.</i>	Similar: support, boost, strengthen Opposite: undermine, weaken Family: bolster (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ magnanimous <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Kind and forgiving towards others, especially those you have beaten. <i>The winning captain was magnanimous, praising the other team's goalkeeper in front of everyone.</i>	Similar: generous, forgiving, big-hearted Opposite: petty, spiteful Family: magnanimity (noun), magnanimously (adverb)

PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Speaking, telling and asking

Precise verbs for speech. Authors use these instead of "said", and questions ask what the choice tells you about the speaker.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ boast <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To talk proudly about yourself or the things you own, to impress others. <i>Nobody wanted to sit next to Callum after he boasted about his new bike all lunchtime.</i>	Similar: brag, show off, crow Opposite: be modest, play down Family: boastful (adjective), boastfully (adverb), boaster (noun)
☐ confess <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To admit that you have done something wrong or embarrassing. <i>Nobody would confess to eating the last biscuit, though there were crumbs on the dog's nose.</i>	Similar: admit, own up, come clean Opposite: deny, cover up Family: confession (noun)
☐ debate <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A discussion in which people give reasons for different opinions. <i>The class held a lively debate about whether the school should keep chickens on the field.</i>	Similar: discussion, argument, dispute Opposite: agreement, consensus Family: debate (verb), debatable (adjective), debater (noun)
☐ declare <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To say something firmly and openly so that everyone knows it. <i>"This is the best sandcastle on the whole beach," Dev declared, planting his flag on top.</i>	Similar: announce, state, proclaim Opposite: hide, withhold Family: declaration (noun)
☐ exclaim <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To say something suddenly and loudly because you are surprised or pleased. <i>"Look, a kingfisher!" Priya exclaimed, nearly dropping her sandwich into the canal.</i>	Similar: cry out, shout, blurt Opposite: whisper, mutter Family: exclamation (noun), exclamatory (adjective)
☐ mutter <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To speak quietly and unclearly, often because you are annoyed. <i>Grandad muttered something about the rain as he dragged the wheelbarrow back to the shed.</i>	Similar: mumble, grumble Opposite: shout, exclaim Family: muttering (noun)
☐ persuade <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	To make someone agree to do or believe something by giving them good reasons. <i>After three weeks of asking, Amira finally persuaded her dad to adopt the scruffy rescue dog.</i>	Similar: convince, talk round, win over Opposite: dissuade, discourage Family: persuasion (noun), persuasive (adjective), persuasively (adverb)
☐ remark <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A short comment that someone says or writes about something. <i>Auntie Jo made a kind remark about my painting, and I grinned all the way home.</i>	Similar: comment, observation, statement Opposite: silence Family: remark (verb), remarkable (adjective), remarkably (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ contradict <i>verb</i> STRONG	To say that the opposite of what someone else has said is true. <i>Every time Leo described the match, his sister contradicted him and said the goal was offside.</i>	Similar: disagree with, deny, dispute Opposite: agree, confirm, support Family: contradiction (noun), contradictory (adjective)
☐ enquire <i>verb</i> STRONG	To ask someone for information about something. <i>Mum rang the library to enquire whether the book about volcanoes had been returned yet.</i>	Similar: ask, query, investigate Opposite: answer, reply Family: enquiry (noun), enquiring (adjective)
☐ insist <i>verb</i> STRONG	To say firmly that something must happen or is definitely true. <i>Even though the sun was shining, Dad insisted that we take our raincoats to the beach.</i>	Similar: demand, stand firm, assert Opposite: give in, yield Family: insistence (noun), insistent (adjective), insistently (adverb)
☐ plead <i>verb</i> STRONG	To beg someone for something in a serious and emotional way. <i>The twins pleaded with their mum to let them stay up for the fireworks.</i>	Similar: beg, implore, appeal Opposite: demand, order Family: plea (noun), pleading (adjective)
☐ query <i>noun</i> STRONG	A question, especially one asking for something to be checked or explained. <i>The librarian answered my query about where the graphic novels had been moved to.</i>	Similar: question, enquiry, doubt Opposite: answer, reply Family: query (verb)
☐ retort <i>noun</i> STRONG	A quick, sharp reply, often clever or angry. <i>"At least my boots match," was Sam's retort when his brother laughed at his hat.</i>	Similar: reply, comeback, riposte Opposite: silence Family: retort (verb)
☐ urge <i>verb</i> STRONG	To try hard to persuade someone to do something. <i>The lifeguard urged the swimmers to come back to the shore before the tide turned.</i>	Similar: encourage, press, push Opposite: discourage, dissuade Family: urge (noun), urgent (adjective), urgency (noun)
☐ assert <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To state something firmly and confidently as a fact. <i>Maya asserted that the footprints in the mud belonged to a badger, not a fox.</i>	Similar: declare, claim, insist Opposite: deny, retract Family: assertion (noun), assertive (adjective), assertively (adverb)
☐ interrogate <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To ask someone many questions, often in a stern or forceful way. <i>When the biscuit tin turned up empty, Gran interrogated each of us in turn.</i>	Similar: question, quiz, cross-examine Opposite: answer, reply Family: interrogation (noun), interrogative (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ rebut <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To tell someone sharply that they have done something wrong. <i>The librarian rebuked the boys for sliding down the banister, though her eyes were twinkling.</i>	Similar: scold, tell off, reprimand Opposite: praise, compliment Family: rebuke (noun)

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Moving and doing

Verbs of movement and action. They set the pace of a passage and are favourites for closest-in-meaning questions.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ clamber <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To climb somewhere awkwardly, using your hands and feet. <i>The children clambered over the slippery rocks to reach the pool at the far end.</i>	Similar: scramble, climb, scale Opposite: glide, slide
☐ dawdle <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To walk or do something slowly, wasting time along the way. <i>We dawdled home from school, stopping to look at every snail on the pavement.</i>	Similar: dally, loiter, drag your feet Opposite: hurry, rush Family: dawdler (noun)
☐ errand <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A short journey to do a small job, such as delivering something. <i>Before tea, Mum sent me on an errand to fetch milk from the corner shop.</i>	Similar: task, job, mission
☐ fidget <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To keep making small restless movements because you are bored or nervous. <i>The vicar's sermon dragged on, and the choirboys began to fidget in the front pew.</i>	Similar: squirm, wriggle, twitch Opposite: settle, relax Family: fidget (noun), fidgety (adjective)
☐ hesitate <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To pause before doing something because you are unsure or nervous. <i>Rosie hesitated at the edge of the pool, then took a deep breath and jumped.</i>	Similar: pause, dither, hold back Opposite: rush, plunge in Family: hesitation (noun), hesitant (adjective), hesitantly (adverb)
☐ hurl <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To throw something with great force. <i>Furious with the wind, Tom hurled his broken kite into the hedge.</i>	Similar: fling, throw, toss Opposite: catch, hold
☐ hurtle <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To move very fast, often in a wild or out-of-control way. <i>The sledge hurtled down the slope so fast that the twins had to bail out into a snowdrift.</i>	Similar: race, speed, rush Opposite: crawl, creep Family: hurtling (adjective)
☐ scurry <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To move quickly with short, hurried steps. <i>A mouse scurried across the kitchen floor and disappeared under the fridge.</i>	Similar: scamper, dash, scuttle Opposite: dawdle, amble Family: scurry (noun)
☐ stride <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To walk with long, confident steps. <i>Ignoring the drizzle, the coach strode across the pitch to shake the referee's hand.</i>	Similar: march, pace, step out Opposite: shuffle, dawdle Family: stride (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ stumble <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To trip or nearly fall while walking or running. <i>Halfway across the field, Jack stumbled on a molehill and landed in the wet grass.</i>	Similar: trip, lurch, totter Opposite: stride, glide Family: stumble (noun), stumbling (adjective)
☐ flinch <i>verb</i> STRONG	To make a small, sudden movement away from something because of pain or fear. <i>The kitten flinched when the hairdryer roared into life next door.</i>	Similar: wince, recoil, shrink back Opposite: stand firm, hold steady Family: flinch (noun)
☐ gesture <i>noun</i> STRONG	A movement of the hand or head that shows a feeling or idea. <i>With a quick gesture, the bus driver waved us across the road in front of him.</i>	Similar: signal, sign, motion Opposite: stillness Family: gesture (verb), gesticulate (verb)
☐ linger <i>verb</i> STRONG	To stay somewhere longer than needed because you do not want to leave. <i>Long after the others had gone in, Nadia lingered by the pond watching the dragonflies.</i>	Similar: loiter, remain, dawdle Opposite: hurry away, depart Family: lingering (adjective)
☐ plunge <i>verb</i> STRONG	To fall or jump suddenly and steeply downwards. <i>The otter plunged into the river and came up seconds later with a wriggling fish.</i>	Similar: dive, drop, plummet Opposite: rise, soar Family: plunge (noun)
☐ retrieve <i>verb</i> STRONG	To get something back from the place where it was left or lost. <i>Our spaniel loves to retrieve tennis balls from the pond, however muddy the water.</i>	Similar: fetch, recover, get back Opposite: lose, discard Family: retrieval (noun), retriever (noun)
☐ rummage <i>verb</i> STRONG	To search for something by moving things about in an untidy way. <i>The caretaker rummaged through the drawer of old keys, looking for the one to the shed.</i>	Similar: search, root about, forage Opposite: tidy, arrange Family: rummage (noun)
☐ lurch <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To move suddenly and unsteadily, as if about to fall. <i>The ferry lurched sideways as a big wave hit it, and everyone grabbed the rails.</i>	Similar: sway, pitch, reel Opposite: glide, steady Family: lurch (noun)
☐ manoeuvre <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A careful or skilful movement, especially one that is tricky to do. <i>Getting the sofa up the narrow staircase took a clever manoeuvre and a lot of shouting.</i>	Similar: move, operation, tactic Opposite: blunder Family: manoeuvre (verb), manoeuvrable (adjective)
☐ saunter <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To walk in a slow, relaxed way, as if you have all day. <i>Hands in pockets, Ollie sauntered along the promenade, licking an ice cream.</i>	Similar: stroll, amble, wander Opposite: hurry, dash Family: saunter (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ toil <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To work very hard for a long time at something tiring. <i>All afternoon the volunteers toiled in the community garden behind the flats, digging out weeds in the heat.</i>	Similar: labour, slog, work hard Opposite: rest, relax Family: toil (noun)

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Thinking and understanding

Reasoning, knowing, remembering and puzzling things out. Useful in non-fiction passages and in the questions themselves.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ concentrate <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To give all your attention to one thing. <i>With the telly blaring downstairs, Sofia found it hard to concentrate on her jigsaw.</i>	Similar: focus, pay attention, apply yourself Opposite: daydream, drift Family: concentration (noun), concentrated (adjective)
☐ doubt <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A feeling of not being sure whether something is true or will happen. <i>There was some doubt about whether the frozen pond was thick enough to walk on.</i>	Similar: uncertainty, hesitation, misgiving Opposite: certainty, confidence, trust Family: doubt (verb), doubtful (adjective), doubtless (adverb)
☐ hunch <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A feeling that something is true, even without any proof. <i>Following a hunch, Dan checked under the shed and found the missing football.</i>	Similar: feeling, instinct, suspicion Opposite: proof, certainty
☐ memorise <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To learn something so well that you can repeat it exactly. <i>Over the weekend Finn memorised every line of his part in the school play.</i>	Similar: learn by heart, commit to memory, remember Opposite: forget Family: memory (noun), memorable (adjective), memorisation (noun)
☐ realise <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To suddenly notice or understand something that you did not know before. <i>Halfway to the bus stop, Zara realised she had left her packed lunch on the table.</i>	Similar: notice, grasp, become aware Opposite: overlook, miss Family: realisation (noun)
☐ recall <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To bring a memory back into your mind. <i>Try as she might, Nan could not recall where she had put her reading glasses.</i>	Similar: remember, recollect, call to mind Opposite: forget Family: recall (noun)
☐ reckon <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To think or believe that something is likely to be true. <i>I reckon the tide will be far enough out by four o'clock for us to explore the rock pools.</i>	Similar: think, suppose, believe Opposite: doubt, know for certain Family: reckoning (noun)
☐ theory <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	An idea that tries to explain why something happens. <i>Milo's theory was that the birds sang louder whenever next door's cat was indoors.</i>	Similar: idea, explanation, hypothesis Opposite: fact, proof Family: theoretical (adjective), theorise (verb), theorist (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ anticipate <i>verb</i> STRONG	To expect that something will happen and get ready for it. <i>Anticipating a rush on the ice-cream van, Gran had the coins ready before it turned into the street.</i>	Similar: expect, foresee, predict Opposite: overlook, disregard Family: anticipation (noun), anticipated (adjective)
☐ assume <i>verb</i> STRONG	To accept that something is true without checking or having proof. <i>We assumed the park would be empty on a rainy Tuesday, but the swings were packed.</i>	Similar: suppose, presume, take for granted Opposite: check, verify, doubt Family: assumption (noun), assumed (adjective)
☐ baffle <i>verb</i> STRONG	To confuse someone so much that they cannot understand or explain something. <i>The disappearing socks baffled the entire household for a month before we discovered the cat's secret nest.</i>	Similar: puzzle, bewilder, confuse Opposite: enlighten, explain Family: baffling (adjective), bafflement (noun)
☐ comprehend <i>verb</i> STRONG	To understand something fully, especially something difficult. <i>Even after Dad explained it twice, I still could not comprehend how the tide worked.</i>	Similar: understand, grasp, follow Opposite: misunderstand, miss Family: comprehension (noun), comprehensible (adjective), incomprehensible (adjective)
☐ deduce <i>verb</i> STRONG	To work something out by thinking carefully about the facts you have. <i>From the muddy paw prints on the doormat, Iris deduced that the dog had escaped again.</i>	Similar: work out, infer, reason Opposite: guess, assume Family: deduction (noun), deductive (adjective)
☐ notion <i>noun</i> STRONG	An idea or belief about something, often one that is not fully formed. <i>Ellie had a notion that the old lighthouse might be a good place for a picnic.</i>	Similar: idea, thought, belief Opposite: certainty, fact Family: notional (adjective)
☐ oblivious <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Not noticing what is happening around you. <i>Lost in his comic, Arun was oblivious to the rain now soaking his trainers.</i>	Similar: unaware, heedless, unmindful Opposite: aware, alert, conscious Family: obviously (adverb), obliviousness (noun)
☐ obscure <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing something that is hard to understand or not widely known. <i>Grandpa collects records by obscure bands that nobody at school has ever heard of.</i>	Similar: unknown, little-known, unclear Opposite: famous, well-known, obvious Family: obscure (verb), obscurity (noun), obscurely (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ contemplate <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To think about something deeply and for a long time. <i>Sitting on the harbour wall, Ruby contemplated what to do with the rest of the holidays.</i>	Similar: reflect on, think over, muse Opposite: ignore, dismiss Family: contemplation (noun), contemplative (adjective)
☐ conundrum <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A confusing problem or question that is very hard to solve. <i>How to fit six of us and the dog into Gran's tiny car was a real conundrum.</i>	Similar: puzzle, riddle, problem Opposite: solution, answer
☐ fathom <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To understand something after thinking hard about it. <i>Nobody could fathom why the hens had stopped laying until we spotted the fox's tracks.</i>	Similar: understand, work out, comprehend Opposite: misunderstand Family: unfathomable (adjective)
☐ lucid <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Clear and easy to understand. <i>The guide gave such a lucid explanation of the tides that even my little brother followed it.</i>	Similar: clear, plain, coherent Opposite: confusing, muddled, obscure Family: lucidly (adverb), lucidity (noun)

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Truth, honesty and trickery

Honesty, deception and disguise. A rich source of antonym pairs.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ bluff <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To pretend to be confident or to know something so that other people believe you. <i>The goalkeeper tried to bluff, diving left with a shout, but the striker calmly rolled the ball right.</i>	Similar: pretend, fake, put on an act Opposite: admit, own up Family: bluff (noun), bluffer (noun)
☐ cunning <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Clever at getting what you want by using tricks. <i>The cunning fox waited until the farmer had gone indoors before creeping towards the hen house.</i>	Similar: crafty, sly, wily Opposite: honest, naive Family: cunningly (adverb), cunning (noun)
☐ deceive <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To make someone believe something that is not true. <i>Every person in the audience was deceived by the trick, certain the coin had truly vanished.</i>	Similar: mislead, trick, fool Opposite: enlighten, inform Family: deception (noun), deceit (noun), deceptive (adjective), deceitful (adjective)
☐ exaggerate <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	To describe something as bigger, better or worse than it really is. <i>Dad always exaggerates the size of the fish he caught, and it grows with every retelling.</i>	Similar: overstate, embellish, inflate Opposite: understate, minimise Family: exaggeration (noun), exaggerated (adjective)
☐ genuine <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Real, and exactly what it claims to be. <i>Grandad checked the old coin with a magnifying glass and declared it a genuine Roman one.</i>	Similar: real, authentic, true Opposite: fake, false Family: genuinely (adverb), genuineness (noun)
☐ sincere <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	Honestly meant, without any pretending. <i>Her apology was so sincere that Ravi forgave her before she had even finished speaking.</i>	Similar: heartfelt, honest, earnest Opposite: false, hypocritical Family: sincerely (adverb), sincerity (noun)
☐ trustworthy <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing a person who can be relied on to be honest. <i>Only the most trustworthy pupils were allowed to collect the dinner money from each classroom.</i>	Similar: reliable, dependable, honest Opposite: dishonest, unreliable Family: trust (noun), trust (verb), trustworthiness (noun)
☐ conceal <i>verb</i> STRONG	To hide something so that it cannot be seen or found. <i>The fox concealed itself behind the compost heap until the gardener had gone indoors.</i>	Similar: hide, cover, disguise Opposite: reveal, expose, uncover Family: concealment (noun), concealed (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ devious <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Using sneaky, dishonest methods to get your own way. <i>Nobody trusted the devious shopkeeper, who kept the best apples hidden and sold the bruised ones first.</i>	Similar: sly, underhand, scheming Opposite: honest, straightforward Family: deviously (adverb), deviousness (noun)
☐ gullible <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Too ready to believe whatever you are told, and so easy to trick. <i>Only a gullible shopper would believe the market trader's promise that the plastic watch was solid gold.</i>	Similar: trusting, naive, easily fooled Opposite: suspicious, sceptical, wary Family: gullibility (noun), gullibly (adverb)
☐ hoax <i>noun</i> STRONG	A trick that makes people believe something false, often as a joke. <i>That photo of a shark in the boating lake turned out to be a hoax made with cardboard.</i>	Similar: prank, trick, deception Opposite: truth, fact Family: hoax (verb), hoaxer (noun)
☐ pretence <i>noun</i> STRONG	A way of behaving that is meant to hide what is really true. <i>Under the pretence of fetching a book, Leo slipped upstairs to wrap his sister's present.</i>	Similar: act, sham, show Opposite: honesty, reality Family: pretend (verb), pretender (noun)
☐ swindle <i>verb</i> STRONG	To cheat someone out of money or goods by tricking them. <i>The market trader swindled customers by selling glass beads as if they were real pearls.</i>	Similar: cheat, con, defraud Opposite: repay, compensate Family: swindle (noun), swindler (noun)
☐ verify <i>verb</i> STRONG	To check carefully that something is true or correct. <i>Before printing the story, the editor rang the zoo to verify that a penguin really had escaped.</i>	Similar: check, confirm, prove Opposite: disprove, contradict Family: verification (noun), verifiable (adjective)
☐ counterfeit <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Made to look real in order to cheat people. <i>The bank clerk held the note up to the light and spotted at once that it was counterfeit.</i>	Similar: fake, forged, imitation Opposite: genuine, authentic Family: counterfeit (verb), counterfeiter (noun)
☐ guile <i>noun</i> STRETCH	Sly cleverness used to trick or outwit other people. <i>With considerable guile, the smallest player drew the defenders left before passing the ball right.</i>	Similar: cunning, craftiness, trickery Opposite: honesty, innocence Family: guileless (adjective), beguile (verb)
☐ ruse <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A clever plan used to fool someone. <i>Pretending to have lost her scarf was just a ruse to get Mum out of the room.</i>	Similar: trick, ploy, dodge Opposite: honesty

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Courage, danger and conflict

Bravery, risk, threat and argument. The vocabulary of adventure stories and historical passages.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ courageous <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing someone who faces fear or hardship without giving up. <i>It was courageous of Aisha to speak up for the new boy when everyone else stayed silent.</i>	Similar: brave, fearless, plucky Opposite: cowardly, timid Family: courage (noun), courageously (adverb)
☐ cowardly <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Too afraid to face difficulty, and quick to run from it. <i>Leaving your friend to face the angry goose alone was a cowardly thing to do, Tom.</i>	Similar: timid, spineless, fearful Opposite: brave, courageous Family: coward (noun), cowardice (noun)
☐ defend <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To protect someone or something from attack or harm. <i>The mother swan spread her wings wide to defend her cygnets from the curious dog.</i>	Similar: protect, guard, shield Opposite: attack, abandon Family: defence (noun), defender (noun), defensive (adjective)
☐ hazard <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A thing that could cause harm or an accident. <i>Loose stones on the cliff path were a real hazard for walkers after the heavy rain.</i>	Similar: danger, risk, peril Opposite: safety, protection Family: hazardous (adjective), hazard (verb)
☐ quarrel <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	An angry argument between people who disagree. <i>A silly quarrel over whose turn it was on the swing ended with both cousins in tears.</i>	Similar: argument, row, dispute Opposite: agreement, reconciliation Family: quarrel (verb), quarrelsome (adjective)
☐ surrender <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To stop fighting and admit that the other side has won. <i>After an hour of snowball fighting, the soaked and shivering red team finally surrendered.</i>	Similar: give in, yield, submit Opposite: resist, fight on Family: surrender (noun)
☐ threaten <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To say you will hurt or punish someone if they do not do what you want. <i>The older boys threatened to throw our football over the fence unless we let them play.</i>	Similar: menace, intimidate, bully Opposite: reassure, protect Family: threat (noun), threatening (adjective)
☐ ambush <i>noun</i> STRONG	A surprise attack by people who have been hiding and waiting. <i>Hidden behind the shed, the twins launched their water-balloon ambush the moment Uncle Pete appeared.</i>	Similar: trap, surprise attack Opposite: warning, open attack Family: ambush (verb)
☐ confront <i>verb</i> STRONG	To face someone or a problem directly instead of avoiding it. <i>Rather than hide the broken vase, Ellie decided to confront the problem and tell her aunt.</i>	Similar: face, challenge, tackle Opposite: avoid, evade Family: confrontation (noun), confrontational (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ formidable <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing something so powerful or difficult that it causes respect or fear. <i>With three county champions in their side, the visiting hockey team looked formidable opponents.</i>	Similar: daunting, mighty, intimidating Opposite: weak, feeble Family: formidably (adverb)
☐ hostile <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Unfriendly, and ready to fight or argue. <i>The farm cat gave the new puppy a hostile glare and refused to leave the doorstep.</i>	Similar: unfriendly, aggressive, antagonistic Opposite: friendly, welcoming Family: hostility (noun), hostilities (plural noun)
☐ menace <i>noun</i> STRONG	Someone or something that threatens harm or keeps causing trouble. <i>Wasps became such a menace at the picnic that we packed up and ate in the car.</i>	Similar: threat, danger, nuisance Opposite: blessing, comfort Family: menace (verb), menacing (adjective), menacingly (adverb)
☐ perilous <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Full of risk and likely to cause harm. <i>The climb down to the rock pools was perilous, with seaweed making every step slippery.</i>	Similar: dangerous, hazardous, risky Opposite: safe, secure Family: peril (noun), perilously (adverb)
☐ treacherous <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Dangerous in a hidden way that is hard to spot, or ready to betray someone who trusts you. <i>Black ice made the lane treacherous, and even the postman's van slid gently into the hedge.</i>	Similar: hazardous, risky, unsafe Opposite: safe, reliable Family: treachery (noun), treacherously (adverb)
☐ valiant <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing a brave and determined effort, especially against the odds. <i>Despite a valiant effort in the final minutes, the school team lost the cup by one goal.</i>	Similar: brave, heroic, gallant Opposite: cowardly, feeble Family: valiantly (adverb), valour (noun)
☐ intrepid <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Adventurous and showing no fear at all. <i>Our intrepid guide waded straight into the icy stream while the rest of us hung back.</i>	Similar: fearless, bold, daring Opposite: timid, cowardly Family: intrepidly (adverb), intrepidity (noun)
☐ jeopardy <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A state of being at risk of harm or loss. <i>One more late library book and Sam's chance of the reading prize would be in jeopardy.</i>	Similar: danger, peril, risk Opposite: safety, security Family: jeopardise (verb)
☐ skirmish <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A short, small fight between two groups. <i>What began as a skirmish over the last slice of cake soon had every cousin involved.</i>	Similar: scuffle, clash, tussle Opposite: truce, peace Family: skirmish (verb)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Size, strength and change

Amounts, scale, growing, shrinking, strength and weakness. Many pair cleanly as synonyms and antonyms.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ alter <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To change something slightly, or to become different. <i>Mum had to alter the costume because the sleeves hung right down over Josh's hands.</i>	Similar: change, adjust, modify Opposite: preserve, keep Family: alteration (noun), alterable (adjective)
☐ expand <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To become larger, or to make something larger. <i>Watch the balloon expand as you blow into it, then let go and see it shoot across the room.</i>	Similar: grow, enlarge, swell Opposite: shrink, contract Family: expansion (noun), expansive (adjective)
☐ fragile <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Easily broken or damaged. <i>The eggs were so fragile that Nan wrapped each one in a tea towel for the journey.</i>	Similar: delicate, breakable, flimsy Opposite: sturdy, tough Family: fragility (noun)
☐ mighty <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Very powerful or very large. <i>With one mighty heave, the three of them dragged the fallen branch off the footpath.</i>	Similar: powerful, strong, huge Opposite: weak, puny Family: might (noun), mightily (adverb)
☐ shrivel <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To become smaller, dry and wrinkled, usually from heat or lack of water. <i>Without rain for a month, the lettuces began to shrivel and the soil cracked like old paint.</i>	Similar: wrinkle, shrink, wither Opposite: swell, plump up Family: shrivelled (adjective)
☐ sturdy <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Strongly built and not easily broken. <i>Twenty winters on the seafront had not put a single wobble in the sturdy wooden bench.</i>	Similar: strong, solid, robust Opposite: flimsy, fragile Family: sturdily (adverb), sturdiness (noun)
☐ swell <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To grow bigger than usual, often by filling with something. <i>The stream began to swell after the storm, spilling over its banks into the meadow.</i>	Similar: expand, bulge, grow Opposite: shrink, deflate Family: swelling (noun), swollen (adjective)
☐ vast <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Extremely large in size or amount. <i>From the top of the hill, the moor stretched away, a vast sea of purple heather.</i>	Similar: enormous, huge, immense Opposite: tiny, minute Family: vastly (adverb), vastness (noun)
☐ abundant <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Available in very large amounts. <i>Blackberries were abundant along the lane that autumn, and every bowl in the house was full.</i>	Similar: plentiful, ample, copious Opposite: scarce, sparse Family: abundance (noun), abundantly (adverb), abound (verb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ brittle <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Hard, but likely to snap or shatter easily. <i>Years in the sun had turned the plastic ruler brittle, and it snapped when Kai bent it.</i>	Similar: fragile, breakable, crumbly Opposite: flexible, tough Family: brittleness (noun)
☐ colossal <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Of truly enormous size. <i>A colossal wave rose behind the pier, and the fishermen ran for the steps.</i>	Similar: gigantic, immense, massive Opposite: tiny, minute Family: colossus (noun), colossally (adverb)
☐ dwindle <i>verb</i> STRONG	To become gradually smaller or fewer until little is left. <i>The queue for the ice-cream van dwindled as the grey clouds rolled in over the beach.</i>	Similar: shrink, decline, diminish Opposite: grow, increase Family: dwindling (adjective)
☐ feeble <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Weak, and lacking force or energy. <i>The kitten gave a feeble mew from the box, too tired even to lift its head.</i>	Similar: weak, frail, faint Opposite: strong, powerful Family: feebly (adverb), feebleness (noun)
☐ scarce <i>adjective</i> STRONG	In short supply and hard to find. <i>Firewood was scarce on the island, so the campers gathered every dry twig they could spot.</i>	Similar: rare, sparse, in short supply Opposite: plentiful, abundant Family: scarcity (noun), scarcely (adverb)
☐ sparse <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing something thinly spread, with only a few in a large space. <i>The grass was sparse under the big beech tree, with bare earth showing between the tufts.</i>	Similar: thin, scanty, scattered Opposite: dense, thick Family: sparsely (adverb), sparseness (noun)
☐ transform <i>verb</i> STRONG	To change something completely in form, look or character. <i>A coat of yellow paint and some bunting transformed the dingy shed into a seaside cafe for the fete.</i>	Similar: change, convert, remodel Opposite: preserve, maintain Family: transformation (noun), transformed (adjective)
☐ dearth <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A serious shortage of something that is needed. <i>There was such a dearth of umbrellas at the fete that people sheltered under the cake stall.</i>	Similar: shortage, lack, scarcity Opposite: abundance, surplus
☐ fluctuate <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To keep changing, rising and falling without a steady pattern. <i>The temperature in the greenhouse fluctuated wildly, roasting the tomatoes by day and chilling them at night.</i>	Similar: vary, waver, swing Opposite: stabilise, settle Family: fluctuation (noun), fluctuating (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ magnitude <i>noun</i> STRETCH	The great size or importance of something. <i>Only when they reached the foot of the dam did the children grasp the magnitude of it.</i>	Similar: size, scale, extent Opposite: smallness, insignificance Family: magnify (verb), magnification (noun)
☐ paltry <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	So small an amount that it is almost worthless. <i>Ten pence was a paltry reward for an afternoon spent weeding Mr Okafor's entire allotment.</i>	Similar: measly, meagre, trifling Opposite: generous, substantial Family: paltriness (noun)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Time, order and speed

When things happen, in what order, and how fast. These words carry sequencing questions and cloze answers.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ gradually <i>adverb</i> FOUNDATION	Slowly and steadily, a little at a time. <i>The tide crept in gradually, until the sandcastle's moat was full and its walls began to crumble.</i>	Similar: slowly, steadily, bit by bit Opposite: suddenly, abruptly Family: gradual (adjective)
☐ hasty <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Done in a hurry, often without enough thought. <i>In her hasty dash for the bus, Nia left her packed lunch sitting on the kitchen table.</i>	Similar: hurried, rushed, rash Opposite: careful, leisurely Family: haste (noun), hastily (adverb), hasten (verb)
☐ postpone <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To move an event to a later time than planned. <i>Because of the thunderstorm, the head teacher decided to postpone sports day until the following week.</i>	Similar: delay, put off, defer Opposite: bring forward, advance Family: postponement (noun)
☐ punctual <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing someone who arrives or does things exactly on time. <i>Mr Das is so punctual that the class can set the clock by the moment he walks in.</i>	Similar: prompt, on time, timely Opposite: late, tardy Family: punctuality (noun), punctually (adverb)
☐ sequence <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A set of things that follow one another in a particular order. <i>The recipe only works if you follow the sequence: cream the butter first, then add the eggs.</i>	Similar: order, series, succession Opposite: jumble, muddle Family: sequential (adjective)
☐ swift <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Moving or happening very quickly. <i>A swift reply came back from the library: the book we wanted was already on its way.</i>	Similar: quick, speedy, rapid Opposite: slow, sluggish Family: swiftly (adverb), swiftness (noun)
☐ abrupt <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Sudden and unexpected. <i>The film came to an abrupt stop halfway through, and the whole cinema groaned.</i>	Similar: sudden, sharp, unexpected Opposite: gradual, gentle Family: abruptly (adverb), abruptness (noun)
☐ brisk <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Quick, energetic and lively. <i>A brisk walk along the front soon warmed us up after the chilly ferry crossing.</i>	Similar: quick, lively, energetic Opposite: sluggish, leisurely Family: briskly (adverb), briskness (noun)
☐ duration <i>noun</i> STRONG	The length of time that something lasts. <i>For the whole duration of the car journey, the twins argued about who had seen the sea first.</i>	Similar: length, span, period Opposite: instant Family: durable (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ interval <i>noun</i> STRONG	A period of time between two events. <i>During the interval, the audience queued for choc ices while the stagehands changed the scenery.</i>	Similar: gap, pause, break Opposite: continuation Family: intervene (verb), intervening (adjective)
☐ precede <i>verb</i> STRONG	To come or go before something else in time or order. <i>A hush always precedes the fireworks, then the first rocket whistles up into the dark.</i>	Similar: come before, lead, go ahead of Opposite: follow, succeed Family: preceding (adjective), precedent (noun)
☐ prompt <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing an action done at once, without any delay. <i>Thanks to the prompt arrival of the lifeguard, the drifting dinghy was towed back safely.</i>	Similar: immediate, speedy, punctual Opposite: late, delayed Family: promptly (adverb), promptness (noun), prompt (verb)
☐ sluggish <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing something moving or working far more slowly than usual. <i>The old laptop was so sluggish that the kettle had boiled before the homepage even loaded.</i>	Similar: slow, lethargic, listless Opposite: brisk, lively Family: sluggishly (adverb), sluggishness (noun)
☐ belated <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Coming or happening later than it should have. <i>Grandad's belated birthday card arrived in March, three weeks after the last slice of cake had gone.</i>	Similar: late, overdue, delayed Opposite: punctual, prompt, timely Family: belatedly (adverb)
☐ elapse <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To pass or go by, used about time. <i>Three whole weeks elapsed before the seeds Amara had planted finally pushed through the soil.</i>	Similar: pass, go by, slip away Opposite: remain, stand still Family: elapsed (adjective)
☐ fleeting <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Lasting only a very short time. <i>We caught a fleeting glimpse of the kingfisher before it flashed away down the river.</i>	Similar: brief, momentary, passing Opposite: lasting, permanent Family: fleetingly (adverb)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Places, weather and the natural world

Settings, landscape and weather. Descriptive passages lean on these, and so do the questions about atmosphere.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ dense <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Packed closely together, with little space between the parts. <i>The fog was so dense that Priya could not see the bus stop from the corner.</i>	Similar: thick, packed, crowded Opposite: sparse, thin Family: density (noun), densely (adverb)
☐ drought <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A long period with little or no rain, when the land dries out. <i>During the summer drought the reservoir shrank and cracked mud appeared where water had been.</i>	Similar: dry spell, water shortage Opposite: flood, deluge Family: drought-stricken (adjective)
☐ horizon <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	The distant line where the land or sea seems to meet the sky. <i>A tiny ship crept along the horizon, so far off that it looked like a toy.</i>	Similar: skyline, far distance Opposite: foreground Family: horizontal (adjective), horizontally (adverb)
☐ overcast <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing a sky that is covered in cloud, with no sun showing. <i>The morning was overcast and dull, so the beach was almost empty when we arrived.</i>	Similar: cloudy, grey, dull Opposite: sunny, cloudless
☐ remote <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Far away from towns and hard to reach. <i>The stone hut stood on a remote hillside, miles from the nearest road or shop.</i>	Similar: faraway, distant, out-of-the-way Opposite: nearby, central Family: remotely (adverb), remoteness (noun)
☐ rural <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing the countryside rather than a town or city. <i>Gran's rural cottage had fields on three sides and a farm track instead of a street.</i>	Similar: country, pastoral, agricultural Opposite: urban Family: rurality (adverb)
☐ summit <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	The highest point of a mountain or hill. <i>After four hours of climbing, we reached the summit and could see three counties below us.</i>	Similar: peak, top, crest Opposite: base, foot
☐ urban <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing a town or city rather than the countryside. <i>Pigeons and foxes have adapted well to urban life, raiding bins behind busy high streets.</i>	Similar: city, built-up, metropolitan Opposite: rural Family: urbanise (verb), urbanisation (noun)
☐ adjacent <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing something that is next to or right beside another thing. <i>Our allotment is adjacent to the railway line, so we hear every train rattle past.</i>	Similar: neighbouring, next-door, bordering Opposite: distant, separate Family: adjacency (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ barren <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing land that is too poor or dry for plants to grow. <i>Nothing grew on the barren slope except a few grey tufts of grass between the rocks.</i>	Similar: infertile, bare, unproductive Opposite: fertile, lush Family: barrenness (noun)
☐ erode <i>verb</i> STRONG	To wear something away slowly, as wind, rain or waves do to rock. <i>Winter storms continue to erode the cliff, and each spring the footpath is moved further inland.</i>	Similar: wear away, eat away, wear down Opposite: build up, deposit Family: erosion (noun), eroded (adjective)
☐ fertile <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing soil or land that is rich and good for growing plants. <i>The valley floor was so fertile that beans, marrows and sunflowers shot up within weeks.</i>	Similar: rich, fruitful, productive Opposite: barren, infertile Family: fertility (noun), fertilise (verb), fertiliser (noun)
☐ humid <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Warm and full of moisture, so the air feels damp. <i>The greenhouse was humid and sticky, and beads of water ran down the glass panes.</i>	Similar: muggy, sticky, damp, clammy Opposite: dry, crisp Family: humidity (noun), humidify (verb)
☐ rugged <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing land that is rough, rocky and uneven. <i>The rugged coast path climbed over boulders and dipped into coves where seals lay basking.</i>	Similar: rocky, rough, craggy Opposite: smooth, flat Family: ruggedly (adverb), ruggedness (noun)
☐ thicket <i>noun</i> STRONG	A dense group of bushes or small trees growing closely together. <i>The rabbit vanished into a thicket of brambles where no dog could follow.</i>	Similar: copse, undergrowth, scrub Opposite: clearing, glade
☐ torrent <i>noun</i> STRONG	A fast, powerful rush of water, often after heavy rain. <i>By teatime the gentle stream had become a torrent, dragging branches and even a bench downhill.</i>	Similar: flood, deluge, gush Opposite: trickle, dribble Family: torrential (adjective), torrentially (adverb)
☐ tranquil <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Calm, peaceful and free from noise. <i>By early morning the lake was tranquil, its surface flat as glass without a ripple.</i>	Similar: peaceful, calm, still, restful Opposite: noisy, chaotic Family: tranquillity (noun), tranquilly (adverb)
☐ precipice <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A very high, steep cliff face or rock edge with a sheer drop. <i>The path ended at a precipice, and the sheep grazed calmly a metre from the drop.</i>	Similar: cliff, sheer drop, crag Opposite: plain, flat ground Family: precipitous (adjective), precipitously (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ secluded <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Hidden away and not easily seen; quiet and private. <i>Behind the tall hedge lay a secluded garden that few visitors to the park ever found.</i>	Similar: hidden, sheltered, private, tucked away Opposite: exposed, busy Family: seclude (verb), seclusion (noun)
☐ undulating <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Describing land that rises and falls gently in wave-like slopes. <i>From the train window we watched undulating fields roll past like a green sea.</i>	Similar: rolling, wavy, hilly Opposite: flat, level Family: undulate (verb), undulation (noun)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Sights, sounds and the senses

How things look, sound, feel, smell and taste. The words that make a description vivid, and that questions ask you to explain.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ dazzling <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	So bright that it is hard to look at. <i>Sunlight bounced off the snow in a dazzling glare that made everyone squint and reach for sunglasses.</i>	Similar: blinding, brilliant, glaring Opposite: dim, dull Family: dazzle (verb), dazzled (adjective)
☐ deafening <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	So loud that it hurts your ears. <i>The thunder was deafening, and the dog dived under the table with his paws over his ears.</i>	Similar: ear-splitting, thunderous, booming Opposite: silent, hushed Family: deafen (verb), deaf (adjective), deafness (noun)
☐ dim <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION	Describing light that is weak and makes things hard to see. <i>In the dim glow of the torch, the tent looked much bigger than it really was.</i>	Similar: weak, shadowy, murky, gloomy Opposite: bright, dazzling Family: dimly (adverb), dimness (noun), dim (verb)
☐ flicker <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To burn or shine unsteadily, going bright and dark very quickly. <i>The candle began to flicker in the draught, throwing jumpy shadows across the ceiling.</i>	Similar: flutter, twinkle, quiver Opposite: glow, blaze Family: flicker (noun), flickering (adjective)
☐ glisten <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To shine with a wet or sparkling light, like dew or raindrops. <i>After the shower the cobwebs began to glisten, each thread strung with tiny drops.</i>	Similar: sparkle, shimmer, twinkle, glitter Opposite: dull, darken Family: glistening (adjective)
☐ hush <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A sudden silence, especially after there has been noise. <i>A hush fell over the hall as the curtain twitched and the lights went down.</i>	Similar: silence, quiet, stillness Opposite: uproar, racket Family: hush (verb), hushed (adjective)
☐ peculiar <i>adjective</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y3-4	Describing something strange or odd, unlike what you would usually expect. <i>A peculiar smell, like burnt toast mixed with seaweed, drifted out of the science cupboard.</i>	Similar: strange, odd, curious, bizarre Opposite: ordinary, normal Family: peculiarity (noun), peculiarly (adverb)
☐ reek <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To give off a very strong and unpleasant smell. <i>The changing rooms reek of damp socks by the end of every Friday swimming lesson.</i>	Similar: stink, smell, whiff Opposite: freshen Family: reek (noun), reeking (adjective)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ rustle <i>verb</i> FOUNDATION	To make a soft, dry, whispering sound, like leaves moving. <i>Something began to rustle in the hedge, and a hedgehog shuffled out onto the path.</i>	Similar: swish, whisper, crackle Opposite: crash, boom Family: rustle (noun), rustling (adjective)
☐ elaborate <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing something with many detailed and complicated parts. <i>The wedding cake was elaborate, with sugar roses, tiny birds and seven tiers of icing.</i>	Similar: intricate, detailed, ornate, fancy Opposite: simple, plain Family: elaborate (verb), elaboration (noun), elaborately (adverb)
☐ fragrant <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Having a pleasant, sweet smell. <i>The lavender bushes by the gate were so fragrant that bees hummed around them all afternoon.</i>	Similar: sweet-smelling, perfumed, aromatic Opposite: smelly, foul Family: fragrance (noun), fragrantly (adverb)
☐ monotonous <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing a sound or activity that never changes and becomes boring. <i>The monotonous hum of the fridge went on all night, the same flat note without a pause.</i>	Similar: dull, repetitive, tedious, unvarying Opposite: varied, lively Family: monotony (noun), monotonously (adverb), monotone (noun)
☐ muffled <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing a sound made quieter and less clear by something covering it. <i>Through the thick wall we could hear the muffled thump of next door's drum kit.</i>	Similar: dulled, deadened, indistinct Opposite: clear, loud Family: muffle (verb), muffler (noun)
☐ shrill <i>adjective</i> STRONG	High, sharp and unpleasant to hear. <i>A shrill whistle cut across the playground and every game stopped at once.</i>	Similar: piercing, high-pitched, screeching Opposite: deep, soft Family: shrilly (adverb), shrillness (noun)
☐ silhouette <i>noun</i> STRONG	A dark outline of someone or something seen against a brighter background. <i>At sunset the old oak became a black silhouette against an orange sky.</i>	Similar: outline, shadow, shape, profile Opposite: clear picture Family: silhouette (verb), silhouetted (adjective)
☐ vivid <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Bright, strong and full of life. <i>The parrot's vivid feathers were so bright they seemed to glow against the grey drizzle.</i>	Similar: bright, brilliant, striking, colourful Opposite: dull, faded Family: vividly (adverb), vividness (noun)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ cacophony <i>noun</i> STRETCH	A harsh, unpleasant mixture of loud sounds all happening at once. <i>The school orchestra's first practice was a cacophony of squeaks, honks and clattering cymbals.</i>	Similar: din, racket, uproar, clamour Opposite: harmony, silence Family: cacophonous (adjective)
☐ dappled <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Describing something marked with patches of light and shade or colour. <i>The pony stood in dappled shade beneath the apple tree, spots of sunlight moving on its back.</i>	Similar: speckled, mottled, spotted, flecked Opposite: plain, uniform Family: dapple (verb), dapple (noun)
☐ pungent <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Strong, sharp and hard to ignore, of a smell or taste. <i>The pungent smell of vinegar from the chip shop reached us before we turned the corner.</i>	Similar: sharp, strong, acrid, overpowering Opposite: mild, bland Family: pungency (noun), pungently (adverb)
☐ translucent <i>adjective</i> STRETCH	Describing something that lets light through but is not fully see-through. <i>The sea glass was translucent, glowing green when Amira held it up to the sun.</i>	Similar: semi-transparent, frosted, milky Opposite: opaque Family: translucence (noun), translucency (noun)

LANGUAGE CRAFT

Story and language craft words

The terms comprehension questions use: narrator, setting, simile, atmosphere. A child cannot answer a question whose wording they do not know.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ alliteration <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	The use of the same first sound in several words close together. <i>'Slippery slugs slide slowly' is packed with alliteration, all those hissing s sounds.</i>	Similar: initial rhyme, sound repetition Opposite: plain prose Family: alliterate (verb), alliterative (adjective)
☐ metaphor <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A way of describing something by saying it is something else. <i>Calling the playground 'a zoo at feeding time' is a metaphor, since it is not really a zoo.</i>	Similar: comparison, image, figure of speech Opposite: literal statement Family: metaphorical (adjective), metaphorically (adverb)
☐ narrator <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	The person or character who tells a story to the reader. <i>The narrator of the book is a ten-year-old girl, so we only know what she notices.</i>	Similar: storyteller, teller, voice Opposite: listener, reader Family: narrate (verb), narration (noun), narrative (noun)
☐ setting <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	The place and time in which the events of a story happen. <i>The setting is a snowbound Scottish village in 1950, which explains why nobody has a phone.</i>	Similar: location, backdrop, scene Opposite: characters
☐ simile <i>noun</i> FOUNDATION	A comparison of two things using the words 'like' or 'as'. <i>'Her hands were as cold as frogs' is a simile that made the whole class shiver.</i>	Similar: comparison, likeness, figure of speech Opposite: literal description Family: similar (adjective), similarity (noun)
☐ atmosphere <i>noun</i> STRONG	The mood or feeling that a place or piece of writing gives you. <i>Fog, a creaking gate and a distant bell gave the opening chapter a spooky atmosphere.</i>	Similar: mood, feeling, ambience Opposite: blandness Family: atmospheric (adjective)
☐ climax <i>noun</i> STRONG	The most exciting or important moment in a story, usually near the end. <i>At the climax of the play, the lighthouse lamp finally blazes and the boat turns for shore.</i>	Similar: peak, high point, turning point, crisis Opposite: anticlimax, beginning Family: climactic (adjective), climax (verb)
☐ figurative <i>adjective</i> STRONG	Describing language that means more than its exact words, using images and comparisons. <i>When Dad says he has 'a mountain of washing', he is being figurative, not measuring it.</i>	Similar: metaphorical, symbolic, non-literal Opposite: literal Family: figuratively (adverb)

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ onomatopoeia <i>noun</i> STRONG	A word whose sound copies the noise it describes, such as 'buzz'. <i>The poet used onomatopoeia, so the rain went 'drip, patter, splash' right across the page.</i>	Similar: sound word, echo word, imitative word Opposite: plain description Family: onomatopoeic (adjective)
☐ personification <i>noun</i> STRONG	Giving human feelings or actions to an object, animal or idea. <i>'The wind howled angrily at the windows' uses personification, because wind cannot really feel angry.</i>	Similar: humanising, figure of speech, embodiment Opposite: literal description Family: personify (verb), personified (adjective)
☐ suspense <i>noun</i> STRONG	A feeling of nervous excitement while waiting to find out what happens. <i>The author builds suspense by ending each chapter just as the door begins to open.</i>	Similar: tension, anticipation, uncertainty Opposite: relief, resolution Family: suspenseful (adjective), suspend (verb)
☐ evoke <i>verb</i> STRETCH	To bring a feeling, memory or picture into someone's mind. <i>The smell of chlorine can evoke the whole of last summer's swimming holiday in a second.</i>	Similar: summon, conjure up, stir, call to mind Opposite: dispel, blot out Family: evocative (adjective), evocation (noun)
☐ hyperbole <i>noun</i> STRETCH	Deliberate exaggeration used for effect, not meant to be taken literally. <i>'I've told you a million times to shut the gate' is hyperbole, not a real count.</i>	Similar: exaggeration, overstatement Opposite: understatement Family: hyperbolic (adjective)
☐ irony <i>noun</i> STRETCH	Using words that mean the opposite of what you really think, often to be funny. <i>'Lovely weather for a picnic,' said Mum with irony, as hail bounced off the car roof.</i>	Similar: sarcasm, dry humour, wry humour Opposite: sincerity, earnestness Family: ironic (adjective), ironically (adverb)

LANGUAGE CRAFT

Linking words and precise adverbs

Connectives and modifiers that change the meaning of a sentence. Cloze and sentence-completion questions turn on exactly these.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ although <i>conjunction</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y3-4	Used to join two ideas when the second one is surprising after the first. <i>Although the pool was freezing, Tomasz swam twenty lengths before breakfast.</i>	Similar: though, even though, while Opposite: because, since
☐ barely <i>adverb</i> FOUNDATION	Only just; by a very small amount. <i>The kite barely cleared the telephone wires before the wind snatched it higher.</i>	Similar: hardly, scarcely, only just Opposite: easily, amply
☐ despite <i>preposition</i> FOUNDATION	Used to say that something happened even though another thing might have stopped it. <i>Despite the drizzle, the whole street turned out for the summer fete on the green.</i>	Similar: in spite of, regardless of, notwithstanding Opposite: because of, thanks to
☐ however <i>adverb</i> FOUNDATION	Used to add a point that goes against what was just said. <i>The forecast promised sunshine; however, we spent the whole afternoon sheltering under the pier.</i>	Similar: nevertheless, but, still, yet Opposite: therefore, moreover
☐ otherwise <i>adverb</i> FOUNDATION	Used to say what will happen if something is not done. <i>Put the guinea pigs in the shed tonight, otherwise the frost will get them.</i>	Similar: or else, if not Opposite: if so
☐ therefore <i>adverb</i> FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y3-4	For that reason; as a result of what has just been said. <i>The river had burst its banks; therefore the footpath to school was closed for a week.</i>	Similar: so, consequently, thus, hence Opposite: however, nevertheless Family: thereby (adverb), thereafter (adverb)
☐ consequently <i>adverb</i> STRONG	As a result of something that happened before. <i>Nobody watered the tomatoes all week; consequently, they wilted and the leaves turned yellow.</i>	Similar: therefore, as a result, hence, so Opposite: regardless, nevertheless Family: consequence (noun), consequent (adjective), consequential (adjective)
☐ furthermore <i>adverb</i> STRONG	Used to add another point that supports what has been said. <i>The tent leaks; furthermore, someone has left the torch switched on all night.</i>	Similar: moreover, in addition, besides, also Opposite: however, conversely

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ merely <i>adverb</i> STRONG	Only; nothing more than what is mentioned. <i>The noise was merely the cat knocking a pan off the draining board, not a burglar.</i>	Similar: only, simply, just, purely Opposite: fully, entirely Family: mere (adjective)
☐ utterly <i>adverb</i> STRONG	Completely and totally, with nothing held back. <i>By the end of the muddy walk her wellies were utterly ruined.</i>	Similar: completely, totally, absolutely, entirely Opposite: slightly, partly Family: utter (adjective)
☐ whereas <i>conjunction</i> STRONG	Used to compare two facts and show how they are different. <i>Maya loves the sea, whereas her brother refuses to go past the rock pools.</i>	Similar: while, but, by contrast Opposite: likewise, similarly
☐ invariably <i>adverb</i> STRETCH	Always happening in the same way, without a single exception. <i>The ice-cream van invariably arrives just as we sit down to dinner.</i>	Similar: always, without fail, unfailingly, consistently Opposite: occasionally, sometimes Family: invariable (adjective), vary (verb), variable (adjective)
☐ notwithstanding <i>preposition</i> STRETCH	Used to say that something is true in spite of another thing. <i>Notwithstanding the wasps, the picnic by the canal was a great success.</i>	Similar: despite, in spite of, regardless of Opposite: because of, owing to
☐ subsequently <i>adverb</i> STRETCH	After that; at a later time. <i>The library flooded in January and subsequently closed for three months while the carpets dried out.</i>	Similar: afterwards, later, next Opposite: previously, beforehand Family: subsequent (adjective)

PRACTISE THESE WORDS**Turn the list into recall**

Reading a list produces recognition; the exam demands recall under a clock. These free interactive exercises on Trace Learn practise the exact skills the words above are tagged with. No sign-up, nothing is recorded, and each one works on a phone.

1. **Synonym Spectrum** These all mean "walked". Drag them onto the rail, calmest on the left.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/synonym-spectrum>
2. **Mind the Gap** Only one of these words belongs in the gap. Keep it, and throw the rest away.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/cloze-swipe>
3. **Redacted Files** Four words have been censored. Decode each one using the clues around it.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/redacted-files>
4. **Word Bridge** Full is to empty as happy is to...?
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/word-bridge>
5. **Question Forge** Three questions, three lines they were forged from. Hammer each pair together.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/question-forge>
6. **Affix Slot Machine** Spin the reels until the three parts build the word in the definition, then pull the lever.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/affix-slot-machine>
7. **Word Morpher** Build the word unhappiness. Drag affixes onto the word - some will not stick.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/word-morpher>
8. **Comprehension X-Ray** Highlight only the sentences that show this is true. Then show the examiner.
<https://tracelearn.app/11-plus/exercises/comprehension-xray>

Find the gaps first

The free four-subject diagnostic shows which vocabulary and comprehension skills need work before you spend a single evening on the wrong tier: <https://tracelearn.app/free-diagnostic>