

FREE RESOURCE · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

Common English words 141 to 150

The common English words in this set are become, interest, country, old, each, school, late, high, different, off. Together they are very common adjectives, verbs and small words that describe change, age, difference and levels. Describing change with become and difference with different is useful in nearly every Writing Task 1 and Task 2 and in Speaking Part 3.

The words

WORD	SOUND	MEANING	EXAMPLE
become verb	/bɪ'kʌm/	To start to be something; to change into a new state.	<i>Online shopping has become popular with people of all ages.</i>
interest noun, verb	/ 'ɪntrəst/	A feeling of wanting to know more about something; or something you enjoy doing. As a verb, to attract attention.	<i>She has shown a strong interest in marine biology since childhood.</i>
country noun	/'kʌntri/	A nation with its own government; or land outside towns and cities.	<i>In my country, most families live close to their grandparents.</i>
old adjective	/əʊld/	Having lived or existed for a long time; or having a particular age.	<i>Many old buildings in the centre have been turned into museums or hotels.</i>
each determiner, pronoun	/i:tʃ/	Every one of two or more things or people, thought of separately.	<i>Each student receives a different topic, so nobody can copy.</i>
school noun	/sku:l/	A place where children learn; or the time you spend in education.	<i>At primary school, I learned to read from a very kind teacher.</i>
late adjective, adverb	/leɪt/	After the expected time; or near the end of a period of time.	<i>Staying up late can make it harder to concentrate in the morning.</i>
high adjective, adverb	/haɪ/	Far above the ground or above average; large in amount or level.	<i>A high standard of living does not always mean a happy life.</i>
different adjective	/ 'dɪfrənt/	Not the same; or separate and distinct.	<i>People from different backgrounds often have different ideas about success.</i>
off adverb, preposition	/ɒf/	Away from a place or position; not on; not working.	<i>Remember to turn off all electrical devices when you leave the house.</i>

Exercises

1. She _____ a doctor after seven years of study.
 - a. become
 - b. became
 - c. becomed
2. My brother is ten years _____ .
 - a. old
 - b. age
 - c. years
3. Each student _____ a different task.
 - a. are having
 - b. has
 - c. have
4. I am very _____ in architecture.
 - a. interesting
 - b. interest
 - c. interested
5. Find the mistake and write the right form: (1) He (2) is different (3) with (4) his brother.
6. Which word ends with the /f/ sound?
 - a. oh
 - b. of
 - c. off
7. Which syllable is stressed in **different**? dif · fer · ent
8. Put the words in order (one or more words are not needed): different / the / have / a / Each / has / of / topic. / students
9. Correct this: *She has ten years.*

Listening items (1) are online only and are not included in this list.

Practise online, free: hear every example and check your answers at www.ielts-laboratory.co/free-resources/common-english-words-141-150/practice/

IELTS tip. In Writing Task 1, become, different and high are useful for describing change and levels. In Speaking Part 1, 'I am interested in...' is a natural way to answer questions about hobbies and studies.

FOR TEACHERS · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

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AIM	Students understand, pronounce and use the common English words become, interest, country, old, each, school, late, high, different, off, and avoid the typical mistakes noted for each word.
TIME	20 minutes
LEVEL	B1 to B2 (IELTS 5 to 6.5)
MATERIALS	This worksheet, one copy per learner; the free online practice for the audio

Warm-up

Write the ten words on the board in random order. Students say which ones they use most often in English and what they think each word does in a sentence.

Lesson steps

1. Present the ten words with their British IPA. Model each word, then students repeat chorally and in pairs, paying attention to weak forms and stress.
2. Students read the example sentences aloud, cover them, and make a new sentence about their own life with each word.
3. Students describe how their country has become different in the last twenty years, using become, different from and each.
4. Run the quiz as a class. For each wrong answer, ask the student to read the watch-out note and explain the rule in their own words.

Extension

Dictate ten sentences with off and of. Students write them and underline the /f/ or /v/ sound.

Answer key

1. b) became. The past tense of become is became.
2. a) old. We say 'ten years old'.
3. b) has. Each takes a singular verb.
4. c) interested. Interested describes how I feel.
5. Part 3: *with* → **from**. The usual phrase is 'different from'.
6. c) off. Off ends with /f/. Of ends with /v/.
7. **DIF**ferent. Different is stressed on the first syllable: DIF-fer-ent.
8. Each of the students has a different topic. Each of the + plural noun takes a singular verb.
9. She is ten years old. We use is and old to give an age.

Questions learners often ask

Is it interested or interesting? Interested describes how you feel. Interesting describes what causes the feeling. 'I am interested in this book because it is interesting.'

Is it different from or different to? Different from is the standard form. Different to is also accepted in British English.

Why can't I say 'I have ten years'? In English we say 'I am ten years old' or 'I am ten'. Have is not used for age.

Sources

- Browne, C., Culligan, B. & Phillips, J. (2013). The New General Service List (NGSL) 1.2. newgeneralservicelist.com. CC BY-SA 4.0.
- Swan, M. (2016). Practical English Usage (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Wells, J. C. (2008). Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (3rd ed.). Pearson Longman.

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