



FREE RESOURCE · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

Common English words 151 to 160

The ten words in this set (next, end, live, why, while, world, week, play, might, must) are short and very frequent in IELTS Speaking and Writing. Several are small grammar words, so a mistake with them, such as might to go or in the end of, is easy to repeat and costly.

The words

WORD	SOUND	MEANING	EXAMPLE
next adjective, adverb	/nekst/	coming straight after the present one in time or order; next to means beside.	<i>The next section of the talk explains how cities reduce traffic.</i>
end noun, verb	/end/	the last part of something; to finish or stop.	<i>In the end, the council decided to build a cycle lane.</i>
live verb	/liv/	to have your home in a place; to be alive.	<i>Many young adults live with their parents because rents are high.</i>
why adverb	/waɪ/	for what reason; used to ask or explain a reason.	<i>Many people ask why public transport is so expensive.</i>
while conjunction, noun	/waɪl/	during the time that; also, used to show a contrast. As a noun, a period of time.	<i>While some people prefer city life, others enjoy the quiet of the countryside.</i>
world noun	/wɜːld/	the earth and all the people and countries on it.	<i>Tourism has grown quickly in many parts of the world.</i>
week noun	/wi:k/	a period of seven days.	<i>I go to the gym three times a week to stay healthy.</i>
play verb, noun	/pleɪ/	to take part in a game or sport; to act or perform; a piece of theatre.	<i>Teachers play an important role in shaping young people.</i>
might modal verb	/maɪt/	used to say that something is possible but not certain.	<i>Cheaper tickets might encourage more people to use the train.</i>
must modal verb	/mʌst/	used for a strong rule or need, or when you are almost sure something is true.	<i>Drivers must stop when the traffic light is red.</i>

Exercises

- For three years I have _____ in a small flat near my university.
 - live
 - lived
 - living

2. I asked her _____ she had left the company.
- a. why
 - b. why did
 - c. why had
3. Find the mistake and write the right form: (1) Students (2) must to (3) hand in (4) the essay (5) on Friday.
4. Put the words in order (one or more words are not needed): agreed / In the end, / of / the two teams
5. Correct this: *The next week I will visit my grandparents.*
6. In which phrase is the word live pronounced /laɪv/, like five?
- a. a live concert
 - b. They live in Bristol.
 - c. I want to live abroad.
7. You _____ wear a seatbelt in the car; it is the law.
- a. must
 - b. may be
 - c. might
8. I read a magazine _____ I was waiting for the bus.
- a. while
 - b. for
 - c. during
9. Many people play an important _____ in protecting local wildlife.
- a. job
 - b. work
 - c. role

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-151-160/practice/

IELTS tip. In Writing Task 2, use might and while to sound balanced: While many people prefer cars, public transport might be better for the environment. In Speaking, answer a why question by giving the reason straight away, then one example.

FOR TEACHERS · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

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AIM	Learners recognise, pronounce and use ten high-frequency words (next, end, live, why, while, world, week, play, might, must) accurately in IELTS-style sentences.
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 sentence starter If I could change one thing about the world, I... on the board. Learners finish it with might or must, then compare in pairs.

Lesson steps

1. Show the ten words on the board. Learners sort them into three groups: I use it, I know it but do not use it, I am not sure. Compare answers in pairs.
2. Use the Hear audio. Drill each word chorally, then individually, marking the stressed syllable. Pay attention to: the vowel in live (verb and adjective), the final /kst/ in next and /st/ in must, and the /ld/ in world.
3. Learners read the collocations and example sentences, then close the page and rebuild three collocations from memory. Check the watch-out notes together.
4. Learners complete the ten-item quiz alone, then explain to a partner why each wrong option is wrong.

Extension

Learners write four sentences about a city they know, using must, might, while and in the end, and read them aloud for a partner to check.

Answer key

1. b) lived. After have we need the past participle, and the past participle of live is lived.
2. a) why. In a reported question the order is normal, so we say why she had left, with no extra helping verb.
3. Part 2: *must to* → **must**. Must is a modal verb, so the next verb comes straight after it with no to.
4. In the end, the two teams agreed. In the end, at the start of a sentence, means finally. The word of does not fit anywhere.
5. Next week I will visit my grandparents. For the coming week we say next week with no the.
6. a) a live concert. The adjective in live concert rhymes with five. The verb live rhymes with give.
7. a) must. A legal rule is strong, so we use must. Might only shows a possibility.

8. a) while. While is followed by a clause such as I was waiting. During needs a noun, and for needs a length of time.

9. c) role. The fixed phrase is play a role. Job and work do not go with play in this way.

Questions learners often ask

Which words in this set cause the most mistakes? Learners most often get might and must wrong by adding to after them, and mix up in the end with at the end of. Check these two first.

What is the difference between might and must? Must is strong: a rule or something you are nearly sure about. Might is weak: something that is possible but not certain.

Are these common English words useful in IELTS Writing? Yes. Might is a useful way to be careful in Task 2, and while is a clear way to show contrast between two views.

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 edition. Oxford University Press.

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