



FREE RESOURCE · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

Common English words 221 to 230

The ten words in this set (build, hold, service, against, believe, second, though, yes, love, increase) carry real weight in IELTS, because increase is a main word in Writing Task 1, though and against show opinion in Task 2, and yes, love and believe come up in Speaking. Two are irregular verbs and one changes stress between noun and verb.

The words

WORD	SOUND	MEANING	EXAMPLE
build verb	/bɪld/	to make something by putting parts together.	<i>Governments are building new homes in many large cities.</i>
hold verb	/həʊld/	to keep something in your hand; to have an event or an opinion.	<i>The city holds a food festival every summer.</i>
service noun	/ˈsɜːvɪs/	a system or business that provides something people need.	<i>A reliable bus service helps older people stay independent.</i>
against preposition	/əˈɡenst/	opposed to; in contrast to; next to a surface.	<i>Many residents are against the plan to build a new road.</i>
believe verb	/bɪˈliːv/	to think something is true; to trust that something exists.	<i>Many people believe that young drivers cause more accidents.</i>
second adjective, noun	/ 'sekənd/	coming after the first; a unit of time.	<i>English is the second language of many professionals in Asia.</i>
though conjunction, adverb	/ðəʊ/	despite the fact that; but.	<i>Even though the course was difficult, most students enjoyed it.</i>
yes interjection	/jes/	used to agree or to answer a question positively.	<i>Yes, I think that technology has improved the way we study.</i>
love verb, noun	/lʌv/	to like very much; a strong feeling of care.	<i>I love living near the sea because the air is clean.</i>
increase verb, noun	/ɪnˈkriːs/	to become larger or to make larger; a rise.	<i>Sales of electric cars increased steadily over the period.</i>

Exercises

- The old library was _____ in 1990.
 - build
 - built
 - build

2. There has been a sharp increase _____ the price of oil.
- in
 - of
 - on
3. In the noun an increase (a rise), which syllable is stressed?
- the second: in-CREASE
 - the first: IN-crease
4. Find the mistake and write the right form: (1) Many people (2) are against (3) to the new law.
5. She _____ in hard work and honesty.
- believes to
 - is believing
 - believes
6. Correct this: *He holded a meeting with the managers.*
7. Which word has the same vowel sound as love?
- cup
 - cope
 - cop
8. Put the words in order (one or more words are not needed): despite / we went out / Even though / it was raining,
9. Which word rhymes with build?
- fooled
 - field
 - filled
10. The hotel offers a free bus _____ to the airport.
- service
 - serve
 - servant

Practise online, free: hear every example and check your answers at www.ielts-laboratory.co/free-resources/common-english-words-221-230/practice/

IELTS tip. In Writing Task 1, describe trends with increase and the right preposition: an increase in car use, an increase of five million. In Speaking, answer a yes or no question with Yes, because... to show reasoning.

FOR TEACHERS · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

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AIM	Learners recognise, pronounce and use ten high-frequency words (build, hold, service, against, believe, second, though, yes, love, increase) 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

Ask learners to describe a graph about city population growth in one sentence each, using increase as a verb and as a noun.

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 stress shift in increase, the silent u in build, and the short /ʌ/ in love.
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 use increase (verb and noun), against and though in six sentences about a rising problem such as pollution, then check stress when reading aloud.

Answer key

1. b) built. Build is irregular. The participle is built.
2. a) in. After the noun increase we use in plus the thing that rose.
3. b) the first: IN-crease. The noun is stressed on the first syllable. The verb is stressed on the second.
4. Part 3: *to the new law*. → **the new law**. Against is a preposition, so it is followed directly by the noun phrase with no to.
5. c) believes. Believe is not normally used in the continuous form, and the phrase is believe in, not believe to.
6. He held a meeting with the managers. Hold is irregular: hold, held, held.
7. a) cup. Love and cup both have the short /ʌ/. Cop has /ɒ/, and cope has /əʊ/.

8. Even though it was raining, we went out. Even though is followed by a clause. The word despite cannot be placed in the sentence.

9. c) filled. Build is said /bɪld/ and rhymes with filled. Field has /i:ld/, and fooled has /u:ld/.

10. a) service. A bus service is a regular system of transport. Serve is a verb, and servant is a person.

Questions learners often ask

What is the past form of build and hold? Build becomes built and hold becomes held. Both are irregular, so learn them as pairs.

How do I use increase in Writing Task 1? Use the verb (sales increased) or the noun (there was an increase in sales). Add an adverb such as sharply or steadily.

Is it believe in or believe? Believe means think something is true. Believe in means trust that something exists or is good.

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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