

FREE RESOURCE · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

Common English words 241 to 250

The ten words in this set (lead, buy, understand, thank, far, today, hour, student, face, hope) include three irregular verbs and one hard sound, /θ/ in thank. Hour starts with a silent h, and student has a y-sound that British English keeps. These are small details that show clear control in IELTS Speaking.

The words

WORD	SOUND	MEANING	EXAMPLE
lead verb	/li:d/	to show the way; to be in charge; to cause something.	<i>Heavy rain can lead to flooding in low-lying areas.</i>
buy verb	/baɪ/	to get something by paying money.	<i>More people now buy their groceries online than in the past.</i>
understand verb	/ˌʌndə 'stænd/	to know the meaning of something or how it works.	<i>It is easier to understand a rule when the teacher gives an example.</i>
thank verb	/θæŋk/	to tell someone you are grateful.	<i>I would like to thank my teacher for helping me prepare.</i>
far adverb, adjective	/fɑ:/	a long distance away.	<i>So far, the new bus route has been popular with commuters.</i>
today adverb, noun	/tə'deɪ/	on this day; at the present time.	<i>Today, more people work from home than ever before.</i>
hour noun	/ˈaʊə/	a period of sixty minutes.	<i>The journey to the university takes about an hour by train.</i>
student noun	/ˈstju:dənt/	a person who studies at school or university.	<i>International students often live in shared housing near campus.</i>
face noun, verb	/feɪs/	the front of the head; to deal with a problem.	<i>Cities face serious traffic problems in the next decade.</i>
hope verb, noun	/həʊp/	to want something to happen; a feeling that good things will happen.	<i>I hope to study medicine and work in a rural clinic.</i>

Exercises

- The heavy rain _____ to flooding in the north last year.
 - lead
 - led
 - lead

2. I _____ this bag yesterday for my trip.
- a. bought
 - b. buyed
 - c. buy
3. Find the mistake and write the right form: (1) I (2) am understanding (3) the lesson (4) now.
4. It was a long wait, nearly an _____.
- a. our
 - b. house
 - c. hour
5. I _____ you will enjoy the course.
- a. expect for
 - b. wish to
 - c. hope
6. Which word starts with the same sound as thank?
- a. tank
 - b. think
 - c. sank
7. Put the words in order (one or more words are not needed): So far, / I have visited / visit / three countries
8. Correct this: *It is a hour from here.*
9. The city _____ serious traffic problems.
- a. looks
 - b. fronts
 - c. faces
10. Which syllable is stressed in **understand**? un · der · stand

Practise online, free: hear every example and check your answers at www.ielts-laboratory.co/free-resources/common-english-words-241-250/practice/

IELTS tip. In Speaking Part 3, use I hope that... and Cities face... to sound natural when you talk about the future or about problems. In Writing, avoid starting every essay with In today's world; begin with a clear statement of the topic.

FOR TEACHERS · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

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AIM	Learners recognise, pronounce and use ten high-frequency words (lead, buy, understand, thank, far, today, hour, student, face, hope) 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

Teach the /θ/ sound with thank, think, thing and three. Learners say them in pairs while touching the tip of the tongue to the teeth.

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 /θ/ in thank, the silent h in hour, and the stress in understand (un-der-STAND).
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 using understand, face, lead to and so far, then read them aloud to focus on stress.

Answer key

1. b) led. The past form of lead is led.
2. a) bought. Buy is irregular and its past form is bought.
3. Part 2: *am understanding* → **understand**. Understand is not used in continuous tenses. With I the form is understand.
4. c) hour. The word for sixty minutes is hour. The h is silent.
5. c) hope. Hope is followed by a that clause. Wish to and expect for do not work here.
6. b) think. Thank and think both start with the voiceless /θ/. Tank starts with /t/, and sank with /s/.
7. So far, I have visited three countries. So far goes with the present perfect, have visited. The base form visit does not fit.
8. It is an hour from here. The h in hour is silent, so the word starts with a vowel sound and needs an.

9. c) faces. Face a problem means deal with it. Fronts and looks do not make this phrase.

10. under**STAND**. The main stress is on the last syllable: un-der-STAND.

Questions learners often ask

How do I make the th sound in thank? Touch the back of your top front teeth with the tip of your tongue and blow air out without using your voice. When you practise slowly, you can let the tip show a little between your teeth. Do not say tank or sank.

Why do we say an hour? Because the h is silent, the word starts with a vowel sound, so we use an.

Is it so far or until now? Both mean up to now. So far goes naturally with the present perfect: so far I have finished two parts. Until now is similar and common in writing.

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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