

FREE RESOURCE · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

Common English words 61 to 70

The common English words in this set are well, because, very, just, come, could, work, use, than, now. Together they link ideas (because, than, now) or are very flexible verbs and adverbs that you use in every conversation. Being able to give reasons with because and compare with than helps you build the longer answers that Speaking Part 2 and Part 3 ask for.

The words

WORD	SOUND	MEANING	EXAMPLE
well adverb, adjective	/wel/	In a good way (She sings well); healthy (I feel well); also a word used at the start of a spoken answer to give yourself a moment to think.	<i>Well, I think living in a small town is healthier, as well as cheaper.</i>
because conjunction	/br'kɒz/	Introduces the reason for something.	<i>I chose to study engineering because I enjoy solving practical problems.</i>
very adverb	/'veri/	To a high degree; makes an adjective or adverb stronger.	<i>Public transport is very important in cities with little parking.</i>
just adverb	/dʒʌst/	Means only or simply, exactly, or a very short time ago.	<i>I have just finished a course on environmental science.</i>
come verb	/kʌm/	To move towards the speaker or to arrive. It also means to originate (I come from...).	<i>Several students came up with the idea of a shared study room.</i>
could modal verb	/kʊd/	The past of can (When I was young, I could swim), or a polite or less certain form (Could you help me? It could be true).	<i>If governments invested more, public transport could become much cheaper.</i>
work verb, noun	/wɜ:k/	Activity done to earn money or to achieve something; as a verb, also to function properly.	<i>Many employees now prefer to work from home two days a week.</i>
use verb, noun	/ju:z/ (verb), /ju:s/ (noun)	As a verb, to employ something for a purpose. As a noun, the act of employing it.	<i>Students use online dictionaries at home and on the bus.</i>
than conjunction, preposition	/ðæn/	Used after a comparative adjective or adverb to introduce what you compare with. In fast speech it is said /ðən/.	<i>Living in the city is more expensive than living in a village.</i>
now adverb	/naʊ/	At the present time. It is also used to introduce a new point.	<i>Now that more people have smartphones, mobile learning apps are popular.</i>

Exercises

1. Public transport is cheaper _____ taxis.
 - a. that
 - b. than
 - c. then
2. We cancelled the match _____ the rain.
 - a. because of
 - b. because
 - c. for
3. She speaks Spanish _____, but she has never lived in Spain.
 - a. fluent
 - b. good
 - c. well
4. Find the mistake and write the right form: (1) I have (2) a work (3) in a bank (4) near my house.
5. How do you say the verb in 'I use a bike every day'?
 - a. /ju:s/
 - b. /ju:z/
6. Put the words in order (one or more words are not needed): a / city / that / expensive / a / living / is / in / more / than / Living / in / village.
7. Correct this: *I use to walk to school.*
8. Which syllable is stressed in **because**? be · cause
9. When I was young, I _____ run very fast.
 - a. can
 - b. cans
 - c. could

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-61-70/practice/

IELTS tip. In Speaking, give a reason with because after your opinion, then add a short example. In Writing, use than correctly to compare two things (cities and villages, past and present).

FOR TEACHERS · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

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AIM	Students understand, pronounce and use the common English words well, because, very, just, come, could, work, use, than, now, 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 compare two places they know using than and give two reasons each using because.
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 sentences with use as a verb and as a noun. Students write them and mark /z/ or /s/ on each.

Answer key

1. b) than. Compare with than.
2. a) because of. Because of is followed by a noun. Because needs a subject and a verb.
3. c) well. Speaks needs an adverb, so use well.
4. Part 2: *a work* → **a job**. Work is uncountable. Use a job for one position.
5. b) /ju:z/. The verb ends in /z/; the noun ends in /s/.
6. Living in a city is more expensive than living in a village. Compare two activities with more ... than.
7. I used to walk to school. Past habit is used to + base verb.
8. be**CAUSE**. Because is stressed on the second syllable: be-CAUSE.
9. c) could. Could is the past of can for general ability.

Questions learners often ask

What is the difference between because and because of? Because is followed by a clause (because it rained). Because of is followed by a noun (because of the rain).

Is work countable? No. As a noun meaning activity, work is uncountable: 'a lot of work'. Use job for one position and works only for things such as factories or art.

How do I say very correctly? Put your top teeth gently on your bottom lip and let your voice buzz. If your lips close together, you are saying 'b'.

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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