



FREE RESOURCE · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

Common English words 81 to 90

The common English words in this set are find, over, any, after, day, where, thing, most, should, need. Together they include basic verbs, question words and small words that show place, time and quantity. Words like find, need and should help you give opinions and recommendations in Speaking Part 3 and Writing Task 2.

The words

WORD	SOUND	MEANING	EXAMPLE
find verb	/faɪnd/	To discover or get something you were looking for, to notice something by chance, or to form an opinion (I find it difficult).	<i>Many learners find it difficult to understand fast speech.</i>
over preposition, adverb	/ˈəʊvə/	Above or across something, more than a number, during a period of time, or finished.	<i>Over the last decade, many cities have introduced cycle lanes.</i>
any determiner	/ˈeni/	One or some of a group, no matter which. It is used in questions and negatives for an amount.	<i>I do not have any time to waste on this.</i>
after preposition, conjunction	/ˈɑːftə/	Later than something; following.	<i>After graduating, many students spend a year travelling before they look for work.</i>
day noun	/deɪ/	A period of twenty-four hours, or the hours of light.	<i>These days, more people shop online than in the past.</i>
where adverb, conjunction	/weə/	In or to which place; also asks about a place.	<i>The village where I grew up has no shops, just a small school.</i>
thing noun	/θɪŋ/	Any object, idea, action or fact, when you do not name it exactly.	<i>The best thing about living near the sea is the fresh air.</i>
most determiner, pronoun, adverb	/məʊst/	The largest amount or number, or the highest degree (most important).	<i>Most of my classmates live within walking distance of the college.</i>
should modal verb	/ʃʊd/	Used to say what is right or sensible, or to give advice. The l is silent.	<i>Governments should invest more in public transport.</i>
need verb, noun	/niːd/	As a verb, to require something because it is necessary. As a noun, the fact that something is necessary.	<i>Cities need to build more affordable housing for young people.</i>

Exercises

1. I do not have _____ brothers or sisters.
 - a. some
 - b. any
 - c. a
2. I found it hard _____ concentrate in the noisy room.
 - a. to
 - b. for
 - c. that
3. _____ of my friends live in the city centre.
 - a. Mostly
 - b. Most
 - c. The most
4. Find the mistake and write the right form: (1) I wonder (2) where (3) does she live (4) now.
5. Which word has the vowel /e/ at the start, like 'ten'?
 - a. ask
 - b. any
 - c. after
6. Put the words in order (one or more words are not needed): most / the / is / thing / my / about / job / The / best / people.
7. Correct this: *I finded my keys under the sofa.*
8. Which syllable is stressed in **after**? af · ter
9. Governments _____ do more to protect the environment.
 - a. should to
 - b. shoulds
 - c. should

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-81-90/practice/

IELTS tip. In Speaking Part 3, 'I find it difficult to...' and 'governments should...' are natural ways to give an opinion. In Writing, replace vague words like thing with an exact noun.

FOR TEACHERS · COMMON ENGLISH WORDS

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AIM	Students understand, pronounce and use the common English words find, over, any, after, day, where, thing, most, should, need, 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 give three pieces of advice to a visitor to their city, using should, need to and find.
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 five 'th' words (thing, think, through, the, this). Students sort them into voiced and unvoiced.

Answer key

1. b) any. In a negative sentence, use any.
2. a) to. The pattern is 'find it hard to + verb'.
3. b) Most. Most of + plural noun means the majority.
4. Part 3: *does she live* → **she lives**. In an indirect question, use normal order and add -s for she.
5. b) any. Any starts with /e/. After and ask start with /ɑ:/.
6. The best thing about my job is the people. The best thing about + noun + is + the noun.
7. I found my keys under the sofa. The past tense of find is found.
8. **AF**ter. After is stressed on the first syllable: AF-ter.
9. c) should. Should is followed by the base verb with no to.

Questions learners often ask

How do I say the 'th' in thing? Touch the back of your top front teeth with the tip of your tongue and blow air out gently. When you practise slowly, you can let the tip show a little between your teeth. Do not make a voice sound.

Is it most people or the most people? Most people. We use 'the most' only for a superlative, like 'the most important thing'.

When do I use any? Use any in questions and negatives (Do you have any plans? I do not have any plans). In positive sentences use some.

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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