

Pygmalion — Key Vocabulary

by George Bernard Shaw

48 key English words, graded A2–C2 — each with a simple definition and an example. Learn them before you read, or review them after.

A2 words (10)

abandon /ə'bændən/

A2

the trait of lacking restraint or control

“she danced with abandon”

abroad /ə'brɔd/

A2

in a foreign country

“markets abroad”

absence /'æbsəns/

A2

the state of being absent

“he was surprised by the absence of any explanation”

absolutely /,æbsə'lutli/

A2

completely and without qualification

“an absolutely magnificent painting”

academic /,ækə'demɪk/

A2

an educator who works at a college or university

“the academic curriculum”

accompany /ə'kæmpəni/

A2

be present or associated with an event or entity

“French fries come with the hamburger”

accuse /ə'kjuz/

A2

bring an accusation against

“The neighbors accused the man of spousal abuse”

acquire /ək'waɪə/

A2

come into the possession of something concrete or abstract

“She got a lot of paintings from her uncle”

admit /əd'mɪt/

A2

declare to be true or admit the existence or reality or truth of

"He admitted his errors"

adopt /ə'dɒpt/

A2

choose and follow

"She followed the feminist movement"

B1 words (10)

accessible /æk'sesəbəl/

B1

capable of being reached

"a town accessible by rail"

accordingly /ə'kɔrdɪŋli/

B1

(sentence connectors) because of the reason given

"consequently, he didn't do it"

accurate /'ækjərət/

B1

conforming exactly or almost exactly to fact or to a standard or performing with total accuracy

"an accurate reproduction"

adventure /əd'ventʃər/

B1

a wild and exciting undertaking (not necessarily lawful)

"When you buy these stocks you are gambling"

alarm /ə'lɑ:m/

B1

fear resulting from the awareness of danger

"I was horrified at the thought of being late for my interview"

alter /'ɔltər/

B1

cause to change

"The advent of the automobile may have altered the growth pattern of the city"

altogether /,ɔltə'geðər/

B1

informal terms for nakedness

"in the raw"

ambassador /æm'bæsədər/

B1

a diplomat of the highest rank

"an ambassador of good will"

anchor /'æŋkə/

B1

a mechanical device that prevents a vessel from moving

"faith is his anchor"

angle /'æŋgəl/

B1

the space between two lines or planes that intersect

"he angled his way into the room"

B2 words (10)

abruptly /ə'brʌptli/

B2

quickly and without warning

"he stopped suddenly"

absorb /əb'zɔrb/

B2

become imbued

"The liquids, light, and gases absorb"

absurd /əb'sɜrd/

B2

a situation in which life seems irrational and meaningless

"The absurd is the essential concept and the first truth"

absurdity /əb'sɜrdəti/

B2

a message whose content is at variance with reason

"the crowd laughed at the absurdity of the clown's behavior"

accent /'æksənt/

B2

distinctive manner of oral expression

"he couldn't suppress his contemptuous accent"

accessory /æk'sesəri/

B2

clothing that is worn or carried, but not part of your main clothing

"he was charged with being accessory to the crime"

acquaintance /æk'weɪntəns/

B2

personal knowledge or information about someone or something

"I have trouble remembering the names of all my acquaintances"

affection /ə'fekʃən/

B2

a positive feeling of liking

"he had trouble expressing the affection he felt"

affectionate /ə'fekʃənət/

B2

having or displaying warmth or affection

"affectionate children"

afterwards /'æftərwərdz/

B2

happening at a time subsequent to a reference time

"he apologized subsequently"

C1 words (9)

aback /ə'bæk/

C1

having the wind against the forward side of the sails

"the ship came up into the wind with all yards aback"

abate /ə'beɪt/

C1

make less active or intense

"The storm abated"

abysmal /ə'bɪzməl/

C1

very great

"abysmal misery"

accustom /ə'kʌstəm/

C1

make psychologically or physically used (to something)

"She became habituated to the background music"

afterthought /'æftər,θɔ:t/

C1

thinking again about a choice previously made

"he had second thoughts about his purchase"

alliteration /ə'lɪtər,eɪʃən/

C1

use of the same consonant at the beginning of each stressed syllable in a line of verse

"around the rock the ragged rascal ran"

amenity /ə'menəti/

C1

pleasantness resulting from agreeable conditions

"a well trained staff saw to the agreeableness of our accommodations"

amiable /'eɪmiəbəl/

C1

disposed to please

"an amiable villain with a cocky sidelong grin"

apologetically /ə,pələ'dʒɛtɪ,kli/

C1

in an apologetic manner

"he spoke apologetically about his past"

C2 words (9)

abominably

C2

in an offensive and hateful manner

"I don't know anyone who could have behaved so abominably"

accost /ə'kɒst/

C2

speak to someone

"he was solicited by a prostitute"

aggrieve /ə'grɪv/

C2

infringe on the rights of

"his behavior grieves his mother"

appal

C2

strike with disgust or revulsion

"The scandalous behavior of this married woman shocked her friends"

appreciatively /ə'prɪʃjətɪvli/

C2

with appreciation

"he accepted my offer appreciatively"

apprehensiveness

C2

fearful expectation or anticipation

"the student looked around the examination room with apprehension"

barometrical

C2

relating to atmospheric pressure or indicated by a barometer

"barometric pressure"

bewilder /bi'wɪldə/

C2

be a mystery or bewildering to

"This beats me!"

blighter

C2

a persistently annoying person

"that chap is your host"

Read it along with audio — tap any word to hear it and see it highlighted in the sentence:

<https://readingcorner.uk/books/pygmalion/vocabulary>