

The Importance of Being Earnest — Key Vocabulary

by Oscar Wilde

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'brɔ:d/

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'lʊtli/

A2

completely and without qualification

“an absolutely magnificent painting”

abuse /ə'bjuz/

A2

cruel or inhumane treatment

“the child showed signs of physical abuse”

accompany /ə'kæmpəni/

A2

be present or associated with an event or entity

“French fries come with the hamburger”

acquire /ək'waɪə/

A2

come into the possession of something concrete or abstract

“She got a lot of paintings from her uncle”

actual /'æktʃʊəl/

A2

presently existing in fact and not merely potential or possible

"the predicted temperature and the actual temperature were markedly different"

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)

absolute /'æbsə,lʊt/

B1

something that is conceived or that exists independently and not in relation to other things

"no mortal being can influence the absolute"

accurate /'ækjərət/

B1

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

"an accurate reproduction"

adapt /ə'dæpt/

B1

make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose

"Adapt our native cuisine to the available food resources of the new country"

agricultural /,ægrɪ'kʌltʃərəl/

B1

relating to or used in or promoting agriculture or farming

"agricultural engineering"

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 /'ɔ:ltə/

B1

cause to change

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

altogether /,ɔ:ltə'geðə/

B1

informal terms for nakedness

"in the raw"

announcement /ə'naʊnsmənt/

B1

a formal public statement

"the government made an announcement about changes in the drug war"

anxious /'æŋʃəs/

B1

eagerly desirous

"anxious to see the new show at the museum"

assistance /ə'sɪstəns/

B1

the activity of contributing to the fulfillment of a need or furtherance of an effort or purpose

"he gave me an assist with the housework"

B2 words (10)

abstraction /æb'strækʃən/

B2

a concept or idea not associated with any specific instance

"he loved her only in the abstract--not in person"

absurd /əb'sɜːd/

B2

a situation in which life seems irrational and meaningless

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

accurately /'ækjəreɪtli/

B2

with few mistakes

"he works very accurately"

admirable /'ædmərəbəl/

B2

deserving of the highest esteem or admiration

"an estimable young professor"

admission /əd'mɪʃən/

B2

the act of admitting someone to enter

"the surgery was performed on his second admission to the clinic"

adore /ə'dɔːr/

B2

love intensely

"he just adored his wife"

advisable /əd'vaɪzəbəl/

B2

worthy of being recommended or suggested

"such action is neither necessary nor advisable"

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"

absurdly /əb'sərdli/

C1

in an absurd manner or to an absurd degree

"an absurdly rich young woman"

accustom /ə'kəstəm/

C1

make psychologically or physically used (to something)

"She became habituated to the background music"

admirably /'ædmərəbli/

C1

in an admirable manner

"the children's responses were admirably normal"

agitate /'ædʒə'teɪt/

C1

try to stir up public opinion

"The speaker charged up the crowd with his inflammatory remarks"

allude /ə'lud/

C1

make a more or less disguised reference to

"He alluded to the problem but did not mention it"

artistically /ɑr'tɪstɪkli/

C1

in an artistic manner

"it was artistically decorated"

astonishment /ə'stɒnɪʃmənt/

C1

the feeling that accompanies something extremely surprising

"he looked at me in astonishment"

astound /ə'staʊnd/

C1

affect with wonder

"Your ability to speak six languages amazes me!"

C2 words (9)

adjoin /ə'dʒɔɪn/

C2

lie adjacent to another or share a boundary

"Canada adjoins the U.S."

appealingly /ə'piːlɪŋli/

C2

in an appealing manner

"the table was set appealingly"

apprise /ə'praɪz/

C2

inform (somebody) of something

"I advised him that the rent was due"

betoken

C2

be a signal for or a symptom of

"These symptoms indicate a serious illness"

bewilder /bi'wɪldə/

C2

be a mystery or bewildering to

"This beats me!"

conduce

C2

be conducive to

"The use of computers in the classroom lead to better writing"

confidingly

C2

with trust

"she looked at her father trustingly"

convulsively

C2

with convulsions, in a convulsive way

"her leg twitched convulsively"

crape

small very thin pancake

“crape the mirror”

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

<https://readingcorner.uk/books/the-importance-of-being-earnest/vocabulary>