

## Vocabulary Reference: 25 High-Frequency Words

These words appear across most Cambridge past papers. Learn precise, exam-ready synonyms for each.

#	Word	Synonym 1	Synonym 2	Synonym 3
1	<b>significant</b>	considerable	notable	substantial
2	<b>impact</b>	effect	consequence	influence
3	<b>popular</b>	widespread	widely embraced	commonly sought
4	<b>contribute</b>	add to / play a part	play a role	involvement
5	<b>benefit</b>	advantage	gain	positive effect
6	<b>experience</b>	encounter	exposure	opportunity
7	<b>environment</b>	surroundings	natural world	ecosystem
8	<b>local</b>	nearby / neighbouring	community-based	area-specific
9	<b>activity</b>	pursuit	endeavour	venture
10	<b>genuine</b>	authentic / truly	real / actual	in practice
11	<b>support</b>	assist	back	sustain
12	<b>individual</b>	single person	solitary	each person
13	<b>attract</b>	appeal / draw	tempt	pull in
14	<b>demand</b>	desire	appetite	need
15	<b>concern</b>	worry	issue	drawback
16	<b>awareness</b>	understanding	knowledge	consciousness
17	<b>alternative</b>	option	substitute	replacement
18	<b>effective</b>	successful	impactful	useful
19	<b>opportunity</b>	chance	opening	occasion
20	<b>community</b>	neighbourhood	local group	residents
21	<b>damage</b>	harm	destruction	negative impact
22	<b>unique</b>	distinctive	one-of-a-kind	unlike anything else
23	<b>sustainable</b>	eco-friendly	long-lasting	environmentally sound
24	<b>valuable</b>	worthwhile	precious	of great worth
25	<b>promote</b>	encourage	advocate	raise awareness of

## NEGATIVE FEELINGS

### Scared / Frightened

7/7

**SIMPLE:** Afraid / Terrified

Spec S24/11 S24/12 W24/11 W24/12 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Petrified / Panicked

*Also accepted: threatened, intimidated, vulnerable*

### Anxious

6/7

**SIMPLE:** Nervous / Uneasy

S24/11 S24/12 W24/11 W24/12 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Tense / Apprehensive

*Also accepted: wary, cautious, stressed*

### Worried

6/7

**SIMPLE:** Concerned / Troubled

Spec S24/11 W24/11 W24/12 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Disturbed / Distressed

*Also accepted: uncertain, afraid*

### Shocked / Surprised

5/7

**SIMPLE:** Startled / Taken aback

Spec W24/11 W24/12 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Stunned / Astonished

*Also accepted: 'amazed' = positive only*

### Overwhelmed

4/7

**SIMPLE:** Cannot cope / Daunted

S24/12 W24/12 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Stunned / Overloaded

### Confused

3/7

**SIMPLE:** Puzzled / Clueless

W24/11 W24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Perplexed / Bewildered

*Also accepted: flustered, unsettled*

### Unconfident

3/7

**SIMPLE:** Self-doubt / Hesitant

W24/11 W24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Insecure / Unsure

*Also accepted: unprepared*

### Uncomfortable

3/7

**SIMPLE:** Uneasy / Out of place

S24/12 W24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Out of comfort zone / Alienated

*Also accepted: lost, unsafe*

### Vulnerable

3/7

**SIMPLE:** Exposed / Powerless

S24/11 S24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Defenceless / Trapped

*Also accepted: inferior, under pressure*

### Embarrassed

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Awkward / Self-conscious

W24/11 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Ashamed / Humiliated

*Also accepted: silly, flustered*

## Sad

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Sorrowful / Upset

W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Melancholic / Devastated

*Also accepted: loss, pity, mournful*

## Frustrated

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Annoyed / Irritated

W25/12

**EXTREME:** Exasperated / Infuriated

*Also accepted: discouraged, disappointed*

## Angry

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Furious / Cross

Spec

**EXTREME:** Enraged / Livid

## Hopeless

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Pessimistic / Defeated

Spec S24/11

**EXTREME:** In despair / Despondent

## Intimidated

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Threatened / Daunted

S24/11 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Overpowered / Bullied

## Lonely

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Isolated / Alone

S24/11

**EXTREME:** Abandoned / Desolate

## POSITIVE FEELINGS

## Happy

5/7

**SIMPLE:** Glad / Joyful

S24/11 S24/12 W24/11 W24/12 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Ecstatic / Elated

*Also accepted: pleased, content*

## Excited

4/7

**SIMPLE:** Enthusiastic / Eager

Spec W24/11 W24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Thrilled / Exhilarated

*Also accepted: overjoyed*

## Determined

4/7

**SIMPLE:** Focused / Committed

Spec W24/11 W24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Motivated / Driven

*Also accepted: eager, impatient, ready*

## Confident

4/7

**SIMPLE:** Assured / Bold

Spec W24/11 W24/12 W25/11

**EXTREME:** Brave / Fearless

*Also accepted: positive, comfortable*

## Hopeful

4/7

**SIMPLE:** Optimistic / Positive

S24/11 W24/12 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Inspired / Aspirational

*Also accepted: wants to change*

## Impressed / Admiration

4/7

**SIMPLE:** Awed / Fascinated

S24/12 W24/11 W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Mesmerised / Captivated

*Also accepted: in awe*

## Relieved

3/7

**SIMPLE:** Satisfied / Grateful

S24/11 W24/12 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Content / At peace

*Also accepted: protected, thankful*

## Amused

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Entertained / Tickled

W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Hysterical

## Curious

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Interested / Inquisitive

W25/11

**EXTREME:** Intrigued / Engrossed

## Proud

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Pleased / Satisfied

S24/12

**EXTREME:** Honoured

## OTHER / COMPLEX FEELINGS

### Pity / Empathy

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Sympathetic / Compassionate

W25/11 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Heartbroken (for)

*Also accepted: concern, caring*

### Love / Affection

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Adoring / Fond

S24/12 W25/12

**EXTREME:** Devoted / Protective

*Also accepted: close, bond, warmth*

### Nostalgic / Fondness

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Sentimental / Wistful

S24/12

**EXTREME:** Yearning / Longing

*Also accepted: warm memories*

### Disbelief

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Incredulous / Doubtful

Spec W24/12

**EXTREME:** Dumbfounded

*Also accepted: cannot believe it*

### Carefree / Reckless

1/7

**SIMPLE:** Headstrong / Careless

W24/11

**EXTREME:** Wild / Reckless

### Grateful

2/7

**SIMPLE:** Thankful / Appreciative

S24/11 S24/12

**EXTREME:** Indebted

*Also accepted: felt heard, encouraged*

## 1. DANGER / THREAT

ADJECTIVES:

- dangerous
- threatening
- violent
- menacing
- frightening
- intimidating
- aggressive
- ferocious

USED WHEN:

Animals attacking or growling, storms, rough water, physical confrontations, someone in peril, weapons, predators.

- "Roaring, swirling, foaming water"* → the noise is threatening, dangerous, violent, attacking S24/11
- "her bristling tail... tense snake of her spine"* → suggests aggression, anger, sense of danger, threat W24/12
- "stern gaze of the guards"* → intimidating, unfriendly, aggressive S25/12

## 2. POWER / ENERGY

ADJECTIVES:

- powerful
- explosive
- forceful
- relentless
- unrestrained
- unstoppable
- energetic
- vigorous

USED WHEN:

Animals breaking free, volcanoes, eruptions, water rushing, engines, someone running, physical strength, speed.

- "Erupting from the cage"* → energy, speed, freedom, unrestrained, like a volcano, explosive W24/12
- "Her growl... an engine deep in her belly"* → energy, power, comes from within, will keep going, never tire W24/12
- "Splashes of water erupted in all directions"* → force, energy, strength, like explosion(s) W24/11

## 3. BEAUTY / APPEAL

ADJECTIVES:

- beautiful
- captivating
- mesmerising
- enchancing
- stunning
- elegant
- striking
- exquisite

USED WHEN:

Nature descriptions, colourful animals, landscapes, food presentation, craftsmanship, sunsets, flowers, art.

- "eyes, as green as the paddle-shaped plants"* → vivid, striking colours, beautiful, captivating, unique W24/12
- "pomegranate towers... lotus flowers"* → artistic, elaborate, elegant, impressive, luxurious S25/11
- "lacework of branches"* → delicate and beautiful as if crafted Specimen

## 4. CALM / PEACE

ADJECTIVES:

- peaceful
- calm
- serene
- restful
- reassuring
- gentle
- soothing
- tranquil

USED WHEN:

After a storm passes, floating on water, relief moments, safe places, warmth, sunlight, shelter, resting.

- "slow waves rocked us as we rose and we sank"* → sea is gentle, calm, feeling of safety, reassurance, relaxation W24/11
- "basking in the warmth washing over me"* → relaxed, calm, glow of achievement, pleasure, relief W24/11
- "floated onto the glassy waters"* → at ease, restful, slowing down, smooth, shiny W24/11

## 5. CHAOS / DISORDER

ADJECTIVES:

- chaotic    frantic    uncontrolled    overwhelming    desperate    random    wild    reckless

USED WHEN:

Crowds, panic, experiments gone wrong, busy markets, too many things happening, someone losing control.

- "squirming mass of swimmers"* → moving constantly, moving everywhere, hard to distinguish individuals W24/11
- "experimented wildly... without method or purpose"* → no order, random, out of control, unrestrained S24/12
- "increasingly outlandish combinations"* → foolish, desperate, unlikely to work, getting more extreme S24/12

## 6. MYSTERY / OTHERWORLDLY

ADJECTIVES:

- mysterious    surreal    otherworldly    magical    supernatural    timeless    prehistoric  
 enchanting

USED WHEN:

Things appearing suddenly, underwater scenes, ancient landscapes, forests, fog, dreams, entering new worlds.

- "materialised in the doorway"* → suddenly, unexpectedly, as if by magic W24/12
- "reveal a fairy-tale landscape"* → entering an imaginary, fantasy, beautiful, magical, enchanting world S24/11
- "dinosaurs roaming... the land time forgot"* → feels prehistoric, otherworldly, stepped back in time S24/11

## 7. TENSION / DRAMA

ADJECTIVES:

- tense    dramatic    suspenseful    intense    urgent    critical    pivotal    gripping

USED WHEN:

Pauses before action, turning points, moments of decision, countdowns, dangerous choices, silence before events.

- "A pause. Then — she's away!"* → drama, suspense, captures the moment before she moves, it all happens quickly W24/12
- "one huge question pounding my brain"* → it is dangerous, risky, scary — something big is about to happen W24/12
- "He felt gravity go to zero. The world stopped."* → critical, tense moment, anything could happen, potential for disaster Specimen

## 8. UNPLEASANT / NEGATIVE

ADJECTIVES:

- unpleasant    cruel    unnatural    degrading    dismissive    disgusting    oppressive    suffocating

USED WHEN:

Cages, bad conditions, someone treated badly, rotten food, pollution, ugly scenes, contempt, insults.

- "she hadn't looked small; she'd looked squashed"* → cage is too small, cage is cruel, cage is unnatural W24/12
- "a creature incapable of reason"* → inhuman, inferior, worthless, dismissive, scornful S24/12
- "gooey masala trickled slowly down my throat"* → unpleasant, thick, hard to swallow, not as nice as it looked S25/11