

100 Vocabulary Words for High School

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Academic words that appear in textbooks, exams and essays in every subject. Learn about five a day: cover the meaning column and test yourself.

Words for arguments and reasoning (1-20)

#	Word	Meaning	Example
1	advocate (v.)	to publicly support or recommend	She advocates for later school start times.
2	assert (v.)	to state firmly that something is true	The author asserts that homework helps learning.
3	bias (n.)	an unfair preference for or against something	The survey questions showed a clear bias.
4	coherent (adj.)	logical, clear and well organized	Write a coherent argument with a clear thesis.
5	concede (v.)	to admit that something is true, often reluctantly	He conceded that her point was fair.
6	contradict (v.)	to say the opposite of; to be inconsistent with	The new data contradicts the old theory.
7	credible (adj.)	believable; trustworthy	Use credible sources in your research.
8	deduce (v.)	to reach a conclusion by reasoning	From the clues, we deduced who did it.
9	fallacy (n.)	a mistaken belief or a flaw in reasoning	Attacking the speaker is a common fallacy.
10	hypothesis (n.)	a proposed explanation that can be tested	Our hypothesis is that light speeds growth.
11	implication (n.)	a likely consequence; something suggested but not said	Consider the implications of the new law.
12	objective (adj.)	based on facts rather than feelings	Scientists try to stay objective.
13	plausible (adj.)	seeming reasonable or likely	That is a plausible explanation.

#	Word	Meaning	Example
14	premise (n.)	a statement an argument is based on	The argument rests on a false premise.
15	refute (v.)	to prove a statement or argument wrong	She refuted every claim with evidence.
16	rhetoric (n.)	the art of persuasive language; or impressive words without substance	The speech was full of empty rhetoric.
17	skeptical (adj.)	doubtful; not easily convinced	Be skeptical of claims with no sources.
18	subjective (adj.)	based on personal opinions or feelings	Whether a film is good is subjective.
19	substantiate (v.)	to support a claim with evidence	Substantiate your answer with a quote.
20	validate (v.)	to confirm that something is true or correct	The experiment validated our results.

Words for people and behavior (21-40)

#	Word	Meaning	Example
21	ambivalent (adj.)	having mixed feelings	I'm ambivalent about moving to a new school.
22	arrogant (adj.)	having an exaggerated sense of your own importance	His arrogant tone annoyed the team.
23	benevolent (adj.)	kind and generous	A benevolent donor funded the library.
24	candid (adj.)	honest and direct	Thanks for your candid feedback.
25	complacent (adj.)	too satisfied to see the need to improve	The leading team became complacent and lost.
26	conscientious (adj.)	careful and thorough; wanting to do what is right	She is a conscientious student.
27	diligent (adj.)	hard-working and careful	Diligent practice improved his playing.
28	empathy (n.)	the ability to understand and share others' feelings	Good leaders show empathy.

#	Word	Meaning	Example
29	gregarious (adj.)	sociable; enjoying company	Gregarious people enjoy big parties.
30	hypocrite (n.)	someone who does not practice what they preach	He criticized littering, then littered. What a hypocrite.
31	impulsive (adj.)	acting without thinking first	It was an impulsive purchase.
32	indifferent (adj.)	having no interest or concern	She was indifferent to the result.
33	meticulous (adj.)	showing great attention to detail	His lab notes are meticulous.
34	obstinate (adj.)	stubbornly refusing to change your mind	The obstinate child refused to leave.
35	pragmatic (adj.)	practical; focused on what works	We need a pragmatic solution.
36	resilient (adj.)	able to recover quickly from difficulties	Resilient students learn from failure.
37	tenacious (adj.)	persistent; not giving up	The tenacious reporter found the truth.
38	timid (adj.)	shy and lacking confidence	The timid kitten hid under the bed.
39	verbose (adj.)	using more words than needed	Cut verbose sentences from your essay.
40	zealous (adj.)	extremely enthusiastic about a cause	She is a zealous recycler.

Words for change, size and degree (41-60)

#	Word	Meaning	Example
41	abundant (adj.)	existing in large amounts	Water is abundant in the region.
42	accelerate (v.)	to speed up	The car accelerated onto the highway.
43	adapt (v.)	to adjust to new conditions	Species adapt to their environment.
44	arbitrary (adj.)	based on random choice, not reason	The rule seemed arbitrary.
45	comprehensive (adj.)	including everything or nearly everything	We need a comprehensive review.
46	deteriorate (v.)	to become gradually worse	The old bridge has deteriorated.

#	Word	Meaning	Example
47	diminish (v.)	to make or become smaller or less	The pain diminished overnight.
48	ephemeral (adj.)	lasting a very short time	Social media trends are ephemeral.
49	excessive (adj.)	more than is necessary or normal	Excessive screen time hurts sleep.
50	fluctuate (v.)	to rise and fall irregularly	Prices fluctuate during the year.
51	inevitable (adj.)	certain to happen	Change is inevitable.
52	negligible (adj.)	so small it can be ignored	The difference was negligible.
53	obsolete (adj.)	out of date; no longer used	Fax machines are nearly obsolete.
54	prevalent (adj.)	widespread; common	The flu is prevalent in winter.
55	profound (adj.)	very great or deep	The book had a profound effect on me.
56	scarce (adj.)	in short supply	Fresh water is scarce in deserts.
57	stagnant (adj.)	not moving, flowing or growing	Stagnant water attracts mosquitoes.
58	substantial (adj.)	large in size, amount or importance	She made substantial progress.
59	transient (adj.)	lasting only a short time; temporary	The side effects are transient.
60	versatile (adj.)	able to do or be used for many things	A versatile player can fill any position.

Words for reading and analyzing texts (61-80)

#	Word	Meaning	Example
61	allusion (n.)	an indirect reference to another work, person or event	"He met his Waterloo" is a historical allusion.
62	ambiguous (adj.)	open to more than one meaning	The ending is deliberately ambiguous.
63	anecdote (n.)	a short story about a real event	She opened her speech with an anecdote.

#	Word	Meaning	Example
64	concise (adj.)	giving information clearly in few words	Keep your summary concise.
65	connotation (n.)	the feeling a word suggests beyond its literal meaning	"Home" has a warmer connotation than "house."
66	didactic (adj.)	intended to teach, often a moral lesson	Fables are didactic stories.
67	euphemism (n.)	a mild word used in place of a harsh one	"Passed away" is a euphemism for "died."
68	foreshadowing (n.)	hints about what will happen later in a story	The storm is foreshadowing of trouble.
69	infer (v.)	to conclude from evidence rather than direct statements	What can you infer about the narrator?
70	irony (n.)	a contrast between what is expected and what happens	A fire station burning down is ironic.
71	juxtaposition (n.)	placing two things side by side to show contrast	The juxtaposition of wealth and poverty is striking.
72	metaphor (n.)	a comparison that says one thing is another	"Time is a thief" is a metaphor.
73	narrative (n.)	a story or account of events	Write a personal narrative.
74	nuance (n.)	a subtle difference in meaning or feeling	Translation can lose nuance.
75	paradox (n.)	a statement that seems contradictory but may be true	"Less is more" is a paradox.
76	satire (n.)	humor or exaggeration used to criticize	The show is a satire of politics.
77	succinct (adj.)	brief and clearly expressed	Give a succinct answer.
78	synthesize (v.)	to combine ideas into a whole	Synthesize three sources in your essay.
79	theme (n.)	the central idea or message of a work	A key theme is the cost of ambition.
80	tone (n.)	the writer's attitude toward the subject	The tone of the letter is bitter.

Academic words for every subject (81-100)

#	Word	Meaning	Example
81	analyze (v.)	to examine something in detail	Analyze the data in the table.
82	anomaly (n.)	something that differs from what is normal	One result was an anomaly.
83	catalyst (n.)	something that causes or speeds up change	The protest was a catalyst for reform.
84	coincide (v.)	to happen at the same time	The exam coincides with the trip.
85	consensus (n.)	general agreement	The group reached a consensus.
86	criteria (n.)	standards used to judge something (singular: criterion)	Check the grading criteria.
87	derive (v.)	to obtain from a source	Many English words derive from Latin.
88	discrepancy (n.)	a difference between things that should match	There is a discrepancy in the totals.
89	empirical (adj.)	based on observation or experiment	We need empirical evidence.
90	feasible (adj.)	possible and practical to do	Is the plan feasible on our budget?
91	inherent (adj.)	existing as a natural, permanent part	Every sport has inherent risks.
92	mitigate (v.)	to make less severe	Trees mitigate summer heat in cities.
93	phenomenon (n.)	an observable event or fact (plural: phenomena)	Rainbows are an optical phenomenon.
94	precedent (n.)	an earlier event used as an example or rule	The case set a legal precedent.
95	preliminary (adj.)	coming before the main part; initial	These are preliminary results.
96	qualitative (adj.)	describing qualities rather than numbers	Interviews give qualitative data.

#	Word	Meaning	Example
97	quantitative (adj.)	involving measurements or numbers	Test scores are quantitative data.
98	redundant (adj.)	not needed; repeating something unnecessarily	"Free gift" is redundant.
99	sufficient (adj.)	enough	Is there sufficient evidence?
100	viable (adj.)	able to work successfully	Solar power is a viable option.

Vocabulary quiz (20 questions)

Part A: Choose the best meaning

1. **refute** — (a) to repeat (b) to prove wrong (c) to refuse to answer (d) to agree
2. **ephemeral** — (a) lasting a very short time (b) very large (c) imaginary (d) ancient
3. **meticulous** — (a) careless (b) very small (c) very careful about details (d) musical
4. **prevalent** — (a) rare (b) widespread (c) previous (d) powerful
5. **ambiguous** — (a) open to more than one meaning (b) ambitious (c) obvious (d) able to use both hands
6. **mitigate** — (a) to make worse (b) to move away (c) to make less severe (d) to measure
7. **candid** — (a) sweet (b) honest and direct (c) secretive (d) rude
8. **obsolete** — (a) out of date (b) required (c) hidden (d) brand new

Part B: Fill in the blank

Use: *concede, catalyst, negligible, skeptical, succinct, empirical*

9. The difference in price was _____, so we bought the nicer one.
10. Scientists rely on _____ evidence from experiments.
11. After seeing the replay, the coach had to _____ that the call was right.
12. Be _____ of headlines that sound too good to be true.
13. The new principal was a _____ for big changes at the school.
14. Your conclusion should be _____: two or three sentences.

Part C: Opposites

Match each word with its opposite: *subjective, abundant, timid, diminish, impulsive, coherent*

15. objective ↔ _____
16. scarce ↔ _____
17. confident ↔ _____

18. increase ↔ _____

19. cautious ↔ _____

20. confused ↔ _____

Answer Key (Teacher Copy)

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Part A: 1 (b), 2 (a), 3 (c), 4 (b), 5 (a), 6 (c), 7 (b), 8 (a)

Part B: 9 negligible, 10 empirical, 11 concede, 12 skeptical, 13 catalyst, 14 succinct

Part C: 15 subjective, 16 abundant, 17 timid, 18 diminish, 19 impulsive, 20 coherent

Scoring: 18–20 excellent · 14–17 good, review the words you missed · below 14, study one theme a day and try again next week.