



English GCSE – Level 9 Ready

100 words to sharpen your expression

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world” - Ludwig Wittgenstein

Which of these words are in your (a) **active** vocabulary, (b) **passive** vocabulary, or (c) are not familiar to you?

1. aberration	35. enmity	69.	morose
2. abhor	36. erudite	70.	myriad
3. acquiesce	37. extol	71.	nadir
4. alacrity	38. fabricate	72.	nominal
5. amiable	39. feral	73.	novice
6. appease	40. forsake	74.	nuance
7. arcane	41. fractious	75.	oblivious
8. avarice	42. furtive	76.	obsequious
9. brazen	43. gluttony	77.	obtuse
10. brusque	44. gratuitous	78.	panacea
11. cajole	45. haughty	79.	parody
12. callous	46. hypocrisy	80.	penchant
13. candour	47. impeccable	81.	perusal
14. chide	48. impertinent	82.	plethora
15. circumspect	49. implacable	83.	predilection
16. clandestine	50. implicit	84.	quaint
17. coerce	51. impudent	85.	rash
18. coherent	52. incisive	86.	refurbish
19. complacency	53. indolent	87.	repudiate
20. confidant	54. inept	88.	rife
21. connive	55. infamy	89.	salient
22. cumulative	56. inhibit	90.	serendipity
23. cynical	57. innate	91.	staid
24. debase	58. insatiable	92.	superfluous
25. decry	59. insular	93.	sycophant
26. deferential	60. intrepid	94.	taciturn
27. demure	61. inveterate	95.	truculent
28. deride	62. jubilant	96.	umbrage
29. despot	63. lithe	97.	venerable
30. diligent	64. lurid	98.	vociferous
31. elated	65. maverick	99.	wanton
32. eloquent	66. maxim	100.	zenith
33. embezzle	67. meticulous		
34. empathy	68. modicum		

**aberration**

(n). something that differs from the norm (In 1974, Poland won the World Cup, but the success turned out to be an aberration, and Poland have not won a World Cup since).

abhor

(v). to hate, detest (Because he always wound up getting hit in the head when he tried to play cricket, Marcin began to abhor the sport).

acquiesce

(v). to agree without protesting (Though Mr. Pospieszny wanted to stay outside and work in his garage, when his wife told him that he had better come in to dinner, he acquiesced to her demands).

alacrity

(n). eagerness, speed (For some reason, Simon loved to help his girlfriend whenever he could, so when his girlfriend asked him to set the table he did so with alacrity).

amiable

(adj). friendly (An amiable fellow, Neil got along with just about everyone).

appease

(v). to calm, satisfy (When Jerry cries, his mother gives him chocolate to appease him).

arcane

(adj). obscure, secret, known only by a few (The professor is an expert in arcane Scottish literature).

avarice

(n). excessive greed (The banker's avarice led him to amass an enormous personal fortune).

brazen

(adj). excessively bold, brash, clear and obvious (Critics condemned the writer's brazen attempt to plagiarise Frankow-Czerwonko's work).

brusque

(adj). short, abrupt, dismissive (Simon's brusque manner sometimes offends his colleagues).

cajole

(v). to urge, coax (Magda's friends cajoled her into drinking too much).

callous

(adj). harsh, cold, unfeeling (The murderer's callous lack of remorse shocked the jury).

**candour**

(n). honesty, frankness (We were surprised by the candour of the politician's speech because she is usually rather evasive).

chide

(v). to voice disapproval (Hania chided Gregory for his vulgar habits and sloppy appearance).

circumspect

(adj). cautious (Though I promised Marta's father I would bring her home promptly by midnight, it would have been more circumspect not to have specified a time).

clandestine

(adj). secret (Announcing to her boyfriend that she was going to the library, Maria actually went to meet George for a clandestine liaison).

coerce

(v). to make somebody do something by force or threat (The court decided that David Beckham did not have to honour the contract because he had been coerced into signing it).

coherent

(adj). logically consistent, intelligible (William could not figure out what Harold had seen because he was too distraught to deliver a coherent statement).

complacency

(n). self-satisfied ignorance of danger (Simon tried to shock his friends out of their complacency by painting a frightening picture of what might happen to them).

confidant

(n). a person entrusted with secrets (Shortly after we met, he became my chief confidant).

connive

(v). to plot, scheme (She connived to get me to give up my plans to start up a new business).

cumulative

(adj). increasing, building upon itself (The cumulative effect of hours spent using the World English website was a vast improvement in his vocabulary and general level of English).

cynical

(adj). believing the worst of others, esp that all acts are selfish (She was cynical about whether politicians genuinely do good deeds for others rather than for publicity).

**debase**

(v). to lower the quality or esteem of something (The large raise that he gave himself debased his motives for running the charity).

decry

(v). to criticize openly (Andrzej Lepper, the leader of the Polish Self Defence party decried the appaling state of Polish roads).

deferential

(adj). showing respect for another's authority (Donata is always excessively deferential to any kind of authority figure).

demure

(adj). quiet, modest, reserved (Though everyone else at the party was dancing and going crazy, she remained demure).

deride

(v). to laugh at mockingly, scorn (The native speaker often derided the other teacher's accent).

despot

(n). one who has total power and rules brutally (The despot issued a death sentence for anyone who disobeyed his laws).

diligent

(adj). showing care in doing one's work (The diligent researcher made sure to double check her measurements).

elated

(adj). overjoyed, thrilled (When he found out he had won the lottery, the postman was elated).

eloquent

(adj). expressive, articulate, moving (The best man gave such an eloquent speech that most guests were crying).

embezzle

(v). to steal money by falsifying records (The accountant was fired for embezzling €10,000 of the company's funds).

empathy

(n). sensitivity to another's feelings as if they were one's own (I feel such empathy for my dog when she's upset so am !!)

enmity

(n). ill will, hatred, hostility (John and Scott have clearly not forgiven each other, because the enmity between them is obvious to anyone in their presence).

**erudite**

(adj). learned (My English teacher is such an erudite scholar that he has translated some of the most difficult and abstruse Old English poetry).

extol

(v). to praise, revere (Kamila extolled the virtues of a vegetarian diet to her meat-loving boyfriend).

fabricate

(v). to make up, invent (When I arrived an hour late to class, I fabricated some excuse about my car breaking down on the way to work).

feral

(adj). wild, savage (That beast looks so feral that I would fear being alone with it).

forsake

(v). to give up, renounce (I won't forsake my conservative principles).

fractious

(adj). troublesome or irritable (Although the child insisted he wasn't tired, his fractious behaviour - especially his decision to crush his jam sandwiches all over the floor - convinced everyone present that it was time to put him to bed).

furtive

(adj). secretive, sly (Claudia's placement of her drugs in her sock drawer was not as furtive as she thought, as the sock drawer is the first place most parents look).

gluttony

(n). overindulgence in food or drink (Helen's fried chicken tastes so divine, I don't know how anyone can call gluttony a sin).

gratuitous

(adj). uncalled for, unwarranted (Every evening the guy at the fish and chip shop gives me a gratuitous helping of vinegar).

haughty

(adj). disdainfully proud (The superstar's haughty dismissal of her co-stars will backfire on her someday).

hypocrisy

(n). pretending to believe what one does not (Once the politician began passing legislation that contradicted his campaign promises, his hypocrisy became apparent).

impeccable

(adj). exemplary, flawless (If your grades were as impeccable as your brother's, then you too would receive a car for a graduation present).

**impertinent**

(*adj.*) rude, insolent (Most of your comments are so *impertinent* that I don't wish to dignify them with an answer).

implacable

(*adj.*) incapable of being appeased or mitigated (Watch out: once you shun Grandmother's cooking, she is totally *implacable*).

implicit

(*n.*) Implied or understood without being directly stated (The way she stuck with him showed her *implicit* trust in his abilities)

impudent

(*adj.*) casually rude, insolent, impertinent (The *impudent* young woman looked her teacher up and down and told him he was hot).

incisive

(*adj.*) clear, sharp, direct (The discussion wasn't going anywhere until her *incisive* comment allowed everyone to see what the true issues were).

indolent

(*adj.*) lazy (Why should my *indolent* children, who can't even pick themselves up off the sofa to pour their own juice, be rewarded with a trip to Burger King?)

Inept

(*adj.*) not suitable or capable, unqualified (She proved how *inept* she was when she forgot two orders and spilled a pint of cider in a customer's lap).

infamy

(*n.*) notoriety, extreme ill repute (The *infamy* of his crime will not lessen as time passes).

inhibit

(*v.*) to prevent, restrain, stop (When I told you I needed the car last night, I certainly never meant to *inhibit* you from going out).

innate

(*adj.*) inborn, native, inherent (His incredible athletic talent is *innate*, he never trains, lifts weights, or practices).

insatiable

(*adj.*) incapable of being satisfied (My *insatiable* appetite for blondes was a real problem on my recent holiday in Japan!)

insular

(*adj.*) separated and narrow-minded; tight-knit, closed off (Because of the sensitive nature of their jobs, those who work for MI5 must remain *insular* and generally only spend time with each other).

**intrepid**

(*adj.*) brave in the face of danger (After scaling a live volcano prior to its eruption, the explorer was praised for his *intrepid* attitude).

inveterate

(*adj.*) stubbornly established by habit (I'm the first to admit that I'm an *inveterate* cider drinker—I drink four pints a day).

jubilant

(*adj.*) extremely joyful, happy (The crowd was *jubilant* when the firefighter carried the woman from the flaming building).

lithe

(*adj.*) graceful, flexible, supple (Although the dancers were all outstanding, Joanna's control of her *lithe* body was particularly impressive).

lurid

(*adj.*) ghastly, sensational (Barry's story, in which he described a character torturing his neighbour's tortoise, was judged too *lurid* to be published on the English Library's website).

maverick

(*n.*) an independent, nonconformist person (John is a real *maverick* and always does things his own way).

maxim

(*n.*) a common saying expressing a principle of conduct (Ms. Stone's etiquette *maxims* are both entertaining and instructional).

meticulous

(*adj.*) extremely careful with details (The ornate needlework in the bride's gown was a product of *meticulous* handiwork).

modicum

(*n.*) a small amount of something (Refusing to display even a *modicum* of sensitivity, Magda announced her boss's affair to the entire office).

morose

(*adj.*) gloomy or sullen (David's *morose* nature made him very unpleasant to talk to).

myriad

(*adj.*) consisting of a very great number (It was difficult to decide what to do on Saturday night because the city presented us with *myriad* possibilities for fun).

nadir

(*n.*) the lowest point of something (My day was boring, but the *nadir* came when my new car was stolen).

**nominal**

(adj). trifling, insignificant (Because he was moving the following week and needed to get rid of his furniture more than he needed money, Kim sold everything for a nominal price).

novice

(n). a beginner, someone without training or experience (Because we were all novices at archery, our instructor decided to begin with the basics)

nuance

(n). a slight variation in meaning, tone, expression (The nuances of the poem were not obvious to the casual reader, but the teacher was able to point them out).

oblivious

(adj). lacking consciousness or awareness of something (Oblivious to the burning smell emanating from the kitchen, my father did not notice that the rolls in the oven were burned until much too late).

obsequious

(adj). excessively compliant or submissive (Donald acted like Susan's servant, obeying her every request in an obsequious manner).

obtuse

(adj). lacking quickness of sensibility or intellect (Political opponents warned that the prime minister's obtuse approach to foreign policy would embroil the nation in mindless war).

panacea

(n). a remedy for all ills or difficulties (Doctors wish there was a single panacea for every disease, but sadly there is not).

parody

(n). a satirical imitation (A hush fell over the classroom when the teacher returned to find Magdalena acting out a parody of his teaching style).

penchant

(n). a tendency, partiality, preference (Fiona's dinner parties quickly became monotonous on account of her penchant for Indian dishes).

perusal

(n). a careful examination, review (The actor agreed to accept the role after a three-month perusal of the movie script).

plethora

(n). an abundance, excess (The wedding banquet included a plethora of oysters piled almost three feet high).

**predilection**

(n). a preference or inclination for something (James has a predilection for eating toad-in-the-hole with tomato ketchup).

quaint

(adj). charmingly old-fashioned (Mary was delighted by the quaint bonnets she saw in Romania).

rash

(adj). hasty, incautious (It's best to think things over calmly and thoroughly, rather than make rash decisions).

refurbish

(v). to restore, clean up (After being refurbished the old Triumph motorcycle commanded the handsome price of \$6000).

repudiate

(v). to reject, refuse to accept (Tom made a strong case for an extension of his curfew, but his mother repudiated it with a few biting words).

rife

(adj). abundant (Surprisingly, the teacher's writing was rife with spelling errors).

salient

(adj). significant, conspicuous (One of the salient differences between Alison and Helen is that Alison is a couple of kilos heavier).

serendipity

(n). luck, finding good things without looking for them (In an amazing bit of serendipity, penniless Mark found a \$50 bill on the back seat of the bus).

staid

(adj). sedate, serious, self-restrained (The staid butler never changed his expression no matter what happened).

superfluous

(adj). exceeding what is necessary (Samantha had already won the campaign so her constant flattery of others was superfluous).

sycophant

(n). one who flatters for self-gain (Some see the people in the cabinet as the Prime Minister's closest advisors, but others see them as sycophants).

taciturn

(adj). not inclined to talk (Though Magda never seems to stop talking, her brother is quite taciturn).

**truculent**

(*adj.*) ready to fight, cruel (This club doesn't really attract the dangerous types, so why was that bouncer being so truculent?)

umbrage

(*n.*) resentment, offence (He called me a lily-livered coward, and I took umbrage at the insult).

venerable

(*adj.*) deserving of respect because of age or achievement (The venerable High Court judge had made several key rulings in landmark cases throughout the years).

vociferous

(*adj.*) loud, boisterous (I'm tired of his vociferous whining so I'm breaking up with him).

wanton

(*adj.*) undisciplined, lewd, lustful (Joanna's wanton demeanor often made the frat guys next door very excited).

zenith

(*n.*) the highest point, culminating point (I was too nice to tell Emily that she had reached the absolute zenith of her career with that one top 10 hit of hers).