

VOCABULARY BUILDER · IELTS

Media

23 high-band words to read, understand,
and actually use – from B2 to C2.

B2

C1

C2

How to use this pack

A word you can only recognise is not yet a word you own. This pack is built to move each term from “I’ve seen it” to “I can use it under exam pressure.” Work through it in order.

1 Test yourself first

Go straight to the **Before** page and write what you think each word means. Don’t look ahead — this is your baseline.

2 Study the word bank

Read each entry: the definition, the example sentence, the collocations and the word family. The example is the most important part — it shows the word alive in context.

3 Do the tasks

Gap-fill, matching, word formation, a full IELTS-style reading, and speaking & writing practice. Use a pencil so you can redo them.

4 Test yourself again

Return to the **After** page and write the meanings from memory. Compare with your baseline — that gap is your progress.

HOW TO READ AN ENTRY

noun / verb / adjective

part of speech

B2 · C1 · C2

CEFR difficulty level

/ˈsɪmbəl/

pronunciation (IPA)

e.g.

example sentence in context

↔

opposite / contrast

What do you already know?

BEFORE

Before you read a single definition, write what you think each word means — even a rough guess or a synonym. Tick how sure you are. This is your honest starting point; you'll come back at the end to measure how far you've moved.

#	WORD	SURE? know · unsure · new	WHAT I THINK IT MEANS
1	journalism	☐ ☐ ☐	
2	broadcast	☐ ☐ ☐	
3	censorship	☐ ☐ ☐	
4	bias	☐ ☐ ☐	
5	propaganda	☐ ☐ ☐	
6	sensationalism	☐ ☐ ☐	
7	coverage	☐ ☐ ☐	
8	tabloid	☐ ☐ ☐	
9	advertising	☐ ☐ ☐	
10	influencer	☐ ☐ ☐	
11	credibility	☐ ☐ ☐	
12	scrutiny	☐ ☐ ☐	
13	objectivity	☐ ☐ ☐	
14	viral	☐ ☐ ☐	
15	outlet	☐ ☐ ☐	
16	manipulate	☐ ☐ ☐	
17	correspondent	☐ ☐ ☐	
18	editorial	☐ ☐ ☐	
19	mainstream	☐ ☐ ☐	
20	transparency	☐ ☐ ☐	
21	defamation	☐ ☐ ☐	
22	speculation	☐ ☐ ☐	
23	hype	☐ ☐ ☐	

The word bank

Twenty-three words, chosen for how often they earn marks in IELTS Writing Task 2 and Speaking Part 3. Read the example sentence aloud – that is where the meaning sticks.

1 journalism /'dʒɜːnəlɪzəm/

noun

B2

The activity of collecting and reporting news for newspapers, TV, radio or online.

e.g. Good **journalism** holds those in power to account.

COLLOCATIONS

investigative / quality journalism

WORD FAMILY

journalist (n), journalistic (adj)

2 broadcast /'brɔːdkɑːst/

verb / noun

B2

To send out a programme on television or radio; a programme that is sent out.

e.g. The match was **broadcast** live to millions of viewers.

COLLOCATIONS

broadcast live • a news broadcast

WORD FAMILY

broadcaster (n), broadcasting (n)

3 censorship /'sensəʃɪp/

noun

C1

The practice of officially controlling or banning parts of books, films, news or online content.

e.g. Strict **censorship** prevents journalists from reporting freely.

COLLOCATIONS

media / state censorship • impose censorship

WORD FAMILY

censor (v/n)

IELTS Central to “freedom of the press” essays – contrast it with “freedom of expression”.

4 **bias** /'baɪəs/

noun

C1

An unfair preference for or against a person, group or idea that affects reporting.

e.g. Readers should be aware of the political **bias** of the newspapers they read.

COLLOCATIONS

media / political bias • show bias

WORD FAMILY

biased (adj) • opp. impartiality

IELTS

A must-have for essays on media reliability — “media bias”, “a biased report”.

5 **propaganda** /ˌprɒpə'gændə/

noun

C1

Information, often false or one-sided, spread to promote a political cause or point of view.

e.g. During the war, both sides used **propaganda** to influence public opinion.

COLLOCATIONS

state / political propaganda • spread propaganda

WORD FAMILY

—

6 **sensationalism** /sen'seɪʃənəlɪzəm/

noun

C2

The use of shocking or exaggerated stories to attract attention, at the expense of accuracy.

e.g. Critics accuse some outlets of **sensationalism**, putting drama before the truth.

COLLOCATIONS

tabloid sensationalism

WORD FAMILY

sensational (adj), sensationalise (v)

7 coverage /'kʌvərɪdʒ/

noun

B2

The reporting of a particular event or subject by the media.

e.g. The election received round-the-clock **coverage** on every channel.

COLLOCATIONS

news / media coverage • extensive coverage

WORD FAMILY

cover (v)

8 tabloid /'tæblɔɪd/

noun

C1

A smaller-format newspaper focusing on sensational stories, celebrity news and scandal.

e.g. The **tabloids** ran the story on their front pages for a week.

COLLOCATIONS

the tabloid press • a tabloid headline

WORD FAMILY

— • cf. broadsheet

9 advertising /'ædvətaɪzɪŋ/

noun

B2

The business or activity of telling the public about products or services to encourage sales.

e.g. Much of the internet is funded by targeted **advertising**.

COLLOCATIONS

online / targeted advertising • an advertising campaign

WORD FAMILY

advertise (v), advertisement (n), advertiser (n)

10 influencer /'Influ:ənsə/

noun

B2

A person who has built a large online following and can shape their audience's opinions or purchases.

e.g. Brands now pay **influencers** to promote products to their followers.

COLLOCATIONS

a social-media influencer

WORD FAMILY

influence (v/n), influential (adj)

11 credibility /,kredə'bɪləti/

noun

C1

The quality of being trusted and believed in.

e.g. A single false story can destroy a news outlet's **credibility**.

COLLOCATIONS

lose / gain credibility • journalistic credibility

WORD FAMILY

credible (adj)

IELTS Useful well beyond media – "this undermines the credibility of the argument".

12 scrutiny /'skru:təni/

noun

C1

Careful and critical examination.

e.g. Public figures must expect their private lives to come under media **scrutiny**.

COLLOCATIONS

come under scrutiny • close / public scrutiny

WORD FAMILY

scrutinise (v)

IELTS A high-band noun – "under intense scrutiny" works in almost any essay.

13 objectivity /ˌɒbdʒek'tɪvəti/

noun

C1

The quality of reporting facts fairly, without letting personal feelings interfere.

e.g. Reporters are trained to preserve **objectivity**, however strong their own views.

COLLOCATIONS

journalistic objectivity • maintain objectivity

WORD FAMILY

objective (adj/n) · opp. subjectivity

14 viral /'vaɪrəl/

adjective

B2

(of online content) spreading very quickly and widely among internet users.

e.g. The clip went **viral**, gaining ten million views in a single day.

COLLOCATIONS

go viral • a viral video

WORD FAMILY

virally (adv)

15 outlet /'aʊtlet/

noun

C1

A particular newspaper, channel or website that publishes news.

e.g. The story was picked up by every major news **outlet**.

COLLOCATIONS

a news / media outlet

WORD FAMILY

—

16 **manipulate** /mə'nɪpjuleɪt/

verb

C1

To control or influence people cleverly or unfairly, often without their knowledge.

e.g. Advertisers know how to **manipulate** our emotions to sell products.

COLLOCATIONS

manipulate opinion / people / images

WORD FAMILY

manipulation (n), manipulative (adj)

17 **correspondent** /ˌkɒrə'spɒndənt/

noun

C1

A journalist who reports on a particular subject or from a particular place.

e.g. The channel's foreign **correspondent** reported live from the capital.

COLLOCATIONS

a foreign / war correspondent

WORD FAMILY

—

18 **editorial** /ˌedɪ'tɔːriəl/

noun

C1

An article giving a newspaper's or editor's opinion on an issue; (adj) relating to editing.

e.g. The paper's **editorial** called for urgent reform.

COLLOCATIONS

an editorial column • editorial independence

WORD FAMILY

editor (n), edit (v)

19 mainstream /'meɪnstri:m/

adjective

B2

Representing the ideas and opinions accepted by most people; the major, established media.

e.g. The story was ignored by the **mainstream** media for weeks.

COLLOCATIONS

mainstream media / opinion

WORD FAMILY

— · opp. alternative

20 transparency /træns'pærənsi/

noun

C1

The quality of being open and honest, so that actions can be easily seen and checked.

e.g. Audiences increasingly demand **transparency** about how news is funded.

COLLOCATIONS

greater transparency · financial transparency

WORD FAMILY

transparent (adj) · opp. secrecy

21 defamation /,defə'meɪʃn/

noun

C2

The act of damaging someone's reputation by saying or writing untrue things.

e.g. The actor sued the magazine for **defamation**.

COLLOCATIONS

a defamation case / lawsuit

WORD FAMILY

defame (v), defamatory (adj)

22 speculation /ˌspekjuˈleɪʃn/

noun

C1

The forming of opinions or guesses without firm evidence.

e.g. The company refused to comment, fuelling **speculation** about a merger.

COLLOCATIONS

fuel / spark speculation • wild speculation

WORD FAMILY

speculate (v), speculative (adj)

23 hype /haɪp/

noun

C1

Intense, often exaggerated promotion or publicity designed to create excitement.

e.g. Despite all the **hype**, the film disappointed audiences.

COLLOCATIONS

media hype • live up to the hype

WORD FAMILY

hype (v), hyped (adj)

Task 1 · Gap-fill

Complete each sentence with a word from the bank. You may need to change the form (tense, ending). Each word is used once.

advertising

bias

censorship

coverage

credibility

defamation

hype

manipulate

propaganda

scrutiny

speculation

viral

1. In some countries, strict _____ prevents newspapers from criticising the government.
2. Every outlet has some degree of political _____, whether it admits it or not.
3. The homemade video went _____ within hours of being posted.
4. The scandal received wall-to-wall _____ on every channel.
5. Clever editing can _____ how viewers interpret an event.
6. Publishing false stories quickly destroys a paper's _____.
7. The regime used state television to spread _____.
8. The product failed to live up to the enormous _____ surrounding its launch.
9. Politicians' finances are rightly placed under public _____.
10. The company's silence only fuelled _____ about job cuts.
11. Most social-media platforms make their money from targeted _____.
12. She threatened to sue the website for _____.

Task 2 · Match the meaning

Write the letter of the correct definition next to each word.

1 journalism	☐	a a person with a large online following who shapes opinions
2 broadcast	☐	b to send out a TV or radio programme
3 sensationalism	☐	c a reporter covering a place or subject
4 tabloid	☐	d collecting and reporting news
5 influencer	☐	e accepted by most people; the established media
6 objectivity	☐	f using shocking stories to grab attention
7 outlet	☐	g a particular newspaper, channel or website
8 correspondent	☐	h a newspaper focused on scandal and celebrity
9 editorial	☐	i an article giving a paper's opinion
10 mainstream	☐	j reporting facts fairly, without personal feelings

Task 3 · Word formation

Change the word in **CAPITALS** into the correct form to complete each sentence.

1. **JOURNALISM** She dreams of becoming a war _____.
2. **CENSOR** Wartime reports were heavily _____ before publication.
3. **BIAS** The coverage was clearly _____ towards one side.
4. **INFLUENCE** Celebrity endorsements can be surprisingly _____.
5. **OBJECTIVE** Reporters must strive for _____ at all times.
6. **SENSATIONAL** The tabloids tend to _____ even the smallest events.
7. **CREDIBLE** Without evidence, the claim simply isn't _____.
8. **ADVERTISE** The company spent millions on _____ last year.

Task 4 · Reading in context

Read the passage, then answer the questions. This mirrors an IELTS reading set – notice how many of your new words appear naturally.

The News in Your Pocket

A generation ago, most people got their news from a handful of newspapers and television channels. Today, millions receive it through a phone, scrolling past headlines shared by friends and strangers alike. This change has brought real benefits: news now travels faster than ever, and ordinary citizens can report events that the mainstream media might ignore.

However, the same speed has a darker side. When a dramatic story can go viral in minutes, there is little time to check whether it is true. Some websites deliberately use sensationalism to attract clicks, and the pressure to be first can damage the credibility of even respected outlets. Because anyone can publish, readers must judge for themselves which sources deserve their trust.

Concerns about bias have grown too. Critics argue that many platforms show users only the opinions they already hold, narrowing rather than broadening their view of the world. Because advertising revenue depends on attention, the most extreme voices are often the loudest.

None of this means the old media were perfect, or that the new ones are worthless. Rather, it places a greater responsibility on the audience. Learning to question a headline, check a source and recognise propaganda has become an essential skill. In an age of endless information, the ability to tell reliable journalism from noise may matter more than the news itself.

Questions 1–5 · True / False / Not Given

TRUE = the passage says so. **FALSE** = the passage says the opposite. **NOT GIVEN** = the passage doesn't say.

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------|
| 1 | In the past, people relied on only a few news sources. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2 | Online news is always more accurate than traditional news. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3 | The passage states which website is the most popular for news. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4 | Advertising on these platforms depends on gaining attention. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5 | The writer thinks traditional media were completely flawless. | T / F / NG |

Questions 6–9 · Vocabulary in context

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| 6 | Find a word/phrase meaning: spreading very quickly online | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7 | Find a word/phrase meaning: using shocking stories to attract attention | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8 | Find a word/phrase meaning: an unfair preference that affects reporting | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 9 | Find a word/phrase meaning: the quality of being trusted and believed | _____ |

Task 5 · Use it yourself

Recognising a word is easy; producing it is what raises your band. Answer out loud, then in writing.

SPEAK Speaking — Part 3 style

Answer each question in 3–4 sentences. Try to use the words in **bold** accurately.

1. Do you think there is too much **bias** in the news today?
2. Should governments ever be allowed to use **censorship** on the media?
3. How much **influence** do social-media **influencers** really have?
4. Is **advertising** a fair way to fund free news and websites?

WRITE Writing — Task 2 mini

Write an introduction and one body paragraph (about 80–100 words) for this prompt. Use **at least four** words from this pack.

Some people think social media has made traditional **journalism** less important, while others believe reliable **journalism** matters more than ever. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Now, from memory

AFTER

Cover the word bank. Write each meaning from memory and tick the box only if you could also use the word in your own sentence. Compare this page with your **Before** page – every word you can now explain is a mark you've earned.

#	WORD	MEANING (FROM MEMORY)	CAN USE IT
1	journalism		☐
2	broadcast		☐
3	censorship		☐
4	bias		☐
5	propaganda		☐
6	sensationalism		☐
7	coverage		☐
8	tabloid		☐
9	advertising		☐
10	influencer		☐
11	credibility		☐
12	scrutiny		☐
13	objectivity		☐
14	viral		☐
15	outlet		☐
16	manipulate		☐
17	correspondent		☐
18	editorial		☐
19	mainstream		☐
20	transparency		☐
21	defamation		☐
22	speculation		☐
23	hype		☐

Answer key

TASK 1 · GAP-FILL

1 censorship 2 bias 3 viral 4 coverage 5 manipulate 6 credibility 7 propaganda 8 hype 9 scrutiny
10 speculation 11 advertising 12 defamation

TASK 2 · MATCHING

1 d 2 b 3 f 4 h 5 a 6 j 7 g 8 c 9 i 10 e

TASK 3 · WORD FORMATION

1 journalist 2 censored 3 biased 4 influential 5 objectivity 6 sensationalise 7 credible 8 advertising

TASK 4 · TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN

1 TRUE 2 FALSE 3 NOT GIVEN 4 TRUE 5 FALSE

TASK 4 · VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

6 viral 7 sensationalism 8 bias 9 credibility



Nicely done. Revisit this pack in a week and again in a month — spaced review is what turns a recognised word into an automatic one. More themed packs at prepex.ai.