

VOCABULARY BUILDER · IELTS

Family & Society

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	upbringing	☐ ☐ ☐	
2	household	☐ ☐ ☐	
3	sibling	☐ ☐ ☐	
4	nurture	☐ ☐ ☐	
5	cohesion	☐ ☐ ☐	
6	generation gap	☐ ☐ ☐	
7	norm	☐ ☐ ☐	
8	demographic	☐ ☐ ☐	
9	urbanisation	☐ ☐ ☐	
10	nuclear family	☐ ☐ ☐	
11	extended family	☐ ☐ ☐	
12	cohabit	☐ ☐ ☐	
13	bond	☐ ☐ ☐	
14	instil	☐ ☐ ☐	
15	solidarity	☐ ☐ ☐	
16	marginalise	☐ ☐ ☐	
17	welfare	☐ ☐ ☐	
18	inequality	☐ ☐ ☐	
19	breadwinner	☐ ☐ ☐	
20	conform	☐ ☐ ☐	
21	social mobility	☐ ☐ ☐	
22	disparity	☐ ☐ ☐	
23	foster	☐ ☐ ☐	

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 upbringing /'ʌpbrɪŋɪŋ/

noun

B2

The way in which a child is cared for and taught to behave while growing up.

e.g. A strict but loving **upbringing** shaped her strong sense of duty.

COLLOCATIONS

a strict / happy upbringing

WORD FAMILY

bring up (phrasal v)

2 household /'haʊshəʊld/

noun

B2

All the people who live together in one house or flat.

e.g. The average **household** is much smaller than it was fifty years ago.

COLLOCATIONS

a single-person / low-income household • household income

WORD FAMILY

—

3 sibling /'sɪblɪŋ/

noun

B2

A brother or sister.

e.g. Children with several **siblings** often learn to share from an early age.

COLLOCATIONS

an older / younger sibling • sibling rivalry

WORD FAMILY

—

4 nurture /'nɜːtʃə/

verb

C1

To care for and encourage the growth or development of someone or something.

e.g. Supportive parents **nurture** their children's confidence and curiosity.

COLLOCATIONS

nurture talent / a child / a relationship

WORD FAMILY

nurturing (adj) · cf. nature (nature vs nurture)

5 cohesion /kəʊ'hiːʒn/

noun

C1

The state of forming a united whole; a sense of unity within a group or society.

e.g. Community events can strengthen social **cohesion** in a diverse neighbourhood.

COLLOCATIONS

social cohesion • a lack of cohesion

WORD FAMILY

cohesive (adj)

IELTS "Social cohesion" is a high-value phrase for essays on communities and immigration.

6 generation gap /,dʒenə'reɪʃn ɡæp/

noun

B2

The difference in attitudes and values between people of different generations.

e.g. Technology has widened the **generation gap** in many families.

COLLOCATIONS

bridge / widen the generation gap

WORD FAMILY

—

7 norm /nɔ:m/

noun

C1

An accepted standard, or a way of behaving that most people in a society follow.

e.g. Working from home has become the **norm** in many industries.

COLLOCATIONS

social / cultural norms • the norm

WORD FAMILY

normalise (v), normal (adj)

8 demographic /,dema'græfɪk/

adjective

C1

Relating to the structure of a population, such as its age, size and make-up.

e.g. An ageing population is one of the biggest **demographic** challenges facing rich nations.

COLLOCATIONS

demographic change / trends • a demographic shift

WORD FAMILY

demographics (n), demography (n)

9 urbanisation /,ɜ:bənai'zeɪʃn/

noun

C1

The process by which more and more people move from the countryside to live in cities.

e.g. Rapid **urbanisation** has put huge pressure on housing and transport.

COLLOCATIONS

rapid urbanisation • the effects of urbanisation

WORD FAMILY

urbanise (v), urban (adj) • opp. rural

10 nuclear family /ˌnjuːkliə 'fæməli/

noun

B2

A family unit consisting of two parents and their children.

e.g. The traditional **nuclear family** is no longer the only common model.

COLLOCATIONS

a traditional nuclear family

WORD FAMILY

— · cf. extended family

11 extended family /ɪkˌstendɪd 'fæməli/

noun

B2

A family group that includes grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins as well as parents and children.

e.g. In many cultures, the **extended family** lives close together and shares childcare.

COLLOCATIONS

a large extended family

WORD FAMILY

—

12 cohabit /kəʊ'hæbɪt/

verb

C1

To live together as a couple without being married.

e.g. More couples now choose to **cohabit** before, or instead of, marrying.

COLLOCATIONS

cohabit with (sb)

WORD FAMILY

cohabitation (n)

13 bond /bɒnd/

noun

B2

A close emotional connection between people.

e.g. The **bond** between siblings often lasts a lifetime.

COLLOCATIONS

a strong / close bond • form a bond

WORD FAMILY

bond (v), bonding (n)

14 instil /ɪn'stɪl/

verb

C2

To gradually establish an idea, attitude or value in someone's mind. (US: instill)

e.g. Parents try to **instil** honesty and respect in their children.

COLLOCATIONS

instil values / discipline / confidence

WORD FAMILY

—

IELTS A high-band verb for how values are passed on — “instil a sense of responsibility”.

15 solidarity /ˌsɒlɪ'dærəti/

noun

C1

Agreement and mutual support within a group, based on shared interests or feelings.

e.g. Neighbours showed great **solidarity**, helping one another through the crisis.

COLLOCATIONS

a sense of solidarity • show solidarity

WORD FAMILY

—

16 marginalise /'mɑ:dʒɪnəlaɪz/

verb

C1

To treat a person or group as unimportant and push them to the edge of society. (US: marginalize)

e.g. Poverty can **marginalise** entire communities, cutting them off from opportunity.

COLLOCATIONS

marginalise a group • marginalised communities

WORD FAMILY

marginalisation (n), marginalised (adj)

17 welfare /'welfeə/

noun

B2

The health, happiness and comfort of people; government support for those in need.

e.g. A good society looks after the **welfare** of its most vulnerable members.

COLLOCATIONS

the welfare state • welfare benefits / support

WORD FAMILY

—

18 inequality /,ɪnɪ'kwɒləti/

noun

B2

An unfair situation in which some groups have more money, opportunities or power than others.

e.g. Wide **inequality** between rich and poor can undermine social stability.

COLLOCATIONS

social / income inequality • tackle inequality

WORD FAMILY

unequal (adj) • opp. equality

19 breadwinner /'bredwɪnə/

noun

C1

The member of a family who earns the money that supports the others.

e.g. In the past, the father was usually the sole **breadwinner**.

COLLOCATIONS

the main / sole breadwinner

WORD FAMILY

—

20 conform /kən'fɔ:m/

verb

C1

To behave in the way that most people, or the rules of a society, expect.

e.g. There is often strong pressure on teenagers to **conform** to their group.

COLLOCATIONS

conform to (norms / expectations)

WORD FAMILY

conformity (n), conformist (n) · opp. rebel

21 social mobility /,səʊʃl məʊ'bɪləti/

noun

C1

The ability of people to move to a higher or lower social or economic position.

e.g. Education is often seen as the key to greater **social mobility**.

COLLOCATIONS

upward social mobility • improve social mobility

WORD FAMILY

—

IELTS A high-value phrase for essays on class, education and opportunity.

22 disparity /dɪˈspærəti/

noun

C1

A great difference, especially an unfair one.

e.g. There remains a striking **disparity** in income between the regions.

COLLOCATIONS

a wide / growing disparity • income disparity

WORD FAMILY

— • opp. parity

23 foster /ˈfɒstə/

verb

C1

To encourage the development of something; also, to bring up a child that is not your own.

e.g. Strong communities **foster** a sense of belonging.

COLLOCATIONS

foster growth / cooperation • foster a child

WORD FAMILY

foster care (n)

IELTS Two senses — “foster cooperation” (encourage) and “foster a child” (raise).

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.

breadwinner

cohabit

cohesion

conform

demographic

disparity

inequality

instil

marginalise

nurture

urbanisation

welfare

1. Rapid _____ has drawn millions of young people into the cities.
2. Shared festivals help to build social _____ in mixed communities.
3. Schools aim to _____ good habits from an early age.
4. A widening gap between rich and poor is a sign of deep _____.
5. A loving home helps to _____ a child's confidence.
6. Policies that ignore the poor only _____ them further.
7. It is increasingly common for couples to _____ before marriage.
8. The state provides _____ support for families in difficulty.
9. An ageing society is a major _____ challenge for the government.
10. For decades, the father was the family's only _____.
11. There is a growing _____ in wealth between the two regions.
12. Teenagers often feel pressure to _____ to their friends.

Task 2 · Match the meaning

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

1 upbringing	☐	a an accepted standard of behaviour in society
2 household	☐	b all the people living together in one home
3 sibling	☐	c a close emotional connection
4 generation gap	☐	d the way a child is raised
5 norm	☐	e the ability to move to a higher social position
6 nuclear family	☐	f a brother or sister
7 extended family	☐	g relatives beyond parents and children
8 bond	☐	h the difference in values between generations
9 solidarity	☐	i mutual support within a group
10 social mobility	☐	j two parents and their children

Task 3 · Word formation

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

1. **NURTURE** A _____ home environment helps children thrive.
2. **URBAN** _____ has transformed the country in a single generation.
3. **EQUAL** The reforms were designed to reduce _____.
4. **COHESION** Communities that celebrate together tend to be more _____.
5. **CONFORM** Some cultures place a high value on _____.
6. **MARGINALISE** The _____ of minority groups remains a serious problem.
7. **FOSTER** The council supports the _____ of children in need.
8. **NORM** Remote work has been _____ by the events of recent years.

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 Changing Shape of the Family

The family has always been the basic unit of society, but its shape is changing fast. A century ago, most people grew up surrounded by an extended family of grandparents, aunts and cousins, often under one roof. Today, in many countries, the smaller nuclear family – or even a single-parent household – has become the norm.

Several forces lie behind this shift. Urbanisation has drawn young people away from their home villages in search of work, loosening the ties that once held families together. More women have entered the workforce, so the idea of a single male breadwinner has faded. Couples marry later, or choose to cohabit instead, and average family size has fallen.

These changes bring both benefits and concerns. Greater freedom and equality within families are widely welcomed. Yet some worry that traditional sources of support are weakening. As populations age, fewer working-age adults are available to care for a growing number of elderly relatives, placing new demands on the welfare state.

There is no single “correct” form of family, and history shows that family life has always evolved. The challenge for modern societies is to make sure that, whatever shape families take, they continue to foster the strong bonds and sense of belonging that people of every generation need.

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 | A hundred years ago, many people lived with their extended family. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2 | The passage says the nuclear family has disappeared completely. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3 | More women entering work has weakened the idea of a single male breadwinner. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4 | The passage states the average family size in each country. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5 | The writer believes there is only one correct form of family. | T / F / NG |

Questions 6–9 · Vocabulary in context

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| 6 | Find a word/phrase meaning: a family of two parents and their children | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7 | Find a word/phrase meaning: the movement of people from the countryside to cities | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8 | Find a word/phrase meaning: the main earner in a family | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 9 | Find a word/phrase meaning: government support for those in need | _____ |

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. How has **urbanisation** affected family life in your country?
2. Do you think the **extended family** is still important today?
3. What can be done to improve **social mobility**?
4. Is **inequality** a serious problem where you live?

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.

In many countries, the traditional **extended family** is being replaced by smaller family units. What are the causes of this trend, and is it a positive or negative development?

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	upbringing		☐
2	household		☐
3	sibling		☐
4	nurture		☐
5	cohesion		☐
6	generation gap		☐
7	norm		☐
8	demographic		☐
9	urbanisation		☐
10	nuclear family		☐
11	extended family		☐
12	cohabit		☐
13	bond		☐
14	instil		☐
15	solidarity		☐
16	marginalise		☐
17	welfare		☐
18	inequality		☐
19	breadwinner		☐
20	conform		☐
21	social mobility		☐
22	disparity		☐
23	foster		☐

Answer key

TASK 1 · GAP-FILL

1 urbanisation 2 cohesion 3 instil 4 inequality 5 nurture 6 marginalise 7 cohabit 8 welfare 9 demographic
10 breadwinner 11 disparity 12 conform

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 nurturing 2 urbanisation 3 inequality 4 cohesive 5 conformity 6 marginalisation 7 fostering 8 normalised

TASK 4 · TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN

1 TRUE 2 FALSE 3 TRUE 4 NOT GIVEN 5 FALSE

TASK 4 · VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

6 nuclear family 7 urbanisation 8 breadwinner 9 welfare



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.