

VOCABULARY BUILDER · IELTS

Art

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	masterpiece	☐ ☐ ☐	
2	exhibition	☐ ☐ ☐	
3	aesthetic	☐ ☐ ☐	
4	contemporary	☐ ☐ ☐	
5	abstract	☐ ☐ ☐	
6	sculpture	☐ ☐ ☐	
7	patron	☐ ☐ ☐	
8	curator	☐ ☐ ☐	
9	depict	☐ ☐ ☐	
10	craftsmanship	☐ ☐ ☐	
11	provocative	☐ ☐ ☐	
12	genre	☐ ☐ ☐	
13	commission	☐ ☐ ☐	
14	avant-garde	☐ ☐ ☐	
15	renowned	☐ ☐ ☐	
16	inspiration	☐ ☐ ☐	
17	mural	☐ ☐ ☐	
18	iconic	☐ ☐ ☐	
19	evoke	☐ ☐ ☐	
20	interpretation	☐ ☐ ☐	
21	acclaim	☐ ☐ ☐	
22	medium	☐ ☐ ☐	
23	creativity	☐ ☐ ☐	

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 masterpiece /'mɑːstəpiːs/

noun

B2

A work of art, music or literature of outstanding quality; an artist's greatest work.

e.g. The gallery's most famous **masterpiece** attracts thousands of visitors a day.

COLLOCATIONS

a timeless / undisputed masterpiece

WORD FAMILY

—

2 exhibition /,eksɪ'bɪʃn/

noun

B2

A public display of works of art or other objects in a gallery or museum.

e.g. The museum is holding a major **exhibition** of the artist's early work.

COLLOCATIONS

hold / stage an exhibition • a solo exhibition

WORD FAMILY

exhibit (v/n)

3 aesthetic /iːs'θetɪk/

adjective

C1

Concerned with beauty or the appreciation of what is beautiful.

e.g. The building's **aesthetic** appeal is as important as its function.

COLLOCATIONS

aesthetic appeal / value • a strong aesthetic

WORD FAMILY

aesthetics (n), aesthetically (adv)

IELTS A high-band word for “to do with beauty” — “aesthetic value” works in many essays.

4 contemporary /kən'tempərəri/

adjective

B2

Belonging to the present time; modern.

e.g. The gallery specialises in **contemporary** art by living artists.

COLLOCATIONS

contemporary art / design • contemporary society

WORD FAMILY

— • cf. classical

5 abstract /'æbstrækt/

adjective

B2

(of art) not representing people or things realistically, but using shapes, colours and forms.

e.g. Many visitors find **abstract** paintings harder to appreciate than realistic ones.

COLLOCATIONS

abstract art / painting

WORD FAMILY

abstraction (n) • opp. figurative

6 sculpture /'skʌlptʃə/

noun

B2

A work of art made by shaping stone, metal, wood or clay; the art of making such works.

e.g. A bronze **sculpture** of the poet stands in the square.

COLLOCATIONS

a marble / bronze sculpture

WORD FAMILY

sculptor (n), sculpt (v)

7 patron /'peɪtrən/

noun

C1

A person or organisation that gives money and support to artists or the arts.

e.g. Without wealthy **patrons**, many great works would never have been created.

COLLOCATIONS

a patron of the arts • a generous patron

WORD FAMILY

patronage (n)

8 curator /kʃʊə'reɪtə/

noun

C1

A person in charge of a museum or gallery, who selects and looks after its collection.

e.g. The **curator** spent two years assembling the exhibition.

COLLOCATIONS

a museum curator • a guest curator

WORD FAMILY

curate (v), curation (n)

9 depict /dɪ'pɪkt/

verb

C1

To show or represent something in a picture, painting or other work of art.

e.g. The mural **depicts** scenes from the city's history.

COLLOCATIONS

depict a scene / figure

WORD FAMILY

depiction (n)

10 craftsmanship /'krɑ:ftsmənʃɪp/

noun

C1

Skill and care in making something by hand.

e.g. The furniture is admired for its fine **craftsmanship**.

COLLOCATIONS

fine / superb craftsmanship

WORD FAMILY

craftsman (n), craft (n)

11 provocative /prə'vɒkətɪv/

adjective

C1

Intended to make people think or react, often by challenging accepted ideas.

e.g. The artist is known for **provocative** works that question authority.

COLLOCATIONS

a provocative piece / statement

WORD FAMILY

provoke (v), provocation (n)

12 genre /'ʒɒnrə/

noun

B2

A particular style or category of art, music, film or writing.

e.g. She has worked in almost every **genre**, from portraits to landscapes.

COLLOCATIONS

a musical / artistic genre

WORD FAMILY

—

13 commission /kə'mɪʃn/

verb / noun

C1

(v) to formally ask an artist to create a work; (n) such a request, or the work produced.

e.g. The city **commissioned** a local sculptor to design the memorial.

COLLOCATIONS

commission a work / portrait • a private commission

WORD FAMILY

commissioner (n)

14 avant-garde /,ævɔ̃'ɡɑ:d/

adjective

C2

New, experimental and ahead of its time, especially in the arts.

e.g. His **avant-garde** films baffled audiences but inspired other directors.

COLLOCATIONS

avant-garde art / cinema

WORD FAMILY

— (also a noun: the avant-garde)

15 renowned /rɪ'naʊnd/

adjective

C1

Known and admired by many people; famous.

e.g. The city is **renowned** for its opera and its galleries.

COLLOCATIONS

renowned for (sth) • a world-renowned artist

WORD FAMILY

renown (n)

IELTS A cleaner, higher-band alternative to "very famous".

16 **inspiration** /ˌɪnspə'reɪʃn/

noun

B2

The process of being mentally stimulated to create something; a source of such stimulation.

e.g. The painter found **inspiration** in the landscapes of her childhood.

COLLOCATIONS

a source of inspiration • draw inspiration from

WORD FAMILY

inspire (v), inspiring (adj), inspirational (adj)

17 **mural** /'mjʊərəl/

noun

C1

A large painting created directly on a wall or ceiling.

e.g. A vast **mural** covers the entire side of the building.

COLLOCATIONS

paint a mural • a street mural

WORD FAMILY

—

18 **iconic** /aɪ'kɒnɪk/

adjective

C1

Widely recognised and admired as a symbol of something.

e.g. The image has become **iconic**, reproduced on posters around the world.

COLLOCATIONS

an iconic image / building

WORD FAMILY

icon (n)

19 evoke /ɪˈvəʊk/

verb

C1

To bring a feeling, memory or image into someone's mind.

e.g. The music **evokes** the atmosphere of a bygone age.

COLLOCATIONS

evoke emotion / memories / a mood

WORD FAMILY

evocative (adj), evocation (n)

IELTS

A sophisticated verb for how art affects us – “the painting evokes a sense of calm”.

20 interpretation /ɪnˌtɜːprɪˈteɪʃn/

noun

C1

An explanation or way of understanding the meaning of a work of art.

e.g. A single painting can support many different **interpretations**.

COLLOCATIONS

open to interpretation • a personal interpretation

WORD FAMILY

interpret (v), interpretive (adj)

21 acclaim /əˈkleɪm/

noun

C1

Strong public praise and approval.

e.g. Her first exhibition won widespread critical **acclaim**.

COLLOCATIONS

critical / international acclaim • win acclaim

WORD FAMILY

acclaimed (adj)

22 medium /'mi:diəm/

noun

C1

The material or method an artist uses, such as oil paint, clay or photography. (plural: media)

e.g. Watercolour is a difficult **medium** to master.

COLLOCATIONS

an artistic medium • a mixed-media work

WORD FAMILY

—

IELTS

Note the plural “media”, and don’t confuse it with the news media.

23 creativity /,kri:ei'tivəti/

noun

B2

The ability to produce original and imaginative ideas or work.

e.g. Art education is valued for the way it nurtures **creativity**.

COLLOCATIONS

foster / stifle creativity • artistic creativity

WORD FAMILY

creative (adj), create (v)

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.

abstract

acclaim

aesthetic

commission

craftsmanship

curator

depict

evoke

exhibition

inspiration

provocative

renowned

1. The gallery is holding a major _____ of the sculptor's work.
2. She is world-_____ for her strikingly detailed portraits.
3. The finest landscapes _____ powerful emotions in the viewer.
4. The council decided to _____ a mural for the station wall.
5. Collectors prize the piece for its extraordinary _____.
6. Over time he moved away from realism towards pure _____ art.
7. Her _____ installation sparked heated public debate.
8. The artist drew _____ from the streets of her home city.
9. The _____ selected two hundred works for the show.
10. The design was chosen purely for its _____ appeal.
11. The painting _____ a busy market in the old town.
12. The exhibition met with widespread international critical _____.

Task 2 · Match the meaning

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

1 masterpiece	☐	a a particular style or category of art
2 contemporary	☐	b belonging to the present time; modern
3 sculpture	☐	c widely recognised as a symbol
4 patron	☐	d a work of outstanding quality
5 genre	☐	e the material an artist works in
6 avant-garde	☐	f art made by shaping stone, metal or clay
7 mural	☐	g a large painting on a wall
8 iconic	☐	h a person who gives money to support the arts
9 interpretation	☐	i a way of understanding a work's meaning
10 medium	☐	j new, experimental and ahead of its time

Task 3 · Word formation

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

1. **SCULPTURE** The war memorial was designed by a celebrated _____ .
2. **INSPIRE** The young artist found the trip deeply _____ .
3. **CREATE** Art education helps children develop their _____ .
4. **AESTHETIC** The whole gallery was _____ arranged.
5. **PROVOKE** The installation's message was deliberately _____ .
6. **INTERPRET** Critics offered many different _____ of the work.
7. **EXHIBIT** Her paintings have been _____ in galleries around the world.
8. **CURATE** The show was expertly _____ by a young specialist.

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.

Does Art Still Matter?

In times of economic difficulty, spending on the arts is often one of the first things governments cut. Museums, galleries and theatres, some argue, are luxuries that cannot be justified when there are hospitals to fund and roads to repair. Yet many people believe that a society which neglects its artists loses something it cannot easily measure.

Supporters of public funding point to the many benefits the arts bring. A famous exhibition or an iconic building can attract visitors from around the world, boosting the local economy. Beyond money, the arts nurture creativity and offer people a way to understand their own history and identity. A powerful painting or piece of music can evoke emotions that words alone cannot express, and encourage us to see the world differently.

Critics respond that the arts should learn to support themselves. If a gallery or a musician produces work that people truly value, they argue, audiences will pay for it without help from the taxpayer. Public money, in their view, is better spent on services that everyone needs.

Most agree that a balance must be struck. Great art has rarely flourished without patrons of some kind, whether wealthy individuals in the past or governments today. The real question is not whether art matters – few would deny that it does – but how much a society is willing to invest in it.

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 | Arts budgets are often reduced when the economy is weak. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2 | The writer says that the arts bring only financial benefits. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3 | A famous building can attract tourists and help the local economy. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4 | The passage names the most visited gallery in the world. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5 | The writer concludes that art does not matter to society. | T / F / NG |

Questions 6–9 · Vocabulary in context

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| 6 | Find a word/phrase meaning: a public display of works of art | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7 | Find a word/phrase meaning: widely recognised as a symbol | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8 | Find a word/phrase meaning: to bring a feeling or memory into the mind | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 9 | Find a word/phrase meaning: people who give money to support artists | _____ |

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. Should **contemporary** art be funded by the government?
2. Do you prefer **abstract** art or realistic art? Why?
3. What can **exhibitions** and museums teach us?
4. Is **creativity** something that can be taught, or are people born with it?

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 that **creativity** is one of the most important skills a person can have. What are the benefits of being creative, and can **creativity** be taught?

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	masterpiece		☐
2	exhibition		☐
3	aesthetic		☐
4	contemporary		☐
5	abstract		☐
6	sculpture		☐
7	patron		☐
8	curator		☐
9	depict		☐
10	craftsmanship		☐
11	provocative		☐
12	genre		☐
13	commission		☐
14	avant-garde		☐
15	renowned		☐
16	inspiration		☐
17	mural		☐
18	iconic		☐
19	evoke		☐
20	interpretation		☐
21	acclaim		☐
22	medium		☐
23	creativity		☐

Answer key

TASK 1 · GAP-FILL

1 exhibition 2 renowned 3 evoke 4 commission 5 craftsmanship 6 abstract 7 provocative 8 inspiration
9 curator 10 aesthetic 11 depict 12 acclaim

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 sculptor 2 inspiring 3 creativity 4 aesthetically 5 provocative 6 interpretations 7 exhibited 8 curated

TASK 4 · TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN

1 TRUE 2 FALSE 3 TRUE 4 NOT GIVEN 5 FALSE

TASK 4 · VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

6 exhibition 7 iconic 8 evoke 9 patrons



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.