

VOCABULARY BUILDER · IELTS

# Work & Business

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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? <small>know · unsure · new</small>                          | WHAT I THINK IT MEANS |
|----|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1  | entrepreneur  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 2  | productivity  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 3  | workforce     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 4  | incentive     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 5  | lucrative     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 6  | delegate      | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 7  | recruitment   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 8  | turnover      | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 9  | stakeholder   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 10 | globalisation | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 11 | outsource     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 12 | remote        | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 13 | burnout       | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 14 | flexibility   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 15 | monopoly      | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 16 | venture       | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 17 | overheads     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 18 | downturn      | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 19 | viable        | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 20 | diversify     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 21 | revenue       | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 22 | corporate     | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |
| 23 | self-employed | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |                       |

# 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 entrepreneur /ˌɒntrəprəˈnɜː/

noun

B2

A person who sets up a business, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.

**e.g.** The city offers grants to young **entrepreneurs** launching their first company.

### COLLOCATIONS

a successful / budding entrepreneur

### WORD FAMILY

entrepreneurial (adj), entrepreneurship (n)

**IELTS** A go-to word for “starting a business” essays – stronger than “businessperson”.

## 2 productivity /ˌprɒdʌkˈtɪvəti/

noun

B2

The rate at which a person, company or country produces goods or completes work.

**e.g.** Flexible hours have been shown to boost employee **productivity**.

### COLLOCATIONS

increase / improve productivity • a productivity boost

### WORD FAMILY

productive (adj), produce (v)

## 3 workforce /ˈwɜːkfɔːs/

noun

B2

All the people who work for a particular company, or in a particular country or industry.

**e.g.** Automation is reshaping the skills the modern **workforce** needs.

### COLLOCATIONS

a skilled workforce • the global workforce

### WORD FAMILY

—

## 4 incentive /ɪn'sentɪv/

noun

C1

Something that encourages or motivates someone to do something.

**e.g.** Bonuses give staff a strong **incentive** to exceed their targets.

### COLLOCATIONS

a financial incentive • offer / provide an incentive

### WORD FAMILY

incentivise (v)

**IELTS** Useful for essays on motivation and pay — “a financial incentive to...”.

## 5 lucrative /'lu:kɹətɪv/

adjective

C1

Producing a great deal of profit; highly profitable.

**e.g.** Software has become one of the most **lucrative** industries in the world.

### COLLOCATIONS

a lucrative deal / career / market

### WORD FAMILY

—

**IELTS** A precise, high-band swap for “that makes a lot of money”.

## 6 delegate /'delɪgeɪt/

verb

C1

To give part of your work or responsibility to someone in a more junior position.

**e.g.** Good managers **delegate** routine tasks so they can focus on strategy.

### COLLOCATIONS

delegate tasks / responsibility / authority

### WORD FAMILY

delegation (n)

## 7 recruitment /rɪˈkrʊ:tmənt/

noun

B2

The process of finding and hiring new people to work for an organisation.

**e.g.** The firm has slowed **recruitment** during the economic downturn.

### COLLOCATIONS

a recruitment drive / process • graduate recruitment

### WORD FAMILY

recruit (v/n)

## 8 turnover /ˈtɜːnəʊvə/

noun

C1

(a) the total money a business earns in a period; (b) the rate at which staff leave and are replaced.

**e.g.** High staff **turnover** suggests employees are unhappy with their conditions.

### COLLOCATIONS

annual turnover • staff / employee turnover

### WORD FAMILY

—

**IELTS** Note the two meanings — “sales turnover” (money) and “staff turnover” (people).

## 9 stakeholder /ˈsteɪkhəʊldə/

noun

C1

A person or group with an interest or concern in a business or project.

**e.g.** Any major decision must take the needs of all **stakeholders** into account.

### COLLOCATIONS

key stakeholders • consult stakeholders

### WORD FAMILY

—

## 10 globalisation /ˌɡləʊbəlaɪ'zeɪʃn/

noun

C1

The process by which businesses and cultures around the world become increasingly connected.

**e.g.** **Globalisation** has allowed even small firms to sell to customers abroad.

### COLLOCATIONS

economic globalisation • the effects of globalisation

### WORD FAMILY

globalise (v), global (adj)

**IELTS** A central word for “world economy” essays — weigh its pros and cons.

## 11 outsource /ˌaʊt'sɔːs/

verb

C1

To arrange for work to be done by another company, often abroad, to cut costs.

**e.g.** Many firms **outsource** their customer service to reduce expenses.

### COLLOCATIONS

outsource production / labour

### WORD FAMILY

outsourcing (n)

## 12 remote /rɪ'məʊt/

adjective

B2

(of work) done from home or away from a central office, using technology to connect.

**e.g.** **Remote** work allows employees to avoid long, stressful commutes.

### COLLOCATIONS

remote working • a remote team

### WORD FAMILY

remotely (adv)

### 13 **burnout** /'bɜːnaʊt/

noun

C1

Extreme physical or mental exhaustion caused by working too hard for too long.

**e.g.** Without proper rest, even dedicated staff can suffer **burnout**.

#### COLLOCATIONS

suffer / experience burnout • avoid burnout

#### WORD FAMILY

burn out (phrasal v)

**IELTS** A key term for “work-life balance” essays.

### 14 **flexibility** /ˌfleksəˈbɪləti/

noun

B2

The ability or willingness to change or adapt easily, for example in working hours.

**e.g.** Employees increasingly value **flexibility** over a slightly higher salary.

#### COLLOCATIONS

workplace flexibility • offer flexibility

#### WORD FAMILY

flexible (adj)

### 15 **monopoly** /məˈnɒpəli/

noun

C1

Complete control of the supply of a product or service by a single company.

**e.g.** Regulators stepped in to break up the company’s **monopoly** over online search.

#### COLLOCATIONS

have / hold a monopoly • a near-monopoly

#### WORD FAMILY

monopolise (v)

## 16 venture /'ventʃə/

noun

C1

A new business project or activity, especially one that involves risk.

**e.g.** The two firms launched a joint **venture** to develop electric cars.

### COLLOCATIONS

a business / joint venture • a risky venture

### WORD FAMILY

venture (v)

## 17 overheads /'əʊvəhedz/

noun

C1

The regular, ongoing costs of running a business, such as rent and electricity.

**e.g.** Working from home lets small firms keep their **overheads** low.

### COLLOCATIONS

high / low overheads • cut overheads

### WORD FAMILY

— (US: overhead)

## 18 downturn /'daʊntɜ:n/

noun

C1

A decline in economic or business activity.

**e.g.** During the **downturn**, thousands of companies were forced to close.

### COLLOCATIONS

an economic downturn • a sharp downturn

### WORD FAMILY

— • opp. upturn

## 19 viable /'vaɪəbl/

adjective

C1

Capable of working successfully; able to survive or make a profit.

**e.g.** The bank refused the loan because the plan was not commercially **viable**.

### COLLOCATIONS

commercially / financially viable • a viable alternative

### WORD FAMILY

viability (n)

### IELTS

"A viable alternative / option" is a versatile essay phrase far beyond business.

## 20 diversify /daɪ'vɜːsɪfaɪ/

verb

C1

To increase the range of products, services or investments a business offers.

**e.g.** The company chose to **diversify** rather than depend on a single product.

### COLLOCATIONS

diversify into (sth) • diversify a portfolio

### WORD FAMILY

diversification (n), diverse (adj)

## 21 revenue /'revənjuː/

noun

C1

The total income a business or government receives, especially from sales or taxes.

**e.g.** Streaming now generates more **revenue** than physical music sales.

### COLLOCATIONS

annual revenue • generate revenue

### WORD FAMILY

—

## 22 corporate /'kɔ:pəreɪt/

adjective

B2

Relating to a large company or business, or to companies in general.

**e.g.** **Corporate** culture varies enormously from one company to the next.

### COLLOCATIONS

corporate culture / strategy • a corporate giant

### WORD FAMILY

corporation (n)

## 23 self-employed /,self ɪm'plɔɪd/

adjective

B2

Working for yourself rather than for an employer, and earning income directly.

**e.g.** More people than ever are now **self-employed**, working as freelancers and consultants.

### COLLOCATIONS

become self-employed • the self-employed (n)

### WORD FAMILY

self-employment (n)

## 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.

burnout

delegate

downturn

flexibility

globalisation

incentive

lucrative

outsource

recruitment

revenue

turnover

viable

1. Technology has become an extremely \_\_\_\_\_ field for skilled graduates.
2. Tax breaks provide a strong \_\_\_\_\_ for firms to invest in research.
3. To cut costs, the company decided to \_\_\_\_\_ its manufacturing overseas.
4. A culture of long hours often leads to stress and eventual \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ has made it easier for small businesses to reach global markets.
6. An effective leader knows how to \_\_\_\_\_ tasks to the right people.
7. The restaurant struggles with high staff \_\_\_\_\_, losing waiters every month.
8. Investors will only back a plan that is commercially \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Advertising accounts for most of the platform's annual \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Younger workers increasingly demand \_\_\_\_\_ in when and where they work.
11. The firm launched a major \_\_\_\_\_ drive to fill fifty new posts.
12. During the economic \_\_\_\_\_, unemployment rose sharply.

## Task 2 · Match the meaning

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

|                  |                          |                                                    |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 entrepreneur   | <input type="checkbox"/> | a complete control of a market by one company      |
| 2 productivity   | <input type="checkbox"/> | b the rate at which work is produced               |
| 3 workforce      | <input type="checkbox"/> | c to widen the range of products a business offers |
| 4 stakeholder    | <input type="checkbox"/> | d a person who starts a business and takes on risk |
| 5 monopoly       | <input type="checkbox"/> | e working for yourself rather than an employer     |
| 6 venture        | <input type="checkbox"/> | f all the people who work in a company or country  |
| 7 overheads      | <input type="checkbox"/> | g the ongoing running costs of a business          |
| 8 diversify      | <input type="checkbox"/> | h a person or group with an interest in a business |
| 9 corporate      | <input type="checkbox"/> | i relating to large companies                      |
| 10 self-employed | <input type="checkbox"/> | j a new, often risky business project              |

## Task 3 · Word formation

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

- ENTREPRENEUR** She has a real \_\_\_\_\_ spirit and loves taking risks.
- PRODUCTIVE** Studies show that remote work can actually increase \_\_\_\_\_ .
- GLOBAL** \_\_\_\_\_ has transformed the way companies operate.
- INCENTIVE** The scheme is designed to \_\_\_\_\_ staff to work harder.
- FLEXIBLE** The job offers a great deal of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- DIVERSIFY** \_\_\_\_\_ helped the firm survive when one market collapsed.
- EMPLOY** Self- \_\_\_\_\_ has risen sharply in the gig economy.
- CORPORATE** He left the world of large \_\_\_\_\_ to start his own firm.

## 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 Office Reimagined

Not long ago, the idea of an entire workforce staying at home would have seemed impossible. Today, remote work is a normal part of business life. Improvements in technology mean that many employees can now do their jobs from anywhere, and companies have discovered that this can lower their overheads and even raise productivity.

For workers, the appeal is obvious. Cutting out a daily commute saves time and money, and greater flexibility makes it easier to balance a career with family life. Some argue that this freedom reduces stress and helps to prevent burnout, allowing people to work when they are most focused.

Yet the shift is not without problems. Critics point out that working alone at home can be isolating, and that new employees in particular may struggle without face-to-face support. There are also concerns that the line between work and rest can disappear, so that some staff end up working longer hours than before.

Businesses, meanwhile, must weigh the savings against the challenge of managing a team they rarely see. Many have settled on a compromise: a “hybrid” model in which employees split their week between home and the office. Whether this becomes the permanent shape of work remains to be seen, but for a large part of the modern workforce, the traditional nine-to-five office is no longer the only option.

## 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     | Remote work can reduce a company's running costs.                | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> |                                                                  |            |
| 2     | The writer says that all employees prefer working from home.     | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> |                                                                  |            |
| 3     | Working from home can save employees money on travel.            | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> |                                                                  |            |
| 4     | Most companies have now banned working in the office.            | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> |                                                                  |            |
| 5     | The writer is certain that hybrid working will become permanent. | T / F / NG |

## Questions 6–9 · Vocabulary in context

- |       |                                                                             |       |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 6     | Find a word/phrase meaning: all the people who work in a company or country | _____ |
| <hr/> |                                                                             |       |
| 7     | Find a word/phrase meaning: the regular running costs of a business         | _____ |
| <hr/> |                                                                             |       |
| 8     | Find a word/phrase meaning: the ability to adapt working hours easily       | _____ |
| <hr/> |                                                                             |       |
| 9     | Find a word/phrase meaning: exhaustion caused by working too hard           | _____ |

## 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 **remote** work is better than working in an office?
2. What can companies do to prevent employee **burnout**?
3. Is it important for young people to have an **entrepreneurial** mindset?
4. Has **globalisation** been good or bad for workers in your country?

### **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, more and more people are choosing to become **self-employed** rather than work for a company. What are the reasons for this, and is it a positive or negative development?

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# 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  | entrepreneur  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | productivity  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3  | workforce     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4  | incentive     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5  | lucrative     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6  | delegate      |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7  | recruitment   |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8  | turnover      |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9  | stakeholder   |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | globalisation |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | outsource     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | remote        |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | burnout       |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | flexibility   |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | monopoly      |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 | venture       |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 | overheads     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 | downturn      |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 | viable        |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 | diversify     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 | revenue       |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22 | corporate     |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23 | self-employed |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

# Answer key

## TASK 1 · GAP-FILL

1 lucrative 2 incentive 3 outsource 4 burnout 5 globalisation 6 delegate 7 turnover 8 viable 9 revenue  
10 flexibility 11 recruitment 12 downturn

## 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 entrepreneurial 2 productivity 3 globalisation 4 incentivise 5 flexibility 6 diversification 7 employment  
8 corporations

## TASK 4 · TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN

1 TRUE 2 FALSE 3 TRUE 4 NOT GIVEN 5 FALSE

## TASK 4 · VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

6 workforce 7 overheads 8 flexibility 9 burnout



**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](https://prepex.ai).