

Cobuild IELTS Dictionary

HarperCollins Publishers 2015
ISBN: 978-0-00-810083-4

This 962-page compilation provides a comprehensive lexical guide for IELTS candidates.

An entry is given as a headword in bold, followed by the General British English pronunciation in phonetic symbols with minor acknowledgement of some regional differences, followed by the word class. Any alternative spellings then appear, in particular for American English. Variations in usage are clearly given. Inflections in plural nouns, third person singular verb forms and verb participles are presented. Definitions, written out in full sentences, are then shown. Alternative definitions are provided for any splits in meaning. Idiomatic phrases are incorporated where they provide useful illustration.

Formality of register is indicated if it is a feature of a word. Some word families in English can be puzzling to students and there are separate boxes here showing examples. Word connections and collocations, usage of words, word morphemes and vocabulary builder notes are also given in boxes.

Foreign learners of English have limited reference points on frequency of word use in the language, so the publisher provides a rating for higher frequency words, on a scale of one to three diamonds. Separately, important words specific to the IELTS exam are indicated by a star before the headword. Testing these criteria for words commonly found in IELTS texts gave reasonable confidence in the publisher's choices. Choices were less successful for importance in some IELTS language production, for example in writing about line graphs; strangely, there is no entry at all for *trough* though its opposite *peak* is present.

Two very useful sections are the IELTS Writing and Speaking guides. These will help the candidate understand these parts of the exam, also providing tips, sample questions and sample answers.

This dictionary will be particularly useful to IELTS candidates close to or above intermediate ESOL level, though at lower ability levels candidates will be less able to fully comprehend the language level in some entries.

Alan Richardson
The TESOL College