

Accommodation & Home Vocabulary

Topic vocabulary for the IELTS exam

* **Important**

- Do **not** try and learn this list of vocabulary.
- Identify the vocabulary you find useful for answering practise questions about accommodation and homes.
- Record these in your vocabulary notebook and practise using them regularly.

Set 1: Key definitions

house – building where people (usually one family) live

- Our **house** is near the park.

home – place where someone lives, where they feel they belong

- It's nice to come **home** in the evening and spend time with my family.

accommodation – a building or set of rooms where someone lives or stays

- Oti started looking for **accommodation** as soon as her university place was confirmed.

a property – building and the land it is built on

- Our present house is too small now that we have children so we are looking for a new **property**.

single storey – with only a ground floor level

- My elderly parents are buying a **single storey** house as they find it difficult to climb the stairs.

two-storey – with two floors levels

- Sanjay found a lovely **two-storey** property to rent close to his workplace.

Set 2: Types of home

detached house – a house that is not connected to any other houses

- We'd love to buy one of the new **detached houses** being built near the lake but they're out of our price range.

semi-detached house – a house that is joined to another house on one side

- Meena lived in a **semi-detached house** and could sometimes hear her neighbours arguing through the adjoining wall.

terraced house (UK) / **row house** (US) – a house in a row of similar houses joined together on both sides

- Having a property either side of us means that our **terraced house** stays warm in winter.

townhouse – a house built in a row but larger in size than a terraced house, often having more than two storeys

- **Townhouses** are popular with families as they often have extra bedrooms in the attic.

bungalow – a house with only one storey; built all on one level

- Many people move to a **bungalow** when they retire so they don't have to climb the stair as they get older.



cottage – a small house, usually located in the countryside

- For lots of people, a **cottage** in the countryside is their idea of a dream home.

flat / apartment – a set of rooms for living in that are part of a larger building and are usually all on one floor

- It was a big day when their son left home and moved into his own **flat**.

fully-furnished flat / apartment – one that you rent with furniture already in it

- The young couple didn't have much money so looked for a **fully-furnished apartment** to rent when they got married.

studio flat / apartment – a small flat that has one main room for living, eating and sleeping in

- Hilda had the choice of three **studio flats** in the converted property and chose the one with pink walls.

bedsit – a rented room that has a bed, table, chairs, and somewhere to cook in it but a shared bathroom

- The **bedsit** is small but has everything I need to create a little home for myself.

condominium (condo) – a building or complex of buildings containing a number of individually owned apartments or houses

- Manuel decided that if he got the big promotion, he would buy a **condo** down by the river.

apartment block / high-rise – an apartment building with at least 10 floors

- There is little space for housing in my city and most people live in a **high-rise**.

block of flats / tower block – a tall building with flats on many levels

- They are clearing some of the old terraced houses in our town and replacing them with **blocks of flats**.

penthouse – an expensive flat at the top of a tall building in a fashionable area of a city

mansion – a large, impressive house

- If we were rich, I would buy a **penthouse** in London overlooking the River Thames but my husband would prefer a **mansion** on the coast.

villa – a large, often luxurious house in the country or near the sea, especially in southern Europe, and often rented out for holidays

- We stayed in a fabulous **villa** when we visited Greece. It even had its own swimming pool.

student digs – student accommodation, often in a shared house

- I was apprehensive about moving into **student digs** but I'm enjoying it and get on well with my housemates.

hall of residence – a college or university building where students live in flats

- Shishka lived in a **hall of residence** for her first year at university then rented a house with some friends.

Set 3: Location

residential area – area in which most of the buildings are houses

- Our town is growing rapidly with several new **residential areas** currently being developed.

suburb – a residential area on the edge of towns or cities

- Nearly all my colleagues at work live in the **suburbs** and commute by train each day.



on the outskirts – the areas that form the outer edge of a town, city or village, that are furthest away from the centre

- It's great living **on the outskirts**. It's easy to get into the city but we are also close to the countryside.

downtown – near the centre of a town or city, especially the business or shopping areas

- I'm looking for a flat **downtown** so I don't have to commute far to work.

housing estate – a large group of houses built at the same time and in the same style

- In the UK, most new homes are built on **housing estates**.

within walking distance – not very far; close enough to reach by walking

- We chose to live here because it's **within walking distance** of the school.

close-knit community – a neighbourhood where people are helpful and supportive

- This is a **close-knit community** and there's always someone to turn to if you need help.

to live on campus – to live on the university or college grounds

- I like **living on campus** as I don't have far to go to lectures or the student's union bar.

Set 4: Rooms

bedroom – room used for sleeping in

- I've painted my **bedroom** yellow as it makes me feel cheerful when I wake up.

living room / lounge / sitting room – room used for relaxing

- In the evenings I chill out in the **living room** with a book or watch a bit of TV.

bathroom – room with a bath and/or shower and often a toilet

- With five people in my family, we have to queue for the **bathroom** in the morning.

kitchen – room where food is prepared and cooked, and sometimes eaten

- The **kitchen** is my favourite room in the house because I love cooking.

dining room – room in which meals are eaten

- I usually eat my breakfast in the kitchen but we always have family meals in the **dining room**.

study – a room for doing paperwork and studying in

- Kamal spent all day in the **study** working on his essay.

hall / hallway – open area inside the main entrance which leads to other rooms and usually the stairs

- Having a large **hallway** is so useful if you have a baby as there's plenty of space to store the buggy.

landing – area at the top of the stairs

- I'm always telling the kids off for leaving their toys on the **landing** in case someone trips over them and falls down the stairs.

utility room – room used for storage and equipment such as the washing machine, freezer, etc.

- It's a rule in our house that all muddy boots are left in the **utility room**.

basement / cellar – room below ground level used for storage and sometimes for accommodation

- The children are so excited that our new house has a **basement** as we've promised to turn it into a playroom for them.



porch – a covered shelter protecting the front entrance of a building

- I'm so grateful for the **porch** on a wet day when I have to stop and wipe the dog's feet before going indoors.

conservatory – a room with a glass roof and walls, attached to a house at one side

- It was Klaus and Meena's dream to build a **conservatory** on the side of their house as somewhere to relax in the sun.

attic / loft – space in the roof used for storage and often converted into accommodation

- Margit regretted putting so much junk up in the **attic** now that she had to clear it out ready for the builders to start work on the loft conversion.

pantry / larder – small, cold room used for storing food

- We had a proper **larder** when I was young but nowadays, most people keep food in the fridge, freezer or a cupboard.

balcony – a platform enclosed by a wall or bars on the outside of a building, with access from an upper-floor window or door

- My dream home would have a **balcony** overlooking the sea.

Set 5: Owning and renting

to rent – to pay money to the owner of a property to be allowed to live there

- One day I hope to own my own home but for now, I can only afford **to rent**.

to rent out / let out – to allow someone to live in your property for a fee

- I inherited my mum's bungalow when she died and I've decided to **rent it out**.

rented accommodation – a property for which a person pays a fixed amount to live in it to the person who owns it

- Being a university town, Exeter has lots of **rented accommodation** for the students.

landlord / landlady – the owner of a building or room that is rented out to others

- I have an excellent **landlord** who always fixes things quickly when something needs repairing.

tenant – someone who rents a flat or house from the person who owns it

- The people renting Adil's flat gave notice last week so he's looking for new **tenants**.

to give notice – to inform someone that you will be leaving or that they are required to leave

- We **gave** the landlord the required 30-day's **notice** that we would be moving out of the flat.

to put down a deposit – to make an initial payment as part of a rental agreement or to secure a purchase

- The landlord said that once we'd **put down the deposit** of £200, the flat was ours.

lease – the contract a tenant signs when renting a property

- We gave him the £200 deposit immediately and agreed that we'd visit the office later to sign the **lease**.

short-term rental / lease – a rental agreement that lasts for a short time, usually 3 - 6 months

- The flat was only available on a **short-term lease** as the landlord wanted to sell it.



evict – to force tenants to leave a property if they fail to pay the rent or they behave unacceptably

- The tenants in the flat above us used to play loud music all night long but thankfully the landlady **evicted** them.

fully-furnished – a rented property with all furniture included

- As a student, I didn't have any money to buy furniture so always rented **fully-furnished** accommodation.

estate agent (UK) / **real estate agent** (US) – someone whose job it is to help people buy and sell property. Some deal with rentals as well.

- Tuyen told the **estate agent** what sort of property she was looking for and he gave her the details of ten houses she might be interested in looking at.

to get on the property ladder – to buy a low priced property with the aim of buying another bigger or more expensive one later in life

- They were fed up with paying high rents and longed **to get on the property ladder** and invest in a home of their own.

mortgage – a large loan given to buy a house or flat

- Julio was delighted when his **mortgage** application was accepted and he could go ahead with his house purchase.

to take out a mortgage – to borrow money from the bank in order to buy a house

- **Taking out a mortgage** is a big commitment and most homeowners spend all their working life paying it off.

first-time buyer – someone buying a property for the first time

- The developer converted the old house into four apartments that would be affordable to **first-time buyers**.

repossess – to take back possession of something, especially a property when mortgage payments have not been made

- Luther lost his job and couldn't pay his mortgage so the bank **repossessed** it.

Set 6: Inside a home

(all the) mod cons – appliances in the home that make it easy to do jobs like washing, cooking, cleaning, etc.

- The furnished apartment I'm interested in renting has **all the mod cons**, including a dishwasher and tumble drier which many rentals don't have.

appliances – a device, machine or piece of equipment, especially an electrical one, that does a specific job in the home, such as a cooker or washing machine

- It must have been such hard work for my grandmother running a home without all the time-saving **appliances** we have today.

fitted kitchen – a kitchen with the cupboards and units designed to fit the space exactly and then fixed in place

- My new **fitted kitchen** has built-in appliances which make so much better use of the space.

built-in wardrobe – a wardrobe that is part of a room and fixed to the wall

- I didn't need to buy much bedroom furniture for my first flat as it had **built-in wardrobes**.



carpeted – the floors have carpet on them

- Some people like bare floorboards in their home but I prefer the rooms to be **carpeted**.

furniture – items in a home that make it comfortable and functional to live in such as chairs, tables, beds, etc.

- Wolfgang and Angelika went to town to choose some **furniture** for their new extension.

utilities – gas, electricity, water

- On top of the rental fee, they had to pay for the **utilities** as well.

spacious – having a lot of space inside

- Sally loved her friend's new home, especially the **spacious** kitchen.

cosy – giving a feeling of warmth, comfort and relaxation

- Old cottages have really thick walls which makes them cool in summer but **cosy** in winter.

natural light – light from the sun

- I hate houses that are dark inside and like my home to be full of **natural light**.

elevator (US) / **lift** (UK) – a box-like compartment housed in a shaft for raising and lowering people or things to different levels in a building

- Vadim often walked up the stairs to his tenth-floor flat but took the **lift** if he was carrying shopping.

Set 7: Outside a home

garden – area of grass or other vegetation beside a house and belonging to the property

- I would hate to live in a house without a **garden** as I love to grow my own vegetables.

lawn – an area of grass that is cut short, especially in someone's garden

- Our garden is mostly **lawn** with some flower borders and a vegetable patch.

backyard – a small space surrounded by walls at the back of a house, usually with a hard surface (US – an enclosed area covered with grass)

- The kids are out playing in the **backyard**.

terrace / patio – paved area close to the house for relaxing, eating, etc

- In the summer we enjoy relaxing on the **patio** and often set up the barbeque there.

hedge – a line of bushes or small trees growing close together around a garden or field
The property had a high **hedge** which gave it good privacy from the neighbours.

fence – a flat upright structure made of wood or wire that surrounds a garden or other area of land

- We had to put up a new **fence** at the side of the house as the old one blew down in a gale.

shed – small wooden building in a garden usually used for storing garden tools

- I don't like going into the **shed** to get tools out as there are large spiders in there.

garage – building intended for storing a car, usually attached to the side of a house

- Most people in the UK use their garage for storage and don't have room for the car.

Set 8: Improving a property

to convert – to change the form of something

- Our plan is **to convert** the garage into a study.

loft conversion – to turn the loft/attic into living accommodation

- Doing a **loft conversion** will mean that each of the children will be able to have a bedroom of their own.



to add an extension – to build an extra room onto a house

- Many people **add an extension** as their family grows rather than buying a larger house.

to redecorate – to paint one or more rooms again or put new wallpaper on the walls

- The colour scheme in their new house was dull and old-fashioned so they **redecorated** before they moved in.

to do up a property – to repair and update an old property

- Jai couldn't afford the smart new houses he looked at so he decided to buy an old property and **do it up**.

to renovate – to restore to a good state of repair

- The property had been empty for several years but we're planning to **renovate** it and turn it back into a nice home.

to paper the walls – to put up wallpaper

- My friend is a decorator and is going to help me **paper the walls** in my new flat.

to tile the bathroom – to cover a wall with tiles to make it water resistant

- We've nearly finished the new extension and just need **to tile the bathroom**.

a lick of paint – a small amount of paint; one layer of paint

- There was very little that needed doing before we move into the house but we gave the walls **a lick of paint** to brighten them up.

Set 9: Other vocabulary

dream home – a home you regard as perfect

- My **dream home** would be a cottage by the sea.

modern – based on up to date styles

- Most **modern** houses are very similar to look at and have small rooms and not much storage space.

house-hunting – looking for a property to live in

- We've been **house-hunting** for three months but can't find anything that really suits us.

house-warming party – a party to celebrate moving into a new home

- I'm going to a colleague's **house-warming party** on Saturday and can't wait to look around her new home.

to have a place of your own – to have your own home and not have to share it with anyone else

- I love living at home with my family but I'm 21 now and have a good job so I feel it's time to find **a place of my own**.

to move in – to begin to live in a property

- Niko was impressed with the recently renovated hall of residence and couldn't wait to **move in**.

to move out – to stop living in a particular place

- Veronica broke up with her boyfriend and **moved out** of their flat.

downsize – to reduce in size; to buy a smaller house

- Many parents **downsize** when their children have left home as they don't need such a large house.



to feel homesick – to feel unhappy because you are away from home and are missing your family, friends, and home very much

- For the first few months at university, Dalia **felt** very **homesick** but she began to feel better once she started to make new friends.

there's no place like home – an expression that means your home is a special place

- I do enjoy travelling the world and visiting amazing places but **there's no place like home**.

next door – the property next to yours

- A new family has just moved into the house **next door**.

a view – what you can see from a particular place

- The thing I remember most about my grandmother's house was the lovely **view** of the mountains.

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For IELTS-style accommodation and home-related practise questions and sample answers visit:

www.ieltsjacky.com/home-vocabulary.html

