

Useful Synonyms

For IELTS Band 7-9

20 common adjectives and their
'less common' synonyms.



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USEFUL SYNONYMS FOR BAND 7-9

INTRODUCTION

In the IELTS Speaking test, 25% of your score is based on 'lexical resource'. Lexical resource refers to your ability to use a wide range of vocabulary to express your ideas. To get Band 7-9, you need to show that you can correctly use some 'less common' synonyms of everyday words and phrases. Here's an example:

Examiner: Why do you think people exercise more than in the past?

Candidate: Hmm....that's a difficult question. Well, I think that ...

The adjective *difficult* is very common. To demonstrate a good lexical resource, the candidate could use a less common synonym, for example:

Hmm, that's a **tricky** question.

If you can avoid repeating the same words within the same answer, you will also get a better score for lexical resource. Here's an example:

There are many **beautiful** places to visit in my country. For example, we have some rather **picturesque** towns and villages in the south.

Another way of demonstrating lexical resource is by replacing a word that the examiner uses with a less common synonym. For example:

Examiner: Is your country's cuisine healthy?

Candidate: Yes, I think my country's cuisine is very **nutritious**.

USEFUL SYNONYMS FOR BAND 7-9

Common adjective	Less common synonyms	Examples of use
bad (harmful)	detrimental, harmful, damaging	detrimental for the environment
bad (unpleasant)	nasty, unpleasant, annoying, dreadful (= <i>very bad</i>)	a dreadful holiday
beautiful (view)	scenic, breathtaking, wonderful, picturesque	I would describe my town as a picturesque little village. The view of the mountains is breathtaking . I enjoy going for walks in scenic places.
beautiful (person)	attractive, gorgeous, good-looking	a gorgeous woman/man He is very good-looking .
dangerous	hazardous	Drinking too much alcohol can be hazardous to your health.
difficult	tricky, hard, tough, challenging	Learning English phrasal verbs is quite tough . That's a tricky question. Finding a good job in my country is very challenging .
easy	effortless, simple	The course was effortless .
enjoyable	great, pleasurable	a pleasurable holiday
expensive	pricey, costly, dear	New cars are very pricey . The price of a ticket is costly .
famous	well-known, renowned, celebrated, notorious (= <i>famous for a bad reason</i>)	a well-known actor This person is renowned for his sporting talent. I'm going to talk about a celebrated writer called ... He was a notorious criminal.
fast	rapid, quick, speedy	the rapid development of technology

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Common adjective	Less common synonyms	Examples of use
polite	well-mannered	I think I am a well-mannered person.
poor	hard-up, impoverished, penniless (= <i>very poor</i>)	There are a lot of impoverished people in my country.
popular (belief)	widespread, prevalent, common	a widespread opinion a prevalent belief
popular (enjoyed by many people)	well-liked	'Dancing with the Stars' is a well-liked TV show in my country
positive (impact, effect)	favourable, beneficial, constructive	I think technology has had a constructive impact on society.
punctual	on time	Being on time is considered to be a positive character trait in my country.
rich	wealthy, affluent	People in my country are becoming wealthier .
safe	secure	My neighbourhood is very secure .
special	unusual, distinctive, characteristic, unique	My city is well-known for its distinctive architecture.
successful	fruitful, prosperous	a prosperous business
traditional (use)	conventional	The conventional use of a mobile phone is to make calls and send text messages.
typical (dish, name)	characteristic, popular	A characteristic dish in my country is chicken madras.
useful	practical, convenient	Shopping online is very convenient .