FREE FROM SMART CUB LEARNING

11 Plus Vocabulary Word List

254 original words in three tiers, each with a child-friendly definition, an example sentence and similar words, plus opposite words and the word family where they exist. Tick the box when your child can use the word, not just recognise it.

106 foundation | **101** strong | **47** stretch | **14** themed sections

Free to print and share for family use. Updated 2026-10-01. Practise every word online at https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/vocabulary-word-list

HOW TO USE THIS LIST

Learn the words in the order the exam rewards them

Most 11+ vocabulary marks come from ordinary words known precisely, not rare words known vaguely. Closest-in-meaning questions put four plausible neighbours next to the answer, so your child needs the exact sense. That is why every word here has a definition, a sentence that shows the meaning, and its close and opposite words: the sentence is the test, and the similar words are the distractors.

The three tiers

Foundation (106)

Words a confident Year 5 reader meets in class reading. Learn these first: they carry the closest-in-meaning and sentence-completion marks that most children can win.

Strong (101)

The words that turn up as answer options in 11+ closest-in-meaning and synonym questions. Knowing these precisely is what separates a solid score from a competitive one.

Stretch (47)

Less common words a well-read Year 6 child may meet in harder passages or as distractors. Add these once the first two tiers are automatic.

A routine that works: ten words, four dated touches

Day 1
Read the word, meaning and sentence aloud. Your child writes one new sentence of their own for each word.

Day 3
Cover the meanings. Show only the words. Your child says the meaning; anything missed goes back to tomorrow.

Day 7
Open any book. Could each word replace a word in a paragraph and keep the sense? That is the closest-in-meaning skill.

Day 21
Ten quick questions, a minute each, then tick the box. Missed words rejoin a new batch at day 1.

The tick box and the labels

Tick a word only when your child can use it in a sentence of their own without help. 8 words carry a KS2 spelling label: they are on the national curriculum statutory spelling lists for Years 3 to 4 or Years 5 to 6, so school already expects them and they are a good place to start.

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PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Feelings and moods

How characters feel, from quiet contentment to dread. Comprehension questions ask how a character feels and which word tells you.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**anxious** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Feeling worried and nervous about something that might happen.** *With the storm rolling in, Priya grew anxious about her dad's boat still out at sea.*	**Similar:** worried, nervous, uneasy **Opposite:** calm, relaxed **Family:** anxiety (noun), anxiously (adverb)
☐	**content** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Quietly happy and satisfied with the way things are.** *Curled up by the fire with a purring cat on her lap, Gran seemed perfectly content.*	**Similar:** satisfied, pleased, comfortable **Opposite:** dissatisfied, restless **Family:** contentment (noun), contented (adjective), contentedly (adverb)
☐	**dread** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A strong feeling of fear about something that is going to happen.** *A cold dread crept over Amir as the dentist's door creaked open and his name was called.*	**Similar:** fear, terror, foreboding **Opposite:** eagerness, confidence **Family:** dread (verb), dreadful (adjective), dreaded (adjective)
☐	**envy** *noun* FOUNDATION	**An unhappy wish to have what someone else has.** *Chloe gazed at her cousin's shiny new scooter with a pang of envy she tried to hide.*	**Similar:** jealousy, longing **Opposite:** contentment, goodwill **Family:** envy (verb), envious (adjective), enviable (adjective)
☐	**furious** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Extremely angry, often in a way that is hard to hide.** *Dad was furious when he discovered the goat had eaten every lettuce on the allotment.*	**Similar:** enraged, livid, fuming **Opposite:** calm, pleased **Family:** fury (noun), furiously (adverb)
☐	**grief** *noun* FOUNDATION	**Deep sadness, especially after someone or something is lost.** *The whole village shared the farmer's grief when his faithful old sheepdog died.*	**Similar:** sorrow, heartache, mourning **Opposite:** delight, happiness **Family:** grieve (verb), grief-stricken (adjective)
☐	**relief** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A feeling of comfort after worry, pain or danger has passed.** *Relief flooded through the whole family as the missing tortoise plodded out from under the shed.*	**Similar:** comfort, reassurance, ease **Opposite:** worry, distress **Family:** relieve (verb), relieved (adjective)
☐	**sulk** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To stay silent and grumpy because you are annoyed about something.** *Rather than join the game, Leo chose to sulk in the corner with his arms folded.*	**Similar:** mope, brood, pout **Opposite:** cheer up, brighten **Family:** sulk (noun), sulky (adjective), sulkily (adverb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**apprehensive** *adjective* STRONG	**Slightly afraid and uneasy about something that is coming.** *The class fell quiet and apprehensive as the rickety rope bridge swayed above the river.*	**Similar:** nervous, fearful, uneasy **Opposite:** confident, unafraid **Family:** apprehension (noun), apprehensively (adverb)
☐	**bewildered** *adjective* STRONG	**Completely confused and unable to understand what is happening.** *Lost among the identical stalls of the market, the twins looked around, utterly bewildered.*	**Similar:** confused, baffled, puzzled **Opposite:** certain, clear-headed **Family:** bewilder (verb), bewilderment (noun), bewildering (adjective)
☐	**dejected** *adjective* STRONG	**Feeling low and unhappy because something has gone wrong.** *Walking home in the rain after the fete was cancelled, Sam looked thoroughly dejected.*	**Similar:** downcast, disheartened, glum **Opposite:** upbeat, hopeful **Family:** dejection (noun), dejectedly (adverb)
☐	**exasperated** *adjective* STRONG	**Extremely annoyed, usually because a problem keeps happening.** *After the printer jammed for the fifth time, the librarian threw up her hands, exasperated.*	**Similar:** annoyed, irritated, infuriated **Opposite:** patient, unruffled **Family:** exasperate (verb), exasperation (noun), exasperating (adjective)
☐	**fret** *verb* STRONG	**To keep worrying about something, often over small things.** *Auntie Jo tends to fret about the weather every time we plan a picnic on the beach.*	**Similar:** worry, agonise, stew **Opposite:** relax, unwind **Family:** fretful (adjective), fretfully (adverb)
☐	**mortified** *adjective* STRONG	**Extremely embarrassed and ashamed about something you have done.** *Tom was mortified to discover he had spent the whole assembly with paint on his nose.*	**Similar:** humiliated, ashamed, embarrassed **Opposite:** proud, unabashed **Family:** mortify (verb), mortification (noun), mortifying (adjective)
☐	**resentful** *adjective* STRONG	**Feeling bitter and annoyed about being treated unfairly.** *Left to wash up alone while his brothers played football, Jamie grew quietly resentful.*	**Similar:** bitter, aggrieved, sour **Opposite:** forgiving, grateful **Family:** resent (verb), resentment (noun), resentfully (adverb)
☐	**yearn** *verb* STRONG	**To long very much for something you cannot easily have.** *Stuck indoors with chickenpox, Ellie began to yearn for the muddy fields and her pony.*	**Similar:** long, crave, pine **Opposite:** spurn, reject **Family:** yearning (noun), yearningly (adverb)
☐	**anguish** *noun* STRETCH	**Terrible suffering of the mind or body.** *Her face twisted in anguish as she realised the letter from Grandpa had blown into the canal.*	**Similar:** agony, torment, distress **Opposite:** comfort, bliss **Family:** anguished (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**despondent** *adjective* STRETCH	**Very unhappy and without much hope that things will improve.** *Weeks of rain had ruined the strawberries, and the growers were despondent about the summer.*	**Similar:** hopeless, gloomy, defeated **Opposite:** hopeful, optimistic **Family:** despondency (noun), despondently (adverb)
☐	**forlorn** *adjective* STRETCH	**Sad and lonely, as if nobody cares or nothing can help.** *A single forlorn puppy sat shivering by the gate, watching every car that passed without stopping.*	**Similar:** lonely, miserable, abandoned **Opposite:** hopeful, comforted **Family:** forlornly (adverb), forlornness (noun)
☐	**seethe** *verb* STRETCH	**To feel very angry.** *Hannah smiled politely at the referee, but underneath she was seething at the unfair decision.*	**Similar:** fume, simmer, smoulder **Opposite:** calm down, forgive **Family:** seething (adjective)

PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Character and behaviour

Words that describe what people are like and how they act. Passages rarely say "she was stubborn"; they show it, and these words name it.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**arrogant** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Behaving as if you are more important or clever than everyone else.** *The arrogant new striker told everyone he was the only player on the team worth watching.*	**Similar:** conceited, big-headed, haughty **Opposite:** modest, humble **Family:** arrogance (noun), arrogantly (adverb)
☐	**loyalty** *noun* FOUNDATION	**Staying faithful to a person, team or promise through good times and bad.** *Out of loyalty to her village team, Beth cheered even when they were losing six-nil.*	**Similar:** faithfulness, devotion, allegiance **Opposite:** betrayal, disloyalty **Family:** loyal (adjective), loyally (adverb), disloyal (adjective)
☐	**meddle** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To interfere in something that is not your business.** *Gran told us not to meddle in the neighbours' argument, but Josh marched over to give his opinion anyway.*	**Similar:** interfere, tamper, pry **Opposite:** keep out, refrain **Family:** meddler (noun), meddlesome (adjective), meddling (adjective)
☐	**mischievous** *adjective* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	**Fond of playing tricks and causing small amounts of trouble.** *The mischievous kitten had unravelled the entire ball of wool across the landing by breakfast.*	**Similar:** naughty, playful, impish **Opposite:** well-behaved, obedient **Family:** mischief (noun), mischievously (adverb)
☐	**patience** *noun* FOUNDATION	**The ability to wait calmly or put up with problems without complaining.** *Fishing from the harbour wall takes patience, as the mackerel may not bite for an hour.*	**Similar:** calmness, forbearance, tolerance **Opposite:** impatience, restlessness **Family:** patient (adjective), patiently (adverb), impatient (adjective)
☐	**pester** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To keep bothering or annoying someone, often by asking for something again and again.** *The seagulls will pester anyone eating chips on the pier until every last one is gone.*	**Similar:** nag, badger, hound **Opposite:** ignore, leave alone
☐	**stubborn** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Refusing to change your mind, even when others give good reasons.** *Too stubborn to ask for help, Uncle Pete drove us around the same roundabout four times.*	**Similar:** headstrong, obstinate, unyielding **Opposite:** compliant, open-minded **Family:** stubbornly (adverb), stubbornness (noun)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**tantrum** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A sudden outburst of bad temper, usually by a young child.** *The toddler threw a tantrum in the supermarket because the trolley had no seat for his teddy.*	**Similar:** outburst, fit of rage **Opposite:** composure, calm
☐	**candid** *adjective* STRONG	**Honest and open about what you really think, even if it is awkward.** *Aunt Ros was candid about the cake: it looked lovely but tasted faintly of soap.*	**Similar:** frank, open, outspoken **Opposite:** evasive, guarded **Family:** candour (noun), candidly (adverb)
☐	**courtesy** *noun* STRONG	**Polite behaviour that shows respect and consideration for others.** *The bus driver waited with great courtesy while the elderly man folded his walking stick.*	**Similar:** politeness, good manners, civility **Opposite:** rudeness, discourtesy **Family:** courteous (adjective), courteously (adverb), discourteous (adjective)
☐	**deliberate** *adjective* STRONG	**Done on purpose, after thinking about it, rather than by accident.** *Knocking over the paint pot was no accident; it was a deliberate attempt to end the lesson early.*	**Similar:** intentional, planned, calculated **Opposite:** accidental, unintentional **Family:** deliberately (adverb), deliberate (verb), deliberation (noun)
☐	**impulsive** *adjective* STRONG	**Acting suddenly on a feeling, without stopping to think first.** *One impulsive leap off the harbour wall left the birthday boy soaked and grinning in his party clothes.*	**Similar:** rash, hasty, reckless **Opposite:** cautious, careful **Family:** impulse (noun), impulsively (adverb)
☐	**meticulous** *adjective* STRONG	**Paying very close attention to every small detail.** *Being meticulous, Grandad labelled every seed packet and lined them up by the month of sowing.*	**Similar:** thorough, painstaking, exact **Opposite:** careless, slapdash **Family:** meticulously (adverb), meticulousness (noun)
☐	**reluctant** *adjective* STRONG	**Unwilling to do something and hanging back from it.** *The pony was reluctant to cross the stream, planting its hooves firmly on the bank.*	**Similar:** unwilling, hesitant, loath **Opposite:** eager, keen **Family:** reluctance (noun), reluctantly (adverb)
☐	**resilient** *adjective* STRONG	**Able to recover quickly after something difficult or upsetting.** *Even after the flood wrecked their shop, the resilient bakers were serving bread again within a week.*	**Similar:** tough, hardy, strong **Opposite:** fragile, vulnerable **Family:** resilience (noun), resiliently (adverb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**sceptical** *adjective* STRONG	**Doubting whether something is really true or will really work.** *Kai was sceptical of his sister's claim that a fox had eaten her homework.*	**Similar:** doubtful, unconvinced, suspicious **Opposite:** convinced, trusting **Family:** sceptic (noun), scepticism (noun), sceptically (adverb)
☐	**vanity** *noun* STRONG	**Too much pride in your own looks, cleverness or importance.** *The peacock in the fable, full of vanity, spent all morning admiring his reflection in the pond.*	**Similar:** conceit, self-importance, pride **Opposite:** modesty, humility **Family:** vain (adjective), vainly (adverb)
☐	**conscientious** *adjective* STRETCH	**Careful to do your work properly and to do what is right.** *A conscientious monitor, Ravi checked every window was shut before leaving the classroom.*	**Similar:** diligent, dutiful, thorough **Opposite:** careless, negligent **Family:** conscientiously (adverb), conscientiousness (noun)
☐	**earnest** *adjective* STRETCH	**Very serious and sincere, meaning every word you say.** *In an earnest voice, Maya promised she would feed the guinea pigs every single morning.*	**Similar:** serious, heartfelt, wholehearted **Opposite:** flippant, half-hearted **Family:** earnestly (adverb), earnestness (noun)
☐	**fickle** *adjective* STRETCH	**Changing your mind or your likes very often and without good reason.** *Our fickle cat adores the salmon flavour one day and turns her nose up at it the next.*	**Similar:** changeable, unpredictable, flighty **Opposite:** loyal, constant **Family:** fickleness (noun)
☐	**haughty** *adjective* STRETCH	**Proud and looking down on other people as if they are beneath you.** *With a haughty sniff, the duchess in the play refused to sit on the wooden bench.*	**Similar:** snobbish, disdainful, superior **Opposite:** humble, modest **Family:** haughtily (adverb), haughtiness (noun)

PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Help, support and generosity

Kindness, comfort and looking after others. Common in stories about friendship and family, and in synonym questions.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**charity** *noun* FOUNDATION	**Giving money, food or help to people who need it.** *Every autumn the school collects tins for charity so that nobody in town goes hungry at Christmas.*	**Similar:** generosity, goodwill, kindness **Opposite:** meanness, selfishness **Family:** charitable (adjective), charitably (adverb)
☐	**comfort** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To make someone feel less sad or worried by being kind to them.** *After the rabbit escaped, Grandma sat on the step to comfort Leah and dry her tears.*	**Similar:** console, soothe, reassure **Opposite:** upset, distress **Family:** comfort (noun), comforting (adjective), comfortable (adjective)
☐	**donate** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To give something, such as money or clothes, to help a good cause.** *Please donate any outgrown wellies to the box in the porch for the nursery children.*	**Similar:** give, contribute, hand over **Opposite:** keep, withhold **Family:** donation (noun), donor (noun)
☐	**generous** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Happy to give more time, money or kindness than is expected.** *A generous neighbour left a whole box of apples from her tree on our doorstep.*	**Similar:** giving, open-handed, kind **Opposite:** mean, stingy, selfish **Family:** generosity (noun), generously (adverb)
☐	**rely** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To depend on someone or something to do what is needed.** *Islanders rely on the little ferry to bring their post, milk and newspapers across each morning.*	**Similar:** depend, count on, trust **Opposite:** distrust, doubt **Family:** reliable (adjective), reliance (noun), reliably (adverb)
☐	**sacrifice** *noun* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	**Giving up something you value in order to help someone else.** *Missing the cup final to look after his little sister was a real sacrifice for Marcus.*	**Similar:** surrender, giving up, forfeit **Opposite:** keeping **Family:** sacrifice (verb), sacrificial (adjective)
☐	**sympathy** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A feeling of care and sorrow for someone who is having a hard time.** *The postman had real sympathy for Mrs Kaur, stopping to carry her shopping up the steps.*	**Similar:** compassion, understanding, pity **Opposite:** indifference, coldness **Family:** sympathetic (adjective), sympathise (verb), sympathetically (adverb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**volunteer** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To offer to do a job freely, without being made to or paid for it.** *Half the class chose to volunteer at the beach clean, filling twelve sacks with litter by lunchtime.*	**Similar:** offer, step forward **Opposite:** refuse, shirk **Family:** volunteer (noun), voluntary (adjective), voluntarily (adverb)
☐	**compassion** *noun* STRONG	**Deep sympathy for someone who is suffering, together with a wish to help.** *Filled with compassion, the children carried the injured hedgehog to the wildlife rescue centre.*	**Similar:** sympathy, kindness, mercy **Opposite:** cruelty, indifference **Family:** compassionate (adjective), compassionately (adverb)
☐	**console** *verb* STRONG	**To try to make someone feel better after a loss or disappointment.** *The coach tried to console the goalkeeper, reminding him of the six saves he had made.*	**Similar:** soothe, cheer, sympathise with **Opposite:** upset, torment **Family:** consolation (noun), consoling (adjective)
☐	**hospitable** *adjective* STRONG	**Friendly and welcoming to guests and strangers.** *Our hospitable hosts at the farmhouse insisted we stay for a second helping of crumble.*	**Similar:** welcoming, friendly, warm **Opposite:** unfriendly, cold **Family:** hospitality (noun), hospitably (adverb)
☐	**nurture** *verb* STRONG	**To care for someone or something young so that it grows well.** *Miss Okafor helped nurture the seedlings on the windowsill until they were sturdy enough for the garden.*	**Similar:** nourish, foster, cultivate **Opposite:** neglect, stunt **Family:** nurture (noun), nurturing (adjective)
☐	**reassure** *verb* STRONG	**To say or do something that takes away someone's worries.** *The vet spoke gently to reassure us that the hamster's limp would mend in a few days.*	**Similar:** comfort, calm, encourage **Opposite:** alarm, unsettle **Family:** reassurance (noun), reassuring (adjective), reassuringly (adverb)
☐	**selfless** *adjective* STRONG	**Caring more about other people's needs than about your own.** *In a selfless act, the lifeguard gave her own coat to the shivering boy pulled from the sea.*	**Similar:** unselfish, altruistic, generous **Opposite:** selfish, self-centred **Family:** selflessly (adverb), selflessness (noun)
☐	**bolster** *verb* STRETCH	**To support or strengthen something so it does not fail.** *A cheer from the crowd helped bolster the tired runners as they climbed the final hill.*	**Similar:** support, boost, strengthen **Opposite:** undermine, weaken **Family:** bolster (noun)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**magnanimous** *adjective* STRETCH	**Kind and forgiving towards others, especially those you have beaten.** *The winning captain was magnanimous, praising the other team's goalkeeper in front of everyone.*	**Similar:** generous, forgiving, big-hearted **Opposite:** petty, spiteful **Family:** magnanimity (noun), magnanimously (adverb)

PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

Speaking, telling and asking

Precise verbs for speech. Authors use these instead of "said", and questions ask what the choice tells you about the speaker.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**boast** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To talk proudly about yourself or the things you own, to impress others.** *Nobody wanted to sit next to Callum after he boasted about his new bike all lunchtime.*	**Similar:** brag, show off, crow **Opposite:** be modest, play down **Family:** boastful (adjective), boastfully (adverb), boaster (noun)
☐	**confess** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To admit that you have done something wrong or embarrassing.** *Nobody would confess to eating the last biscuit, though there were crumbs on the dog's nose.*	**Similar:** admit, own up, come clean **Opposite:** deny, cover up **Family:** confession (noun)
☐	**debate** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A discussion in which people give reasons for different opinions.** *The class held a lively debate about whether the school should keep chickens on the field.*	**Similar:** discussion, argument, dispute **Opposite:** agreement, consensus **Family:** debate (verb), debatable (adjective), debater (noun)
☐	**declare** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To say something firmly and openly so that everyone knows it.** *"This is the best sandcastle on the whole beach," Dev declared, planting his flag on top.*	**Similar:** announce, state, proclaim **Opposite:** hide, withhold **Family:** declaration (noun)
☐	**exclaim** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To say something suddenly and loudly because you are surprised or pleased.** *"Look, a kingfisher!" Priya exclaimed, nearly dropping her sandwich into the canal.*	**Similar:** cry out, shout, blurt **Opposite:** whisper, mutter **Family:** exclamation (noun), exclamatory (adjective)
☐	**mutter** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To speak quietly and unclearly, often because you are annoyed.** *Grandad muttered something about the rain as he dragged the wheelbarrow back to the shed.*	**Similar:** mumble, grumble **Opposite:** shout, exclaim **Family:** muttering (noun)
☐	**persuade** *verb* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	**To make someone agree to do or believe something by giving them good reasons.** *After three weeks of asking, Amira finally persuaded her dad to adopt the scruffy rescue dog.*	**Similar:** convince, talk round, win over **Opposite:** dissuade, discourage **Family:** persuasion (noun), persuasive (adjective), persuasively (adverb)
☐	**remark** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A short comment that someone says or writes about something.** *Auntie Jo made a kind remark about my painting, and I grinned all the way home.*	**Similar:** comment, observation, statement **Opposite:** silence **Family:** remark (verb), remarkable (adjective), remarkably (adverb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**contradict** *verb* STRONG	**To say that the opposite of what someone else has said is true.** *Every time Leo described the match, his sister contradicted him and said the goal was offside.*	**Similar:** disagree with, deny, dispute **Opposite:** agree, confirm, support **Family:** contradiction (noun), contradictory (adjective)
☐	**enquire** *verb* STRONG	**To ask someone for information about something.** *Mum rang the library to enquire whether the book about volcanoes had been returned yet.*	**Similar:** ask, query, investigate **Opposite:** answer, reply **Family:** enquiry (noun), enquiring (adjective)
☐	**insist** *verb* STRONG	**To say firmly that something must happen or is definitely true.** *Even though the sun was shining, Dad insisted that we take our raincoats to the beach.*	**Similar:** demand, stand firm, assert **Opposite:** give in, yield **Family:** insistence (noun), insistent (adjective), insistently (adverb)
☐	**plead** *verb* STRONG	**To beg someone for something in a serious and emotional way.** *The twins pleaded with their mum to let them stay up for the fireworks.*	**Similar:** beg, implore, appeal **Opposite:** demand, order **Family:** plea (noun), pleading (adjective)
☐	**query** *noun* STRONG	**A question, especially one asking for something to be checked or explained.** *The librarian answered my query about where the graphic novels had been moved to.*	**Similar:** question, enquiry, doubt **Opposite:** answer, reply **Family:** query (verb)
☐	**retort** *noun* STRONG	**A quick, sharp reply, often clever or angry.** *"At least my boots match," was Sam's retort when his brother laughed at his hat.*	**Similar:** reply, comeback, riposte **Opposite:** silence **Family:** retort (verb)
☐	**urge** *verb* STRONG	**To try hard to persuade someone to do something.** *The lifeguard urged the swimmers to come back to the shore before the tide turned.*	**Similar:** encourage, press, push **Opposite:** discourage, dissuade **Family:** urge (noun), urgent (adjective), urgency (noun)
☐	**assert** *verb* STRETCH	**To state something firmly and confidently as a fact.** *Maya asserted that the footprints in the mud belonged to a badger, not a fox.*	**Similar:** declare, claim, insist **Opposite:** deny, retract **Family:** assertion (noun), assertive (adjective), assertively (adverb)
☐	**interrogate** *verb* STRETCH	**To ask someone many questions, often in a stern or forceful way.** *When the biscuit tin turned up empty, Gran interrogated each of us in turn.*	**Similar:** question, quiz, cross-examine **Opposite:** answer, reply **Family:** interrogation (noun), interrogative (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**rebuke** *verb* STRETCH	**To tell someone sharply that they have done something wrong.** *The librarian rebuked the boys for sliding down the banister, though her eyes were twinkling.*	**Similar:** scold, tell off, reprimand **Opposite:** praise, compliment **Family:** rebuke (noun)

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Moving and doing

Verbs of movement and action. They set the pace of a passage and are favourites for closest-in-meaning questions.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**clamber** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To climb somewhere awkwardly, using your hands and feet.** *The children clambered over the slippery rocks to reach the pool at the far end.*	**Similar:** scramble, climb, scale
☐	**dawdle** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To walk or do something slowly, wasting time along the way.** *We dawdled home from school, stopping to look at every snail on the pavement.*	**Similar:** dally, loiter, drag your feet **Opposite:** hurry, rush **Family:** dawdler (noun)
☐	**errand** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A short journey to do a small job, such as delivering something.** *Before tea, Mum sent me on an errand to fetch milk from the corner shop.*	**Similar:** task, job, mission
☐	**fidget** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To keep making small restless movements because you are bored or nervous.** *The vicar's sermon dragged on, and the choirboys began to fidget in the front pew.*	**Similar:** squirm, wriggle, twitch **Opposite:** settle, relax **Family:** fidget (noun), fidgety (adjective)
☐	**hesitate** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To pause before doing something because you are unsure or nervous.** *Rosie hesitated at the edge of the pool, then took a deep breath and jumped.*	**Similar:** pause, dither, hold back **Opposite:** rush, plunge in **Family:** hesitation (noun), hesitant (adjective), hesitantly (adverb)
☐	**hurl** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To throw something with great force.** *Furious with the wind, Tom hurled his broken kite into the hedge.*	**Similar:** fling, throw, toss **Opposite:** catch, hold
☐	**hurtle** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To move very fast, often in a wild or out-of-control way.** *The sledge hurtled down the slope so fast that the twins had to bail out into a snowdrift.*	**Similar:** race, speed, rush **Opposite:** crawl, creep **Family:** hurtling (adjective)
☐	**scurry** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To move quickly with short, hurried steps.** *A mouse scurried across the kitchen floor and disappeared under the fridge.*	**Similar:** scamper, dash, scuttle **Opposite:** dawdle, amble **Family:** scurry (noun)
☐	**stride** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To walk with long, confident steps.** *Ignoring the drizzle, the coach strode across the pitch to shake the referee's hand.*	**Similar:** march, pace, step out **Opposite:** shuffle, dawdle **Family:** stride (noun)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**stumble** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To trip or nearly fall while walking or running.** *Halfway across the field, Jack stumbled on a molehill and landed in the wet grass.*	**Similar:** trip, lurch, totter **Family:** stumble (noun), stumbling (adjective)
☐	**flinch** *verb* STRONG	**To make a small, sudden movement away from something because of pain or fear.** *The kitten flinched when the hairdryer roared into life next door.*	**Similar:** wince, recoil, shrink back **Opposite:** stand firm, hold steady **Family:** flinch (noun)
☐	**gesture** *noun* STRONG	**A movement of the hand or head that shows a feeling or idea.** *With a quick gesture, the bus driver waved us across the road in front of him.*	**Similar:** signal, sign, motion **Opposite:** stillness **Family:** gesture (verb), gesticulate (verb)
☐	**linger** *verb* STRONG	**To stay somewhere longer than needed because you do not want to leave.** *Long after the others had gone in, Nadia lingered by the pond watching the dragonflies.*	**Similar:** loiter, remain, dawdle **Opposite:** hurry away, depart **Family:** lingering (adjective)
☐	**plunge** *verb* STRONG	**To fall or jump suddenly and steeply downwards.** *The otter plunged into the river and came up seconds later with a wriggling fish.*	**Similar:** dive, drop, plummet **Opposite:** rise, soar **Family:** plunge (noun)
☐	**retrieve** *verb* STRONG	**To get something back from the place where it was left or lost.** *Our spaniel loves to retrieve tennis balls from the pond, however muddy the water.*	**Similar:** fetch, recover, get back **Opposite:** lose, discard **Family:** retrieval (noun), retriever (noun)
☐	**rummage** *verb* STRONG	**To search for something by moving things about in an untidy way.** *The caretaker rummaged through the drawer of old keys, looking for the one to the shed.*	**Similar:** search, root about, forage **Opposite:** tidy, arrange **Family:** rummage (noun)
☐	**lurch** *verb* STRETCH	**To move suddenly and unsteadily, as if about to fall.** *The ferry lurched sideways as a big wave hit it, and everyone grabbed the rails.*	**Similar:** sway, pitch, reel **Opposite:** glide, steady **Family:** lurch (noun)
☐	**manoeuvre** *noun* STRETCH	**A careful or skilful movement, especially one that is tricky to do.** *Getting the sofa up the narrow staircase took a clever manoeuvre and a lot of shouting.*	**Similar:** move, operation, tactic **Family:** manoeuvre (verb), manoeuvrable (adjective)
☐	**saunter** *verb* STRETCH	**To walk in a slow, relaxed way, as if you have all day.** *Hands in pockets, Ollie sauntered along the promenade, licking an ice cream.*	**Similar:** stroll, amble, wander **Opposite:** hurry, dash **Family:** saunter (noun)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**toil** *verb* STRETCH	**To work very hard for a long time at something tiring.** *All afternoon the volunteers toiled in the community garden behind the flats, digging out weeds in the heat.*	**Similar:** labour, slog, work hard **Opposite:** rest, relax **Family:** toil (noun)

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Thinking and understanding

Reasoning, knowing, remembering and puzzling things out. Useful in non-fiction passages and in the questions themselves.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**concentrate** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To give all your attention to one thing.** *With the telly blaring downstairs, Sofia found it hard to concentrate on her jigsaw.*	**Similar:** focus, pay attention, apply yourself **Opposite:** daydream, drift **Family:** concentration (noun), concentrated (adjective)
☐	**doubt** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A feeling of not being sure whether something is true or will happen.** *There was some doubt about whether the frozen pond was thick enough to walk on.*	**Similar:** uncertainty, hesitation, misgiving **Opposite:** certainty, confidence, trust **Family:** doubt (verb), doubtful (adjective), doubtless (adverb)
☐	**hunch** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A feeling that something is true, even without any proof.** *Following a hunch, Dan checked under the shed and found the missing football.*	**Similar:** feeling, instinct, suspicion
☐	**memorise** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To learn something so well that you can repeat it exactly.** *Over the weekend Finn memorised every line of his part in the school play.*	**Similar:** learn by heart, commit to memory, remember **Opposite:** forget **Family:** memory (noun), memorable (adjective), memorisation (noun)
☐	**realise** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To suddenly notice or understand something that you did not know before.** *Halfway to the bus stop, Zara realised she had left her packed lunch on the table.*	**Similar:** notice, grasp, become aware **Opposite:** overlook, miss **Family:** realisation (noun)
☐	**recall** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To bring a memory back into your mind.** *Try as she might, Nan could not recall where she had put her reading glasses.*	**Similar:** remember, recollect, call to mind **Opposite:** forget **Family:** recall (noun)
☐	**reckon** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To think or believe that something is likely to be true.** *I reckon the tide will be far enough out by four o'clock for us to explore the rock pools.*	**Similar:** think, suppose, believe **Family:** reckoning (noun)
☐	**theory** *noun* FOUNDATION	**An idea that tries to explain why something happens.** *Milo's theory was that the birds sang louder whenever next door's cat was indoors.*	**Similar:** idea, explanation, hypothesis **Family:** theoretical (adjective), theorise (verb), theorist (noun)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**anticipate** *verb* STRONG	**To expect that something will happen and get ready for it.** *Anticipating a rush on the ice-cream van, Gran had the coins ready before it turned into the street.*	**Similar:** expect, foresee, predict **Opposite:** overlook, disregard **Family:** anticipation (noun), anticipated (adjective)
☐	**assume** *verb* STRONG	**To accept that something is true without checking or having proof.** *We assumed the park would be empty on a rainy Tuesday, but the swings were packed.*	**Similar:** suppose, presume, take for granted **Opposite:** check, verify, doubt **Family:** assumption (noun), assumed (adjective)
☐	**baffle** *verb* STRONG	**To confuse someone so much that they cannot understand or explain something.** *The disappearing socks baffled the entire household for a month before we discovered the cat's secret nest.*	**Similar:** puzzle, bewilder, confuse **Opposite:** enlighten, explain **Family:** baffling (adjective), bafflement (noun)
☐	**comprehend** *verb* STRONG	**To understand something fully, especially something difficult.** *Even after Dad explained it twice, I still could not comprehend how the tide worked.*	**Similar:** understand, grasp, follow **Opposite:** misunderstand, miss **Family:** comprehension (noun), comprehensible (adjective), incomprehensible (adjective)
☐	**deduce** *verb* STRONG	**To work something out by thinking carefully about the facts you have.** *From the muddy paw prints on the doormat, Iris deduced that the dog had escaped again.*	**Similar:** work out, infer, reason **Opposite:** guess, assume **Family:** deduction (noun), deductive (adjective)
☐	**notion** *noun* STRONG	**An idea or belief about something, often one that is not fully formed.** *Ellie had a notion that the old lighthouse might be a good place for a picnic.*	**Similar:** idea, thought, belief **Family:** notional (adjective)
☐	**oblivious** *adjective* STRONG	**Not noticing what is happening around you.** *Lost in his comic, Arun was oblivious to the rain now soaking his trainers.*	**Similar:** unaware, heedless, unmindful **Opposite:** aware, alert, conscious **Family:** obliviously (adverb), obliviousness (noun)
☐	**obscure** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing something that is hard to understand or not widely known.** *Grandpa collects records by obscure bands that nobody at school has ever heard of.*	**Similar:** unknown, little-known, unclear **Opposite:** famous, well-known, obvious **Family:** obscure (verb), obscurity (noun), obscurely (adverb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**contemplate** *verb* STRETCH	**To think about something deeply and for a long time.** *Sitting on the harbour wall, Ruby contemplated what to do with the rest of the holidays.*	**Similar:** reflect on, think over, muse **Opposite:** ignore, dismiss **Family:** contemplation (noun), contemplative (adjective)
☐	**conundrum** *noun* STRETCH	**A confusing problem or question that is very hard to solve.** *How to fit six of us and the dog into Gran's tiny car was a real conundrum.*	**Similar:** puzzle, riddle, problem **Opposite:** solution, answer
☐	**fathom** *verb* STRETCH	**To understand something after thinking hard about it.** *Nobody could fathom why the hens had stopped laying until we spotted the fox's tracks.*	**Similar:** understand, work out, comprehend **Opposite:** misunderstand **Family:** unfathomable (adjective)
☐	**lucid** *adjective* STRETCH	**Clear and easy to understand.** *The guide gave such a lucid explanation of the tides that even my little brother followed it.*	**Similar:** clear, plain, coherent **Opposite:** confusing, muddled, obscure **Family:** lucidly (adverb), lucidity (noun)

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Truth, honesty and trickery

Honesty, deception and disguise. A rich source of antonym pairs.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**bluff** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To pretend to be confident or to know something so that other people believe you.** *The goalkeeper tried to bluff, diving left with a shout, but the striker calmly rolled the ball right.*	**Similar:** pretend, fake, put on an act **Opposite:** admit, own up **Family:** bluff (noun), bluffer (noun)
☐	**cunning** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Clever at getting what you want by using tricks.** *The cunning fox waited until the farmer had gone indoors before creeping towards the hen house.*	**Similar:** crafty, sly, wily **Opposite:** honest, naive **Family:** cunningly (adverb), cunning (noun)
☐	**deceive** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To make someone believe something that is not true.** *Every person in the audience was deceived by the trick, certain the coin had truly vanished.*	**Similar:** mislead, trick, fool **Opposite:** enlighten, inform **Family:** deception (noun), deceit (noun), deceptive (adjective), deceitful (adjective)
☐	**exaggerate** *verb* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	**To describe something as bigger, better or worse than it really is.** *Dad always exaggerates the size of the fish he caught, and it grows with every retelling.*	**Similar:** overstate, embellish, inflate **Opposite:** understate, minimise **Family:** exaggeration (noun), exaggerated (adjective)
☐	**genuine** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Real, and exactly what it claims to be.** *Grandad checked the old coin with a magnifying glass and declared it a genuine Roman one.*	**Similar:** real, authentic, true **Opposite:** fake, false **Family:** genuinely (adverb), genuineness (noun)
☐	**sincere** *adjective* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y5-6	**Honestly meant, without any pretending.** *Her apology was so sincere that Ravi forgave her before she had even finished speaking.*	**Similar:** heartfelt, honest, earnest **Opposite:** false, hypocritical **Family:** sincerely (adverb), sincerity (noun)
☐	**trustworthy** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing a person who can be relied on to be honest.** *Only the most trustworthy pupils were allowed to collect the dinner money from each classroom.*	**Similar:** reliable, dependable, honest **Opposite:** dishonest, unreliable **Family:** trust (noun), trust (verb), trustworthiness (noun)
☐	**conceal** *verb* STRONG	**To hide something so that it cannot be seen or found.** *The fox concealed itself behind the compost heap until the gardener had gone indoors.*	**Similar:** hide, cover, disguise **Opposite:** reveal, expose, uncover **Family:** concealment (noun), concealed (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**devious** *adjective* STRONG	**Using sneaky, dishonest methods to get your own way.** *Nobody trusted the devious shopkeeper, who kept the best apples hidden and sold the bruised ones first.*	**Similar:** sly, underhand, scheming **Opposite:** honest, straightforward **Family:** deviously (adverb), deviousness (noun)
☐	**gullible** *adjective* STRONG	**Too ready to believe whatever you are told, and so easy to trick.** *Only a gullible shopper would believe the market trader's promise that the plastic watch was solid gold.*	**Similar:** trusting, naive, easily fooled **Opposite:** suspicious, sceptical, wary **Family:** gullibility (noun), gullibly (adverb)
☐	**hoax** *noun* STRONG	**A trick that makes people believe something false, often as a joke.** *That photo of a shark in the boating lake turned out to be a hoax made with cardboard.*	**Similar:** prank, trick, deception **Opposite:** truth, fact **Family:** hoax (verb), hoaxer (noun)
☐	**pretence** *noun* STRONG	**A way of behaving that is meant to hide what is really true.** *Under the pretence of fetching a book, Leo slipped upstairs to wrap his sister's present.*	**Similar:** act, sham, show **Opposite:** honesty, reality **Family:** pretend (verb), pretender (noun)
☐	**swindle** *verb* STRONG	**To cheat someone out of money or goods by tricking them.** *The market trader swindled customers by selling glass beads as if they were real pearls.*	**Similar:** cheat, con, defraud **Family:** swindle (noun), swindler (noun)
☐	**verify** *verb* STRONG	**To check carefully that something is true or correct.** *Before printing the story, the editor rang the zoo to verify that a penguin really had escaped.*	**Similar:** check, confirm, prove **Family:** verification (noun), verifiable (adjective)
☐	**counterfeit** *adjective* STRETCH	**Made to look real in order to cheat people.** *The bank clerk held the note up to the light and spotted at once that it was counterfeit.*	**Similar:** fake, forged, imitation **Opposite:** genuine, authentic **Family:** counterfeit (verb), counterfeiter (noun)
☐	**guile** *noun* STRETCH	**Sly cleverness used to trick or outwit other people.** *With considerable guile, the smallest player drew the defenders left before passing the ball right.*	**Similar:** cunning, craftiness, trickery **Opposite:** honesty, innocence **Family:** guileless (adjective), beguile (verb)
☐	**ruse** *noun* STRETCH	**A clever plan used to fool someone.** *Pretending to have lost her scarf was just a ruse to get Mum out of the room.*	**Similar:** trick, ploy, dodge

ACTIONS AND THINKING

Courage, danger and conflict

Bravery, risk, threat and argument. The vocabulary of adventure stories and historical passages.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**courageous** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing someone who faces fear or hardship without giving up.** *It was courageous of Aisha to speak up for the new boy when everyone else stayed silent.*	**Similar:** brave, fearless, plucky **Opposite:** cowardly, timid **Family:** courage (noun), courageously (adverb)
☐	**cowardly** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Too afraid to face difficulty, and quick to run from it.** *Leaving your friend to face the angry goose alone was a cowardly thing to do, Tom.*	**Similar:** timid, spineless, fearful **Opposite:** brave, courageous **Family:** coward (noun), cowardice (noun)
☐	**defend** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To protect someone or something from attack or harm.** *The mother swan spread her wings wide to defend her cygnets from the curious dog.*	**Similar:** protect, guard, shield **Opposite:** attack, abandon **Family:** defence (noun), defender (noun), defensive (adjective)
☐	**hazard** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A thing that could cause harm or an accident.** *Loose stones on the cliff path were a real hazard for walkers after the heavy rain.*	**Similar:** danger, risk, peril **Opposite:** safety, protection **Family:** hazardous (adjective), hazard (verb)
☐	**quarrel** *noun* FOUNDATION	**An angry argument between people who disagree.** *A silly quarrel over whose turn it was on the swing ended with both cousins in tears.*	**Similar:** argument, row, dispute **Opposite:** agreement, reconciliation **Family:** quarrel (verb), quarrelsome (adjective)
☐	**surrender** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To stop fighting and admit that the other side has won.** *After an hour of snowball fighting, the soaked and shivering red team finally surrendered.*	**Similar:** give in, yield, submit **Opposite:** resist, fight on **Family:** surrender (noun)
☐	**threaten** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To say you will hurt or punish someone if they do not do what you want.** *The older boys threatened to throw our football over the fence unless we let them play.*	**Similar:** menace, intimidate, bully **Opposite:** reassure, protect **Family:** threat (noun), threatening (adjective)
☐	**ambush** *noun* STRONG	**A surprise attack by people who have been hiding and waiting.** *Hidden behind the shed, the twins launched their water-balloon ambush the moment Uncle Pete appeared.*	**Similar:** trap, surprise attack **Opposite:** warning, open attack **Family:** ambush (verb)
☐	**confront** *verb* STRONG	**To face someone or a problem directly instead of avoiding it.** *Rather than hide the broken vase, Ellie decided to confront the problem and tell her aunt.*	**Similar:** face, challenge, tackle **Opposite:** avoid, evade **Family:** confrontation (noun), confrontational (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**formidable** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing something so powerful or difficult that it causes respect or fear.** *With three county champions in their side, the visiting hockey team looked formidable opponents.*	**Similar:** daunting, mighty, intimidating **Opposite:** weak, feeble **Family:** formidably (adverb)
☐	**hostile** *adjective* STRONG	**Unfriendly, and ready to fight or argue.** *The farm cat gave the new puppy a hostile glare and refused to leave the doorstep.*	**Similar:** unfriendly, aggressive, antagonistic **Opposite:** friendly, welcoming **Family:** hostility (noun), hostilities (plural noun)
☐	**menace** *noun* STRONG	**Someone or something that threatens harm or keeps causing trouble.** *Wasps became such a menace at the picnic that we packed up and ate in the car.*	**Similar:** threat, danger, nuisance **Opposite:** blessing, comfort **Family:** menace (verb), menacing (adjective), menacingly (adverb)
☐	**perilous** *adjective* STRONG	**Full of risk and likely to cause harm.** *The climb down to the rock pools was perilous, with seaweed making every step slippery.*	**Similar:** dangerous, hazardous, risky **Opposite:** safe, secure **Family:** peril (noun), perilously (adverb)
☐	**treacherous** *adjective* STRONG	**Dangerous in a hidden way that is hard to spot, or ready to betray someone who trusts you.** *Black ice made the lane treacherous, and even the postman's van slid gently into the hedge.*	**Similar:** hazardous, risky, unsafe **Opposite:** safe, reliable **Family:** treachery (noun), treacherously (adverb)
☐	**valiant** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing a brave and determined effort, especially against the odds.** *Despite a valiant effort in the final minutes, the school team lost the cup by one goal.*	**Similar:** brave, heroic, gallant **Opposite:** cowardly, feeble **Family:** valiantly (adverb), valour (noun)
☐	**intrepid** *adjective* STRETCH	**Very brave when facing something difficult or dangerous.** *Our intrepid guide waded straight into the icy stream while the rest of us hung back.*	**Similar:** fearless, bold, daring **Opposite:** timid, cowardly **Family:** intrepidly (adverb), intrepidity (noun)
☐	**jeopardy** *noun* STRETCH	**A state of being at risk of harm or loss.** *One more late library book and Sam's chance of the reading prize would be in jeopardy.*	**Similar:** danger, peril, risk **Opposite:** safety, security **Family:** jeopardise (verb)
☐	**skirmish** *noun* STRETCH	**A short, small fight between two groups.** *What began as a skirmish over the last slice of cake soon had every cousin involved.*	**Similar:** scuffle, clash, tussle **Opposite:** truce, peace **Family:** skirmish (verb)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Size, strength and change

Amounts, scale, growing, shrinking, strength and weakness. Many pair cleanly as synonyms and antonyms.

WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐ **alter** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To change something slightly, or to become different.** *Mum had to alter the costume because the sleeves hung right down over Josh's hands.*	**Similar:** change, adjust, modify **Opposite:** preserve, keep **Family:** alteration (noun), alterable (adjective)
☐ **expand** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To become larger, or to make something larger.** *Watch the balloon expand as you blow into it, then let go and see it shoot across the room.*	**Similar:** grow, enlarge, swell **Opposite:** shrink, contract **Family:** expansion (noun), expansive (adjective)
☐ **fragile** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Easily broken or damaged.** *The eggs were so fragile that Nan wrapped each one in a tea towel for the journey.*	**Similar:** delicate, breakable, flimsy **Opposite:** sturdy, tough **Family:** fragility (noun)
☐ **mighty** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Very powerful or very large.** *With one mighty heave, the three of them dragged the fallen branch off the footpath.*	**Similar:** powerful, strong, huge **Opposite:** weak, puny **Family:** might (noun), mightily (adverb)
☐ **shrivel** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To become smaller, dry and wrinkled, usually from heat or lack of water.** *Without rain for a month, the lettuces began to shrivel and the soil cracked like old paint.*	**Similar:** wrinkle, shrink, wither **Opposite:** swell, plump up **Family:** shrivelled (adjective)
☐ **sturdy** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Strongly built and not easily broken.** *Twenty winters on the seafront had not put a single wobble in the sturdy wooden bench.*	**Similar:** strong, solid, robust **Opposite:** flimsy, fragile **Family:** sturdily (adverb), sturdiness (noun)
☐ **swell** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To grow bigger than usual, often by filling with something.** *The stream began to swell after the storm, spilling over its banks into the meadow.*	**Similar:** expand, bulge, grow **Opposite:** shrink, deflate **Family:** swelling (noun), swollen (adjective)
☐ **vast** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Extremely large in size or amount.** *From the top of the hill, the moor stretched away, a vast sea of purple heather.*	**Similar:** enormous, huge, immense **Opposite:** tiny, minute **Family:** vastly (adverb), vastness (noun)
☐ **abundant** *adjective* STRONG	**Available in very large amounts.** *Blackberries were abundant along the lane that autumn, and every bowl in the house was full.*	**Similar:** plentiful, ample, copious **Opposite:** scarce, sparse **Family:** abundance (noun), abundantly (adverb), abound (verb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**brittle** *adjective* STRONG	**Hard, but likely to snap or shatter easily.** *Years in the sun had turned the plastic ruler brittle, and it snapped when Kai bent it.*	**Similar:** fragile, breakable, crumbly **Opposite:** flexible, tough **Family:** brittleness (noun)
☐	**colossal** *adjective* STRONG	**Of truly enormous size.** *A colossal wave rose behind the pier, and the fishermen ran for the steps.*	**Similar:** gigantic, immense, massive **Opposite:** tiny, minute **Family:** colossus (noun), colossally (adverb)
☐	**dwindle** *verb* STRONG	**To become gradually smaller or fewer until little is left.** *The queue for the ice-cream van dwindled as the grey clouds rolled in over the beach.*	**Similar:** shrink, decline, diminish **Opposite:** grow, increase **Family:** dwindling (adjective)
☐	**feeble** *adjective* STRONG	**Weak, and lacking force or energy.** *The kitten gave a feeble mew from the box, too tired even to lift its head.*	**Similar:** weak, frail, faint **Opposite:** strong, powerful **Family:** feebly (adverb), feebleness (noun)
☐	**scarce** *adjective* STRONG	**In short supply and hard to find.** *Firewood was scarce on the island, so the campers gathered every dry twig they could spot.*	**Similar:** rare, sparse, in short supply **Opposite:** plentiful, abundant **Family:** scarcity (noun), scarcely (adverb)
☐	**sparse** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing something thinly spread, with only a few in a large space.** *The grass was sparse under the big beech tree, with bare earth showing between the tufts.*	**Similar:** thin, scanty, scattered **Opposite:** dense, thick **Family:** sparsely (adverb), sparseness (noun)
☐	**transform** *verb* STRONG	**To change something completely in form, look or character.** *A coat of yellow paint and some bunting transformed the dingy shed into a seaside cafe for the fete.*	**Similar:** change, convert, remodel **Opposite:** preserve, maintain **Family:** transformation (noun), transformed (adjective)
☐	**dearth** *noun* STRETCH	**A serious shortage of something that is needed.** *There was such a dearth of umbrellas at the fete that people sheltered under the cake stall.*	**Similar:** shortage, lack, scarcity **Opposite:** abundance, surplus
☐	**fluctuate** *verb* STRETCH	**To keep changing, rising and falling without a steady pattern.** *The temperature in the greenhouse fluctuated wildly, roasting the tomatoes by day and chilling them at night.*	**Similar:** vary, waver, swing **Opposite:** stabilise, settle **Family:** fluctuation (noun), fluctuating (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**magnitude** *noun* STRETCH	**The size or importance of something.** *Only when they reached the foot of the dam did the children grasp the magnitude of it.*	**Similar:** size, scale, extent **Opposite:** smallness, insignificance **Family:** magnify (verb), magnification (noun)
☐	**paltry** *adjective* STRETCH	**So small an amount that it is almost worthless.** *Ten pence was a paltry reward for an afternoon spent weeding Mr Okafor's entire allotment.*	**Similar:** measly, meagre, trifling **Opposite:** generous, substantial **Family:** paltriness (noun)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Time, order and speed

When things happen, in what order, and how fast. These words carry sequencing questions and cloze answers.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**gradually** *adverb* FOUNDATION	**Slowly and steadily, a little at a time.** *The tide crept in gradually, until the sandcastle's moat was full and its walls began to crumble.*	**Similar:** slowly, steadily, bit by bit **Opposite:** suddenly, abruptly **Family:** gradual (adjective)
☐	**hasty** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Done in a hurry, often without enough thought.** *In her hasty dash for the bus, Nia left her packed lunch sitting on the kitchen table.*	**Similar:** hurried, rushed, rash **Opposite:** careful, leisurely **Family:** haste (noun), hastily (adverb), hasten (verb)
☐	**postpone** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To move an event to a later time than planned.** *Because of the thunderstorm, the head teacher decided to postpone sports day until the following week.*	**Similar:** delay, put off, defer **Opposite:** bring forward, advance **Family:** postponement (noun)
☐	**punctual** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing someone who arrives or does things exactly on time.** *Mr Das is so punctual that the class can set the clock by the moment he walks in.*	**Similar:** prompt, on time, timely **Opposite:** late, tardy **Family:** punctuality (noun), punctually (adverb)
☐	**sequence** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A set of things that follow one another in a particular order.** *The recipe only works if you follow the sequence: cream the butter first, then add the eggs.*	**Similar:** order, series, succession **Opposite:** jumble, muddle **Family:** sequential (adjective)
☐	**swift** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Moving or happening very quickly.** *A swift reply came back from the library: the book we wanted was already on its way.*	**Similar:** quick, speedy, rapid **Opposite:** slow, sluggish **Family:** swiftly (adverb), swiftness (noun)
☐	**abrupt** *adjective* STRONG	**Sudden and unexpected.** *The film came to an abrupt stop halfway through, and the whole cinema groaned.*	**Similar:** sudden, sharp, unexpected **Opposite:** gradual, gentle **Family:** abruptly (adverb), abruptness (noun)
☐	**brisk** *adjective* STRONG	**Quick, energetic and lively.** *A brisk walk along the front soon warmed us up after the chilly ferry crossing.*	**Similar:** quick, lively, energetic **Opposite:** sluggish, leisurely **Family:** briskly (adverb), briskness (noun)
☐	**duration** *noun* STRONG	**The length of time that something lasts.** *For the whole duration of the car journey, the twins argued about who had seen the sea first.*	**Similar:** length, span, period **Family:** durable (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**interval** *noun* STRONG	**A period of time between two events.** *During the interval, the audience queued for choc ices while the stagehands changed the scenery.*	**Similar:** gap, pause, break **Family:** intervene (verb), intervening (adjective)
☐	**precede** *verb* STRONG	**To come or go before something else in time or order.** *A hush always precedes the fireworks, then the first rocket whistles up into the dark.*	**Similar:** come before, lead, go ahead of **Opposite:** follow, succeed **Family:** preceding (adjective), precedent (noun)
☐	**prompt** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing an action done at once, without any delay.** *Thanks to the prompt arrival of the lifeguard, the drifting dinghy was towed back safely.*	**Similar:** immediate, speedy, punctual **Opposite:** late, delayed **Family:** promptly (adverb), promptness (noun), prompt (verb)
☐	**sluggish** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing something moving or working far more slowly than usual.** *The old laptop was so sluggish that the kettle had boiled before the homepage even loaded.*	**Similar:** slow, lethargic, listless **Opposite:** brisk, lively **Family:** sluggishly (adverb), sluggishness (noun)
☐	**belated** *adjective* STRETCH	**Coming or happening later than it should have.** *Grandad's belated birthday card arrived in March, three weeks after the last slice of cake had gone.*	**Similar:** late, overdue, delayed **Opposite:** punctual, prompt, timely **Family:** belatedly (adverb)
☐	**elapse** *verb* STRETCH	**To pass or go by, used about time.** *Three whole weeks elapsed before the seeds Amara had planted finally pushed through the soil.*	**Similar:** pass, go by, slip away **Opposite:** remain, stand still **Family:** elapsed (adjective)
☐	**fleeting** *adjective* STRETCH	**Lasting only a very short time.** *We caught a fleeting glimpse of the kingfisher before it flashed away down the river.*	**Similar:** brief, momentary, passing **Opposite:** lasting, permanent **Family:** fleetingly (adverb)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Places, weather and the natural world

Settings, landscape and weather. Descriptive passages lean on these, and so do the questions about atmosphere.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**dense** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Packed closely together, with little space between the parts.** *The fog was so dense that Priya could not see the bus stop from the corner.*	**Similar:** thick, packed, crowded **Opposite:** sparse, thin **Family:** density (noun), densely (adverb)
☐	**drought** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A long period with little or no rain, when the land dries out.** *During the summer drought the reservoir shrank and cracked mud appeared where water had been.*	**Similar:** dry spell, water shortage **Opposite:** flood, deluge **Family:** drought-stricken (adjective)
☐	**horizon** *noun* FOUNDATION	**The distant line where the land or sea seems to meet the sky.** *A tiny ship crept along the horizon, so far off that it looked like a toy.*	**Similar:** skyline, far distance **Family:** horizontal (adjective), horizontally (adverb)
☐	**overcast** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing a sky that is covered in cloud, with no sun showing.** *The morning was overcast and dull, so the beach was almost empty when we arrived.*	**Similar:** cloudy, grey, dull **Opposite:** sunny, cloudless
☐	**remote** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Far away from towns and hard to reach.** *The stone hut stood on a remote hillside, miles from the nearest road or shop.*	**Similar:** faraway, distant, out-of-the-way **Opposite:** nearby, central **Family:** remotely (adverb), remoteness (noun)
☐	**rural** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing the countryside rather than a town or city.** *Gran's rural cottage had fields on three sides and a farm track instead of a street.*	**Similar:** country, pastoral, agricultural **Opposite:** urban **Family:** rurally (adverb)
☐	**summit** *noun* FOUNDATION	**The highest point of a mountain or hill.** *After four hours of climbing, we reached the summit and could see three counties below us.*	**Similar:** peak, top, crest **Opposite:** base, foot
☐	**urban** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing a town or city rather than the countryside.** *Pigeons and foxes have adapted well to urban life, raiding bins behind busy high streets.*	**Similar:** city, built-up, metropolitan **Opposite:** rural **Family:** urbanise (verb), urbanisation (noun)
☐	**adjacent** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing something that is next to or right beside another thing.** *Our allotment is adjacent to the railway line, so we hear every train rattle past.*	**Similar:** neighbouring, next-door, bordering **Opposite:** distant, separate **Family:** adjacency (noun)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**barren** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing land that is too poor or dry for plants to grow.** *Nothing grew on the barren slope except a few grey tufts of grass between the rocks.*	**Similar:** infertile, bare, unproductive **Opposite:** fertile, lush **Family:** barrenness (noun)
☐	**erode** *verb* STRONG	**To wear something away slowly, as wind, rain or waves do to rock.** *Winter storms continue to erode the cliff, and each spring the footpath is moved further inland.*	**Similar:** wear away, eat away, wear down **Opposite:** build up, deposit **Family:** erosion (noun), eroded (adjective)
☐	**fertile** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing soil or land that is rich and good for growing plants.** *The valley floor was so fertile that beans, marrows and sunflowers shot up within weeks.*	**Similar:** rich, fruitful, productive **Opposite:** barren, infertile **Family:** fertility (noun), fertilise (verb), fertiliser (noun)
☐	**humid** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing air that contains a lot of moisture and feels damp.** *The greenhouse was humid and sticky, and beads of water ran down the glass panes.*	**Similar:** muggy, sticky, damp, clammy **Opposite:** dry, crisp **Family:** humidity (noun), humidify (verb)
☐	**rugged** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing land that is rough, rocky and uneven.** *The rugged coast path climbed over boulders and dipped into coves where seals lay basking.*	**Similar:** rocky, rough, craggy **Opposite:** smooth, flat **Family:** ruggedly (adverb), ruggedness (noun)
☐	**thicket** *noun* STRONG	**A dense group of bushes or small trees growing closely together.** *The rabbit vanished into a thicket of brambles where no dog could follow.*	**Similar:** copse, undergrowth, scrub **Opposite:** clearing, glade
☐	**torrent** *noun* STRONG	**A fast, powerful rush of water, often after heavy rain.** *By teatime the gentle stream had become a torrent, dragging branches and even a bench downhill.*	**Similar:** flood, deluge, gush **Opposite:** trickle, dribble **Family:** torrential (adjective), torrentially (adverb)
☐	**tranquil** *adjective* STRONG	**Calm and peaceful.** *By early morning the lake was tranquil, its surface flat as glass without a ripple.*	**Similar:** peaceful, calm, still, restful **Opposite:** noisy, chaotic **Family:** tranquillity (noun), tranquilly (adverb)
☐	**precipice** *noun* STRETCH	**A very high, steep cliff face or rock edge with a sheer drop.** *The path ended at a precipice, and the sheep grazed calmly a metre from the drop.*	**Similar:** cliff, sheer drop, crag **Family:** precipitous (adjective), precipitously (adverb)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**secluded** *adjective* STRETCH	**Hidden away and not easily seen; quiet and private.** *Behind the tall hedge lay a secluded garden that few visitors to the park ever found.*	**Similar:** hidden, sheltered, private, tucked away **Opposite:** exposed, busy **Family:** seclude (verb), seclusion (noun)
☐	**undulating** *adjective* STRETCH	**Describing land that rises and falls gently in wave-like slopes.** *From the train window we watched undulating fields roll past like a green sea.*	**Similar:** rolling, wavy, hilly **Opposite:** flat, level **Family:** undulate (verb), undulation (noun)

THE WORLD AROUND US

Sights, sounds and the senses

How things look, sound, feel, smell and taste. The words that make a description vivid, and that questions ask you to explain.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**dazzling** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**So bright that it is hard to look at.** *Sunlight bounced off the snow in a dazzling glare that made everyone squint and reach for sunglasses.*	**Similar:** blinding, brilliant, glaring **Opposite:** dim, dull **Family:** dazzle (verb), dazzled (adjective)
☐	**deafening** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**So loud that it hurts your ears.** *The thunder was deafening, and the dog dived under the table with his paws over his ears.*	**Similar:** ear-splitting, thunderous, booming **Opposite:** silent, hushed **Family:** deafen (verb), deaf (adjective), deafness (noun)
☐	**dim** *adjective* FOUNDATION	**Describing light that is weak and makes things hard to see.** *In the dim glow of the torch, the tent looked much bigger than it really was.*	**Similar:** weak, shadowy, murky, gloomy **Opposite:** bright, dazzling **Family:** dimly (adverb), dimness (noun), dim (verb)
☐	**flicker** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To burn or shine unsteadily, going bright and dark very quickly.** *The candle began to flicker in the draught, throwing jumpy shadows across the ceiling.*	**Similar:** flutter, twinkle, quiver **Family:** flicker (noun), flickering (adjective)
☐	**glisten** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To shine with a wet or sparkling light, like dew or raindrops.** *After the shower the cobwebs began to glisten, each thread strung with tiny drops.*	**Similar:** sparkle, shimmer, twinkle, glitter **Opposite:** dull, darken **Family:** glistening (adjective)
☐	**hush** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A sudden silence, especially after there has been noise.** *A hush fell over the hall as the curtain twitched and the lights went down.*	**Similar:** silence, quiet, stillness **Opposite:** uproar, racket **Family:** hush (verb), hushed (adjective)
☐	**peculiar** *adjective* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y3-4	**Describing something strange or odd, unlike what you would usually expect.** *A peculiar smell, like burnt toast mixed with seaweed, drifted out of the science cupboard.*	**Similar:** strange, odd, curious, bizarre **Opposite:** ordinary, normal **Family:** peculiarity (noun), peculiarly (adverb)
☐	**reek** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To give off a very strong and unpleasant smell.** *The changing rooms reek of damp socks by the end of every Friday swimming lesson.*	**Similar:** stink, smell, whiff **Opposite:** freshen **Family:** reek (noun), reeking (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**rustle** *verb* FOUNDATION	**To make a soft, dry, whispering sound, like leaves moving.** *Something began to rustle in the hedge, and a hedgehog shuffled out onto the path.*	**Similar:** swish, whisper, crackle **Family:** rustle (noun), rustling (adjective)
☐	**elaborate** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing something with many detailed and complicated parts.** *The wedding cake was elaborate, with sugar roses, tiny birds and seven tiers of icing.*	**Similar:** intricate, detailed, ornate, fancy **Opposite:** simple, plain **Family:** elaborate (verb), elaboration (noun), elaborately (adverb)
☐	**fragrant** *adjective* STRONG	**Having a pleasant, sweet smell.** *The lavender bushes by the gate were so fragrant that bees hummed around them all afternoon.*	**Similar:** sweet-smelling, perfumed, aromatic **Opposite:** smelly, foul **Family:** fragrance (noun), fragrantly (adverb)
☐	**monotonous** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing a sound or activity that never changes and becomes boring.** *The monotonous hum of the fridge went on all night, the same flat note without a pause.*	**Similar:** dull, repetitive, tedious, unvarying **Opposite:** varied, lively **Family:** monotony (noun), monotonously (adverb), monotone (noun)
☐	**muffled** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing a sound made quieter and less clear by something covering it.** *Through the thick wall we could hear the muffled thump of next door's drum kit.*	**Similar:** dulled, deadened, indistinct **Opposite:** clear, loud **Family:** muffle (verb), muffler (noun)
☐	**shrill** *adjective* STRONG	**High, sharp and unpleasant to hear.** *A shrill whistle cut across the playground and every game stopped at once.*	**Similar:** piercing, high-pitched, screeching **Opposite:** deep, soft **Family:** shrilly (adverb), shrillness (noun)
☐	**silhouette** *noun* STRONG	**A dark outline of someone or something seen against a brighter background.** *At sunset the old oak became a black silhouette against an orange sky.*	**Similar:** outline, shadow, shape, profile **Family:** silhouette (verb), silhouetted (adjective)
☐	**vivid** *adjective* STRONG	**Bright, strong and full of life.** *The parrot's vivid feathers were so bright they seemed to glow against the grey drizzle.*	**Similar:** bright, brilliant, striking, colourful **Opposite:** dull, faded **Family:** vividly (adverb), vividness (noun)
☐	**cacophony** *noun* STRETCH	**A harsh, unpleasant mixture of loud sounds all happening at once.** *The school orchestra's first practice was a cacophony of squeaks, honks and clattering cymbals.*	**Similar:** din, racket, uproar, clamour **Opposite:** harmony, silence **Family:** cacophonous (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**dappled** *adjective* STRETCH	**Describing something marked with patches of light and shade or colour.** *The pony stood in dappled shade beneath the apple tree, spots of sunlight moving on its back.*	**Similar:** speckled, mottled, spotted, flecked **Opposite:** plain, uniform **Family:** dapple (verb), dapple (noun)
☐	**pungent** *adjective* STRETCH	**Strong, sharp and hard to ignore, of a smell or taste.** *The pungent smell of vinegar from the chip shop reached us before we turned the corner.*	**Similar:** sharp, strong, acrid, overpowering **Opposite:** mild, bland **Family:** pungency (noun), pungently (adverb)
☐	**translucent** *adjective* STRETCH	**Describing something that lets light through but is not fully see-through.** *The sea glass was translucent, glowing green when Amira held it up to the sun.*	**Similar:** semi-transparent, frosted, milky **Opposite:** opaque **Family:** translucence (noun), translucency (noun)

LANGUAGE CRAFT

Story and language craft words

The terms comprehension questions use: narrator, setting, simile, atmosphere. A child cannot answer a question whose wording they do not know.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**alliteration** *noun* FOUNDATION	**The use of the same first sound in several words close together.** *'Slippery slugs slide slowly' is packed with alliteration, all those hissing s sounds.*	**Similar:** initial rhyme, sound repetition **Family:** alliterate (verb), alliterative (adjective)
☐	**metaphor** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A way of describing something by saying it is something else.** *Calling the playground 'a zoo at feeding time' is a metaphor, since it is not really a zoo.*	**Similar:** comparison, image, figure of speech **Family:** metaphorical (adjective), metaphorically (adverb)
☐	**narrator** *noun* FOUNDATION	**The person or character who tells a story to the reader.** *The narrator of the book is a ten-year-old girl, so we only know what she notices.*	**Similar:** storyteller, teller, voice **Family:** narrate (verb), narration (noun), narrative (noun)
☐	**setting** *noun* FOUNDATION	**The place and time in which the events of a story happen.** *The setting is a snowbound Scottish village in 1950, which explains why nobody has a phone.*	**Similar:** location, backdrop, scene
☐	**simile** *noun* FOUNDATION	**A comparison of two things using the words 'like' or 'as'.** *'Her hands were as cold as frogs' is a simile that made the whole class shiver.*	**Similar:** comparison, likeness, figure of speech **Family:** similar (adjective), similarity (noun)
☐	**atmosphere** *noun* STRONG	**The mood or feeling that a place or piece of writing gives you.** *Fog, a creaking gate and a distant bell gave the opening chapter a spooky atmosphere.*	**Similar:** mood, feeling, ambience **Family:** atmospheric (adjective)
☐	**climax** *noun* STRONG	**The most exciting or important moment in a story, usually near the end.** *At the climax of the play, the lighthouse lamp finally blazes and the boat turns for shore.*	**Similar:** peak, high point, turning point, crisis **Opposite:** anticlimax, beginning **Family:** climactic (adjective), climax (verb)
☐	**figurative** *adjective* STRONG	**Describing language that means more than its exact words, using images and comparisons.** *When Dad says he has 'a mountain of washing', he is being figurative, not measuring it.*	**Similar:** metaphorical, symbolic, non-literal **Opposite:** literal **Family:** figuratively (adverb)
☐	**onomatopoeia** *noun* STRONG	**A word whose sound copies the noise it describes, such as 'buzz'.** *The poet used onomatopoeia, so the rain went 'drip, patter, splash' right across the page.*	**Similar:** sound word, echo word, imitative word **Family:** onomatopoeic (adjective)

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**personification** *noun* STRONG	**Giving human feelings or actions to an object, animal or idea.** *'The wind howled angrily at the windows' uses personification, because wind cannot really feel angry.*	**Similar:** humanising, figure of speech, embodiment **Family:** personify (verb), personified (adjective)
☐	**suspense** *noun* STRONG	**A feeling of nervous excitement while waiting to find out what happens.** *The author builds suspense by ending each chapter just as the door begins to open.*	**Similar:** tension, anticipation, uncertainty **Opposite:** relief, resolution **Family:** suspenseful (adjective), suspend (verb)
☐	**evoke** *verb* STRETCH	**To bring a feeling, memory or picture into someone's mind.** *The smell of chlorine can evoke the whole of last summer's swimming holiday in a second.*	**Similar:** summon, conjure up, stir, call to mind **Opposite:** dispel, blot out **Family:** evocative (adjective), evocation (noun)
☐	**hyperbole** *noun* STRETCH	**Deliberate exaggeration used for effect, not meant to be taken literally.** *'I've told you a million times to shut the gate' is hyperbole, not a real count.*	**Similar:** exaggeration, overstatement **Opposite:** understatement **Family:** hyperbolic (adjective)
☐	**irony** *noun* STRETCH	**Using words that mean the opposite of what you really think, often to be funny.** *'Lovely weather for a picnic,' said Mum with irony, as hail bounced off the car roof.*	**Similar:** sarcasm, dry humour, wry humour **Opposite:** sincerity, earnestness **Family:** ironic (adjective), ironically (adverb)

LANGUAGE CRAFT

Linking words and precise adverbs

Connectives and modifiers that change the meaning of a sentence. Cloze and sentence-completion questions turn on exactly these.

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**although** *conjunction* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y3-4	**Used to join two ideas when the second one is surprising after the first.** *Although the pool was freezing, Tomasz swam twenty lengths before breakfast.*	**Similar:** though, even though, while
☐	**barely** *adverb* FOUNDATION	**Only just; by a very small amount.** *The kite barely cleared the telephone wires before the wind snatched it higher.*	**Similar:** hardly, scarcely, only just **Opposite:** easily, amply
☐	**despite** *preposition* FOUNDATION	**Used to say that something happened even though another thing might have stopped it.** *Despite the drizzle, the whole street turned out for the summer fete on the green.*	**Similar:** in spite of, regardless of, notwithstanding
☐	**however** *adverb* FOUNDATION	**Used to add a point that goes against what was just said.** *The forecast promised sunshine; however, we spent the whole afternoon sheltering under the pier.*	**Similar:** nevertheless, but, still, yet
☐	**otherwise** *adverb* FOUNDATION	**Used to say what will happen if something is not done.** *Put the guinea pigs in the shed tonight, otherwise the frost will get them.*	**Similar:** or else, if not
☐	**therefore** *adverb* FOUNDATION KS2 spelling Y3-4	**For that reason; as a result of what has just been said.** *The river had burst its banks; therefore the footpath to school was closed for a week.*	**Similar:** so, consequently, thus, hence **Family:** thereby (adverb), thereafter (adverb)
☐	**consequently** *adverb* STRONG	**As a result of something that happened before.** *Nobody watered the tomatoes all week; consequently, they wilted and the leaves turned yellow.*	**Similar:** therefore, as a result, hence, so **Family:** consequence (noun), consequent (adjective), consequential (adjective)
☐	**furthermore** *adverb* STRONG	**Used to add another point that supports what has been said.** *The tent leaks; furthermore, someone has left the torch switched on all night.*	**Similar:** moreover, in addition, besides, also

	WORD	MEANING AND EXAMPLE	SIMILAR, OPPOSITE, FAMILY
☐	**merely** *adverb* STRONG	**Only; nothing more than what is mentioned.** *The noise was merely the cat knocking a pan off the draining board, not a burglar.*	**Similar:** only, simply, just, purely **Family:** mere (adjective)
☐	**utterly** *adverb* STRONG	**Completely and totally, with nothing held back.** *By the end of the muddy walk her wellies were utterly ruined.*	**Similar:** completely, totally, absolutely, entirely **Opposite:** slightly, partly **Family:** utter (adjective)
☐	**whereas** *conjunction* STRONG	**Used to compare two facts and show how they are different.** *Maya loves the sea, whereas her brother refuses to go past the rock pools.*	**Similar:** while, but, by contrast
☐	**invariably** *adverb* STRETCH	**Always happening in the same way, without a single exception.** *The ice-cream van invariably arrives just as we sit down to dinner.*	**Similar:** always, without fail, unfailingly, consistently **Opposite:** occasionally, sometimes **Family:** invariable (adjective), vary (verb), variable (adjective)
☐	**notwithstanding** *preposition* STRETCH	**Used to say that something is true in spite of another thing.** *Notwithstanding the wasps, the picnic by the canal was a great success.*	**Similar:** despite, in spite of, regardless of
☐	**subsequently** *adverb* STRETCH	**After that; at a later time.** *The library flooded in January and subsequently closed for three months while the carpets dried out.*	**Similar:** afterwards, later, next **Opposite:** previously, beforehand **Family:** subsequent (adjective)

PRACTISE THESE WORDS

Turn the list into recall

Reading a list produces recognition; the exam demands recall under a clock. These free interactive exercises on Smart Cub Learning practise the exact skills the words above are tagged with. No sign-up, nothing is recorded, and each one works on a phone.

1. **Synonym Spectrum** These all mean "walked". Drag them onto the rail, calmest on the left.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/synonym-spectrum
2. **Mind the Gap** Only one of these words belongs in the gap. Keep it, and throw the rest away.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/cloze-swipe
3. **Redacted Files** Four words have been censored. Decode each one using the clues around it.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/redacted-files
4. **Word Bridge** Full is to empty as happy is to...?
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/word-bridge
5. **Question Forge** Three questions, three lines they were forged from. Hammer each pair together.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/question-forge
6. **Affix Slot Machine** Spin the reels until the three parts build the word in the definition, then pull the lever.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/affix-slot-machine
7. **Word Morpher** Build the word unhappiness. Drag affixes onto the word - some will not stick.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/word-morpher
8. **Comprehension X-Ray** Highlight only the sentences that show this is true. Then show the examiner.
   https://smartcublearning.com/11-plus/exercises/comprehension-xray

Find the gaps first

The free four-subject diagnostic shows which vocabulary and comprehension skills need work before you spend a single evening on the wrong tier: https://smartcublearning.com/free-diagnostic