

## English Vocabulary Profile user guide

The English Vocabulary Profile (EVP) is an interactive web resource which provides a huge searchable database of detailed information on the words and phrases that learners know at each level of the Common European Framework (CEF). Information on the A1-C2 levels is also provided for individual meanings of words, to give an indication of teaching and learning priorities. However, the EVP is descriptive not prescriptive: the mandate of the English Profile programme is to 'investigate what learner English is really like' so the EVP describes what learners know and can do, based on our empirical research methods using a range of sources.

We have not attempted to separate receptive competence from productive as, in reality, so much will depend on learning styles and priorities. The resource also reflects worldwide competence, so does not take into account cognates in a particular L1 that may enable earlier than average acquisition of a word.

### The Search panel

British English American English

Choose level:

- A1
- A1-A2
- A1-B1
- A1-B2
- A1-C1
- A1-C2
- A2 only
- B1 only
- B2 only
- C1 only
- C2 only

[Browse A-Z](#)

OR

Enter a word or phrase

ADVANCED SEARCH

Hide culturally sensitive words

Search

English Profile Home  
About English Vocabulary Profile  
Word of the Week  
Help  
Feedback

(1) Clicking the tabs at the top of the search panel enables you to choose either the British English or American English version of the resource.

(2) The 'choose level' section allows you to choose whether you want to look at ALL the words a learner knows at a particular level, by selecting one of the options on the left; or just what is NEW at a particular level, by selecting one of the options on the right. By default A1-C2 (the entire resource) is selected.

(3) Browse A-Z allows the user to look at the entire resource letter by letter.

(4) The text box: here you can type in a word if you want the EVP to show you results specific to that word. Leave this blank to see all the words related to the level you have chosen above.

(5) Advanced search gives you more ways to refine your search, including topic, part of speech, prefix and suffix.

(6) Hide culturally sensitive words: checking this box means that words which are taboo in some cultures will not appear in your search results. This covers words to do with crime, alcohol, gambling, war, etc.

### (1) British/American English

Only one version of the EVP can be searched at any time - you have to choose either British or American, using the tabs at the top of the search panel. The EVP opens with British English selected, but you can switch to American English at the start of a search, or at any other time.

The resource will even find a search word that is not in the language variety you searched but *is* in the other variety, as in this example for *vacation*. Clicking on the result shown will take you to the American version.

British English | American English

Search results for A1-C2 (0 matches)

Choose level:

- A1
- A1-A2
- A1-B1
- A1-B2
- A1-C1
- A1-C2
- A2 only
- B1 only
- B2 only
- C1 only
- C2 only

Browse A-Z  
OR  
Enter a word or phrase  
vacation

No search results for **vacation** were found in the **British English Vocabulary Profile**.  
Search results for **vacation** were found in the **American English Vocabulary Profile**:

Core results:

- **vacation** noun **A1**

There are often differences in entries for the same word across the two versions. Look at the British and American listings for *school* below.

Core results:

- **primary school** noun **B1**
- **school** noun PLACE **A1**
- **school** noun TIME **A2**
- **a dance/language/riding, etc. school** **A2**

**school** was also found at:

- **attend a church/college/school, etc.** **B1**

Primary school is used in the UK.

Core results:

- **elementary school** noun **B1**
- **school** noun PLACE **A1**
- **school** noun TIME **A2**
- **a dance/language/riding, etc. school** **A2**
- **school** noun COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY **B1**

**school** was also found at:

- **attend a church/college/school, etc.** **B1**

Elementary school is used in the US.

Note the COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY meaning of *school* in the US.

## (2) Choose level

Here you can choose the level of the words you want to look at. For example, A1-A2 will give you ALL the words and phrases learners know at A2 level. If you choose A2 only, this will exclude anything already known at A1. To browse the full list of words, phrases and phrasal verbs from a particular level, choose a level and click search, leaving the text box blank.

Remember that the EVP operates at both word and meaning level, so that for whatever level you choose your results will show only the meanings of that word which learners know at that level. For us, 'knowing' a word is a cumulative process, which implies lifelong learning, as further meanings and uses are acquired. A simple example is the word *blue*. It is unlikely that anyone would dispute the fact that learners who have reached A1 level 'know' this word: colours are one of the first vocabulary sets to be taught everywhere. However, the English Vocabulary Profile entry for this word stretches from A1 to C2 level, with figurative and idiomatic use coming in at the higher C1 and C2 CEFR levels, for example *out of the blue*, and *blue* in the sense of 'sad'.

Core results:

- **blue** adjective COLOUR **A1**
- **blue** adjective SAD **C2**
- **blue** noun **A2**
- **out of the blue** **C1**
- **navy blue** adjective **B1**

**blue** was also found at:

- **pale blue/green/yellow, etc.** **A2**
- **turn blue/cold/nasty, etc.** **B2**

### (3) Browse A-Z

This allows you to browse through all the words in the EVP letter by letter. It works in conjunction with the 'choose level' section; so that if you select 'B1 only' and then browse, all your results will be from that level. If you want to browse the entire resource, leave the default 'A1-C2' selected.

To view the list of entries and sub-entries for any letter, select the appropriate letter from the list at the top of the screen. The list of entries and sub-entry ranges for the first letter is displayed alphabetically.

- **dad** noun ...**the other day**
- **one day some day one of these days ...deep** adjective **STRONGLY FELT**
- **deep** adjective **SOUND ...democracy** noun

To view the list of words from each range, select the appropriate range. Then click on any result to display its entries.

### (4) The text box

You can type whichever words you are interested in into this box to display results specific to that word. Like the Browse function, this works in conjunction with the 'choose level' section. The text box allows you to type in a different spelling of a word: *organise/organize* will retrieve the same result.

### (5) Advanced search

This allows you to filter your search results using a number of variables:

- the category, eg word, phrase, phrasal verb or idiom;
- the part of speech eg adjectives or verbs;
- grammar, eg countable nouns or transitive verbs
- usage eg formal or informal;
- topics, eg food and drink, or education; and finally
- prefixes and (vii) suffixes.

When using advanced search features remember to make sure that the text box has been left blank, and that you have chosen the level you want to look at, as these searches work in conjunction with each other. Also, when you want to perform a new search after using the advanced search, remember to click 'clear filters'.



A note on affixation: this has been a big area of research for the EVP project. Here, as elsewhere, native speaker frequency has played a part in the process of assigning CEF level, along with a consideration of the transparency of the different parts of speech in relation to the base word. When an affix is attached to a word, it may be transparent in meaning – for example, it is not difficult to understand *downloadable* from the verb *download* - but it is less easy to work out the meaning of *changeable*, as in *changeable weather*, formed from *change*.

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## Using the English Vocabulary Profile

When you have selected your search criteria using the search panel and clicked search, you'll be taken to the results screen (if there is more than one result; if not you will be taken directly to the entry). Here you can click on whichever result most interests you, and the next screen (the entry screen) will display all your results with the specific one you clicked on at the top of the page.

Here, as an example, is the results screen for *cool*, with British English and A1-B2 selected.

**British English**

American English

Choose level:

- A1
- A1-A2
- A1-B1
- A1-B2
- A1-C1
- A1-C2
- A2 only
- B1 only
- B2 only
- C1 only
- C2 only

[Browse A-Z](#)

OR

Enter a word or phrase

**Search results for A1-B2 (6 matches)**

Core results:

- cool exclamation A2
- cool adjective GOOD A2
- cool adjective SLIGHTLY COLD B1
- cool verb B2
- cool down/off (sb/sth) or cool (sb/sth) down/off BECOME LESS HOT B2
- cool down/off (sb/sth) or cool (sb/sth) down/off BECOME CALMER B2

Here is the entry for *cool*, again with A1-B2 selected

**cool** /ku:l/ All levels Outline view

**Word family:**  
 Nouns: cool, coolness  
 Verbs: cool  
 Adjectives: cool

► **EXCLAMATION** INFORMAL

A2 used when you like something or agree to something  
**Dictionary examples:**  
*You've got your own apartment? Cool!*  
*"We'll meet at ten, then?" "Cool."*

🔍 **Learner example:**  
*That's very exciting. Cool!*

*Key English Test; A2; Chinese*

► **ADJECTIVE**

**GOOD**

A2 INFORMAL good, stylish, or fashionable  
**Dictionary examples:**  
*It was a really cool gig.*  
*She's really cool.*

🔍 **Learner example:**  
*I got this mega cool T-shirt.*

*Key English Test; A2; Dutch*

**SLIGHTLY COLD**

B1 slightly cold, but not too cold  
**Dictionary examples:**  
*cool water*  
*a nice cool breeze*

🔍 **Learner example:**  
*Sometimes a cool wind blows [in Bodrum].*

*Preliminary English Test; B1; Turkish*

► **VERB**

B2 to become less hot, or to make something become less hot  
**Dictionary example:**  
*Allow the bread to cool before slicing it.*

🔍 **Learner example:**  
*In the summer many people were delighted by fountains which cooled the air.*

*First Certificate in English; B2; German*

**cool down/off (sb/sth) or cool (sb/sth) down/off**

**BECOME LESS HOT**

B2 to become less hot, or to make someone or something become less hot  
**Dictionary examples:**  
*She waited until her coffee had cooled down and then took a sip.*  
*We went for a swim to cool off.*

🔍 **Learner example:**  
*The pool is a very popular place to cool down [in].*

*First Certificate in English; B2; Swiss German*

**BECOME CALMER**

B2 to become calmer, or to make someone become calmer  
**Dictionary example:**  
*Just leave her to cool off and then talk to her.*

🔍 **Learner example:**  
*It seemed to me that you were stressed. If I were you, I would cool down a little.*

*First Certificate in English; B2; Swedish*

Here you can toggle between viewing all the levels, or just the ones you have selected in your search. You can also toggle between full and outline view.

Guide words in capital letters for each meaning help the user navigate through long entries.

Dictionary examples: these are representative uses of the word in question, as used by native speakers.

Learner examples are taken from the Cambridge Learner Corpus. Details of the exam from which the example is taken, the exam CEF level, and the L1 of the candidate are provided.

Part of Speech information is provided next to the arrow symbol.

Phrasal verbs are listed at the end of an entry.

## Word family panels

Entries for words which have two or more 'family members' include Word Family panels. In many cases the various family members will have different CEF levels – for example, in the family for that very word, the adjective *different* is A1 but the lower-frequency verb *differ* is B2.

**different**  /'dɪf.ə'rent/

**Word family:**

**Nouns:** difference, indifference

**Verbs:** differ, differentiate

**Adjectives:** different, indifferent

**Adverbs:** differently

Clicking on any one of these will take you to the entry for that word.

## Sources for the EVP

- Cambridge Corpora: EVP research has been substantially but not exclusively corpus-informed. We have used both the *Cambridge International Corpus*, a 1.2 billion-word collection of written and spoken English, and the *Cambridge Learner Corpus*, a unique corpus of written learner English, currently standing at 48 million words and which includes student writing at all six CEFR levels, and from 203 countries worldwide. Work is now underway to construct a spoken learner corpus of 2 million words, which will further inform future iterations of the Vocabulary Profile.
- The corpus-informed Cambridge University Press dictionary database, which is the only monolingual English dictionary resource to flag frequency at sense level. Using this, the EVP project has been able to evaluate each sense of a word, starting from its frequency for first language users and comparing that with learner data. Interestingly, the two are not always the same: what is frequent and useful for learners may not be quite as frequent for native speakers, and vice versa. Take for example the word *case*: learners meet the meanings of CONTAINER (pencil case) and BAG (suitcase) before they know its most frequent sense for native speakers, that of SITUATION (*in this case*, etc.)
- A range of classroom-based sources, including wordlists from leading coursebooks by different publishers, readers wordlists and the content of vocabulary skills books. We have also referred to the Vocabulary Lists for the KET and PET examinations, which have been in use since 1994 and have been regularly updated to reflect language change and patterns of use. Finally, even though it was published thirty years ago, the *Cambridge English Lexicon* by Roland Hindmarsh has proved invaluable as a checking source, where the language has not evolved over time; it too was organised at meaning level.

For further guidance, go to the Help notes within the resource, or contact [englishprofile@cambridge.org](mailto:englishprofile@cambridge.org)