

VOCABULARY LEVELS (A1–C2)

LO Advanced English Podcast — Lesson Breakdown

OVERVIEW

This lesson explains how English vocabulary changes from beginner to advanced using CEFR (Common European Framework).

It also explains why listening can be harder than reading, even when you “know” the word.

CEFR LEVELS

- A1 = Beginner
 - A2 = Elementary
 - B1 = Intermediate
 - B2 = Upper-Intermediate
 - C1 = Advanced
 - C2 = Specialist / Mastery
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A1 — BEGINNER VOCABULARY

Main idea: Words you can picture in your mind (easy to draw).

Typical A1 words

- Verbs: eat, drink, make, go, run, buy
- Nouns: family, water, school, tree, car, bike
- Adjectives: big, small, good, bad, hot, cold
- Time + numbers: basic time words and numbers

Key point

- A1 can feel hard because you start from zero and must learn new sounds.
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A2 — ELEMENTARY VOCABULARY

Main idea: Similar to A1, but more conceptual and more varied.

Typical A2 words

- Verbs (more conceptual): finish, decide, spend, wait, prefer
- Phrasal verbs (beginning): get up, go out, turn on, look for
- Nouns (situation-based): ticket, airport, doctor, test, desk
- Adjectives (a bit harder): busy, expensive, enormous
- Adverbs (starting): adverbs that describe adjectives

Multi-word expressions (idea units)

- on the weekend
 - in the morning
 - at the moment
 - from time to time
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B1 — INTERMEDIATE VOCABULARY

Main idea: More conceptual words, less frequent words, and more “life/work” vocabulary.

Typical B1 words

- Work/study nouns: deadline, project, manager
- Verbs (more precise): reduce, suggest, improve, compare
- Phrasal verbs (more specific): deal with, carry on, find out, set up
- Adjectives: nervous, confident, successful, responsible

Discourse / linking words (connect ideas)

- however
 - although
 - because of
 - in order to
 - as a result
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B2 — UPPER-INTERMEDIATE VOCABULARY

Main idea: The biggest jump for many learners. More abstract words, harder pronunciation, and more fixed phrases.

Typical B2 words

- Abstract nouns: impact, advantage, responsibility, policy
- Formal verbs: establish, assume, contribute, maintain
- Nuanced adjectives: reasonable, efficient, significant

Pronunciation challenge

- Many words are multi-syllable and have clear stress

Example idea: responsibility, contribute

Collocations (words that “go together”)

- make progress
- take responsibility
- raise awareness

Idioms (easy words, difficult meaning)

- over my head

- not my cup of tea
- at the end of the day
- I could eat a horse (= very hungry)

Register and pragmatics (when to use words)

- Casual: What's up?
 - Formal: How are you today? / How are things today?
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C1 — ADVANCED VOCABULARY

Main idea: Low-frequency, precise vocabulary + advanced fixed expressions.

Typical C1 words

- Precise verbs: undermine, facilitate, advocate, consolidate, inhibit
- Abstract nouns: credibility, sustainability, ambiguity, constraint, incentive

Idioms and fixed expressions

- on the fence (= not decided)
- take it with a grain of salt (= don't fully trust it)
- that being said (= introduce a counterpoint)
- be that as it may (= concession / counterpoint)
- not only ... but also (= formal linking pattern)

Metaphorical words

- bottleneck
- backlash

Key point

• B2 and C1 can feel very similar. C1 often means "more dense" language (more advanced words packed together).

C2 — SPECIALIST / MASTERY VOCABULARY

Main idea: Technical terminology used to learn or teach a specialized field.

Examples of C2 areas

- law, medicine, finance, science, engineering

Key points

- C2 words are not common in everyday conversation.
 - Even native speakers may not know many C2 terms.
 - For most ESL learners, C1 is high enough.
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IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

- Many learners recognize words in reading but cannot process them fast when listening.
- Most natural speech uses very common words (often A2 or lower).
- Difficulty often comes from multi-word expressions, idioms, and collocations.
- Listening practice helps you recognize words faster in real time.

CLOSING

What level felt difficult for you while listening: B1, B2, or C1?

Remember: The more you listen, the faster you learn.