

Improve your IELTS word skills

1 Identify the type of words in the box below. Are they (a) general nouns which need a context for their meaning or (b) nouns which have specific meaning?

consequence ■ factor ■ change ■ result ■ impact ■ effect ■ cause ■ role

2 Complete the sentences with a word from the box above. Some will need to be put in the plural form.

- a Technology has had a huge _____ on our lives.
- b The area has undergone many _____ in recent years.
- c Planting trees can have a knock-on _____ on the economy of arid areas.
- d Deforestation can have unforeseen _____ for the ecology of a region.
- e It is sometimes difficult to discover the exact _____ of a problem.
- f To achieve the best _____, it is important to initiate change at a local level.
- g The main _____ contributing to success in any organization is a happy workforce.
- h The climate has played a major _____ in this region's economic history.

3 Complete the sentences with a phrase from the box.

gradual development ■ limited impact ■ far-reaching consequences
dramatic changes ■ favourable outcome ■ underlying cause ■ profound effect

- a Government intervention has had _____ for regional growth.
- b Shock tactics can bring about _____ in people's behaviour.
- c _____ is much more acceptable than rapid change.
- d The introduction of new farming practices has had a _____ on people's lives.
- e To achieve the most _____ the countries involved need to negotiate.
- f The _____ in this particular case is not easy to find.
- g The huge sums invested had only a _____ on the neighbourhood.

4 Decide whether the words in brackets have the same or opposite meaning to the words in italics.

Example

Tourists have changed the coastline *dramatically*. (slightly) *Opposite meaning*

- a The wasteland was *completely* transformed. (totally)
- b The government *fully* accept the consequences of their actions. (partially)
- c The marine life in the coral reef is *highly* sensitive to temperature fluctuations. (exceedingly)
- d Alternative sources of energy like solar power can *vastly* improve life in remote communities. (marginally)
- e The rising sea level will *greatly* affect the livelihoods of people on some Pacific islands. (considerably)

Technique

Make a list of general nouns like the ones in the box above. Write a phrase to go with each one to put it in context. General nouns are useful in all parts of the exam.

Technique

Keep lists of general nouns with possible adjective collocations. Use the *Macmillan Collocations Dictionary*. This will help to build your vocabulary range for the other skills as well as reading.