

1 People and relationships

Describing people | Recognizing adjectives | Working out meaning from context

Vocabulary

People in relationship:

- **client (clients)**
NOUN A **client** of a professional person or organization is a person that receives a service from them in return for payment. ▪ *a solicitor and his client* ▪ *The company requires clients to pay substantial fees in advance.*
- **colleague (colleagues)**
NOUN Your **colleagues** are the people you work with, especially in a professional job. ▪ *Female academics are still paid less than their male colleagues.* ▪ *In the corporate world, the best sources of business are your former colleagues.*
- **employer (employers)**
NOUN Your **employer** is the person or organization that you work for. ▪ *employers who hire illegal workers* ▪ *The telephone company is the country's largest employer.*
- **parent (parents)**
NOUN Your **parents** are your mother and father. ▪ *Children need their parents.* ▪ *When you become a parent the things you once cared about seem to have less value.*
- **sibling (siblings)**
NOUN Your **siblings** are your brothers and sisters. [FORMAL] ▪ *Some studies have found that children are more friendly to younger siblings of the same sex.* ▪ *Sibling rivalry often causes parents anxieties.*
- **spouse (spouses)**
NOUN Someone's **spouse** is the person they are married to. *Husbands and wives do not have to pay any inheritance tax when their spouse dies.*

Describing people:

- **autonomous**
ADJECTIVE An **autonomous person** makes their own decisions rather than being influenced by someone else. ▪ *They proudly declared themselves part of a new autonomous province.* ▪ *the liberal idea of the autonomous individual*
- **consistent**
ADJECTIVE Someone who is **consistent** always behaves in the same way, has the same attitudes towards people or things, or achieves the same level of success in something. ▪ *Becker has never been the most consistent of players anyway.* ▪ *his consistent support of free trade* ▪ *a consistent character with a major thematic function*
- **conventional**
ADJECTIVE Someone who is **conventional** has behaviour and opinions that are ordinary and normal. ▪ *a respectable married woman with conventional opinions* ▪ *this close, fairly conventional English family*
- **co-operative** also **cooperative**
ADJECTIVE If you say that someone is **co-operative**, you mean that they do what you ask them without complaining or arguing. ▪ *The president said the visit would develop friendly and co-operative relations between the two countries.* ▪ *a contented and co-operative workforce*
- **efficient**
ADJECTIVE If something or someone is **efficient**, they are able to do tasks

successfully, without wasting time or energy. ▪ *With today's more efficient contraception women can plan their families and careers.* ▪ *Technological advances allow more efficient use of labour.* ▪ *an efficient way of testing thousands of compounds*

• **flexible**

ADJECTIVE Something or someone that is **flexible** is able to change easily and adapt to different conditions and circumstances. ▪ *more flexible arrangements to allow access to services after normal working hours* ▪ *We encourage flexible working.*

• **idealistic**

ADJECTIVE If you describe someone as **idealistic**, you mean that they have ideals, and base their behaviour on these ideals, even

if this may be impractical. ▪ *Idealistic young people died for the cause.* ▪ *an over-simplistic and idealistic vision of family dynamics*

• **tolerant**

ADJECTIVE If you describe someone as **tolerant**, you approve of the fact that they allow other people to say and do as they like, even if they do not agree with or like it. ▪ *[+of] They need to be tolerant of different points of view.* ▪ *Other changes include more tolerant attitudes to unmarried couples having children.*

• **vulnerable**

ADJECTIVE Someone who is **vulnerable** is weak and without protection, with the result that they are easily hurt physically or emotionally. ▪ *Old people are particularly vulnerable members of our society.*

Practice exercises

1 Circle the words that you associate with family relationships. Underline the words you associate with professional relationships.

a client	d colleague
b parent	e spouse
c sibling	f employer



2 Listen to three speakers talking about people who have been important to them. Indicate the person each speaker describes by writing a letter a-f from Exercise 1 in each space.

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

Exam tip:

- You can often recognize whether a word is a noun, verb, adjective or adverb from its ending.
- Adjectives can have many different endings, but these are common.

-able/-ible	vulnerable, flexible	-ic	idealistic
-al	conventional	-ive	co-operative
-ant/-ent	tolerant, consistent, efficient	-ous	autonomous

- Learn to recognize these.



3

Listen again to the three speakers and write down the adjectives from the table above that you hear. Listen for the word endings: -able, -ible, -al, -ant, -ent, -ic, -ive, -ous.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Exam tip: In Part 4 of the IELTS Listening exam you have to listen to a talk on a topic of general academic interest.

You do not need to know all of the vocabulary.

If you hear a word you don't know, listen for expressions like:

- a i.e.
- b in other words
- c that is
- d by ... I mean
- e that is to say

The text that follows these expressions helps you understand the word.

Example: Employers value **conscientious** workers, that is workers who complete tasks with care.



4

Listen to the extract from a lecture about only children and notice the expression the speaker uses to indicate she is defining the key expressions 1–6 below. Look back at the Exam tip and write a letter a–e in each space.

- 1 only children _____
- 2 parental resources _____
- 3 tolerant _____
- 4 co-operative _____
- 5 autonomy _____
- 6 unconventional _____



5

Listen to the extract again and complete the definitions the speaker gives for words 1–6 above. Write one word in each space.

- 1 only children – 'children without _____'
- 2 parental resources – 'not just money, but also _____ and _____'
- 3 tolerant – 'able to accept _____'
- 4 co-operative – 'able to work _____ with _____'
- 5 autonomy – 'ability to _____ their own _____'
- 6 unconventional – 'not quite _____ in social terms'

Exam practice: Listening exam Section 4

03

Listen to the lecture extract about birth order and personality and answer questions 1–5 by choosing the correct letter A, B or C.

Exam tip: Listen for key adjectives and clues in the context for what they mean.

- 1 What does the speaker discuss in relation to personality?
 - A Family size
 - B The relationship between children and their parents
 - C People's position in the family
- 2 What does the speaker imply about anxiety?
 - A It is a positive trait.
 - B It is a negative trait.
 - C It is experienced by younger siblings.
- 3 What do some researchers say about youngest children?
 - A They form relationships easily.
 - B They agree with the opinions of other people.
 - C They like it if people agree with them.
- 4 Why are middle children considered to be rebellious?
 - A They don't like to be told what to do.
 - B They don't know how to be agreeable.
 - C They like to be different from others.
- 5 What does the speaker say about the quality of research on birth order?
 - A Most research has been done correctly.
 - B Most research has been done incorrectly.
 - C Most research has come to a clear conclusion.