

11+ PREPARATION

The 11+ Vocabulary Cheat Sheet

A focused list of higher-tier words that appear most often in the English and Verbal Reasoning papers — plus a study method that actually works.

Why Vocabulary Matters

Two parts of the 11+ test vocabulary directly: the English comprehension and the Verbal Reasoning paper. Synonyms, antonyms, and word-in-context questions add up to a substantial slice of the total marks. A child with a strong word bank reads faster, understands inference better, and answers more questions correctly under time pressure.

How to Use This List

Don't try to learn it all at once. Use this 7-step method, ten minutes a day, four days a week — and start **at least six months** before the exam.

- 1 Pick a small set of 5–10 words to learn each week.
- 2 Write down each word's definition in a notebook (use a dictionary).
- 3 Test your child verbally a few days later — without the page in front of them.
- 4 Once they're solid, move on to the next set.
- 5 Keep re-testing earlier sets as you go — spaced repetition seals memory.
- 6 For each known word, add 1–2 synonyms.
- 7 Then add antonyms. By the end, every word has a small family.

Other Ways to Build Vocabulary

The single most effective thing is reading. Novels, comics, even non-fiction — anything where new words appear in a real context. Encourage your child to ask about words they don't know rather than skipping over them. (See our *11+ Reading List* for ideas.)

Vocabulary List

Around 500 higher-tier 11+ words, organised alphabetically. Tick or highlight as you go — sets of 5–10 at a time.

A

abate	affable	amiable	arduous
aberration	affliction	amphibian	ascent
abode	aghost	amply	askance
abrasive	allay	anguish	assented
absolution	alleviate	annihilated	asunder
abundance	allusion	antiquity	augmenting
accusatory	altercation	apathetic	authentic
acquainted	altruistic	aped	axiom
adherent	amateur	apprehensive	
adversary	ambling	apprise	

B

baleful	benevolent	bleak	breach
balk	benign	bleats	breadth
barbarian	bereft	boastful	brevice
beam	besieged	boisterous	burgeon
belligerent	bewildered	braggart	
bellicose	bickering	brazen	

C

cacophony	coercion	concerted	corrosive
calamity	colloquial	conducive	credibility
callow	combat	confine	crucial
candid	commotion	confiscate	culpable
chastised	compelling	conspicuous	curate
chauvinist	complacent	contemplate	curtail
cherished	complicity	contented	customary
chicanery	conceited	convoluted	
clement	conceivable	corroborate	

D

dale	demote	derivative	diffident
darn	demure	despondent	diligent
decree	deranged	destitute	diligence
deject	derail	detain	dilapidated
delectable	deride	detractors	disarray
delude	derision	devour	discerning
deluge	derisive	diction	disheveled

disintegrate	disparaging	droll
dismal	disparate	drone
dismay	dour	duress

E

edible	emanate	enrage	exonerate
effigy	eminent	epoch	expel
effusion	enchant	era	extrovert
elated	endeavour	erasable	
elect	engrossed	erroneous	
elude	enmity	exhort	

F

fastidious	filly	foal	fraudulent
feasible	finesse	foe	frivolous
feign	flamboyant	forge	frugal
feral	flatulence	forsake	furtive
ferocity	flimsy	fortuitous	futile
fiasco	flourish	frantic	

G

gallant	genealogy	grandeur	gratuitous
gasket	gentility	grandiose	gregarious
gauge	goaded	granular	guttural

H

harmonious	heedless	hinder	hoes
hearth	helix	hinge	hoof
heeding	hierarchical	hoax	hubris

I

idiom	impoverished	inedible	insipid
idiosyncrasy	imprudent	inept	insistent
idol	impudent	inexplicable	insolent
idyllic	inaudible	infamy	instigate
imminent	inaugural	infatuate	instructive
impartial	inaugurate	inference	intact
impecunious	incessant	infernal	intercede
impermeable	inconspicuous	inferior	introvert
implicate	indolent	injustice	intuitive
impose	industrious	innocuous	irreverent

J

jovial

K

keel

L

lair	lenient	lofty	lure
lame	lethargic	lucrative	lustrous
lament	liable	luminary	
languish	liberal	luminous	
lavish	litigation	lunar	

M

mace	meanders	mere	munificence
malice	meddle	meticulous	mute
malignant	mediocre	mitigating	muted
malleable	melancholic	monochrome	
mare	melodious	monotonous	

N

nauseous	nominal	nuance	
nobility	novice	nuisance	

O

obfuscate	obscure	onerous	oscillate
oblige	obstinate	ordained	ostentatious
oblong	omit	ordeal	
obligatory	omnivore	orator	

P

pacifist	pew	ponder	prejudiced
pact	pillage	ponderous	prelude
palpable	pious	porous	prominence
passive	pivotal	pragmatic	prominent
perchance	placate	precarious	prosper
peripheral	plaintiff	precedent	prosperous
peril	plausible	precocious	protract
perilous	plenary	predilection	prudence
perpetuate	plethora	predominantly	prudent
perplexed	plummet	prejudice	pungent

Q

quaint	quandary	quarantine	quarry
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R

ramification	relegate	reprimand	reverence
ransack	reluctant	residue	revile
ravenous	remnant	resilience	rhapsody
reap	remnants	resonant	rogue
recede	repelled	respite	ruffian
receptacle	repercussions	retort	
reel	reprieve	retrieve	

S

sacrifice	sage	sanctity	sanction
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scarcity	sphere	stout	superfluous
sceptical	spic	strenuous	superiority
scholastic	squabble	subservient	supplicate
scowl	squeak	subtlety	sups
severe	stance	succinct	swallow
significant	stipulatory	suggestible	sycophancy
sonnet	stolid	sundry	

T

tapestry	tempestuous	tranquility	trivial
tardy	terminate	transient	turbulent
taut	traitor	trepidation	tweak

U

ultimatum	unfathomable	unscrupulous	unwitting
unanimous	unorthodox	unsurpassed	

V

vague	veil	vicarious	virtuous
vain	venerable	vice	vivid
vanadium	ventriloquist	vigilant	vixen
vanguard	verge	vilify	voracious
vapid	viable	virtue	

W

wary	whimsical	wither	wretch
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Y

yearn	yearned
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Want help putting this into practice?

Book a free diagnostic session at our Slough or High Wycombe centre — or online.

thinksmartacademy.co.uk →