

B2 Vocabulary — General English + Workplace English

JBK Independent Learning Program

Layer 1 — The Learning Goal

1.1 What Will I Learn?

CEFR Learning Objective

B2 — Use a good range of vocabulary, and choose words that fit my meaning and the situation.

I have a good range of vocabulary for my field and most general topics. I can use different words to avoid repeating myself. I sometimes choose the wrong word, but it does not stop people from understanding me.

Workplace Application (how to use this at work): At B2, vocabulary should help you communicate clearly and in the right way at work. You may need to discuss work problems, explain and defend ideas, compare options, and make recommendations. You may also need to understand professional documents and change your language for different audiences.

In this chapter, you will learn how to:

- choose vocabulary for your own goals;
- find vocabulary in real English;
- understand words in context (the words and situation around a word);
- learn collocations (words that often go together, like “make a decision”) and useful chunks (groups of words you learn together);
- notice word families (words from the same root, like decide and decision) and related words;
- understand the difference between similar words;
- choose words that fit the situation;
- use vocabulary more exactly and flexibly;
- use AI and other tools to support your learning; and
- decide what vocabulary you need next.

At B2, the question is not only:

What words should I learn?

A more important question is:

What words will help me communicate this idea well?

1.2 Why Should I Care About Vocabulary?

Workplace Application: At work, choosing the right word matters. The right word helps you explain ideas exactly, show the difference between similar terms, discuss problems and solutions, and speak appropriately to colleagues, customers, and managers.

At B2, you can talk about many subjects. But sometimes you know several words with similar meanings and are not sure which one is best. For example:

help — assist — facilitate

big — significant — substantial

These words are related, but they are not always used in the same situations.

At B2, vocabulary learning is less about learning **more** words and more about learning to **choose and use** words well.

Good vocabulary helps you:

- explain ideas clearly;
- discuss complex topics;
- sound more natural;
- communicate professionally; and
- change your language for different situations.

1.3 Your Vocabulary Goal

Workplace Application: If you use English at work, choose vocabulary for a real communication goal. For example: "I need more exact vocabulary for presentations," "I want to discuss project risks more clearly," or "I need the right language for professional emails and meetings."

Start with your own needs. Ask:

What vocabulary do I need for my goal?

For example:

I need more exact vocabulary to discuss environmental issues.

I want to sound more professional in business meetings.

I need vocabulary for my university course in economics.

Your learning objectives from the CEFR (the European scale of language levels, from A1 to C2) can help you choose a goal. If you need help, ask AI:

“Please explain this CEFR learning objective in clear English and give me examples of the vocabulary I may need.”

Choose vocabulary that is useful for you now.

1.4 How AI Can Help You Learn Vocabulary

Workplace Application: AI can help you prepare for work situations. It can compare similar terms, explain formality (how formal or informal your English is), give examples of professional collocations, create workplace practice, and help you review vocabulary for meetings, presentations, and reports.

You can ask AI to:

- explain difficult vocabulary;
- compare similar words;
- explain collocations and word families;
- explain formal and informal language;
- create examples and practice activities;
- give feedback (comments that help you improve) on your word choices; and
- help you find vocabulary for a goal.

AI can be your **Vocabulary Coach**, **Practice Partner**, and **Learning Assistant**.

But remember:

AI does not learn vocabulary for you. You still need to notice, understand, practice, use, and review it.

Layer 2 — The Learning Method

2.1 The B2 Vocabulary Learning Process

Workplace Application: Use the same process with workplace vocabulary. Find useful words in reports, professional emails, presentations, and meetings. Find out how they are used, and practice choosing between them. Use them in a real message, check how well you used them, and use them again.

At B2, vocabulary learning is more active and more personal. A useful process is:

Learn → Understand → Practice → Use → Evaluate → Reuse

Step 1 — Learn

Begin with a goal. Ask: **What vocabulary do I need?** Then find vocabulary connected to that goal. For example:

Goal: Discuss environmental problems.

You might find: **reduce emissions, environmental impact, pose a serious threat, take effective measures, long-term consequences.**

At B2, real English becomes more important. You can find useful vocabulary in news articles, podcasts, videos, lectures, books, professional websites, and real conversations. Real English often has words and expressions that you will not find on a standard vocabulary list.

As you read and listen, ask:

What words and expressions do good speakers and writers actually use?

You don't need to understand every word or learn every new word. Choose vocabulary that you are likely to use.

Step 2 — Understand

When you find an important word, study it closely. For example:

Word: significant

Meaning: important or large enough to matter

Collocations: significant increase, significant difference, significant impact

Word family: significance, significantly

Related words: important, considerable, substantial

Then ask:

Can I always use these words in the same way?

For example, **a significant increase** and **a substantial increase** are both correct. But **significant** focuses on how much the change matters, and **substantial** focuses on how large it is. At B2, these small differences become important.

At B2, look closely at two things: **collocations** and **formality**.

Collocations. Don't learn only one word. Learn the words that often go with it:

commit a crime — commit an error — commit resources

pose a risk — pose a threat — pose a challenge

Ask: **What words commonly go with this word?** Learning chunks like these helps you use English more naturally.

Formality. Words can be informal, neutral, formal, academic, professional, or specialized. For example, **buy** is common in everyday conversation, and **purchase** is more common in a formal business document. **Help** is everyday; **assist** and **facilitate** are more formal. Ask:

Where, and with whom, would I use this word?

Choose the Right Tool

Workplace Application: Choose the tool that solves your professional vocabulary problem now. For example, use SKELL for collocations, YouGlish to hear words in real speech, a dictionary for meaning and formality, or AI for more practice.

Different tools help with different problems:

How is this word actually used? → SKELL

How is it pronounced in real speech? → YouGlish

What words are related to it? → Visual Thesaurus / VocabGrabber

How can I remember it? → Anki

How can I practice it? → A partner / AI

Choose the tool that solves your problem.

The Resource Library (a list of free websites and tools in Part 3) has more information about these tools.

Step 3 — Practice

At B2, practice should make you **choose** vocabulary, not only remember definitions. For example:

Which word is better here: big, significant, or substantial? Why?

Rewrite this sentence using a more formal expression.

Explain the same idea to a friend and then to your manager.

These activities make you choose words. That is an important B2 skill.

Step 4 — Use

Use new vocabulary in real communication: discussions, presentations, writing, role-plays, and work situations. For example:

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of AI in education. Use at least five useful expressions from today's vocabulary work.

Afterward, ask:

Which words could I use without thinking too much?

Those words are becoming part of your active vocabulary.

Step 5 — Evaluate

Ask: **How well do I know this vocabulary?** A useful progression is:

Recognize → Understand → Remember → Use → Use appropriately → Use flexibly

The last two steps are especially important at B2. For example, you may know both **problem** and **challenge**. But can you choose the right word for the situation?

There is a difference between “**Do I know this word?**” and “**Can I choose the right word?**”

Step 6 — Reuse

Keep meeting the vocabulary in new contexts. For example:

Learn: significant

Read: significant increase

Hear: significant change

Say: significant advantage

Write: significant impact

Meeting and using a word many times helps it become active. Tools such as Anki can help you review, but real communication is also important. Use the vocabulary again.

2.2 A Few Vocabulary Strategies

We cannot teach every vocabulary strategy (a way to help you learn) in one chapter. Here are a few that are very useful at B2. You can explore more in the Resource Library.

Rebecca Oxford Learning Strategies

Rebecca Oxford (a researcher who studied how people learn languages) described many strategies that language learners can use. At B2, two useful examples are:

Cognitive Strategy — Practicing

Workplace Application: Practice professional vocabulary by explaining a work issue, writing a short professional paragraph, role-playing a meeting, or using new vocabulary in a recommendation.

Use new vocabulary in meaningful communication. For example, discuss a topic, write an argument, give a presentation, or role-play a work situation. The goal is to move vocabulary from knowing it when you see it to using it yourself.

Memory Strategy — Making Connections

Workplace Application: Connect professional vocabulary to a real project, task, customer, or decision. For example, connect “implementation” with a project you know and use the word in a sentence about that project.

Connect a new word with something that helps you remember and use it. For example, connect **substantial** with **a substantial increase**. Then make your own sentence:

The company made a substantial investment in new technology.

For more Oxford strategies, visit the Resource Library.

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies help you plan and check your own learning.

Planning

Workplace Application: Choose a focused workplace goal. For example: “This week I will learn and use six expressions for discussing project risks and recommendations in meetings.”

Before you study, ask:

- What is my goal?
- What vocabulary do I need, and where will I use it?
- Which resource will help me?
- How will I practice it?

Monitoring

While you learn, ask:

- Do I understand this word?
- Do I know its common collocations?
- Do I know when it is appropriate?
- Can I use it, or do I need more practice?

For example:

I understand “facilitate,” but I am not sure when to use it instead of “help.” I need to study the difference.

Cognitive Strategy — Compare Similar Words

When two words have similar meanings, compare them. For example: **problem** and **challenge**. Ask:

- What is the difference?
- When can I use each word?
- Which one is more formal? Which one is more common?

This helps you choose words more exactly.

2.3 Personal Learning Strengths

Workplace Application: Use your strongest learning methods with professional vocabulary. If you learn through discussion, practice meetings or presentations. If you learn well with your eyes, make a word map about a project or work topic.

People learn in different ways. Howard Gardner, a researcher, wrote about different kinds of intelligence. His work can give you useful ideas:

- **Linguistic** — reading, writing, explaining, and discussing vocabulary;
- **Visual** — word maps, diagrams, and visual connections;
- **Musical** — noticing pronunciation, rhythm, and sound;
- **Interpersonal** — learning through discussion and communication; and
- **Intrapersonal** — keeping a learning record and thinking about your progress.

Try different activities. Some may work especially well for you. But don't limit yourself to your favorites. A strategy that is not your favorite can still be useful.

2.4 Weekly Study Plan

Workplace Application: Include workplace vocabulary in your plan. For example, find useful vocabulary in a work-related article on Monday, practice it during the week, and use it in a short presentation, discussion, or written task on Friday.

Here is an example plan. You can change it to fit your own needs.

Day	Activity	Time
Monday	Choose a vocabulary goal	20 min
Tuesday	Find vocabulary in real English	20 min
Wednesday	Investigate meaning, collocations, and formality	20 min
Thursday	Practice choosing the right words	20 min
Friday	Use the vocabulary in speaking or writing	20 min
Saturday	Meet the vocabulary in a new context	20 min
Sunday	Review and reflect	20 min

2.5 Learning Notebook

Workplace Application: Your notebook can include professional collocations, formality notes, and examples from your own work. For example: “raise a concern — formal / professional — I would like to raise a concern about the project timeline.”

At B2, your Learning Notebook (your own notebook for this course) should not become another long vocabulary list. Let technology, such as Anki, organize your words. Use your notebook for **personal discoveries**. For example:

Word: significant

Useful collocation: significant impact

Related word: substantial

My discovery: I understand many advanced words, but I sometimes have difficulty choosing the most natural one.

My next step: I will compare similar words and study more examples.

Your notebook becomes a record of what you discover about your own learning.

2.6 My Strategy Record

Each time you practice vocabulary, write down the strategy you tried, whether it helped you, and why.

My vocabulary goal:

Date	Strategy I tried	Did it help me? (Yes / A little / Not yet)	Why?	What will I try next time?

Over time, you may notice patterns. For example:

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I remember collocations better when I find them in real texts.

I recognize many advanced words, but I need more practice using them.

What you notice can become your next learning goal.

Layer 3 — The Learning Tools

Choose Your Tier

This layer has four tiers. A tier is a way to practice with the tools you have. The goal is the same in every tier.

- **Tier 1 — Paper and People:** a notebook, a printed dictionary, and a partner if you have one.
- **Tier 2 — Phone, No Internet:** any phone with a voice recorder, and text messages (SMS).
- **Tier 3 — Limited Data:** light dictionaries, a flashcard app, and AI in text.
- **Tier 4 — Good Internet:** AI, full websites, and online resources.

Each tier adds to the tiers before it, so the lower tiers are useful for everyone.

3.1 Partner and AI Roles

Workplace Application: AI can be your professional vocabulary coach. It can help you look at exact word choice, formality, collocations, and realistic workplace communication.

Tier 1 — Paper and People

Challenge Partner: Your partner describes a situation, and you choose the best word for it. Then you explain why.

Discussion Partner: You discuss a topic and try to use exact words and collocations, not general ones.

If you have no partner, write two similar words in your notebook, such as “affect” and “effect.” Write when you use each one, with an example.

Tier 2 — Phone, No Internet

Recorder: Record a one-minute talk with your target vocabulary. Listen with your notebook open, mark the words that were too general, and record it again.

Text Messages (SMS): Send a partner a short message with a precise word or collocation. Your partner replies with a better or more formal choice. SMS needs no internet, but your plan may charge for each message, so use it only sometimes.

Tier 3 — Limited Data

Light Dictionaries: Cambridge Dictionary explains meaning, formality, and usage, and SKELL shows real examples. Both are in the Low-Data Edition of the Resource Library (its short list of websites that use little data).

Flashcard App: If you have a smartphone, download AnkiDroid once on Wi-Fi. After that, it uses no data.

AI in Text: Paste a sentence and ask for more exact word choices. Text uses very little data.

Tier 4 — Good Internet

For B2 vocabulary, AI can be your:

Vocabulary Coach: It explains words in context, compares similar words, and explains collocations, word families, and formality.

Practice Partner: It gives you situations where you must choose the best word, creates role-plays with your target vocabulary, and gives feedback on your word choices.

Learning Assistant: It creates B2 activities and review activities and helps you find vocabulary for a goal.

You can find more ideas in the Resource Library.

3.2 Scripts and AI Prompts

Workplace Application: Adapt these prompts (the messages you write to AI) to your job. Ask AI to create B2 practice with vocabulary for meetings, presentations, projects, reports, negotiations, customer communication, or another situation you often meet.

Every tier has the same three tasks: compare similar words, improve precision, and practice flexible use. Only the tool is different.

Tier 1 — With Paper and a Partner

Compare Similar Words: In your notebook, make a table for two similar words: meaning, formality, collocations, and one example each. Check it with a printed dictionary or a partner.

Improve Precision: Write five sentences on paper. Underline general words such as “good,” “big,” or “do.” Rewrite each sentence with a more exact word.

Practice Flexible Use: Your partner writes three situations on cards, such as a meeting, a complaint, and a casual chat. You use your vocabulary in each one.

Tier 2 — With Your Phone

Compare Similar Words: Record two sentences for each word. Listen. Is the difference clear?

Improve Precision: Record a one-minute explanation. Listen with your paper in front of you. Mark the general words, and rewrite them with more exact words.

Practice Flexible Use: Record the same idea twice: once formally and once informally. Listen and compare.

Tier 3 — Dictionaries and Text Prompts

Compare Similar Words: Type both words into SKELL and compare their real examples. Check formality in Cambridge Dictionary.

Improve Precision and Practice Flexible Use: The prompts under Tier 4 are text prompts. They use little data, so you can use them too.

Tier 4 — AI Prompts

Prompt 1 — Compare Similar Words

“I am a B2 English learner. Please explain the difference between these words: [words]. Tell me about meaning, formality, common collocations, and typical situations. Give me examples.”

Prompt 2 — Improve Precision

“I am a B2 English learner. Here is my sentence: [sentence]. Suggest two or three alternatives that are more exact or more appropriate. Explain the differences between them.”

Prompt 3 — Practice Flexible Use

“I am a B2 English learner. Here are five vocabulary items: [words]. Create three different situations in which I must choose and use the most appropriate vocabulary. Give me feedback on my choices.”

You can change these prompts to match your own goals.

3.3 Choose Your Vocabulary Practice

You can choose General English, Workplace English, Academic English, or vocabulary for your own interests. Choose one goal for now. You can explore more later.

Option 1 — General English

Choose vocabulary for topics that interest you, such as technology, health, travel, education, society, the environment, or current issues. Ask AI:

“Please suggest a B2 vocabulary activity about [topic]. Focus on exact vocabulary, collocations, and useful expressions for discussion.”

Option 2 — Workplace English

Workplace Application: Choose a workplace vocabulary goal that is useful now. At B2, the situation may be a meeting, negotiation, presentation, project, customer problem, or report, while the language stays at B2.

Choose vocabulary for situations you meet at work. Ask AI:

“Please suggest a B2 Workplace English vocabulary activity about [topic]. Focus on exact vocabulary, useful collocations, and appropriate professional language.”

Option 3 — Academic English

If you are studying, choose vocabulary for explaining ideas, comparing information, discussing evidence, presenting arguments, or writing assignments. Ask AI:

“Please suggest a B2 academic vocabulary activity about [topic]. Focus on useful academic vocabulary, collocations, and appropriate formal language.”

Option 4 — Personal Goal

Choose vocabulary for your own situation. Ask AI:

“I am a B2 English learner. My vocabulary goal is [goal]. Please suggest useful vocabulary, collocations, and expressions. Explain any important differences in meaning or formality.”

Practice in Your Tier

- **Tier 1 — Paper and People:** Find vocabulary for your goal in a newspaper, a book, or work documents. Use your notebook and a partner.
- **Tier 2 — Phone, No Internet:** Record your target vocabulary in sentences, and listen during the week. Practice precise words by SMS.
- **Tier 3 — Limited Data:** Compare words in Cambridge Dictionary and SKELL. Review difficult words with AnkiDroid.
- **Tier 4 — Good Internet:** Ask AI for an activity with the prompt in your option.

3.4 The JBK Independent Learning Cycle

Workplace Application: Use the JBK Independent Learning Cycle (seven steps to plan and check your own learning) with workplace vocabulary. Check what you can say now. Plan a goal for a real work situation and audience. Choose real material or an activity, and practice choosing the right words. Check whether your words fit the situation. Think about what helped, and decide what to learn next.

Now use the learning system you learned in Part 1.

Note: The JBK Independent Learning Cycle is the author's own model. It is inspired by the European Language Portfolio (ELP), a record of your language goals and progress.

1. Assess

What can I do now?

2. Plan

What is my goal?

What vocabulary do I need?

Who is my reader or listener, and how formal is the situation?

When and how will I practice?

3. Choose

Which activity or resource will I use?

Use the Resource Library or ask AI for help.

4. Practice

Complete the vocabulary activity.

Use one or two strategies.

Use AI if it helps you.

5. Evaluate

Can I choose the right word for the situation?

Did my words fit the level of formality?

Can I use them without looking at my notes?

6. Reflect

What did I learn?

What worked well?

What was difficult?

Did AI help me?

7. Improve

What will I practice next?

You might:

- study collocations or compare similar words;
- practice more formal vocabulary;
- find examples in SKELL or hear the words in YouGlish;
- review difficult words with Anki; or
- ask AI to create another activity.

Assess → Plan → Choose → Practice → Evaluate → Reflect → Improve

3.5 This Week's Practice

Workplace Application: Choose a vocabulary task connected to a real work situation. Learn five to seven useful words, collocations, or expressions in context. Practice choosing the best language, and use it in a realistic workplace speaking or writing task. Review it later.

Plan one vocabulary practice for this week.

My vocabulary goal: What vocabulary do I need to learn?

Vocabulary activity: What will I do to practice these words or phrases?

Resource, model, person, or AI: What will I use to help me?

My vocabulary strategy: How will I learn and remember the vocabulary?

When will I practice?

After you practice, complete your Learning Record (your notes before and after each practice) in Section 3.6 and your Strategy Record (a table of the strategies you try) in Section 2.6.

3.6 My Learning Record

Workplace Application: In your Learning Record, also write the workplace situation you practiced and the level of formality you needed.

Your Learning Record helps you remember what you have practiced, what you have learned, and what you want to do next. Keep it in your Learning Notebook.

Use this record before and after each vocabulary practice session. A few short notes are enough.

Before I Practice

My vocabulary goal:

Words, collocations, or expressions I will practice:

The strategy I will try:

After I Practice

Which new words or phrases can I use now?

Which words or phrases are still difficult?

What did I learn?

What will I practice next?

Workplace English

What workplace situation did I practice?

What level of formality did I need?

Your records can help you see your progress over time.

3.7 Visit the Resource Library

Workplace Application: In the Resource Library, look for B2 resources that show professional vocabulary in real or realistic contexts. Choose resources that solve your current vocabulary problem.

You have learned several ways to improve your B2 vocabulary. These are a starting point. The Resource Library has more resources, strategies, and tools.

Look for resources that match:

- your B2 level;
- your vocabulary goal;
- General, Workplace, or Academic English;
- your interests; and
- the situations where you need English.

You do not need to try everything. Choose the resources that solve your current learning problem.

The Resource Library gives you choices. You decide what you need.

Layer 4 — Reflection and Growth

4.1 Self-Assessment — “I Can...”

Now that you have finished this chapter, think about what you can do.

Vocabulary

I can...	Yes	Sometimes	Not yet
choose vocabulary that is useful for my goals.	☐	☐	☐
find useful vocabulary in real English.	☐	☐	☐
investigate the meaning and use of a new word.	☐	☐	☐
notice common collocations and word families.	☐	☐	☐
compare words with similar meanings.	☐	☐	☐
notice differences in formality and context.	☐	☐	☐
choose vocabulary that fits the situation.	☐	☐	☐

I can...	Yes	Sometimes	Not yet
use some new vocabulary exactly and flexibly.	☐	☐	☐
review and reuse vocabulary in different contexts.	☐	☐	☐

Independent Learning

I can...	Yes	Sometimes	Not yet
choose the right vocabulary tool for my problem.	☐	☐	☐
use a few vocabulary learning strategies.	☐	☐	☐
use AI to help my vocabulary learning.	☐	☐	☐
use my notebook to record useful discoveries.	☐	☐	☐
use the JBK Independent Learning Cycle to organize my practice.	☐	☐	☐
decide what vocabulary I need to practice next.	☐	☐	☐

Workplace Self-Assessment

I can...	Yes	Sometimes	Not yet
choose B2 vocabulary that is useful for my work.	☐	☐	☐
understand important professional vocabulary in context.	☐	☐	☐
choose vocabulary that fits a professional situation and audience.	☐	☐	☐
use some professional vocabulary exactly and flexibly.	☐	☐	☐
decide which professional vocabulary I need next.	☐	☐	☐

You do not need to check “Yes” for everything today.

Your goal is to keep improving.

4.2 Reflection

Workplace Reflection: Which professional words, collocations, or expressions can I use more confidently now? Where will I use them? Which word choices are still difficult? Did the work context help me understand and remember the vocabulary?

Think about your experience in this chapter. Ask yourself:

- What vocabulary can I use now?
- Which words do I understand but still don't use?
- Which words have similar meanings but different uses?

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- Which collocations did I learn?
- Which words are more formal or informal?
- Which strategy or tool helped me most?
- Did AI help me? How?
- What vocabulary do I need next?

Record your answers in your Learning Notebook.

4.3 Your Next Step

Workplace Application: Choose five to seven words, collocations, or expressions you need for one work situation. Study them in context, compare how they are used, practice them, use them in a realistic task, and review them later.

Don't try to learn every word you see. A small group of useful words that you can use flexibly is worth more than a long list of words you cannot use.

Look at the vocabulary you studied in this chapter. Choose three to five important words or expressions. For each one, ask:

- Do I understand the meaning?
- Do I know how it is used?
- Do I know a useful collocation?
- Do I know related words?
- Do I know how formal it is?
- Can I use it without looking at my notes?
- Can I choose it when it is appropriate?

Then choose your next action and use the JBK Independent Learning Cycle from Section 3.4:

Assess → Plan → Choose → Practice → Evaluate → Reflect → Improve

4.4 Remember

Vocabulary learning is not:

See a word → Memorize it → Take a quiz

Instead, your vocabulary process is:

Learn → Understand → Practice → Use → Evaluate → Reuse

And your independent-learning cycle is:

Assess → Plan → Choose → Practice → Evaluate → Reflect → Improve

Knowing a word is not the same as knowing how to use it.

You choose the vocabulary you need. You choose the tools that solve your problems. You use AI when it is useful. You decide what to practice next.

That is how you become your own English teacher.