

IELTS Reading Most common synonyms and opposites

Preparing for the IELTS Reading section involves recognizing how statements in the questions are paraphrased in the text. This often involves the use of **synonyms**, **opposites**, or rephrased structures. Below is a list of commonly observed synonyms and opposites based on actual IELTS exams and Cambridge IELTS books.

1. Common Synonyms in IELTS Reading

General Vocabulary:

Word in Text	Synonym in Questions
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Important	Essential, significant, vital
Increase	Rise, grow, climb, expand
Decrease	Decline, reduce, fall, drop
Advantage	Benefit, positive aspect
Disadvantage	Drawback, negative aspect
Discover	Find out, uncover, identify
Method	Approach, technique, way
Cause	Reason, source
Effect	Impact, consequence, result
Produce	Create, generate, make
Protect	Safeguard, conserve, shield
Harm	Damage, injure, destroy
Accurate	Precise, exact, correct
Danger	Risk, hazard, threat
Problem	Issue, difficulty, challenge
Support	Aid, assist, help

Time-Related Vocabulary:

Word in Text Synonym in Questions

Today	Nowadays, at present, currently
Previously	Earlier, in the past, before
Future	Later, in time to come, forthcoming
Immediately	Instantly, at once, right away
Gradually	Slowly, over time, step by step

Quantities and Numbers:

Word in Text Synonym in Questions

Many	Numerous, a lot of, several, a large number
Few	A small number, not many
All	Every, the entire
Some	A proportion, a minority
Most	The majority, almost all
Half	50%, one out of two

Verbs and Actions:

Word in Text Synonym in Questions

Improve	Enhance, boost, develop
Prohibit	Ban, forbid, restrict
Encourage	Motivate, stimulate, inspire
Require	Need, demand, necessitate
Replace	Substitute, exchange, change
Examine	Investigate, analyze, study
Build	Construct, erect, create

2. Common Opposites in IELTS Reading

General Vocabulary:

Word in Text Opposite in Questions

Increase	Decrease, drop, reduce
Advantage	Disadvantage, drawback, downside
Improve	Worsen, deteriorate
Protect	Harm, damage, destroy
More	Less
Present	Absent
Agree	Disagree
Support	Oppose, hinder
Include	Exclude

Time-Related Vocabulary:

Word in Text Opposite in Questions

Early	Late
Permanent	Temporary
Past	Future
Ancient	Modern

3. Structural Paraphrasing Patterns

IELTS Reading questions often paraphrase entire ideas, not just single words. Here are common rephrasing patterns:

Expressions of Cause and Effect:

- **Text:** "This leads to an increase in temperature."
- **Question:** "Results in higher temperatures."

Expressions of Comparison:

- **Text:** "More people preferred method A."
- **Question:** "Method A was more popular."

Expressions of Negation:

- **Text:** "This technique is not effective in all cases."
- **Question:** "This technique is only effective in some cases."

Passive to Active Voice:

- **Text:** "The rules were implemented by the government."
- **Question:** "The government implemented the rules."

Change in Number Representation:

- **Text:** "Half of the population..."
 - **Question:** "50% of the people..."
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4. Tips for Recognizing Synonyms and Opposites

- **Practice with Cambridge IELTS Books:** Pay attention to how questions paraphrase text.
- **Underline Key Words:** While practicing, highlight words in questions and their synonyms/opposites in the passage.
- **Build a Vocabulary List:** Add new words and their synonyms/opposites to your list for revision.
- **Practice Skimming and Scanning:** Helps you locate the paraphrased text quickly.

By mastering synonyms, opposites, and paraphrased structures, you'll greatly improve your ability to answer IELTS Reading questions efficiently. Let me know if you'd like more examples or practice exercises!