

Grade 9 Vocabulary

Real Words from Real Grade 9 Essays



One of the questions I'm asked most often is: "What can I do to help my child improve in English?" If I could choose just one thing, it would be this: **Help them build their vocabulary.**

Students don't achieve Grade 9 because they use "fancy" words. They achieve Grade 9 because they have the vocabulary to express **more precise, thoughtful ideas.**

The words in this guide weren't chosen from a dictionary or a list of impressive words. They were taken from **real Grade 9 GCSE English essays** that I recently marked as an examiner.

Remember: **the goal isn't to sound clever, it's to become more precise.**

Five easy ways to build vocabulary at home

✓ Encourage your child to ask, "What does that word mean?" whenever an unfamiliar word comes up.

✓ Choose a **Word of the Week** and challenge everyone in the family to use it naturally. Make it a competition!

✓ Encourage your child to swap simple words for more precise ones when they are talking.

Instead of...

- **big** → gargantuan
- **important** → pivotal or crucial
- **harmful** → pernicious

✓ Read widely: paperback and online all counts. Articles online about your child's interests is a great place to start if they are reluctant.

✓ Celebrate curiosity. The aim isn't to sound clever; it's to become fascinated by language.

Small improvements, repeated consistently, lead to remarkable progress over time.

About the author

Hi, I'm **Suzy Mersereau**.

I've taught English for over 20 years and am an GCSE English examiner. Through [Much Ado About Learning](#), I help students build the confidence, precision and analytical skills needed to achieve the grades they're capable of.

I hope you and your child enjoy exploring these words together, and that this guide is the start of many great conversations about language.

Vocabulary used in Real Grade 9 essays:

Word	Definition	Example
Myopic	Adjective: Short-sighted; lacking long-term thinking.	Scrooge's myopic obsession with wealth prevents him from recognising what truly matters.
Pivotal	Adjective: Extremely important.	Eva Smith is pivotal to Priestley's message, despite never appearing on stage.
Visceral	Adjective: Deeply emotional; instinctive.	The image creates a visceral sense of fear in both the character and the reader.
Tangible	Adjective: Clear and noticeable; able to be perceived or felt.	There was a tangible tension in the air before the storm finally broke.
Tenacious	Adjective: Determined and persistent.	Juliet is remarkably tenacious, refusing to abandon Romeo despite the consequences.
Gargantuan	Adjective: Enormous; exceptionally large.	Gargantuan waves crashed against the cliffs, shaking the lighthouse.
Iniquitous	Adjective: Extremely unjust or immoral.	Macbeth's iniquitous reign is built upon betrayal, fear and murder.
Fallacious	Adjective: Based on faulty reasoning; logically unsound.	It is fallacious to assume that banning phones alone will improve behaviour.
Pernicious	Adjective: Harmful, often in a gradual or subtle way.	Stevenson presents secrecy as a pernicious force that slowly destroys both individuals and society.
Deluge	Noun: A flood or an overwhelming amount of something.	A deluge of rain transformed the quiet lane into a raging river.
Imperative	Adjective: Absolutely necessary or essential.	It is imperative that schools prioritise students' mental health.
Crucial	Adjective: Extremely important; decisive.	Mercutio's death is a crucial turning point in the play.
Conducive	Adjective: Making a particular outcome more likely.	The oppressive atmosphere is conducive to feelings of isolation and despair.
Exacerbate	Verb: To make a problem or situation worse.	Mr Birling's selfish attitude exacerbates the divisions within society.
Monumental	Adjective: Extremely significant or important.	Scrooge undergoes a monumental transformation by the end of the novella.