

## Foreword

This book is intended for those students who are appearing for the GCE “O” Level English Language examination, or any other examination of equivalent standard like SPM or High School Diploma. If you work sincerely through the whole book and understand every word in it, you cannot fail your GCE “O” Level English paper. If you do, just return this book to me for a full refund of the cost of this book.

For you to understand a word properly, you need to see how it is used in concrete context. No dictionary is able to do this because that dictionary will be so heavy and huge that I don't think you want to buy it.

This book is also useful to those high school students who are preparing to study in the English medium polytechnics or university colleges. It will provide them the opportunity to revise the words they have learned through out the secondary school days but have forgotten many of them.

For the students who are taking the GCE “A” Level English examinations, or other exams like TOEFL, SAT, IELTS, GRE or GMAT, this is one of the books you must have. Your lecturers will guide you on other reference books you will need in order to obtain high scores

An average student will need only about five months to master all the difficult words in this book. This will save you a lot of money in the end as you will not require a lot of classes again.

For the working adults, this is a book for you too, whether you are a CEO, director, manager, consultant, senior engineer, or whatever position you are in. This convenient book can be used in the bus, train, aeroplane etc. Why not just keep it in your briefcase for easy access? You can learn a lot by tackling it a little at a time.

Item 1

Associate (noun: declaring oneself in agreement)

Partner (noun: a person who takes part in a business with shared risks and profits)

Correct: Mr. Brown is our business associate.

Correct: Mr. Hill is one of the partners in this company.

Item 2

Assignment (noun: a secret appointment to meet between illicit lovers)

Assignment (noun: handling over of something)

Correct: The hotel owner arranged assignment for this gentleman and the lady.

Correct: My last assignment was to teach English language to engineers who graduated from non-English medium colleges.

Item 3

Arouse (verb: to give rise to, especially a feeling or emotion, to induce)

Rouse (verb: to stir to action or to bring out of a state of sleep)

Correct: His nervousness aroused the suspicions of the police.

Correct: The loud bang of the thunder roused every body last night.

Item 4

Abjure (noun: to renounce or repudiate)

Adjure (verb: to request earnestly)

Correct: He abjured the consuming of meats from today.

Correct: His friend adjured him to consider carefully before handing over his resignation letter.

Item 5

Abrogate (verb: to abolish)

Arrogate (verb: to assume without right)

Correct: Slavery was abrogated long ago.

Correct: The maintenance head arrogated the recruiting responsibility.

Item 6

Appraise (verb: to estimate or evaluate the worth of)

Apprise (verb: to inform or advise)

Assess (verb: to estimate the size, quality, or value of)

Correct: Before you appraise the employees, you will not know which are the ones to retrench.

Correct: The king has not yet been apprised of the decision by the armed forces.

Correct: Our accountants assessed the amount of tax we had to pay last year.

Item 7

Amoral (adj.: cannot understand the concept of right or wrong)

Immoral (adj.: morally wrong, wicked, evil)

Correct: The truly amoral people are the babies and the lunatics

Correct: It is immoral to kill innocent people.

Item 8

Await (verb: wait for)

Wait (verb: defer)

Correct: A surprise awaits you for your next birthday.

Correct: We waited for a month before we received the cargo.

Item 9

Assume (verb: to accept as true without proof)

Presume (verb: to accept as true with something to back up, but not a strong evidence)

Correct: The customers did not complain before and therefore we assumed they are satisfied.

Correct: We received a complaint from one of our customers before and therefore we presumed majority of them were not satisfied with our service.

Item 10

Assure (verb: to reassure, make confident)

Insure (verb: to safe guard against loss or damage by paying insurance)

Ensure (verb: to make certain)

Correct: We assured the casualty that we could reach a hospital within an hour.

Correct: He insures his cargo for a million dollars.

Correct: I ensure the client will receive the component by next week.

Item 11

Aircraft (noun: machine capable of flight, word is used as singular or plural)

Aeroplane (noun: powered aircraft with wings, British spelling)

Airplane (noun: powered aircraft with wings, U.S. spelling)

Correct: One of the aircraft was damaged by the terrorists.

Correct: The aeroplane / airplane landed safely.

Item 12

Alternate (adj.: following each other in succession)

Alternative (noun: a choice between one of two or more things)

Correct: These two groups of people work on alternate days.  
Correct: There will be a lot of alternatives to consider.

Item 13

Although (conj.: despite the fact that)

Though (conj.: Interchangeable with although except at the end of a sentence, e.g.  
They looked tired, though.)

Correct: Although he was having fever, he came to work.

Correct: Though he was sick, he came to work.

Item 14

Aren't you

Correct: You're going to England tomorrow, aren't you?

Wrong: You're going to England tomorrow, isn't it?

Item 15

Advise (verb: offering words of opinion)

Advice (noun: words offered as an opinion)

Correct: He advises her not to waste the money.

Wrong: He advices her not to waste the money

Correct: She was not happy with his advice.

Wrong: She was not happy with his advise.

Item 16

Am not going to do nothing

Correct: I am not going to do anything today.

Wrong: I am not going to do nothing today.

Item 17

Allude (verb: to mention something indirectly, without identifying it)

Elude (verb: to manage to get away from)

Correct: He uses his poems to allude the corrupt practices of his manager.

Correct: He eluded paying some income tax last year.

Item 18

Allusion (noun: indirect reference to something, a hint)

Illusion (noun: deception)

Correct: The allusion of the poem was about the corrupt manager

Correct: All the sufferings and pains are caused by greed, hatred and illusion.

Item 19

All right (predic.: in satisfactory condition)

Alright (adv.: less frequently used than “All Right”, but readily found in journalistic and business publications, or in fictional dialogue)

Correct: It is all right / alright to be late because your presence will not affect anyone.

Item 20

Award (verb: to bestow for performance or quality)

Reward (verb: to give something in return for a meritorious action or service)

Correct: The best employee for the year was awarded with a return air ticket to a destination of his or her choice.

Correct: The first aider was rewarded for his bravery in saving the life of the casualty.

Item 21

Abnormal (adj.: does not conform to the rule or standard)

Subnormal (adj.: below or inferior to the average)

Correct: The abnormal guy urinates on the road when all the tourists are there.

Correct: Because his intelligence is subnormal, he failed his driving test six times.

Item 22

Absurd (adj.: wildly unreasonable)

Ridiculous (adj.: unreasonable)

Correct: It is absurd for the factory owner to demand that all workers must work 14 hours per day, six days per week.

Correct: It is ridiculous to believe the people like you because you are rich.

Item 23

Accessory (noun: additional or extra things fitted to cars, equipment etc)

Accessory (noun: someone involved in a crime but did not actually commit it as chief actor)

Correct: I wish to buy this car without accessories.

Correct: Because Abang was an accessory to that crime, he escaped the death sentence and was jailed for ten years.

Item 24

Affable (adj.: agreeable, friendly)

Efface (verb: to make disappear)

Correct: The new director was an affable person.

Correct: Although the document had been folded many times, we were lucky the name of the author was not totally effaced.

Item 25

Amend (verb: to alter, change)

Emend (verb: to correct, or improve by removing errors and corruptions)

Correct: This society must amend its constitution so that even the foreigners can become members.

Correct: Many monks sat together to comment on a religious document, so as to emend it, by removing errors and corrupted portions for the sake of the future generations.

Item 26

Adjacent (adj.: lying near or close)

Adjoining (verb: suggests actually touching)

Correct: His workshop is adjacent to mine.

Correct: His workshop adjoins mine. (in a terrace or semi-detached)

Item 27

Annunciate (verb: to proclaim or promulgate)

Enunciate (verb: to pronounce clearly)

Correct: The new leaders gathered on that day to annunciate the formation of a Republic of China, thus ending the over 4000 year-old kingdom.

Correct: Phonetic teachers who are able to enunciate each English word properly are most appreciated.

Item 28

Averse (adj.: disinclined, unwilling, opposed)

Adverse (adj.: opposing, unfavourable)

Correct: Some students are averse to the idea of doing any work.

Correct: The new president of the society has to face adverse opposition from some of the members.

Item 29

Affluent (adj.: wealthy, prosperous)

Effluent (noun: liquid industrial waste that is discharged into the environment)

Correct: Children from affluent families are lucky.

Correct: An officer from the Department of Environment comes to our factory once a month to collect samples from the effluent to make sure that the toxic contents in the effluent are not beyond the permitted limit.

Item 30

Alternate (adj.: refers to the every other one, e.g., one, three, five, seven, nine .....)

Alternative (noun: means one of the two choices)

Correct: Please pick all the alternate names on the list and put these names into two teams.

Correct: You have two alternatives, one of them is to remain in this country.

Item 31

Ante (prefix forming nouns and adjectives: means before, in front of, e.g., antennas or anteroom)

Correct: The anteroom is a small room leading to the main one which is a bigger room.

Correct: Antennas are television aerials.

Correct: Antennae are the feelers on the heads of some insects.

Anti (prefix forming nouns and adjectives: against, e.g., anti-American)

Correct: The Japanese were once anti-American.

Item 32

Anxious (adj.: means there is a sense of anxiety, or worry)

Eager (adj.: means there is a pleasant expectation, full of intense interest or desire)

Correct: She was so anxious about her mother's health that she flew from London to New York to visit her in the hospital.

Correct: She did well in her final examinations and therefore she was very eager to have the result of the examinations.

Item 33

Apt (adj.: means natural tendency, e.g. habitual probability)

Liable (predic. adj.: refers to habitual probability and also responsible for)

Likely (adv.: means probably)

Correct: The snake is apt to bite you if you step on it.

Correct: He is liable for all the mistakes committed in the workshop.

Correct: It is likely to rain heavily during the next few days.

Item 34

Affect (verb: to produce an effect on something, an action is taking place)

Effect (noun: the result of an action)

Correct: His bad behaviours affect the reputation of our company because he is one of us.

Correct: She does not smoke and therefore she does not suffer the effect of smoking.

Item 35

Anticipate (verb: looking forward to)

Expect (verb: to suppose, looking forward to something which is likely to happen)

Correct: I cannot anticipate how dangerous the road will be.  
Correct: I expect he will behave badly during our next meeting.

Item 36

Apartment (noun: American word for flat)  
Flat (noun: an apartment on one floor)

Correct: He bought an apartment in Hong Kong.  
Correct: She bought a flat in Singapore.

Item 37

Anyways & Anywheres

These are nonstandard English words for anyway and anywhere

Item 38

Anywhere (adv.: in or at any place)  
Anyway (adv.: in any case, at all events)  
Any way (adj.: going to somewhere, or a way of doing thing)

Correct: The police officer confirmed that those terrorists could be anywhere on this island.  
Correct: Anyway, the decision is yours.  
Correct: You can complete the job any way you think is most suitable.

Item 39

Amount (noun: refers to singular noun, e.g. money, influence, water)  
Number (noun: refers to plural noun, e.g. apples, oranges, eggs)

Correct: We need a certain amount of money.  
Correct: We have a number of apples.

Item 40

Activate (verb: to make a system active)  
Motivate (verb: to stir to action, refers to people)  
Actuate (verb: cause the operation of an electrical or pneumatic device)

Correct: We activate the pneumatic systems so that the automation is functioning.  
Correct: The manager motivates the employees to take up higher studies.  
Correct: In a good hotel, when the air-conditioning system fails, a controller will actuate an alarm to inform the maintenance crew that the air-conditioner has stopped functioning.

Item 41

Admission (noun: the act of allowing to enter)  
Admittance (noun: permission or right to enter)

Correct: The college admission office has been burnt by the terrorists.  
Correct: Please ask for admittance before you enter that building.

Item 42

Aroma (noun: pleasant smell)  
Odour (noun: scent, usually pleasant)  
Smell (noun: may be pleasant or unpleasant)

Correct: People love the aroma of fresh flowers.  
Correct: The body odour of some people can be very unpleasant.  
Correct: Dogs have a fine sense of smell.

Item 43

After (prep: following in time, later, behind)  
Afterwards (adj.: later), British  
Afterward (adj.: later), American English

Correct: After waiting for a week, we received the required component.  
Correct: The man apologized afterwards.

Item 44

Ascend (verb: to rise or climb)  
Assent (verb: to agree to)

Correct: The mountaineers started to ascend only yesterday.  
Correct: It is only with the assent from the majority of the members that the president of the society can be ousted.

Item 45

Ambiguous (adj.: having double meaning)  
Ambivalent (adj.: having mixed or conflicting feelings, uncertain, undecided)

Correct: His explanation on the accident was ambiguous.  
Correct: The employees were ambivalent in their attitude towards the management.

Item 46

Amid (prep.: in the middle of, interchangeable with amidst)  
Amidst (prep.: in the middle of, this word is seldom used in Modern English)

Correct: The ship and the poor sailor were sinking amid the waves.

Item 47

Amiable (adj.: a good nature disposition)

Amicable (adj.: friendly or peaceable)

Correct: Johnny is my most amiable companion.

Correct: We had an amicable meeting with the clients.

Item 48

Analysis (noun: separation of a whole into its constituent elements)

Synthesis (noun: the combination of constituent elements to form a whole)

Correct: We sent the used lubricating oils to a laboratory for analysis.

Correct: We can produce water by synthesis of hydrogen and oxygen.

Item 49

Apiary (noun: a place where bees are kept)

Aviary (noun: an enclosure or building for keeping birds)

Correct: The farmer built a new apiary.

Correct: There was a hole on the top of the aviary and therefore some of the birds escaped.

Item 50

Artist (noun: a person who practises fine art like painting or sculpture)

Artiste (noun: a person who performs in public, especially a singer or dancer)

Correct: The artist sold his painting for U.S. \$200000.00.

Correct: Those artistes were from China.

Item 51

Assay (noun: to subject to chemical analysis)

Essay (noun: a composition on any subject)

Correct: Assay is the analysis of an ore or drug to determine its components.

Correct: Each student must write an essay of about 600 words within two hours.

Item 52

Abysmal (adj.: measureless, or unfathomable)

Abyssal (adj.: in oceanography, a depth of more than 300 fathoms)

Correct: Children living in abysmal poverty were killed on the street by people who claimed these children were thieves or were acting as drug-traffickers.

Correct: We know very little of those creatures living at the abyssal zone of the ocean.

Item 53

Adapt (verb: to change or make suitable for a purpose)

Adopt (verb: take and use as one's own)

Correct: This book has been adapted to be used for our GCE. "O" Level classes.

Correct: The supervisor adopted my safety article and used it during his briefing

Item 54

Adopted (verb: took other people's child as one's own child)

Adoptive (adj.: due to adoption)

Correct: Mr Haque adopted this child two years ago.

Correct: Because of the adoption, Mr Haque is the adoptive father.

Item 55

Acceptance (noun: a favourable reception, willingness to receive something)

Acceptation (noun: usual or generally agreed sense)

Correct: His acceptance of our invitation means he is still interested to associate with us.

Correct: If you have no other specific clauses to add in, I would assume the acceptation of this agreement as effective from today.

Item 56

Advantage (noun: superior or favourable position)

Vantage (noun: a place affording good view or prospect)

Correct: His rich family background gave him an advantage over all the other children.

Correct: I enjoy watching the scenery from the vantage point of this tall building.

Item 57

Adherence (noun: attachment to a cause or belief)

Adhesion (noun: sticking of one thing to another, or the capacity of a substance to stick fast)

Correct: The politician is well known for his adherence to free speech.

Correct: This industrial glue has very good adhesion.

Item 58

Actuate (verb: to cause to act, e.g. cause the operation of an electrical or pneumatic device)

Activate (verb: bring into action)

Correct: Murders are mostly actuated by hatred.

Correct: In a petroleum refinery, the liquefied petroleum gas is supplied to the facilities by pipe lines from an external source. When the refinery is on fire, a sensor will send the signal to the valve actuator which will then activate the valve to close, thus preventing more gas to continue flowing into those facilities.

Item 59

Awake (verb: not asleep)

Wake up (verb: stop sleeping, e.g. she woke up at 6 A.M.)

Correct: The casualty is awake now.

Correct: They must wake up at 5 A.M. tomorrow in order to catch the train to Shanghai.

Item 59.01

Arbitrator (noun: person appointed to settle a dispute)

Arbiter (noun: person chosen or appointed to judge and settle a specific question)

Correct: I would not be able to act as an arbitrator to settle the dispute between these countries.

Correct: They employ an arbiter of fashion to assist them during their next fashion show.

Item 59.02

Altogether (adv.: entirely or completely)

All together (adv. phrase: every thing or every body in the same place or at once)

Correct: Altogether I paid \$900 to have my car repaired.

Correct: The director said he wanted to see us all together in the canteen.

Item 59.03

Awesome (adj.: dreadful, inspiring reverential fear or wonder)

Awful (adj.: unpleasant or horrible)

Correct: The United States Government has to face the awesome responsibility of rebuilding Iraq.

Correct: The weather in the northern part of England is awful during winter.

Item 59.04

Appendixes (noun: a small organ attached to your intestine, Appendixes and appendices are interchangeable and they are both plural of appendix, but appendices also means supplements to a book, document etc. Appendixes is preferable in non-technical contexts)

Correct : As a young medical student, his first practical job was to remove appendixes.

Correct: The appendices consist of foreign words with the meanings explained in English.

Item 59.05

Alumni (noun: is the plural form of alumnus, refers to either male graduates or to males and females collectively)

Alumnae (noun: refers to female graduates, and not, traditionally, to mixed group, the singular is alumna)

In U.S.A., alumnus is a male graduate or former student of a university or

college.

Correct: The alumni association of my former college sent me a membership application form.

Correct: Many of the alumnae from Texas A&M met in Singapore this year.

Item 59.06

Adviser (noun: someone who is asked to give suggestions to another person or a group of people about what they should do)

Advisor (noun: interchangeable with adviser)

Correct: He is the economic adviser of the newly elected government.

Item 59.07

Autocracy (noun: absolute government by an individual or a paramount authority)

Autonomy (noun: the right of a state or institution to govern itself)

Correct: You cannot expect much from a country where autocracy is still practiced.

Correct: Many colleges have gained greater autonomy from government control.

Item 59.08

Allegiance (noun: loyalty to a person or cause etc)

Alliance (noun: a pact between two or more nations)

Correct: Their allegiance to the nation was so great that they willingly took up arms to fight the invaders.

Correct: In order to survive in a modern world, many countries would have to form an alliance to face the most unexpected enemies.

Item 59.09

Antiquated (adj.: old-fashioned, out of date)

Antique (noun: things existing from an early date made valuable by the eyes)

Correct: This is an antiquated washing machine and the repair cost will be more than the cost of any new washing machine in the market today.

Correct: He spends a lot of money on antique furniture.

Item 59.10

Argentina (noun: a nation in South America)

Argentine (noun: of or relating to Argentina)

Correct: Argentina has an area of 2,766,889 square kilometers.

Correct: Jack is of Argentine descent.

Item 59.11

Achieve (verb: acquire, gain, earn, accomplish)

Attain (verb: arrive at, reach a goal etc which we aspired without being sure of success)

Correct: After working hard for thirty years, this gentleman had at last achieved victory because he proved it to his friends that he could accumulate a million U.S. dollars within that period of time.

Correct: Living the life of an ascetic for six years, Sakyamuni had at last attained Buddhahood.

Item 59.12

Acedia (noun: torpor, sloth, the dimness of the faculties of each of the mental properties such as contact, feeling and so forth)

Apathy (noun: lack of interest or feeling)

Correct: Drunkenness and acedia are two of the causes of one's downfall.

Correct: The slam children faced their bleak future with apathy.

Item 59.13

Amatory (adj.: connected with sexual love)

Amorous (adj.: moved by sexual love, refers to warmer feeling or affectionate desire for lovemaking or sex play)

Correct: When his amatory affairs leaked out, the ruling party had to asked him to resign.

Correct: The security guard cast amorous glances at that female refugee.

Item 59.14

Ascribe (verb: to credit, or assign as a quality or characteristic)

Attribute (verb: to regard as belonging to)

Correct: These people ascribe to a philosophy that permeates every part of their life.

Correct: Some people tend to attribute their success to external causes such as luck.

Item 59.15

Aerobic (adj.: organisms that require atmospheric oxygen)

Anaerobic (adj.: organisms that don't require atmospheric oxygen)

Correct: Aerobic bacteria live in the sewerage.

Correct: Anaerobic bacteria grow only in the absence of molecular oxygen.

Item 59.16

Accent (noun: the way a person pronounces a language)

Pitch (verb: the degree of loudness or highness of a sound)

Correct: After working in France for five years, Johnny speaks with a French accent.

Correct: My music instructor told me that my song should be pitched in a higher key.

Item 60

British shoe size  
American shoe size

Correct: I wish to buy this brand of shoes. I would like to have British size 7.  
Correct: I wish to buy that pair of shoes. Please give me the American size 8.

When a person says his shoe size is British size 7, he does not mean he wants a pair of shoes made in Britain. If he wants to buy the shoes made in Britain, he will say: I want British Make.

Item 61

Borrow (verb: acquire temporarily with the promise of returning)

Lend (verb: grant a person the use of a thing on the understanding that it shall be returned)

Correct: I borrow her book.

Correct: She lends me her book.

Wrong: She borrows me her book, (when the meaning is she allows me to use her book.)

Item 62

Big (adj.: of considerable size, amount etc)

Great (adj.: something very large, important or outstandingly good)

Large (adj.: of great size, often used in term of quantity)

Correct: The rich man has a big house.

Correct: A great politician can bring peace and prosperity to his country.

Correct: I could see a large number of people swimming in the sea.

Item 63

Broad (adj.: wide or large)

Wide (adj.: considerable, extending far, of great extent)

Correct: People who were lucky enough to receive a broad and balanced education turned out to be the happier ones.

Correct: This workshop has a wide entrance.

Item 64

Benign (noun or adj.: abnormal growth of tissue that is not cancerous, also means gentle, kindly)

Malignant (adj. cancerous, harmful, feeling or showing intense ill will)

Correct: I have met some unfriendly people before, but I can not say I have not met some benign people.

Correct: Hatred is more dangerous than a malignant disease.

Item 65

Bereaved (adj.: lost a relative or close friend recently, especially by death)  
Bereft (adj.: deprived of)

Correct: The bereaved person would cry whenever people talked about her deceased mother.  
Correct: The homeless child is bereft of love.

Item 66

Biased (verb: prejudiced)  
Biassed (interchangeable with biased)

Correct: If someone is biased against you, he will definitely think of you unfairly.

Item 67

Blush (verb: embarrassed)  
Flush (verb: cleanse, also means blush)

Correct: The poor girl blushes and her face goes red.  
Correct: The lavatory has been flushed with a rushing flow of water.

Item 68

Boat (noun: a small vessel for travelling across water)  
Ship (noun: a large boat which carries passengers or cargo)  
Vessel (noun: is a ship or a large boat, it is also a container for liquids)

Correct: I enjoy boating.  
Correct: I traveled from Singapore to Hong Kong by ship.  
Correct: The engineer inspected the vessel before he confirmed it was safe to fill in the liquid.

Item 69

Bosom (adj.: woman's breasts, also means very close friend)  
Breasts (noun: the upper front parts of human bodies)

Correct: Johnny is my bosom friend.  
Correct: Some people have no hair on their breasts.

Item 70

Bullion (noun: gold or silver in the form of bars)  
Gold (noun: valuable yellow metal used in jewellery and also used as international money)

Correct: Bullion robbery has always been exciting news.  
Correct: The price of gold has gone up.

Item 71