

Vocabulary Reading Passages

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A strong vocabulary is not just about knowing the meanings of words. Students must also understand how words are used naturally and accurately in context.

This collection of vocabulary passages and sentences has been compiled from different English preliminary examination papers. It gives students an opportunity to encounter useful words in meaningful contexts while becoming familiar with the standard of vocabulary tested in school examinations.

The correct answers have been inserted and highlighted in **bold** for easy reference. Students can use these exercises to:

- learn the meanings of unfamiliar words;
- observe how each word is used in a sentence;
- practise choosing words based on context; and
- build a wider vocabulary for English PSLE Paper 2 – Vocabulary sections and composition writing.

If you need practice for English or Chinese Oral Exam, our [AI Oral Examiner](#) has real-time speech conversation and a personalised feedback report to help students improve. It's helped hundreds of students to improve and there's free credit for the first sign up as well to give it a try.

If you want to practice Composition and Situational Writing instead, you can use our [AI Compo Grader to grade compos and Sit Writing](#) instantly and get immediate feedback too.

Article 1

The PA ssion Community Football (PACF) programme was started in 2004 by the People's Association (PA). It has been a **cornerstone (foundation)** of youth development for 20 years, providing weekly football training for children and teens aged 5 to 16.

The programme also **fosters (nurtures)** friendships among participants from diverse backgrounds, regardless of age, race or social status.

For the past decade, Post Office Savings Bank (POSB) has **stood by (supported)** the PACF programme, contributing about \$1.2 million through the POSB PA ssion Kids Fund. To mark the 20th Anniversary of the PACF programme, POSB has **pledged (promised)** an additional \$600,000 to extend its commitment over the next three years, enabling PA to increase the

number of active PACF centres from 35 to 50 by next year. The programme will also **broaden (expand)** its impact by collaborating with community organisations to strengthen family bonds through football. Around 2000 children will benefit from this programme annually.

Article 2

When we first brought Marley home, he was a tiny puppy with oversized paws and endless energy. He fitted into our hearts **in the blink of an eye (instantly)**, becoming a part of our daily routines. Every morning, Marley would wait by the door, his tail wagging back and forth, eager for his walk.

“Marley, you always know how to cheer me up,” I said one morning as I put on his leash. He looked up at me with his big eyes, as if he **comprehended (understood)** every word. Despite his mischievous nature, Marley had a knack for finding the most comfortable spot in the house, usually our favourite couch. His playful antics and **boundless (inexhaustible)** enthusiasm brought both chaos and joy to our lives.

Marley was **undeniably (unquestionably)** clumsy, often knocking over vases and scattering newspapers around the house.

Yet, in the evenings, he would curl up beside us, breathing quietly, offering a sense of lasting **companionship (friendship)** that words couldn’t describe. Through all the ups and downs, Marley remained by our side, teaching us about loyalty and love.

Article 3

It was 1.45 a.m. on Friday when I was rudely awakened by the sound of a huge explosion. Then I heard the high-pitched scream of a siren. The monsoon storm had been **violent (raging)** for the past two days. Startled, I sat up in bed and listened carefully. The sound seemed to be coming from the direction of an old dam about three kilometres from our home.

Immediately, I raced out of my room. My parents **caught hold of (seized)** my arm and we rushed to the attic. We stared down at what had earlier been the living room and watched in horror as the water continued to **flow continuously (relentlessly)** into our home.

With all communication lines **unavailable temporarily (disrupted)**, it was three hours later before help arrived. We were more fortunate as many others did not survive this **calamity (disaster)**. I realised how unpredictable life is and how precious my parents are to me.

Article 4

Standing at its base, Ben looked up eagerly at the lighthouse. His heart quickened with the anticipation of what lay inside. Climbing the winding stairs **gingerly (carefully)**, he was mindful of the narrow steps beneath his feet.

In the lantern room, Ben paused, **admiring (appreciating)** the old, faded pictures of the lighthouse. “300 years? How amazing!” he gasped as he realised that the sturdy lantern had stood through **countless (numerous)** storms. The light glowed faintly. Stepping closer to the lantern, he could feel its purpose to guide lost sailors home. Gazing out over the endless sea, he imagined ships battling fierce storms, **in urgent need (desperately requiring)** of a glimmer of hope. The lighthouse was a promise of safety, warning sailors of hidden **dangers (hazards)**.

Filled with wonder, Ben turned away from the lantern and continued his exploration to uncover the rest of the lighthouse’s secrets.

Article 5

At just seven years old, Marissa has already stepped into the world of entrepreneurship.

Concerned about the harmful chemicals found in everyday products, she started an **innovative (creative)** business selling chemical-free nail polish using plant-based ingredients. With this business, she aims to provide safe **alternatives (options)** for children while also **giving back to (contributing to)** the community, pledging fifty percent of her earnings to charity. She plans to save the rest of her earnings.

She has learnt **valuable (important)** lessons about financial responsibility, and perseverance. Her **risky journey (venture)** into business has not only taught her about goal-setting and hard work but it has also inspired other young minds to explore entrepreneurship. Marissa shows that innovation has no age limit.

Article 6

In a multiracial country like Singapore, racial harmony is an important part of life. Racial Harmony Day is celebrated on 21 July each year to remind Singaporeans of the importance of racial and religious tolerance and unity.

Fun and special activities are held in schools to **capture the attention (captivate)** of young people and help them learn about other cultures. Classrooms and halls are often **adorned (decorated)** with traditional and cultural items showing Singapore’s rich diversity. There are also **designated (assigned)** booths for games, food tasting, and performances from different ethnic groups.

Traditional customs, such as clothing and food, have also **evolved (developed)** over time. For example, some traditional dishes now include modern ingredients, and cultural clothing is sometimes designed with a modern twist.

The education system is **instrumental (important)** in teaching values such as respect and kindness from a young age. Through these efforts, Singapore continues to build a strong, united society where everyone feels valued and included.

Article 7

Gaming addiction has become a growing concern, especially among children. While video games can be **engaging (captivating)** as a pastime, excessive gaming can lead to serious consequences. Some children become so **caught up (absorbed)** in their games that they neglect their studies and even lose sleep. Parents who try to limit their child's gaming often face **resistance (opposition)**, with some children becoming agitated or even defiant when asked to stop.

One reason gaming is so **compelling (irresistible)** is the sense of achievement it provides. Many online games reward players for completing tasks, encouraging them to keep playing to unlock new skills and abilities. This constant reinforcement **fosters (encourages)** an addictive cycle, making it difficult for some children to stop. If left unchecked, this cycle may impair a child's development, affecting attention span, emotional control, and real-life social skills.

Article 8

A gentle breeze ruffled the curtains in Sheila's room. Her brown eyes fluttered open almost **instinctively (involuntarily)** as the chill crept over her. Moonlight cast eerie shadows across her room. Something felt **unsettling (disturbing)**. She got out from under her blanket and ran across the cold wood floor to close the window.

Sheila **peered intently (stared)** at the garden. Even the pale glow from the moon was not enough to keep the darkness from enveloping her. The **silence (quietness)** was simply too much for her.

Suddenly, Sheila's heart raced when she saw something **flicker (flutter)** strangely in the dark like a flame struggling against the wind. She ran back to bed, pulling her blanket over her head immediately. Sheila knew from all the horror movies which she had watched that investigating never ended well.

Article 9

As a student, I find the POSB Smart Buddy programme helpful. **Rolled out (launched)** in 2017, it is now expanding to all schools in Singapore. With Smart Buddy, making payments in school has



become so **convenient (efficient)**. I just tap my smartwatch or EZ-Link card to pay for meals or items at the canteen and bookstore.

My parents like it too. Using the free Smart Buddy app, they can track my spendings each day, set daily spending **limits (restrictions)** and even help me create savings goals. Whenever I am low on money, they can **top up (replenish)** my account through the mobile app **remotely (from afar)**, no matter the location, without delay.

I also like that the programme is more than just about spending — it teaches me how to use digital payments safely and manage my money wisely.

Article 10

In a multiracial country like Singapore, racial harmony is an important part of life. Racial Harmony Day is celebrated on 21 July each year to remind Singaporeans of the importance of racial and religious tolerance and unity.

Fun and special activities are held in schools to **capture the attention (captivate, attract the interest)** of young people and help them learn about other cultures. Classrooms and halls are often **adorned (decorated)** with traditional and cultural items showing Singapore's rich diversity. There are also **designated (set aside for a particular purpose)** booths for games, food tasting, and performances from different ethnic groups.

Traditional customs, such as clothing and food, have also **evolved (developed or changed gradually)** over time. For example, some traditional dishes now include modern ingredients, and cultural clothing is sometimes designed with a modern twist.

The education system is **instrumental (very important in making something happen)** in teaching values such as respect and kindness from a young age. Through these efforts, Singapore continues to build a strong, united society where everyone feels valued and included.