



From: Rick
To: IELTS Prep Group
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Lesson Objective

The student shall be able to use “power words” as part of their oral vocabulary, read and comprehend both social and business language and demonstrate effective oral communication skills

Section One

Vocabulary

Match the correct word in column A with the definition in column B, then use in a sample sentence

Evaluation Criteria: Ability to understand definitions of English vocabulary

Column A	Column B
VOCABULARY	DEFINITION
1. MOTIVATE (verb)	A. The quality of being believable or worthy of trust.
2. CREDIBILITY (noun)	B. To provide with a motive, or a cause or reason to act; incite; impel.
3. RESPECT (noun)	C. To inspire with courage, spirit, or confidence.
4. INFLUENCE (noun)	D. A distinguishing characteristic or quality, especially of one's personal nature.
5. FLUID (adjective)	E. Adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.
6. ENCOURAGE (verb)	F. Changing readily; shifting; not fixed, stable, or rigid.
7. TRAIT (noun)	G. the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of others.
8. INTEGRITY (noun)	H. Esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or ability, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or ability.

Section Two

Reading Comprehension and Pronunciation skills.

Evaluation Criteria: Ability to effectively read and comprehend written English in a social or business environment.

ARTICLE A

Leadership Skills

Source

1. The question of what makes a good leader—in other words, *what are leadership skills*—is widely debated. It is clear that the ability to lead effectively relies on a number of key skills, but also that different leaders have very different characteristics and styles.

There is, in fact, no one right way to lead in all circumstances, and one of the main characteristics of good leaders is their flexibility and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Leadership skills are highly sought after by employers as they involve dealing with people in such a way as to motivate, enthuse and build respect.

2. Understanding Leadership

Many people consider leadership to be an essentially work-based characteristic. However, leadership roles are all around us and not just in work environments. Ideally, leaders become leaders because they have credibility, and because people want to follow them. Using this definition, it becomes clear that leadership skills can be applied to any situation where you are required to take the lead, professionally, socially, and at home in family settings. Examples of situations where leadership might be called for, but which you might not immediately associate with that, include:



- Planning and organising a big family get-together, for example, to celebrate a wedding anniversary or important birthday;
- Responding to an illness or death in the family, and taking steps to organise care or make other arrangements; and
- Making decisions about moving house, or children's schooling.
- In other words, leaders are not always appointed, and leadership skills may be needed in many circumstances.

With apologies to Shakespeare, we might say that “some are born leaders, some achieve leadership, and some have leadership thrust upon them”

3. But what exactly is a leader?

A leader can be defined fairly simply as ‘a person who leads or commands a group, organisation or country’. This definition is broad, and could include both formal and informal roles—that is, both appointed leaders and those who emerge spontaneously in response to events.

In recent years, considerable evidence has emerged that the strongest organisations and groups tend to permit and actively encourage each member of the group or organisation to take the lead at the appropriate point. Organisations and families with particularly controlling leaders, by contrast, tend to be fairly dysfunctional. Leadership, therefore, is in practice fairly fluid: leaders are made by circumstances. The crucial issue is that people are prepared to follow them at the right moment.

People also struggle with the concept of how being a leader is different from being a manager. You may have heard the idea that ‘leaders do the right thing, and managers do things right’. This is a fairly delicate distinction, and many leaders are also managers (and vice versa). Perhaps the key difference is that leaders are expected to create and communicate a compelling vision, often associated with change. Managers, on the other hand, are perhaps more often associated with maintaining the status quo.

4. Developing Leadership

Many people wonder if leadership can really be taught. People with vested interests (academics and those offering leadership training or literature of some sort) are convinced that it can. Many successful leaders, however, have never had any formal training. For them leadership is a state of mind, and it is their personalities and traits that make them successful leaders.

There is, clearly, a balance to be struck between these two positions. There is no question that some people are intrinsically more drawn towards leadership roles than others. However, it would be nonsense to suggest—although this has been mooted in the past—that only people with certain physical or personal traits could lead. For example, it has clearly been proven that being male, or being tall, does not of itself make someone a better leader, although many leaders are both male and tall.

It seems most likely that leadership requires certain skills. Some people will acquire these more easily than others. You can of course learn about effective leadership skills and practices but being able to implement them yourself may require an altogether different set of skills and attitudes. The question “*Can leadership be taught?*” has no simple answer and we do not want to argue for one side or the other, but rather keep an open mind on the subject and provide information about the skills good leaders need.

5. Leadership Styles

One of the most important aspects of leadership is that not every leader is the same. Of course we have all heard jokes about ‘mushroom’ leadership (keep them in the dark and feed them manure) and ‘seagulls’ (swoop in, squawk, and drop unpleasant things on people) but, joking aside, there are many different styles of leadership.

Different leadership styles are appropriate for different people and different circumstances, and the best leaders learn to use a wide variety of styles.

There are many different models of leadership style, but perhaps one of the best-known is Daniel Goleman's Six Leadership Styles. This is almost certainly one of the models that is most strongly-rooted in research, which may explain some of its popularity.

- **Coercive, or commanding** – ‘do as I say’
- **Pace-setting** – ‘do as I do, right now’
- **Authoritative** – ‘come with me’
- **Affiliative** – ‘people come first’



- **Democratic** – ‘what do you think?’
- **Coaching** – ‘try it and see’

6. Leadership Styles

Whether or not leadership itself can be taught, there is no question that there are a number of core skills that most good leaders have. These skills can be learnt like any others.

There are a number of broad skill areas that are particularly important for leaders. These include strategic thinking, planning and delivery, people management, change management, communication and persuasion and influencing.

1. Strategic Thinking

Perhaps the most important skill a leader needs—and what really distinguishes leaders from managers—is to be able to think strategically. This means, in simple terms, having an idea or vision of where you want to be and working to achieve that.

The best strategic thinkers see the big picture, and are not distracted by side issues or minor details. All their decisions are likely to be broadly based on their answer to the question ‘does this take me closer to where I want to be?’

Of course as well as being able to create a compelling vision, they must also be able to communicate it effectively to their followers, which is partly why communication skills are also vital to leaders.

Creating a vision is not simply a matter of having an idea. Good strategic thinking must be based on evidence, and that means being able to gather and analyse information from a wide range of sources. This is not purely about numbers, but also about knowing and understanding your market and your customers, and then—and this is crucial—using that information to support your strategic decisions.

7. 2. Planning and Delivery

While it is important to be personally organised and motivated as a leader—and see our pages on Time Management and Self-Motivation for more about these areas—it is perhaps even more important to be able to plan and deliver for the organisation.

These areas are key management skills, but the best leaders will also be able to turn their hand to these. The best vision in the world is no good without the plan to turn it into reality.

Alongside strategic thinking, therefore, go organising and action planning, both essential for delivery of your vision and strategy. Project management and project planning are also helpful skills for both managers and leaders. Good risk management is also important, to help you avoid things going wrong, and manage when they do.

Good leaders also often have very strong facilitation skills, to manage groups effectively.

Leaders also need to be able to make good decisions in support of their strategy delivery, and solve problems. With a positive attitude, problems can become opportunities and learning experiences, and a leader can gain much information from a problem addressed.

8. 3. People Management

Without followers, there are no leaders. Leaders therefore need skills in working with others on a one-to-one and group basis, and a range of tools in their armoury to deal with a wide range of situations. Many of these skills are also vital for managers, and you can find out more about these in our page on Management Skills.

In particular, leaders are expected to motivate and encourage their followers, both directly (see our page on Motivating others) and by Creating a Motivational Environment.

One of the first skills that new leaders need to master is how to delegate. This is a difficult skill for many people but, done well, delegation can give team members responsibility and a taste of leadership themselves, and help them to remain motivated. See our page on Delegation Skills for more.

There are further challenges to delegating work within a team, including balancing workloads, and ensuring that everyone is given opportunities to help them develop.



Leaders and managers both need to understand how to build and manage a team. They need to know how to recruit effectively, and bring people 'on board' through induction processes. They also need to understand the importance of performance management, both on a regular basis, and to manage poor performance.

9. 4. Change Management and Innovation

Change management may seem like an odd companion to people management and communication, but leadership is often particularly important at times of change.

A leader needs to understand change management in order to lead an organisation through the process. For example, change management requires the creation and communication of a compelling vision. It also requires the change to be driven forward firmly, and leadership to make it 'stick' if the organisation is not to revert within a very short period.

Similarly, innovation and entrepreneurship are both often linked to change management, and also take leadership.

10. 5. Communication

While communication skills are important for everyone, leaders and managers perhaps need them even more. These skills are general interpersonal skills, not specific to leadership, but successful leaders tend to show high levels of skill when communicating.

Good leaders tend to be extremely good listeners, able to listen actively and elicit information by good questioning. They are also likely to show high levels of assertiveness, which enables them to make their point without aggression, but firmly. They know how to build rapport quickly and effectively, to develop good, strong relationships with others, whether peers or subordinates. These skills come together to help to build charisma, that quality of 'brightness' which makes people want to follow a leader.

Leaders also need to know how to give others their views on personal performance in a way that will be constructive rather than destructive, and also hear others' opinions of them.

They are usually very good at effective speaking, equally skilled at getting their point across in a formal presentation or Board meeting, or in an informal meeting or casual corridor conversation. They have also honed their ability to communicate in difficult situations, usually by practice over time.

11. 6. Persuasion and Influencing

Finally, one particular area of communicating that is especially important for leaders is being able to persuade and influence others.

Good leaders use a range of tools for this. Leaders also need tools to help them understand the way that others behave, and create positive interactions. As a first step, it may be helpful to understand more about emotional intelligence—another vital quality for leaders to possess—but there are a number of other tools that may also be useful, including Transactional Analysis, and Myers-Briggs Type Indicators.