OET vocabulary and spelling list

Words to spell correctly in Listening Part A and in letters, grouped by profession. Cover the term, listen to it or say it aloud, write it, then check.

Nursing

Word	Note
haemorrhage	British haem-; double r, then silent h: haemorrhage.
oedema	British spelling begins oe-; swelling from fluid in tissues.
diarrhoea	British ending -rrhoea: double r, h, then o-e-a.
dyspnoea	Shortness of breath; British spelling ends -oea.
catheterisation	British -isation ending; 'catheter' has th, not t.
sphygmomanometer	Blood pressure cuff; starts s-p-h-y-g-m-o.
paediatric	British spelling keeps ae: paediatric, paediatrician.
anaesthetic	British ae: anaesthetic, anaesthetist.
pressure injury	Australian term; UK nurses often say pressure ulcer.
nil by mouth	NBM; no food or drink, usually before a procedure.

Medicine

Word	Note
oesophagus	British spelling begins oe-; one s, then -phagus.
haematuria	Blood in the urine; British haem- spelling.
ischaemia	Reduced blood supply; British -aemia ending.
anaemia	British ae; adjective anaemic.
colonoscopy	Camera examination of the large bowel; -oscopy ending.
dysphagia	Difficulty swallowing; not dysphasia, a language disorder.
gastro-oesophageal reflux	GORD in British use; GERD in US usage.
myocardial infarction	Heart attack (MI); 'infarction', not 'infraction'.
haemoptysis	Coughing up blood; ending is -ptysis.
tachycardia	Fast heart rate; opposite of bradycardia.

Dentistry

Word	Note
gingivitis	Gum inflammation; g-i-n-g-i-v-i-t-i-s.
periodontitis	Gum disease with bone loss; peri- plus odont- plus -itis.
caries	Tooth decay; same form in singular and plural.
mandible	Lower jaw; adjective mandibular.
maxilla	Upper jaw; adjective maxillary, with double l.
occlusion	How upper and lower teeth meet; double c.
abscess	Collection of pus; spelt a-b-s-c-e-s-s.
leukoplakia	White patch that will not rub off; needs monitoring.
bruxism	Grinding or clenching the teeth, often during sleep.

Word	Note
fissure sealant	Protective coating on back-tooth grooves; 'fissure' has double s.

Pharmacy

Word	Note
contraindication	Reason not to use a medicine; one word, no hyphen.
adherence	Taking medicines as prescribed; now preferred to 'compliance'.
interaction	When one medicine changes another medicine's effect.
corticosteroid	One word: cortico- plus steroid.
anticoagulant	Medicine that slows clotting; one word, no hyphen.
nephrotoxic	Harmful to the kidneys; nephro- means kidney.
over-the-counter	OTC; sold without prescription; hyphenated before a noun.
dose administration aid	Pre-packed medicine pack; avoid brand names in letters.
paracetamol	Called acetaminophen in the US; use paracetamol here.
inhaler technique	How a device is used; poor technique reduces benefit.

Physiotherapy

Word	Note
physiotherapist	One word; 'physio' in speech, the full word in letters.
proprioception	Sense of joint position; starts p-r-o-p-r-i-o.
range of motion	ROM; give values in degrees in letters.
flexion	Bending a joint; ends -xion, not -ction.
extension	Straightening a joint; opposite of flexion.
quadriceps	Front thigh muscle group; same form singular and plural.
hamstrings	Muscles at the back of the thigh; one word.
ligament	Joins bone to bone; a tendon joins muscle to bone.
sciatica	Leg pain from sciatic nerve irritation; starts sc-.
rehabilitation	Often shortened to rehab; note -habil- in the middle.

Occupational Therapy

Word	Note
activities of daily living	ADLs; personal care such as washing, dressing, eating.
dexterity	Skill with the hands; often 'fine motor dexterity'.
cognition	Thinking skills; adjective cognitive.
hemiplegia	Paralysis of one side; hemiparesis means one-sided weakness.
commode	Portable toilet chair; double m.
grab rail	Fixed bathroom rail; 'grab bar' in US usage.
wheelchair	One word, no hyphen.
ergonomic	Designed to reduce strain; noun ergonomics.
perceptual	Relating to how the brain interprets what the senses detect.
fatigue management	Energy-saving strategies; 'fatigue' ends -gue.

Dietetics

Word	Note
dietitian	Preferred spelling in Australia and the UK; 'dietician' is a variant.
coeliac	British spelling with oe; US spelling is celiac.
gluten	Protein in wheat, barley and rye; not 'glutton'.
malnutrition	One word; includes undernutrition.
carbohydrate	Often 'carbs' in speech; -hydrate, not -hydrite.
glycaemic	British ae spelling, as in glycaemic index.
fibre	British and Australian -re spelling; US fiber.
gestational diabetes	GDM; diabetes first found during pregnancy.
cholesterol	Ends -ol: chole- plus -sterol.
enteral feeding	Tube feeding into the gut; parenteral means intravenous.

Optometry

Word	Note
ophthalmologist	Eye surgeon; spelling trap: o-p-h-t-h-a-l.
intraocular pressure	IOP; pressure inside the eye, measured in mmHg.
glaucoma	Optic nerve damage, often with raised eye pressure.
cataract	Clouding of the lens; spelt c-a-t-a-r-a-c-t.
macula	Central retina; adjective macular, as in macular degeneration.
retina	Light-sensitive layer; retinal detachment is an emergency.
astigmatism	Uneven focusing from corneal shape; note -stig- in the middle.
presbyopia	Age-related loss of near focus; presby-, not presbi-.
diplopia	Double vision; -opia ending.
visual acuity	VA; recorded as, for example, 6/6 in Australia and the UK.

Podiatry

Word	Note
callus	Thickened skin; 'callous' is an adjective meaning unkind.
orthoses	Plural of orthosis; 'orthotics' is common informally.
plantar fasciitis	Double i: f-a-s-c-i-i-t-i-s.
neuropathy	Nerve damage; peripheral neuropathy often affects the feet.
metatarsal	Long foot bones; the metatarsal heads form the ball.
ulceration	Formation of an ulcer; adjective ulcerated.
onychomycosis	Fungal nail infection; starts o-n-y-c-h-o.
ingrown toenail	'Toenail' and 'ingrown' are each one word.
Achilles tendinopathy	Capital A; tendin-, not tendon-, in tendinopathy.
debridement	Removing dead or damaged tissue from a wound or callus.

Radiography

Word	Note
radiographer	Takes the images; a radiologist is the doctor who reports.
contrast medium	Plural 'contrast media'; injected to show vessels or organs.
claustrophobia	Fear of enclosed spaces; starts c-l-a-u-s-t-r-o.
gadolinium	MRI contrast agent; spelt g-a-d-o-l-i-n-i-u-m.
ionising radiation	British -ising spelling; X-ray and CT, not MRI.
extravasation	Contrast leaking out of the vein into surrounding tissue.
fluoroscopy	Real-time X-ray imaging; fluoro-, not flouro-.
ultrasound	One word; also called sonography.
mammography	Breast X-ray; double m in the middle.
cannula	Thin tube placed in a vein; double n, one l.

Speech Pathology

Word	Note
dysphagia	Swallowing difficulty; compare dysphasia, a language disorder.
aspiration	Food or fluid entering the airway.
aphasia	Language loss after brain injury; spelt a-p-h-a-s-i-a.
dysarthria	Unclear speech from muscle weakness; note -arthr- in the middle.
stuttering	Also 'stammering' in British usage; double t.
articulation	How speech sounds are made.
mildly thick fluids	IDDSI level 2; use the framework's exact names.
audiologist	Tests hearing; ends -logist.
tracheostomy	Opening into the windpipe; trache- plus -ostomy.
laryngeal	Adjective of larynx; note the g before -eal.

Veterinary Science

Word	Note
anaesthesia	British ae; anaesthetic is both noun and adjective.
desexing	Australian term; 'neutering' is more usual in the UK.
spay	Remove the ovaries and uterus; past tense spayed.
castration	Removal of the testes in a male animal.
hyperthyroidism	Overactive thyroid; common in older cats.
vaccination	Double c; also vaccinate, vaccine.
parvovirus	Serious viral gut infection in dogs; one word.
heartworm	Mosquito-borne parasite in dogs; one word.
tick paralysis	Emergency caused by the paralysis tick in eastern Australia.
periodontal disease	Disease of the gums and tooth-supporting tissues.