



WOW! (A2 - Pre-Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Is the word 'wow' used frequently in your country?
2. Do you ever use it when you're speaking your own language? If so, how? when?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. The word 'wow' was already in use in the 16th century.
2. It did not become common until the middle of the 20th century.
3. In the early 1920s, 'wow' was used only as a noun.
4. It became much more popular when it appeared in films and TV shows.
5. It has a negative meaning in business expressions like 'wow factor' and 'wow effect'.
6. It can sometimes be used in an ironic or sarcastic way.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What does 'wow' express besides surprise and excitement?
2. What was the earliest English text to contain it?
3. How was the exclamation 'I vow!' used at that time?
4. In what kind of books was 'wow' common in the 20th century?
5. Why is it often used online to react to pictures, videos or posts?
6. What meaning can 'wow' have as a criticism?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. The cream in this cake isn't fresh. It has an _____ taste.
2. The latest version of this phone is expensive, but it has a really useful new _____.
3. To become a _____, a priest has to be at least 35 years old and have a doctorate in theology.
4. When the two girls met at primary school, it was the beginning of a _____ friendship.
5. The first castle built on this site was much smaller. It _____ to the 11th century.
6. People living in big cities in the UK say they are worried about the _____ in knife crime.

E – Ready for the A2 KEY English Test? (Paper 1, Part 4)

Choose the best word for each space.

Most people know the meaning of 'wow' because it's used in lots of languages besides English, but it's best not to use it ¹ _____ (*much/too/too much*) often if you want people to ² _____ (*take/make/have*) notice of what you're saying. To express a mixture of surprise and admiration, the exclamations 'Awesome!' or 'Impressive!' or even 'Astonishing!' can be used instead. ³ _____ (*By/On/From*) the other hand, if you're expressing shock or disbelief, you can use phrases like 'Good grief!' or 'Come on!' or 'You must be ⁴ _____ (*joked/joker/joking*)!' Some expressions, like 'You don't say!' or 'What a surprise!' are found in both positive and negative situations, but just be ⁵ _____ (*careful/caring/careless*) of the tone of voice you use. If you don't ⁶ _____ (*look/show/sound*) genuinely surprised, people will think you're being sarcastic.

F – Check your pronunciation

One of the four words in each group has a different vowel sound. Which one?

1. found though sounds noun
2. business quick surprise history
3. early word verb recorded
4. strong social over posts
5. emphasis unpleasant features express

G – Talk about it

In pairs or groups.

1. What expressions are used in your language to express surprise and admiration?
 2. Are they slang expressions?
 3. Do you know how they originated?
 4. What other foreign words and phrases are used frequently in your country?
 5. Do you think there are too many? Why (not)?
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Answers: Wow!

B – Listen and answer

1. T 2. F – It was already in common use by the late 1800s. 3. F – It was also used as an adjective and a verb. 4. T 5. F – It has a positive meaning in these expressions. 6. T

C – Read and answer

1. It also expresses admiration. 2. An English language version of The Aeneid by Virgil. 3. It was used to add emphasis to a statement. 4. In comic books. 5. Because it's a quick and easy way to show appreciation or surprise without writing lengthy comments. 6. It can mean "That was a lousy/unpleasant/improper thing to say!"

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. unpleasant 2. feature 3. bishop 4. lasting 5. dated back 6. rise

E – Ready for the A2 KEY English Test?

1. too 2. take 3. On 4. joking 5. careful 6. sound

F – Check your pronunciation

1. though 2. surprise 3. recorded 4. strong 5. features