

10 Essential B2 Vocabulary Words for this Week

(from chapters 1-5 of *Britt-Marie Was Here* by Fredrik Backman)

The following 10 words have been selected for this week's study because they will help you communicate more effectively and confidently in everyday situations where educated adults need to express themselves clearly.

- ✓ You'll use them in real conversations with teachers, doctors, neighbors, and friends
- ✓ They help you understand written materials (news, forms, letters) better
- ✓ They make you sound more educated and confident
- ✓ They help you express exactly what you mean with more precision
- ✓ They work in many different situations – not just one specific context
- ✓ They help you participate fully in your community as an educated adult

Here's why each one is valuable:

1. **maintain** – Useful when you need to state your opinion firmly in conversations with doctors, teachers, service providers, or family discussions. "I maintain that..." sounds more confident than "I think..."
2. **eligible** – Important for understanding what benefits, programs, or services you qualify for – healthcare, community programs, library services, volunteer positions, or housing assistance.
3. **distinguish** – Helps you explain differences clearly when talking with your children's teachers, discussing healthcare options, or making informed decisions about services and products.
4. **observe** – A more sophisticated way to share your thoughts in conversations. Instead of repeatedly saying "I think," you can vary your language with "I observed that..."
5. **adjust** – Extremely practical for daily life. We constantly need to adjust schedules, plans, expectations, and approaches with family, friends, and service providers.
6. **genuine** – Helps you express sincerity and authenticity. You can describe "genuine interest," "genuine concern," or question whether someone's apology is genuine.
7. **emphasize** – Essential when you need to make your point clear – in parent-teacher conferences, medical appointments, community meetings, or important family discussions.
8. **resist** – Useful for discussing everyday choices and decisions. "I couldn't resist buying it" or "I resisted calling him" adds sophistication to how you describe your experiences.
9. **reluctantly** – Adds depth to your storytelling. Instead of just "I agreed," you can say "I reluctantly agreed" – this shows your true feelings and makes your English more expressive.
10. **defend** – Important for advocating for yourself, your children, or your ideas when speaking with authority figures, in community settings, or during important conversations.

The goal: Expand your vocabulary so you can express yourself with the sophistication and precision that matches your education and intelligence.

maintain (verb) /meɪn'teɪn/ mayn-TAYN: "Kent often maintained that she has 'hidden' his shaver, when he stood there in the mornings yelling 'Briitt-Mariie' because he couldn't find it" (p. 12).

Definition: If you maintain that something is true, you state your opinion strongly.

eligible (adjective) /ˈɛlɪdʒəbl/ EL-ih-juh-bl: "The girl sighed again and tried to say something about 'retraining courses' and 'measures' that Britt-Marie might be eligible for, but Britt-Marie made it clear that she certainly wouldn't welcome any of those measures" (p. 26).

Definition:: Someone who is eligible for something is qualified or able to have it or do it.

distinguish (verb) /dɪ'stɪŋɡwɪʃ/ dih-STING-wish: "The girl smiles to hide her disappointment, as people do when they don't have the ability to distinguish between 'a place to live' and 'a home'" (p. 4).

Definition:: If you can distinguish one thing from another or distinguish between two things, you can see or understand how they are different.

observe (verb) /əb'zɜ:v/ ub-ZURV: "'Maybe you'd have more time to find people jobs if you didn't spend your days in meetings?' observes Britt-Marie as the girl shuts the door" (p. 11).

Definition:: If you observe that something is the case, you make a comment or remark about it.

adjust (verb) /ə'dʒʌst/ uh-JUST: "'Oh, right. I suppose it's important?' says Britt-Marie, adjusting a crease in her skirt that only she can see" (p. 10).

Definition:: If you adjust something, you change it slightly so that it is more suitable or effective.

genuine (adjective) /ˈdʒɛnjʊɪn/ JEN-yoo-in: "The girl's irritation turns to genuine concern" (p. 18).

Definition:: Genuine is used to describe people and things that are exactly what they appear to be, and are not false or pretended.

emphasize (verb) /ˈɛmfəsaɪz/ EM-fuh-syz: "Immediately after saying this, Britt-Marie always firmly closes her mouth, to emphasize this is the last thing she intends to say on the subject" (p. 8).

Definition:: To emphasize something means to indicate that it is particularly important or true, or to draw special attention to it.

resist (verb) /rɪ'zɪst/ rih-ZIST: "Britt-Marie looks down at her plate and tries to resist the instinct to serve up a portion for Kent" (p. 21).

Definition:: If you resist doing something, or resist the temptation to do it, you stop yourself from doing it although you would like to do it.

reluctantly (adverb) /rɪ'lʌktəntli/ rih-LUK-tunt-lee: "In the end she reluctantly fills in her name, social security number, and her cell phone number" (p. 3).

Definition:: If you do something reluctantly, you do it unwillingly and with hesitation.

defend (verb) /dɪ'fend/ dih-FEND: "Britt-Marie doesn't like it at all. She gets confused when anyone defends her—it doesn't happen very often" (p. 35).

Definition:: If you defend someone or something, you take action to protect them or to speak in support of them when they are being attacked.