

Topic vocabulary

Collocations for the most common Matura topics. Topic-specific vocabulary is what lifts your Lexical and Structural Range above the safe basics. Each phrase comes with its meaning and an example.

These phrases are for the **content** of your text (the ideas in your body paragraphs). For structure and linking, use the phrase bank.

Environment & climate 12 phrases

climate change The long-term change in the Earth's weather patterns. Works as the subject of strong openings: 'Climate change affects every one of us.'

carbon footprint The amount of CO2 your lifestyle produces. Often with 'reduce': 'Flying less is the fastest way to reduce your carbon footprint.'

renewable energy sources Wind, solar, hydro – energy that does not run out. 'Austria invests heavily in renewable energy sources.'

greenhouse gas emissions The gases that heat up the planet. Usually with 'cut' or 'reduce': 'The EU wants to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.'

to cut down on waste To reduce the amount you throw away. 'Schools could cut down on waste by banning plastic bottles.'

a throwaway society A society that buys, uses and bins things quickly. Good for critical writing: 'We live in a throwaway society.'

environmentally friendly Not harmful to nature. Describes products, habits, choices: 'an environmentally friendly alternative'.

to raise awareness of To make people notice a problem. 'The campaign raises awareness of plastic pollution.'

sustainable development Growth that does not destroy resources for the future. A key term in formal texts and reports.

to tackle pollution To deal with pollution seriously. 'Tackle' also works with problems, causes, issues.

single-use plastic Plastic you use once and throw away – straws, cups, bags. 'The EU has banned many single-use plastics.'

to combat global warming To fight against global warming. More formal than 'fight': perfect for reports and articles.

Social media & technology 12 phrases

to scroll through a feed To move through posts on a screen, often mindlessly. 'I caught myself scrolling through my feed for an hour.'

screen time The hours you spend looking at screens. 'Parents worry about their children's screen time.'

a digital detox A planned break from phones and social media. 'A weekend digital detox did me a world of good.'

to go viral To spread extremely fast online. 'The video went viral within hours.'

an online presence How you appear on the internet – profiles, posts, photos. 'Employers check applicants' online presence.'

to spread fake news To pass on false information as if it were true. 'Bots spread fake news faster than humans can correct it.'

data privacy Control over who sees and uses your personal information. 'Teenagers care more about data privacy than adults think.'

to stay connected To keep in contact, especially over distance. 'Social media helps families stay connected across continents.'

information overload Too much information to process. 'Constant notifications lead to information overload.'

a filter bubble An online space where you only see opinions you already agree with. Strong term for writing on social media.

cyberbullying Bullying that happens online. 'Victims of cyberbullying cannot simply walk away.'

to disconnect from devices To switch off and step away from technology. 'Learning to disconnect from devices is a skill in itself.'

Education & school 12 phrases

to sit an exam To take an exam (British English). 'Austrian students sit their final exams in May.'

lifelong learning Continuing to learn long after school. A favourite in articles about the future of work.

a heavy workload A large amount of work to manage. 'Students complain about a heavy workload in their final year.'

to fall behind To make slower progress than the others. 'Without support, weaker students quickly fall behind.'

extracurricular activities Clubs, sports and projects outside normal lessons. 'Universities value extracurricular activities.'

distance learning Learning from home via the internet. 'Distance learning tested everyone's self-discipline.'

academic pressure Stress caused by the demand for good marks. 'Academic pressure peaks in the Matura year.'

to broaden your horizons To widen your experience and understanding. 'A term abroad broadens your horizons.'

a well-rounded education An education that develops many different skills, not just exam knowledge.

to retake a subject To repeat an exam or course you failed. 'She had to retake maths in autumn.'

peer pressure The push to do what people your age do. 'Peer pressure shapes what teenagers wear, watch and buy.'

to develop key skills To build the central abilities you need. Common in formal texts: 'Group projects develop key skills.'

Health & lifestyle 12 phrases

a balanced diet Eating a healthy mix of foods. 'A balanced diet does more than any miracle product.'

to lead an active lifestyle To live in a way that includes regular movement. 'Cycling to school is an easy way to lead an active lifestyle.'

mental health The state of your mind and emotions. 'Schools finally talk openly about mental health.'

to put on weight To become heavier. Neutral phrasing: 'Many students put on weight in stressful phases.'

a work-life balance The balance between job or school and free time. 'A healthy work-life balance prevents burnout.'

to burn off calories To use up energy through movement. 'A brisk walk burns off more calories than you think.'

a sedentary lifestyle A lifestyle with too much sitting. Formal and precise – great for reports on health.

to cope with stress To manage stress successfully. 'Sport helps me cope with stress before exams.'

to stay in shape To remain fit. 'You do not need a gym membership to stay in shape.'

sleep deprivation Not getting enough sleep. 'Sleep deprivation ruins concentration faster than any distraction.'

preventive healthcare Medicine that stops illness before it starts – check-ups, vaccinations, healthy habits.

to get into shape To become fit (after not being fit). 'He got into shape for the ski season.'

Work & career 12 phrases

to apply for a job To formally ask for a position. 'She applied for a summer job at a local hotel.'

job satisfaction How happy work makes you. 'For many, job satisfaction matters more than salary.'

a steady income Regular, reliable money. 'A steady income gives you freedom to plan.'

to climb the career ladder To move up to better positions. 'She climbed the career ladder within five years.'

work experience Practical experience of working. 'An internship gives you valuable work experience.'

a nine-to-five job A standard office job with fixed hours. Often slightly negative: 'He never wanted a nine-to-five job.'

to be self-employed To work for yourself instead of a company. 'Being self-employed means freedom – and risk.'

job security How safe your job is from being lost. 'Public sector jobs offer more job security.'

to work remotely To work from home or anywhere outside the office. 'Half the team works remotely on Fridays.'

to meet a deadline To finish work on time. 'Journalists live from deadline to deadline.'

a competitive field An area where many people fight for few positions. 'Medicine is a highly competitive field.'

transferable skills Skills useful in any job – teamwork, communication, problem-solving.

Travel & tourism 12 phrases

to broaden the mind Travel makes you more open and understanding. 'Travel broadens the mind' is a classic opener – use it with a twist.

mass tourism Tourism in huge, damaging numbers. 'Mass tourism is slowly destroying the places it loves.'

off the beaten track Away from the usual tourist routes. 'We found a village completely off the beaten track.'

a once-in-a-lifetime trip A journey you will probably only make once. 'For my grandparents, it was a once-in-a-lifetime trip.'

to immerse yourself in a culture To dive deeply into local life. 'Living with a host family lets you immerse yourself in the culture.'

eco-tourism Travel designed to protect nature and support locals. Useful contrast to mass tourism.

a tourist hotspot A place crowded with visitors. 'Hallstatt has become a tourist hotspot.'

to travel on a budget To travel cheaply. 'Interrail is the classic way to travel on a budget.'

cultural exchange Sharing traditions and views between cultures. 'School partnerships create real cultural exchange.'

to soak up the atmosphere To enjoy the feeling of a place. 'We sat in the square and soaked up the atmosphere.'

overtourism When too many tourists overwhelm a place. Modern, precise term – examiners notice it.

a culture shock The confusion of meeting a very different culture. 'Moving from a village to Tokyo was a culture shock.'

Consumerism & money 12 phrases

to live beyond your means To spend more than you earn. 'Credit cards make it easy to live beyond your means.'

an impulse buy Something you buy without planning. 'The chocolate at the checkout is a classic impulse buy.'

to save up for To collect money for something specific. 'She is saving up for a year abroad.'

fast fashion Cheap clothing produced quickly and thrown away quickly. A key term for writing on consumption.

a throwaway culture A culture of using things once and binning them. Works well paired with fast fashion.

value for money Good quality for the price paid. 'The hostel was basic but great value for money.'

to be in debt To owe money. 'Many students leave university deeply in debt.'

to spend money wisely To make sensible spending choices. 'Learning to spend money wisely should be taught at school.'

a tight budget Very little money to work with. 'We planned the trip on a tight budget.'

conspicuous consumption Buying expensive things to show off. Advanced term – use it once, precisely.

to cut back on spending To reduce how much you spend. 'Families cut back on spending when prices rise.'

ethical shopping Buying with attention to people and planet. 'Ethical shopping costs more – but who pays otherwise?'

Society & community 12 phrases

to volunteer for a good cause To work unpaid for something worthwhile. 'Thousands volunteer for good causes every weekend.'

a sense of belonging The feeling of being part of a group. 'Clubs give young people a sense of belonging.'

social inequality The unfair gap between rich and poor. 'Education is the best answer to social inequality.'

to give something back To return help to your community. 'After her career, she wanted to give something back.'

an ageing population A society with more and more old people. Standard term in reports and articles on society.

cultural diversity The variety of cultures in one place. 'Vienna's cultural diversity is one of its greatest strengths.'

to bridge the gap To reduce the distance between groups. 'Sport can bridge the gap between generations.'

community spirit The feeling of togetherness in a neighbourhood. 'The flood revealed an amazing community spirit.'

to integrate into society To become a full part of a society. 'Language courses help newcomers integrate into society.'

equal opportunities The same chances for everyone. 'Equal opportunities remain a goal, not a reality.'

a multicultural society A society made up of many cultures. Neutral, factual term for reports.

to break down barriers To remove obstacles between people. 'Music breaks down barriers that words cannot.'

AI & the digital future 12 phrases

artificial intelligence (AI) Computer systems that perform tasks needing human-like thinking. Write it out once, then use 'AI'.

an AI-generated text A text written by a machine. 'Teachers are learning to spot AI-generated texts.'

a deepfake video A fake but realistic video created with AI. 'Deepfake videos make it harder to trust what we see.'

to automate routine tasks To let machines do repetitive work. 'AI automates routine tasks so people can focus on ideas.'

to be replaced by a machine To lose your job or role to technology. 'Not every job can be replaced by a machine.'

to rely too heavily on AI To depend on AI so much that your own skills suffer. 'Students who rely too heavily on AI stop learning.'

digital literacy The ability to use and judge digital tools sensibly. 'Digital literacy is as basic as reading now.'

to regulate new technologies To set legal rules for technology. 'The EU was the first to regulate new technologies like AI.'

an algorithm The set of rules a computer follows to decide something. 'An algorithm decides what you see next.'

human oversight Humans checking and controlling what machines do. 'Every AI system needs human oversight.'

to raise ethical concerns To create questions about right and wrong. 'Facial recognition raises serious ethical concerns.'

to adapt to technological change To adjust to a world changed by technology. 'Schools must adapt to technological change, not ignore it.'

Media & news 12 phrases

to keep up with the news To stay informed about current events. 'Most teenagers keep up with the news on their phones.'

a reliable source A source you can trust. 'Check whether the claim comes from a reliable source.'

to spread disinformation To distribute deliberately false information. Stronger and more precise than 'fake news'.

media literacy The ability to understand and question media. 'Media literacy should be a school subject of its own.'

a paywall A barrier that makes you pay to read articles. 'Quality journalism increasingly sits behind a paywall.'

public service broadcasting Radio and TV financed by the public, like the ORF or the BBC. Useful in writing on trustworthy news.

investigative journalism Journalism that uncovers hidden facts. 'Investigative journalism brought the scandal to light.'

a news outlet A company that publishes news – paper, site or channel. 'Compare how two news outlets report the same story.'

to fact-check a claim To check whether a statement is true. 'Fact-check a claim before you share it.'

clickbait headlines Headlines designed only to make you click. 'Clickbait headlines promise more than the article delivers.'

freedom of the press The right of media to report without state control. 'Democracy dies without freedom of the press.'

to quote somebody out of context To repeat words in a misleading way. 'The minister claimed she had been quoted out of context.'

Migration & global citizenship 12 phrases

to flee a war zone To escape from an area at war. 'Millions have fled war zones in recent years.'

to seek asylum To officially ask another country for protection. 'The family sought asylum in Austria.'

a refugee camp A temporary settlement for people who have fled. 'She spent two years in a refugee camp before moving on.'

to integrate into a new society To become part of a new country's life. 'Work and language are the keys to integrating into a new society.'

a residence permit The official document allowing you to live in a country. 'Without a residence permit, nothing else is possible.'

to face discrimination To be treated unfairly because of who you are. 'Many newcomers face discrimination when looking for flats.'

a sense of global responsibility The feeling that world problems concern us all. 'Climate change demands a sense of global responsibility.'

to overcome a language barrier To manage communication despite different languages. 'Children overcome language barriers astonishingly fast.'

a skilled worker Someone with valuable professional training. 'Austria actively recruits skilled workers from abroad.'

cultural identity The feeling of belonging to a particular culture. 'You can build a new life without giving up your cultural identity.'

to build a new life To start again in a new place. 'They arrived with two suitcases and built a new life.'

humanitarian aid Emergency help – food, shelter, medicine. 'Humanitarian aid reaches the camps by convoy.'