WORDS OF POSITIVITY

Word of the year ideas

60 words to choose from for a year or a month, with their meanings. Updated 4 November 2026. Free to print and share in a classroom.

Calm and balance

For a year with fewer rushes and more room to breathe.

Balance n.

A workable proportion between competing needs in which none is neglected.

Calm adj.

Free enough from agitation to think and respond steadily.

Patience n.

The ability to wait through delay without becoming harsh or reckless.

Peace n.

A state of inner or surrounding calm without troubling disturbance.

Composure n.

Visible and inward self-control that keeps strong emotion from disrupting judgment or conduct.

Simplify v.

To reduce unnecessary complexity while keeping what the purpose actually requires.

Focus and skill

For a year of finishing things and getting better at one of them.

Focus v.

To direct attention or effort toward a chosen subject.

Confidence n.

Trust in one's own ability or judgment that supports decisive action.

Diligence n.

Steady, attentive effort that keeps work accurate and complete.

Clarity n.

The quality of being easy to understand without confusion or ambiguity.

Mastery n.

A highly developed command of a skill, subject, or technique.

Skill n.

Developed ability gained through learning or practice.

Energy and adventure

For a year of starting things, saying yes and going somewhere new.

Energy n.

Lively strength and enthusiasm available for activity or effort.

Enthusiasm n.

Strong, lively interest that brings energy to an activity or cause.

Vitality n.

Healthy energy and capacity for life, growth, or effective activity.

Initiative n.

Readiness to begin useful action without waiting to be directed.

Momentum n.

Progress that creates energy and makes further progress easier to sustain.

Adventure n.

An unusual experience involving discovery, uncertainty, or worthwhile challenge.

Hope and growth

For a fresh start, or a year that should look forward more than back.

Hope n.

A grounded desire for a good outcome together with belief that it remains possible.

Growth n.

Development toward greater skill, maturity, health, or understanding.

Progress n.

Forward movement toward a goal, improvement, or more developed condition.

Optimism n.

A hopeful tendency to expect that worthwhile outcomes remain possible.

Purpose n.

A meaningful reason that explains what an action, role, or creation is meant to serve.

Renewal n.

The return or creation of energy, purpose, strength, or activity.

Joy and gratitude

For a year of noticing what is already good and enjoying more of it.

Joy n.

A strong feeling of happiness that makes a moment feel especially welcome.

Gratitude n.

Sincere recognition that another person or circumstance has brought value.

Delight n.

A bright feeling of genuine pleasure.

Playfulness n.

A readiness to enjoy, imagine, experiment, or joke in a lighthearted way.

Cheerful adj.

Showing good spirits through a noticeably positive manner.

Celebration n.

An occasion or expression of happiness that recognizes something valued.

Kindness and connection

For a year spent more on the people around you.

Kindness n.

Care for another person expressed through considerate choices or help.

Compassion n.

Concern for another's suffering joined with a desire to ease it.

Generosity n.

A readiness to give more time, care, credit, or resources than duty requires.

Empathy n.

The capacity to understand and emotionally appreciate another person's experience.

Friendship n.

A mutual relationship sustained by affection, trust, and voluntary care.

Goodwill n.

A friendly willingness to cooperate or think well of another party.

Courage and resilience

For a hard year ahead, or one that asks you to keep going.

Courage n.

The strength to act in line with what matters despite fear, pain, or serious risk.

Resilience n.

The capacity to adapt, recover, and continue after strain or disruption.

Perseverance n.

Continued effort toward a worthwhile aim despite difficulty, delay, or discouragement.

Determination n.

Firm purpose that keeps effort directed toward a goal despite difficulty.

Fortitude n.

Calm courage that endures pain, loss, or prolonged difficulty.

Adaptability n.

The capacity to respond well when circumstances, roles, or demands change.

Curiosity and wisdom

For a year of learning, slowing down to think, and acting on what you believe.

Curiosity n.

A desire to discover, ask, or understand more than is presently known.

Creativity n.

The ability to form original, fitting ideas or expressions and turn them toward a purpose.

Wisdom n.

Sound judgment shaped by knowledge, experience, and reflection.

Reflection n.

Careful thought about experience, meaning, or a decision.

Mindfulness n.

Deliberate awareness of present experience without immediate, automatic judgment.

Integrity n.

A steady commitment to honest and morally consistent conduct.

For a class or a child

The twelve words of the week from our kids page, each with a challenge to try.

Kind adj.

Inclined to notice another person's needs and respond helpfully.
Try this: Do one kind thing for someone who did not ask.

Brave adj.

Able to face fear, pain, or difficulty without surrendering what matters.
Try this: Try one thing that feels a little scary.

Curious adj.

Eager to investigate, ask questions, and learn more.
Try this: Ask a question you don't know the answer to.

Patient adj.

Able to wait, teach, or persist without letting frustration turn harsh.
Try this: Let someone else go first, and wait calmly.

Honest adj.

Truthful and fair, including when the truth is uncomfortable.
Try this: Tell the truth about a mistake you made.

Helpful adj.

Providing assistance that makes a need or task easier.
Try this: Help someone at home without being asked.

Grateful adj.

Feeling and recognizing the value of help, care, or a welcome circumstance.
Try this: Say thank you and say what for.

Creative adj.

Able and inclined to bring new ideas or work into being.
Try this: Make something new from things you already have.

Respectful adj.

Showing active regard for another person's dignity, rights, boundaries, or views.
Try this: Listen to a friend's idea all the way through.

Determined adj.

Keeps working toward a chosen outcome despite resistance or delay.
Try this: Keep going with something hard for one more try.

Gentle adj.

Kind and controlled in a way that avoids causing distress.
Try this: Be gentle with someone smaller than you.

Responsible adj.

Dependable in carrying duties while considering the consequences of one's choices.
Try this: Do one job each day without a reminder.