

"Perfect" — Ed Sheeran

Extended analysis · vocabulary, idioms & pronunciation · Level A2-B1 · British (England) accent

How to use this PDF: play the song on the website, then study these notes. Every example sentence here is our own — for the real thing, listen to the track.

1 · Extended vocabulary

to dive in	<i>phrasal verb</i>	To start something fully and without hesitating. <i>Stop planning and dive in — you'll learn as you go.</i>
to follow someone's lead	<i>expression</i>	To copy what someone does because they know the way. <i>I'd never danced salsa, so I just followed her lead.</i>
barefoot	<i>adjective / adverb</i>	Without shoes. <i>The kids ran barefoot across the warm sand.</i>
to whisper	<i>verb</i>	To speak extremely quietly. <i>He whispered the answer so the teacher wouldn't hear.</i>
breathless	<i>adjective</i>	Unable to breathe normally — from effort or from emotion. <i>The view from the summit left us breathless.</i>
to deserve	<i>verb</i>	To have earned something, good or bad. <i>After that season, the team deserved the trophy.</i>
faith	<i>noun</i>	Strong trust or belief in someone or something. <i>She kept faith in the project when everyone else quit.</i>
a mess	<i>noun</i>	Something (or someone) untidy or chaotic — often used with affection. <i>I'm a mess before my morning coffee.</i>
milestone	<i>noun</i>	An important stage in a life or process. <i>Buying their first flat was a huge milestone.</i>
vows	<i>noun</i>	The formal promises two people make at a wedding. <i>They wrote their own vows in two languages.</i>
slow dance	<i>noun</i>	A dance done in a close embrace to slow music. <i>The night ended with a slow dance under fairy lights.</i>
sweetheart	<i>noun</i>	An affectionate word for the person you love — also 'childhood sweethearts'. <i>They were childhood sweethearts who met at fourteen.</i>

2 · Idioms & expressions

● to dive right in

To commit completely from the first second, without testing first.

Example: The course looked hard, but she dove right in.

● to follow someone's lead

To let someone more confident guide your steps.

Example: Just follow my lead in the negotiation and we'll be fine.

● against all odds

Despite everything suggesting failure.

Example: Against all odds, the little bakery survived the crisis.

● to carry the weight

To bear a responsibility or burden, alone or together.

Example: She carried the weight of the family business at 25.

● to be someone's other half

A warm way to call someone's partner.

Example: Bring your other half to the barbecue on Sunday!

● to look perfect

With 'look' + adjective, English describes appearance without 'seem': look tired, look great, look perfect.

Example: You look perfect in that jacket — buy it.

3 - Pronunciation & connected speech

◆ The vanished G in -ing

Words like 'darling' and 'dancing' lose their final g-sound in relaxed British singing: 'dahh-lin', 'dahn-sin'. The -ing ending survives in spelling only — listen for the vowel.

◆ Non-rhotic R, ballad edition

At slow tempo you can clearly hear British R-dropping: 'heard', 'girl' and 'first' have no American R-colour at all. Compare this with Flowers to hear both systems side by side.

◆ Weak little words, even sung slowly

Even in a slow ballad, grammar words stay weak: 'and' becomes 'n', 'of' becomes 'uh-v', 'to' becomes 'tuh'. If a slow song keeps them weak, imagine fast conversation.

◆ Linking into vowels

Sheeran glues final consonants to the next vowel — 'found a' becomes 'foun-da'. Practise reading phrases as sound-chains, not word-by-word.

4 - Keep going

Cards, synced video and games for this song live at

yourenglishtoolbox.com/learn-english-with-music/learn-english-with-perfect-ed-sheeran/. Lyrics are not reproduced in this document — enjoy them inside the official video.