

## What is Academic Vocabulary?

This Worksheet is for use with the **What is academic vocabulary?** video, available on YouTube and Youku.

Video name: **What is academic vocabulary**

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mak6uP8fVDs>

Alternate link: [https://v.youku.com/v\\_show/id\\_XNTg4ODUyNjE0MA==.html](https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTg4ODUyNjE0MA==.html)

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## Worksheet

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### Task 1: Before watching

Study the following short passage from an academic journal. What features make it particularly *academic*?

*Indeed, there is evidence that women are less likely than men to seek to be elected to political leadership positions, and that female students are less likely to run for student government in college (Lawless and Fox, 2008; New, 2014; Kanthak and Woon, 2015).*

### Task 2: What is academic vocabulary?

Complete the following notes for the first part of the video.

#### Definition

Broad definition

- vocabulary used in academic 1. \_\_\_\_\_ - usu. 2. \_\_\_\_\_, maybe also 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- includes spoken/written - though most research conducted into 4. \_\_\_\_\_ form

Specific definition

- vocabulary which occurs 5. \_\_\_\_\_ in academic texts across many different 6. \_\_\_\_\_ but less 7. \_\_\_\_\_ in 8. \_\_\_\_\_ ones.

different from 9. \_\_\_\_\_ and general vocabulary

also called:

- 10. \_\_\_\_\_ vocabulary
- specialised 11. \_\_\_\_\_ vocabulary
- Tier 12. \_\_\_\_\_ vocabulary.

### Task 3: Academic Word List (AWL) vs Academic Vocabulary List (AVL)

Which of the following are features of the **Academic Word List (AWL)** and which are features of the **Academic Vocabulary List (AVL)**? Tick as appropriate. Note: most apply to only one list, but some apply to both, and some to neither. An example has been done.

Feature	AWL	AVL
Comprises academic vocabulary	✓	✓
Consists of word families		
Consists of lemmas (i.e. plurals, verb inflections, alternative spellings)		
Excludes words from another list		
Meant for <i>productive</i> use (i.e. writing)		
Meant for <i>receptive</i> use (i.e. reading)		
Words occur 1.5 times more often in academic than non-academic texts.		

**Task 4: Vocabulary shift**

The following words were all mentioned in the video. What are the more *academic* words with the same meaning?

- bad \_\_\_\_\_
- thing \_\_\_\_\_
- say \_\_\_\_\_
- see \_\_\_\_\_
- look for \_\_\_\_\_
- idea \_\_\_\_\_

The following were NOT mentioned in the video. Can you think of more academic words to replace them? The first letter of each word has been given to help you.

- figure out *d* \_\_\_\_\_
- find *d* \_\_\_\_\_
- think *c* \_\_\_\_\_
- look into *i* \_\_\_\_\_
- get rid of *e* \_\_\_\_\_
- go up (e.g. prices) *i* \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 5: General words with academic/technical meaning**

The following five words were all mentioned in the video. What are the *everyday* meanings, and what are the *academic/technical* meanings?

Word	Everyday meaning	Academic/technical meaning
<i>discipline</i>		
<i>population</i>		
<i>summit</i>		[History]
<i>base</i>		[Chemistry]
<i>bug</i>		[Computer Science]

The following are some further examples. Most are *technical* words, for the given subject. What are the everyday and academic/technical meanings? Use a dictionary if needed.

Word	Everyday meaning	Academic/technical meaning
<i>concentration</i>		[Biology/Chemistry]
<i>solution</i>		[Chemistry]
<i>market</i>		[Economics]
<i>root</i>		[Mathematics]
<i>field</i>		[General academic meaning]

**Task 6: Multiword vocabulary**

Use words from the box to complete the following collocations/phrases from the video.

similar	discuss	discussed	discussion	things
mind	light	health	terms	fact

- other \_\_\_\_\_ being equal
- mental/physical \_\_\_\_\_
- be widely \_\_\_\_\_
- bear in \_\_\_\_\_
- due to the \_\_\_\_\_ that
- broad \_\_\_\_\_
- in \_\_\_\_\_ of
- in \_\_\_\_\_ of
- \_\_\_\_\_ a topic/issue
- \_\_\_\_\_ approach/argument/characteristics

**Task 7: Why is academic vocabulary important?**

What reasons were given about why studying academic vocabulary is important?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 8: Studying academic vocabulary**

The video finished with the following quote. What is the meaning/significance of the quote?

*Nobody is a native speaker of academic English*

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**Further reading**

The following are some suggested links for further reading or vocabulary study

**Vocabulary profilers**

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/profiler/> [for GSL/AWL, AVL and many other lists]

<https://www.lexutor.ca/vp/> [mainly for GSL/AWL, difficult to use]

**AWL highlighter**

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/highlighter/>

**AWL (complete list, with definitions)**

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/awllists/>

**AVL (complete list, defaults to first 500)**

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/other/avl/>

**ACL (Academic Collocations List)**

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/acl/> [can be sorted by frequency, type]

**Academic word lists**

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/wordlists/> [how to use wordlists]

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/wordlists/overview/> [overview of many wordlists]

## Answers

### Task 1: Before watching

Possible answers.

- Long, complex sentences
- In-text citations
- Formal vocabulary (e.g. *evidence, less likely, seek*)

### Task 2: What is academic vocabulary?

Complete the following notes for the first part of the video.

#### Definition

Broad definition

- vocabulary used in academic **1. contexts** – usu. **2. university**, maybe also **3. school**
- includes spoken/written – though most research conducted into **4. written** form

Specific definition

- vocabulary which occurs **5. frequently** in academic texts across many different **6. subject areas** but less **7. frequently** in **8. non-academic** ones.

different from **9. technical** and general vocabulary

also called:

- **10. sub-technical** vocabulary
- specialised **11. non-technical** vocabulary
- Tier **12. 2** vocabulary.

### Task 3: Academic Word List (AWL) vs Academic Vocabulary List (AVL)

Which of the following are features of the **Academic Word List (AWL)** and which are features of the **Academic Vocabulary List (AVL)**? Tick as appropriate. Note: most apply to only one list, but some apply to both, and some to neither. An example has been done.

Feature	AWL	AVL
Comprises academic vocabulary	✓	✓
Consists of word families	✓	
Consists of lemmas (i.e. plurals, verb inflections, alternative spellings)		✓
Excludes words from another list	✓	
Meant for <i>productive</i> use (i.e. writing)		✓
Meant for <i>receptive</i> use (i.e. reading)	✓	
Words occur 1.5 times more often in academic than non-academic texts.		✓

**Task 4: Vocabulary shift**

The following words were all mentioned in the video. What are the more *academic* words with the same meaning?

- bad *negative*
- thing *factor, reason, etc.*
- say *state*
- see *observe*
- look for *seek*
- idea *notion*

The following were NOT mentioned in the video. Can you think of more academic words to replace them? The first letter of each word has been given to help you.

- figure out *determine*
- find *discover*
- think *consider*
- look into *investigate*
- get rid of *eliminate*
- go up (e.g. prices) *increase*

**Task 5: General words with academic/technical meaning**

The following five words were all mentioned in the video. What are the *everyday* meanings, and what are the *academic/technical* meanings?

Word	Everyday meaning	Academic/technical meaning
<i>discipline</i>	Training people to obey rules	Subject of study.
<i>population</i>	Number of people living in a country/region.	All individuals who could be included in a study/survey.
<i>summit</i>	Top of something	[History] Conference of high level officials.
<i>base</i>	The bottom of something	[Chemistry] A water soluble compound with pH < 7, which reacts with an acid to form a salt.
<i>bug</i>	A kind of insect	[Computer Science] Flaw in a computer program

The following are some further examples. Most are *technical* words, for the given subject. What are the everyday and academic/technical meanings? Use a dictionary if needed.

Word	Everyday meaning	Academic/technical meaning
<i>concentration</i>	Complete attention; intense mental effort.	[Biology/Chemistry] The strength of a solution.
<i>solution</i>	The way of solving a problem.	[Chemistry] A mixture of two or more substances.
<i>market</i>	A place where meat, vegetables and fruit are sold.	[Economics] The world of commercial activity where goods and services are bought and sold.
<i>root</i>	The underground part of a plant.	[Mathematics] A number which times by itself equals another number. Symbol $\sqrt{\quad}$ .
<i>field</i>	A piece of land without trees.	[General academic meaning] Branch of knowledge.

**Task 6: Multiword vocabulary**

Use words from the box to complete the following collocations/phrases from the video.

similar	discuss	discussed	discussion	things
mind	light	health	terms	fact

- other things being equal
- mental/physical health
- be widely discussed
- bear in mind
- due to the fact that
- broad discussion
- in terms of
- in light of
- discuss a topic/issue
- similar approach/argument/characteristics

**Task 7: Why is academic vocabulary important?**

What reasons were given about why studying academic vocabulary is important?

- Different from general vocabulary (more difficult)
- Comprises a lot of academic texts (10%-14%)
- Subject lecturers will not usually define, in contrast to technical words

**Task 8: Studying academic vocabulary**

The video finished with the following quote. What is the meaning/significance of the quote?

*Nobody is a native speaker of academic English*

Even native speakers of English need to learn how to speak and write academically (usually by reading extensively and noticing language features).

## Teacher's Notes

Video name: **What is academic vocabulary**

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Video length: 24.01

Learning (1) Understand what academic vocabulary is [Task 2]

Outcomes (2) Understand differences between two academic lists (AWL and AVL) [Task 3]

(3) Study some general words and their academic equivalents [Task 4]

(4) Study some general words with academic/technical meaning [Task 5]

(5) Study some academic collocations/phrases [Tasks 6]

(6) Understand why studying academic vocabulary is important [Task 7]

(7) Consider why nobody is a native speaker of academic English [Task 8]

### Suggested sequence/timings (for teachers)

The following is a possible sequence. The length of the video (24 minutes) means that more than one 60' lesson would be needed for all tasks. Timings are not given.

#### **1. Warm-up**

Students study the example text (Task 1) and elicit ideas why it is academic. The following are suggested reasons: (1) Long, complex sentences; (2) In-text citations; (3) Formal vocabulary (e.g. *evidence*, *less likely*, *seek*). The point here is that academic vocabulary is *one* aspect of making a text academic (there are many others).

#### **2. Video comprehension and exercises**

a) Task 2 covers the **definition** of academic vocabulary, in particular how it is distinct from *general* and *technical* vocabulary. Video timing: **00:40-03:57**.

b) Tasks 3-6 cover the **wordlists** part of the video. This video segment mentions **AWL** first (Task 3), then **vocabulary shift** (Task 4), then **general words with academic meaning** (Task 5), **before looking at the AVL** (also part of Task 3). **Multiword lists** (Task 6) are at the end of this section. Video timing: **03:57-16:03**.

c) Task 7 covers the **Why is academic vocabulary important?** section. Video timing: **16:03-17:17**.

d) Task 8 covers the **Studying academic vocabulary** section. Video timing: **21:29-23:29**.

#### **3. Extension activities**

Students could explore different lists mentioned in the video, or find academic texts and study them using highlighters such as the AWL highlighter or vocabulary profilers. Useful links are given after Task 8 (p.3).