

Academic Vocabulary

Researchers such as Kinsela, 2003; Becks, 2002; Marzano, 2005; and Scarcella 2003, stress that vocabulary knowledge is strongly correlated to academic achievement. Academic language or vocabulary is essential to reading comprehension, learning, and applying concepts. This type of vocabulary used during instruction is known as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). It differs from the language used in daily social interactions, known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). The WIDA Consortium categorizes academic vocabulary from content areas into three categories – *General*, *Specific* and *Technical* language. ESOL teachers can use *WIDA’s Performance Definitions* to guide their planning for systematic and explicit vocabulary instruction. As the students progress towards attaining English language proficiency, their use of more complex vocabulary must also increase.

Engaging English language learners with vocabulary across the curriculum in multiple contexts and language domains helps them build word consciousness (metalinguistic skills) as well as gain a deeper understanding of concepts. Closing the vocabulary gap for ELLs will level the playing field by providing them a strong foundation for the knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century.

The list on the following page delineates the type of vocabulary needed to access each content area during the marking period. Specific Language Vocabulary words are listed by content because they are important to learning the vocabulary in context during the marking period, however, they may also be used in other content areas.

General Language Vocabulary <i>Words required for basic communication. They are often learned through context.</i>	Specific Language Vocabulary <i>They are academic words that appear in high frequency across content areas and need to be taught explicitly. (Listed in orange.)</i>	Technical Language Vocabulary <i>Words limited to a specific content, low frequency, and best taught in a relevant context. (Listed in black.)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) • Highest frequency vocabulary • General content vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appear frequently across content areas (e.g., describe, synthesize, analyze, pattern, solution) • Multiple-meaning words used in a variety of contexts and contents • Provides an efficient way to express a known concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low frequency words or phrases • Limited to a specific content • Best taught in context as needed

Click on link for professional development:

- **What is Academic Language? Webcast**
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/academiclanguage/>
- **Articles on academic vocabulary building**
http://www.scoe.org/docs/ah/AH_kinsella2.pdf
<http://innovativocab.wikispaces.com/file/view/MarzVocabiGami.pdf>
http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/literacy/files/Vocabulary/choosingwords/Which_Words_to_Teach.pdf
- **Models and strategies for Vocabulary Awareness and Mastery** - This model for vocabulary instruction promotes vocabulary building and comprehension (see Slides 19 and 20 when visiting link below)
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/development/resources/ELLs/player.html>
<http://www.elltoolbox.com/vocabulary-activities.html>
- **The Language of Mathematics: Indirect Comparison - Which line is longer?**
https://mymcps-instruction.mcpsmd.org/sites/ic/_layouts/mcps.olc.home/resourceview.aspx?ResourceID=2690&ViewPage=1
- **Academic Language Function Toolkit**
<http://orh.sweetwaterschools.org/files/2012/06/Academic-Language-Functions-toolkit.pdf>

General Language Vocabulary

Select words based on students' needs to communicate in the classroom and school and to complete specific tasks.

ask, answer, describe, predict, observe, measure, record, investigate, question, tell, know, throw, catch, cell phone, media center, feelings, tool, graphic organizer, notes, storyboard, dictionary, skit, hundred chart

Thinking and Academic Success Skills Vocabulary – Evaluation and Metacognition

evaluate, assess, weigh evidence, clarify, examine, rank, test, question, judge, justify, criteria, alternative, solution, self-aware, self-evaluate, strategies, self-monitor, self-reflect, apply, adapt

Specific Language Vocabulary and Technical Language Vocabulary by Content

Art	theme, point of view, viewpoint, criteria, art criticism (e.g., describe, analyze, interpret, evaluate) , composition, composition techniques (e.g., symmetrical/asymmetrical balance, center of interest, rule of thirds), art elements, (e.g., form, shape, color, pattern, line, texture), symbol, sketch, still life, landscape, relief, mural
Health Education	cell phone, landline , communicable disease, contagious, non-communicable disease, signs/symptoms, treatment, prevention, germ (e.g., bacteria, virus, fungus), air, diet, transmission, parasite, medical emergency, emergency services, 911 service, first aid (e.g., cut/scrape, bruise, blister, sunburn, tick, faint, bloody nose), tease, verbal bullying, psychological bullying, physical bullying, passive bully, telling, tattling
Information Literacy	technology tool, relevant , freedom of selection, personal information need, inquiry question, topic, digital/print resource (e.g., keywords, search terms, media center catalog, call number, authority, facts, definitions, details), citation information (e.g., author, organization, title, publisher, copyright date), text features (e.g., table of contents, index, photographs, illustrations, headings), audio/visual presentation (e.g., storyboard, skit, video), <i>Word, Kidspiration, Pixie</i>
Math	skip-count, partition, pattern, known/unknown, even/odd , multiplication/division (e.g., facts, product, quotient, equation, multiplication table), equal groups (e.g., groups, sets, rows, columns), area measurement, unit fractions (e.g., whole, equal parts, numerator, denominator, halves, thirds, sixths, fourths/quarters, eighths), array, bar diagram
Music	vocal technique, diction, audience, composer, arranger, lyrics, verse, duet, trio, quartet, pitch, texture, rhythm, tempo, upbeat, ostinato, dynamics, accent, solfege, staff, octave, measure, bar lines, double bar line, meter, meter signature, repeat sign, treble clef, folk song, folk dance, (a) round
Physical Education	feedback, self-evaluation , overhand throw, underhand, catch, forearm pass, overhead pass, strike, dominant, non-dominant, volleyball
Reading	making inferences (e.g., evidence, details, information, question) , literal language, nonliteral language, narrative story, story elements (e.g., characters, setting, plot, problem, events, solution, point of view, central message, main idea, theme), narrative poem (e.g., stanza, simile, metaphor, voice, theme, sequence), (a) play (e.g., actor, narrator, protagonist, scene, script, stage directions, dialogue, production, director, stage, scenery), informational text, author's purpose (e.g., to inform, explain, describe), text features (e.g., chapter heading, subtitle, links, caption, photograph, bold print, glossary, video), text structure (e.g., cause/effect), prefix, suffix, root word, synonym
Science and Engineering	materials, technology , science investigation words (e.g., testable question, observation), observable properties (e.g., color, size, length, shape, odor, texture), processes (e.g., dissolve, mix, heat, cool, freeze, melt, separate, crush, bend), physical change, mixture, temperature (e.g., thermometer, degrees, Celsius)
Social Studies	adapt, modify , geographic tools, map elements (e.g., title, author, date, compass rose, scale, legend/key, border, grid, source information, index), map words (e.g., location, continent, country, state, county, city, capital, ocean), environment, geographic characteristics, human characteristics, human-made features, natural/physical features (e.g., savannah, prairie), region (e.g., tundra, rainforest, desert, grassland, coastal plain), climate, population words (e.g., rural, urban), landmark, pollution
Writing	literal language, nonliteral language, technology tool, narrative poem (e.g., stanza, simile, metaphor, voice, theme, main idea, sequence, events), information writing/opinion writing (e.g., introduction, hook, claim/opinion, body paragraphs, facts, definitions, details, reasons, conclusion, main idea, central message), text structure (e.g., comparison, cause/effect), print/digital source text features (e.g., keywords, key concepts, tabs, headings, table of contents, index, photographs/illustrations), possessive/abstract/concrete noun, pronoun, verb, linking word, conjunction, adjective, adverb, subject, predicate, simple/compound/complex sentence, dependent/independent clause

Note: Use this document to select the requisite academic vocabulary necessary to make the content of the curriculum comprehensible for ESOL students. Words are listed in the order they are addressed during the marking period and grouped according to the context in which they are taught. Specific Language Vocabulary used across contents is listed in **Orange** and Technical Language Vocabulary is listed in **Black**.