

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>

[MENU](#)

General Language Vocabulary

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

identify, explain, locate, restate, classify, solve, observe, sort, compare, similar, different, highlight, share, underline, dance, sing, graphic organizer, storyboard, question, capital letter, comma, period, exclamation point, question mark, quotation mark

Thinking and Academic Success Skills Vocabulary - Synthesis and Collaboration

examine, paraphrase, integrate, generalization, respectful, group goal, diverse perspectives, options, compromise, consensus, unity

Specific Language Vocabulary and Technical Language Vocabulary by Content

Art	point of view, mood, theme, inference , content, form, style, color scheme, shade, value, value scale, unity/unified (sense of wholeness), monochromatic, analogous, tint, criteria, contour line, gesture drawing, artistic movement, birds-eye view
Health Education	verbal/non-verbal communication, body language , personal wellness (e.g., self-fulfillment, stress management, stress, stressor, eustress, distress, emotions, emotional awareness, emotional needs, physical needs, social needs, social wellness, personal well-being, spiritual well-being, intellectual well-being, social well-being, physical well-being, emotional well-being, environmental well-being), consumer, product label, advertising techniques (e.g., media message, slogan, jingle, bandwagon, weasel, star power, cartoon character, excitement, ideal kids/families)
Information Literacy	technology (e.g., <i>Inspiration, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Glogster EDU, PhotoStory, Pixie</i>), resources (e.g., works cited, author, title, publisher, copyright date), research and resources (e.g., intellectual freedom, research question, keywords, authority, bias, print/digital book, online database, web site, online/print encyclopedia), historical fiction (e.g., historical context, historical setting, facts, details, events, characters, problem, solution, theme), product format (e.g., e-book, multimedia poster, video, slide show)
Math	estimate, round, pattern, comparing values (e.g., greater than, less than, equal, as many as, as much as) , digit, numeral, number name, compose, decompose, expanded form, place value (e.g., ones, tens, hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, hundred thousands, millions), math operations (e.g., addition, addend, sum, subtraction, difference, multiplication, factor, product, division, quotient, part, whole), calculation vocabulary (e.g., standard algorithm, equation, unknown quantity)
Music	mood , melody, texture, articulation, orchestration, tempo, dynamics, form, tone color, tonal center, rhythm, pitch, solfege, notate (e.g., whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth note, sixteenth note, section, phrase, contrasting phrase, repeating phrase, ostinato pattern), (a) round, square dance, music timeline (e.g., middle ages, renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, modern)
Physical Education	physical fitness (e.g., pulse, resting heart rate, muscular strength/endurance, cardiorespiratory fitness, flexibility), dribble, bounce pass, chest pass, basketball
Reading	context clue, inference, paraphrase , informational text, historical fiction, realistic fiction, story elements (e.g., narrator, character thoughts/actions, point of view, firsthand account, secondhand account, setting, events, key details, evidence, reasons, main idea, summary, theme), text structure (e.g., chronology, cause and effect), simile, metaphor, prefix, root word, synonym, antonym
Science and Engineering	overhead, eye level, underfoot, living, non-living , organisms and needs (e.g., plant, animal, sunlight, water, nutrients, air, space, energy, Sun, adaptation), environment (e.g., ecosystem, habitat, deciduous forest, desert, tundra, rainforest, grassland, wetland, coral reef, terrarium, aquarium), decomposition (e.g., decomposer, insects, bacteria, mold, fungi, soil), competition (e.g., symbiosis, symbiotic relationship, producers, consumers), living things and food (e.g., food web, food chain, herbivore, carnivore, omnivore)
Social Studies	needs, author, date, title, pattern, timeline, United States , firsthand account/primary source, secondhand account/secondary source, geographic tools (e.g., globe, photograph, chart, diagram, graph, map, mental map, physical map, political map, map sketch), map elements (e.g., border, compass rose, scale, key/legend, grid, source information, index), geographic characteristics (e.g., human-made feature, natural/physical feature, climate, vegetation), Maryland (e.g., region, Appalachian Mountains, Piedmont Plateau, Atlantic Coastal Plain), settlement (e.g., population growth, urban, suburban, rural), Native Americans (e.g., Eastern Woodland, Great Plains, Southwest Desert, Pacific Northwest, food, clothing, shelter)
Writing	actions, thoughts, feelings, words, theme, mood , visualize, character analysis (e.g., thesis statement, introduction, opinion, hook, body paragraph, main idea sentence, reasons, evidence, facts, details, definitions, conclusion), historical fiction (e.g., character, setting, events, problem, solution, outcome, direct dialogue, indirect dialogue), preposition, conjunction, synonym, antonym, sentence fragment, run-on sentence

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**.