

Top Academic Words

This list contains words that are used most frequently in academic settings. These words should be strategically infused into the school culture and classroom settings. Effective vocabulary instruction includes:

- Encountering a target word in semantically rich contexts within motivating texts, rather than in a list of words
- Repeated exposure to the word, in varied contexts
- Opportunities to use the word orally and in writing
- Explicit instruction in the word’s meaning
- Explicit instruction in word learning strategies, including analysis of the word’s parts and its multiple subject-specific meanings

Suggestions for including these academic words in your efforts to advance literacy include:

- Encouraging PLTs and/or teaching teams to plan how to effectively deliver instruction relating to these words.
- Sharing these words systematically through school announcements, website resources, school-wide publicity, etc.
- Devising a strategic plan for each content area to use specific words (for example, on Mondays, ELA classes add the word to the vocabulary notebook; on Tuesdays, science classes find the word in context and record their findings; on Wednesday, social studies classes use the word with a literacy strategy like Verbal-visual Association or Frayer Model; etc.)
- Creating public way for students to read and learn about these words during non-academic times such as waiting in the lunch line, looking in bathroom mirrors, walking on sidewalks (via chalk), etc.

	Word	Definition	Example
1.	Acquire	To come into possession or ownership of; to gain through actions or efforts	She hoped to acquire the knowledge necessary to help her pass the test.
2.	Analysis	an investigation of the component parts of a whole and their relations in making up the whole	Her analysis of the situation was accurate.
3.	Approach	Move towards or come nearer to; to present, offer, or make a proposal or request to	The cars slowed as they approached the intersection. He approached the president with a suggestion.
4.	Area	A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography)	The Chicago area is a thriving community.
5.	Assessment	Appraisal or evaluation; to assign value or worth	The assessment measured her mastery of the math concepts.
6.	Assume	Take to be the case or to be true; accept without verification or proof; to take over the duties or responsibilities of	I assume he made his own lunch. The Vice President assumed the office of Presidency.
7.	Authority	The power or right to give orders or make decisions	She has the authority to hire and fire employees.
8.	Available	Obtainable or accessible and ready for use or service	The tickets to the play were made available today.
9.	Benefit	Something that is advantageous or good;	Extending the hours of the library will benefit everyone.

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10.	Classify	To arranged by classes; categorize.	She wanted to create a budget by classifying her expenditures based on needs and wants.
11.	Concept	An abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances	He struggled with the concept of gravity.
12.	Conflict	To come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory or in opposition; clash; to fight, content or do battle.	The account of the eyewitness conflicted with that of the other.
13.	Consecutive	Following one another in uninterrupted succession or order; marked by a logical sequence.	It was hard to find five consecutive days to plan for taking a trip.
14.	Consistent	(Sometimes followed by `with') in agreement or consistent or reliable	His views and actions are consistent.
15.	Context	The parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specific word or passage, usually influence its meaning or effect; the set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation, etc.	You have misinterpreted my remark because you took it out of context.
16.	Contract	A binding agreement between two or more persons that is enforceable by law	She signed a contract to complete a specific amount of work.
17.	Convey	To carry, bring, or take from one place to another; to communicate, impart, make known.	The forklift conveyed the heavy boxes to the dock. He conveyed his final wish to his wife.
18.	Corresponds	To be in agreement or conformity; To be similar; To communicate by exchange of letters.	His actions do not correspond with his words. She corresponds with her penpal.
19.	Create	To cause to come into being, as something unique that would not naturally evolve or that is not made by ordinary processes.	She created a work of art.
20.	Data	A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn. Plural of datum.	These data represent the results of our analyses.
21.	Definition	A concise explanation of the meaning of a word or phrase or symbol	She recorded the definition created by the group.
22.	Demonstrate	To make evident or establish by arguments or reasoning; prove; to describe, explain, or illustrate by examples, experiments, or specimens.	The coach demonstrated how to successfully complete the play.
23.	Derived	Formed or developed from something else; not original	She derived pleasure from her art class.
24.	Design	To plan and fashion artistically or skillfully; to intend for a definite purpose.	She designed a t-shirt for her club.
25.	Distinct	Distinguished as not being the same; not identical; separate; different in nature or quality; dissimilar.	His public and private lives are distinct.

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26.	Distribution	(Statistics) an arrangement of values of a variable showing their observed or theoretical frequency of occurrence; arrangement	The array of grades represented a normal distribution.
27.	Economic	of or relating to an economy, the system of production and management of material wealth	The globe is affected by the economic downturn.
28.	Elaborate	To add details to writing, speaking, etc.; expand; develop to perfection; marked by intricate and often excessive detail.	The potential boss asked me to elaborate about my experience.
29.	Environment	Surroundings, conditions, influences; in ecology, the air, water, minerals, organisms, and all other external factors surrounding and affecting a given organism at any time.	Recycling helps preserve the environment.
30.	Equate	To regard, treat, or represent as equivalent; reduce to an average.	We cannot equate quantity and quality.
31.	Establish	To found, institute, build, or bring into being on a firm or stable basis. To show to be valid or true.	He established his medical practice in the little town.
32.	Estimate	To form an approximate judgment or opinion regarding the worth, amount, size, weight, etc.	It is difficult to estimate the cost of an education.
33.	Evidence	That which tends to prove or disprove something; ground for belief; proof; something that makes a plain or clear.	His flushed look was visible evidence of his fever.
34.	Exponent	A symbol or number placed above and after another symbol or number to denote the power to which the latter is to be raised.	The exponents of x^n is n .
35.	Export	To ship commodities (or ideas) to other countries or places for sale, exchange, etc.	The United States exports pork products to Japan.
36.	Factor	One of the elements contributing to a particular result or situation; In Math, one of two or more numbers, algebraic expressions, or the like, that when multiplied together produce a given product.	Poverty is only one of the factors in the crime. In Math, 6 and 3 are factors of 18.
37.	Financial	Pertaining to monetary receipts and expenditures; money matters.	The company released its financial report for the quarter.
38.	Formula	Any fixed or conventional method for doing something; in Math, a rule or principle frequently expressed in symbols.	She used a formula to solve the math problem.
39.	Function	The purpose for which something is designed; in Math, a relation between two sets that associates a unique element (the value) of the second (the range) with each element of the first.	The function of the hammer is to hit nails into wood.
40.	Generalization	To make an inference from particular facts, statistics, or the like; to make a conclusion that applies to the group based on facts common to most.	She made a generalization about the condition of her desks when she saw the first two.

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41.	Identify	To verify or recognize as being a particular person or thing.	He identified the handwriting as belonging to her.
42.	Impact	The striking of one thing against another; Influence or effect.	The impact of the collision broke the windshield. Einstein's work impacted modern science.
43.	Income	The monetary payment received for goods or services.	Her income helps to pay the bills.
44.	Indicate	To show, point out, or make known.	The thermometer indicated the air temperature.
45.	Individual	A single human being, as distinguished from a group.	He is a strange individual.
46.	Interpret	To give or provide the meaning of; explain; to bring out an understanding.	He tried to interpret the meaning of her harsh words.
47.	Involved	Very intricate or complex.	She gave an involved account of the crime.
48.	Issue	<i>verb</i> The act of sending out or putting forth. <i>noun</i> An important subject requiring a decision.	She issued her last warning to the class. Her behavior in class has become an issue.
49.	Labor	To strive, as toward a goal; work hard	The President labored for peace.
50.	Legal	Permitted by law.	Such acts are not legal.
51.	Legislation	The act of making or enacting laws.	The Senate passed legislation banning the use of cell phones while driving.
52.	Major	Great, as in rank or importance.	It was a major political issue.
53.	Method	A procedure, technique, or way of doing something, especially in accordance with a definite plan.	There are three possible methods of repairing this motor.
54.	Occur	To happen, take place, come to pass.	When did the accident occur?
55.	Perceive	To become aware of, know, or identify by means of the senses; recognize; discern.	I perceive a note of sarcasm in your voice.
56.	Percent	One one-hundredth part; 1/100	Your grade is eighty percent, meaning that out of one hundred parts of the task, you showed mastery in eighty parts.
57.	Period	A rather large interval of time.	It has been a great period of profit for the company.
58.	Policy	A course of action adopted and pursued by a group.	The document outlined our nation's foreign policy.
59.	Potential	Possible, as opposed to actual; capable of being or becoming.	The scientists discussed the potential uses of nuclear energy.
60.	Principle	A fundamental, primary, or general law of truth from which others are derived; a tenet.	The course is based on the principles of modern physics.
61.	Procedure	A particular course of action or mode of action.	The procedure for fire drills was included in the handbook.

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62.	Proceed	To move or go forward or onward, especially after stopping.	Please proceed to the nearest exit.
63.	Process	A systematic series of actions direction to some end.	There is a process for homogenizing milk.
64.	Relevant	Bearing upon or connected with the matter in hand; pertinent.	He gave a relevant remark.
65.	Required	To have need of.	He requires medical care.
66.	Research	Diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts, theories, applications, etc.	He participated in recent research about artificial sugars.
67.	Response	An answer or reply, as in words or in some action.	She wrote a response to her boss.
68.	Role	Proper or customary function.	The role of the teacher is important.
69.	Section	A distinct part or subdivision of anything, as an object, country, community, class, or the like.	The left section of the drawer held the secret key.
70.	Seek	To go in search or quest of; to try to find or discover by searching or questioning.	He needed to seek the truth.
71.	Significant	Having or expressing a meaning; important; of consequence.	He was doing significant work.
72.	Similar	Having likeness or resemblance, especially in a general way.	The two homes were similar in price.
73.	Source	Any thing or place from which something comes, arises, or is obtained, origin.	Which foods are the source of calcium?
74.	Specific	Having a special application, bearing, or reference; precise or particular.	She needed a specific sum of money.
75.	Structure	Arrangement of parts, elements, or constituents.	The structure of the assessment was such that the questions became increasingly more difficult.
76.	Theory	A proposed explanation whose status is not certain, in contrast to well-established propositions that are regarded as actual fact.	Her theory of aliens was still unproven.
77.	Variable	In math, a quantity or function that may assume any given value or set of values.	In an equation, x often represents the variable.