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noun · *verb* · *adjective*

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GRADE 6
ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

What is Academic Vocabulary?

Academic Vocabulary includes the words, phrases, and language structures that are used in learning. It includes the formal language that is used in education, whether orally, in textbooks, and in assessments.

Academic Vocabulary is distinct from the informal language that is used at home, on the playground, and in daily conversation. Slang and colloquialisms are not part of academic vocabulary. Students may be quite adept with the English language in the informal register long before the academic register is developed. It takes specific instruction to build academic vocabulary.

Teaching Academic Vocabulary

There are three methods of teaching academic vocabulary, and all three are necessary for vocabulary development. **Explicit instruction of words, explicit instruction of word-learning strategies, and indirect instruction of vocabulary** are all essential to developing academic vocabulary.

In explicit instruction of words, teachers select terms that are taught using definitions, examples, and proper usage. These terms may be content-specific (e.g., addend, subtrahend) or conceptual (e.g., summarize, explain). This instruction includes using the terms in context and multiple exposures to cement the learning. If word banks or vocabulary notebooks are used, these are the terms that are included with definitions, usage, and non-linguistic representations to help the learner remember the term and its meaning and usage.

In explicit instruction of word-learning strategies, teachers introduce, model, and prompt for the use of strategies that are used when a student comes to an unknown word. Context clues, word parts, cognates, text features, and related words are used to help the student attach meaning to the unknown word. Students must practice using the strategies across the curriculum whenever they are presented with unknown words. For the English Learner, special attention must be given to helping him determine which are the important words. Names and poetic or flowery description can be difficult to navigate, but may not be essential for comprehension of the big ideas being presented.

In indirect instruction of vocabulary, students are exposed to language through discussion, reading, being read to, multimedia resources, and education-related experiences. This is a very natural way to learn language, but it also varies widely depending on the language experience of the student.

Reinforcing Academic Vocabulary Instruction

Students should record terms that are taught directly. The record of the terms should be in a format that the student can easily access and understand. The vocabulary may be collected in a notebook, on note cards, in word banks, or other collections, but they must have meaning for the student. If each student has an individual record of the terms, leave room for new information. Students should add new concepts, deeper meaning, graphics, or new usages to the record as the vocabulary develops.

When a term is revisited or a new or deeper meaning is explored, the students should be prompted to record the new learning. Students may also use graphic organizers to help them see the connections between related terms. This is especially helpful when studying a topic with many academic vocabulary terms. **The Standards Plus EL Portal has many graphic organizers that can be used.** Each graphic organizer is presented in a blank format and a completed format as an example of how it may be used:

- Concept web
- Concept tree
- Venn diagram
- Organized List
- Idea hand

Games are an engaging way to revisit vocabulary, and a few simple games can be used all year with different sets of vocabulary. Vocabulary Bingo can be set up so that the students listen for vocabulary terms or their definitions. The bingo cards may have a different term written in each square, or they may have a different definition in each square. The teacher can call the definition of the term, and the students must mark the matching term, or the teacher may call the term itself, and the students must mark the definition that goes with the term. **Examples of these two types of bingo games are found in the Standards Plus EL Portal .** Charades or picture charades work well for terms that can be acted out or drawn. Crossword puzzles and rebuses are great for review, too.

Reinforcing Academic Vocabulary Instruction

In the spirit of competition, students can compete for class, table, or personal "points" for find-ing or using academic vocabulary. For example, a student may come in from the playground and say, "Wow! A lot happened at lunch today. Let me **summarize** what happened…" If summarize is a term that the class is studying, the class, that student's table group, or the student could earn a "point" for correct usage of an academic vocabulary term. Students may also earn points for finding academic vocabulary terms in reading material, hearing academic vocabulary terms that others use, or using them in their writing.

A

Actions: what the character does.

Affix: a word part that is added to the beginning or end of a root; a letter or letters added to a root or base word.

Analogy: a figure of speech that shows the relationship between words or ideas.

Antecedent: the noun or pronoun to which a pronoun refers.

Antonym: a word that has an opposite meaning.

Appearance: what the character looks like.

Argument: an established claim that is proven through logical reasoning, examples, and research; a claim supported by reasons and evidence.

Author's purpose: the reason an author writes a text.

B

Background information: information related to the claim that helps to orient the reader.

C

Character: a person in the story.

Characters: People in a story.

Chronological: a text structure that uses time order.

Claim: the writer's position on a problem or issue.

Climax: the moment of greatest tension in the story.

Compare/Contrast: a structure used to show the similarities and differences between two ideas.

Complex Sentence: one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

Compound Sentence: two or more independent clauses.

Compound-Complex Sentence: two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Con: evidence against a claim.

Concluding words and phrases: Words and phrases that sum up ideas in a written text (e.g., in conclusion, as you can see, as a result).

Concluding sentence – Argument: The final sentence that restates the claim and ties together the reasons that support the claim. Often the conclusion of an argument will appeal to the reader to agree with the claim.

Conclusion: How the story ends.

Conclusion – Informative/Explanatory: The final sentence or paragraph that restates the topic and lets the reader know that the text is complete.

Conflict: A problem the characters must solve; the central concern or problem in the story.

Connotation: the implied or associated feeling of a word or words: neutral, positive, or negative.

Context: the words and ideas around unfamiliar words; information that supports the claim; also called evidence.

Coordinating Conjunctions: and, but, or, yet, for, nor, so

Correlative Conjunction: a pair of conjunctions that join words or groups of words that are used in the same way (e.g., both/and; either/or; neither/nor).

D

Definition: the meaning of a word.

Dependent Clause: includes a subject and a verb, but begins with a subordinating conjunction.

Denotation: the literal meaning of a word.

Detail: Information that describes or explains an idea in text; information that supports the main idea.

Dialogue: the written conversation between characters; what the characters say.

Direct characterization: directly stating the character's traits.

E

Events: Things that happen to the characters; the action or what happens in a story.

Evidence: factors that support the claim (e.g., statistics, expert opinions, anecdotes, language choices).

Example: words that show meaning by showing what it is like.

Expanding Elements: Compound subjects, compound verbs, and prepositional phrases.

Explanation: words that tell the meaning by giving more detail.

Explicit information: information provided directly in the text; factual information that is stated clearly in the text.

Exposition: setting the scene; beginning of a story.

F

Falling Action: the events that happen as a result of the climax.

First person: the narrator is a character in the story and tells it firsthand; only the narrator's thoughts and feelings can be revealed to the reader.

First person pronouns: I, we, me.

H

Hook: a startling fact or situation or a question that intrigues the reader.

Hyperbole: a figure of speech in which something is greatly exaggerated.

I

Independent Clause: Subject and verb make a complete thought and a complete sentence.

Indirect characterization: using the story to show the character's traits.

Inference: a conclusion you reach based on what you read; a conclusion that can be drawn from clues in the text and background knowledge and experience of the reader.

Informational text: text that informs, explains, or teaches about a topic.

Informative/Explanatory Text: Text written to inform the reader or explain a topic.

Intensive pronoun: a pronoun that adds emphasis to the subject of a sentence or clause.

M

Main idea: the central point of a passage or text; also called the central idea.

Man-made structures: buildings, monuments, bridges, and tunnels.

Mood: the overall feelings or emotions that are created in the reader.

N

Narrative Writing: Text written to entertain or relate events.

Narrator: The person telling the story.

Negative: a word that has a bad or unfavorable association.

Neutral: a word that does not have any other ideas or feelings associated with it.

Nonrestrictive parenthetical element: A parenthetical element that can be left out without changing the essential meaning of the sentence.

O

Objective pronoun case: a pronoun that is used as the object of a sentence or a clause.

Origin: the language from which a word or root originated.

P

Paraphrase: a restatement of the text in one's own words; to restate text in one's own words.

Parenthetical element: a word, phrase, or clause that provides additional information in a sentence. The word, phrase, or clause helps the reader gain a deeper understanding and gives a richer language experience.

Personification: assigning qualities of a human to something that is not human.

Physical features: natural occurrences in the physical environment (e.g., mountain ranges, oceans, rivers, etc.).

Plot: How the characters, events, and setting interact in telling the story; the main events in a story.

Plural intensive pronouns: ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

Plural possessive pronouns: our, ours, your, yours, their, theirs.

Plural subjective pronouns: us, you, them, we, they.

Poetry: Literature written in lines of verse.

Political divisions: continents, regions, countries, cities, and towns.

Positive: a word that has a good or favorable association.

Possessive pronoun case: a pronoun that shows ownership or possession. (Never have apostrophes.)

Prefix: an affix added at the beginning of a root; a word part that is added before a base or root word that changes the meaning of the word.

Prepositional Phrase: A phrase that begins with a preposition and usually tells when or where something happened

Prepositional Phrases: A sentence element that begins with the preposition (in, over, from, during) and ends with noun or pronoun.

Pro: evidence in favor of a claim.

Prompt: A writing situation that is defined for the writer; a scenario that describes a writing task.

Pronoun: a word that takes the place of a noun in a sentence.

Pronoun gender: Whether a pronoun is masculine (he, him, his), feminine (she, her, hers), or neutral (it, its).

Pronoun number: Whether a pronoun is singular or plural.

R

Reasons: the information that persuades a reader to accept the writer's claim.

Resolution: the solution to the conflict and the end of the story.

Restatement: providing the meaning of a word by restating the meaning adjacent or in close proximity to the given word.

Rising Action: the main events that build in excitement.

Root: a word or word part before an affix is added.

Root or Base Word: a word that stands alone without an affix.

S

Second person: the narrator is giving directions or instructions to you.

Second person pronoun: you.

Setting: Where a story takes place.

Shift in person: when the pronoun and the antecedent are in different persons.

Simple Sentence: one independent clause.

Singular intensive pronouns: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself.

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Singular possessive pronouns: my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its.

Singular subjective pronouns: me, you, him, her, it, I, he, she.

Stanza: Section of a poem; lines of poetry.

Subjective pronoun case: a pronoun that is used as the subject of a sentence or a clause.

Subordinating Conjunction: begins dependent clauses: after, if, once, unless, when, since, because.

Suffix: an affix added at the end of a root; a word part that is added after a base or root word that changes the meaning of the word.

Summary: a brief restatement of the main ideas of a story in one's own words.

Synonym: a word that has a similar meaning.

T

Text evidence: information provided in the text that supports an answer to a question; information found directly in the text.

Text features: features that help the reader navigate the text: bold or italicized print, headers, sub-headings, captions, etc.

Text structure: how the plot of a story unfolds.

Theme: The lesson, moral, or essential message of a story or poem.

Thesis statement – Argument: the sentence that introduces the writer's claim.

Third person limited: the narrator is a character watching the action; all of the characters' thoughts and feelings must be inferred from the plot and dialogue.

Third person omniscient: the narrator is an outsider looking in at the action; all of the characters' thoughts and feelings can be revealed to the reader.

Third person pronouns: he, she, they, him, her, them.

Titles: the names of books, movies, magazines, newspapers, articles, songs, plays, and works of art.

Tone: the author's attitude toward the subject.

Topic Sentence – Informative/Explanatory: The sentence that introduces the topic.

Transitional words and phrases: Words and phrases that connect ideas in a written text and help the writing to flow (e.g., because, also, therefore, another, for example).

V

Vague pronoun: a pronoun with an unclear or ambiguous antecedent.

Verse: Lines of poetry.

Viewpoint: what an author thinks or feels about a topic; also called point of view.

W

Writing topic: the subject of a written text.

A

Absolute Deviation: The absolute value of the deviations.

Absolute Value: The distance a number is from zero on a number line. It is the magnitude of a positive or negative quantity.

Acute angle: An angle that measures less than $90°$.

Additive Identity Property of Zero: Any number added to zero is equal to that number (e.g., $2 + 0 = 2$).

Additive Inverse Property: Any number plus its opposite will always equal zero (e.g., $-4 + 4 = 0$).

Algebraic expression: An expression that contains a variable, mathematical operation symbols, and/or numbers.

Angle: A shape formed when two rays are joined at a common endpoint or vertex.

Area: The two-dimensional space a figure covers.

B

Base number: A number to which an exponent is added. The base number is the number being multiplied.

Box or Box-and-Whiskers Plot: A data display that shows the most central pieces of data using a box and the minimum and maximum values using whiskers.

Braces: A grouping symbol used when there a set within another set which is in a third set of information to be separated from the rest. { } Braces contain brackets and parentheses: {5[8-(9+2)]}. Solve first for the parentheses and then for the brackets.

Brackets: A grouping symbol used when there is one set with another set of information to be separated from the rest. [ ] Brackets contain parentheses: [(4+2) -3]. The section in parentheses is solved first.

C

Coefficient: The number that is multiplied by the variable or an algebraic expression in an algebraic term.

Common: The same (e.g., common denominator means having the same denominator.)

Composite Rectangular Figure: A figure which is composed of multiple overlapping or connected rectangles.

Congruent: Equal size and shape.

Constant: A number without a variable; a value that does not change.

Convert: To create an equivalent fraction by multiplying or dividing to change the denominator.

Coordinate plane: A grid formed by the intersection of a horizontal number line (x-axis) and a vertical number line (y-axis).

D

Data Distribution: Data displays where the data points are plotted or distributed on a number line.

Data Set: A list of numbers or values.

Dependent Variable: The value that changes based on the independent variable.

Denominator: The bottom number in a fraction.

Deviation or Deviation from the Mean: The mean of the data set subtracted from each value in the data set.

Difference: The result of subtraction.

Distributive property: A number can be decomposed and its parts multiplied and result in the same product if the number is not decomposed: $a(b + c) = ab + ac$.

Dividend: The number being divided.

Divisor: The number by which the dividend is being divided.

Dot Plot: A data display that shows the location of each data point on a line.

E

Equilateral triangle: A triangle with three equal sides.

Equivalent: Having the same value; the same size.

Evaluate: To solve an expression.

Exponent: A small number written to the right and above a base number that shows the number of times the base number is multiplied by itself. $3^4 = 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$

F

Factor: A number being multiplied in a multiplication equation; a number or expression that is multiplied by another number or expression to get a product

Fraction: Part of the whole or part of a group.

G

Graph: To plot points on the coordinate plane.

Greatest Common Factor: The largest factor two numbers have in common.

H

Histogram: A data display that looks like a bar graph in which data is grouped into bins.

I

Independent Variable: The value that does not change.

Inequality: An expression in which the two values being compared are not equal.

Inequality Sign: Symbols used to indicate a number that is greater than or less than another number (e.g., >, <).

Interquartile Range (IQR): The difference between the values at Quartile 3 and Quartile 1 in a data set.

Isosceles triangle: A triangle with two equal sides.

L

Least Common Multiple: The lowest number that is common multiple of two different values.

Line: A straight line that goes on indefinitely in opposite directions.

M

Maximum: The largest value in a data set.

Mean: The average of a data set.

Measurement conversion: Converting between larger or smaller units within the same scale or between customary and metric measurement scales.

Median: The number in the middle of a data set when the values are in order.

Minimum: The smallest value in a data set.

Mixed Number: A number composed of a whole number and a fraction.

Multiple: The total of a quantity of units; 3, 6, 9, 12, etc.

Multiplicative Identity Property of One: The product of any number and one is that number.

Multiplicative Inverse Property: Any number multiplied by its reciprocal is always equal to one.

N

Negative Number: A number that falls to the left of zero on the number line.

Net: A two-dimensional pattern of a three-dimensional figure.

Normal Distribution: A bell-shaped data plot, with most of the data points in the center and an equal spread to the left and the right.

Numerator: The top number in a fraction.

Numeric expression: An expression that contains numbers and operation symbols.

O

Obtuse angle: An angle that measures more than 90°.

Opposite Number: Numbers that are an equal distance from zero on the number line (e.g., -4, 4).

Ordered pairs: Corresponding numbers in a table that are used to locate a point on a coordinate plane.

Origin: The point at which the x-axis and the y-axis intersect (0, 0).

P

Parallelogram: A quadrilateral with two pairs of parallel sides.

Parentheses: A grouping symbol used when there is just one set of information to be separated from the rest. ( ) Parentheses are solved first.

Part-to-part: A comparison between the parts in a ratio.

Part-to-total: A comparison between a part and the whole in a ratio.

Percent: Rate per one hundred.

Point: A precise location or space, usually represented by a dot.

Positive Number: A number that falls to the right of zero on the number line.

Prism: A three-dimensional triangular or rectangular figure.

Product: The solution in a multiplication equation; the result of multiplication.

Pyramid: A four- or five-side solid with a rectangular or triangular base and triangular faces.

Q

Quadrant: Section of the coordinate plane defined by the x- and y-axis: Q1: (x, y); Q2: (-x, y); Q3: (-x, -y); Q4: (x, -y).

Quadrilateral: A four-sided polygon.

Quartile: The median of the first and second halves of a data set.

Quotient: The solution to a division problem; the result of division.

R

Range: The distance between the largest and the smallest values in a data set.

Ratio: The comparison of two numbers or quantities using division.

Rational Number: A number that can be written as a fraction.

Rectangle: A parallelogram with four right angles.

Repeating Decimal: A decimal that has digits that repeat infinitely (4.5353535353…).

Rhombus: A quadrilateral with four equal sides.

Right angle: An angle that measures exactly 90°.

Right triangle: A triangle with a right angle.

S

Scalene triangle: A triangle with no equal sides.

Skewed Distribution: Data plots that are not bell-shaped and show most of the data points to one end or the other of the number line.

Square: A rhombus with four right angles.

Statistical Question: A question where you expect answers to vary.

Sum: The result of addition.

Surface Area: The area of the combined sides of a solid figure.

T

Term: An individual element of any math expression. It could be a single number or variable, or it could be the product of several numbers or variables separated from another term by a + or - sign in an overall expression. For example has 3 terms. The terms are 6, 7y, and .

Terminating Decimal: A decimal which has digits that do not go one forever (e.g., 7.623).

Total-to-part: A comparison between the whole and a part in a ratio.

Trapezoid: A quadrilateral with exactly two parallel sides.

Triangle: A three-sided polygon.

U

Unit rate: the value of one measurement relative to one unit.

Unlike: Different (e.g., unlike fractions have different denominators.)

V

Variability or Variance: The spread of distances between values in a data set.

Variable: A letter that represents a number.

Volume: The capacity of a figure. The cubic area contained within a solid figure.

X

x-axis: The horizontal number line at the starting position (0,____) on the coordinate plane.

Y

y-axis: The vertical number line at the starting position (____,0) on the coordinate plane.