

Teach Students the All-Purpose Academic Word List

by Alice Thomas

The Academic Word List (AWL) consists of 570 word families that occur reasonably frequently over a wide range of academic texts. The list was developed and evaluated by Averil Coxhead for her MA thesis (Coxhead, 2000). The AWL word families were selected according to range and frequency. For range, the word families had to occur across disciplines (e.g., the arts, commerce, law and science). For frequency, AWL word families had to occur over 100 times in the 3,500,000-word Academic Corpus. Additional information about the AWL word selection can be found at www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/principles.aspx.

Almost all of the words in the Academic Word List are headwords of word families (e.g., the headword *analyze* represents several other forms of that word such as *analysis*, *analyzes*, *analyzed*, *analyzing*, *analyst*, *analytic*, *analytical* and *analytically*). Therefore, students who master the AWL will increase his vocabulary exponentially beyond the 570 headwords.

The 570 words are grouped into 10 sublists that reflect word frequency. Thus, the first sublist contains words with the highest frequency and the last sublist contains the words with the lowest. Each sublist contains 60 words except sublist 10, which contains 30 words.

Because of the words were selected by their range and frequency in the English language Academic Corpus, the AWL is useful for learners across the disciplines. The AWL does not contain technical words likely to appear only in a specific discipline such as *trapezoid*, *photosynthesis* or *preposition*.

Adolescent students should benefit from teachers who (1) explicitly teach the word families on the AWL, (2) regularly use words on the AWL, (3) elaborate on the AWL word families, and (4) require student usage (verbal and written) of AWL words.

Free practice exercises for each sublist of words may be found at www.academicvocabularyexercises.com.

AWL Sublists (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/information.aspx>)

Sublist 1

analyze • approach • area • assess • assume • authority • available • benefit • concept • consist • constitute • context • contract • create • data • define • derive • distribute • economy • environment • establish • estimate • evident • export • factor • finance • formula • function • identify • income • indicate • individual • interpret • involve • issue • labor • legal • legislate • major • method • occur • percent • period • policy • principle • proceed • process • require • research • respond • role • section • sector • significant • similar • source • specific • structure • theory • vary

Sublist 2

achieve • acquire • administrate • affect • appropriate • aspect • assist • category • chapter • commission • community • complex • compute • conclude • conduct • consequent • construct • consume • credit • culture • design • distinct • element • equate • evaluate • feature • final • focus • impact • injure • institute • invest • item • journal • maintain • normal • obtain • participate • perceive • positive • potential • previous • primary • purchase • range • region • regulate • relevant • reside • resource • restrict • secure • seek • select • site • strategy • survey • text • tradition • transfer

Sublist 3

alternative • circumstance • comment • compensate • component • consent • considerable • constant • constrain • contribute • convene • coordinate • core • corporate • correspond • criteria • deduce • demonstrate • document • dominate • emphasis • ensure • exclude • framework • fund • illustrate • immigrate • imply • initial • instance • interact • justify • layer • link • locate • maximize • minor • negate • outcome • partner • philosophy • physical • proportion • publish • react • register • rely • remove • scheme • sequence • sex • shift • specify • sufficient • task • technique • technology • valid • volume

Sublist 4

access • adequate • annual • apparent • approximate • attitude • attribute • civil • code • commit • communicate • concentrate • confer • contrast • cycle • debate • despite • dimension • domestic • emerge • error • ethnic • goal • grant • hence • hypothesis • implement • implicate • impose • integrate • internal • investigate • job • label • mechanism • obvious • occupy • option • output • overall • parallel • parameter • phase • predict • principal • prior • professional • project • promote • regime • resolve • retain • series • statistic • status • stress • subsequent • sum • summary • undertake

Sublist 5

academy • adjust • alter • amend • aware • capacity • challenge • clause • compound • conflict • consult • contact • decline • discrete • draft • enable • energy • enforce • entity • equivalent • evolve • expand • expose • external • facilitate • fundamental • generate • generation • image • liberal • license • logic • margin • medical • mental • modify • monitor • network • notion • objective • orient • perspective • precise • prime • psychology • pursue • ratio • reject • revenue • stable • style • substitute • sustain • symbol • target • transit • trend • version • welfare • whereas

Sublist 6

abstract • accurate • acknowledge • aggregate • allocate • assign • attach • author • bond • brief • capable • cite • cooperate • discriminate • display • diverse • domain • edit • enhance • estate • exceed • expert • explicit • federal • fee • flexible • furthermore • gender • ignorant • incentive • incidence • incorporate • index • inhibit • initiate • input • instruct • intelligence • interval • lecture • migrate • minimum • ministry • motive • neutral • nevertheless • overseas • precede • presume • rational • recover • reveal • scope • subsidy • tape • trace • transform • transport • underlie • utilize

Sublist 7

adapt • adult • advocate • aid • channel • chemical • classic • comprehensive • comprise • confirm • contrary • convert • couple • decade • definite • deny • differentiate • dispose • dynamic • eliminate • empirical • equip • extract • file • finite • foundation • globe • grade • guarantee • hierarchy • identical • ideology • infer • innovate • insert • intervene • isolate • media • mode • paradigm • phenomenon • priority • prohibit • publication • quote • release • reverse • simulate • sole • somewhat • submit • successor • survive • thesis • topic • transmit • ultimate • unique • visible • voluntary

Sublist 8

abandon • accompany • accumulate • ambiguous • append • appreciate • arbitrary • automate • bias • chart • clarify • commodity • complement • conform • contemporary • contradict • crucial • currency • denote • detect • deviate • displace • drama • eventual • exhibit • exploit • fluctuate • guideline • highlight • implicit • induce • inevitable • infrastructure • inspect • intense • manipulate • minimize • nuclear • offset • paragraph • plus • practitioner • predominant • prospect • radical • random • reinforce • restore • revise • schedule • tense • terminate • theme • thereby • uniform • vehicle • via • virtual • visual • widespread

Sublist 9

accommodate • analogy • anticipate • assure • attain • behalf • bulk • cease • coherent • coincide • commence • compatible • concurrent • confine • controversy • converse • device • devote • diminish • distort • duration • erode • ethic • format • founded • inherent • insight • integral • intermediate • manual • mature • mediate • medium • military • minimal • mutual • norm • overlap • passive • portion • preliminary • protocol • qualitative • refine • relax • restrain • revolution • rigid • route • scenario • sphere • subordinate • supplement • suspend • team • temporary • trigger • unify • violate • vision

Sublist 10

adjacent • albeit • assemble • collapse • colleague • compile • conceive • convince • depress • encounter • enormous • forthcoming • incline • integrity • intrinsic • invoke • levy • likewise • nonetheless • notwithstanding • odd • ongoing • panel • persist • pose • reluctance • so-called • straightforward • undergo • whereby

References

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<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/information.aspx>

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