

ACADEMIC WORD STUDY 1

In these sections you will meet important vocabulary that you need to understand and learn. All the words come from the Academic Word List (AWL), a list of the most common words in academic texts (see pages 138–139). Increasing your academic vocabulary is a key way of improving your reading and writing in the IELTS test.

When you've completed the exercises, check the answers on page 168 and correct any mistakes so you can use this page as a reference point for revision.

Understanding academic words

1 Academic vocabulary is generally fairly formal. Match these common academic verbs to a less formal verb with the same meaning from the box below.

- | | | |
|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | assist | He was <u>assisted</u> by a colleague. |
| 2 | construct | The bridge took 4 years to <u>construct</u> . |
| 3 | indicate | The graph <u>indicates</u> a rise in sales. |
| 4 | obtain | You can <u>obtain</u> a visa at the embassy. |
| 5 | purchase | Tickets may be <u>purchased</u> in advance. |
| 6 | require | The problem <u>requires</u> careful thought. |
| 7 | respond | They did not <u>respond</u> to my letter. |
| 8 | select | You must <u>select</u> an answer A–D. |

answer ~~build~~ ~~buy~~ ~~choose~~
get ~~help~~ need ~~show~~

2 The examples below come from *Reading academic texts* (page 12). Each one contains an academic word in bold. Study the way the academic word is used and write the correct part of speech, noun (N), verb (Vb) or adjective (Adj), in the right-hand column.

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | <u>academic</u> fields like computer sciences (D) | Adj |
| 2 | to see if a book is <u>relevant</u> or not (A) | ..... |
| 3 | to <u>extract</u> deeper meaning (A) | ..... |
| 4 | there's no <u>substitute</u> for careful reading (A) | ..... |
| 5 | your short term memory does not <u>retain</u> information (B) | ..... |
| 6 | short term memory can ... retain only about six <u>items</u> (B) | ..... |
| 7 | One popular <u>technique</u> is to look for signals (C) | ..... |
| 8 | the <u>structure</u> of a passage of text (C) | ..... |

3 Study the meanings below and match each one to an academic word 1–8 from exercise 2.

Meanings

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| a) relating to education, especially at college or university level | 1..... |
| b) a special way of doing something | ..... |
| c) to keep or store | ..... |
| d) to remove or take | ..... |
| e) a single thing (e.g. on a list) | ..... |
| f) something which can be used instead of another thing | ..... |
| g) the way in which the parts of something are connected together | ..... |
| h) containing information which is useful | ..... |

Using academic vocabulary

4 Complete the following using academic words from exercises 1 and 2. Make any changes necessary.

- Saccharin is a chemical substance which tastes sweet and is often used as a substitute for sugar.
- A cut in income tax was the most popular item on the government's agenda.
- Exam information can be obtained from the www.ielts.org website.
- 50% of the patients in this hospital need long-term care.
- Scientists are now able to extract DNA from a single hair.
- New medical techniques mean that people spend less time in hospital after an operation.
- The government is planning to construct 500,000 new homes in the south east.
- I found several articles on the Internet which are relevant to my essay topic.

5 Choose four academic words from this page and write personal examples to help you remember them.

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