

# The Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon™

The Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon (OPAL) is a set of four word lists that together provide an essential guide to the most important words and phrases to know in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This list gives the 600 most important words in academic speaking, divided into six sublists of 100 words each, with the most important words in Sublist 1.

## Spoken single words

### Sublist 1

action *n.*  
also *adv.*  
analysis *n.*  
approach *n.*  
argue *v.*  
argument *n.*  
assumption *n.*  
basically *adv.*  
become *linking v.*  
between *prep.*  
case *n.*  
context *n.*  
control *n., v.*  
country *n.*  
culture *n.*  
data *n.*  
define *v.*  
definition *n.*  
demand *n.*  
design *n., v.*  
develop *v.*  
diagram *n.*  
difference *n.*  
different *adj.*  
direction *n.*  
economic *adj.*  
effect *n.*  
equal *adj., n., v.*  
error *n.*  
essentially *adv.*  
example *n.*  
experiment *n.*  
factor *n.*  
failure *n.*  
focus *n., v.*  
form *n., v.*  
function *n., v.*  
general *adj.*  
group *n., v.*  
handout *n.*  
history *n.*  
human *adj., n.*  
hypothesis *n.*  
idea *n.*  
important *adj.*  
individual *n., adj.*  
international *adj.*  
kind *n.*  
knowledge *n.*  
language *n.*  
learning *n.*  
lecture *n.*  
level *n.*  
material *n.*

measure *n., v.*  
method *n.*  
model *n.*  
movement *n.*  
natural *adj.*  
nature *n.*  
observe *v.*  
occur *v.*  
OK *exclam, adj., adv.*  
particular *adj.*  
particularly *adv.*  
per *prep.*  
period *n.*  
phase *n.*  
population *n.*  
principle *n.*  
probability *n.*  
process *n.*  
produce *v., n.*  
product *n.*  
production *n.*  
rate *n.*  
relationship *n.*  
research *n., v.*  
response *n.*  
sense *n.*  
set *v., n.*  
simple *adj.*  
simply *adv.*  
social *adj.*  
society *n.*  
solution *n.*  
source *n.*  
state *n., v.*  
structure *n., v.*  
student *n.*  
study *n., v.*  
system *n.*  
text *n.*  
theory *n.*  
topic *n.*  
type *n.*  
value *n.*  
variable *n., adj.*  
word *n.*  
world *n.*

### Sublist 2

academic *adj., n.*  
actually *adv.*  
analyse *v.*  
assume *v.*  
based *adj.*  
basic *adj.*  
begin *v.*

behaviour *n.*  
body *n.*  
cause *n., v.*  
certain *adj.*  
change *n., v.*  
class *n.*  
column *n.*  
common *adj.*  
compare *v.*  
complex *adj.*  
concept *n.*  
concern *v.*  
condition *n.*  
course *n.*  
create *v.*  
degree *n.*  
describe *v.*  
detail *n.*  
development *n.*  
final *adj.*  
element *n.*  
environment *n.*  
evidence *n.*  
exchange *n.*  
explain *v.*  
explanation *n.*  
fact *n.*  
flow *n., v.*  
force *n., v.*  
generate *v.*  
identity *n.*  
image *n.*  
influence *n., v.*  
information *n.*  
interesting *adj.*  
issue *n.*  
law *n.*  
learn *v.*  
less *det/pron, adv.*  
may *modal v.*  
means *n.*  
modern *adj.*  
notion *n.*  
object *n.*  
often *adv.*  
output *n.*  
possible *adj.*  
power *n.*  
practice *n.*  
pressure *n.*  
primary *adj.*  
problem *n.*  
question *n., v.*  
random *adj.*  
range *n.*  
rather *adv.*

reading *n.*  
real *adj.*  
reason *n.*  
recognize *v.*  
related *adj.*  
relation *n.*  
relatively *adv.*  
represent *v.*  
result *n., v.*  
role *n.*  
science *n.*  
seminar *n.*  
series *n.*  
shape *n., v.*  
slide *n.*  
so *conj.*  
sort *n., v.*  
specific *adj.*  
stage *n.*  
strategy *n.*  
talk *v., n.*  
technology *n.*  
tend *v.*  
term *n.*  
terms *n.*  
test *n., v.*  
therefore *adv.*  
thought *n.*  
treatment *n.*  
understand *v.*  
use *v., n.*  
useful *adj.*  
various *adj.*  
volume *n.*  
whole *adj., n.*  
within *prep.*  
write *v.*

### Sublist 3

according to *prep.*  
account *n., v.*  
aim *n., v.*  
almost *adv.*  
amount *n., v.*  
aspect *n.*  
associated *adj.*  
attempt *n., v.*  
attitude *n.*  
barrier *n.*  
beginning *n.*  
call *v.*  
characteristic *n., adj.*  
classic *adj., n.*  
classical *adj.*  
clearly *adv.*

combination *n.*  
 completely *adv.*  
 component *n.*  
 conflict *n., v.*  
 consequence *n.*  
 cultural *adj.*  
 derive *v.*  
 directly *adv.*  
 distinction *n.*  
 divide *v.*  
 enter *v.*  
 entry *n.*  
 establish *v.*  
 exist *v.*  
 famous *adj.*  
 foreign *adj.*  
 framework *n.*  
 free *adj.*  
 gain *n., v.*  
 gender *n.*  
 given *adj.*  
 growth *n.*  
 happen *v.*  
 here *adv.*  
 highly *adv.*  
 huge *adj.*  
 impact *n.*  
 instance *n.*  
 interest *n.*  
 interested *adj.*  
 judgement *n.*  
 key *adj., n.*  
 large *adj.*  
 later *adj., adv.*  
 line *n.*  
 list *n., v.*  
 literature *n.*  
 loss *n.*  
 mechanism *n.*  
 module *n.*  
 move *v.*  
 national *adj.*  
 negative *adj., n.*  
 normal *adj.*  
 number *n.*  
 obvious *adj.*  
 obviously *adv.*  
 part *n.*  
 perspective *n.*  
 point *n., v.*  
 position *n.*  
 positive *adj., n.*  
 publish *v.*  
 purpose *n.*  
 ratio *n.*  
 reaction *n.*  
 read *v.*  
 reflect *v.*  
 reject *v.*  
 resource *n.*  
 risk *n.*  
 same *adj., pron.*  
 scale *n.*  
 sequence *n.*  
 show *v.*  
 significant *adj.*  
 slightly *adv.*  
 small *adj.*  
 so-called *adj.*  
 standard *adj., n.*

suppose *v.*  
 survival *n.*  
 target *n., v.*  
 teach *v.*  
 technique *n.*  
 textbook *n.*  
 together *adv.*  
 true *adj.*  
 university *n.*  
 variation *n.*  
 variety *n.*  
 very *adv.*  
 way *n.*  
 whereas *conj.*

### Sublist 4

ability *n.*  
 again *adv.*  
 although *conj.*  
 apply *v.*  
 area *n.*  
 because *conj.*  
 briefly *adv.*  
 care *n.*  
 central *adj.*  
 choice *n.*  
 choose *v.*  
 communication *n.*  
 conclusion *n.*  
 construct *v.*  
 contain *v.*  
 contrast *n., v.*  
 critical *adj.*  
 crucial *adj.*  
 decision *n.*  
 depend *v.*  
 determine *v.*  
 difficult *adj.*  
 direct *adj., v.*  
 distinguish *v.*  
 draw *v.*  
 duty *n.*  
 early *adj.*  
 effective *adj.*  
 effectively *adv.*  
 event *n.*  
 existence *n.*  
 experience *n., v.*  
 expert *n., adj.*  
 expression *n.*  
 extreme *adj., n.*  
 extremely *adv.*  
 fairly *adv.*  
 finally *adv.*  
 following *adj., prep.*  
 formal *adj.*  
 generally *adv.*  
 global *adj.*  
 guess *v., n.*  
 hence *adv.*  
 high *adj.*  
 however *adv.*  
 importance *n.*  
 increase *n., v.*  
 input *n.*  
 introduce *v.*  
 introduction *n.*  
 low *adj.*  
 lower *adj.*

main *adj.*  
 major *adj.*  
 mention *v.*  
 might *modal v.*  
 necessarily *adv.*  
 new *adj.*  
 note *n., v.*  
 objective *n., adj.*  
 operation *n.*  
 order *n., v.*  
 per cent *n., adj.*  
 phenomenon *n.*  
 physical *adj.*  
 picture *n.*  
 possibility *n.*  
 powerful *adj.*  
 practical *adj., n.*  
 predict *v.*  
 previous *adj.*  
 procedure *n.*  
 professional *adj., n.*  
 quantity *n.*  
 quickly *adv.*  
 rational *adj.*  
 reduce *v.*  
 rule *n.*  
 scientific *adj.*  
 session *n.*  
 similar *adj.*  
 skill *n.*  
 sometimes *adv.*  
 story *n.*  
 straightforward *adj.*  
 stress *v., n.*  
 subject *n., adj.*  
 such *det/pron*  
 suggest *v.*  
 supply *n., v.*  
 task *n.*  
 technical *adj.*  
 thing *n.*  
 title *n.*  
 underlying *adj.*  
 understanding *n.*  
 unit *n.*  
 version *n.*  
 view *n., v.*

### Sublist 5

absolute *adj.*  
 access *n.*  
 active *adj.*  
 activity *n.*  
 advantage *n.*  
 appear *v.*  
 average *n., adj.*  
 background *n.*  
 basis *n.*  
 can *modal v.*  
 capacity *n.*  
 category *n.*  
 chain *n.*  
 claim *n., v.*  
 community *n.*  
 contemporary *adj., n.*  
 correspond *v.*  
 cycle *n.*  
 developed *adj.*  
 dimension *n.*

discuss *v.*  
 discussion *n.*  
 distinct *adj.*  
 emerge *v.*  
 emphasis *n.*  
 emphasize *v.*  
 environmental *adj.*  
 equivalent *adj., n.*  
 experimental *adj.*  
 extent *n.*  
 external *adj.*  
 familiar *adj.*  
 feature *n.*  
 female *adj., n.*  
 generation *n.*  
 illustrate *v.*  
 interact *v.*  
 interaction *n.*  
 intermediate *adj.*  
 internal *adj.*  
 interpretation *n.*  
 invent *v.*  
 involve *v.*  
 journal *n.*  
 largely *adv.*  
 lead *v.*  
 lecturer *n.*  
 likely *adj.*  
 limit *n., v.*  
 look *v.*  
 male *adj., n.*  
 maximum *adj., n.*  
 memory *n.*  
 middle *n.*  
 need *v.*  
 observation *n.*  
 operate *v.*  
 origin *n.*  
 outcome *n.*  
 parallel *n.*  
 pattern *n.*  
 perceive *v.*  
 perfectly *adv.*  
 potential *adj., n.*  
 potentially *adv.*  
 presence *n.*  
 prevent *v.*  
 proportion *n.*  
 quality *n.*  
 rapidly *adv.*  
 react *v.*  
 reality *n.*  
 refer *v.*  
 reference *n.*  
 reflection *n.*  
 rely *v.*  
 representation *n.*  
 require *v.*  
 respond *v.*  
 sheet *n.*  
 shift *n., v.*  
 significance *n.*  
 single *adj.*  
 somehow *adv.*  
 spread *n., v.*  
 structural *adj.*  
 sum *n., v.*  
 summary *n.*  
 tendency *n.*  
 theme *n.*

theoretical *adj.*  
throughout *prep., adv.*  
total *adj., n.*  
transfer *n., v.*  
try *v.*  
tutor *n.*  
typical *adj.*  
typically *adv.*  
used *adj.*  
welfare *n.*

### Sublist 6

acquire *v.*  
adapt *v.*  
add *v.*  
adult *n., adj.*  
affect *v.*  
already *adv.*  
answer *n., v.*  
arise *v.*  
article *n.*  
attack *v., n.*  
attention *n.*  
author *n.*  
avoid *v.*  
balance *n.*  
behave *v.*  
benefit *n.*

beyond *prep., adv.*  
broad *adj.*  
centre *n.*  
circumstance *n.*  
clear *adj.*  
closely *adv.*  
code *n.*  
combine *v.*  
concentrate *v.*  
conclude *v.*  
consider *v.*  
content *n.*  
deal *v.*  
decline *n., v.*  
department *n.*  
description *n.*  
destroy *v.*  
differ *v.*  
discover *v.*  
easily *adv.*  
end *n., v.*  
entirely *adv.*  
essential *adj.*  
exactly *adv.*  
exam *n.*  
explore *v.*  
fail *v.*  
find *v.*

fundamental *adj.*  
grow *v.*  
hopefully *adv.*  
identify *v.*  
imply *v.*  
increasingly *adv.*  
indeed *adv.*  
initial *adj.*  
interpret *v.*  
involved *adj.*  
label *v., n.*  
limited *adj.*  
link *v., n.*  
maintain *v.*  
majority *n.*  
many *det./pron.*  
mental *adj.*  
moment *n.*  
motivation *n.*  
nevertheless *adv.*  
option *n.*  
organization *n.*  
partly *adv.*  
perform *v.*  
perhaps *adv.*  
popular *adj.*  
precisely *adv.*  
prefer *v.*

progress *n.*  
pure *adj.*  
quote *v., n.*  
reach *v.*  
recognition *n.*  
relevant *adj.*  
roughly *adv.*  
sample *n.*  
secondly *adv.*  
section *n.*  
sexual *adj.*  
sign *n., v.*  
situation *n.*  
space *n.*  
split *v.*  
stable *adj.*  
strength *n.*  
style *n.*  
symbol *n.*  
teacher *n.*  
trace *n.*  
traditional *adj.*  
treat *v.*  
trend *n.*  
trust *n., v.*  
upper *adj.*  
vary *v.*  
whatever *det./pron.*

*OPAL has been created with reference to the following corpora: the Oxford Corpus of Academic English (OCAE), the fiction subcorpus of the Oxford English Corpus (OEC), the spoken element of the British National Corpus (BNC) and a subset of the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus, developed within the University of Warwick and for which relevant permissions have been obtained. BASE was developed at the Universities of Warwick and Reading under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Paul Thompson. Corpus development of BASE was assisted by funding from BALEAP, EURALEX, the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.*