ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Objectives

When you have finished this section, you will be able to

- recognise technical terms specific to particular academic or scientific discipline
- select appropriate words from the general academic vocabulary and use them in your own academic writing

Resource List

1) Academic Vocabulary List in grammatical categories by Rick Smith:
   http://www.englishcompanion.com/pdfDocs/acvocabulary2.pdf

2) Exercises on academic vocabulary, texts and concordance lines:
   http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/#top

3) The Longman Vocabulary site with exercises:
   http://wps.ablongman.com/long_licklider_vocabulary_2/0,6658,418005-,00.html

4) Victoria University of Wellington's site on Academic Word List and how to use it:
   http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/sublists.aspx

Key Concepts

- Academic vocabulary
- Headwords & inflections
- Academic Word List (AWL)

Procedure

Before Class

1. Review *Features of Academic Writing*.

a. Note the choice of specific words/vocabulary used that differentiates a text as academic.

b. Look at the websites in the Resource List and familiarize yourself with the academic word/vocabulary lists and also the sublists.

In Class

Recalling what you have learnt from the websites, either in pairs or in a small group, compare your answers for **Tasks A, B, C & D.** Be prepared to share your answers with the rest of the class.

After Class

Study the **Additional Resources** given at the end of this handout.

Tasks

A. Discussion

1. Working with a partner, start by going through **Sublist 1** from the **AWL Site 4** (Resource List: 4). If you know these words, move to **Sublist 2** and work down to **Sublist 10**. As you move down the Sublists, note the words that are familiar.

2. Compare the words you are familiar with to those your partner is familiar with. Discuss the words you are familiar with. Are these words from your own discipline or from your own vocabulary repertoire?

B. Word Building

Below are some head words or the stem form of a word. Try to work out the various forms of the given head words, that is the inflections of the word.

e.g. analyse

analysed	analyser	analysers	analyses	analysing	analysis
analyst	analysts	analytic	analytical	analytically	analyse
analysed	analyses	analysing			

- conceive
- valid
- undertake
- seek
- precise
- straightforward
- trend
- residue
- regime
- albeit

C. Application

1. In pairs or in small groups, reduce the informality of the following sentences by providing formal alternatives for the underlined words. Consult (Resource List: 4) **AWL Site 4.**

(a) Additionally, citizens in democratic regimes get easy access to information the Internet provides.

(b) Government agencies made forms and searchable databases online, making it easier for citizens to get their questions answered.

(c) For countries enjoying the benefits of freedom and democracy, embracing the Internet has been relatively painless. For other nations, the course of action has proved more difficult.

(d) The Internet will have become so interwoven in the fabric of their economic life that cutting off access will not be possible. De facto freedom of information will slowly emerge in these countries, even if never officially recognized. This will be one of the Internet's most important contributions to global civilization.

(e) Internet pornography, now a multibillion-dollar industry and one of the first profitable sectors of the Internet economy, becomes a problem when it involves children or is viewed in a public setting. One study guesses that 20% of all white-collar males access pornography online while at work.

(f) Finally, as we grow more dependent on the Internet, we grow more vulnerable. Before the Internet, viruses could be spread from one computer to another only through floppy disks. With the widespread availability of software downloaded from websites or sent out through email, viruses now spread like wildfire, covering the world in hours.

(g) With so much of our public life now available online, terrorists no longer need to risk coming here to gather information before an attack, nor do they need to meet in person to talk.

(h) The same factors that empower legitimate Internet users also empower those opposed to our national interests. There is no escaping this basic fact.

2. Examine the underlined words and phrases in the following text. Replace these words by selecting appropriate words from the AWL so that the text is formal and academic.

A Computer that Can "Read" the Mind *by* The National Science Foundation (US)	**Your Answers**
For centuries, the concept of mind readers was strictly the domain of folklore and science fiction. But according to new research published today in the journal *Science*, scientists are closer to knowing how specific thoughts activate your brains. The findings tell the power of computational modelling to improve your understanding of how the brain processes information and what you think. The research was conducted by a computer scientist, Tom Mitchell, and a cognitive neuroscientist, Marcel Just, both of Carnegie Mellon University. Their previous research, supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the W.M. Keck Foundation, had shown that functional magnetic resonance imaging(fMRI) can really detect and locate brain activity when a person thinks about a specific word. Using this data, the researchers made a computational model that made a computer to correctly figure out what word a research subject was thinking about by analysing brain scan data. In their most recent work, Tom and Marcel used fMRI data to develop a more sophisticated computational model that can foretell the brain activation patterns associated with concrete nouns, or things that we experience through our senses, even if the computer didn't already know the fMRI data for that specific noun.	

Additional Resources


Another useful resource is the online website developed by Tom Cobb (Université du Québec à Montréal).

***Complete Lexical Tutor v.6.2* at http://www.lextutor.ca/**

The *Complete Lexical Tutor v.6.2* is a free website with a concordancer, vocabulary profiler, exercise maker, interactive exercises, and other language learning resources for students, researchers, and teachers.