

Units 82 and 83 deal with vocabulary that is often used in academic writing in any subject.

A Presenting arguments and commenting on others' work

If you **advocate** something, you argue in favour of it: He **advocated** capital punishment.
 If you **deduce** something, you reach a conclusion by thinking carefully about the known facts: Look at these sentences and see if you can **deduce** how the imperfect tense is used.
 If you **infer** something, you reach a conclusion indirectly: From contemporary accounts of his research, we can **infer** that results were slower to come than he had anticipated.
 If someone's work **complements** someone else's, it combines well with it so that each piece of work becomes more effective.

If someone's work **overlaps** with someone else's work, it partially covers the same material.

You might call someone's work: **empirical** [based on what is observed rather than theory]
ambiguous [open to different interpretations] **coherent** [logically structured]
comprehensive [covering all that is relevant] **authoritative** [thorough and expert]

B Talking about figures and processes

If figures or decisions are referred to as **arbitrary**, they are based on chance rather than a plan or any particular reason.

Figures that **deviate** from the norm are different from what is typical.

If statistics **distort** the picture, they give a false impression.

If you refer to the **incidence** of something (e.g. left-handedness), you are talking about how often it occurs in the population.

If something (e.g. the incidence of brown eyes) is **predominant**, it is the largest in number.

If things (e.g. stages in a process) happen **in sequence**, they happen in a particular order.

If you want to say that something happens in many places or with many people, you can say that it is **widespread**: **widespread outbreaks** of an illness, **widespread alarm**

C Words used instead of more everyday words in an academic context

<i>academic verb</i>	<i>everyday verb</i>
append	add (at the end)
conceive	think up
contradict	go against
convene	meet
demonstrate	show
denote	be a sign of, stand for
negate	make useless, wipe out
perceive	see
reside	lie, live
trigger	cause
utilise	use

<i>academic word</i>	<i>everyday synonym</i>
the converse	the opposite
crucial	very important
likewise	similarly
notwithstanding	despite this
somewhat	rather
thereby	in this way
whereby	by which (method)

Exercises

82.1 Which of the five verbs in A best fits in each sentence?

- 1 Although my brother and I are researching in similar areas, our work, fortunately, does not It has, however, often been said that what I do his work very well.
- 2 Look at the complete set of graphs and see if you can the rules governing the data from them.
- 3 This article a somewhat different approach to the problem than that which has been put forward by others in the field.
- 4 A great deal can be about the artist's state of mind from the content and style of his later works.

82.2 Which of the five adjectives in A best describes each of these things?

- 1 a textbook written by the most highly regarded expert in the field
- 2 research based on a survey of the population
- 3 a poem which can be understood in two quite different ways
- 4 an argument which is well-expressed and easy to follow
- 5 a textbook which gives a broad overview of an entire discipline

82.3 Answer these questions which use vocabulary from B.

- 1 If the incidence of asthma in children is increasing, what is actually going up:
a) the seriousness of asthma attacks b) the number of asthmatic children
- 2 What are the next two numbers in the sequence 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36?
- 3 If the average mark of schoolchildren in a maths test was 68% and James's mark deviated most markedly from that average, what do we know about James's mark?
- 4 If a historian distorts the facts, does he present them a) accurately b) clearly
c) in a misleading fashion?
- 5 If a sociologist chooses the subjects of her research in an arbitrary fashion, is she being careful to get people from an appropriate balance of backgrounds?

82.4 Use vocabulary from C to rewrite these sentences in a more formal academic style.

- 1 We believe the information lies in archives that must not be opened until 2050.
- 2 He thought up his theory while still a young man.
- 3 Each of the signs in the phonetic alphabet stands for a sound rather than a letter.
- 4 This study went against what was previously held to be true and so started a great deal of discussion amongst specialists in the field.
- 5 Details of the experiment have been added at the end of the report for those who wish to see how we arrived at our data.

82.5 Rewrite this paragraph, using words from C, to make it sound more academic.

The study was initially **thought up** in order to validate a new method of enquiry **by which** genetic information could be **used** to predict disease. Our work **goes against** the findings of Hill (2001); indeed it would appear to **show** the **opposite** of what he claimed. We **see** our work as presenting a **rather** different view of the genetic factors which **cause** disease. **Despite this**, our work does not **wipe**

out Hill's, as his studies served the **very important** purpose of devising symbols to **stand for** certain tendencies, **in this way** facilitating further research. We hope that Hill will **similarly** find our work to be valid and that when international researchers **meet** next April, they will concur that much of value **lies** in both our and Hill's studies. Our results are **added at the end**.

Academic writing 2

A Explaining, reinforcing, exemplifying

Look at these newspaper snippets and note the contexts in which the words in bold occur.

The Prime Minister **reiterated**¹ his concern that the debate should not be dominated by personal attacks. He also asked ...

The recent events **underscore**⁴ the need for a better understanding of the environmental impact of biotechnology. If this phase in the ...

Mr Burns' comments **epitomise**² the attitude of many parents nowadays. He seems to be in the ...

Several historians have **posited**⁵ a connection between the decline of the Roman Empire and the eruption of a far distant volcano ...

It was a philosophy first **expounded**³ by John Ruskin in the nineteenth century. If human ...

In an attempt to **account for**⁶ the lack of interest, political analysts have looked at past voting patterns. On the basis of ...

¹ repeated, restated

² are a perfect example of

³ developed, proposed

⁴ emphasise

⁵ suggested as a basic fact/principle

⁶ explain, find the cause of

B Categorising and including

Japanese visitors **comprised/made up** 70% of the hotel's guests last year. [70% consisted of]
The course is **comprised** of two elements: reading and writing. [is composed of]
These two approaches can be **subsumed** under one heading. [brought together / united]
The book **embraces** a number of issues, from economic to religious ones. [covers/includes]
Her philosophy is difficult to **categorise**. [label as belonging to a particular type or class]

C Structuring the text

Some words and expressions for ordering and arranging the parts of an essay.

function in the text	example
beginning	I should like to preface /'prefɪs/ my argument with a true story.
mapping out the text	I shall return to this point later in my essay.
connecting points	This brings me/us to my next area of discussion, which is finance.
focusing	I should now like to address the question of the arms race.
ordering points	The arguments are presented in ascending/descending order of importance.
quoting/referring	The ideas of several writers will be cited in support of the argument. The text alludes to several themes that need closer examination.
including/excluding material	Discussion of the roots of the problem is beyond the scope of this essay. It is impossible to deal with all the issues in this short essay. There will only be space to touch upon the big question of political responsibility.
drawing conclusions	We are forced to conclude that unemployment will always be with us.

Exercises

83.1 Look at these extracts from essays and use words from A opposite to improve their style, making the underlined words more formal.

- 1 The response from the public really shows us the importance of having a full investigation of the facts.
- 2 This view of the world was originally laid out by the Ancient Greek philosophers.
- 3 It is not easy to find the reason for the fall in population of these birds.
- 4 Economists have said there might be a link between exchange rates and a general lack of confidence in the European Union.
- 5 I should like to say again here that the issue is not one that can be easily resolved.
- 6 The recent events are the best example of the dilemma faced by politicians the world over.

83.2 Rewrite these sentences using the verb in brackets and making any other necessary changes.

- 1 70% of the landmass is mountain ranges. (COMPRISE)
- 2 A wide variety of subjects are dealt with in the book. (EMBRACE)
- 3 I think these three sections can all come under one heading. (SUBSUME)
- 4 Poems are not easily amenable to being put into different types. (CATEGORISE)

83.3 Complete the table with the noun forms of these verbs. Use a dictionary if necessary.



verb	noun
categorise	
preface	
allude to	
cite	
reiterate	
epitomise	

83.4 Fill the gaps with words from C that express the meaning in brackets.

- 1 I shall to this issue later in this essay. (come back to)
- 2 The question of monetary union us to our next topic: the idea of a federal Europe. (means we've arrived at)
- 3 Smith just upon the subject of Internet policing but does not go into it in depth. (mentions only briefly)
- 4 I shall attempt to the problem of censorship later in this discussion. (attend to, consider)
- 5 Psychological factors in learning foreign languages are this essay. (outside of the topic area)
- 6 I shall discuss the poets in order, that is to say I shall comment on the least important ones first.
- 7 In the final analysis, we are that there is little hope of stamping out illegal drugs altogether. (have no choice but to believe)
- 8 This unit has attempted to a range of useful vocabulary for formal writing. (give all the necessary information about)