

A High-Incidence Academic Word List

There is a very important specialized vocabulary for learners intending to pursue academic studies in English at the secondary and post-secondary levels. The *Academic Word List*, compiled by Coxhead (2000), consists of 570 word families that are not in the most frequent 2,000 words of English but which occur reasonably frequently over a very wide range of academic texts. These 570 words are grouped into ten sublists that reflect word frequency and range. A word like *analyze* falls into Sublist 1, which contains the most frequent words, while the word *adjacent* falls into Sublist 10 which includes the least frequent (amongst this list of high incidence words). This contains the headwords of the families in the Academic Word List. In other words, this list contains the most frequent form of the word, more often a noun or verb form, although there may be one or more important related word forms. For example, the headword *analyze* would also include *analyst*, *analytic*, *analytical* and *analytically* in the word family.

The *Academic Word List* is not restricted to a specific field of study. That means that the words are useful for learners studying in disciplines as varied as literature, science, health, business, and law. This high-utility academic word list does not contain technical words likely to appear in one, specific field of study such as *amortization*, *petroglyph*, *onomatopoeia*, or *cartilage*. Two-thirds of all academic English words come from Latin, French (through Latin), or Greek. Understandably, knowledge of the most high-incidence academic words in English can significantly boost a student's comprehension level of school-based reading material. Secondary students who are taught these high-utility academic words and routinely placed in contexts requiring their usage are likely to be able to master academic material with more confidence and efficiency, wasting less time and energy in guessing words or consulting dictionaries than those who are only equipped with the most basic 2000-3000 words that characterize ordinary conversation.

Sources: Coxhead, Averil. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 213-238.
Averil Coxhead's website: www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/div1/awl

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

2. achieve acquire administrate affect
appropriate aspect assist category chapter
commission community complex compute
conclude conduct consequent construct
consume credit culture design distinct
equate element 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

3. alternative circumstance comment
compensate component consent
considerable constant constrain contribute
convene coordinate core corporate
correspond criteria deduce demonstrate
document dominate emphasis ensure
exclude fund framework 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 technical technique
technology valid volume

4. access adequacy 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 prior principal professional project
promote regime resolve retain series
statistic status stress subsequent sum
summary undertake

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 mental medical
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

6. abstract acknowledge accuracy
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
ignorance incentive incorporate incidence
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

7. adapt adult advocate aid channel
chemical classic comprehensive comprise
confirm contrary convert couple decade
definite deny differentiate dispose
dynamic equip eliminate empirical 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

8. abandon accompany accumulate
ambiguous appendix 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

9. accommodate analogy anticipate assure
attain behalf cease coherent coincide
commence compatible concurrent confine
controversy converse device devote
diminish distort duration erode ethic
found format 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

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