



# Academic Vocabulary

## ELAR Department

### **What Is Academic Vocabulary?**

Academic vocabulary refers to the words that are used in academic discourse, both written and spoken, and that traditionally have been identified from a corpus of academic texts. Some lists of academic vocabulary include an indication of each word or word family's rate of occurrence in academic texts (e.g., Coxhead, 2000; Zeno, Ivens, Millard, & Duvvuri, 1995).

Definitions of academic vocabulary can differ, depending on the source and context in which the term is used. For the specific purposes of this booklet, we have defined academic vocabulary as "the key words and concepts in the TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) that will help CSI students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade

- read and understand text,
- develop subject-matter literacy, and
- demonstrate their knowledge and skills."

This definition aligns closely with the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards (Gottlieb, Carnuccio, Ernst-Slavit, & Katz, 2006). TESOL defines academic language as language that is "used to acquire a new or deeper understanding of content related to the core curriculum areas and communicate that understanding to others; it is the language that students must use to effectively participate in the classroom environment" (p. 18).

### **Why Is Academic Vocabulary Important?**

The relationships between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension, and language proficiency and reading growth, are well established in the literature. Research has shown a strong and consistent predictive relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension across grade levels (Alexander & Jetton, 2000; Nagy, 2005). However, nonnative English speakers in the upper elementary and middle school grades often face the challenge of learning core content with specialized vocabulary and basic English at the same time (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Students may become fluent in conversational English relatively quickly, but it takes considerable time to develop the vocabulary needed to succeed in school.

Many factors influence the rate at which academic English is learned, but research suggests that ELLs require 4 to 10 years to obtain the academic language and vocabulary of their native English-speaking peers (Collier, 1989; Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

This vocabulary challenge must be addressed through systematic and intensive vocabulary development and language-rich classrooms. A recent review of literature on reading instruction for ELLs found strong evidence to support the inclusion of high-quality vocabulary instruction in a curriculum for ELLs (Gersten et al., 2007). Toward that goal, the review panel recommended the development and adoption of vocabulary lists to help focus instruction on both content-specific vocabulary and common academic words that students may not know (Gersten et al., 2007). In addition, evidence suggests that instructional approaches effective for teaching native speakers can also be used effectively with students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Gersten & Baker, 2000). Teachers also can capitalize on the growing body of literature on effective vocabulary instruction for ELLs (e.g., Carlo et al., 2004).

## **How Were Terms Selected?**

Fourth, Fifth and Sixth grade ELAR teachers from CSI identified the academic vocabulary in this resource from the TEKS for fourth to sixth grade, and refined the lists. The lead team members selected the following types of terms:

- Specialized vocabulary words (i.e., content area specific): These words relate to subject matter and concepts that students are expected to know (e.g., character, plot).
- Nonspecialized, academic vocabulary words: These words can be found across content areas and in multiple contexts.

These words have the potential to build a strong language foundation, especially for ELLs (Beck et al., 2002).

- Words and phrases that describe how students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge: These words often are found in the skills outlined in the TEKS student expectations (e.g., the student is expected to clarify, the student is expected to summarize).

Our goal was to compile terms from the Texas curriculum in a useful format to help teachers plan effective instruction that incorporates academic vocabulary. The lists are intended as a resource and should not be considered a mandate for which words to teach.

Again, by no means do we suggest that you teach all of the included words for your grade level and subject area, nor would it be prudent to teach the words in isolation, out of context.

Use your knowledge of your students and your school's curriculum to determine which words to teach. You may decide to delete or add terms. Terms are organized by Genre but you may need to reorganize words to better meet your students' needs.

Consider your students' knowledge of the words when deciding which words to teach. The lists include both specialized terms and common terms with which some students may already be familiar. Also consider the depth of knowledge you want your students to have for a given word—sometimes having some knowledge of a word will suffice, but in other instances, a student may be required to recognize and use the word in a variety of contexts (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Dale, 1965; Graves, 2000; Graves, 2006).

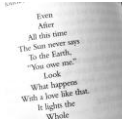



Carefully determine whether students must fully understand a word before deciding whether to incorporate it in your vocabulary instruction.

## Genre: Fiction and Poetry


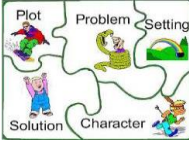
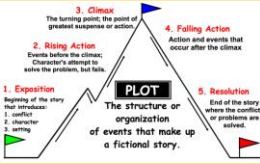






Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>poetry</b> <i>poesia</i>	the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts.	
<b>rhyme scheme</b> <i>rima</i>	the pattern of rhymes used in a poem, usually marked by letters to symbolize correspondences, <i>ababbcc</i> .	
<b>stanza</b> <i>estrofa</i>	an arrangement of a certain number of lines, usually four or more, sometimes having a fixed length, meter, or rhyme scheme, forming a division of a poem.	
<b>line</b> <i>linea</i>	a verse of poetry	
<b>line break</b> <i>salto de linea</i>	the end of the verse of a poem	
<b>figurative language</b> <i>lenguaje figurativo</i>	language that contains or uses figures of speech, especially metaphors.	
<b>Metaphor</b> <i>metáfora</i>	a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance	
<b>Simile</b> <i>el símil</i>	a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared	
<b>imagery</b> <i>la imaginería</i>	the formation of mental images, figures, or likenesses of things	

\*Vocabulary instruction is ongoing and not broken down by weeks










### Genre: Fiction and Poetry

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>hyperbole</b> <i>la hipérbole</i>	exaggeration in language	
<b>onomatopoeia</b> <i>onomatopeya</i>	words used to represent sounds	
<b>idiom</b> <i>el modismo</i>	An idiom is a phrase or an expression that has a figurative, or sometimes literal, meaning	
<b>alliteration</b> <i>aliteración</i>	the conspicuous repetition of identical initial consonant sounds in successive or closely associated syllables within a group of words, even those spelled differently	
<b>repetition</b> <i>la repetición</i>	the simple repeating of a word, within a short space of words, with no particular placement of the words to secure emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last night I dreamt about chickens</li> <li>They were playing on my pillows</li> <li>They were nesting in my head</li> <li>They were walking in my room</li> <li>They were lying on my bed.</li> </ul>







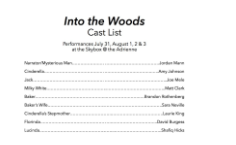

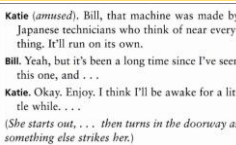

### Genre: Fiction and Poetry

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>fiction</b> <i>la ficción</i>	the class of literature comprising works of imaginative narration.	
<b>story elements</b> <i>elementos de la historia</i>	The five basic elements of a story	
<b>plot</b> <i>la trama</i>	the series of related events in the story	
<b>characters</b> <i>el carácter</i>	A person, animal or thing in a story	
<b>setting</b> <i>el escenario</i>	When and where the story takes place	
<b>exposition</b> <i>la exposición</i>	The opening or the 1st part of the plot, Here the author describes the setting, introduces the characters, and gives background information.	
<b>resolution / denouement</b> <i>la resolución</i>	Comes after the falling action and it brings the story to a satisfactory end.	
<b>rising action</b> <i>la acción creciente</i>	the part in which the author describes the conflict or the problem in the story.	
<b>falling action</b> <i>el desenlace</i>	the part where the author describes how the problem is solved.	

### Genre: Fiction and Poetry

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>climax</b> <i>el clímax</i>	the turning point in the story, the part where the problem is at its worse.	
<b>antagonist</b> <i>antagonista</i>	the opponent or rival of the hero in the story	
<b>protagonist</b> <i>protagonista</i>	the central character in the story, novel, or play	
<b>foreshadowing</b> <i>presagiar</i>	the use of clues to hint at what will occur later in the story	
<b>theme</b> <i>el tema</i>	the message or meaning in a story, poem, or play	
<b>narrator</b> <i>el narrador</i>	the person telling the story	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person point of view</b> <i>punto de vista de la primera persona</i>	The narrator tells the story from his own point of view saying, "I did this or I did that."	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person point of view</b> <i>punto de vista del segundo persona</i>	The book or story addresses the reader as if the reader is an active character in the book. For Example: You are walking down the street.	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient</b> <i>tercera persona omnisciente</i>	The narrator is not one of the characters in the story, but tells the emotions, motives, and actions of ALL the characters in the story.	



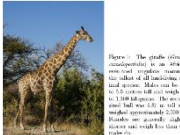






### Genre: Drama

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>drama</b> <i>el drama</i>	a work of literature designed to be performed in front of an audience, also called a play	
<b>scene</b> <i>la escena</i>	a division of an act into smaller parts	
<b>act</b> <i>el acto</i>	a division within a play, much like chapters of a novel	
<b>script</b> <i>el guion</i>	The written words of a drama or play, including dialogue and stage directions	
<b>dialogue</b> <i>el diálogo</i>	conversation between two or more characters	
<b>setting</b> <i>el escenario</i>	Construction on the stage that shows time/place	
<b>cast characters</b> <i>el personaje</i>	a list of characters presented before the action begins	
<b>props</b> <i>la utilería</i>	Small movable items that the actors use to make actions look real	
<b>stage directions</b> <i>dirección de escena</i>	italicized comments that identify parts of the setting or the use of props or costumes, give further information about a character, or provide background information	
<b>narrator</b> <i>narrador</i>	person telling the story and exposition (not involved in the action or related to characters)	

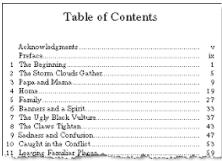
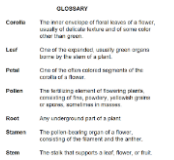




## Genre: Literary Nonfiction

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>biography</b> <i>la biografía</i>	The story of a person's life written by someone other than the subject of the work	
<b>autobiography</b> <i>la autobiografía</i>	The story of a person's life written by himself or herself	
<b>memoir</b> <i>las memorias</i>	a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources	
<b>cause and effect</b> <i>causa y efecto</i>	Cause statements stem from actions and events, and effects are what happen as a result of the action or event	
<b>compare and contrast</b> <i>compara y contrasta</i>	Placing together characters, situations or ideas to show common or differing features in literary selections and To compare or appraise differences	
<b>summary</b> <i>el resumen</i>	To capture all the most important parts of the original text (paragraph, story, poem), but express them in a much shorter space, and in the reader's own words.	
<b>sequence of events</b> <i>secuencia de eventos</i>	Chronological order of events in a story	
<b>author's purpose</b> <i>propósito del autor</i>	The author's intent either to inform or teach someone about something, to entertain people, or to persuade or convince their audience to do or not do something	






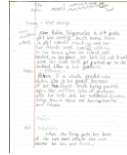



Genre: Informational Text

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>text features</b> <i>la característica del texto</i>	parts of a text beyond the main article or story that help you better understand what you read (photographs, illustrations, captions, maps, sidebars, table of contents, charts and graphs, bullet points, glossary, headlines, subheadings)	
<b>subheadings</b> <i>el subtítulo</i>	heading or title of a section of a text; also called a subtitle	
<b>caption</b> <i>la leyenda</i>	a label or brief explanation that accompanies a photograph or an illustration	
<b>text box</b> <i>cuadro de texto</i>	A box of text that gives more information about the topic or article	
<b>illustration</b> <i>la ilustración</i>	Placing together characters, situations or ideas to show common or differing features in literary selections and To compare or appraise differences	
<b>photograph</b> <i>fotografía</i>	To capture all the most important parts of the original text (paragraph, story, poem), but express them in a much shorter space, and in the reader's own words.	
<b>headline/heading</b> <i>el titular</i>	title of an article	
<b>map</b> <i>el mapa</i>	Illustration of geographic locations and includes a key	
<b>diagram</b> <i>el diagrama</i>	Drawings that show the parts of something using labels	



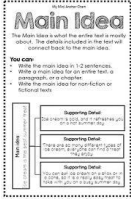
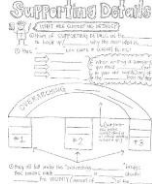
### Genre: Informational Text

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>table of contents</b> <i>tabla de contenido</i>	Gives the heading and beginning page number of each section, found at the beginning of the text	
<b>glossary</b> <i>glosario</i>	A list of important words, listed alphabetically at the end of a text	
<b>index</b> <i>índice</i>	An alphabetical listing of the subjects, including people and places found in a text, usually in the back of a text	
<b>timeline</b> <i>línea de tiempo</i>	Shows the reader important events in the order that they happened, includes dates	
<b>bullet points</b> <i>viñetas</i>	Organized information on a list	<p>Things not to do include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a semi colon instead of a colon to introduce a list.</li> <li>• Putting a semi colon at the end of each item;</li> <li>• Putting a semi colon and "and" at the end of the penultimate item; and</li> <li>• Putting a full stop at the end of the last bullet.</li> </ul>
<b>bold, italic and colored print</b> <i>impresión especial</i>	Used to show keywords that are new or important words	
<b>hyperlink</b> <i>hiperenlace</i>	a link from a hypertext file or document to another location or file, typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or image on the screen	

## Writing

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>parts of speech</b> <i>partes de la oración</i>	Nouns, pronouns, plural nouns, irregular plural nouns, verbs, verb tenses, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, adverbs	
<b>simple and compound sentences</b> <i>oraciones simples y compuestas</i>	A simple sentence contains one independent clause. A compound sentence contains more than one	
<b>central idea/thesis</b> <i>tesis</i>	The thesis statement is a one-sentence statement that expresses the main idea of the essay. The thesis statement is an arguable statement that communicates the author's stance on a topic to the reader.	
<b>prewriting</b> <i>preescritura</i>	the first stage of the writing process, typically followed by drafting, revision, editing and publishing. Prewriting can consist of a combination of outlining, diagramming, storyboarding, clustering.	
<b>drafting</b> <i>redacción</i>	Preparing the preliminary version of the essay or composition	
<b>revising</b> <i>revisando</i>	the stage in the writing process where the author reviews, alters, and amends their composition. Revision follows drafting and precedes editing. Drafting and revising often form a loop as a work moves back and forth between the two stages.	
<b>editing</b> <i>edición</i>	prepare (written material) for publication by correcting, condensing, or otherwise modifying it	
<b>publishing</b> <i>publicar</i>	Final, completed draft of the composition or essay.	
<b>expository</b> <i>expositivo</i>	presenting reasons, explanations, or steps in a process. Logical order should be used with appropriate sequencing of ideas or steps in a process. Effective expository writing should contain a main idea, supporting details, and a conclusion	

### Writing

Vocabulary	Definition	Example
<b>persuasive</b> <i>persuasivo</i>	Persuasive writing intends to convince readers to believe in an idea and to do an action. Many writings such as critics, reviews, reaction papers, editorials, proposals, advertisements, and brochures use different ways of persuasion to influence readers	
<b>narrative</b> <i>narrativa</i>	Writing a story (usually about something that happened to you) in such a way that the audience learns a lesson or gains insight.	
<b>main idea</b> <i>idea principal</i>	It is the most important thought about the topic	
<b>supporting details</b> <i>detalles de apoyo</i>	come after the topic sentence, making up the body of a paragraph. They give details to develop and support the main idea of the paragraph	

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