Academic Vocabulary

Researchers such as Kinsela, 2003; Becks, 2002; Marzano, 2005; and Scarcella 2003, stress that vocabulary knowledge is strongly correlated to academic achievement. Academic language or vocabulary is essential to reading comprehension, learning, and applying concepts. This type of vocabulary used during instruction is known as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). It differs from the language used in daily social interactions, known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). The WIDA Consortium categorizes academic vocabulary from content areas into three categories – *General*, *Specific* and *Technical* language. ESOL teachers can use *WIDA's Performance Definitions* to guide their planning for systematic and explicit vocabulary instruction. As the students progress towards attaining English language proficiency, their use of more complex vocabulary must also increase.

Engaging English language learners with vocabulary across the curriculum in multiple contexts and language domains helps them build word consciousness (metalinguistic skills) as well as gain a deeper understanding of concepts. Closing the vocabulary gap for ELLs will level the playing field by providing them a strong foundation for the knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century.

The list on the following page delineates the type of vocabulary needed to access each content area during the marking period. Specific Language Vocabulary words are listed by content because they are important to learning the vocabulary in context during the marking period, however, they may also be used in other content areas.

General Language Vocabulary *Words required for basic communication. They are often learned through context.*	**Specific Language Vocabulary** *Academic words that appear in high frequency across content areas and need to be taught explicitly.* (Listed in **orange**.)	**Technical Language Vocabulary** *Words limited to a specific content, low frequency, and best taught in a relevant context.* (Listed in black.)
• Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) • Highest frequency vocabulary • General content vocabulary	• Appear frequently across content areas (e.g., describe, synthesize, analyze, pattern, solution) • Multiple-meaning words used in a variety of contexts and contents • Provides an efficient way to express a known concept	• Low frequency words or phrases • Limited to a specific content • Best taught in context as needed

Click on link for professional development:

- **What is Academic Language? Webcast**
  http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/academiclanguage/
- **Articles on academic vocabulary building**
  http://www.scoe.org/docs/ah/AH_kinsella2.pdf
  http://innovativocab.wikispaces.com/file/view/MarzVocabiGami.pdf
  http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/literacy/files/Vocabulary/choosingwords/Which_Words_to_Teach.pdf
- **Models and strategies for Vocabulary Awareness and Mastery** - This model for vocabulary instruction promotes vocabulary building and comprehension (see Slides 19 and 20 when visiting link below)
  http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/development/resources/ELLs/player.html
  http://www.elltoolbox.com/vocabulary-activities.html
- **The Language of Mathematics: Indirect Comparison - Which line is longer?**
  https://mymcps-instruction.mcpsmd.org/sites/ic/_layouts/mcps.olc.home/resourceview.aspx?ResourceID=2690&ViewPage=1
- **Academic Language Function Toolkit**
  http://orh.sweetwaterschools.org/files/2012/06/Academic-Language-Functions-toolkit.pdf

General Language Vocabulary	
Select words based on students' needs to communicate in the classroom and school and to complete specific tasks. read, discuss, tell, solve, share, edit, revise, comma, semicolon, listen, interview, visualize, search, investigate, observe, sort, categorize, compare, similar, different, research, graphic organizer, storyboard, question, answer, ask, sing, song, dance, draw	
Thinking and Academic Success Skills Vocabulary – Intellectual Risk Taking and Elaboration	
infer, interpret, attempt, investigate, estimate, challenge, choices, uncertainty, improvise, novel, adapt, adjust, enhance, expand, enrich, embellish, details	
Specific Language Vocabulary and Technical Language Vocabulary by Content	
Art	**observe, research, storytelling,** artist, artwork, view, scene, light, shadow, spatial relationships, details, emphasis, clay, vessel, coil, slab, pinch, painting, realism, portrait, still life, landscape, shading, crosshatching
Health Education	**responsibility, community, citizen,** body (e.g., food, water, heart, blood, oxygen, brain, neurons, cerebellum, cerebrum, limbic system, brain stem, lungs, hemoglobin), toxins (e.g., pollution, poison, inhalant, huffing, sniffing, prevention), social groups (e.g., group characteristics, interdependence, relationships, unity, interact, emotions, feelings), harassment (e.g., sexual harassment, target, stereotype, upstander, bystander, digital footprint, cyberbully)
Information Literacy	**library catalog, topic, genre,** narrative (e.g., point of view, first person, third person, problem, solution, setting, dialogue, key details, sensory details, evidence, main idea, theme), descriptive annotation, icons, hyperlinks, sidebars, electronic menu, menu bars, multimedia, comments, search box, subject directories, tabs, keywords, bread crumbs, drop down menu, short cuts, index/site map, navigation buttons, navigation bars, graphics, digital image, book trailer, script, Creative Commons license, *NoodleTools*, source, source analysis, citation information
Math	**data, resizing,** problems and operations (e.g., unknown, decompose, equation, sum, difference, multiplication, factor, product), scaling, fractions (e.g., unit fraction, partition, equal shares, whole, dividend, divisor, quotient, denominator, numerator, mixed number), measurement and time (e.g., area, perimeter, dimensions, length, width, square units, minutes, hour), representing math thinking (e.g., area model, array, number line, line plot), comparing number values (e.g., greater than, less than, equal to, equivalent)
Music	**performance,** vocal expression, diction stanzas, lyrics, rhythm pattern, rhyme, meter, tempo, dynamics, articulation, texture, solfege, pitch, notate, whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth note, sixteenth note, rest, staccato, accent, marcato, tenuto, diatonic scale, pentatonic scale, major, minor, melody, countermelody, harmony, musical styles (e.g., middle ages, renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, modern, swing music, jazz, orchestration, improvisation)
Physical Education	creative dance (e.g., beat, formation, rhythm, sequence, contrasting movements), gymnastics (e.g., flexibility stretches, weight transfer, static balance, dynamic balance, synergetic balance), body terms (e.g., core strength, core muscles, chest, back, abdominals, obliques, gluteus maximus, hamstrings, quadriceps)
Reading	discussing text (e.g., character, dialogue, quotes, point of view, firsthand account, setting, events, details, evidence, reasons, key words, problem, solution, central message, tone, theme, main idea, summary, author's purpose), poem terms (e.g., stanza, symbolism, imagery, simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, onomatopoeia), genres (e.g., realistic fiction, biography, graphic text, literary nonfiction), text structure (e.g., chronology), homograph, idiom
Science and Engineering	**vacuum, medium, material, transfer, position, pattern,** light (e.g., energy, shadow, transparent, translucent, opaque, wave, ray, reflection, refraction, prism, color spectrum), astronomy (e.g., celestial body, Sun, Earth, moon, phase, day, night, star, planet, asteroid, meteor, comet, constellation, Sun-centered, solar system, gravity, orbit, rotation, axis, revolution, horizon), technology (e.g., space exploration, communication, satellite telescope, GPS, wireless, radar)
Social Studies	**industry, trade,** government, culture, education, rights, freedom, geographic characteristics (e.g., physical characteristics, physical features, natural environment, weather/climate, vegetation, animal life, human characteristics, human-made features), transportation (e.g., overland trail, steamboat, National Road, highway, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, Erie Canal, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Transcontinental Railroad), settlement patterns (e.g., town, fort, city, rural, suburban, urban), exploration/expansion (e.g., Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Lewis and Clark Expedition, Mississippi River, frontiersmen, territory), migration (e.g., voluntary migration, forced migration, slavery)
Writing	**dialogue,** book trailer, script, literary analysis, author's message, poem (e.g., repetition, alliteration, imagery, sensory details, personification), opinion writing (e.g., print/digital source, introduction, thesis statement, opinion, body paragraphs, key details, evidence, reasons, conclusion, main idea), text structure (e.g., outcome, description, condition, cause/effect, problem/solution, sequence, comparison), plot structure (e.g., exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution), subordinate conjunction

Note: Use this document to select the requisite academic vocabulary necessary to make the content of the curriculum comprehensible for ESOL students. Words are listed in the order they are addressed during the marking period and grouped according to the context in which they are taught. Specific Language Vocabulary used across contents is listed in **Orange** and Technical Language Vocabulary is listed in **Black.**