

CHECK YOUR  
VOCABULARY FOR

# **Academic English**

Third Edition

David Porter



All you need to pass your exams

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# ACADEMIC ENGLISH

THIRD EDITION

by

David Porter

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For Ana Rita

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# Introduction

The purpose of this book is to help students learn a common core of vocabulary which will be useful for almost any subject studied at college or university.

## Advice to the Student

### *Obtain a Dictionary*

Before attempting to use this book, you will need to obtain a good English-English dictionary, such as the *Easier English Dictionary for Students* (ISBN: 978 07475 6624 3) published by A&C Black Publishers Ltd, which this workbook has been based on.

### *Using your Dictionary*

A dictionary is really a long list of individual words, but in normal situations, words are very rarely used on their own, appearing instead together with other words. For this reason, the vocabulary you will learn in this book is presented in example sentences which will help you to **understand** the words, to **remember** them more easily, and to **use** them correctly.

### *Doing the Exercises*

There are different types of exercise in this book, but one small example will be enough to show you how to use the book. In these two sentences from Unit One, notice first of all that the other words in these sentences show you the grammar of these words – here an adjective and then a verb.

1. Although not exactly identical, the two books are so \_\_\_\_\_ to each other that one writer must have copied much of his book from the other.
2. The Prime Minister set up a committee of financial experts to help him discuss and \_\_\_\_\_ new policies.

### *Working Out the Word or Meaning*

Also, notice that the other words in the sentences can help you to guess the meaning of the missing words. In the examples above, we can see from the phrases *not exactly identical* and *copied much of his book* that the adjective in the first example must mean something like *almost the same*. In the same way, because the *policies* mentioned in the second example are described as *new*, the verb in the second example seems to mean *plan* or *prepare*:

1. Although **not exactly identical**, the two books are so \_\_\_\_?adj?\_\_\_\_ to each other that one writer must have **copied much of his book** from the other.
2. The Prime Minister set up a committee of financial experts to help him discuss and \_\_\_\_?v?\_\_\_\_ **new** policies.

### *Sample Answers*

With the exercise from which these sentences were taken, the words *similar* (adj) and *formulate* (v), were included in the list of answers. Because of the grammar of these words and their meanings – which we can check in the dictionary if necessary – the completed sentences will look like this:

1. Although not exactly identical, the two books are so **similar** to each other that one writer must have copied much of his book from the other.
2. The Prime Minister set up a committee of financial experts to help him discuss and **formulate** new policies.

### *Keep Your Own Notes*

Next, whenever you find out what a new word means, write it into your vocabulary notebook, which you can organise in alphabetical order like a dictionary. With any new word, you should copy either the sentence from this book or the example from the dictionary. This will help you to learn the word.

# Introduction

## *Words With Many Meanings*

When you do look in your dictionary, you may find that one word has many meanings. If you compare these, however, you will often find that they are not so different from each other, so try to look for one central meaning.

## *Word That Go Together*

Remember also to write down any other words which are often found together with your new word. For example, notice in your dictionary that we normally use the word *to* after the word *similar* (a 'dependent preposition') and that it is usually *policies*, *plans* or *programs* and so on which are *formulated* (examples of 'collocations'). This information will help you to use the new words correctly.

## *To sum up:*

- decide if the word in the example sentence is a verb, a noun or an adjective
- read the other words to help you guess the meaning of the new word
- then if necessary use your dictionary to select a suitable answer
- if possible, choose one central meaning for the word from the dictionary entry
- write down your new word with an example sentence to help you remember its meaning
- note down any dependent prepositions or collocations to help you use the word correctly

## **Advice to the Teacher**

The purpose of this book is to equip non-native speakers of English at upper intermediate level and above with a core of sub-technical vocabulary relevant to the full range of university subjects.

It is envisaged that this book will be used to supplement an English for Academic Purposes/Study Skills course, at foundation, undergraduate or postgraduate level. It may either be used in class or be assigned for study on a self-access basis.

The vocabulary items presented here are based on research by I. S. P. Nation\*, which culminated in a series of approximately 800 words ranked in sets according to their frequency of occurrence in texts drawn from a number of very different academic subjects.

Since the order of the eleven units presented in this book reflect this ranking, the words in Unit One have a wider range of application than those in Unit Two and so on, which means that students should work through the book sequentially.

Inside the units, each word is presented in an example sentence which aims firstly to provide a context from which students may be able to infer the meaning of the word in question and secondly to give instances of associated words such as collocates and dependent prepositions. This form of presentation will allow students to find out not only what words mean, but also how to use them.

The exercises include gap-filling, word matching, identifying synonyms, matching sentence fragments, and word-completion. In all cases, the style and content of the examples I have written are intended to be typical of language used in academic contexts.

In approaching the exercises, it is vital that students use dictionaries appropriately, and far preferable that they use an English-English learner's dictionary rather than a translation dictionary. Similarly, it is important that students do not regard simply filling in blanks as the sole purpose of this book. Instead, students should approach vocabulary learning actively. This means keeping a vocabulary notebook in which they should be encouraged to write an example for each new word, with special attention being paid to any dependent prepositions and collocations.

Although the immediate goal is for students to learn the words here, if it can encourage students to take a more active, thoughtful approach to vocabulary learning, this book will have succeeded in its wider aim.

\*Nation, I. S. P. (1990) *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

# 1a – Fill in the gaps

From the following list, use each word only once to complete the sentences below. Remember that in the case of nouns and verbs you may need to change the form of the word:

arbitrary (adj)	•	assign (v)	•	context (n)	•	criterion (n)	•	data (n)
denote (v)	•	devise (v)	•	formulate (v)	•	ignore (v)	•	impact (n)
similar (adj)	•	summary (n)	•	usage (n)	•	vertical (adj)		

- Although not exactly identical, the two books are so \_\_\_\_\_ to each other that one author must have copied much of his book from the other.
- The Prime Minister set up a committee of financial experts to help him discuss and \_\_\_\_\_ new policies.
- It is often possible to guess the meaning of a word from the other words around it — that is to say, the \_\_\_\_\_.
- In 1990, the British researcher Tim Berners-Lee \_\_\_\_\_ the first browser, and so paved the way for the development of the World Wide Web.
- In newspapers, the layout of the columns is \_\_\_\_\_, while the rows run across the page horizontally.
- The rise in the number of deaths from AIDS has had a very significant \_\_\_\_\_ on people's sexual behaviour.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of drugs has increased significantly in spite of more severe penalties such as longer prison sentences.
- Students should not try to write down everything they hear in a lecture, but just make a \_\_\_\_\_ of the most important points.
- We use the term "class" to \_\_\_\_\_ groups of people who share the same social and economic backgrounds.
- In one case, a murderer may go to prison for life, while another may be set free: it all seems completely \_\_\_\_\_.
- The new journalist was \_\_\_\_\_ to researching the election promises of the main political parties.
- Before we can judge a government's success, we have to decide the \_\_\_\_\_, such as unemployment, defence or taxation.
- One student failed because he completely \_\_\_\_\_ the instructions on the paper, although they appeared at the top of every page.
- Market researchers use \_\_\_\_\_ such as people's spending patterns as well as information about age and occupation to decide on the most effective marketing strategies.

**Don't forget to keep a record of the words and expressions that you have learnt, review your notes from time to time and try to use new vocabulary items whenever possible.**

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## 1b – Choose the right word

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In each of the sentences below, decide which word in **bold** is more suitable.

1. During the 1970's and 1980's, it became increasingly **evident** / **visible** that companies in the West were uncompetitive.
2. The United Kingdom **makes** / **publishes** more books than any other country.
3. There has been a major road accident, **involving** / **including** 23 cars and 16 lorries.
4. On the basis of the latest survey, we know that most people have a very **negative** / **bleak** view of politicians and their parties.
5. In many parts of the world, people are becoming more worried about the danger of pollution and its effect on the **environment** / **ecology**.
6. Education experts from France travelled to Japan to **evaluate** / **judge** the secondary school system there.
7. Although it is not very big, the library has an excellent **range** / **variety** of books, journals and other resources for study.
8. Increasingly, the design of buildings is being **adjusted** / **modified** to allow easier access for disabled people.
9. The lack of extra student accommodation **restricted** / **narrowed** the expansion in student numbers which the university was planning.
10. Many students **acquire** / **derive** a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction from their time at university.
11. Although the world is getting warmer slowly, the increase in temperature **varies** / **fluctuates** from country to country.
12. Following the bank raid, the police **followed** / **pursued** the robbers but were unable to catch them.
13. Assessment on this course **includes** / **consists of** coursework (30%) and examinations (70%).

***Don't forget to keep a record of the words and expressions that you have learnt, review your notes from time to time and try to use new vocabulary items whenever possible.***



## 1c – Finish the sentence

Choose the best ending for each of the sentence extracts below from the list underneath:

1. I like your essay, but I want you to **illustrate**...
2. What will the result be if in the future we **assume**...
3. Students may be asked to compare many **alternative**...
4. The Channel Tunnel between France and England was **constructed**...
5. Everyone wants to be happy, but we probably all **define**...
6. Many universities now have language centres to **facilitate**...
7. Numbers and results are not particularly useful in themselves; we need to **interpret**...
8. In spite of warnings about cancer, many Westerners **equate**...
9. Advertisers use a variety of **techniques**...
10. At first, the police viewed the crimes as **random**...
11. It may be the case that no solution is possible, given the **magnitude**...
12. Although computers are becoming increasingly **complex**,...
13. The investigation was stopped because the witnesses could not **identify**...

- a. ...theories, from which they have to select the most convincing.
- b. ...happiness in many different ways.
- c. ...that nearly everyone has access to a motor car?
- d. ...the programs they use are becoming much easier to operate.
- e. ...a sun tan with health and youthfulness.
- f. ...the man they had seen commit the robbery.
- g. ...language learning for international students.
- h. ...at a cost of over £8 billion.
- i. ...of this problem.
- j. ...them to understand what they actually mean.
- k. ...events, but realised later that there was a pattern linking them.
- l. ...to persuade consumers to buy products and services.
- m. ...your points by providing some supporting examples.

## 1d – Word substitution

From the list below, choose one word which could be used in place of the language shown in **bold** without changing the meaning of the sentence. Remember that you may need to change the form or in some cases the grammatical class of the word:

comply with (v)	•	conclude (v)	•	equivalent (adj)	•	guarantee (n)
imply (v)	•	method (n)	•	obvious (adj)	•	presume (v)
proceed (v)	•	require (v)	•	specify (v)	•	sum (n)

1. If a company does not **observe** health and safety laws, it may be fined very heavily if any of its workers are injured. \_\_\_\_\_
2. For many years, \$4 was **equal** to £1. \_\_\_\_\_
3. University regulations **state** that students must pass 18 modules to graduate. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Anybody driving a car **is obliged** by law to have insurance. \_\_\_\_\_