

Academic Vocabulary

Tool Kit

4th Grade

The words in this tool kit were gleaned from benchmark tests and SOL released items, however, please be aware that this type of language is also used in textbooks and on worksheets. This tool kit is designed to be a visual aid for your students. As you may be aware, research indicates that only about 30 percent of our students are auditory learners. Therefore, we must present vocabulary visually and in a tactile/kinesthetic fashion in addition to presenting it auditorily. Below are some examples of supports that can be used to help visual and tactile/kinesthetic learners acquire academic vocabulary.

Figure 3G: Examples of Sensory, Graphic and Interactive Supports

Sensory Supports	Graphic Supports	Interactive Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-life objects (realia) • Manipulatives • Pictures & photographs • Illustrations, diagrams & drawings • Magazines & newspapers • Physical activities • Videos & Films • Broadcasts • Models & figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts • Graphic organizers • Tables • Graphs • Timelines • Number lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pairs or partners • In triads or small groups • In a whole group • Using cooperative group structures • With the Internet (Web sites) or software programs • In the native language (L1) • With mentors

WIDA Consortium: Understanding the WIDA ELP Standards: A Resource Guide 2007 Edition

Test designers have reinvented the way some common vocabulary words are used. Therefore, it is necessary to deliberately teach these words as they are used academically or in an assessment format. For most of the academic vocabulary words in this tool kit, there will be a definition, example of how the word is used, and a suggested activity. Some of the words which tend to be more subject specific are included in this tool kit as a means of reminding us that some words need to be taught explicitly.

The goal is for these words to become part of our shared vocabulary and part of the culture of the classroom. We want the use of these words to become second nature for our students. The following are suggestions of small moments that can be used for academic vocabulary review:

- morning meeting
- lining up in the classroom to leave
- lunch lines
- hallway transitions
- classroom transitions between stations/centers

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all that apply

all that apply = multiple correct responses

This phrase applies specifically to TEI questions which require more than one answer. Students are used to only having one right answer.

While students are in line or in a group, make a rule and ask a student or students to choose all of the students who apply to your rule. For example, “To fit my rule, you must be wearing jeans. Choose all that apply to my rule.”

blank

blank (n) = black line, empty box

For example:

“Which word belongs in (or on) the blank?”

In a very literal sense, when we ask a student this question, what we mean is, “Which word replaces the black line?”

Be explicit in demonstrating to your ELL students that “blank” means a black line, empty box, or empty space.

can best be
replaced by

can best be replaced by = can be exchanged for

For example:

“In paragraph 4, the word distract can best be replaced by-”

Be very explicit in explaining that “replaced” means that one word or phrase is being removed and the other is being put in its place. Some ELL students have difficulty great difficulty with the concept of “replacing” a word or phrase.

describes

describes = shows or demonstrates

For example:

“Which best describes the difference between 3,021-987?”

“The sum of $32,796 + 47,580$ is best described as –”

The answer is typically an estimate:

“about 70,000”

“closer to 1,000 than 2,000”

This is so tricky! Typically, “describes” is used for specific attributes, not generalizations. Try to use “best describes” in a more ambiguous sense.

expression

expression = number sentence

For example:

“Which expression best completes the equation shown to illustrate the associative property of addition?”

“Expression” is used interchangeably with “equation” and “number sentence.” Use these words interchangeably in instruction.

following

following = the next in a series

When getting ready to give directions, say, “Please listen to the following directions.” As often as possible use the word following in the adjective form as opposed to using it in a verb form.

identify

identify = choose or find

For example:

“Identify the equivalent representations for model 2.”

Typically seen in TEI questions. It is used in place of choose. Occasionally use “identify” instead of “choose” or “find.”

illustrate

illustrate = show or demonstrate

For example:

“Which expression best completes the equation shown to illustrate the associative property of addition?”

“Illustrate” is so frequently used in the context of an actual illustration or diagram. Students sometimes get confused when “illustrate” is used in isolation like this.

Use “illustrate” interchangeably with “demonstrate” or “show.”

mean

mean = definition

It is used in this context, “What does the word _____ mean?”

As often as possible in any subject, choose a word that you think may be difficult and ask students, “What does that word mean?” The answer preferably needs to be in the form of a synonym or short phrase.

model

model (n) = picture of a model (base ten blocks)

Students are usually exposed to this word in the context of actual manipulatives. They may not make the connection between a picture of a model and the three dimensional manipulatives. Whenever possible, use pictures of models in conjunction with actual models.

models

models (v) = shows

For example:

The number sentence below models an addition property.

$$2+3=3+2$$

The noun, model is often used in the same test. Students often assume models (v) is being used in the noun form and have often commented during the test that the models are missing.

Use “models” in place of “shows” occasionally to demonstrate that models can also be a verb form.

mostly about

mostly about

It is the superlative, “most” or “mostly” in this expression that is difficult for some students.

While in a group, ask your students, “What color are most students wearing today?” Instead of asking them to give you the main idea of a story, sometimes ask them, “What was that story mostly about?”

nearest

nearest = closest in value

In general conversation, we use the term “closest” more often than “nearest.” When students are in line or sitting near one another, choose a student to identify which person is nearest him/her.

Use this term in a math context as well, of course. For example, “Round 65 to the nearest ten.” Always try to acknowledge that nearest refers to proximity.

order

order (v) = organize or put

For example:

“Order these numbers from least to greatest.”

We typically use the noun form of order as in, “Put the numbers in order from least to greatest.” Make sure to use the expressions, “Order” and “Put in order” interchangeably.

passage

passage = paragraph, poem, reading selection (it has multiple meanings in this context)

It is used in this context, “The title of this passage is *Sally is a Sea Turtle*. What do you think the passage will be about?” The word, “passage” is used across the curriculum to identify a reading selection.

Use the word, “passage” with any reading excerpt that you share with your class whether it be a poem, a chapter in a read aloud, or a paragraph in a textbook.

placed

placed = put

For example:

“Which number can be placed in the box to make the following number sentence true?”

Use “placed” instead of “put” in casual conversation. Instead of asking a student to “put” something on your desk, ask them to “place” it there.

related

related = similar or able to be combined with

This word is used in this context, “Which number sentence is a related fact for the following number sentence.”

When asking students to line up to go somewhere, choose some with similar attributes to line up together (i.e. all blonds, all wearing the same color, all wearing jeans). Ask your students to identify how those students who lined up are related to one another.

represent

represent/s = show/s

For example:

“The model below is shaded to represent the number 1.”

“Which model represents the number that goes in the blank to make the statement below true?”

Use “show” and “represent” interchangeably.

takes place

takes place = happens

For example:

“The story most likely takes place in...”

Occasionally ask your students to tell you where something “takes place.” For example, when they are on their way to the gym, ask them, “Can someone tell me where P.E. takes place?”

true

true = correct; accurate

The most common use is: “Which statement is true?” It is often followed by a series of mathematical expressions. Use true and correct interchangeably in instruction.

used in
place of

used in place of = exchanged for

This expression is similar to, “best replaced by.” So often, ELL students associate the word, “place” with a physical location. Be explicit in your instruction of this phrase and its relationship to the word, “replace.”

value

value (n)= worth

This is typically used in a math context, “What is the value of the number 7 in 67?” Use value as often as possible in place of the word, “worth.”