



Support

**Grade 4**  
**Academic**  
**Vocabulary**

## What is Academic Vocabulary?

Academic Vocabulary includes the words, phrases, and language structures that are used in learning. It includes the formal language that is used in education, whether orally, in textbooks, and in assessments.

Academic Vocabulary is distinct from the informal language that is used at home, on the playground, and in daily conversation. Slang and colloquialisms are not part of academic vocabulary. Students may be quite adept with the English language in the informal register long before the academic register is developed. It takes specific instruction to build academic vocabulary.

## Teaching Academic Vocabulary

There are three methods of teaching academic vocabulary, and all three are necessary for vocabulary development. **Explicit instruction of words, explicit instruction of word-learning strategies, and indirect instruction of vocabulary** are all essential to developing academic vocabulary.

**In explicit instruction of words**, teachers select terms that are taught using definitions, examples, and proper usage. These terms may be content-specific (e.g., addend, subtrahend) or conceptual (e.g., summarize, explain). This instruction includes using the terms in context and multiple exposures to cement the learning. If word banks or vocabulary notebooks are used, these are the terms that are included with definitions, usage, and non-linguistic representations to help the learner remember the term and its meaning and usage.

**In explicit instruction of word-learning strategies**, teachers introduce, model, and prompt for the use of strategies that are used when a student comes to an unknown word. Context clues, word parts, cognates, text features, and related words are used to help the student attach meaning to the unknown word. Students must practice using the strategies across the curriculum whenever they are presented with unknown words. For the English Learner, special attention must be given to helping him determine which are the important words. Names and poetic or flowery description can be difficult to navigate, but may not be essential for comprehension of the big ideas being presented.

**In indirect instruction of vocabulary**, students are exposed to language through discussion, reading, being read to, multimedia resources, and education-related experiences. This is a very natural way to learn language, but it also varies widely depending on the language experience of the student.

## Reinforcing Academic Vocabulary Instruction

Students should record terms that are taught directly. The record of the terms should be in a format that the student can easily access and understand. The vocabulary may be collected in a notebook, on note cards, in word banks, or other collections, but they must have meaning for the student. If each student has an individual record of the terms, leave room for new information. Students should add new concepts, deeper meaning, graphics, or new usages to the record as the vocabulary develops.

When a term is revisited or a new or deeper meaning is explored, the students should be prompted to record the new learning. Students may also use graphic organizers to help them see the connections between related terms. This is especially helpful when studying a topic with many academic vocabulary terms. **The Standards Plus EL Portal has many graphic organizers that can be used.** Each graphic organizer is presented in a blank format and a completed format as an example of how it may be used:

- Concept web
- Concept tree
- Venn diagram
- Organized List
- Idea hand

Games are an engaging way to revisit vocabulary, and a few simple games can be used all year with different sets of vocabulary. Vocabulary Bingo can be set up so that the students listen for vocabulary terms or their definitions. The bingo cards may have a different term written in each square, or they may have a different definition in each square. The teacher can call the definition of the term, and the students must mark the matching term, or the teacher may call the term itself, and the students must mark the definition that goes with the term. **Examples of these two types of bingo games are found in the Standards Plus EL Portal .** Charades or picture charades work well for terms that can be acted out or drawn. Crossword puzzles and rebuses are great for review, too.

## Reinforcing Academic Vocabulary Instruction

In the spirit of competition, students can compete for class, table, or personal “points” for finding or using academic vocabulary. For example, a student may come in from the playground and say, “Wow! A lot happened at lunch today. Let me **summarize** what happened...” If summarize is a term that the class is studying, the class, that student’s table group, or the student could earn a “point” for correct usage of an academic vocabulary term. Students may also earn points for finding academic vocabulary terms in reading material, hearing academic vocabulary terms that others use, or using them in their writing.

## Grade 4

# Language Arts - Academic Vocabulary

### A

**Act:** Large portions of the play.

**Adage:** A statement or saying that expresses something that is generally understood as the truth.

**Address:** The place where a person or company is located, the place where a delivery may be made.

**Affix:** A word part that is added to the beginning or end of a root.

**Antecedent:** The word that precedes the relative adverb.

**Antonym:** A word that has an opposite meaning.

### C

**Cast of Characters:** A list of the characters in a play.

**Cause and Effect:** One act or event that leads to something else happening.

**Character:** The people or animals that complete the action in a story.

**Characters:** People in a story.

**Chronology:** When the ideas or information are presented in time order.

**Comparison:** How things are alike and how they are different.

**Compound Sentence:** A sentence consisting of two or more independent clauses; may be joined by a coordinating conjunction.

**Concluding Sentence – Informative/Explanatory:** The final sentence that restates the topic and lets the reader know that the text is complete.

**Concluding Sentence – Opinion:** The final sentence that restates the topic and ties together the reason the author holds his/her opinion.

**Conclusion:** How the story ends; the closing of a written text that ties all of the ideas together.

**Conflict:** A problem the characters must solve.

**Conjunction:** A word that joins clauses.

**Consonants:** all of the other letters in the alphabet.

**Context:** The words and ideas around unfamiliar words.

**Coordinating Conjunction:** A word used to join two clauses; **FANBOYS:** for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

## Grade 4

# Language Arts - Academic Vocabulary

### D

**Detail:** Information that describes or explains an idea in text; information that further explains a reason; information that supports the main idea.

**Dialogue:** What the characters say.

**Direct Speech:** The words that a person says.

**Drama:** A play or story.

### E

**Events:** Things that happen to the characters.

### F

**Fact:** True information.

**Firsthand Account:** Told by someone who was there; uses the pronoun I.

**First Person:** Point of view that uses I and we.

**Formal Language:** Language that is planned; no slang words; speaking with a purpose,

**Future Progressive Tense:** The verb shows a continuing action that will happen.

### G

**Geographical Location:** A specific place.

**Graph:** A picture that shows a relationship between two or more things.

### H

**Holiday:** A day that commemorates a special event. Often people do not work or go to school on holidays.

### I

**Idiom:** An expression that has a meaning other than what the words literally mean.

**Informal Language:** Casual conversation; slang might be used; first person (I) is usually used.

**Informational Text:** Text that informs, explains, or teaches about a topic.

**Informative/Explanatory Text:** Text written to inform the reader or explain a topic.

## Grade 4

# Language Arts - Academic Vocabulary

### L

**Linking Words and Phrases:** Words and phrases that connect ideas in a written text (e.g., because, also, therefore, another, for example).

### M

**Main Idea:** The central point of a passage or text.

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech that compares two unlike things to show a similarity.

**Meter:** The sound or rhythm of the poem.

**Modal Auxiliary Verb:** A verb that is used with the main verb to show a shade of time or mood; can, must, might, may, shall, should, will, would, ought.

### N

**Narrative Writing:** Text written to entertain or relate events.

**Narrator:** The person telling the story.

### O

**Opinion:** How you feel about a topic.

### P

**Past Progressive Tense:** The verb shows a continuing action that has already happened.

**Pie Chart:** A chart that presents information in a split circle.

**Plot:** How the characters, events, and setting interact in telling the story.

**Plural:** two or more of something.

**Poetry:** Literature written in lines of verse.

**Point of View:** Outlook or attitude of the reader or writer.

**Prefix:** A word part that is added to the beginning of a root.

**Preposition:** Words that link nouns and pronouns to other words; tell where, how, or when something occurred.

**Prepositional Phrase:** A group of words that begins with a preposition.

**Present Progressive Tense:** The verb shows a continuing action that is currently happening.



## Grade 4

# Language Arts - Academic Vocabulary

**Problem/Solution:** A structure that identifies a problem and suggests a way to solve it.

**Product:** An item or brand of items that are sold.

**Progressive Verb Tense:** The verb ends in –ing; the verb shows continuing action.

**Prompt:** A scenario that describes a writing task.

**Prose:** Literature written in everyday language. Prose is made up of sentences and paragraphs.

**Proverb:** A simple saying that is understood to be the truth or that gives advice.

## Q

**Quotation:** Words, phrases, or sentences taken exactly as written from a text.

## R

**Reason:** Evidence the writer uses to support his/her opinion.

**Relative Adverb:** Introduces a clause that modifies an antecedent: where, when, why.

**Relative Pronoun:** Relates information to the rest of a sentence: who, whom, whose, that, which.

**Rhyme Scheme:** The pattern of rhyme in a poem.

**Root:** A word or word part before an affix is added.

**Run-on Sentence:** A sentence with two or more independent clauses that are not joined with a conjunction or semicolon.

## S

**Scenes:** A shorter piece of the play; scenes combine to make an Act.

**Secondhand Account:** Told by someone who was not there; uses pronouns he, they, and she.

**Sentence Fragment:** An incomplete sentence; may be missing the subject or the verb.

**Setting:** Where the play takes place; where a story takes place.

**Simile:** A figure of speech that compares two things using like or as.

**Singular:** one of something.

**Stage Directions:** How the characters move and speak (walk, run, fight).

**Stanza:** Section of a poem; lines of poetry.

**Subject:** The person, place, thing, or idea that a sentence is about.

## Grade 4

# Language Arts - Academic Vocabulary

**Suffix:** A word part that is added to the end of a root; a word part that is added after a base or root word that changes the meaning of the word.

**Summarize:** To retell in your own words.

**Synonym:** A word that has a similar meaning.

### T

**Theme:** The central idea of a story.

**Third Person:** Point of view that uses he, she, and they.

**Timeline:** A line that represents when important events occurred and in what order.

**Title:** The name of a work of art or writing; a word or abbreviation added to a person's name that tells about who he or she is, e.g., Dr., Mrs., etc.

**Topic Sentence – Informative/Explanatory:** The sentence that introduces the topic.

**Topic Sentence – Opinion:** The sentence that introduces the writer's opinion.

### V

**Venn Diagram:** Two overlapping circles that are used to compare and contrast two things.

**Verb:** An action words (run, jump, leap, sleep)

**Verb phrase:** When a modal auxiliary verb is used with the main verb.

**Vowels:** a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y.

### W

**Writing Topic:** The subject of a written text.

## Grade 4

# Mathematics - Academic Vocabulary

### A

**Additive comparison:** A comparison in which one quantity is added to a number to get another quantity.

**Acute angle:** An angle that measures less than  $90^\circ$ .

**Angle:** A shape formed when two rays are joined at a common endpoint or vertex.

**Area:** The number of square units within a figure.

**Arithmetic pattern:** A pattern that is created by adding or subtracting from each term in the series.

### C

**Circle:** A two-dimensional figure in which all points are equal distance from the center of the figure.

**Common:** The same (e.g., common denominator means having the same denominator).

**Compare:** To indicate if one value is greater than, equal to, or less than another.

**Compose:** To put numbers together; to put together.

**Composite number:** A number that has more than two factors.

**Conversion factor:** The number of smaller units it takes to make one of the larger units of measure.

**Convert:** To create an equivalent fraction by multiplying or dividing to change the denominator.

**Customary units:** The units of measure used in the United States, including feet, inches, gallons, pints, pounds, and ounces.

### D

**Decompose:** To break numbers apart; to break into smaller parts.

**Denominator:** The bottom number in a fraction.

**Digit:** The numerals 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 that are used to write numbers in standard form.

**Distributive property:** A number can be decomposed and its parts multiplied and result in the same product if the number is not decomposed.

## Grade 4

# Mathematics - Academic Vocabulary

### E

**Equilateral triangle:** A triangle with three equal sides.

**Equivalent:** Equaling the same size; having the same value; the same size.

**Estimation:** To determine a reasonable answer that is close to the actual result with calculating the solution.

**Expanded form:** A number written to show the place value of each digit.

### F

**Factor:** A number being multiplied in a multiplication equation.

**Factor pair:** Two numbers, which when multiplied together create a product of a specific number.

**Fraction:** Part of the whole or part of a group.

### G

**Geometric pattern:** A pattern that is created when a number is multiplied or divided to create each term in the pattern.

**Greatest factor:** The number with the highest value in a multiplication equation.

### I

**Improper Fraction:** A fraction in which the numerator is greater than the denominator; a fraction with a value greater than one.

**Intersect:** Cross, a figure that touches another.

**Inverse Operation:** An operation that undoes another operation; addition and subtraction are inverse operations; multiplication and division are inverse operations.

**Isosceles triangle:** A triangle with two equal sides.

## Grade 4

# Mathematics - Academic Vocabulary

### L

**Least factor:** The number with the lowest value in a multiplication equation.

**Length:** The distance from one point to another in a straight line.

**Line:** A straight line that goes on indefinitely in opposite directions.

**Line plot:** Data displayed on a number line.

**Line segment:** A line with distinct endpoints.

**Line symmetry:** The imaginary line that divides a figure into parts that mirror each other.

### M

**Mass:** The weight of an object.

**Metric units:** Units of measure in which each unit is smaller or larger by a factor of ten, including meter, centimeter, liter, milliliter, grams, and kilograms.

**Mixed Number:** A number composed of a whole number and a fraction.

**Multiple:** The product; created by multiplying two whole numbers.

**Multiplicative comparison:** A comparison in which one quantity is multiplied by a number to get another quantity.

**Multiplier:** The number that tells how many times larger another number is.

### N

**Numerator:** The top number in a fraction.

### O

**Obtuse angle:** An angle that measures more than  $90^\circ$ .

### P

**Parallel lines:** Lines that are equal distance from one another for their entire length. Parallel lines never intersect.

**Partial product:** The product of one place value within a multi-digit multiplication problem.

**Partial quotient:** The quotient of one place value within a multi-digit division problem.

**Pattern feature:** Additional patterns that are not stated in the rule.

## Grade 4

# Mathematics - Academic Vocabulary

**Pattern rule:** A rule that tells the relationship between each number or term in a pattern.

**Perimeter:** The distance around a figure.

**Perpendicular lines:** Lines that intersect at a  $90^\circ$  angle.

**Place value:** The value of a digit in a number.

**Point:** A precise location or space, usually represented by a dot.

**Prime number:** A number that has exactly two factors, one and itself.

**Product:** The solution in a multiplication equation.

**Protractor:** A mathematical tool used to measure angles.

### Q

**Quadrilateral:** A four-sided polygon.

### R

**Ray:** A line that begins at a fixed point and extends infinitely in one direction.

**Regroup:** To group a ten in a specific place value in the place value that is one higher or one lower than the original number, e.g., 12 tens can be regrouped as 1 hundred and 2 tens.

**Right angle:** An angle that measures exactly  $90^\circ$ .

**Right triangle:** A triangle with a right angle.

**Rotation:** The movement, clockwise or counter-clockwise, from one point through  $360^\circ$  turns to return to the original starting point.

**Round:** To find the closest place value to which a number is located.

### S

**Scalene triangle:** A triangle with no equal sides.

**Standard form:** A number written using base-ten numerals.

**Straight angle:** An angle that measures exactly  $180^\circ$ .

## Grade 4 Mathematics - Academic Vocabulary

### T

Term: A number that occurs in a number pattern.

Triangle: A three-sided polygon.

### U

Unknown factor: A factor that is not given a value. The value must be determined.

### V

Vertex: The point at which two lines intersect.

Volume: The amount of liquid measured.

### W

Written form: A number written using words rather than numerals.