

Lesson Plan:

Academic vocabulary in context

LEVEL	TIME	SKILLS	FOCUS
Intermediate / Advanced (B1-C1)	60-90 minutes	Vocabulary, writing, reading	Academic Word List (AWL) words; word families; paraphrasing with AWL vocabulary

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand and use 20+ high-frequency academic words accurately
- Recognize and use word families: analyze/analysis/analytical/analytically
- Use academic vocabulary in formal writing and academic discussion
- Paraphrase informal language using academic vocabulary

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Core academic word families

- analyze → analysis → analytical → analytically
- concept → conceptual → conceptualize
- establish → establishment → established
- significant → significance → significantly
- approach → approach (v) → approachable

High-frequency AWL in context

- indicate: The data indicates a clear trend. / What does this indicate?
- demonstrate: The study demonstrates that... / She demonstrated the technique.
- assess: We need to assess the risks. / The impact was assessed by an expert panel.
- interpret: How do you interpret these results?
- contrast: In contrast to previous findings... / The two methods contrast sharply.

AWL words by function

- Process: analyze, assess, identify, establish, demonstrate
- Reference: indicate, suggest, imply, propose, argue
- Structure: framework, context, approach, perspective, evidence

Meaning & Nuance

Word	Part of speech	Academic example sentence
significant	adjective	There was a significant increase in unemployment.
significance	noun	The significance of the finding is still debated.
significantly	adverb	Costs have risen significantly this year.
analyse	verb	We need to analyse the data carefully.
analysis	noun	A thorough analysis of the results revealed...
indicate	verb	The figures indicate a downward trend.
indication	noun	There is no indication of when this will change.
context	noun	In the context of global trade, this is significant.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: Academic or everyday? (10 min)

Task: Students classify 10 words: academic or everyday?

- 'big' vs. 'significant'. 'show' vs. 'indicate'. 'use' vs. 'utilize'.
- Discuss: what makes a word feel academic?

2. Vocabulary in context (15 min)

Task: Students read 3 short academic sentences and identify AWL words.

- For each: what does it mean? What is the word family?
- Build a word family map for 5 key words.

3. Academic paraphrasing (15 min)

Task: Rewrite informal sentences using academic vocabulary.

- 'They found out that...' → 'The study established that...'
- 'This shows that...' → 'This indicates / demonstrates that...'

4. Academic writing paragraph (25 min)

Task: Write a short paragraph on a given topic using at least 8 AWL words.

- Topics: technology in education, urbanization, globalization.
- Peer review: are the AWL words used naturally or forced?

TEACHER NOTES

- The AWL covers ~10% of words in academic texts — teaching even the top 50 word families has a significant impact.
- Word family work (analyze/analysis/analytical) is more efficient than teaching words in isolation.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Learn the word family for 5 AWL words and write 2 sentences for each form.
2. Read a short academic article and highlight all AWL words you recognize.
3. Write a 100-word academic paragraph using at least 6 AWL words.