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## *Introduction*

In order for students to acquire new knowledge and learning, they must be able to understand what they read, hear, and are asked to do in the classroom. According to Robert Marzano, a leading researcher in education and author of several books on academic vocabulary, students must comprehend academic vocabulary in order to understand instruction and academic texts. Often, students have a hard time writing to prompts or responding to instructions because they don't know exactly what is being asked. This is because they don't understand the meanings behind instructional verbs or how these words are used in an academic context.

### *What Is Academic Vocabulary?*

Academic vocabulary is the language of the classroom. It includes academic language—the specific words and phrases that students encounter in their academic reading, assignments, and daily classroom activities—as well as the grammar and language structures that make up classroom discussions. Academic vocabulary incorporates words not always used in everyday conversation, and sentences may be more complex. In some cases, students encounter words that have different meanings than they do in other contexts.

Academic vocabulary refers to words and phrases that are used in the process of learning. Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist, worked with colleagues to create and publish a taxonomy that provides a framework for classroom instruction. Bloom's Taxonomy has been updated to reflect the action words students encounter in their learning while maintaining a hierarchy of higher-order thinking. Each level contains key words found in academic tasks for that level of critical thinking. Current standards emphasize the need for students to develop critical-thinking skills. Bloom's Taxonomy labels the levels of higher-order thinking as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Teachers and students use academic language to discuss new knowledge and concepts, develop ideas, talk about texts, and engage in classroom activities. This book will focus on terms used specifically in classroom instruction. Many of these terms are included in Bloom's Taxonomy, which enables teachers to identify objectives and plan instruction that develop critical-thinking skills and to assess student learning. Direct instruction in academic vocabulary supports students by helping them understand what they are expected to do.

This book contains three main components: strategies to help teachers explain academic vocabulary; lessons that present definitions, examples, and practice of academic instructional verbs; and a glossary, which includes related, non-specific academic language to further develop students' working vocabulary.



## How to Use This Book

*Know the Lingo! Mastering Academic Vocabulary* contains strategies, specific lessons and activities, and a glossary to help teachers illustrate and teach instructional verbs and other academic vocabulary. Introduce and discuss the concept of academic vocabulary with students. Explain that in school, teachers ask students to do certain things in the classroom. When teachers tell students what to do or how to do something, we call these sentences *instructions* or *directions*. It is important for students to understand what the words used in directions mean, so they will be able to successfully do what is being asked. In these lessons, students will learn the meanings of words teachers use when giving instructions. Other times, students read words that tell them what to do; these are called *written directions*. When first starting these lessons, help students understand the nature of and expected response to a *prompt*. A prompt is a sentence that tells students which action to take. Review also the concept of *task*, meaning a specific piece of work to be done, often assigned by another person. The glossary lists additional academic vocabulary students encounter in the context of instruction, activities, and other classroom materials. Students need to understand the meanings of these words in order to successfully complete academic tasks within the classroom. Copy these pages for students and explain to them that they will keep their glossaries handy to help them understand academic words used in the prompts and tasks in the lessons.


The strategies and examples listed on “Strategies to Teach Academic Vocabulary” (pages 6–7) offer support for students who need additional assistance in making connections between words, their meanings, and expected actions. They may be used with various instructional verbs and other academic vocabulary to teach students and help them incorporate academic vocabulary into their daily learning.

The “Academic Instructional Verbs” section (pages 8–103) highlights grade-appropriate instructional verbs that students will find included in many prompts. These words include *describe*, *discuss*, *evaluate*, and *summarize*. The word list is compiled from grade-level standards and Bloom’s Taxonomy. Lessons are presented in an order that correlates to the frequency with which students might encounter the word. For example, most prompts ask students to “write,” so that lesson is one of the first taught. Each verb is explained in the following ways:

- **Define:** Students are provided with a definition of the instructional verb.
- **Study:** Students are asked to review sample prompts and tasks that include the instructional verb as well as sample responses to the prompts and tasks.
- **Practice:** Students practice answering prompts and completing tasks that contain the instructional verb.
- **Check:** Students participate in a small-group or whole-class activity to confirm their understanding of the instructional verb.
- **Review:** Students are reminded of how the instructional verb is used.
- **Collaborate:** Students collaborate in pairs to further demonstrate their understanding of the instructional verb.



## *How to Use This Book (cont.)*

Preview each lesson to ensure you have the needed materials on hand. When this icon appears , prepare or complete the activity as directed. Guide students through the sample prompts and sample answers provided in each lesson to help students understand the meaning of the academic verb. Then preview the practice prompts and tasks to which students will respond. Ensure students have the “Academic Concepts Glossary” (pages 104–108) for reference as they complete individual, whole-class, small-group, or paired activities. Designate a place for students to store their glossaries for easy access during classroom instruction and activities. Sometimes a sample prompt or activity includes a short reading passage for students. Most reading passages fall within the third-grade reading range based on Lexile measures (520L–820L) for this grade level. For further review, consider using this comprehension check format as a follow-up to the lesson activities:

### *Check Your Work*

Think about your answers to the following questions. Discuss your thoughts with a partner or other classmates, or write your responses in a journal entry.

- Did you know what to do?
- Was it easy or hard to understand what the word or phrase means?
- Could you tell someone else what to do if they heard this word?
- In your own words, what does this word mean?

*Note:* Any Common Core State Standards addressed in lesson activities are listed on pages 110–112.

### *Academic Vocabulary Notebooks*

Consider having students keep academic vocabulary notebooks. Notebooks will help students with word recognition in future encounters. Encourage students to refer to their notebooks during various cross-curricular activities.

- Create and maintain a class “journal” to observe and discuss academic vocabulary in practice throughout a school day.
- Have students copy the word and a simple definition for reference in small-group discussions and activities.
- Have students write observations and new information about academic vocabulary.
- Have students write comments about their experiences with academic vocabulary in classroom activities.
- Encourage students to make connections across content areas.
- Have students discuss and compare their observations with classmates.
- Have students compare terms within or between subject areas.
- Provide activities that engage students in using terms from their notebooks.
- Have students edit and revise their notebooks to reflect new learning.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Define

## DEFINE

**Question:** What does it mean to define something?

**Answer:** When we define something, we tell what it means. We describe or explain it exactly.

## STUDY

**Sample Prompt:** What are some ways we can learn how to define words?

**Sample Answer:** We can use a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus to help us define words.

**Sample Prompt:** How would you define the word *solid*?

**Sample Answer:** A *solid* is something that is hard and firm, not a liquid or a gas.

## PRACTICE

① **Prompt:** How would you define the science word *matter* in your own words?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

② **Prompt:** What tools could you use to check how you defined the word in Practice Prompt #1?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

③ **Task:** Read the paragraph below. Think about what it means to define to answer the questions.

Matter comes in three forms: solid, liquid, and gas. Almost everything we see around us is in one of these three states. Some objects keep their shape all the time. Other things may change. Scientists have found a fourth state of matter called *plasma*. It is different from a solid, liquid, or gas. It does not hold its shape, and it has a lot of energy. Flames and lightning are examples of this type of matter. Understanding the states of matter helps us learn about the world in which we live.

How does the author define *plasma*? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why does the author define this word in the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_




Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Define (cont.)

### CHECK

Look back at what the word define means.

- ① Your teacher will display a chart on an interactive whiteboard or chart paper with three columns labeled *solid*, *liquid*, and *gas*. 
- ② Work together as a class to define the words *solid*, *liquid*, and *gas*. Add your ideas to the chart as you write what each word means in the correct column.
- ③ Think about and write examples of matter in each of these states.

### REVIEW

- When we define a word, we state the meaning.
- We can define words to show that we know exactly what they mean.
- We can define something by describing it exactly.

### COLLABORATE

When we look back at what this word means, we see that it means to give the meaning of a word.

- ① How would you define *water* without naming it?

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- ② What descriptive words can you include to help someone know what *water* is not?

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- ③ Trade your answers to the above questions with a partner.
- ④ Think about how your partner defined the word and create a picture or graphic to show his or her meaning of the word. Use a separate piece of paper.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Take Notes

### DEFINE

**Question:** What does it mean to take notes?

**Answer:** When we take notes, we get information from something we hear or read. We write what we learn.

### STUDY

**Sample Task:** Read the paragraph below. Take notes about how you could learn about new types of animals.

Scientists study many different kinds of animals. Often, they find new types of animals. They write about the new animals they find.

**Sample Answer:** I could research to read and learn about new animals scientists have found.

**Sample Task:** Read the paragraph below. Take notes about what you learn.

Seadragons are in the same family as seahorses. However, scientists have found only three kinds of seadragons so far. The ruby seadragon is named for its color. It lives in deeper water, farther from shore than seahorses. Scientists are surprised they did not know about this animal.

**Sample Answer:** Scientists have found a red seadragon. They did not know about this animal before. There are not very many different kinds of seadragons.

### PRACTICE

- ① **Task:** Read the paragraph below. Then take notes on a separate piece of paper about what you learned about this new life form.

Many animals eat plants. We do not think about plants eating animals. But sundew plants eat insects. Scientists have found a new type of this plant. They call it the giant sundew. It grows up to four feet across. Even though this plant is new to scientists, it is already in danger. It grows only at the top of one mountain, very high above sea level. Its habitat is limited and could be easily destroyed by people.

- ② **Prompt:** Which details did you take notes on?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Take Notes (cont.)

### CHECK

Look back at what it means to take notes.

- ① Listen as your teacher reads this paragraph aloud :

When scientists study new animals, they think about how they are alike and different from other animals. Animals have different physical characteristics. They do not all look the same. Scientists examine certain features of the animal to see how it compares to other animals like it. They study the animal's habitat.

- ② Take notes to remember what you heard. \_\_\_\_\_

- ③ Share your notes with classmates in a small group.

- ④ Pretend you are scientists and make up an animal. Take notes to describe how this new animal is different from other animals. Use a separate piece of paper. Work together and apply what you learned from the paragraph.

### REVIEW

- When we take notes, we write the main ideas from what we hear or read.
- We take notes when we write information from something we hear or read.
- We can include drawings and words when we take notes to help us remember what we learn.

### COLLABORATE

When we look back at what it means to take notes, we see that it means to write information we learn from something we hear or read.

- ① Trade your answer to Practice Task #1 with a partner.
- ② Read your partner's notes and take notes about what you notice. Use different colors to underline or circle key words.
- ③ Talk with your partner about what you learned from reading his or her notes. What will you do differently the next time you take notes?

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