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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*, *indicate*, *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 “review,” 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 fourth-grade reading range based on Lexile measures (740L–940L) 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 younger 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Report



## DEFINE

**Question:** What does it mean to report?

**Answer:** When we report, we write a detailed statement or tell what happened. We give information or describe our feelings when we report about something.



## STUDY

**Sample Prompt:** Report on the new planet scientists have discovered.

**Sample Answer:** Scientists have discovered a planet that orbits around its own star, Kepler-22. They named the planet Kepler-22b. This planet is a comfortable distance from its sun, and its “year” is not quite as many days as our year on Earth.

**Sample Prompt:** What has NASA’s Kepler mission reported?

**Sample Answer:** The telescope on the spacecraft has discovered a dwarf star that has seven Earth-sized planets.



## PRACTICE

① **Prompt:** Why do people report on a subject?

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② **Prompt:** What space discovery topic would you like to report on for classmates? Why?

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③ **Prompt:** What information might you want to include when you report on a new space discovery?

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

## Report (cont.)

### CHECK

Look back at what the word report means.

- ① Discuss with classmates space discoveries you have read or seen reported in the news.
- ② What do you notice about how different people report the discoveries?
- ③ Work together to create a chart describing what you notice about how people report on a specific topic, such as space discoveries. Use a separate piece of paper.
- ④ What did you report you noticed in reading or viewing these accounts?

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### REVIEW

- We report when we say or write what happened.
- When we report, we give a detailed statement about something that happened.
- When we report about something, we give information about it.
- We tell people about something when we report.
- When we report, we might describe our feelings about a thing or event.

### COLLABORATE

When we look back at what this word means, we see that it means to say or write details or information about something.

- ① Share with a classmate your experiences reporting on a topic in the past.
- ② What did you learn from each other and the class discussion in the Check activity about how to report?

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- ③ Discuss with your partner how you will apply this learning to report on the space discovery topic you identified in Practice Prompt #2.
- ④ Work together to write the steps you will take to report on your topic. Use a separate piece of paper.
- ⑤ As time allows, research and report on your topic in writing. Use a separate piece of paper.



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

# Express



## DEFINE

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

**Answer:** When we express something, we show how we feel or what we think by saying, doing, or writing something. We can express an opinion, an idea, a thought, or a feeling.



## STUDY

**Sample Prompt:** Express an opinion about fruit.

**Sample Answer:** Fruit is a healthy, tasty snack food.

**Sample Prompt:** How could you express how fruit is part of a healthy diet?

**Sample Answer:** I could create a poster showing pictures of foods, including fruit, that a person might eat as part of a healthy diet.



## PRACTICE

① **Task:** Think about your favorite fruit. Express in writing why it is your favorite.

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② **Prompt:** Express your ideas about a fruit you would like to try. Why would you like to try this fruit?

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③ **Task:** Read the quotation and express what you think it means.

“A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds.” ~ Saint Basil

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

## Express (cont.)

### CHECK

Look back at what the word express means.

- ① Work with a small group to express your ideas about different ways to eat fruit.
- ② Take notes to remember what you want to express to your classmates. Use a separate piece of paper.
- ③ Express your ideas clearly to others in your small group in a discussion.
- ④ Listen to classmates and review the ideas they expressed about ways they like to eat fruit.
- ⑤ What is one new idea you heard about a way to eat fruit that you would like to try? Express in writing what you plan to do.

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### REVIEW

- When we express something, we talk or write about it.
- We might express our opinion about something to other people by saying it or writing it.
- We can express an idea by showing it with a sign or a symbol.
- We can do something other than talking or writing to express our thoughts or feelings about something.

### COLLABORATE

When we look back at what this word means, we see that it means to show what we think or feel about something by talking, writing, or doing some action.

- ① Express your thoughts from Practice Task #3 to a partner.
- ② How easy was it for you to understand the ideas your partner expressed?

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- ③ Review your partner's written response to Practice Task #1.
- ④ How well did you partner express his or her opinion in writing? Share your answer with your partner.