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To the Teacher

Overview

Second-language learners have long realized the importance of vocabulary for improving language proficiency. However, very often vocabulary does not receive sufficient attention in language classrooms. Research indicates that learners need to have access to a minimum of 3,000 words in order to even begin to comprehend authentic texts (Laufer, 1992), and students wishing to study in English at the university level may need up to 10,000 words (Hazenberg and Hulstijn, 1996). In order to help students attain vocabularies of this size, teachers need to provide explicit instruction on the more frequent words, and they also must help students to develop learning strategies that will enable them to acquire less frequent vocabulary.

In addition to developing a wide vocabulary, learners wishing to operate in academic environments in English also need to become familiar with a special type of formal vocabulary that is common in academic discourse. Commonly known as *academic vocabulary*, these words are found in a wide variety of academic disciplines. They are not specific to any one discipline but are the "support vocabulary" (sometimes referred to as "sub-technical vocabulary") necessary for speaking or writing precisely in a variety of fields. Examples include the words *analyze, predominant*, and *theory*. In a typical academic textbook, these words make up around 10 percent of the total text (Coxhead, 2000). In addition to facilitating the precise statement of ideas, these words contribute to the more sophisticated tone that is characteristic of academic texts.

Focus on Vocabulary 2: Mastering the Academic Word List assists students in learning this academic vocabulary. However, there is still the question of *which* academic vocabulary to teach. We have relied upon empirical research to determine the target words presented in this book. Coxhead (2000) compiled a corpus of 3.5 million words of written academic discourse, composed of 414 academic texts written by more than 400 authors on 28 topic areas. From this broad corpus, she identified 570 word families that are used frequently in academic texts across a wide range of topics, thus creating the Academic Word List (AWL). We have deleted 66 of the most frequent words from the AWL, which we feel students should already know (for example, *area, create, require*, and *similar*). This leaves 504 words, and these words are the ones featured in *Focus on Vocabulary 2*.

There is always a compromise between teaching many words in a cursory fashion, and teaching fewer words in greater depth. The words in the AWL constitute a significant percentage of those used in academic texts (around 10 percent). Therefore, students need to learn these words and learn them well. In order to help students gain a reasonable mastery of these words, we have drawn on the latest vocabulary research to design the most beneficial exercises. The key rationale behind the pedagogy in this book can be summarized in the following points.

- Words must be encountered numerous times to be learned. Nation (1990) reviewed the literature and concluded that it takes from five to sixteen or more repetitions for a word to be learned. In every chapter of *Focus on Vocabulary 2*, each target word appears at least four times, and most appear many more times elsewhere in the book. The Strategy Practice chapters and online Unit Tests provide additional recycling opportunities.

- Learning a word entails more than knowing its meaning, spelling, and pronunciation (Schmitt, 2000). In fact, there are a number of other types of word knowledge, including a word's collocations, grammatical characteristics, register, frequency, and associations. In order to use a word with confidence, a learner must have some mastery of all of these types of word knowledge. Some can be taught explicitly (for example, meaning and spelling), while others can only be truly acquired through numerous exposures to a word (for example, frequency and register information). Our extensive recycling can help learners gain intuitions about types of word knowledge that are best learned in context. We have provided exposures to the target vocabulary in both reading passages and in a number of exercise sentences, which model as many different contexts as possible. At the same time, our exercises focus on elements that can be explicitly taught. Every chapter focuses on meaning, the derivative forms of a word (word families), and collocation.
- Different contexts provide different kinds of information about a word. For example, it is possible to learn one meaning from a particular context (for example, *to monitor an election* in an international relations context) yet require a different context in order to learn a separate meaning (for example, *a computer monitor* in an information technology context). Because of this, we have provided exposures to the target academic vocabulary in the reading passages and in a number of different exercise types. The exercise sentences model as many different contexts as possible.
- Students learn best when their attention is focused on the material to be learned (Schmidt, 1990). To make the target words more noticeable, we have placed them in **bold** type in the chapters in which they are the target words. However, to avoid excess clutter, recycled target vocabulary is not boldfaced in subsequent chapters.
- Learners typically do not know all of the members of a word family, even if they know some of these word forms (Schmitt and Zimmerman, 2002). However, a learner must know the correct form of a word (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) for a particular context. Thus, every chapter has a section (Word Families) that deals with the derivative forms of the target words.
- Equally important for the natural use of words is collocation. These word partnerships are actually difficult to teach, but we feel that collocation is so important to the appropriate use of vocabulary that we have included a collocation section in each chapter (Collocation). The exercises explicitly teach a number of collocations for the target words. However, as it is impossible to teach all of the collocations for a word, the tasks are best seen as exercises that will help make learners more aware of collocations in general and may help students build their collocation intuitions for individual words more rapidly.
- In order to ensure that the information in this book reflects the actual usage of the target words, we have researched the 179-million-word New Longman Corpus. This has allowed us to empirically determine how the target academic words behave in real contexts. This was particularly useful in identifying the collocations of the academic words, because intuitions are often unreliable in this area. In addition, the examples and sentence exercises in this book are based on the patterns and constructions found in the corpus, and so are authentic in nature.

Organization of the Book

The book is divided into seven units, with each unit focusing on a specific subject. Within each unit, there are four chapters—three main chapters plus a Strategy Practice chapter that presents additional information and chances to recycle the target vocabulary.

MAIN CHAPTERS

Each of the three main chapters is organized as follows.

Getting Started provides warm-up questions about the chapter topic. The main purpose of the questions is to activate students' prior knowledge about the topic before they read the passage. The questions also usually ask about the students' life or ideas, so they can be used as a more general discussion starter as well.

Assessing Your Vocabulary Knowledge: Target Words presents twenty-four target words and asks students to assess their knowledge of each word both before and after they work through the chapter. The assessment test is taken from Schmitt and Zimmerman (2002) and views vocabulary learning as incremental. Thus, even if students do not achieve productive mastery of every word by the time the chapter is finished, the test can show partial improvement (e.g., from *no knowledge* to *receptive knowledge*). By avoiding a *no knowledge / full mastery* dichotomy, the test can show smaller degrees of learning. We would expect every student to learn enough about the target words to show some improvement on this test, which should maintain and enhance their motivation.

Reading presents an academic reading passage, usually from an actual college textbook. We have simplified some of the non-academic vocabulary and the phrasing in the passages, but otherwise they remain authentic. Exposure to academic vocabulary in extended, nearly authentic texts is beneficial. There is a great deal of academic vocabulary in these texts that is not specifically targeted in the chapter, and this provides natural recycling (in new contexts) of words students have already studied. Also, students appreciate that the readings closely match their expectations of what academic reading is like.

- **Reading Strategies** includes a variety of activities aimed at developing students' awareness of text structure and the linguistic features writers use to achieve cohesion. Other activities provide opportunities for students to recognize an author's point of view, to summarize, to synthesize information from multiple readings, and to consider how information they gain from reading might be used in other areas of their study. Although there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, successful academic reading requires that students not only be able to read for basic comprehension, but also to connect new information with background knowledge, to integrate information from a single text with information from other texts, and to apply ideas that they have learned from reading. This section helps them develop these skills.

Focusing on Vocabulary features the following sections.

- **Word Meaning** features a variety of exercises designed to help students learn the meaning of each of the twenty-four target words. Some of the tasks are deductive in nature, and some are inductive, catering to a range of learning styles.
- **Word Families** provides practice in recognizing and using the various derivative word forms that make up a word's family (*access, accessible, accessibility*).
- **Collocation** exercises are designed to improve students' intuitions about the collocations a word takes (*emotional stability, political stability*).

Expanding the Topic provides various reading, discussion, and writing activities that recycle the target words and expand students' word knowledge in new ways.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

The fourth chapter in each unit includes the following features.

Using Your Dictionary—Dictionaries are the one resource students worldwide use to improve their vocabulary. However, many students never learn to use them systematically. This section provides tips and practice for using dictionaries effectively.

Strategy—This section provides an introduction to a number of different vocabulary learning strategies, such as *using affixes* and *the keyword technique*, along with advice on how to use the strategies effectively.

Word Knowledge—In the main chapters, we focus on meaning, derivatives, and collocation. In this section of the Strategy Practice chapters, we explore other kinds of word knowledge, including frequency and academic phrases.

The Strategy Practice section also provides additional chances for students to use the academic words they have studied.

Answer Key and Unit Tests

Focus on Vocabulary 2 is accompanied by an online Student Book Answer Key and Unit Tests. The tests give students additional vocabulary practice and assess their word knowledge.

Focus on Vocabulary 2 draws on our vocabulary research and many years of experience teaching vocabulary. We hope that you enjoy using it in your classes and that it helps your students learn the academic vocabulary they need to flourish in an academic environment. Good luck!

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To the Student

Why Study Academic Vocabulary?

When studying in English, you will be required to read texts, write essays, respond to exam questions, and participate in class discussions. The English used in academic environments differs somewhat from the English you hear in informal social situations. A key component of academic style is the use of academic vocabulary. By focusing your vocabulary study on words that occur frequently in academic contexts, you will be able to develop your own academic style and achieve academic success.

Focus on Vocabulary 2 is based on the Academic Word List, a list of 570 words that occur frequently across a range of academic subjects. If you learn these words in addition to a 2,000-word basic vocabulary, you will be able to understand more than 86 percent of the words you encounter in your academic reading.

What Does It Mean to Know a Word?

Although you will encounter most new academic vocabulary when you read, you will also need to be able to use those words when you speak, listen, and write. In order to use academic words effectively in your oral and written work, you must know more than simple word meanings. You must expand your knowledge of a word so that you know which meaning fits a particular context. You must learn which word form to use (for example, a noun or a verb) in a specific sentence. In addition, you must learn how to combine academic words with other words to form commonly used collocations. Many elements of word knowledge are required in order to choose the best word for a particular situation.

Complete the following Word Knowledge Quiz. It will help you understand the amount of word knowledge needed in order to truly understand a word. When you finish, check your answers on page xiv.

WORD KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1. **Word Meaning**—Many words in English have more than one meaning. The word *bank* occurs frequently in English. Place a checkmark (✔) next to the correct meanings of *bank* below.

   _____ **a.** a business that keeps and lends money

   _____ **b.** land along the side of a river or lake

   _____ **c.** a place where human blood is stored until someone needs it

   _____ **d.** a large amount of clouds, mist, or fog

   _____ **e.** a large box or container in which things can be stored or moved

   _____ **f.** a large number of machines arranged close together in a row

   _____ **g.** the money that people can win in a gambling game

   _____ **h.** a slope made at a curve in a road to make it safe for cars to go around

2. Spelling and Pronunciation—Many words have similar spellings but are not pronounced in the same way. Look at the words in Set 1. Notice that the letters *ough* are pronounced in three different ways in these words. In Set 2, the letters *ch* are pronounced in three different ways.

For each set of words, write the word pairs that share the same sounds or pronunciations for *ough* or *ch*.

Set 1

th<u>ough</u>   th<u>ough</u>t   t<u>ough</u>   d<u>ough</u>   c<u>ough</u>   r<u>ough</u>

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

Set 2

<u>ch</u>aracter   <u>ch</u>air   ma<u>ch</u>ine   coa<u>ch</u>   heada<u>ch</u>e   mousta<u>ch</u>e

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

3. Word Families—Most words are part of a "family" of words that have a shared meaning. For example, the word forms *appear* (a verb) and *appearance* (a noun) are related. In each of the following sentences, one word form is incorrect. Cross it out and write the correct word form in the blank.

a. A develop country needs to build up its industry. _____

b. Here is a plan to develop the economic rapidly. _____

c. I need to obtain more knowledgement in earth science. _____

d. She worked on loan applications for a corporate. _____

4. Collocation—Some words appear together frequently. They are "word partners," or collocations. In the sentence below, circle the letter of the word that is <u>not</u> a good partner for the word *changed*.

Napoleon *changed* French society _____ by creating the Civil Code and the Commercial Code.

a. radically   **b.** dramatically   **c.** deeply   **d.** considerably

5. Synonyms—Do you understand slight differences in meaning well enough to select the right word for a particular sentence? The words *change, adapt,* and *modify* have similar meanings, but they are not exactly the same. Select and write the word that best fits each sentence below.

a. The author wanted to _____ his book for children.

b. The social worker tried to _____ the child's bad behavior.

c. You can't _____ your mind after signing the contract.

6. Frequency—All of the words in each group below have a similar meaning. However, some of the words are much more common in English than the others. Can you rank the words according to how frequently they occur in English? For each row of words, write 1 for the most frequent word, 2 for the next most frequent word, and 3 for the least frequent word.

a. _____ device   _____ gadget   _____ machine

b. _____ errand   _____ job   _____ task

7. Associations—As you get to know a word better, it becomes "linked" in your mind with other words. These links, or associations, can help you use the word faster and more naturally. Ninety-eight native English speakers were asked to name words that they associated with the word *hungry*. Circle the words you think they associated with *hungry*.
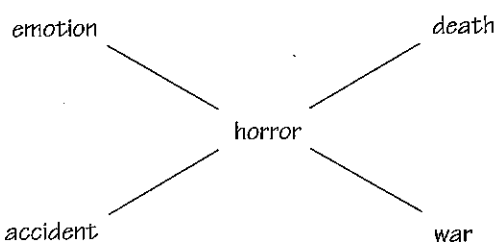
empty	food	house	starving
sad	winter	thirsty	tired

The exercises in *Focus on Vocabulary 2* will help you increase your understanding of each kind of word knowledge listed above. Some of these topics (word meanings, word families, and collocations) will be focused on in the main chapters, while others will be highlighted in the Strategy Practice chapters. As you work your way through the book, you will learn many new academic words. However, you will find that you learn more than just the words' meanings; you will also gain a broad understanding of the way the words function in academic texts.
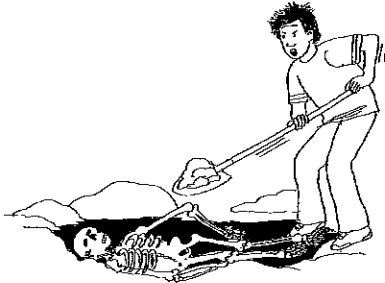
Vocabulary Cards—A Key Vocabulary Learning Strategy

Focus on Vocabulary 2 will teach you many strategies for learning academic words. Using vocabulary cards is one such strategy. Look at the example of a vocabulary card below. This card was created by a Japanese student who wanted to understand and remember the word *horror*. Study the card and read the directions for creating vocabulary cards of your own.

(Front of card)

Part of speech and pronunciation	Word map
horror (n) 'hɔrɚ	emotion death horror accident war
Word family -id (adj.) -ibly (adv.) -ify (v.)	**Collocations** horror movie horror struck inspire horror

(Back of card)

First language translation of horror	Keyword illustration (horu = dig)
きょうふ (in Hiragana) 恐怖 (in Kanji)	
Second language definition Intense fear, dread	**Example sentence** The family watched in horror as their house burned.

How to Create and Use Vocabulary Cards

To make your own vocabulary cards for the words in this book, follow these steps.

1. Write the English word in the top left corner of the front of the card. Then write the word's meaning in the top left corner of the back of the card. Include anything that tells the meaning, for example, first language translations or English definitions. With this information, you can start using the card to learn the word. The card pictured above is for a Japanese student learning the English word *horror*; therefore, it has two Japanese translations, one in Hiragana spelling and one in Kanji spelling.

2. When you review the card, add new information to it in the different sections. This will make you think more deeply about the word and will expand your word knowledge. Include the following kinds of information on your card:

- an example sentence for the word
- notes on how to form the other members of the word family
- a word map with related words
- a list of collocations
- any other information you find interesting or important

3. Consider adding a memory picture to the card. This is called the *keyword technique*. In the sample card above, the student drew a picture of someone digging up a skeleton because the English word *horror* sounds like the Japanese word *horu* (meaning "dig"), and a skeleton evokes horror. You will learn more about how to use the keyword technique in Chapter 24.

4. Keep filling out the different sections until you know the word well. For some words, you may need to complete all of the sections. For other words, you may need less information.

5. Keep your cards in a box or folder. Take some cards out and study them often. They are portable, so you can even take them with you and study them on the way to and from school or work. As you learn a word better, move its card toward the back of your box so you will not study it as often. Put cards for new words toward the front, where you will see them more often.

6. Remember to review each word numerous times. Repetition builds your memory of a word. Even after you "know" a word, go back and review it occasionally to make sure you do not forget it. If you do not review, you will lose all of the benefits of your previous study!

As you study the academic words in this book, try making vocabulary cards to help you remember the words. Studying with vocabulary cards will enrich the learning process and add to the knowledge gained by doing the exercises in the book.

Answers to the Quiz on pages x-xii

1. Word Meaning—All meanings are correct except e.

2. Spelling and Pronunciation

Set 1

The following word pairs share the same pronunciation for *ough*:

though /ðoʊ/   thought /θɔt/   tough /tʌf/

dough /doʊ/   cough /kɔf/   rough /rʌf/

Read the words aloud to compare the three pronunciations.

Set 2

The following word pairs share the same pronunciation for *ch*:

character /ˈkærɪktɚ/   chair /tʃɛr/   machine /məˈʃin/

headache /ˈhɛdeɪk/   coach /koʊtʃ/   moustache /ˈmʌstæʃ/

Read the words aloud to compare the three pronunciations.

If you are unfamiliar with phonetic spellings, please look at the chart on page 151 in Chapter 16, which gives an explanation of the various phonetic symbols.

3. Word Families

   a. ~~develop~~   developing

   b. ~~economic~~   economy

   c. ~~knowledgement~~   knowledge

   d. ~~corporate~~   corporation

4. Collocation—c

5. Synonyms

   a. This type of literary transformation is usually described by the word *adapt*.

   b. *Modify* means to change, but usually in a way that leads to improvement.

   c. *Change* is used to describe an adjustment in mental thinking or perspective, especially in the phrase "change your mind."

6. Frequency

The figures in parentheses show how often these words occur per million words. The words are listed in order of decreasing occurrence.

a. machine (140.26)　　　device (55.16)　　　　gadget (2.24)

b. job (306.27)　　　　　task (139.91)　　　　　errand (2.69)

7. Associations

The associations the students gave included:

food　　　　　thirsty　　　　tired　　　　empty　　　　starving

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