

I What is special about academic English?

A Everyday words and academic uses

Many words in academic English are the same as everyday vocabulary, but they are often also used with a slightly different meaning, which may be specialised.

<i>everyday or academic use</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>academic use</i>	<i>meaning</i>
Standards of discipline in schools have declined.	ability to control oneself or other people	Nanotechnology is a relatively new discipline .	area of study
Underline your family name on the form.	draw a line under it	The research underlines the importance of international trade agreements.	gives emphasis to
The lake was frozen solid .	not liquid or gas	We have no solid evidence that radiation has caused the problem.	certain or safe; of a good standard

B Vocabulary and academic style

- In writing, academics use many expressions which are neutral, but they also use rather formal expressions which are not common in everyday language. Knowing whether an expression is formal or just neutral is important.

<i>neutral</i>	<i>more formal</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>more formal</i>
in short, briefly, basically	in sum, to sum up	try	attempt
only	sole(ly)	mainly/mostly	primarily
almost / more or less	virtually	typical of	characteristic of

However, very informal vocabulary may be used in *spoken* academic styles in classes and lectures. Learn to understand such language when you hear it but be careful not to use it in essays and written assignments. Here are some examples of teachers using informal language. 'OK. **Have a shot** at doing task number 3.' [more formal: Try/Attempt to do ...]

'**There's no way** schools can be held responsible for failures of government policy.' [more formal: Schools cannot in any way be held ...]

- Academic language tries to be clear and precise, so it is important to keep a vocabulary notebook (see page 8) and learn the differences between similar words, as well as typical word combinations (underlined here).

The building is a prime example of 1920s architecture. [excellent in quality or value]

The group's primary concern is to protect human rights. [main / most important]

C Noun phrases

Academic language puts a lot of information into noun phrases rather than spreading it out over a whole sentence. For example, instead of saying *Radiation was accidentally released over a 24-hour period, damaging a wide area for a long time*, an academic might say *The accidental release of radiation over a 24-hour period caused widespread long-term damage*. It is therefore important to learn the different forms of a word, for example:

<i>noun</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>adjective(s)</i>	<i>adverb(s)</i>
accident		accidental	accidentally
quantity/quantification	quantify	quantitative/quantifiable	quantitatively/quantifiably

Finally, be aware of 'chunks' or phrases which occur frequently, and learn them as whole units. Examples: *in terms of*, *in addition*, *for the most part*, *in the case of*, etc. (See Unit 16.)