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New Edition

Academic Vocabulary **in Use**

Vocabulary reference
and practice

Self-study and classroom use

Second Edition

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To the student and the teacher

Who is this book for?

This book is for anyone who wants or needs to learn the kind of English which is used in academic contexts. It deals with the language used in written works such as textbooks and journal articles as well as with the spoken language of lectures and seminars. It also presents vocabulary relating to being a student at a university or college in that it covers topics relating to university life. It will be particularly useful for students preparing for IELTS, the Pearson Academic English Test or any other examination aimed at assessing whether candidates' English is at a high enough level to study in an institution where English is the medium of instruction. It will be helpful for people who need to attend – or indeed give – lectures or presentations in English or to participate in international conferences. It will enable students who have to prepare assignments or write up a dissertation in English to do so in a much more natural and appropriate way.

What kind of vocabulary does the book deal with?

The book presents and practises the kind of vocabulary that is used in academic contexts regardless of which discipline you are specialising in. So it considers words and expressions like *concept*, *put forward a theory* and *come to a conclusion*. It does not deal with the specialist vocabulary of any particular subject such as anatomy or physics. Specialist terms are often relatively easy to master – they will be explained and taught as you study the subject and indeed these words may sometimes be similar in English and your own language. However, it is the more general vocabulary used for discussing ideas and research and for talking and writing about academic work that you need to be familiar with in order to feel comfortable in an academic environment. Despite the fact that such vocabulary items are much more frequent than specialist vocabulary, they are often felt to be more difficult to learn. It is, therefore, useful to approach them in the systematic way suggested by this book.

One positive aspect of academic vocabulary is that there are relatively few differences, depending on whether you are studying in London or New York, Delhi or Sydney, Johannesburg, Dublin, Wellington, Toronto or Singapore or indeed any other place where you may be using English for academic purposes. Academic English tends to be a truly international language and the units of the book focus on vocabulary that will be essential for you regardless of where you are studying now or where you may be likely to study in the future. There are some differences between words used to describe people and places and these are highlighted in Unit 19. Reference sections 3 and 4 also focus on some vocabulary and spelling variations. In the units of the book we use British English spelling conventions, except when quoting texts which originally used American spellings. Much of the vocabulary used in the book is neutral in that it is equally appropriate in both written and spoken contexts. We indicate those instances where a word is too formal to be used in speech or too informal to use in academic writing.

How was the vocabulary for the book selected?

The academic vocabulary focused on in this book was all selected from language identified as significant by the Cambridge International Corpus of written and spoken English and also the CANCODE corpus of spoken English developed at the University of Nottingham in association with Cambridge University Press. These enormous corpora include large collections of written and spoken academic text and so it was possible to identify language that is distinctive for academic contexts. We also made considerable use of the Cambridge Learner Corpus, a corpus of more than 60 million words of text taken from hundreds of thousands of learner scripts from students taking Cambridge English exams all over the world. From this corpus we were able to learn what kinds of errors students taking, for example, IELTS, were typically making.

In planning this book we made considerable use of Averil Coxhead's work on developing academic wordlists. Her lists can be found at, for example, <http://www.uefap.com/vocab/select/awl.htm>

How is the book organised?

Each unit consists of two pages. The left-hand page presents the academic vocabulary to be focused on in the unit. You will usually find words and expressions presented in context with, where appropriate, any special notes about their meaning and usage. The right-hand page checks that you have understood the information on the presentation page by giving you a series of exercises to complete.

The units are organised into different sections: The book begins with a Unit Zero called *Before you start*. The first section then includes nine units which look at basic aspects of academic vocabulary such as what is special about academic vocabulary, key verbs and key quantifying expressions. The second section devotes eight units to how words typically combine with one another in academic English. The third section has six units focusing on aspects of life in academic institutions. The fourth section provides four units considering aspects of planning and starting a piece of work and the fifth consists of five units relating to thinking and interacting. The sixth section has six units dealing with ways of talking about different concepts such as numbers, time and cause and effect. The seventh section includes twelve units covering aspects of the organisation and presentation of ideas.

Towards the end of the book you will find six reading texts relating to different academic disciplines with exercises based on the vocabulary in those texts. We hope you will find these useful examples of how to use texts to expand your knowledge of academic vocabulary in English and would recommend that you read these texts and do the exercises on them even if they relate to an academic subject that is very different from your own.

There are five reference sections dealing with some key areas where we felt it would be useful for you to have lists of items that could not be presented as fully in the main body of the book, i.e. Formal and informal academic words and expressions, Numbers, units of measurement and common symbols, British and North American academic vocabulary, Spelling variations and Word formation. Where appropriate, these reference sections provide space for you to add further examples of your own.

At the end of the book there is a Key with answers to all the exercises and an Index of all the key words and expressions, indicating the units where they can be found. The pronunciation is provided for standard British English.

Do Unit Zero first followed by Unit 1 *What is special about academic English?* Then work through the remaining units in any order that suits you.

So, good luck with your work on academic English. We hope that the materials in this book will help you to enjoy and to benefit fully from your studies. We hope that you will be able to share ideas in a creative, exciting way with scholars from all over the world and we wish you the very best for a successful and rewarding academic life.

A

What do I need

- a notebook or file – to write down the vocabulary that you study in this book as well as words and expressions that you come across elsewhere
- some good dictionaries

We strongly recommend the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as this contains exactly the kind of information you need in order to be able to understand and use English vocabulary. Through its example sentences it shows you how the word is used and which other words it typically combines with. The dictionary also helps you with difficult items such as phrasal verbs indicating, for example, whether the object can come before the particle (set up the apparatus, set the apparatus up, go through a set of calculations but not ~~go a set of calculations through~~). The dictionary is available in both paper and electronic versions and can be accessed online at <http://dictionary.cambridge.org>.

You will need a specialist dictionary relating to your own subject area as well. Your teacher may also be able to recommend other dictionaries for your specific needs.

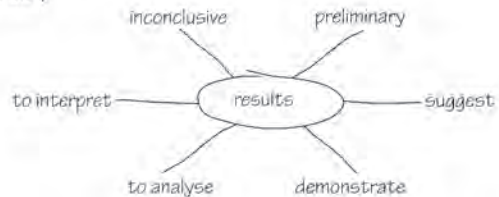
B

What should I note about new vocabulary?

Here are some things to note – though it won't be appropriate to note them all for all words you come across.

- examples of the word or expression in use
- typical word combinations - you might, for example, note down adjectives or verbs typically associated with a noun that you want to learn or nouns, adverbs or prepositions associated with a verb
- any special features of the word (e.g. is there anything special about its grammar or pronunciation or is it particularly characteristic of either written or spoken English?)
- any other information that might help you to learn the word (e.g. is it similar to any word in your own language or does it share a root with a word you already know?)
- any additional vocabulary that learning this word may help with (e.g. does a verb have a related noun or what is the opposite of an adjective?)
- any other uses of the word (e.g. can it be used metaphorically or does it have any other meanings in the way that so many English words do?)

Diagrams can be useful, for example, word bubbles:



or word forks:



C

What else can I do to improve my vocabulary?

As well as working through the units in this book, read as much English as you can in the subject areas that are most relevant to you. If you are new to studying in English, you could start by reading a textbook aimed at students who are at a slightly lower level than you are as far as the subject area is concerned; or you might prefer to read the latest articles in your field from a journal on the internet.

There is an enormous wealth of material available online for you to study and learn from. Try the websites of universities and other academic institutions which have extensive websites, for example, or blogs written by specialists in your field. Don't forget that, as well as written texts, you can find plenty of lectures and other listening materials online too.

Exercises

0.1 Answer the questions about what you will use to help you learn new words.

- 1 Where do you plan to note down vocabulary – a notebook, a folder, an electronic file...?
- 2 What dictionaries (printed or online) are there relating to your own special subject?
- 3 What other good dictionaries are there that will be useful for you, e.g. a good bilingual dictionary?

0.2 Look up the following words in a good dictionary and note them down with any of the relevant types of information listed in B opposite.

- 1 university 2 academic 3 degree

I hope to go to university next year. (example of the word in use)

0.3 Look up the following phrasal verbs. Note down where the object *an interesting expression* can go.

- 1 look up 2 note down 3 come across

look up an interesting expression, look an interesting expression up

0.4 Complete the word forks. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 (verbs) | 2 (adjectives) |
| <i>to carry out</i> | <i>higher</i> |
| an experiment | education |

0.5 Complete the word bubbles. Use a dictionary to help you.



0.6 Do the following tasks to help you explore academic vocabulary on the internet.

- 1 Check out a university website e.g. the University of Cambridge at <http://www.cam.ac.uk> Massachusetts Institute of Technology at <http://web.mit.edu> the University of Sydney at <http://sydney.edu.au> the University of Cape Town at <http://www.uct.ac.za>
Note down the different kinds of information you can find there.
- 2 Put *lecture* and the name of your subject e.g. *lecture psychology* into a search engine. Make a note of any interesting links it takes you to.
- 3 Put *blog* and the name of your subject e.g. *blog law* into a search engine. Check out some of the links it suggests. Make a note of any that look as if they may be worth reading regularly.

1

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 used with a slightly different meaning, which may be specialised.

everyday use	meaning	academic use	meaning
Standards of discipline in schools have declined.	ability to control yourself 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 value of case studies.	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 neutral expressions. They also use rather formal expressions which are not common in everyday language. Knowing whether an expression is formal or just neutral is important.

neutral	more formal	neutral	more formal
in short, briefly, basically	in sum, to sum up, fundamentally	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 informal 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 often uses complex noun phrases. 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:

noun	verb	adjective(s)	adverb(s)
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 to, for the most part, in the case of, etc.* (See Unit 16).

Language help

Using complex noun phrases improves your writing style and can contribute to higher grades in essays and assignments.

Exercises

1.1 The words in the box each have an everyday use and an academic use. Complete each pair of sentences using the same word in the correct form.

generate turn solid confirm identify underline character pose nature focus

- 1 She loves to pose for photographs in front of her fabulous house.
The events pose a threat to stability in the region.
- 2 The photograph was useless. It was blurred and out of focus.
Child poverty should be the focus of our attention in the coming years.
- 3 I went online and confirmed my flight reservation.
The data confirm the hypothesis that animal-lovers enjoy better health.
- 4 The power plant generates electricity for the whole region.
This issue always generates a great deal of debate among academics.
- 5 The murderer was identified from fingerprints discovered at the scene.
In this theory of history, progress is closely linked with technology.
- 6 I saw her whisper to her husband and whisper something in his ear.
Let us now turn to the subject of social networking.
- 7 He always underlines every new word when he's reading.
The study underlines the fact that very little research exists.
- 8 The liquid became solid as the temperature was lowered.
The study lacks solid evidence and its conclusions are questionable.

1.2 Rewrite the underlined words using more formal words and phrases from B opposite.

- 1 The book is mainly concerned with the problem of policing the internet.
- 2 Almost every school in the county had reported problems with the new system.
- 3 The work of the Institute is not only devoted to cancer research.
- 4 Basically, we believe we have demonstrated a significant link between the two events.
- 5 Several research teams have had a shot at solving the problem, without success.
- 6 The reaction is typical of the way large corporations keep control of their markets.

1.3 Read the text and answer the questions.

- 1 Underline two verbs followed by adverbs which it would be useful to learn as pairs.
- 2 Underline two adverbs next to each other which it would be useful to learn together.
- 3 What are the noun forms of the verbs *produce*, *rely*, *discover* and *claim*?
- 4 A novel is a kind of book, but what does the adjective *novel* mean here?

The production of plastics depends heavily on petroleum, but a novel way of making plastics out of sugar could reduce our reliance on oil. The discovery that a chemical in sugar can be converted relatively easily into a substance similar in structure to the material obtained from petroleum has led to the claim that plastics could soon be produced cheaply by the new method.

1.4 Complete the second sentence using a noun phrase. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 People who investigated the problem biologically came to no firm conclusions.
Biological investigations of the problem came to no firm conclusions.
- 2 When they developed antibiotics, it revolutionised medicine.
The development of antibiotics caused a revolution in medicine.
- 3 They solved the problem by altering the deck of the bridge.
The altering of the deck was an ingenious solution to the problem of the bridge.
- 4 Exploring Antarctica has always been especially challenging.
The exploration of Antarctica has always presented special challenges.

Over to you

Look at an academic text you have read recently and underline pairs of words which you think it would be useful to learn and remember together.

This unit focuses on some important nouns in academic English. See also Units 10, 11 and 15.

A General nouns referring to ideas

She wrote an article on the **subject** of class. [thing which is being discussed, considered or studied]

The **theme** of the poem is emigration. [main subject of a talk, book, etc.]

The students were given a list of essay **topics**. [specific subjects that someone discusses or writes about]

There was a lively debate on the **issue** of globalisation. [important subject or problem]

Political **theory** is a popular undergraduate subject. Einstein's **theory** of gravitation has been questioned recently. [statement of the rules on which a subject of study is based or, more generally, an opinion or explanation]

The **model** of climate change presented in the Stern Review seems to be becoming a reality. [description of a system or process which explains how it works]

The book is called 'The **Nature** of Intelligence'. [basic character of something]

Human behaviour is based on the **principle** of least effort. [basic idea or rule that explains how something happens or works]

B More specific nouns connected with ideas and phenomena

Repetition is an important **aspect** of speech development in children. [one individual part of a situation, problem, subject, etc.]

Automatic backup is a **feature** of the new software. [a typical quality that something has]

The political motives for the government's actions are beyond the **scope** of this essay. [range of a subject covered by a book, discussion, class, etc.]

The study revealed a **pattern** of results. [a regularly repeated arrangement]

During 2005, the **number** of violent attacks increased to an alarming degree. [amount or level]

C Nouns referring to ways of thinking, processes and activities

Read these titles of academic books and articles. Note the key nouns and their prepositions.

Micro-organisms in water: their **significance**¹ and **identification**²

Renewable energy: a critical **assessment**³ of recent **research**

Citizens' **Views** on Healthcare Systems in the European Union

The Case⁴ for Change: Rethinking Teacher Education. Towards a New **Approach**⁵

Perspectives⁶ on Ecological Management: A study of public **awareness**⁷ of river pollution

Epidemiological research into asthma and allergic disease: establishing a standardised **methodology**⁸

¹ importance ² ability to establish the identity of something ³ judgement of the amount, quality or importance of something ⁴ arguments and facts in support of or against something ⁵ way of considering something ⁶ particular ways of considering something ⁷ understanding based on experience or information ⁸ set of methods used when studying something

Common Mistake

Research is uncountable. Don't say: *They carried out some useful researches.* To make it plural, say *research studies* or *pieces of research*. *Research* is followed by *on* or *into* not *of*. Say, for example, *do research on/into memory loss.*

Exercises

2.1 Look at the nouns in A and B opposite and note the prepositions that are associated with them. Answer the questions.

- Which preposition often follows the nouns in both A and B?
- Which preposition is often used before the nouns in A?
- Which preposition would fill this gap – The postwar period is _____ the scope of this paper and will be dealt with in a later study.

2.2 Choose the best noun to complete each sentence.

- Environmental *topics / issues / principles* should be at the top of today's political agenda.
- In the exam students had to choose three from a choice of ten essay *subjects / theories / topics*.
- There are still people who are reluctant to accept Darwin's *nature / topic / theory* of evolution.
- The professor decided to take moral courage as the *issue / theme / model* for his inaugural lecture.
- Economists used a *model / principle / topic* of human behaviour to help them forecast likely inflation trends.
- The Peter *Issue / Principle / Theme* states that members of a hierarchical group will usually end up being promoted to the point at which they become incompetent.

2.3 Match the beginnings and endings of the sentences.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1 The study revealed a regular | <input type="checkbox"/> | a scope of your research. |
| 2 The research focuses on one particular | <input type="checkbox"/> | b awareness of the problem. |
| 3 The writer makes a powerful | <input type="checkbox"/> | c issues facing the world today. |
| 4 The writers take an original | <input type="checkbox"/> | d into the environmental effects of nanoparticles. |
| 5 Until recently there was little | <input type="checkbox"/> | e approach to their theme. |
| 6 I think you should broaden the | <input type="checkbox"/> | f aspect of modern society. |
| 7 To date, there has been little research | <input type="checkbox"/> | g pattern of changes in temperature. |
| 8 There are many important | <input type="checkbox"/> | h case for restructuring parliament. |

2.4 Correct the mistakes in the underlined phrases.

¹Recent researches that were carried out for a report by a government agency showed that local police can play an important role in crime prevention. The report makes ²a strong case of boasting the numbers of community police officers although it warns against increasing police presence on the streets to an alarming degree. ³Its methodological was based on a range of interviews asking members of the public for ⁴their views in how best to prevent crime. Unfortunately, how to implement this recommendation was ⁵out of the scope of the study but at least it serves a useful purpose in ⁶raising awareness to the issue.

2.5 These book titles have been rephrased to sound more academic. Complete them using words from the box.

assessment features identification nature patterns perspectives principles significance

- What democracy is really like – The _____ of Democracy
- Why dreams are important – The _____ of Dreams
- What do we see in glaciated landscapes? – The _____ of Glaciated Landscapes
- How to evaluate language skills – The _____ of Language Skills
- Ways in which human behaviour repeats itself – _____ of Human Behaviour
- How to recognise different species of bees – The _____ of Bees
- Thinking about taxation from different angle – _____ on Modern Taxation
- How to make sure that a business is successful – The _____ of Successful Business

3 Key verbs

A Key verbs for structuring academic assignments

Look at these tasks which students have been given.

Discuss some of the problems involved¹ in investigating attitudes to diet and health. Write a critical review of an investigation you have read about, or describe an investigation you yourself could conduct². Consider the advantages and disadvantages of different methods.

Starting from rest, an aircraft accelerates to its take-off speed of 60 ms⁻¹ in a distance of 900 metres. Illustrate³ this with a velocity-time graph. Assuming⁴ constant acceleration, find⁵ how long the take-off run lasts. Hence calculate⁶ the acceleration.

'The fact that nations agree to follow international law demonstrates⁷ that we can identify⁸ ideals that are trans-national and trans-cultural.' How far is this statement true? Critically analyse any recent event which supports or challenges⁹ the statement.

Examine¹⁰ how industrial growth has affected any two developing countries. Provide¹¹ statistical evidence where necessary and include a discussion of likely future trends.

- ¹ which are part of/included in ² organise and do ³ draw something in order to explain something
⁴ accepting something to be true ⁵ discover by calculating (see 6) ⁶ judge the number or amount of something by adding, multiplying, subtracting or dividing numbers ⁷ shows, makes clear
⁸ recognise someone or something and say or prove who or what they are
⁹ questions whether something is true ¹⁰ look at or consider carefully and in detail ¹¹ give

B More key verbs

These extracts from academic books contain more key verbs.

In developing methods to explain the significance of health status measures, one can classify¹ ways of establishing² quality of life into two main types.

The length of time spent on the tasks may account for³ the decrease in motivation which was seen⁴ in many of the participants.

The data presented⁵ in Chapter 3 showed⁶ that the age of the subjects was not the main factor.

Political theory attempts⁷ to build bridges between different schools of political thought.

- ¹ divide things into groups according to their type ² discovering or getting proof of
³ explain ⁴ see is often used in the passive in academic style ⁵ given ⁶ proved ⁷ tries

C Noun forms of key verbs

In academic style, noun forms of key verbs are often used instead of the verbs.

key verb	verb + noun form of key verb	example
explain	give/provide/offer an explanation (of/for)	The model provides an explanation for the differences between the two sets of data.
explore	undertake / carry out an exploration (of)	Kumar undertook an exploration of music genius.
emphasise	place/put emphasis (on)	The hospital puts a lot of emphasis on training.
describe	give/provide a description (of)	The book gives a description of modern Europe.
affect	have an effect on	Climate change has an effect on sea levels.
prove	offer/provide proof (that)	This research offers proof that bees are on the decline.

Common Mistake

Notice the difference in spelling between the verb *affect* and the noun *effect*. Don't confuse them. The verb **to effect** means to make something happen. *The invention of the world wide web effected a transformation in global communications.*

Exercises

3.1 Match the verbs from A in the box on the left with their synonyms in the box on the right.

affect attempt calculate challenge compute distinguish give influence
demonstrate identify include involve question show study try
investigate provide

3.2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of verbs from B opposite.

- As can _____ from Table II, participation figures have been steadily falling since 1970.
- Different authors have _____ for the President's actions in different ways.
- Mendel attempted to devise a system for _____ the many different types of pea plant that he grew.
- It is often most effective to _____ your data in a chart or table.
- The data we have collected _____ that there has been a downward trend with regard to job satisfaction over the last 50 years.
- The aim of the research is to _____ a new software application which will help aviation engineers design more sophisticated aircraft.
- The archaeologists should be able to use carbon dating techniques to _____ exactly how old the bones are.
- Charles Darwin _____ to explain the existence of different species in terms of evolution.

3.3 Explain the difference in meaning between each pair of sentences.

- A Greig's article supports Park's theory. B Greig's article challenges Park's theory.
- A Describe the new tax regulations. B Discuss the new tax regulations.
- A Lodhi provides new data. B Lodhi considers new data.
- A Titova conducted four sets of experiments. B Titova examined four sets of experiments.
- A Lee established why such changes occur. B Lee investigated why such changes occur.
- A Okaz assumed that the data were reliable. B Okaz proved that the data were reliable.
- A Illustrate the magnitude of the deceleration. B Find the magnitude of the deceleration.
- A The events effected economic development. B The events affected economic development.

3.4 Rewrite the underlined verbs using nouns from the box.

description emphasis explanation exploration

3.5 Complete the phrases with the correct noun forms of the verbs. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- investigate = conduct, carry out an _____ into/of
- illustrate = provide an _____ of
- analyse = provide, carry out an _____ of
- affect = have an _____ on
- attempt = make an _____ to/at
- classify = make, provide a _____ of

Erikson's (2005) book ¹explains the changing patterns of educational achievement in children of poorer families. She ²explores the relationship between income, family background and achievement at school and in further education. The book ³describes a study carried out in 12 inner-city neighbourhoods. Erikson's research ⁴emphasises the importance of support within the home.

Over to you

Using the tasks in A as a model, prepare some assignment topics for students studying any subject that you are familiar with.

For any key adjective it is useful to note (a) whether it is typically followed by a specific preposition, (b) what nouns it typically collocates with, (c) whether it has any antonyms (adjectives of opposite meaning) and (d) whether it has any related nouns.

A Adjectives and prepositions

Here are some extracts from academic texts, with adjectives followed by *to* or *of*.

Language development is conceived as **relative**¹ to one's own past performance, or relative to that of others.

Some of the responses to the questionnaire were **specific**¹ to young male respondents. Others were **common to** all the respondents.

How can we make science **relevant**² to environmental policy? Poor communication between scientists and politicians is **characteristic**³ of the situation today.

We need to plan technologies which are **appropriate**⁵ to the needs of small farmers. It was **typical of** the farmers in the study that they had a negative attitude to technology.

¹ true to a particular degree when it is being compared with other things connected with what is happening or being discussed ² connected with what is happening or being discussed
³ typical of ⁴ only found in ⁵ suitable or right for a particular situation or occasion

B Some key adjectives and their typical noun collocates

There was an **apparent**¹ discrepancy between the two sets of results.

We noted a **potential**² problem with the experimental design which we had to deal with first.

The **principal**³ cause of the failure was a sudden temperature change.

The research used a **rigorous**⁴ methodology which had been tested on many occasions.

¹ seeming to exist or be true ² possible when the necessary conditions exist ³ first in order of importance ⁴ careful to look at or consider every part of something to make certain it is correct

C Adjectives and their opposites

Each sentence in this text on drug abuse contains a pair of adjectives which are opposites.

We cannot discuss drug abuse as an **abstract**¹ problem without considering **concrete**² examples of abuse and their social consequences. Abuse is rarely a **simple** issue; it usually results from a **complex** set of circumstances. Both **quantitative**³ and **qualitative**⁴ research is necessary to gain a full picture of the situation. By combining research methods, we may obtain an **accurate** picture of the causes and results of abuse, in contrast with the **inaccurate** assessments which often result from purely quantitative studies. A **significant**⁵ amount of fear and prejudice surrounds the notion of abuse, and the media have a role which is also not **insignificant** in promoting such fears. The dissertation concludes that **rough**⁶ estimates of the number of drug addicts need to be made more **precise** by properly defining addiction.

¹ existing only as an idea, not as a material object ² existing in a form that can be seen or felt
³ using or based on numbers and statistics ⁴ using non-number-based methods such as interviews, focus groups, etc. ⁵ important or noticeable ⁶ fairly correct but not exact or detailed

D Nouns related to adjectives

Often in academic style, a noun form of the key adjective is used.

I admire her **simple** style.

I admire the **simplicity** of her style.

These statistics are less **relevant**.

These statistics have less **relevance**.

Exercises

4.1 Use the information in A opposite to correct the mistakes with prepositions in the sentences.

- 1 A lengthy discussion of the advantages of solar power is not relevant with this essay topic.
- 2 It is typical to the disease for it to start with an itchy rash.
- 3 This methodology is not appropriate about the kind of research you are planning.
- 4 The use of original metaphors is characteristic from the writer's style.
- 5 Relative with previous explanations, this theory is quite persuasive.
- 6 Dark hair and eyes are common for all people from the region.

4.2 Complete the sentences with adjective and noun collocates from B opposite.

- 1 There is an _____ in your figures.
- 2 Management's refusal to listen to the workers' demands was the _____ of the riots.
- 3 Lamaque devised a _____ for doing research in the field.
- 4 We spotted a _____ with our procedure and so we changed it in two areas.

4.3 Replace the underlined adjectives with their opposites.

- 1 Karlsson checked the figures and agreed with me that they were accurate.
- 2 The solution to the problem is a simple one.
- 3 Make rough calculations before you begin to write up your results.
- 4 The army played a significant role in events.
- 5 Hernandez prefers to discuss ideas in abstract terms.
- 6 Volkova's article reports on a fascinating piece of quantitative research.

4.4 Complete the sentences with adjectives from the box.

complex potential rigorous specific rough qualitative

- 1 The plant is difficult to grow and needs very _____ conditions to survive.
- 2 His tutor was critical of his work for not being _____ enough.
- 3 In the past the northern tribes looked on the tribes of the south as _____ enemies.
- 4 We chose a _____ approach to our research and interviewed individuals personally.
- 5 A _____ set of circumstances led to a civil war in 1897.
- 6 The _____ estimates that we made turned out to be surprisingly accurate.

4.5 Complete the table with nouns formed from the adjectives. Use a dictionary if necessary.

adjective	noun	adjective	noun
appropriate		complex	
significant		accurate	
precise		rigorous	

4.6 Rewrite the underlined words using nouns formed from the adjectives.

- 1 The professor praised Carla for her rigorous work. *The professor praised Carla for the rigour of her work.*
- 2 The slight discrepancy in the two sets of figures is not significant.
- 3 The complex language used by the poet makes his work difficult to interpret.
- 4 You must be precise when taking measurements.
- 5 The later part of the book will be more relevant for next year's course.
- 6 The tutor was pleased with how simple and appropriate our research proposal was.

Over to you

When you come across a key adjective from this unit in your reading, note it down in a phrase so you build up a set of useful phrases using the adjective.

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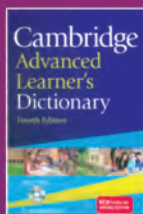
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