



Classroom Activities

Practical Activities for Teaching Academic Language

One of the strengths of the Academic Language Programme is that academic vocabulary is not taught through memorisation alone. Students learn new words by actively using them in meaningful contexts through discussion, collaboration, reading, writing and creative tasks.

The activities below have been developed and refined during the Erasmus+ Equity in Gifted Education (EGE) project. They can be used across subjects and adapted to different age groups and educational contexts.

Teachers are encouraged to combine activities that develop passive vocabulary knowledge (understanding words) with activities that promote active vocabulary use (using words in speaking and writing).

Understanding Academic Vocabulary

These activities help students recognise and understand new academic words.

Activity	Learning goal
Match words with definitions	Develop passive vocabulary knowledge
Match words with synonyms	Build semantic understanding
Complete texts with missing words	Understand vocabulary in context
Choose the correct word in a sentence	Apply vocabulary accurately
Highlight academic words in a text	Recognise academic vocabulary
Watch a news programme and identify target words	Listen for vocabulary in authentic contexts



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Activity

Learning goal

Find academic words in newspaper articles

Connect vocabulary to real-world language

Categorise words into themes

Build conceptual understanding

Build word families

Expand vocabulary knowledge

Create a glossary

Consolidate learning

Using Academic Vocabulary

Students actively apply new vocabulary in meaningful situations.

Activity

Learning goal

Write example sentences

Active vocabulary use

Prepare a short presentation

Oral communication

Participate in a debate

Academic discussion

Write a role play

Creative language use

Prepare and deliver a pitch

Persuasive communication

Write instructions

Functional writing

Explain words to family members

Retrieval practice

Make puzzles for classmates

Reinforcement through teaching

Peer interviews

Authentic communication

Panel discussion

Collaborative reasoning



Research & Critical Thinking

These activities integrate academic vocabulary with higher-order thinking skills.

Activity	Learning goal
Analyse a case study	Analytical thinking
Compare two viewpoints	Evaluation
Evaluate online sources	Digital literacy
Summarise an article	Reading comprehension
Present evidence	Argumentation
Solve a real-world problem	Creative thinking
Discuss different perspectives	Critical thinking

Reflection & Metacognition

Academic language becomes more meaningful when students reflect on their own learning.

Suggested reflection questions:

- Which new word was easiest to remember?
- Which word was most difficult?
- Why?
- Where could you use these words outside school?
- Which learning strategy worked best for you?
- Which word will you try to use this week?

Reflection encourages students to become more aware of how they learn new vocabulary and how academic language supports learning across subjects.



Differentiation

Students enter school with different levels of exposure to academic language. Therefore, the Academic Language Programme encourages differentiated instruction.

Some ideas:

Students needing more support

- picture cards
- matching activities
- visualisation
- sentence starters
- collaborative tasks

Students ready for additional challenge

- debates
- presentations
- analysing authentic texts
- writing essays
- designing vocabulary games
- teaching new words to classmates

This approach ensures that all students continue to develop while working at an appropriate level of challenge.

Teacher Tip



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Choose activities that match your lesson objectives rather than using the same format every week. Students remain motivated when academic vocabulary is practised through a variety of engaging tasks, meaningful themes and authentic classroom situations.