

# SELF-STUDY ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH *ACADEMIC WORD LIST CARDS*

## STAGE ONE: LEARNING WORD MEANING

### Activity 1: Learn those words!

Materials needed: one deck of Academic Work List Cards, 60 sticky notes (no bigger than 2X3 inches), internet connection

1. Take one card and look at the word on it. Write the translation of the word into your own language (try to figure it out from the definition of the card but use a translation dictionary to check) on a sticky note and put it on the back side (black and white side) of the card. Do the same with 29 more cards. Put the cards in a pile with the English words face up.
2. Find an online dictionary that provides the pronunciation of words, such as the Macmillan online dictionary ([www.macmillandictionary.com](http://www.macmillandictionary.com)). Type in the first word, listen to the pronunciation and practice. Try to recall the translation of the word into your own language, then flip over the card to check. Repeat with the remaining cards.
3. Now put the cards in a pile with the translation side up. Now go through the cards, looking at the word in your language and trying to remember the English words, flipping the cards to check. Take a break!
4. Return to the cards later. Repeat step 3. With any words that you are confident that you know, put the cards in one pile. Put the cards for the words you don't know as well in a separate pile. Practice the words you don't know a few more times (on different days) and change the order of the cards (keeping them in the same order is not a good idea).
5. Once you are confident you know the meaning of the 30 words, repeat steps 1-4 with the remaining 30 words in your deck of cards.
6. Remove the sticky notes from your cards. Put the cards away. Test yourself one last time by saying the English word as you throw each sticky note away.

### Activity 2: Categories

1. Use the whole deck of cards and try to put words into categories... you have to decide what the categories are! What you need to decide is what some words have something in common. (There is no correct answer; this activity is useful because you are thinking about the words and their meanings, which helps firm your knowledge of them.)

## STAGE TWO: EXERCISES

It is very helpful to do some exercises using the vocabulary. We strongly recommend Garnet Education's ***English for Academic Study: Vocabulary***. You can buy this book through our website at EnglishCentral.net or through Amazon. This gives you exercises to practice the academic word list. More importantly, it also teaches you about word families, word grammar, collocations and how to be a good vocabulary learner.

There are also some exercises online to practice the vocabulary. To practice the words from your cards (sublist 1 of the Academic Word List), you can try the following:

<http://www.englishvocabularyexercises.com/AWL/id21.htm>

[http://www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/academicwordlistuop/crossword\\_awl1.htm](http://www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/academicwordlistuop/crossword_awl1.htm)

[http://www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/academicwordlistuop/crossword\\_AWL1\\_B.htm](http://www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/academicwordlistuop/crossword_AWL1_B.htm)

## STAGE THREE: MASTERING WORDS

Knowing the meaning of a word is just the first step in mastering the word. Just knowing the meaning of a word is what we call "passive knowledge"; in order to improve your English, you need to make the word part of your "active knowledge", meaning that you need to be able actually use it in your conversation and writing. This is a longer process, so be patient. The following activities are designed to help you put these words into your "active knowledge".

Activity 3: These words are for me!

1. Think of how you will be using English in your future studies or work. You are going to arrange the cards into three piles. One pile will be for words that you think will be very useful in your future studies or work, the second pile will be for words that you think will be somewhat useful for and the third pile will be for words that you don't think will be very useful.
2. Go through the deck of cards and put each card into one of the three piles.
3. Begin by focusing on the cards in the "very useful" pile. Write a sentence for each word; the sentence should be about something related to your future studies or work. Use the form of the word with a red star.
4. Now write more sentences, but this time use at least two of the words in each sentence.
5. Now a long sentence, using as many of the words as you can (the sentence should still make sense!). Congratulate yourself and take a break.
6. On a later day, repeat 3-5 with the "somewhat useful" pile.
7. On a later day, write a sentence or two about why each of the words in your pile is not really useful for your future area of study or work.

#### Activity 4: Personalizing Parts of Speech

On each card, there are different forms listed for each of the words. Note that some of these word forms are quite different from the root word in meaning. Also note that sometimes the word forms are more common than the root word (the red star on each card shows which form is most common).

1. You need either a learner's dictionary or access to an online learner's dictionary like [macmillandictionary.com](http://macmillandictionary.com).
2. Take one of the cards and search the different parts of speech. You want to discover which parts of speech are common. If your card is "Create", for example, you will find that most of the parts of speech for that word are quite common (good learners' dictionaries show word frequency; high frequency words in the Macmillan dictionary, for example, are shown with a star system... any words with stars are words you should know!).
3. Now look for an example sentence for each of these words. For "creative", for example, the Macmillan Dictionary has the example of "we offer people the opportunity to be creative". You want to change some of these sentences so that they are personalized and then write them down in a notebook. The example sentence noted could become, "My teacher offers me the opportunity to be creative in class".
4. Keep going until you have done all of the high frequency words (this is a big job – don't try to do it one day!).

#### Activity 5: That is so true!

1. Take any 15 cards. Read the quotes on the black and white sides. If you read a quote and think "that is so true!" (you agree with it strongly, in other words), put that card in one pile. With other quotes that you don't have any strong feelings about (maybe you don't really agree or you have no opinion about it), put it in a second pile. In a third pile, put any quotes that you don't really understand (maybe you don't understand because of the language, but you also might not really understand because of the idea).
2. Spend some time with some friends who are also trying to learn English or who are supportive of your learning. Bring the cards for the quotes you really agree with and the ones you don't really understand. Tell them you want to play a conversation game with them. Start by reading the quotes that you think are so true and ask your friends if they agree. You can then share reasons for agreeing, perhaps discussing personal experiences that make you agree with the cards. After that, bring out the quotes that you don't really understand. Discuss with your friends and see if together you can figure out the meaning.
3. On later occasions, repeat steps 1-2 with the remaining cards.

#### Activity 3: These words are for me!

8. Think of how you will be using English in your future studies or work. You are going to arrange the cards into three piles. One pile will be for words that you think will be very useful in your future studies or work, the second pile will be for words that you think will be somewhat useful for and the third pile will be for words that you don't think will be very useful.
9. Go through the deck of cards and put each card into one of the three piles.



10. Begin by focusing on the cards in the “very useful” pile. Write a sentence for each word; the sentence should be about something related to your future studies or work. Use the form of the word with a red star.
11. Now write more sentences, but this time use at least two of the words in each sentence.
12. Now a long sentence, using as many of the words as you can (the sentence should still make sense!). Congratulate yourself and take a break.
13. On a later day, repeat 3-5 with the “somewhat useful” pile.
14. On a later day, write a sentence or two about why each of the words in your pile is not really useful for your future area of study or work.

Activity: Q&A Solitaire

1. There are questions on each of the cards. Ask yourself a some of the questions.... You can answer yourself out loud or quietly in your head. You might want to write down some of your answers as well.
2. Memorize some questions you think are interesting and later ask some of your friends to answer them!