



FOCUS ON  
**VOCABULARY 2**  
Mastering the Academic Word List



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- 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.

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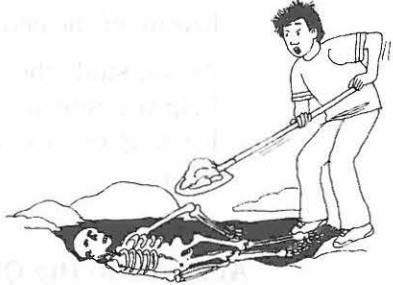
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(Back of card)

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

### 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.

9. The natural environment of any animal will \_\_\_\_\_ be altered  
(clearly, noticeably)  
when humans begin developing the area for their own needs.
10. The fact that most people thought the goods were overpriced is  
\_\_\_\_\_ the reason why the items failed to sell.  
(most likely, probably)
11. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who studies the human mind,  
(mental health professional, analyst)  
emotions, and behavior.
12. Good working relationships between staff members are \_\_\_\_\_  
(necessary, fundamental)  
to the success of any business.

### **Word Tip**

- The word family tables you have been completing in this book show that in most cases, a word will exhibit minor spelling changes depending on its form or part of speech. However, in some cases, the spelling will be exactly the same even though the part of speech is different. This is the case for three of the target words in “The Meaning of the Chair.” Look at the example for **access**.

noun form

Certain devices allow parents to limit their children’s **access** to inappropriate websites.

verb form

Passengers cannot **access** the airport parking area from the main terminal building without going outside.

- Find two more target words in the reading that have the exact same spellings for the noun and verb forms. (In the reading, one word appears in its verb form; the other word appears in its noun form.) Write them here.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_