The Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon™

The Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon (OPAL) is a set of four word lists that together provide an essential guide to the most important words and phrases to know in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This list gives around 250 important phrases for academic speaking, grouped into 16 functional areas.

### Spoken phrases

#### 1. Signposting and focusing in lectures/lessons
- I was going to / we are going to
- I would like to
- I want to talk about / look at
- what I want to do
- I (just) want to
- just going to
- going to talk about
- going to be talking about
- going to look at
  - going to show you
  - going to go through
  - going to go into
  - going to say
  - I was talking about
  - we were talking about
  - been talking about
  - we talked about
  - going to be talking about
  - going to look at
- you can look at
- be looking at
- to deal with
- interested in
- if you/we look at
- if you think about (it)
- when we-/you look at
- (and) you can see that
- we can see
- as you can see
- so you can see
- you can see here
- you will see
- we-/you need to know
- have to look at
- look at this
- here we have

#### 2. Specifying topics and relations between ideas
- in terms of
- with respect to
- in relation to
- (in) the context of
- in the case of
  - from the point of view of
  - when it comes to
  - in the form of
  - on the basis of
  - to do with
- as to
- nothing to do with
- the idea is that
- the notion of
- this idea of
- the idea that
- the meaning of
- in the sense (that)

#### 3. Drawing attention to something or focusing on it
- in this/that case
- the question is
- the point is that
- the problem of
- the problem with
  - the possibility of
  - the state of
  - the issue of
  - the question of
  - the nature of
- one of the things
- in particular
- the most important
- the importance of
- is important to
- a very important
- one of the key
- one of the most

#### 4. Clarifying and restating
- (so) in other words
- as I say
- as I said
- that is to say
- what I mean by
  - in a sense
  - if you like
  - as it were
  - you might say
  - in some way
- more or less
- (the) way(s) in which
- the way that
- a way of
- in the way that
- in a way that
- in such a way
- in this/that way
- in the same way
- the same thing

#### 5. Giving examples
- going to give you an example
- (so) for example
- for instance
  - such as
  - an example of
  - to show you
- an idea of
- a sense of
- what I mean
- a bit like
- something like
- like this

#### 6. Adding
- as well as
- and so on (and so forth)
  - and all the rest of it
  - et cetera (et cetera)
- (not only) but also

#### 7. Using vague language
- or something like that
- something to do with
- a kind of
- a sort of
- some kind of
  - some sort of
  - this/that sort of (thing)
  - this/that kind of (thing)
  - the sort of thing
  - all sorts of
- all kinds of
- and things like that
- in a way
- in some ways
- to some extent
- of some kind
- or whatever
- a little bit about
- a (little) bit more about

#### 8. Classifying and comparing things
- the same sort of
- the sorts of
- the kinds of
- these sorts of
- the type of
- types of
9. Making contrasts
- on the other hand
- on the one hand
- at the same time
- as opposed to
- rather than
- the difference between
- but in fact
- the other way round

10. Expressing relationships between things and ideas
- the relationship between
- the role of
- according to
- involved in

11. Expressing aims, causes and effects
- as a result of (of)
- the effect(s) of
- what happens if
- what happens to
- the reason for
- the reason why
- because of
- so that
- in order to
- the basis of
- to work out
- to find out
- to see how

12. Ordering content and making time references
- first of all
- by the end of
- at this stage
- in a minute
- later on
- the first thing (that)
- in the first place
- in a moment
- at this point
- for a long time
- in the future
- period of time
- at the beginning/start of
- at that point
- in this course

13. Hedging and expressing degrees of certainty
- may or may not
- I suppose
- as you know
- you find that
- it seems to me (that)
- of course
- tend to be
- on the whole
- I think (that)
- the fact that
- more likely to
- I would say
- we know that
- may well be

14. Marking a shift in or change of topic
- (going to) come to
- move on to
- OK so
- all right
- come back to (that)
- go on to
- OK now
- let me just
- go back to (that)
- so we have
- all right so
- by the way
- back to that
- so you get
- right so

15. Direct address or instruction to students/audience
- (just) to remind you
- many of you
- if you think about it
- on the board
- if you remember
- most of you
- in front of you
- What does that mean?
- to bear in mind
- you might want to (look at)
- at the top of
- Why do you think…?
- to think about
- you will find
- at the bottom of
- What do you think…?
- for those of you
- you can imagine
- on the /your handout
- Are there any questions?

16. Expressing quantity and increase/decrease
- (lots and) lots of
- the number of
- more and more
- the development of
- (quite) a lot (of)
- a (whole) series of
- as a whole
- the process of
- a certain amount of
- a (whole) range of
- the majority of
- at the level of
- an awful lot of
- a variety of
- the whole of
- the rate of (change)
- a little bit (of)
- all sorts
- on the /your handout
- the level of
- a number of
- a group of
- a number of
- the level of

OPAL has been created with reference to the following corpora: the Oxford Corpus of Academic English (OCAE), the fiction subcorpus of the Oxford English Corpus (OEC), the spoken element of the British National Corpus (BNC) and a subset of the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus, developed within the University of Warwick and for which relevant permissions have been obtained. BASE was developed at the Universities of Warwick and Reading under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Paul Thompson. Corpus development of BASE was assisted by funding from BALEAP, EURALEX, the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.