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 the 600 most important words in academic speaking, divided into six sublists of 100 words each, with the most important words in Sublist 1.

Spoken single words

Sublist 1

action n.
also adv.
analysis n.
approach n.
arise v.
argument n.
assumption n.
bias adv.
become linking v.
between prep.
case n.
context n.
control n., v.
country n.
culture n.
data n.
define v.
definition n.
demand n.
design n., v.
develop v.
diagram n.
difference n.
different adj.
direction n.
economic adj.
effect n.
equal adj., n., v.
error n.
especially adv.
example n.
experiment n.
factor n.
failure n.
focus n., v.
form n., v.
function n., v.
general adj.
group n., v.
handout n.
history n.
human adj., n.
hypothesis n.
idea n.
important adj.
individual n., adj.
international adj.
kind n.
knowledge n.
language n.
learning n.
lecture n.
level n.
material n.
measure n., v.
method n.
model n.
movement n.
natural adj.
nature n.
observe v.
occurrence n.
OK exclam., adv.
perticular adj.
perticularly adv.
period n.
phase n.
population n.
principle n.
probability n.
process n.
produce v., n.
product n.
production n.
rate n.
relation n.
research n., v.
response n.
sense n.
set v., n.
simple adj.
simply adv.
social adj.
society n.
solution n.
source n.
state n., v.
structure n., v.
student n.
study n., v.
system n.
text n.
topic n.
type n.
value n.
variable n., adj.
word n.
world n.

Sublist 2

academic adj., n.
actually adv.
analyse v.
assume v.
based adj.
be basic adj.
begin v.
behaviour n.
body n.
cause n., v.
certain adj.
change n., v.
class n.
column n.
common adj.
compare v.
complex adj.
concept n.
concern v.
condition n.
course n.
create v.
degree n.
describe v.
detail n.
development n.
final adj.
element n.
environment n.
environmental adj.
environmentally adv.
exchange n.
explain v.
explanation n.
fact n.

Sublist 3

according to prep.
account n., v.
aim n., v.
almost adv.
among n., v.
aspect n.
associated adj.
attempt n., v.
attitude n.
barrier n.
beginning n.
call v.
characteristic n., adj.
classic adj., n.
classical adj.
clearly adv.
The Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon™
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.