

Winter 2014

The Collins Writing Exchange

Ideas, Tips, and Resources on Writing
from
Collins Education Associates

Special Focus

Developing Academic Vocabulary

"One of the most crucial services that teachers can provide, particularly for students who do not come from academically advantaged backgrounds, is **systematic instruction in important academic terms.**" (authors' emphasis)

Building Academic Vocabulary

Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering

Key Vocabulary for Opinion Writing

Essential Terms for Elementary Opinion Writing

David Coleman, a principle author of the Common Core State Standards, refers to general academic vocabulary as the "language of power." He suggests that frequent and systematic instruction in general academic vocabulary is an important shift that all teachers must make, including elementary teachers.

Collins Associate Gary Chadwell focuses on key academic vocabulary specifically for opinion writing for students in grades 2 to 5 in his *SEEN Magazine* article, "Introducing Students to the General Academic Vocabulary of the Common Core State Standards." Read the [article](#) and begin to teach the 20 most frequently used academic terms from the standards related to opinion writing.

Key Vocabulary for Argument Writing

Essential Terms for Secondary Argument Writing

Writing a thoughtful and compelling argument is an essential skill for college- or career-ready students. To develop an effective argument, students must be fluent with the language of argumentation. Get a sneak preview of Dr. John Collins and Paige Boncher's [white paper](#) on essential terms related to argument writing. They identify 18 of the most important terms secondary students need to know, explain why each is important, and provide both a standard definition as well as a student-friendly definition for each.

Academic Terms Students Need to Know

How to Determine Your Students' Needs

Based on samples we've seen, next generation assessment questions promise to be replete with academic vocabulary terms like *analyze*, *claim*, *relevant*, and *textual evidence*. Are your students fluent with general academic vocabulary terms? Do they know and use the terms? Do they recognize the terms, but don't really use them in their own writing or speaking?

We have compiled helpful lists of the most common terms used in the Common Core State Standards for different types of writing. Select from the lists below to determine for yourself how many terms you feel the majority of your class knows.

Key Vocabulary Terms — INFORMATIVE Writing

General Academic Vocabulary Term	May not/ Probably not know	Probably recognize but may not use	Know it and use it
analyze			

Opinion/Argument Terms

[Grades 3 to 5](#) [Grades 6 to 8](#) [Grades 9 to 12](#)

Informative Terms

[Grades 3 to 5](#) [Grades 6 to 8](#) [Grades 9 to 12](#)

Narrative Terms

[Grades 3 to 5](#) [Grades 6 to 8](#) [Grades 9 to 12](#)

Teaching General Academic Vocabulary

Ready-to-Use Vocabulary Cards Help Build Vocabulary Fluency

In *Building Academic Vocabulary*, Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering stress that to build academic vocabulary students need multiple encounters with new terms through peer interactions, games, and other activities. For those multiple exposures, the authors recommend that students develop vocabulary cards containing student-friendly definitions, non linguistic illustrations, and a meaningful sentence for each term.

We have developed ready-to-use vocabulary cards for high-frequency academic terms for each type of writing mentioned in the article above. Our vocabulary cards already have a student-friendly definition for each term and are ready for students to add their own illustration and meaningful sentence. Choose a set of vocabulary cards below and get started with your students right away!

Opinion/Argument Vocabulary Cards

[Grades 3 to 5](#) [Grades 6 to 8](#) [Grades 9 to 12](#)

Informative Vocabulary Cards

[Grades 3 to 5](#) [Grades 6 to 8](#) [Grades 9 to 12](#)

Narrative Vocabulary Cards

[Grades 3 to 5](#) [Grades 6 to 8](#) [Grades 9 to 12](#)

Classroom Tips That Work

Use "Test Question Vocabulary" When Giving Written and Oral Directions

CEA Associate Joan Pokrant interviewed teachers across the country on why they felt their students did poorly on high-stakes constructed response questions. Their most frequent answer: Students are often confused by the vocabulary in the questions. Terms like *evaluate*, *specific*, *stanza*, and *compute* often leave students uncertain of how to proceed.

In *Open Response Writing: 18 Strategies to Improve Student Performance*, Pokrant devotes an entire section to the importance of teachers using test-question vocabulary in daily interaction with students. Read an [excerpt](#) from her book that discusses this problem and suggests five Action Steps for improving students' fluency with these process words.

Strategy 5

Use general academic vocabulary when giving written and oral directions.

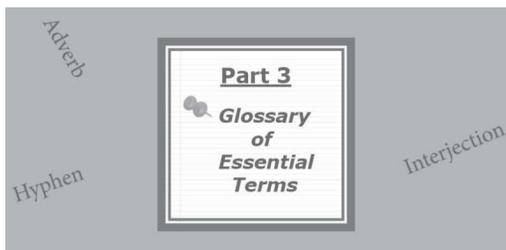
The term used for "test question vocabulary" by the Common Core State Standards is "general academic vocabulary." Since using a common language is proving to be important, I will refer to "test question vocabulary" as "general academic vocabulary" to align with the Common Core.

Convention Wisdom

Essential Terms for Writing Conventions

To talk about and understand how writing conventions work, students need specialized language. Terms like *antecedent*, *appositive*, *clause*, and *phrase* are not acquired by students in casual conversation. These unfamiliar terms need to be taught.

Collins Education Associates offers a *Teacher Resource Guide* for each level of the *Essential Conventions Check Mate™* line of products. Each guide has a Glossary of Essential Terms with student-friendly definitions. Use these reproducible masters to teach key terms related to writing conventions. Select the set for your grade level and try them with your students tomorrow.



Grades 2 to 3 Glossary ~ [Level P](#)

Grades 4 to 6 Glossary ~ [Level A](#)

Grades 6 to 9 Glossary ~ [Level B](#)

Grades 9 to 12 Glossary ~ [Level C](#)

Upcoming Events

View Our Schedule, Plan a Session

Collins Education Associates is offering workshops and institutes at various sites around the country. Check the [schedule](#) for upcoming sessions in your area. New offerings are added weekly, so if you don't see something in your area, check back again soon. Don't forget that you can host a Collins Institute in your district, open it up to outside participation, and underwrite some or all of the cost of the workshop for your teachers.

Would you like to speak to a Collins Associate about offering a Collins professional development session in your school or district? Call us at 800-932-4477 to learn about options and pricing and to set up a FREE phone consultation with a Collins Associate. We will customize the training to suit your needs!

About Our Newsletter

Helpful Resources for Busy Educators

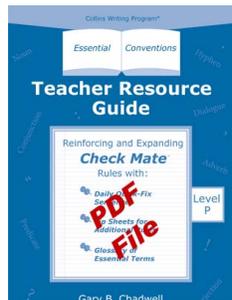
Thank you for your interest in our newsletter. Your feedback both by [email](#) and at our workshops is extremely encouraging. We welcome your suggestions and requests for future issues and enjoy hearing from you.

For those of you who had this issue of *The Collins Writing Exchange* forwarded to you by a colleague, [join our mailing list](#) and receive future issues directly. The *Exchange* is issued six times a year.

Essential Conventions Teacher Resource Guides

\$5 Off

Save \$5 on the **PDF** version of the *Essential Conventions Teacher Resource Guides*. Now through February 28, 2015 you can purchase the PDF for \$20 instead of the regular price of \$25. [Volume licenses](#) are also available.



Preview & Order

Grades 2 to 3 ~ [Level P](#)
Grades 4 to 6 ~ [Level A](#)
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Offer Expires 2/28/2015.

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