

Developing Lexical Fields and Word Building

Vocabulary Development – Word Building

Aims – to build productive vocabulary use based on student’s chosen topics; to raise awareness of the importance of word building, including through the use of suffixes and to provide practice using words from lexical sets.

Developing Lexical Fields (Vocabulary sets)

A lexical field is a way of grouping and organizing related words and expressions into a system which shows their relationship to one another. For example, father, mother, uncle, and aunt, belong to one lexical field – family. The vocabulary you need to study Business Management will be very different than that for Biology. By reading in your discipline, keeping vocabulary records and organising these into lexical fields, you will enhance your word knowledge and understanding of your subject.

Vocabulary Word Building (suffixes)

How many words does the Academic Word List consist of? **But** these are head-words – the most common words within a *word family*. This means that there may be many more related words that you will also need to understand and learn. Here is an example of a word family:

CONCLUDE

concluded	concludes	concluding	conclusion	conclusions	conclusive
conclusively	inconclusive	inconclusively			

The most common word in this family is *conclusion* and this is the word you will find on the Academic Word List, sub-list 2. The Academic Word List, including all the words in the word families is about 3000 words.

Task 2: Look at the 5 sentences below and identify the problem in each one (NB: none of these mistakes were picked up by spellcheck).

1. Tourists are in search of authenticity experiences.
2. This notion is particularly importance in developing countries.
3. Many people are fascination with others’ lives.
4. The upstream states actually use this power to increase their water allocate at the expense of those lying downstream.



5. In many developing countries, tourists do not have the conscious of environment protecting (x 3!)

How do I know how to build words accurately?

- 1: Identify if the word in your sentence will be a noun/verb/adjective or adverb.
- 2: Use a dictionary to check you have the correct suffix. Be careful – some nouns have 2 suffixes e.g. information/informant. Using the wrong one can cause misunderstandings and unintentional meanings.
3. Notice how words are used in the texts you are reading. You could also use the 'Flax' tool to see how the word is used in context (<http://flax.nzdl.org/greenstone3/flax?a=fp&sa=library> – click in 'learning collocations' and ensure you've changed the search to Academic English BAWE.

Task 3 – Look through one of your readings. Many of the words are nouns. Make a note of the most common noun suffixes you see

Common noun suffixes:

Task 4 Choose 5 words from a reading text that you have assigned and build the families. Use 'conclude' from above as a model.

1.
2.
3.
4.



5.

Task 5: Choose one word that you analysed above from your reading text and write 3 sentences using different parts of the word. Find examples on Flax for the ones you are unsure of.

Example: The results of the test were **inconclusive**.

All essays must have a **conclusion**.

The **concluding** chapter brings the entire argument together.

1.

2.

3.