Many words in academic English are the same as everyday vocabulary, but they are often used with a slightly different meaning, which may be specialised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyday use</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Academic use</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards of <strong>discipline</strong> in schools have declined</td>
<td>The ability to control yourself or other people, even in difficult situations</td>
<td>Nanotechnology is a relatively new <strong>discipline</strong>.</td>
<td>A particular area of study, especially a subject studied at a college or university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underline</strong> all the verbs from the text</td>
<td>To mark with a line or lines underneath; underscore</td>
<td>The chart <strong>underlines</strong> the importance of consuming more fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>Gives emphasis to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lake was <strong>frozen</strong> <strong>solid</strong></td>
<td>not liquid or gas</td>
<td>This provided <strong>solid</strong> evidence that he committed the crime.</td>
<td>certain or safe; of a good standard; giving confidence or support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 1**

The words in the box each have an everyday and academic use. Complete each pair of sentences using the same word in the correct form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>generate</th>
<th>turn</th>
<th>solid</th>
<th>confirm</th>
<th>identify</th>
<th>underline</th>
<th>character</th>
<th>pose</th>
<th>natural</th>
<th>focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. They love to _______ for photographs in front of their garden.
   The president’s comments _______ a threat to stability in the region.

2. I’m such a terrible photographer, most of my photos are blurred and out of _______.
   Children malnutrition should be the _______ of our attention in the coming years.

3. I went to trivago.com and ____________ my hotel reservation.
   The data ____________ the hypothesis that pet owners enjoy better health.

4. The power plant in Chingaza _______ electricity for the whole region.
Using movies in the class always__________ a great deal of debate among teachers.

5. The murderer was ________ from fingerprints discovered at the scene
   In this theory of history, progress is closely __________ with technology.

6. Students ________ the most important ideas when they are reading university texts.
   The study ________ the fact that very little research exists.

7. He lived in close communion with ________.
   Motor-racing is by ________ a dangerous sport.

8. The liquid became__________ as the temperature was lowered.
   The study lacks ______________ evidence and its conclusions are questionable.

**Vocabulary and academic style**

In writing, academics use many expressions which are neutral, but they also use rather formal expressions which are not common in everyday language. Knowing whether an expression is formal or just neutral is important because it gives you a better language rapport to interact in both daily life and academic contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>More formal</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>More formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in short, briefly</td>
<td>in sum, to sum up,</td>
<td>try</td>
<td>Attempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basically</td>
<td>fundamentally</td>
<td>mainly/mostly</td>
<td>primarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only</td>
<td>solely</td>
<td>typical of</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>almost, more or less</td>
<td>virtually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, very informal vocabulary may be used in *spoken* academic styles in classes and lectures. Learn to understand informal language when you hear it but be careful not to use it in essays and written assignments.

Here are some examples of teachers using informal language.

‘OK. Have a shot at doing task number 8.’ (more formal: Try/Attempt to do ...)

‘There’s no way schools can be held responsible for failures of government policy.’ (more formal: Schools cannot in any way be held ...)
Academic language tries to be clear and precise, so it is important to keep a vocabulary notebook and learn the differences between similar words, as well as typical word combinations.

**Exercise 2**

Rewrite the underlined words using more formal words and phrases.

1. The book is mainly concerned with the problem of policing the internet.

2. Almost every school in the country had reported problems with the new system.

3. The work of the Institute is not only devoted to cancer research.

4. Basically, we believe we have demonstrated a significant link between the two events.

5. Several research teams have had a shot at solving the problem, without success.

6. The reaction is typical of the way large corporations keep control of their markets.

7. We tried to find a new way of understanding the data.

8. Briefly, with the loss of centrality, historical centres are transformed into historical places or neighbourhoods.

*Adapted from Academic Vocabulary in Use, Michael McCarthy, Felicity O'Dell, 2016.*
ANSWER KEY

Exercise 1
1. Pose/pose
2. Focus/focus
3. Confirmed/confirmed
4. Generates/generates
5. Identified/identified
6. Underline/underlines
7. Nature/nature
8. Solid/solid

Exercise 2
1. Mainly/primarily
2. Almost/virtually
3. Not only/solely
4. Basically/fundamentally
5. Had a shot/attempt to do
6. Typical of/characteristic of
7. Tried/attempted
8. Briefly/To sum up