

# KEY ACADEMIC ADJECTIVES

## Academic Vocabulary – Academic Word List

Adjectives are necessary to enrich our spoken and written texts, they make our writings and speeches more visual and vivid. Our readers and listeners will get a better idea of what we wish them to picture. In addition; when we read a paper which is a descriptive one, adjectives help us to illustrate the content of what we read about.

For any key adjective it is useful to note (a) whether it is typically followed by a specific preposition, (b) what nouns it typically collocates with, (c) whether it has any antonyms (adjectives of opposite meaning) and (d) whether it has any related nouns.

There was an **apparent** discrepancy between the two sets of results. We noted a **potential** problem with the experimental design which we had to deal with first. The **principal** cause of the failure was a sudden temperature change. The research used a **rigorous** methodology which had been tested on many occasions.

1 seeming to exist or be true

2 possible when the necessary conditions exist

3 first in order of importance

4 careful to look at or consider every part of something to make certain it is correct

### Exercise 1

Complete the sentences with the following adjective and noun collocates

apparent	potential	rigorous	principal
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1. Business management students subjected the data to a \_\_\_\_\_ analysis.
2. He believes that the key to memory, despite its \_\_\_\_\_ complexities, will eventually prove to be simple: a single molecule.
3. Critics say the gold factory poses a \_\_\_\_\_ threat to the environment.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ structures include the municipal buildings, corn exchange, library, public hall, and the market cross.

### VOCABULARY SHIFT

When students write in academic context, sometimes it may sound childish because of the adjectives they select. Here is a list of the most common used adjectives and what options you use when writing for University or academic contexts.

Informal		Formal (written)
a lot of, lots of	→	many, numerous, a large number of
big	→	large, great, high, major
small, tiny	→	minute, insignificant
hard	→	difficult, arduous, laborious
good	→	suitable, appropriate, effective, efficient, beneficial, advantageous
bad	→	poor, inappropriate, unsuitable, ineffective, inefficient, unsatisfactory, defective
this kind of this sort of a these kinds of	→	such (a/an/Ø)
different	→	various, a variety of; separate, individual; other

## Exercise 2

Choose the formal alternative in each sentence.

1. The aim of this study is to develop an environmentally friendly and *good* / *effective* portable energy source.
2. Nanotechnology is the art and science of manipulating matter at the atomic or molecular scale and may lead to *significant*/ *big* improvements in technologies for protecting the environment.
3. The *novel* / *new* characteristics of nanotechnologies may lead to unforeseen environmental problems.
4. Timbre is *difficult* / *hard* to distinguish from other features in music.

5. Chemical syntheses typically result in *bad / poor* yields of desired products with many unwanted by-products.
6. Analysis of sound can be spectral or perceptual characterization of sound. In the perceptual analysis, accomplishing meaningful perceptual parameterization is a *very heavy / laborious* task compared to its spectral counterpart.
7. A fuel cell creates electricity, which is a form of *outside / external* energy, directly from the energy in chemical fuels without an *intermediate / middle* conversion into thermal energy.
8. Fuel cells are almost three times as *good / efficient* as *conventional / regular* vehicles and emit virtually no pollutants.
9. In the USA, the trend has been towards *bigger / larger* vehicles like SUV's with *higher / bigger* fuel consumption.
10. Many things that we are already familiar with are nanoscale and *analogous to / like* applications of nanotechnology.