

## Essential General Academic Vocabulary Guide for Students in Grades 6–12

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**General academic vocabulary is the language of school and tests. It is more likely to be used in written expression rather than speech. Using general academic vocabulary in your own writing helps create a more formal writing style.**

Word	Definition	Example Sentence
analyze	to examine something carefully and with focus	<b>Analyze</b> the passage to determine the author's point of view.
apply	to connect something you know or can do to another situation	<b>Apply</b> the three most essential elements of British rule to Colonial Boston's economic hardships.
appropriate	right or correct in a particular situation or context	Include three pieces of <b>appropriate</b> textual evidence to support your claim.
argument	an idea supported by evidence or reasoning	In your <b>argument</b> , please be certain that your claim is clear and your evidence sufficient.
assess	to make a judgment about	After reading the essay, <b>assess</b> the merit of the claim.
audience	those who receive information or a message	Your response should be appropriate for the intended <b>audience</b> .
cite	to mention or quote as an example to support an idea, claim, or opinion	When summarizing the reading, please <b>cite</b> the source, title, and author.
claim	to state a position that may go against the positions of others	Include a <b>claim</b> that clearly states your stand on extending the school day.
clarify	to make something easier to understand	<b>Clarify</b> your position on using social media in school.
closure	the act of bringing something to an end or reaching a conclusion	Your concluding paragraph should bring <b>closure</b> to your argument.
compare	to see what is the same or similar about two or more items or to judge which is better	<b>Compare</b> the causes of the Korean War with those of the Vietnam War and decide which was more justified.
compose	to create or write	<b>Compose</b> a letter to the editor regarding student rights.
contrast	to see what is different about two or more items or to decide which is better or worse	<b>Contrast</b> the poetry of Plath with that of Dickinson, and determine who was a stronger feminist.
conventions	generally accepted practices, such as in grammar or language mechanics	A strong command of English <b>conventions</b> is essential for a journalist.
counterclaim	a claim that goes against a previous claim	All effective arguments must address at least one <b>counterclaim</b> .
credible	reasonable to trust or believe	Include <b>credible</b> evidence in your answer.
critique	to express your opinion about the good and bad parts of something	You are to summarize the reading, not <b>critique</b> it.
define	to explain the meaning of something	<b>Define</b> your position on early voting.
delineate	to clearly show or describe	<b>Delineate</b> your methods for solving this equation.
design	the way in which something is planned and made	Identify the flaw in this <b>design</b> and explain how it resulted in failure.
detail	a fact or piece of information about something	In your response, include a sufficient number of supporting <b>details</b> .
determine	to decide the truth or validity of something (facts, statistics, or claims)	What steps are necessary to <b>determine</b> if evidence is credible?
develop	to grow or change and become more advanced	You must <b>develop</b> your theory in a logical and concise manner.
dialogue	a conversation between two or more people, groups, or entities	The <b>dialogue</b> in the passage was incredibly disturbing.
e.g.	a Latin abbreviation that means "for example"	Some paragraphs ( <b>e.g.</b> , the first and last) are vague.
essay	a formal and focused piece of writing, usually containing multiple paragraphs	Your argument <b>essay</b> should be completed by Friday and include both a claim and a counterclaim.
evaluate	to determine the value, worth, or importance of something after careful consideration	<b>Evaluate</b> the following two speeches and determine which is more likely to sway voters.
evidence	something that proves that a claim is true or valid	Citing textual <b>evidence</b> , evaluate who is a worse father, Claudius or Polonius.
explain	to make clear with sufficient reasons or details	Looking at this student response, please <b>explain</b> what the error was.
fact	true and provable piece of information	Good writers cite <b>facts</b> when making arguments.

formal style	impersonal, objective, precise use of language	<i>Students should always use a <b>formal style</b> in academic writing.</i>
formulate	to develop and explain all the details of an idea, thought, or conclusion	<b>Formulate</b> your response before you answer the prompt.
infer	to use information you have been given to come to a conclusion	<i>What can you <b>infer</b> from the information that the government has shared with voters?</i>
integrate	to combine one thing with another to make a whole	<i>In your response, <b>integrate</b> the beliefs of at least two cultures we have studied.</i>
interpret	to explain or understand the meaning of	<i>Does the following graph <b>interpret</b> the data correctly?</i>
justify	to prove or show something to be just, right, or reasonable	<i>Please make a claim that you can verbally <b>justify</b>.</i>
logical	using reason	<i>Use <b>logical</b> sequencing in your answer.</i>
mood	the atmosphere in a situation	<i>The <b>mood</b> of the poem is glum.</i>
objective tone	presenting information in a way that is not emotional or biased	<i>An <b>objective tone</b> may be desirable in argument writing, but it might not work for persuasion.</i>
organization	the appropriate arrangement of parts in an orderly and efficient way	<i>Use chronological <b>organization</b> in your plot summary.</i>
paraphrase	to reword something written or spoken by someone else	<b>Paraphrase</b> this statement by Winston Churchill.
passage	a portion or section of a written work; a paragraph, verse, or similar	<i>Evaluate the following <b>passage</b> for its impact on the teenage reader.</i>
phrase	a group of words that express an idea wholly or incompletely	<i>Which <b>phrase</b> is more persuasive?</i>
plagiarize	to use another's words without authorization	<i>Be careful that you do not unintentionally <b>plagiarize</b>.</i>
point of view	the position or outlook of the author	<i>Can you determine the <b>point of view</b> of this writer from his use of language?</i>
precise	definite or exact	<i>Your response should be <b>precise</b>, not vague.</i>
predict	to say what will happen in the future	<i>Based on chapter one, can you <b>predict</b> the conflict?</i>
rank	relative position or standing	<i>List three main causes of the Depression in <b>rank</b> order.</i>
reason	basis of argument; supporting evidence	<i>You must include more than one <b>reason</b> to support your claim.</i>
relevant	connected to the subject	<i>Evidence is not strong if it is not <b>relevant</b>.</i>
source	where the information comes from, can be written, spoken, audio, video, and so on	<i>Include more than one <b>source</b> in your evidence.</i>
specific	precise or particular	<i>Include a <b>specific</b> reference to an expert in your answer.</i>
sufficient	enough	<i>Include <b>sufficient</b> information to solve the problem.</i>
summarize	brief restatement of important points of a written or oral statement	<b>Summarizing</b> is not the same thing as retelling!
support	to uphold or defend as valid or right	<b>Support</b> your assertion with three pieces of evidence.
synthesize	to combine a number of things into a coherent whole	<b>Synthesize</b> the four main ideas in this reading.
text	the whole of a written work	<i>Read the <b>text</b> closely before you attempt to answer.</i>
text features	elements that help the reader make sense of the text	<i>Subtitles and pull-out quotes are two common <b>text features</b>.</i>
text structure	how a text or a passage is organized	<i>The <b>text structure</b> was a problem-solution pattern with clear subheadings to assist the reader in identifying the central ideas.</i>
theme	underlying or unifying idea that runs throughout a written work; <b>the message</b> or <b>the meaning</b>	<i>How did you identify the <b>theme</b> of man's inhumanity to man in the novel?</i>
tone	a feeling or an attitude expressed by the words	<i>The author's <b>tone</b> tends to predict the theme.</i>
transform	to change something from one state to another	<i>How did the idea of civil rights <b>transform</b> the United States in the 1960s?</i>