

ADULT LITERACY & NUMERACY, LITERACY GLOSSARY

A

Academic words

Words that express specific ideas or instructions and are scholarly rather than specialised or practical. Academic words are those most often heard in education or theoretical contexts, for example, *conclusive*, *methodology*, *controversial*.

Acronym

A word or term formed from the initial letters of other words, for example, *NZQA*, *TPK*.

Alphabetic principle

The understanding that written letters of the alphabet represent specific spoken sounds.

Automatically

Without having to think about it, for example, decoding whole words or phrases without needing to sound out individual letters or syllables.

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C

Clause

A group of words that includes a subject and a verb, for example, “the door closes”. A sentence may have one or more clauses.

Cognition, cognitive

Cognition means the process of acquiring knowledge; cognitive skills are the skills used in acquiring knowledge.

Coherent

The way in which the meanings and sequences of ideas combine to make meaning. A text is coherent when the words, structures and sequences of ideas work together effectively to create a meaningful whole for a listener or reader.

Cohesion (of a text)

The way in which the various parts of a text, such as the ideas and sentences, are linked together. This can be achieved in many ways, for example, by using lexical chains (words with linked meanings placed throughout the text), by using pronouns that refer back to a noun used earlier, by omitting unneeded words that the reader can supply from the context (ellipsis), or by using verb tenses to remind the reader that the action continues to be in the past.

Cohesive devices

There are many devices that speakers and writers can use to make a text more cohesive. They include lexical chains, pronoun references and ellipsis. They build on the prior experience or schemas that listeners and readers bring to listening or reading.

Collocation

A set of two or more words that are often used together, such as *heavy drinker* or “See you later”.

Colloquial language

Informal language, often involving such well-known idioms as “He’s onto it!” or “Everything’s ka pai”.

Complex sentence

A sentence in which there is more than one clause and one of the clauses is subordinate to another, for example, “When I was walking home [subordinate clause], I met Hone” [main clause]. A complex sentence often includes phrases as well as one or more subordinate clauses.

Compound sentence

A sentence containing at least two main clauses joined by conjunctions, for example, “I like mussels, but Tania likes pipis.”

Compound word

Two or more words that function as a single unit of meaning, for example, *steamroller and wallpaper*.

Concepts about print

Ideas about or knowledge of the conventions of written texts. Key concepts about written English texts include:

- that text is read from left to right with a return sweep to the left of each new line
- that print on the left-hand page or column is read before print on the right-hand page or column
- that written sentences start with capital letters and end with full stops
- that the spacings between words, sentences, lines of print and paragraphs follow a meaningful pattern.

Connotations

The common associations of a word, for example, the word *pig* has connotations of *dirty* and *greedy*).

Content (of a text)

The ideas or information contained within a text.

Critical awareness (of texts)

An active awareness of different perspectives and purposes for speaking and writing and of how these shape texts, for example, awareness that a writer may place the information they want to draw attention to at the beginning of their text.

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D

Decode

To decode means to read words by translating the written symbols into the sounds of spoken language (often silently).

Denotation

The use of a word to name a defined thing, for example, a *pig* meaning a specific kind of animal with four legs, two ears and so on.

Dialogue

A conversation between two or more people.

Digraph

A combination of two letters that represent one sound, for example, *ea* in *bread*, or two letters that represent a sound that is not a combination of the two individual sounds, for example, *ch*, *sh*.

Discourse

Language beyond the level of the sentence. The word *discourse* can refer to both spoken and written language. However, these progressions use it mainly for spoken language, because it captures the fact that a lot of spoken language is often unpredictable. For example, although the language used to open and close a telephone conversation may follow a predictable pattern, the middle section with the key messages generally does not.

Discourse marker

A word or phrase in a text that helps the listener or reader to follow the relationships between the parts of a text, for example, "First ... finally", "Of course", "but, on the other hand ...".

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E

Effective interactions

Interactions that achieve their intended purpose, for example, reaching a mutual understanding.

Ellipsis

The omission of words from a sentence; in grammar, the term ellipsis conveys that implied words are omitted, for example, "Yes I will" [answer the phone].

In punctuation, the term means three dots showing that some text is missing, for example, "Yes, I'd love to, but ..."

Encode (in writing)

To write (that is spell) words and common symbols from spoken language in the symbols (letters and punctuation marks) of written language.

Everyday words

High-frequency words that are commonly used in a wide range of everyday contexts and are not technical or academic, for example, *house*, *wait*, *decide*, *happy*.

Extended vocabulary

A vocabulary that goes beyond the basic words associated with a context or topic, for example, within the topic of cars, *tyre* could be considered a basic vocabulary item while *tread* is more extended.

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F

Figurative language

Language that uses images to build meaning without literal description and often without direct comparison, for example, by using metaphor "My heart wept for you".

Flow

To move forward steadily and continuously without abrupt changes or interruptions.

Fluent, fluency

A speaker, reader or writer is fluent (demonstrates fluency) when they can speak, read or write rapidly and accurately, focusing on meaning without having to give laborious attention to the individual words or the common forms and sequences of the language.

Formulaic phrases or expressions

Common phrases or expressions that are learned and used as whole units rather than as individual words, for example, "How are you?" or "See you later."

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G

Generative principles (of word formation)

The principles that allow new words to be formed (generated) from root words, for example, by adding endings to form plurals (*horse, horses*) or different tenses (*walk, walked*).

Genre

See Text type.

Gist

The substance or general idea of an oral or written text, without all of the details.

Grammatical constructions

The ways words and sentences are arranged according to the rules of grammar, for example, in English the passive verb form *be* + past participle is used to show that the subject of the sentence is not the agent of the verb, but rather receives the action. It is incorrect to say "The wharenuis is building", the correct grammatical construction is "The wharenuis is being built".

Graphic organiser

A template that writers can use to help them organise a text, for example, an electronic text file with spaces for an introduction, main points, and details and a conclusion.

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H

High-frequency words

The 2,000 words most frequently used by English language speakers.

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I

Infer

To read between the lines and understand something that is not stated explicitly.

Integrate (strategies)

To use multiple strategies in combination, for example, by making inferences when reading and drawing on prior knowledge as well as information from the text to assess these inferences.

Interactions

Reciprocal actions or communications, for example, where two or more people engage in oral or written discussion or conversation.

Intonation

The way a speaker's voice rises and falls, for example, a speaker's voice may fall at the end to express authority ("Stop that **now**") or the speaker can give what is said a particular meaning or feeling, for example, "Sue's here?" with a rising intonation is a question, whereas "Sue's here" with a falling or flat intonation is a statement.

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L

Language device

A language feature used by a speaker or writer to create a particular effect, for example, the use of language forms such as *likely* to and *may* to modify statements and show reasonableness, accuracy and objectivity in an academic argument.

Letter-sound correspondence

The way certain letters or letter combinations in written language correspond to or represent certain sounds in spoken language.

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M

Media

Forms of communication, for example, print media, digital media and electronic media.

Metacognition, metacognitive

Terms used to describe the processes learners use to think and talk about their own learning, articulating what they know, what they can do and how they can apply their learning in new contexts. As learners make their learning explicit to themselves and others, they develop their awareness of their learning and how to develop as learners.

Morpheme

The smallest unit of meaning in a word. For example, the word *jumped* contains two morphemes, *jump-*, meaning *to leap* and *-ed*, meaning *in the past*.

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N

Negotiating meaning

Communicating with the intention of reaching a better understanding of another speaker or writer, for example, asking and answering questions such as “Do you mean ...?”, “Why did you say ...?”

Non-verbal methods of communicating

Ways of communicating that do not require the use of words, such as gestures, facial expressions and the use of pictures or mime.

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O

Onset and rime

The initial sound (the onset) and the following sound (the rime) in a syllable, for example, *sh/op*, *th/ink* and *scr/ap*. Note that *rime* is not the same as *rhyme*, which is when two words share the same rime in their final syllable, for example, *sh/op*, *dr/op* and *lo/l/i/pop*.

Oral text

A spoken text (see also Text).

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P

Pace

The speed of a written or spoken Text.

Perspective

A particular point of view.

Phoneme

The smallest segment of sound in spoken language, for example, *pot* and *knife* have three phonemes.

Phonemic awareness

The awareness of individual sounds in spoken language and that these sounds can be represented by letters or groups of letters in written language.

Phonological awareness

The awareness of different levels in the sound system of spoken language – word, syllable, onset and rime, and phoneme.

Phrase

A group of words that forms part of a sentence but does not express a complete thought, for example, as *happy as anything* (adjectival phrase) or a *unique and unexpected experience* (noun phrase).

Pitch

The degree of highness or lowness of a speaker's tone.

Prefix

A word part that can be added at the beginning of a base or root word to alter its meaning, for example, *un-* can be added to the word *kind* to make *unkind*.

Prior knowledge/learning

What a person already knows (the knowledge they bring to a spoken or written text).

Progression

A set of steps along a continuum, each step representing a significant learning development.

Prosodic features

Features relating to the patterns of stress and intonation in spoken language.

Purpose (of a text)

The intended effect of a speaker's or writer's spoken or written text, for example, to seek or communicate information, to entertain, or to express opinion.

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Reading Comprehension

RdCrit

Reading Critically

RdDec

Reading: Decoding

RdL&T

Reading: Language and Text Features

RdVoc

Reading: Vocabulary

Register

An expert speaker or writer chooses the appropriate register for the situation, bearing in mind what is taking place, who is taking part and what part language is playing. The term register may be used with a very specific meaning, that is, the kind of language that is familiar and expected in a particular social or work setting. For example, "Would you mind kindly stepping this way?" is spoken in a very different register from "Get over here right now!" and there are differences in the underlying as well as surface meanings. The term can also be used to describe the way in which a speaker chooses vocabulary, grammar, prosodic features such as tone and other language features for a particular purpose and audience.

Rhetorical pattern

A language pattern used to create a particular effect, for example, patterns of repetition or pauses in oratory; patterns that indicate a connection such as cause and effect in oral and written text.

Rhyme (Of two or more words)

To share the same, or a very similar, final syllable, for example, *pill*, *will* and *still*. Sometimes words that rhyme may only share the same rime (final sound) in their final syllables, for example, *lollipop* and *drop*.

Rime

See Onset and rime.

Root word

The original base word from which one or more other words have been formed, for example, the root of *original* is the Latin word *origo*, *origin-*, meaning "to rise".

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S

Sentence structure

The arrangement of words and phrases to create sentences. Sentences may be simple ("I'm a Kiwi"), compound ("I'm a Kiwi but I come from Australia"), or complex ("I'm a Kiwi from New Zealand, which is a small country in the South Pacific").

Sight words

Words that a reader knows and can read automatically, rather than needing to decode them.

Specialised words

Words that are used for a specific subject or context, for example, a technical context (*specifications*, *two-by-four*).

Static visual texts

Visual texts that feature still images (as in a poster) rather than moving images (as in a television advertisement).

Strand

A strand of thread is made up of many individual fibres. In the same way, each strand of adult learning progressions is made up of several progressions, which together describe the development of expertise within the strand.

Strategy

The deliberate application of knowledge and/or skills in a particular way to solve a problem, for example using prior knowledge of the topic to test whether the decoding of a text makes sense.

Stress (on spoken words)

Stress means the way the speaker indicates meaning by emphasising certain words and syllables rather than others, for example, "Morehu told you he **resigned?**" with the stress or emphasis on *resigned* expresses surprise that Morehu resigned, but with the stress on *told* or *you* expresses surprise that Morehu told you.

Style

A distinctive way of speaking or writing.

Suffix

A word part that can be added at the end of a base or root word to alter its meaning, for example, *-ly* and *-est* can be added to the word *kind* to make *kindly* and *kindest*.

Syllable

A segment of a word, often a vowel sound with initial or final, or initial and final consonant sounds. Words may consist of one syllable, for example, *dog*, *on*, *brought*, *play*, or more than one syllable, for example, *to/day*, *de/ci/sion*, *ce/le/bra/tion*.

Symbol

A graphic or literary image that represents a particular concept, for example, a picture of a skull and crossbones often represents danger or that something is poisonous and, in English literature, images associated with spring (blossoms, daffodils, lambs) often represent youth, new life or new beginnings.

Syntactic functions

The roles of particular kinds of words (for example, verbs, nouns and prepositions) in a sentence.

Synthesise information

To draw two or more pieces of information together to create a new understanding that includes elements from varied sources. Many academic texts, for example, include information from many other sources and this information is used according to the writer's purpose, such as to support the writer's argument.

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T

Text

A piece of spoken, written or visual communication that is a whole unit, for example, a conversation, a speech, a poem or a poster.

Text form

The form in which a particular example of a text type appears. For example, a poem, a magazine article and a letter to the editor are all text forms. Each of these could also be any one of a number of text types. A magazine article, for example, could be an argument or a recount.

Text type (genre)

A particular kind of text, with particular conventions and generic patterns linked to the purpose of the text. The patterning may show itself in the overall structure of the text and in the ideas and language features. For example, if a writer's purpose is to recount something that happened in the past, we can anticipate that they will cover a series of events in chronological order. Written texts may consist of more than one text type, for example, a text about the sport of rugby may include both a report explaining the sport and a recount of a particular game.

Tone

Modulation of the voice or phrasing of a written text to express the attitude or feeling that the speaker or writer wants to convey to the intended audience, for example, the tone of voice used by a speaker could be angry, friendly or serious. The term "tone" is sometimes used in the sense of intonation.

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U

Utterances

A segment of spoken language that is seen as complete within the context of the discourse and usually has pauses or silence before and after. It may be one word, or a phrase, or a sentence, for example, "Hi", "At home" (a response to a question), or "That's a nice shirt."

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V

Validity

The degree to which an assertion can be supported by evidence.

Visual text

A text in which visual elements predominate words. It may use static images, as in a poster, or moving images, as in a video (see also Text).

Vocabulary

The words in a language. There are different ways to count vocabulary items, but the vocabulary of a language is often based on the number of words or phrases with specific meanings. For example, different forms of a verb (word family) are equal to one vocabulary item, as is a compound word or expression such as "shoot the breeze".

Voice

The personal characteristics in a spoken or written text (including tone, register, style and text features) through which the listener or reader can identify either a particular speaker or writer, or the kind of person that the writing suggests the writer is, for example, using *like* as a filler "... and she was, like, really mad" could be seen to suggest the voice of an adolescent or teenage girl (although voice may also be assumed as a device of a writer).

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W

Word family

A group of words that share a common base or root word, for example, *run, ran, runner, running or care, careless, carefree, uncaring.*

Writing frame

A template or graphic organiser designed to support writers. For example, a writing frame may use headings or sentence starters with lines for the writer to enter information or ideas. A bank deposit form is one kind of writing frame.

WrL&T

Writing: Language and Text Features

WrP&A

Writing: Purpose and Audience

WrP&C

Writing: Planning and Composing

WrR&E

Writing: Revising and Editing

WrSp

Writing: Spelling

WrVoc

Writing: Vocabulary