

# **STUDY MATERIAL - 01**

## **ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSE**

### **What is English for Academic Purpose?**

**English for academic purposes (EAP)**, commonly known as **Academic English**, entails training students, usually in a higher education setting, to use language appropriately for study. It is one of the most common forms of English for specific purposes (ESP).

An EAP program focuses instruction on skills required to perform in an English-speaking academic context across core subject areas generally encountered in a university setting. Programs may also include a narrower focus on the more specific linguistic demands of a particular area of study, for example business subjects. Programs may be divided into pre-sessional courses and courses taken alongside students' other subjects. In the former case, sometimes EAP courses may be intended to raise students' general English levels so that they can enter university. In the United Kingdom, this often means endeavouring to help students get a score of 6 or above in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) examination. In the US, this can mean helping students attain a score of 80 or greater on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or more than 4 on the ITEP (International Test of English Proficiency). Outside Anglophone countries, English-medium universities may have a preparatory school where students can spend a year or two working on their English and academic skills before starting degree courses. EAP courses running alongside other degree courses may be based on the American English and Composition model, or may employ Content-based instruction, either using material from the students' degree subjects or as an independent, elective-like course. These in-sessional courses may be desirable more to help students develop study skills and required academic practices than for language development.

In common with most language teaching, EAP instruction teaches vocabulary, grammar and the four skills (reading, writing, speaking - including pronunciation - and listening), but usually tries to tie these to the specific study needs of students; for example, a writing lesson would focus on writing essays rather than, say, business letters. Similarly, the vocabulary chosen for study tends to be based on academic texts. In addition, EAP practitioners often find that, either directly or indirectly, they are teaching study skills and often having to tackle differences in educational culture, such as differing attitudes to plagiarism. This trend has

become more prominent as the numbers of foreign students attending UK universities, and other institutions across the English-speaking world, has increased over the last decade.

There is some debate amongst EAP teachers as to the best way to help students with academic English. On the one hand, students might be taught particular conventions but not expected to understand why they need to adapt their writing; a pragmatic approach. On the other hand, students might be encouraged to challenge writing conventions and only adopt them if they seem justified; a critical approach. Recently attempts have been made to try and reconcile these opposing views. A critical pragmatic approach to EAP encourages students to develop writing conventions required by universities while also encouraging them to think about the reasons why these conventions exist.

## **Difference Between Academic and General English:**

**The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) divides into two categories: academic and general.**

This separation considers English as two different manners for communication purpose. Although applied to immigrants seeking to enter the United States or the United Kingdom, the concept applies to English-speaking citizens as well.

The most difference is academic and general modules: English refer to formal and informal English, respectively. Academic English concerns itself with the “proper” way of speaking and writing, and places heavier emphasis on grammar. Considered a tougher standard to meet, academic English relates more to those seeking opportunities in higher education. General or social, academic English connects to the everyday use of English and appeals to those who are not looking to work in the academic field.

**The difference can also be seen in the following ways:**

General English aims to achieve a high standard of everyday English communication skills. It covers the four main skills of:

- **Reading**
- **Writing**
- **Listening and**
- **Speaking**

English for Academic Purposes is designed for students planning to begin tertiary studies. It introduces students to academic study skills.

**The Linguistic components that academic students learn to become aware of can be categorised in 5 areas:**

- 1. The Phonological component** – understanding phonological (sound) features of Academic English; this includes spelling (i.e. advice, advise) intonation, stress, and sound patterns (e.g., ‘photograph, pho’tographer, pho’tography, photo’graphic)
- 2. The Lexical component** – understanding the forms and meanings of words that are used across many different kinds of disciplines (usually an academic student favourite); as well as understanding prefixes, roots, and suffixes, the parts of speech of words (noun/verb/adverb/determiner etc.) and their grammatical limitations.
- 3. The Grammatical component**– Here academic students guide themselves to understand and use the grammatical features (morphological and syntactic) associated with study patterns dealing with “analysis”, “definition”, “argumentative composition”, and “procedural description”; here we learn more about grammatical metaphor as well as the complex punctuation rules that govern them (e.g. let’s eat grandma vs. let’s eat, grandma)
- 4. The Socio-linguistic component**– This includes knowledge beyond ordinary General English examples, such as apologizing, complaining, and making requests. In Academic, students deal more with expository and argumentative texts and contexts, especially when wanting to communicate successfully with likeminded people, whether it be with their classmates in the class, or outside with native speakers.
- 5. The Discourse component** – understanding helpful language tools such as transitions (linking words) and other organisational signals that, in reading, help academic students gain perspective on – what is being read, in seeing relationships between the writer and the reader and the listener and speaker, as well as following logical methods of thought. Particularly in writing, these discourse features help your everyday academic student develop their thesis and provide a smooth writing flow between ideas (using such words as, nevertheless, in spite of, according to)

It can be seen that the learning patterns of Academic English are rather uniquely different to General. The term ‘General English’ can rather be changed to ‘Social English’ or ‘Conversational English’, because that is what it really is at the end of the day. For most students starting to study any new language this would fundamentally be enough.

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