

ELL Strategies & Best Practices: Developing Academic Language & Vocabulary

Challenge: How can teachers help ELLs build the academic language they need to read complex texts and gain key content knowledge?

Academic language is critical for both learning new content and demonstrating one's learning. Compared to their English-proficient peers, ELLs often lack general academic and domain-specific vocabulary to understand challenging content-area texts. Explicit instruction and modeling related to a text's structure, syntax, and word choice builds disciplinary thinking, language, and comprehension. Providing opportunities for students to use academic vocabulary in writing and speaking also increases students' understanding of content and supports language learning.

Intervention: Use Actively Learn to teach academic language and create opportunities for students to practice using content-specific vocabulary in writing.

Teach Key Vocabulary & Model Text Analysis

Insert notes throughout a text to highlight academic vocabulary, provide definitions for words with multiple meanings, or analyze text features, syntax, and language. Before assigning a text to students, model strategies that students can use while reading to support text analysis.

Create Opportunities for Student Practice

After pre-teaching vocabulary and other language or text features, add directions to assignments in Actively Learn prompting students to use key vocabulary terms or language forms in their responses to questions and notes.

Thinking about using Actively Learn to build academic language? Here are some ideas:

Notes and questions can be embedded into assignments to guide students as they are reading a text to notice and use academic language and vocabulary.

DR. LEARN

The root 'bio' refers to life or living things. The term **biotic** is being used to describe all the living things in an ecosystem.

QUESTION 4 DOK 2 STANDARD RST.4

Describe a desert ecosystem using the highlighted vocabulary terms from this reading (abiotic, biotic, producer, consumer).