

# 3 Education

Naming academic subjects | Verbs, nouns and adjectives associated with academic study |  
Choosing the correct part of speech

## Vocabulary

### Academic subjects:

- **archaeology** also **archeology**  
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Archaeology** is the study of the societies and peoples of the past by examining the remains of their buildings, tools, and other objects. ▫ *an archaeology professor at Florida State University*
- **astronomy**  
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Astronomy** is the scientific study of the stars, planets, and other natural objects in space. ▫ *a 10-day astronomy mission*
- **economics**  
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Economics** is the study of the way in which money, industry, and trade are organized in a society. ▫ *He gained a first class Honours degree in economics.* ▫ *having previously studied economics and fine art*
- **geology**  
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Geology** is the study of the Earth's structure, surface, and origins. ▫ *He was visiting professor of geology at the University of Jordan.*
- **linguistics**  
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Linguistics** is the study of the way in which language works. ▫ *Modern linguistics emerged as a distinct field in the nineteenth century.*
- **psychology**  
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Psychology** is the scientific study of the human mind and the reasons for people's behaviour. ▫ *Professor of Psychology at Bedford College* ▫ *research in educational psychology*

- **sociology**

UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Sociology** is the study of society or of the way society is organized. ▫ *a sociology professor at the University of North Carolina* ▫ *a treatise on the sociology of religion*

### Academic activities:

- **analyse (analyses, analysing, analysed)**  
VERB If you **analyse** something, you consider it carefully or use statistical methods in order to fully understand it. [US **analyze**]  
▫ *McCarthy was asked to analyse the data from the first phase of trials of the vaccine.*  
▫ [+ what] *This book teaches you how to analyse what is causing the stress in your life.*
- **claim (claims, claiming, claimed)**  
VERB If you say that someone **claims that** something is true, you mean they say that it is true but you are not sure whether or not they are telling the truth. ▫ [+ that] *He claimed that it was all a conspiracy against him.* ▫ [+ to-inf] *A man claiming to be a journalist threatened to reveal details about her private life.* ▫ *He claims a 70 to 80 per cent success rate.*
- **define (defines, defining, defined)**  
VERB If you **define** a word or expression, you explain its meaning, for example in a dictionary. ▫ [+ as] *Collins English Dictionary defines a workaholic as 'a person obsessively addicted to work'.*
- **evaluate (evaluates, evaluating, evaluated)**  
VERB If you **evaluate** something or someone, you consider them in order to make a judgment about them, for example about how good or bad they are. ▫ *They will*

first send in trained nurses to evaluate the needs of the individual situation. ▀ The market situation is difficult to evaluate. ▀ [+ how] we evaluate how well we do something

• **investigate (investigates, investigating, investigated)**

VERB If you investigate something, you study or examine it carefully to find out the truth about it. ▀ *Research in Oxford is now investigating a possible link between endometriosis and the immune system.*  
▀ [+ how] *Police are still investigating how the accident happened.*

**Nouns associated with research:**

• **evidence**

UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Evidence** is anything that you see, experience, read, or are told that causes you to believe that something is true

or has really happened. ▀ [+ of/for] *a report on the scientific evidence for global warming*  
▀ [+ that] *There is a lot of evidence that stress is partly responsible for disease.* ▀ [+ to-inf] *To date there is no evidence to support this theory.*

• **hypothesis (hypotheses)**

NOUN A **hypothesis** is an idea which is suggested as a possible explanation for a particular situation or condition, but which has not yet been proved to be correct. [FORMAL] ▀ *Work will now begin to test the hypothesis in rats.* ▀ *Different hypotheses have been put forward to explain why these foods are more likely to cause problems.*

• **theory (theories)**

NOUN A **theory** is a formal idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain something. ▀ [+ of] *Einstein formulated the Theory of Relativity in 1905.*

## Practice exercises

**Exam tip:** Words for academic subjects can have many different endings, but these are common.

-ics: *statistics*

-logy: *biology*

-y: *philosophy*

Learn to recognize these.

1 Complete words 1–7 below with the ending -ics, -logy, or -y to form the names of subjects. Then match them to the topics of study a–g.

1 archaeo _____	a the human mind
2 astronom _____	b people of the past
3 econom _____	c society
4 geo _____	d money, industry and trade
5 linguist _____	e the Earth
6 psycho _____	f how language works
7 socio _____	g stars and planets

**Exam tip:** Words for naming people by their occupations often end in -er.

Examples: *teacher/farmer/miner*

Words for naming people who study academic subjects for a living usually end in -ist.

Examples: *biologist/physicist*

Learn to recognize these.

**2 Choose the correct words for academic subjects and the people who study them to complete sentences 1–7.**

- 1 An \_\_\_\_\_ at the Royal Observatory has discovered a new moon in our solar system.
- 2 She wanted to understand why people feel, think, and behave in certain ways, so she decided to do a degree in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ is the study of language in general, not any particular language such as French or Mandarin.
- 4 The government's predictions for economic growth and inflation were not endorsed by leading \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Students from the department of \_\_\_\_\_ spent the weekend studying rock formations off the coast of Scotland.
- 6 Graduates in \_\_\_\_\_ often take jobs which involve analysing data and formulating social policy.
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ were called in to investigate the Iron Age tools discovered on the building site.

**Exam tip:** When writing in the IELTS exam you need to use not only the right words but also the right parts of speech, for example:

*Thompson and her colleagues analyse (verb) the samples using the antibody test.*

*The main results of the analysis (noun) are summarized below.*

*I have an analytical (adjective) approach to every survey.*

When you learn a new word, learn its associated parts of speech.

**3 The words in the table are commonly linked to academic study. Use your dictionary to complete the table.**

verb	noun	adjective
claim		×
	definition	×
evaluate		
	investigation	
×	evidence	
	hypothesis	
		theoretical

**4 Choose the correct part of speech from the words in italics for sentences 1–6.**

- 1 When giving a presentation, it is important to *define/definition* key terms.
- 2 An effective essay is not just descriptive but also *evaluation/evaluative*.
- 3 It is important to *investigate/investigation* the causes of inequality.
- 4 It is now *evidence/evident* that stress contributes to disease.
- 5 Most scientific research begins with a *hypothesize/hypothesis*.
- 6 There is no *theory/theoretical* model to explain the impact of inflation on economic growth.

## 5 Choose words from the table in Exercise 3 to complete the sentences 1–5.

- 1 In academic discussions, it is important to \_\_\_\_\_ arguments for their strengths and weaknesses.
- 2 It would be difficult to design a scientific experiment to test the \_\_\_\_\_ that multiple time dimensions exist.
- 3 To date there is no \_\_\_\_\_ to support this theory.
- 4 After lengthy \_\_\_\_\_, they were still unable to identify the source of the leak.
- 5 There is no general agreement on a standard \_\_\_\_\_ of the term 'intelligence'.

## Exam practice: Writing Task 2

Below is a student's answer to an IELTS Writing Task 2, in which candidates are required to write a 250 word essay on a given topic. Complete the essay with words from the unit. There may be more than one correct answer. Hint: make sure you choose the correct part of speech.

### WRITING TASK 2

Write about the following topic:

*Is there any value in studying academic subjects that are not 'useful' in terms of generating wealth for the country?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Many people these days (1) \_\_\_\_\_ that a useful education is one that prepares graduates for occupations that create wealth. However, when we (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the usefulness of an academic subject we should think carefully about how we (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the term 'useful'. In this essay, I argue that many academic subjects that do not directly generate great wealth can still be very useful.

Some subjects can be useful because they create knowledge that can be applied in related fields. (4) \_\_\_\_\_, for example, study the way language works. Their (5) \_\_\_\_\_ can be used to create more effective methods of language teaching. Improved international communication can result in better trading relations, which can in turn generate wealth. (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the lives of people in the past through their artifacts. Many of these will be displayed in museums, which can attract tourists who generate income for hoteliers, restaurants and so on.

Many academic subjects can also be 'useful' in terms of contributing to people's quality of life. Some people pursue hobbies in fields such as (8) \_\_\_\_\_ in order to have a better understanding of the planet we live on. Others with an interest in stars and planets may become amateur (9) \_\_\_\_\_. Curiosity is an important human trait, and many academic subjects allow people to satisfy this need.

In short, there is little (10) \_\_\_\_\_ that simply educating people to be efficient workers makes them happier or richer in the broader sense. Human curiosity and the unpredictable nature of knowledge creation mean that a variety of academic disciplines should be valued.

Now complete the essay in your own words.