

# ***Productive Learning Activities for the AWL***

(Conference presentation handout)

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Examples in this handout are from my self-published teacher resources titled:  
*Learning Vocabulary & Mastering AWL Sublist 1, Mastering AWL Sublist 2, and Mastering AWL Sublist 3.*

These texts can be purchased from my store at [www.AACE-English.com](http://www.AACE-English.com)

I am forever grateful to Dr. Averel Coxhead for her dedicated corpus research.

## **How well do you know a word?**

**Receptive** involves recognizing and retrieving the word's meaning. You can recognize and comprehend the words in a reading or listening context.

**Productive** knowledge is required for expressing a meaning through speaking or writing which involves retrieving and producing the correct spoken or written word form (Nation, 2007). You can recall and use it appropriately.

*Other terms for this distinction: Passive vs. Active Vocabulary*  
Nation, I S P (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*, Cambridge University Press.

Feel free to contact me - especially, if you have any feedback about improving the tasks, etc.

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# What is the AWL?

Go to: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~alzsh3/acvocab/>

**Part A:** Before clicking on any links, read the information on **Academic Vocabulary Page**  
**Introduction/ How can you use the AWL?/ Background.**

Then answer the following questions

1. Why is the AWL useful?
2. From this site, which two programs can you use to help you learn and practice the AWL?
3. What is a corpus of academic vocabulary?
4. Give 3 details about Averil Coxhead.
5. What are the **3 main steps** that Coxhead took to choose the 570 words in the AWL?

<u>Main step</u>	<u>Details</u>
1/ _____ -	_____ _____ _____ <u>In 4 disciplines: art, commerce, law, science</u>
2/ counted the frequency and range –	_____ <u>Used at least 10 times in each discipline</u>
3/ _____ -	<u>570 words</u> _____

6. Is this sentence **True** or **False**? Why?  
Because the word “environment” was used at least 100 times in textbooks about art, commerce, science and education, it is in sublist 1.
7. Check out the **Concordances** section of the website. Do you think this is a useful tool for helping you learn and use new vocabulary? Why or why not?

# AWL Self Study Resources

## Internet sites for Access to & Practicing the AWL

### A/ [www.academicvocabularyexercises.com](http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com)

**Vocabulary Exercises for the Academic Word List** by Gerry Luton (UVic, BC)

The exercises are divided by sub-lists, so you can learn the most frequent ones and then continue on to the next level.

- The sentences are more academic in nature. The sentences aren't in a meaningful context such as a paragraph or story. You are given the AWL word choices.
- The prompts are sentences with gaps. Different word forms are used also.
- You get immediate feedback if your answers are correct or incorrect.

He also has a software program called *Gerry's Vocabulary Teacher* available.

### B/ [www.vocaba.com](http://www.vocaba.com)

- Designed by Scott Foubister [scott@vocaba.com](mailto:scott@vocaba.com)
- Flashcard creator; very reasonable rates for student per term
- Access to other vocabulary lists
- Has dedicated AWL courses available (no I don't get any \$\$\$!)

### C/ <http://mediamills.ca>

- Designed by Brooke Mills. Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, BC
- Audio examples of AWL words for pronunciation support

### D/ [www.lex tutor.ca](http://www.lex tutor.ca)

There are a wide variety of activities/systems to use on this site.

### E/ <http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/r21270/levels/>

**Level Tests on-line** by Nation, ISP & Laufer, B (& Tom Cobb - Quebec)

(Paul Nation is another well respected vocabulary learning scholar).

- They have several tests based on frequency.
- Their prompts are sentences with part of the word given to you. The sentences aren't in a meaningful context (like a story or essay).

Example: 1. I've had my eyes tested and the optician says my vi\_\_\_\_\_ is good.

### F/ <http://www.uefap.com>

**Using English for Academic Purposes** by Gillet, Andy (began 1999), U of Hertfordshire, UK

**Click on Vocabulary → exercises → selection → Academic Word List**

- There are 50+ readings. The readings have the AWL words highlighted.
- At the end of the text, you will find exercises. They give you the list of words to choose from. You need to fill in the complete word.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Receptive Vocabulary Learning Task

## Definition Recognition

- Match the AWL word with one of its meanings in the other column.
- Write the letter of the meaning under ANS on the answer page.

### [Sublist 2A]

1. Achieve	a to admit or accept that something is true or that a situation exists b to successfully do something
Administration	c to do something that causes a change, to influence d study of the way money is used and goods are produced
Affect	e managing a company or organization f someone who publicly supports someone or something
2. Acquire	a to learn a skill or gain knowledge b part of a plan/idea/solution that has many other parts
Appropriate	c to slowly become familiar in a new situation d correct or suitable
Aspect	e arrangement of things for people to look at or buy f express an opinion about someone or something
3. Assistance	a one of the parts into which a book is divided b a complete list of items in alphabetical order
Category	c tools or machines that you need to do a job or activity d selling and sending good to other countries
Chapter	e a group of people/things that are the same type f help or support
4. Commission	a people who have the same interests or live in same area b enough in quantity or good enough in quality
Community	c the system or type of money that a country uses d has many different parts and may be difficult to understand
Complex	e to formally ask someone to write a report/ produce art for you f the way someone behaves in public
5. Computer	a to do a process/activity to get info or prove something b a decision after thinking about all the information, the final part
Conclusion	c a number of related events that happen again and again d electronic machine that stores info/ uses programs to organize info
Conduct	e use of imagination to produce new things f certain and exact details

***and so on....***

## 1<sup>st</sup> Productive Learning Task

## Information Gap Crosswords

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Productive Learning Task

## Speed Speaking

[Sublist 1 ALL]

How would you **respond to** a person who tells you that you should lose some weight? Explain.

What's the best **procedure** for breaking up with a boy/ girl friend? Explain.

Explain one **benefit** of **establishing** your own business.

In your home country, which **legislation** would you like to change? Explain.

Do you think **variables** such as gender, age and first language influence a person's ability to learn English? Explain.

Do you think smoking marijuana (pot) should be **legal** in your city? Explain.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Productive Learning Task Fill in the Blanks

### Entrepreneurs

[Sublist 1 B, All other AWL words highlighted]

- First, read the entire text to get a sense of the content.
- Then, fill in the space with the best AWL word. (Other AWL sublist words are highlighted)

#### Part A

1. An entrepreneur is "someone who starts a new business or arranges business deals in order to make money, often in a way that \_\_\_\_\_ **financial** risks."<sup>1</sup>
2. In \_\_\_\_\_, anyone can **establish** a successful small business which introduces a new service or product.
3. However, it's difficult to **establish** a new business in most \_\_\_\_\_ of the **economy** if there is social unrest, political uncertainty or natural disasters, to name a few.
4. Depending on the country and its **economic** climate, the \_\_\_\_\_ of getting the business from an "idea" to "opening day" may be simple or **complex**.
5. There are so many \_\_\_\_\_ that entrepreneurs need to consider in the beginning.
6. The **process** usually depends on government \_\_\_\_\_ and business law. ... **continued**

#### Optional: Give them Hints

factors interpret involves issue legal legislation major percentage  
policies (x2) principles process procedures sectors source theory

**Find Someone who**

[AWL Sublist 2B]

**participated** on a sports team during high school \_\_\_\_\_  
doesn't like to read **text** on the computer screen \_\_\_\_\_  
**normally** eats breakfast \_\_\_\_\_  
lives in a university **residence** \_\_\_\_\_  
lived near or in a desert **region** \_\_\_\_\_  
**previously** smoked cigarettes but has quit \_\_\_\_\_  
keeps a reading **journal** \_\_\_\_\_

**5<sup>th</sup> Productive Learning Task**

**Paraphrase "Simulation"**

**Paraphrase Task Instructions**

- First, read the entire piece to understand the main ideas.
- Each sentence has a word or words that can be replaced with an AWL Sublist word.
- Highlighted words in the text are from the other AWL Sublists.
- Determine the AWL word that can replace the more common word(s)
- **Note:** Not all the prompts and AWL choices are perfect synonyms. The focus is for you to develop your ability to recognize when and where AWL words can be used.

*Relevant*

Example: Ms. Ann Gora angrily replied, "The issue of allergies to cat hair is ~~connected~~!"

**Healthy Pets for Healthy People**

[AWL Sublist 2B]

***A) Example of Text with underlined hints***

**Part A Context:** Dr. Ayah Dona Care is the chief administration officer at the Kent Walkanymore Senior Home. There are 3 buildings in the home: Sonny Daze, Ty Foon, and April Showers.

1. She is at a meeting with the occupants in the Sonny Daze building. They are the oldest and least healthy people in the **complex**, so it's considered a nursing home. They vary in age from 89 to 109 years old.

2. The main reason for the meeting is to discuss the **issue** of allowing pets in their building. Dr. Dona Care was **reluctant** because she worried the building caretaking worker would **react negatively** because this extra work was not in the **contract**.

3. The residents had very different views about the **issue**.

4. Ms. Bea Ooteeful thought animals were dirty, had germs and strongly believed animals should never be inside a building. They should only be in remote areas of the countryside.

**B) Example of Text with No Hints -- ELLs find the best word from the entire list (or hints box)**

5. The other members of the community vowed that they would have fun grooming, petting and feeding a pet.

6. Mr. Jer Aff presented a good point of view. He thought it was usual to have pets in a home, and Sonny Daze was now their home.

7. Mr. Ham Ster described Eden **Alternative**, a senior health care **concept** he read about on the internet. One of the senior homes has over 100 birds, dogs and cats inside the buildings. Outside, they have rabbits and chickens. The **author** described a **research** study that compared Eden **Alternative** to common and regular nursing homes. They discovered that 15% fewer people died over the past 5 years because they had animal therapy!\*

8. Everyone agreed that 15% was a very related and to the point **statistic**, so Dr. Dona Care had to **consent** to the idea.

9. Mr. Lauren Orrder explained it was easy to follow the rules about animals in senior care homes.  
... **the story continues ...**

**C) Optional: AWL Choice Hints PART A**

investments	maintenance	normal	perceptions	positive
primary	purchase	range	regions	regulations
relevant	residents	resources	restriction	traditional

**D) Post- Reading Vocabulary tasks**

**1. Teacher? I have never seen these names before!**

- The names of the characters in this story are not common English first and family names. This is because they are like puns, which are jokes made with word sounds.

For example: *Mr. Jer Bill* is actually a pun on the animal *gerbil*

- To “get the joke”, read each of the names out loud. Put the stress on different syllables until you figure out which word(s) the name is made from.

**2. Communication words. How did she say it?**

- This story has more than 25 different ways of expressing the word SAID. For example, discuss, demanded, etc.
- Find all of those “said” words and find the meaning for the words you don’t know.
- Then, use them when you speak and write to make your meaning more specific.
- To help you remember these words, classify them into groups.

\*cited in Maguire Paist, F. (n.d.) *Animals as caregivers*. Retrieved on 2/11/2011 from [www.caregivers.com](http://www.caregivers.com) The original study was published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society (May 1999).

## 6<sup>th</sup> Productive Learning Task

### Writing with Selected Sets of AWL words Stories, news articles or conversations

- As a group, use the AWL words in this set to create a story, news article or conversation. You need not use the word form that is given.
- Think of your own situation or use the suggested one. Try to use as many of the words as possible. **You can certainly use additional AWL words as well.**
- Before you submit your work, use the **highlighter** program on the University of Nottingham site.
- Then, reformat it and edit to see if you can use more AWL words (like paraphrase tasks).

#### [AWL Sublist 3]

circumstances	contribution	corporate	criteria	demonstrate	dominant
emphasis	ensure	framework	funds	interaction	maximum
negative	partnerships	proportion	reaction	scheme	sequence
sufficient	volume				

**Possible contexts:** Globalization / Economic Matters

## Guided Writing (Productive) Task Examples

These examples were written for the Guided Writing task. Not all the AWL words are used correctly, but these samples show you that students can do it! Their work has not been edited and permission to publish them has been obtained.

### AWL SUBLIST 3

compensation	consent	core	criteria	document
emphasis	illustrated	instance	justification	layer
maximum	outcomes	registered	removed	sequence
shift	specified	task	technical	

### *A Day at Work (J.L., Korea)*

[All AWL words highlighted]

Recently, I have received a generous amount of **compensation** due to an **injury** that **occurred** during one of my work **shifts**. I cannot state the amount of money I got due to a **consent** form that I had to sign; however, I can say that the **maximum** amount that the company can **release** for **injuries** is \$20,000. The company's **emphasis** on employee **benefits** is strictly carried out. For **instance**, in order to get my **compensation**, I had to complete a **document** that would state the amount of money given and that I would agree not to **file** any charges against the company. After **filing** the **specified** form to the main head office in Toronto, I had to meet the **required criteria**, such as, a **medical documentation** of the **injury** and written letter from my supervisor as a witness to the accident. Then, I had to write a descriptive letter to be **filed**, explaining how the accident happened.

The day of my **shift**, I needed to copy some **files** for my supervisor, but I didn't know that the copier was having some **technical** difficulties. Once I pressed the 'Start' button, the paper jammed. I thought it was an easy enough **task** to sort out, so instead of calling the **technical** support line for help, I decided to follow the **illustrated** diagrams that explained how to fix the problem. I had to **remove** the jammed paper from the **specified** tray, and the **outcome** of that was an **injury** to the hand. So in the end, the best way to fix all things is to call a **registered professional** for **assistance**, instead of doing everything yourself.

### AWL Sublist 2 Group A *A Successful Athlete (A.P. Korean) Listening/ Speaking course*

Park Ji-Sung is the first Korean who became a member of Manchester United, the England Premier league. Some of his notable **features** are that he is a **positive** person and he has a lot of **potential**. When he was young, he was very small, so he had always thought that he had to practice hard. It was his **previous strategy** to being a soccer player. As he was growing up, he **obtained** a reputation because he played soccer well. He **participated** in the World Cup which was held in Korea-Japan in 2002. Before the World Cup started, he **instituted** a new training program, but unfortunately he got **injured**. However, the director of the Korean soccer team, Guss Hiddink **affected** him deeply by helping him so he could **achieve** his goal, which was to play in the World Cup. Now, he is playing soccer in England. He is training and **focusing** on his weaknesses

## 7<sup>th</sup> Productive Learning Task Shorter Writing Tasks

### Help! I have a problem! What should I do?

[AWL Sublist 3 B]

- With your partner(s) offer suggestions for this person.
- Use the highlighted AWL words and other AWL words in your response.
- Write a dialogue or short story about the problem being solved.
- Your teacher may ask you to present it to the class.

1. Help! What is the best **technique** for **removing** pen stains from my white cotton shirt?
2. I have to work the night **shift** on Friday, but I want to go to the school dance.
3. My brother **published** a book about our family and it is full of lies!
4. I missed the **registration** deadline for next term!
5. My best friend is **scheming against** me **to** steal my boy/girl friend!
6. I forgot the **sequence** of my bank account PIN (Personal Identification Number) and I need some money NOW!
7. (on the cell phone) "I am driving 30 km ( 18 mph) above the **maximum** speed limit! A police car is behind me with its lights flashing! What should I do?"

## 8<sup>th</sup> Productive Learning Task Pre-reading & Post-reading Discussions

Post "Team Etienne Cycles the Trans Canada" Activity – Fundraising [AWL Sublist 1, 2 & 3]

1. List 10 fundraising strategies that you know of. (ex: cycling across a country)
  - Which one is the most effective?
  - Which one would you support?
2. What do you know about Terry Fox and his cause? Explain.
3. What do you know about Rick Hansen and his cause? Explain.
4. In your group, design a campaign to raise funds for a cause of your choice.
  - List the steps you will take.
  - Design a logo.
  - Design a poster.
  - Present your ideas to the class.

## Research which has informed this material development

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# The Sales Pitch

## ***Learning Vocabulary & Mastering AWL Sublist 1***

### ***Mastering AWL Sublist 2***

### ***Mastering AWL Sublist 3***

*Janice GT Penner*

#### **Innovative! Creative! Interesting topics!**

Extensively piloted with high school and adult academic prep ELLs

- The most frequent 180 words are divided into groups of 30 for manageable learning
- ELLs use the words in meaningful contexts
- Ready to copy & complete answer keys
- AWL words are recycled throughout
- 11 types of tasks which emphasize **productive knowledge** of the words:
  - Info-gap crosswords
  - Find someone who
  - Discussion Questions
  - Proverbs
  - Pre-reading Discussions
  - Gap Fill tasks
  - Speed Speaking
  - Guided Writing
  - Paraphrase tasks
  - Post-reading integrated skills tasks
- **Receptive knowledge** can be tested through
  - Definition Recognition tests & Definition crosswords
- **Three levels of support** (no hints, underlined hints and CLOZE choices)

#### **In Learning Vocabulary & Mastering AWL Sublist 1, also includes**

- “About Learning vocabulary”
- “How do you learn?” (self-reflection tasks)
- “How well do you know a word?” (learning about productive vs receptive)
- What does your brain do when you learn?
- Why are Vocabulary Notebooks important?
- Detailed explanations for developing Vocabulary Notebooks - Personal Vocabulary Organizing system (PVO)

#### **Reading Topics:**

**Sublist 1:** Language Learning, Academic Writing (plagiarism) Sociology: The Family, Entrepreneurs,

**Sublist 2:** The “Book Nurse”, Healthy Pets for Healthy People, Home Sweet Home in Vancouver, BC,

**Sublist 3:** “Team Ettiienne” cycles the Trans-Canada, Who are Learning Disability learners?, Distance Education and E-learning.

#### **Institutional User Agreement available**