

2

Key nouns

This unit focuses on some frequent and important nouns in academic English. See also Units 10, 11 and 15.

A General nouns referring to ideas

<i>example (with prepositions underlined)</i>	<i>comment</i>
She wrote an article <u>on the subject of</u> class.	thing which is being discussed, considered or studied
The theme of the poem is emigration.	main subject of a talk, book, etc.
The students were given a list of essay topics .	used to refer to what one is studying or writing about
There was a lively debate <u>on the issue of</u> globalisation in the seminar yesterday.	subject/problem which people are thinking/talking about
Political theory is a popular undergraduate subject. Einstein's theory of gravitation has been questioned recently.	statement of the rules on which a subject of study is based or, more generally, an opinion or explanation
The model of climate change presented in the Stern Review seems to be becoming a reality.	a representation of something as a simple description which might be used in calculations
The book is called ' The Nature of Intelligence'.	main characteristic of something
Human behaviour is based on the principle of least effort.	basic idea or rule that explains how something happens or works

B More specific nouns connected with ideas and phenomena

<i>example (with prepositions underlined)</i>	<i>comment</i>
Repetition is an important aspect of speech development in children.	one individual part of a situation, problem, subject, etc.
Automatic backup is a feature of the new software.	a typical quality of something
The political motives for the government's actions are beyond the scope of this essay.	range of a subject covered by a book, discussion, class, etc.
The study revealed a pattern of results which could be interpreted in either of two ways.	showed a regularly repeated arrangement
During 2005, the number of violent attacks increased to an alarming degree.	amount or level

C Nouns referring to ways of thinking, processes and activities

Read these titles of academic books and articles. Note the key nouns and their prepositions. Micro-organisms in water: their **significance**¹ and **identification**²

Renewable energy: a critical **assessment**³ of recent research

The Case⁴ for Change: Rethinking Teacher Education. Towards a New **Approach**⁵

Perspectives⁶ on Ecological Management: A study of public **awareness**⁷ of river pollution

Citizens' **Views** on Healthcare Systems in the European Union

Epidemiological **research into**⁸ asthma and allergic disease: establishing a standardised **methodology**⁹

¹ importance ² ability to establish the identity of something ³ judgement of the amount, value, quality or importance of ⁴ arguments, facts and reasons in support of or against something

⁵ way of considering something ⁶ different particular or individual ways of considering

something ⁷ having special interest in or experience of something, and so being well informed

⁸ research is often also used with the preposition on ⁹ a system of ways of studying something



Research is uncountable. Don't say *They carried out some interesting researches*. To make it plural you can just say 'studies', or 'research studies' or 'pieces of research'.

Exercises

2.1 Look at A. Choose the most appropriate noun to complete each sentence.

- 1 Environmental *topics / issues / principles* should be at the top of today's political agenda.
- 2 In the exam students had to choose three from a choice of ten essay *subjects / theories / topics*.
- 3 There are still people who are reluctant to accept Darwin's *model / topic / theory* of evolution.
- 4 The professor decided to take moral courage as the *issue / theme / model* for his inaugural lecture.
- 5 The London underground map is best understood as a *model / principle / topic* showing how the different stations relate to one another rather than a precise representation of their distances from each other.
- 6 The Peter *Issue / Principle / Theme* states that members of a hierarchical group will usually end up being promoted to the point at which they become incompetent.

2.2 There are six phrases containing errors underlined in this paragraph. Can you correct them?

The study showed that local police can play an important role in crime prevention. It makes a strong case of boosting the numbers of community police officers although it warns against increasing police presence on the streets at an alarming degree. Its methodological was based on a range of interviews asking members of the public for their views in how best to prevent crime. Unfortunately, how to implement this recommendation was out of the scope of the study but at least it serves a useful purpose in raising awareness to the issue.

2.3 Look at these titles of academic books (A–H). Then match them to their subject areas (1–8).

A The Nature of Democracy	1 economics
B The Significance of Dreams	2 education
C The Features of Glaciated Landscapes	3 literature
D The Assessment of Language Skills	4 history
E An Approach to Free Verse	5 geography
F The Identification of Bees	6 psychology
G Perspectives on Modern Taxation	7 politics
H New Perspectives on Cleopatra	8 zoology

2.4 Match the beginning of each sentence with the most appropriate ending.

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|---|--|
| 1 The study revealed a regular | scope of your research. |
| 2 The research focuses on one particular | awareness of the problem. |
| 3 The writer makes a powerful | issues facing the world today. |
| 4 The writers take an original | into the environmental effects of nanoparticles. |
| 5 Until recently there was little | approach to their theme. |
| 6 I think you should broaden the | aspect of modern society. |
| 7 To date, there has been little research | pattern of changes in temperature. |
| 8 There are many important | case for restructuring parliament. |