Understanding academic words

1. Academic vocabulary is generally fairly formal. Match these common academic verbs to a less formal verb with the same meaning from the box below.

1. assist
   He was assisted by a colleague.

2. construct
   The bridge took 4 years to construct.

3. indicate
   The graph indicates a rise in sales.

4. obtain
   You can obtain a visa at the embassy.

5. purchase
   Tickets may be purchased in advance.

6. require
   The problem requires careful thought.

7. respond
   They did not respond to my letter.
You must select an answer A–D.

answer
build
buy
choose
get
help
need
show

The examples below come from *Reading academic texts* (page 12). Each one contains an academic word in bold. Study the way the academic word is used and write the correct part of speech, noun (N), verb(Vb) or adjective (Adj), in the right-hand column.

1. *academic fields like computer sciences* (D)

2. *to see if a book is relevant* or not (A)

3. *to extract* deeper meaning (A)

4. *there’s no substitute* for careful reading (A)

5. *your short term memory does not retain* information (B)

6. *short term memory can … retain only about six items* (B)
7 One popular **technique** is to look for signals (C) 


8 **the structure** of a passage of text (C) 


3 Study the meanings below and match each one to an academic word 1–8 from exercise 2.

**Meanings**

a) relating to education, especially at college or university level

b) a special way of doing something

c) to keep or store

d) to remove or take

e) a single thing (e.g. on a list)

f) something which can be used instead of another thing

g) the way in which the parts of something are connected together

h) containing information which is useful
Using academic vocabulary

4 Complete the following using academic words from exercises 1 and 2. Make any changes necessary.

1 Saccharin is a chemical substance which tastes sweet and is often used as a ....................... for sugar.

2 A cut in income tax was the most popular ....................... on the government’s agenda.

3 Exam information can be ....................... from the www.ielts.org website.

4 50% of the patients in this hospital ....................... long-term care.

5 Scientists are now able to ....................... DNA from a single hair.

6 New medical ....................... mean that people spend less time in hospital after an operation.

7 The government is planning to ....................... 500,000 new homes in the south east.

8 I found several articles on the Internet which are ....................... to my essay topic.

5 Choose four academic words from this page and write personal examples to help you remember them.

1 ....................................................................................... 

2 ....................................................................................... 

3 ....................................................................................... 

4 .......................................................................................