



# **Supporting ELLs' Academic Language Development in Distance or Hybrid Settings**

## **Tools Packet**

**eTeachNY  
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## Levels of Academic Language








Level of Academic Language	Feature of Academic Language	Meaning	Examples
Word	Lexical	Precision of general, specific, and technical vocabulary; linguistic properties of words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 1 (e.g., book or run), Tier 2 (e.g., measure or entertainment), Tier 3 (e.g., isotope or revolutionary) vocabulary</li> <li>Syllables, prefixes, suffixes</li> </ul>
Sentence	Grammatical	Types and variety of grammatical structures; grammatical devices used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conditional tense (e.g., If it rains, the grass gets wet.)</li> <li>Embedded clauses (e.g., Two species of armadillo, <i>which are found in Central America</i>, are the northern naked-tailed armadillo and the nine-banded armadillo.)</li> <li>Compound sentences (e.g., Manuel waited for the train, but the train was late.)</li> </ul>
Discourse	Organization and functions	Organization and purpose of text or talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure and purpose of a debate, a persuasive essay, explanation of a mathematical equation, or a science lab report</li> <li>Discourse connectors for sequencing text (e.g., first, next, etc.) and conveying relationships between ideas (e.g., however and moreover)</li> </ul>

## Checklist for Increasing Academic Language Awareness

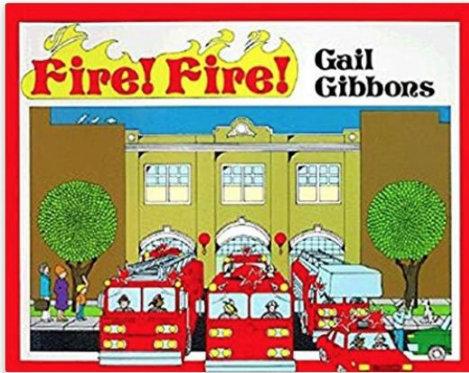
### Directions:

1. Select the text you will be using with your students.
2. Note the purpose for teaching this text. You can cite content and/or language standards or provide a general purpose.
3. Analyze the various elements of the text's academic language and complete this checklist.

Awareness-Building Questions	Text Info Yes/No	Example(s) Found in Text	Teach This Feature? Yes/No
<b>Vocabulary (Word Level)</b>			
 Are there everyday <b>Tier 1 words</b> (e.g., cat) that may be unfamiliar to students?			
 Are there general academic <b>Tier 2 words</b> (e.g., analyze or describe) that may be unfamiliar?			
 Are there <b>Tier 3 words</b> specific to the content you're teaching that may be unfamiliar?			
 Does the vocabulary in the text lend itself to any <b>mini lessons on word-learning strategies</b> (e.g., words with multiple meanings, determining meaning of words in context, or affixes)?			
<b>Grammar or Syntax (Sentence Level)</b>			
 Are there aspects of <b>grammar</b> (e.g., clauses, verb tense, or interrogatives) that may be challenging for ELLs?			
 Is there any <b>syntax</b> (arrangement of words and phrases) that might be confusing?			
 Are there any <b>conventions</b> that may be new or confusing (e.g., punctuation, spelling, etc.)?			

Awareness-Building Questions	Text Info Yes/No	Example(s) Found in Text	Teach This Feature? Yes/No
<b>Organization (Discourse Level)</b>			
 What is the <b>type of text</b> (e.g., lab report or blog post)?			
 How is the text <b>organized or structured</b> (e.g., description or cause and effect)?			
 How do the ideas <b>hang together cohesively</b> ?			
 Are there any <b>markers of sequence or relationships</b> between ideas (e.g., in addition or likewise)?			
 What is the <b>purpose of the text</b> (e.g., to persuade or to inform)?			
<b>Sociocultural Level</b>			
 Does the text assume any <b>experience, background knowledge</b> , and/or <b>awareness</b> for students to understand it?			
 Could students' first <b>language and/or home culture</b> impact their understanding of the text?			

***Fire! Fire!*<sup>1</sup> by Gail Gibbons**  
**Grades K-1 Informational Text**



In an apartment house, a breeze has blown a towel up into the flame of a hot stove. A fire begins. The smoke alarm screams. A phone call alerts the fire-dispatch center. Instantly, a dispatcher calls the firehouse nearest the fire.

A loudspeaker blares out the address of the fire, and the firefighters go into action. They slide down brass poles to the ground floor, where the fire engines are, and hurry into their fire-fighting gear. Then they take their positions on their engines.

The big trucks roar out of the firehouse. Sirens scream and lights flash. The fire engines arrive at the scene. The fire is bigger now. The fire chief is in charge. He decides the best way to fight this fire.

Hoses are pulled from the trucks. Each separate fire truck is called a “company.” Each separate company has an officer in charge. The fire chief tells each officer in charge what he wants the firefighters to do. Firefighters are ordered to search the building to make sure no one is still inside. A man is trapped. A ladder tower is swung into action. The man is rescued quickly.

At the same time, an aerial ladder is taking other firefighters to the floor above the fire. Inside, the firefighters attach a hose to the building’s standpipe. Water is sprayed onto the fire to keep it from moving up through the apartment house.

Now the aerial ladder is swung over to the roof of the burning building. Firefighters break holes in the roof and windows to let out poisonous gases, heat, and smoke before they can cause a bad explosion. There’s less danger now for the firefighters working inside the building.

Firefighters are battling the blaze from the outside of the building, too. Fire hoses carry water from the fire hydrants to the trucks.

Pumps in the fire trucks control the water pressure and push the water up through the discharge hoses. Streams of water hit the burning building and buildings next door to keep the fire from spreading. The fire is under control.

The fire is out. The firefighters clean up the rubble. Back at the firehouse, they clean their equipment and make an official report on the fire.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbons, G. (1987). *Fire! Fire!* Harper Collins Publishers.

***Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs*<sup>2</sup> by Kathleen Kudlinski**  
**Grades 2-3 Informational Text**

Long, long ago, before people knew anything about dinosaurs, giant bones were found in China. Wise men who saw the bones tried to guess what sort of enormous animal they could have come from.

After they studied the fossil bones, the ancient Chinese decided that they came from dragons. They thought these dragons must have been magic dragons to be so large. And they believed that dragons could still be alive.

Boy, were they wrong!

No one knows exactly what dinosaurs looked like. All that is left of them are fossil bones and a few other clues. Now that we think that many of our own past guesses about dinosaurs were just as wrong as those of ancient China.

Some of our mistakes were little ones. When the first fossil bones of *Iguanodon* were found, one was shaped like a rhino's horn. Scientists guessed that the strange horn fit like a spike on *Iguanodon's* nose

Boy, were we wrong about *Iguanodon*!

When a full set of fossil bones was found later, there were two pointed bones, they were part of *Iguanodon's* hands, not its nose!

Other new clues show us that we may have been wrong about every kind of dinosaur.

Some of our first drawings of dinosaurs showed them with their elbows and knees pointing out to the side, like a lizard's. With legs like that, big dinosaurs could only waddle clumsily on all fours or float underwater.

Now we know that their legs were straight under them, like a horse's. Dinosaurs were not clumsy. The sizes and shapes of their leg bones seem to show that some were as fast and graceful as deer.

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<sup>2</sup> Kudlinski, K.V. (2005). *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs*. New York: Dutton.

***A History of US*<sup>3</sup> by Joy Hakim**  
**From Book 1: The First Americans, Prehistory to 1600; Chapter 7: “The Show-Offs”**  
**Grades 4-5 Informational Text**

In case you forgot, you’re still in that time-and-space capsule, but you’re not a baby anymore. You’re 10 years old and able to work the controls yourself. So get going; we want to head northwest, to the very edge of the land, to the region that will be the states of Washington and Oregon. The time? We were in the 13th century; let’s try the 14th century for this visit.

Life is easy for the Indians here in the Northwest near the great ocean. They are affluent (AF-flew-ent –it means “wealthy”) Americans. For them the world is bountiful: the rivers hold salmon and sturgeon; the ocean is full of seals, whales, fish, and shellfish; the woods are swarming with game animals. And there are berries and nuts and wild roots to be gathered. They are not farmers. They don’t need to farm.

Those Americans go to sea in giant canoes; some are 60 feet long. (How long is your bedroom? Your schoolroom?) Using stone tools and fire, Indians of the Northwest cut down gigantic fir trees and hollow out the logs to make their boats. The trees tower 200 feet and are 10 feet across at the base. There are so many of them, so close together, with a tangle of undergrowth, that it is sometimes hard for hunters to get through the forest. Tall as these trees are, there are not as big as the redwoods that grow in a vast forest to the south (in the land that will become California).

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<sup>3</sup> Hakim, Joy. (2005). *A History of US*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



***Research Opens Windows into the Creative Brain by Karen Weintraub<sup>4</sup>***  
**Grades 6-8 Informational Text**

Scientists have long wanted to understand exactly how our brain allows us to be creative. Although there is still a lot to learn, one thing has become clear in recent years: Creativity doesn't live in one single spot.

There are sites in the brain dedicated to recognizing faces, moving your left index finger and recoiling from a snake. But having original ideas is a process, not a place.

"There is a very high level of cooperation between different parts, different systems of the brain so that they orchestrate this process," says Antonio Damasio, a neuroscientist and director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California. Damasio led a panel Saturday on creativity and the brain to launch the Society for Neuroscience's annual meeting in San Diego.

There are differences, of course, between creating a painting and creating a business strategy, writing a symphony and coming up with new ways to comfort a distraught child. But Damasio says they all share the same underpinnings.

Imagination is the cornerstone of creativity: "It's pretty hard to conceive that anyone could be creative without a rich imagination," he says.

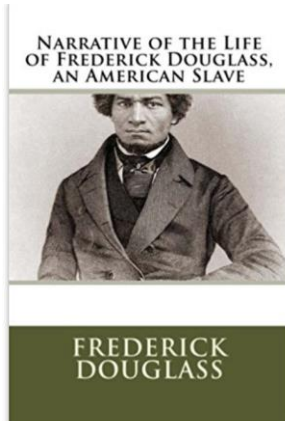
Yet imagination depends on memory. Imagining what a new piece of music might sound like requires you to play with bits of music that you carry in your head, to have an understanding of and memory for music so that you can manipulate notes to create something new. Memory is also required to recognize when something is original, which is an essential, and particularly rewarding, part of creativity.

Emotions are intimately involved in creativity, too, Damasio says. And if the creativity involves finding a new way to get the football across the field or recite a monologue, then many areas of the brain that move the muscles are activated, too.

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<sup>4</sup> Weintraub, K. (2013, November 10). Research opens windows into the creative brain. *USA Today*. Retrieved from [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/LIFE/usaedition/2013-11-11-Creativity-and-the-brain-2\\_ST\\_U.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/LIFE/usaedition/2013-11-11-Creativity-and-the-brain-2_ST_U.htm)

***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass<sup>5</sup>**  
**Grades 6-8 Informational Text**



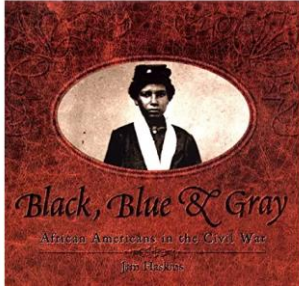
The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey’s ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. “You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, but I am a slave for life! Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?” These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a slave for life began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The Columbian Orator.” Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

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<sup>5 5</sup> Douglass, F. (1845). *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*. Boston: Anti-Slavery Office.

**Haskins' *Black, Blue and Gray: African Americans in the Civil War*<sup>6</sup>**  
**Grades 9-12 Informational Text**



In 1775 the first shots were fired in the war between the thirteen American colonies and Great Britain that ended in a victory for the colonists and the founding of a new nation, the United States of America. Only eighty-five years later, in 1861, the first shots were fired in a different war—a war between the states that became known as the Civil War. It was a war fought between the Confederate States of America and the states that remained in the Union—each side representing a distinct economy, labor system, and philosophy of government. The southern states that formed the Confederacy had agricultural economies that depended on a slave workforce

and believed that any rights not granted to the federal government by the United States Constitution belonged to the states. The northern states were undergoing rapid industrialization, which depended on wage labor, and while northerners disagreed among themselves about slavery, most believed it represented a direct challenge to their own rights and freedoms. Most also believed that a strong federal government, with the ability to legislate behavior in areas not specifically set forth in the Constitution, was key to the growth and strength of the American republic. It was inevitable that these two very distinct societies would clash. For the Confederates, nicknamed Rebels, the Civil War was a new war of Independence. For the Unionists, nicknamed Yankees, it was a war to preserve the Union that had been so dearly won in the American Revolution.

In the eyes of the four and a half million African Americans, enslaved and free, it was a war about slavery; and they wanted to be part of the fight. But many northern whites did not want blacks to serve in the northern military. They called it a “white man’s war” and said that slavery was not the main point of the conflict. At first, northern generals actually sent escaped slaves back to their southern masters. Eventually, the Union did accept blacks into its army and navy.

A total of 178,895 black men served in 120 infantry regiments, twelve heavy artillery regiments, ten light artillery batteries, and seven cavalry regiments. Black soldiers constituted twelve percent of the North’s fighting forces, and they suffered a disproportionate number of casualties.

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<sup>6</sup> Haskins, J. (1998). *Black, blue and gray: African Americans in the Civil War*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

***Life by the Numbers* by Keith Devlin<sup>7</sup>**  
**From Chapter 3: “Patterns of Nature”**  
**Grades 9-12 Informational Text**

Though animals come in many shapes and sizes, there are definite limits on the possible size of an animal of a particular shape. King Kong simply could not exist, for instance. As Labarbara has calculated, if you were to take a gorilla and blow it up to the size of King Kong, its weight would increase by more than 14,000 times but the size of its bones would increase by only a few hundred times. Kong’s bones would simply not be able to support his body. He would collapse under his own weight! And the same is true for all those giant locusts, giant ants, and the like. Imagining giants—giant people, giant animals, or giant insects—might prove the basis for an entertaining story, but the rules of science say that giants could not happen. You can’t have a giant anything. If you want to change size, you have to change to overall design.

The reason is quite simple. Suppose you double the height (or length) of any creature, say, a gorilla. The weight will increase 8 times (i.e., 2 cubed), but the cross section of the bones will increase only fourfold (2 squared). Or, if you increase the height of the gorilla 10 times, the weight will increase, 1,000 times (10 cubed), but the cross-sectional area of the bones will increase only 100 times (10 squared). In general, when you increase the height by a certain factor, the weight will increase by the cube of that factor but the cross section of the bone will increase only by the square of that factor.

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<sup>7</sup> Devlin, K. (1999). *Life by the Numbers*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

### Academic Language Planning Template - Distance and Hybrid Learning

1. Analyze the text to determine which aspects of the academic language in the text might be challenging to ELLs.
  - Text name and grade level:
  - Word-level challenges for ELLs:
  - Sentence-level challenges for ELLs:
  - Discourse-level challenges for ELLs:
2. Decide which vocabulary you will focus on from the text and how you will teach and practice the new vocabulary.

Vocabulary Word	How to Teach and Practice It in a Distance or Hybrid Learning Environment

3. Decide which academic language linguistic features of the text you will teach at the sentence and discourse level.

Linguistic Feature of Text	How to Teach This Feature in a Distance or Hybrid Learning Environment
Sentence level:	
Discourse level:	