

IL Beginning Academic Vocabulary List (K-2)

Word	Definition	Example Sentence
above	(preposition) Illustrate this word by putting your hand above your head. Have the students put their hands above their heads or above different objects near them.	The light is above my head.
accident	(noun) something that happens that wasn't planned or expected	I dropped my lunch tray by accident.
across	(adverb) when something moves from one side to the other	I ran across the playground.
add	(verb) to find the total of two or more numbers.	When you add 2 and 3, you get 5.
address	(noun) the number and street that tells where a place is	My address is 229 Main St.
against	(preposition) Illustrate this word by leaning against a wall or leaning a book against something.	I leaned my bike against the house.
age	(noun) Illustrate this word by telling the students their ages.	When the nurse asked my age, I told her I was six.
ahead of	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having students line up. Point out who is ahead of each student in line.	My friend is ahead of me, so he will get his lunch first.
alike	(adjective) the same in one or more ways	My brother and I are alike. We both have brown hair and brown eyes.
area	(noun) Illustrate this word by identifying different areas in the classroom.	We can play in this area.
army	(noun) a group of people who fight for a country	Our army protects us.
around	(preposition) Illustrate this word by walking around your desk, and draw attention to a scarf, necklace, or belt around your neck or waist.	He put chairs around the table.
arrive	(verb) to get to the place you are going	You arrive at school at 7:30 in the morning.
away from	(adverb) Illustrate this by having a student move away from the group.	I moved away from the dog when it growled at me.
begin	(verb) to start something	When I say, "Start," you can begin the test.
beginning	(noun) the first part of something	At the beginning of the poem, Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall.
behind	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having the students line up and then identify who they are behind.	I was behind my friend in the lunch line, so she got her lunch first.
below	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having the students put an object below their hands or chair.	I can put my hands below my chair.
beneath	(preposition) Illustrate this word by telling students that beneath and below are synonyms and have them put something beneath their chairs.	The floor is beneath your feet.
beside	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having the students identify the person beside them.	Sit beside your partner so you can read the book together.
best	(adjective) better than all the others	I won the race, so I'm the best!

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between	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having three students stand in a line and identify the student that is between the other two, or by giving them two numbers and identifying what number is between them.	Four is the number between three and five.
both	(various) Illustrate this word by identifying something two students have in common.	Although they are very different animals, both cats and dogs make good pets.
bridge	(noun) something that is built over a river, a road, or some other space to help people get from one side to another	We crossed the bridge over the rushing river.
by	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having two students stand by each other.	We line up by the door before going to lunch.
calendar	(noun) Illustrate this word by having the students identify the calendar in the classroom. Ask students what they learn from a calendar.	I found the 4th of July on the calendar.
capital	(noun) the city where a state or country's main government is	The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.
center	(noun) Illustrate this word by having the students stand in a circle and then have them take turns standing in the center.	There are seeds in the center of an apple.
change	(verb) to make something different	You can change red to purple by adding blue. The leaves change colors in the fall.
city	(noun) an area where lots of people live and work	In the city where I live, there are lots of people, cars, and places to shop.
climate	(noun) the weather that is normal for an area	The climate here is hot most of the year.
coast	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing to the coast on a map or globe in the classroom.	From the boat I could see the coast.
complete	(verb) to finish	The teacher told us we must complete and turn in our reports today.
continent	(noun) Illustrate this word by showing the continents on a map or globe in the classroom.	We live on the North American continent.
copy	(verb) to make something that looks like another thing	I will copy the math problem that is on the board into my notebook.
corner	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing to the corner of a piece of paper, the classroom, or a book.	A triangle has three corners, and a square has four.
correct	(adjective) without any mistakes	That answer is correct.
country	(noun) an area of land that has one government	This country is the United States of America.
cover	(noun) something that goes over another thing to protect it	The book's cover kept the pages safe from the rain.
crop	(noun) plants that are grown on a farm	This year we had a big crop of corn.
cross out	(verb) to draw a line through something	Let's cross out the wrong answer.
date	(noun) Illustrate this word on your classroom calendar.	Today's date is _____.
difficult	(adjective) hard to do	The puzzle was difficult, so I asked my dad for help.

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direction	(noun) the way something or someone is looking or going	The map will show us what direction the school is in.
discover	(verb) to find or learn for the first time	The scientist hopes to discover a new planet.
E/earth	(noun) the planet we live on	I wonder what Earth looks like from space.
edge	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing to the edge of a book, paper, or table.	Don't put your glass on the edge of the table, because it might get knocked off.
end	(noun) the last part of something	At the end of the story, Goldilocks sees the three bears standing over her, so she gets scared and runs away.
equal	(adjective) the same amount or weight	Our pieces of cake are the same size, so they are equal.
equator	(noun) an imaginary line around the middle of the Earth	The weather is very warm on the equator.
example	(noun) Illustrate this word by explaining that there are many kinds of fruit. Then ask students to give you examples. Ask if corn is an example. Ask students why not.	The example on the test helped me know how to answer the rest of the questions.
explore	(verb) to travel to different places to learn new things about them	In a few years, scientists might explore Mars.
far from	(adverb) a long distance away from something	The park is just down the street, so it's not very far from here.
farm	(noun) a place where plants and animals are raised	Cows live on the farm.
favorite	(adjective) something you like more than other things	I have read my favorite book four times.
fill in	(verb) to give information that is missing	There was a space at the top of the test for me to fill in my name.
find	(verb) to discover something, especially after looking for it (noun) a discovery	I hope I can find the money I lost.
finish	(verb) to end or complete something	I must finish my homework before I can watch TV.
fix	(verb) to make something work as it should	My bicycle tire is flat, but I can fix it.
follow	(verb) to go after or behind someone or something	We follow the leader.
fraction	(noun) a small part of a larger thing	This piece of cake is a fraction of the whole cake.
give	(verb) Illustrate this word through by demonstrating giving something to a student.	I give my dog a treat when he is being good.
globe	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing to a globe in the classroom or holding up a picture of a globe.	Turn the globe until you see the United States.
government	(noun) people who make laws and important decisions for a city, state, or a country	I have to wear a safety belt in the car, because the government made it a law.
grade	(noun) a score or letter given on schoolwork that shows how well you did	I work hard in school and get good grades.
greater than	(various) Illustrate this word by putting the students into unequal groups or drawing unequal groups of circles and identify the group that is greater than the other.	Four is greater than two.

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group	(noun) some people or things that belong together	My reading group meets every day.
guess	(verb) to think something without knowing for sure	I don't know the answer, so I'll have to guess what it is.
half	(noun) Illustrate this word by folding a piece of paper in half.	Our teacher split the class in half and created two big teams.
hear	(verb) to be aware of sounds	I like to hear birds singing.
holiday	(noun) a day of celebration when many people do not go to school or work	We don't go to school today because it's a holiday.
human	(noun) a person	People are human, but animals and plants are not.
husband	(noun) a married man	When my grandpa married my grandma, he became her husband.
imagine	(verb) to think of a thing that isn't real	I like to imagine that I am an astronaut floating in space.
in	(preposition) Illustrate this word by putting an object in a container.	My book is in my backpack.
in front of	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having the students line up and identify one student who is in front of another.	I am in front of you in line, so I will get lunch first.
incorrect	(adjective) wrong, not right	My teacher made me fix my incorrect answer to the question.
inside	(preposition) Illustrate this word by putting an object inside a container.	There was no light inside the cave.
into	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having the kids walk into the room, or by putting an object into a container.	He walked into the room.
island	(noun) land that has water all around it	We sailed all the way around the island in our boat.
last	(adjective) coming in after others	I was the last to eat lunch because I was at the end of the line.
leader	(noun) someone that other people follow	We followed the line leader back to class.
less than	(various) Illustrate this word by putting the students into unequal groups or drawing unequal groups of circles and identify the group that is less than the other.	Two is less than four.
line	(noun) Illustrate this word by drawing a line or pointing to a line in the classroom.	I write my name on the line at the top of my paper.
machine	(noun) something we make to do work	A dishwasher is a machine that washes and dries the dishes.
measure	(verb) to find out the size, length, or weight of something	I measure my foot with a ruler to see how long it is.
message	(noun) information given or sent to someone	My mom sent a message that she would take me home after school.
middle	(noun) Illustrate this word by having three or more students line up. Identify the student(s) in the middle.	Lunch is in the middle of the day.
mistake	(noun) something a person did wrong	I made a mistake working out the math problem and got the wrong answer.

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money	(noun) metal coins or paper used to pay for things	I have two dollars. How much money do you have?
month	(noun) one of the twelve parts of a year	January is the first month of the year.
move	(verb) Illustrate this word by moving something from one place to another.	I moved the books from the shelf to my desk.
near	(preposition) Illustrate this word by moving yourself near someone or something in the classroom.	I like to sit near my friend so we can read together.
neighbor	(noun) a person who lives near you	The girl in the house next door is my neighbor.
next to	(preposition) Illustrate this word by moving yourself next to someone or something in the classroom.	I sit next to the door, so I am always the first one in line.
nothing	(noun) Illustrate this word by showing the students a container with nothing in it, than with something in it.	I need a drink, but my cup is empty.
number	(noun) something that tells how many or which one	I counted the number of plates we needed for dinner.
ocean	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing out the ocean on a map or globe in the classroom.	Big ships sail on the ocean.
off	(preposition) Illustrate this word by having someone turn off a light switch.	The heater was off, so we all had to wear our coats in the classroom.
on	(preposition) Illustrate this word by putting your hand on your head, on the table, etc.	The book is on the table.
on top of	(preposition) Illustrate this word by drawing a square and then putting a triangle on top. Add more shapes. Ask students to find things in the classroom that are on top of other things.	The candles are on top of the cake.
once	(adverb) one time	We go on vacation once a year.
out of	(preposition) Illustrate this word by putting something in a closed box or other container and asking a student to take the item out of the container.	Take the eggs out of the carton carefully.
outside	(preposition) Illustrate this word by taking a crayon out of a box. The crayon is now outside the box. Have students take something out of their backpacks. The objects are now outside the backpacks.	The doors were locked so we waited outside the school.
over	(preposition) Illustrate this word by putting your hand over and under things.	The cloud is over us.
parents	(noun) people who are mothers or fathers	My parents help me with my homework.
piece	(noun) a part that is taken away from something larger	I ate a small piece of the pie.
planet	(noun) a large, round object that orbits a star	Earth is a large planet.
print	(verb) Illustrate this word by printing your name and writing your name in cursive.	I can print my name.
pull	(verb) to hold onto something and move it toward yourself	I pulled on the door handle, but it wouldn't open.
push	(verb) to move something away from you using force	I had to push my bike up the steep hill.

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quarter	(noun) Illustrate this word by folding a paper in half and then half again, pointing out that each section is a quarter of the whole paper.	The four of us each had a quarter of the pizza.
real	(adjective) something that is not imaginary	Elephants are real.
rectangle	(noun) a four-sided shape	The top of the table is a rectangle.
report	(noun) information about a topic or event that is shared with others	I am giving a report about Mars to my classmates.
ruler	(noun) Illustrate this word by showing a ruler and use it to measure something and use it to draw a straight line.	This ruler is twelve inches long.
score	(noun) a number that shows how many points a person or team makes in a game	The soccer score was 5-3.
season	(noun) the four parts of the year, called spring, summer, autumn, or winter.	Winter is my favorite season.
sentence	(noun) a group of words that has a subject and a verb and gives a complete thought	"The puppy licked my hand," is a sentence.
settle	(verb) to make a home in a place	My family settled here because it is such a friendly place.
shape	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing out different shapes in the classroom.	This shape is a rectangle.
show	(verb) Illustrate this word by revealing something special such as a book the class will be reading or a picture of something engaging.	I want to show you the new magic trick I learned.
side	(noun) Illustrate this word by pointing to the side of the room, the side of an object, and the side of a shape, such as an octagon.	We have bookcases on one side of our classroom and computers on the other side.
smell	(verb) to use your nose to sense smells	I smell cookies baking.
space	(noun) the area between things or the area for something special	On book covers there is space for the name of author and illustrator.
spell	(verb) to write or say the letters in a word in the right order	How do you spell your name?
stand	(verb) to be on your feet	All the seats were taken so I had to stand for the whole game.
street	(noun) a road in a city or town	The school bus stops on the street in front of my apartment.
take away	(verb) to subtract	If I have five apples and you take away two, I'll only have three left.
taste	(verb) to sense if food is sweet, sour, salty, or bitter using your mouth	Please taste the soup and see if it needs more salt.
team	(noun) a group of people who work together	We have ten good players on our team.
tell	(verb) to talk about something to someone	I like to tell jokes to my friends.
temperature	(noun) a measurement that tells you how hot or cold something is	The weatherman says the temperature is dropping, so I'm going to wear a coat today.
think	(verb) to use your mind to get ideas or solve problems	I like puzzles because it's fun to think of different ways to solve them.
touch	(verb) to put your hand or another part of the body on something	When I touch an ice cube, it feels really cold.

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triangle	(noun) a shape that has three sides Illustrate this word by pointing out triangles in the classroom.	My slice of pizza is shaped like a triangle.
turn	(verb) to change direction	If you go to the end of the hall and turn right, you'll see the lunchroom.
twice	(verb) two times	I will say this twice. I will say this twice.
under	(preposition) Illustrate this word by placing a book under a desk or by placing your hand under a book.	I couldn't find my pencil because it was under my chair.
underline	(verb) to draw a line under something	I will underline the words that I spelled wrong.
unequal	(verb) Illustrate this word by cutting a piece of paper in equal parts (halves). Then cut another paper into unequal parts. Have students explain the concept of unequal. You can also assign easy tasks to a small group of students and difficult tasks to a different group.	I complained when my brother cut the cake into unequal pieces.
vote	(verb) to make your choice known when deciding something with other people	We must all vote on who we think should be the class president.
wait	(verb) to stay in one place	We had to wait in the lunch line for a long time.
week	(noun) seven days	If I read four pages every day for seven days, I will finish this book in a week.
whole	(noun) complete or full	No one wanted a piece of pizza, so I ate the whole pizza by myself.
wife	(noun) a married woman	When my grandpa married my grandma, she became his wife.
work	(verb) to get something done	Taking care of a pet is hard work.
wrong	(adjective) when something is not true	$1 + 1 = 3$ is wrong.
year	(noun) Illustrate this word by showing 12 months on a calendar to show the whole year.	It takes a whole year for the earth to orbit the sun.
zero	(noun) the number 0, nothing at all	Our team had zero points until I scored.