

Academic Word List generalising/ hedging practice

Choose one of the lines from the list of AWL vocabulary on the two pages below, and make a generalisation using those words or on that topic. The part in brackets is optional. Be careful to make the generalisation accurate, including your level of (un)certainty. Your partner will attempt to make you change your statement by arguing that the statement should be stronger or weaker, by asking questions, etc, with language like that in the box.

Useful language for discussing generalisations

- I'd say.../ But isn't it more like...?/ I'd change that statement (slightly) to say...
 - Do you (really) mean (to say)...
 - How common do you think that is?
 - How sure are you about that?/ What makes you so sure/ unsure?
 - I think it's (slightly/ quite a lot/ a lot/ far) more/ less common than that.
 - I think that's a bit of an overgeneralisation/ exaggeration./ Isn't that (a bit of) an oversimplification?/ That is a bit of a stereotype, isn't it?
 - I think you can be more certain about that. – I don't think you can be so sure about that.
 - I wouldn't go so far myself. – I'd go further and say...
 - Is it really so much/ many/ little/ often/ seldom/ likely/ unlikely?
 - Isn't that a bit out of date?
 - That's a bit vague./ I think you could be more precise.
 - What makes you think that?/ What evidence is there that...?/ Do you have any figures on that?
- abandonment (of pets)
 - abstract art
 - abstracts (in academic papers)
 - academic standards (in high schools nowadays)
 - access (for disabled people)
 - acquisitiveness (= a nicer way to say greedy or consumerist)
 - adaptability (at work)
 - inadequacies (of young people)
 - inadequate (infrastructure/ reforms)
 - (foreign) aid
 - alternatives (to the present economic system)
 - ambiguity (in politicians' statements/ newspaper editorials)
 - amendments (to the national constitution)
 - use of analogies (in fiction)
 - analytical (people)
 - appendices (in academic writing)
 - underappreciated (professions)
 - unapproachable (people)
 - inappropriate (things to read on trains)
 - arbitrary (decisions by school teachers)
 - (the national) assembly (of this country)
 - assessment (in universities)
 - assignments (in universities)
 - assistance (for single parents)

- assumptions (people from this country have before travelling abroad)
- attachments (to your hometown/ to emails)
- unattainable (national goals/ goals of parents for their children)
- attitudes (towards immigration)
- (recognized) authorities (on academic areas)
- automation (in factories)
- availability (of credit)
- awareness (of equal opportunities)
- beneficiaries (of the present social welfare system)
- bias (in newspapers/ on TV)
- capabilities (of graduates)
- chemicals (in food)
- citations
- (interest in) classical music
- coincidences (luck, and fate)
- (relationships) with colleagues
- (TV) commentators
- commodity (prices)
- uncommunicative (teenagers)
- incompatible (couples)
- compensation (given by courts in this country)
- concentration (of power and money in the capital city/ powers of young people)
- concepts (that should be taught at school)
- inconclusive (conclusions in academic writing)
- (bad) conduct (by teachers)
- (the usefulness – or not – of academic) conferences
- conflict (in married couples)
- conformity (in this country)
- consensus (decision making)
- inconsistency (in what politicians say)
- (national) constitutions
- construction (by the government)
- consumers
- contemporary (art/ fiction)
- contradictory (statements by politicians in the same party)
- controversy (on Twitter)
- unconventional (lifestyles)
- convincing (other people)
- cooperation (between academics)
- corporate (responsibility)
- creativity (in schools)
- (consumer) credit
- cultural (training)
- (strong) currencies
- (economic) cycles

Ask about any lines you aren't sure about, making generalisations as a class each time.