WHAT IS ACADEMIC LANGUAGE?

Oral and written language used for academic purposes. Academic language is the means by which students develop and express content understandings. Academic language represents the language of the discipline that students need to learn and use to participate and engage in meaningful ways in the content area. There are language demands that teachers need to consider as they plan to support student learning of content; these language demands include vocabulary, language functions, syntax, and discourse.
WHAT IS ACADEMIC LANGUAGE?

Academic language gives students ways to participate in the content they’re learning.
LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS & DEMANDS

- Language Functions: The content and language focus of the learning task represented by the active verbs within the learning outcomes.

- Language Demands: Specific ways that academic language (vocabulary, discourse, syntax) is used by students to participate in learning task through reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking to demonstrate their understanding.
Language functions are what students **DO**.

Language demands (vocabulary, syntax and discourse) are the tools students **USE** to participate in the content they are learning.
Vocabulary: Includes words and phrases that are used within disciplines including: (1) words and phrases with subject-specific meanings that differ from meanings used in everyday life (e.g., table); (2) general academic vocabulary used across disciplines (e.g., compare, analyze, evaluate); and (3) subject-specific words defined for use in the discipline.

Discourse: includes the structures of written and oral language, as well as how members of the discipline talk, write, and participate in knowledge construction. Discipline-specific discourse has distinctive features or ways of structuring oral or written language (text structures) that provide useful ways for the content to be communicated.

Syntax: The set of conventions for organizing symbols, words, and phrases together into structures (e.g., sentences, graphs, tables).
LESSON PLANNING WITH ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Remember: Begin with the end in mind!

Start with content standards and objectives.

What are the verbs?

What are students expected to do with language?

What will they produce to show they’ve done it?
Consider the key content standard.

Think about the language tasks that students need to do to complete the verbs of the standard. How will they participate in the content? Identify the language function(s).

Content: *Macbeth*
BUILD A LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to…

analyze
STEP 2. IDENTIFY THE LANGUAGE DEMANDS

Consider what students will use to engage with the content during the lesson.

What tools will students use to work with the content? Identify the language demands (vocabulary, discourse, syntax) students will work with.

ambition  motivation  plot  climax

tragic hero  characterization  exposition  falling action

plot  theme  rising action  resolution

What will students use to analyze the text?

vocabulary  discourse  syntax
STEP 3. IDENTIFY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Determine what students will produce to show how they participated with the content of the lesson.

Add scaffolds as needed (graphic organizers, sentence frames, etc.)

What will students use to analyze the text?

vocabular\_y
discourse
syntax
Students will be able to analyze the ways ambition motivates Macbeth by plotting ten pieces of evidence (quotations) on a plot diagram, then writing a three paragraph essay.
ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND RIGOR

Hess Rigor Matrix:

Math/ Science and ELA