

To the Teacher

This book is for intermediate- to advanced-level nonnative speakers of English who use—or expect to use—English in their work at a college or university. *BAV*'s main aim is to help college-level EAP writers move a core of useful items from their receptive to productive vocabularies. They probably already know what most of these items mean. Now it's time to learn how to use them.

This book was inspired by a need I have felt often during my 15 years as an EAP teacher at universities in the United States, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Japan, and Singapore. The strongest impetus came from listening to frustrated EAP writers who were sophisticated readers and had large receptive vocabularies. They knew what they wanted to say and even suspected they knew which words to use, but they couldn't force these familiar words to do the job for them. Often I wished for vocabulary-development materials that targeted productive vocabulary and that took the time to address collocations, usage restrictions, and other vital elements of knowing a word well enough to use it, not just to interpret it.

BAV does take the time to look at the key vocabulary in great detail. The usage clues for an item are very specific: In what contexts is it especially useful? What structures can come before it? What structures can follow it? How formal does the item sound? Are there any times when the student shouldn't use it? How is it different from other items with similar meaning?

Each chapter focuses on 10–14 key vocabulary items within a certain meaning area, for a total of 111 key items. The selection of these items was more art than science. I was not terribly concerned with a key item's score in frequency counts. I was much more interested in a hard-to-define balance of utility and vulnerability to error. I wanted to choose useful words, and I wanted to address some well-known points of confusion. The nine meaning areas in *BAV* have been carefully selected to be useful in the kinds of writing most common in EAP writing classes—general description, description of processes (especially those involving changes), comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. No chapter in *BAV* restricts its focus to a single “mode,” but many teachers would find it useful, for example, for their students to work with chapters 3 and 4, “Equivalence, Similarity” and “Difference, Inequality,” when a writing task involves comparison and/or contrast.

The key vocabulary items in this book form a general academic vocabulary—a solid base of words and phrases useful to students in nearly any field. We don't deal with the specialized vocabulary of any particular academic discipline; for that, students should depend on their teachers in content-area courses. Items were selected with a view toward

general utility and enough breadth to allow for important meaning distinctions within a certain field. **Usage Clues** were written to address common and likely problems. Comments about collocation patterns were validated by, among other sources, reference to corpora, including the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE); see <www.hti.umich.edu/m/micase>.

Besides the key vocabulary, each chapter introduces 20–25 additional vocabulary items (underlined in the **In Context** sections). A comprehensive list of all the additional vocabulary items from chapters 1–9 can be found in Appendix 2. These are not necessarily related to the meaning focus of the chapter. Also, they get little explanation—perhaps only a restatement or paraphrasing—so as not to distract students from the key vocabulary. Nevertheless, these can add breadth and can form an interesting and rewarding second level of vocabulary learning.

Consolidation Exercises appear occasionally throughout a chapter. These provide convenient points to stop and solidify what the students have been learning about the previous group(s) of vocabulary. At the end of the chapter there is a set of **Comprehensive Review Exercises**; here, all the vocabulary from the chapter comes into play. At the very end of each chapter comes a set of essay assignments that allow for even wider variation and creativity from the students.

This book can function as a writing text but not a traditional one. There is nothing here about the writing process; there are no readings to react to, and there are no descriptions of essay structure or organization. Many academic-writing students have already had courses that emphasize such things and are ready to approach writing afresh from another angle. *BAV* works with vocabulary explicitly and in depth and then encourages students to practice the precise use of this vocabulary in writing assignments.

BAV can be used either as a supplement to a more general writing text or as a stand-alone text for a lexically focused writing course. A writing teacher working with a more traditional writing text will welcome the vocabulary precision *BAV* encourages. Other teachers who don't usually work with traditional writing texts—who already have ample files of material about process and structure and who know how to find readings for students to react to—may want to use *BAV* alone, as the foundation of a writing course with more than the usual attention to lexis.

A couple of disclaimers are in order. First, except for obvious historical references, the names of persons, companies, groups, and products in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to real-world entities is coincidental and unintended. Second, I have tried to create realistic-sounding examples from various fields of academic study. However, this book makes no claim of technical accuracy in any field except English usage. Please do not base any kitchen chemistry or amateur diplomacy on what I have written.

We hope you and your students find *BAV* interesting and that you find it easy to teach from. Above all, we hope that, after working with *BAV*, your students will enjoy the pleasure and pride of being able to write or say in English exactly what they mean.