

5.1: Unpacking noun phrases

Teacher's notes

Background

In this exercise, students explore the meaning of some technical terms used in the manufacturing production process. This is particularly useful for students studying business and technical subjects, but the principles of trying to unpack noun phrase terms will be helpful for all groups. Students need to be familiar with the concept of noun phrases.

Aims

- to practise unpacking noun phrases to clarify their possible meanings
- to use critical thinking to identify the best meanings, using explanations and definitions in context

Material

Individual copies of the tasksheet, with target noun phrases referring to technical terms used in production, and copies of a manager's explanations of these terms
Students' own dictionaries and some English–English advanced learners dictionaries
Business dictionaries or other technical dictionaries can also be used if wished

Procedure

- 1 Present the phrases *consumer focus groups* and *gas phase reactions*. Ask students for suggested meanings, and record the suggestions. Students check their suggested meanings with those on the tasksheet, and then study the framework given on the tasksheet for unpacking noun phrases.
- 2 In groups, students work out possible meanings for each noun phrase on the tasksheet. They then read the manager's explanations of what the phrases mean, and decide which of the possible meanings is correct. Finally, the students use dictionaries to explore the meaning of a group of key semi-technical words (words which have a restricted meaning in the particular discipline). They can also look up in the dictionaries other words they wish to check from the noun phrases or the manager's explanations.

Follow-up

Students can bring in examples of noun phrases relating to their subject, and explore the meaning with the help of other students and the teacher. Alternatively, students can become the experts, presenting oral explanations of phrases they already know, modelled on the manager's explanation in the task. This can be played as a class guessing game, with the new noun phrases written on the whiteboard, and the class first suggesting possible ways of unpacking the phrases before checking their suggestions with the explanation given by the student. The strategy of unpacking noun phrases should become a routine feature of classroom reading. Students should be encouraged to try this whenever they meet complex noun phrases in texts.

KEY

The correct answer is underlined. Other possible ways in which the terms could have been unpacked are also given.

- 1 process control laboratory
a laboratory where a process is controlled
(NOT the process of controlling a laboratory)
- 2 batch production process
a process in which products are produced in batches
(NOT a process of production named after Mr Batch or a company called Batch*)
- 3 statistical process control
a statistical method for controlling a process
(NOT a method for controlling statistical processes)
- 4 monthly management brief
a monthly brief by the management
(NOT a monthly brief for the management or a brief on the subject of managing on a monthly timescale)
- 5 waste management report
a report on how waste is being managed (dealt with)
(NOT a management report that is not needed)
- 6 company reporting structure
the structure used within a company for organizing which manager each employee reports to (NOT the structure that has to be used for writing reports in a company, or the structure of reports that have to be written about the company for outside use, e.g., company annual reports)
- 7 failure mode effect analysis
analysis of possible effects of failure in different modes (aspects) of a process

*Remember to check whether technical terms contain proper names by looking out for capital letters at the beginning of a word.

Tasksheet: Unpacking noun phrases

Many technical expressions in academic fields are in the form of reduced noun phrases, such as *consumer focus groups* or *gas phase reactions*. Sometimes, there is more than one possible meaning for the phrase. For example,

<i>consumer focus groups</i>	groups which focus on consumers groups of consumers who are focusing on something
<i>gas phase reactions</i>	reactions which take place when substances are in the state (phase) of being gases reactions of gases which take place in a series of phases (stages)

In both cases, the correct answer is the first one, but this is not clear from the original noun phrases. We have to try to unpack the phrase to find its possible meanings, and then use the context to help us decide which is likely to be the right one.

The first strategy is to look at the last word in the phrase. This is usually the most general noun. In the first example, this is *groups*. Then we try to use it to start a phrase which specifies something about the noun.

groups who (do something)

Other phrases which might specify something about a noun could be:

A *where (something happens)*

A *for doing something*

A *done by (someone or something)*

A *done for someone or something*

Here are some technical terms used in the field of manufacturing and production. In the first example, the general noun at the end of the phrase is *laboratory*. A laboratory is a place, so a suitable phrase might be: *A laboratory where something is controlled*. Read the manager's explanation on the next page and decide if this would fit the definition he gives.

Try to unpack each phrase to find possible meanings and write them in the grid.

1 process control laboratory	
2 batch production process	
3 statistical process control	
4 monthly management brief	
5 waste management report	
6 company reporting structure	
7 failure mode effect analysis	

A manager's explanations

A technical manager gave these explanations when asked what the terms meant. Compare them with your ideas, and decide which one is the best meaning for each term.

- 1 It's the lab where we take measurements so that we can make adjustments to keep the process under control.
- 2 This is a process where batches of the same product are manufactured at one time.
- 3 To do this you monitor and analyze the trends statistically during the process so that you can correct any problems and control the process.
- 4 This is a document that is circulated by the management every month to let the employees know what is happening in the company.
- 5 This is a report we write on whether the levels of waste in the production process are being managed effectively, that is, kept to a minimum.
- 6 This is the way the responsibility is organized: that is, who reports to whom in the departments and who is in charge of what.
- 7 Our process can fail in different modes, or ways. For example, if a machine is running, it might fail by a technical fault, such as a motor burning out. Another failure mode might be a fault in the materials used in the process. Another reason to fail is a delivery problem. If the raw material wasn't delivered on time, that would cause different types of problem. We do an analysis of the effects of a failure in each different mode. Then we can pick out the most critical types of failure and try to design them out of the system.

Vocabulary study

The words in the box below, taken from the noun phrases in the examples and task, have different meanings in some academic fields from their everyday meanings. Compare the explanations and examples given for these words in different dictionaries. Do they include the meaning that is used in the particular noun phrases in this task?

phase mode brief batch

5.2: Exploring the academic word list

Teacher's notes

Background

In this exercise, students explore the meaning of some words from the academic word list (AWL). This requires them to think about differences in meaning between words from the same functional group, and to practise interpreting meaning from context. The task can be used when students are studying the rhetorical function of change and development.

Aims

- to explore in context the meanings and collocations of a group of verbs from the AWL
- to raise awareness of transitive and intransitive uses of verbs (optional)

Material

Individual copies of the tasksheet with a word spider for recording vocabulary for change and a reading task containing short texts about change and development
Students' own dictionaries and English–English advanced learner dictionaries

Procedure

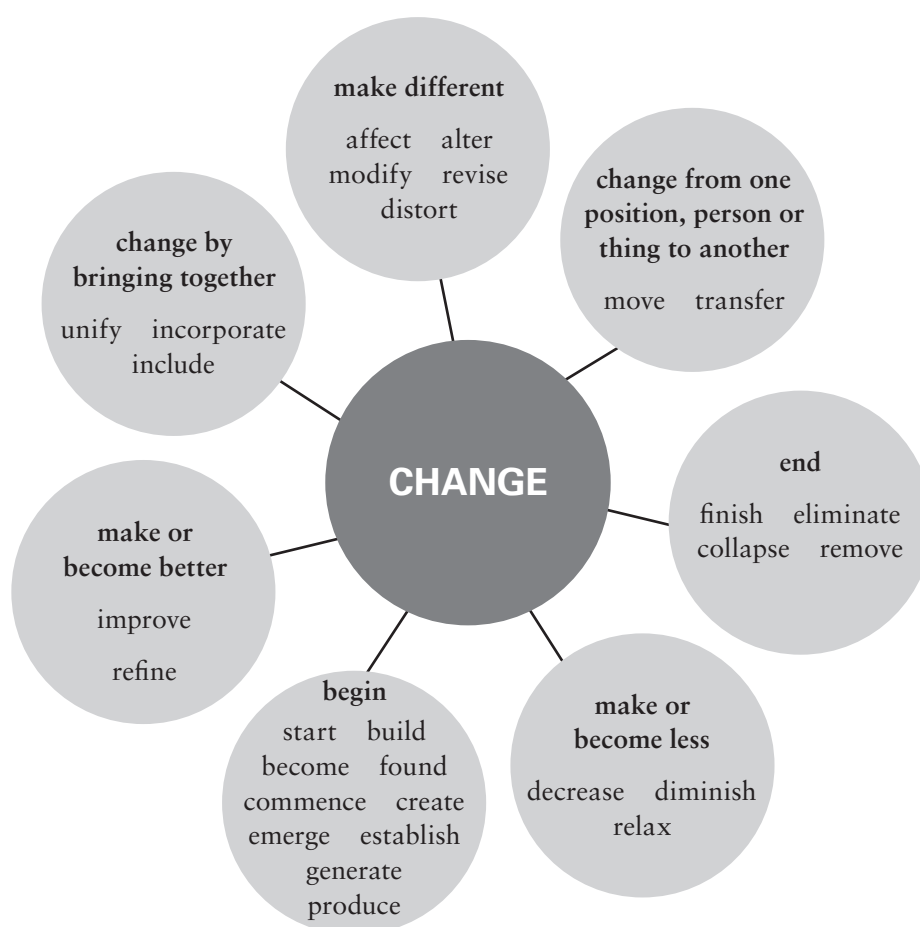
- 1 Ask students to reflect on the words to describe change in their language: how do they say something has got better, or got worse? Are there many different words for *make better*, *make less* or *become less*?
- 2 Give out the tasksheet on change and development. Without using a dictionary, students group words given in the box according to their meaning, and add them to the word spider. Then they read short texts, to check the meanings of these words in context. After checking the key, they identify and record collocations for the target words which they have found in the texts.
- 3 Students check the words from the box in their dictionaries. They compare the meanings and information given in different dictionaries, and discuss which of the verbs have different meanings in these texts from meanings in everyday English, e.g., *relax* and *revise*. They can also evaluate the dictionaries they are using, and decide which ones give the most useful information.
- 4 As a further optional stage, the teacher can draw attention to the verb *emerge* on the tasksheet, and the fact that it has no object and is always intransitive. Using dictionaries and the examples in the texts, students can sort the words into the following groups: always intransitive; always transitive; and those which can occur in both forms. This area of language is a common source of error for learners, for example, *Inflation collapsed the economy*.

Follow-up

Students can:

- add to the word spider from texts studied in class, adding further meaning circles as words for new types of change are met
- tick these words in a copy of the AWL
- write parallel mini-texts about an aspect of change or development in their subject or their country, using the language they have recorded to help them
- find and record additional vocabulary for change that they have used in their writing

KEY



Marked text for a, b and c

Words from Task a are in bold; extra words for change are in *italic*; and collocations are underlined.

- 1 The government are not going to relax the regulations on movement of domestic birds as there is concern that a new strain of bird-flu may **emerge** which could be **transferred to** the human population. These regulations have **affected** farmers *severely* and they fear that the chicken farming industry may collapse completely if the government does not remove the restrictions very soon.
- 2 The first oil company was founded in Scotland and within a few years other oil companies were established in the USA. Soon exploration **commenced** in many regions, including the Middle East, and plants for refining oil were *built* all round the world. As the industry became more powerful, *oil producing countries* decided to **create** an international organization, OPEC, to **unify** their pricing and production policies. However, as global demand has *increased* the oil supply has **diminished** and other sources of energy are becoming more important.
- 3 The **revised** report was an improvement on the previous versions and **incorporated** the data **generated** in our second survey. We also **altered** the conclusion to *include* this new information.
- 4 The fact that the thermometer could not be inserted into the liquid distorted the results of the test. The design of the thermometer was modified to eliminate this problem.

noun–verb collocations	noun–verb collocations (passive)
Text 1 relax the regulations on remove the restrictions Text 4 distorted the results eliminate this problem	Text 2 The company was founded in companies were established Text 3 the data generated Text 4 The design ... was modified
verbal noun–noun collocation	verb–adverb collocations
Text 2 refining oil	Text 1 affected severely collapse completely
verb–preposition collocation	fixed phrases
Text 1 transferred to	Text 2 oil producing countries Text 3 an improvement on

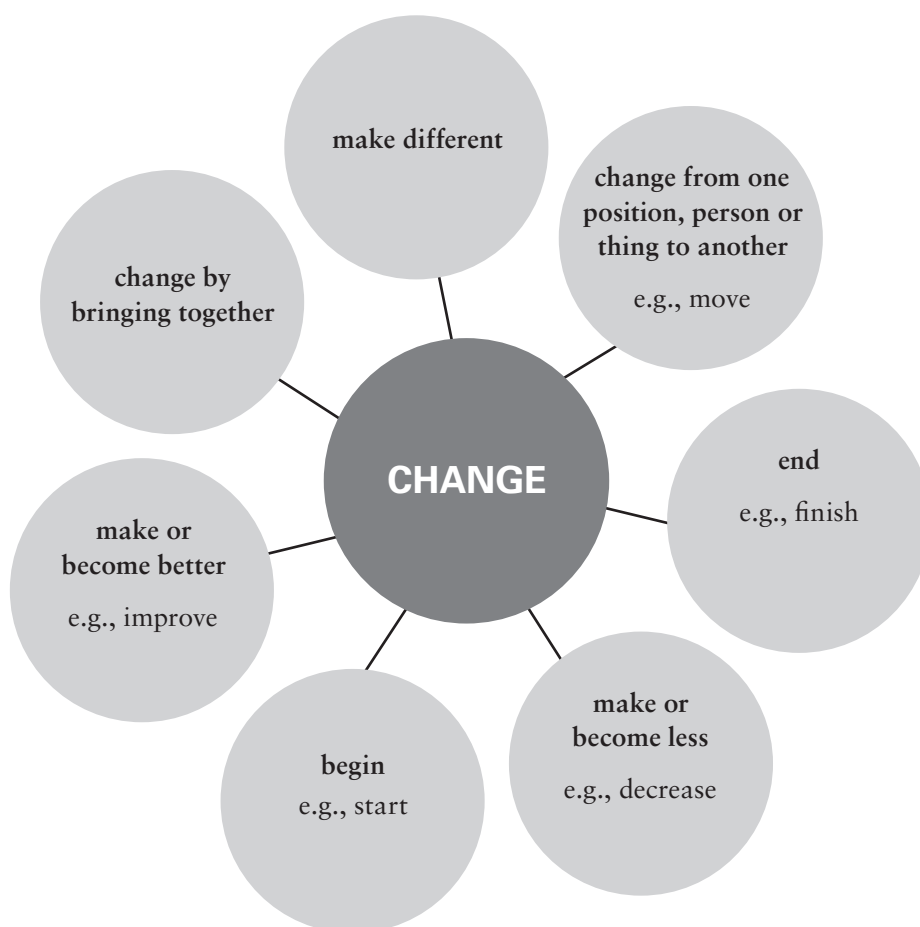
Tasksheet: Recording vocabulary

This word spider shows some different ways in which things can change. Some examples of verbs for these types of change are given in the circles.

In the box below, there are more verbs for different types of change.

- a With a partner, decide which types of change the verbs in the box refer to, and add each verb to the correct circle in the word spider.

Change and development



affect	alter	commence	create	collapse	distort
diminish	emerge	eliminate	establish	found	generate
	incorporate	modify	revise	refine	
	relax	remove	transfer	unify	

- b Read these mini-texts about different kinds of change. Find and highlight the words from the box. Do you still agree with the meanings you chose in Task a?
- 1 The government is not going to relax the regulations on movement of domestic birds as there is concern that a new strain of bird-flu may emerge which could be transferred to the human population. These regulations have affected farmers severely and they fear that the chicken farming industry may collapse completely if the government does not remove the restrictions very soon.
 - 2 The first oil company was founded in Scotland and within a few years other oil companies were established in the USA. Soon exploration commenced in many regions, including the Middle East, and plants for refining oil were built all round the world. As the industry became more powerful, oil producing countries decided to create an international organization, OPEC, to unify their pricing and production policies. However, as global demand has increased the oil supply has diminished and other sources of energy are becoming more important.
 - 3 The revised report was an improvement on the previous versions and incorporated the data generated in our second survey. We also altered the conclusion to include this new information.
 - 4 The fact that the thermometer could not be inserted into the liquid distorted the results of the test. The design of the thermometer was modified to eliminate this problem.
- c Find other words for change in the text, and add their verb forms to the word spider. Add new circles to represent other types of change if you need to.
- d Find collocations in the text to complete the patterns in the boxes.

noun-verb collocations	noun-verb collocations (passive)
_____ the regulations on _____ the restrictions distorted the _____ _____ this problem	The company was _____ in companies were _____ the _____ generated The _____ ... was modified
verbal noun-noun collocations	verb-adverb collocations
refining _____	affected _____ collapse _____
verb-preposition collocation	fixed phrases
transferred _____	oil <u>producing</u> countries an _____ on

5.3: Product costing: studying subject-related vocabulary

Teacher's notes

Background

In this exercise, students explore the vocabulary of a key business concept: cost. They meet vocabulary associated with this concept in an introductory text designed to prepare students for the first-year course in an undergraduate Business Management programme. As the main rhetorical function of the text is classification, students also identify and record some vocabulary for this function.

Aims

- to explore the meanings and collocations of vocabulary associated with *cost*
- to identify and record vocabulary for classifying
- to develop strategies for noticing and learning key subject vocabulary

Material

Individual copies of the reading tasksheet *Product costing*

Students' own dictionaries and some English–English advanced learner dictionaries

Specialist business dictionaries can also be used, if available

Procedure

- 1 Ask students how companies decide the price of a product. What does the price depend on? Elicit suggestions, e.g., raw materials, wages, delivery and advertising costs. How does a company know how much it costs to produce a product?
- 2 Students read the text quickly to find out why accountants classify costs in two different ways. Then they read the text carefully in order to fill in the diagram that represents this classification. They should not use dictionaries at this stage.
- 3 Students find the vocabulary used to classify the types of cost. They then focus on the use of the word *cost*, and collect collocations and grammar patterns which occur with this word. There is space on the language reference sheet for students to add words from the text which were unfamiliar to them or used in a new way. Dictionaries can be used at this stage.
- 4 Students test their knowledge by completing the gapped summary of the text at the end of the tasksheet. This can be done in the same lesson or as revision at the beginning of the next lesson.

Follow-up

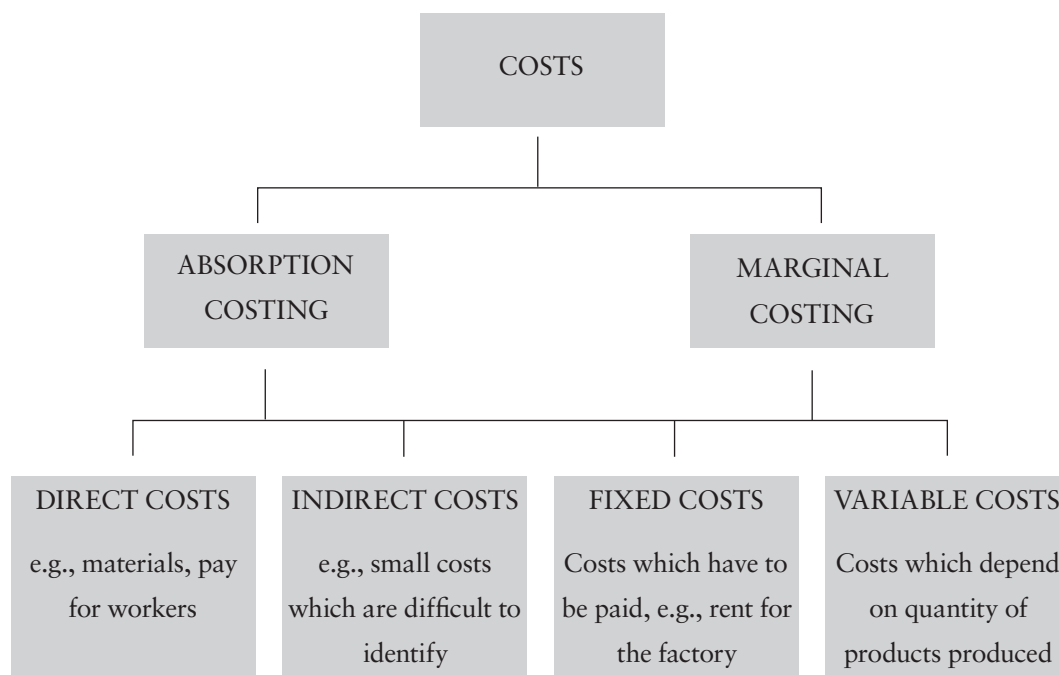
As a fun way of recycling this language, students can form groups and choose a light-hearted example of a business they might set up. They brainstorm the different types of costs involved in producing the product or service, and write a short text on a teacher's visual to present to the rest of the class. The strategy of picking key words, and looking for the patterns and collocations, can be applied to other specialist texts relevant to the group's degree subjects.

KEY

Task 1

Accountants need to classify costs as a basis for recording accounts, and in order to make decisions.

Task 2



Task 3

Marked text for a and b. Words and phrases for classifying are highlighted in bold. Collocations with cost are underlined.

Product costing

In this section we will explain how accountants calculate the total cost of a product. But we must first tell you something about the **classification** of costs.

Costs may be **classified** in very many different ways. Accountants traditionally use two main **classification systems**: (1) into direct and indirect costs; and (2) into fixed and variable costs.

A direct cost is one that is easily and economically identifiable with a particular product or unit. It follows that an indirect cost is one that is not easily identifiable with a particular product or unit.

Suppose that we are manufacturing a leather armchair. The leather used in making the chair will be easily identifiable. It will probably be fairly easy (and economic) to work out the cost of the leather. Hence we would **classify** the leather as a direct cost. Apart from the leather some nails have been used in making the chair. It is possible to see the nails, that is, identify them but it probably would be uneconomic to try to work out the cost of just a few nails. They would, therefore, probably be **treated as an** indirect cost.

Direct costs are usually **classified into** direct material costs (such as the leather used in making the chair) and direct labour costs, that is, the wages and salaries incurred* in making the chair.

Another common **classification system** used by accountants is the distinction made between fixed costs and variable costs. A fixed cost is one that does not change with the level of activity, for example, the managing director's salary. A variable cost is one that varies directly with the level of activity. For example, manufacturing one unit might cost £1, two units £2, ten units £10 and so on.

Traditionally, costs are recorded in management accounts on a direct/indirect basis. This basis is then used to calculate the total cost of making a product. The procedure is known as *absorption costing*. The fixed/variable classification is normally used in decision-making. It is known as *marginal costing*.

- 1 **Absorption costing:** a way of calculating the cost of a product, including the cost of producing it and also the general costs of running the business or factory.
- 2 **Marginal costing:** a system of costing where overheads (= general costs not directly related to particular goods and services) are not included and are calculated separately.

*(The strong collocation *costs are incurred* can also be noted here, although it occurs in a rather indirect form in the text.)

Box a

phrases for putting items into categories

may be classified in different ways
classify the leather as
 would ... be treated as
 are ... classified into

showing the difference between items
 being classified
 noun–noun collocation

the distinction made between
 classification system/s

Box b

Verb–noun collocations	Noun–passive verb collocation
<u>calculate</u> the cost of <u>work out</u>	costs are <u>recorded</u>
Noun–verb collocation	
<u>varies</u> directly <u>with</u> cost does not <u>change</u> with	
Collocations for types of cost	Collocations for costing
<u>material</u> <u>labour</u> <u>direct</u> <u>indirect</u> costs <u>fixed</u> <u>variable</u> <u>total</u>	<u>absorption</u> costing <u>marginal</u>
Other vocabulary and patterns	
patterns with <i>the cost of</i> how costs are recorded costs not directly related to particular goods or services	the cost of <u>running</u> a factory the cost of <u>making/producing</u> a product <u>on a direct/indirect basis</u> <u>overheads</u>

Task 4

Accountants have two main ways of classifying costs. They can consider the cost of producing a particular product, for example, they calculate the cost of the materials and the direct labour costs (the wages and salaries that have to be paid to the employees who make the products). They also have to consider the costs of other items that are difficult to work out. These are called indirect costs.

Another method used to classify costs is to distinguish costs that vary with the amount of goods that are produced, that is, variable costs, from fixed costs incurred whether a large or small number of products are manufactured.

Tasksheet: Reading

Task 1

The big picture

Read the text below quickly to answer this question:

Why do accountants need to classify costs? Write two reasons here.

Product costing

In this section we will explain how accountants calculate the total cost of a product. But we must first tell you something about the classification of costs.

Costs may be classified in very many different ways. Accountants traditionally use two main classification systems: (1) into direct and indirect costs; and (2) into fixed and variable costs.

A direct cost is one that is easily and economically identifiable with a particular product or unit. Suppose that we are manufacturing a leather armchair. The leather used in making the chair will be easily identifiable. It will probably be fairly easy (and economic) to work out the cost of the leather. Hence we would classify the leather as a direct cost. It follows that an indirect cost is one that is not easily identifiable with a particular product or unit.

Apart from the leather, some nails have been used in making the chair. It is possible to see the nails, that is, identify them but it probably would be uneconomic to try to work out the cost of just a few nails. They would, therefore, probably be treated as an indirect cost.

Direct costs are usually classified into direct material costs (such as the leather used in making the chair) and direct labour costs, that is, the wages and salaries incurred in making the chair.

Another common classification system used by accountants is the distinction made between fixed costs and variable costs. A fixed cost is one that does not change with the level of activity, for example, the managing director's salary. A variable cost is one that varies directly with the level of activity. For example, manufacturing one unit might cost £1, two units £2, ten units £10 and so on.

Traditionally, costs are recorded in management accounts on a direct/indirect basis. This basis is then used to calculate the total cost of making a product. The procedure is known as absorption costing.* The fixed/variable classification is normally used in decision-making. It is known as marginal costing.**

(Adapted from Dyson, J. *Introduction to Business*, Heriot-Watt University distance learning materials.)

**Absorption costing*: a way of calculating the cost of a product, including the cost of producing it and also the general costs of running the business or factory.

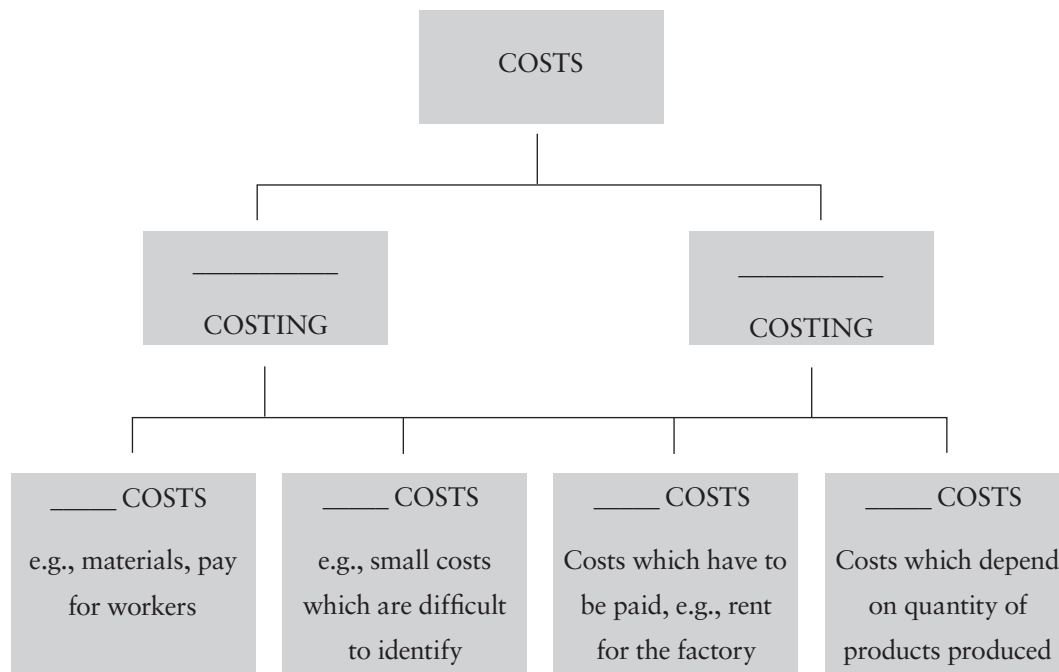
***Marginal costing*: a system of costing where overheads (= general costs not directly related to particular goods and services) are not included and are calculated separately.

(Definitions from Longman Business English Dictionary)

Task 2

Understanding the text

Read the text carefully to fill in this diagram showing the main types of classification of costs.



Task 3

Vocabulary study

- a This text is about classifying costs. Find and highlight words or phrases for classifying. Add them to the box below.

phrases for putting items into categories	may be <u>classified</u> in different ways
	_____ the leather ____
	would ... be _____ as
	are ... classified _____
showing the difference between items being classified	the _____ made _____
noun–noun collocation	classification _____

- b The word *cost* is very important in accounting and business texts. Highlight each example of one of its forms in the text *Product costing*. Then find collocations with *cost*, and add them to the boxes.

Hints: Some of the vocabulary is in the footnotes. Some letters in the words are given to help you.

Verb–noun collocations	Noun–passive verb collocation
_____ the cost of _____	costs are r_____
Noun–verb collocations	
cost _____ directly _____	
_____ does not _____ with _____	
Collocations for types of cost	Collocations for costing
_____ costs	_____ costing
_____ costs	_____ costing
_____ costs	_____ costing
_____ costs	_____ costing
_____ costs	_____ costing
_____ costs	_____ costing
Other vocabulary and patterns	
patterns with <i>the cost of</i>	the cost of r_____ a factory
	the cost of making/p_____ a product
how costs are recorded	_____ direct/indirect _____
costs not directly related to particular goods or services	o_____ds
new words or phrases	

Task 4

Complete this summary of the text to test yourself. Use one word in each gap. The length of the gap does not tell you the length of the word. Some letters are given to help you.

Summary

Accountants have two main ways of classifying costs. They can consider the cost of _____ a particular product, for example, they _____ the cost of the materials and the direct _____ costs (the wages and salaries that have to be paid to the employees who make the products). They also have to consider the costs of other items that are difficult to _____ out. These are called _____ costs.

Another method used to classify costs is to d_____ costs that v_____ with the amount of goods that are produced, that is, v_____ costs, from fixed costs in _____ whether a large or small number of products are manufactured.

5.4: Gender differences: studying functional vocabulary

Teacher's notes

Background

In this exercise, students read a text from a marketing unit in an undergraduate business management programme, which presents evidence and conclusions, and they explore the vocabulary for this function in the context of a report on other writers' research.

Aims

- to read flexibly for different purposes
- to record and learn vocabulary for research activities, the conclusions that are tested, and the evidence that is found
- to write a summary based on a source

Material

Individual copies of the reading tasksheet *Gender difference surveys*

Procedure

- 1 Students read the introductory paragraph *Gender difference surveys*, and discuss stereotypes and examples of stereotypes of men and women.
- 2 Students read quickly to identify the main finding of the research, before reading carefully to take notes to answer a specific question. They add a title and the source to the table of notes to practise simple referencing skills. The teacher can stop and have an 'auction'* at this stage, to see who has the best title in the form of a suitable noun phrase.
- 3 Students find and record language for referring to research, and the evidence and conclusions which are drawn from research. Discuss the issue of academic caution. Students try to think of reasons why academic writers use hedging or cautious language in drawing conclusions from their research. Then they look for examples of this in the text and underline them.
- 4 Students use their notes to write a summary, and compare it with the model answer. They should highlight evidence–conclusion vocabulary, and language indicating caution, which they have used in their texts.

Follow-up

As a fun way of recycling this language, students can form groups, think of a stereotype they may have of other class members (based on gender or nationality), then do a class survey of how valid these stereotypes are, and write a brief account of their research. They could also find a report of a survey or other research in their subject and write a summary.

*See Chapter 6 and Classroom materials 6.8, *EAP warmers*, for an explanation of this technique.

KEY

Task 1

Does the writer claim there are any major differences between men and women in how they use the web? No. He reports evidence that the differences are small or getting smaller.

Task 2

Feature	Men	Women
trend in share of web use	more use, but decreasing	less use, but increasing
seek relationships?	no difference	
comfortable with technology?	no gender difference, experience more significant	
uses web for shopping?	slightly more	slightly less

Suggested title and source:

Gender differences in web use

(Georgia Tech Research Corporation (1995, 1998) and Hawfield and Lyons (1998))

Task 3

Text is marked as follows:

vocabulary for research activities, evidence and conclusions in bold; words showing hedging (academic caution) are underlined.

The Graphic Visualization and Usability Center (GVU) of the Georgia Tech Research Corporation **carried out** a number of **surveys** of the Web. Their 1995 **survey found that** only 29% of users were female. By comparison the 1998 **survey findings indicated that** females now accounted for 39% of all users. This is **evidence to support the view that** the male domination of the Web is beginning to wane.

One **assumption** that is frequently used in marketing is that there is a difference in Web use between men and women. This issue was **explored** in a **study carried out by** Hawfield and Lyons (1998). They **looked at** four common **assumptions**.

The first **claim** was that women seek relationships or “community” on the Web, but the Hawfield and Lyons **research suggests that** there is no real difference between men and women in this respect.

With respect to the second conventional **belief that** women are uncomfortable with technology, Hawfield and Lyons **found that research findings suggest that** it is rather general experience with technology that matters and that gender does not play a role.

As regards the third **belief**, that women love to shop, Hawfield and Lyons **found that** most women do not fit this **stereotype**. This is **backed by** the GVU **study which found that marginally more** male than female **respondents reported** using the Web for shopping purposes.

Finally, the **researchers examined the idea that** women are drawn to the Web to purchase retail items such as cosmetics and clothing. The authors **found little** evidence of this.

Nouns	
experts (who work on evidence)	authors, researchers
people who take part in surveys	respondents
research activities	surveys, studies
conclusion or idea under investigation	view, issue, claim, belief
fixed ideas not based on evidence	assumption, stereotype
evidence	findings
Verb collocations	
experts	found + that looked at the idea examined the idea that carried out a number of surveys
respondents	reported
(people)	do not fit this stereotype
conclusions or ideas under investigation	are explored, are backed by
a survey/study	found that carried out by
research	suggests that
research findings	suggest that
collocations for conclusions or ideas	conventional belief common assumptions
collocations for evidence	evidence to support little evidence of

Task 4

(Vocabulary for research activity, evidence and conclusions, including hedging words indicating caution, is in bold.)

According to **studies** on **possible** gender differences in web use carried out by the Georgia Tech Research Corporation (1995–1998) and Hawfield and Lyons (1998), there were few differences in men's and women's patterns of use of the web. Although these **surveys** **found** that men used the web **slightly** more, their share was decreasing, **suggesting** a trend towards equal use. There **appeared to** be no difference with respect to seeking relationships on the web and how comfortable the respondents felt with technology depended **mainly** on their experience. Men used the web **slightly** more for shopping, which did not **fit the stereotype** that women are more interested in shopping.

Tasksheet: Reading

Gender difference surveys

Marketing experts take very seriously the differences between men and women in purchasing behaviour. It is essential that marketing experts know which differences are real, and which are only **stereotypes**. A **stereotype** is a fixed idea about what people are like, based not on real evidence, but on prejudice. For example, many people assume that women are 'not good with computers'. We are all liable to make assumptions about people based on stereotypes, but it is very important for businesses not to make this mistake when dealing with their customers. If you don't know how your customers really think and behave, you could lose them. For this reason, there are many studies investigating gender differences to find out which are real, and which are just stereotypes. The following text outlines the conclusions of two of these studies.

Task 1

The big picture

Read the text *Gender and the Web* for two minutes, without using a dictionary, to answer the following question:

Does the writer claim that there are any *major* differences between men and women in how they use the web?

Gender and the Web

The Graphic Visualization and Usability Center (GVU) of the Georgia Tech Research Corporation carried out a number of surveys of the Web. Their 1995 survey found that only 29% of users were female. By comparison the 1998 survey findings indicated that females now accounted for 39% of all users. This is evidence to support the view that the male domination of the Web is beginning to wane.

One assumption that is frequently used in marketing is that there is a difference in Web use between men and women. This issue was explored in a study carried out by Hawfield and Lyons (1998). They looked at four common assumptions.

The first claim was that women seek relationships or "community" on the Web, but the Hawfield and Lyons research suggests that there is no real difference between men and women in this respect.

With respect to the second conventional belief that women are uncomfortable with technology, Hawfield and Lyons found that research findings suggest that it is rather general experience with technology that matters and that gender does not play a role.

As regards the third belief, that women love to shop, Hawfield and Lyons found that most women do not fit this stereotype. This is backed by the GVU study which found that marginally more male than female respondents reported using the Web for shopping purposes.

Finally, the researchers examined the idea that women are drawn to the Web to purchase retail items such as cosmetics and clothing. The authors found little evidence of this.

(Adapted from Consumption and Identity Marketing module, Heriot-Watt University Management Programme)

Task 2

Note-taking

Complete the table of notes on *Gender and the Web*. These notes are to answer the question:

Outline any differences between men and women in their use of the Web.

Give your notes a suitable title and add a reference to the source.

Title and source: _____

Feature	Men	Women
trend in share of web use		
seek relationships?		
comfortable with technology?		
uses web for shopping?		

Task 3

Language study

- a Find and highlight words in the text that refer to people involved in research, research activities, ideas which the researchers have, and the evidence that is found. Then highlight any collocations you can find. Add the vocabulary to the Vocabulary reference sheet.

Vocabulary reference sheet for research activities, evidence and conclusions

Nouns	
experts (who work on evidence)	authors, _____
people who take part in surveys	r _____ ents
research activities	s _____, s _____
conclusion or idea under investigation	_____, issue, _____, _____
fixed ideas not based on evidence	a _____, _____
evidence	_____ ings
Verb collocations	
experts	_____ + that
	_____ at the idea
	_____ the idea that
	_____ a number of surveys

respondents	_____
(people)	do not ____ this stereotype
conclusions or ideas under investigation	are _____, are _____ by
a survey/study	_____ that _____ out by
collocations for conclusions or ideas	_____ that
collocations for evidence	_____ that
collocations for conclusions or ideas	_____ belief _____ assumptions
collocations for evidence	evidence to _____ _____ evidence of

- b Underline expressions that the writer uses to show caution about the initial assumptions, and the conclusions that can be drawn from the surveys.

Task 4

Writing a summary

Write a brief summary to answer the question below. Use only the notes you took in Task 2 and the Vocabulary reference sheet. Reference any sources you use in your text.

Outline any differences between men and women in their use of the web.

5.5: Vocabulary games

Teacher's notes

Background

In this set of group exercises, students think critically about the way vocabulary is used in different fields and try to draw on their own vocabulary knowledge, especially in their chosen field of study. The tasks can be adapted to suit the students' specific target courses and for mixed or specialist EAP. They can be used individually as warmers or become a regular feature of the course, especially as light relief from more routine work. If they are used regularly in this way, students can start to develop their own challenge tasks modelled on these, e.g., *What do you call a ... in your subject?*

Aims

- to practise thinking critically about the meanings of words
- to use critical thinking to identify the appropriate words or collocations to use in different academic contexts

Material

Individual copies of Tasksheets 1, 2 and 3

Keys in paper form or on teacher's visuals

Students can use their own dictionaries and some English–English advanced learners' dictionaries or specialist dictionaries in the stage where they are checking the suggested answers and their own answers, if these are different from the suggested answers. They can also note which of these dictionaries give any information on collocations.

Procedure

Task 1: The bicycle game

- 1 Introduce the idea that different disciplines may see a thing in a different way and use special vocabulary: for example, *peas* and *carrots* are vegetables we eat, but, in agriculture, they would be referred to as *crops*. Present Tasksheet 1: The bicycle game. Students complete the task through pairs or group discussion.
- 2 Present the Key for Tasksheet 1 on a teacher's visual or give out paper copies. Discuss students' answers and any possible alternatives (e.g., explore the difference between a consumer and a customer).
- 3 They can add some other subject areas, however ridiculous, and challenge the class to think of possible ways it could be referred to (e.g., in astronomy, could 'The bicycle' be the name of a constellation?).

Follow-up

In future lessons, students can bring in their own challenges for words and what these objects would be called in different academic subjects (particularly their own discipline) to the group, using the *What do you call a ... in ...?* format. They can also reverse the format to focus on one discipline, e.g., in Management studies: *What do you call a bicycle/monthly pay/people affected by the business and its activities?* This would generate a bank of discipline-specific words like *product/salary/remuneration/stakeholders*.

Procedure

Task 2: The people game

- 1 Discuss with the class whether they would use the word *people* in academic writing and why it might not be a very effective academic word. They might suggest reasons for trying to avoid it, mainly because it is so unspecific. If we write 'People think ...', 'People often try to ...' the readers will ask 'Which people?' or 'Is that true of all people in the world?' Explain that this exercise is aimed at building a bank of words that can apply to people in different contexts and situations. Present an example, e.g., *What do you call people studying at university? (students)*.
- 2 Give out Tasksheet 2: The people game to groups or pairs and see how many suggestions they can come up with in a fixed time (say 5 minutes). Ask them to see how many they can find without looking at the words in the box below; then they can fill in any others using the words in the box.
- 3 Compare their answers and decide if there are alternatives, in some cases.

Follow-up

This exercise can be repeated regularly as a warmer. Students can bring their own ideas and challenges: *What do you call people who ...?*, particularly relating to words they have come across in their own subject area, or the names of practitioners in these areas.

Procedure

Task 3: Fat marks or thin marks?

- 1 Explain the concept of collocations. These are words that commonly occur together. Ask them to think about why some words sound funny or ridiculous together, for example, would they say someone had obtained *thin* or *fat* marks in an exam, or *tall* or *short* marks? Why does this sound ridiculous? This is because we use a numerical scale to score exam marks, so this can only be represented as a position on a vertical line (*high*, *low*). Point out that we can also represent grades in an evaluative way – with words that show our satisfaction with the quality, like *excellent*, *good*, *bad*, *poor*. Similarly, it would sound strange to refer to people as *high* or *low*, rather than tall or short.
- 2 Present Tasksheet 3. Ask students to suggest words they would use to represent size or dimensions for the words on the task sheet.
- 3 Present the key for them to compare their answers. It is important to stress that these are only suggestions and there are many other possibilities. If they are not sure about their suggestions, ask them to think about the metaphor behind each word (e.g., *field* or *area* refer to flat two-dimensional surfaces, so words to indicate size are those we would use to describe such surfaces, even when we are not using them in their literal meaning (e.g., when we say *field of study* or *area of research*.) Encourage them to think about whether the metaphor is based on a linear concept (e.g., *level*) or two-dimensional (*area*) or three-dimensional (*volume*) concepts.

Follow-up

The task can be repeated in future lessons using other groups of words which the teacher or students have identified as problematic. Students can also check which collocations are acceptable by using online concordancing sites, such as The Compleat Lexical Tutor or <https://www.wordandphrase.info/academic/>.

KEY

Tasksheet 1

Suggested answers

What do you call a <i>bicycle</i> in ...?	
Engineering	a machine
Economics	a good
Marketing	a product/line/model
Business	a product
Town planning	a form/means of transport/ wheeled vehicle
A drama/theatre production course	a prop
A film studies or English literature course	a symbol/semiotic
An English language class	a noun phrase
Logistics	freight (if it was being transported by land); cargo (if it was being transported by air or sea)
Sports studies	an exercise machine
OR your subject area (if it is different from all of these)	

Tasksheet 2

Suggested answers

What do you people who are ...?	
On a train or bus	passengers
Receiving treatment in hospital	patients
Filling in a survey or questionnaire	respondents
Being interviewed	interviewees
Taking part in a research study/meeting/ conference	participants
Being studied by taking part in an experiment	subjects
Nationals of a country	citizens
Living in an area/neighbourhood/house/ apartments	residents
Walking in the street	pedestrians
Buying goods	customers/consumers

Tasksheet 3

Suggested words*

large, wide, extensive, vast, small, restricted	area
wide, extensive, small, narrow	a ... range
large, small	amount
high, low	value
high, low, intermediate	a ... level of
wide, large, extensive, small, restricted, narrow	field
large, small	volume
high, low	cost
high, low	a ... degree of
large, small	a ... number of

*These are just suggestions. There are many more possibilities, but they will fit the idea of the same dimensions (e.g., regarding a flat surface or a three-dimensional object, as in volume).

Tasksheet 1: The bicycle game

Decide how each of these disciplines might refer to a *bicycle* in terms of its role in that discipline. There may be more than one possible answer in some cases.

What do you call a <i>bicycle</i> in ...?	
Engineering	
Economics	
Marketing	
Business	
Town planning	
A drama/theatre production course	
A film studies or English literature course	
An English language class	
Logistics	
Sports studies	
OR your subject area (if it is different from all of these)	

Tasksheet 2: The people game

Think of the specific words you would use for people in these situations. There may be more than one possible answer in some cases. Try to find as many answers as you can without looking at the suggested words in the box below. Then use the box to find the others.

What do you call people who are ...?	
On a train or bus	
Receiving treatment in hospital	
Filling in a survey or questionnaire	
Being interviewed	
Taking part in a research study/ meeting/conference	
Being studied by taking part in an experiment	
Nationals of a country	
Living in an area/neighbourhood/ house/apartments	
Walking in the street	
Buying goods	

Suggested words

citizens customers consumers interviewees participants
passengers patients pedestrians residents respondents subjects

Tasksheet 3: Large or small? Fat or thin?

See how many adjectives you can think of for size or dimensions which collocate with these words or expressions.

	area
	a ... range of
	amount
	value
	a ... level of
	field
	volume
	cost
	a ... degree of
	a ... number of