STUDY NOTES

EPISODE 5: VOCABULARY RANGE

VOCABULARY

Expanding on information and extending topic vocabulary in your IELTS Writing tasks allow you to convey meaning more precisely. This also allows you to demonstrate your use of a wider range of vocabulary, and command of word forms and word order. These features, word forms and word order, describe **Vocabulary**, one of the criteria used to assess your writing.

Nominal Groups

In formal academic writing, one of the means by which information can be expanded on is through the use of **nominal groups**. A nominal group structure consists of a main noun which is surrounded by other words or phrases that serve to describe or characterise the noun.

Here is the structure of a nominal group:

premodifiers		head noun		postmodifiers
determiners* + adjectives	+		+	prepositional phrases

*Examples of Determiners	
articles	a, an, the
possessives	my, your, his/her, its, their, one's, whose
demonstratives	this, these, that, those
quantifiers	each, every, some, many, most, fewer, several

Types of Nominal Groups

There are four types of nominal groups:

i			head noun only – this is the main noun within the group or clause	
			awareness	
ii	**premodifiers**	+	**head noun**	
	greater community		awareness	
iii			**head noun**	+	**postmodifier**
			awareness		of environmental issues
iv	**premodifiers**	+	**head noun**	+	**postmodifier**
	greater community		awareness		of environmental issues
	greater community **awareness** of environmental issues				

Deconstruction of nominal groups

Nominal groups are important because they provide the subject matter or content of your essay.

Here is a **topic sentence** from a sample IELTS Writing Task 2 essay addressing the topic of recycling.

Community response to the importance of disposing of waste materials responsibly is reflected in its participation in various recycling programs.

The nominal groups in this topic sentence are deconstructed to see how information is expanded on and contextualised.

There are five nominal groups in this sentence. Here is a breakdown of those groups.

Nominal Group 1		
premodifier adjective	+	head noun
community		response
An adjective is used to describe whose response, adding additional meaning.		
community response		

Nominal Group 2		
head noun	+	postmodifier prepositional phrase
response		to the importance of disposing of waste materials (responsibly)
A prepositional phrase is used to add more information, in particular what the response is aimed at, namely the importance.		
response to the importance of disposing of waste materials (responsibly)		

Nominal Group 3				
head noun	+	postmodifier prepositional phrase	+	adverb - the manner in which waste should be disposed of
the importance		of disposing of waste materials		responsibly
Importance is now the head noun to which more information is added using a prepositional phrase to specify **what is important** – of disposing of waste materials. The adverb responsibly modifies disposing.				
the importance of disposing of waste materials responsibly				
The information conveyed in the postmodifier can be expressed in the following simple sentence. The (responsible) disposal of waste materials is important.				
Using nominal groups allows you to include more complex structures in your writing.				

Nominal Group 4		
premodifier determiner	+	head noun
its		participation
The premodifier its specifies whose, i.e. the community's.		
its participation		

Nominal Group 5		
head noun	**+**	**postmodifier**
		prepositional phrase
participation		in various recycling programs
The postmodifier is used to expand on information, specifying what the participation will be in.		
participation in various recycling programs		

Using **nominal groups** allows you to communicate more meaning in a simple sentence. It is also an effective way of extending your topic vocabulary because you are using a greater number of words. This also gives you the opportunity to use more elaborate structures and convey meaning more precisely.

Nominalisation
Instead of verbs or verb phrases, it is possible to use nouns or noun phrases in written English. This also helps express ideas more precisely and concisely. Making verbs into nouns is called **nominalisation**.

Here are some examples of noun forms of verbs.

Nominalisation		
verb	**noun forms**	
	thing	person
to consume	consumption	consumer
to apply	application	applicant
to conserve	conservation	conservationist
to investigate	investigation	investigator
to advertise	advertisement, advertising	advertiser
to find	finding(s)	finder
to develop	development	developer
to be aware	awareness	

Using nominalisation
Nominalised language is commonly used in formal academic writing. Ideas can be expressed more precisely and concisely.

verb phrase	Waste materials need to be disposed of properly.
noun phrase	The proper disposal of waste materials is necessary.
To be able to change the verb phrase into a noun phrase requires a command of word forms and word order. verb to be → is adverbs in a verb phrase change to an adjective: properly → proper	

Nominalisation is also useful for Academic Writing Task 1. It provides another way of expressing changes in graphs, charts, processes or any other pictorial information.

verb phrase	The number of Internet users increased significantly.
noun phrase	There was a significant increase in the number of Internet users.
verb phrase	It is evident that interest in the product grew steadily.
noun phrase	The steady growth of interest in the product is evident.

> To be able to change the verb phrase into a noun phrase requires a command of word forms and word order.
> verb + adverb → adjective + noun
> increased significantly → significant increase
> grew steadily → steady growth

Nominalisation is a technique used in paraphrasing. This is particularly helpful when paraphrasing information from a question topic in an IELTS Writing Task 2 for an introductory paragraph. Here is the first sentence of a question topic.

question topic	Over the last decade, many large capital cites are being rapidly restructured and redeveloped.
introduction	In recent times there has been a rapid restructuring and redevelopment of many cosmopolitan cities.

Apposition

Another way of expanding on information in your writing is using **apposition**. Here are two examples

My friend, **a teacher by profession**, will be joining us for lunch.

His other film, **quickly gaining in popularity**, is a documentary.

Appositions are noun phrases which refer to the same grammatical structure. They are placed next to the structure they are defining or modifying.

Grammatical structure		
noun phrase	apposition noun phrase	
My friend	a teacher by profession	gives more information about the friend
His other film	quickly gaining in popularity	gives more information about the film