Adjectives & Sentence Patterns for Expressing Evaluation & Stance in Academic Writing

Student Activity Sheet

Activity 1. Lead-in: Individual Gap-filling Task

Instructions: read the abstract from an undergraduate research article (abridged & slightly edited). Complete the two sentences by filling the blanks provided (Hint: there should be two words if two lines are given).

During the last nine years, more and more young people join in the carnival
on November 11 affectionately known as "Double 11 Shopping Festival".
Although Chinese millennials are often asked in marketing research studies
as to why they shop online on this day, their views have never been
considered seriously - many of our peers have been left out of the dialogue.
In light of this, we (1) necessary that the reported data needs
to take immediate peer groups. In addition, one subject that emerges is why
millennial choose to participate in this festival in the age of such fabulous in-
store experiences. (2) interesting to see what attracts this
student group to the online venue from a list of motivational factors including
social satisfaction and financial savings.

Reference

Zhao, X., Chen, X., Song, X., Zhang, W., Gao, L., & De Ciel, R. (2019). A look at Alibaba Double 11 Shopping Festival. *Journal of Student Research*, 8(1), 88-91.

Activity 2: Studying Concordance Lines for the Correct Sentence Structure of Evaluation

Instructions: In pairs, study the concordance lines in the following figures. Check whether your answers in Activity 1 are correct. And then, answer the following questions and discuss the answers with your partner.

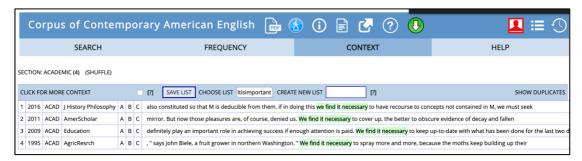


Figure 1. Sentence pattern for (1)

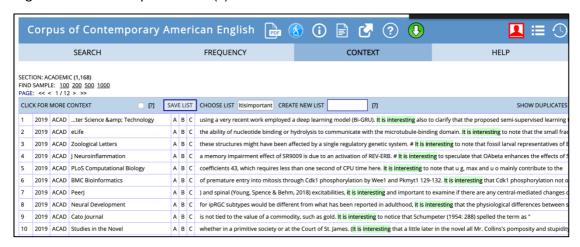


Figure 2. Sentence pattern for (2)

a.	Read the highlighted words in the concordance lines of Figure 1 & 2. What word
	is in the Subject position in each figure?

Figure 1: _____

Figure 2: _____

b. Observe the positions of "It" in the two sets of concordance lines. How does the pronoun "it" function in the sentences?

The "it" in Figure 1 is in the ______ position, while that in Figure 2 is in the _____ position.

c. Discuss with your partner: suggest the possible sentence patterns that collocate with the adjectives for evaluation.

Subject	Verb	Object/ Complement

Activity 3: Categorising Adjectives for Evaluation (30 minutes)

Instructions: based on the sentence patterns found in #2, engage the corpus tool (https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/) and look for top 30 adjectives collocating with such patterns in the sub-corpus of academic writing.

- 1 In "Collocates", key in "it is" or "find it" in the first search bar.
- 2 Click on the "POS" next to the second search bar, and choose "adj.ALL".
- 3 Click on the number "2" to identify the adjectives collocates within 2 words on the right of "it is"/ "find it".
- 4 Click "Sections" and choose "ACADEMIC" in [1].
- 5 Click on "Find Collocates".

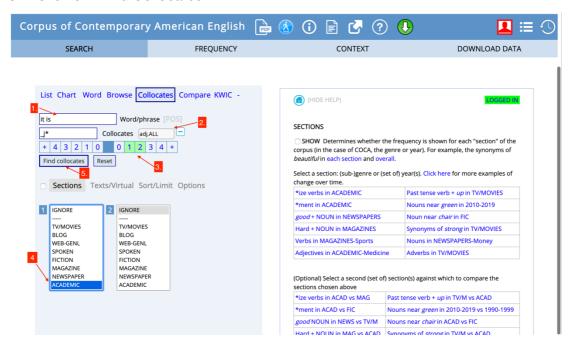


Figure 3. Instructions for searching the right collocates (adjectives) of "it is" in academic texts

6 Sort the adjectives into seven main categories:

Category	Examples (Students can add more)
Ease	easy, difficult, hard
Importance	important, crucial
Expectedness	obvious, surprising
Possibility	possible, impossible
Necessity	imperative, necessary
Reliability	useful, good
Emotivity	wise, unfortunate

Activity 4: Completing the Sentence Structure

a. In pairs, study the concordance lines (either in the activity sheet or on COCA directly); identify the two common phrase/ clause patterns immediately following the adjectives.

Pattern 1	Noun + find it + adjective	1
Pattern 2	It + linking verb + adjective	2

b. From the concordance lines, copy two examples for each pattern. If necessary, you can click on a particular entry for more context. Then, colour the Subject in red, the verb in green, adjective in blue; underline the infinitive phrase or the that-clause. Examples are given to you in the table.

Grammatical	Examples from the corpus
pattern	
N + find it + adj + to-	E.g. we find it difficult to accept the argument
inf/ that-clause	1.
	2.
It is + adj + to-inf/ that-clause	E.g. it is difficult to deal with gender issues in the church.
	1.
	2.

Activity 5: Review & Take-home Task

a. Consult the concordance lines in Figure 3 and 4. With your partner, discuss when each of the two patterns are used, and fill in the blanks below.

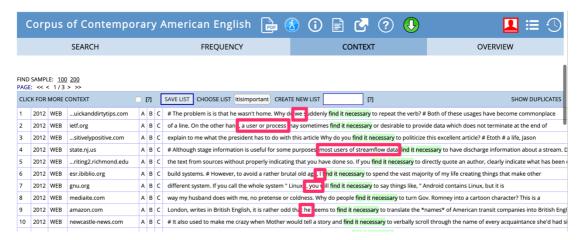


Figure 3. "Evaluators" (nouns in Subject position, circled) as do-ers of the thinking action (*find it + adjective*)

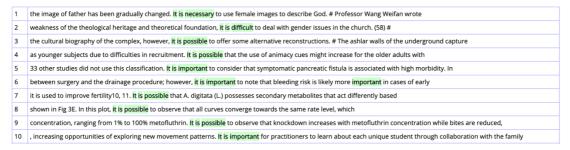


Figure 4. Concordance lines (it is + adjective) for highlighting the evaluation

When using the "find it" pattern, the writer emphasises _______, who does the action of commenting (we find it necessary); when using the "it is" pattern, the writer chooses to foreground the ______, so that readers can be more aware of the writer's own attitude towards the topic.

b. Take-home writing task: Rewrite the underlined parts having less English-like evaluative expressions. Present the results in the next class.

Text A

The majority of customers in Hong Kong are used to the traditional display space in a store. In light of this, the retailing team noticed that they are important to adopt a new approach for product assortment. For instance, they placed the new arrivals facing the door and the shoes, accessories or cosmetics next to the garments. As a result, the consumers are easy to know the possible ways to match them. This new product assortment method had great success, which encouraged the customers to buy multiple items simultaneously.

Text B

SMEs play an important role in the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs), promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, creation of employment and decent jobs, promotion of sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation and the reduction of inequality. However, manufacturing SMEs are challenging to include low innovation and product development. Other challenges would be inability to access both domestic and international markets, inability to access affordable credit, tedious and lengthy process in quality standards and certification. In addition, they face limited access to markets which is a severe constraint to its growth and competitiveness. Further, as a result of their small sizes, it usually finds difficult to compete in the domestic economy with established enterprises, face competition from imported goods, and lack requisite productive capacity and technologies to meet demand in the international markets. It is argued that some affirmative action and selective interventions and preference schemes by the government can enhance their market penetration. SMEs are difficult to access public procurement opportunities compared to large firms.

Extracted and edited from

Osano, H. M. (2019). Global expansion of SMEs: role of global market strategy for Kenyan SMEs. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 8(1), 13.

Bonus Stage: Where to evaluate in the paragraph?

Revisit Text B, a text extract from a journal article. With your teacher and peeers, discuss where in the paragraph the author put the evaluation with the target sentence patterns. Also, explain why these sentences are placed in those positions.

a.	Possible positions of evaluative sentences in a paragraph
b.	Reasons for putting the evaluative sentences in the identified positions
C.	Comparing "it is + adjective" and "human subjects + find it + adjective", which is more common in academic writing? Discuss in the class, use the "Compare" function in COCA, and take notes in the space below.

***** END *****