

# **Vocabulary Acquisition**

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## **Introduction**

For several years, there has been discussion among the instructors in the Academic Preparation unit of Academic Foundations regarding recurring problems with teaching students, especially in the areas of vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Instructors have asked questions such as “Why don’t students remember what they’ve read? Why can’t they do context clues? Can you believe they don’t know this vocabulary?” From these discussions has come the research question for this project: What are the effective strategies for teaching adults vocabulary to be successful in future learning?

In response to their frustration for themselves and for their students’ learning, some instructors have tried various strategies to address the issues. They have found some successful methods and been able to adapt others to fit this learning environment better. However, there has not been a concerted effort to formalize these and other strategies into a curriculum for vocabulary development, especially not a layered curriculum which addresses issues such as appropriate content and strategies for each level. This paper will discuss research findings from an in-depth study on the topic of vocabulary acquisition as they relate to the teaching practices within the unit, hopefully as a beginning for the development of that curriculum.

## **Characteristics of Academic Preparation Learners**

By far the majority of learners in the Academic Preparation unit are second language (L2) learners. In fact, many of them are learning their third, fourth, or even fifth

language. Most of these students are immigrants with very good education in another language, so they are experienced adult learners and exhibit many of the characteristics of adult learners. However, the academic expectations and protocols which governed their original learning are often quite different from the learning environment in Canada.

The first language (L1) learners are usually students who dropped out of high school for some reason and are now returning to complete their education in order to pursue a career. Others have been injured on the job and cannot continue in their previous career, so they are returning to re-educate for another career. Often, these students have not been in an academic setting for many years and exhibit the attitudes and characteristics they had when they were in school in the past.

Instructors in the Academic Preparation unit have recognized in the behaviour and attitudes of their adult learners the Principles of Adult Learning (Lieb, 1991) which are included here as Appendix A. They have observed, for example, that adult students have different priorities for learning than their instructors do. Those students learn and remember the concepts which are important to them within their academic and cultural contexts.

Also, adult learners tend to focus on vocabulary and concepts which reflect their life experiences (Long and Shaw, 2000; Haastrop and Henriksen, 2000). This can be an advantage because instructors can teach students to use their life experiences to relate to what they are reading, thereby improving their reading comprehension and possibly expanding their vocabulary. However, some learners are resistant to extending their learning beyond what they have already experienced. This can strongly affect their

openness to new vocabulary, new concepts, and even new teaching styles (Belzer, 2004; Dimroth, 2008). For example, in a reading class, some students will express dislike for vocabulary discussion which, in their opinion, is “off topic”. They want to restrict that discussion to definitions and parts of speech, rather than discussing contexts where the new vocabulary could be used appropriately.

Academic Preparation instructors have noticed that L2 learners with the same L1 usually make the same grammar and vocabulary errors. Bailey (2006) attributes this characteristic to the language processing strategies which the students have learned in their first language. Partly as a result of this, L2 learners learn English constructs in a different order than L1 learners do (see Appendix B for a table of comparison excerpted from Bailey, p. 236). This can impact the way vocabulary is taught directly, for example regarding prefixes and suffixes and their functions.

Finally, instructors have noticed that adult students express a variety of motives for their pursuit of learning. For example, some “just want to pass” and want a quick method to meet the minimum requirements of the course they are taking. Some students seem to get “stuck” and do not want to do the work required to improve their vocabulary. Others have part-time jobs and/or family responsibilities which limit the time they have available for studying and learning. As a result, instructors have to work to motivate all of their students to learn, regardless of the learners’ intrinsic motivation.

### **Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary**

In the research, the first question addressed is exactly what vocabulary should be taught. The second is how much vocabulary adult learners need in order to be

successful in the higher levels of education. These questions have been reflected in discussions among instructors about the quality of the vocabulary textbooks currently in use in Academic Preparation. While the textbooks do meet some of the requirements for effective vocabulary instruction, such as grouping vocabulary around topics of interest to adult learners, they have some serious drawbacks, including the excessive inclusion of low frequency words which learners are unlikely to encounter in their academic reading.

The discussion in the research has centered on a number of word lists which have been proposed as suitable for adult learners. Chall (as cited in McKeown and Curtis, 1987) divides reading vocabulary in two parts: recognition and meaning. Recognition vocabulary consists of words which readers automatically understand when they see them. Probably the best-known example is the Dolch Sight Word List attached here as Appendix C. Meaning vocabulary consists of words which readers should know in order to comfortably understand what they are reading. Research by Laufer (as cited in Nation & Waring, 1997) shows that readers should know the meanings of 95% of the words in a passage in order to achieve reasonable comprehension of what they are reading. In other words, they need to know 95% of the most commonly used words in English.

One of the best-known lists of the high frequency words is the General Service List (GSL) (West, as cited in Nation and Waring, 1997) which is a list of the 2,000 most frequently-used headwords (base forms of word families) in English. One argument against the use of this list is that it provides only about 80% coverage of the high

frequency words which is not sufficient for the requirements of adult readers, especially those planning to continue past Academic Preparation (Nation and Waring, 1997).

Because of the changes which have occurred in the language since the development of the GSL in 1953, other research has been conducted to create a more up-to-date list of high frequency words. Most notably, Nation worked with the 100-million-word British National Corpus (as cited in Cobb, 2007) to classify words into families. He then created 14 1000-word family lists of the most commonly-used words in English. This list has been adopted as the basis of a website (<http://www.lex tutor.ca>) which can be used to evaluate text in terms of appropriate level of study without referring to grade equivalence, or to modify text to the appropriate reading level.

Nation has translated the required vocabulary level from the earlier-stated 95% to word list equivalents. He states that". . .a 8,000-9,000 word-family vocabulary is needed for dealing with written text, and 6,000-7,000 families for dealing with spoken text" (2006, 79). Nation has also created a table of the word-families lists corresponding to the level of reading which can be expected for those lists. This list has been adapted to the reading levels in the Academic Preparation courses in consultation with the instructors and is attached here as Appendix E.

Another issue discussed in the research literature is the depth of knowledge readers have of their vocabulary. Academic Preparation instructors have expressed concern with regard to the depth of learning which has occurred when learners memorise words and their meanings and even contextualized sentences for a test and then, immediately after the test, forget the bulk of what they have memorized.

Dale (as cited in Curtis, 2006, p. 55) listed four stages of comprehension: “words whose meanings are known (Stage 4); words whose meanings are recognized in some contexts but not others (Stage 3); words that have been seen or heard, but whose meanings are not known (Stage 2); and finally, words that have never been heard or seen before (Stage 1)”. Paribakht & Wesche (as cited in Nassaji, 2004) created a self-assessment called the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale. Test-takers rate their own level of knowledge of a word on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning that they do not know the word at all and 5 meaning that they can use the word correctly in context. Unfortunately, most reading comprehension tests do not measure depth of understanding (Joshi, 2005).

Another issue complicating measurement of the breadth and depth of adult learners’ vocabulary is the fact that they have a larger receptive vocabulary (verbal) than productive (written, primarily academic). Researchers in L2 vocabulary acquisition have labelled these two vocabularies BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) (Cummins, n.d. ). Academic Preparation instructors have commented on the frustration of hearing L2 learners speak fairly well but still experience difficulty with communicating in writing: “Good grief! They can’t even write a complete sentence! How did they get here?”

### **Characteristics of an Effective Vocabulary Teaching Program**

As researchers have investigated what works and what does not work in teaching vocabulary, two major strands have emerged. Advocates of direct teaching support methods which involve discussion of words as objects. This would include lessons on

phonics, decoding, affixes, and root words, among others. On the other hand, proponents of incidental learning support the use of context clues, inferencing, and wide-range reading. Instructors in the Academic Preparation unit use both, but the emphasis seems to be more on incidental learning of vocabulary. For example, at the beginning of each reading class, the teacher and the students silently read novels which they have personally selected, often from a list of suggested titles from Alberta Education. This gives the instructor the opportunity to model good reading behaviour, and it provides the students with the time for reading, something many of them claim not to have.

The research literature supports a balanced approach with both incidental and explicit approaches (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). Specifically, Nation (as cited in Laufer, 2006), an internationally-recognized expert in L2 vocabulary acquisition, recommends that “a balanced [reading] course should consist of four major strands: comprehensible meaning-focused input, form-focused instruction, meaning-focused output, and fluency development” (p.162). Laufer (2006) adds “that [form-focused instruction] has a major importance in any learning context that cannot recreate the input conditions of first-language acquisition” (p.162).

The facet of incidental learning which has caused the teachers of Academic Preparation the most difficulty is the whole topic of context clues. Handouts teaching the skills have been developed and used; teachers have modeled the steps of using context clues; practice at the appropriate vocabulary level has been provided, yet students are consistently weak in these skills. When students are asked why they have so much trouble with context clues, the usual reply is “We don’t know enough of the surrounding

vocabulary to recognize the clues.” Many factors underlie this situation, but the fundamental reality is that the students clearly need to develop larger and deeper vocabularies much faster than they currently are.

Haastrup & Henriksen (2000) describe the process of learning new vocabulary as a gradual process which takes time. They envision “the phases leading to the integration of a word into a [vocabulary] network:

- notice: detach word meaning from context
- analyze: recognize links between related L2 words
- integrate: structure and restructure relations between words” (p. 225).

de Bot et al (1997) discuss a more detailed model of the comprehension and production of vocabulary in communication developed by Levelt (p. 315) and support it with other researcher comments as well as their own research. They state that

learning from context involves three basic elements: *learner processes of knowledge acquisition* (selective encoding and selective combination of new information, and selective comparison in relating this to previous knowledge), *contextual clues* on which these processes operate (e.g. temporal, spatial, and functional description cues), and *moderating variables* (e.g. number of occurrences of the unknown word, importance of the unknown word to understanding the context in which it is embedded, and the density of unknown words) (p. 315).

This is the process which Academic Preparation instructors strive to teach and reinforce for their learners.

## Best Practices

- teach the connections between letters (or groups of letters) and sounds.  
This needs to be reviewed and practiced until the knowledge is automatic (de Bot et al, 1997; Burt et al, 2005)
- “highlight Greek and Latin roots, or bases, as students meet them across the curriculum” (Henning, 2000, p. 270). While the majority of English words (especially in the science fields) are formed from these roots, many other languages are not, so the learners do not know them (Joshi, 2005).
- footnote vocabulary words which are a higher level of meaning than required (Watanabe, 1995).
- create a word tree using a common root word and its meaning as the “trunk” of the tree. Branches on the left of the tree are prefixes with their meanings. Students join each prefix to the root word to create a new word on the branches to the right and predict the meaning of the new words (Henning, 2000).
- create a wheel of words with “spokes” that connect to families of words which share the same root word which is the “hub” of the wheel (Henning, 2000).

- The Oxford Bookworm series of graded readers which have high frequency vocabulary with six stages of vocabulary, ending with 2,500 of the highest frequency vocabulary (Tran, 2006a )
- encourage students to keep a word notebook of unknown words which they encounter in their reading. They can then look up these words and write sentences with them (Tran,2006a).
- teach adjectives and adverbs in degrees. For example, teach *upset*, *irritated*, *angry*, *furious*, and *outraged* together and discuss the levels of meaning (Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000).
- modify expository and narrative passages to make them comprehensible for the students, using [www.lex tutor.ca](http://www.lex tutor.ca), a free website (Tran, 2006a; Cobb, 2007).
- demonstrate the Keyword Method (Shapiro & Waters, 2005) of learning and remembering new vocabulary. Helping students to relate new words to familiar words in a memorable, even silly, way will promote recall, in part because it often involves visualization.
- employ the peg word system (Shapiro & Waters, 2005) to attach new words to a list of peg words through rhyming.
- task-based learning (de la Fuente, 2006) which requires learners to use and discuss newly-learned vocabulary to improve meaning knowledge and recall. For example, students who were taught vocabulary on the topic of

food were then given the task of creating a menu. The requirement to add affixes to the new vocabulary and verify the correct term for the context reinforces the need for discussion.

- Jigsaw II co-operative learning (Shaaban, 2006). This process requires students to be assigned to teams, given topics on which to become experts, and teach the whole class the topics which they are experts in. The use of co-operative learning, peer tutoring, and recognition of expertise helps students to develop self-confidence, improve reader motivation, and develop a good reader self-concept.
- co-operative learning can be extended to co-operative test-taking, which reinforces the notions of the responsibilities of individuals within a group, self-management skills, test-taking strategies, and self-confidence as learners.
- identify cognates from L1 which resemble L2 words in appearing (such as root words) and meaning (August et al, 2005).
- reinforce knowledge of polysemous words (words with multiple meanings, such as produce) using cloze sentences with rich context (August et al, 2005).
- alphabet/synonym or alphabet/antonym activity (Fisher & Blachowitz as cited in Joshi, 2005). Ask students for synonyms or antonyms beginning with the same letter as the given word.

- discuss word derivation (Sadoski, as cited in Joshi, 2005). Tell the story behind the word.
- ask comprehension questions of varying difficulty, based on Bloom's Taxonomy (Wong & Abdullah, 2009).
- ensure that context clues exercises contain rich context (Webb, 2008b).
- teach learners to verify their meaning inferences of unknown words by rereading the context with the unknown words replaced by the learners' guesses (Nassaji, 2004).
- Community-of-language approach (Manzo et al, 2006). Make a list of the vocabulary that is important to a unit/lesson which is about to be taught. Display the list prominently. Ask students to bring examples of contexts (written and verbal) where they have found the words. It is important to include examples found in electronic communications (eg. email) as well as other, more traditional sources. Usually, there is a reward system here.
- direct teaching of appositives (Watanabe, 1997).
- open-ended analogies (analogies with more than one correct answer) (Curtis, 2006).
- "nurture students' awareness of and interest in words and their meanings" (Curtis, 2006, p. 60). Curtis gives five approaches to accomplish this.

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## Appendix A (excerpt from Lieb, 1991)

### Adults As Learners

Part of being an effective instructor involves understanding how adults learn best. Compared to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners. Despite the apparent truth, adult learning is a relatively new area of study. The field of adult learning was pioneered by Malcom Knowles. He identified the following characteristics of adult learners:

- Adults are *autonomous* and *self-directed*. They need to be free to direct themselves. Their teachers must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. Specifically, they must get participants' perspectives about what topics to cover and let them work on projects that reflect their interests. They should allow the participants to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership. They have to be sure to act as facilitators, guiding participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts. Finally, they must show participants how the class will help them reach their goals (e.g., via a personal goals sheet).
- Adults have accumulated a foundation of *life experiences* and *knowledge* that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base. To help them do so, they should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic. They must relate theories and concepts to the participants and recognize the value of experience in learning.
- Adults are *goal-oriented*. Upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goal they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an educational program that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Instructors must show participants how this class will help them attain their goals. This classification of goals and course objectives must be done early in the course.
- Adults are *relevancy-oriented*. They must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. Therefore, instructors must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins. This means, also,

that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects that reflect their own interests.

- Adults are *practical*, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work. They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake. Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job.
- As do all learners, adults need to be shown *respect*. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

**Appendix B** (adapted from Bailey et al, 1974, p. 236)**TABLE 1***Difficulty order of functors*

<b>First language learners</b> (de Villiers and de Villiers, 1973)	<b>Second language learners</b> (Dulay and Burt, 1973)
1. plural (-s)	plural (-s)
2. progressive (-ing)	progressive (-ing)
3. past irregular	contractible copula
4. articles (a, the)	contractible auxiliary
5. contractible copula	articles (a, the)
6. possessive ('s)	past irregular
7. third person singular (-s)	third person singular (-s)
8. contractible auxiliary	possessive ('s)



**Appendix C** (retrieved from <http://www.geminihschool.org> on June 14, 2010)

### Dolch Sight Word List

Preprimer	Primer	First	Second	Third
a	all	after	always	about
and	am	again	around	better
away	are	an	because	bring
big	at	any	been	carry
blue	ate	as	before	clean
can	be	ask	best	cut
come	black	by	both	done
down	brown	could	buy	draw
find	but	every	call	drink
for	came	fly	cold	eight
funny	did	from	does	fall
go	do	give	don't	far
help	eat	going	fast	full
hers	four	had	first	got
I	get	has	five	grow
in	good	her	found	hold
is	has	him	gave	hot
it	he	how	goes	hurt
jump	into	just	green	if
little	like	know	its	keep
look	must	let	made	kind
make	new	live	many	laugh
me	no	may	off	light
my	now	of	or	long
not	on	old	pull	much
one	our	once	read	myself
play	out	open	right	never
red	please	over	sing	only
run	pretty	put	sit	own
said	ran	round	sleep	pick
see	ride	some	tell	seven
the	saw	stop	their	shall
three	say	take	these	show
to	she	thank	those	six
two	so	them	upon	small
up	soon	then	us	start
we	that	think	use	ten

yellow	there	walk	very	today
you	they	where	wash	together
	this	when	which	try
	too		why	warm
	under		wish	
	want		work	
	was		would	
	well		write	
	went		your	
	what			
	white			
	who			
	will			
	with			
	yes			

Gemini Elementary School (<http://www.geminischool.org/>)

### Dolch Word List

**Appendix D** (retrieved from <http://www.lex tutor.ca/vp/bnc/samples.html>. on March 5, 2010.

## What texts can I read if I know *this* many words?

Reading a text depends on knowing *at least 95%* of its lexical words, **SO...**

Words you know	Text you can read	Example	Vocab Profile	Get VP
1000 word families K1 only Ac Prep Reading 2 More formal context required	Script of informal spoken conversation TV Sit-com	"IAN: Well, if not, just have to struggle on, won't we? CINDY: No we won't Ian, one way or another, we're gonna get some help. ROBBIE: Told you the dog would be back. IAN: No one's gonna hurt ya this time, I swear it. ROBBIE: Dog came back. ALAN: Yeah, I can see. ROBBIE: So, what do you want to do now? ALAN: Give him back again. ROBBIE: We can't do that, Alan! ALAN: Why do you think he runs away in the first place? ROBBIE: Because his owner kicks him around--that's why. ALAN: What do ya mean? ROBBIE: Well, look at his back. ALAN: I never noticed these before.."	K1 =96.00%	VP
2000 word families K1 - K2 Ac Prep Reading 3	Graded Reader Bookworm Level 1 <i>Elephant Man</i>	"My name is Dr Frederick Treves. I am a doctor at the London Hospital. One day in 1884, I saw a picture in the window of a shop near the hospital. I stopped in front of the shop and looked at the picture. At first I felt interested, then I felt angry, then afraid. It was a horrible, ugly picture. There was a man in the picture, but he did not look like you and me. He did not look like a man. He looked like an elephant. I read the writing under the picture. It said, 'Come in and see the Elephant Man. 2 pence.' I opened the door and went in. There was a man in the	K1 =92.62% K2 =04.03% = 96.65%	VP

		shop. He was a dirty man in an old coat with a cigarette in his mouth. 'What do you want?' he asked. 'I'd like to see the elephant man, please,' I said."		
3000 word families K1 - K3 Ac Prep Reading 4	Graded Reader Bookworm Level 6 <i>Cry Freedom</i>	" The road out of East London to the north gradually rises from the coast to grassy hills, and then descends again to the valley of the Buffalo River, about sixty kilometres from East London. Only whites live in King William's Town itself, of course. Woods, in his white Mercedes, drove through the black township, a few kilometres from the centre of the town, on his way to the address Dr Ramphela had given him. The houses were small and miserable, but the surrounding hills, covered with acacia trees, were beautiful. Woods drove on, surprised that he was meeting a banned person at an address in the white town. He found the quiet, wide street with trees on both sides. The address was an old church, with small trees around it, and bits of broken fence. Woods parked across the street and stared at it for a moment. He noticed two security policemen under a tree not far away. They were obviously Biko's 'minders' and Woods smiled and waved at them. Biko needed watching, Woods believed, because he aimed to create separate black organizations, which Woods thought dangerous. "	K1 =87.93% K2 =05.75% K3 =02.30% = 95.98%	VP
4000 word families K1 - K4 Ac Prep Reading 5	Mid-Quality Newspaper Treatment of medical subject  Montreal Gazette, 15/1/07	" The Canadian Down Syndrome Society is right to be concerned about a proposal that all pregnant women be routinely tested to determine whether the fetuses they're carrying have Down syndrome. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada no doubt has the best of intentions in recommending the program, and even the Down Syndrome Society has no problem with expectant mothers getting all the information they need to make decisions about their pregnancy. The key word, however, is 'all.' The society fears - and with reason - that doctors are far too quick to	K1 =83.04% K2 =05.85% K3 =02.92% K4 =04.68% =96.49	VP

		<p>highlight the burdens of raising a child with Down syndrome without ever acknowledging the joys and rewards that such children can bring to a family. Doctors, the society says, never fail to mention the heart problems and premature dementia that can come with Down syndrome, but often ignore other, more positive, aspects of the condition. What's also often left out are the positive prognoses. Most children with Down syndrome go on to live full and fulfilling lives."</p>		
<p>5000 word families  K1 - K5</p>	<p>Academic textbook on animal conservation  In Schmitt &amp; Schmitt, Ch 7, Unit 25</p>	<p>" Another option to save the African elephant would be an exclusive marketing scheme in which ivory was traded. The core of such a system would have to be an agreement between exporting countries who are committed to managing their herds at sustainable levels and importing countries who were both willing and able to enforce import controls requiring them to accept ivory from approved exporting countries alone. Ivory could be taken for registration to a single point of export controlled and supervised by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The CITES center would accept ivory only from states deemed to have met strict conservation criteria. Once exported, ivory samples would be randomly tested at regular intervals to determine their place of origin. Ivory from anywhere other than approved states would be confiscated and the importing nation fined in the first instance, and suspended from the scheme in the case of repeated offenses. This scheme might start small initially, and later be expanded if successful. Such expansion could be implemented by a resolution within the CITES framework. One problem is that actual enforcement of such schemes is by no means automatic. Considerations like the corruption or powerlessness of officials, ignorance, and apathy must be fully addressed in the program's implementation</p>	<p>K1 =70.83% K2 =10.19% K3 =06.94% K4 =04.63% K5 =04.17% =96.76%</p>	<p>VP</p>

		for them to be successful."		
6000 word families  K1 - K6	High end weekly news magazine - feature  <i>Economist</i> , Jan 19, 2007	" MORE magazines documenting the ups and, better, the downs of celebrities are sold in Britain than anywhere else, relative to the size of its population. The reasons given for the country's vast appetite for celebrity vary from the historical (Brits like having a class system and have created a new one on the embers of the old) to the sociological (people no longer know their neighbours well enough and so gossip about famous lives instead). The result is benign, most of the time. British celebrity culture is tolerant: ethnic minorities and homosexuals feature prominently. And it is democratic: no discernible talent is needed to enter the aristocracy of celebrity. Not this week, though, when the unpleasant, even racist, treatment of Shilpa Shetty, an Indian actress, on <i>Celebrity Big Brother</i> , a reality-television show, has been at the top of news bulletins. The format of the programme resembles a performance at the Circus Maximus, though with the lions given the week off. The contestants live together in a house fitted out with cameras. The winner is the last one left in, after some have walked out in dismay and others have been voted off by viewers."	<p>K1 =79.27%</p> <p>K2 =07.25%</p> <p>K3 =02.59%</p> <p>K4 =02.59%</p> <p>K5 =02.07%</p> <p>K6 =03.11%</p> <p>=96.88%</p>	VP
7000 word families  K1 - K7	High end weekly news magazine - review  <i>Economist</i> , Jan 19, 2007	" The key to understanding Lord Black, who is set to go on trial next March, is that for him business has never been more than the means to an end. It was a lesson he absorbed as a boy from his wealthy and cynical father, who taught him that greed, arrogance and unscrupulousness were the way of the world. At the same time, the precocious young Conrad learned from his passion for history that real heroes were permitted to flout rules designed by the mediocre to shackle them. Mr Bower portrays Lady Black as every bit as much of a chancer as the husband over whom she still exerts a powerful hold, both sexual and intellectual. Marrying for the fourth time at the age of	<p>K1 =81.50%</p> <p>K2 =04.00%</p> <p>K3 =02.00%</p> <p>K4 =03.00%</p> <p>K5 =01.00%</p> <p>K6 =02.50%</p> <p>K7 =01.50%</p> <p>=95.50%</p>	VP

		<p>51, the haughty, but always insecure, Ms Amiel believed she had married a man of unlimited means. Given free rein to an extravagance she admitted “has no bounds”, Lady Black encouraged her husband to befriend New York's super-rich elite. With their four houses in choice locations, their armies of butlers and the pair of private jets that stood ready to whisk them to the next celebrity party or shopping expedition, they were accepted at their own valuation."</p>		
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