



VOCABULARY CONTINUUM

Explore shades of meaning, not just definitions.



THE IDEA

Words exist on a continuum. Exploring gradations in meaning helps EAL learners choose precise vocabulary and sound more natural.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Choose a useful adjective, verb or adverb. Place it in the middle of a continuum. Add weaker and stronger forms either side. Discuss the differences and use in sentence practice or writing.

EXAMPLE: GOOD (adjective)

poor fair okay **good** very good excellent outstanding



WEAKER

Less positive.
Could it be negative?
How much?

CORE

Common,
everyday
language.

STRONGER

More positive.
Could it be the
strongest?

EXAMPLE SENTENCES

- The instructions were **poor**. I didn't understand.
- The instructions were **okay**, but I still needed help.
- The instructions were **good**. I could follow them.
- The instructions were **excellent**. Everything was clear.
- The instructions were **outstanding**. I learnt a lot.



WHY IT WORKS

Learners develop nuance, accuracy and confidence. They learn that one word rarely fits every context.



EAL UPGRADE

Provide sentence stems to support comparison:

"This is stronger than ____, but not as strong as ____."

"I would use ____ when..., but I would use ____ when..."



TRY IT TOMORROW

Pick one high-utility word from your lesson.

Create a 5–7 point continuum.

Students discuss, rank and write their own sentences.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

"Where would you place this word on the continuum? Why?"

"What's the difference between ____ and ____?"

"When might you choose one word over another?"

**DUNCAN
ROSE**

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