



EVERY SUBJECT HAS A LANGUAGE

Disciplinary language matters.



THE IDEA

Every subject has its own language.

It's not just general English, but the specific vocabulary, phrases, text types and ways of thinking used in that discipline.

EAL learners need explicit support to understand and use this subject language so they can access the content, take part in discussions and show what they know.

When we make the language of our subject visible, we open the door for all learners.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Identify the key vocabulary and phrases in your subject.

Make subject language visible (displays, glossaries, examples).

Model how to use it in context.

Give opportunities for students to hear, say, read and write it.

Link language to thinking tasks (e.g. explain, compare, justify, evaluate).

Revisit and recycle throughout the unit.

THE 3 STEPS

1



IDENTIFY

Find the subject language.

Look at your unit, lesson or task. Identify key vocabulary, phrases, grammar structures, text types and thinking skills. Consider what might be challenging for EAL learners.

*What are the key words?
What language do students need to understand and use?
What are the common text types in this subject?*

2



MAKE IT VISIBLE

Teach and model the language.

Introduce key words and phrases in context. Use visual supports (glossaries, word banks, examples, diagrams). Model how to use the language through speaking, reading and writing.

*"In Science, we say ..."
"In History, we use ..."
"In Maths, this means ..."
"Here is an example ..."*

3



USE AND REINFORCE

Give opportunities to use it.

Build the language into class activities, discussions, practical work and assessments. Provide sentence frames and structured practice. Revist and recycle the language regularly.

*Can you use this word in a sentence?
How else could we say this?
Try using this phrase in your answer.
Where have you seen this language before?*



WHY IT WORKS

- Helps EAL learners access and participate in all subjects.
- Builds subject knowledge and confidence.
- Supports academic language development.
- Leads to higher quality work and deeper understanding.
- Benefits all learners, not just EAL students.



EAL UPGRADE

- Create a subject language bank.
- Use visuals and real examples.
- Teach key phrases and text types.
- Revisit regularly across the unit.
- Encourage students to use the language in speaking and writing.



TRY IT TOMORROW

- Choose one subject.
- Identify five key words or phrases from your next lesson.
- Make a simple display or slide.
- Use at least one in a class activity.
- Ask students to use the language in a short spoken or written response.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

*"This is important language in our subject."
"Let's say it together."
"Can you use that word in a sentence?"
"How does this help us explain ... ?"
"Try using this phrase in your answer."
"You'll need this language for the next task."*