



COMMAND WORDS AREN'T OBVIOUS

Teach the meaning, not just the word.



THE IDEA

Command words in instructions, questions and assessments have specific meanings.

EAL learners may know the word but not what they need to do.

Make the meaning explicit, give examples and let them practise.



IN THE CLASSROOM

- Pre-teach key command words.
- Use student-friendly meanings.
- Show good and bad examples.
- Give a quick practice task.
- Revisit across subjects.

1



EXPLAIN THE MEANING

Teach what it means.

Give a simple, student-friendly definition. Use a few key examples.

Describe

Give the key features.

Explain

Give a reason or cause.

2



SHOW EXAMPLES

Show good and bad examples.

Use short examples from your subject.



"Identify two reasons for this change."
(give two clear reasons)



"Identify two reasons."
(just names, no detail)

3



PRACTISE AND APPLY

Let students use it.

Give a short task using the command word. Check and give feedback.

"Explain why this happened."



WHY IT WORKS

- Clearer instructions.
- Builds confidence.
- Improves the quality of answers.
- Helps across all subjects.



EAL UPGRADE

Create a command word glossary with simple definitions and example sentences.



TRY IT TOMORROW

Choose 3 common command words. Teach, show examples and give a quick task.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

"In this question, explain means ..."
"You need to give a reason ..."
"A good answer includes ..."