

The 3-Level Word Bank

Combine everyday, academic and technical language purposefully.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Separate everyday, general academic and subject-specific words needed for one task.

Teach it in four steps

1. Identify the subject concepts before building the bank.
2. Choose a few words at each level and connect them to meanings.
3. Model how words from different levels work together in one sentence.
4. Let learners select only the words their own explanation needs.

Worked classroom example

Science: everyday: warm, surface; academic: increase, therefore; technical: evaporation, particle.
 “At the surface, particles escape, so the liquid gradually evaporates.”

Teacher prompt: “Which detail supports your explanation? Show me how you know.”

Check understanding

Ask learners to explain which technical word adds precision and which connective expresses the relationship.

Fade the support

Reduce the bank to technical terms, then ask learners to construct their own supporting wording.

Adapt it across subjects

Maths: combine everyday context, compare/justify and gradient/intercept.

Humanities: combine people/place, consequence/evidence and sovereignty/migration.

Adjust the language support

A1-A2 access: keep the subject goal; use visuals, a small word bank, pointing or drawing and partner rehearsal. Use a home language to establish meaning where helpful.

B1-B2 extension: ask for fuller explanations, precise subject vocabulary and qualifications. Reduce sentence openings when learners can organise the response independently.

These are starting points, not placement rules. Judge support from the learner’s response to this task; proficiency can differ across skills.