

Highlight the Language Load

Identify the language a demanding task requires.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Choose a real task and identify its language demands alongside its conceptual demands.

Teach it in four steps

1. Underline technical terms and general academic verbs.
2. Mark phrases that express relationships or qualify claims.
3. Identify the response structure the task requires.
4. Select a small, purposeful scaffold for the most significant barrier.

Worked classroom example

Science: “Evaluate the reliability of the investigation” needs the meaning of evaluate, language of repeated measurements and a judgement supported by evidence.

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

Check understanding

Ask learners to explain what the task requires before they attempt the full answer.

Fade the support

Remove the annotation when learners can identify task demands themselves.

Adapt it across subjects

Maths: distinguish calculate from justify.

Humanities: identify the language of comparison and source evaluation.

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.