Collocations Matter

Teach a subject term together with the words it naturally combines with in the required response.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Choose a term and the verbs or nouns it naturally combines with in this task.

Teach it in four steps

1. Teach a subject term together with the words it naturally combines with in the required response.
2. Identify which words regularly work together.
3. Compare a plausible but inappropriate combination with the model.
4. Use the phrase to express a new subject idea.

Worked example: Collocations Matter

We draw a conclusion, support a claim and conduct an investigation. “Do a conclusion” may be understandable but does not provide the expected academic combination.

Teacher prompt: “Show the relationship and explain the choice you made.”

Check understanding

Ask learners to choose and use a phrase for a new result or source.

Fade the support

Remove the matching list and retrieve the complete phrase in context.

Adapt it across subjects

Maths: solve an equation, calculate a mean. Humanities: challenge an interpretation, cite a source.

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.