Pre-Teach Less. Remember More

Use brief spaced retrieval to help learners remember a small number of essential words over time.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Use the four steps with a short task from this week's subject lesson; collect one response from every learner.

Teach it in four steps

1. Choose a few words: Select the terms needed for upcoming learning.
2. Meet them briefly: Connect each word to a clear example and meaning.
3. Retrieve later: Return after a gap with a no-notes matching or recall prompt.
4. Use them again: Ask learners to apply a word in a fresh subject sentence.

Use the routine

Science: Use a Frayer-style model for evaporation: define it, sketch it, give a puddle example and distinguish it from boiling.

"What helped you make sense of that?" "Show how your evidence supports your answer."

Check understanding

Look for an independent response that shows the subject relationship, not only repetition of the model. Compare it with the task goal and identify the next useful teaching step.

Fade the support

Keep the subject goal and source intact. Offer one brief model, visual or language prompt, then give learners time to try it independently.

Adapt it across subjects

Maths: Sort examples of equivalent fractions and explain why 2/3 and 4/6 belong together.

Humanities: Compare two sources about migration and name one useful similarity and difference.

English: Build a word network for "isolated" using a quotation, image, synonym and original sentence.

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.