

Value the Interpreter Role

In pairs, one learner explains a process in a familiar language while the partner captures the English key terms.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Assign complementary roles linked to the thinking, not simply a leader and a writer.

Teach it in four steps

1. In pairs, one learner explains a process in a familiar language while the partner captures the English key terms.
2. Require the explainer to state a reason and the checker to test it.
3. Swap roles on the next example.
4. Collect an individual answer to check that both learners can perform the thinking.

Worked example: Value the Interpreter Role

An interpreter helps communicate a partner's idea faithfully, then asks the partner to confirm the meaning. Rotate the role and assess each learner's own explanation so interpreting does not replace everyone's participation.

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

Check understanding

Check both learners independently after role exchange.

Fade the support

Remove role cards when questioning and explanation are shared productively.

Adapt it across subjects

Science: explainer and evidence checker. Humanities: source interpreter and challenge questioner.

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.