Make a Shared Visual Reference

Create a common format for units, symbols or key command words that learners see across subjects.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Select a meaningful visual and a small number of labels or relationships.

Teach it in four steps

1. Create a common format for units, symbols or key command words that learners see across subjects.
2. Locate a feature learners can point to.
3. Connect the feature to precise language.
4. Use that language to explain a changed visual, checking each claim against evidence.

Worked example: Make a Shared Visual Reference

Agree a labelled visual that communicates the same relationship across classes. Use a force diagram with consistent arrow and unit conventions, then check whether learners can read a fresh version.

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

Check understanding

Change one feature or label and check that the interpretation changes with the evidence.

Fade the support

Remove supplied labels selectively and ask learners to choose their own.

Adapt it across subjects

Maths: graph or geometric diagram. Humanities: a map or source image with a stated interpretive limit.

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.