

Ideas For A Good Vocabulary Lesson Plan

Having good vocabulary lesson plans is key to helping your students improve. Increasing vocabulary is important to learning a language, as anyone can communicate if they know enough words, even if their grammar isn't great. If they don't know the words they can't do anything.

So how do I write good vocabulary lesson plans?

Well, here are some key points to help you.

1. Have a theme.

Students won't remember random words so teach new vocabulary in groups. For example personality adjectives, weather words, clothing, words connected with travel, etc.

2. Give a context.

It is usually quite ineffective to simply let students try and work out meaning from context. But seeing or hearing words in context will help them remember. So for example you can pick out words from a reading text and get them to look them up in a dictionary and make their own sentences using these words.

3. Repetition repetition repetition!

If you see or hear a word once, will you remember it? It isn't likely is it? Use the words more than once and present them in different ways. Students have different learning styles – some will remember from reading a word, others will remember from hearing it. Others will need to use it to remember the word. So try and give them plenty of opportunity to read or hear the words.

4. Use it, don't lose it!

If the students use the word, producing it in their own sentences, they are much more likely to remember it. Let them use the new vocabulary in written texts, role plays or presentations. Make sure they use the new words and don't stick to old, 'safe' words they know. It's important to get them to make sentences that show they understand the meaning. For example if you've taught 'stormy', the sentence

‘It is stormy,’ does not show understanding. A sentence like, "We didn't go out because of the stormy weather," would probably be much better. Push the students to do the best they can and don't let them get lazy.

5. Opposites attract.

That may not always be true but if you are teaching adjectives, it makes sense to teach them in pairs as students will be more likely to remember them that way.

6. Make it fun.

Make it fun. Vocabulary teaching is a great opportunity to get some games into the classroom. Many teachers resort to Hangman as a filler at the end of the lesson but it isn't much fun, can be culturally insensitive, and doesn't really help learning all that much. Pairs matching/memory games work well with vocabulary and there are a load of games you can make more interesting by setting up teams and letting them compete against each other.

7. Recap and reinforce.

Don't teach vocabulary in one lesson then forget it. Always have an activity in the next lesson to reinforce the learning.

8. Show and tell.

Of course you can tell your students new words, but you may need to show them how to learn them. Let them see different techniques of organizing vocabulary notebooks – mind maps, lists, translations, sentences, etc, and encourage them to look up new words they encounter.

If you follow these tips when you are writing vocabulary lesson plans, then your lessons should become more effective and more enjoyable