

**Word Focus
Activity**

Discussion Words and Question Sheets

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Talk a Lot

How to Use

Discussion Words and Question Sheets – Instructions

It's amazing how much you can do with forty cut-out vocabulary words! We have outlined many activities for using these words with students on the discussion words question sheets. First of all, print a discussion words page onto thin card and cut up the cards with scissors. If possible you could laminate them to make them extra sturdy.

The main activity goes as follows: sit down with the whole class around a large table and lay out all of the cards face down. Students take a number of cards each. The number they take depends on the number of students in the class and for how long the teacher wants the activity to last, e.g. for a ten minute activity ten students could each take two cards.

Go around the group one student at a time. Each student chooses one of their cards and has to describe the word in English without saying it. The other students have to guess the word. The students could use dictionaries to find new words that they don't know. It's possible for students to make this activity deliberately harder for their peers by giving more cryptic descriptions!

Using the Question Sheets

The teacher reads the questions out loud in a random order, or one or more of the students could read out the questions. The teacher should use as many of the questions as is necessary to fill the time that they have allotted to this activity. For example, if you have 25 minutes for this activity it's unlikely that you will need to use the main activity as described above as well as all of the questions on the handout. As with the Talk a Lot course in general, there is more material here than will probably be needed; but as all teachers know, it's better to have too much material planned for a lesson than not enough!

Extension Activities

- The students work on the main activity with the words in pairs or small groups.
- The students have to think of ten, twenty, thirty or forty additional words on the same topic, e.g. Music, and make their own discussion words cards, using the template on p.5.4.
- The teacher or the students invent new questions based on the original/new words, using the template on p.5.5 for guidance.
- Have a game of vocabulary bingo. Each student writes down fifteen words from the forty words in three lines: five on the top, five on the middle and five on the bottom. The teacher reads out words from the group at random. The students cross out the words they have written down when they hear the teacher say them. The students race to see who can cross off the first line, then two lines, then all of the words.
- "Yes/No" questions: one student takes a card with a word on it, keeping it secret from the others, who have to ask "Yes/No" questions in order to find out what the word is. The first student can only answer "Yes" or "No". For example, for words on the topic of "Cars", the other students could ask: "Is it inside a car?", "Can I put my foot on it?", "Does it play music?", etc. until they are able to guess the identity of the word. This is a great activity to get students making questions with inversion.

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- The students match the phonetic and English spellings of different words, translate words into/from the IPA, or group words by the sounds they contain. (See p.18.29 for discussion words from Book 1 and p.18.34 for discussion words from Book 2.)
- A student mimes different words without talking, while the others have to guess them.
- Word association activities:
 - a) the teacher (or a student) chooses a word and each student has to say six words that they associate with this word, or each student in the group has to say one word. For example, if the word is “head” the students could say “nose”, “face”, “eye”, “ear”, “chin”, “mouth”, and so on.
 - b) the teacher (or a student) chooses a word and the first student says the first word that comes into their head, followed by the next student and the next in a kind of word association chain. See how long your group can go for without running out of steam. You may be surprised where you end up! For example: “dog” > “bark” > “tree” > “field” > “farm” > “cow” > “milk”, and so on.
- Play vocabulary battleships! Students have to work in pairs and they both have a copy of the discussion words page from that lesson’s topic, e.g. “Sport”. They should label the columns at the top A, B, C, and D, and the rows on the left-hand side from top to bottom 1-10, so that the word “volleyball” is in cell B5, for example. Each student marks ten cells in their grid – these are their “battleships”. Without showing their partner their page, each student asks for a cell on their partner’s grid, for example, “Can I have D5, please?” If this cell (“cue”) has not been marked as a battleship, the partner says, “Miss!” and play passes to them. They request a cell on their partner’s grid, e.g. “I would like A6, please”, which is “swimming”. If “swimming” has been marked as a battleship, the player who marked it must describe the word without saying it. If their partner can guess it, they “sink” the battleship and can choose another cell on the grid. The object of the game is to sink all of your partner’s battleships by a) guessing the correct grid reference, and b) guessing the vocabulary word. Obviously it is in each player’s interests to make the definitions of their words as oblique as possible, so this is a good game for encouraging creative and lateral thinking!
- Make any of these activities into a competition – individual or team – with points given for correct answers, and prizes. The teacher could even deduct points for incorrect answers. Prizes could be awarded for the first student to answer a question correctly, or the student who wins the vocabulary bingo, or who can think of the most new words on the same topic without a dictionary. For a fun group competition there could be a league, with the same teams competing in each lesson for points that accumulate towards a running total. It depends on how competitive your students are!

Assessment

Assessment is performed by the teacher checking and correcting during the task, listening for errors that can be dissected later on in a group feedback session, giving individual as well as group feedback, and referring students back to:

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- a) the grammar they are learning from forming the sentence blocks, and building sentences
- b) the pronunciation work they are doing using the techniques of connected speech and the IPA


Each student's achievement in this activity is also recorded as part of their overall lesson score (for both accuracy and effort) by the teacher on their course report.

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Talk a Lot

Topic: _____

Discussion Words – Template



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Talk a Lot

Topic: _____

General Questions

1. Are there any words or phrases that you don't know? Find them in a dictionary.
2. Take some cards. Describe the word or phrase on a card without saying it.
3. How many words and phrases have... a) 1 syllable, b) 2 syllables, c) 3 syllables, d) 4 syllables? [etc.]
4. Put words and phrases with more than one syllable into groups according to where the strong stress falls.
5. Put the words and phrases into alphabetical order.
6. Find and put into groups... a) compound nouns, b) words with suffixes.
7. Put together words and phrases that have the same number of letters.
8. Put together words and phrases that start with the same letter.
9. How many words and phrases can you remember when they are all turned over?
10. Put words and phrases that contain the same sounds into groups, using the IPA. (See phonetic chart on p.18.6.)

Sample Lesson Questions

1. Which word or phrase sounds like... a) b) c) d) [etc.]
2. Put all of the _____ together into a group. Put them into order of...
3. This is a...
4. Find...
5. Which word or phrase means...?
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

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How to Use

Discussion Words – Sample Lesson Plan

<u>Activity Type:</u>	Discovery; embedding new vocabulary
<u>Level:</u>	Elementary - Pre-Intermediate
<u>Skills:</u>	Vocabulary; Speaking & Listening; Pronunciation; Stress
<u>Class Size:</u>	Students work in pairs or small groups with a maximum of six in a group. This lesson also works well with individual students in a one to one situation
<u>Time:</u>	1 hour
<u>Aim:</u>	To learn and embed/memorise new vocabulary words and phrases – spellings, meanings, stress, and sounds – on a given topic, through exploration and discovery
<u>Materials:</u>	1 set of cut-up vocabulary words and phrases per six students; whiteboard and pens; students have their notebooks and pens

Procedure:

1. Students should be in small groups – six per set of discussion words. Give out the sets. Students put all of the cards face up on the table. Ask them to read the words out loud and put any words and phrases that they don't know – new words – into a separate group.
2. Students write down the new words and phrases in their notebooks. Students either look up the new words and phrases, or ask other groups; or the teacher explains their meanings. Students quickly write down translations and/or draw pictures to help them remember the meanings.
3. Students put the cards into **alphabetical order**. This could be a team activity with a prize or mark for the fastest and most accurate team. Note: some higher level students balk at doing what they consider to be an Elementary task – putting words into alphabetical order. But the aim (as with the whole of this lesson) is to keep the students looking at and focusing on the words. As they do this they will notice the words that are new for them and “lock in” the meanings. That said, I've never had a pre-intermediate level group get this task completely right first time – there is always a last minute revision of the order! The teacher checks and corrects each group's list. At this point, ask the students to read out the list and correct pronunciation as they go. If one group finishes before the other(s) they could go straight on to the next activity. In this way, different groups can move at their own pace through the lesson. If you have only one group, the pace will be set by the level of the students.
4. Put the words and phrases into groups according to **how many syllables** they have. Students love trying this and often haven't considered syllables before. You will hear them sounding out the words on their own initiative, without prompting. The teacher checks and corrects.
5. Students decide **where the strong stress falls** in each word or phrase and put a mark on the card above the correct syllable. Students can refer to dictionaries as a last resort to check

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How to Use

Discussion Words – Sample Lesson Plan

the phonetic spelling and word stress. They should treat a phrase, e.g. “petrol station” as one entity and mark the stress for the phrase, rather than each individual word. Then students group the cards according to stress within their original groups. For example, in a group of words with three syllables, there could be two words with the strong stress on the first syllable, two words with the strong stress on the second syllable, and one word with the strong stress on the third syllable.

6. Even if your groups are moving at roughly the same pace, you should stop and have **whole class feedback** here. Students choose five or six words each and have to say the words with the stress in the right place. The teacher highlights errors on the board.

*If you wanted to look at word stress with your students in more depth, you could insert the **optional stress discovery stage** here (see below).*

7. Depending on how you're doing for time, you could try one of the more in-depth questions from the **Lesson Questions** section of the discussion words question sheet for the topic that you're studying, e.g. question 6. in the Life Events topic from Book 2: “Put [the life events] into order of when they could happen during a person's life.”

8. Students **put words into groups according to phonetic sounds**. You could write on the board five different vowel sounds or diphthongs and five different consonant sounds and ask them to categorise the words according to their sounds, or assign different sounds to each group. The teacher checks and corrects, then leads class feedback (or separate group feedback if the groups are progressing at wildly different speeds). Encourage students to use the phonetic spellings in their dictionaries to help them, and the phonetic alphabet chart on p.18.6.

9. Students take five cards each. Each person has to **describe one of their words** or phrases for the others (or other teams) to guess, without saying the word(s) on the card. After a few rounds of describing, you could ask the students to mime the word or phrase instead. All the time the students are focused on the forty key vocabulary words and phrases. The teacher checks and corrects.

10. The teacher uses the Lesson Questions for the topic as the basis of a **quiz**.

11. Depending on time and level, students could **write their own quiz questions** based on the vocabulary words, and fire them at the other team(s).

12. Finally, at the end of the lesson, the students close their books and turn over all the cards (or collect them in). Challenge them to **remember all forty words**. You could also do this the following day or lesson as a memory test.

Note: You could drop one or more of these activities depending on time and what you want to practise with your students

Homework Activities: a) Students prepare for a spelling test with the forty words and phrases in the next lesson

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Discussion Words – Sample Lesson Plan

- b) Students write a story or article that includes all of the forty words and phrases
- c) Students write twenty (or more!) new words and phrases on the same topic.

Optional Stress Discovery Stage

(To be inserted after stage 6 above.)

1. Students have finished checking word stress and have the correct stressed syllable marked on each word or phrase on their cards.
2. Put all of the cards on the table in the following groups:

Phrases:	1 Syllable. Words:	Stress on 1 st Syllable:	Stress on 2 nd Syllable:	Stress on 3 rd Syllable:	etc.

3. Take away **phrases** – we are looking for individual word stress only.
4. Take away **one syllable words** – we know where the stress is (on the only vowel sound in the word)
5. Identify **suffixes** in the rest of the words. Notice how none of them are stressed*.
6. Identify **compound nouns**. Notice how they are all stressed on the first syllable*.
7. Notice how most of the words are **stressed on the first syllable**. This is very common in English.
8. **Look at the other words**. Where is the strong stress? Why is it like that? (See p.13.4 for more analysis of why some nouns are not stressed on the first syllable, e.g. words that come from a verb, foreign words, and words that have a suffix with its own particular stress pattern.)

(*It's wrong to make general rules about topics in English, because students have a habit of finding exceptions to rules that can make a teacher blush! However, we can say with confidence that suffixes are **almost always** unstressed (you can see some that **are** usually stressed on p.15.4), and that compound nouns are **almost always** stressed on the first syllable. You can see some exceptions to this rule on p.13.2.)

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