

One-word Drills

Compare / Contrast

I did some **chores** *around the house* yesterday.

I did some **errands** *in town* this morning.

Support with Examples

I did some **chores**. I did the laundry. I did the dishes. I did the vacuuming.

I did some **errands**. I went to the post office. I paid my water bill. I bought groceries.

Support with Sentences

I can't **afford** the tickets. I **don't have enough money**.

I **regret** buying those shoes. I **wish I hadn't done that**. / **It was a bad idea**.

Reword

I **weeded** my garden on Saturday. I **pulled** all the weeds.

I **walked** my dog on Sunday. I **took** my dog **for a walk**.

Create Context

I saw some **sculptures**.

I saw some **marble** sculptures at an **art gallery**.

I saw some **bronze** sculptures in the **park**.



Combinations

I saw some **marble** sculptures at an **art gallery**. They were **statues of people**.

I saw some **bronze** sculptures in the **park**. One was a **statue of a man on a horse**.

Gestures

He	went to	H&M.	He	came to	school.
She		London.	She		Shinjuku.
We		England.	We		Tokyo.
They		the UK.	They		Japan.
pointing out			pointing in		

Pronunciation

come	calm	ban	van	sip	ship
color	collar	bin	vin	seep	sheep
suck	sock	boat	vote	see	she

Testing

When you're finished drilling your examples or during your review, ask students to think of their own examples. Take care to listen to what they are trying to say and help them say it as clearly as possible with repetition drills.

One-word drills

When you have a monocultural classroom it's sometimes easy to translate a word into the students' native tongue. However in some cases such as multicultural classrooms, translation just doesn't work. Even in a monocultural classroom this can be problematic. It depends on a number of factors such as the teacher's facility with the language, the students' familiarity with the topic, the clarity of usage and how closely the term actually translates into the target language. We may of course *explain* a term's meaning. Explanation is just one form of clarification. **Part of the goal here is to have the students understand with minimal explanation.**

This worksheet illustrates some, but not all types of one-word drills with examples of each. The examples are not all level-specific. Remember it's up to you to tune your language to the appropriate level of your students' understanding.

About the examples:

Compare / Contrast

Stress should be given to the factors which differentiate the terms. Multiple examples or rewording can be used.

Support with Examples / Sentences

The first sample suggests multiple examples of the terms. Support sentences should be tailored to the level of the students understanding. In this case, "I wish I hadn't" is a bit harder than, "It was a bad idea."

Reword

Rewording is probably one of the best ways of simplifying a term for students. It's also an important skill for them to learn when encountering situations in which they don't know how to say precisely what they wish to say.

Create Context

Here the meaning might still be a bit unclear from the context alone. In some cases the context helps the students understand but can also be supported with rewording or explanation.

Gestures

The example used of came and went is a common mix up in word choice many students make. Drilling lots of examples with the gesture helps make the difference and meaning very clear by giving a visual memory key.

Pronunciation

So many words have similar sounds in English it's hard to pick just a few. For many students whose backgrounds involve pronunciation patterns in their native languages different than our own the difference in sounds could be unclear. Minimal pairs is a great exercise to help clarify the difference.

Testing

Take care eliciting examples from students. For nouns it's easy to simply make a meaningless sentence that doesn't actually show clear understanding.

I saw a lot of sculptures.

I like sculpture.

I want to buy a sculpture.

None of these sentences shows true understanding. You could swap out the word sculpture for almost any other noun and it would mean the same thing.

Look for more detailed examples.

There is a sculpture of Abraham Lincoln on the teachers desk.

I saw some sculpture last weekend. I saw three metal statues at an art gallery.

This can be tough for many students so help them along. Listen for clues to what they are *trying* to say and help them say it.

How to use the worksheet.

1. Look for vocabulary coming up in your classes that could be tricky for students. Or compile a list of terms that you have noticed students struggling with.

2. Practice making each of the different types of example drills listed.

3. Share your ideas in a group discussion with other teachers.

4. Ask yourselves which ones work best for which terms and use them accordingly with your students.

Credit

All images created by hand, by Mike Kloran. Check out more of my illustration and educational design at:

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