



SPEAKING & WRITING TOOLS FOR ELS

PREVENT "I DON'T KNOW"

Transitioning from social language to academic fluency is a major hurdle for English Learners (ELs). Before asking students to speak, provide tools to help them find the appropriate words, lower the affective filter and prevents "I don't know what to say" moments.

Word Banks

Words can be grouped by function, topic, & add visuals

Use when a student knows what they want to say but is struggling with the exact content language, during independent work, or introducing new content

Nouns	Verbs
Expression	Express
Permission	Permit
Protection	Protect
Opposition	Oppose
Announcement	Announce
Recommendation	Recommend
Understanding	Understand

*When student lacks labels or needs to upgrade vocabulary

Sentence Frames

These provide the grammatical structure for students who have the vocabulary but don't know how to put it into complex sentences.

Use for a summary, analysis, or for newcomers who need a simple structure to participate

I think *coy* means _____ because the parrot is _____ in its cage.

The speaker of the poem is a _____ worker. I think this because of the _____ and the line, "Out of the swamp the cane appears/ to haunt us, and we cut it _____"

*When student lacks syntax

Dialogue Stems

These help facilitate social-cognitive bridges, how to disagree politely, or ask for help.

Use during collaborative groups or Socratic seminars. The goal is to facilitate a fluid, student-led discussion.

Expressing an Opinion

- I think that...
- In my experience...
- The evidence seems to show...

Acknowledging Ideas

- I agree with _____ because...
- My idea builds upon _____'s idea that...

*When student lacks the social entry point