Show how much vocab you know – Writing Task 2

Teacher’s notes

Aim: Demonstrate a wider range of lexis and avoid over-reliance on input text by using synonyms / paraphrasing

(Under the Assessment Criteria for Writing Task 2 candidates are assessed on range of lexis (vocab). To get a higher band for lexical resource, they need to demonstrate flexibility, awareness of style and collocation and ability to use less common lexical items)

Instructions (also see Answer Sheet below)

1. As a quick warmer, ask Ss to come up with as many different ways of saying very good as possible (e.g. excellent, superb, fantastic, wonderful, brilliant, fabulous, etc).

2. Tell Ss that they’re going to look at how to show a range of vocabulary / avoid repeating words when answering Writing Task 2 questions. Hand out the worksheet and ask Ss to underline the key words in the task (exercise A). Feed back.

3. Ask Ss to read a candidate’s introduction to the task and briefly elicit opinions (Is it a good introduction? Does the candidate show a range of vocab?). Put Ss in pairs to match words / phrases from the introduction to the vocab from the task (exercise B).

4. Put Ss into small groups to read another Task 2 essay title and think of synonyms for the underlined words (exercise C). Feed back onto the board and build up a list of alternatives for each word (be prepared to re-phrase Ss suggestions where appropriate).

5. Ss write an introduction to the essay, aiming to avoid repetition of vocab from the rubric by using some of the vocab from stage 4. Ask for volunteers to read out their introductions and give / elicit brief feedback.

Follow up
A logical follow up would be for Ss to work on completing the essay which they’ve written the introduction for. You would need to give support e.g. brainstorming ideas, planning, etc, if you haven’t already addressed this in previous lessons.

Alternative suggestions
You could use stages 1 – 3 to introduce an essay from your coursebook – substitute the coursebook essay rubric at stages 4 and 5.

This type of activity can be repeated each time you introduce a new essay title as it is a useful way of extending Ss’ vocab. It could also be used for Academic Writing Task 1 to help them avoid overusing vocab from the input text, such as headings from graphs (e.g. No. of people who travelled overseas > visited different countries, went abroad, etc).
ANSWER KEY - Worksheet – Show how much vocab you know

Exercise A

Some people believe that prison is not an effective method of reducing crime.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

How could we stop criminals from reoffending?

Exercise B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>jail / a life behind bars (vs life on the outside)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective method</td>
<td>the best way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing crime</td>
<td>cutting crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>deter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminals</td>
<td>people who break the law, offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reoffending</td>
<td>committing another crime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise C

**Suggested vocab:**
Parents – mothers and fathers, adults
Children – youngsters, youths, 10 – 14 year olds / teenagers (etc), offspring
Clubs / extra classes – extra-curricular activities, societies, extra tuition
Take part in – attend, go to, be involved in
Benefit – gain, be useful / helpful
Outside school hours – in their free / leisure time, at weekends, in the evening
Family – close relatives, siblings, brothers and sisters
Spend (their) time – involve (themselves) in
Worksheet – Show how much vocab you know

A Look at the Writing Task 2 question below and underline the key words.

Some people believe that prison is not an effective method of reducing crime.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?
How could we stop criminals from reoffending?

Read a candidate’s introduction to an essay answering the question above.

I completely agree that putting people who break the law in jail may not be the best way of cutting crime. For some offenders, a life behind bars is, to some extent, easier than life on the outside so the idea of prison may not deter them from committing another crime.

B Match words / phrases in the candidate’s introduction to key words in the task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Example: jail / ______________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective method</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing crime</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminals</td>
<td>_______________________________ / ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reoffending</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C Think of synonyms / ways to paraphrase the key words which are underlined in the Writing Task 2 question below.

Many parents believe that children benefit from taking part in clubs or extra classes outside normal school hours. Others feel that children should spend their time with their family when they are not in school.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Example:

Parents – mothers and fathers, adults

D Write an introduction to the essay using some of the synonyms / paraphrases