

Classifying Academic English functional language

Instructions for teachers

Card matching stage

Photocopy and cut up one copy per group of 2-4 students. Students try to first classify them into categories and then put them into order. You can give hints if they get stuck:

1. There are six categories.
2. The greatest number of cards in one category is 14 and the smallest number of cards in one category is 9.
3. The actual number of cards in each category is 14, 14, 13, 12, 12 and 9.
4. One example of each: almost no + 13 more, very different + 13 more, explode + 12 more, almost never + 11 more, will definitely + 11 more, a great benefit + 8 more
5. There are no more than two which mean the same thing.
6. The doubles of each category are: four (almost no + 13 more), seven (very different + 13 more), six (explode + 12 more), three (almost never + 11 more), four (will definitely + 11 more), three (a great benefit + 8 more)

Testing each other stage

After checking their answers with the suggested answers above and/ or as a class, students can further test each other in groups, for example:

- Seeing if their partner can remember a phrase which has the same meaning
- Seeing if their partner can remember a phrase which comes between two other phrases
- Seeing if their partner can remember a phrase which comes next in a sequence
- Seeing if their partner can remember the one phrase of that kind which they don't say
- Seeing if their partner can remember collocations, e.g. "Continue beep the same level" or "Decline something"

Communicative practice

They can then take turns trying to make statements which their partner accepts are true with phrases on the cards. If their statement is accepted, they can take the card and score one point. The same card can't be used more than once.

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers (with the same meaning on the same line)

absolutely identical	exactly the same
practically the same	nearly identical
very similar	only slightly different
quite similar	fairly similar
very different	a great difference
an absolutely huge difference	an immense difference
completely different	totally different

by far the greatest positive point	an overwhelming advantage
the main argument in support	
a very substantial plus	
a great benefit	a major selling point
a substantial argument for	a considerable benefit
a significant positive aspect	

will definitely	
will almost certainly	
is likely to	will probably
may	might
could perhaps	could potentially
is unlikely to	probably won't
almost certainly won't	
definitely won't	

almost always	
usually	most of the time
very often	
often	
sometimes	
occasionally	
rarely	seldom

hardly ever	very rarely
almost never	

almost all	
the vast majority	
most	
very many...	
many...	a large number of...
quite a lot of...	a fairly large number of...
some	
a few	
very few	a small minority of...
almost no	a tiny minority of...

explode	take off
climb	expand
creep up	
continue at the same level	remain constant
dip	fall slightly
decrease rapidly	fall sharply
decline dramatically	plummet