

## PAIR DEFINITIONS

### Purpose

To recall, then write, a definition of a word and to find out how well the definition describes the intended word to another learner.

The learners work in pairs. One learner writes a definition for a given word, then the other learner, who has not seen the original word, writes a word that fits the definition.

### The teaching points

- Providing written definitions specific to the subject content.
- Providing a word that fits a given definition.
- Recalling words and their definitions.

### Resources

Two charts for each pair of learners. Each chart consists of three columns:

- the first is headed “Words” and has a list of key words from the text
- the second is headed “Definitions” and is left blank
- the third is headed “Words” and is left blank.

Each chart should have a different list of key words in the first column.

WORDS	DEFINITIONS	WORDS
[key word]		
[key word]		
[key word]		

### The guided teaching and learning sequence

Prepare the charts as described, using key words from a relevant text.

Explain the task and ask the learners to work in pairs.

1. Give one learner a copy of the first chart, and the other learner a copy of the second chart. The learners are not to look at each other’s charts.
2. Have the learners read their charts and then write a definition for each word listed in the second column.

3. The learners then fold the paper along the vertical line between the first and second columns to ensure their partner can see the definitions but not the original words.
4. The learners now swap papers with their partners and read their partners' definitions. They use the third column to write the words they think their partner has defined.
5. As each pair completes their charts, they open them and compare the results.
6. Discuss the activity with the learners and clarify any issues or difficulties they had.

### Follow-up activity

Telephone whispers is a similar activity. Increase the number of learners in the group to four and extend this activity as follows:

- Prepare four different charts, each with five columns. In the first column of each chart, write a different list of key words.
- Give each member of each group a copy of one of the four charts. After writing their definitions in the second column, each person folds the page between the first and second columns and passes the page on to the next person.
- That person fills in the third (Words) column, folds the page again to hide the first two columns, and passes the page on to the next person (and so on until all five columns have been completed).
- When the four pages are opened up, the learners can check whether the words and definitions are similar and discuss any anomalies.

Words	Definitions	Words	Definitions	Words
(Key word)				
(Key word)				
(Key word)				

Source references:

- The National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults  
<http://www.literacyandnumeracyforadults.com/resources/354441>
- Effective Literacy Strategies in Yr9-13; A guide for Teachers. 2004. Pg.46