**What are key words?**

**How this activity supports learning**

Vocabulary acquisition is a key aspect of language learning, but not all words are equally important to know. By focusing on the key words of the Oxford 3000 and Oxford 5000, learners will ensure they acquire the most useful and relevant vocabulary.

This activity is designed to:
- introduce the concept of key words to students
- demonstrate to learners that they already know some key words
- revise topic vocabulary.

**Classroom Instructions**

**You will need:**
- access to the Oxford 3000 word list either online or as a printout (available at www.oxford3000.com).
- one copy of the activity sheet per group.

1. Choose a topic that students have previously studied in class, e.g. holidays and travel.
2. Students work in small groups to create a mind map including 12 words related to the topic. They should brainstorm ideas without checking back through their notes or books.
3. Monitor and point out any errors such as misspellings.
4. Once they have completed their mind maps, students check the words they have selected against the Oxford 3000 list and add key symbols to the key words.
5. Explain that key words are important to learn because they are used very frequently and will be especially useful for both understanding and using English.
6. Collect all the key words and write them on the board. Ask students to explain how the key words relate to the topic, e.g. *abroad* is related to holidays because it is about being in or going to a foreign country.

**Variations**

You could make topics and instructions more specific depending on students’ levels or ability. For example:

- Give each group a different sub-topic, e.g. booking a holiday, holiday accommodation, holiday activities, etc.
- As well as checking individual words against the Oxford 3000 and Oxford 5000 lists (for B2+), encourage students to include phrases and phrasal verbs (e.g. *check in, on board*) and check them against the Oxford Phrase List.

**Note:** You can find key phrases and phrasal verbs on the Oxford Phrase List at www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/wordlists/
What are key words?

Holidays and travel

- airport
- hotel
- passport
- tourist
- plane
- souvenir
- luggage
- book (v)
- airline
- sightseeing
- abroad
- flight
What are key words?