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# **A Framework for Prep-free Lessons 3**

**Integrated Lessons Based on Texts**

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*Methods and activities for more effective teaching with less preparation*

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## **Introduction**

*A Framework for Prep-free Lessons 3* is one of a series of experiments with lesson frameworks that allow teachers to deliver effective lessons with little or no planning or preparation. *A Framework for Prep-free Lessons 1* uses emergent language from students' conversations as the linguistic focus of the lessons. *A Framework for Prep-free Lessons 2* focused on emergent language from the teacher, while this, the third version, uses language from a text. Any text can be used for these lessons as long as it is appropriate for the level of the students and there are at least 10-15 words in the text which the students would not know. Texts should be relatively short and can be drawn from sources like coursebooks, newspapers, magazines and the internet.

## **Lesson Aims**

The main aim of the lesson is that the students learn new vocabulary, and that they learn it in context. However, the lesson framework is designed to include all four skills. The text initially is dealt with as any reading text would be, with the students doing a quick read to get the gist of the writing. Following the gist read, the students read it more carefully for comprehension, and then they answer a few reading comprehension questions. In dealing with the vocabulary, students will have to find the meanings in dictionaries and, for words with more than one meaning, they will have to consider the context to determine which one applies. Students will later get extensive practice in determining meaning from context when they have to locate words in the text which match the dictionary-style definitions. After the students have dealt with the vocabulary, they will get listening practice from the teacher's oral summary of the text. By this point they should have a good understanding of the text, so instead of listening for comprehension, their task will be to take notice of structures involving the new vocabulary they've learned. The structures will typically be collocations and expressions. Students will then write questions using the structures, which will give them some practice with writing. Finally, in asking the questions of other students, they will get speaking practice, both for fluency and accuracy.

## **Teacher's Preparation**

The first thing you'll need to do is to select a text. This will depend on the level of your students. For very low level students you may be restricted to coursebook material or any other graded material you can find in your library or on the internet. Some short and simple news stories from commuter newspapers such as *Metro*, may work also. The text should be basically comprehensible for the students but there should be some vocabulary, say 10 – 20 words, that they won't know.

students who still haven't found all the words, ask those who have to help the others match words to their remaining definitions. The students can simply compare notes and students who are missing words and definitions can copy them into their notebooks. When this stage is finally finished, all students should have all the words with definitions written in their notebooks.

**6a. Preparation for listening stage**

During the listening stage the teacher will present a brief oral summary of the text containing all the words that the students have targeted. The students will be asked to listen for the expressions and/or collocations containing those words. This means you will need to plant the targeted words in those collocations or expressions. Since you will be relatively free during the previous two stages (Choosing Vocabulary and Clarification 1), you should be able to do this right in class. Sometimes the targeted words will already be in collocations or expressions in the text. In this case, you only need to highlight them. In other cases you can either think of a word or expression or quickly look one up in a collocation dictionary. Remember that you are going to be including these expressions and collocations in a summary of the text so you will need to choose ones that fit the context. If you look at the text below, an excerpt from a short biography of Einstein, you can see that words likely to be unfamiliar to upper-intermediate or advanced students are already in chunks like, “a **lean** two years”, “**patent** office” and “obtained a **post**”. The word “patent” provides a good example of how you can easily create an expression. When summarizing the text, you could simply say, “He worked in an office where people came to apply for a patent”, thus forming the useful expression, “to apply for a patent”. Whatever you come up with you should make note of your expressions or collocations on your copy of the text. I find it easier if I use an enlarged photocopy of the text.

After a lean two years he obtained a post at the Swiss patent office in Bern. The patent-office work required Einstein's careful attention, but while employed (1902-09) there, he completed an astonishing range of publications in theoretical physics. For the most part these texts were written in his spare time and without the benefit of close contact with either the scientific literature or theoretician colleagues. Einstein submitted one of his scientific papers to the University of Zurich to obtain a Ph.D. degree in 1905. In 1908 he sent a second paper to the University of Bern and became a lecturer, there. The next year Einstein received a regular appointment as associate professor of physics at the University of Zurich.

**6b. Listening for collocations and expressions**

When all the students have the words and definitions in their notebooks, you are ready to begin the listening stage, where you will provide an oral summary of the text containing the expressions and collocations around the targeted words. The summary is adlibbed but you will use the highlighted words and collocations/expressions as a guide. Before starting, you will need to explain to the students that they will have to listen for the words they targeted but they will need to write down the collocations and expressions that the targeted words are part of. Just to make sure they know what to do, you could start your summary of the text and stop after the first targeted word and check that the students were able to write down.