

Lexical Generative Power Activities

Lesson Framework

Note that all language must come from texts, either written texts or spoken. For the latter, give students the tapescripts for them to use to extract useful language.

1. Texts are dealt with for comprehension first.

Students should read or listen to the text in the usual manner, e.g., to answer comprehension questions

2. Unknown vocab in text is learned.

After students have read for comprehension, deal with any important vocabulary that they were unlikely to have known when reading/listening.

3. Students generate topics to be written/spoken about.

Use one of the activities below to have students choose some topics. The idea here is that the universality of the chunks will be tested and established based on how easily they can be used for different topics.

4. Students find chunks based on generative power.

Students work in pairs with a text to pick out useful chunks of language that they think are fairly universal. The chunks can be collocations, colligations, verb/noun/prepositional phrases, or just specify that each chunk must have at least content word in it. This will ensure that they don't pick out chunks like "or at a" when "or at a time..." is there. You should decide on the number of chunks you want each pair to find (e.g., 5) and whether there is a word limit for a chunk, like four words.

5. Students try to use extracted chunks on a selected topic, either in writing or speaking.

In pairs, students are assigned a topic (see activities below) and a group of chunks (see activities below) and they must use them in speaking or writing (see activities below). After each pair has done that, make corrections, especially with the assigned chunks.

6. Select a few to review and test in future.

From all the chunks that have been featured in the class, make a list of the ones that you believe are most useful and come back to those in future classes, ideally by reviewing and testing.

Activities to Generate Topics

Group Brainstorm

Students brainstorm a list of topics in groups with one member writing them down. Make it a competition to think of the most topics. You can specify that they be three words or less, two words or one word. This will eliminate topics being too specific, like "words that can have more than one meaning" instead of "vocabulary". Then stop students and find out who got the longest list. Elicit the topics and write them on the board. After, you can add other topics from other groups, if you'd like.

Categories on walls

Post some sheets of paper on the wall with some general categories written at the top, like *Culture*, *School Subjects*, *Leisure Activities*, *Global Issues*, *The Natural World*, *Work-related*, etc. Then divide students into pairs or small groups. Give each group a different coloured marker. They start at any paper and write a sub-topic down on that paper (e.g. "history" under "school subjects") and then they move to the next paper in a clockwise direction. Insist that they must write on every paper and they cannot repeat what is already on the paper. Make it competitive by seeing who can finish first or by who can add the most and, in this case, you stipulate that they should continue going around to each paper after the first rotation.



Rotating Paper

Divide students into small groups and give each group a half-sheet of flipchart paper and a marker. One student in each group writes down the number “1” and then a topic beside it (you can limit the number of words, if you want) and then passes the paper and marker to the next student. This continues with the paper rotating to each group member. Of course, they can help each other think of topics but each student must take their turn writing the number and a topic. Make it a competition to write down the most topics.

Board Brainstorm

Before starting, divide the board into two halves. Then divide the students into two teams and have each team line up in front of one half of the board. Give a marker to the student at the front of the line. When you tell them to start, each student is to go to the board and write a topic down (limit words in you’d like) and then pass the marker to the next teammate and go to the back of the line. This is a competition to write the most topics but explain that you will erase any topic that was already written by the other team. This will force them to watch what the other team is contributing.

Activities to Find Chunks

Papers on Walls

Split the text into sections and assign each section to a sheet of flipchart paper posted on the wall. Divide students into pairs or small groups and give each of them a different coloured marker. They work together and whenever they find a chunk that they think is reasonably universal, one member goes to the flipchart paper representing that section of the text and writes the chunk there. They return to their group and give the marker to another member. Do not allow repeats of chunks. This continues until a good collection of chunks is written on the papers. Make any necessary corrections and eliminate chunks that are incorrect or not useful. This activity could be made competitive to see which group can contribute the most chunks. Have them count the ones in their colour to determine the winner.

Paper Race

Divide students into pairs or small groups. Give each of them a different coloured marker and some strips of paper large enough for them to write chunks on that will be visible to all students when posted on the wall/board. Students search text for useful chunks and when they find one, they write in on the paper and bring it to you. If it’s a good one, stick it on the wall or board (some sticky tack will help with this). This continues until a good collection of chunks is represented on the wall/board. Do not allow repeats. Tell students to keep looking as you post new chunks so they know not to repeat any. This activity could be made competitive to see which group can contribute the most chunks. Have them count the ones in their colour to determine the winner.

Top 10/15/20

Do the same as above but as the papers come in, arrange them on the board/wall in order of most to least useful. You’ll need to be constantly rearranging them as they students write them and present them to you. Once you have a list of the top 10, 15 or 20 (your choice), you can stop the activity. Remove any excess chunks and the ones you have will be the ones used for the productive stage. This activity could be made competitive to see which group can contribute the most chunks in the top 10/15/20. Have them count the ones in their colour to determine the winner.



First Five

Divide students into pairs or groups. Give each group a regular sheet of paper and a marker. Challenge them to find five useful chunks in the text faster than anyone else. As soon as one group finds five and writes them on their paper, they give it to you to post on the wall/board. Now, all other students cannot repeat any of those chunks in their lists of five. If they have, they need to cross out repeats and look for others to replace them. Keep doing this until all groups have finished. Note that you may need to adjust the number for each group to find depending on the length of the text and how many useful chunks it actually has. Perhaps, the number for them to find will have to be less, like three or four chunks each.

Activities to Select Chunks

Random Selection

For collections of chunks that are visible, i.e., on the wall or board, each group gets a set (e.g., 5 each). For lists on walls or the board, number all the chunks (e.g. 1 -25) and then have ready a set of cards marked with those numbers. Each pair of students takes an equal number of cards and they have to use the chunks that correspond to the numbers on the cards. If there are not enough cards to distribute equally, then distribute five each to some students, they write down the numbers of their chunks and return the cards to you so you can give some to the remaining students.

Choose a Set

For chunks already listed in sets, for example, in sets of 5, pairs of students choose a set. The idea is to choose a set that seems fairly universal, one that could be used for many different topics. Each pair should choose a different set. You can number the sets to make selection easier. Alternatively, you can ask each pair to choose a set for another pair to use or you can assign a set to each pair. You can stipulate that students cannot choose the set that they wrote.

Our Favourites

From all the chunks extracted, each pair of students chooses a set of 5, for example, that they think will be really universal. Different pairs can have the same chunks.

Pair Challenge

Each pair of students writes their names on a slip of paper. Then redistribute those papers so each pair has the name of another pair. Alternatively, place the papers face up on your desk and students come up and take the names of any other pair. Then each pair writes down five (or other number) of chunks that they want the other pair to use. In this case, they might choose ones that are difficult to use.

Activities to Select Topics

Secret Choice for Others

Put students in pairs. Have each pair write their names on a piece of paper. Collect the papers and redistribute to new pairs. Each pair writes down the topic they want the pair on their paper to write about. Collect the papers and give them back to the original pairs complete with their topic.

Open Choice for Others

Put students in pairs. Each pair writes their names with a marker at the top of a sheet of paper. Collect all the papers and post on the wall or board. Then have the other pairs go up to a paper and write down the topic on another pair's paper. You can ask that no topic is repeated so students will have to watch what others are writing.



Voting Choices for Others

Put students in pairs. Each pair writes their names with a marker at the top of a sheet of paper. Collect all the papers and post on the wall or board. Then start with one pair and ask for nominations for the topic the class wants them to talk about. If the class only suggests one topic, go with it, but if you get two or more, have the class vote on the topic they want that pair to talk about. Once the topic is decided, write it on the paper the pair wrote their names on. Continue with other pairs. You can stipulate that no topics are repeated.

Student or Teacher Choice

Simply allow each pair to choose their own topic. You can ask them to put their hands up as they decide and write their chosen topics on the board. You can stipulate no repeated topics. Alternatively, you could just assign a topic to each pair.

Activities to Produce Chunks

Rehearsed Dialogues

Put students in pairs and they discuss how they will use their assigned chunks on their topic in a conversation. Then they practice their dialogue before being called on to do it for the whole class. Teacher makes note of errors, especially with the assigned chunks, and corrects after the dialogue has finished.

Unrehearsed Dialogues

Put students in pairs and they discuss how they will use their assigned chunks on their topic but they do not actually practice the dialogue. Then they have a dialogue for the whole class and try to use all their assigned chunks. Teacher makes note of errors, especially with the assigned chunks, and corrects after the dialogue has finished. Note that this may only work well with higher level learners.

Rehearsed Monologues

Put students in pairs and they discuss how they will use their assigned chunks on the topic they have in a monologue. Then one student practices the monologue with the other one listening to help and point out any noticeable errors. The other student then tries it. Teacher calls on just one student from the pair to present the monologue to the class, listening for errors to correct after the monologue as finished, especially with assigned chunks.

Pair Planned Paragraph

Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss how they could write a paragraph on the assigned topic and include all the chunks they were given. Then they write individually, preferably on flipchart paper. After they have both finished, they check each other's work for errors. Teacher then posts their paragraphs on the wall and makes corrections, especially with the assigned chunks.

Pair Paragraph Writing

Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss how they could write a paragraph on the assigned topic and include all the chunks they were given. Then they write together, preferably on flipchart paper. Ask them to switch writers after each sentence. After they have finished, post their paragraphs and make corrections, especially with the assigned chunks.