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Universal Activities

Original and Adapted Recyclable Activities

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Methods and activities for more effective teaching with less preparation

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Introduction

I call these 24 activities universal because I've found that I can use them over and over again for a variety of grammar points and vocabulary. Essentially, they have become my "bag of tricks" and most of my lessons over the latter part of my fifteen years of teaching have included these activities or, in some cases, been made up solely of them. Realizing that having "universal activities" made my lesson planning so much easier, I began sharing these activities with my peers in a series of workshops. Over almost ten years of presenting the workshop "Universal Activities", the collection grew as teachers who attended suggested other activities and further adaptations of the ones I already had.

The activities themselves are either original or were taken from other sources and adapted to increase their universality. A good example is "Don't Say 'Yes' or 'No'", which comes from a well-known Penny Ur book called *Five Minute Activities*. The original activity has a student being fired a barrage of questions which they cannot answer with "yes" or "no". By simply stipulating that the students use a particular grammar structure in the questions, I created a fun form of controlled practice that can be used with numerous grammatical structures.

Another consideration in determining the universality of an activity was its potential to be adapted to all proficiency levels. Most, if not all, of the activities should lend themselves to use at all or most levels. The samples accompanying the activities in this collection are sometimes based on actual student contributions from my classes, which were mostly above pre-intermediate level. However, these samples are included merely to illustrate the wide range of application of the activity and are meant to stimulate teachers to extend the application even further.

When asked for my recipe for successful teaching, I've always summed it up with this statement: "Have fun and always leave the students with the feeling that they've learned something." This approach is reflected in the activities chosen for this collection. They are all very student-centred and have obvious linguistic aims. Because I ended up using these activities so frequently, I often saw ways of increasing their linguistic value or making them more fun for students. This is why I tried to make many of the activities cooperative or competitive, and ideally both. I've found that students are the most motivated when they can collaborate with partners in order to compete against their other classmates.

Activities

Folded Paper



Speaking
Vocabulary



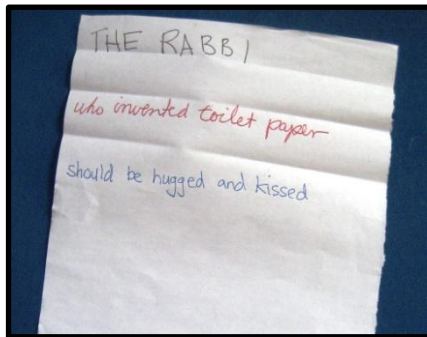
Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker



This activity can be used to practice all sorts of lexical or grammatical structures. In addition, it will often involve specific vocabulary. Students are required to write a structure in stages on a sheet of paper, but each time they write a section of the structure, they have to fold the paper over so what they have written is not visible. After folding the paper, they pass it on to another student, who then continues to add to the structure.

Students enjoy this activity because, when they unfold the papers at the end, it often produces humorous results.

This activity can be used with many grammar points. As indicated above, it could also involve focussing on specific vocabulary depending on what is needed to fill the variable slots in the structure (see example below). Brainstorming some ideas for filling those slots is a good idea and students should be encouraged to use their creativity and provide their own ideas. Drawing attention to the variable slots in the structure not only raises awareness of the form but it gives students an idea of the type of items that can fill the slots and the overall generative value of the structure.

Transactional letters which are somewhat formulaic really lend themselves to this activity. Giving the students the lexical structure of the letter and pointing out where the variable information fits in actually gives them a model for creating a letter of this genre.

After you've done this activity in class, you can ask students to replace the variable, often silly parts, with serious information and what they should end up with is a basic but viable example of a letter of that genre.



In the workshop, *Universal Activities*, this activity was presented using a controversial building to demonstrate the construction of an identifying relative clause. That presentation is drawn on below to outline the procedure for the activity.

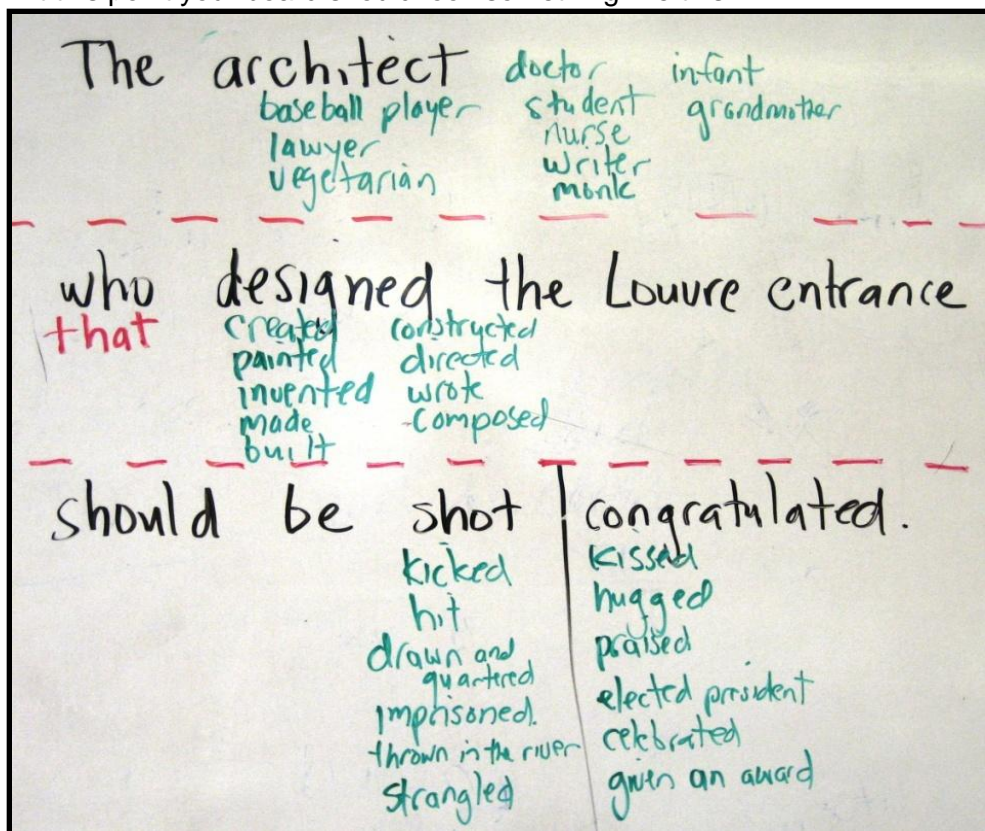
Materials

- half-sheets of paper
- board markers

Procedure

1. Write this line on the board: "The architect"
2. Leave some space below it, draw a dotted line and below it write this line: "who designed the Louvre entrance".
3. Leave some space, draw another dotted line on the board and write the following below it: "should be..."
4. Ask students who dislike the pyramid to finish the line "should be..." (e.g. "shot."). Write it on the board.
5. Ask students who like the pyramid to finish the line (e.g. "congratulated."). Write it on the board.
6. Clarify the structure as a relative clause and make sure the students understand why it is identifying and that "who" can be replaced with "that".
7. Elicit other general names for people besides architect and write them on the board around "architect", e.g. doctor, teacher, student, vegetarian, teenager (you could limit it to just professions).
8. Elicit other verbs for creating things and write them on the board under "designed", e.g. wrote, directed, painted, invented, sculpted, constructed, assembled, etc.
9. Elicit other rewards and write them on the board under "congratulated", e.g. kissed, hugged, praised, etc.
10. Elicit other punishments and write them on the board under "shot", e.g. punished, imprisoned, hit, scolded, etc.

At this point your board should look something like this:



11. Give each student a half-sheet of paper
12. Explain that the dotted lines on the board represent folds in the paper.
13. Tell the students to hold the paper vertically and write "The" + a *general name for a person* (e.g. "doctor") across the very top.
14. Tell students to fold the top of the paper over towards them so the line they wrote is no longer visible.
15. Tell students to pass the paper to the right and not to unfold the top.
16. Tell students to write "who" or "that" + *verb for creating + thing that was created* (e.g. "who invented the flush toilet") and fold it over and pass it to the right again.
17. Tell students to write "should be" + *reward or punishment* (e.g. "should be hugged") and fold it over again and pass it to the right.
18. Tell students they may unfold the paper and read the complete sentence.
19. Get some students to read them aloud and make corrections if needed.

Samples

Used to

Woody Allen (famous person 1)

 and Madonna (famous person 2)

 used to live in New York (place 1)

 They got married and moved to Siberia (place 2)

 They quickly got used to the traffic jams (noun)

 but they couldn't get used to eating pizza for breakfast_(gerund)

Direct and indirect suggestions

The Queen

 suggested to Wayne Gretzky

 "Let's have a party"

 He/she suggested he/she jump off a bridge

Gerunds

Bill Clinton

 accused Bart Simpson of

 stealing potatoes. He/she denied doing that

 and admitted losing his/her underwear

 but was arrested for vomiting.

1st Conditionals

Mother Teresa warned

 Tony Blair,

 "If you don't stop driving my car,

 I will eat your French toast."

3rd Conditionals

Monica Lewinsky

killed (strangled, poisoned, etc.) *Bill Gates*

If he/she hadn't died (been killed),

he/she would be *president* now

Passives

Andre Agassi

was bitten (licked, kissed, kicked, insulted, surprised, etc.)

by a dog/a dentist (animal or general name for a person)

that had been *kissed* (insulted, kicked, etc.)

by *Celine Dion*

Transactional letters

Letter of complaint

I am writing to complain about the *hamster*

that/which I bought in your *bakery*

11 years ago.

The problem is that it is *the wrong size*

and whenever I use it, it *makes a strange noise*

I am very (extremely, etc.) **unhappy** (unsatisfied, angry, furious, etc.) **and**

I would appreciate it if you *jumped out the window.*

Yours faithfully,
Joseph Stalin

Application letter

I would like to apply for the position of *dogcatcher*

which/that was advertised in *Playboy*

on *May 14, 1952.*

I am *4 years old and*

I have a degree in *drinking vodka* **from**

McDonald's University.

I have worked as a *drug dealer*

and I have been *cleaning toilets* **for** *10 years.*

I hope you will consider my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Donald Duck

**Serious application
letter**

*I would like to apply for the position of Administrative Assistant
which was advertised in The Guardian
on May 14, 2007.*

*I am 24 years old and
I have a degree in Business Administration from
Hamburg University.*

*I have worked as a clerical worker for BASF
and I have been working in offices for over 4 years.*

*I hope you will consider my application. I look forward to hearing from you.
Yours sincerely,
Max Friedrich*

Guess Who



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This guessing game is great for personalizing grammar or vocabulary. Students enjoy it as they get to guess which classmate wrote which set of statements about themselves. The students are required to use the target language in written answers to a set of questions about themselves. Their answers are then collected and redistributed to the students. The students then take turns reading aloud the statements on the paper they have and the rest of the class tries to guess whose paper it is. A good thing about this activity is that the teacher can assess the students' ability to use the target language in the written stage, if you want to monitor, or in the spoken stage afterwards, or both.

This activity could be made more communicative by giving the students a paper to record their partner's answers, which they would get by interviewing them. The only change is that during the guessing phase, you have to ask students who know whose paper is being read to not reveal it so others can still guess.

<p style="text-align: center;">Guess Who – My Plans</p> <p>tonight: <i>meeting a friend</i></p> <p>tomorrow: <i>going to sleep in</i></p> <p>next weekend: <i>going to</i></p> <p>next week:</p> <p>next summer:</p> <p>when I am older:</p>

Materials

- half-sheets of paper

Procedure

1. Decide on the grammar or vocabulary you want students to practice.
2. Give each student a half-sheet of paper. You can copy the guidelines for the questions on the papers beforehand or you can write the guidelines on the board or on an overhead transparency. Above is a sample for practicing future forms.
3. Each student fills out their answers. You can ask them at this stage to use the prescribed grammar or you could accept point form and have the grammar applied in the reporting stage.
4. Gather up the papers and redistribute them. Tell students not to worry if they get their own as nobody will know.
5. Each student reports what is on their paper. Example below:
 - “This person is meeting a friend tonight.”
 - “This person is going to sleep in tomorrow.”
 - “This person is going to go to a pub next weekend.”
 - “This person is going to take next week off.”
 - “This person thinks they will look for a job next summer.”
 - “This person won't get married until they are at least 30.”
6. As each student reports, make a note of errors to correct. Correct them after the student finishes.
7. When each student finishes reporting, the rest of the class tries to guess who it is.
8. When there are two students left, have them both report before the class guesses. This avoids making the answer obvious when only one student is left.

<p>Samples Present perfect</p>	<p>I have never.... I have.... I haven't...</p>
<p>Present simple</p>	<p>I live at ... I work at... I eat...</p>
<p>Present continuous</p>	<p>At this time I am living ... At the present I am working... Right now I am thinking...</p>
<p>Past continuous</p>	<p>At 8:00 last night I was... At this time last week I was... At this time last year I was...</p>
<p>Gerunds</p>	<p>I avoid... I can't imagine... I enjoy...</p>
<p>2nd conditionals</p>	<p>If I were rich, I would... If I could change something about myself, I would... If I were president, I would...</p>
<p>Comparatives</p>	<p>I think ___ is more _____ than _____ I think ___ is _____er than _____ I think ___ is as _____ as _____</p>
<p>Frequency adverbs</p>	<p>I always... I never... I often...</p>
<p>Phrasal verbs</p>	<p>I look forward to... I often put off... I am saving up for...</p>
<p>Personality adjectives</p>	<p>I think _____ is intelligent. I think _____ is handsome. I think _____ is neurotic.</p>
<p>Adverbs of manner</p>	<p>I walk _____ly. I act _____ly. I speak _____ly.</p>
<p>Professions</p>	<p>I would like to be a _____ I used to be a _____ My mother is a _____</p>

Changing Identities



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This activity is similar to *Guess Who* in that it encourages students to personalize the language. However, the twist in this one is that the students pretend they are someone else when writing the statements about “themselves”. Students enjoy this activity because they get to speculate about someone else in the class when writing the statements. Obviously this activity works best for students who know each other fairly well. Like *Guess Who* it can be used for all sorts of grammar and also for vocabulary or lexical structures.

After students have pretended to be someone else and have written their statements, they read them aloud. However, you can increase the level of motivation and the communicative value of this activity by asking the class to guess who it was written about after each one is read and then have the person who it was written about say how many of the statements are true. Then you could get other students to guess which ones are the true statements.

Materials

- half-sheets of paper

Procedure

1. Indicate to students what structures or vocabulary they are to use.
2. Hand out a half-sheet of paper to every student and have them write their name across the top and fold it over so it can't be seen.
3. Collect the papers and redistribute them making sure no student gets his/her own.
4. Tell students to use the target language and to write a certain number of statements about the person whose name is on the paper (you decide how many). They should write them in the first person (i.e. “I am...”).
5. Then have the students say whose identity they have assumed and they read out the statements about “themselves”. You could also make it into a guessing game by telling the student to withhold the name and have the rest of the class guess first.
6. Give the real person a chance for rebuttal. They could make it into a guessing game with something like “only two of those are true”.

Sample

Frequency adverbs

YUKI

I always stay out late on Saturdays.

I rarely do my homework.

I often arrive late on Mondays.

Find Someone Who



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This is a standard warmer but it can actually be used to practice all kinds of grammar and vocabulary. Simply plant the grammar or vocabulary in the “find someone who” questions and students will get practice with the target language, both in asking and answering the questions. Once students are familiar with the procedure, why not get them to create their own *Find Someone Who*? They can work in pairs to write the requirements and so that they will each have a copy, they can produce two identical versions or write two that are different.

This is a great activity to use for controlled practice because the target language can be used in three different ways. Getting students to compose their own questions gives them written practice with the target. Then, if you stipulate that they have to use the target that they hear in the question in their answer, they will get listening and speaking practice. Repeating language they hear is good practice with a learning strategy they can use in the real world.

Materials

- small pieces of paper

Procedure

1. Prepare slips of paper for each student with sentences starting with “find someone who...”.

Sample with present perfect

Find someone who...

has been to New York. *Tariq*

has eaten snails.

has been on a ship.

has seen a hockey game. *Jana*

has ridden a horse

2. Distribute the papers to the students and tell them they will have to ask other students in the class and that will require converting each “find someone who” to a question. Thus “Find someone who has been to New York” becomes “Have you been to New York?”
3. Tell students they will need to find a different student for every FSW question. You can make it competitive by telling them the winner will be the first person to complete the activity. Tell them they can sit down when they are finished.
4. Students mingle and once they find someone who has fulfilled one of the FSW requirements, they write their name on the paper.
5. End the activity. If you made it competitive, end it when the first student has finished.
6. Get some feedback from students on whom they found and for what.

Samples

Gerunds

Find someone who...

- likes going dancing.
- hates waking up early.
- loves eating at McDonalds.

Frequency adverbs

Find someone who...

- always goes to bed late.
- usually does their homework.
- sometimes drinks wine.

Past continuous

Find someone who...

- was sleeping at 11:00 last night.
- was watching TV at 9:00 last night.
- was eating dinner at 7:00 last night.

2nd conditional

Find someone who...

- would not quit working if they won the lottery.
- would legalize marijuana if they were prime minister.
- would not give you money if they were rich.

Relative clauses

Find someone who...

- knows the name of the person who lives next door.
- has a sister who is older.
- comes from a city that is very big.

Comparatives

Find someone who...

- is taller than their best friend.
- is less traditional than their sibling.
- is better at cooking than their father.

Don't Say "Yes" or "No"



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



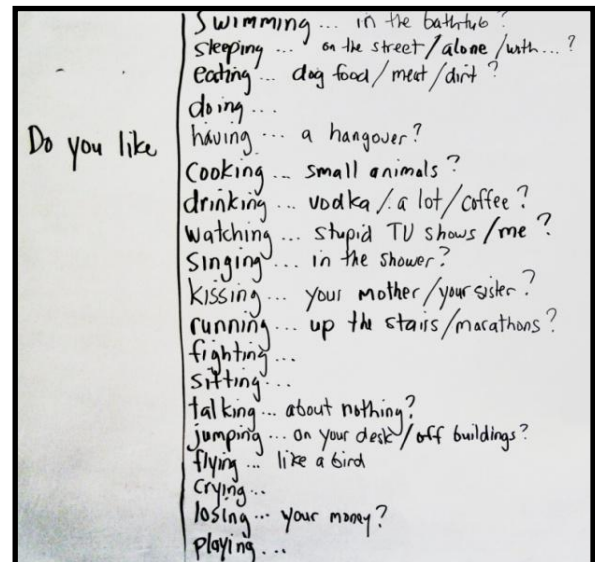
Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker



This activity from Penny Ur's *Five Minute Activities* has been adapted by requiring students to use a particular structure in questions aimed at another student. Each student, in turn, is fired a barrage of questions from other students and they must answer without saying "yes" or "no" for a period of time – usually 1-2 min.

For the students asking the questions, it's actually just a substitution drill with the structure they have been required to use (i.e. "Have you...?" for present perfect practice).

However, it's a really fun and motivating substitution drill. It gets the students involved personally as many of the questions will be asked because the students know the person on the "hot seat", and they will ask them specific questions hoping to trick them into answering with "yes" or "no".



Materials

- board markers

Procedure

1. Put the structure up on the board leaving space to fill in the variable slot. The example on the right shows how you might begin for practicing gerunds.
2. Elicit some other examples to fill the variable slot in the structure and get them on the board, Try to get the students to be creative, it will be more fun (see the board photo).
3. Explain to students that each one of them will take a turn on the "hot seat". This means the other students will be firing a barrage of questions at them using the prescribed structure. The student on the hot seat will have to answer them without using "yes" or "no".
4. Tell them also that they cannot repeat the same answer twice in a row. This is to prevent students from saying something like "maybe" repeatedly.
5. Establish how long each turn on the hot seat will be. One to two minutes is usual.
6. You can take the first turn on the hot seat. Tell students to listen to some of the ways you answer. Here are some ideas:

- “Not often”
- “Only on Saturdays”
- “I’d rather not say”
- “Certainly”
- “Of course”
- “Whenever I can”
- “I try to avoid it”

7. Start the first student in the hot seat. If he/she says “yes” or “no” before the time limit is up, their turn ends. For large classes, you can get two or more groups to do this activity simultaneously.

Samples

Gerunds

Do you ever avoid	meeting... a friend?
Can you imagine	sleeping... in your bed?
Do you appreciate	being... on a beach?
Have you got used to	doing...
Would you risk	having... friends?
Have you given up	being ... in this class?
	eating...
	answering ... these questions?
	jumping ... out the window?
	kissing...
	smoking...
	eating... food?

Frequency adverbs

Do you	often... get drunk?
	usually ...say yes?
	sometimes ...

Present perfect

Have you ever	played... baseball?
	written... a love letter?
	gone to ...

Future plans

Are you going to	go... to heaven?
	do... your homework?
	visit...

Ability

Can you	fly... like a bird?
Are you able to	drink... 100 beers?
	swim...

1st conditional

If you ...	will you...?
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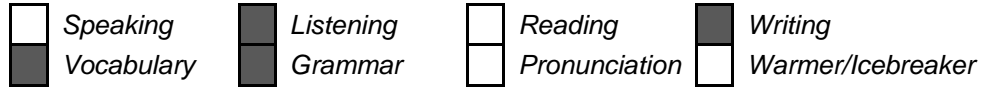
2nd conditional

If you were me	would you answer this question?
	would you give me \$100?
	would you ...?

Question tags

You are...	...you?
You were...	
You have...	
You can...	
You worked...	

Dictogloss



Dictogloss, a form of dictation, has been around for a while but many teachers don't realize that it can be adapted to practice virtually any grammar and also lexical structures. The principle behind the activity is that the teacher dictates a text faster than the students can write it down so they just get the essence of the text. They then try to reconstruct it from their notes and the challenge is to recreate it so that it is grammatically correct. It can be used at the beginning of a lesson to present a grammar point for the first time. If the grammar is new to the students, they are likely to make errors when trying to reconstruct the text. The teacher can then focus on the errors to introduce the target grammar. It can also be used later in the lesson as controlled practice. Once you have taught a grammar point, you can plant several examples of it in a text (see example below) to get students to work on producing the correct form when reconstructing the text. Also, dictogloss can be used to review or test a grammar point.

Dictogloss is also a terrific listening activity because it encourages students to focus on meaning by listening for the content words in the text. This is valuable practice because it makes the connection between reception and production by getting students to focus on information necessary to reproduce the meaning. This is a real-world skill and one place where it's used all the time is in the retelling of jokes or anecdotes, which is why I like to use jokes or anecdotes to practice it. The procedure is outlined below using a joke that was rewritten to include a number of passive structures. Note the key word listening stage, which I like to use because it emphasizes the importance of listening for key words.

Materials

- prepared script

Procedure

1. Prepare a short text with the target structure planted in it.

Two teachers were overheard talking about violence in the schools. One said that her school was so violent that some teachers had been attacked by students. The other said that her school was very traditional and students were taught respect and discipline. They were required to raise their hands before attacking a teacher.

2. Explain to students that you are going to read the text and they are to only listen for key words and write them down.
3. Read the text at normal speed.
4. Elicit the key words from the students and write them on the board. As an added task, you could get the students to work together to put them in the correct order.
5. Explain to students that you are going to read it again, but faster than they can write it and they need to write down as much of the

essential information as they can.

6. Read the text deliberately but faster than they can write down every word. Your speed will depend on the level you are teaching.
7. Put students into pairs, or preferably threes, and tell them to compare notes and try to reassemble the text.
8. Once they have completed the reconstruction, ask a group to read out their text. Ask other groups to listen for things they may have missed.
9. Get feedback from other groups on what they may have missed and ask all students to correct their texts accordingly.
10. If you haven't been able to elicit a completely correct version of the text, read it again slowly so the students can make corrections.
11. Draw students' attention to the grammatical structures and elicit and/or explain why that particular form is used.

Shouting Dictation



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This activity is similar to *Dictogloss* in that it requires students to reconstruct a dictated text which they cannot take down clearly and completely because of a distraction, except in this case, the distraction is not caused by speed but by noise. Again, this activity provides useful listening practice. However, in addition to the skill of listening for keywords, this activity gives students unique practice with another listening skill which is rarely dealt with in the classroom, yet very important outside of it. It gives students practice dealing with auditory distractions. As with *Dictogloss*, shouting dictation can be used to present, practice, test or review any grammatical or lexical structures.



Another potential benefit to this activity is that it gets students to speak up in a safe environment, which can be useful encouragement for those students who normally lack the confidence to speak clearly and at a suitable volume.

Materials

- a short text divided in half so there is one copy for each member of each pair
- tape recorder, CD player or radio (optional)

Procedure

1. Prepare a short text with the target structures planted in it and divide it into two equal halves with roughly the same amount of text.
2. Pair up students and give each member a different part of the text with the instruction that they are not to show it to their partner. If you have an odd number of students, you will need to pair yourself up with a student and keep a copy of a text to dictate to them.
3. Students line up against the walls on opposite sides of the room so that each student is directly opposite their partner. All the students with the same part of the text should be in the same line.
4. Optional: Place a CD player or radio in the centre of the room and turn it on loud enough to provide an auditory distraction.
5. Students with the first part of the text dictate it simultaneously to their partner on the other side, who write down words they can hear.
6. Students with the second part of the text dictate it to their partners.
7. Divide students from each side of the room into pairs or threes and have them try to reconstruct the text from their notes.
8. Once everyone has finished, get some students to read their reconstructed text aloud. The students who dictated it can listen for and correct mistakes.
9. Draw students' attention to the target structures and clarify where necessary.

Verbal Boxing



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

I thought of this activity while watching Olympic boxing. I noticed that every good punch thrown by one of the combatants was awarded a point by the judge. I envisioned a pair of students with a judge and each student being awarded a point every time they used a particular word or



structure within a conversation. It turned out to be a great way to practice the target language as the students had to focus on the meaning of each item when trying to determine how they could work it into the context of the conversation. Also, in attempting to work the item in, they are working on fluency as they must construct some sort of segue to fit in their contribution. More attention to accuracy can be supplied, like in Olympic boxing, by having the judge award points for only “good punches”, words or structures used accurately. The judge could have a list of the target structures to refer to when checking accuracy. Also, the judge might not count target language that was not introduced with a proper segue. This will eliminate the possibility of students just alternating with sentences instead of building an actual conversation. You can also stipulate, for a list of target language like vocabulary, that an item may be used only once and the judge can check off each item on a list as it’s used or, to make scoring easier, write the initial of the student who used it beside it.

I found that the competitive aspect of this activity makes it work a lot better than just telling the students to use the target language in a conversation. Besides this, having the judge there listening for the target is going to promote more use than if you just put them in pairs. When I first started using this activity, I had apprehensions about making conversations competitive and so I made an important modification which improved the activity. Rather than having the conversing students competing against each other, I told them their scores would be combined and compared with other pairs. This meant they were cooperating in order to compete.

Materials

- none, just students’ pens and notebooks

Procedure

1. Let students know what structure or vocabulary you want them to use. Write it on the on the board or they can refer to it from handouts, their notebooks or text books.
2. Put them in groups of three. If you cannot divide them into threes, you can have a group of four where there are two judges, each one counting for one speaker. Or you can be the judge for one pair of students.
3. Explain to students that they are to have a conversation and try to

use the targeted items as much as possible and every time they do, they will be awarded a point (you can also assign a speaking topic). If they are working from a list of items, you may stipulate that they may use each item only once. Point out that it is a competition.

4. Tell them to decide who is going to speak and who is going to be the judge. Explain to the judge how to award the points.
5. Tell them approximately how much time they have and tell them to start.
6. Stop the activity and ask each judge to count up the total score for both speakers. You can ask each judge to report their totals at this point – it makes it more competitive. Then write them on the board with the initials of each student in the group.
7. Students switch roles so the judge has a turn to speak and another member of the group is the judge.
8. Elicit the totals again and you can add them to the previous totals on the board to determine which group got the highest total.

Rotating Paper



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This activity was created out of the frustration I experienced trying to monitor all the conversations in a large class, especially when trying to collect some errors from each student. Pairing students up and giving them a speaking task or topic is a good way of working on fluency but without some way of recording errors, there's little opportunity to focus on accuracy. There are other ways of focussing on accuracy but few as beneficial to the individual student as collecting errors from natural unrehearsed speech. The answer came from the previous activity, *Verbal Boxing*. The idea was to put students into groups of three and have one write down any utterances by the other two that they suspected to contain errors. The idea failed. The students who were asked to write down errors were reluctant to do so and often ended up joining the conversation, even though they were told not to. In any case, they rarely recorded any suspected errors. Like many failed classroom experiments, it only needed a little tweaking to make it more effective. Since it was generally agreed that the task of writing down errors was distasteful to them, the "writer" was told they would be relinquished of the role by simply writing down one suspected error, even if it turned out in the end to be correct. This removed the pressure of having to be certain of mistakes and encouraged the students to try to find one because as soon as they did, they were able to relinquish the writer role and join the conversation. Some students found further motivation in making one of their partners drop out of the conversation.

Materials

- one paper or overhead transparency plus pen for each group

Procedure

1. Assign speaking task or topic.
2. Put students in groups of three to five.
3. Give a sheet of paper or an overhead transparency to one student in each group. Explain that that student is to keep silent until he/she has recorded an utterance that they suspect may be wrong. Emphasize that it doesn't actually have to be wrong, just a suspected error. Also make sure they understand that they will need to write down enough words to provide a context (give an example, if necessary).
4. Explain that as soon as the writer has recorded something, they can relinquish their role and join the conversation. They would pass the paper to the right and that student would have to withdraw from the conversation and assume the writer role. Emphasize that before joining the conversation, the writer needs to wait for a suitable point to join in. They shouldn't interrupt.
5. Monitor the students and when you feel that they have recorded enough errors, you can stop the activity.
6. Collect the error sheets and discuss any significant errors. If you'd asked students to write suspected errors directly on overhead transparencies, project the transparencies and deal with the errors directly.

Verbal Boxing + Rotating Paper



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

The two previous activities could be combined and the result would be an effective way of getting students to use the target language together with a way for the teacher to check what they've done. Rather than having the writer in the group write down suspected errors, you can ask them to write down examples of the target vocabulary or grammar used by the speakers. This task may prove to be more motivating for the students for two reasons. First, there is more motivation for the two speakers to use the target language because there will be a way for the teacher to check afterwards. Secondly, there is more positive reinforcement because the focus is on correct usage rather than errors. And having the contributions written down gives the teacher a chance to check afterwards for accuracy. You will have to decide how many examples the writer will need to record before relinquishing his/her role to another student. It depends on the level of the students and how complicated the target language is. For example, with single words like adjectives to describe things, you might want to set the number at 5 to 10, while for a complicated grammatical structure like a third conditional, you might want to set it at 1 or 2, since they will not be that easy to work into the conversation.

Materials

- one paper or overhead transparency plus pen for each group

Procedure

1. Let students know what structure or vocabulary you want them to use. Write it on the board or they can refer to it from handouts, their notebooks or text books.
2. Put them in groups of three to five.
3. Explain to students that they are to have a conversation and try to use the targeted items as much as possible and every time they do, they will be awarded a point (you may want to assign a speaking topic). If they are working from a list of items, you may stipulate that they may use each item only once. Point out that it is a competition.
4. Give a sheet of paper or overhead transparency to one student in each group. Explain that that student is to keep silent until he/she has recorded a certain number of uses of the target language. Also make sure they understand that they will need to write down enough words to provide a context (give an example, if necessary).
5. Explain that as soon as the writer has recorded the required number of uses of the target language, they can relinquish their role and join the conversation. They would pass the paper to the right and that student would have to withdraw from the conversation and assume the writer role.
6. Stop the activity and ask each group to report the number of times they used the target language.
7. Collect the writers' sheets and discuss any significant errors. If you got students to write the utterances directly on overhead transparencies, you can project them and deal with the errors directly.

Listen and Repeat



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This is a very simple but valuable activity. A student asks another a question featuring a certain structure and the student who answers needs to use that structure in their answer. A simple example with the present perfect could have one student asking “Have you been to New York?” and the other student would have to say, “Yes, I have been to New York”. When used with one grammar point, it is a simple controlled practice activity. Students could write a series of questions, individually or in pairs, featuring the same grammar point and then they would ask other students in the class those questions. You could also ask them to write a sample answer below each question so when they ask other students, they could refer to it to check for accurate reproduction of the form. It could be used it as a mingling activity where each student would ask every other student in the class the questions (see *Interviews and Surveys* below), which has the benefit of exposing the students to a variety of examples of the structure and gives them more extensive practice. Even though it is controlled practice, it can allow students to personalize the language and find out something about their classmates.

Listen and repeat is a valuable activity because by training students to listen for structures and then repeat them, the link between reception and production is emphasized. It suggests to students that they should be aware of structures when they encounter the language and, more importantly, that they be aware of how this awareness can accelerate their understanding and acquisition of the language, particularly if they recognize structures that they can use, and particularly those they can use immediately. All teachers have experienced students who, when asked a question featuring a particular structure, will not use it in their answer. For example, a student is asked what they are doing and they fail to notice the continuous form and answer in the present simple. To really emphasize this, try giving students lists of several different structures, even ones that they may not be familiar with, and explain to them that it’s not important whether they understand the form completely but that they reproduce it in their answer. A good example of this is with verbs followed by gerunds. A student may not know that a particular verb is followed by the gerund, but by listening to a question like, “What do you imagine doing when you’re older?” they can pick it up and repeat it in an answer like, “I can imagine working for a large company.”

Materials

- None, unless you want to supply the questions on slips of paper

Procedure

1. Supply students with one or more questions featuring the target structure or put them in pairs and have them write their own.
2. If desired, have the students write answers for their questions and monitor them to make sure they know what form a correct answer should take.
3. Tell them that when they are asked a question, they will have to

notice the grammar/structure of the question and repeat it in their answer. Give them an example or two.

4. Pair up students with new partners and they "listen and repeat".
5. If desired change the pairs and have them ask the same questions again to a new partner or have them switch papers first so they end up asking their previous partner's questions.
6. Get some feedback by asking for some sample answers.

Samples

Present perfect

Have you taken a holiday this year?
No, I haven't taken a holiday this year.

Present perfect continuous

How long have you been learning English?
I've been learning English for three years

Past continuous

What were you doing last night at 11 o'clock?
At 11:00 o'clock last night I was watching TV.

Future continuous

What will you be doing tonight at 7:00?
At 7:00 tonight I will be eating dinner.

2nd conditional

If you were rich, what would you do?
If I were rich, I would travel around the world.

Relative clauses

Do you know the man who Madonna married?
No, I don't know the man who Madonna married.

Present wishes

Do you wish you had more money?
Yes, I wish I had more money

Past wishes

Do you wish you had been in Berlin when the wall came down?
Yes, I wish I had been in Berlin when the wall came down.

Verbs with gerunds

Do you feel like having a holiday?
Yes, I feel like having a holiday.

Verbs with Infinitives

Can you afford to go on holiday this year?
No, I can't afford to go on holiday this year.

Interviews or Surveys



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

Having students interview each other is a good way to practice fluency and it certainly encourages them to bring something of themselves to the class, whether it be personal information or merely an opinion. However, interviews and surveys can be relatively meaningful controlled practice, especially when students are required to repeat the same structures in questions and/or answers. Surveys, because they require students to ask every other student in the class, are an obvious way to repeat target language. Interviews can be used in a similar way, where students are to ask a question or set of questions of every other student in the class. In order to get more variety, you could tell students to write their questions on a sheet of paper and once they have asked another student, they switch their set of questions with that student and move on to ask another student the new set of questions. It's best to get students standing when they do these mingling activities.

Even if you use interviews and surveys for controlled practice of target structures, there's no need to completely lose the fluency component of the activity. You can tell students to ask follow-up questions once the ones with the target structure have been asked and answered. For example, if the present perfect question was, "Have you been to New York?" the follow-up question could be, "And what did you think of it?"

Materials

- none, unless you want to supply the questions on slips of paper

Procedure

1. Tell students what target language they are going to practise and either give them papers with questions prepared in advance or have them write their own interview questions, alone or in pairs.
2. If students are writing their own questions, monitor and make sure they are accurate.
3. Tell students what procedure they are to follow for the activity, i.e. one-to-one, with or without switching partners.
4. Assign a general listening task. If it is an interview, tell them you are going to get some feedback from them afterwards and give them some criteria for what they will report (e.g. "Who gave you the answer that was the most interesting, funniest, surprising, etc.). If they are doing a survey tell them what result you want them to come up with (e.g. "How many students in the class think that...?")
5. Start the activity. If desired, you could monitor and listen for any errors that you could correct afterwards.
6. Stop the activity and, if it is a mingling activity or a survey, tell them to switch partners. In some cases, you can have students switch whenever they've finished with one partner.
7. End the activity when you think it is appropriate and get the survey results from students or, if just an interview, get some feedback on your listening task from 4.
8. If desired, bring up any errors that you heard.

**Sample with
superlatives**

Who is the most successful person you know?

Who do you think is the greatest basketball player?

Who is the friendliest person at this school?

What's the worst film you have ever seen?

Work in Your Word



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This is a great fluency activity which gets students to consider the meaning of an assigned word or structure in order to fit it into the context of a conversation. It's also great practice in conversation management as students will need to guide the conversation in such a way that it will allow them to get their word or structure in. In addition, in order to insert their word/structure, students will have to pay attention to what the other student is saying, which is an important communicative skill. *Work in Your Word* is an ideal classroom activity because it focuses on fluency and accuracy, as both the form and meaning of the word or structure need to be considered.

There are a variety of ways this activity can be implemented. Students can be in pairs or small groups. They can switch partners after successfully using their word or structure and keep the same one or they can switch it with their partner so they can get a chance to use every word or structure in conversation. If students switch structures, it can be a useful controlled practice activity. You can get students to write the structures themselves and check them for accuracy before they start. In some cases, especially with vocabulary, the students will not have an idea what their partner's word or phrase is. In that case you can make it competitive by either asking the partner to guess what the word or phrase was and you can challenge the speaker to plant the item without the other student being able to detect it.

Materials

- one small piece of paper per student for their word/structure

Procedure

1. Prepare a strip of paper for each student with the word or structure you want them to work with, unless you're going to have them write their own (see below).
2. Tell students that you will give them a strip of paper with a word or structure on it that they will need to use in a conversation. Explain how it must be worked in and not just uttered randomly. Alternatively, you could tell them what structure you want them to use (e.g. present perfect) and you could hand them a blank strip of paper and they have to write their own version of it.
3. Put them in pairs or small groups and if desired, you could give them a topic for their conversation.
4. Give them a time limit, say three minutes, in which they have to use their word or structure. Alternatively, you can leave it up to students when they stop, stipulating that they should go on a bit after they've used their word/structure. However, if you do it this way, you will have to tell students to move on to another partner once they've finished (you can also ask them to switch papers).
5. Students start the conversation. If you gave them a time limit, stop them at that time and ask the students to guess what the word or structure was that their partner used. If you didn't give them a limit, they can guess once they've finished on their own. You can have them collect points for either guessing the word/structure or not

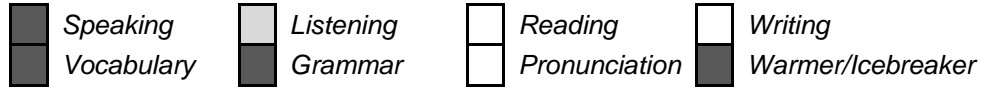
having their word/structure guessed.

6. If desired, have the students switch papers with their partner and then move on to use their new word/structure with a new partner.

Samples

Phrasal Verbs	work out
Collocations	day trip
Irregular verbs	use the past participle of “swim”
Idioms	cool as a cucumber
Expressions	That’s a good idea.
Verb + gerund	I put off going to the dentist today
Verb + infinitive	I hope to meet you later.
1st Conditional	If I find out, I’ll let you know.
2nd Conditional	If I were rich, I would help you out.
Suggestions	Let’s go for a drink.
Advice	If I were you, I would leave now.
Modals	You must stop talking.
Adjective order	Do you have a large blue book?
Wishes	I wish I were home now.
Question tags	You’re new here, aren’t you?
Comparatives	You’re taller than my sister.
Superlatives	That’s the nicest shirt I’ve ever seen.

Party Quirks



Originally an improv game, *Party Quirks* has been used in the classroom mostly as a warm up activity. In its basic form, it requires that all the participants have some sort of personality quirk which they must demonstrate while mingling at a simulated party. The participants are challenged to guess what quirk is being displayed by each person at the “party”. One way I’ve used this in class, with hilarious results, was to assign each student a different phobia or mania. They then mingled at the party and acted appropriately. For example, the kleptomaniac kept trying to steal things from people while talking to them. Although useful for teaching various phobias and manias, it first appeared to have little potential for classroom application beyond that. In reality *Party Quirks* can be used with a wealth of grammar and vocabulary. The trick is to get the students to use the grammar or vocabulary obsessively. For example, a student who has been assigned frequency adverbs will keep saying, “I always...”, “I usually...” etc. The same could be done with lexical groups. Students could excessively talk about fruit, vegetables, furniture, tools, etc. I’ve also used this activity successfully with emotions which would require different stress and intonation such as happiness, excitement, anger, disinterest, etc. Perhaps one of the more useful classroom applications is to use *Party Quirks* to focus on students’ common errors. For example one student could continually leave out the third person ‘s’ with present simple verbs.

Party Quirks is a great classroom activity because it is fun and interactive. It gets the students to listen carefully and to focus on whatever target language has been assigned. However, the repeated use of words or structures makes it good controlled practice, and like previous activities, having to work the items in not only puts emphasis on meaning but the act of getting them in is good fluency practice. If you are using it for controlled practice of different grammar points or for error identification, you might ask students to switch quirks after every exchange. Otherwise, you would ask students to keep the same quirk and mingle with everyone at the party so all have a chance to guess it.

Materials

- prepared bits of paper with the quirks written on them

Procedure

1. Prepare pieces of papers with quirks for each student. For large classes you can split the group in two and give each group a set of the quirks.
2. Tell students to act in the manner stated on the card. Demonstrate to clarify.
3. Tell students they are to mingle and every time they talk to someone they are to try to guess what their quirk is. Make sure they know the type of language they should look for.
4. Stop the activity when all or most students have talked to everyone and get some feedback as to how various students were acting.

**Lisa Richter's
Version**

1. Prepare pieces of paper with quirks, but just one quirk for each group of 3 or 4 students.
2. Put students in groups of 3 or 4.
3. Explain that one student from each group will leave the classroom and when they come back they will have to guess which grammar or vocabulary everyone in their group is using.
4. Send one student from each group out of the room. Give one quirk each to the groups.
5. Call the students who left back in. The group has a conversation and all using the same quirk. The student who was outside tries to guess what it is.
6. Switch the quirks so each group has a different one and they send a different student out of the class.
7. Continue in the same way until all groups have done all the quirks.

Samples

Reporting verbs

You keep <i>offering</i> to do things for people.	You keep <i>boasting</i> about yourself.	You keep <i>complaining</i> about other people at the party.	You keep <i>ordering</i> people to do things.
You keep <i>reminding</i> people to do things.	You keep <i>suggesting</i> things to people.	You keep <i>explaining</i> meanings of words to people.	You keep <i>admitting</i> to all the bad things you've done.
You keep <i>apologizing</i> to people.	You keep <i>warning</i> people not to do things.	You keep <i>begging</i> people to do things for you.	You keep <i>advising</i> people to do things.

**Expressing
annoyance
(keep + -ing)**

keep interrupting	keep whistling	keep talking about the weather	keep chewing gum very loudly
keep asking the time	keep calling people by the wrong name	keep talking about sports	keep laughing

Food vocabulary

You keep talking about different kinds of meat.	You keep talking about kinds of non-alcoholic drinks.	You keep talking about different kinds of vegetables.	You keep talking about different kinds of fruit.
You keep talking about kinds of dairy products.	You keep talking about different kinds of desserts.	You keep talking about different kinds of pasta.	You keep talking about different kinds of bread.
You keep talking about different kinds of snacks.	You keep talking about kinds of alcoholic drinks.	You keep talking about different kinds of fish.	You keep talking about different kinds of seafood.

Household items

You keep talking about things found in the bedroom.	You keep talking about things found in the living room.	You keep talking about things found in the kitchen.	You keep talking about things found in the basement.
You keep talking about things found in the family room.	You keep talking about things found in the closet.	You keep talking about things found in the hallway.	You keep talking about things found in the back yard.
You keep talking about things found in the garage.	You keep talking about things found in the front entrance	You keep talking about things found in the attic	You keep talking about things found in the bathroom

Tense mistakes

<p>When you speak, you talk about other people (the third person) but you always forget to add the ‘s’ to the end of the verb.</p> <p>Examples: My brother go to school. My friend like sports.</p>	<p>When you speak, you talk about things you have done for a long time using “for” or “since” but you don’t use the present perfect.</p> <p>Examples: I study English for 4 years. I play tennis since I was 10.</p>
<p>When you speak, you talk about things you are doing now, but you don’t use the progressive/continuous form.</p> <p>Examples: Right now, I go to school. At this time, I study English. At this moment, I speak to you.</p>	<p>When you speak, you talk about continuous actions that happened at a certain time in the past, but you don’t use the progressive/continuous form.</p> <p>Examples: Last night at 11:00, I watch TV. Last week/year at this time, I work. Yesterday, at 1:00, I eat lunch</p>
<p>When you speak, you talk about hypothetical situations a lot, but instead of using would or could, you use will and can.</p> <p>Examples: If I were you, I will study harder. If I had money, I can travel.</p>	<p>When you speak, you ask questions with the auxiliary verbs DID but you use the past tense afterwards.</p> <p>Examples: Did you went there? Did you met your friend?</p>

Grammar review

<p>You use the present simple a lot. The present simple is used for habitual actions (things you do all the time).</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>I go to school.</i> <i>I wake up at 7.</i> <i>I drink tea.</i></p>	<p>You use the present continuous a lot. The present continuous is used for actions at this moment.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>I'm studying English</i> <i>I'm talking to you.</i> <i>I'm thinking about ...</i> <i>I'm getting tired, bored, etc.</i></p>	<p>You use "going to" a lot to talk about the future. "Going to" is used for future plans.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>I'm going to go to university.</i> <i>I'm going to see a film tonight.</i> <i>I'm going to be a doctor.</i></p>
<p>You use reported speech a lot.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>Ken said I was a good student.</i> <i>Claudio said he was hungry.</i> <i>Tony Blair said he liked beer.</i></p>	<p>You use the past continuous a lot. The past continuous is used for continuous actions at a certain time in the past.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>At 2 last night I was sleeping.</i> <i>In 1999 I was working in...</i> <i>At 8 I was watching TV.</i></p>	<p>You use the past simple a lot. The past simple is used for finished actions in the past. The time must be said.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>I went to a film yesterday.</i> <i>I ate toast for breakfast.</i> <i>In 1998 I visited Paris.</i></p>
<p>You use the present perfect a lot. The present perfect is used for your experience. The time it happened is not said.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>I have been to France.</i> <i>I have studied German.</i> <i>I have met Madonna</i></p>	<p>You use "wish" a lot. You use "wish" and the past tense for things you want now.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>I wish I had a lot of money.</i> <i>I wish I was at home.</i> <i>I wish I knew your name.</i> <i>I wish I could sing.</i></p>	<p>You use the future continuous a lot. The future continuous is used for continuous actions in the future. The time must be said.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> <i>Next Sept. I'll be going to school.</i> <i>At 12 I will be sleeping.</i> <i>In two hours I'll be eating.</i></p>

Talk Show Interview with Cue Cards



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This activity simulates a talk show where the host interviews a guest. As in a real talk show, the host is supplied with cue cards, which will determine what questions he/she is to ask the guest. Students enjoy this activity because they can discover things about their classmates by interviewing them. However, they also enjoy it when a student acts as a famous person, especially since they can decide what questions to ask them and how they would answer. The results are often very funny. The primary value in this activity for students, besides fluency practice, is that the cue cards require the host to correctly form structures using particular grammar or lexis. The students do the talk show interview in groups of three; a host, a guest and a cue card holder. But before they do that, they need work together to create the cue cards. The cards will have cues in note form, which the host will have to form into questions. For example, the cue card will say, “visit Paris” and the host would have to construct, “Have you visited Paris?” (see example below).

This activity is a really fun way to wind up a lesson. Once students have learned the target language and they’ve done some controlled practice with it, this activity tests whether they can produce the form accurately and appropriately. Yet, the talk show can provide lots of fluency practice with the guest’s answers to the questions and with follow-up questions from the host. You can decide how involved you want the activity to be. It can be adjusted in terms of time to fill up whatever remains at the end of the lesson. You can decide exactly how many cue cards you want each group to produce or how long you want them to spend on the task of writing them. And once they’ve done the role play, you should switch the roles around so each member of the trio gets a chance to be a host. You can also switch the cue cards so each trio gets a chance to use the cue cards from the other groups.

Material

- lots of sheets or half-sheets of paper for cue cards
- one marker per group

Procedure

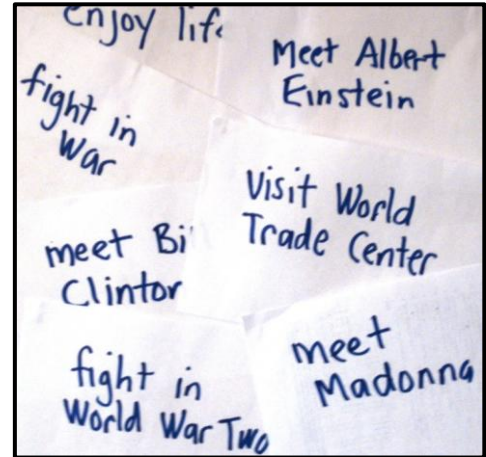
1. Put students in groups of three. If need be you can have a group of four with two guests.
2. Check that they know what a talk show is and explain what cue cards are and how they are used. A demonstration will help.
3. Tell them what grammar or vocabulary you want them to practice and how they should complete the cue cards to provide a basis for producing the target language. See example below.
4. Give them a stack of paper (half-sheets will do) and a marker. In their groups, they brainstorm things to write on the cue cards.
5. Monitor the students to make sure they are completing the cue cards correctly and once you feel they have prepared enough, stop them.
6. Explain that they are to do a talk show simulation and they are to

decide who will hold up the cue cards and who will interview whom. Establish, if you'd like, that the guest is welcome to elaborate and the host can ask follow-up questions.

7. Start the simulation and monitor groups for any significant errors.
8. Stop the activity when most groups have completed their cue cards.
9. Switch roles within each group and repeat.
10. Switch cue cards for each group, if desired.
11. Get some feedback from the activity and take up any significant errors, if desired.

Sample cue cards from an interview with a 100-year-old person. The verbs were written in base form in order to challenge the interviewer to decide whether the question should be in the present perfect or the past simple (note how students cleverly chose the World Trade Center). Thus the correct questions would be:

- Have you enjoyed life?
- Did you meet Albert Einstein?
- Have you fought in a war?
- Did you visit the World Trade Center?
- Have you met Bill Clinton?
- Did you fight in World War Two?
- Have you met Madonna?



Samples

Sample cue cards for gerunds

Do you avoid...?	Can you imagine...?	Would you risk...?	Are you interested in...?
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Cards for superlatives

the _____ (interesting)?	the _____ (crazy)?	the _____ (embarrassing)?	the _____ (big)?
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Cards for frequency adverbs

Do you often...?	Do you usually...?	Do you sometimes...?	Do you always...?
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Cards for personality adjectives

intelligent?	sexy?	obnoxious?	energetic?
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Cards for future forms

meet for lunch?

win the World Cup?

get married?

retire young?

Cards for past continuous

do at 11:00 last night?

date last year at this time?

eat an hour ago?

sleep yesterday when I call?

Cards for question tags

are famous, ___ you?

were in a film ___ you?

wife loves you, ___ she?

not meeting you for the first time, ___ I?

Cards for phrasal verbs

break up?

settle down?

turn off?

take after?

Cards for common phrases

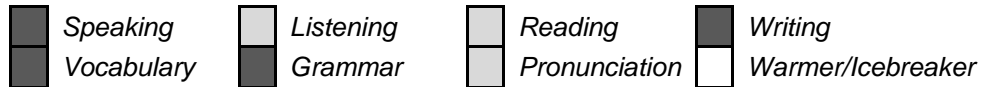
take part in?

get into trouble?

on the whole?

have something in common with?

One-act Play



Writing dialogues to practice target language is a common classroom activity and, although the one-act play is similar, it has a few more advantages. Students enjoy the idea of writing a play because it allows them to step out of themselves and play different characters in specific situations. It encourages them to be creative, which in itself is a good thing, but it also gets them to think of a situation which would lend itself to the language they are meant to use (see example below with “wish”). Also, the one-act play can have any number of characters but it works best with three or four. I’ve added an extra wrinkle to this activity which students really enjoy. Instead of getting a group of students to write a play for themselves, I have them write a play for some of their classmates. The example below using different forms of “wish” was actually written by female classmates of Peter, Marek and Pavel. They relished the idea of having the three young men play homeless people, which is something they would have not done to themselves. In short, writing for your classmates is more motivating and opens up a new level of creativity.

The one-act play is a great activity for practising grammatical or lexical structures and vocabulary. Not only do the students have to get the form correct when writing the play, but they have to consider the meaning when trying to fit it into the context. And the target language is practised in four ways starting with writing, then by reading the scripts when preparing to perform, then speaking when it is performed and then, for performers as well as the audience, by listening. You can ask the audience to listen for the target language or, if you don’t want to impede their enjoyment of the play, you can ask that the performance is repeated for focussing on the target language. Or you can limit the number of targeted items each member of the audience has to listen for to one or two. In dealing with accuracy of the target language, you can monitor the students while they are writing and make corrections before the performance or you and/or the students can listen for errors during the performance. This would be best done during a second reading. However you decide to do it, if you have an idea how long each stage will take (writing, performing, feedback) then you can use this activity to fill up whatever amount of time you have at the end of a class. The one-act play is an ideal way to end a class because it is a fun and creative activity which involves all four skills as well as the target language.

Materials

- 1 sheet of paper per student for the scripts

Procedure

1. Let students know what target language you want them to practice.
2. Divide the class up into evenly sized groups. If this is not possible you can involve yourself as a performer or you can have a group of three writing for four and vice versa.
3. Check to see that they know the meaning of “one-act play”, “narrator” and “setting the scene”.
4. Explain to them that they are to write a one-act play and assign

- them a group of students to write for.
5. Tell them they are to decide the situation and what roles the other students are to assume. Explain that after they hand the scripts over one of them will serve as the narrator to set the scene before the other group starts performing.
 6. Tell the groups that once they've decided what they will write about, each member of the group must write the script simultaneously. This is to give each of the performers a copy of the script (and also provides writing practice for all). Give them a time limit.
 7. Monitor students and help them with corrections, unless you plan to address them after the performances.
 8. Warn students when their time is almost up so they have a chance to wind up their plays.
 9. Stop the activity and each group gets the scripts that were written for them. Give them a chance to read them over and check with the group that wrote them, if needed.
 10. The narrator sets the scene and the first group performs its play.
 11. If desired, give the audience a listening task (e.g. listen for target language or errors) and have them perform or read the play again.
 12. After all groups finish, deal with any significant errors that came up.

Sample

Using 'wish'

Three Homeless People

Marek: It's so cold. I *wish it was* summer.

Pavel: I would like some vodka.

Petr: I have no place to live. I don't like living in the street. I *wish I had* a home.

Marek: I used to have a big house. I had a car and I had a lot of money. But I was a gambler and I used all my money for gambling. I *wish hadn't done* that.

Pavel: I would like some vodka.

Petr: I had a wife and two children. My wife left me because I drank so much alcohol. I *wish I hadn't drunk* so much.

Pavel: I would like some vodka.

Marek: Pavel, I *wish you would shut up*.

Petr: I had vodka yesterday. I drank it all. I *wish I hadn't finished* it.

Pavel: I would like to buy some vodka. I have no money. I *wish I had* some money.

Marek: Oh, no. It's raining. I will get wet. I *wish I had an umbrella*.

Petr: I don't like rain. I *wish it would stop*.

Pavel: But it's raining vodka.

Target language

wish + past for present wishes

I wish I was home.

wish + past perfect for past wishes

I wish I hadn't said that.

wish + would to complain about present situation

I wish you would shut up!

wish + would when waiting for an event outside our control

I wish the bus would come.

Chain Stories



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

Chain stories, where each student contributes a short section of a story, are a good way to get students to use target language in a context. However, there is a problem with chain stories, if done the traditional way where students add to the story in an order based on their seating arrangement. What happens is one student (or the teacher) begins a story and when they stop, the student beside them continues the story and so on. The problem is that students know beforehand when their turn will come and they often don't pay attention until the story is just about to reach them. There is a simple solution to this problem which gets all students to pay attention all the time. Simply write the names of the students on cards, large enough for them to see. Put them in a pile on your desk then turn over and hold up the first one. That name on the card is the student who is to speak. Repeated shuffling (or fake shuffling) will keep them more off guard as even if they've just contributed to the story, their name might come up again.

The target language required for the story can be stipulated by the teacher or can be given to the students from a list on the board or a handout or it can be written on cards and distributed to students. You could give each student a different card stipulating what they need to add to the story, for example, a different phrasal verb. This works particularly well for written chain stories. These stories have students seated in a circle or semi-circle and they begin writing their stories simultaneously on their own sheet of paper. When signalled, the students have to stop writing and then pass their paper to the right. They will then need to read what was written before and continue that story. This is good reading practice since comprehension is essential for the task. If each student had a card stipulating the language to use (e.g. with a different phrasal verb), the students would pass the cards at the same time as they pass the papers, but in the opposite direction (i.e. to the left). Written stories have the advantage that all students are active at the same time. They also allow for extensive error correction, without focussing on any particular student's errors. Try getting students to write their stories on overhead transparencies as they can be projected on the board and corrected in front of the whole class.

Materials

- cards with students' first names
- handouts or cards with target language (optional)
- one sheet of paper or overhead transparency per student for written stories
- one overhead transparency pen per student, if required

Procedure for oral chain stories

1. Stipulate target language to be included, verbally, or with the board, a handout or cards.
2. Write each student's name on a card large enough for them to see from any place in the classroom, or hand out the cards, get them to write their own names on them and collect them.
3. Put the cards on your desk and shuffle them.

4. Tell students that they each are to use the target language in a story and when you turn over a card and show a name, that student then has to add to the story. You can signal to each student that their contribution has ended by putting down their card. Point out that you are going to be shuffling the cards and they'll need to pay attention as their turn could be at any time.
5. Give students a topic or start the story yourself to set the topic.
6. Lift up the first card and that student begins. When you've decided that student has added enough (listen for the target language) lower the card and pick up the next one.
7. End the activity whenever appropriate and deal with any significant errors which occurred, if desired.

Procedure for written chain stories

1. Stipulate target language to be included, verbally, or with the board, a handout or cards.
2. Hand out blank sheets of writing paper or overhead transparencies to each student.
3. Tell students that they are going to be contributing to the story in written form. Explain that they are to use the target language but when you tell them to stop, they must stop writing wherever they are and pass their paper to the right.
4. Give students a topic and write the opening of the story on the board, which they must use (e.g. "It was a dark and stormy night...").
5. If using cards with target language, distribute them and tell the students that they must use the language on the card in their segment of the story.
6. Stop the story and get all students to pass their papers to the right. If using cards, get them to pass their cards to the left.
7. Decide when you want the story to end and at that point tell all students to conclude the story they are presently working on.
8. Take up the stories by having students read them aloud or display them on the walls. You can also pass them out to pairs of students and get them to peer correct, or if using overhead transparencies, you can project them and correct the errors.

Superlatives

Last night X had the strangest dream. In his/her dream...

Past perfect

It was the worst trip, X had ever had...

Reported speech

X told Y that...

Reporting verbs

X exclaimed that... (Y denied...,etc.)

Past simple

Last summer X went to...

Past continuous

Last night at 11:00 X was watching TV when...

Personality adjectives

X met a very interesting man yesterday...

Verbs followed by gerunds/infinitives

X decided to ...

Clothing

X wanted to buy a new skirt but...

Linking words

Although X had never ...

Discourse markers

Unfortunately X ...

Sample written chain story

Camping

It was the ^{most} amusing camping trip we had ever been on. 1
 Hence I say that, because we met ~~some~~ ^{some} 2
 st wildlife, It's kinda tough chance to meet ~~them~~. 3
 We ^{did} hiked, biked and kayaked some of adventures 4
~~which~~ WERE GREAT, SPENDING THE TIME WITH NEW FRIENDS 5
 MAKES THIS TRIP WORTH IT. WHAT I LIKED MOST 6
 WAS THE SILENCE BY NIGHT, ALL THE SKY FULL OF STARS 7
 AND THE MOON, A NICE CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT 8
 WE WERE GOING TO DO ALL TOGETHER, SO WE DECIDED 9
 SHARE TASKS FOR PREPARED, FOOD, MAKE A FIRE PIT, 10
 AND COLLECT WOOD, AND OTHERS WANTS TO WAKE UP EARLY 11
 For explore the mysterious and amazing land that 12
 surround us, i decided ~~to~~ not to go and rest well 13
 for ~~tomorrow's~~ ^{the next day} activities such as swimming and 14
 canoeing. I really enjoyed my day while my 15
 friends were so tired that they slept the entire 16
 afternoon. 17
 18

Game show quiz



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This activity is based on the popular game show Jeopardy, where contestants choose the category and difficulty level of their questions. Its classroom application is a fun and challenging game, which can be used with any grammar or vocabulary that can be broken down into categories. For example, phrasal verbs are ideal as students can choose from categories based on either the verb or its particle (i.e. “I’ll take ‘put’ for \$100” or conversely, “I’ll take ‘off’ for \$100”). It’s best to get students to work in teams of two or three as it gives them an opportunity to discuss the grammar or vocabulary before answering questions. Also, making decisions about which question to answer and how to answer it will give students communicative practice. You can make it more competitive and involving if you allow other teams to offer answers to questions answered incorrectly. I usually establish an order for answering them (team with their hand up first or next team to the left/right) and award them half points.

Although preparation of the questions does take some time, once you have created them, you can use the game whenever you teach that vocabulary or grammar point. Alternatively, you could get the students to write the questions. Once you’ve decided on the categories, split them up among the teams and get each team to use their notes, coursebooks or other reference material to write 3 – 5 questions of increasing difficulty for each category. Then, when playing the game, each group is not allowed to choose a question that they wrote. Getting students to write the questions is beneficial because it gets them thinking about the target language more and it gets them more involved in creating the game and playing it, as they will become the quizmasters when a team chooses one of their questions. Getting students to produce the game can be a good way to review a few grammar points or lexical categories that they’ve recently studied.

Materials

- prepared game sheet with answers or, if students write their own, reference material

Procedure

1. Prepare a sheet with 4 to 10 categories of grammar or vocabulary across the top and 3 – 5 rows for the money amounts of 100, 200, 300 (400, 500).
2. For each category write 3 – 5 questions of increasing difficulty and write each question in the appropriate box on the grid on your sheet.
3. Draw a grid on the board like the one on your sheet but, in the column below each category, put the money amounts in ascending order. Leave a space at the side of the entire grid or at the bottom to total up scores for each team.
4. Put the students into pairs or threes and explain rules of the game.
5. Each team goes in succession, choosing a category and a difficulty level. Read the questions and give them a short time to confer on the answer. If they get it right, give them the points and write them on the board. If they get it wrong, you can allow other teams to

answer it for half the points.

6. Once a question has been answered, cross it off or erase the money amount.

Procedure for student version

1. Decide what target language you want students to practice and create enough categories that they can be divided up equally among the teams.
2. Assign each team their categories and explain to them that they need to write 3 – 5 questions (decide on the number beforehand) in different levels of difficulty and they will need to be put in ascending order.
3. Monitor students while they are preparing the questions to make sure they have worded them correctly to elicit the answer.
4. Draw the grid on the board and explain the rules as above but stipulate that a team cannot choose one of their own questions
5. Proceed as above but have the students who wrote the question read it out and decide whether the answering team has answered it correctly.

Grid for negative prefixes (advanced level)

de	dis	il	im	in	mis	non	ir	un
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500

Negative prefixes answer sheet

de	dis	il	im	in	mis	non	ir	un
de-ice to remove frozen water from something, esp. airplane	dishonest adj. for someone who doesn't tell the truth	illegal against the law	impolite someone who is rude	inaccurate something which is not 100 % correct, esp. statistics	mispronounce verb for saying words, esp. in another language with the wrong sound	non-alcoholic drinks without anything which makes you drunk, e.g. some kinds of beer	irresponsible adj. for one who doesn't care about the results of their actions	unfair not right according to a set of rules or principles
devalue to decrease the worth of something, esp. currency	disable to take from something the power to work or function	illogical something which makes no sense	imperfect something that isn't 100% - it has some small flaws or mistakes	indirect not straight, roundabout	misfortune bad luck	non-fiction literature which is true stories	irresistible adj. for something which you have an uncontrollable attraction to	unused something (esp. manufactured) which is new
decentralise to remove power from one place and distribute equally, esp. gov.	displeasure, dissatisfaction a noun for unhappiness about something	illiterate adj. to describe someone who can't read or write	immature an adult who acts like a child	indefinite undecided or uncertain, no fixed limits, like the article "a" or "an"	misbehave to act badly, esp. for children	non-profit companies which are designed not to make money	irregular not straight, or according to rules or in rate of occurrence	unwelcome uninvited adj. for guests that you don't want
deodorise to remove the smell from something	discomfort the feeling of just a little bit of pain or physical unpleasantness	illegible adj. to describe handwriting which cannot be read	immeasurable something very big – cannot be measured	infinite not having an end	misinform to tell someone something wrong	non-violent someone who doesn't believe in physical force esp. to get civil rights	irrelevant something that is not connected to what is being talked about	unbeaten adj. for a sports team which has not yet lost a game
decompose break down or separate into small parts, esp. after death	disobey to not do what someone orders you to do	illegitimate contrary to laws or rule, esp. children of unmarried parents	improbable something which is not likely to happen	inflexible rigid, not moveable, esp. for people's opinions	misadventure an exciting experience which turns out badly	non-resident someone who lives somewhere but without a permit	irreversible adj. for something which cannot be changed back to what it was	unborn word for a child that a pregnant woman is carrying

Mixed grammar

future	gerunds	articles	comparatives	conditionals	past tenses	reported speech	modal verbs
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500

Phrasal verbs #1

get	give	break	bring	come	take	turn	put	go
to get out of bed, usually in the morning up	to return something back	to end a relationship up	to return something back	something returns also a memory which returns back	to remove clothes off	to move a switch to make some-thing work (esp. electricity) on	to raise up	to continue on
to leave (esp. for holiday) or escape away	to stop doing something or surrender up	to fall apart (emotionally also) or stop working down	to care for a child until it is an adult or introduce a new topic up	the cost or an amount becomes less down	when an airplane leaves the ground off	to change direction and return to where you came from. back	to gain weight on	to explode or make a sudden noise (alarm) off
recover over	to distribute out	to escape from a place or situation out	to produce for sale, esp. something new out	to find across	to gain control of something, esp. a corporation over	to come or appear up	to delay or postpone off	when a fire dies or electricity stops working out
continue or progress or form a friendly relationship on	to reveal a secret away	something unpleasant like war or disease happens suddenly out	to cause about	something unexpected happens up	to say some-thing then say that you didn't mean it (retract) back	to transform (change to something else) into	to be discouraged off	to review over
get depressed or sad down	to surrender to something in to	to use something like shoes until they are OK in	to introduce an idea or something produces profits for you. in	to get an idea up with	to resemble after	to refuse, usually an applicant who is not qualified down	to insult down	to search in something through

Phrasal verbs #2

carry	work	look	set	come	take	turn	pass	go
to lift something and remove it from somewhere out	to calculate or solve esp. a problem out	to try to find something that is lost for	to leave esp. begin a journey off	to enter or arrive in	to remove from somewhere out	to lower esp. sound or heat down	to give something to someone in a lower place down	to continue on
to continue on	to make an effort to improve something. esp. skill on	to expect something good forward to	to start a plan or trip out	a memory returns back	to review up	to go to bed in	to distribute out	to start something else on
to do a task out	to exercise out	to search for information, usually in a book of facts up	to establish, esp. business up	something breaks and a part becomes separated from it off	to start doing something new, esp. hobby up	to leave a road or path and take another one off	to faint or sleep from drinking to much alcohol out	to become bad, esp. food (e.g. milk) off
something reminds you of something in the past back	to get rid of something, esp. weight, by work or exercise off	to take responsibility for something or someone after	to delay or make more difficult back	expression used to encourage someone to do something on	to begin to like something or someone to	to show up for an event out	to go from generation to generation down	something dates back to a time in history back
to succeed in a difficult job or task off	to build up energy or emotion, esp. to get upset up	to have a poor opinion of some-one or something down on	something is fixed in a surface so it doesn't stick out in	to encounter a difficulty up against	to write, esp. in a notebook down	to become disloyal on	to fail to take advantage of a situation up	to agree to something, esp. a plan along with

Prefixes (upper-intermediate/advanced)

inter	over	under	pre	re	sub	trans
international between or among different countries	overtime noun for when you work later than your scheduled hours	underground adj. to describe something which is below the surface of the earth	prefix noun for something which is attached to the beginning of a word to change its meaning	rewrite to write something again	subtitles translated words under the screen in foreign language films	transcontinental word to describe something, (e.g. train) which goes across Europe, Africa, North America, etc.
interpersonal adj. to describe relations between people	overweight adj. to describe someone who is heavier than they should be	undergraduate noun for someone who has not yet completed university	prehistoric adj. used to describe something that existed before history was recorded	refill to pour some more liquid to the top of a something after it has been emptied	subplot not the main story in a film or play, but a lesser one that also happens	transform verb to describe a change in appearance, shape or character
interracial adj. for between or among different races of people	overcrowded adj. to describe somewhere where there are too many people	underdeveloped adj. used esp. to describe agricultural countries without much industry	preview to see something, esp. a film before it is released for the general public	reappear when something goes away or you can't see it and then you can	subhuman adj. to describe a person who is more like an animal than a person	transplant to move something growing in the ground to somewhere else. Also used for organs
interplanetary between or among planets	overflow verb for when water or other liquid runs out of something because it is too full	undercharge verb for when someone asks you to pay less than you should for something	prejudice to form an opinion about a person before you really know them, esp. based on ethnicity	reconstruct to rebuild something	sub-standard adj. to describe something that is below the usual acceptable level	transaction a business deal
intersection place where two lines or roads meet	overestimate verb for guessing the price something will be or the time it will take and you guess too much	underestimate verb for guessing the price something will be or the time it will take and you guess too little	predate verb to say something existed before a certain time in history.	reconsider to think about something again, esp. a decision	subdivide to separate something into equal parts a second time	transcribe to write down notes into complete sentences, or from spoken language

Suffixes

...ment a thing or substance, often related to something else	...less without something	...ness a state or condition	...ship state, condition or quality an art or skill	...ize to make or create	...able having the ability	...ity name of a quality	...ism a belief or practice
payment money given to someone usually for a service	harmless something that won't hurt you	blindness a condition where a person cannot see	friendship the state of being in a relationship which is not family, romantic or sexual	apologize to make a statement saying you are sorry for something	comfortable when something makes you feel relaxed, for example a piece of furniture	creativity the quality of making new things or ideas	racism a belief that some people are better than others depending on the colour of their skin
basement part of a building which is below ground level	fearless not at all afraid	weakness the condition of having very little strength	dictatorship the state of living in a country where one person has all the power	equalize to make two or more things the same	affordable something you are able to buy because you have enough money	infinity the quality of going on forever	journalism the practice of reporting news for the media
judgement a decision or evaluation made about someone or something	worthless describing something that has no value	closeness the state of two things or people being near each other, physically or emotionally for people	ownership The state of possessing something	magnetize to make a piece of metal so it attracts another piece of metal	unforgettable memorable a word to describe something you will always remember	maturity the quality of acting your age or even older than you are	optimism the belief that everything will get better
treatment a substance used to care for an illness or wound	speechless describing someone who cannot or will not talk, usually just for the moment	likeness the state of resembling something	companionship the state of having someone with you to keep you from being lonely	penalize to punish someone for doing something wrong	disposable Something you can throw away	humidity the quality the air has when it is very moist	anarchism the belief in a country without government
fragment a piece or part broken off of something	mindless describing something not requiring or displaying any intelligence	dullness the state of being boring, stupid or, for objects, not sharp	apprenticeship the state of being an assistant while learning a job or profession	monopolize to take complete possession or control of something, esp. a conversation	arguable a statement or position you are able to disagree with	mobility the quality of being able to move	liberalism a belief in progress and reform, especially in politics

Mixed vocabulary

Weather	Family	Sports	The Body	Crime	Travel	Jobs	The Arts
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Household items

Things found in the KITCHEN	Things found in the BATHROOM	Things found in the LIVING ROOM	Things found in the BEDROOM	Things found in the BASEMENT	Things found in the GARAGE
100	100	100	100	100	100

Adjective order

Adjectives for OPINION	Adjectives for DIMENSION	Adjectives for AGE	Adjectives for SHAPE	Adjectives for ORIGIN	Adjectives for MATERIAL
100	100	100	100	100	100

Weather vocabulary

words to describe warm or hot temperatures	words to describe cold temperatures	words to describe rain	words for other types of precipitation	words for types of storms	words to describe good weather
100	100	100	100	100	100

Categories on Walls



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar

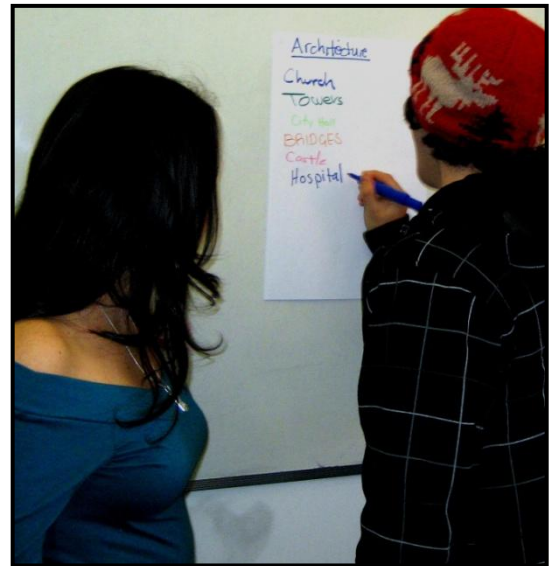


Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This game was created out of a fairly well-known activity which I think is called “Four Walls.” Four Walls requires students to stand up and move to one of the walls of the classroom according to what category is posted on that wall. For example, the walls could each have a paper posted on them with the categories: NOUN, VERB, ADJECTIVE and ADVERB. The teacher reads words from a list, one by one, and for each one, the students have to decide which part of speech it is and then move to that wall. It’s a good activity



which students enjoy. However, my adaptation of it is even better because it not only gets students out of their seats, it gets them running around the classroom enthusiastically. Also, because it isn’t limited to four categories, it’s a lot more wide open, so it can be used for any grammar or vocabulary which can be broken down into categories (e.g. fruits, vegetables, grains, meat, dairy products). The number of categories can vary from as little as three to over ten. Each category is written on the top of a sheet of paper and the papers are posted around the classroom. Students work in teams, usually of two or three, and compete against other teams in an attempt to add the most items to the sheets. The restriction that they cannot add two in a row keeps them moving around the class. Since the teams are each given just one pen of a particular colour, the members of a team will have to work together to help the person with the pen add to the sheets. Clever teams will split up so that the other members are not with the writer at a particular sheet, but are waiting at other sheets with ideas. You may want to let students in on that strategy so that they don’t end up bunched up around the writer at one sheet. Alternatively, before starting the activity, you could give the teams a couple of minutes to discuss strategy. Like many other activities in this collection, *Categories on Walls* gets the students to cooperate in order to compete.

Categories on Walls can serve many functions in a classroom. It can be used as a warmer to either review what students did in a previous class or to bring out what they already know about that target language for that day’s lesson. In essence, it can be used as the first stage of a test-teach-test type of lesson. For example, if you were teaching nationality adjectives, you could put papers on the walls with the continents for categories (North American nationalities, European nationalities, African nationalities, etc.) to see how many students could come up with. You could also use *Categories on Walls* to practice the grammar or vocabulary you’ve taught. For

example, you could have papers for practising future forms with titles such as “Plans and Intentions”, “Arrangements”, “Strong Intentions”, “Instant Decisions”, “Scheduled Events” and “Predictions”. Obviously, in much the same way, this activity can also be used to test students on what you’ve taught. It can also be used to generate ideas before doing a productive activity like writing a story. See the example below for ideas generated for a story about camping.

Materials

- one sheet of paper for each category chosen
- one different coloured marker for each team
- tape or other means of posting sheets

Procedure

1. Decide what categories you are going to use and write each one on top of a sheet of paper with a marker. You can use larger sheets of paper if you want to elicit more ideas from the students or if you want longer items such as phrases or sentences.
2. Put the category sheets up on the walls of the classroom. Try to spread them out with plenty of space in between (you can also use the windows).
3. Put the students in teams of two or three and give each team a different coloured marker.
4. Explain to the students that they are to work together as a team to add examples in each of the categories on the wall. Tell them that it is a competition and they will be awarded points for every correct item they add. Explain that they cannot add two in a row and if you find two in a row in their colour, they will lose points. They also cannot repeat something that has already been written on the sheet.
5. You can explain to students that they shouldn’t bunch up at one sheet with the person with the marker. Other team members can be waiting with ideas at other sheets. Or you could give them a couple of minutes to discuss their own strategies. I’ve even seen students throwing the marker to each other around the classroom.
6. Tell the students to start and stand back!
7. Stop the activity whenever you want.
8. Go over the sheets and cross off any examples that are incorrect or that are repeated. You can explain the errors, if you’d like.
9. Get each team to count up the number of correct contributions to determine the winning team.

Universal Activities

Sheets used for brainstorming before writing about a camping trip

Natural Features

Animals and Insects

Equipment

Supplies

Clothing

Weather

Verbs followed by gerunds/infinitives

Do you promise...
to study
to do your homework
to come back?
to play with me
to stay in touch with me
to pay the bill
to be a good friend
to bring beers to the party
to get married?

Do you appreciate...
being here
staying with me
eating pizza
being in your country?
being alone with me
Contacting your friends?
Telling me these words

Can you imagine...
being with me
staying in Alaska
traveling around the world?
Having an affair.
working in Canada?
living on the moon
sitting in a castle.

Do you refuse...
to do your homework
to arrive early
to get married
to take a shower
to see your teacher?
to do laundry

Have you decided...
to be a doctor?
to be alone?
to go to Paris
to save money
to have children?
to travel around the world
to use my book
to change homes?
to stay in T.O.
to leave the country?
to make a movie.

Do you miss...
being with your family
being with your friends?
seeing your family
eating Mexican food
walking in your city?
waiting for the subway
having a girlfriend

Quiz Show Final Stage



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

As the name suggests, this activity is based on the final stage of the popular game show Jeopardy. In Final Jeopardy the contestants are given one question to answer and they write it down without anyone being able to see it. Then all the contestants' answers are displayed, the correct answer is given and we can see who got it and who didn't. I decided to adapt Final Jeopardy to the classroom in order to solve some problems that were occurring when I tested students' ability to produce a correct sentence involving the target grammar or vocabulary. I would ask individual or pairs to produce a sentence and then when I asked them to read them out, students who listened



to the first correct sentence would quickly change their own before being called on. Not only did it prove difficult to assess whether all the students were able to produce a correct sentence on their own, but the whole procedure took time as every student had to be given a chance to read. Final Jeopardy provided the ideal solution. I gave each pair or individual student a sheet of paper and a marker. They wrote their sentence and then held it up when instructed to do so. It then became obvious who had been able to produce it correctly and the students benefited by being able to look around and instantly compare their answer with those of their classmates. And this took only a minute or two. It is really easy for the teacher to then correct and to deal with errors, especially those made by more than one team. If you can get hold of some small whiteboards, you can use the activity for several sentences in a row without wasting piles of paper. If you do do several sentences in a row, you can make it competitive by awarding points for each correct sentence. In the actual Final Jeopardy, contestants are required to wager money before answering the question. You can make this version more competitive by getting students to do the same.

Materials

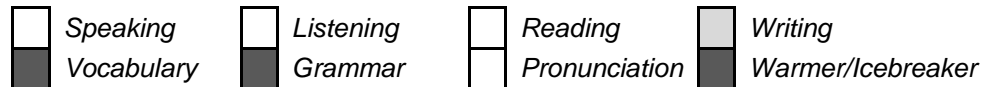
- one sheet paper (or half-sheet) or small board per student or team
- one marker per student or team

Procedure

1. Establish the target language you want the students to practice.
2. Put students in pairs or threes, unless you want them to work individually. Hand each group a marker, a sheet or half-sheet of paper or a small whiteboard.
3. If you want them to wager on whether they can produce a correct sentence with that target language, give them a money amount, say \$1000, from which they can decide how much to bet. Get the wagers from them and write them on the board.

4. Tell them to write a sentence using the target language. If you'd like, give them a time limit. Tell them not to look at what other students are writing.
5. When students have finished tell them to all hold up their sentences simultaneously. Ask them to look at what other students have written and you can ask them which sentences they think are correct.
6. Point out errors and discuss, if desired, and then award points.
7. Repeat, if desired.

Miming



Miming is a great way to deal with grammar or vocabulary because it relates the language to the action, thing or concept it represents rather than the students' first language. And unlike second language explanations, miming relates immediately and directly to the linguistic item. Of course, teachers have been using miming, probably for centuries, to illustrate the meaning of words and some grammar structures, especially the present continuous. However, there's a lot more you can use miming for than just eliciting, "You are playing tennis". If you set it up properly, you can use miming to represent almost all the tenses and other structures, both grammatical and lexical. See below for some ideas.

Once the item has been mimed, you can elicit what it was from the students or you can allow them to confer with a partner or two before stating it or writing it down. Miming can also be used effectively with the above activity, *Quiz Show Final Stage*, with the mime being the prompt for the sentences on the cards. You can mime the grammatical or lexical items yourself or get the students to take turns doing them. Then they have to discern what is being demonstrated and write the appropriate sentence. For some grammar and vocabulary you might want to make it easier for them by narrowing it down. For example, let them know that what's being mimed is a phrasal verb or a sentence using the past continuous. Another way to make miming competitive is to provide two or more teams with identical lists of items to mime and guess. Then they race to finish them first.

Materials

- none, unless for *Quiz Show Final Stage* or you want to provide cards to cue the mimes

Procedure

1. Make sure students understand what miming is and that they will not be allowed to speak.
2. Establish the type of target language that is going to be mimed. Let the students know if it is grammar or vocabulary and, if necessary, narrow it down even more.
3. If you are miming a list of items, give each student cards with items to mime. You can have two or more groups racing to finish miming the same group of items or you can have them mime different items on cards and then switch each group's cards and do it again.

4. Establish whether you want the students to call out what they think is being mimed or write it down. Also let them know if they can confer with other students.
5. Either mime the items one at a time and elicit the language after each one or have the students write down each one in succession and then check their answers with other students afterwards. You should have a master list, preferably on an overhead transparency for them to check their answers.

	Instructions for miming	Target structures
Present Continuous	Mime continuous actions	“You are drinking coffee.” “You are playing guitar.”
Present Perfect	Mime present result of a past action	“You’ve hurt your arm.” “You’ve lost your wallet.”
Present Perfect Continuous	Mime the present result of a continuous action that has just stopped	“You’ve been running.” (out of breath) “You’ve been drinking.” “You’ve been crying.”
Past Simple	Mime actions and then allow a little time (minutes) to pass before eliciting. Works well with written response in the form of a list.	“You woke up. You brushed your teeth. You combed your hair. You shaved. You ate breakfast. You got dressed.”
Past Perfect	Use two participants and have one finish an action before the other does another action.	“When X arrived, Y had eaten.” “When X woke up, Y had gone.”
Past Perfect Continuous	Use two participants and have one finish a continuous action before the other does another action	“When X sat down, Y had been drinking.” “When X walked in, Y had been crying.”
Future: “Going to” for predictions with evidence	Mime the evidence of a future event or action.	“You are going to have a baby.” “You are going to throw up.”
Future: Present continuous for arrangements	Two participants mime what future activity they are going to do together and show the time with their fingers.	“They are eating dinner at 7.” “They are playing tennis at 2.”
“Going to” for future plans or intentions	Mime the action that is going to take place in the future.	“You are going to go to sleep.” “You are going to read a book.”

Future Continuous	Mime a continuous action that is going to take place in the future and use your fingers to indicate the time.	“You will be watching television at 8.” “You will be sleeping at 2.”
Passive	Use two participants and mime one participant doing something to the other.	“X is being given a book.” “X was screamed at.”
Wish	Mime the thing or situation that is being wished for.	“He wishes he were on the beach.” “She wishes she were taller.”
0 Conditionals	Mime the two parts.	“If he watches TV, he falls asleep.” “If she eats too fast, she gets a stomach ache.”
1st Conditionals	Mime the condition and the result.	“If she studies hard, she will pass the exam.” “If he forgets his watch, he will ask for the time.”
Question Tags	Mime anything and students have to add a tag to it.	“He’s drinking, isn’t he?” “They are talking, aren’t they?” “He has been drinking, hasn’t he?”
Jobs	Mime actions which suggest different jobs.	“She is a bus driver.” “He is a chef.”
Idiomatic Expressions	Mime them in the literal sense.	“He let the cat out of the bag.” “It is on the tip of her tongue.”
Phrasal Verbs	Mime phrasal verbs associated with actions.	“He is putting on his coat.” “She is opening up her book.”
Clothing	Mime nouns by indicating the use and shape.	“He is wearing boots.” “She is wearing a bathrobe.”

Assemble the sentence



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This activity was developed by a former colleague, Cathy Dobb. It's a simple yet effective controlled practice activity that can be used with any structure. It allows students to be creative as they are put into groups and told to compose sentences. Once they have done that, the sentences are scrambled on bits of paper and handed to another group to reassemble. This activity is ideal for dealing with structures because, in composing sentences, the students will have to get the form correct as well as deal with meaning when developing the context around the structure. After the sentences are passed on to the next group, meaning and form will again have to be dealt with in trying to assemble them so that they make sense.

You may want to have students compose and then reassemble more than one sentence, depending on the level of the students and the complexity of the structure. For example, if you were dealing with question formation with beginners, you might want to deal with one sentence while at higher levels, you might want to go as high as three. Dealing with three simultaneously is more challenging and it helps students identify the parts of speech as they will, for example, have to isolate the nouns and decide which ones could be subjects of which sentences. You might also want to use this activity to review grammar by dealing with different structures (e.g. 1st, 2nd and 3rd conditionals). Beyond the target structure, students will not only get general practice in composing sentences but they will also be dealing with other aspects of sentence grammar like articles, prepositions, adverbials, etc.

Materials

- lots of little rectangles of paper to write words on

Procedure

1. Put students into pairs or, preferably, groups of three.
2. Tell students what structure you want them to include in their sentences and how many sentences you want them to write (1 – 3). If you want, give them a minimum word limit per sentence and tell them not to capitalize or use punctuation (except apostrophes).
3. Tell them to compose their sentences and write them in their notebooks. Monitor during this phase and correct any errors.
4. Give them the little pieces of paper and tell each group to choose someone who will be the writer.
5. The other members of the group dictate the sentences slowly to the writer who writes each individual word on a different piece of paper.
6. Once all groups have finished, get them to scramble the papers and hand them to another group.
7. The groups try to reconstruct the sentences and check with the team that wrote them to see if they are correct. Monitor during this phase and make note of things they have difficulty with.
8. Discuss anything that students posed problems for the students.

Cards for past perfect practice

we

were

hungry

because

we

hadn't

eaten

all

day

Strip Race



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This is a really motivating activity that can be used with any written text or listening tapescript. The activity gets students working together using clues to find words, phrases or structures in the text. You need to provide the clues on strips of paper and each strip should be numbered. Students work in pairs or groups of three and take a strip from a pile on the teacher's desk, locate the answer in the text and write in their notebooks along with the question number. They check their answer with you and if correct, continue with another strip. First team to complete all the strips wins.

The clues that you provide can be based on form (e.g. find a three-part phrasal verb) and/or meaning (e.g. find a word which means...). When dealing with meaning, students will have to consider the context of unknown words or phrases to find what the clue on the strip is referring to. This is good practice with the valuable skill of determining meaning from context. When dealing with form, the activity raises awareness of various lexical or grammatical structures used in the text and, it can be linked to genre analysis if you get students to look for linguistic items that are typical of that genre. For example, you might want to draw attention time clauses in a narrative text. Both the meaning and form related questions encourage autonomous learning as the skills can be applied whenever students encounter texts.

Materials

- strips of papers with clues (total should be more than number of teams)

Procedure

- teacher's answer sheet with the search items numbered
1. Prepare a set of strips of paper where each strip will instruct the students to find a particular word, phrase or structure in the text (e.g. "Find a word which means..."). There should be more strips than numbers of pairs/teams, by at least one. Number the strips in the same order as the items appear in the text and spread them out on your desk.
 2. Tell students the total number of strips and have them write the numbers vertically in their notebooks (i.e., 1- 10).
 3. Refer students to the text involved and tell them they will have to come up to your desk and grab a strip. Tell them that they are to take it to their partner and then search the text for the item referred to on the strip. When they think they've found it, they check it with you. If it is correct, they write in their books. You can specify if you want them to write the clue also. For vocabulary, it is probably best as the clue will often be the definition. Then they can take another strip. If incorrect, they can try again or they can go on to another question and try to get back to it later.
 4. Start the race. Write the numbers 1 – 3 on the board and tell the first team to finish to write their names beside number 1 on the board, likewise for second and third.

5. Stop the race after the first three teams are finished. Let students confer with the teams who have finished to get the correct answers for those they missed.
6. Take up any answers that may have proved difficult for the students.

Samples

1. Find a phrasal verb which means to knock something over.

2. Find a third conditional.

3. Find a verb that means to begin.

4. Find a three-part phrasal verb which means to get an idea.

5. Find a phrase that means to reveal a secret.

6. Find an adverb that means to do something carefully.

7. Find a word that means to think about something.

8. Find a reporting verb that means to speak loudly.

9. Find a noun which is a synonym for a job.

10. Find a word which is the opposite of aggressive.

Error Correction Race



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This is a fun way to give students controlled practice with grammar or vocabulary. Students are required to work together to create accurate sentences with the target language. Depending on the target language chosen, accuracy can be judged based on form or meaning or both. For complex grammatical structures like conditionals, the challenge will be for students to correctly create the form while for vocabulary, the emphasis will probably be more on getting the meaning correct. The students are given a certain number of strips of paper, usually around five, and the object of the game is to write the as many correct sentences as possible out of the total number of strips. The incorrect sentences will be put in a separate pile and, in the second stage, students will compete to see who can correct the most of those.

This activity could be used for controlled practice with grammar where the students have to write a number of sentences using the same structure. Or, the teacher could stipulate that each sentence be different in some way, for example, students could be asked to write sentences in the affirmative, the negative and the interrogative, or perhaps each sentence would be written in a different person. For vocabulary, the obvious thing to do would be to get students to use a different target word or phrase in each sentence. The list of target words or phrases can be written on the board.

Materials

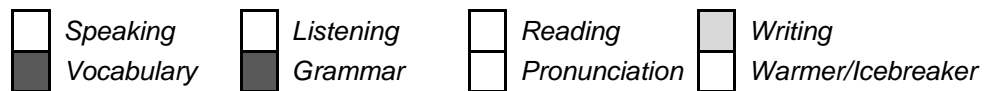
- strips of paper

Procedure

1. Decide how many sentences you want students to write and prepare strips of paper so each team will have that number, for example, five.
2. Put students into pairs or threes.
3. Give each group a different coloured board marker or a different section of the board. Tell them the object of the game is to get the most correct sentences on the board. You will use their colour or section to count their contributions afterwards.
4. Tell students what grammar or vocabulary you want them to practice. List target language on the board, if necessary.
5. Explain to students that each team is to send a member to your desk to take a strip of paper. When they return they have to work with their teammates to write a sentence on the strip including the target grammar or vocabulary. Establish the word minimum for sentences. Longer sentences are more likely to contain mistakes. For example, if you don't set a minimum limit for a present perfect sentence, you're more likely to get something like, "I've been to Paris", rather than "I've been to Paris last year".
6. Students take the first strip of paper and write their sentence.
7. When they have completed the first strip, they must show it to you. If the sentence is correct, tell them to write it on the board either in their colour or in their section.

8. Once they have written it on the board (you can establish that the team members take turns coming up to you and writing on the board), they give the sentence to you and you put it in a pile of correct sentences.
9. If the sentence is wrong, they don't write it on the board and you take the strip from the student and put it in a pile for incorrect sentences. Tell the student to take another strip of paper and return to their partners to write another sentence. If you have a list of five lexical items or different grammar points, they have to move on to the next one on the list.
10. Once all the teams have completed their five sentences, whether correct or incorrect, tell them that each team is to send a member to your desk to take a sentence from the incorrect pile and they will return to their team members to try to correct the sentence. Once they think they have corrected it, they are to show it to you. If it is correct, you tell them to write it on the board. If incorrect, they put it back in the pile and take another one
11. Once all the sentences have been corrected or the students have reached the point where they cannot correct any more, get each team to total up their sentences on the board to establish a winner.
12. Take up any sentences they couldn't correct and any corrected mistakes which you think are worth focussing on.

Paper Strip Test



This is a great activity to get students to test each other on grammar or vocabulary. The activity could be used to review language from a previous class or it could be used for controlled practice right after the new vocabulary or grammar is explained. It's a completely student-centred activity as it is the students who write questions for other students. The questions are written on strips of paper and then the papers are collected and numbered and dealt with in a similar way as in the *Strip Race* activity. The difference with this activity is that the students need to check with the students who wrote the question to find out if they have the correct answer. Students enjoy this activity because it is a competition to see who can get all the answers first.

You can have students working in pairs to write the questions and after you can have them working in pairs to answer them. If you use pair work, you will need to have at least one finished test question for each pair. If you are going to have students answer the questions individually, you can still have them composing the questions in pairs but you will need to have at least one finished question per individual student. If you have each student or each pair write one question each, you should add a question of your own to make sure there is always an extra question. Then you have to establish what grammar or vocabulary you want them to test. If you are dealing with vocabulary, you will need to assign each individual student one word that they are to write a test question for. If you have more students than words, you can get some pairs to write two different questions featuring the same

word, or a different form of it, e.g., “study”, “studying”, “studied”. The easiest way to assign the words is to write the list on the board and have each student come up to the board, choose one and then cross it off.

Once you’ve established what each student is supposed to test, then you need to establish what type of test question you want students to use. The type of question will depend somewhat on the target language as some types are better suited to vocabulary and others to grammar. Below is a list of different types with examples.

Basic question

- What does *assemble* mean?
- What word means to make something from small parts?
- What are your plans for next Saturday? (future forms)

Multiple choice

- The water level has _____.
A. rised B. risen C. rose
- He takes _____ his father.
A. on B. over C. after

Gap fill

- He _____ the furniture from IKEA.

Gap fill with key word to transform

- If I _____ (know), I wouldn’t have gone there.
- Most parents think _____ (educate) is important.

Key words

- If / I / know / Mary / there / I / not go / party / last night.

Note: Keep verbs in base form, use “not” for negatives and use only subject pronouns.

Sentence transformation

- I regret not studying harder in school.
If only _____ in school.

Sentence transformation with key word

- I regret not studying harder in school. **WISH**
I _____ in school

Note: Students must use the key word in the given form in their answer.

Materials

- strips of paper

Procedure

1. Establish the target language students are to test each other on. For vocabulary or multiple grammar points, list the items on the board and have each student (or pairs of students) come up and choose one and cross it off.
2. Establish the type of test question students are to use.
3. Give out a strip of paper to each student, or each pair of students, and have them write their question. If you are going to have students answering individually, make sure the total number of questions exceeds the total number of students in the class. If you are going to have students answering in pairs, make sure the total number of finished questions exceeds the total number of pairs in the class.
4. As students finish writing their questions, tell them to write their name(s) somewhere on the strip and to bring them up to you. Check each question quickly and number them as they come in.
5. When all strips have been completed put them in a pile on your desk and tell students the total number of strips. They should write those numbers vertically in their notebooks. Tell them they will be writing the answers for each question there. You should establish what they should write for each answer as sometimes it will be more beneficial for them to write a whole sentence rather than a word, for example, if it is a gap fill.
6. Students come up and take one strip each (or one per pair) and try to answer it. They cannot write on the strip but when they think they have the correct answer, they check with the student that wrote it (the names are on the strip) and if they are correct, they write the answer in their notebooks beside the appropriate number. Then they return the strip and take another one.
7. The first three students (or pairs of students) to finish, write their names on the board.
8. After three students or pairs have finished, have the rest of the class check with them to see which questions they missed.

His idea might be good. POSSIBLE	.4.
_____ his idea is good.	Kenji

Sample for modal verb practice using Key Word Sentence Transformation

Vocabulary or Grammar Hot Seat



Speaking
Vocabulary



Listening
Grammar



Reading
Pronunciation



Writing
Warmer/Icebreaker

This is a lively activity which gets students to enthusiastically review grammar or vocabulary that's already been taught, either in a previous lesson or earlier in that lesson. It can be used as a warmer or at any other point in the lesson. It is based on a popular game where someone gets a teammate to guess a word from clues but they are not allowed to say the actual word as a clue. In this version, students try to get their teammate to guess a short sentence. Below are some sample simple sentences for some grammar points and vocabulary.



- I have seen Titanic. (present perfect)
- If I was home, I would be happy. (2nd conditional)
- I have put off my dentist appointment. (phrasal verb)
- He has a splitting headache (vocabulary/collocation)

This is a particularly useful activity for getting students to focus on structures. One student will be in the hot seat and their team members will be giving them clues as to the words in the sentence. To do that effectively, they should focus on the part of speech of each word in the sentence. This will draw their attention to the structure of both grammatical and lexical chunks. Even if this activity is used for reviewing vocabulary consisting of individual words, contextualizing the word in a sentence gives students some ideas of how the word is used. To illustrate how students could focus on the parts of speech, here are some examples of clues that could be given for the sentence "I have seen Titanic".

- first word, a pronoun, first person singular
- second, an auxiliary verb, also means to possess
- verb, past participle, what you do with your eyes
- a famous ship that sank – it was made into a film

Materials

- list of sentences featuring target language

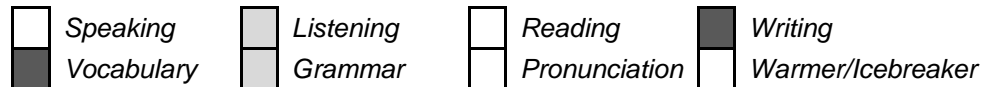
Procedure

1. Put two chairs in front of the board spaced well apart and with their backs to the board.
2. Put students into two teams and get each team to assemble in front of one of the chairs.
3. Explain that each team will send a member to the chair. They will be sitting with their backs to the board. You will write a sentence on the board which the students in the hot seats cannot look at. The other members of the team will give their teammate clues for each word in the sentence without saying any of the actual words. The first

student to recite the entire sentence correctly will win a point for their team. Remind them to focus on the parts of speech.

4. Write the first sentence near the top of the board. Start the game.
5. When one of the students correctly recites the sentence, put a mark on their team's side of the board to indicate a point. Then write the next sentence on the board below the first one. Continue with two new students in the hot seats.
6. When you are finished with all the sentences, announce the winners and you can go over any grammar or vocabulary in the sentences which students had trouble with.

Using Words in Sentences



This is a really simple activity that can be used whenever you have a list of target language consisting of vocabulary or simple phrases. After clarifying the meaning the words, you can use this activity to get students to use them correctly in sentences. This is an activity that can be used easily at virtually every level as the number of sentences written and the complexity of each sentence is completely up to the students. The main objective is that the vocabulary is used correctly in an appropriate context.

Materials

- list of target vocabulary

Procedure

1. Write the target vocabulary on the board and point out to students how many words (phrases) there are in total.
2. Put students in pairs or small groups. Tell them they are to work together to write sentences using the target vocabulary. Explain that they will get 1 point for every word (or phrase) used but they will lose 1 point for each sentence they write. So, if there are 10 words and they use them all and combine two in each sentence, they will get 10 points but lose 5 points for having five sentences. Obviously the best score would be 9, based on using all 10 words in one sentence. Give them a time limit and start the activity.
3. Monitor while students are writing to check for correct usage.
4. Stop the activity, ask how many points each team got and get some or all of the students to read their sentences.