Lessons In A Can

We have 100s of lessons here! All with materials to download and use in the classroom. Click and go. The "level" is only what is recommended. Most can be modified for many levels. Enjoy, happy eating!

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# 1 Battleship
Nov 2, 2009 10:14PM

Today I offer a very good way to get low level students to practice and learn the target language. BATTLESHIP.

Play first as a whole class, teams guessing. Later the students play in pairs. Draw a grid equal to the battleship grid on the board. Prepare 6 ships on your own hidden paper. (2 3 squares, 2-4 squares, 2-5 squares. Only horizontal or vertical.

Students from each team ask you, using the target language and try to get a "hit". If they hit, they continue and get a point. If they sink a ship, scream “Battleship” and they get the amount of points the ship is worth (3, 4 or 5) plus the point for the hit. But then they must stop guessing, next team’s turn. Continue until all battleships are sunk. Team with the most points wins.

Then have the students draw their own ships in and play, using the bottom grid. Circulate and help as necessary. I even got a few classes who loved the game, making their own cardboard battleship holders. Just fold hard/thick cardboard and staple together. They glue or paper clip their sheet to the board and play, their paper well hidden. Works like a charm. Here, attached is one sheet. Find many more HERE. Enjoy! Can be prepared by any teacher and used for any grammatical target language….be inventive!

You can also play online battleship in our ARCADE

Battleship Vacation

# 2 Who is it? - Student Created Content
Nov 2, 2009 10:21PM

Today’s Canned Lesson is a quick but very effective way to get conversation started in your class. For low beginners to advanced.

1. Put some pictures of celebrities/famous people on the board. (I just print and use magnets to hold). Describe some an get the students to respond, who they think you are describing. Circle that picture. It is eliminated. Continue until all have been guessed. You may even do this in the form of a point game.

2. Hand out the Who Is it ? sheet. 1 sheet / 2 or 3 students. Students describe a person on the sheet and the others guess. When guessed or if they say “We give up!”, a circle is drawn around the person’s name. It is eliminated. Students continue taking turns until most of the names are eliminated.

# 3 Reading - Spot the Differences
Nov 2, 2009 10:23PM

#3 Today’s Canned Lesson is for mid to higher level students. It’s called Read Aloud and Spot the Differences.

This is similar to the conversation activity in which students look at pictures, describe the pictures, and discover the picture differences. However, this is done with a reading text and students read and listen. In the example below, which is done in pairs, one student reads a text aloud about one animal. The other student listens and reads a text silently until he or she realizes there is a difference. This student informs the partner of the difference in the text. Students write the differences on their texts, and after each student has read aloud, they discuss the differences and decide which information is correct. The teacher can provide the students with a new text which has all the correct information. Students scan it to discover the correct answers.

Sound easy enough? Yes, an instant lesson but make sure you the teacher read these beforehand!

Also, this power point with pictures is a perfect compliment. Students look at the pictures and find as many differences as possible.

Put on the board - In Picture A there is / isn’t ………… but in Picture B there is / isn’t.

# 4 The 3 Wishes Game
Nov 3, 2009 02:57PM

#4 Today’s lesson activity has to do with “wishing”. Practice beforehand the proper grammatical form of stating wishes. Then
maybe tell the 3 genie joke as outlined in the handout — marooned on an island each wishes to be home, the last wishes they’d come back, he’s lonely!

Once you’ve covered that, play the LIE game.

1. Write down 4 wishes on the board, one is a lie and the students guess which one is the lie.
2. Students do the same and others try to guess which is their lie.
3. Handout the cards and tell them they are genies but with only the powers on the cards. They walk around the class trying to get their wishes granted!

Really fun, read in detail on the handout below. Thanks to Jill Hadfield and her great set of Communication Games for the inspiration for this activity which I modified. Have fun wishing!

3 Wishes Game Handout

Mr. X’s Amazing yesterday powerpoint
Mr. X’s Amazing day video

#6 Where the Hell is …. (Matt)?

Nov 3, 2009 03:24PM

This video reviews countries and is really fun for students.

1. Warm up — Show the students one of the “Where the hell is Matt? ” videos. Pause the video and have a student ask others - “Where “the hell” is Matt?” (a good full screen version is in the A/V player. (assorted folder). Put full screen and then keep hitting pause.

2. Activity. - Write some names of countries on the board. Describe a country using the target language of the handout. Students guess which country is being described. Once guessed, cross off the list. Continue with students playing each other in 3s, competing using the handout. Also use this What the Wordle Countries game! Or quiz with this FLAG slideshow.

3. Warm Down. You might use any of the videos on Geography at the movies or any of the games about countries in our Games resources or Games pages. (like Jeopardy / Baam - about countries/flags) This “LILY” video is great too. Play and pause and have a student point out the country before Lily does!

Finally, in pairs, students can play using the attached Which country is it? handout.

# 7.  Retelling - Funny Stories

Nov 3, 2009 03:33PM

Stories are powerful ways to activate language and also help students “frame” and retain language. This lesson about Funny stories is for higher level students but is really fun and engaging. See our Stories/Reading resources for many more resources.

Funny Stories

1. Start by giving one of the funny stories attached (I like to give the 3 wishes story) to one of your better students to read. Ask them to step out of the class and read alone. You will call them back in, in a few minutes.

2. Tell another story to the class. Stop before the punchline and ask them to guess.

3. Give students a funny story (attached below). You can either just chose 3/4 and give these out to groups so each member has a
**#8 Do you believe in.....?**

Nov 3, 2009 06:30PM

This is for higher level students and is a discussion activity. Fits right in with the theme of Halloween.

Start the lesson by asking students about their beliefs regarding a few of the topics. Prompt with “why?”, “How come?” Then students sit in pairs and discuss their beliefs. If they have differing beliefs, they should tell why the believe what they do.

Finally, if time permits, give students a topic and have them do a quick survey - walking around the classroom. To finish up, they tell the class the results of their survey. Many might surprise you! Modify for the culture you teach in - see the attached.

This is what makes the world beautiful - the variety of beliefs!

DD

**#9 Birthday Horoscope activity**

Nov 3, 2009 06:36PM

This lesson activity is for mid to high levels. It practices adjectives to describe character.

First, quiz the students about the zodiac, birthdays etc.... Review months, ordinal numbers. Then ask them to walk around the class, asking everyone when their birthday is and recording the info. / name of the person beside the zodiac category.

Then, the students come together in groups. They should look at the categories of adjectives and write a classmate name under the list that best describes that person. Can lead to lots of discussion but it should be a best fit. Ask them to decide which list best suits you, the teacher, to start the discussion.

After groups have written the names of classmates under the lists, tell the students that each list corresponds to a particular zodiac sign! Ask about different students and what other groups thought was his/her personality profile. Then reveal which sign it is, really.

*** Sagittarius is group 1 , Scorpio 2 etc...keep going clockwise.***

An interesting activity. This will take a full lesson, leave lots of time!

David

**# 10 — Comic books or Mini books!**

Nov 3, 2009 06:47PM

This lesson idea is SUPER and really works. Kids love comics and drawing and it really unleashes the power of “personalization” - meaning that to retain language students have to use it in a personal fashion. Whether that means asking to do something in real life or making their own storybook.

Use the Action story pictures attached. Run through them using the ppt if possible (in our ppt presentation folder) and illiciting response about Mr. D. Then students write sentences about him.

Low level students can use the models and higher levels can add more information. Edit and then students can cut the pictures and enter the edited language into a “mini book”. See the pdf attached on how to create this book.

Finally, share it in class. Students can read and pass their own book around. Start building a class library of mini books, you’ll be amazed at how fast it can grow.

Also see the Action story handouts which can also be used for either pictures or to write a whole comic book.

More on comics later.........
#11 Classroom interviews / radio shows

I find that many students don’t learn how to make questions, early enough. It is a vital skill and especially important if you want to foster dialogue/conversation. No conversation can really happen with questions!

I have found a classroom radio show to be a perfect anecdote. Both for helping students acquire the ability to ask basic questions and for fostering speaking skills. I usually would interview a new student each day, as a class. I called this the “Mr. D. Radio Show”. Eventually, I got higher level students being the MC and I just sat back and enjoyed the “show”.

How? Well, use the Big and Little town identity cards attached. Write down on chart paper, the questions for each of the items (Name, Age, nationality etc…). As the students as a group ask or repeat the questions, the chosen student answers. When you’ve interviewed all the students, have them take an identity ( a superhero, celebrity ) and without asking their name, the students ask questions and guess who…. You can also make this into a classroom activity by having students interview each other in pairs using the cards. Further, the cards can be used for any sort of “find someone who…” game. Simply hand out the cards and give the students a task. For example - find someone who is the same nationality as you. Students go around the room asking. If they find a match, they link arms and continue walking around the room asking “Where are you from?” . This works for birthdays, likes, height, weight, etc…)

Enjoy the interviews. I will also add, the microphone aspect of this works well to get students who otherwise wouldn’t talk, speaking. Especially in Asian countries, giving a student a microphone transforms them and they get some sort of anonymity from it and feel more comfortable speaking.

David

#12 — POP UP CARS

This lesson is for young learners. As you probably know, all young students love cars! (and don’t let the secret out but girls also…).

Students chose one of the 3 popup cars attached. Print them on stiffer/thicker paper. Then, they colour them their favourite colours, choosing from a list. Students then get the chance to describe their car. You can even practice car vocabulary this way.

Not a heavy lesson but one which students will enjoy. I’ve also hung up the cars after they are coloured and glued. Nice way to get some class pride going and it keeps them out of their hands.

You can even play a quick quiz game using the racing car counter attached. Great way to make a boring question and answer game fun!

David

Pop-Up Cars pdf
Car Race ppt

#13 — Teaching English to young learners through sign language! A TPR method.

I recently attended a storytelling workshop led by Cathy Spagnoli. She is an amazing storyteller and uses all sorts of gestures/effects. She also uses ASL , sign language to tell stories and add an extra dimension to them. I got to thinking that this would be an excellent way to introduce the alphabet and even get young students spelling words back and forth. Doing fosters language acquisition and retention and it is a fun, active way to teach English.

You can go through this PPT I made with students. They can try to make the sign. Or if adept, after awhile try to sign the picture shown.

Another great TPR activity along the same way is getting the students to write/draw numbers/words/pictures on each others back or palm. The other student guesses! Great fun and not as easy as it sounds. But a marvelous way to practice.
#15 Using Text messaging to motivate students to write!
Nov 9, 2009 07:57PM

This lesson is a whole language lesson but could also just be part of a writing lesson. For adolescents but might work with adults!

If we are to succeed in the classroom, we have to use methods that motivate more “digital” learners. Language is not just the static thing we so often categorize in under. It is dynamic and comes in many forms. Text messaging is a mainstay of many students lives and we should use it as a way to motivate them to learn standard English.

I have several games called Transl8it, I’ve attached the Pop song version. (the others are in our shared ppt games folder). Students decode the pop song into standard English. They then correct their answers/spelling. Next, play the song clip by clicking the cell phone and sing! A great interactive lesson. Also, can they guess the song and singer?

You can make your own text messaging for your students to transl8 by going to www.transl8it.com Simply enter the English and press the button — out comes the text message! Copy/paste/print and hand out to students to decode into standard English.

There is a page of text abbreviations on this What the Wordle which might be useful. Get more like this HERE. This essay by the eminent David Crystal - Txtng - da gr8 db8 is a good read on this subject.

You might also warm up with this commercial. It says a lot about the digital divide….

#16 Teaching Numbers!
Teaching numbers is a very practical skill that students will appreciate. Knowing how to count isn’t enough! We use and state numbers in many different ways. Students need to be exposed to these.

Prepare — Put up a whole lot of numbers on the board. Prices / temperatures / serial numbers / percentages / decimals / fractions / square roots / math problems / dates / ratios / diameter / length X width / ft. inches etc….

Then ask students a question and from that, they must state the answer that is on the board. Cross each one off as they are asked/answered. Then go over them for pronunciation or review them at the end of the lesson.

Practice. — Students take the handout and fold it in half. One reads/dictates first for their partner. The partner takes down notes and records the numbers. Make sure they know how to ask “Could you repeat that?” and “Could you speak a little more slowly, please?”

After they are finished they unfold their sheet and correct their dictation.

Produce - Students make their own sentences using the model and changing the numbers. Then practice again with their partner.

You might extend with a listening exercise, having students listen and record the numbers stated in a dialogue……

And then after all that, I usually do the song, “Feel like a number” or “1, 2, 3, Gloria Estaphan (attached)

Also, this video is a super “engager” - to get students into the lesson about numbers….. and for kids, The Song of the Count rulz!

I FEEL LIKE A NUMBER doc

#17 Brand Preferences - Stating preferences and using Neither/either Some of / None of.

Nov 9, 2009 08:15PM

This lesson is really interactive and greatly motivating. Students of all levels love to talk about their preferences and discuss brands and which they prefer and why.

Prepare- Warm up with the conversation Ppt Preferences. First have the students ask you about your own preferences. Then in small groups, they follow the ppt and ask each other. After each questions, they must ask “How come?” “…… If you have time, get the students to do the survey at the end. They write down two
opposing things (McDonalds or Burger king) on an index card. They
go around the class asking and then when the activity is partial
finished (don’t allow them to ask everyone unless it’s a really small
class!) as a group, have each student report back.

Preferences

Practice. - Students use the brand sheet to talk about the brands
of goods they prefer and why? How loyal are they? They must state
if they have a brand preference or don’t have a preference (see
attached.)

Produce - Play the What’s my Brand ppt. The first slides are about
many brands. Students have 3-5 min. to write the brand name and
product to as many as possible. Winner is the team with the longest
correct list!

Then go through the top 100 brands. Can they guess the product
and even the country of origin? Play it as a competitive game to
make it even more interesting…..

In the teaching folder, there are even more materials related to
brands. Take a look.

What’s My Brand ppt
Brand Preferences doc

#18 When was the first time
/ last time…. Nov 11, 2009 04:45AM

This is intended to practice the use of the past simple tense and
help students talk about their past experiences. Do you know that
almost 70% of English conversation utilizes the past tense? We
should spend more time on this, IMO.

Warm Up. Give the students some pictures and have them ask you
using the target language on the board.

1. When did you last ....................? 
2. When was the first time you................? 

Students can also ask their own questions but they must state two
additional follow up questions. Who / What / Where / When / How
..... ? / Why.......? / Did you ........

Next, the students use the attached worksheets to interview their
partners. They should also ask follow up questions.

Finally, Students can do a survey about one question and then
report back to the class. I use Index cards for them to record and	tabulate their survey results.

I often use many pictures to just make this lesson into a small
group discussion. A student turns over the card (and I get them
from many sources, see Communication Games in our media fire
folder for a good source, they can be small and of any action,
scene) and the other students ask - When did you last ....? Then,
they also ask follow up questions.

A simple lesson but one which assures a lot of language production!
Especially with intermediate level students.

When did you first / last ... handout

#19 Gossip - "I heard it
trough the Grapevine
Nov 11, 2009 05:00AM

#19 Gossip - “I heard it through the Grapevine”

Everyone loves to gossip. Today’s lesson in a Can harnesses that
energy. It is a very simple lesson which gets intermediate or
advanced level students really producing creative language.

Prepare — Write the following chunks on the board.

1. The word on the street is....
2. Don’t pass this around but.....
3. Keep this quiet but.....
4. I heard it on the grapevine.....
5. Just between you and me ......
6. It’s said that........ (add your own)

Start gossiping about class members but pretend it is true. Get the
students reaction! Ex. “I heard that James is in love with........!”
Pretend it is all true....

Practice - Give each student a blank piece of paper. At the top,
have students write.

I heard it through the grapevine that
(name)……………………………………………..!

Tell them to insert the name of the person sitting to their left and
complete the gossip. Then pass their sheet to the person on their
right who continues spreading the gossip by writing more
information about it and using another gambit or chunk. Students
continue this....it becomes hysterical!

After the papers have made it around the classroom and got to 8-9
students. Collect them and read a few. It will be hilarious. Keep
some for the beginning of the next class to read and correct for
errors/feedback. Post up for students to read on their downtime....

End – Play the song “I heard it through the Grapevine” . Students
fill in the blanks.

Karaoke - Heard it Through the Grapevine

#14 Commercials in the EFL Classroom
Nov 11, 2009 05:35AM

#14 TV Commercials
For this lesson, you’ll need a computer and screen. If not, use the Make a commercial blank dialogue with your students (attached) only.

TV Commercials are great for the classroom! Look in the Commercials folder of our A/V player. Or see this blog post and get a whole list with recommendations for the language points to use for teaching! A purpose or learning outcome is important.

*** When showing a commercial in class, be careful to edit for content.

This lesson focuses on being the video “Media Wise” and learning to analyze a TV Commercial.

First show students a few TV commercials - ask them to tell you which one they liked best and why? Then talk about what things “hooks” companies use to get us to buy items (celebrities, packaging, music, science, sex, humor, surprise, belonging to a group, miracles etc…).

Here’s a suggestion.

Show the nice little film, MEDIA WISE. This can be used with young students or adults. My adult teachers loved it and the language is clear, easy to understand. Ask students to do the quiz afterwards. You might also do the attached Fact or Opinion pair exercise. Students guess if the statement of their partner is truly a fact or an opinion (commercials make us believe opinions are facts!)

Finally, have the students do the blank dialogue of a commercial (altered from one I used long ago in Side by Side) with a partner. Model first for the students. This is really fun and can be hilarious. Afterwards, chose some pairs to perform the commercial for the class!

If you have time or want to extend to another lesson - use the Analyze a TV Commercial chart I made. Show some other commercials and ask them to fill in the categories…..

Analyzing TV Commercials chart
Media Wise download
Media Wise teacher’s guide
Download a whole list of the best commercials (links) for teaching
Our Mixtube playlist of commercials

Here’s a good example of a commercial which has a learning outcome - comparatives/superlatives.

#20 Finish It Off!
Nov 12, 2009 08:43PM

#20 Finish It! The power of Bla bla bla bla….

This is a fun, conversational exercise. It can be used as a filler or as a warm up or extended as a full lesson. Lots of spin off possibilities. It is called Finish it and provides students the opportunity to creatively use language “chunks” those groups of 4/5 words in English that convey meaning and context to language.

1. Warm up: Write up on the board — “Excuse me, what did you say?”……. Speak to students and say a sentence but don’t finish it. Just cough or mumble..Example: “Yesterday I went to &(&(&)” The students have to ask - “Excuse me what did you say?” or their own correct reply (could you repeat that. / I’m sorry I didn’t catch that…)

This can be hilarious and keep asking them and then repeating.

2. Give the students the Finish it cards. In small groups 2/3, one student reads the card and just mumbles...the other student asks them to repeat it and they then read the card or “chunk” again and repeat it.

   Ex.  
   A) “I love to play *)*)*)&^  
   B) “Excuse me, what do you love to do?” (this is a good variety for higher level students to rephrase indirectly) 
   A) “I love to play volleyball in the summer.”

3. Bla bla bla..... You can play this also very effectively by doing it “bla bla “ style. Students read a chunk and then finish it with bla bla bla..... Their partner must repeat the chunk and finish it correctly. Really works on the students active listening skills when done in this fashion.

Try it, this lesson is fun and really relaxes students while making them produce authentic language! It also helps students “notice” language and what chunks of language go with what others.

FINISH IT - Discussion CARD GAME.doc
You might also try one of our http://eflclassroom.ning.com/resources/topics/finish-it “target='_blank’”Finish It Off ppt stories!

The Haircut
#21 - Look on the bright side!

Nov 12, 2009 08:52PM

#21 - Look on the bright side! A lesson practicing the use of “chunks” to respond to information in a good way.....

Warm-up: Put the following “chunks” on the board

1. Look at it this way!
2. Very true but ....
3. Anyways, ...
4. Look on the bright side.....
5. But on the other hand.....

Tell the students some bad news. Really complain! My wife left me! I'm broke! The cost of living is so high! My office is so noisy! etc.......

Let the students respond using the gambits above.

Hand out the activity sheet attached. Students in 2/3 will practice using these “chunks”. One student reads out the complaint and the others offer positive responses... If students finish earlier than others, have them make their own complaints and these are read out to the class or partners who offer to “see the bright side”.

Finally, let them complain to you and you, the teacher, offer your wealth of positive advice!

You might end this lesson with a song - of course “Always look on the bright side of life ” by Monty python would be ideal (and it is in our Karaoke folder, play with the karafun player). But there are many songs that might fit the bill - “walking on sunshine” is another...and in the karaoke folder and quick karaoke. THIS VIDEO would also be very inspirational!

ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF LIFE.doc

#22 — Horrible, Stupid, Funny Jokes

Nov 12, 2009 09:03PM

#22 — Horrible, Stupid, Funny Jokes.

Young learners LOVE jokes. Doesn’t matter if they are in English and hard to figure out - they will try and encounter language. Today's Lesson in a Can is about joke telling and sharing..... Find lots more resources in this vein HERE.

1. Write on the board some responses to jokes.

“That’s hilarious. / That’s stupid”
“ That’s funny / That’s horrible!”
“hahahaha” / How stupid! “
Good one! / I like it ! etc....
“Oh I get it! / I didn’t get it!”

Ask students some very simple jokes like “why is 7 afraid of 8? ” - Because 7, ate 9!” Get them to respond using the above. You can use my Joke of the Day ppt. and see if they get ‘em.

Give each student a worksheet or one worksheet to a pair. They are to work and match up the joke and the punchline...... Afterwards, they tell another partner or group (there are 3 different selections of 12 jokes each) their joke and respond with the target language.....

It can be very funny and it is a good way to lighten up the day/lesson. Enjoy!

Here is one in parting - “have you heard the one about the bed? “Neither have I. It hasn’t been made up yet.”

HORRIBLE STUPID FUNNY JOKES.doc

JOKE OF THE DAY.ppt

These funny stories in our RESOURCES are also great!

Funny Stories Full Screen

#23 - AT THE MOVIES

Nov 20, 2009 07:55PM

#23 - AT THE MOVIES - Movie quizzes, posters, vocabulary and more....

Students love going to the movies and discussing their favourites. This Canned Lesson uses that energy to get students to produce language about movies. It is adapted using the materials found at Bogglesworld.

Materials: worksheets provided / Blank sheets of paper / colouring utensils

Part A - Begin chatting about movies. Favorite / types or genres. Actors/actresses etc....
American / your culture - differences
Label movies mentioned into different genres.

Complete the “At the Movies” sheet. Then talk about a movie mentioning genre/actors etc....students guess which movie it is!

Part B - When finished, they make their own Riddles sheet. Read as a class and guess.
Award points.
Part C - Have the students make a movie poster. Or alternately, they can complete the Movie language sheet for vocabulary review (higher students).

Make sure they include - visual, title, awards won, show times, theatre name, reviews, plot summary. Provide an example. Or draw one together first, on the board.

Make sure you post up the movie posters around the school! They will be proud of them....

#24 Elementary - What Time is it?
Nov 20, 2009 08:08PM

This is a lesson that almost anyone who teaches beginners, will have to do. There are so many ways to attack it but let me just offer you a few activities that are very effective.

1. Use a large flash clock on the screen if you have it. Click here. (more in our Teacher’s Toolbox! )Here are a couple more handy resources - O’Clock / What time is it?

Ask the students “What time is it?” and review the time. Then have them in pairs, ask each other as you change the clock.

If you don’t have the full screen clock — a really great way to do this is with TPR - Total Physical Response. Turn your back to the students and use one arm bent to be the hour hand and the other to be the minute hand. One side of the class asks what time is it? and the other states the time. Then have them do this in pairs also........

Here are two activities from Andrew Finch’s Tell Me More activity book. A super resource.

In the first one - students fill in the clocks and write the time underneath each. Then play bingo.

The second is a game where students ask “what do you usually do at (….o’clock?). This is for higher level students but also practices stating the time.

Finally you can end a lesson with an appropriate song or watch this REAL ENGLISH video about telling the time. A focus on listening skills and pause the video and get students to repeat what time it was......

Now it’s time for me to be back to class!

#25 The Thank you Game
Nov 20, 2009 08:13PM

This works well at the end of a session/course. A very simple activity.

1. Divide the board into two columns. In one, brainstorm the ways of saying “thank you” in English. There are many of them! In the other brainstorm the ways of replying to “thank you”. There are many of them!

2. Practice by saying thank you to students. Example - “thank you for always coming on time, Juan” The students must use a reply that is on the board.

3. Using the Thank you handout, students go around the classroom thanking their classmates. Each time, they check off one item and they can only sit back down after they’ve run off the whole list. ........

A great, personal fun way to teach about saying “Thank you”. Adapted from an idea of Jill Hadfield and her Communication Games.

You might end this with a song - “Thank you” by Dido comes to mind as well as “Thank you for being a friend” (I forget the artist!)

Thank You Game

#26 The Family
Nov 20, 2009 09:20PM

This is a basic theme in EFL and one every teacher should enjoy teaching. It is personal and motivating.

Here are a few lesson ideas and use what you think is appropriate depending on the level of your students.

1. Write some names on the board - name s from your own family/friends. Students should elicit information from you — Who is ______? Relate to them using ______ is my ______ He/she/they is/are ___’s _______. Allow students to ask more questions such as “Where does she live? How old…..? If you are a new teacher, it might even be a nice idea to bring in photos or make a ppt of family pics and students ask about those.

2. After this, give each student a blank A4 sheet of paper. Students have 2 min to write down all the names of people in their own family. They can use their L1!

3. In groups of 2/3, students ask each other about family members. Who is …? Also describe them more, depending on the level.

You can go through these ppts available in the presentation folder to review vocab and get students speaking more....

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

FAMILY

I usually always end by singing "We Are Family". It’s in the karaoke folder. Divide the class into 3 groups. One group sings WE ARE
FAMILY group 2 sings - I GOT ALL MY SISTERS WITH ME and group 3 sings GET UP EVERYBODY SING! You the teacher sing the other parts!

This is also a cool Real English video in our More Videos for the Classroom folder.

#27 Conversation starters…..

Nov 20, 2009 09:29PM

#27 Conversation starters…..

Keeping and / or getting students to start talking is the cornerstone of teaching of EFL as an “art”. A good teacher has a bag of tricks to keep students blabbing and producing language. Even better is to get the students initiating their own conversation.

Today’s Lesson in a Can is not really a lesson but some ideas for generating conversation.

http://iteslj.org has some dandy conversation questions and I’ve included a very handy catalogue of them. Just hit CTRL and click and you will be taken to that topic.

When I am doing a conversation lesson, I ALWAYS have students generating follow up questions. So that they must produce their own language… I put up all the question starters ….Who / What Where….Did/ Does / Will….in a column on the board. If students need prompting to ask a question, I point to the question prompt.

Also, when a student answers a conversation question - the other student(s) must state one or two follow up questions. This is very important to the whole activity of conversation…..

Another great way of generating conversation is “why?” use this word often!!!!

I also play many presentations, just pictures which go across the screen. (see our presentation folder for many) Students ask the standard questions about each slide. Who is it? Where are they? What is he/she doing? etc…..You can use a good photo presentation to illicity all kinds of conversation. Good music also keeps a good mood.

Lastly, I cut up hundreds of small pictures as mini conversation starters. Give a group a pile of cards. One student turns over the card and asks a question (you can also taper this so the students only use some target language like — have you ever ______ and ________). The student on the right replies and the others must ask two follow up questions.

Two great sources of these small pics are all 3 levels of Hadfield’s Communication Games books and also Wrights, “1,000 pictures for teachers to copy” Both in our mediare folder…..

So get your students talking with these few ideas…..!

PhotoAmazing

#28 Presentations and Public Speaking

Nov 20, 2009 09:35PM

#28 Presentations and Public Speaking

This Lesson in a Can can be short and sweet or long and delicious…..just depends on your own needs. Public speaking though, is something most EFL teachers sooner or later must “teach” but as a subject in and of itself, it is a great way to give students speaking confidence and get them producing real language. You will be amazed, if you are patient, how well most, if not all of your students will perform! All of the materials mentioned below are available in our Public Speaking folder

1. I usually begin a public speaking lesson by brainstorming, “What makes a great presenter?”. The students should hit all the bases - Skills / Content / Organization …….. See the full lesson below or the full ppt in our Public Speaking folder.

2. Next, I play one of the Presentation Tips videos and we watch presentations and ask what they can do better…..There are also interactive ppts in the folder which look at the Worst presentation habits and the top presentations tips!

3. Warm up with a game of Angel or Devil. See the lesson material uploaded here…..Students in pairs/ Angel and Devil, state 3 reasons for (angel) or against (devil), a topic — make sure they use transitions!

4. Prepare a presentation! Give out the presentation skeleton (attached) and model a presentation. Discuss the 3 kinds of openings (story/?/Fact). Students then choose one of the topics and prepare a speech. They then “read” their speech in a small group. Change groups several times so they get the chance to deliver it to another group(s).

The next day or if your class is long. Get them to deliver their speech. You might not do evaluations but the Public Speaking folder contains many rubriks and also peer evaluation checklists. The Impromptu speech worksheet has a nice checklist for a presentation.

To extend, you might use any of the included a/v materials. For example I put on the “I have a dream” speech of MLK Jr. in karaoke. I turn off the sound and ask students to try and say the speech on their own. Also, there are a couple of funny speeches you can play for laughter. I also sometimes use Oprah Winfrey’s eulogy for Rosa Parks with the transcript, with higher level students. Also a hit with higher level students is the “I hate Public Speaking” song.

Lots you can do here. Also for quick mini speeches, use the mini cards I made. Give a card to a student and they have to quickly make a short 1, 2, 3 speech…..

Presentation Cloze Doc
#29 - Introductions. Who are you?

Nov 20, 2009 09:40PM

This is a very simple idea and it let’s students “share” themselves and they will have a poster to put up in the classroom to display for others and be proud of their English.

1. On the board, write the following.

Name:  
Age:  
Birthday:  
Family:  
Like:  
Hate:  
Favorite:  
Future:  

Write your own words there (you the teacher). Students to warm up, make sentences about you the teacher. Erase your answers and ask the students on the back of their handout (attached) to write their own answer. Give them 5 minutes. After, in pairs or groups they tell about themselves.

Next, ask the students to write one sentence about themselves for each item.

1. My name is….  
2. I am …. years old.  
3. My birthday is….  
   etc……….  

You can put up the target language or leave it out depending on the student’s level.

Students should help each other to edit their sentences and the teacher goes around the classroom offering help.

Modify the handout as you see fit, to give more room for writing.

Finally, students draw a picture of themselves or their favourite things etc……..Post the work up in your classroom or have some students read them (the most important part of the writing process Publishing! / Presenting!). You might also http://voicethread.com/share/3276/” target=”_blank”>start a voicethread and have students record an introduction….

This is Me pdf

Story Frame Template doc

#30 School is……. (adjectives).

A very simple activity, lesson idea. Today’s lesson in a Can is about adjectives used to describe how a person feels: frustrating, boring, exciting etc….. the _____ing form for a person. (this also might be a good time with higher level students to show / explain the difference between - "The class is boring [to me]" and "The class is bored")

Write the target language from the handout on the board. ______ is / are sometimes _____ing because ______________. Get students to respond about their particular classes and school feelings. Start with school. School is sometimes boring because we have to write quietly. / School is sometimes exciting because we can play soccer etc………..

Then give the students the handouts and ask them to connect as many things with feelings as possible, to express how they feel. In pairs students talk about their answers. You might finish by asking students to write out 5-10 statements on how they feel about certain things….publish on the class wall and let them read about how other students feel!

A great way to talk about school….. You might also try http://eflclassroom.ning.com/resources/topics/grammar-poems” target=”_blank”>a Grammar Poem. There is a good one about “school”.

School is handout.doc
#31 - Top 5 (the best vocab. game)
Nov 25, 2009 05:22PM

#31 Vocabulary review - Top 5

Today's lesson in a Can is an example of how to review vocabulary in a fun way. Not really a lesson but a game that I'd like teachers to know about. It is called Top 5. Very user friendly and I've received so many emails from around the world praising it. I've made many games but since this is so simple, it has become the most popular I believe.

Students are in teams and scoring is both individual and team. They try to guess the Top 5 answers to categories. 1 = 10 pts 2 = 7 pts 3 = 5pts 4 = 3pts 5 = 2pts. If the guess an item but their answer is not in the right position, they only get 2 pts.

There are two basic ways to play:

1) With the worksheet. This is the best way. Students individually write their answers down and score. The team leader collects the team scores and totals. Continue as many rounds as desired. Top team wins and also Top student (total of all the category scores).

2) Without the worksheet. — Put students in groups and they try to guess. If they guess an item on the list they get the associated points and may continue. If it isn't on the list, they lose their turn.

How does the teacher know the answers? Right click and select speakers notes. A small box will appear and move it to the top corner. Cover this on the screen, so only the teacher (you) will see it on your computer. You can also use this method to play Top 5 charades. Students come to the computer and try to act/mime the Top 5 answers until the music stops. Points for each correct.

I've attached the Top 5 elementary version and Christmas version. In our powerpoint games folder there are many more versions for intermediate, advanced and adults. Enjoy! Start Top 5ing today!

Top 5 elementary download
Top 5 Christmas
Top 5 Worksheet download

#32 Total Physical Response and learning the Alphabet - Sign it!
Dec 2, 2009 09:37PM

This lesson is for young learners and is a unique way to teach the alphabet, spelling and some basic vocabulary. What you do is get the students active by having them sign the letters of the alphabet!

Elementary students love acting and using their bodies and this facilitates learning. Play the powerpoint below and have the students sign each letter of the alphabet. If they get good, see if they can spell a word! Review the picture vocabulary as you go along…..Finally, see if they can sign the phrases at the end of the presentation — like "I love you".

A great lesson which teaches more than just English!

Let's sign the ALPHABET!

Let's Sign the ALPHABET! ppt

#33 - Christmas Lessons - "The Joy of Giving"
Dec 2, 2009 09:41PM
Today's Lesson in a Can is about Christmas and I will continue to post some Christmas lessons until the season is in full swing.

This lesson really brings a class together and is super fun and rewarding. Students give gifts to each other (only pictures!) and use target language for saying Merry Christmas, thank you and "you shouldn't have / Why did you! / It's lovely! / It's just what I wanted....."

First, come to class with some pictures you've cut out of a newspaper or magazine. Nice gift ideas. Tell the students it's Christmas and walk around the class giving items. Stop at a student, handing them the picture and say, "Merry Christmas! Students if advanced must reply with more than "you're welcome" and should use one of the above structures (you've put on the board). Keep going around the class until students get the hang of it.....

Next, give students one of the pictures (see attached from Hadfields Adv. Communication Games) and put them in pairs. They must make a list of students names in the class and write down one of the gift items beside it. They may have to ask you the names of the gifts or look them up in the dictionary.

Finally, when they have decided who is getting what gift, give the signal and students will walk around the class using the target language and giving gifts.

To conclude, ask students what they got and which present they liked best (and why!). Everyone in the class will feel great. If by some chance, some students are not getting many gifts, give them some from your magazine collection. This will make them feel great.

Christmas Gifts pdf

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#34 - Mr. Bean’s Christmas - Video in the classroom

Dec 2, 2009 09:50PM

I love using Mr. Bean in the classroom (see our resources here and also our Mr. Bean player! and it’s been a staple over my teaching career. Why? Well because the students love his “style” and also it facilitates a lot of language production because it lacks its own language. Thus, the students have to produce the language, vocabulary, role play whatever......

Today’s lesson is straight forward. Mr. Bean’s Christmas. It is in 3 parts and you will find it in our A/V player. This handout from English4today will guide your students through the video and help check comprehension.

Moreover, I’d play the video twice. The first time, have students describe what Mr. Bean is doing while watching/pausing the video. “Mr. Bean is looking around....” “Mr. Bean is shopping” etc..... even prep the students by pretending to be Mr. Bean before you show the video. Walk around doing goofy things and they have to say....Mrs. x. / Mr. x is ............! (I once did this same thing with a Mr. Has Been lesson plan, hilarious! Another great way to use a Mr. Bean video (or many other videos for that matter) is to put students in pairs. One student watches the video and when not laughing, describes what Mr. Bean is doing to his/her partner who has their back to the screen. Change after a few minutes. Not as easy as it looks/seems!

Anyways, enjoy Mr. Bean’s Christmas!

#35 Christmas Spirit?! The N.Y. Times Lessons

Dec 2, 2009 10:05PM

#35 Legally Jolly! The N.Y. Times Snapshot of the Day

Today's Canned Lesson uses a real neat resource (thank you Nancy Bosch on Classroom 2.0!) - The N.Y. Times Learning Network.

Each lesson is based around the 5 Ws and students complete the exercises and respond critically to the photo and newspaper article. Not hard hitting news but not soft stuff either. Very well done. See it here. This article is an in depth look at a town that banned the display of a creche and also a menorah on city property (no Christmas tree either)!

What’s great about all this is that students can also access after class on the web, to review. Or even ahead of the class, to prepare. All is ready for you! Or assign one student to present the lesson and prepare ahead! I also like this because it is using “authentic” materials for language teaching — the goal if possible for all us teachers....

Here’s another interesting holiday article - Working the Santa Shift.

Click HERE to get all their Christmas/holiday related lesson articles.
Please let others know what you think about this marvelous resource.....

#36 Last One Standing - A new song game...
Dec 2, 2009 10:12PM

Today’s Canned Lesson was inspired by a colleague Jennifer. Last week we held our in-house workshops and basically shared some lessons. She demonstrated a way to teach a song which really was interactive, competitive and fun. I’d heard about it but never “did” it — this is a perfect example of sharing and colleagues learning from each other.....I’d of never tried this in my own classroom without her “push”. See all our Last One Standing videos HERE. Resources HERE.

HOW? —
1. Divide the class into groups.

2. Put up the Powerpoint “Last man standing” and show the vocabulary page (there is a rules page also). Review the vocab in whatever way you find works. Ask the students to draw the vocab. or make sentences but be sure to ask them to “guess’ the song.

3. After you have pre-taught the vocabulary, give students an A4 blank sheet of paper. Ask them to write on of the words on the sheet of paper, BIG and preferably in marker.

4. Then, play the song. Students are standing and if they hear their word, they can sit down. (or vice versa). Here it again, they stand up! Continue and those standing at the end win. Most standing in a group, that group wins. Really fun and afterward play the whole song with the vocabulary highlighted.

Let me know how this works for you. I will make a version with many songs shortly but without full lyrics. Very easy to edit this and do your own songs. Remember, to embed as I did in Powerpoint, you need to convert the mp3 songs into .wav files . Then you can travel with them and don’t need both a sound and a powerpoint file.

This would make a really good camp song activity - so all you camp teachers, take note!

Enjoy.
David

Last One Standing Pop Song Version 1 ppt
Last One Standing Version 2 ppt

#37 The 3 Sentence Game. Variations on guessing games.....
Dec 19, 2009 06:52PM

Everyone knows the 20 question guessing game. (and see 20Q and Akinator for great online versions! ) Well, this game is a variation and just one of many possible variations. First to be demonstrated whole class (put the pic on the screen or overhead) and then students can play in groups or pairs.

It simply consists of a handout with a grid of pictures. I’ve uploaded one that is very usable, from Andrew Finch’s book TELL Me More …a very practical, teacher friendly book of activities for young learners. My fav. game is called the 3 sentence game. Students make 3 sentences using the structures....

1. It can ……. 2. It doesn’t …….. 3. It is ……………

They state their sentences clearly and other students guess. If they don’t guess right, that student gets a point!

Other variations:
1. 20 question style. Students ask yes/no questions until they guess the right one.

2. Concentration. Students cut up two sheets and then lay the cards on their desks. They turn them over and say a sentence, trying to get matches...

3. Snap. One sheet to a group. A caller or a teacher describes and the first in the group to ‘snap” or put their finger on the correct picture wins a point.

4. Bingo. Traditional style with chips or marker. But have the students use full sentences to describe. Other students listen and then select the right picture.....you can even have them cut up the picture, make their own card and turn over when they hear the caller state.....easy way to do bingo.

5. Your own variation!!!!!

3 Sentences Game Andrew Finch PDF
#38 Adv. / Disadv. Angel and Devil - Sequencing information
Dec 19, 2009 06:56PM

I mentioned this lesson idea earlier in the Canned lesson about Presentations. In this activity, students state 3 reasons for or against something in pairs. One person is the angel and gives 3 good reasons using sequential transitions (Firstly, first of all, in the first place / Secondly, furthermore ...... and so on...) One person is the devil and gives 3 reasons NOT to.

First model. The teacher is the devil and gives three reasons NOT to (study - for example!). The students offer 3 reasons TO study. Make sure they order their arguments using transitions.

Then in pairs students play, being angel and devils.....can lead to some lively discussion and really gets students thinking on their feet or the seat of their pants!

Advantages/Disadvantages.doc

#39 BAAM! - A multi level language game / idea using flashcards/pictures
Dec 19, 2009 07:04PM

I got this idea awhile back while listening to a podcast interview of the genki English founder (it’s in our music player). It is called BAAM! and is a stimulating game of chance most appropriate for young learners but adults might enjoy it too (you never know :))

1. Find some appropriate flashcards which will help you practice whatever theme/vocab or language structure you are studying.
2. Divide students into 3s.
3. Put the flashcards into a bag/box. For every 5 flashcards put in a BAAM! card.
4. Students take turns reaching into the bag and pulling out a card. If it is a BAAM card - they must return all their cards to the bag/box. If it is a Flashcard, they must use produce a response. (this can depend on the level and target language. The lowest level of students can just say the word/what it is. The highest can use some language structure like Yesterday I .......... I also often have the student who draws the card produce 3 questions about the flashcard to ask the partners. But this is all up to you - the teacher).

5. The first student with 3 flash cards correctly answered wins!

I’ve attached the BAAM cards and some elementary flashcards that are usable. You can also use any of the many flashcards in our mediafire account. Further, take any ppt and make flashcards by using print preview and choosing Print 6 slides / page. They make beautiful flashcards and it’s a handy trick for many things, ppt - print preview.

Teaching with pictures - a great source of pictures for this activity.

BAAM Powerpoint Templates & Discussion

#40 ZIP - ZAP - Addictive language game
Dec 19, 2009 07:07PM

Today’s Canned lesson is really an activity that your students can do whenever some fun yet competitive language practice is needed. It would be a great activity for a camp or for a party or just as a reward for students. I discovered it when teaching Grade 4 and having my students in the portable on rainy days. I observed the games they played and modified this one for learning. It is called Zip - Zap.

Get the students in a circle standing, best size is 6-12 . One student starts in the middle. The student in the middle is the boss, what they say goes. The winner is last person standing.

The “boss” spins around pointing and saying, zip zip zip......when they stop, the person they are pointing at ducks. The two on either side have to draw and shoot or “zap” the other person. The boss calls the winner. In the ESL / EFL variation, instead of just pointing, the boss says a letter. The two students shoot each other by drawing and saying a word beginning with that letter. The loser dies and must sit down. Continue until 2 students left. Stand them back to back. They pace 3 steps and then draw. The winner, the last person alive goes to the middle as “boss” and you start again......

Lots of variations. Saying a letter is the simplest. But you can do ending in the letter, word association (boss says food, they say a food or associated word), verb - noun, noun - verb, opposites, colours. Country / city or language or nationality etc......

Fun game and the students really concentrate and get into it. Zip - zap. Sounds complicated but anything but. My grade 4s would play this all day if I had let them.....

DD
#41 ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHER!

18 April, 2010 | "When one teaches, two learn."

Dec 19, 2009 07:10PM

This is a very powerful way to teach and also teach and get students to use higher level thinking skills.
I took my inspiration from the Sesame Street song/video. You might play the video and sing the song and I’ve included it in the attached powerpoint.

Warm up — Choose 4 objects and present them to students. Ask the students how they are similar / different. Then ask the students to choose one object and state why it is different. Put up the structure on the board.

The _______ doesn’t belong because ____________________.

Next. a) give students a pile of flashcards or cut up pictures of things.
b) have students write out a pile of words for things on slips of paper.
Ask the students in groups or pairs to play the game and taking 4 random cards/things, state which one doesn’t belong.

Finally, play the attached ppt game. Give students a few thinking songs to make a list for each slide (there are many “doesn’t belongs!” You will find the students will be so creative usually! Give them points for each statement they come up with....

And keep singing the song....One of these things is not like the others...one of these things doesn’t belong. Can you tell me which doesn’t belong .... by the time I finish this song....

NOT like the other things

Not Like the Other Things.ppt

#42 Introducing the teacher and making a "communicatively focused" class

Dec 19, 2009 08:07PM

One of the scariest things can be the first day of class. But this can also be one of the most invigorating for a teacher. If you are prepared and at the same time, flexible — you’ll have a great time getting to know your students and also allowing them to get to know you. It is also essential that you keep things light and in this way, create a very relaxed, warm environment from the get go. Leave the rules and classroom procedures and a well designed (ordered) lesson for the next time. Not the first class.

A great way to introduce yourself is to produce a ppt and have the students ask you questions based on the photos. You can also just bring in some pictures and things about yourself and let them hold them up and ask you! They will ask — Who is she? Where are you? etc.....put up question words on the board for a prompt or in your ppt proper. Also, VIP!!! When a student asks you a question - ask and echo one back. This is a great teaching technique and it allows you to assess that students language level. If they ask, “Is she your mother?” . Answer and then ask, “What is your mothers name? ” or “Does your mother like spaghetti too?” or anything about her/his mother.

Another good activity is for the students to interview each other in English. They can also take on a famous person or characters personality for this. This activity reviews all the basic questions regarding; name, age, job, family, likes etc..... Here is a ppt (see the second part) which can be used for this. Get the students echoing like you and asking the questions back to each other. Also, try to get them extending and asking follow up questions if possible.

Interview and placement test

There are several other icebreaker and other ideas which I’ll save for the next time. But one other one might be to use the basic questions about “favourites” to interview each other . A good list of conversation questions can be found at the Internet TESL Journal. But you’ll have to edit many of these and see my uploaded examples. A good idea here is to put students in pairs. Then after a set time, they change partners and form the questions in the 3rd person. The students have to remember what their partner’s favourites were — not that easy!!!! As always, at the end, do a briefing and review the material in some open fashion.

Have fun introducing yourself to your students! That’s the key, the first day.

David

Interview a Classmate.ppt
#43 — Getting to know the students

Dec 19, 2009 08:22PM

Continuing on from the last Lesson in a Can idea of introducing the teacher......

Getting to know your students will be your top job the first few weeks/month. It is essential that you gauge what they already know but even more importantly, essential that you get to know them as “individuals”. You might not remember all their names or exactly what they each individually like/dislike but you should get a general idea of interests and what motivates them. This should impact what you teach — use their interests and curiosity to drive the content of your own lesson plans.

How to do that? Well, for one you could give a needs assessment. Basically that is just a checklist or quick questionnaire of what things you’d like to know about them. Keep this on file for reference. I’ll upload an example of a comprehensive one which asks students about their own English level and attitude towards learning English. Further, you got to have a Seating Plan for each class. Just make an A4 of squares representing the class and pass it around. Students will fill it in. Each class, have it on your desk for reference. Look at the students, look at the seating plan, refer to the students by name. Pretty soon, you won’t have to look at the seating plan. Also, if you make it quite large, you can make notes beside a student’s name for reference. A very handy tool, a seating plan!

Icebreakers are great ways to get students to mingle and get to know each other. My fav. is the 3 truths, one lie game. See a whole bunch more in this old discussion thread where I outline the 3 truths , 1 lie “snowball fight” game. So many more. I’ve uploaded here a couple for higher level students. One other quick one is to have students write all over an A4, certain key words about their life. For example, purple, 1999, horses, Delaware etc..... They switch papers with a partner and ask each other questions. “What does Delaware mean? Were you born there?” etc..... Teacher demonstrates by writing the key words on the board about him/herself and then students will ask the questions.

Good luck creating a friendly, free and fervent classroom. The attention you pay on the “mingling” lesson ideas early on, will pay off in student motivation and learning in the future (remember Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis!!!).

David

#44 Make a Difference

Dec 19, 2009 08:29PM

This Lesson in a Can is really creamy, really cool and definitely wayyyyyy out there. It’s objective is to get students discussing how they can make a difference. Empowerment, in the narrowest sense.

You might begin this with a brainstorming session on what are the problems in

a) their life
b) their school/community
c) with family/friends
d) the world

Next, engage! Here is a cool karaoke (attached - play with the player available on our Karaoke page) by a cool singer, Raul Midon. Present the karaoke and have them raise their hands when they hear / see certain vocabulary. Write the vocab words on the board. Or have groups listen for different vocab. (you chose!). After, get each group to compete to sing the chorus,

Everybody can be somebody
and everybody
can make a little difference
in this world.

Next, brainstorm together on the board, the graphic organizer attached. Get one or two ideas and have the students in pairs/small groups, complete it with pictures about how they can make a difference. A caption for each one.

Have students present their work afterward or display! I always make this an important part of the lesson and not an afterthought. In fact, it is the most important part — publishing/presenting.

I hope this little lesson idea has made a difference in somebody’s teaching world!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE.doc

#45 Where you from?

Dec 21, 2009 01:04AM

This Lesson in a Can has 2 simple teacher objectives.

1. to demonstrate a whole class “walk around ” activity that teachers can use for any type of language practice or target language.

2. to show the power of print preview for making classroom decorations, flash cards and story boards in ppt. (a very under utilized part of ppts!).

GETTING TO KNOW CLASSMATES.doc

SEATINGPLAN.doc
Where Are You from?

Students will practice the target language of asking “Where are you from?” and answering with a nationality. A very simple objective along with learning some geography.

Engage: Print out some flashcards from the attached ppt about flags. How? Well, open the ppt and go to File and then Print Preview - the ppt will open in a new window, usually black and white. Go to slides and click the arrow. Select 2 slides/page. Print out the pages you want! You now have nice size pictures to use on the board (magnet them to the board) or in class. You can also use this ppt option to create a writing exercise (3 slides / page) or for flashcards for group/pair games (6 slides / page).

Next, give out some of the above “flags” to students. Ask them where they are from. Get them to hold up their flag and say where they are from. You might also engage/warm up by showing the Real English video “Where do you live?”. Stop and ask questions as you go along (it is in our A/V player, click it above!).

Study (practice). Choose 6/7 countries that you want the students to learn. Hand out mini flags (print as above but on the selected slides — rearrange the slides to the beginning of the presentation by dragging) to the students of these 6/7 countries (less if you have few students). They must then wander around the class and find by asking “Where are you from?”, other students from the same country. When they find a match, they link arms and continue finding other countrymen. Put up large flags of these countries on the walls around the class. When the activity is finished, the students go stand under their flag. Ask them, “Where are you from?” and all the students should state - “We are from ….” . Make sure the students greet each other in English before asking!

This kind of activity can be used with any set of flashcards and I call it - the Chain Game. Very task based and students love it and get to repeat often the target language which creates some form of mastery and accomplishment.

Activate - Play the ppt attached. Students in groups take turns trying to answer correctly. All the other students ask in chorus “where are you from?” Groups earn points for correct answers. With higher level classes, you might use the attached worksheet game.

You might also play the Baam game, based on flags also. Or even the “Where the hell is Matt” video in our A/V player. Stop before the place name comes up and ask students to guess “where the hell Matt is?”.

Good luck and happy teaching and exploring both the world and ppt!

#46 Designing a lesson plan. The 3 step plan
Dec 21, 2009 01:18AM

#46 Designing a lesson plan. The 3 step plan.

Today’s lesson in a can demonstrates a simple lesson plan.

Many teachers should write up a specific lesson plan, either for their own sake or accountability (parents, students, administration, officialdom, their memory ;))

You can either use the 1. Prepare 2. Practice 3. Produce layout or the 1. Engage 2. Study 3. Activate framework. Or your own but it should include 3 steps. See this ppt for today’s lesson.

Basically it is about using the past tense and asking about yesterday’s actions.

1. Engage: Play whole class. Draw the squares on the board and get one student to be interviewed. Teams take turns asking “Did you … yesterday?”. If the student answers yes, draw an O , if no, draw an X. Keep going form group to group. first group to hit 5xs or 5Os in a row wins. If no Bingo is found, the student sitting down wins!

2. Study by students playing the game in pairs. Give them each a handout and they try to get bingo by taking turns, asking/answering with a partner. Lots of really good target language production.

3. Engage - Students make their own Bingo card and then play!

You might also play the karaoke video, Oops I did it again for fun! (Available with the player on our Karaoke page)

Lesson Plan Bingo

Lesson Plan Bingo.ppt
Did you bingo.pdf
LESSON PLAN.doc

#47 Lesson Ideas - People
Dec 21, 2009 01:26AM

#47 Lesson Ideas - People

This lesson in a Can focuses in on the target language of …. has / have got ….

This is a fairly common expression of “to have” and should be encouraged to be used by beginning learners. There usually isn’t any confusion if it is introduced and encountered early enough on in the learning process.

I introduce it by describing people.

1. Warm - up. Ask the students about their family. “Has your father got big eyes?” “Has your sister got long hair?” Ask students to
describe their family after writing on the board the following blanks.

I / you have got

he
she has got ———— ears, nose, eyes, mouth, hair, feet, hands, teeth etc...
it

we
you have got
they

You might also practice this with a listening game. Make a statement - “I have got brown hair!”. Students go to the “Yes” or the “no” side of the classroom to answer each statement. (in the middle if its “maybe”.

2. After the students have been introduced to the forms, get them practicing them.

Show the following ppt. Play it as a game if you wish, giving points for correct descriptions. Lots of fun here! Or do it as a writing exercise if wished, where the students write correct descriptions of the people. You might also play the Describe ‘em Pass the Paper game or the Guess Who game attached if students are familiar already with these forms.

PEOPLE

3. Activate! — A) Get the students to write descriptions (4 statements) of a classmate on slips of paper. Collect them and then read or have students read them out loud. After each statement stop and allow students to guess. Whoever finally guesses right, wins and can read their sentences/statements.

Finally to end, sing the song “He’s got the whole world in his hands” — here’s the karaoke file (get the karaoke player on our Karaoke Page). The students can do all the body motions! Then, after singing the song, students can make their own words to sing and change the lyrics. For example group one might select — Teachers and Students. They sing this part and the rest of the class chants - “in his hands”. This can get really silly! (I’ve had students say things like pizza and Pokemon!”

So you sing

He’s got teachers and students
in his hands
He’s got teachers and students
in his hands
He’s got teachers and students
in his hands
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

PEOPLE.ppt

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#48 Breaking English News - Current Events in the classroom.
Dec 21, 2009 01:32AM

#48 Breaking English News - Current Events in the classroom.

Current events are really a great way to stimulate students for language production and provide very relevant, authentic language use and modeling. They also teach students about some very important issues and help make great citizens (this is our job too!). Also see attached at the end of the lesson, the TOP REASONS why teachers should use current events in their classrooms!

www.breakingenglishnews.com
This is an excellent resource for use in the classroom and one which students can also use outside the classroom.

Get many videos of news articles and downloadable resources HERE, on our World Issues page. Just show the video and click the appropriate title below. Here’s an example - The World’s Tallest Building.

The News-Media-David.doc

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#49 What’s your job? What do you do?
Dec 21, 2009 01:38AM

#49 What’s your job? What do you do?

Teaching about jobs and careers is always fun. This open level lesson really can be done a hundred different ways. Just look at the materials, think about your students and DO IT!

Warm up with some TPR. Act and have the students guess your occupation. One group of students must sing - “What does he/she do?” (this gets students to think about the difference with “what is he/she doing?”)

Maybe play this video if possible to activate student knowledge. Real English videos are in our A/V player above....

There are many ppts in our resource folders on jobs/careers. I’ve uploaded a fine one by another sharing teacher Randy. Go through the ppts and have students fill in some of the slides in writing. Then they can complete the attached worksheets. Really provides lots of language structure for talking about jobs....

Careers
Dec 21, 2009 01:47AM

#50 Making storybooks Part 1

One of the “unmotivating” things about teaching English or learning English is its “invisible” nature. I mean, you don’t really have some tangible and physical evidence of your progress or as a teacher, your student’s learning….it is all just “dust” in the wind……. Making storybooks can be highly motivating because it does provide a trace, some evidence of progress, learning, community…….

You can make minibooks either seriously and indepth or in just a quick, mini-book fashion. It all depends on how much time you have and your particular goals. Also your student’s level of interest and level.

But it should be done along this processual line. Please see attached some basic pictures I use for one book (but you can use any story “set” of pictures), as well as a description of two types of books. [kids love the mini books! They fit in their pockets!]

1. Engage the students. — Play the story in video, tell the story in some form. Show the pictures and get them to tell the story. Or have them order the jumbled pictures. Get them talking about the story, the focus here is on them producing the vocabulary for the story orally and getting familiar with the story.

2. Practice. Go through the story. I usually do this with a ppt together. Highlight difficult vocabulary. For each picture have the students write one or two sentences. Then retell the story together.

3. Give the students the pictures. Show them how to make the book and if possible, some examples of previous made books. Explain about a title page, numbering pages, using both sides of the page. Make sure they make lines under their pictures!!!! for the text. Then get the students cutting and pasting and making their books. Circulate and help with editing as appropriate. Hold up books for the class now and then and point out great features. This really motivates them.

4. Publication/sharing. The most important part of the writing process. Select students to read their books or have a time period of DEAR (drop everything and read) where students can explore/share quietly each others books. This stage is very important.

IF you do bookmaking, you’ll really be surprised by the increased pride and confidence of your students. t really works! It also uses all kinds of other learning styles which is so important. Finally, you will also have something “concrete” to show the principal or parents about what is happening in your classroom. Evidence!!!!
Once students have created some storybooks, you might want to get ambitious and have them go through the same process but this time on the computer! Right, our students are now so “digital” and we can motivate them immensely by having them make books online to share.

They love the process and they are learning so much more than just English. A good site to start with this is the Tarheel Reader!

Skills that will stay with them a lifetime…..

A teacher is always more than a teacher.

Here’s my fav. digital Story. Get more on our STORIES page and in VIDEOS.

I made the above presentation using Photo Story 3. Photostory 3 is a very easy to use application that is a free download from Microsoft. See the attached handout which walks you through the process or also this blog post.

Lots there to teach you but it is very easy. Just add photos, add music, add text and you are set….. Here is another example from my library.

Make sure if your students make some digital photostories, they share.

Here are also a few links with much more about digital storytelling and many student produced examples….

The Gift of Story
http://www.aaronshep.com/storytelling/GOS.html
Effective Storytelling http://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/eest.htm
Classroom Ideas
http://www.tellingtales.com/Teachers/Teachers-Frame.htm
Digital Storytelling http://www.digitales.us/
http://www.inms.umn.edu/elements/
http://www.coe.uh.edu/digital-storytelling/
All the links you will ever need about stories
http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/storylinks.html#Storytellers %20Collections

Resources: Photostory 3 and Karaoke how to
Storytelling.doc
Digital Story Lesson Plan

Surveys are a super "student centered” friendly way to get the students practicing target language and speaking. They are easy to arrange and give lots of freedom for students to frame their own personal questions.

How do you do them?

It is really easy. I usually do my own quick survey of students and write the question on the board. For example, “Have you ever been to Japan?”

Under the question I write 3 columns, Yes / Not sure / No. I then ask students super quickly and each time I stress they must ask me back in return. Echoing is a principal of teaching that I use and teach to the students. That way, whatever the activity, there is always continuous and multiple "encounters" with the same language…..

After I have asked everyone, I state my findings. I write on the board.

“I found out that 4 students have been to Japan.” Or write this helper:

All
Most
Many
Some of us .................
A few
Not many
None

Next, I erase out that part of the above written in bold. Students are then given a recipe card or just slips of paper. They have to write out a question and then go survey the class (and reminding them to echo and answer in full sentences!). Then either in small groups or the full group, students report their findings…

Make sure you use a timer for this activity. The point is not for everyone to finish asking everyone. It just is a “sample” survey and if they ask, explain this to them…..

Check out this unique and “active” way to do a survey! YES, NO, MAYBE.
A great way to practice all kinds of target language and get the students out of their seats and speaking on task!

Tomorrow, a bit about quizzes for higher level students!!!!

#53 Personality Quizzes
Jan 24, 2010 01:29AM

With higher level students a teacher can move more into giving quizzes. Personality quizzes, What kind of person are you.....style quizzes work wonders. One rule I have is to try and make them communicative. How?

Simply put them in pairs with each person having a different quiz. They then “interview” the partner and quiz their partner. After they are finished they provide them with the results and then switch roles. In this way, the quiz is communicative and also they get to encounter the language of the quiz TWICE.

I also will be starting to put many more quizzes online. I use Quibblo and like their updated format. Students can retake the quiz online and also begin the process of sharing and creating their own with classmates. A remarkable tool. Take some of our quizzes there or find them featured from time to time here on the main page. Here’s a popular one I made so you can find out your classroom management style.

I’ve uploaded a ppt with answers and a pile full of simple quizzes you can use in the classroom (big thanks to my colleague John for sharing the book from which they are adapted). All are scientific quizzes with neat questions.....Enjoy!

Those working with teachers or teaching very high level students, could find lots on my teacher training reflection page. Including a nice quiz for the MBTI.

Quizzes
Personality Quizzes Power Point

Stories and narratives are super if at the appropriate level but they are even more powerful if they have built in repetition of the language.....

I have attached my own EFL adaptation of this story, for performance as a play. Use this for a whole lesson, giving students parts or as a special performance for assemblies, camps or parents. It will be so much fun and takes a minimum amount of preparation and prompting.

Higher level students can expand the play/script.

The karaoke version is in our player. Make sure to show the book first and also preteach any of the vocabulary AFTER the first viewing and then view again. It is always imperative to just let the students try to figure things out FIRST and then go over the vocab. Not the other way around like I see so many teachers do it. Always expose the students to the text / script/ listening first and then REPEAT after going over comprehension and vocab. They benefit from the repetition.

Have fun with this story!!! Tell me what you think of my adaption please!

Get more materials in our Play section and this conversation.

The Play > The Little Mole Adaptation

#55 Webquests
Jan 24, 2010 10:56PM

#54 Plays in the Classroom
Jan 24, 2010 01:40AM

The little Mole is a popular kids book. A great read and I heartily recommend the book for young students. What I like most is that the language is repetitive. For EFL students, they need exactly this.
I really think TBL (task based learning) is a great method and especially one of its most potent weapons — Webquests. Students scour the internet to obtain and then present info. on a given topic. I’ve put up some great links and webquests on a previous thread on EFL Classroom 2.0.

Generally, a webquest consists of an Introduction (statement) / Tasks / Process / Evaluation (rubric usually) / Conclusion. Here’s one teacher’s write up about using them in the classroom. Here’s an example. See more attached or in the above discussion.

Today, I’d like to introduce another, about Korea. Produced by Jaekyu Lee and Geunjae Lee, two Korean Americans living in Chicago and participating in the Cabrini Connections program, a tutoring program from unprivileged kids.

Their S. Korea webquest has it all - Intro. Activities, Rubric — all well laid out and designed/presented. Awesome. A great lesson for students from anywhere in the world. They also have a soccer webquest but I think it falls short in the “simplicity” factor but is interesting nonetheless.

Thank you, both of you and happy webquesting everyone!

#57 Teaching with only a blank piece of paper - Part 1
Jan 24, 2010 11:11PM

Teaching, whatever you think it is, is really simple. Emotion/desire plus knowledge = understanding/learning.

In my early days, I learned to teach at a school which had almost nothing. No photocopier, no textbooks, no video, certainly no computers! Just chairs, a chalkboard and paper. So I taught and I learned a great deal of how to teach effectively with just the basics.

’All I got is a blank piece of paper”
3 words and the truth.
All I got is a blank piece of paper
The rest is up to you.”

Recognize the original? (Red guitar - U2). Forgive my bad poetry but here I’ll offer up some very quick ideas for a full lesson which EFL teachers can do with minimal (none) preparation and maximum language learning effect.

The first in this series is the simplest. Kids love to draw and this “draws” on that. It is really just picture brainstorming.

Ask the students what they see on the blank blackboard. They will say “NOTHING!”
Ask them what they see. Students will offer all sorts of things. When they reply, quickly sketch/draw and write the word beside it.

Give the students a blank piece of paper. Ask them to draw what is on the board. When everyone is ready, continue as above with students saying what they can see, the teacher drawing/writing the vocab word and students following along drawing their own pictures. When finished, students can personalize their picture and get a few of the higher leveled students to present. You can even have them do pair work, describing what is in the picture or asking “What can you see?” to each other. Finally, collect the work and put the best pictures up on the wall.

You can do this in a general fashion, as I just described or in a more focused fashion. Say the topic was, My neighborhood. The class can draw and label. Works for all sorts of topics, just depends how inventive you are.....

Tomorrow - how to teach about apartments/houses using just a blank sheet of paper.

#58 - Getting to know the teacher and classmates. Part 2
Jan 25, 2010 09:29PM

I use a blank piece of paper to introduce myself to new students and also get them talking and communicating about their own lives in the first class. Of course you can use the fancy ppts for photos of yourself or distribute photos around the class, but often just some words on a blank piece of paper will do.

1. Before class, write all sorts of words with some reference to yourself, all around the board. Diet Jane small dogs orange Vienna etc......
Then ask a student a question using the words. “Juan, do you like small dogs?” The student replies and then asks you... “Do you like small dogs teacher?” Or you can do this the other way around. The point is, students get two opportunities to use the language modeled and also begin to understand communication is a two way street. As an EFL teacher — get used to “parroting”, it is an invaluable tool in your teaching tool kit!

Continue asking/responding to questions based on the words on the board. As each one is mentioned, cross it off or erase it.

2. Give each student a blank piece of paper. Tell them they have 3/4/5 minutes to write down all over the piece of paper, words referring to themselves.....(use a handy timer — see our Practice page and click one under Teacher Tools). Then in pairs or 3s, students repeat the modeled process as described above. Asking and answering questions about their lives.

3. If time permits, you can change students from groups and have them tell a few details about their previous partner. Or you can go around the class, asking students to say one interesting thing about the partner they interviewed.

This makes for a great, communicative class - all with just one sheet of paper!!!

Other Options: Try the What the Wordle way. Make a wordle with key words of yourself and then students can ask questions. Here’s an example for myself. Also, try the attached Pass the Paper game for students in groups to play and get to know each other! Or try BAAM - Ask the teacher!

I’ve uploaded a slightly more complicated version of this from Communication Games for your reference. It’s deals with an activity about guessing about classmates. Also a handy interview ppt for introducing classmates to each other......

Resources: Interview a classmate ppt Guessing about classmates Getting to know your classmates.doc

#59 - Describing your family - Part 3
Jan 25, 2010 09:40PM

Okay, so you only got one piece of paper / student. Okay, so you got to do a lesson on the family. Okay, so how you gonna do it?

Easy! Use your piece of paper (the board). Write down names of family members and friends all over the board. Then, model the target language on the board. Write —

Who is _________? (name) is (name)’s _________!

Ask students about other classmates.

Then have the students ask you. Answer and you the teacher reply using the above target language. After they ask about one name, they may ask some follow up questions. Where does she live? How old is he? What does she do?...

Write these under the above target language.

After a name is spoken, cross it off on the board. When you’ve gone through all or most of the names — tell the students to write down names of their family on the blank piece of paper. In their native language!!!!!! Give them a set time to complete it 2-3 min. (use a timer).

Then, walk around and ask a few questions to different students using the target language (or bring one student to the front of the class). Who is ....? etc..... In pairs students switch papers and discuss about their family members.

Simple and works like a charm. Just walk around monitoring students and adding to their own mini discussions. You could extend this by having them do a family tree poster with the English family vocab. beside each name.....

Here’s a handy ppt about conversation and the family....

Next — How to teach about apartments/housing using only a blank piece of paper!

#60 - Describing Apartments - Celebrities Part 4
Jan 25, 2010 09:53PM

Okay, Okay, Okay! I won’t bore you much longer with the one piece of paper thing! More technology oriented lessons shortly! But I could go on forever with ideas under this category.....

Today’s lesson is focused on using the vocabulary for the Home or Apartment. Here’s a briefer version of that below.

1. Before class draw a wall / room only blueprint outline of your apartment or home on the blackboard. Label only the front door!

Write the target/focus language on the board beside it, “Where is your/the ....?” “It’s / They’re ........ my / the ...... in the ...........room”

Ask students to warm up — “Do you have a .......?” After they reply, ask where it is. They will state the room using the gap above. After you’ve done this to warm up, ask the students if they are curious about your own “home”. Get them to use the target question and answer by drawing it into the blueprint and writing the name under
the target language beside the drawing.

The students will be very curious and will keep asking so many questions! If you wish, they could even brainstorm the questions in groups first and then ask you.

When you've done this and all the vocab is written down and drawn in, get one student to come up and label (draw a line between the word and the item). The rest of the students will ask “where is the …..” to which the student responds.

Finally — take out the blank piece of paper! Yes, you guessed it. Now the students do the same thing in pairs or 3s. Asking each other where everything is and drawing it in and writing the vocab words. Afterwards, they change papers and label their partners drawing by connecting the word and place.

Extend by asking students to tell the class one interesting thing about their partner’s “home”. They’ll be very interested and this is a good example of personalizing the learning context to enhance learning and motivation…..

*** other ways to use one blank piece of paper****

1. Copycat drawing - one partner describes a picture, the other draws it without looking.

2. Writing . Word chain. Students continue writing one long word using the last letter or letters. The more last letters they use, the more points they get. Spelling counts!

3. Famous people. Students write all the names of famous people they can think of on one sheet of paper. Then with a partner, they describe one of them and the partner must guess who on the paper it is! (see attached Who is it game)

4. Fold it stories. Put the students in a circle. Each student writes this on the top of a sheet of paper.
I heard that (classmate on their right’s name) …..(gossip)………….. last night! They then pass it to their left and keep filing it out while the story grows and exaggerates. Don’t let it get to the person who it is about! Then share/read and laugh afterwards!

5. Tape a piece of blank paper to each student’s back! Give each student in the class a marker. The students walk around the class and write down a question on the piece of paper that they’d like the classmate to answer….(they get inventive!). After 5 min. , students get a partner and give their partner the sheet of questions. They then interview each other! Or you can do this with one question and use a post it. Students stick a post it with a question to their forehead and walk around asking each other the questions!

6. Last one standing — my song game….see attached.

Lots more one blank page ideas later!!!! Now I got to plan my own lessons!

Resources: Global Celebrities.doc Last One Standing Game

# 56 Whiteboard Soccer - a simple review game.

Mar 14, 2010 10:00PM

Today’s Lesson in a Can is just an idea, a game that is very “low tech” but will work in any classroom. It also is easy to control and you won’t have any classroom management problems with it! World Cup fever will soon be here and this game is excellent for harnessing that energy for review purposes.

First, draw a soccer pitch like that above on the board. To the left and right, draw the flags of each team and this is where the score will be kept/marked.

Second, divide the class into two teams (I’ve had 4 team soccer with two pitches intersecting but it gets rather complicated). Each team will be a country. Next, elect a captain from each team. They take the coin toss. Make it into a real game , so do the whole ceremony! After the coin toss, do the national anthem. Teams stand and sing. Find the karaoke anthems for Canada, England, U.S. , France on our karaoke page.

Third. Let’s play ball! First, state the rules of raising their hands and not complaining or speaking out of turn. If they do they get a yellow card and lose possession of the “ball” or magnet on the board. Red card gives a penalty kick for the other team , taken by the team captain.

Put a magnet in the middle of the soccer pitch. Team A starts answering a question. If they are right, they move ahead. 3 correct answers in a row and they score. If they answer incorrectly, the ball changes possession and Team B starts answering questions. I usually play to 5.

An exciting game and you can use this with any type of set questions, review, quiz etc….I’ve uploaded a pile of basic quiz type questions or you might want to use it with the Golden Bell games I’ve made. So many sets of general questions to use with this game all over the internet. Even other presentations like the one I recently posted, Flags. Or best, get the students making up the questions and use the questions created from another class! See our Quiz and Trivia question page for more.
Lots of fun and your students I guarantee, will love whiteboard soccer!!! I’ve even seen teachers play Whiteboard baseball. Adapting the rules so that if students answer questions correctly they “hit” and “run”. 3 wrong answers, that team is out.

Golden Bell Trivia Questions
Golden Bell Adv.
Golden Bell Low
1,000 + Trivia Questions
#61 Using current events - BreakingNewsEnglish

Jan 26, 2010 05:26AM

Current events are great to use in the classroom. Here’s many reasons why!

One easy way is to use the BreakingNewsEnglish karaoke videos on our World Issues page. Each video comes with a cloze version (some words missing) and a full version. Also, links to the materials on BreakingNewsEnglish which are full of great activities. Sean Banville does a great job and is a teacher who shares and is a great role model for all other teachers.

Here’s an example - $100 Laptop. Visit the One Laptop Per Child website for inspiration also!

$100 Laptop lesson

#62  It’s a Wonderful World - Celebrating the Earth

Jan 26, 2010 05:37AM

This is a very fun and easy to do lesson.

1. Warm up by asking the students/brainstorming why the world is wonderful. Write the student’s answers on the board as you discuss or have them also do this in groups, filling out a webmap or graphic organizer....

2. Play the song and sing — It’s a Wonderful World. Give the attached lyric sheet handout and have them listen and fill in the missing words.

3. Get the students to cut up each line of the song sheet! (they love this!) and then mix up their pieces. Ask them to listen and put it together. You will need to listen to the song several times for this!

4. Give the students this Story Frame (attached) and using the things brainstormed, the students draw their wonderful world and describe the things they think make it wonderful!

Bingo — you have a WONDERFUL lesson. You might also try this video showing the earth in one year!

Resources: Wonderful World ppt  Lyric sheet  Story Frame

# 63 English homonymns and homographs

Jan 26, 2010 05:42AM

This canned lesson is for very high level students. It isn’t easy to tell the difference between words that are spelled and sound the same but have a different meaning! These are commonly referred to as homonyms and homographs. Here is a nice breakdown of these English “word” categories.

WORDS THAT BOTH SOUND THE SAME AND ARE SPELLED THE SAME are both homonyms (same sound) and homographs (same spelling). Example: lie (untruth) and lie (prone); fair (county fair), fair (reasonable).

1. Get the students to give you some examples they may know of common homophones — our / are bear / bare some / sum

Then ask them about the opposite, ones that sound or don’t sound the same BUT are also SPELLED the same. bear / bear wound / wound produce / produce etc......

You might warm up with this video/karaoke. English Words. It shows a lot of difficult words for even high level students.

# 64 - Teaching Teachers

Feb 1, 2010 05:40PM

Many of us will be asked when we teach at a school in a foreign country, to “teach the teachers”. This brings a lot of dread in teachers but once you get going — A Lot of JOY. Really can be fun and teachers are usually a lot less demanding believe it or not. Please see my training institute’s site and these books for further materials! I also recommend Andrew Finch’s book “Teaching Reflections” for teachers of a higher level of English.

Keep it relaxed and when teaching adults, always design your lessons around A) Choice (give them a sense of control) B) Usefulness/interest (use topics that can be immediately relevant to their lives, of immediate interest).

Here is one lesson I’ve done with teachers. One of many. It focuses on question making skills. See the template also attached for ideas for question making. Students simply turn over a card/picture and use the template to ask each other (form) questions.

The next 6 Lessons in a Can will all be focused around asking
When doing lessons where questions are the “core”, I like to put students in groups of 3. In 3s, the students can rotate the conversation and every second time, change from a question to a response…….

S1: What are you doing this weekend?
S2: I’m going to the beach? What are you doing James?
S3: I’m doing nothing, just watching TV.
What are you doing Jan?
S1: I’m doing the same as you.

See how each student asks/answers in the cycle and there is repetition fostering learning.

In Today’s Canned Lesson I have a two part lesson on making questions.

1) Using the attached handout, students in 3s ask the questions. After a question is done, it is crossed off the sheet. One student asks the question and the 3rd student must ask a “follow up” question. This helps ensure real conversation and not just read-answer. Lots of great questions on this sheet and it could also be used as an icebreaker and getting to know students activity.

2. Next, have the students ask you some of the questions (or do this prior to the above) and return a question to each asker. Then, ask students to choose one question and survey the class. They then have to report back to the whole class or their group about the information they found out. Surveys are a great way to make a class interactive and really focus on the pattern of a question, one question. See the other attached handout for surveys that is made for Korean teachers.

Resources:
Please see THIS PAGE for a full slate of videos/resources about asking/using questions in the classroom. Part of a workshop I give.

Questions for discussions
Many Discussion Question handouts
Question making Schematic
Teaching and the Art of Questioning
Survey Questions - Korea

The art of questioning students is the foundation of all good teaching practice. It provides for both assessment and student growth (learning) and is the core of the scientific method and how we learn. Yet, teachers spend comparably little time, learning how to ask questions or make questions which lead to good teaching. Moreover, many teachers spend little time developing this fundamental skill in their students. You can’t have “real” communication without questions yet so many students gain English competence in this – too far along their learning curve to benefit.

Activity
Class walkarounds – post it!

This activity is meant to get students on their feet and speaking. Give students some post it notes. On one Post it note, they write something about themselves. Example, "I love potato chips!” Students then “post it” on themselves and walk around the class. They ask each other questions about the post it. After one question, they change to another person.

Example:
A) What kind of potato chips do you like?
B) I really like sour cream and onion! (I hate mornings).
A) What time did you get up today?
B) I got up at 6:30 am! [change partners]

This activity can even be “larger” by having students write many questions each on one post it note. Students walk around the class asking other students and “posting” a “question” note on them. After the walkaround, students return to their seat and with a partner, using the post its to interview a partner.
Photo and word prompts work wonders!

In 3s, students are shown photos (either on a big screen or with flash cards). They make a question each about the photo. The Question Making Schematic can be used to help students. Alternately the “Who / What / Where game can be played.

With flash cards, students just turn over a card and use that for a prompt to ask a question to another person. This person then “echoes” the question back and the third person adds another follow up question.

It might go as follows.

(Flashcard is HOUSE)

A) Is your house big?
B) No, it isn’t. Is your house big?
A) It is so-so.
C) Do you have air conditioning in your house?
B) No, we don’t.

A slideshow like this one below (and many more in our presentation folders or on our Practice page) can be used very effectively to elicit language from students or to get them asking questions to each other….Alternatively, laminate some good photos and let the students use those to make questions!

Best National Geographic Photos

Listening - The 5 ws!

Play any short clip or news report. Even a short story. Ask the students to list the “reporters” 5ws on a piece of paper.

Who
What
Where
When
Why

Then check as a group or in pairs. Can they answer them?

This activity can also be done for any reading/text in the textbook. It is invaluable to get the students themselves forming the comprehension questions for your class readings. This should be your goal – get them to TEACH THEMSELVES!

Question Tic Tac Toe

In the attached handout are tic-tac-toe squares. Students play like regular tic-tac-toe except they must ask a question using the question word prompt. If they ask a question correctly they get an X or an O but also only if the other person can’t answer it!!!! So the person answering can defend and block the X or 0. It can take awhile to finish.
A game but this works wonders!

Another quick game teachers can ply and which is about questioning is … the blablabla game.

A) I went to blablabla this weekend?
B) Excuse me, where did you go this weekend?
A) I went to my grandparents this weekend.

Give students some sentence prompts to complete. They finish/ personalize the sentences and then take out the important info. and say “blablabla” instead. They other person must form a question to ask for the additional information. Works wonders and lots of fun in the blablabla…. [excuse me, where is it lots of fun? — Oh , in the classroom!]

Also see this schematic which will help students make questions as well as this categorization of questions — going from low level closed questions up to Bloom’s higher ordered/thinking questions which are much more open....

Resources:
- tic tac toe handout
- Question types and examples
- Schematic for making questions

# 70 Questions Part 6 of 6 - Battleship!

Mar 14, 2010 10:51PM

There are so many great ways to promote question making ability in the language classroom! Here is my last one but by no means is it THE last one....be creative!

Battleship is a great way to practice question making at a low level. Also fun for young learners who pick up on the game rather quickly.

I’ve already written about this in one of the earlier Canned Lessons but I’ll run through it again.

The attached battleship sheets can be modified by the teacher, to suit any language structure. Did / do / Are / Is / Will / Have etc...?

First play it whole class and have the students in teams. Draw the grid on the board and students form questions to ask. If they hit the battleship (on the teachers paper), the group can continue until a battleship is sunk. If they miss, they lose their turn. They get 1 pt for each hit and the value of the ship if they sink it (3, 4 or 5 pts). Team with the most points at the end wins.

Students don’t need any pencils, just the sheet. You record hits and misses on the board. But after the whole class game - have the students fill out their own battleship grid and ask/play with a partner. I’ve even seen some teachers get the students to design a cardboard divider for the game. Really cool!

Enjoy battleshipping! Get sinking (I mean thinking!). Here also is a flash version that might also be valuable to introduce the concept to students.

Resources:
- Many Battleship premade games.
- Battleship example handout
- Resource page for Battleship
- Battleship Power Point
- Battleship online game in our Arcade
# 71 Games for reviewing tenses

Mar 22, 2010 02:55AM

Games are great in the classroom. See the attached article and the links below for some real motivational reading about the benefits of using games in the EFL Classroom — also some nice, easy to do games mentioned. Lately, I've had quite a few teachers emailing with requests on how to teach this or that tense....

Verbs are the fly paper of learning. Students will never learn vocabulary (the flies) until they have enough of them verbs for the flies to stick. So teach VERBS! Get students using them, repeating them, focusing lesson attention on them, mastering them......it will pay off big time! So how to?

Well, besides using movies and pictures to get students to describe and set in sequence using tenses (for an example, see the Lesson in a Can about Mr. X's Amazing Day), games are great. I do it two ways. One, using picture cards students create stories with particular settings. Put the language focus/target on the board and in small groups students turn over cards and practice.

1. What's up? I’m ____ing.
3. What are you going to do tomorrow? I am going to / I will ..........

You can also use the pres. perfect but the idea is for students to first use themselves (I) as a reference. Then, next lesson or later, change the target language to reflect other reference (He/She/We/They). I use 1000 pictures for teachers as the flash cards and get this in our Resource Sharing area!

Also, warm up the students by showing a video or playing an audio book (so many in our A/V player or stories page) and stop occasionally asking the appropriate tense target question.....

You might also try these See these 3 great BAAM games I made that review all the above tenses. Your students will love them! Play over consecutive days and let them see the differences in the tenses.....

Games Links/articles — The use of Games. 6 games for the EFL Classroom Creative Games for the classroom

Attachments: Ten of the very best reasons for using games in the EFL Classroom BAAM - what are they doing

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# 72 Holiday Talk

Summer is upon us and everyone is thinking about holidays. It might be good to do a travel lesson about holidays.

I usually start this lesson by asking students about their favorite things to do on holiday. Or I might just get everyone excited and play the Where the hell is Matt video (see in our A/V player under Assorted - download there also by clicking the arrow on the right). Pause occasionally asking students, “Where in the world is Matt?”

Then, I put on the powerpoint (see attached) and the class interviews the teacher or one volunteer student. Then, the students in pairs or groups interview each other about their last holiday.

When you change each slide, simply give a prompt (I tap my bell) and move on. They finish the sentence and move on to the next question. If your students are quite high level, they can make the questions into indirect — Could you please tell us........

After this, I usually do one of two things. Lower level students can plan their vacation on chart paper. Brainstorm as a class what should go on their travel poster.

Come visit ..........! We have .......... Famous facts ...... etc......

You might extend this into another lesson . Get students to present afterwards. Or with higher level conversational classes try the attached Train travel roleplay. Pretty neat......and get them to perform afterwards!

Also see the videos in our A/V player about all sorts of countries. Travel postcards and they are great for teaching, all about a min. in length.....snapshots of destinations. Another extension idea is to write postcards. Then, the teacher is the postman and delivers to the lucky students! Use real postcards or a template.

Enjoy your vacations!

Resources: Travel Talk PPT  Holiday Talk

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# 73 - Verb Attack. Nosy Neighbors Game

Mar 22, 2010 03:12AM

Enjoy your vacations!
When teaching and especially in a learner’s first year or so, VERBS should be the focus. All other vocabulary won’t “stick” unless there is a verb referent and so we should focus much communication on the practice/use of verbs — the fly paper of the world of words.

Nosy Neighbors (see attached) is a perfect way to practice using verbs communicatively. It is from Jill Hadfield’s great series of Communication Games. A must book for a serious teacher and see it in our Bookstore. It is a perfect example of a teaching material that is basic and infinitely adaptable by the teacher. Also, get The Best of here!

1. Warm up by asking the students questions about the main handout. Or better, just give it to them and they ask questions using target language, be it past, present, future... (whatever you want to practice). Ex. “When do you usually...?” - to practice present habitual tense.

2. After they have got familiar with the vocabulary verbs - tell them that they live in a house on this street. Assign each student in the group one house Houses 1-4 and 6-9.

3. Cut up and give them their activity card. They describe what is happening / has happened / happened or will happen in their house. The basic game is using the present tense but by using the picture cards, I’ve made and included, you can do this for every tense / all target language.

4. As one student reads what is happening - the others draw lines from the correct house to the correct picture. They continue until all the activities are linked to houses. One house has no activity linked — #5. Ask the students what is happening there - they should tell you. “They are having a party!”

5. Students can the ask / answer what is happening by asking each other and following the lines drawn.

You can use this sheet time and time again (and the picture cards) to review all sorts of tenses. I even use it for a game of Charades. Students choose one picture and act it out - the others guess...

A very handy handout! Enjoy.

Attachments: Nosy Neighbors .pdf Nosy Neighbor cards Doing ppt

# 74 Let’s Talk - The Art of Teaching Conversation
Mar 23, 2010 07:02PM

#84 Let’s TALK! The art of teaching conversation — Let them speak!

Teaching conversation should be fun and easy. Yet, too often it gets bogged down in explanations, side tracked into obfuscation, parlayed by prepositions and battered by THE BOOK. I have a remedy.

I try to do two things. One — teach conversation without a book! Yes, we still use the book but the book is the book and NOT conversation time really. I try to use either cue cards or ppt prompts for conversation. See some examples for classroom use in our SHARE area (Resources - Share - Conversation/Discussion). This really frees the student from the pencil/pen/paper/text and let’s them do what most English is — communicate.

Two - I try to teach conversation how it should be taught. Speak first, experiment and then do the study and focus on language structure, then focus on explanation. This inductive and upside down lesson plan approach is essential I believe for conversation.

I have made these Let’s Talk power points which can be used in the classroom with great effect. First, have the students interview you or another student — a whole class activity. Then, let them attack in pairs, using the prompts to ask / answer questions. Make sure they know there is no right answer! Many ways to ask the questions.

Lastly, go over the prompts again. Click on each and get example questions. Interview another student again using these!

I’ll be making more of these on other topics. Also see the other discussion “Conversation” in Sharing. Enjoy the conversation!

Resources: Let’s Talk Let’s Talk Small Talk
Debate has become a “hot” subject to teach and teach English by…….

It can be very helpful and provides students with many great language learning opportunities and lots of practice. But it must be set up for success. See the presentation below for some pointers and some rationale as to why debate is great in the EFL Classroom.

I usually set up debate for success by creating the proper classroom atmosphere. One of orderly discussion and freedom to participate. This is paramount.

You should teach the art of debate informally first, through a series of simple activities. The easiest is Advantages / Disadvantages. I call this — Angel / Devil. (see link below).

One student or group of students are the Angel and list the Pros of a topic. The other student or group, the Cons. Make sure they order their arguments! They can battle back and forth given so many topics. Write some on the board or use the handout below. Also see many debate materials in our Resource area.

The next step is a formal debate. Take a look at the attached handout which outlines the structure of a formal debate and how it should be held.

Here’s How: 10 Easy Steps
1. Introduce debates by producing the rubric that you will be using to grade them.
2. Before the debate, give students the topic(s) to be covered. (see below)
3. Before you hand the debate assignments out, explain that some students might be debating positions opposite to their beliefs. This is an important skill for them to learn.
4. Students should completely fill out the debate organizer regarding the debate topic.(see reverse)
5. Begin the debate with the pro side speaking first. Allow them 5-7 minutes of uninterrupted time to explain their position. All members should participate.
6. Repeat for the con side.
7. Give both sides about five minutes to confer and prepare for their rebuttal.
8. Begin the rebuttals with the con side and give them three minutes to speak. All members should participate equally.
9. Repeat this step for the pro side.
10. Closing arguments for both sides, starting with the pro side. Allow the audience to ask questions of the debating teams.

You can really get more out of students by filming them! They really put on their best show and this can be very motivating.

Further, make sure you always go through the rubric and let them know what you are looking for in their debating. Also, it can be great to show them some video of others stating their viewpoints or debating. www.trueutube.co.uk has some fantastic material for this. Short videos on contentious subjects. It can be quite fast but I recommend you checking it out.....Here’s an example under “Beauty or Intelligence.”

HANNAH ON BEAUTY VERSUS INTELLIGENCE
Resources: Hold a Debate in the Classroom Debate Organizer Advantages / Disadvantages

This is always a winner and fun for students. They practice making simple questions using Do/Did/Were/Have…….

I usually start this lesson by writing down the following sentences on the board.

1. (Teacher’s name) usually drinks coffee in the morning.
2. (Teacher’s name) loves to cycle on the weekend.
3. (Teacher’s name) believes in UFOs
4. (Teacher’s name) didn’t vote in the last election.
5. (Teacher’s name) has been to China.

Ask the students to write down their own answers. Yes or No.

Next, give each student a handout (there are 4 different ones in the attached handout). They can guess about classmates by completing the statements with a name.

Ask the students to write down their own answers. Yes or No. Then the students can ask you the teacher and see if they are correct.

After they complete this (give them a 5 min time limit - use the Super Timer!). They can guess about classmates by completing the statements with a name. They can either do it for just a small group of 4-6 students or the whole class (and get the answers by having a walkaround afterwards).

Finally - let the students tell you some interesting things they found out about each other! It is a great way to get to know your classmates.
students!

You might even extend this by playing a whole class guessing game. One student comes to the front of the class and the teacher hands them a piece of paper with a student’s name on it. The class, group by group (make it a competition!), asks yes/no questions to guess which classmate it is. If the answer is YES, that group can continue to answer. If they attempt to answer and are wrong - they are out!

This game/activity was adapted from the very useful book Pair Work. Get a copy through our bookstore. It will come in handy!

Resources: Guessing about Classmates

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# 77 Culturally Specific Content / Teaching
Apr 10, 2010 06:42AM

I’m a big fan and believer of CST - Culture Specific Teaching (my terminology :). What it means is that you use the students prior knowledge to help teach English. In this case, their cultural knowledge. This allows the students to have an abundance of “pressure” (knowledge/content) which will really facilitate production of English. This “transference” is a great way to give students confidence in speaking English. They try to explain / produce their own knowledge of their country in English.

See a presentation and more materials particularly for Korea - HERE.

I used to teach Adult ESL for the Canadian government. Besides lots of functional language, my curriculum had to also teach about Canada. One of the best/most interesting lessons was to make an acrostic poem about Canada.

First, I’d prepare/engage by having the students watch the Canadian anthem video. These are readily available and contain lots of great images of the country. As the students watch they record/note on paper what they see. Mountains/dances/monuments etc…. Here’s the one I’ve used for Korea! (attached and also in our A/V player)

Then give them a graphic organizer and in groups they can organize their content into semantic categories. Finally, brainstorm as a group on the board.

Next - give students the handout and they fill in and make their own poem about their own country. (Change Korea to your own country!). Use these grammatical prompts or change them for your own. Circulate the room and help students with spelling/prompts/examples.

After that - have some of the students or all, read their poems to the class. Demonstrate how this is done by modeling your own poem! Teachers make the best motivators!

Finally - collect them and edit/correct them. The next lesson hand them back and have the students on a much larger piece of paper, make a bigger poster of their poem and decorate. Hang around the class and school, they’ll be very proud.

A great lesson that all levels/students will enjoy!

RESOURCES: Korean Grammar Poem   Korean Nat. Anthem

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# 78 Good News / Bad News
Apr 10, 2010 06:45AM

This is a very fun and communicative/speaking lesson. Really demonstrates that a lot of “learning” and especially language — is linked to the process of forming neural connections. The brain sparks and comes alive as we discover similarities/differences and connections. It is through this linkage that language is stores and accessed. The burgeoning field of Connectivism is helping educators in this regard ( but that’s another topic!).

First - Warm up: Give students a good news card each. (see attached). Tell the students you can see the future, you are a fortune teller. Ask them to tell you about the card. Then tell them some bad news you “see”.

Example:
S - Hey! I have some good news. I bought a new car!
T - Well, the bad news is….you don’t have any money for gas!

Continue with many examples from the students. This teaches them the “gist” of the activity.

Second: Give students each a good news and bad news card (non matching). They walk around trying to find a match for their Good news card. After they find a match they can sit down. Review the answers.

Extension: Get other pictures and students in small groups of 3, flip over a picture and make up some good news - the other students try to say some bad news that WILL happen later….

You can also play this game as per the instructions attached. As a flashcard snap game and also a worksheet game…take a read of it. The pictures are also good for making up stories and story writing. Cut them up, mix them up and students select 4/5 and write up a story about them….works like a charm!

This is an adaptation of a lesson in Hadfield’s great “Intermediate Communication Games”. Also see this full book (attached) with many more great lesson ideas.

I have some good news and bad news for you teachers also!

Good news: You have a great lesson idea to teach!

Bad news: You got to teach it :)

RESOURCES: Good news/bad news handout   Textbook -
I'm sure most teachers know of and have used Pictionary / draw it as a game in the EFL classroom.

Students are shown a word and must draw it. The first team/member to guess the drawing, gets a point. You can even do it as a race, teams against each other drawing the same vocab item.

I also do Pictionary by showing student(s) a ppt picture on the desktop (the other students can’t see). They race and draw. Repeat. After the game, review all the ppt slides together as a whole class. (Get many of these kinds of power points - HERE)

But here is a very creative way to play pictionary. Your students will love it!

Go to odopod No registration required. A random sketch by someone in the internet universe will appear. Students can watch and guess/describe for points. Keep clicking “Ran” and get more great sketches....AMAZING! Also, point your students to - Draw My Thing, a great interactive online game.

Enjoy this lesson idea. Not a whole lesson but maybe students could also use the sketches as prompts to create / write stories? I’m sure there are lots of creative ways to use this.....

Where I work - we produced these activities, part of a chapter of English Factory. I really like these and the methodology is explained well on the first page. Enjoy and use these to keep your busy teaching life under control! Your students in any case, will love them!

#80 Information Gap / Communication Gap / A-B

Every EFL/ESL/ELT eventually learns that the best and most crucial method available is the information gap. Simply put, it is two students with different versions of the same material. The students without looking at the others content, must communicate (using the target language) to complete each others information/handout.

I started teaching without any books, the Internet or fancy resources. I learned to make these Information or Pair gap exercises from the rare English magazine or newspaper I got. I’d just copy one item that was language level appropriate (or near). I’d make two copies, labeling one A and the other B. On one, I’d erase/scratch out some info. On the other, I’d scratch out other info. Then, in class, the two students would have to ask each other for the information necessary to finish their sheet.

Of course with experience I do much more BUT this kind of activity remains the staple/standard of English Language Teaching. Sure, task gap remains a tried and tested rock of Gibraltar. A quick exercise for busy teachers....
# 81 Ask the Teacher!

Questioning in the classroom

Apr 12, 2010 07:08AM

#81 - ASK THE TEACHER! Questioning in the classroom.

Previously in Lessons in a Can, I outlined many ways to “teach” and practice questions in the classroom. A vital skill which students should learn early on. Here are a few more ways to make a lesson practicing question making.

1. Interview the Teacher! Play this BAAM Game (attached) where the students interview the teacher and have to make the correct question to get the points (be careful not to get BAAMed!). The teacher can answer and should also ask the same question to the students (or group). If they answer correctly, they can double their money!

2. Try this “Spin the Question” teacher tool (attached) or this one. Spin the wheel and where it stops, students must ask the student “in the hot seat” a question starting with that question word. A great interactive way to practice questions.

3. I’ve attached a student profile sheet. Students can fill out this (for real or maybe they can make their own fictitious character?) and then interview each other using the form as a prompt. See this Lifestyle Question list for more great, higher level questions to use either for class surveys or interviews/group discussion….

Enjoy playing BAAM! Ask the Teacher. This is also a very low stress way to introduce yourself to any class. Even if the questions are simple you are still doing some great ice breaking and able to safely assess the student’s various levels…try it, you’ll like it!

Resources:  BAAM Ask the Teacher  Lifestyle Questions  Spin the Question Student profile interview sheet.pdf

#82 — Prices. How much is it?

Apr 15, 2010 07:46PM

This lesson is more a jumble of lesson ideas for prices and shopping lessons.

First, have students do a walkaround. Warm up by asking students “How much was your…..? Let students respond freely.

Next, Get students to write on a cue card one question for other students. “How much was your…….” They should write about the other students clothes/items they have. Then have them walk around asking. When they meet someone who is asking about the same item…they link arms and continue walking around asking…. Can be lots of fun and there is lots of language repetition. Model by having the students ask you about your own items/clothes!

Then, give out the worksheets attached. Students practice asking and giving information about prices. Make sure they learn to do this “blind”, without looking.

After that, play “The price is right”. I’ve attached the ToysRUs version but other versions are in our ppt games section of Resources / Share. Play in groups and each group has a whiteboard. They debate and write their price/guess. The team closest but not over gets the bonus question. Each time they win/guess correctly, they get to reach in a money bag (I photocopy monopoly money). The team with the most money at the end wins!

You can play the Price is Right without ppt. Simply get some nice big pictures of times. On the back write the price. Show students the picture. They guess and then you turn around the picture to reveal the price…works like a charm!

Another possible game for numbers/prices is Deal or No Deal. Play this and also The real ToysRUs game in our Arcade!

Enjoy playing this great game about prices!

RESOURCES:  How Much Is It?  ToysRus Price is Right Official Monopoly Game
#83 - A short lesson on Thinking and Cooperative Learning
Apr 15, 2010 08:05PM

This week I gave workshops to teachers about "Reflection". I did a couple activities to model for them how their classroom is really just a puzzle that they must figure out. I used a couple of "thinking" activities. Many exist - the most common is the "move two toothpicks to make 5 boxes" one.

Here are two nice thinking activities that students can do in groups. Get them to cut up the pictures and physically use the pictures to move around the objects and discuss, and come up with a solution. This site, has many more trust building, problem solving, ice breaking exercises!

boy dog rabbit veg exercise.pdf
Garden Plot exercise.pdf

In addition to teaching English, if you can get your students really thinking "outside the box" you are doing a great thing! Here are two of my favorite De Bono videos. He outlines why it is so important to teach "thinking" and outlines his views on lateral thinking and his Six Thinking Hats method...extraordinary. Try these activities, your students will like the challenge.... Maybe even start a "puzzle of the day" challenge to start every class?

Six Hats Video

#84 Cell Phone Scramble!
Apr 15, 2010 08:11PM

Last week I wrote a blog post about using cell phones in the classroom. This week, here is a lesson, tidied up, that I offered there. It is one your students will love!

First, show THIS dialogue (the first one) to the students. Ask some comprehension questions afterward. Show it again.

Next, give the students the handout (attached). Tell them in pairs, to unscramble the dialogue to find out your cell phone number (change the numbers to your own cell number). The first to text message you wins!

Last, the students a) practice the dialogue changing words around. b) make up their own "cell phone scramble" quiz for the class to play and text their number!

If you want, start using www.transl8it.com . Enter a story or some text there and it will give you the text message translation. Give this to students to "decode". Then they check against the original. Or play one of the Transl8it.com ppt games I've already created!

Resources: Cell Phone Scramble dialogue worksheet (change to your own phone number!)

#85 - The POWER of Prediction. — teaching the Future Tense.
Apr 16, 2010 03:21PM

I wrote another teacher about this lesson idea and thought this would be a good place to share it.

An excellent way to teach and give students practice with the future tense is to use a story. Reading teachers know all about this most powerful technique and it works wonders in a language classroom.

Simple get a really good story (we have hundreds of audio stories you could use in our Story area.).

Next, start reading but stop at intervals and ask the students to predict. "What will happen next?", "What's going to happen next?"? "What do you think "X" will do next? etc..... Do this whole class or allow them to brainstorm their responses and then share. After sharing ideas, then continue the story and see if they were right! Maybe even give a reward if the students are bang on!

A nice story for this is The Eyebrow Story. Probably the story I've gotten emails from teachers the most. Peter Reynold’s stuff is great.

This is a very quick, no fuss, no muss way for a teacher to give students practice with the future tense and also share a damn good story!

Another good story for this, is of course, The Paperbag Princess!
This Lesson in a Can, you can pick up and do almost anytime, any moment, what ever the topic. Very handy and one lesson that I call a VIP - Very Important Paper.

You can play Jeopardy low tech with students! Of course, use all our games or templates to play with a computer - however, this method really fosters thinking skills, cooperative learning and language production. Plus, it’s still good old style Jeopardy competition.

First. Draw a mind map like the one in the attached handout. Put your topic in the center and get students to respond. Fill in the 6 main arms. Then, ask students in groups to fill out ONE arm with more vocabulary words/terms. Or you could just ask them to fill in the whole mind map.

Second. Review what the students came up with , writing on the board some of the responses. Now you have a nice vocabulary map for reference.

Third. Tell the students you are now going to play JEOPARDY! Each group must write 5 questions about one category. Use this “Let’s Play Jeopardy” worksheet! Give them time to do this and you can use the second provided handout to give them a question "prompt". If needed, use the 3rd handout, a handy framework for making questions.

Fourth. Play Jeopardy. Many ways to do this but the easiest and most organized is to go in a clockwise fashion. First do all the $100, then $200 questions etc.... Team one asks Team two. If they don’t answer correctly or at all, Team 3 gets a chance to answer. But if you wish, you can do it “Real Style” and I’ve seen teachers use bells for each group to ring in. I usually have them knock (it must be acoustic, you won’t see all the hands raised!) but if they BANG, they get a yellow card and lose money. Make sure to appoint a scorekeeper and draw a grid with the questions like Jeopardy on the board also, X each question as it is finished.

Finally. Bonus Question. Give the groups the category and ask them to write down how much they wager. Check each group. Give the final question, also written down on paper. Find out who the winner is!

Whiteboards for each group really work well with Jeopardy. They force ALL students to try and come up the answer and you can have all groups write their answer. Use the timers on our Practice page under Teacher Tools to brighten up this aspect....

Have fun playing Jeopardy. Next — Lessons about Brainstorming / Mind Mapping....

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I had a teacher ask me about how to teach clothing vocabulary, so I decided to post it up for the world! This will be one of the 52 lessons in my self published book coming this new year — Teaching with only a blank piece of paper! A book designed with quick, adaptable lessons which can wean teachers away from the terrible textbook! (while they aren’t always terrible...depends :))

First - you have to decide to connect “Clothing” to B. It can be either the weather or the body (I like the body!). You kill two birds with one stone and you are also practicing great teaching methods because inorder to facilitate vocabulary acquisition you need two requirements; A) Connection - connecting the thing to a verb or situation B) Communicative pressure - the need and desire to use this word to convey meaning. Here you will get both!

Start: Engage the students by asking what they are wearing?
Bring some students up to the front of the class and let them describe. Further, give students in pairs blank pieces of paper. Divide the pairs into As and Bs. A pairs must record as many items of clothing as they can think of. B pairs must record as many body parts as they can think of.

**Study:** On the board - have students relay the information they recorded. You can even record points for each answer, students can’t repeat or they lose two points! Have a student write this information in two columns on the board. Clothing on the left - body part on the right.

Between the columns write the following prepositions: On , Over, In, Around, Under.

Students must then connect all the clothing with the body parts using the target language

“You wear a / an (clothing item) On/Over/In/Around/under your (body part).

Half of the class writes on a slip of paper a body part. Half the class writes an item of clothing. Without showing their paper, students must walk around the class and find a “match”. They do so by saying - "I’m a ______ can you help me?" Once they find a match, they can sit down. The students who didn’t find a partner have to state what they are and the rest of the class will state what their match is.....

**Engage:** Finally - give students each student a picture of a model from a catalogue. On a blank piece of paper, they glue the model and write a paragraph about what they are wearing....Present some of these afterwards and put up on the classroom walls.....

There you go - a complete lesson (or more!)...... Look on our practice page or elementary page for many ppts and presentations about clothing/the body/weather which you can use to check student learning and understanding. Either at the end of the lesson or the first part of the next, to repeat. These two memory games work for the body. 12

This presentation is fun! And of course - this sterling teacher made video about clothes and weather could be used with students. Try this clothing/weather ppt too!

Brrr it is cold today. I’ll need a coat!
Lessons in a Can

18 April, 2010 | "When one teaches, two learn."

# 88 Christmas Gift Giving lesson

Apr 16, 2010 03:52PM

Lesson #88 - Christmas Class Gift Giving!

This lesson is one of several I’ll outline for Christmas classes. Generally Christmas classes are less structured and more “activity” and project based. Get students making crafts, doing and allow the language objectives to come in through the backdoor!

This lesson is wonderful. It is called, Class Gift Giving.

Before the lesson — collect and cut out a lot of pictures of possible X-mas gifts from magazines! Or use these handy pictures. Write ways to say Thank you for a gift in English, on the board, in a list.

Thank you very much!
Thank you so much!
You shouldn’t have!
How kind of you!
It’s wonderful. It’s ____!
Etc.....

1. Engage - Ask the students what they got for Christmas last year. Brainstorm / write the vocab on the board as you go along.

2. Tell the students that Christmas has come early! Using the target language “Merry Christmas ____! I got you a small gift for Christmas”, give the magazine pictures as gifts to selected students. Watch their eyes light up!

3. Practice - After this, either give the students in groups, a magazine which they can cut up or the pictures of gifts attached. The group must make a list and decide what gift to give each member of the class. For more advanced classes, have them make an additional column of “why” they gave the gift.

Name Gift Why?

David running shoes He likes to run.

After most have completed their list, have the students run around the class, giving their gifts and saying/practicing the Thank you target language.

4. Activate - Get the students to show their group members or the whole class, what they got for X-mas and who gave it to them. They have to tell if they like it or not and say why it was or wasn’t a good choice.....

Time permitting - students can then make their own wish list for X-mas and put it into a special box. After X-mas, take out the box and discuss with students if they got what they’d wished for!

While students are choosing the gifts or making the lists, put on some X-mas carols/music. Plenty in our Christmas folders in ppt but here are a few karaoke songs......Hope this gets you into the Christmas Teaching Spirit! Please use our Christmas Page for loads of carols.

#89 Christmas Continued — Card Making!

Apr 16, 2010 04:01PM

#89 Christmas Continued — Card Making!

Continuing on from the gift giving lesson, another great way to use Christmas as a lesson theme is to have the students make cards for each other or home!

First, brainstorm together on the board, some typical things we say in Christmas Cards:

Wishing you a Merry Christmas
Peace and love this holiday season
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Photocopy these cards. Let the students read and choose one card template they like. Students can then color and add their own personal greetings and letter inside. Have all the students include the following sentence,

Thanks for ___________________________!

Monitor and roam, helping students as necessary and checking for understanding of Christmas vocabulary...
Make sure you share the cards at the end! Use these posters to decorate the classroom too! Also, put on some Christmas music too while the students work!

# 90 Fortune Teller or Cootie Catcher!

Do you remember this game from when you were young? It is the perfect adaptable game for ESL/EFL!

In the vein of Christmas and more "craft" friendly lessons, I offer up how to make a Fortune Teller. Get the students making them and beforehand brainstorm what the numbers of colors on the Cootie Catcher will mean. For example,

1. Jump up and scream
2. Make a funny face
3. Hug someone
4. Act like a ______.

Blue = run around the room
Red = count to 100
Purple = Sing a song
Green = say "Oh My God!"

Students can then play and have loads of fun. Change the combinations and they can continue to use their Kootie Catcher to produce English! Loads of fun for the elementary classroom but even older students would enjoy it. Your imagination is the limit! See this already made one. handtalker.pdf

Here are some more instructions. And HERE. Google "cootie catcher" and you'll get more templates. More crafts on our Arts and Crafts resources page.

#91 - Nat. Film Board short videos

Apr 16, 2010 04:11PM

#91 - Nat. Film Board short videos. Using video stories.

As I've noted elsewhere, I put together a great page of short National Film Board of Canada videos for teaching English (plays full screen there). Great stories, many without much dialogue, to foster discussion and prompt for language. Many ways to use them and I'll be supplying more ideas and resources for those videos on that page, in the near future. Also, see the selection that promotes peace, sterling!

One of my absolute favorites is "The Big Snit". It won the academy award for best short and is super! Here's how I make a lesson for it. This is for intermediate and above students. (or others but just for enjoyment or incidental learning)

1) Pre-teach "snit", prompt students with questions about "anger", "arguments"

2) Show the video. Ask some groups to write down verbs / actions in the video. Ask other groups to write down nouns / things they see.

3. Show the ppt with only the pictures. Or better yet, print as small pictures using File - Print Preview - 6 slides / page - Print. Ask the students to try and retell the story using the pictures and key words as prompts.

4. Read together the final (full) story ppt. Use the picture only ppt again and ask them to retell once more for review. Can they do it?

Many more ways to use this video. It is a great prompt for discussing anger or nuclear war / peace. Also about how to resolve conflict. I'm sure you'll find some amazing ways to teach with this great resource!

# 92 — New Year’s Resolutions

Apr 16, 2010 04:27PM

#92 — A Lesson for New Years!

This is a great lesson idea for New Years. A perfect time to teach the future tense to students and get them to practice language that really identifies with their own lives.

I usually first start with asking some students about their hopes for the New Year. “What are you going to do this year?”.

Then, I give them out these New Years resolution cards. I ask them to check off the ones the resolve for the New Year. The more the
better. Give them about 5 min.

Next, ask them to state some of their resolutions from the list. Respond and write on the board - So will I! / I’m going to too! Oh, I won’t / Oh I’m not going to.

Next, ask the students to walk around the class stating their resolutions. They must reply with a qualifier from the board - in agreement or disagreement. Once they have found someone who agrees with every statement on their list, they can sit down! Task done.

Finally, I play the “Resolution Lie Game”. This is a variation of a standard lie game for practicing any kind of tense/language. Write 4 resolutions on the board for yourself, the teacher. (using the attached card example). Ask a student to read them and then get students to vote on which they think is the lie. Reveal which ones are true and which is the lie. Who was right?

Give a card to all the students. Have them complete it, making one “false / lie” resolution..... In small groups they read their own and guess which one is the lie. Or do this as a whole class. Lots of fun!

If you are really ambitious have the class sing the traditional New Years song - Auld Lang Syne. It might be interesting for higher level students to see if they recognize any of the “old English” words/lyrics....

RESOURCES: It means ppt Signs ppt Let’s Sign the Alphabet ppt

#93 - Signs. Must(n’t) / Have to / Don’t Have to / Can / Can’t

Apr 16, 2010 04:33PM

Signs are a great subject. The offer practice of modals (Must / should / Can / May (n’t) ) and also a variety of commands and command verbs: Don’t ! / Allowed / Permitted / Required / Have to / Need to

Write this language on the board and engage students by asking about the rules of the classroom / school. Or if a low level, give commands and get the students to respond Total Physical Response style. Pick up your book! Stop! Go! Don’t look! etc.....

After the warm-up, review signs with the attached powerpoint.
# 94 Exercise and Treadmills

Apr 16, 2010 04:48PM

**#94 — Exercise and Treadmills.**

I strongly believe in getting teachers to use their personal lives to motivate their students (you don’t have to reveal all!) and also getting teachers to make their own materials for teaching. The two go hand in hand.

So today’s lesson has some info. about me and my treadmill exploits.

1) **Warm up** the group with the song / video “Here it Goes Again” See the lyrics and handout for the song. At the bottom are the words for playing Last One Standing. Put those words on the board. Get students to copy one word in big letters with marker on a sheet of A4. The class stands up and when they hear their word/phrase, they sit down. If they hear it again, they can stand up. Last one standing wins! Also play in groups, so a whole group can win.

2. **Ask about exercise** and what students think the hardest thing to do would be. Climb Everest? Swim across the ocean? etc…. Then read together the article about my treadmill exploits. Discuss the vocabulary and students complete the exercises.

3. **If your students are higher level**, you might get them to try the BreakingnewsEnglish “Exercise Pill” activity. See it in our Current Events area. where you have audio and video of it. It is a great news story with discussion/activities. Just play the video or cloze of the story and click underneath on the article to get the Breakingnewenglish activities/worksheets.

# 95 Current Events

Apr 16, 2010 04:58PM

**# 95 Gaza War of Words...**

I really believe one of the higher callings of teaching is to teach students to be global citizens and aware of the issues around them. Using Current Events is a wonderful teaching topic. See all the reasons I think so HERE.

The recent events in Gaza and the bloodletting, only confirm for me deeper than ever that us teachers have to do more to get students discussing issues of “the media” and “nationalism” and “peace”.

So to also highlight the materials available for the many news articles in our NEW Current Events page, I made a quick lesson using Karaoke video for the Breaking News English article - “Gaza War of Words.”. Click here to download the great materials from Breakingnewenglish.com (download the .pdf/.doc or mp3 from the top of the page of each article) and use both the Cloze and full videos for listening/reading activities. Get more articles and materials/videos on our Current Events page.

Gaza cloze  Gaza full

# 96 Running Dictations

Apr 16, 2010 05:04PM

**# 96 Running Dictation**

This activity can be used with any level - just use an appropriate text. It is great for introducing a text that you will study in depth through intensive reading. Or it can also be used to finish off a
lesson/unit and review the text again...

Basically, you have to do 4 things.

1. **Divide the class into groups of 3-5.** One person is a scribe or writer. Give them the handout with only the first part of the article or topic sentence of paragraphs appearing.

2) **Discuss the topic sentences, headline/title. Predict.** What will the article be about? What words will you encounter? What questions do you have? A kind of K, W, L (what I know / what I want to know / what I found out).

3. **Put up the full text around the classroom, number them for each group.** On GO!, the students in turns run to the article/text and read it. They then run back and tell the writer who records it. The next “runner” goes and so on...set a time limit or go until someone has finished the article.

4. **Review and check against the real/full article/text.** The winner is the group who best recorded the text and NOT the one who wrote the most!

Here’s a full explanation and also a ready to go Running Dictation exercise. It is about the reunification of separated families from the Korean war and is from Andrew Finch’s Activities to help teach the H.S. textbook - get it in our Korea area in the Resources Share.

**Enjoy and get fit using Running Dictations!**

**# 97 Find Someone Who….**

Apr 16, 2010 05:10PM

*Find someone who* is a standard English teaching activity. It can be adapted to practice vocabulary or tenses. It is also perfect for getting to know students and for the first week of class. Or also a great way (using the future tense) for the ending of classes... Get dozens of them, all types HERE!

**Basically it is of three main types.**

1. **Text sheets** where students ask questions and write down student’s names who agree

(NAME) likes to play tennis.

2. **Bingo style** where students go around the classroom asking the questions in the box and trying to get a bingo.

3. **Sentence strip style.** Each student has strips with questions. They wander around the class finding students and need a certain number to be finished. All questions are different.

Go to our resources / Share area and find lots of Find Someone Who as examples. Right here, there is one with a good explanation and also one where the students actually fill out the sentences first. I think this an excellent way to do it and get the students making the materials. They learn so much by making things/materials (just like us teachers do!).

I’d also recommend using picture based bingo cards (students write names over the picture and try to get bingo.) Using pictures really focuses the activity upon natural production of language. See our Picture Sets for loads of usable sheets/handouts.... You might even use the attached Bingo Basic ppt for Find Someone Who. Just print out the slides [ File - Print Preview - Print] as a handout and then the students hunt for students.

**But always make sure that after the activity, the students share their findings!** In small groups, they can make statements about other classmates. It can be a lot of fun. I also sometimes add the feature of having students have to ask for one piece of additional information or a followup question. Example: Do you like pizza? Yes I do! / Oh, What kind do you like most? Oh I like cheese pizza. / Answer: Rachel told me she likes cheese pizza. This works great with higher level students.

So start using this if you haven’t! It is a versatile method to make your classroom into an active, enjoyable place!

**#98 Cloze Activities**

Apr 16, 2010 05:18PM

**# 98 - Cloze activities — another standard.**

Cloze activities are the staple of many teacher’s tool kit. The bread that goes with all eating.

What are they? Cloze activities are basically dialogues where there is missing information. They are often called, “Blank Dialogues”. Students complete the dialogue with the correct information and make their own “conversation”. Sometimes there is one correct answer but often and most importantly, there can be multiple correct answers and the cloze allows for personalization of the content.

**Here’s an example:**

A: …………………………….
B: What did you do ____________________?
A: I see.
B: Nothing much. I ________ and ______________.
A: Interesting. What did you do ______________?
B: I went to ________________________________.
A: What did you do ____________, (name)?
B: _________________________________.
A: ……………………………..

Cloze activities are great controlled activities which can be used in the “Study or Practice” part of the traditional lesson plan.

They are very valuable in allowing for a focus on language production and also as an assessment tool. See the Side by Side presentations on our Practice page. Get the ppts in our Resources area. Side by Side uses a “prompt” for the cloze and the pictures prompt the student for a specific answer to the cloze/blank.

**Cloze activities can also be created by students as role plays.** They are also very valuable as listening exercises. The teacher simply hands out material which has some words missing (clozed) and the students must listen for that information. They can then practice using their own words for the cloze.
# 99 — "BACKDOOR" , a standard communication technique
Apr 16, 2010 05:23PM

This technique is great if you have a very talkative class or a class that really needs a focus on language production! It can be done in many ways but basically;

1. Students are in pairs or 3/4s. Some students are facing the screen/blackboard/front of the class. The other half are looking away.

2. The students who are viewing, “describe” what they see. This can be a video, flashcards, the teacher or student acting out a scene etc….. Description is “functional”, meaning the students produce language to the best of their ability to describe what they see. Accuracy is not important.

3. The scene/video/flashcards are played again with everyone looking. A possible “correct” version is then presented.

That’s it. It can be loads of fun. I’d start by modeling this. How I do this is usually by telling the class I’m Mr. Been. or Mr. Has Been! I act out a scene as Mr. Bean and the students respond by stating what I have been doing / did / am doing / will do (chose your tense to practice). I then ask half the students to turn around and we do the same thing but BACKDOOR with students describing for the others turned around. I then perform the Mr. Been skit with everyone watching. Another easy way is to just put up some photos on a screen (or hold them up) and let the students describe. Signal to change to another picture.

BACKDOOR works sooooo well with video. I especially like using video shorts without dialogue. Mr. Bean is perfect and check out the Mr. Bean on this page or in our A/V player. I’ve used this Mr. Bean - at the swimming pool, with great success. Let students describe for 1 min or so , then change around. Stop before the end and let all watch together the climax! Try BACKDOOR, you students will love it. You might just put some expected vocabulary on the board prior to this , to help prompt student language - I usually just write it as we go along to prompt the “describers”. Like “diving”, “bathing suit”, “lifeguard” etc.....

# 100 Using Flashcards in your classroom
Apr 16, 2010 05:30PM

#100 - Getting Flashy! Using Flash cards

Flashcards are a MUST for the Second language communicative classroom. Even for adults, they add the “compulsion” and “necessity” to communicate meaningful information. Further, they can be a game and add spice and curiosity to a lesson. But the $24 question is - How? How if I don’t have the money to spend on them nor the resources to get them? Further, even if I did, what would I do?

Don’t worry! Problem solved. Just read on.

1. Get the flashcards by vocabulary printing powerpoints.
Look in our Resources area under Instructional Powerpoints or in our Media Fire account under Instructional Powerpoints. Lots there. Or even scroll down on our Practice page. . I really like using the quick to print off and use - Picture Sets. One pagers of great content/vocabulary. I’ve included an example below.

You print powerpoints into flashcards by hitting File - Print Preview - and then selecting how many slides to a page (4 / 6 / 9 will do). Then PRINT! Give the pictures to your students, two sets / group [it is important to have 2 sets!!!!]. Give them scissors and get them to cut out the sets of pictures. They learn so much by doing this and you can drink your coffee :)

The print screen will look like this one.

So now you have flashcards!

Next, you can get your students to play a variety of games. Many described below. OR, you can simply ask them to come up with their own game! You’ll be astonished how orderly they will play and how creative the games they come up with will be! Further - go HERE and see my blog post with a Flashcard ebook of complete games!

1. Guessing games. These are standards. The cards are in a stack in the middle. One student is the teacher and describes the object or performs/mimes the object or draws the object. The others guess. One guess ONLY! The correct guess - gets the flashcards
The student with the most flashcards (points) at the end wins.

2. Matching games. These are also very easy/common games.
A) Concentration. Two sets are turned over and spread out. A student turns over one and then another (from the other set), stating the object/verb. If they match, they continue choosing and collecting flashcards/points.
B) Bingo. Shuffle the cards. Deal out 4 or 6 to each student. They turn them up and make a bingo card with them. Call out from the remainder of cards and if the students has that item/verb, they can turn over their card. First to finish their card (super bingo) wins!
C) Fish. Shuffle and deal the cards. 4 or 5 to each group member. The person uses the target vocabulary of the teacher which is on the board (ex. Do you have / Have you got / Have you ever…? / Did you … yesterday?) and asks one group member. If that person has a match, they say YES. They give the flashcard to the student who continues trying to get matches. If that person doesn’t have a match, they say NO (or Go Fish) and the student stops asking and picks up a card from the middle. Continue until all matches have been found. The student with the most matches wins!
D) SNAP! Put one set in the middle turned up. One person describes the object/verb and the first to SNAP! and cover with their hand the right flashcard wins the match. Most matches win!

3. Language Games
A) Stories. Deal the cards to all members or put them in the middle and students draw them. The first student puts a card down and starts a story. “Once upon a time…..” , using the flashcard in the sentence. The next continues and so on, until all cards are used. They can repeat and just change the vocabulary language - great for learning!
B) Question Game. Put the cards in the middle. A student turns up one card and asks another student a question using the flashcard as a prompt. All other students must do the same. The teacher can put on the board some target questions (ex. Do you like… / Have you ever …. / Do you wish ….. etc…)
C) Truth or Lie. Deal 3 cards to each student. One student at a time says a statement for each flashcard. 2 are true, one is a lie. The other group members must guess which is the lie! So much fun…..
D) Bragging. Put the cards in the middle. One student turns over a card and says, “My ____ is ____er / more ….. than your _____. The next student turns over a card and screams, “So what!” , My ____ is _____er / more … than your _____. Continue until all cards are done. This is hilarious!

So there you have it. Some of the many variations of flashcard games so important for teaching. Of course, also print big flashcards you can use with the whole class to preteach the vocabulary and do TPR with (total physical response/acting). I’d also recommend keeping the flashcards after you’ve made them. I store them in envelopes with the topic on each one for handy reference…..

Now start being a student centered teacher and get them playing flashcard games! Also, use books like Jill Hadfield’s Communication Games or 1,000 pictures for teachers to make photocopies of small pictures for use in these games above. Keep them in ziplocked bags for easy reference/use.

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**#101 - 2 Way Tasks**

Apr 16, 2010 05:36PM

**#101 - Two way Tasks**

This is another standard lesson type. Tasks are a great way to get students “communicating” and not just memorizing or parroting without meaning. The basic thrust is to communicate meaning to another person. A two way task (aka - pair work) does this with head on directness….

Basically you give students A and B similar but varying incomplete information. It can be text, dialogue, picture or even video. Then they have to fulfill a task to complete their own information. For example these two pictures - one for Student A / the other for Student B. Student A through questions, must discover and record what is in the incomplete boxes. Student B, the converse. That’s “2 way tasks in a nutshell! 

See this discussion for more resources along this vein; Pair work, communication games etc….. This is a great way to get your classroom “speaking” and producing language!

A couple “caveats”. One - don’t over explain the task! For instance, with these pictures, let the students discover the way to ask each other for the information. This could be done in many ways! Numbered boxes, prepositions etc… Let the students control how to complete the task - they will enjoy it more. People love a puzzle!

Two. If you are going to explain - model it. Do a dry run with a good student in the front and the rest of the students asking. Do the dry run without pens - pencils down! Then when in pairs, they can record the information.

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Person A:

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Person B:
#102 - Listening! Activities galore for your classroom!

Apr 16, 2010 05:40PM

Listening is a very overlooked skill in our classrooms. It is as vital (or even more so!) in the beginning as speaking and we should treat it so. But too often, it is the poor cousin. No more! Here are the major listening activities grouped by type. I’ve provided a lot of links to possible audio sources as well as a printable appendix with example activities. These Funny Stories in ppt might offer another listening solution for your classroom!

Remember though, nothing is written in stone. Be creative and use the general idea I’ve provided with some audio or twist that your own students will enjoy. That’s the secret - tailor make it.... See this below on the new DoxTop - a great online publishing place....Check this out too.

#103 Reading Response - Get your students thinking!

Apr 16, 2010 06:06PM

Reading response is on basic way of getting students to respond to text. It is very simple but very powerful and useable in the English language classroom.

1. Select an interesting story! Keep it at the student’s level and read the story together (even maybe stopping from time to time and asking the students to predict - “What’s going to happen next?”.

I have many favorites but it all depends on the language level of your students. See our Story page or Leveled Readers for many options. Also look in Resources for lots of leveled reading stories, easily printed.

This is one of my favorites! The Eyebrow Story

2. Next - give the students the handout, Reading Response Questions.

Either orally or in writing (in a reading response journal with pictures) have them ask/answer some of the questions for the story they read.

3. Finally - share the answers. The student reads their question and answer. Prompt for discussion.

There you have it! A very quick lesson that is rich in learning and narrative.