

Crazy Animals

And Other Activities for Teaching English to Young Learners

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Introduction

There are many books of activities for teaching English in the primary classroom, but this book is different. It is different because all the activities have been tried and tested by the very people who are going to use them, teachers like you. These teachers work in the most diverse contexts and conditions, sometimes with large classes, sometimes with very small groups, sometimes with every type of resource you could wish for, sometimes with only a board to support their teaching. However, they share a desire to help their students to learn English in an enjoyable way. We imagine you too share this desire and that is why you have picked this book. We hope you find the activities useful, engaging and fun too, and enjoy using them in your class.

How the book was born

The book is the direct result of a year-long project called 'Investigating Global Practices in Teaching English to Young Learners' (www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/global-practices-teaching-english-young-learners). A number of primary school teachers who responded to the survey in this study told us about the kinds of activities they used in class to motivate their learners. We felt that these ideas deserved to be shared with primary teachers all over the world, and so the idea for this book was born.

We contacted over 1,000 teachers who had left their e-mail addresses on the survey site and asked them to send us their favourite activities for teaching English to young learners. From the many we received, we selected the 50 that we felt were the most original and creative, but also the most practical for the greatest number of teachers. In most cases, we have edited the

original activity in order either to provide very clear guidance, or to make it more appropriate for teachers everywhere. We are extremely grateful to all those who sent in activities, whether they are included here or not, and to teachers who gave us their opinion on them, such as teachers of young learners at the JALT 2011 conference in Tokyo.

The Activities

For each activity, we give the ages of the children it is suitable for and the time it takes. Both of these should be taken as guides only. Very often, the English level of the children is more important than their age to the success of the activity. In addition, the timing of the activity depends on the size of the class or how quick the children are to respond. You will always be the best judge of whether an activity is suitable for your class and how long it is likely to take.

Each activity has a section called **Alternatives** in which we give different ideas for using the activity. These are either related activities that were sent in by other teachers, or our own ideas. There is also a section called **No Resources?**, which suggests ways of doing the activity even if you do not have access to the resources needed, such as computers, flashcards or even sufficient coloured paper for all the children. We have also included a **Preparation** section so you will know how long it will take you to prepare for each activity.

We know that many teachers work with large classes and so we have indicated if the activities are suitable for this context. We take a large class to be 30+ children. Even where activities are indicated as not being suitable for large classes, it is worth looking at the **Alternatives** section as often we suggest an approach for using the same activity with large classes.

Finding activities

The activities are simply presented in alphabetical order. We have also developed a table which you can use to find activities quickly. The table gives the list of activities and then some useful information about them, for example, if they are suitable for large classes or if resources are required (other than a board, board pen/chalk, paper and pencils/pens, which we believe are readily available in most classrooms). However, these are only guidelines and you might find that an activity we recommend for very young learners (4–6/7) is suitable in your context for junior learners (7–11) or even older learners (12+). Timings, as we say above, are very approximate. In the table we indicate if they are generally short (5–20 minutes), medium length (20–40 minutes) or long (over 40 minutes). Again, please use your own judgement to decide how long activities will take.

Some considerations when using the activities

Language in the young learner classroom

For many children, their only source of exposure to English will be you, the teacher. For this reason, it is advisable to take all possible opportunities to speak English in the classroom. However, this does not mean that your English has to be perfect or that you have to speak English all the time. Indeed, switching between different languages is common in many everyday contexts for many people, and the classroom is no different in this regard. In this book, we have suggested where using the children's first language might be effective, but this does not mean you should avoid it at other times. You are the best judge of how to support your children's learning in the classroom.

There are lots of different ways that you can use English, however. You can use English to organise the activities in this book, to control the class while they do them and to talk to the children on a one-to-one basis. Many of the activities in the book have steps that involve the children in quiet tasks, such as cutting and pasting, drawing, colouring and so on, that do not explicitly practise new structures or vocabulary. While children are engaged in these, you can chat to them more informally. It is not necessary to use complex language; simple, encouraging comments are effective and might include things like, *'Cut the shapes carefully. You can use all the colours you want. How are you getting on? Have you nearly finished? What colour are you going to use next?'* and so on. Slattery and Willis (2001) is an excellent source of English expressions to use in the primary classroom.

But what about the children's language use? We cannot expect children to use English all the time. It is not only unnatural; it can also damage children's confidence. Of course, children can be encouraged to use English in whole class activities and also while working with their peers in pairs and groups. However, if children use their first language in these activities, it should not be seen as a problem, particularly if the input is in English or some part of the output requires children to use English. At some stage of the activity, children will be involved with English, and this is what is important for young learners.

Teachers play a critical role in creating an environment in which children feel happy trying out their English skills. As well as encouraging children and praising their efforts, teachers need to have confidence in their own English speaking skills, whatever their level. If children see their teachers speaking English with enjoyment and enthusiasm, not worrying about making mistakes or knowing every word, then they have a very positive model for using English themselves. We hope the activities in this book play their part in providing the kind of fun and engaging activities that can motivate children to use English in class.

Whole class work, group work, pair work

There are activities in this book for the whole class and for individual, group and pair work. Whole class activities involve all the learners and are important for developing a positive classroom approach to learning English, good relationships between learners and the opportunity for students to learn from both the teacher and from each other. Many of the whole class activities involve students becoming physically involved in the learning experience, by holding up cards, for example, or by working in teams. The teachers who suggested these whole class activities certainly do not view whole class work as a passive experience!

Many of the activities in this book involve children working in groups or pairs. Some teachers are reluctant to try these approaches, especially if their classes are large. These teachers argue that they cannot monitor what all the children are doing, that the children will speak their first language, or that the class will get out of control. Therefore, teachers often turn activities that are meant to be done in groups or pairs into whole class activities.

There are a number of reasons why we would encourage you to use pair and group work where the activity states this mode of organisation, even if you have never tried it before. First, if activities are done as a whole class, the children may not be directly involved in participating and can become bored and distracted. This is especially true in large classes. On the other hand, if children are working in pairs and groups, they will all have the opportunity to use English and to be engaged in the activity. Second, pair and group work can also help children to develop other skills such as listening to others, co-operating and reaching a consensus. These skills are useful to children no matter how good their English is! Third, pair and group work can provide a change of pace in a lesson and so revitalise the class atmosphere.

Children can be kept on task in pair and group work in a number of ways. For example, one child can be nominated a group monitor, or group 'captain' and it is this child's responsibility to ensure that the task is completed.

Alternatively, you can have a points or rewards system (see below) and award points to groups that stay on task and complete the activity.

Working in groups and pairs inevitably increases the noise level of a class, even where the children are closely monitored. If you work in a context where noise is not tolerated, or is associated with lack of discipline or work, you can try to explain to the head teacher, and teachers who are affected by the noise, what you are doing and why (or show him/her/them this introduction). You can also warn teachers in advance when the children will be doing pair or group work to demonstrate that you understand the inconvenience but also to show that these activities are planned into your teaching and part of your pedagogic practices.

Rewarding children

Some of the activities in this book suggest giving rewards to children who 'win'. Some teachers take sweets or other prizes into the classroom to give to children who complete an activity first (see below for a discussion of competition), behave particularly well, do an activity successfully and so on. However, you need to consider whether it is appropriate or acceptable in your context to use rewards. Even if it is, you need to consider the effect of rewards on the children. If the same children constantly get the rewards (or do not get them), it can be de-motivating and could have negative effects on the classroom dynamics. Rewarding as many children as possible is one way of dealing with this: children can be rewarded for effort as well as success, for example.

A system that we have observed in primary classes involves dividing the class into small groups (4–6 children per group), and using a reward point system. The groups can be changed regularly, once a month for example, and different strategies can be used to form the groups, with the teachers either choosing the groups or making a random selection, or children choosing their own groups. Children then earn points for their group, rather than rewards for themselves. Points are given for performing well in activities, for good behaviour in class, for completing homework, answering questions in class, and classroom management, such as finding material quickly. This reward system encourages collective class responsibility.

Competition

Some of the activities encourage both individual and group competition, with a 'winner' at the end. While a certain amount of competition can be healthy, the same potential difficulties exist as with using rewards. Competition can push some children to perform better, but it can be de-motivating for others. We suggest a limited use of competition in activities and a preference for collective responsibility whereby a child wins for their group, rather than for themselves.

Concluding Comments

We have had great fun putting this book together and learnt a lot of new approaches and ideas for teaching English to young learners. We hope that in using the book you will also have fun and learn, and that your children will too!

We would love to hear from you about your experiences in using these activities and any changes you make to meet your children's needs or that of the context in which you work. Send your thoughts and ideas to lss_activities@aston.ac.uk

References

English for Primary Teachers (Resource Books for Teachers) by Mary Slattery and Jane Willis (24 May 2001) Oxford OUP

Activity 1: Act out

Eliana Fernandez Malla – Dominican Republic

Age: All ages  15–30 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Cards illustrating action verbs (e.g. dance, eat, walk, etc.), sand clock or timer.

Organisation: Pair work, group work, whole class.

Aim: To revise and practise the present continuous tense.

Description: This is a simple but fun way for children to practise a grammar point through a guessing game with mime.

Preparation: Make flashcards with a picture of a different action on each one. Actions could include, run, jump, cry, laugh, run, sleep, cough, stretch, brush, clap, smile, walk, sit, stand, write, read, listen, speak, wash, wriggle, sneeze, blink, wink, turn.

Procedure

1. Show the picture cards one at a time to the whole class. Elicit the verbs illustrated and practise the pronunciation of each one. Ask the children to mime the action.
2. Divide the class into groups of two or three. Each group decides who will mime and who will guess. Decide which group will go first and say that each group will have two minutes to guess as many actions as they can.
3. Bring the first group to the front of the class. Ask the child who will mime to stand so all the children in the class can see. Give the child the first card. They mime the action on the card. The group has to guess what the mime is by calling out, for example, 'you are running/you're running'. If they guess correctly, they take the card and the teacher gives the child a new card. If they don't know, they say 'next one', the card goes back to the bottom of the pile and the child continues to the next card.
4. After two minutes, the group counts the number of cards it has collected and records the number on the board. The cards are given back to the teacher, and the second group comes to the front to guess.
5. The winning group is the one with most points recorded on the board.

Notes

You could make correct pronunciation a condition of getting the point, or you could award an extra point for it.

Alternatives

- Each group takes it in turns to send one person to the front to mime one verb at a time.
- Each group has its own set of cards and works at the same time, with members taking it in turns to pick up a card and act it out. If you have a large class, one member of each group can observe another group. They get points for their group if they notice any errors, for example if the group gives itself a point it should not have.
- Depending on the level of the children, you could also award extra points if they can tell you the past form of the verb, and/or the past participle.
- The game would work with other tenses too, but you should try and make the context as natural as possible.

For example:

- a. to practise the past continuous, the children can call out their guesses after the child at the front has finished miming – ‘you were walking’.
 - b. To practise the past simple, the child at front can mime a series of actions while the group writes them down. After the two minutes, the group calls out the sequence: ‘you walked, then you sat down, then you read a book’.
- Rather than miming the action, the children can draw the action on the board. The children in the group guess in the usual way. To make it more challenging, write the verb on the flashcards rather than drawing a picture. Children then have to read and show they understand what the verb means by drawing it.

No resources?

If you do not have the resources to make cards with illustrations, you can simply write the verb on a piece of paper.



Activity 2: Acting songs

Natalia Paliashvili – Georgia

Age: 4–7  15 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Song words and recordings of the songs, equipment to play the song, flashcards, pictures and objects to illustrate the words from the song.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To develop stress and rhythm through song.

Description: This activity involves children learning the words and doing actions to songs. Traditional songs are ideal as they are melodic, repetitive and easy to memorise. Look for songs such as *London's Burning*, *Old Macdonald had a Farm*, *London Bridge is Falling Down*, *Oranges and Lemons*, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* etc. See, for example, www.freekidsmusic.com/traditional-childrens-songs/. The activity below is for *London Bridge is Falling Down*.

Preparation: You will need to download the song and the words you wish to use.

Procedure

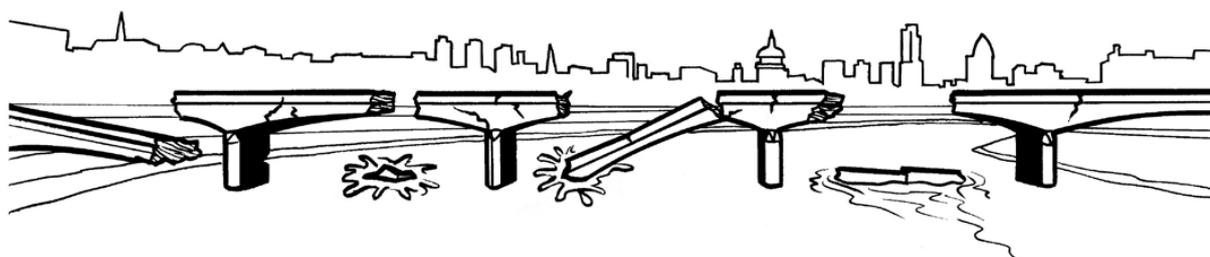
1. Pre-teach the main words 'bridge, fall down/build up, lady, sticks, stones'. Use a mixture of actions, mime, objects and pictures to make the words memorable.
2. Play or sing the song to the children two or three times while they just listen. Use actions, mimes and gestures to illustrate the song as you sing it. Encourage the children to join in miming and singing.
3. Ask the children to repeat any words/phrases they have understood. Write these words on the board.
4. Play or sing the song and do the actions again, but this time stop after each line and ask the children to repeat both the words and actions.
5. Play or sing the whole song again, with the children singing along and doing the actions.
6. Repeat stage 5 but this time give individual children different parts to act out.

Alternatives

- Songs can also be used to practise day-to-day vocabulary and language structures. For example, *this is the way (I brush my teeth)* repeats the present simple tense with a number of daily routines. Likewise, *Ten Little Aeroplanes* presents counting up to ten and back again. These songs, with activities and animations, can be found on the British Council website learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/ This site also has great songs to practise stress and rhythm: *Chocolate Cake* is one of our favourites.
- Songs can be exploited in lots of different ways. Here is an idea from Ornella Granatiero (Italy) called *Go on Singing*. In this activity, a song from the children's course book is used, but you could use any song. The materials are the same as for the activity on the previous page:
 1. Play or sing the song two or three times while the children listen in silence, follow the words in their books or look at the flashcards.
 2. Play or sing the song again two or three times, this time with the children singing and miming actions.
 3. Once the children can sing most of the song, play or sing it again, but stop after a few lines and ask one of the children or a group of children to continue the song. After one or two lines, start playing it again. Repeat this, asking different children to continue until the end of the song.

No resources?

If you do not have equipment to play songs, you can sing them yourself. If you do not have access to the internet to download song words, you can make up simple songs yourself. The important thing is that they are memorable for the children with lots of repetition. You could ask the children to clap or beat the rhythm or to mime actions. Do not worry if you are not a good singer, you can chant instead.



Activity 3: Alphabet and sound recognition

Wendy Weiss Simon – Israel

Age: All ages  10 minutes per lesson **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Flashcards with letters of the alphabet, use both small letters and capitals.

Organisation: Individual work, pair work or group work.

Aim: To develop identification of letters and knowledge of sounds.

Description: This activity helps students to learn the order of the letters of the alphabet and their sounds by working with flashcards in a variety of ways.

Preparation: A set of cards of the letters of the alphabet for each individual, pair or group. The teacher will also need a set of big letter flashcards, suitable for putting on the board.

Procedure

1. Give one set of letter cards to each student, pair or group of students and ask them to spread the letters out on the top of their desks, leaving a space at the bottom.
2. Ask the students to tell you the order of the letters in the alphabet and start putting up your flashcards in the correct order on the board, or write the letters in order. At the same time, the children rearrange the cards on their desk into the correct order.
3. Once all the children have their cards in the right order, the teacher calls out a letter and the children hold up the card with the letter on it.

Notes

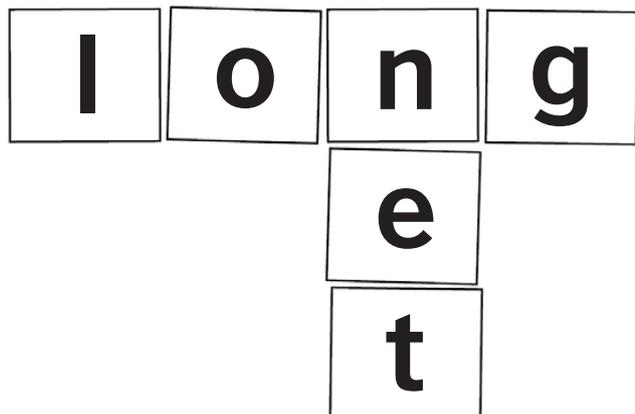
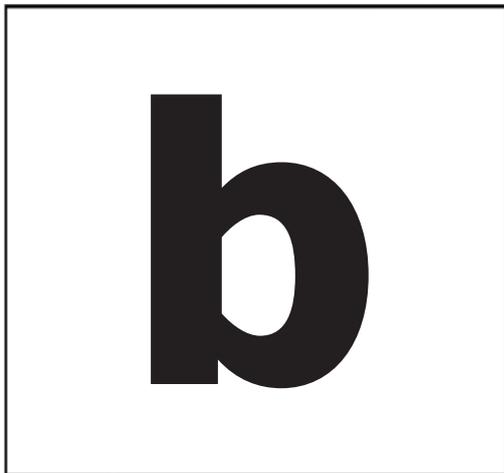
Remember to collect up all the cards at the end of the activity, making sure they are not in order, so that they are ready to use again next lesson.

Alternatives

- In the second part of the activity, instead of calling out letters, call out sounds and children hold up the corresponding letter(s).
- You can also call out sounds made up of more than one letter (th, sh, ch).
- Give the children words or short phrases to spell out using the cards on their desk. Remember, do not ask children to spell words which use the same letter twice, such as *all*, as the children only have one card with each letter!
- Ask children to spell words that they have recently learnt using the cards. If you give each card a number value (for example, a = 1 and z = 5) children can gain points for the words they spell, like in *Scrabble*.
- In pairs or groups, children can play a dominos game. Divide two sets of letters amongst the children. The first child makes a word from the letters they have and lays them down on the desk. The next child then tries to make another word, using their own letters and those already on the desk. The child with the fewest letters left is the winner.

No resources?

All of the above activities can be carried out by writing the alphabet on the board and simply asking the children to call out the relevant letters. Alternatively, children can be asked to come to the board to indicate the correct letter(s) or write out the word/phrase.



Activity 4: At the zoo

Raisa Dukaļska – Latvia

Age: 5–10 ⌚ 5–20 minutes Large classes? Yes Mixed level? Yes

Materials: Pictures of animals and dice.

Organisation: Whole class.

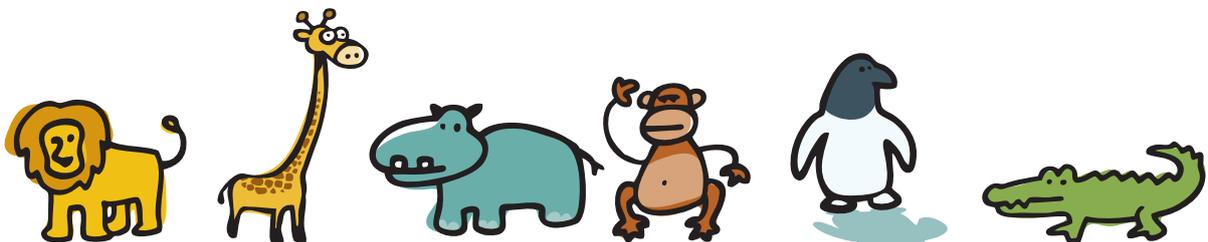
Aim: To practise or revise animal vocabulary and to produce simple descriptions.

Description: Pictures of animals from the zoo are put on the board and numbered 1–6. Children take it in turns to throw a dice. The number thrown corresponds to an animal on the board, and the child must make a sentence about the animal.

Preparation: You will need pictures of zoo animals to put on the board, ensuring they are big enough for the whole class to see. Clipart is a good source, or you can draw the animals yourself.

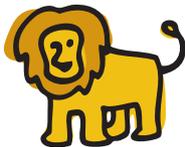
Procedure

1. Before playing the game, revise the numbers 1–6, the names of some animals, and some adjectives to describe the animals.
2. Put the pictures of the animals on the board and give each animal a number from 1–6.



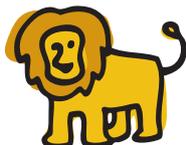
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

3. Ask for a volunteer to throw the dice. When the dice lands on a number, the child must say which animal corresponds to that number. The teacher (or the child) writes the name of the animal on the board under the picture:



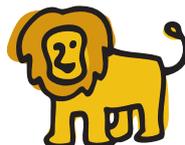
It is a lion

4. Another volunteer throws the dice. If the number lands on the same number, the volunteer must say something about the animal (for example, 'it is big'). The teacher can write this on the board. If the number is different, the volunteer names a different animal. The text might look something like this:



It is a lion. It is big. It is golden.
It likes sleeping and eating.

5. The game continues until all the animals are named and have been described. The number of sentences you write for each animal depends on the level of the children.
6. Once all the texts are on the board, erase key vocabulary to create a gap fill. Ask for volunteers to read out the texts and fill in the gaps.



It is a _____.
It is _____.
It is _____.
It likes _____ and _____.

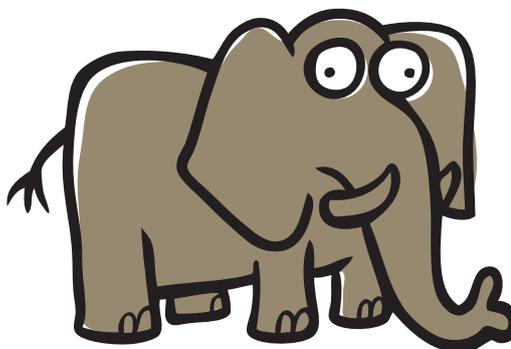
Alternatives

- This game can be played in groups but you will need more pictures and more dice.
- You could also add animal sounds as these tend to be different in different languages!
- As the descriptions of the animals build up, you can ask the children to read out or remember all the descriptions given so far before adding another sentence. For example, 'It is a lion. It is big. It is golden. It likes sleeping and...'
- For older children, choose a different category such as pop or music stars.

No resources?

You can write the names of the animals on the board, or you could draw them. You could ask confident children to come to the front to mime being the animals. You could also ask children to respond to cues, such as, 'jump like a monkey', 'roar like a lion', 'snap like a crocodile'

If you have no dice, you can write numbers 1–6 on different pieces of paper, which the children can pull out of a box when it is their turn to shake the dice and make a sentence.



Activity 5: Birthdays

Donatella Bergamaschi – Italy

Age: 4–10  **10–15 minutes** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A birthday hat, a birthday badge or sticker with ‘I’m 11’ (or whatever age) on it, a fabric or card birthday cake with fabric or card candles.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise stress and intonation, and language chunks.

Description: This activity introduces a routine that can be used at the start of the lesson when it is one of the children’s birthdays. The presents involved are imaginary, so encourage the children to think creatively.

Preparation: You will need to either find or make the badge, cake and hat.

Procedure	Timing
<p>1. Ask the child whose birthday it is to come to the front of the class. Ask ‘How old are you?’ and give the child the badge or sticker with their age on it to wear for the duration of the class. All the children sing</p> <p>Happy Birthday to you Happy Birthday to you Happy Birthday dear xxxx Happy Birthday to you.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; gap: 20px;">    </div> <p>2. Ask the birthday child to ‘blow out’ the candles on the cake and put the hat on.</p> <p>3. The birthday child stands at the front of the class. Ask the other children ‘who has a present for X?’ The children who want to give a ‘present’ put up their hands and take it in turns to come up to the front.</p> <p>4. The two children repeat the following dialogue</p> <p>Present giver: Hello. I’ve got a present for you. Birthday child: What is it? Present giver: It’s a ... Here you are. Birthday child: Thank you very much.</p> <p>5. Repeat until all the children who want to give a ‘present’ have had their turn.</p>	

Alternatives

- If you are short of time, the children can write their presents on pieces of paper, which they give to the birthday girl/boy. The birthday girl/boy can open their presents during a break or at the end of the class.
- You can develop class routines for any occasion that you like. Donatella's class also has a rhyme that they chant whenever a child arrives late for class. The child has to knock at the door before coming in and the class chants:

One two three four come in please and close the door

Five six seven eight it's time for school you're very late

Nine ten nine ten don't be late for school again

No resources?

You can use a paper hat and a picture of a birthday cake, either from a magazine or you can draw one. Alternatively, you can give the birthday girl or boy a card which all the children have signed, perhaps with messages. Or, just sing Happy Birthday and do the present-giving routine.



Activity 6: Brown bear, brown bear

Chiara Mantegazza – Italy

Age: 5–8  **1–2 hours** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Brown Bear, Brown Bear story book, flashcards, sets of black and white pictures, blank booklets for each child.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To develop listening and speaking skills through story-telling.

Description: The children listen to the story and then join in. They then do a series of activities to help them to remember the story.

Preparation: You will need a copy of the book (see website below), a set of flashcards of the animals, a set of the animals in black and white for each child and a blank booklet (two pieces of A3 paper folded and stapled together). You can download the pictures of the animals at this wonderful website (which also has lots of other ideas for useful activities):

www.dltk-teach.com/books/brownbear/index.htm

It is a good idea to stick the pictures on to card so that they last longer.

Procedure

1. Show the back of the book (a picture of a brown bear) and ask the children about it. What other bears do they know? Have they seen a bear? (This can be done in the children's first language).
2. Read the story, showing the pictures as you go.
3. Read the story again, this time pausing before saying the next animal and colour so that the children can join in. Then close the book, say the name of an animal to see if children can remember the colour (and vice versa).
4. Divide the class into ten small groups. Give each group a flashcard with one of the animals/people on it red bird, yellow duck, blue horse, green frog, purple cat, white dog, black sheep, gold fish, mother, group of children. Stick the picture of the brown bear on the board.
5. With the children, face the board and chant 'Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?' The group with the first animal from the story (Red Bird) answers the chant, 'I see a red bird looking at me'. The story continues until all the children have had the chance to chant their animal/people.
6. Give each child a black and white set of animals/people cut into individual sections. Children put the animals/people in the right order (they can listen to the story again if it helps). Children can then colour in the animals/people.
7. Give each child a paper booklet or children can use their exercise book. Children write the title on the front and draw the brown bear (if this is too difficult, you can make sure the booklets already have the title on them or you can go around the class helping children to write, or you can give them another black and white picture of the title for them to cut out, colour and stick). Children then stick their animals/people in the book in the right order.
8. Children take their books home to show and read to their parents.

Notes

There are a number of activities here and so it is probably better to carry them out over a series of lessons rather than in one lesson.

Alternatives

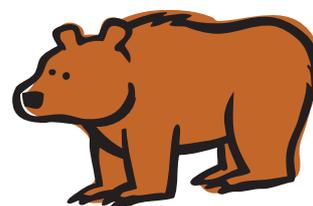
- Rather than each group responding one by one to the question, 'Brown bear, brown bear what do you see?', children can make a chain by trying to remember what animals went before, for example, 'I see a red bird, a yellow duck, a blue horse and a green frog looking at me!'
- After they have stuck the pictures into the booklets, the children can then write the story out, or you can give the children the sentences to stick in next to the right picture (depending on age). You can write the colour in blocks that children can fill in with the right colour:

I see a **red** bird looking at me.

- A similar set of steps can be carried out with lots of story books written for children. You can use *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Eric Cayle); *A Squash and A Squeeze* (Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler); *There was an old woman who swallowed a fly* (Pam Adams); *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (Michael Rosen). You can also find stories on www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories/
- Yulia Sharma (Ukraine) suggests another brown bear activity that could be used in conjunction with this story, when you think that the children are getting restless.
 1. Ask the children to stand up. Take them to a corner of the classroom and say that a brown bear is sleeping there. Tell the children that they must be very quiet because they must not wake the bear. If they wake the bear, he will chase them.
 2. Ask the children if they like berries and if they like mushrooms. Tell them you are going to pick mushrooms and berries which are to be found near the brown bear. If the bear wakes up, they must return home to their chairs quickly so that the bear does not catch them.
 3. Teach the children the rhyme about the brown bear:
Mushrooms, berries, one two three
Brown bear, brown bear, don't catch me!
 4. Take the children as far away from the brown bear's lair as possible and with them slowly start moving towards the bear, chanting the rhyme. Pretend to pick mushrooms and berries. When you are near the lair, chant the rhyme very quietly. When you are very close, and on 'don't catch me!', grab a teddy bear you have hidden in the lair and start to chase the children. The child you catch then becomes the bear when you repeat the activity.

No resources?

You will need to know a story if you do not have a book to read. Ask children some questions about the subject of the story to begin and then tell the story. You will need to use gestures instead of pictures. So if you know the Brown Bear story, you can mime a bear, do a gesture for 'see' and then mime the other animals/people. Instead of flashcards, children also mime in groups. Go straight to the booklet making stage, but instead of sticking in pictures, children can draw them and colour them if they can. Otherwise, they can write the colour on the picture.



Activity 7: Calendars

Giuliana Veruggio – Italy

Age: All ages  **Maximum 15 minutes** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A calendar page for each child.

Organisation: Individual work.

Aim: To revise vocabulary.

Description: In this activity the children decide what new language they want to remember. Each child is given a new calendar page at the beginning of each month. Over the month they fill in the spaces on the calendar with new words that they choose themselves.

Preparation: You will need to prepare a calendar page of the month for each child. You can make this on the computer or you can draw it. Make sure each square has a day and a number.

Procedure

1. At the beginning of each month, give each child a calendar page of the month with a square for each day.
2. Every Friday (or on whichever day you choose), ask the children to put a new English word, perhaps with a picture or a translation in each square for that week. The words can be from work covered in class or the children can ask you for words they would like to know in English. As the children are working on their calendar weeks, go around the class and ask them to pronounce the words and tell you what each word means.
3. At the end of the week, the children take their calendars home and learn the words they have written down. By the end of each month, the children should have learnt about 30 new words and have a colourful record of their achievements.

Notes

This is an easy way to personalise learning as the children choose their own words to write in the squares. You can brighten up the classroom by displaying completed months on the walls.

Alternatives

- Children can write sentences instead of words.
- At the end of each week/month, the children can write a story, trying to include as many words as possible. You can give a prize for the best story.
- For more advanced learners, you can make the task more challenging by asking them to try to use words beginning with as many different letters of the alphabet as possible. You can give a prize to the child who uses the most different letters.

No resources?

You can make a class calendar page or the children can draw a grid in their exercise books.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Activity 8: Change places, please

Marianna Burlina – Italy

Age: All ages  5–20 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: None.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To listen and respond to requests and to make requests.

Description: This is a whole class activity which involves children changing places in response to cues.

Preparation: No preparation is needed for this activity.

Procedure

1. Put all the chairs in a circle facing the middle. There should be chairs for all the children but not one for the teacher.

2. Stand in the middle of the circle of chairs and nominate two children to change places (for example, 'Marco and Anna, change places please')



3. When the children are used to moving around, say a sentence such as 'If you have brown eyes, change places'. The children who have brown eyes get up and try to sit in another chair. While the children are moving, the teacher tries to find a chair. Someone will be left without a chair and this child then makes the next 'change places please' sentence.

4. At the end of the game, say 'there will only be one more sentence'. At this point, the child who is in the middle can say, 'If you are a teacher, change places, please' making sure that the teacher always loses the game!

Notes

This activity is a great deal of fun but it also has the potential to be quite chaotic. Children love it but do be careful to avoid minor accidents!

Alternatives

- This game can be played in big groups if the children sit on the floor.
- The game can be played with low level children and simple vocabulary. For example, you can give the children names of fruits: four children are bananas; four apples; four mangos; four peaches; four melons and so on. The teacher is also a fruit. The teacher starts by saying 'bananas and mangos' and those children have to change places. To make it even more fun, you can introduce 'fruit salad' and all the children have to change places.

No resources?

No resources are needed for this activity.



Activity 9: Crazy animals

Sabrina De Vita – Argentina

Age: 9+  1 hour Large classes? No Mixed level? Yes

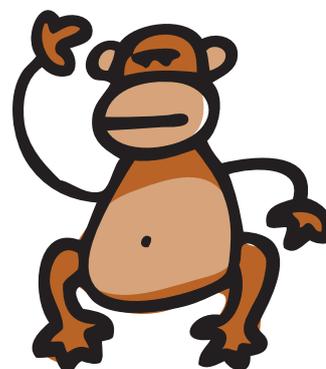
Materials: Computer with internet connection, digital pictures of animals.

Organisation: Individual, pair and group work.

Aim: To describe characteristics of different animals.

Description: The children write texts about animals and then record their texts on the Blabberize website.

Preparation: You will need digital pictures of all the animals you use for the activity. If you need some pictures of wild animals, try: www.weforanimals.com/free-pictures/wild-animals/ or Google images (www.google.com.ar/img/ghp?hl=es&tab=wi) It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with the website and how it works before class.



Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups and assign an animal group to each (or the groups can choose). For example, insects, birds, reptiles and so on.
2. Ask a child to choose an animal from the assigned group. He or she then writes a short text about the animal, in the first person.
For example:
Hello! I am a crocodile. I live in the river and sleep a lot. I have a very big mouth and very sharp teeth so that I can catch and eat my dinner! I like sleeping and sleeping and sleeping. Sometimes other animals think I am a log.
3. When the texts are ready, the children take it in turns to upload the pictures and record the texts on Blabberize (blabberize.com). This site allows you to upload pictures which you can then make talk by manipulating the mouth on the picture and recording a message. The children should follow the very clear instructions on Blabberize to make their recordings.
4. The children can then share their Blabberize recordings with each other or post them as part of a class blog.
5. Watch the best (funniest!) recordings together as a class.

Notes

Of course websites can disappear without warning, but Blabberize has been going for quite some time and is a much used resource by teachers.

Alternatives

- The children can make personal texts about themselves. Instead of uploading pictures of animals to the site, they can upload pictures of themselves instead.
- The children could also take on the roles of important world leaders, cultural icons, scientists in a similar way.

No resources?

If you do not have a computer, you will not be able to use the websites. However, the children can still choose an animal, write the text and read it to the class. You can encourage them to use 'animal' voices when they read.

If you have paper, pens, and string or wool, the children could also make an animal mask that they can put on while they are reading.



Activity 10: Creative chairs

Silvana Rampone – Italy

Age: 6–10  **30+ minutes** **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A4 paper, felt tip pens, scissors, glue, dance music and equipment to play it on.

Organisation: Group work and whole class.

Aim: To practise speaking and writing.

Description: In this activity, children co-operate in drawing pictures, developing their creativity through collaborative work and also developing their communicative and thinking skills.

Preparation: You will need a piece of paper and a coloured pen for each child.



Procedure

1. Ask the children to place their chairs in a circle. Give one sheet of A4 paper and a felt tip pen to each child. Use as many different colours as possible. Tell the children to write their names on the back of their piece of paper.
2. Tell the children to sit on their chairs and to draw anything they like on the piece of paper.
3. Tell the children that when they hear music, they have to start dancing around the chairs. When the music stops, the children should stop and stand behind the nearest chair and draw another picture on the paper on the chair they are standing behind.
4. Start the music.
5. When the music stops, the children go to the nearest chair (not their own) and add a drawing to the paper they find there. Continue this procedure until you see that the papers are quite full of drawings.
6. Ask the children to go back to the chair they started from and look at the drawings. The children then take it in turns to hold up their pictures and describe what they see to the rest of the class. They can use the chunk 'I can see...' to introduce the pictures. You can help them with any new words they need.
7. After describing their pictures, the children can then write a story, including as many of the pictures on the piece of paper as possible.

Notes

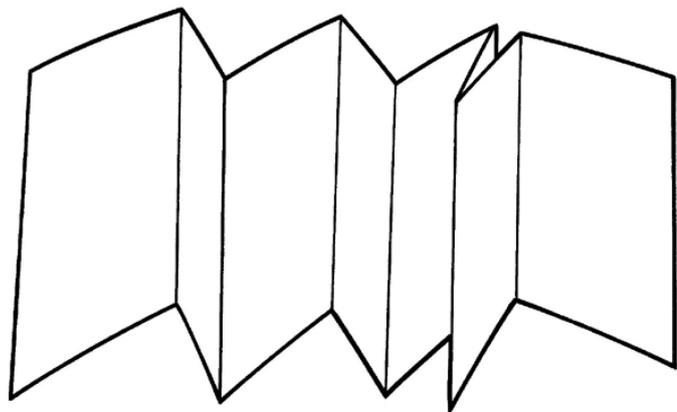
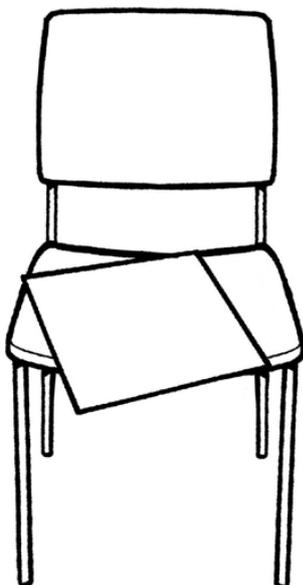
If you have a large class, you can organise the children into two or three circles.

Alternatives

- You can extend this by asking all the children to hold up their pens. The child describing the picture can identify who did the drawings and say 'This is Davide's picture' or 'Davide drew this picture' or 'This was done by Davide' or whatever phrase might be useful for your class to practise.
- The children hold up their pictures for the class. Play the game 'I spy'. Children take it in turns to say 'I spy with my little eye ...' finishing the sentence with the names of objects in the pictures, for example, 'I spy with my little eye a flower'. The other children have to find all the pictures with flowers in them and point to them.
- The children cut out the objects from their drawings. Place all the cut out pictures on the floor and ask the children to sort them out so that all drawings of the same object are together (flowers, houses, people etc).
- Put a large poster-size sheet of paper on the floor or on a desk and ask the children to stick the objects on it to make a display using singular and plural forms. Write on the poster (or ask the children to write) one flower six flowers (depending on how many there are on the poster). Draw the children's attention to any irregular plurals and how they are formed.
- Give each group a piece of poster-size paper. The children cut the objects out of their pictures and rearrange them on the poster, leaving some space at the bottom. When they're happy with the layout, they can glue them onto the paper to make the new picture. The children can then colour the background, give their poster a title and write a short description of it at the bottom.
- The children make an accordion book of their story by sticking the pictures in the right sequence. (see diagram below). They then write short sentences for each stage of the story.

No resources?

You can divide the board into different sections and instead of dancing around chairs, children just dance on the spot (you can sing or play an instrument, or nominate a child to do so). When the music stops, the children go to a section of the board and draw a picture. Repeat until all the children have drawn a picture in each of the sections.



Activity 11: Plants and seeds

Erica Cimarosti – Italy

Age: 9+  **2 lessons** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Coloured paper (A4).

Organisation: Individual, whole class.

Aim: To learn science through English, to practise listening, speaking and writing.

Description: The children choose a seed and/or plant to describe and write notes and information about it in a leaflet.

Preparation: The teacher does not need to prepare anything for this activity as the children bring things from home. However, you might prefer to prepare an example of a leaflet to show the children.



Procedure

1. In the first lesson, ask the children what they have learnt about seeds and plants in science. Allow them to use the L1 if necessary, repeating what they say in English. Ask them to choose a plant they have studied in their science lessons for their English project.
2. For homework, ask the children to find out as much information as they can about their plant and to cut out pictures of it, or bring in sample of seeds and plants. Make sure none of the plants is toxic!
3. In the second lesson, give each child a sheet of coloured paper and ask them to fold it in half, top to bottom. Make sure the children then turn the paper so that it opens like a book with 4 pages.
4. Make sure the children leave the first page blank. On the second page, tell them to write the name of the plant at the top and stick a picture of the plant or seed (or their sample). They should then write the main information about the plant: popular name, scientific name, colour, size, preferred soil, propagation.
5. On the third page, tell them to write a description of the plant by answering the following questions: Where does it come from? Where does it grow? What is it useful for? What other interesting things do you know about this plant?
6. Encourage the children to decorate their leaflet, but make sure the first and last pages are left blank.
7. Join all the leaflets together by gluing the back page of one leaflet to the front page of the next leaflet to make a class accordion book.

Notes

This activity works particularly well if you can decide the topic with the subject teacher. Erica agreed this with her learners' science teacher as the children had studied seeds and plants in science and also worked in the school garden.

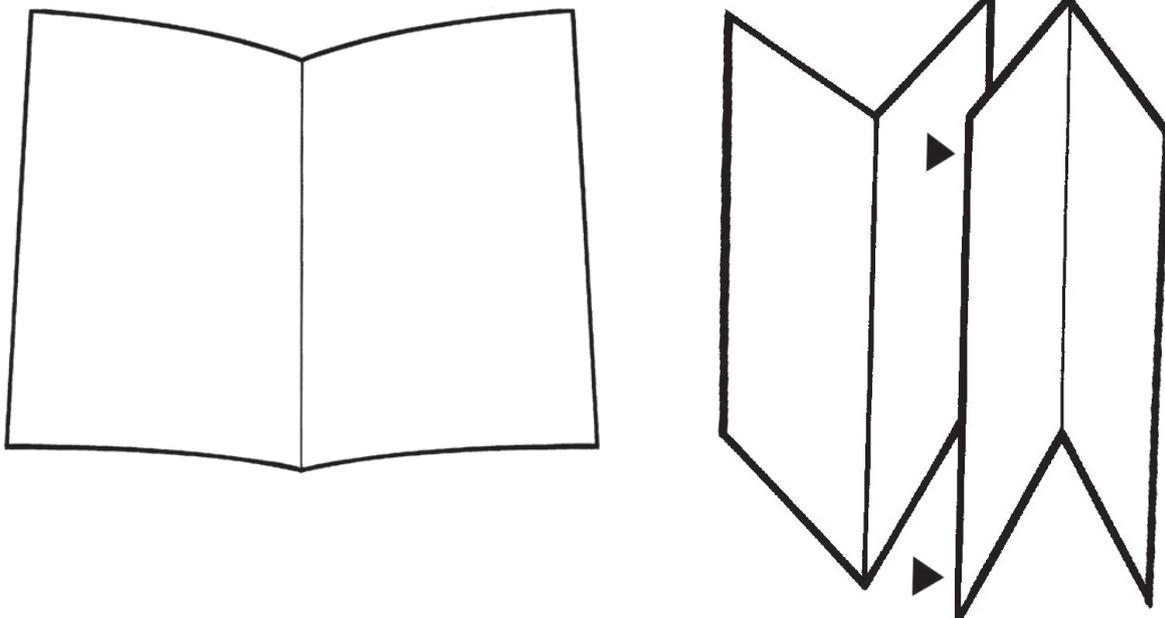
Alternatives

- In lower level classes, you can give them a model text to follow, such as the following:
... come from ...
They grow in ...
They are used ...
I chose this plant because ...
- In lower level classes, you could also give the alternatives for the description.
For example:
Habitats: warm/dry/damp/cold/wet climate; in fields/in the mountains/in the desert/by the sea/in woods.
Uses: in cooking/to cure colds, headaches, stomach aches/ to make colours
- This activity can be done in collaboration with any other subject teacher. The children can prepare information about a figure from history, a geographical feature.
- If you have a large class, divide the leaflets into categories (flowers/shrubs/trees, for example) and make a number of different concertina books, rather than one big one.
- You can extend this activity by asking the children to give oral presentations.

No resources?

Children can collect plants and seeds to display on a 'nature table'. They can then write about the plants in their work books.

Acknowledgements: This activity was inspired activities in the course book Treetops plus 4, class book by Sarah Howell and Lisa Kester-Dogson published by Oxford University Press.



Activity 12: Fairy tale chains

Nada Masud – Armenia

Age: 8+  20 minutes Large classes? Yes Mixed level? Yes

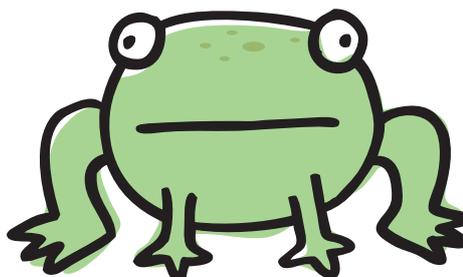
Materials: Pieces of paper.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise writing stories.

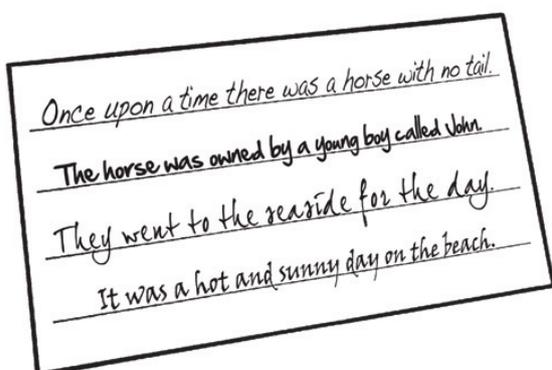
Description: In this activity the children build up stories by writing part of the story and then passing it on.

Preparation: No preparation is needed for this activity.



Procedure

1. Give each child a blank piece of paper.
2. Ask each child to write their name on the top of the page. Then they should write the first line of a fairy tale at the top of the page. It is better if the fairy tale is made up rather than known.
For example: Once upon a time there was a frog that had no legs. He wanted to get married.



3. After a minute, tell the children to stop writing and to pass the story to the person on their right. They cannot finish the sentence they are writing! The next writer continues the story until the next minute is up and the children pass to the right again.
4. Continue for about eight more turns. When it is the last turn, warn the children that they will have two minutes to write an ending for the story.
5. The children give the fairy tales back to the writer of the first line. The children read the stories and can take it in turns to read them out to the rest of the class.

Notes

This is quite a challenging task for low level learners. You may need to help them to write what they want to say.

Alternatives

- It does not have to be a fairy tale. You could provide a theme for the stories instead, for example, sports or food.
- A popular version of this activity in the UK is called ‘Consequences’. In this game, the teacher gives cues and, before passing on the paper, the children fold the paper over so the next writer cannot see what has been written.

So, for example, the teacher might say, ‘write the name of three friends’. The children do so, fold over the paper, and pass it on. The teacher then says, ‘write a place where they visited’. The children write, fold and pass on the paper. Then the teacher says, for example, ‘write what the first friend said when they arrived’, ‘write what the second friend said’, and so on. The teacher can give as many cues as he or she likes. The children have finally to unfold the papers to read the crazy stories.

- Shawn Lajeunesse (Taiwan) suggests a similar activity called ‘Rotating Stories’. For this activity you need a picture for each group of four children, a piece of paper attached to each picture and pens/pencils.
 1. Put the children into groups of four and give each group a picture, a piece of paper and a pencil.
 2. Assign a role to each child – the Writer will write the sentences, the Checker will check what has been written, the Reader will read what the other groups have written and the Captain will organise the group. Explain that the children must respect their roles although they can help and encourage each other.
 3. Each group writes from one to three sentences to start a story about the picture. When they’ve finished, they pass their picture and paper to the next group, who adds one to three more sentences to the story and so on until the pictures get back to the original group. Each rotation should be about five minutes and it is a good idea to fix a time limit. First the Reader shows the picture to the group and reads the sentences already written. The children decide together on the next sentences and the Writer writes them on the paper. The Checker then reads the new sentences for grammar and spelling and asks the teacher for help if necessary.
 4. When they receive their original picture back, the group writes some final sentences to finish the story.
 5. The group edits the story and makes a good copy of it.
 6. Display all the stories on the wall or around the classroom.

Notes

- You could ask the children to illustrate the stories before displaying them.
- If you have very large classes, the children can do the activity in pairs from their seats and pass the story to the next pair. Continue until 4 or 5 pairs have added to the story and then return it to the original pair. In this case, only the roles of Writer/Captain and Reader/Checker can be combined.

No resources?

If you do not have enough pieces of paper for each child for the first activity, it can be done in groups. You can build the story up orally asking each child to add a sentence in turn. After a number of turns, ask all the children to write what they remember in their workbooks and to add an ending to the story.

Activity 13: Fly the airplane, pilot!

Juliana Cavaliere Gonçalves – Brazil

Age: 5–10  **10–20 minutes** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A piece of paper for each child.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To revise language from previous lessons.

Description: The children make paper airplanes. They then answer questions and if they get the right answers, they have the opportunity to throw their planes at ‘targets’ in the room to score points for their team.

Preparation: You will need to prepare a set of questions based on work you have been doing with the children. This might be some vocabulary, a story, some grammar.



Procedure

1. Give each child a piece of paper and then show them how to fold a paper airplane. Be prepared to help children who struggle.
2. Let the children play for a short time with their airplanes.
3. Divide the children into teams.
4. Now decide with the children which parts of the classroom are going to be ‘targets’. Assign a number to each target. Easy targets will have a low number, for example the table could be worth 5 points. Difficult targets will have a high number, for example the trash can might be worth 20 points. The most difficult target should be worth a good lot, for example, 50 points for the clock.
5. The children stand in lines in their teams at the front of the class with their airplanes. Ask the first question to the front row of children. The first child to raise their hand has to answer. If the answer is right, they get the chance to throw the airplane at a target of choice. If the airplane hits the target, the child gets the points. If the answer is wrong, another child can try to answer. All the first row must then go to the back of their lines so the next set of children can have a turn.
6. The team that scores the most points is the winner!

Notes

Once the airplanes have been made, they can be kept for the next time.

You can have any number of teams, depending on the number of children in the class and the space you have.

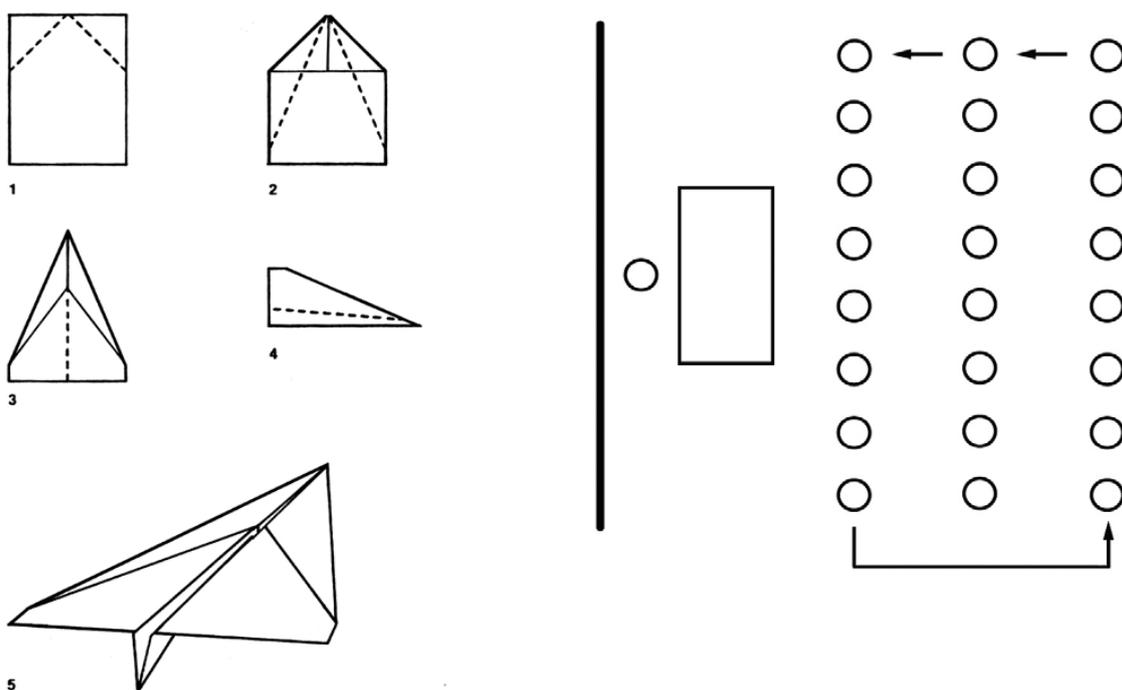
In a mixed ability class, try to make sure that children of similar ability are in the same row so that you can adapt the question to the children.

Alternatives

- In small classes the children can play individually.
- The teacher can create a running total over a week, month or term so that the game can be played frequently but for a short time only.
- The children can decorate their planes or make modifications to make them fly better.
- Maria Stakhovskya (Russia) offers an alternative to airplanes. She suggests that you bring in soft balls and skittles/objects to knock down. After answering the question, the children can try to knock down the skittles. They score points depending on the number of skittles they knock down. If you use objects, the children can try to hit the objects with the soft balls. If they are successful, they say something about the object they hit.

No resources?

You can play this as a running game (best played outside!). Get children into teams and ask them to stand in lines, in the same way as suggested above. When a child answers a question correctly they get a point but instead of throwing airplanes, all the children in the row run to a marker and back to the end of their lines. The child who arrives first also gets a point.



Activity 14: Global presentations

Eugenia Quiroga – Argentina

Age: 12+  20 minutes + 1–1½ hours **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Pieces of paper with the names of countries and a box or hat.

Organisation: Group work, whole class.

Aim: To practise extended speaking through presentations, to develop intercultural understanding.

Description: The children work in groups on class presentations about customs and activities in other parts of the world. This activity lasts for two lessons. You need to allow about 20 minutes in the first lesson, about an hour to prepare the presentations (this can be done as homework) and then about 15 minutes for each presentation in the second lesson.

Preparation: You will need to write the names of a number of countries on pieces of paper and put them into a hat or box.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Tell them that in the next lesson the groups will have to give a group presentation based on the country they pull out of the hat or box. Pass around the hat or box and groups pick out a piece of paper with the name of their country.
2. Tell the class the presentation can be on any aspect of life in their allocated country. There are three rules:
 - The children need to give some information about the country.
 - The children need to do some kind of activity with the class about the country.
 - The whole presentation must not last more than 15 minutes (or whatever time seems reasonable to you).
3. Brainstorm the kind of information that can be given about the country (location, population, capital city, customs, famous people and so on) and the kind of activity that can be done (a quiz, a dance, a song, an exhibition to walk around, food tasting, making something and so on). Also brainstorm where the children can find the information (internet, library, television, by talking to people from the country).
4. Allocate either class time, homework time or both to groups to prepare the presentations.
5. In the next lesson/lessons, the children present their work.

Notes

Sometimes topics in the course book can be used to introduce the presentation work, particularly if you are studying about traditions, food, customs and so on.

Alternatives

- You can allocate topics to each child in the group. One, for example, must describe food, another famous people, and the third, what young people in the country like to do.
- You can introduce a peer assessment task. Children can mark each other on content, interest, the success of the activity and so on.
- You could develop the activity over a number of lessons by giving, for example, 15 minutes a lesson over a two-week period for preparation in class. This will allow you to help the children more and to monitor their progress.
- Presentations can also be spread over a number of lessons, with one or two presentations each lesson.
- You can have a presentation day and invite parents or students from other classes to listen to the presentations and take part in the activities such as demonstrations of dancing, food tasting, singing songs and quizzes.

No resources?

The children might struggle to find information about different countries if a library or the internet is not available. If this is the case, ask the children to focus more locally – on people in different areas of their country or in neighbouring countries, for example. This information can be found by talking to people and in local media.



Activity 15: Hammer battles

Weronika Salandyk – Poland

Age: 5–9  10–15 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Flashcards and two plastic hammers.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise or revise vocabulary.

Description: After practising vocabulary items on flashcards, children show what they have remembered by locating the correct flashcard and hitting it with a plastic hammer.

Preparation: You need to prepare flashcards with all the words you want to practise/revise. You will need around 10 to 12 cards and two plastic hammers!

Procedure

1. Ask the children to sit in a circle on the floor. Spread all the flashcards face up on the floor in front of the children.
2. Revise the words and the correct pronunciation of the items on the flashcards. The children can all point to the correct word first, then repeat the word, then individual children can say the word.
3. After all the words have been revised, give two children a plastic hammer each. Say one of the words on the flashcards. The children locate the flashcard and hit it with the hammer. The first to hit is the winner.
4. The children pass the hammer to the child on their left and the game continues.
5. When the children know the words from the flashcards quite well, ask one of them to take over your role and shout out the words.

Notes

This is a lot of fun and as long as you only have two hammers, it should be fairly easy to control!

Alternatives

- If there is not enough space on the floor, the flashcards can be attached to the board.
- If you do not like the idea of hitting the cards, children can stand on the cards or grab the cards (but this can cause arguments).
- In larger classes you can do steps one and two using the board, with the children sitting in their seats. You can then divide the class into two circles to play the game. In this case, you will need two sets of cards.
- If you do not have hammers, you can play an alternative version. Carry out steps one and two as explained. Then start to turn the cards over by asking the children in turn to identify a word and then turn it face down. When all the flashcards are face down, repeat the process. This time it is more difficult as children have to remember where the flashcard was!

No resources?

If you do not have flashcards, use pictures from magazines or newspapers. If you do not have hammers, use empty plastic bottles or rolled up newspapers.

Acknowledgements

Weronika learnt about using plastic hammers from Jane Cadwallader at an IATEFL workshop in Poland called 'Understanding messages in kindergarten'.



Activity 16: Handkerchief tag

Luis Nunes – Portugal

Age: All ages  20–25 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A handkerchief or piece of cloth

Organisation: Whole class

Aim: To revise vocabulary, to develop concentration.

Description: This game is a version of a well-known children's game which is adapted to practise or revise vocabulary. It requires space and is quite physical, but it also requires the children to keep silent and concentrate.

Preparation: You need to create a list of words that you want to revise and find a handkerchief or a piece of cloth.

Procedure

1. Choose one child to be the 'speaker'. Divide the rest of the class into two teams (A and B) of an equal number of players.
2. Each team member is secretly given a name which is an item of vocabulary you want to practice/revise. The same names are given to each team. For example, if you want to revise colours, one child on Team A is *blue* and one child on Team B is also *blue*, one child on Team A is *yellow* and one child on Team B is *yellow* and so on. (You can either whisper the words to each child or give them a card with their word on it.)
3. Give the speaker a list of the words to be practised/revised.
4. The two teams line up facing each other, preferably about 3 metres apart, with the speaker in the middle, at the head of the two teams. The speaker holds the handkerchief where it is clearly visible:



5. The speaker calls out a word, for example *BLUE*. The two children who have been named blue must run to the speaker and try to grab the handkerchief. They must not touch each other.
6. The child who grabs the handkerchief first runs back to their team. If they manage to reach the team without being touched by the blue from the opposing team, they win the point. If the opposing blue manages to catch up with the runner and touch them, then no points are scored.
7. The game continues until all the words have been called out. The team with the most points at the end is the winner.

Notes

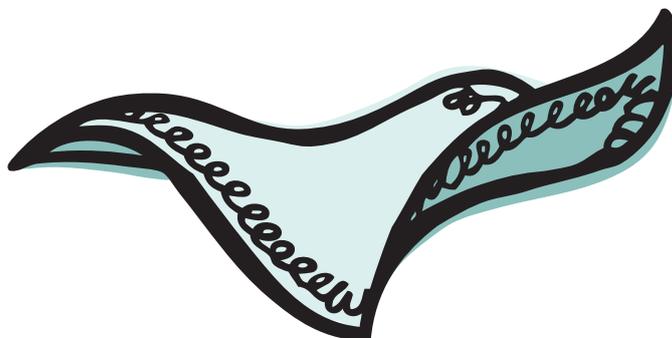
If the two teams are unequal, use two speakers. This game is ideal for playing outside.

Alternatives

- If you have a large space, this game could be played in large classes by dividing the class into two or three groups of two teams that play at the same time.
- You can make the scoring system more complicated. For example, when the speaker calls 'water', no-one should move. If anyone moves, they lose a point for their team. If the speaker calls fire, all the players come to the centre and they have to find their opposite number. Both teams get a point for each pair that finds each other.
- If you do not have enough space to have the teams standing in a line, the children can play from their seats. Make sure all the children from the same team are sitting near each other, preferably around the same desk. Give each team two or three soft objects. When the speaker calls out a word, the two children with that word have to grab the soft object and throw it to the speaker. The one the speaker catches first gets the point.
- The seated version of the game can be played by larger classes as there can be three teams or more.

No resources?

This activity only requires a piece of paper and a handkerchief or piece of cloth.



Activity 17: Hidden words

Iryna Sukhodolska – Ukraine

Age: 8–12  20–25 minutes Large classes? Yes Mixed level? Yes

Materials: Pen and board

Organisation: Pair work, group work

Aim: To develop reading skills and pronunciation and to revise vocabulary.

Description: This activity is designed to challenge children’s ability to read sentences and find the names of animals hiding in the sentences. They can use their imagination to write their own sentences and practise the pronunciation of different sounds.

Preparation: You need to write the sentences on the board before the lesson starts (which you can cover up with a big piece of paper if you like) or present them in a different way such as on a PowerPoint slide or on flashcards.

Procedure

1. Ask the children to name all the animals that they know in English. Write the names on the board.
2. Write the sentence ‘*Close the door at once!*’ on the board. Ask the children to read it and to find an animal hidden in the words. If they cannot find the animal, tell them it is ‘rat’ and ask them to search again. When they have found it, underline the word rat on the board: ‘*Close the door at once!*’
3. Explain to the children that they are going to read more sentences with animals hidden in them. In pairs, they have to find the animals in the sentences.
 Example sentences:
 1. He arrived in America today. (cat)
 2. Eric owes me 10 cents. (cow)
 3. That will be a real help. (bear)
 4. She came late every day. (camel)
 5. We made errors in each exercise. (deer)
 6. If I shout, he’ll hear me. (fish)
 7. She dresses naked dolls. (snake)
 8. At last, I, Gerald, had won. (tiger)
 9. He called Nikko a lazy boy. (koala)
 10. In April I only called once (lion)
4. Children work in pairs or groups to identify the animals hidden in the sentences. The team to finish first is the winner.

5. Those children who finish quickly can start to write their own sentences with hidden animals in them that they can then share when everyone has finished.

Notes

Do not worry if the sentences contain unknown vocabulary. It is good for the children to be exposed to language they do not know and learn that it is not always necessary to understand everything to achieve the goal. If children want a translation of the sentences, try waiting until after they have found the animal names to do this so that they do not get distracted from the main activity.

You may prefer to avoid 'hiding' words using capital letters in the sentence if you think it might confuse the children.

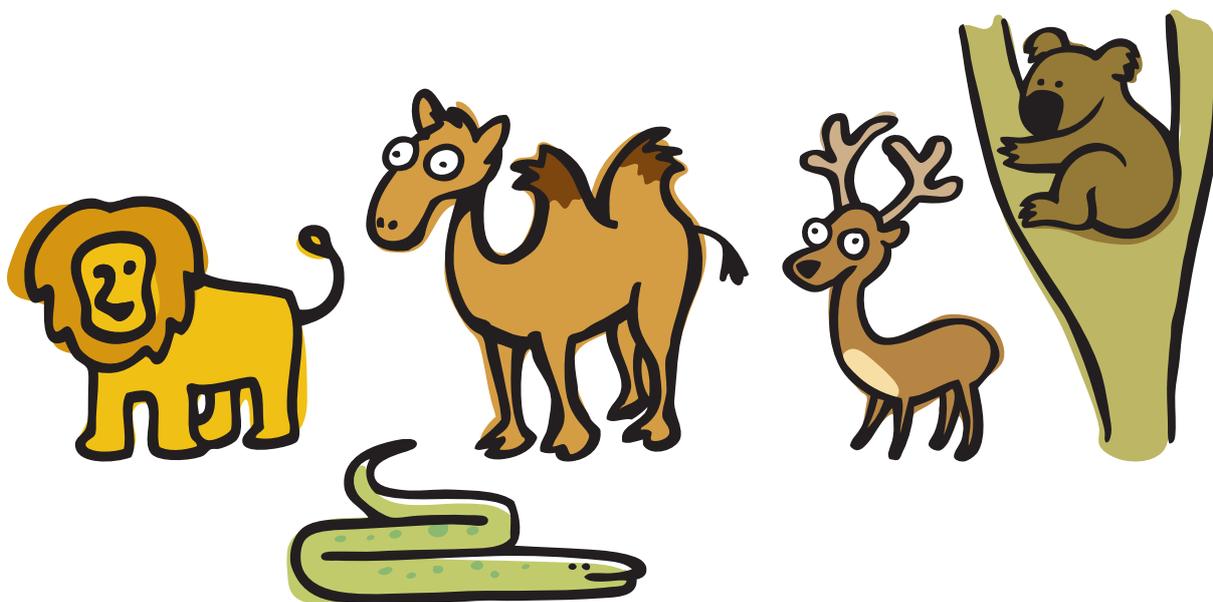
You might want to provide children with lower English levels with a list of the animals they have to find.

Alternatives

- You can use this activity to revise any set of vocabulary, such as colours, clothes, furniture, parts of the body and so on.
- You can extend the activity by asking the children to draw the animals and label them.
- If the children's level of English is sufficient, you can extend the activity by asking them to tell an animal story, either invented or based on their experience. They can then write the story and illustrate it themselves.
- Children like puzzles. You can use the website <http://puzzle-maker.com/WS/index.htm> to make free crossword puzzles and word searches based on your own vocabulary lists and definitions (thank you to teachers at the JALT Conference for this suggestion).

No resources?

You only need a blackboard and chalk for this activity.



Activity 18: I have it in my name

Issoufou Kanda Ibrahim – Niger

Age: All ages  15–20 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: None.

Organisation: Group work and whole class.

Aim: To practise/revise the alphabet and numbers. To practise listening for specific information, pronunciation of numbers and letters.

Description: This activity is a simple and fun way to revise the alphabet and numbers and is also quite cognitively challenging for children as they have to associate letters and numbers.

Preparation: No preparation is needed for this activity.

Procedure

The teacher

1. Say a number and a letter, for example, *‘three, M’*. Tell the children that if they have an *‘M’* as the third letter in their name, they should raise their hand. All the children who have *M* as the third letter in their name raise their hands and then take it in turns to spell out their name together with the numbers corresponding to the position of each letter.

For example:

Teacher: Three M

Child: My name is Asma, one A, two S, three M, four A

Notes

You might want to explain the activity in the children’s first language as the instructions are quite complicated!

Alternatives

- The children can take it in turns to choose the letter and the number.
- The game can be made easier by calling out just a letter and asking the children whose name begins with that letter to spell their names, along with the numbers.

For example:

Teacher: O

Child: My name is Oscar. One O, two S, three C, four A, five R.

- Spelling games can be popular with children. A simple spelling game is to split the class into groups. Give Group A a word to spell. One child in the group starts to spell the word. If they get it right, award a point. If wrong, stop the child (perhaps with a buzzer sound) as soon as the wrong letter is given. The turn passes to Team B, who now knows where the mistake has been made. A child from Team B now tries to spell the word. If correct, award a point. If not, stop at the wrong letter in the same way and the turn moves to Team C.

For example:

Teacher: Team A: Australia

Team A: A-S

Teacher: BUZZ! Team B

Team B: A-U-S-T-R-E

Teacher: BUZZ. Team C

Team C: A-U-S-T-R-A-L-I-A

Teacher: Well done! Team C one point.

No resources?

This activity does not require any resources.

One	F
Two	I
Three	O
Four	N
Five	A

Activity 19: Information translation

Laura Toro – Italy

Age: 7+  30 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** No

Materials: Pieces of paper with questions written in the children's first language.

Organisation: Pair work, whole class.

Aim: To practise asking and answering questions. To translate from L1 to English.

Description: In this activity the children translate questions from their own language into English to get information they need.

Preparation: You will need to prepare folded strips of paper with questions in the children's first language. You will need one set of questions for each pair.

Procedure

1. Choose a set of questions, written in the children's first language, on a particular theme. These might be personal questions the children can ask to find out information about each other, such as *What's your favourite food? What sports do you play?* and so on. Questions can also be more challenging and be about general knowledge or about a particular subject, such as science.
2. Give each pair a set of questions. The children take turns to open a strip of paper and read the question. They then have to translate the question into English to ask their partner.
3. The second child answers the question in English. He or she then picks a question to ask and so on, until all the questions have been answered.
4. You can extend the activity by asking the children to write a paragraph with the information they have learned from their questions.
For example:
*This is Paolo. He's from Verona and he has two sisters.
He likes playing football. He has a cat called Blue.*

Notes

Although translation is not much used in many current approaches to language teaching, it can support language learning in a number of ways. Here, for example, children are encouraged to make links between their first language and English and to understand that English can be used to communicate ideas successfully.

Alternatives

- If you teach other subjects through English, this activity can be a good way of revising units you have studied in, for example, science, geography, history and so on.
- You can ask the children to think of three of their own questions in their first language and write them on pieces of paper. These are then put in a hat and each child takes out three questions they have to translate and then ask their partner.
- If you have a small class, you can either do the activity as a whole class, or pairs can take it in turns.

No resources?

You can write the questions on the board instead of using strips of paper.



Activity 20: Label me!

Flavia Amorim Sperandio – Brazil

Age: All ages  45 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Sticky note pads or slips of paper and adhesive tape (you will need three times the number of children in the class). Cards with parts of the body (pictures and words).

Organisation: Individual work, pair work, group work, whole class.

Aim: To present and practise the words and pronunciation referring to parts of the body

Description: This activity leads to a game in which the children label each other with parts of the body.

Preparation: You will need to prepare one card each for each child in the class with either a picture of a part of the body or the word for it. Make sure each picture card has a corresponding word card.

Procedure

1. Give one card to each child randomly. Ask each child with a word card to find the child with the corresponding picture card.
2. Ask each pair to say what part of the body they have, correcting pronunciation if necessary (but don't insist at this stage).
3. Give the children one minute to write down or draw as many parts of the body as they can. Words in English are worth three points, words in L1 are worth two points and a drawing is worth one point. Ask the children to call out the words they have and write them on the board, helping with the English and the pronunciation where necessary.
4. The labelling game can be played either in teams or pairs. Distribute an equal number of sticky notes or paper slips to pairs or teams of children and ask them to write down the name of a different part of the body on each piece of paper (you can decide at this point to erase the words from the board or leave them up, depending on the children's level). Give a time limit for the preparation of the labels so that the children stay on-task.
5. If the game is played in team, each team selects a volunteer to be labelled (the model). The team members line up facing the model. On the word 'Go', the first member in the line chooses a label, runs to the 'model', sticks the label on the correct part of the model, runs back to the line and touches the next child on the shoulder. The second child then chooses a label and so on until the team finishes all the labels. No child in the line should move until the previous child has touched them on the shoulder. The team with the most correct labels is the winner.
6. If the game is played in pairs or small groups, the children can take it in turns to label each other.

7. Practise the new vocabulary with the whole class by having the children stand in a circle. Call out the name of a part of the body; the children have to touch the correct part on their own body. Any child who touches the wrong part is 'out'. You can gradually increase the difficulty by, for example, going more quickly or calling out one part but touching a different part. The last child left in is the winner.

Notes

You will need to decide if it is appropriate for children to be labelling each other in this way. It might be worth ensuring the pairs/groups are single sex only. Alternatively, draw bodies on the board or on large pieces of paper, one for each pair/group, which are then labelled.

Alternatives

- Step 7 can also be played non-competitively and with the children in their seats. Simply call out the parts of the body and have the children touch the relevant part but without excluding anyone for making a mistake.
- **Zorica Petrovska (Macedonia)** has this idea for presenting the parts of the body:
 1. Put the children into groups of 4–5 and give three small pieces of paper to each member of the group and one large piece of paper to each group. Tell them to write the name or draw one part of the body on each piece of paper.
 2. Each group folds up the pieces of paper, collects them together and passes them to another group so that each group has a new set of body parts.
 3. Each group opens all the pieces of paper and has to draw a monster using all the parts of the body on the pieces paper. So, for example, if the group has three pieces of paper with 'eye', their monster has to have three eyes. At the end of the activity each group will have its own monster that can be coloured in and displayed on the wall. You may also ask the children to label the parts of the body on their monsters.
 4. You may also ask the children to label the parts of the body on their monsters.
- **Marija Jovic (Serbia)** has this idea for revising parts of the body and colours with younger children, called Make a Sponge Bob:
 1. Each child should bring a small sponge to school and some crayons or markers. The teacher needs to bring toothpicks and a picture of SpongeBob (optional)
 2. Draw a picture of SpongeBob on the board or show the children his picture. Ask them if he's happy or sad, big or small, what colour he is (if revising colours too).
 3. The children make their own SpongeBobs by drawing his trousers, his belt and then his face. Help them to insert the toothpicks for arms and legs.
 4. The children present their SpongeBob and name the parts of the body.

No resources?

These activities use quite a lot of paper. If you do not have a lot of paper available, try to use the board for some phases, or miss out some stages. For example, rather than giving students pieces of paper with words and pictures, you could whisper to children what they are. Then, instead of using sticky labels, you could give students chalk/pens and ask them to write the label. You could also start the activity at Step 3.

Activity 21: Story-telling – Little Red Riding Hood

Chiara Mantegazza – Italy

Age: All ages  1 ½–2 hours Large classes? Yes Mixed level? Yes

Materials: Flashcards and/or real objects relating to vocabulary in the story. Text of the story, for example from www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/tweenies/storytime

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To develop listening skills and introduce new vocabulary and expressions.

Description: Story-telling is an important approach to teaching English to young learners. This activity uses the story ‘*Little Red Riding Hood*’ but it can be adapted to any children’s story.

Preparation: Select a story you want to tell the class; in this example, we use ‘*Little Red Riding Hood*’ but it can be any story. Select some words/expressions from the story that you particularly want the children to learn. You should not choose more than six or seven of these. For each word/ expression decide on an action, mime, noise or object that can be associated with the word/ expression. In ‘*Little Red Riding Hood*’, this could be *wolf* = howling noise, *grandmother* = bend over and mime walking with a stick, *house* = put your finger tips together in a roof shape, *big* = mime a wide movement with your arms, *woods* = swishing noise (like trees in the wind).

Procedure

1. Pre-teach the key vocabulary of the story using flashcards or real objects.
2. Tell the story to the class. Make it as lively and interesting as possible by using mime, different voices, objects etc.
3. Teach the children the vocabulary associations prepared before class. Practise by calling out the words and asking the children to make the correct noise, do the action etc.
4. Read the story again, asking the children to listen carefully and make them do the right action when they hear the corresponding word/expression. Repeat the story once or twice.
5. Repeat the story in subsequent lessons, asking the children to perform the actions when they hear the corresponding word/expression.
6. Extend the activity by allocating roles to the children (Red Riding Hood, Grandmother, Wolf, Woodcutter, Mother) and asking them to act out the story while you read. The other children make the noises/actions.

Alternatives

- There are many follow up activities you could do with this story. For example, children could draw and colour the characters and practise writing their names; they can be asked to retell the story in pairs or small groups; they can change the story by suggesting a different ending or adding in new characters.
- **Vesna Sarvevic (Spain)** suggests that after telling the story, you stick up large posters round the classroom. Each poster has a hand written section of the text, with gaps. Each child then receives either a picture or a word and walks to the poster to fill one of the gaps. The children walk around the classroom reading the texts. When they find the gap that their word or picture fits, they stick it on the poster. (Alternatively, the teacher can read each text in turn with the students coming up to the front when they think their word fits the gap.) Finally the complete text is read out.
- This activity presents just some of the ways in which stories can be exploited in the YL classroom. Any children's' story can be used, not just fairy-tales. If you have access to the internet, there are many sites with the words of stories and often with illustrations, audio and/or video versions. Two reliable sites are the BBC children's site, CBeebies, which can be found at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories/theme/fairytales/> and The British Council site: <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories>

No resources?

Use objects or draw them on paper to pre-teach the vocabulary.

If you don't have access to the internet or to story books, you can use local folk tales and translate them into English.



Activity 22: Chain games

**Eliana Fernandez Malla – Dominican Republic and
Jekaterina Mazure – Latvia**

Age: All ages  20–30 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Flashcards.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise or revise a new vocabulary set.

Description: Children sit in a circle. They learn a new vocabulary set (for example, vegetables). They then take turns to repeat a shopping list and add new items to it.

Preparation: You will need to prepare flashcards of the words you want the children to learn.

Procedure

1. Introduce a set of words you want the children to learn, for example fruit and vegetables, through flashcards. After practising the pronunciation, stick the card on to the board (you might want to write the word under the card).
2. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Explain they will have to use the flashcards to try to remember a list of words.
3. Introduce the phrase, *'My auntie went to market, and she bought an apple'*. The first child should add to the list, using another word from the flashcards, in the following way: *'My auntie went to market and she bought an apple and some carrots'*. The activity goes on with each child adding to the list after having repeated all the items before.
4. Repeat the activity, but this time take the flashcards off the board and erase any writing.

Notes

You can help children who are struggling by mouthing the words in the list.

Alternatives

- It is not necessary to teach a set of vocabulary first. The children can add whatever they like to the list from words they remember. This takes much less time.
- Another alternative is to start the next item in the list with the last letter of the previous item. For example, *'I went to market and bought an apple, an elephant, some trees and a snake'*.
- Add a rhythm. Model the rhythm by slapping your knees (gently) twice, clapping (twice) and then clicking the fingers on each hand in turn. Get all the children to take up the rhythm. Then say your own name on the first click and one of the children's names on the second. The child then says their name on the first click and another child's on the second. Once the rhythm has been established, introduce a word family, for example, fruit. The activity starts again, but this time you say a fruit with the first click and a name of a child with the second. For example, *'banana, Peter'*. Peter then has to say, for example, *'apple, Justina'*, and so on.

No resources?

You do not need the flashcards. You can play the game using words the children already know or you can use the course book to teach the words you want them to know.



Activity 23: Memory game

Ester Bianchi – Italy

Age: 6–10  30 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Sets of cards with words and drawings/pictures of fruit (or other vocabulary group), one set for each group of four.

Organisation: Group work, whole class.

Aim: To introduce and practise vocabulary, to practice pronunciation.

Description: This is an adaption of the classic card-matching game sometimes called Pelmanism. In this version the children have to find picture/word combinations, but there are a number of variations.

Preparation: You will need to create sets of cards – at least 14 cards in each set. To explain the activity we are using fruit as the vocabulary set, but you can choose whichever vocabulary you like. On seven cards draw/stick pictures of fruit and on the other seven, write the names of the fruit.

Procedure

1. Show the picture cards to the children and repeat the words all together.
2. Show the children the word cards with the picture cards and repeat again.
3. Divide the class into groups of four and give each group a set of cards. One child in each group shuffles the cards and lays them face down on the desk.
4. The children take it in turns to turn over two cards to try and find a picture-word pair. If the child is successful, they say the name of the fruit and take the card and turns over two more cards. If they are not successful, the cards are turned face down again and the next child has a turn. The child with the most cards at the end is the winner.

Notes

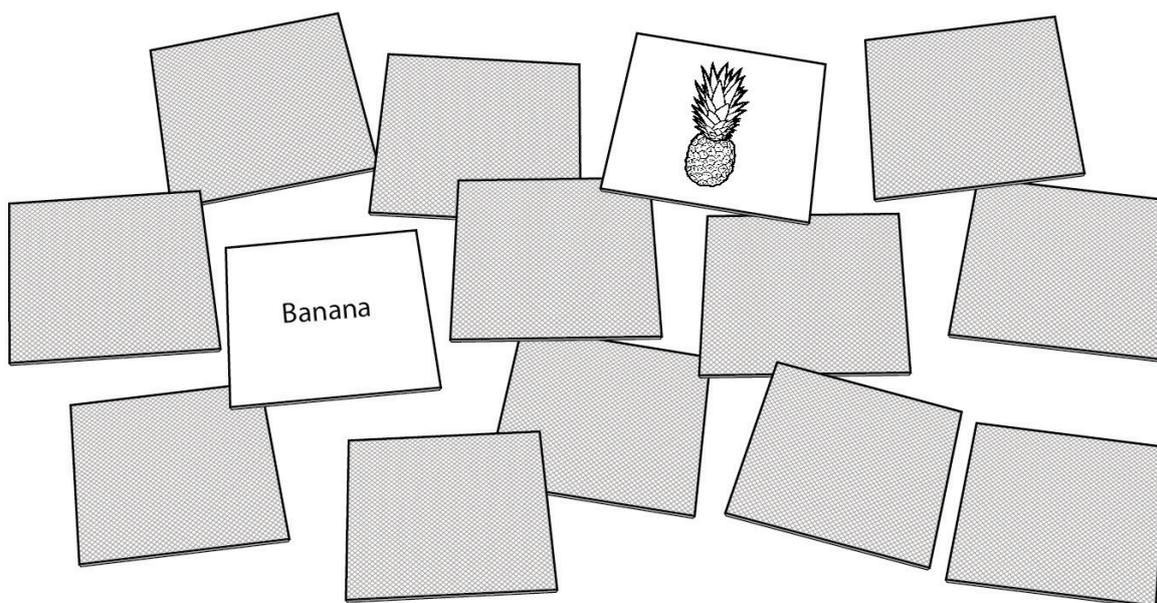
In activities where the children are working in groups, especially in competitive games such as this one, it can be useful to nominate one child in each group as the group leader and give them responsibility for leading the activity and monitoring it.

Alternatives

- This game can be played with any vocabulary set. It can also be played with sound/letter pairs, such as the letter 'C' and a picture of a car.
- The same game could be played with question/answer pairs or with matching sentence halves to practise grammar points. For example, matching tenses and adverbs: one set of cards has time adverbs such as *yesterday, I, twice a day, since 2000, next week*. The other set has phrases such as *I went to the doctor's, I'm not feeling very well, I brush my teeth, I've been at this school, I'm going to the USA*.
- The children can draw the pictures on pieces of paper/card in preparation for the game.
- **Gulanara Janova (Georgia)** suggests another game with cards which she calls 'Fishing'. Put the prepared vocabulary picture cards, or objects into a box or bag. Ask the children to come to the front one at a time to pick a picture/object out of the bag/box – tell them they are 'catching a fish'. The child who has caught a fish has to name it. If they name it correctly, they take it back to their seat. If they cannot name it, they have to put it back in the bag/box. The child with the most 'fish' at the end is the winner. This activity can also be used to revise/practise grammar, for example, children can describe their picture (e.g. *'It's a big, black cat'*) or say what their classmates have caught (e.g. *'I have a cat, Dana has a horse, Ivan has a duck and Josi has a lion.'*).

No resources?

Make one set of cards and either play as a whole class or bring a group to the front to play while the others watch. Alternatively, call 14 students to the front and tell seven they are fruit pictures and seven that they are fruit names. Ask them to sit down. Children from the class call out pairs, for example, 'Mohammed is an apple picture and Ali is an apple word'. If they are correct, they get a point. If not, the turn moves to another child.



Activity 24: Messy closet

Jelena Čupić – Serbia

Age: 8-10  30 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Paper dolls, paper clothes, an outline of a closet/wardrobe.

Organisation: Individual, pair and group work.

Aim: To revise vocabulary related to clothes and expressions of place. To practise reading for detail.

Description: In this activity the children have to 'tidy' up a closet by reading a description of its contents and putting the clothes in the correct place.

Preparation: You will need to prepare a paper doll, and for each group, some glue and a set of paper clothes.

Procedure

1. Use the paper doll to introduce a character to the children. Give it a name or ask the children to name it. Tell the children this character is very untidy and they are going to help tidy up its wardrobe (closet).
2. Give each child/pair or group a large A3 picture with the outline of an empty closet, including shelves, hanging rail etc. together with a description of what the tidy closet should look like and the paper clothes that need tidying, for example: My t-shirts go on the top shelf on the right. My jeans go on the bottom shelf on the left. My shoes go in the bottom of the wardrobe, under my jeans. My belts and ties hang on the wardrobe door. On the middle shelf I put my underwear. Trousers go on the top shelf next to the t-shirts.
3. The children read the description of the tidy closet and stick the items of clothing in the correct place.
4. The children put their tidy closet on the board or wall and compare their work with others.



Notes

Although it is time-consuming to create the doll, wardrobe and clothes, if you can laminate all the paper items and use blu tac or sticky tape to stick rather than glue, then the materials can be re-used for this activity, with a different text, and for other activities.

Alternatives

- Give the children a list of the relevant items of clothing, ask them to find pictures and cut them out. This could be done as a homework activity.
- You could also describe the closet to the children and ask them to draw it as part of the activity.
- This activity can be extended to a writing activity by asking the children to draw a picture and write a description of their own closet.
- It can also be a listening activity if you choose to read the text out loud rather than giving it to the children.
- Jelena also suggests another activity which can be done with paper dolls. This activity is called My Nutty Family.
 1. Model the activity by presenting the imaginary character. Use a doll, picture or drawing to present the character and to say something about their life.
 2. Give out a slip of paper with the name of a family member to each child or pair of children. Give each child or pair a paper doll and a selection of accessories.
 3. The children think of the background story to their character – who they are, what they do, where they live and so on. They then dress their paper doll according to the character they have invented. Encourage them to be creative and funny.
 4. The children take it in turns to come to the front and talk about their character using the first person. Encourage them to make connections with what others have said before them to link the characters together.
- **Geneviève Parrain** (France) suggests using a paper doll or puppet to introduce the class to a new class member.
 1. On slips of paper (one for each child) write a piece of information about the new class member. For example, 'I am 10 years old', 'I like apples', 'I live in a small house', 'I have two brothers and two sisters', and so on.
 2. Introduce the doll as the new class member.
 3. Explain to the children they are each going to get one piece of information about the new class member. They have to memorise the information and then remember information that their classmates tell them.
 4. The children walk around the class and exchange information about the new class member. They then sit down and write as much as they can remember about the new classmate. The child who remembers most is the winner.

No resources?

Do this as a whole class activity with one set of clothes. Children take it in turns to put the clothes away and say/write where they have put the clothes. Or ask the children to imagine their closet/shelf at home and to say where things are.

Activity 25: My seasons' book

Ludmilla Koval – Ukraine

Age: 7–9  30–40 minutes once a season over a year **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A blank booklet of ten pages for each child (five A3 pieces folded and stapled is ideal). Coloured pens/crayons/pencils/glue, items from nature (such as leaves), any other materials to decorate (for example, glitter).

Organisation: Whole class.

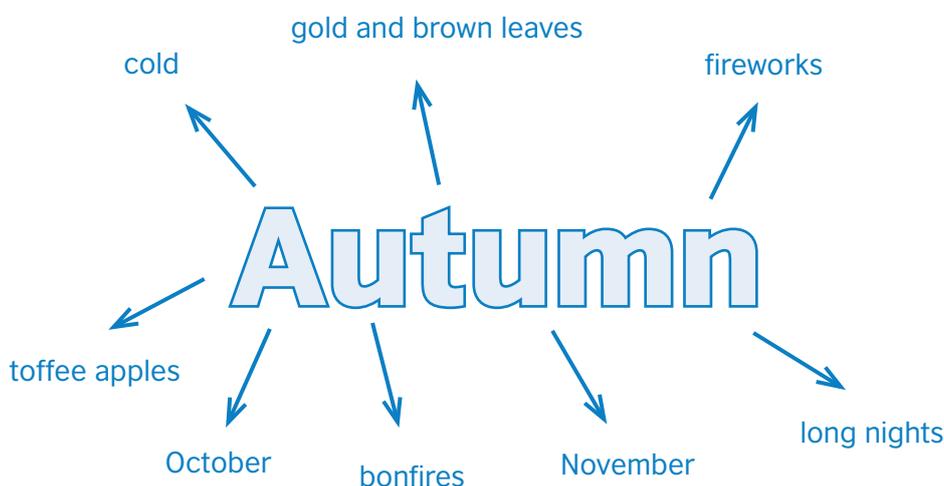
Aim: To practise vocabulary and writing, particularly creative writing.

Description: The children prepare booklets about the four seasons.

Preparation: No preparation is needed for this activity.

Procedure

1. In the first lesson of 'My Seasons Book', ask the children to write the title on the front cover and to put their name on. They can decorate it as they wish.
2. In the second lesson, write the name of the season you are experiencing on the board, for example, AUTUMN. Create a mind-map of all the things the children associate with this season in your country. If they do not know the English word, provide a translation. Here is an example:



3. The children then write Autumn in the centre of their second page and they can either copy what is on the board, or they can write their own words around the season (for example, they could write the months that are in autumn). The children then decorate the page, for example, with dry leaves.
4. For the next page, prepare a poem, a song or a story about autumn. Again, you can either do this as a class activity, building up the text on the board that children then copy into their books, or the children can write their own story or poem, or choose one of their own.

5. At the beginning of each season, repeat the sequence of activities until the children have a complete 'My Seasons' book.

Notes

During the year as the books are being compiled, you can display them in the classroom or students can take them home to show their families.

Alternatives

- You could make this a monthly activity. You would obviously need more pages in the blank booklet.
- Rather than preparing individual booklets, the children could make posters in groups. Split the class into four groups and allocate a season to each (or let the groups choose). The children then design and create a poster containing key sections (such as key words, a poem, some drawings, a story). The posters are then displayed in the classroom.

No resources?

Make one poster for the whole class. Groups of children can be responsible for one section, or you can select the best pieces of writing from the class and add them to the poster. Alternatively, the children could learn a short piece to represent each season. Here are some ideas from the CanTeach website – www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems.html

November

No sunshine, lots of rain,
 No warm days, snow again!
 No bugs or bees
 No leaves on trees.
 You must remember
 This is November!

Summer

The snow fell gently all the night
 It made a blanket soft and white
 It covered houses, flowers and ground
 But did not make a single sound.

Springtime

A small green frog
 On a big brown log;
 A black and yellow bee
 In a little green tree;
 A red and yellow snake
 By a blue-green lake,
 All sat and listened
 To red bird sing,
 'Wake up, everybody,
 It's spring! It's spring!'

Summer

In the summer when the days are hot,
 I like to find a shady spot,
 And hardly move a single bit
 And sit, and sit, and sit, and sit.

Activity 26: Numbers and words

Frosina Acevska – Macedonia

Age: 7–11  25 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Flashcards with pictures on, magnets or tape and pen/chalk.

Organisation: Whole class activity.

Aim: To revise new vocabulary and numbers.

Description: The teacher uses flashcards to revise vocabulary. The children then have to remember the vocabulary items and write them in their workbooks.

Preparation: You will need 20 picture flashcards representing vocabulary you want to revise.

Procedure

1. Use the flashcards to chorally drill the vocabulary. When the children are confident saying the word from the flashcard, stick it on to the board and give it a number from 1 to 20.
2. Read out a number, for example 7. The child who identifies flashcard number 7 by saying the word, collects the card from the board and keeps it. Continue until all the flashcards have been collected.
3. Now you have to get the cards back. To do this, write the words on the board one by one, or show a flashcard of the written word only. The child who has the corresponding picture says the word and puts the picture back on the board next to the correct number. They then write the word on the board next to the picture.
4. When all the pictures are back on the board, the children choose five words they want to remember. They then write the words in their vocabulary notebooks/workbooks and draw pictures to illustrate them.

Notes

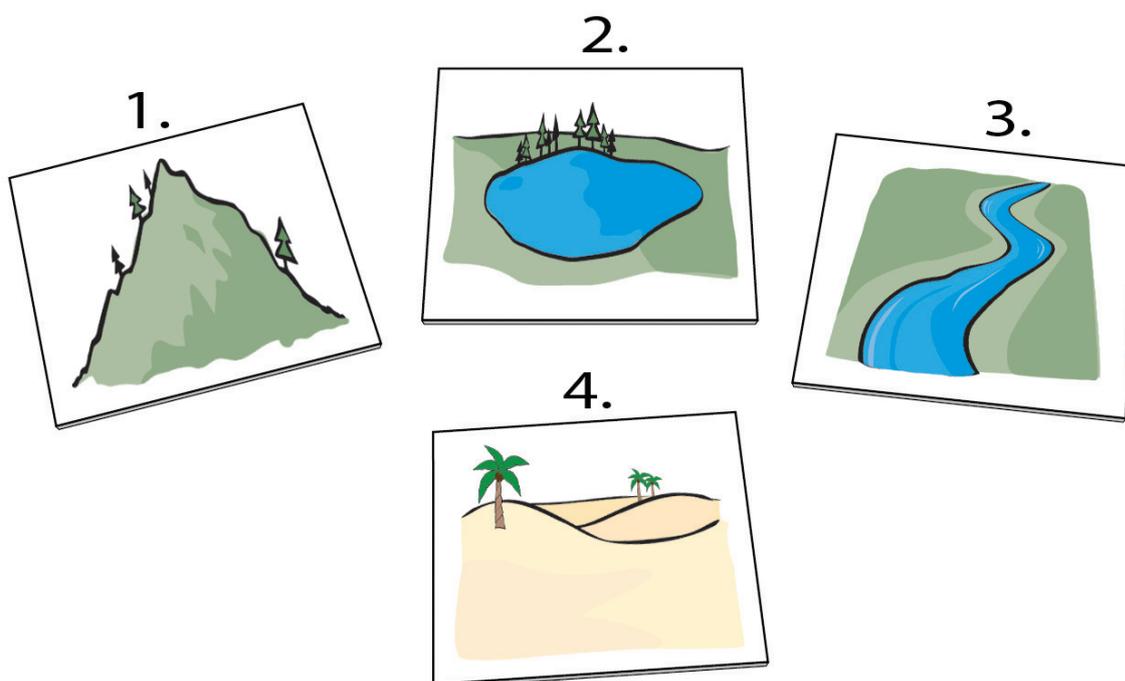
You can do this activity with any number of cards from 5–20.

Alternatives

- The children can choose the words they want to remember and tell the teacher.
- You can revise numbers by using any numbers that you like, not just 1–20. So you could, for example, use 100–119 or random numbers.
- When the children have collected the flashcards, they can write a short story using the words on the cards. Or they can share their words with a pair or a group and write a story together.
- The children can make the flashcards for homework and then bring them in to do the activity.
- Once revised, the flashcards can be stuck on the wall of the classroom to remind the children of what they have done.

No resources?

Draw the pictures on the board next to a number. When a child ‘collects’ a card, they have to stand next to the picture at the board. The advantage of this arrangement is that the children only collect one picture each. When all the pictures are taken, ask the remaining children to continue with the activity by asking, ‘*What picture does Mohammed have?*’ They have to respond with the correct word, and then Mohammed can sit down.



Activity 27: Outburst

Jane Čadová – Czech Republic

Age: 7+ 🕒 10–20 minutes Large classes? Yes Mixed level? Yes

Materials: Pieces of paper, clock.

Organisation: Whole class activity.

Aim: To activate vocabulary and to learn new words.

Description: In this game, the children have to guess the words from different categories that are on the teacher's list.

Preparation: You will need to make some word set lists, with eight items on each list. For example, fruit, vegetables, clothing, furniture, colours, domestic animals, wild animals, things in the classroom, and so on. These can be written in the following way:



Procedure

1. Give each child a piece of paper, or they can use their exercise books. Explain the activity. Jane suggests saying the following:
You are going to guess the words I have on my list. You have two minutes to guess as many words as you can and to write them down on your paper.
2. Give the first category, in this case, Wild Animals. The children write down as many wild animals as they can in two minutes.
3. The children read out the items on their lists in turn, one by one. If the word is on your list, the child gets a point, as do all other children who have written this item down. In small classes where all children get a chance to speak, you can give extra points for spelling and correct pronunciation, if you like. To help, ask a child to write down the children's guesses on the board.
4. Give a new category and start again.

Notes

It is useful to store the lists on a computer so you can reuse, or so you can delete and add different items.

You can allow children with lower levels of English to draw pictures/write the item in their first language as long as they then write down the English word later.

You can add some new vocabulary to the lists as children are very keen to learn the words they have not been able to guess.

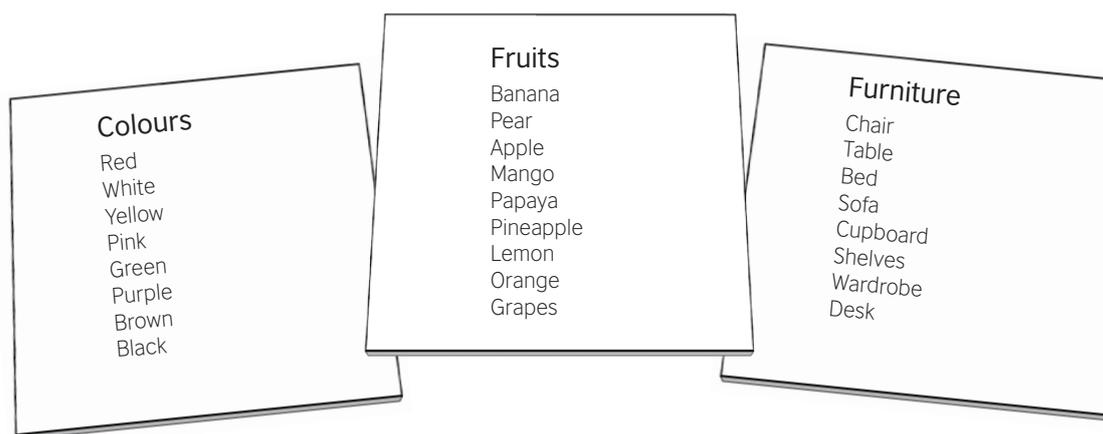
Alternatives

- Instead of writing down, the children shout out the answers. This is more fun, but also a lot noisier!
- Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Ask each group to prepare three word lists (you can give them the categories, or they can decide themselves). The children can use the dictionary to help. Then put groups together, facing each other. The groups play against each other using the word lists they have made.
- If you have a projector and PowerPoint in your classroom, you can prepare the lists on slides. Then as the children make correct guesses, you can make the words appear on your list.

No resources?

Make the lists on one piece of paper and then ask the students to shout out their guesses.

Jane has adapted this activity from the commercial game *'Outburst'* created by Hersch and Company, Parker Brothers, 1994.



Activity 28: Put on your hats!

Ream Odetallah – UAE

Age: 7–11  40 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Paper hats, texts written on large pieces of paper, words written on cards.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise reading skills through completing a text and considering overall meaning by deciding on a title.

Description: Children in groups fill gaps in a given text with words supplied by the teacher. When completed, the children give the text a title, which they write on the paper hat. The paper hats are then worn by a representative from each group and the class votes on the best title for the text.

Preparation: For each group you will need one paper hat, a text with missing words, and the missing words written onto pieces of card that will fit the gaps. The paper hats do not need to be elaborate, just a strip of paper with the ends glued together is fine. It is best if the text is written or copied onto a large sheet of paper.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a paper hat, a gapped text, and the words to fill the gaps. Explain the rules.
2. The group works together to put the words into the correct gaps. If you like, the children can glue the words in. When they are finished, the group decides the best title for the text and writes it on the paper hat.
3. One person from each group puts on the paper hat. They then stand at the front of the class with the other hat wearers. The titles are read out (by the children or the teacher) and the class votes on the best title.
4. The hats are then used to make a wall display.

Notes

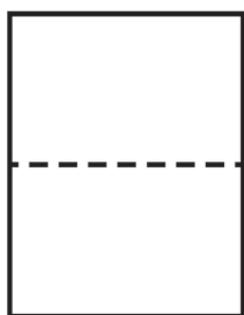
If you have children of different levels in your class, you can easily differentiate this activity. The children with the highest levels of English can have a text but with no word cards to help fill the gaps; children with slightly lower levels can have only the first letter of the words, and the children with the lowest levels can have the whole word, as described here.

Alternatives

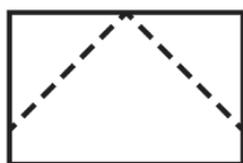
- Give each group a different text which they can then put together to tell a story. When all the gaps are completed and the hats are ready, ask the hat wearer to read their extract to the class. When all have finished, the class must decide which order the texts should go in to tell the story. The children can do this by directing the hat wearers where to stand in the line (the person with the first part of the story stands at the front of the line).
- The children can create the gapped texts themselves and then swap with other groups.
- **Vesna Sarcevic (Spain)** suggests a similar activity. In her version, a text is read to the children by the teacher (she used a text based on Tian Tian, a Giant Panda, and she had a very cute panda toy to show the children). After reading the text and talking about it with the children, Vesna then puts up large posters round the classroom. Each poster has a hand written section of the text, with gaps. Each child then receives either a picture or a word that will fill one of the gaps. The children walk around the classroom reading the texts. When they find the gap that their word or picture fits, they stick it on the poster. Finally the complete text is read out.
- As an alternative to Vesna's activity, the teacher can read each text in turn with the children coming up to the front when they think their word fits the gap.

No resources?

Make a hat from newspaper for each group. Write the text on the board. In groups the children decide which word best fits each gap and writes it in their exercise books/on a piece of paper. They then write the title of the text on their hats. One person puts on the hat in each group. The teacher reads the text and asks for suggestions for each gap, which the children provide. Then the hat wearers go to the front and the class votes for the best title.



1



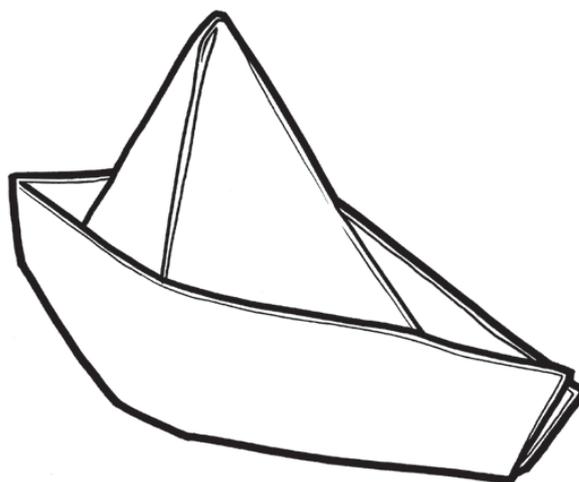
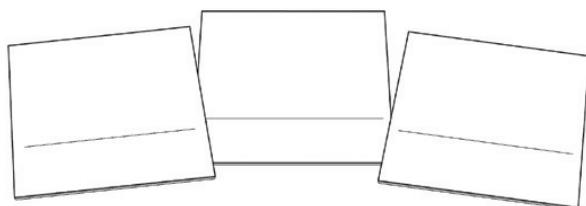
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3



4



Activity 29: Scrambled rhymes

Donatella Bergamaschi – Italy

Age: 7+  15–120 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Pieces of paper with one line from the rhymes on each piece.

Organisation: Pair work, group work, whole class.

Aim: To revise rhymes and songs, to practise stress and intonation, to develop reading skills, to develop co-operative skills

Description: In this activity the children revise rhymes and songs they know and then read them through a game.

Preparation: Choose two rhymes or songs that the children know quite well. Write each rhyme/song onto a large piece of paper. Cut up the pieces of paper line by line. You should be able to read the lines from some distance. Count the number of lines you have cut. This is the number of pairs/groups you will need to form when you are in the classroom.

Procedure

1. Remind the children of the two rhymes or songs with the help of pictures and gestures.
2. Once the children are confident and you are sure most of them can remember both rhymes/songs, divide the class into groups or pairs (the number of pairs/groups will depend on the number of lines you have cut).
3. Give each group/pair a line folded up so they cannot read it. Tell them not to look at it.
4. Tell the class they have to find the correct order of the lines by co-operating with the other groups/pairs.
5. Say, '*ready, steady, go*'. The children have to find groups/pairs that have the lines from their rhyme/song and then they have to put the lines into the correct order.
6. Ask one child from pair/group to come to the front and to stand in the correct order, holding up their line.
7. The children read out their lines in order. The other children judge if they are in the correct order.
8. Award points to the teams according to the time taken, accuracy, autonomy, noise or whatever criteria you choose.

Notes

You can put a time limit of two or three minutes on this, depending on how many lines there are in the rhyme.

Alternatives

- With older or more advanced children you can revise the texts of stories, articles or written dialogues.
- If you are worried about noise or space, split the class into two groups. The groups can take it in turns to carry out the activity. Those who do not have lines can help the other children to get into order and can judge if the order is correct.
- Standing in order is a useful technique. For example, you can ask children to stand in order of height, age and shoe size. Alternatively, you can draw an imaginary line across the classroom and children stand on it according to their opinion. One end of the line is 'strongly agree' and the other end is 'strongly disagree'. Then you can read out a statement, for example, '*Super Mario is the best computer game in the world*'. Children stand on the line according to their opinion. You can then ask the children to defend their opinion (this can be done in the children's first language).

No resources?

You only need two big pieces of paper for this activity.

How I wonder what you are!

Like a diamond in the sky.

Up above the world so high,

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

How I wonder what you are.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

Activity 30: Something about me

Cinzia Bettinelli – Italy

Age: 9–10  2–8 hours **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Organisation: Individual, pair work, group work and whole class.

Materials: a short audio/video clip of a person talking about him or herself, sheets of coloured paper, pictures of food, sporting activities, hobbies, jobs, etc.

Aim: To practise writing and speaking skills, especially writing and speaking about oneself.

Description: Using the recorded conversation as a model, children learn how to give basic information about themselves and then prepare a book to use as a prompt to tell the class ‘something about me’.

Preparation: You will need to make a recording of a competent English speaker talking about him or herself (you do not need to find a native speaker – anyone who can speak some English is fine). The speaker should introduce him or herself, describe their family, talk about things they like, for example, hobbies and food, and describe the job they do. The speaker does not need to read a script, but should speak simply and naturally. The recording should not last more than two minutes.

You will also need two sheets of A3 paper for each child and pictures from newspapers and magazines.

Procedure

1. The children listen to the conversation on the audio/video clip. The first time the children listen, ask them to listen for information about family, hobbies and job. The second time, ask them to listen for phrases that the speaker uses to introduce the information, for example:
 - Hello, I'm ... and I'm ...*
 - I live in ...*
 - I have ... brothers and ... sisters*
 - I like ... But I don't like ...*
 - My favourite food is ...*
 - I work...*
2. Write the key phrases on the board and ask children to practise saying them.
3. With a partner, children practise saying the whole text, filling the gaps with information about themselves.
4. Give the children sheets of coloured paper to fold into a handmade book (they need at least two A3 sheets each to make eight pages). On the front page they write ‘Something about me’ and glue their photo.
5. At the top of each page they write a different title, such as MY TOWN, MY FAVOURITE FOOD, MY HOBBIES, MY FAVOURITE SPORTS, WHEN I GROW UP and so on.

6. The children illustrate each page in a different way, using a mix of drawings, photographs, pictures cut out of magazines etc. They then write a sentence about each topic on the relevant page to say something about themselves. For example, 'My favourite food is pizza'.
7. When the books are ready, ask some of the children to speak about themselves and show their books to the class.

Notes

You may wish to tell the children what to write on each page or you may prefer to let them decide.

Alternatives

- You can complete steps 1–4 and then spend 15–20 minutes at the end of each lesson completing one page at a time until the children have finished their books.
- The activity can also be integrated into a series of lessons, with each lesson focusing on one area of the language needed to complete the books. At the end of the lesson, the children can complete the relevant page. At the end of the series of lessons, the children can speak about themselves, showing their book to the class. The series of lessons could focus on, for example:
 - a. Food. At the end of the lesson, the children add to their books 'my favourite food'.
 - b. Expressing preferences and like/don't like. At the end of the lesson, the children add to their books what they like or don't like.
 - c. Describing places. At the end of the lesson, the children add to their books 'My town' and write a description of their town.
- Children can take their books home to show their families.

No resources?

If you don't have access to audio/video, you could use a puppet or a toy who can tell the children something about themselves. If the children don't have access to photographs and/or magazine pictures, they can draw all the illustrations themselves.



Activity 31: Sound stories

Patrycja Łuczak – Poland

Age: 8+  30–40 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Cassette, CD or digital files with sounds, equipment to play the sounds.

Organisation: Individual, pairs or groups.

Aim: To develop creative writing skills and build vocabulary.

Description: The teacher records sounds such as the wind, a car engine, a storm, a cat meowing, steps and so on. The children listen to and identify sounds and then write a story based on what they hear.

Preparation: You will need to prepare the sounds on a digital file, cassette or CD.



Procedure

1. Play the sounds. The children listen and write down the sounds they hear. They check with a partner to see if they have the same answers. If necessary, play the sounds a second and even a third time. Finally, write the answers on the board.
2. Each child writes a short story based on the sounds they hear.
3. The children take it in turns to read out their story and the class votes which is the spookiest/funniest/happiest/most exciting story.

Notes

You could tell the children before they write their stories whether they should be funny/happy/spooky and so on.

Alternatives

- Instead of writing individual stories, the children could work in pairs or small groups. This would work well if you have large or mixed ability classes.
- The children can be told that they have to include all the sounds in their story.
- The children have to write the story around just one sound.
- The children are given a limit on the number of sounds they can use (three or four for example) in their story.
- When the children read their stories, classmates can make the sounds at the appropriate points in the story.
- If you want to extend this activity, the children can be asked to illustrate their stories with pictures, either with their own drawings or by cutting and pasting pictures from magazines etc. and the stories can be displayed on the wall.
- Alternatively, the children can collect all their stories in a book and make copies for parents and other teachers. If appropriate, they can sell the book for a small fee.

No resources?

If you do not have access to audio equipment, you could make the sounds yourself, or put the children into groups and ask them to think of some sounds they imitate. The other children listen and guess the sounds.

You can think of sounds that you can imitate, such as the wind blowing, or a door bell ringing.

You could use pictures instead of sounds. The children have to name the objects in the pictures and then write a story including those objects.



Activity 32: Storybook predictions

Nick Shekkeris – Cyprus

Age: 7–12  About 30 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A story book and a piece of paper and pen/pencil for each child.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise listening skills, especially prediction.

Description: Children work alone. They listen to the story and respond to questions the teacher asks about the story by writing or drawing on the paper.

Preparation: You will need a piece of paper for each child. You will need to decide where you are going to stop reading in the story so that children can make their predictions.

Procedure

1. Give each child a piece of paper (A4 size is ideal). Ask the children to divide it into four squares (by folding or by drawing lines).
2. Tell the children they are going to listen to a story and that they must guess what happens next at different points. Give an example.
3. Pick up the story book and start to read. About a quarter of the way through, stop reading and ask the children to write down in the first square what happens next. For example, if the story is Goldilocks and the Three Bears, you could say, *'Goldilocks walked into the forest and then she saw a _____*. The children write down what they think Goldilocks saw. You can help the children by going back and reading sections that might help the children to guess.
4. When all the children have written something, ask them for their suggestions. At this point it is important to praise the children for their ideas – after all, they do not know the story so all reasonable guesses are acceptable.
5. After discussing the children's guesses go back to the story and read the complete sentence. Ask the children questions about the right answer; for example, ask, *'who do you think lives in the house?'*
6. Continue with the story and half way, three quarters of the way and towards the end, repeat the procedure.
7. Finish by asking children what they think of the story and if they were surprised by anything in it.

Notes

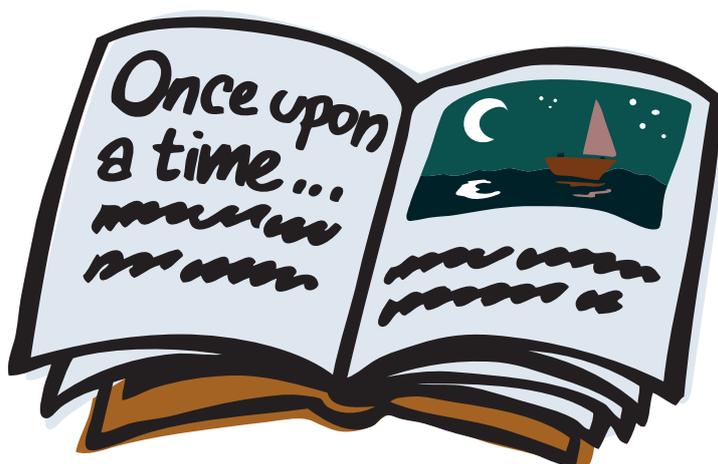
Do not worry too much about the children speaking in English in this activity. The main purpose is for them to listen to a story in English and to learn that prediction can be helpful in helping them to understand. For many children, it will be too difficult for them to express their own predictions in English, so using the first language is absolutely fine.

Alternatives

- Ask the children to draw a picture or to answer in their first language, rather than write in English. This is particularly useful with low level learners.
- Give the children a set of pictures that represent scenes in the story. They can:
 - a. put the pictures into the correct order as they listen
 - b. predict the story by putting the pictures in what they think is the correct order before they listen. They then listen to see if they were right.
- Put the children in groups and ask them to stand at the board. Read the story, and at the gap, ask the children to decide on an answer together and then to write it on their section of the board.

No resources?

If you do not have paper for all the children, ask them to close their eyes and imagine at the prediction points. You can then ask them what they have imagined.



Activity 33: Swap the dot

Antonella Sartoris – Italy

Age: 5–8  15 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** No

Materials: Circles of card. Each circle has either a colour or a number on it. Use actual colours and write numbers (e.g. 5), rather than writing the words.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise recognising and saying number words and colours.

Description: Each child has a card with either a colour or a number. The teacher calls out a number and a colour. The children with these cards must stand up, shout out their colours or numbers, and swap cards.

Preparation: You will need to prepare the card circles, depending on the number of children in the class. For 20 children, you will need 10 colour cards and 10 number cards. The colours can be red, yellow, pink, blue, green, black, white, grey, orange, brown, for example.

Procedure

1. Ask the children to stand in a circle and give each one a card.
2. Practise the vocabulary. You can do this by pointing to each card, saying the word and asking the children to repeat; by saying a word and asking the child with the card to hold it up; by going round the circle and asking each child to say their word, and so on.
3. Now play the game. Call out a number and a colour, for example, five and orange. The children with these cards must come to the centre, shout out their words and then swap their cards.
4. Repeat until all the children have swapped cards.
5. Now ask each child to say what is on their new card.

Notes

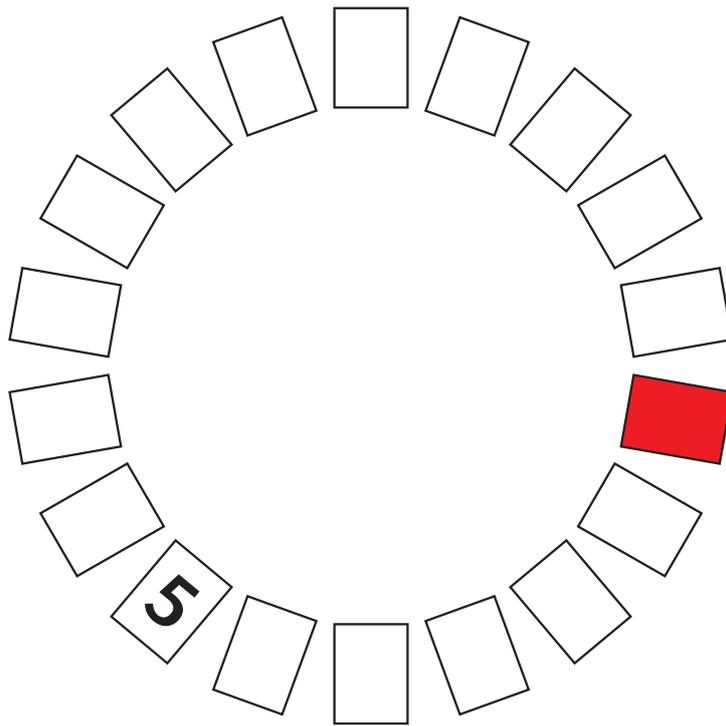
Once you have made the cards, you can use them to revise colours and numbers. You can also write the colour or number on the back of the cards and use these to teach the written form.

Alternatives

- If you have a larger class, you can add another group to the numbers and colours, for example, animals. The teacher then calls out three words – for example, ‘5, blue, tiger’ – and the children swap three cards.
- When the children have all swapped cards, they can put them face down and the class can try to remember which child has which card.
- Put all the cards face down on the floor (with the number/colour facing the floor). Children take it in turns to turn up two cards. If they can say the names correctly, they keep the cards. If not, the cards are put back in the same place.

NO RESOURCES?

You can use old newspaper or scrap paper rather than card. Or you could also give each child a colour or number that they have to remember. When the teacher calls a number and colour, the children with these words come to the middle of the circle and say, ‘I am red’ and ‘I am 12’ and so on. They then swap words rather than cards.



Activity 34: Take the yellow one!

Gordon Hunter – China

Age: 6–8  **20 minutes** **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Large number of coloured pencils/pens/crayons (at least 30).

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise colours and prepositions of place and to list items.

Description: Children pick up pencils in response to the teacher’s instructions. They then describe what pencils they have.

Preparation: No preparation is needed for this activity.

Procedure

1. Check the children know colours by picking up individual pencils and asking, ‘What colour is this?’ You might want to introduce the adjectives ‘dark’ and ‘light’ to describe the colours if you have different shades.
2. Check the children know prepositions of place by putting one of the coloured pencils in different positions and asking the children where it is.
3. Ask the children to stand round a central table. Tip the coloured pencils on to the table.
4. Ask the children to take pencils in the following way:
Tomoko, take the yellow pencil next to the green one.
Chen, take the blue pencil between the pink and the orange one.
Jean, take the red pencil under the dark green one.
5. Nominate a child to become the teacher and let them give the instructions. If you have a lot of pencils, you can divide the class into groups, and the role of the teacher can be taken by a different child in each group.
6. All children should now have some pencils. Model the second part of the activity, in which children practise lists and substitution:
In my hand, I have two green pencils, a yellow one and a blue one.
7. Children take it in turns to describe what pencils they have.

Alternatives

- You can mix up pens, pencils and crayons, which makes it a little harder!
- You can add to or change the final text the children say. For example, they can say:

In my hand I have two green pencils, a yellow pencil and a blue one. I like the blue one best. Jean has a blue pen and a yellow crayon. I have more than him! The children can also write down their texts.

No resources?

You do not need to have pens or pencils for this game. You can gather lots of different objects from the children. For example, you could gather an exercise book, a pencil, some chalk, a stone, and a handkerchief – whatever is to hand. You can then proceed in the same way.



Activity 35: Taste the fruit!

Vesna Buzalkovska – Republic of Macedonia

Age: 8+  50 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Different pieces of fruit for tasting, a scarf for blindfold.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise or revise the names of fruits and to prepare simple descriptions of them.

Description: Children are blindfolded and take it in turns to taste fruit that they cannot see. They must guess which fruit they are eating.

Preparation: Before the class, you need to prepare the fruits for 'tasting' by cutting up a variety of fruits into small pieces.

Procedure

1. Teach the common fruits in your context and also others that are common around the world.
2. Show the children the fruits you have cut up into small pieces on a tray. Tell the children they can volunteer to try and guess the fruit by taste alone.
3. Blindfold the child who volunteers with a scarf. Using a clean fork or spoon, pick up a piece of fruit. Then put the handle into the child's hand so they can feed him or herself. The child then guesses the name of the fruit.
4. Continue the game until all the fruit has been eaten.
5. Now build up a text about one of the fruits. For example, ask the children, 'What colour are bananas?' 'Where do they come from?' 'What do they taste like?' Do you like bananas? As you elicit answers, build up the text on the board:
Bananas are yellow.
They come from South America.
Bananas taste sweet.
I don't like bananas.
6. Erase some of the words from the text leaving a stem skeleton:
_____s are _____
They come from _____
_____s taste _____
I _____s.
7. The children choose a fruit. They draw an outline of the fruit and then write the text inside the outline.

Notes

Only children who volunteer should taste the fruits. Do not force reluctant children to take part. Make sure you have enough clean forks for all the pieces. You do not need to taste all the fruit you teach.

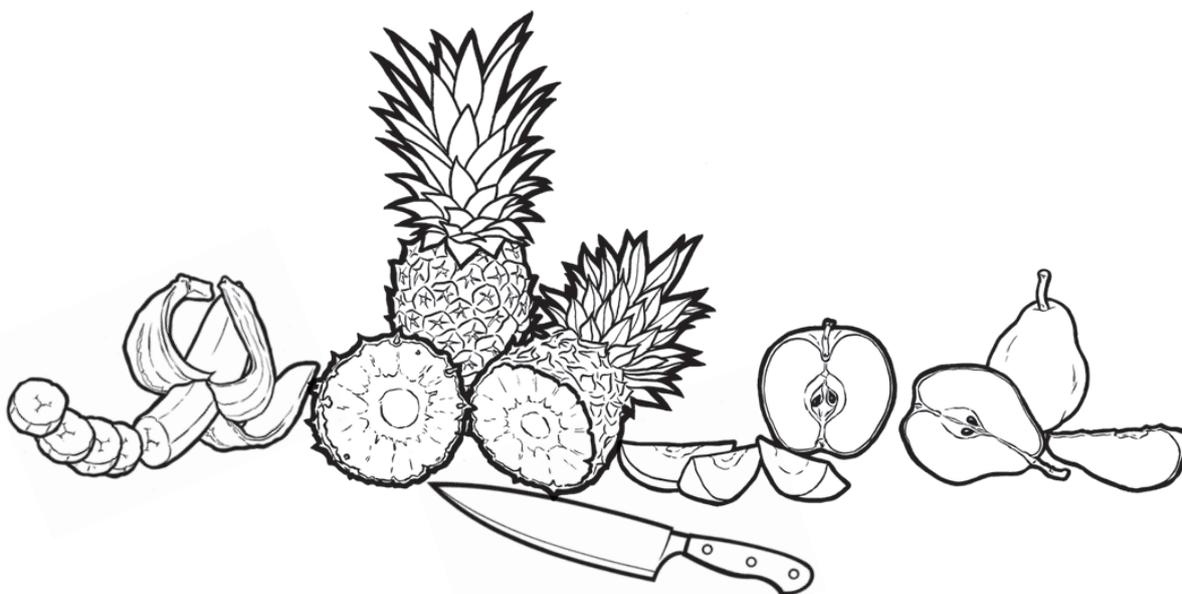
Alternatives

The activity can be done with all kinds of food. It can be good fun if you choose food from a particular country that the children are not all familiar with.

A similar activity can be done with feeling things. Put a number of items in secret into a box. A child is blindfolded and must pull one thing out of the box and describe what they can feel. They must then guess the object.

No resources?

Most teachers will be able to find a small supply of some food items that can be used to play the game.



Activity 36: The house seller

Maria Elena Placido – Italy

Age: 9+  40–50 minutes Large classes? Yes Mixed level? Yes

Materials: Paper and pens.

Organisation: Whole class activity.

Aim: To revise house vocabulary and to role play buying or selling a house.

Description: Children are divided into small groups. They are either buyers or sellers of houses. The sellers design a house and the buyers decide what sort of house they want. Buyers then visit sellers to try to find the perfect house for their family.

Preparation: No preparation is needed for this activity.



Procedure

1. Revise house vocabulary – room names (e.g. bathroom, lounge, bedroom), floors (e.g. ground, cellar, first, attic) and other parts such as stairs, garden, balcony and so on.
2. Divide the class into small groups of three to four. Make sure you have an even number of groups. Tell half the groups they are going to be sellers and half the groups they are going to be buyers.
3. The sellers design a house. Each group of sellers draws a picture and labels it, and writes a description. Each group of buyers draws a picture of a family. Each member of the family has a 'thought bubble' in which the buyers write what they want in their new house.
4. Set up the classroom as a shop. Sellers sit behind desks with their houses and buyers visit the shops. Buyers visit all the sellers to find out about their houses and to tell the sellers about their needs.
5. Buyers then decide which house would suit them best and sellers decide which family would suit their houses.
6. Buyers and sellers explain their choices to the class.

Notes

This activity is good for mixed level classes as there is a lot of drawing and labelling as well as writing to be done.

Alternatives

- You can prepare family cards for the buyers rather than buyers describing their own family. The buyers then decide what kind of house they need based on the descriptions.
- You can use pictures/house plans from estate agents (real estate). Sellers then have to decide which house they want to try to sell.
- This activity can also be done with shops. Each group of sellers must decide what sort of shop they own and what they sell in their shop. Each group of buyers prepares a shopping list and then goes around the shops and tries to buy all the items on the shopping list.

No resources?

Few resources are needed for this, just some blank paper and pens.



Activity 37: The noun tree

Hasmik Perosyan – Armenian Republic

Age: 8–15  20–25 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Board and stickers.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise pronouncing words and to develop written texts.

Description: The teacher draws a large tree and the children provide ‘leaves’ or ‘fruit’ by writing nouns on pieces of paper to stick on the tree. The nouns are then made into sentences, and the sentences into stories.

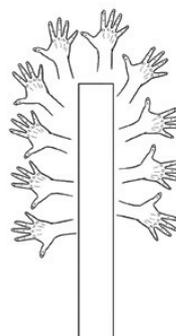
Preparation: You will need to cut sticky notes or pieces of paper into the shapes of leaves and fruit, one for each child.

Procedure

1. Draw a large tree on the board with many branches.
2. Ask the children what is missing from the tree and elicit either ‘fruit’ or ‘leaves’. Tell the children they are going to provide the fruit or leaves to the tree.
3. Give each child a piece of paper or sticky note cut into the shape of a leaf or a fruit. Ask each child to think of a noun that they like in English and can say well and to write it on the paper.
4. Ask each child to come up to the board with their leaf or fruit. Ask the child what noun they have chosen and ask them to say it loudly with the correct pronunciation. They can then stick it on the tree.
5. Now ask either the child or the class to make a sentence with the noun. The sentence can be written on the board (by the teacher or by another child) or in the children’s books.
6. Continue until all the nouns are on the tree and all the sentences written.
7. Now ask the children to choose some of the sentences (you can say how many) to include in a story. The best story gets a prize.

Notes

If you have an interactive whiteboard, you can prepare the tree in advance.



Alternatives

- You can use the activity to practise or revise vocabulary sets by choosing a theme for the tree, rather than allowing the children to choose any noun. For example, a transport tree, a furniture tree, a shops tree. The children have to choose nouns related to the chosen theme.
- If you have a large class, this activity can be done in groups following the same procedure.
- You can have a verb tree or an adverb tree too.
- You can use this activity to review work; instead of asking the children to think of nouns, tell them which nouns they must write.
- Elif Olcay Bozdaş (Turkey)** sent a variation on this activity called 'New Year Tree'. For this activity you need green and brown card. Before the class, cut the green card into squares of about 15cm x 15cm. Make sure you have one square for each child. Cut the brown card into a rectangle of 20 x 30 cm. This will be the tree trunk.
 - Stick the brown card to the wall or board.
 - Give each child a square of green card and tell them to trace the outline of their hand on the square.
 - Tell the children to cut out the outline of their hand, so they have a hand-shaped piece of card.
 - Ask the children to write their name in one of the fingers on the hand and their wish for the New Year.
 - Ask each child to say something about their wish and come up and stick their hand above the 'tree trunk' to make the tree.

Notes

This activity does not have to be limited to New Year – you can do it at any time. You can use the activity to practise a number of different expressions, for example, the children write their favourite food/subject/singer/person/sport/place and so on. They could write a sentence about their town/their family and so on.

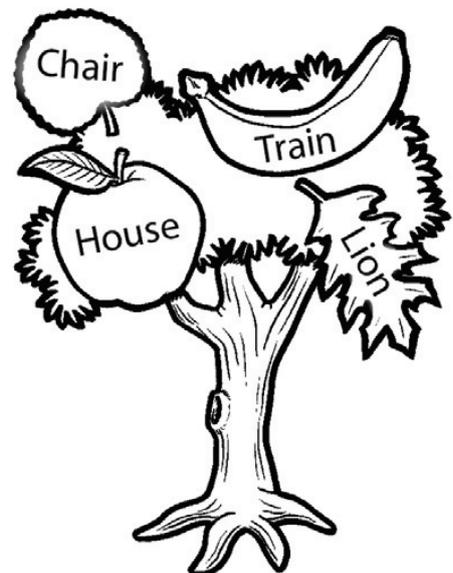
Acknowledgements

Elif saw this activity done by Suzan Öviz from Middle East Technical University.

No resources?

Trace out a large tree on the classroom floor using a stick. Ask the children where the trunk is and where the branches are. Proceed as above, but instead of writing down a noun, the children think of one. When they are called up, they become the leaf or fruit and stand on one of the imaginary branches.

Draw a tree trunk on the board and ask the children to come up in turn, draw a branch and write their wishes in the branch.



Activity 38: The snake game

Marina Kolar – Croatia

Age: 7+  10–20 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: board and markers (either magnets or some sort of sticker, such as a sticky note), a dice.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To practise or revise vocabulary and structures.

Description: Children in the class are divided into two teams. Individuals from each team must answer questions dictated by a square on the board snake.

Preparation: You will need to prepare a series of questions based on the categories in your snake (see Step 1 below).

Procedure

1. Draw a large snake on the board and divide its body into a number of squares (at least 15). In each square write a letter as a prompt to the category of question. For example, V might be a 'vocabulary' question; C might be 'correct the sentence', while O might be 'odd man out.'
2. Divide the class into two teams. Explain the rules of the game. A member from each team comes to the front and shakes a dice. According to the number on the dice, they move forward up the snake's body. On reaching the number, the child places the marker on the square and has to answer a question, according to the letter. If the child is not sure of the answer, they can ask the rest of the team.
3. If the child answers correctly, the marker remains on the square. If the question is answered incorrectly, the child moves the marker three squares down the snake. The winning team is the first to reach the snake's tongue.

Notes

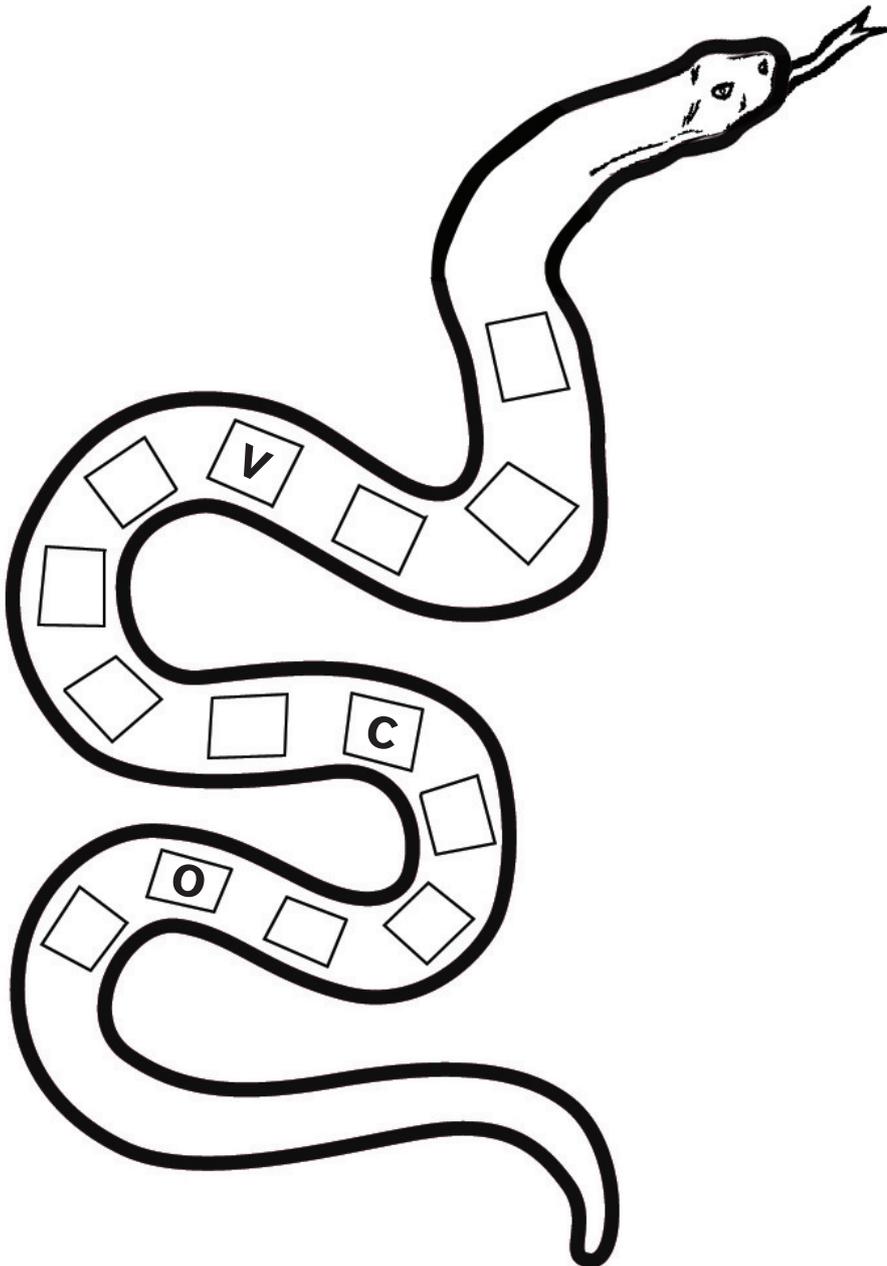
Other categories you might consider are 'translation', 'spelling' and 'pronunciation'. Larger classes will need more teams.

Alternatives

- The children could prepare questions for each other based on the categories.
- Children from the opposing team could read out the questions in a 'snakey' voice. They could also decide if the answer is right or wrong (if they get it wrong, they move down the snake two spaces).

No resources?

You could draw the snake on the floor with chalk and have two children act as the 'markers', moving up and down the snake!



Activity 39: Throwing a ball

Joanna Sanecka – Poland

Age: All  5–30 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Soft objects that can be thrown, such as a soft ball or toy. You'll need one for each group.

Organisation: Whole class or large groups.

Aim: To revise vocabulary.

Description: In this activity, the children take it in turns to say a vocabulary item by throwing the ball to each other. The activity can be used to practise any set of vocabulary you like. There are a number of variations on this game and one alternative is given below.

Preparation: You will need a ball (or the same number of balls as groups).

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of about ten. The game is played by each group at the same time. Ask the group to stand in a circle.
2. Tell the students the area of vocabulary to be used in the game, for example, months of the year, colours, animals, numbers, clothes etc. and throw the ball to a child. The child who catches the ball says another word in the series and throws the ball to another child. This child also says a word in the series and throws the ball again.
3. If a child gets a word wrong or can't remember another item, either:
 - a. The child is 'out' and the game continues until only one child is left and is the winner.
 - or*
 - b. The child changes the subject of the vocabulary group and a new round begins using the new vocabulary.

Notes

If you don't have room for the children to stand in circles, ask them to sit around tables. If you have desks in fixed rows, they can play by going down the row and back again. You can also use a soft toy rather than a ball.

Alternatives

- With younger or lower level children you can choose simple vocabulary sets with limited items and a fixed sequence, such as months, numbers, letters, days, etc. The child who catches the ball has to give the next word in the sequence.
- **Ibrahim Sabatin (Palestine)** suggested a similar activity which can be used when children meet each other for the first time:
 1. The teacher starts the game by saying, 'Hello, I'm Maryam' and throws the ball to a child. The child who catches the ball introduces him/herself in the same way, throwing the ball to another child and so on.
 2. Once every child has had a turn, the ball returns to the teachers, who says something else about themselves, for example, 'I live in Hebron' or 'I live in Main Street' (if all the children are from the same town) and throws the ball to a child who tells the group where they live and throws the ball to the next child and so on.

Possible prompts might be:

Hello, I'm...

I live in...

My birthday's in (month)

I like (hobbies/favourite food etc)

I can (abilities/talents etc)

No resources?

You only need a ball(s) for this activity.



Activity 40: Toothpick game

Weronika Salandyk – Poland

Age: 8+  Maximum 20 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Toothpicks and pictures of people doing things.

Organisation: Group work.

Aim: To practise making sentences describing the pictures.

Description: Children work in pairs or groups. They take it in turns to make sentences about the pictures, and use the toothpicks to show which part of the picture they are describing.

Preparation: You will need to find suitable pictures of people doing things. These can be pictures from your course book, pictures from magazines, a photocopied picture or a flashcard. The important thing is that there is a lot of activity in the picture. Make sure you have enough toothpicks to bring to class.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into pairs or groups of no more than four. Give each pair/group a set of about 12–20 toothpicks.
2. Give each pair or group a picture.
3. Tell the children that they have to take it in turns to make sentences about the pictures. Elicit some examples using one of the pictures, or a picture you put on the board.
4. Here is the fun part. As the children make a sentence, they must put a toothpick on to the picture, so that the point of the toothpick touches the part of the picture that the child is describing. The next child then makes a sentence, following the same procedure. However, this child's toothpick must touch the picture and also the previous toothpick, like in a dominos game.
5. The children get one point for each toothpick they manage to lay down. The child who places all their toothpicks first is the winner.

Notes

You might need to cut the toothpicks in half if the pictures are small.

Alternatives

- If you have children of different levels, you can differentiate the kind of sentences they must make. For example, lower level children can make sentences with adjectives while higher level children can make sentences with particular tense patterns.
- You can add a level of challenge by insisting that the children cannot move existing toothpicks when they lay down their toothpick, or they lose a point.

No resources?

If you do not have toothpicks, small sticks are fine. If you do not have lots of pictures, use one picture and ask one group of children to do the activity while the others watch.



Activity 41: Tourist role play

Mohammed Azaza – UAE

Age: 7+  20 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Pictures of famous places in your country/area. A large map of the country/area in which you live. Tourist props such as a sun hat, camera, sunglasses and so on.

Organisation: Whole class.

Aim: To describe places that the children know both orally and in writing.

Description: Children identify local places of interest to a tourist. They produce short texts about the places and then role play a tourist visiting the different sites.

Preparation: You will need to find the pictures of famous places in your country/area and a map for the activity. These can be flashcards, photographs or cut from a magazine/tourist brochure. You will also need tourist props, or you could make these out of paper/card.

Procedure

1. Show the children pictures of famous places and areas in your country and ask the children to name them.
2. Choose one of the pictures. For example, for the UAE, it might be the desert. With the children, build up a text about the desert on the board, creating a skeleton structure the children can use to describe other pictures:

This is *the desert* in the UAE.
The desert is **very** big and **very** beautiful.
I have been to *the desert* lots of times.
My favourite thing about *the desert* is
 the peace and quiet.
3. The children choose one of the pictures from Step 1 and write a text of their own. This can be done individually, or in pairs or groups, depending on the children's level and the support they need. The children take it in turns to read out their texts.
4. Show a map of the country/area and stick the pictures and texts in the correct place on the map.
5. Show the class a picture of a tourist. Ask one of the children to come to the front to be the tourist. Give the child some props to make them feel like a tourist (for example, a hat, a camera, sunglasses, binoculars, a guidebook). Give the tourist a pointer too.
6. Ask the tourist to point to four different things on the map and to say where they have been and to describe the places. The children then take it in turns to take on the role.

Notes

Low level children need a lot of support to produce texts. This activity scaffolds them in doing so. The texts can then be put on the walls of the classroom, or made into a class book to show to visitors.

Alternatives

- At the role play stage, the teacher (or another child) can interview the tourist. If a child takes on this role, they can be given interview questions: Can you tell me where you have been? Which place did you like best? Why? And so on. Interviews could also be recorded.
- Make a diary activity. After stage 3, the children fill in a diary, choosing the sites they wish to visit. Then they share the information with their partner.

	I will visit /see /go to...
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

No resources?

Elicit places of interest from the children rather than showing them pictures. Ask the children to draw a place of interest. The other children can guess where it is. Draw a rough map on the board and the children can write their texts directly on to the board.



Activity 42: Traffic lights

Ludmilla Gerasimova – Russia

Age: 4–6  Maximum 40 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: A piece of paper and a red, yellow and green crayon for each child.

Organisation: Individual, whole class.

Aim: To revise colours and simple verbs, to get children to pay attention.

Description: Children make a set of traffic lights using the paper and coloured crayons. They then show they understand the colours and basic commands.

Preparation: A piece of paper for each child and enough red, orange and green coloured pencils/crayons for the children to share.

Procedure

1. Distribute the pieces of paper and crayons. Show the children how to fold the paper in half length ways. The top half is the cover and the bottom half is the base.
2. Show the children how to draw three circles on the base from top to bottom.
3. Ask the children to colour in the three circles: the top circle is red, the middle circle is yellow and the bottom circle is green, just like traffic lights.
4. Ask the children to point to the coloured circles as you say the colours out loud.
5. Show the children how to cut the cover into three flaps, so that each flap covers one circle.
6. Call out 'stop!' and the children show the red circle. Call out 'get ready' and the children show the yellow circle. Call out 'go' and the children show the green circle. Practise this a few times.
7. Put the children into groups of three to five. The children take it in turns to shout out 'stop', 'get ready' and 'go' while the other children show the correct colour.
8. Now teach them the actions. For 'stop' the children must sit on the floor; for 'get ready' the children must look at the teacher quietly. For 'go' the children must do the activity, running, skipping, reading, playing and so on.
9. Practise the actions with the children until they respond automatically to the commands.

Notes

This is a very good activity to teach to children at the beginning of a course. Once they know the commands, it is then very easy to get them to stop an activity quickly or to start an activity quickly. You can either shout the commands, or you can show them the colour of the traffic lights.

Young learners in particular cannot sit for long periods of time and easily get bored. This activity allows you to introduce a quick energetic activity into the lesson (such as skipping or running) which you can easily control.

Alternatives

- The children can take it in turns to be the teacher using their own traffic lights to control the class.
- If you are doing group work, one child can be in charge and can control the group using the traffic lights they have made.
- Rather than traffic lights you can introduce other cues, particularly with older learners. For example, you can write 'ed' in a splash box in the corner of the board. When children forget to use the past tense, you can point to the cue, rather than reminding them orally each time. You can do the same for the articles, 'a' and 'the' and other easily forgotten things, such as 's'.



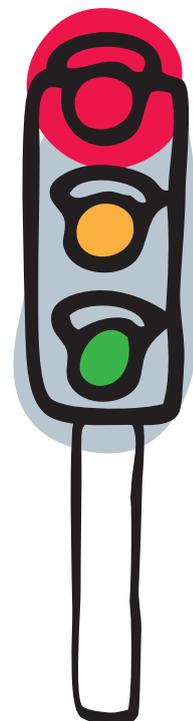
No resources?

If you do not have paper and coloured crayons for all the children, make one set yourself and teach the children the actions.

You could draw the traffic lights on the board at the beginning of class and then point to the colour for the action you would like the children to perform.

Acknowledgments

Ludmilla learnt a version of this activity on a Teaching Young Learners course at the Language Link in Moscow.



Activity 43: Vocabulary chart

Patrycja Łuczak – Poland

Age: All  10–15 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Blackboard/whiteboard, chalk or board pens.

Organisation: Group work, whole class.

Aim: To revise vocabulary.

Description: This activity involves a team competition, which can be interesting and motivating for children as well as encouraging co-operation. Children revise vocabulary by finding words that start with a given letter. Each letter has a score and the children in teams compete to see which team can get the highest score.

Procedure

1. Decide on an area of vocabulary that you wish to revise, for example, jobs.
2. Draw a chart on the board with 12 squares, numbering each square as illustrated below:

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

3. Ask the children to give you some letters of the alphabet to write in the squares, for example:

1 D	2 O	3 A	4 B
5 K	6 E	7 I	8 N
9 J	10 W	11 G	12 Z

4. Divide the children into teams of five or six. Each team in turn has to give the name of a job beginning with one of the letters in the chart. If the word is correct, the teacher writes it on the board and the team scores the number of points given in the square. For example, if a team says the job *builder*, they get four points, while for *journalist* they get 9 points. The team with the highest score wins.

Notes

The chart can have any number of squares you like. You could write the letters in the order the children give them, or write the more difficult letters in the squares with the higher scores. You can allow each letter to be used only once, or you can allow each letter to be used as many times as you choose.

Alternatives:

- Instead of asking teams to call out words in turn, they can be told to write down as many words as they can beginning with the letters within a time limit of, for example, five minutes.
- You can ask the team to spell the word for you to write on the board, deducting points for incorrect spelling.
- Teachers of young learners in Japan suggested the following two activities for large classes.
 - a. Divide the children into teams, and give them time to decide on a job for each square. Then play the game.
 - b. Divide the children into teams. Teams must race to find a word for each letter. The first team to have a word for each letter wins.

No resources?

This activity does not require any particular resources.

This activity comes from a methodology course held at the Richard Language College, Bournemouth, UK.

Activity 44: Vocabulary challenge

Laurie Thain – Canada

Age: 6-10  At least 20 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Flashcards.

Organisation: Whole class activity.

Aim: To learn new vocabulary.

Description: In this game the class have to guess what is on a card chosen by one of the children.

Preparation: You will need to make flashcards of the new vocabulary items (we use furniture here). There should be one card for each child in the class.

Procedure

1. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Teach the children the words on the flashcards. There are lots of ways you can do this. We suggest the following: show each card and say the word. Children repeat. Show the cards again in a different order and ask the children to say the correct word. Help them if necessary. Then give each child a card. The children show the cards one-by-one and the class says the word. The children can then put cards face down in front of them and the teacher asks, *'What card does Mary have/has Mary got?'* and the children have to remember. If they are right, the card is turned face up.
2. When all the cards have been learnt, you can play the game. Choose one leader and one helper. The helper gathers all the cards and the leader chooses one which they put face down on the floor.
 The helper holds the remaining flashcards. The children take turns asking the leader questions. For example, if the vocabulary set is domestic animals, the children might ask, *'Do you have the chair?'* The leader answers, *'Yes I do'* or *'No I don't'*.
 If 'Yes', the lucky guesser becomes the leader and chooses a new card to turn face down and there is a new helper assigned. If 'No', the helper turns up the 'cat' so all can see it. Then children take it in turns to ask a question until someone guesses correctly and becomes the leader.

Notes

You can play lots of rounds of this game or just a few – it is up to you! It is also a really useful activity for revising vocabulary previously taught.

Alternatives

- The teacher can be the leader. If a child guesses the card correctly, they keep it. At the end of the game, when all the cards have been collected, the children take it in turns to say what they have, for example, *'I have a chair, a table and a cupboard'*.
- **Hatice Elif Kalaycioglu (Turkey)** suggests the following alternative: instead of sitting in a circle, the children stand in a circle. The teacher plays some music and the children walk round the cards. When the music stops, the teacher calls out the item of vocabulary. The children have to point to the correct picture card. If you want to make this into a competition, the last child to point and any children who points to the wrong card can be 'out', until only one child remains. She also suggests putting the pictures on the board. The children can be divided into two teams, A and B. The teacher calls out one item of vocabulary and the first member of the team has to go to the board and either take the correct picture or point at it. The first child to do so wins the point.
- The same activities can be used to practise sound/spelling associations. Instead of pictures, write the words on the cards, or use a mixture of picture and word cards. The children have to collect both the correct picture and word cards.
- Ask the children to cut pictures out of magazines, newspapers etc and stick them on card (laminates them if you can). Over time, you can build up a class collection of picture cards that can be used for a number of different activities.

No resources?

Flashcards do not have to be of professional quality. Basic drawings on scrap paper are fine.

Activity 45: Walking the words

Mustafa Mohamed El sayed Ahmed El shamy – Egypt

Age: 4–12  30 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Board and pen/chalk

Organisation: Whole class

Aim: To learn and practise stress patterns in difficult words.

Description: Children practise the stress patterns in difficult or long words by walking the word (small, light steps for unstressed syllables; long, energetic steps for stressed syllables).

Preparation: There is no preparation needed for this activity, but you should decide before the lesson which words you are going to practise.

Procedure

1. Tell the children they are going to learn an interesting way to remember stress patterns in long or difficult words.
2. Choose a long or difficult word like **Alligator**. Ask the children to watch you. Stand in front of the class and walk the word by taking a short, light step for unstressed syllables, and a long, energetic step for stressed syllables. For information, you should take one long, energetic step and then three short, light steps. As you walk, say the word.
3. Demonstrate with a few more words.
4. Write some long or difficult words on the board and then elicit the stress patterns from the children, perhaps like this (the 'a' has the biggest box as it is the stressed syllable):

Al	li	ga	tor
5. Put the children into pairs or groups.
6. Tell the children they will take it in turn to read the words off the board or walk the word. In a pair, child A first of all chooses a word from the list on the board, and child B walks it, saying the word out loud. Child A checks if child B has the stress pattern correct by looking at the stress pattern on the board. Then they swap around.
7. At the end of the lesson, the children can record the words and their stress patterns in their vocabulary note books.

Notes

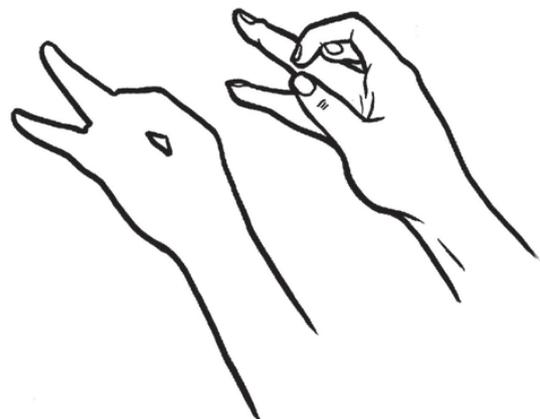
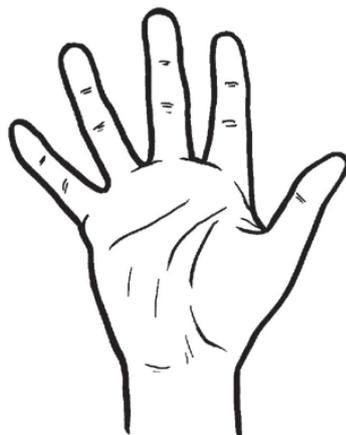
Choose words that the children know the meaning of so that they can concentrate on the pronunciation only.

Alternatives

- This activity can be done in groups following the same procedure.
- As the children get good at the activity, you can ask them to step sentences. This is particularly good for helping children to understand how stress changes in longer stretches of talk.
- With younger children use simpler words.
- The activity can be used to learn/practise the stress patterns of the names of countries, using the country's flag to mark the stress.
- Chiyuki Yanase (Japan) suggests another variation: the children can bend their knees for unstressed syllables and jump for stressed syllables. So, for example, for the word banana, they would bend knees, jump and bend knees.
- Teachers of young learners in Japan suggested other entertaining ways to indicate the stress patterns of words. These include, for example, 'duck hands' where children put their four fingers to their thumb in imitation of a duck's beak. They open wide for stressed syllables and only a little for unstressed syllables, waving arms up and down, and, of course, clapping.

No resources?

You only need a board and pen/chalk for this activity.



Activity 46: We are different

Alma Balniene – Lithuania

Age: All ages  **Maximum 15 minutes** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: None

Organisation: Whole class

Aim: To practise listening and responding personally to questions and statements.

Description: The children stand in a line. The teacher asks questions or reads out statements. Children stay on the line or move away from it depending on whether they agree, disagree or cannot decide.

Preparation: You will need to prepare the questions or statements to read out.

Procedure

1. Ask the children to stand in a line.
2. Tell the children you are going to ask questions or make statements. Explain that the children have three options:
 - a. They should take a step forward if the answer to a question is yes, or if they agree with a statement.
 - b. They should take a step backwards if the answer to a question is no, or if they disagree with the statement.
 - c. They should stay in the same place if they do not know the answer to the question or if they cannot decide if they agree with the statement.
3. Read out a statement or question, for example, 'Do you like ice cream?' The children step forward, backwards or stay in one place, depending on their answers.
4. Read out another statement/question, for example, 'I have a pet'. The children step forward or backwards or remain in the same place depending on what is true.
5. Continue until you run out of questions or until the children can no longer step backwards or forwards.

Notes

This activity does not require that the children speak, so it is not stressful for them.

Alternatives

If you do not want the children standing all over the classroom, they can step back into the line at the beginning of each new statement/question.

Each child can prepare their own statement/question, which they take in turns to read out.

You can play this game outside or in the school hall if your classroom is crowded or if you want a change of scenery.

No resources?

No resources needed for this activity.

Acknowledgments

Alma learnt this activity from Alexandra Zaparucha on a Methodology and Language for Primary Teachers course at Pilgrims, the University of Kent at Canterbury, England.



Activity 47: Where is the poisoned apple?

Viktória Belák – Hungary

Age: 3-12  10–20 minutes **Large classes?** No **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Flashcards or objects.

Organisation: Whole class activity.

Aim: To practise asking and answering questions and practise saying new vocabulary

Description: Children take it in turns to guess the identity of an object through asking questions.

Preparation: You will need to find appropriate pictures or objects before class. Around 10 should be enough.

Procedure

1. Take a set of objects or pictures and place them on the table.
2. Ask the children to stand around the table and look at the objects.
3. Ask for a volunteer and send them out of the room (for a very short time).
4. When the volunteer is outside, the children decide together which object/picture is 'the poisoned apple'. Do not remove it!
5. Ask the volunteer to return. They must then identify the poisoned apple by asking yes/no questions (Is it red? Is it big? Can I eat it?)
6. The volunteer can only name the object when they are sure. If they guess incorrectly, they lose.
7. The game can then be repeated a number of times.

Notes

This activity works well with vocabulary that children have been studying in their course book or in a story.

Alternatives

- When the volunteer goes out, move the objects around. The volunteer must then tell you what changes have been made (good for practising prepositions of place).
- Kim's game. Ask all the children to study the objects for one minute. Then cover up the table with a cloth. The children must write down the objects that they remember (or they can talk to their partners about what they can remember).
- Guessing games, where one child does not know information that the class does, are fun and useful activities. Pavlina Onchevska (Macedonia) suggests one variation:
 1. One volunteer goes out of the room for one minute.
 2. The rest of the class hide an object somewhere in the classroom.
 3. When the volunteer comes back, the other children take it in turns to give him or her directions. For example, Go straight on to the window. Turn left at the teacher's desk. This is good for practising directions.
 4. You can also divide the class into two teams, with each team taking it in turns.
- Ask for a volunteer, who then leaves the room. The class decides what job the child has (e.g. police officer). The child comes back in and must ask questions to find out the job. This works too with famous people, countries and characters from films and books.

No resources?

You can write the names of the objects on the board or you can draw pictures of the objects instead.



Activity 48: Wordle prediction

Marija Jovic – Sebia

Age: 8-14  45 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Printed copies of 'word clouds'.

Organisation: Group work.

Aim: To practise the reading skill of prediction; writing.

Description: <http://www.wordle.net> is a website that uses keywords from a text of your choice to generate a 'word cloud' (called a 'wordle'). In this activity the children use the word cloud to predict the content of a text and to write it, but this is a very flexible tool that can be used for a number of purposes.

Preparation: Before the lesson, choose the reading text that will be the focus of the lesson. Then go to <http://www.wordle.net> and create your word cloud using words from the text. Choose the most important words from each paragraph (not more than five per paragraph) and copy them into the Wordle generator. The more times you copy a word, the bigger it will appear on the word cloud, so copy the most important words in each paragraph a number of times into Wordle. You will need one copy of the word cloud for each group.

Procedure

1. Divide the children into groups of four and give each group a copy of the word cloud. Explain that the children will reconstruct the text using the words in the word cloud. Explain that the biggest words are the most important ones and may be used more than once.
2. The children work together to reconstruct the text, writing their own versions using the words in the word cloud.
3. A representative from each group reads out the group's text.
4. Hand out a copy of the original text and ask the children to decide which group's version was the closest to the original.

Alternatives

- If the text has a number of paragraphs, you can help the children by colour-coding the words. Words of the same colour belong in the same paragraph.
- Naila Masud (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) gives a number of alternative ways of using Wordle word clouds:
 1. Revision: to revise a text the children have studied recently, paste the text into Wordle and generate a word cloud. Show the children the word cloud and ask them if they can remember what the text was about, the meaning of the words and how they were used in the text. You can build up a bank of word clouds over the semester and bring them out at random to get the children to recall the texts and key vocabulary.
 2. Prediction: to help the children predict the content of a reading or listening text and activate their background knowledge (which helps their reading/listening), you can create a word cloud from the text and ask them to predict the content. You can use the cloud to pre-teach any new vocabulary before the children read or listen to the text.
 3. Reconstruction: to help the children reconstruct a dialogue they have listened to or have been studying, you can create a word cloud, colouring the words in different colours for each speaker. The children have to reconstruct the dialogue.
 4. Writing poems: Children can write their own short poems or haiku. Generate a word cloud either with words of your choice or using a short poem or haiku. The children write their own poems using the words.

No resources?

If you do not have access to a computer, you can create a word cloud by writing the words in different colours on pieces of paper, one for each group, or you could write them on the board, using different coloured pens/chalk. Alternatively, you could create a word cloud by hand on a large piece of paper to share with the class.

If you have a computer but not an internet connection, you can also create word clouds using any text programme.

This activity was inspired by an activity in Challenges 2, Pearson Longman.



Activity 49: Words competition

Patrycja Łuczak – Poland

Age: 7+  5–10 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Board and pen/chalk.

Organisation: Whole class activity.

Aim: To work together to create a text. To practise or revise grammar points or vocabulary.

Description: A text with gaps is written on to the board. Children in teams guess the missing words and score points if they are correct.

Preparation: There is no preparation necessary for this activity but you may prefer to write the sentences on the board before the children arrive in class.

Procedure

1. Write three sentences on the board. In each sentence, make sure there are some blanks which are numbered. Here is an example:

There was an important football _____ (1) last _____ (2).

The _____ (3) team was _____ (4). Players from the team _____ (5) _____ (6) at the end. The fans _____ (7) to _____ (8) _____ (9) but it was _____ (10).

2. Divide the class into two teams. Explain the rules of the game. Each team will take it in turns to suggest a word to fit a particular gap. If the team is correct, it wins the number of points allocated to the gap. For example, the team that gets the final gap correct, wins 10 points.

Notes

Choosing the right text is quite important. Try using a text the children have already seen, perhaps from the course book. If you feel very confident, you could decide not to have a text and allow the children to create it during the game, based on words they suggest that fit the gaps.

Alternatives

- If you have an interactive whiteboard, you can prepare the text in advance and reveal the word when the children guess correctly.
- You could also use PowerPoint slides or overhead transparencies.
- The children can prepare the texts themselves.
- Gap only one word class, for example, nouns or verbs or prepositions or verb participles.
- Write the whole text on the board and cover up the key words with a piece of paper with the number on. You can take the paper off when the child gets the word correct.

No Resources?

You only need a board and chalk for this activity.

eg.

One, two, , four, five,
once I caught a alive

, seven, eight, nine, ,
then I let it go

did you let it ?

Because it bit my so

Which did it ?

This finger on my

Activity 50: Writing basket for early finishers

Ludmila Gerasimova – Russia

Age: 7-10  2-10 minutes **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Basket or boxes of some kind, laminated pictures, dry erase markers or non-permanent markers.

Organisation: Individual work.

Aim: To revise vocabulary.

Description: A common problem for teachers is what to do when some children finish an activity before others. This simple activity asks children to write on picture cards and gives early finishers something to do while they are waiting for their classmates.

Preparation: You need to prepare a writing basket (box) before class with pictures relevant to the vocabulary the children have studied. Glue the pictures to the card, leaving some space for writing. Laminate the pictures and put them in the basket together with dry erase or non-permanent marker pens.

Procedure

1. Children who have finished an activity early each take a picture from the basket and write the word underneath.
2. The child shows the completed card to the teacher.
3. If the word is correct, the child can then take another card from the basket and so on until the class is ready to move to the next activity.

Notes

Although this may take some time initially, you can build up a collection of pictures to be used again and again. If the teacher is too busy to check the cards, the children can hold onto their completed cards to be checked later.

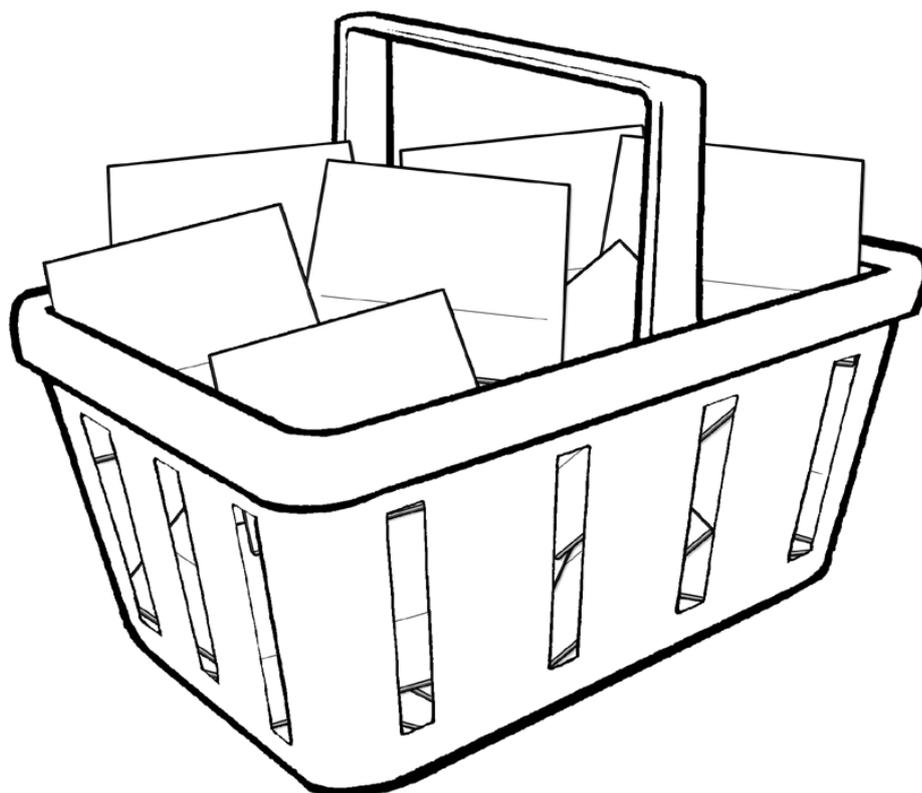
Alternatives

- Rather than find all the pictures yourself, you could ask the children to cut up and bring to school pictures of the vocabulary they have learned.
- This activity could be used to revise lexical sets rather than single words or phrases. A picture of a room could be used to revise furniture, for example, or a picture of a landscape to revise geographical features. Make sure you leave enough space for the children to write all the words, perhaps by having a large border around the picture.
- This activity could also be used to revise certain structures, such as the present continuous. Choose pictures showing scenes of activity and ask the children to write what is happening.

No resources?

If you do not have access to a laminator, you can still use pictures but the children can write the words in their note books, or on the blackboard/whiteboard.

If you don't have access to suitable pictures, you can fill the basket with realia (real objects) instead. Children write the words in their books rather than on the object.



Index Grid

	Preparation	Resources	Age			Timing			Language Focus					Large class		
			Very young	Junior	Older	Short	Medium	Long	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing	Grammar		Lexis	
Act out	Yes	Yes	X	X	X		X						X			No
Acting songs	Yes	Yes	X			X						X				Yes
Alphabet sounds	Yes	Yes	X	X	X		X									Yes
At the Zoo	Yes	Yes	X	X		X							X			Yes
Birthdays	Yes	Yes	X	X		X						X				Yes
Brown Bear, Brown Bear	Yes	Yes	X	X				X				X				Yes
Calendars	Yes	No	X	X	X		X								X	Yes
Change places, please	No	No	X	X	X		X					X				No
Crazy animals	Yes	Yes		X	X					X			X			No
Creative chairs	No	Yes		X			X					X				No
English in Science	No	Yes		X	X				X			X				Yes
Fairy tale chain	No	No		X			X						X			Yes
Fly the airplane	Yes	No	X	X			X							X		Yes
Global presentations	Yes	No			X				X			X				Yes
Hammer battles	Yes	Yes	X	X		X									X	No
Handkerchief tag	Yes	No	X	X	X			X							X	No
Hidden words	Yes	No		X	X			X				X				Yes
I have it in my name	No	No	X	X	X		X					X				Yes
Information translation	Yes	No		X	X			X								Yes
Label me	Yes	Yes	X	X	X					X						Yes
Little red riding hood	Yes	Yes	X	X	X					X						Yes
Memory chains	Yes	Yes	X	X	X		X									Yes
Memory game	Yes	Yes	X	X	X		X									Yes

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Shama
Xin
Petroska

This is a book for primary school teachers of English written by primary school teachers of English. It brings together the experience and expertise of teachers from around the world to provide a range of stimulating and exciting classroom activities for the primary classroom. There are 50 tried and trusted activities which have been refined and improved over the years by teachers working in diverse contexts and environments. Children will enjoy practising their English through these stimulating and motivating activities.

This book grew out of an Aston University – British Council research project called 'Investigating Global Practices in Teaching English to Young Learners' (www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/global-practices-teaching-english-young-learners). Over 1,000 teachers were contacted and asked to send their favourite activities for teaching English to young learners. The most original and creative activities received were selected for this book.

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