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4 Elements  
in the ESL/EFL Classroom:  
a Teacher's Handbook of Activities

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
Berdyansk State Pedagogical University

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and Maryna Shevchenko

**4 ELEMENTS**  
**IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM:**  
a Teacher's Handbook of Activities

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Навчально-методичний посібник здійснює практичну підтримку модуля “Навчання аудіювання, читання, письма, говоріння англійською мовою”, що є складовою освітнього компонента “Методика навчання предмета (англійська мова і зарубіжна література)”. У посібник включено систему активностей, які розвиватимуть в учнів навички чотирьох видів мовленнєвої діяльності – аудіювання, читання, письма, говоріння, що і є тими чотирма елементами на уроці англійської мови. Кожна активність підкріплена цифровими інструментами, використання яких уможливорює інтерактивне навчання, індивідуальний підхід у навчанні, створює динамічне і ефективне освітнє середовище.

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## PREFACE

In the dynamic realm of language teaching, the manual “4 Elements in the ESL/EFL Classroom: a Teacher’s Handbook of Activities” emerges as a collaborative effort by a team of dedicated authors – Iryna Shkola, Bohdana Saliuk, and Maryna Shevchenko. Tailored for both in-service and pre-service English teachers and aspiring educators in the field of English language and foreign literature, this guide focuses on the essential language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

It corresponds to the context of the innovative model of training of pre-service English language teachers, “New Generation School Teachers,” developed in cooperation with the British Council in Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. It can be used during the implementation of the module “Teaching listening, reading, writing, speaking in English” of the educational component “Methods of teaching the subject (English language and foreign literature)”.

What sets this handbook apart is its innovative approach, where each language activity is associated with one of the four natural elements – fire, air, water, and earth. The meticulously crafted structure of the manual provides clear instructions, learning objectives, and versatile options, including the integration of digital technologies. This not only facilitates the creation of engaging and diverse English lessons but also streamlines the teacher’s preparation time.

It’s worth noting that the activities presented in this book are not tied to specific topics, offering educators the flexibility to implement them across various subjects. Furthermore, each activity comes with additional variations to accommodate students’ language proficiency levels or to target the development of different language skills.

In recognition of the evolving educational landscape, the authors have thoughtfully included information on online tools applicable to both online and offline classroom settings. The collective effort of three authors representing educational institutions from different regions of Ukraine enriches the content with diverse perspectives.

This handbook is a testament to the authors’ commitment to professional development, as evidenced by their participation in the excellence program “Professional Development for Instructors of Pre-Service EFL

Teachers.” Their collaboration within the TESOL Faculty United for Ukraine community, formed through this program, is reflected in the culmination of this book.

Heartfelt gratitude is extended to Childhood Education International, the Regional English Language Office Kyiv, and the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv for their unwavering support and opportunities provided throughout the excellence program. The authors also express their appreciation to their families and institutions for their steadfast support during the creation of this book.

Bohdana Saliuk, Iryna Shkola, and Maryna Shevchenko, as the authors, anticipate that this handbook will kindle the interest of educators and researchers alike. They hope that the presented activities, designed to enhance language skills and actively involve students in the learning process, inspire a deeper exploration of effective teaching methods in the English language classroom.

Chapter 1.  
**SPEAKING**



## **SPEAKING - FIRE**

Speaking, as a language skill, can be likened to fire within the framework of the four language skills representing the elements of nature. Just as fire is dynamic, illuminating, and possesses the power to transform, speaking is a vibrant and transformative aspect of language communication.

Speaking plays a crucial role in language proficiency, allowing individuals to express thoughts, convey emotions, and engage in interactive communication. It serves as the element of fire because similarly has the capacity to spread rapidly, igniting connections and fostering understanding among people.

Developing speaking skills involves various strategies to kindle the linguistic flame. Firstly, immersion in authentic language environments, such as conversational groups or language exchanges, provides a real-world context for learners to practice speaking. Additionally, regular and purposeful interactions with native speakers or fellow learners contribute to fluency development.

Speech exercises, debates, and role-playing activities serve as the bellows that stoke the fire of speaking proficiency. These activities not only enhance linguistic abilities but also nurture confidence and spontaneity in verbal expression. Furthermore, incorporating multimedia resources, such as podcasts, audiobooks, and videos, allows learners to tune their ears to diverse accents and speaking styles.

Like a controlled blaze, constructive feedback from teachers or language partners acts as a guiding force, helping learners refine pronunciation, intonation, and overall oral communication skills. Using technology, learners can be engaged, and motivated, and receive immediate feedback on their spoken language.

Group discussions and collaborative projects act as the crucible where the flames of speaking skills are tested and refined. Engaging in these activities not only cultivates effective communication but also nurtures the ability to articulate ideas coherently and persuasively.

In conclusion, speaking as a language skill is the fire that brings language to life. It thrives on practice, exposure, and interactive experiences. By incorporating diverse strategies and embracing opportunities for real-world communication, learners can fan the flames of their speaking abilities, turning them into powerful and expressive elements within the realm of language acquisition.

## 10 Tips for Teaching Speaking Skills to Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

1. Create a **supportive environment**. Create a classroom atmosphere where students feel at ease expressing themselves, fostering an environment free from the fear of judgment. Actively encourage open communication and participation, ensuring that every student feels valued and comfortable contributing to class discussions.

2. **Focus on fluency over accuracy**. Prioritize fluency in the early stages of language development. Allow students to communicate freely without constant correction. Gradually introduce accuracy as they gain confidence.

3. **Contextualize the lesson and incorporate real-life situations**. Designing tasks that mirror authentic communication ensures that students engage with the language in relevant and everyday contexts. In this case, speaking activities become not only a language exercise but a valuable skill-building experience for effective communication in various situations.

4. **Focus on key skills**. Harmer (Harmer, 2001) identifies key similarities between speaking and writing, including the need to structure language, follow rules and norms, employ different styles depending on the context, interact with an audience, and use strategies (Dupont, 2020).

5. **Facilitate collaboration** by integrating pair and group activities, which not only promote meaningful conversations but also empower students to share ideas and collectively build confidence in a supportive environment.

6. **Provide clear instructions**. Offer clear and concise instructions for speaking activities. Ensure students understand the task at hand, minimizing confusion and allowing them to focus on language expression.

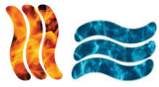
7. **Encourage critical thinking**. Design speaking tasks that require critical thinking and problem-solving. Engage students in discussions that prompt them to express opinions, justify their views, and consider multiple perspectives.

8. **Incorporate technology**. Integrate technology to enhance speaking skills. Platforms like Flipgrid or video conferencing tools provide opportunities for students to practice speaking in a virtual environment.

9. Offer **constructive feedback**. Provide constructive and specific feedback on students' speaking performance. Highlight strengths and suggest areas for improvement, fostering a growth mindset.

10. Offer **variety in speaking tasks**. Introduce a variety of speaking tasks to cater to different learning styles. Incorporate debates, role-plays, storytelling, and discussions to keep the lessons engaging and dynamic.

## Ball Game



### Use it...

- as a versatile activity that can be employed in various settings, including icebreakers, and team-building exercises;
- at the beginning of a school year, workshop, or any group gathering to help participants get to know each other in a fun and interactive way;
- in team-building sessions to foster communication and cooperation among group members;
- to improve communication skills as participants must articulate their answers concisely and clearly while the pressure of catching the ball looms;
- as the game progresses, participants need to adapt to the changing dynamics, adjusting to different questions and response times.

### Procedure

1. Ball Game proves to be more challenging than expected. To play, gather a group of about twelve to fifteen students in a circle, leaving ample space for the ball to travel between participants.

2. Equip yourselves with a sizable ball – one that bounces well off the floor – and let the fun begin. The game involves a series of questions posed by each participant while bouncing the ball to the next in line. The catch? The recipient must answer the question before touching the ball, or they face disqualification and must gracefully exit the circle.

3. The momentum continues as the ball passes from one participant to the next, with each student on the right taking turn to ask a question. The cycle repeats until only one person remains standing, proving their quick thinking and agility.

4. Sample questions to keep the game entertaining might include inquiries about family, preferences, and general knowledge, such as favorite sports, movies, music, and more.

What's your mother's age?

How many children are there in your family?

What is your favorite sport?

What is your favorite color?

Movie?

Song?

Actor?

What is your favorite gemstone?  
 What sport do you play best?

### Variation

We can call it “In-Depth Insights Relay”. Similar to the traditional Ball Game, participants stand in a circle, and one person starts with the ball. The first participant asks a question to the person opposite them and throws the ball to them. Questions should be open-ended and require detailed answers, such as “Describe your dream vacation destination in detail” or “Share a memorable experience you’ve had.” The person catching the ball must provide a detailed and thoughtful response to the question before throwing the ball to another participant. The game continues with each participant asking a question and giving a detailed answer before passing the ball to the next person in the circle. Emphasize that the answers should be as detailed and comprehensive as possible, encouraging participants to share personal stories, preferences, or experiences.

### Digital tools

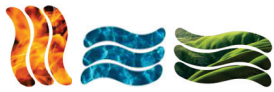
When engaging in online or asynchronous activities, virtual collaborative whiteboards like *Miro* or *Jamboard* offer a great way to create a digital space for participants. Here, they can view questions, input their answers, and visually interact with the game. In this context, the Ball game focuses on developing writing skills.

Additionally, for quick exchanges and text-based interactions, teachers can leverage platforms such as *Slack* <https://slack.com/get-started#/landing> or *Microsoft Teams Chat*. These tools enable participants to promptly respond to questions and share insights. Instead of a physical ball, participants can use a virtual “emoji ball” to indicate the passing of the turn. For example, participants can post a specific emoji as they pass the “ball” to the next person in the thread.



To enhance speaking skills, *Flipgrid* can be utilized. Participants have the opportunity to record detailed responses to questions, sharing video clips that add a more personal dimension to the online interaction. By incorporating *Flipgrid*, you not only foster speaking skills but also establish a dynamic and interactive online environment for participants to engage in meaningful discussions. This not only adds a personal touch to the game but also allows for more in-depth communication, making *Flipgrid* a valuable tool for language development.

## Find Someone Who



### Use it...

- to help students get to know each other in a casual and interactive way, breaking the ice and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere;
- to practice effective communication by formulating and asking questions, actively listening to responses, and engaging in conversations with their peers;
- for language practice, reinforcing vocabulary or grammar related to the topic of the lesson;
- by sharing information about themselves and learning about others, students contribute to building a sense of community within the classroom.

### Procedure

1. Students are instructed to walk around the room and ask everybody in the group. they have 3-5 min.

2. Encourage students to ask any of the provided questions to their classmates. There is no specific order in which the questions need to be asked.

3. Emphasize that students are allowed to ask the same person only one or two questions to promote interaction with various classmates.

4. Stress the importance of actively asking the questions rather than just pointing to them on the handout.

5. Instruct students that if the person being asked can answer affirmatively, the interviewer should write the interviewee's name next to that question on their sheet. If the answer is negative, nothing is written, and the interviewer should seek out another classmate who might be able to answer affirmatively.

6. More advanced students can be instructed to ask follow-up questions.

#### Examples:

- a) Find someone who:
- ...has 2 brothers
  - ...likes chocolate
  - ...doesn't like rock...

In this case, we reinforce vocabulary related to personal preferences, family, and likes/dislikes. In the following one, attention is paid to grammar (past simple).

- b) Find someone who...
- ...visited a foreign country last year.
  - ...attended a concert last weekend.
  - ...cooked a special meal for a celebration.
  - ...completed a challenging project in the past month.

### Variation

1. The questions can be arranged in a Bingo grid. If this option is chosen, it is recommended to place the questions in different squares on each Bingo card so that students don't all call "Bingo!" at once.

2. The questions can be presented to the students exactly as they should ask them, or they can be provided with simple sentence stems or vocabulary items so that they can construct their own questions, practicing a particular grammar point.

Example: a present tense/habit question like "exercise every day" can be transformed into "Do you exercise every day?"

A simple past question such as "Speak English" can be rephrased as "Did you speak English yesterday?"

A Present perfect question like "eat apple pie" can be changed to "Have you ever eaten apple pie?"

3. Have pairs of students create questions using information prompted by the teacher (past tense, daily routines, etc.). Give a time limit instead of a question limit. Collect the papers and redistribute them for pairs to use.

4. Have students report/write about what they found out about their peers.

### Digital tools

When adapting the activity for an online setting, there are various digital tools you can use in class.

The first one is *Google Forms* where you can create a Google Form with questions, and share the link with your students. They can fill out the form, and you can analyze the responses later.

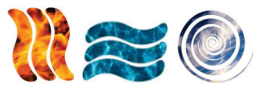


The second is *Online Bingo Generator* (<https://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator>): you can input the questions into the squares of the bingo card then share the generated bingo cards with your students, and they can mark off answers during the activity. Here is the activity made via *Bingo card generator*: <https://mfbc.us/m/tw7cbu3>



The third comfortable tool is *Padlet*. You can create a *Padlet* board with the questions. Share the *Padlet* link with your students, and they can post responses to the questions.

## Fruit Salad



### Use it...

- to initiate discussions;
- to enhance speaking and listening skills while discussing relevant and thought-provoking topics;
- to debate or public speaking clubs as a structured way to explore and express opinions on environmental and global issues;
- as a team-building exercise to promote collaboration, critical thinking, and effective communication among students

### Procedure

#### Activity Part 1.

1. "Fruit Salad" is a vibrant and engaging speaking activity designed to foster group discussions and critical thinking. Each participant is assigned a specific 'fruit' that corresponds to a unique discussion question, encouraging diverse perspectives and active participation.

2. For instance, participants embodying 'Cherries' might answer the question 'What kind of pollution is worst for our health?' and discuss their thoughts, while 'Bananas' may explore 'What kind of pollution personally bothers you most?'

3. The 'Apples' group could discuss the environmental friendliness of various energy sources, adding depth to the discourse. Meanwhile, the 'Oranges' participants grapple with the global environmental challenges posed by their respective countries.

4. Each student takes turns discussing their assigned topic within their group. Encourage them to use the English language as much as possible. While discussing, students should take notes on the key points or interesting details shared by their peers.

5. This not only enhances their listening and note-taking skills but also prepares them for the second part of the activity where they will share these findings. Time: 8-10 minutes

Activity Part 2: You will now make fruit salads! In other words, you will mix with people from the other 3-4 fruits in your Fruit Salad group. (See Table below with names, allocated fruit and fruit salad group). Share the ideas coming from your group with others in your fruit salad. Your mission is to blend ideas and perspectives from your diverse fruit mix. Time: 8-10 minutes.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Fruit Salad</i>
Ann Pavlova	Apple	Fruit Salad 1
	Cherry	Fruit Salad 1
	Banana	Fruit Salad 1
	Orange	Fruit Salad 1
	Apple	Fruit Salad 2
	Cherry	Fruit Salad 2
	Banana	Fruit Salad 2
	Orange	Fruit Salad 2

### **Variation for language proficiency levels:**

- For beginners, provide sentence starters or vocabulary prompts related to each topic to help scaffold their responses.
- For intermediate levels, encourage more detailed responses and ask follow-up questions to elicit extended discourse.
- For advanced levels, incorporate idiomatic expressions or complex language structures related to the discussion topics.

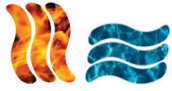
### **Digital tools**

Remote learning teachers can use interactive virtual platforms *Wonder.me* and *Gather.town* that offer a unique audio experience, allowing participants to move around and engage in conversations in a virtual space.

The *Wonder.me* platform provides a spatial audio experience, allowing participants to move around a virtual space and engage in real-time conversations. The first step is to set up a dedicated room for the class, dividing it into clusters or designated areas representing each “fruit” group. As students enter the virtual space using *wonder.me*, they navigate the environment using avatars. The discussion rounds involve participants moving to the designated areas for their assigned “fruit” to engage in lively discussions. Rotation is simulated by signaling students to move to new areas after a set time.

*Gather.town* provides a unique visual map where students navigate through distinct regions or spaces representing each “fruit” group. Avatars are customized for easy identification, mirroring the movement in a physical environment. Students enter the virtual environment and use avatars to move to the designated areas for their assigned fruit, initiating discussions. *Gather.town*’s proximity-based audio facilitates real-time conversations, enhancing the interactive nature of the activity.

## Six Thinking Hats



### Use it...

- to improve communication skills, result from expressing thoughts clearly and listening actively to others;
- to analyze issues critically, considering both positive and negative aspects;
- for creative thinking by encouraging the generation of new ideas and alternative solutions;
- to develop collaborative skills by actively engaging in group discussions and building on each other's ideas.

### Procedure

This speaking activity, inspired by Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats, involves participants adopting metaphorical hats to approach problem-solving and decision-making from different perspectives. Each hat represents a unique thinking style, guiding participants to explore various aspects of an issue collaboratively. In this structured discussion, students wearing different metaphorical hats bring unique perspectives to the topic they discuss.

**White Hat:** Analytical, objective thinking, with an emphasis on facts.

The White Hat represents thinking objectively about things; you're an analytical thinker. You only look at the facts and are concerned with making decisions based on sufficient and correct information.

White Hat Sample Questions:

- What information do we require?
- What questions need asking?
- What information is missing?
- Where can we find this information?
- What is the context (who, what, when, where, why, how, how much)?
- What are the theories and opinions in play?

**Blue Hat:** Structured thinking, high-level overview of the situation, the big picture.

The Blue Hat is structured thinking with a holistic view of the situation. The thought process of the Blue Hat is to direct the group towards a goal, for the group to see the bigger picture. Such a person is not focused on the details, but on controlling or organizing the brainstorming process. Using De Bono's technique in group discussions or brainstorming always starts with the Blue Hat to determine the process the group will follow in

reaching their objectives.

Blue Hat Sample Questions:

- What is the problem?
- What is our goal?
- Who is best suited for each task?
- What process do we need to follow?
- What steps should we take?
- How should we think about...?
- What do we need to know about...?
- Where can we find...?
- When should we....?

**Red Hat:** Emotional thinking, perception, and opinion.

The Red Hat is about emotional thinking. It's the subjective feelings or intuition that you have that are more based on an opinion you may have on a particular issue. So, in a group activity, differences of opinion are taken into consideration.

Red Hat Sample Questions:

- What do you think about this?
- How do you feel about it?
- What was your first reaction?
- What is your gut feeling?

**Black Hat:** Critical, skeptical, focused on risks, and identifying problems.

You are wearing a black hat. This means you are acting like 'the devil's advocate'. You question everything and always see the potential problems in any idea or plan.

Black Hat Sample Questions:

- What is the main problem with this?
- What was overlooked?
- What are the risks?
- What are the possible failure scenarios?
- What are the consequences?
- Why won't this work?
- What are the weaknesses?

**Yellow Hat:** Optimistic, speculative, best-case scenarios.

The Yellow Hat represents an optimistic view or best-case scenario. Thinking from a positive perspective helps a group to view creative ideas in a rational light and to look at the benefits and feasibility of a decision or plan of action.

Yellow Hat Sample Questions:

- What is the best about this?
- What is your favorite...?
- Why do you think this will be successful?

- What are the benefits?
- How does this improve things?

**Green Hat:** Creative, associative thinking, new ideas, brainstorming, out-of-the-box.

The Green Hat is about creative thinking; generating new ideas, and examining new possibilities. The Green Hat perspective provokes risk-taking when a group is involved in brainstorming.

Green Hat Sample Questions:

- How can we change...?
- What can we do about...?
- How can we improve it?
- What will we do when...?
- Why don't we try...?
- How can we do this another way?
- What new idea does this generate?

**Table of Thinking Hats & their perspectives**

Thinking Hats (Color)	Perspective
Blue	The process
White	Facts
Green	Creativity
Yellow	Benefits
Red	Feelings
Black	Problems

Example: Let's Use The 6 Thinking Hats When Talking About Soda

**White hat. Facts:** things we already know

- it's a kind of drink;
- it's carbonated;
- it's sweet.



**Red Hat. Feelings:** How does it make you feel?

- happy;
- excited;
- energized.



**Yellow hat. Benefits:** positive or good things about drinking soda

- quenches your thirst;
- gives you energy;
- makes you feel good.



**Black hat. Problems:** negative or bad things about drinking soda.



**Green Hat. Creativity:** ideas to make soda better. What changes will you make?

- use natural flavors;
- don't use an addictive substance such as caffeine;
- don't sell it to kids to prevent obesity.



**Blue hat. The process.**

What is the topic? - Soda.



## Variation

The Four Thinking Hats activity borrows the idea from de Bono and offers teachers a creative alternative to the usual speaking-focused lesson. It is especially effective with Business English classes where learners are able to use real-life 'problems' as the basis of a discussion.

## Digital tools

We can use *Google Docs/Sheets/Slides* and other collaborative documents, spreadsheets, and presentations to allow participants to contribute their thoughts in real time. Each hat can have a dedicated document or slide for focused discussions.

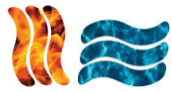
Online whiteboard platforms like *Miro* enable teams to visually map out ideas, switch between different thinking hats, and collaborate in real time while *Google's Jamboard* allows for collaborative drawing, brainstorming, and organizing thoughts in a visual format.

*Trello's* boards and cards can be used to organize discussions for each thinking hat. Participants can contribute their ideas and comments on specific cards.

*Padlet* offers a virtual canvas where participants can post thoughts, images, or links corresponding to each thinking hat. It's a visual and collaborative tool.

*Microsoft Teams* provides channels for discussions, and participants can switch between channels dedicated to different thinking hats. The chat feature facilitates real time communication.

## Desert Island



### Use it...

- for sparking students' creativity and encouraging teamwork;
- to think critically about survival situations and work together to make decisions;
- for team-building at the beginning of a school year or as an engaging break from routine lessons;
- to challenge students' problem-solving skills and to promote communication and cooperation in a relaxed and enjoyable environment.

### Procedure

Students can do it individually, in pairs, or in a small group. They have to imagine they're stuck on a desert island in the big Pacific Ocean, and all they have are their swim suits and shoes. They should pick eight things from a list that might be on the island. There are practical things like matches, a bottle of water, and a tent, but also fun things like a camera or a ball. They only get eight items, so they should think carefully.

They'll have 5-8 minutes to decide with partners or groups. After that, it's time to share their choices and explain why they picked each item. It's not just about survival – it's also a chance to be creative and come up with clever ways to use the items.

Step 1: Setting the scene.

You, as the facilitator, paint the vivid picture for the class. Participants imagine the isolation of a desert island, with the only possessions being their current attire. The challenge? Choose wisely from a list of items that could be found on the island. The catch? They can only pick eight items. These items range from practical necessities like a box of matches to more eclectic choices like a camera or a bottle of whisky.

Step 2: Presenting and defending choices.

Following the brainstorming session, students step into the spotlight to present their solutions. In a lively discussion, they articulate their reasoning behind each chosen item and defend its relevance to survival on the desert island. This step not only fosters public speaking skills but also encourages students to think on their feet and respond to inquiries from their peers.

## Variation

We can create variations for students of different levels of language proficiency. In the version made for beginners, the focus is on simplicity and basic survival needs. The list comprises everyday objects, accompanied by visuals or icons for better understanding. Students are encouraged to articulate the importance of each chosen item using basic language skills.



**Name the four items and explain why you chose each one.**

Intermediate learners face an added challenge with a mix of practical and creative items. A time limit (e.g., 3-5 minutes) introduces urgency, prompting students to employ descriptive language and fundamental reasoning. The emphasis remains on effective communication of their choices.

Advanced learners are prompted to think beyond survival and explore innovative uses for each item. Presentations become more in-depth, requiring eloquence and critical thinking skills.

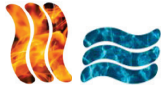
## Digital tools

Teachers can use *Padlet* board or *Jamboard* <http://surl.li/ouoca> to make a list of items and space for students to post their choices. Students can comment on each other's choices, fostering interaction and discussion. *Zoom breakout rooms* can be used for small group discussions. Every group can make their own choice and think about the explanation of their reasons.



Students can record short video clips explaining their choices using *Flipgrid*. This adds a personal touch and allows for a more dynamic presentation of their selected items.

## Twenty Questions



### Use it...

- to promote critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills;
- to expand students' vocabulary and knowledge about different categories such as animals, objects, or countries;
- to enhance communication skills and the ability to convey thoughts concisely;
- to teach concepts in history, science, literature, and more.

### Procedure

The participants engage in an intellectually stimulating game where they must guess a word associated with a designated theme or category. This added layer of challenge and creativity elevates the game, making it both entertaining and thought-provoking. To enhance the experience, each round features a carefully chosen theme, offering a range from broad categories like animals, fruits, and colors to more specific topics like famous landmarks, movie titles, or historical events.

Before delving into a guessing process, the facilitator provides a couple of hints related to the chosen theme, acting as catalysts for the participants' creative thinking. For instance, if the theme is "Famous Landmarks," a hint could be, "It's a man-made structure with a rich history." These hints initiate the guessing process, sparking curiosity and guiding participants toward the correct answer.

The participants then embark on a series of yes-no questions to narrow down the possibilities and pinpoint the word related to the chosen theme. The structured approach encourages strategic thinking as participants carefully formulate questions to unravel the mystery. The example with the "Famous Landmarks" theme illustrates how participants skillfully inquire and deduce the word based on the provided hints.

To add a competitive edge, participants must successfully guess the word related to the theme within twenty questions to win the round. However, if they exceed the limit, they face the challenge of losing that particular round. To maintain excitement and variety, the game can be played through multiple rounds with different themes, ensuring continuous engagement and a dynamic experience for all participants.

## Variation

“Cryptic Chronicles”:

Instead of a straightforward word or theme, choose abstract concepts or philosophical ideas for each round. Examples include concepts like justice, serendipity, entropy, or philosophical terms like existentialism.

Offer hints that are more abstract and thought-provoking, pushing students to delve into deeper intellectual territory. For example, “It’s a concept often debated by philosophers, embodying the interconnectedness of all things.”

Participants can ask yes-no questions, but the questions should reflect a deeper understanding of the chosen abstract concept.

Example with “Existentialism” as the Abstract Concept:

*Participant:* “Is this concept related to the nature of existence and individual freedom?”

*Answer:* “Yes.”

*Participant:* “Does it explore the meaning and purpose of human life?”

*Answer:* “Yes.”

*Participant:* “Is this concept commonly associated with philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre?”

*Answer:* “Yes.”

Win or Lose: participants win if they successfully identify the abstract concept within twenty questions, showcasing a deep understanding of complex ideas. If not, they lose.

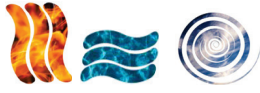
The game encourages advanced critical thinking as students explore complex and abstract ideas.

## Digital tools

In a remote or online format, teachers can elevate the interactive experience by establishing a virtual whiteboard using platforms like *Miro* or *Jamboard*. This collaborative space empowers participants to collectively jot down hints, questions, and answers, enriching the intellectual discourse with a visual component.

To further enhance engagement, tools such as *Flipgrid* and *Loom* come into play, enabling students to record brief videos expressing their ideas. This not only adds a personal touch to their contributions but also allows them to articulate their thoughts more comprehensively, fostering a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the discussed topics.

## Fortunately, Unfortunately



### Use it...

- as a playful and interactive storytelling exercise that fosters creativity, collaboration, and quick thinking;
- to explore the balance between positive and negative elements in a narrative while keeping participants engaged in the imaginative process.

### Procedure

The first student begins the story with an opening sentence. This sentence sets the stage for a narrative and introduces a situation or character.

The next student continues the story by adding a sentence that starts with the word “fortunately.” This sentence introduces a positive turn of events or a favorable development in the storyline. The following student contributes a sentence beginning with “unfortunately.” This introduces a challenge, setback, or unexpected turn of events that adds tension or complexity to the story.

Students continue alternating between “fortunately” and “unfortunately,” building on the narrative with each sentence. Each “fortunately” offers a silver lining or positive resolution, while each “unfortunately” introduces a new obstacle or complication. Participants must be creative and adaptive, as they respond to the twists introduced by their peers. The challenge lies in seamlessly integrating both positive and negative elements to craft a cohesive and entertaining story.

Example: One day, Bob woke up.

Fortunately, it was a Sunday and he could stay in bed.

Unfortunately, there was a storm outside and water was pouring in through his window.

Fortunately, all he had to do was get up and close the window.

Unfortunately, when he got up, he saw that there was a tiger next to the window!

Fortunately...

### Variation

Encourage students with lower proficiency to use simpler language structures and vocabulary and introduce visual cues or prompts related to

the story's theme to aid understanding. Offer support in the form of vocabulary lists or language aids if needed.

Use the picture to help you to tell a story. You could use some of the key words to help.



Key Words
scientist
gas
crazy
discover
workshop
smoke
invent
mixture
potion
explode
experiment
warning

For higher proficiency students, challenge them to incorporate more complex language, figurative expressions, or idioms.

### Digital tools

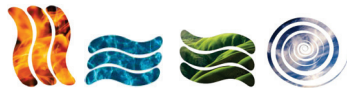
Digital tools enhance the online learning experience for the storytelling game. *Zoom breakout rooms* are particularly useful for smaller group sessions, allowing each breakout room to contribute to a part of the story. The groups can then reconvene to share the complete narrative, fostering collaborative storytelling.

*Jamboard* is very resourceful for this activity. Start by creating a new *Jamboard* for the storytelling game. Share the link with your students. They can work in pairs or small groups, discuss or write. It depends on the goal of the class. You can scaffold them by adding on the frame a picture to stimulate their imagination and a list of words to make them practice using them: <http://surl.li/ouons>



For those seeking to incorporate visuals or prompts, *Flipgrid* is a valuable resource. Here, students can record short video clips sharing their sentences, and the chronological grid visually showcases the collective storytelling effort. Additionally, after the storytelling game, consider creating a word cloud to represent the most frequently used words in the story visually. This not only adds a creative and visual element to the activity but also provides a unique reflection of the narrative's key themes. These digital tools not only facilitate seamless collaboration but also enhance the overall engagement and creativity within the online learning environment.

## Role of the Dice Story






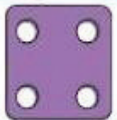


























### Use it...

- to encourage participants to think creatively as they weave a story using diverse and sometimes unexpected narrative elements;
- to promote imaginative ideas, characters, and plot twists;
- to cultivate teamwork when participants collaborate to construct a coherent and engaging story;
- to expand participants' storytelling proficiency by incorporating various elements seamlessly;
- to support vocabulary expansion while exploring diverse narrative elements.

### Procedure

In the "Role of the Dice Story" activity, participants embark on a dynamic storytelling adventure guided by the roll of a dice. The facilitator or participants take turns rolling a standard six-sided dice, each number corresponding to a specific narrative element. These elements typically include the protagonist, setting, conflict, resolution, and two wild cards for unexpected twists. Then, participants use all the elements to make a story together. They can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

### My Fairy Tale Storyboard

						
Setting						
Good Characters						
Bad Characters						
Prop						

	When	Where	Character	Plot
	in winter time	an ocean	a crazy clown	looking for the Bermuda Triangle
	at midnight	the mall	an unhappy principal	going to a country concert
	at a morning English class	a school	an angry surfer	stuck in a desert
	at noon	a sailboat	a boat captain	find a mysterious diary
	in the summer	a cave	a talking gorilla	fixing a car
	on the 4th of July	the North Pole	an NBA basketball player	running the marathon in the mountains

### Variation

Instead of solely focusing on developing speaking skills, consider incorporating the engaging and innovative Dice-Inspired Collaborative Writing Storytelling activity. This adaptation takes participants on a collaborative writing journey, guided by the unpredictability of a dice. By introducing this variation, the storytelling adventure seamlessly transitions into a writing exercise, placing a deliberate emphasis on the enhancement of writing skills.

As participants roll the dice and weave together a unique narrative, the activity serves as a dynamic platform for honing creativity, crafting cohesive paragraphs, and adapting to unexpected twists introduced by the dice. This approach not only diversifies the language learning experience but also offers a holistic development of communication skills.

Crucially, at the conclusion of the activity, take a moment to reflect on the collaborative story. Engage in a comprehensive discussion to explore and appreciate the distinctive contributions of each participant, the narrative's fluidity, and the imaginative twists seamlessly integrated through the dice. This reflective component adds depth to the learning experience, fostering a sense of achievement and camaraderie among participants.

In embracing this dice-inspired writing journey, participants not only refine their writing proficiency but also actively contribute to a shared, creative endeavor that transcends traditional language skill development.

## Digital tools

There are various strategies for employing digital tools to tell stories thereby augmenting students' speaking proficiency as well as creativity and collaboration. They encompass leveraging multimedia elements, interactive platforms, and mobile apps to cultivate a dynamic environment conducive to honing communication competencies. Through the integration of such technological resources, students can refine their speaking abilities while engaging in a creative narrative construction.

For instance, **online dice for storytelling**. Instead of 1 to 6 sides like on traditional dice, storytelling dice contain specific images that can be interpreted. Students compose a story individually, in pairs, in mini-groups, or with a whole class (one student - one picture - one sentence), as an improvisation (if speaking skills are on the intermediate level and higher), or as a prepared task.

The theme is better to declare in a general way (for example, friendship, love story, adventure, winter holidays, etc.) since the dice fall out randomly and sometimes it is difficult to weave one or another picture into the story. Therefore, the generalization of topics gives students more space for creativity and their interpretations. The choice of a theme might also be made according to the topic vocabulary learned previously; the target grammar may also be focused.

After announcing the topic, students choose a character (characters), think through the plot (introduction, development, conclusion), create a story, and present it. Teachers can propose using some plots for students who are less familiar with the process of storytelling.

Online dice for storytelling usually have 5 or 9 sides which a user can roll to change the pictures. Those pictures, which are concepts and symbols but not just a word, must be linked in a holistic story, but the order of using pictures might be instructed taking into account the capability of students to interpret and create fluently. Usually, the story starts with the first picture and moves step by step to the last. If there are 9 sides, the first three might be used for introduction, the next three for development, last three for the conclusion, but this way isn't a rule. For some learners it could be difficult to interpret pictures in the order the pictures are given, therefore they can mix them to create a story but then point out the picture while presenting.

Here are links to online storytelling dice:

<https://davebirss.com/storydice-creative-story-ideas/>

<https://www.eslkidsgames.com/esl-story-dice-online>

<https://eltbuzz.com/storytelling/storygen/>



Using online dice for storytelling presents an opportunity for learners to sharpen their speaking skills in a dynamic setting. This method not only encourages students to construct narratives but also prompts them to articulate these stories aloud.

Emoji is a digital tool similar to previous and also very productive in encouraging students to speak more while making and presenting their stories. The task based on using emoji is called **Emoji Cave Painting**.

Emoji Cave Painting is a storytelling game where students create a story with the help of various emojis, and share it or they can “leave a message” to their classmates and ask them to solve it, thus developing speaking skills and creativity. The emoji stories must be shown to others via social messengers (*Telegram, WhatsApp, etc.*), in a *Zoom* conference chat, or on online boards for collaboration like *Jamboard, Miro, and Padlet*, by uploading emojis in PNG or JPG formats.



Instructions for Emoji Cave Painting:

1. The teacher introduces the activity, emphasizing that emojis represent parts of a holistic story, not individual words. Students should understand emojis as concepts. Ensure all students can access the chosen online platform for sharing emojis.

2. Students brainstorm a plot and characters, selecting emojis to depict different situations. They may incorporate specific vocabulary or grammar aligned with lesson goals.

3. Students upload their emoji stories onto the chosen platform.

4. Classmates solve the emoji-based puzzles, attempting to narrate the stories behind the emojis. If time is limited, students can present their stories without guessing.

5. Following the guessing round, the teacher fosters discussions on diverse interpretations. Highlight how different emoji combinations convey varied stories, encouraging an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

## Stomp and Geniuses



### Use it...

- to engage students in pairs or small groups to delve into the depths of vocabulary exploration. It is an ideal choice when aiming to enhance creative thinking, critical analysis, and collaborative discussions around various words;
- to dive into the richness of vocabulary exploration, unlocking the potential for enhanced creative thinking, critical analysis, and collaborative discussions;
- to encourage students to delve into the nuances and intricacies of language while fostering a dynamic and engaging learning experience.

### Procedure

1. Students work in pairs or small groups to embark on this vocabulary adventure.

2. Each group selects a word from the provided list. The chosen word becomes the focal point of their exploration.

3. With their chosen word in mind, students engage in lively discussions, filling in a table. They start by describing the word without explicitly stating it. The table includes sections for the definition, characteristics, and examples of using the chosen word in various contexts.

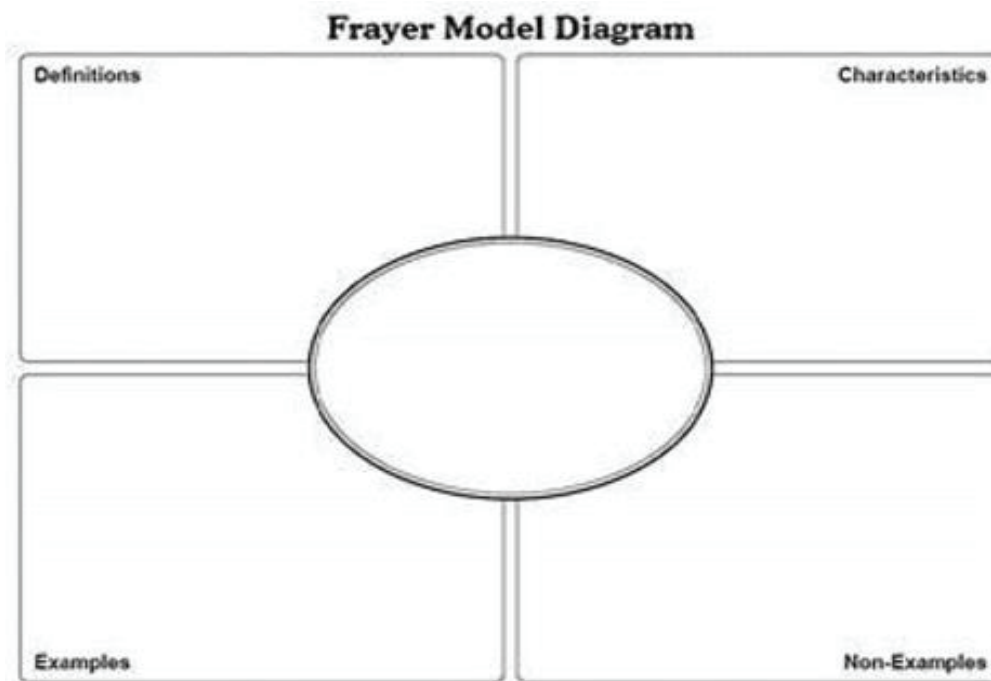
4. A unique twist in this activity is the prohibition of directly stating the chosen word on paper. Instead, students intricately make a narrative around the word.

5. In the final part of the table, students list non-examples and explore scenarios where the use of the chosen word is impossible or impractical. This adds a layer of critical thinking to their exploration.

6. The entire process, from word selection to completing the table, takes 5-8 minutes.

7. After completing their tables, groups exchange their work with the neighboring pairs. With a concise 3-minute window, the neighboring group engages in discussions and attempts to decipher the central word based on the crafted clues.

8. The teacher encourages discussions on the diversity of interpretations and the effectiveness of descriptive elements.



Example:

Students have chosen the word Flip-flops.

Definition: summer Freedom Footwear represents a distinctive type of open-toed shoes, often associated with leisure and warm weather escapades.

Characteristics: This footwear is celebrated for its open-toed design, offering a liberating sensation for the feet. These shoes feature a straightforward construction, combining a flat sole with a Y-shaped strap. Perfect for relaxed occasions, ideal for beach outings, poolside relaxation, or leisurely strolls.

Examples: Lisa opted for her favorite Summer Freedom Footwear for a serene day by the sea, reveling in the sand's touch. At the pool party, everyone flaunted their stylish Summer Freedom Footwear, effortlessly transitioning between aquatic fun and lounging.

Non-Examples: Summer Freedom Footwear is a no-go for formal events, where more sophisticated shoe choices are expected. When temperatures dip, the breezy design of these summer shoes proves impractical for keeping feet warm.

**Variation**

Example 1. Vocabulary Exploration for Beginners.

This simplified version of the "Stomp and Geniuses" activity is designed for beginners with low proficiency levels, aiming to introduce basic vocabulary in a playful and interactive way.

Procedure:

1. Students form pairs or small groups for a collaborative and supportive learning environment.
2. Provide a list of basic words suitable for beginners. Each group selects one word from the list.
3. Instead of a complex table, students use a simplified template. They write the chosen word at the top, draw a simple picture representing it, and list three basic characteristics or uses of the word.
4. Students engage in guided discussions within their groups, using prompts like “What is it?” and “How do we use it?” to share their thoughts.
5. After the discussion, groups exchange their work. Classmates try to guess the chosen word based on the visual clues provided. Encourage them to use simple phrases or questions like “Is it something we eat?” or “Do we use it at home?”
6. Wrap up the activity with a class wide discussion. Invite each group to reveal the word they chose, and discuss the various interpretations and characteristics.

Example 2. “Synonym Symphony” edition.

This variation focuses on expanding students’ understanding of synonyms and enhancing their ability to express ideas with linguistic precision.

Procedure:

Students team up in pairs or small groups.

Instead of selecting a single word, each group is provided with a pair of synonyms. The challenge is to explore and dissect the subtle nuances between the two words.

Using a specially designed table, students discuss the chosen pair of synonyms, covering aspects such as definitions, connotations, and context-specific usage.

The twist in this variation lies in the students’ task to create a narrative that seamlessly incorporates both synonyms. The narrative should showcase the distinct contexts in which each synonym thrives.

As a critical thinking element, students include a section on non-examples, exploring scenarios where the use of either synonym might be inappropriate or less effective.

The entire process, from selecting the synonym pair to completing the table, is allocated a time frame of 5-8 minutes.

Groups swap their work with neighboring pairs who are tasked with deciphering the synonym pair based on the crafted narrative and descriptive elements.

Example:

Synonym Pair: Joyful and Ecstatic

Definition: Both terms describe a state of intense happiness or delight, but with varying degrees of intensity.

Contexts: While “joyful” is often associated with a general sense of happiness, “ecstatic” implies an overwhelming and euphoric level of delight. For instance, receiving a thoughtful gift may make someone joyful, but winning a surprise vacation could make them ecstatic.

Narrative: As the sun set on the horizon, the crowd erupted in both joyful cheers and ecstatic shouts. The atmosphere was charged with a mix of contentment and sheer elation. Friends shared joyful embraces, while others were caught in the whirlwind of ecstatic dance moves.

Non-Examples: Using “ecstatic” to describe a simple daily occurrence may seem exaggerated, and “joyful” may not capture the intensity of an extraordinary moment.

This Synonym Symphony edition adds a layer of complexity to the vocabulary exploration, challenging students to navigate the subtle nuances between closely related words.

### Digital tools

For the “Stomp and Geniuses” activity, you can use various digital tools to enhance engagement and collaboration:

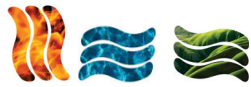
1. Shared *Google Docs* collaboration. Forge a virtual hub for pairs or groups with shared *Google Docs*, enabling collaborative exploration. Students simultaneously fill in tables, discuss chosen words, and provide real-time feedback through features like comments and suggestions.

2. *Jamboard* or *Miro* visual exploration. Leverage *Jamboard* or *Miro* as digital whiteboards, where students draw, write, and organize thoughts collectively. The shared board becomes an interactive canvas, fostering a collaborative environment for visually dynamic representations of chosen words.

3. *Flipgrid* multimedia dimension. Enhance engagement with *Flipgrid*, encouraging students to record video clips explaining their chosen words creatively. Classmates respond with video guesses, creating a lively exchange of interpretations and insights in a multimedia-driven dialogue.

4. Polling tools for collective consensus, Utilize *Mentimeter* or *Poll Everywhere* for virtual consensus-building. Craft polls to gauge collective understanding on specific aspects of chosen words, enriching the exploration with interactive reflections and shared insights.

## Crime Scene



### Use it...

- to help students of all levels in practicing their ability to describe people and events and to produce questions;
- for getting students to listen to each other and to take notes or just for some fun.

### Procedure

The activity is centered around a short video clip depicting a crime scene. Any crime scenario will suffice, and the video doesn't necessarily have to be in English; it can even be played with the sound turned off.

1. Divide the class into two groups. Inform one half that they will play the role of the police responsible for interviewing a witness to the crime. Their task is to collaborate with the other police group and formulate questions for the witness.

2. Tell the other half of the class that they are the witnesses who will observe the crime. Arrange the classroom setup so that only 'the witnesses' can see the TV screen. Optionally, you can send 'the police' out of the class or to another room to work on their questions while the witnesses watch the crime.

3. After playing the crime scene video clip, pair the students so that each police member is with a witness. The police should then conduct interviews to gather as much information as possible about the crime.

4. Emphasize the importance of the police taking notes as they listen. For students with artistic inclinations, encourage them to collaboratively create a picture of the criminal or a diagram reconstructing the crime scene.

5. To boost motivation, consider introducing a prize for the most accurate notes, fostering a sense of competition and engagement among the students.

This engaging activity encourages students to actively participate, enhances their listening and note-taking skills, and provides an opportunity for creative expression through artistic elements like drawing or diagramming.

Example:

You are investigating a MURDER.

Partner 2 must INTERVIEW Partner 1 to obtain the crime scene EVIDENCE.

The objective is for Partner 2 to re-create the CRIME SCENE DIAGRAM without looking at Partner 1's paper.



### General questions:

1. Can you describe the house? (small/large, how many rooms, etc.)
2. What path did the murderer take through the house? (Which rooms did they walk through?)

### Evidence questions:

- E1. Where was the BODY found? What position was it in?
- E2. Where was the GUN (murder weapon) found?
- E3. Where was the BLOOD found?
- E4. Where were the murderer's FOOTPRINTS found?
- E5. Where was the FORCED ENTRY made?
- E6. Where was the BROKEN GLASS found?

### Variation

For beginner level students: "Detective Picture Bingo".

1. Prepare Bingo cards with simple pictures related to a crime scene (e.g., magnifying glass, footprints, detective hat).
2. Show or describe each picture to the students.
3. Students mark the corresponding pictures on their Bingo cards as they listen.
4. The first student, who has completed a row, shouts "Bingo!" and describes the pictures in the row.

For mixed proficiency group play: "Crime Scene Codenames"

1. Prepare cards with words related to a crime scene, varying in difficulty.
2. Form teams with a mix of proficiency levels.
3. A student provides clues using vocabulary or simple sentences without saying the word.
4. Teammates, regardless of proficiency, try to guess the word based on the clues.
5. Rotate roles, allowing everyone to practice and contribute.

### **Digital tools**

You can create a *Padlet* board for each group. Students can collaborate in real time, posting questions, observations, and notes. Also, you can visualize the crime scene details by attaching images or text.

If you work online, you can use *Jamboard* and set up a collaborative work for each group. Students can draw diagrams or create a visual representation of the crime scene and write questions, notes, and observations on the digital canvas.

It's a good idea to use *Flipgrid*. Students can record their witness interviews on *Flipgrid*. This helps encourage creativity by allowing them to visually present their findings. Classmates can watch and comment on each other's videos.

Students also can collaborate on a *Miro* board to reconstruct the crime scene. Sticky notes can serve to organize thoughts, questions, and visual elements. This enhances creativity in the digital workspace.

These digital tools aim to enhance collaboration, engagement, and creativity during crime scene activities while providing a seamless online experience for students.

Chapter 2.  
**LISTENING**



## LISTENING - AIR

Listening, as a language skill, can be metaphorically compared to the intangible force of air within the context of language proficiency. Similar to air's pervasive and essential nature, listening is a fundamental and omnipresent aspect of language communication.

Listening serves as the airy element because, like air, it surrounds us at all times, facilitating communication and interaction. It is an invisible force that connects individuals, transcending physical boundaries. Listening is the gateway through which language learners absorb spoken language, nuances of pronunciation, and variations in tone and intonation.

Developing listening skills involves creating an atmosphere where the airwaves of spoken language can be effectively captured. Immersive experiences, such as listening to podcasts, engaging in real-life conversations, and tuning into authentic audio materials, act as the currents through which learners navigate the auditory landscape of a language.

Listening is a receptive and dynamic skill. It requires learners to attune their ears to various accents, speeds, and styles of speech. Listening exercises, audiobooks, and language immersion programs act as the breezes that gently guide learners through the subtle intricacies of the spoken language.

Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing listening experiences. Online platforms, language learning apps, and audio resources provide a medium through which learners can immerse themselves in authentic spoken language, fine-tuning their listening skills. These digital channels serve as the conduits through which the invisible force of language is transmitted.

Listening is the receptive use of language, and since the goal is to make sense of the speech, the focus is on meaning rather than language (Cameron, 2001). Listening, as the airy force, is a skill that encourages mindfulness and receptivity. Active listening exercises, dictation tasks, and language games become the currents where learners engage with spoken language, honing their ability to discern meaning from context and tone.

## Mastering English Listening Skills: 10 Proven Tips for EFL Classroom Success

1. **Incorporate authentic materials** such as podcasts, interviews, or news clips to expose students to real-life language usage and diverse accents.

2. **Provide listening exercises with varying speeds** to help students adapt to different speaking paces, enhancing their overall listening comprehension skills.

3. **Engage students with pre-listening activities** to activate prior knowledge, set context, and introduce key vocabulary, ensuring better comprehension during the actual listening task.

4. **Teach active listening strategies**, such as predicting, summarizing, and inferencing, to empower students in extracting meaning from spoken content effectively.

5. **Expose students to a variety of English accents** through materials from different English-speaking regions, preparing them for global communication.

6. **Integrate interactive tasks** like partial dialogues, Q&A sessions, or role-plays to encourage active participation and application of listening skills in communicative scenarios.

7. **Facilitate post-listening discussions** where students reflect on what they heard, share opinions, and discuss any challenges they encountered, fostering metacognitive awareness.

8. **Utilize technology** with audio-visual aids, online platforms, and language learning apps to create a dynamic and engaging listening environment.

9. Progressively **increase the complexity of listening tasks**, starting with simple dialogues and gradually introducing more challenging materials as students gain confidence and proficiency.

10. **Provide constructive feedback** on students' listening performance, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. Offer regular reinforcement through targeted practice and activities.

## Visuals/Predicting the Content from the Pictures (pre-listening activity)



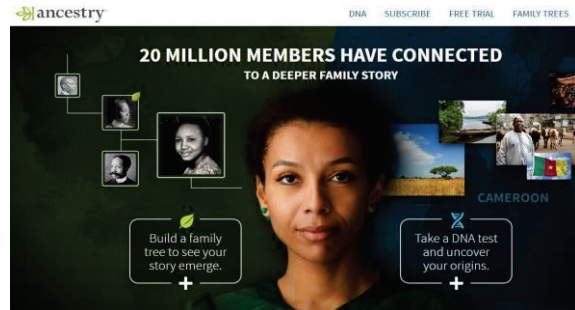
### Use it...

- to enhance students' engagement and critical thinking skills;
- to stimulate curiosity and speculation;
- to encourage students to participate in predicting outcomes.
- This approach aims to foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter, promote discussion, and develop analytical thinking skills.

### Procedure

According to Davies and Pearse (2000), this stage is useful to prepare the learners for what they are going to hear, just as we usually prepare for real-life situations.

The pictures may illustrate the ideas of the text and be placed before it. Also, the pictures might be shots from the video or represent the heroes from the listening or reading activity that follows.



Example: lesson about DNA testing to identify ancestry roots. Before watching the DNA experiment, we present 3 pictures and encourage the students to guess and speculate on the possible outcomes of the experiment. The heroes are captured with different emotions and feelings on their faces.

Teacher's instructions: In the experiment below 67 people from all

over the world were asked to take a DNA test. In the end, they learned that they had much more in common with other nationalities than they had thought before. Let's predict the outcomes.

What might this listening be about?

Who do you think these people are?

What do you think they might have known after getting their DNA test results?

### **Variation**

You can pick a different topic, for example, a lesson about animals. Simplify the activity for students with low language proficiency. In this case, the pictures could show various animals in different habitats. Ask students:

What do you think this reading/listening will be about based on the pictures?

Who are the characters in these pictures? (Hint: animals)

What might they discover or experience in their habitats?

This variation maintains the simplicity for beginners, focusing on basic understanding and prediction, while shifting the context to a different topic for a varied learning experience.

### **Digital Tools**

To spark student motivation and involvement, leverage the power of *Genially* - an interactive platform that seamlessly crafts animated presentations, elevating visual content with images, text, and multimedia elements. By incorporating captivating visuals, you create an immersive learning experience that resonates with diverse learning styles.

Take it a step further by incorporating *Google Forms* into your strategy. Integrate the visuals into a form, dedicating a section for students to share their speculations and expectations. This not only enhances the preparatory stage but also cultivates an environment of active participation, transforming the learning process into a collaborative journey.

For a different twist, consider the dynamic capabilities of *Flipgrid*. This invaluable tool allows students to respond to preparatory content through short video reactions, injecting a personal touch into their engagement. The use of video not only fosters a sense of connection but also elevates the interactivity and dynamism of the entire educational activity.

By combining the strengths of *Genially*, *Google Forms*, and *Flipgrid*, you can create a multifaceted approach to motivate and engage students, transforming traditional learning into an interactive and dynamic adventure.

## Quizzes (pre-listening activity)



### Use it...

- to stimulate your student's interest in the topic under discussion through personalized tasks;
- to enhance their critical thinking skills by analyzing questions and providing explanations for their answers;
- to encourage students to research and gather information about the topic before engaging with the main content.

### Procedure:

1. Introduce the topic, emphasizing the relevance and importance of the subject.
2. Create a quiz with questions related to the topic of the coming listening activity. Ensure that questions require thoughtful responses and explanations rather than simple true/false answers.
3. Share it with students before the main lesson. Encourage them to guess the answers and explain their reasoning.
4. Before watching the BBC video, initiate a discussion based on the quiz questions. Allow students to share their predictions and reasoning with the class.
5. Proceed with the main activity, such as watching the BBC video about sustainable farming in the Arctic city.
6. After the main content, revisit the quiz questions. Discuss the actual answers and allow students to compare their predictions with the information presented.
7. Facilitate a reflection session where students discuss what they learned from the quiz, how it contributed to their understanding, and if any misconceptions were clarified.

#### Example:

Before watching the BBC video about sustainable farming in the Arctic city, students complete a Typeform quiz on life in the Arctic city. The quiz includes questions such as:

- What are the average winter and summer temperatures in the town?
- Why are cats banned in the town?
- What is required to carry a rifle every time you leave the settlement?

- Why do you think the Svalbard archipelago has turned into a rubbish dump?
- Is it possible to grow vegetables in such harsh conditions?

### **Variation**

#### Example 1:

Instead of a quiz, students can create short video responses to each question using *Flipgrid*. This variation adds an element of creativity and allows students to express their thoughts verbally.

#### Example 2:

Craft a set of thought-provoking questions related to the subject and incorporate them into an interactive *Kahoot* quiz. Ensure the questions prompt careful consideration and explanation, fostering a deeper understanding of the material.

Share the *Kahoot* quiz with students ahead of the main lesson, encouraging them to make educated guesses and articulate their reasoning for each question.

Prior to diving into the main activity, initiate a class discussion centered around the *Kahoot* questions. Allow students to express their predictions and reasoning, creating an engaging and collaborative atmosphere.

Proceed with the primary activity, such as watching a documentary on sustainable farming practices in the Arctic city.

Following the main content, revisit the *Kahoot* quiz questions. Discuss the correct answers and provide students with the opportunity to compare their predictions with the information presented.

Conclude the session with a reflective discussion where students share insights gained from the quiz, discuss its contribution to their comprehension, and explore any misconceptions that may have been clarified.

### **Digital Tools**

Elevate your interactive teaching toolkit by crafting engaging quizzes through platforms like *Typeform* or *Google Forms*. These tools not only make assessment a breeze but also infuse an element of fun and participation into the learning process.

For seamless collaboration and visually appealing presentations, harness the collaborative power of *Google Docs* and the creative canvas of *Google Slides*. These versatile tools empower educators to organize collaborative work effortlessly and design visually stunning presentations that captivate and enhance the learning journey.

## Listen and Do Songs (while listening activity)



### Use it...

- to teach English to young learners;
- to enhance students' engagement and listening skills;
- to help the learners understand the text through activities;
- to motivate students be active as they are listening.

### Procedure

1. Let the students listen to the song without any interruptions so that they will have an opportunity to hear the music and the lyrics. This may also be termed free listening. This activity is quite beneficial and motivating for students, and they express positive feelings about free listening.
2. After the free listening, tell the students to look at the lyrics of the song (from the handout, textbook, board, or poster), since this is probably the best time to let students see and read the lyrics. (If the students read the lyrics before the first listening, they may try to read along and not concentrate.)
3. Next, read the lyrics of the song aloud and ask the students to listen and follow from the handout.
4. Finally, read the lyrics aloud line by line and ask the students to repeat every line aloud.
5. After you have completed the repetition phase, use the power of TPR to teach the actions for the song. Read every line aloud, demonstrate the associated action or actions, and ask the students to do the same actions. The following well-known song, "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes":



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4eueDYPTIg>

### Variation

Support weaker students by starting with a simplified listening session, focusing on melody and rhythm to reduce pressure and build confidence. Use visual aids like simple images to connect auditory input with visual cues, aiding comprehension.

For actions, go at a slower pace, breaking down movements into

manageable steps. Provide visual guides like step-by-step illustrations for better understanding. Create a supportive environment, allowing weak students to participate at their own pace.

For advance students use *Genially*: <http://surl.li/otbzu>

*Genially* elevates the presentation of lyrics by incorporating multimedia elements. Images, animations, and other visual components create a dynamic and visually engaging experience. This platform offers interactivity, allowing students to click, explore, and engage with the content actively. This not only captures students' attention but also aids in better comprehension and retention of the lyrics.



### Digital tools

*Google Docs* or *Padlet* enable the seamless sharing of lyrics in a digital format. This ensures students have easy access to the material, promoting a smooth and accessible learning experience. These platforms support real-time collaboration, allowing students to engage with the lyrics collectively. They can read along simultaneously, fostering a sense of shared participation. Students can annotate and highlight sections of the lyrics directly on *Google Docs*, fostering active engagement. *Padlet*, with its visual and flexible layout, allows for creative interactions with the content. Example: <http://surl.li/otbsz>

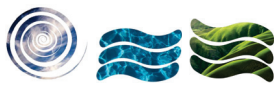


*Flipgrid* allows students to record personalized song performances, adding a unique and individual touch to the learning activity. This personalization fosters a sense of ownership and creativity. The use of *Flipgrid* brings a virtual and interactive element to the activity, as students not only listen but actively participate by recording their responses. Students can view and engage with their peers' performances on *Flipgrid*, creating a sense of community and encouraging positive peer-to-peer interactions. This peer engagement contributes to a collaborative and supportive learning atmosphere.

Also, you can use *Brain Breaks* channel on YouTube <http://surl.li/otbtv> to incorporate fun and interactive activities into the learning environment. It offers a diverse playlist of energizing and entertaining activities, enhances the overall experience.



## Graphic Organizers



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' listening skills by actively engaging them in the process of extracting and organizing information;
- to improve learners' note-taking skills, fostering their ability to capture and record essential details efficiently;
- to boost comprehension by visually organizing information under relevant headings, aiding learners in understanding the structure and relationships within the content;
- to reinforce organizational skills, guiding learners in structuring information in a logical and systematic manner;
- to encourage active participation and engagement in the learning process as students create their own summaries through the graphic organizer.

### Procedure

Begin by introducing the topic of the lesson or text that the graphic organizer will focus on. Provide a brief overview to set the context.

Clearly explain the purpose of the graphic organizer. Highlight that it is a tool to help organize and summarize information effectively.

Hand out blank graphic organizers to each student. Ensure that the organizers have clear headings or sections for different pieces of information.

Take a few minutes to review each section of the graphic organizer. Explain the headings and their relevance to the topic. This helps students understand where to place specific information.

Engage in a brief discussion related to the topic. This could involve introducing key vocabulary or concepts that students should pay attention to during the listening or reading activity.

Conduct the main listening or reading activity. Instruct students to fill in the graphic organizer with keywords or short phrases that correspond to the information in the correct sections.

Allow students some individual time to complete their graphic organizers. Encourage them to focus on capturing essential information rather than trying to record everything.

After the activity, organize a group discussion. Students can compare their graphic organizers, discuss any uncertainties, and share the

information they captured.

Clarify any misunderstandings or address questions that may have arisen during the group discussion. Emphasize key points and important details from the activity.

As an extension, you can have students reflect on the effectiveness of the graphic organizer in helping them understand and remember the information. This encourages metacognition.

Conclude the activity by summarizing the main points of the lesson or text. Reinforce the value of using graphic organizers as a tool for effective information processing. Here are the examples of graphic organizers:

### Example 1

Main Idea and Key Details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the main character of the video?	
What topic is the main speaker talking about?	
Write down the most important things they discussed.	
What are the outcomes?	
Can you offer the solution to the problem?	

### Example 2

**Narratives!** W.13

Who?      When?

Where?      What?

How does the story end?

Example 3

Beginning What happens at the beginning? Who are the main characters? Where is it set? How are the characters feeling?	
Build up What happens next? How does the story hint at a problem? How are the characters feeling?	
Problem What is the problem within the story? How are the characters feeling?	
Resolution How is this problem resolved/sorted out? How are the characters feeling?	
Ending How does the story end? Does it end happily? Is there a twist to the plot? How are the characters feeling?	

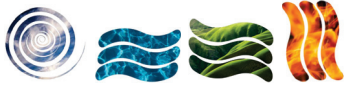
**Variation**

Visual Mind Mapping can be a variation of graphic organizers. In this variation of the graphic organizer activity, we introduce a creative twist by incorporating visual mind mapping. Instead of structured sections, students will use a blank space to create a visual representation of the information.

**Digital Tools**

*Google Slides* or *Microsoft PowerPoint* help us create digital graphic organizers using presentation software for clear structure and visual appeal. *Jamboard* or *Padlet* is very comfortable for collaborative digital discussions and sharing of digital graphic organizers. *Google Forms* or *Microsoft Forms* assist with digital reflection, allowing students to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the digital graphic organizer.

## Partial Dialogues (interactive listening activity)



### Use it...

- to enhance students' listening skills;
- to develop speaking proficiency;
- to promote communication strategies;
- to gain experience in understanding and responding within specific contextual settings, preparing them for diverse real-world communication scenarios.

### Procedure

1. Begin by explaining the concept of the interactive listening activity to the participants.
2. Emphasize that this activity aims to enhance both listening and speaking skills by requiring active participation in a simulated conversation.
3. Select or create a set of partial dialogues appropriate to the participants' language proficiency level and learning objectives.
4. Provide a brief overview of the scenario or context for each dialogue, ensuring participants have enough information to engage meaningfully.
5. Clearly outline the procedure for the activity, emphasizing the alternating nature of listening and speaking.
6. Explain that participants will listen to a segment of a dialogue and then actively contribute by completing or responding to the dialogue in a natural and contextually appropriate manner.
7. Start with a practice round to familiarize participants with the format.
8. Model an example by playing a portion of a dialogue and then responding to it, demonstrating how they should seamlessly integrate their contributions into the ongoing conversation.
9. Facilitate the activity by taking turns between playing segments of the partial dialogues and allowing participants to respond.
10. Encourage participants to be attentive listeners, responding naturally as if they were engaged in a real conversation.
11. Pause intermittently to provide constructive feedback on participants' responses.

12. Encourage participants to discuss their thought processes and language choices, promoting reflection on both listening and speaking skills.

Examples:

*Partial Dialogue 1:*

Speaker 1 (Played Audio): "Hey, are you free this Saturday?"

Pause for Participant Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Response: "Yeah, I'm free. What's up?"

*Partial Dialogue 2:*

Speaker 2 (Played Audio): "I was thinking we could catch a movie or maybe try that new café downtown."

Pause for Participant Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Response: "Sounds good! I've been wanting to see a movie. What time?"

*Partial Dialogue 3:*

Speaker 1 (Played Audio): "How about the evening? The movie starts at 7, and we can grab dinner before that."

Pause for Participant Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Response: "Perfect! Let's meet at the café at 5:30, and then we can head to the movie."

## **Variation**

### Example 1. Role-Play Scenario Building.

Begin by introducing the participants to the concept of an immersive role-play scenario activity designed to sharpen their listening and speaking skills through dynamic engagement.

Emphasize that this activity serves as a bridge between passive listening and active participation, fostering a realistic and fluid conversational experience.

Select or create a series of role-play scenarios tailored to the participants' language proficiency and learning objectives. Each scenario should present a unique context or situation, offering participants a diverse range of conversational challenges.

Clearly outline the procedure for the activity, highlighting the alternating rhythm of listening and speaking inherent in the role-play scenarios. Emphasize that participants will listen to a segment of a scenario and then actively contribute by responding in a manner authentic to the given context.

Guide participants through a practice round to acclimate them to the format. Model an example by playing a segment of a scenario and responding to it, illustrating how to seamlessly integrate their contributions into the unfolding conversation.

Facilitate the activity by taking turns between playing segments of the role-play scenarios and allowing participants to respond.

*Examples:*

*Scenario 1: At the Coffee Shop*

Speaker 1 (Played Audio): "Hey, do you come to this coffee shop often?"

Pause for Participant's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Response: "Yeah, it's my favorite spot. What's good here?"

*Scenario 2: Planning a Surprise Party*

Speaker 2 (Played Audio): "I heard it's your friend's birthday soon. Any plans?"

Pause for Participant's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Response: "Actually, I was thinking of throwing a surprise party. What do you think?"

### Example 2. Melodic Conversations – Interactive Song Dialogue

Introduce the concept of "Melodic Conversations," an engaging variation that seamlessly integrates songs into a dynamic language learning activity, enhancing both listening and speaking skills through the power of music.

Select or create a set of songs suitable for the participants' language proficiency level and learning objectives. Choose songs with clear and relatable lyrics that offer potential for dialogue creation.

Briefly introduce each song, providing context or a brief summary of its theme. Clearly outline the procedure for the activity, emphasizing the alternating nature of listening to song segments and actively contributing by crafting dialogue inspired by the lyrics.

Explain that participants will listen to a portion of a song and then collaboratively create a dialogue that complements or extends the narrative presented in the lyrics.

Play a segment of a song and model how to derive dialogue from the lyrics, encouraging participants to seamlessly integrate their contributions into the evolving musical conversation.

Facilitate the activity by taking turns playing segments of songs and inviting participants to craft dialogue inspired by the lyrics.

Emphasize the connection between the song's mood and the language used in their responses.

Examples:

**Song 1:** "Imagine" by John Lennon

Segment Played: "Imagine there's no countries..."

Dialogue Creation: "Hey, have you ever thought about a world without borders?"

Participant's Response: "Yeah, it's a beautiful concept. What do you think it would be like?"

**Song 2: “Count on Me” by Bruno Mars**

Segment Played: “If you ever find yourself stuck in the middle of the sea...”

Dialogue Creation: “Imagine being stranded on an island. Would you count on me to come rescue you?”

Participant’s Response: “Absolutely! I know you’d be there for me. What’s our plan for survival?”

**Song 3: “Happy” by Pharrell Williams**

Segment Played: “Because I’m happy...”

Dialogue Creation: “What makes you happiest in life?”

Participant’s Response: “Hmm, good question. I think it’s spending time with loved ones. How about you?”

This Melodic Conversations variation transforms songs into catalysts for interactive dialogue creation, offering a harmonious blend of music and language learning.

**Digital tools**

The *British Council’s LearnEnglish Teens* platform offers a rich collection of listening exercises suitable for A1-C1 level learners. It’s an excellent source for students to practice listening skills, and you can seamlessly integrate partial dialogues into your teaching approach: <http://surl.li/otcst>



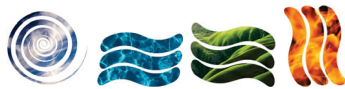
*BBC 6 Minute English* is a nice resource for English learners, offering short and engaging videos accompanied by a variety of activities. The content is designed to be both informative and entertaining, making it an effective tool for language acquisition. The variety of activities provided ensures that learners can practice listening skills, expand vocabulary, and engage in discussions: <http://surl.li/ocvc>



*Voice of America - Learning English* is another valuable resource for English learners, providing a rich collection of videos with high-quality content. The materials are designed to enhance language skills, covering a wide range of topics such as news, culture, and everyday conversations. The platform offers a great opportunity for learners to practice listening, improve comprehension, and expand vocabulary in a real-world context: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/5609.html>



## Info-Gap (interactive listening activity)



### Use it...

- to enhance students' listening comprehension;
- to promote active engagement with the content;
- to encourage students to anticipate and fill in missing words, fostering a deeper understanding of spoken language.
- to challenge students to deduce meaning from context.

### Procedure

1. Select a recording or video suitable for your students' level, ensuring it has an appropriate length. Consider using songs from various genres as well.
2. Transcribe the recording with accuracy, capturing the spoken content as closely as possible.
3. Create two separate cloze exercises or handouts – one for Student A and one for Student B. For instance, in Student A's handout, starting from line two of the transcript, omit every seventh word after the first word. In Student B's handout, starting from line two, omit every seventh word after the third word. Number the lines or paragraphs of both transcripts equally to facilitate later reference for students.
4. Distribute the handouts to students, instructing them to spend a few minutes reading the transcripts and attempting to guess any missing words before listening to the recording. Depending on the recording's topic, consider incorporating relevant contextual information.

### Variation

#### Example 1.

#### Collaborative Cloze Challenge

After distributing the handouts to individual students, encourage them to pair up – one as Student A and the other as Student B. In this collaborative setting, each student fills in the missing words in their partner's transcript, fostering teamwork and peer collaboration.

#### Example 2.

#### Competitive Cloze Race

Divide the class into small groups and turn the cloze exercise into a competitive challenge. Each group races against time to fill in the missing words correctly. Award points for accuracy and speed. This variation adds

an element of friendly competition, fostering a lively and engaging atmosphere in the classroom.

### Example 3.

#### Visual Cloze with Images

Enhance the cloze exercise by incorporating images related to the content. Instead of solely relying on words, students can use visual cues to predict and fill in missing information. This variation appeals to visual learners and adds a creative dimension to the activity.

### **Digital tools**

*Edpuzzle* allows teachers to embed questions, including fill-in-the-blank questions, directly into video content. You can use this tool to create interactive video lessons for students.

It's easy to implement it: select a video suitable for your students, and within *Edpuzzle*, add fill-in-the-blank questions at specific intervals. Share the *Edpuzzle* link with your students for an interactive and trackable cloze exercise:

<https://edpuzzle.com/discover>



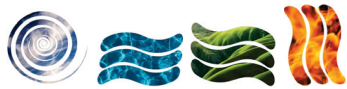
Using *Google Docs* teacher can create a shared document for Student A and Student B. Utilize the comment feature to guide students on which words to omit. Students can collaborate in real-time on the document, fostering teamwork.

Quiz platform *Quizizz* allows to create engaging quizzes with various question types, including fill-in-the-blank. It's suitable for turning the cloze exercise into a competitive race. It is possible to create a *Quizizz* quiz with fill-in-the-blank questions based on your cloze exercise. Have students join the quiz session and race against each other to complete the blanks accurately and quickly: <https://quizizz.com/admin>



*Canva* is also helpful tool that can be used to create visually appealing handouts with images related to the content. It's ideal for the "Visual Cloze with Images" variation. It is possible to design a handout on Canva with the cloze exercise and incorporate relevant images. The next step is exporting the handout as a PDF or image file to distribute to students.

## Jigsaw Listening (interactive listening activity)



### Use it...

- to elevate students' listening comprehension;
- to foster active engagement;
- to encourage anticipation and synthesis;
- to deepen understanding through collaboration;
- to promote sequential and contextual comprehension.

### Procedure

1. Divide the class into small groups, ensuring an equal distribution of students in each group.
2. Assign each group a specific part or segment of the listening material.
3. Explain the concept of Jigsaw Listening to the students. Clarify that each group will be responsible for listening to a distinct part of the message, and later, they will collaborate to reconstruct the complete message.
4. Provide each group with their designated listening segment. Ensure that the segments are distinct and non-overlapping.
5. Communicate any specific instructions or focus areas for each group's listening task.
6. Instruct groups to listen attentively to their assigned segment, taking note of key information, main ideas, and any relevant details.
7. Encourage active engagement by providing a purpose for listening, such as identifying specific vocabulary, themes, or details.
8. After individual listening, have group members discuss their findings and collectively take notes on the crucial points within their segments.
9. Emphasize the importance of collaboration and effective communication within the group.
10. Bring all groups together to share their respective segments. Each group takes turns presenting their findings and contributing their part of the message.
11. Encourage questions and discussions between groups to ensure a coherent understanding of the overall message.
12. Facilitate a collaborative session where groups work together to reconstruct the complete message. This may involve negotiating differences in interpretations, resolving uncertainties, and aligning the sequence of information.

13. Play the complete recording or provide the entire message to verify the accuracy of the reconstructed version.
14. Facilitate a reflective discussion on the challenges, insights, and strategies employed during the activity.
15. Conclude the activity with individual reflection, prompting students to consider their listening skills, the effectiveness of group collaboration, and areas for improvement.

### Variation

In this exciting variation of Jigsaw Listening, students embark on a genre-based adventure where each group delves into a different genre of content, ranging from news reports to interviews, podcasts, and storytelling. The objective is for each group to master the distinctive characteristics of their assigned genre, providing an immersive experience in diverse linguistic styles. As they share their findings and reconstruct the overall message, students not only enhance their listening skills but also develop genre-specific comprehension strategies. This variation sparks curiosity, exposes students to various communication styles, and transforms the classroom into a dynamic exploration of language in different contexts.

### Digital tools

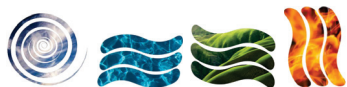
Use *Edpuzzle* (<https://edpuzzle.com/>) to enhance engagement and accountability. It allows you to embed questions, discussions, and notes directly into video content. Teachers can use it to create interactive video lessons for Jigsaw Listening. Assign specific segments to each group, insert comprehension questions, and track individual and group progress. *Edpuzzle* enhances engagement through interactive video elements, while the analytics feature provides insights into each student's contribution, ensuring accountability and understanding.



*Google Workspace* (*Docs*, *Meet*, and *Drive*) allows seamless collaboration. Google Docs facilitates real-time collaboration, making it ideal for Jigsaw Listening. We can assign each group a shared *Google Doc* for note-taking and reconstruction.

*Padlet* makes possible dynamic information sharing. You can create a *Padlet* board for each group to post their discoveries, making it an effective tool for the information-sharing aspect of Jigsaw Listening.

## Quiz Your Classmates (post-listening activity)



### Use it...

- to reinforce listening comprehension;
- to promote active participation;
- to diversify question formats;
- to encourage peer learning;
- to provide immediate feedback.

### Procedure

1. Give each small group of students three post-it notes. Review various types of test questions, including true or false, multiple choice, short answer, and fill-in-the-blanks.
2. Instruct students to create three quiz questions based on the listening track. Each question should use a different type of question format.
3. Students write one quiz question on each post-it note without providing the answer.
4. Ask students to include their names at the bottom of each post-it note.
5. After writing the questions, students circulate within the class. They give post-it notes to a different student in the class.
6. Students attempt to answer the quiz questions they receive from their classmates.
7. After attempting the quiz questions, students return to the original creators of the questions.
8. The test creators grade their classmates' attempts and provide feedback.
9. Encourage discussion and clarification for any challenging questions.

### Variation

#### Interactive Quiz Carousel

In this variation, students engage in an Interactive Quiz Carousel to enhance listening comprehension, foster active participation, diversify question formats, encourage peer learning, and provide immediate feedback.

The procedure involves creating different question stations, each representing a unique format (true or false, multiple choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blanks). Small groups rotate through these stations, creating quiz questions based on the listening track. As they move through the carousel,

groups leave their questions at each station for the next group to attempt.

This dynamic approach ensures that each group experiences and contributes to questions of various formats. After the rotation, groups return to their original station to review attempts, provide immediate feedback, and engage in discussions for clarification. The Interactive Quiz Carousel creates an engaging and collaborative learning environment, promoting both comprehension and interaction.

### Digital tools

To create quizzes students can use *Google Forms*, *Quizziz* and *Kahoot*.

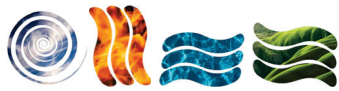
To provide students with tasks both for online and offline work you can use *Miro*. It provides a virtual collaboration board where groups can collectively organize and share their quiz questions. It offers a dynamic visual space for interactive engagement. You can set up a *Miro* board for each group, guiding them to visually organize quiz questions and encouraging collaboration within the virtual space.

*Nearpod* enables the creation of interactive quizzes with multimedia elements. You can design a *Nearpod* presentation with interactive quiz questions, share it with students, and guide them through the engaging quiz format.



*Jamboard* also serves as a collaborative whiteboard where students can visually discuss and analyze quiz questions. It enhances conceptual understanding through visual representation.

# Voice Blogging



## Use it...

- to enhance listening comprehension;
- to foster active participation;
- to vary question formats;
- to promote peer learning.

## Procedure

Veronika Syrotkina (Syrotkina, 2023) suggests the following activity: students will record voice journals about their week using free websites or applications and any smartphone. You may also suggest some interesting questions to encourage speaking. For example: “What would you do if you discovered you had a twin?” or “What do you usually do on Saturday evenings?” So, it’s going to be like a blog, but with students’ voices rather than writings.

They may listen to their records for self-checking, as well as to the records of their group mates, and provide feedback to each other. Encourage students to make positive comments, which will help to build assertive communication and effective cooperation within a group, not to mention listening skills development.

From my point of view podcasts serve as particularly effective instruments for capturing the attention of younger audiences. This efficacy stems primarily from three distinct characteristics (Donnelly & Berge, 2006). Initially, podcasts incorporate the voices of hosts and guests, creating a sense of personal connection and informality compared to written content. Secondly, podcasts grant young individuals increased autonomy by enabling them to listen while involved in other activities, such as exercising. Thirdly, podcasts empower youth to download files, providing the flexibility to listen at their convenience and in various locations.

## Variation

### Example 1. Tailored to Students’ Interests

Customize the voice blogging activity by allowing students to choose topics aligned with their individual interests. Instruct them to record voice journals discussing aspects of their week related to their passions or hobbies. Encourage the formulation of questions based on these interests, fostering a more personal and engaging experience. For example, “How

does your favorite hobby impact your daily routine?” or “Share an experience related to your current reading obsession.” This variation not only enhances listening skills but also makes the activity more enjoyable and relevant to each student's unique preferences.

Example 2. Adapted for Language Proficiency Levels

Adapt the voice blogging activity to cater to varying language proficiency levels within the class. Assign different complexity levels of questions based on individual proficiency, ensuring that each student feels challenged yet supported. For beginners, provide straightforward questions related to daily routines, such as “Describe your morning routine.” For intermediate learners, introduce more complex inquiries like “Discuss a challenging situation you faced during the week and how you resolved it.” This variation allows for differentiation, enabling students to practice language skills at their own pace while still participating in a shared learning experience.

### Digital tools

One excellent digital tool for voice blogging is podcasting app *Anchor* (<http://surl.li/ovpdv>). It is a user-friendly app that allows students to easily create and share voice recordings. The unique capability allows developers to construct blocks of audio sections seamlessly, eliminating the need for extensive editing. Users can effortlessly record segments, organize them, and incorporate transitions and music, both of which are conveniently provided by *Anchor*. Additionally, *Anchor* simplifies the distribution process by making it easy to share podcasts across all major listening apps.



Another tool is a platform for recording and editing voices *Vocaroo* (<https://vocaroo.com/>). Users can easily record their voices without the need for complex setups or technical expertise. Students can use *Vocaroo* without creating an account, simplifying the onboarding process. This is especially beneficial for quick and hassle-free voice blogging activities.



*Vocaroo* provides a unique link for each recording, making it easy for students to share their voice blogs with classmates, and teachers, or even embed them in other digital platforms. Since it operates on the web, *Vocaroo* doesn't require any downloads or installations. Students can access it from various devices, promoting flexibility and accessibility.

# Paraphrase Challenge



## Use it...

- as a team-building activity to foster effective communication and understanding among team members;
- as part of leadership development programs, allowing participants to practice active listening and communication skills;
- to reinforce the importance of attentive listening and effective paraphrasing;
- to improve students' listening comprehension and paraphrasing abilities.

## Procedure

The Paraphrase Challenge is an activity where participants can test their listening skills. If you have a large team, then you can carry out the challenge in small groups.

Instructions:

1. Ask for about ten volunteers, especially if you are working with limited time.
2. Give each participant up to four minutes to talk about a random topic they are passionate about.
3. Let other individuals listen and paraphrase the statement.
4. The speaker can then clarify and correct the audience.

The Paraphrase Challenge is a good way to reinforce active listening skills, especially the art of not interrupting speakers.

## Variation

### Example 1.

The Topic Swap Exercise is an engaging activity designed to assess participants' listening proficiency. When dealing with larger groups, consider implementing this challenge in smaller teams for optimal participation.

1. Select around ten volunteers, particularly in time-constrained situations.
2. Allocate up to four minutes for each participant to discuss a randomly assigned topic they are enthusiastic about.
3. Challenge other team members to actively listen and paraphrase the speaker's statements.

4. Following the paraphrasing attempts, allow the speaker to clarify and rectify any misunderstandings.

The Topic Swap Exercise serves as an effective method for enhancing active listening skills, emphasizing the importance of refraining from interrupting speakers during conversations.

#### Example 2.

Introduce the Paraphrase Challenge as a tailored activity to bolster language skills for weaker students, using short audio or video clips. Play a brief audio or video segment and ask students to paraphrase the content in their own words, focusing on key points. For example, you might play a short dialogue and then have students express the main ideas using different wording. This variation integrates listening skills with paraphrasing, offering additional support to students who may find traditional text-based exercises challenging.

### **Digital tools**

An effective tool that seamlessly integrates into this activity and its variations is *Flipgrid* (<https://flipgrid.com/>). It allows participants to record their passionate discussions effortlessly. Its video response feature enhances the Paraphrase Challenge by providing a dynamic visual element to paraphrasing attempts. For the Topic Swap Exercise, teams can use *Flipgrid* to share their discussions in video format, fostering a collaborative and engaging exchange of ideas. The platform's accessibility and interactive features contribute to a smooth online implementation, promoting active participation and effective communication.



In the realm of video conferencing tools, *Google Meet* and *Zoom* play a crucial role in executing the activity. By creating breakout rooms, these platforms facilitate small group interactions for effective implementation of the Paraphrase Challenge. Participants can use the chat or audio features to actively listen and paraphrase statements, enhancing their language skills in real time. For the Topic Swap Exercise, these platforms support virtual discussions in breakout rooms, ensuring seamless sharing of diverse topics among participants.

*Padlet* (<https://padlet.com/>) emerges as a versatile tool for both the Paraphrase Challenge and the Topic Swap Exercise. Participants can post their paraphrased statements on a *Padlet* board, creating a visually engaging and collaborative space for discussion. The platform's visual layout enhances the sharing and understanding of paraphrased content. In the Topic Swap Exercise, teams can use *Padlet* to share their thoughts visually, fostering a creative exchange of ideas.

Chapter 3.

# READING



## READING – EARTH

Reading can be metaphorically likened to the earth as an element of nature within the context of language expertise. Much like the grounding force of the earth, reading establishes a robust base for language learners, offering steadiness, profundity, and a link to the linguistic landscape.

Reading functions as the foundational element because, akin to the earth, it furnishes a stable platform for learners to assimilate language structure, vocabulary, and cultural subtleties. This expertise empowers individuals to secure their language understanding, constructing a solid groundwork upon which other language proficiencies can thrive.

Enhancing reading skills entails creating an immersive environment through diverse instruments. Just as the earth encompasses varied terrains, reading materials span a spectrum of genres, from novels and articles to poems and academic texts. Exposure to this linguistic landscape expands vocabulary, improves comprehension, and nurtures a more profound grasp of language nuances.

Reading is a contemplative and reflective component. Engaging with written content enables learners to plunge into the profundity of language, deciphering meanings, and exploring subtleties. Book clubs, literary discussions, and reflective journals are tools to till the linguistic soil, encouraging learners to critically analyze and reflect upon what they read.

Digital tools act as a fertile ground for reading advancement. Online platforms, e-books, and digital libraries offer learners an extensive expanse of reading materials. Interactive tools, such as apps and multimedia resources, enhance the reading experience, rendering it more captivating and accessible. Book clubs, online forums, and social media platforms have evolved into intersections where the force of the earth in reading skills is exchanged and celebrated.

So, reading, as a language skill, embodies the stabilizing force of the earth. It imparts steadiness, profundity, and a connection to the linguistic landscape, enabling learners to foster a strong basis for language expertise. Through varied reading experiences, reflective practices, and leveraging technology, individuals can embrace the force of reading to enhance their language.

## 10 Pieces of Advice for Teaching Reading

The process of developing reading skills typically involves several stages aimed at progressively enhancing learners' comprehension and language proficiency. These stages are designed to scaffold learners from basic decoding of texts to a more complex and nuanced understanding. Here are the key stages of reading in an EFL classroom:

### 1. Pre-Reading Stage.

Objective: activate prior knowledge and set a purpose.

Activities:

- skim through headings, subheadings, and visuals to generate interest and predictions;
- connect the topic to learners' existing knowledge to build a foundation for comprehension;
- clarify the purpose for reading, whether it's for information, enjoyment, or analysis.

### 2. While-Reading Stage.

Objective: develop comprehension and language skills.

Activities:

- teachers may conduct guided reading sessions, leading discussions, and providing support for understanding;
- introduce and reinforce key vocabulary to enhance learners' understanding of the text;
- encourage learners to read sections of the text aloud, promoting pronunciation and fluency.

### 3. Post-Reading Stage.

Objective: consolidate understanding and reflect.

Activities:

- pose questions to assess understanding and prompt discussion;
- encourage learners to summarize the main points or events in their own words;
- engage learners in discussions about the content, encouraging critical thinking and personal responses.

These stages form a dynamic and iterative process, and teachers often tailor their approach based on learners' proficiency levels, interests, and specific learning objectives. Analyzing our personal teaching experience and the works of the most prominent English language educators, we can summarize the experience and compile a list of advice for teaching reading.

1. The first step is to **create a Literacy-Rich Environment**. For this purpose, you have to set up a classroom environment that promotes literacy, including a variety of reading materials, cozy reading corners, and displays of student work. This aligns with the principles of Lucy Calkins

(Calkins, 2001) and Nancie Atwell (Atwell, 2007). Calkins (2001, 66) explains that during the reading time, teachers “confer, lead guided reading groups, and do strategy lessons.”

2. **Offer students a range of reading materials** and allow them to choose texts that align with their interests and reading levels. This approach is supported by Richard Allington (Allington, 2021) and Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 2001).

5. **Teach Reading Comprehension Techniques Explicitly.** Explicitly instruct students in various reading comprehension strategies, utilizing insights from the research of Stephen Krashen (Krashen, 2004). Strategies may encompass prediction, questioning, summarization, and making connections.

6. **Encourage a Process-Oriented Reading Approach.** In line with the insights of Donald Graves (Graves, 2003) and Nancie Atwell (Atwell, 2015), promote a process-oriented reading approach. Encourage students to engage in pre-reading activities, active reading strategies, and post-reading reflections, fostering a holistic understanding of the reading process.

4. **Integrate Reading Conferences for Personalized Support.** Drawing inspiration from the practices of Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 2001) and Regie Routman (Routman, 2000), incorporate one-on-one reading conferences. Use these conferences to understand students’ reading habits, provide personalized support, and build strong teacher-student reading relationships.

6. **Create a Reading Workshop Atmosphere.** Inspired by the approaches of Nancie Atwell (Atwell, 2007) and Donald Graves (Graves, 2003), establish a reading workshop environment. Encourage students to engage in authentic reading tasks, receive constructive feedback, and participate in meaningful discussions about their reading experiences.

7. **Promote Critical Literacy Skills.** Encourage students to analyze and question the content of the texts they read, developing their ability to think critically and engage deeply with diverse perspectives.

8. **Incorporate Digital Tools for Reading Engagement.** Utilize platforms such as e-books, interactive reading apps, and online discussion forums to enhance students’ digital literacy skills and foster collaborative reading experiences in a technology-driven world.

9. **Conduct Formative Assessments.** Use formative assessments, such as class discussions, quizzes, and short assignments, to gauge understanding and tailor instruction. Regularly assess students’ progress and provide constructive feedback to guide their improvement.

10. **Promote Written Conversations.** Implement written conversations about books, as described by Nancie Atwell (Atwell, 2014). Provide opportunities for students to discuss a wide range of topics individually, fostering language development and encouraging expressive communication.

## Pre-Reading Word Search



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills;
- for collaborative or individual work;
- to appeal to visual learners.

### Procedure

1. Tell the title, topic, and genre (if necessary) of the text.
2. Give students a printout of the word search table with hidden concepts from the text they will read after. Check whether they have found all the words. Ask them to predict what these words mean in the text, and provide a discussion.
3. Students read the text. While reading the focus is on the main ideas and specific details of the narration.
4. After reading, students compare their predictions with the information from the text. They discuss and clarify the ideas, concepts, and details.

### Variation

1. For A1-A2 learners word search includes the words from the text or their synonyms. Illustrations of the words could be added.
2. For the B1 level and higher-level students, word search includes concepts and ideas of the text. Definitions of the words could be added.
3. The found words in the word search game could be used to fill the gaps in the text.
4. Word Scramble can be used instead of word search. Students unscramble words related to the text. This activity helps learners improve their vocabulary as well. For example, TSHARMCSI - Christmas.

### Digital tools

You can create a word search game with online builders such as *Word Search Labs* or *The Word Search*.

*Word Search Labs* (<https://wordsearchlabs.com/>) allows you to make an unlimited number of puzzles, edit, share the link (for online playing), print (for offline) them; and choose the number of layouts, their shape, and



placement. Here is the generated word search puzzle for the text about Christmas traditions:

D  
B  
V E G  
S L R  
M T L I J  
N S L C H G V  
G F K I F J H  
C A N D L E I T  
C H I M N E Y B  
G S N O W M A N L  
H A A N N B Z L R G B  
K R R T C O Y S C N I  
N Q L Y M K K M R A A A F  
C K B A C S V Z U G N J P O T  
N N U N D N V Y U A D L G Q Y  
V S S D H Y I M D D Y Z K N W X  
W R E A T H S L E I G H E S M U  
V I W E Y N L U G N X J B E N E Q  
R J H M A N D T R E I N D E E R G S U  
M L F Q B K X S A L L V J D H L Y Z P  
E U E D R O T T N Z V E D N Q J V E L F K  
P M O  
W K F  
E M K

The Word Search (<https://thewordsearch.com/maker/>) generator is similar to the previous one. It allows users to create personalized word search puzzles on a topic by listing 10 to 30 words. Once submitted, the puzzle becomes instantly playable online and readily printable for sharing with students. This puzzle is more interesting to use online because settings propose to choose the difficulty, to use color and sound effects. Here is the generated puzzle via this platform for the same text (a):



a)

N	G	H	N	E	N	R	M	D	A	T	N	R	G
A	L	A	H	I	I	L	S	L	E	I	G	H	N
E	C	A	N	D	L	E	N	I	E	G	G	L	B
H	T	A	E	R	W	Y	L	G	L	I	A	C	I
R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	H	L	F	T	I	G
G	D	N	A	L	R	A	G	T	E	T	N	E	C
A	N	A	S	E	S	G	A	N	B	A	I	F	L
A	E	C	E	I	D	A	E	N	Y	T	L	M	M
D	W	F	L	L	D	H	N	E	A	G	M	L	L
F	Y	D	T	A	O	O	N	T	A	G	L	G	W
C	N	S	N	O	W	M	A	N	A	F	F	Y	I
C	A	N	D	Y	I	R	E	F	I	F	L	E	L
E	L	E	I	H	I	B	F	H	L	A	A	T	C
C	D	C	C	E	R	N	N	A	A	E	D	C	A

b)

Christmas

ISARMCST \_\_\_\_\_

ITGF \_\_\_\_\_

ASNTA \_\_\_\_\_

ERIEERDN \_\_\_\_\_

ONMWSAN \_\_\_\_\_

ECMIHNY \_\_\_\_\_

LCNEAD \_\_\_\_\_

LBEL \_\_\_\_\_


WATERH \_\_\_\_\_

LNGRADA \_\_\_\_\_

LGIHT \_\_\_\_\_

FEL \_\_\_\_\_

IELHSG \_\_\_\_\_



As for scramble variation of the task, use the next digital tools to mix letters in a word: <https://www.wordunscrambler.net/word-scrambler.aspx> and [Word Scramble Maker | Education.com](https://www.wordscramblemaker.com/) (3 free worksheets). An example of the scramble worksheet made with the second tool is above (b).

## Pre-Reading Quiz



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills, prediction based on topic and true/false statements in particular;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills;
- for collaborative or individual work.

### Procedure

1. Create 5-10 statements, each either true or false, to serve as predictions related to the topic of the text.
2. Share the statements via handouts, or display them on a screen.
3. Students work individually or in pairs/small groups to respond to the statements based on their existing knowledge of the topic. If in pairs or groups, encourage discussion and justification of their answers.
4. Instruct students to read the text while simultaneously checking their answers to the statements. Encourage them to perform this activity concurrently with their reading. This process aids in engaging them actively in the reading and verifying their prior assumptions.

### Variation

1. Learners or groups create true/false statements related to different texts. Have them exchange their questions and readings with other groups.
2. Assign students different perspectives or roles related to the topic. Have them create true/false predictions based on these assigned perspectives. This variation encourages critical thinking from different viewpoints.
3. Instead of true/false statements multiple-choice and open-ended questions might be used.

### Digital Tools

You can create polls with true/false statements and students can respond in real time using their mobile devices via digital tools like *Socrative* (<https://www.socrative.com/>) or *Poll Everywhere* (<https://www.polleverywhere.com/>). This allows for quick feedback and engagement.

## One-Minute Reading



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills, in particular, skimming;
- to improve students' reading fluency by gradually increasing their reading speed.

### Procedure

1. Choose a text that aligns with your students' proficiency level, avoiding an excess of new vocabulary and complex grammar. Ensure the text spans at least 700 words.
2. Provide the text and inform students they have 1 minute for an initial read-through. Emphasize general comprehension and encourage swift reading.
3. After 1 minute, prompt students to pause, mark where they stopped, and individually contemplate what they've read without discussing it.
4. Allocate another 60 seconds for students to re-read the text from the beginning, aiming to cover more content than in the initial period.
5. Repeat this process up to four times, pausing after each reading session to encourage reflection on the topic covered.
6. Students compare their stopping points, and assess the extent of their increased reading pace across the sessions.

### Variation

1. Incorporate comprehension questions after each reading session to assess students' understanding.
2. Implement a scaffolded approach by presenting texts in ascending complexity levels. Begin with a simple text and progressively introduce subsequent passages with added details. This method aims to assist students in discerning between main ideas and supporting details within the text.

### Digital Tools

Reading apps like *Outread* help enhance reading speed by presenting text in a way that encourages faster reading while maintaining comprehension, and offer exercises to gradually increase the reading pace.

Online reading platforms like *Newsela* (<https://newsela.com/>) or *ReadWorks* (<https://www.readworks.org/>) offer articles and passages at various reading levels, accompanied by comprehension questions. They allow customization of reading materials based on students' proficiency.

# Skimming & Scanning



## Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills;
- for collaborative work;
- to practice skimming and scanning to find information quickly.

## Procedure

1. Prepare the text appropriate to students' language level. The time for skimming and scanning depends on the volume and complexity of the text but must be no longer 30-40 seconds for 240 words.
2. Explain the notions of skimming (to get a general understanding of the text from the first sentences in each paragraph) and scanning (to look for specific information) texts.
3. Divide students into small groups of three / four. They choose a Timekeeper.
4. For **stage 1 Skimming**, students have 10 seconds to skim the text (mention focusing on the opening sentence of each paragraph). The Timekeeper indicates the start and end of this period.
5. Then students answer questions shortly for general understanding (in teams, later in class), such as: What is this story about? Where does it take place? Who are the characters?
6. For **stage 2 Scanning**, students change roles. Give them 1-2 questions for specific information they have to find in the text. They discuss what words should be found (e.g., numbers, emotions, names). After, students scan the text for 30 seconds. The Timekeeper indicates the start and end of this period.
7. Check the answers.

## Variation

1. There could be different questions for scanning to each team (1 specific question to 1 team).
2. You can facilitate the time, and all students read the text individually.

## Digital tools

To create interactive quizzes related to skimming and scanning techniques or to reinforce comprehension by setting up quiz-style questions about the text *Kahoot* (<https://kahoot.com/>), *Quizizz* (<https://quizizz.com>), or similar platforms can be used. You can make either multi-choice or open questions based on the text.

# Matching Headings to Paragraphs



## Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills.

## Procedure

1. Introduce the purpose of the activity: to develop students' ability to quickly grasp the main idea of each paragraph. Emphasize the importance of identifying key headings to understand the overall structure of the text.
2. Provide students with a text divided into paragraphs and a set of headings.
3. Before starting the activity, review the headings with the students. Ensure they understand the meaning and context of each heading. Discuss any potential vocabulary challenges.
4. Allow students some time to read the text independently. Encourage them to focus on understanding the main idea of each paragraph rather than getting into detailed information.
5. Instruct students to match the given headings with the corresponding paragraphs. They should consider the overall theme or main point of each paragraph to make accurate matches.
6. Facilitate a class discussion (with a partner or in small groups) where students share their choices and reasoning behind matching specific headings to paragraphs. Encourage critical thinking and debate if there are differing opinions.
7. Provide feedback on the accuracy of the matching. Highlight any common challenges or successes observed during the activity. Emphasize the importance of understanding the main idea of each paragraph.
8. Ask students to reflect on the process. What strategies did they use to match headings? Were there any paragraphs that posed a challenge, and how did they overcome it?

## Variation

1. Students can create their headings for paragraphs.
2. Make 1-2 odd headings so that students think critically and read the text more carefully.

## Digital Tools

For matching headings to paragraphs, you can use various digital tools to enhance engagement and streamline the process.

*Google Docs* helps you to create a digital document with the text and headings. Students can use the commenting feature to match headings to paragraphs.

You can also use *Google Forms* to design a form with the paragraphs and a dropdown menu for selecting the appropriate headings. This allows for easy submission and quick analysis of responses.

*Padlet* can help to create a digital board where students can post their chosen (or written) headings next to each paragraph. This visual collaboration tool encourages discussion.

*Jamboard* with paragraphs and moveable text boxes for headings also can be very useful. Students can work in groups, and discuss and match heading to paragraphs. Students can drag and drop the headings next to the corresponding paragraphs. This tool allows for real-time monitoring of student responses.

## Find a Word, Find a Sentence



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills;
- for individual work;
- to enhance scanning skills while reading and to identify specific information within the text.

### Procedure

1. Write a definition of a word (without revealing the word itself) on the board. Explain to students that this definition corresponds to a word found in the reading they are about to engage with.
2. Distribute or display the reading passage to students. Instruct students to start reading while keeping in mind the definition provided on the board. Encourage them to actively search for the word that matches the given definition.
3. For more advanced students, add additional questions or prompts on the board related to the text, and invite them to look for a sentence or sentences that answer these questions.
4. After the reading task, gather students to discuss their findings. Encourage them to share the sentences or words they identified based on the prompts.

### Variation

1. Repeat the activity using different words or prompts to explore various aspects of the text, encouraging students to practice scanning for different types of information. You can ask students to search for an interesting sentence, a main idea, a sentence that reminds them of a story, a sentence that the student disagrees with, and so forth.

### Digital Tools

The hidden words in the text and their definitions could be placed in the crossword. After reading the text students complete the crossword. As a home project, students make their crosswords for opponent teams.

To make digital crosswords use *Crossword Labs* (<https://crosswordlabs.com/>).



## “Jeopardy” Reading



Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to motivate students by enriching new knowledge;
- for collaborative work;
- as a class competition.

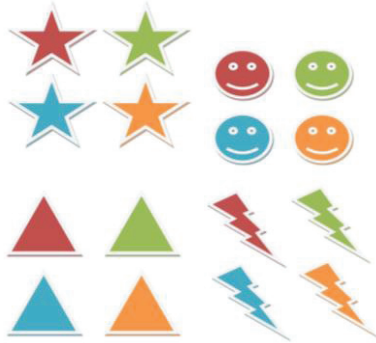
### Procedure

1. Prepare 4 texts related to one topic, for instance, “Popular sports in the USA (hockey, basketball, baseball, American football)”, or “Christmas celebrations (history of the holiday, symbols and decorations, food, X-mas popular culture)”.
2. Divide students into 4 groups of 4 people each. Hang out texts to every group: one text for one group, in general, 4 different texts for 4 groups. Students read their piece of information (5 minutes). Then collect texts and give students time to discuss what they have read (3 minutes).
3. Then students change the groups so there is one representative from each group in a new one. Here the new teammates share their piece of information (12 minutes).
4. Students come back to their original groups and start playing Jeopardy.
5. One by one groups choose the category, related to all 4 texts. They can't choose their group's category and may answer the question from this category only if their opponents don't know the answer.
6. Each category has 4 questions related to the texts. They are rated according to their difficulty: 100 points would be given for answering the easiest question, and 400 for the most difficult.
7. The team with the highest score wins.

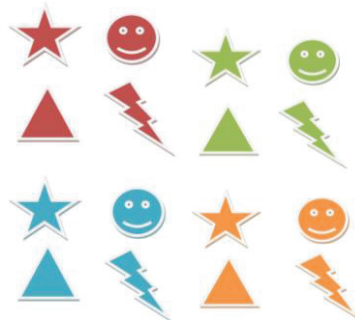
### Variation

1. You can give some new information to work with, based on topic vocabulary or related to calendar planning. Or the texts might be used for repeating already known topics.
2. The number of groups and members in them is variable. It can be 3 teams and 3 members each, or 5 to 5. The idea is to have as many teams and students in them as parts of the text they would work with.
3. Groups can be divided differently. For instance, according to shapes and colors as shown below.

**Stage 1.** Students make groups according to **shapes**



**Stage 2.** Students make groups according to **colors**



4. For the Jeopardy game, you can use a blackboard with stickers of different colors on it, or a whiteboard/flipchart with color markers.

### Digital tools

For creating a Jeopardy game, you can use a free online builder: <https://jeopardylabs.com/>

*JeopardyLabs* is a Jeopardy-style game that works via a web browser. The library allows to use of games made by other users.

Also, you can create your own game using the template. A traditional number of rows (points) and columns (categories) is 5 to 5. The filled cells are shown later in a ready game, their number might be changed. It is possible to insert images, videos, or math formulas while writing questions and answers, as well as edit, print, share, download, or embed games from the library or your own.

Tutorial video: [How to Use Jeopardylabs.com](#)

Using this online builder is simple meanwhile it is an engaging activity for students.



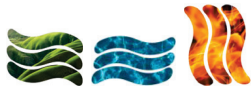
**Instructions:** Enter your Jeopardy game title, and category names. Click a cell to enter your question/answer (it's OK to leave some rows/columns/cells blank). When you're done, click Save & Finish. [Dismiss](#).

Undo Redo +Add Row + Add Column Visibility: Public Save & Finish

Enter Title

	Enter Category Name	Enter Category Name	Enter Category Name	Enter Category Name	Enter Category Name
100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500

# Mind Mapping the Stories



## Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills;
- for collaborative or individual work;
- to appeal to visual learners.

## Procedure

1. When introducing students to mind mapping for the first time, explain the structure and the way to create it: hierarchical structure (starting with a central idea or topic and branching out with related subtopics, connecting them through lines), and visual organization (images, colors, symbols, or icons representing concepts). Show the example if necessary.
2. Before reading, encourage students to predict what the story is about based on its title. They discuss the possible branches of a mind map in mini-groups. For A1-A2 learners propose branches or give a prepared one. From the B1 level students are instructed to determine subtopics themselves.
3. Students read the text. Time for reading depends on its size and level of reading comprehension development: approximately, 1 page for 5-6 minutes by teenage learners.
4. After reading the text students make a mind map in teams. They organize subtopics into brunches and derive them into smaller ones to include information they think is necessary for understanding and presenting the text.
5. Students present their group mind maps and compare them to peers' ones.

## Variation

1. Mind map branches are varied according to the text. For a fiction story, they may include characters, plot lines, themes, and literary tools.
2. The text can be one for all students or several for different groups.
3. If the text size doesn't allow students to read it in class, it should be given as a home task. mind mapping might be created either collaboratively in the class or individually at home.
4. Encourage students to add pictures, emojis, etc. to their mind maps to make them visually attractive and better organized.

- For stories or articles, students can create timelines thus organizing the events chronologically, or use a fishbone diagram that visualizes causes and effects.

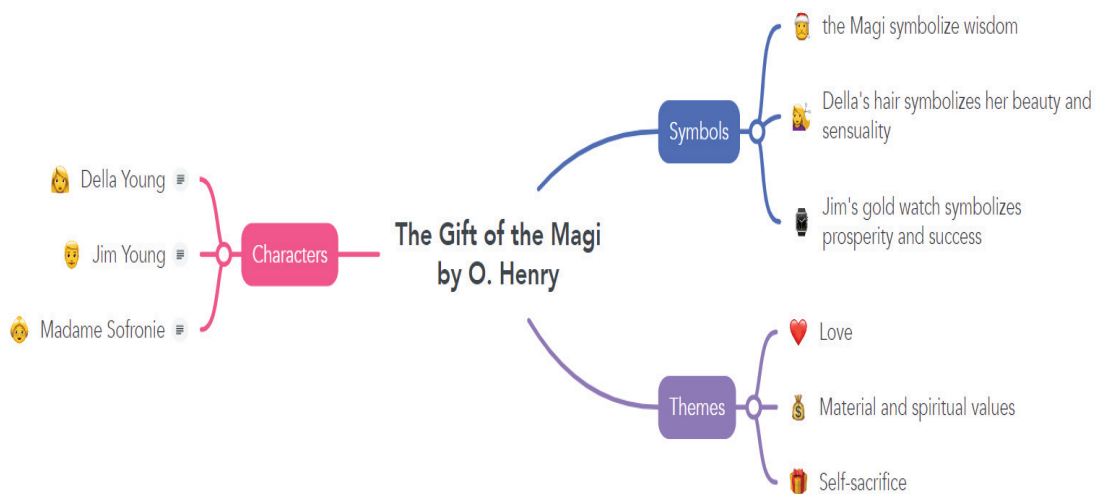
### Digital tools

Specific computer software and online platforms (*MindMeister*, *EdrawMind*, *Canva*, *XMind*, *Google Jamboard*, *Miro*, etc.) offer tools and features to efficiently organize ideas into mind maps. These tools not only aid in structuring information visually but also facilitate easy sharing and collaboration with a wider audience, enabling seamless communication and idea dissemination.

*MindMeister* <https://www.mindmeister.com> enables users to collaborate on mind maps, share ideas, comments, and plans in real-time, enhance their work with embedded multimedia attachments, such as videos, images, gifs, and links, and export mind maps to various formats, such as PDF, PowerPoint. The main disadvantage of this platform is 3 free templates but they can be edited.



Example of a student's mind map on the short story "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry made via *MindMeister*:



As a result, using digital tools for mind mapping improves students' reading skills by clarifying complex concepts into simple, but meaningful displays. This activity helps them grasp the general idea of the text, structure the relations it has, highlight causes and effects, as well as enhance their motivation in reading.

## Read to Debate



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills, to provide debate in particular;
- for pair work;
- to deepen students' understanding of the issue discussed in the text.

### Procedure

1. This activity requires students to engage in a debate from an article from a textbook or other source. The text selected for this activity should (1) discuss a controversial issue, and (2) be within students' ability to discuss.
2. Students scan the text while focusing on the controversial topic. They do not take any notes at this point.
3. Students form pairs and debate the issue with their partners. One student will argue in favor of the issue and one will argue against it. Students are required to quote ideas from the text to support their arguments.
4. Students scan the article again to discover useful expressions and additional ideas to support their point of view. They can take notes of keywords they will need.
5. Students participate in a whole class or a group debate. Besides quoting ideas from the text, students are encouraged to personalize the topic with information about themselves.

### Variation

1. Read to interview. You can choose texts from different genres (persuasive, argumentative, or narrative texts). Students scan the text to get as many ideas as possible. They form pairs, and one member acts as the interviewer and the other the interviewee. The interviewer asks questions related to the content of the text. The interviewee is required to use the ideas or facts in the text to answer those questions. Then students switch roles. They can find new partners, but they must play a different role than they did before.

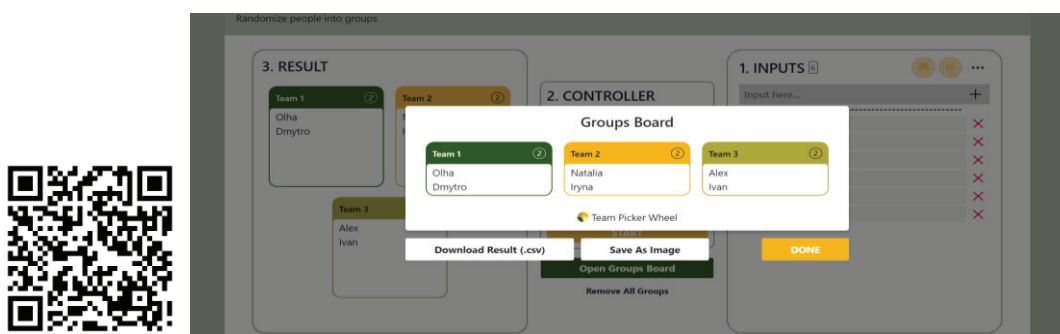
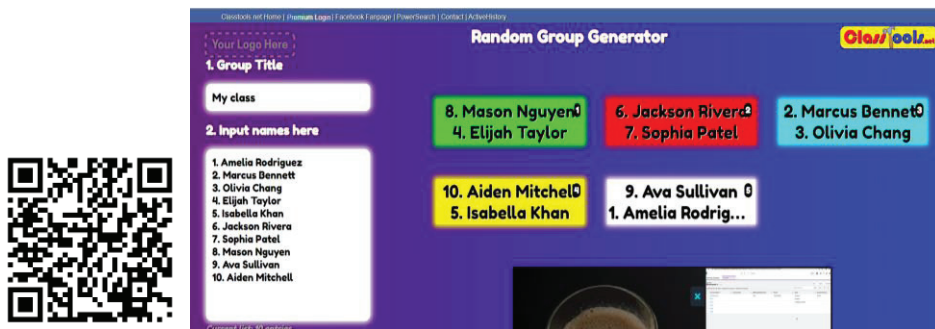
### Digital Tools

Using messengers like *Viber* or *Telegram* for this debate activity can be quite effective. Using messengers facilitates seamless communication,

allowing students to refer back to the article easily, share quotes, and exchange ideas even when they're not physically together.

1. Choose a controversial article or text to debate. Share this text with all participants via the messenger app.
2. Instruct students to scan the text, focusing on the controversial topic.
3. Have students form pairs or groups through the messenger app. Each pair will debate the issue, with one student arguing in favor and the other against it.
4. Facilitate pairs to respond one by one, argument and then counterargument. Follow the timing.
5. Encourage them to cite ideas directly from the text to support their arguments, and to search for useful expressions and additional ideas to strengthen their arguments.
6. Organize a whole classroom vote for successful positions.

To divide students into pairs or groups use group randomizers like *Random Group Generator* ([Random Group Generator](https://randomgroupgenerator.com/)) or *Team Picker Wheel* (<https://pickerwheel.com/tools/random-team-generator/>).



## Web Quest



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' reading skills;
- to improve learners' critical thinking skills, to search, organize, and analyze the information in particular;
- as group mini-projects.

### Procedure

1. In a web quest, students visit various websites (pre-determined by the teacher) to find information to use in a class project. And because we have determined (in advance) the websites the students are going to visit, we can be confident that they will not spend too much time surfing the Internet.
2. Introduce the web quest by presenting its main theme which includes offering background details on the topic and, within the language learning realm, introducing crucial vocabulary and ideas essential for completing the tasks ahead.
3. Provide clear instructions on the specific information students need to extract from these websites. Assign tasks related to reading comprehension, such as identifying key facts, summarizing main points, or extracting data.
4. Possible ideas for projects:
  - create a magazine "Review on 2023" so that students read news websites and choose 5-6 most interesting and important news in different categories. Then they write short articles for their magazine;
  - make a brochure for visiting some country (sightseeing, food, culture, tourist tips);
  - create an infographic summarizing key statistics or facts related to a specific topic or theme (health trends, environmental issues, or historical events) by gathering data from reliable websites;
  - construct a historical or thematic timeline based on information gathered from various websites (scientific discoveries, significant events in a particular country's history, or advancements in technology).
5. Students read through the content on these websites attentively, extracting relevant information that aligns with their assigned tasks.

Emphasize the importance of comprehending the material rather than skimming through quickly.

6. Students design the project into a specific product (brochure, recipe book, magazine, etc.) and present it.

### Variation

1. Instead of extracting information for a project, task students with creating interactive quizzes based on the content they read on specific websites. They can design questions that test comprehension, critical thinking, or specific details from the readings. This not only reinforces their understanding but also engages peers in interactive learning.
2. Students can create multimedia presentations incorporating text, images, videos, and audio clips obtained from various websites. This allows for creative expression while showcasing their comprehension of the material.
3. Have students explore websites that offer virtual tours or experiences related to historical landmarks, museums, or cultural sites. They can gather information and create guided tours or interactive experiences based on their findings.

### Digital Tools

Use graphic design tools like *Canva* or *Piktochart* which enable students to visually represent the information they've gathered from websites, creating engaging and informative projects with a variety of templates (infographics, notebooks, timelines, etc.).

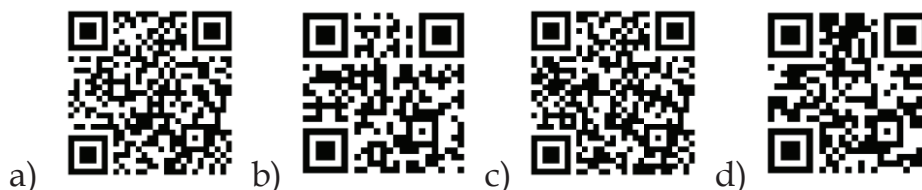
To encourage verbal expression, students can use *Flipgrid* or *VoiceThread* to record a short video or audio response discussing the readings they've done, providing an opportunity to practice speaking and articulating their thoughts.

*Canva* (a, [https://www.canva.com/en\\_gb/](https://www.canva.com/en_gb/))

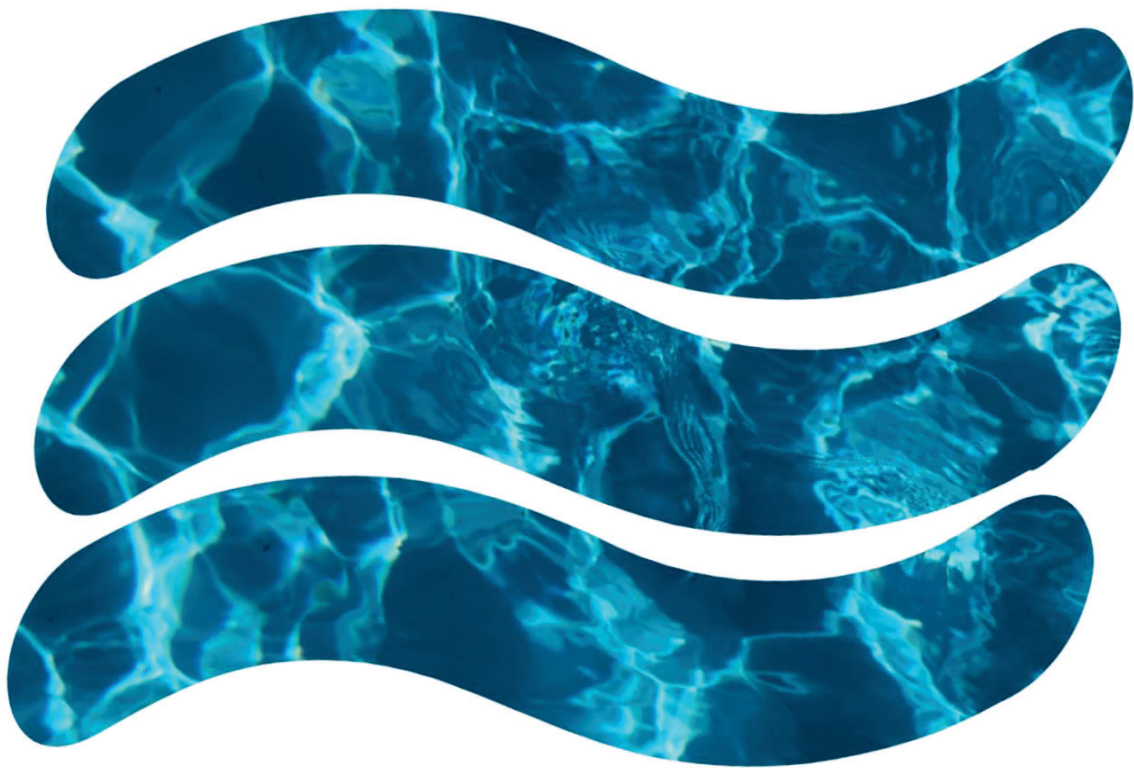
*Piktochart* (b, <https://piktochart.com/>)

*Flipgrid* (c, <https://info.flip.com/en-us.html>)

*VoiceThread* (d, <https://voicethread.com/>)



Chapter 4.  
**WRITING**



## WRITING - WATER

Writing, as a language skill, can be metaphorically likened to the fluid force of water within the realm of language proficiency as elemental forces. Similar to water's versatility and adaptability, writing is a dynamic and fluid expression of language that takes on various forms and serves multiple purposes.

Writing embodies the fluidity of water as it can mold itself into diverse genres, from essays and narratives to poetry and technical documentation. This language skill, like water, flows seamlessly, adapting to the nuances of different writing styles and contexts. It is a force that can take the shape of creative expression, academic analysis, persuasive argumentation, or informative documentation.

Developing writing skills involves channeling the fluidity of expression through practice, experimentation, and refinement. Writing prompts, creative exercises, and structured assignments act as the tributaries that feed into the river of writing proficiency. Through continuous engagement, learners can navigate the currents of various writing forms, honing their ability to articulate ideas with clarity and coherence.

Just as water sustains life, writing sustains language proficiency. It is the vital force that captures thoughts, ideas, and emotions, allowing individuals to communicate across time and space. Writing serves as a reservoir of expression, providing a means for learners to dive into the depths of their creativity and articulate their unique voices.

Online platforms, word processors, and collaborative writing tools provide a fluid environment for learners to compose, edit, and share their written work. The interconnected nature of digital platforms allows writing to flow seamlessly between individuals, fostering collaborative and constructive feedback.

Writing, like water, can be a reflective and contemplative force. Journaling, essays, and blogging act as reflective pools where individuals can delve into their thoughts and emotions. In the interconnected world of writing, online communities, writing workshops, and collaborative platforms become the rivers where the force of water in writing skills converges. Engaging in these spaces allows learners to share their written creations, exchange ideas, and navigate the ever-changing currents of the writing landscape.

## 10 Tips for Teaching Writing Effectively

1. **Create a supportive environment.** Foster a positive and encouraging atmosphere in the EFL classroom. Students are more likely to engage with writing tasks when they feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment.

2. **Clearly define objectives.** Provide clear and specific writing goals for each lesson. Whether it's mastering a particular grammatical structure or crafting a persuasive essay, clearly communicate what students are expected to achieve.

3. **Utilize diverse writing prompts.** Keep writing tasks interesting and relevant by incorporating a variety of prompts. From real-world scenarios to creative storytelling, diverse prompts cater to different interests and learning styles, making the writing process more engaging.

4. **Encourage peer collaboration.** Foster a sense of community by incorporating peer review activities. Encourage students to share their work with classmates, providing constructive feedback that enhances both writing and critical thinking skills.

5. **Model effective writing.** Demonstrate proper writing techniques and structures through examples. Analyze sample texts together, highlighting key elements like organization, language use, and style to help students internalize effective writing practices.

6. **Provide regular feedback.** Offer timely and constructive feedback on students' writing. Address both strengths and areas for improvement, and encourage revisions to reinforce the idea that writing is a dynamic process of refinement.

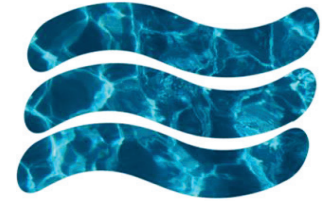
7. **Incorporate technology.** Integrate technology tools to enhance the writing experience. Online platforms, word processors, and language learning apps can add an interactive dimension to writing exercises, making them more engaging for students.

8. **Cultivate a love for reading.** Encourage students to read extensively in the target language. Exposure to diverse writing styles and genres can significantly influence and improve their own writing abilities.

9. **Customize lessons to individual needs.** Recognize and cater to the unique strengths and weaknesses of each student. Tailor writing assignments to align with their interests, allowing for a more personalized and meaningful learning experience.

10. **Promote self-reflection.** Encourage students to reflect on their writing progress and set personal goals. By fostering self-awareness and autonomy, you empower learners to take ownership of their writing development in the EFL classroom.

## “Running” Dictation



### Use it...

- to enhance learners’ writing skills;
- to enhance learners’ reading, listening, and speaking (pronunciation) skills;
- for collaborative work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- for developing memory and a sense of language.

### Procedure

1. Prepare short texts (related to the lesson topic).
2. Check whether the assignment is timed well and suitable for the students’ level.
3. Pair students up. They choose who runs (“a runner”) and who sits at the desk and writes (“a writer”) in their pairs.
4. Print out texts and stick them on a wall away from the desks. You should stick them somewhere out of sight from where the students sit so sitters wouldn’t be able to see the text.
5. Check whether each team has a similar distance to cover compared to the others.
6. The running students run to texts, read, remember as much as possible, and then return to dictate the text to their partners. A writer listens carefully and writes exactly what is said. Then they swap roles.
7. The first pair to finish writing the complete and correct texts wins.

Be careful that you do not:

- let students use their phone cameras to “remember” the text;
- let “running” students write: they can spell words out and tell their partner when they’re wrong;
- let “writing” students go and look at the text (or let “running” students bring it to them);
- let the runners see what their seated partners are writing.

### Variation

1. For A1-A2 students there are not texts but sentences of one text. The sentences practice some grammar or vocabulary. For example, the text is about a day off and includes sentences with Present Simple and relevant vocabulary. Or even, there can be collocations and single

words.

2. There could be several numbered texts and the students collect them all and put them into the correct order.
3. The texts could include blanks that students need to fill in.
4. Running students read and then run back to their partners. Writing students listen, then scan the text and write if the sentence is true or false.
5. There could be answers for running students, and writing students search for appropriate questions in the list or make a question, and vice versa – runners ask questions, and writers answer.
6. Runners also can describe a picture with as many details as they can bring to their partners instead of memorizing and retelling the text.

### Digital tools

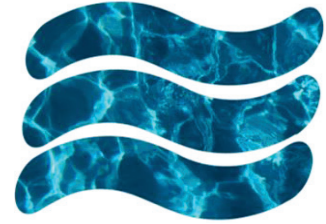
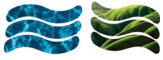
Instead of text printouts, you may put QR codes randomly in the class. Running students decode the tasks with QR decode apps on their mobile phones and then come to writers.

Since the students will have the text on their phones and no longer need to memorize it, it is worth giving the task of retelling the main ideas of the text in their own words, which their partners will write down.

To make a QR code you can use free websites like *QRCode Monkey* (<https://www.qrcode-monkey.com/>). It is possible to code not only texts but also URL links to video or audio content so that students may listen to the piece of information and then retell it to their partners. The QR code can be customized by choosing colors and shapes, and adding logo pictures.



## Freeze Writing



### Use it ...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- for collaborative (or individual) work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- for developing creativity.

### Procedure

1. Put the students in pairs or threes.
2. Give them paper and ask them to write the beginning of a letter – address, opening greeting. Students do it and stop.
3. Then instruct students to write the body of a letter. But when they hear 'Freeze!', they stop writing even in the middle of a word or a sentence.
4. The students begin to write. You check that everyone has written something before you say 'Freeze!' for the first time.
5. After saying 'Freeze!', you transfer each paper to the next group so that everyone's working with another piece of paper with a letter on it. Ask students to read, correct, improve, and continue the received letter for some time.
6. Then you say 'Freeze!' and together check the results. Before the end, the papers can be transported from one group to another for some rounds depending on time.

### Variation

1. Students can write a story. One student – one sentence, then change, so the whole class participates in writing. You follow timing (for instance, 30 seconds for a sentence), then say 'Freeze!' for passing papers to the left/right/behind students.
2. You can write a story beginning on the board: "Once upon a time...", "The first snowflake landed on her nose...", "Ben woke up and realized...".
3. Students are instructed to write a line on a piece of paper, folding it afterward to conceal it from the next writer. The final person unfolds the paper and reads the story.

## Digital tools

In this writing activity, digital tools could significantly enhance collaboration and engagement.

A collaborative writing platform like *Google Docs* could allow students to work simultaneously on a single document. Each pair/group or student could be assigned a specific section, making it easier to track changes and contributions.

For instance, students are divided into pairs or threes, and one by one they write a sentence for their collaborative story in space. They are instructed to use past tenses and given phrasal verbs and idioms, then to write one sentence in one space. You as a moderator say 'Freeze!' for changing students. Here is an example of Freeze Writing via *Google Docs*.

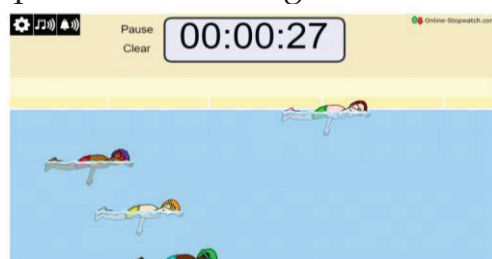
Use one phrasal verb or idiom in one space! Wait for 'Freeze!' to stop writing.

**Grammar:** Past tenses and linking words

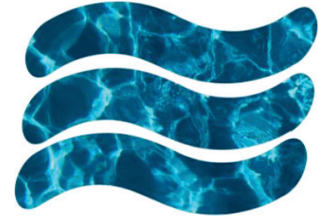
**Phrasal verbs and idioms:** keep abreast of; keep an eye on; keep track of; keep (someone) company; keep (someone) from; keep back; keep a secret; keep a promise

Name of the character	Introduction	Rising action 1	Rising Action 2	Rising Action 3	Rising Action 4	Climax	Falling action	Resolution
Sleeping Beauty	It was a sunny and beautiful day	The girl decided to go to a restaurant	She wanted to keep back from eating sweets	Unfortunately, she kept track of the delicious smell	She was in Candyland, where it was impossible to keep somebody from sweets	She reached the restaurant and found a giant donut	She didn't manage to keep a promise not to eat sweets	She ate a piece of the donut and fell asleep a real Sleeping Beauty to keep a secret
the Frog Prince	It was a day when the Frog Prince became	The frog prince decided to keep track of mystery	The Frog Prince decided to keep an eye on	People were so scared, so they asked him to leave	In that way, the Frog Prince got his mystery	Suddenly the Duke Crocodile appeared. He	But the Frog Prince was smart and agreed	In the end, the Frog Prince decided that he needed

An online timer tool such as *Timerdoro* (<https://timerdoro.com/>) or *Online Stopwatch* (<https://www.online-stopwatch.com/>) can help manage the time intervals for each contribution. The first allows for sharing a link to the teacher's timer with students. The second proposes various interesting interfaces of timers, that can engage students as well. An example of a Swimming Timer is below.



## Small Group Story “Wonderful Day”



### Use it...

- to enhance learners’ writing skills;
- for collaborative work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- for developing creativity.

### Procedure

1. Draw 4 big circles on the board. In the first circle write ‘Who am I?’ and ask your students to decide on the main character of the story:
  - How old is the character?
  - What does the character do?
  - What does the character look like?
  - Who are his/her friends?
  - What family has he/she got?
  - What kind of relationship does he/she have with them?
  - What does the character like doing?
2. In the second circle write ‘Morning’ and ask the students to decide what the character could do on such a wonderful day and write up their ideas.
3. Repeat the procedure for the third and fourth circles substituting ‘Morning’ for ‘Afternoon’ and ‘Evening’.
4. Put the students into groups and ask each group to write one part of the story: morning, afternoon, or evening. If you have a large class, you could divide them in two, so they write two stories.
5. Give the students about 20 minutes to discuss together and write their part of the story. Encourage creativity by allowing students to brainstorm various scenarios that could occur during their chosen time of day, keeping in mind the character's traits and the overall narrative flow.
6. Let students present their stories. Compare and discuss them.

### Variation

1. You can change the topic of the story. It can be an “Awful Day”, a “First School Day”, or a “Summer Day”.
2. Instead of drawing circles, provide each group with a character profile template. Students brainstorm and fill in details about their

character: age, profession, appearance, personality traits, background, etc. Each group creates a unique character.

3. Story genre could be chosen: detective, love story, fantastic, etc.

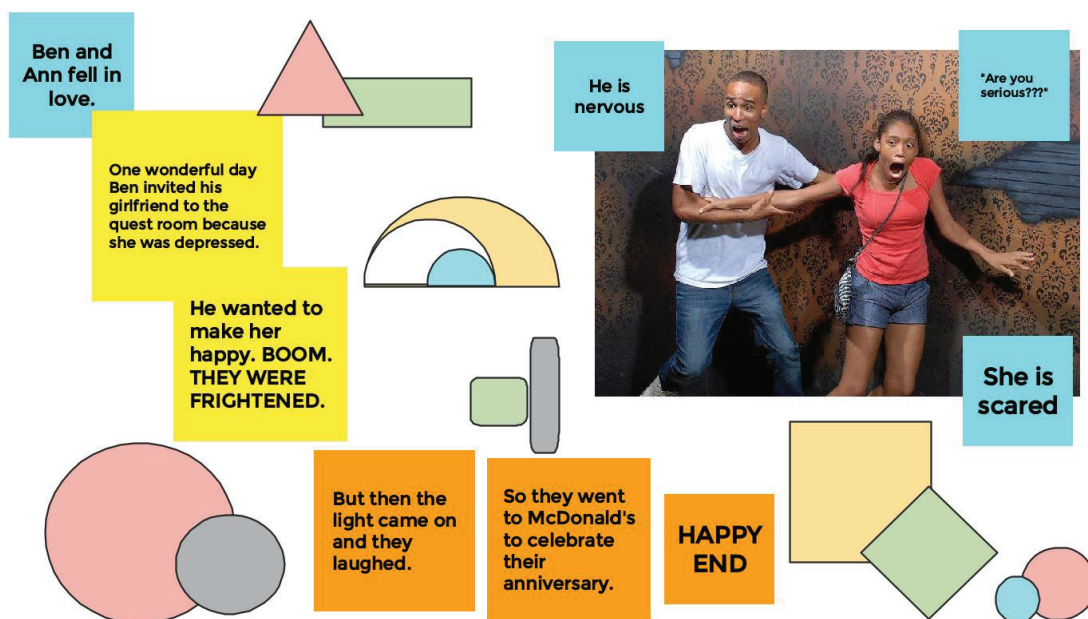
### Digital tools

To facilitate the collaborative storytelling activity students can use virtual boards like *Padlet* (<https://uk.padlet.com/>), *Jamboard* (it's a Google product, so everyone with an account has access to it), or *Miro* (<https://miro.com/>).

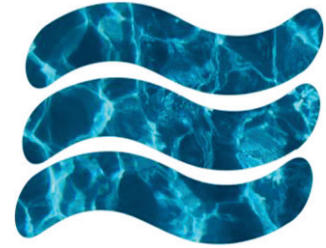
For instance, utilizing *Padlet* students can post their character profiles, story ideas, and outlines. It's visually engaging and allows for easy organization of thoughts. The virtual board is easy to work with, so every student participates in the activity and writes their own ideas via mobile phones. The timeline template in *Padlet* could help make the order of a story (tutorial: [How to share your personal history on Padlet](#)).



Here is an example of a group story "Wonderfull Day" made in *Jamboard*. Students (A2 level) were divided into 3 groups of two people for one shared story. Vocabulary and grammar focus - 'feelings' words and Past Simple. The first team (blue stickers) chooses and describes characters. The second team (yellow stickers) writes two sentences of the beginning and a rising action. The third team (orange stickers) finishes the story with a climax and a falling action. Teams take turns for the next story (approximately 8 minutes for one story): the yellow team chooses characters, the orange team writes the beginning and a rising action, and the blue team adds a climax and a falling action.



## Role-Play Writing



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- for collaborative work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- for developing creativity.

### Procedure

1. Tell students about the characters. The information might include name, age, occupation, personality traits, background, motivations, and goals.
2. Read the situation from the role-play to your students.
3. Divide the class into small groups (in pairs or alone according to the number of characters), give them one character, and ask them to write the continuation based on the given situation and their character profile.
4. Ensure there's no communication or interaction between the various groups while they are writing from their characters' points of view.
5. Give the students a time limit.
6. Once the texts are completed, students share them ensuring they are read in the right sequence to narrate the story. After the reading, you can assess the texts or facilitate a follow-up exchange of roles among the students.

Example (written by Richard Frost).

#### *Situation*

Sue and Jane are sisters. They get on well with each other the only problem is that both of them are single and desperately want to get married and settle down. One night they go to a party, where they meet Paul.

#### *Role card for group 1*

Sue: Write a letter to Paul telling him how much you enjoyed being with him at the party. Tell him what a special person he is and that you long to meet him in a more romantic setting. Tell him that you feel there is something special between the two of you. Finish the letter with the line... "This could be the beginning of a beautiful relationship."

#### *Role card for group 2*

Jane: Write a letter to Paul telling him about how much you love him. Tell him that every moment you spent together at the party was wonderful.

Ask him to come for a romantic evening and tell him you will make it a night to remember. Finish the letter with the line... "Paul, you are the one for me!"

*Role card for group 3*

Paul: Write a letter to Sue telling her that you cannot meet her and that you don't think it would be a good idea as you are much more interested in her sister, Jane. Tell her that Jane is much more attractive and intelligent and that she should accept the idea that you will be seeing a lot more of her sister. Finish the letter... "I am sorry if this is painful for you but please leave me alone!"

*Role card for group 4*

Mystery letter: Write a letter to Jane and Sue (one letter for both) and tell them that you found their letters in Paul's bag. Tell them that you know what has been going on and that if either of them sees Paul again you will confront them. Threaten them more and tell them to find men of their own. Finish the letter... "Never come near my husband again!"

## Variation

1. Mix the characters among the groups. Each group receives a combination of characters, they continue the story based on the given situation and the profiles. Encourage them to negotiate and integrate the diverse perspectives of each character into a cohesive narrative.

2. Students write the first sentences of the continuation according to the given character's profile. Then, reshuffle these character texts, ensuring each group receives a different character from their original one. Students continue the story from this new character's perspective. Do this a few rounds. It promotes flexibility in storytelling, challenges students to embody different personas, and offers insights into diverse character motivations within the narrative. Then, students present their original characters witnessing how the texts change from their first intentions.

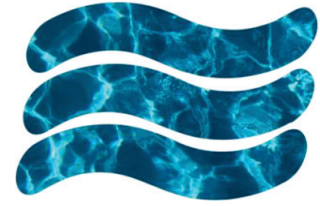
3. After students have brainstormed their continuations, encourage them to craft a dialogue exchange between characters. This dialogue should further the storyline, reveal character traits, and add depth to the narrative.

## Digital tools

Mobile apps enable the recording of users' voices so they can tell a story. For example, in the *ChatterPix Kids app*, users download any image, animate its mouth, and record their voice to narrate a story or a monologue as a character. This app is simple to use and fun because you can make anything "talk", but the recording has a limit of 30 seconds.



## 6-Word Stories



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- for individual work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- for developing creativity.

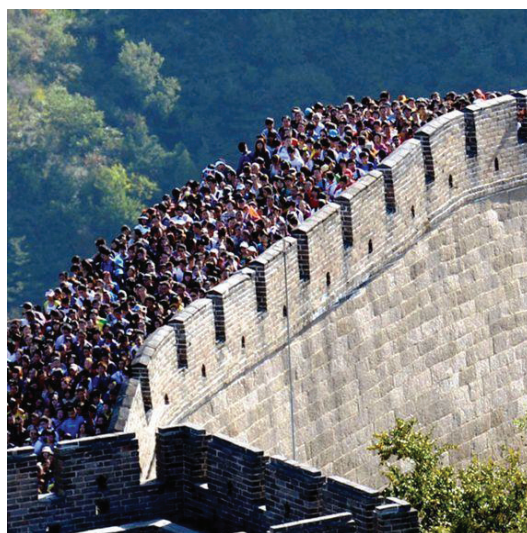
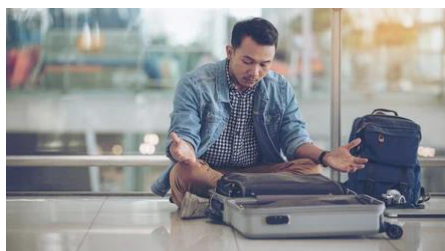
### Procedure

1. Introduce the concept of 6-word stories to the students. Explain that these stories are complete narratives told in only six words, challenging them to distill the essence of a story into a brief, but impactful format.
2. Share examples of famous 6-word stories demonstrating the power of brevity in storytelling. For instance, you can tell a famous legend when Ernest Hemingway was challenged to compose a brief tale using just six words. He wrote the next: "For sale: Baby shoes. Never worn." Discuss this story: What situation is behind these 6 words? What characters? What did they feel? etc.
3. Provide a theme, or a prompt, or allow students to choose a topic for their 6-word stories. It could be about anything - a moment, an emotion, a challenge, a discovery, etc.
4. Give students time to brainstorm and craft their own 6-word stories. Encourage them to focus on conveying a complete narrative, using vivid language and imagery despite the limited word count. Let them think about the conflict stories can have.
5. Invite students to share their 6-word stories with the class. Encourage discussion about the impact of each story. Ask students to reflect on how much can be conveyed in just six words and the different emotions or ideas evoked by various stories.

### Variation

1. You can increase the number of words to 10-12 if it is necessary for narration. Or don't count prepositions, conjunctions, or interjections in the 6-word stories. But mention that the story mustn't become a paragraph, it has to be short.
2. Dedicate 6-word stories to specific vocabulary or grammar topics.
3. Propose the mood of a story (mysterious, humorous, dark, etc.) or a genre (detective, romance, historical, fantasy, comedy, etc.).

4. Propose students to write a 6-word story and leave one-word blank in it so after exchanging their groupmates would fill the gaps with own words.
5. Ask students to use alliteration (She sells seashells by the seashore) or assonance (He feels the heat as he kneels), or to start each word with the same letter (Silent squirrels silently seek secret stashes).
6. Show a picture and encourage students to write 6-word stories based on it. Examples of pictures for the topic “Travelling”:



### Digital tools

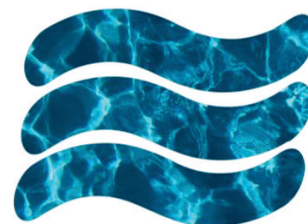
Use an online collection of 6-word stories to show students examples like *Six Word Stories* (a) <http://www.sixwordstories.net/>) or random word generator websites (b) [Random Word Generator](#) OR c) [Word Generator](#)) to implement the given word into the story.

To share students' stories you can use any online whiteboard for collaborative work (*Miro, Jamboard, Padlet, Mentimeter*) or *Google Docs*.

The good idea is to challenge students to share their 6-word stories on social media platforms (*Instagram, Facebook, etc.*) using a class-specific hashtag. This encourages brevity and creativity within the given character limits of these platforms. Or use messengers like *Telegram, Viber, or WhatsApp*, share a picture, and ask students to write their 6-word stories below in 2 minutes. They do it simultaneously and immediately see the result.



## Comics



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- for collaborative work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- as a project-based learning activity;
- for developing creativity.

### Procedure

1. Introduce the concept of comics as a storytelling medium, showcasing examples and discussing their elements: panels, speech balloons, characters, settings, and sequence of scenes.
2. Engage students in a conversation about the purpose of comics, how they combine visuals and text, and the different genres/styles of comics (superheroes, manga, graphic novels, etc.).
3. Explain specific elements, including panels (pages typically feature multiple rectangular frames), gutters (the space between each panel acts as a separation), balloons (wherein the text is inserted into the panel alongside the illustrations, playing a fundamental role in conveying the narrative), and captions. Show examples.
4. Divide the class into small groups. Students brainstorm and outline their story ideas. Emphasize the importance of a clear beginning, middle, and end in 4-6 scenes.
5. Guide them in creating a rough storyboard or layout of their comics, sketching out the sequence of events, and arranging the panels.
6. Provide materials or digital tools for students to create their comics. They can draw by hand or use software/apps for digital creation. Instruct them to combine illustrations and text within panels to convey their story.
7. Students share their comics with peers, explaining their creative process and storytelling choices. Encourage discussions about the diversity of narratives and visual styles.

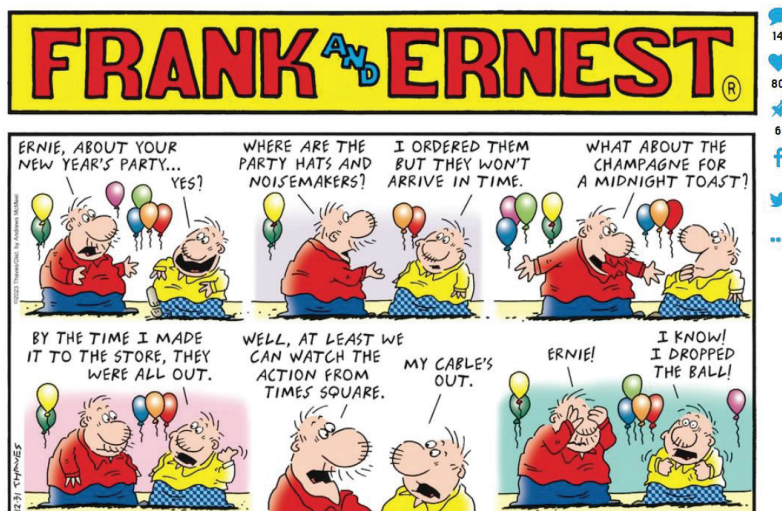
### Variation

1. Ask students to make comics based on a well-known story like a fairy tale about Cinderella or Alladin. They are free to change endings, characters' behavior, and their words.

- Dedicate comics to specific vocabulary or grammar topics, for instance, the second conditionals. It is worth mentioning that comics are good for practicing asking questions and responding to them.

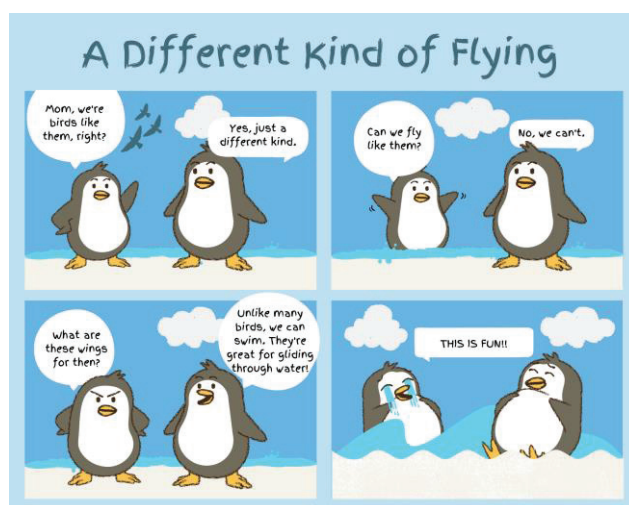
### Digital tools

Use online libraries of comics to show students examples like *GoComics* (<https://www.gocomics.com/>). Students can explore the library before the lesson for inspiration. Below is one of the examples:

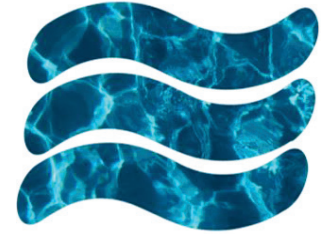


There is a list of digital tools for making comics: *Pixton*, *ToonDoo*, *Comic Master*, *StripGenerator*, *Canva* (with some free elements), *Storyboard That* (limited free options), *Book Creator* (limited free version), *Storyboarder* (free downloadable software).

For instance, *Canva* (<https://shorturl.at/kIRV2>) includes a variety of templates for 4-6 scenes comics which can be added, shared for simultaneous collaborative work, and later shared. Here is the comic made by a student via *Canva* templates:



## Short Poems



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- for individual work;
- to reinforce specific grammar and vocabulary;
- for developing creativity.

### Procedure



1. Introduce the concept of a chosen short poem (haiku, limerick, or acrostic poems), discussing its elements like rhyme, meter, imagery, and figurative language. Share examples:

Type	Definition	Example
<b>Acrostic poem</b>	It is a poetic form with specific letters in each line, whether it's the first, last, or others, to spell out a particular word or phrase. Typically, in its simplest and most common form, the initial letters of each line form the word or phrase being highlighted.	<i>Star by Kaitlyn Guenther</i> Stars shine brightly Tonight And carolers come out to sing O' holy night. The Ringing of bells spreads cheer all around.
<b>Limerick</b>	The limerick is a widely enjoyed type of short, funny poem, often silly and occasionally a bit naughty. It's made up of five lines that rhyme in an AABBA pattern.	<i>Limerick by Edward Lear</i> There was an Old Man with a beard Who said, "It is just as I feared! Two Owls and a Hen, Four Larks and a Wren, Have all built their nests in my beard!"
<b>Haiku</b>	A haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry consisting of three lines with a syllable pattern of 5-7-5. It typically captures a fleeting moment in nature, evoking emotions or insights with vivid imagery and a focus on the present moment.	<i>Haiku by Matsuo Bashō</i>  An old silent pond . . . A frog jumps into the pond, splash! Silence again.

2. Students brainstorm the ideas for the topic, images, and emotions of a poem. Focus on specific vocabulary and grammar.
3. Allow time for students to individually craft their short poems.
4. Invite students to share their short poems with the class. Encourage them to read their creations aloud, emphasizing the rhythm and tone of their poems.
5. Encourage students to reflect on their experience in writing short poems. Ask them to discuss the challenges, discoveries, and enjoyment they found in expressing themselves through poetry.

### Variation

1. As a pair work, poems might be written line by line by each student.
2. Ask students to write a poem as a reflection of a picture.
3. Consider peer-review sessions where students share their works in progress, offer feedback, and provide constructive suggestions to enhance each other's poems.
4. For acrostic poems, give students the list of words as you can see below. Students chose the flower (mimosa, iris, rose, tulip, daisy, bluebell, lotus, or cactus) and wrote their acrostic poems:

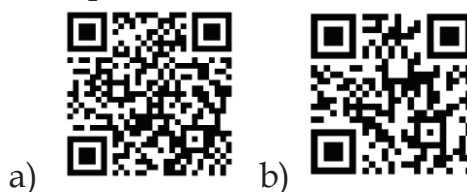
<p>Valeria</p> <p>Lets go to our magic time! I like the spring so much, because Its time which carries for us the sun and fun You, hope I, also love this magic time!</p>		<p>Olha</p> <p>Iris</p>	<p>I love iris. Really beautiful flower, brings joy to others.</p> <p>Idealistic, amazing flower. So I'll sit near it and enjoy an hour.</p>	
<p>Lily</p>				

### Digital tools

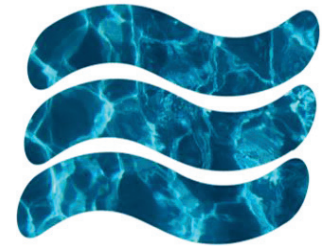
Consider creating a class anthology or display board to showcase the poems. Digital platforms or physical displays can highlight students' creative works.

For instance, use *Google Blogger* to create an anthology blog where students can post their written works. Organize posts by categories or themes, allowing easy access and navigation.

Also, you can propose to students a project: using *Canva* (a) [https://www.canva.com/en\\_gb/](https://www.canva.com/en_gb/)) or *VistaCreate* (b) <https://create.vista.com/>) templates for books or A5 documents to create a designed anthology of their poems.



## Decoding Emoji Messages



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- for individual work;
- to engage students in creative writing and critical thinking.

### Procedure

1. Assign or display a set of emojis (about 6-7) and ask students to decode the Emoji Message individually or in small groups and write it as a text.
2. One emoji could be for one sentence. Point out that emoji isn't a word but a concept. So, the "sun" emoji can be interpreted as the sun literally, or daytime, good weather, etc.
3. You can show one set of emojis for everyone, as a result, there will be many interpretations of one message. Or give each student or team different messages.
4. After writing, students share their texts, comparing and analyzing the interpretations of a message.

### Variation

1. The Emoji Message could be sent to a class group in *Viber*, *Telegram*, *WhatsApp*, or *Google Docs* so that everyone would write and read decoded texts simultaneously.
2. Students can prepare a set of emojis for each other (one for one, team for team, or randomly).
3. **Write an emoji conversation** (by Colm Boyd). Learners work in pairs and first select five emojis each. The task is then to invent a conversation, incorporating one emoji into each message.

*Learner A* (picks Weary emoji): Sabine, I think I forgot my keys again (inserts Weary emoji).

*Learner B* (picks Eye Roll emoji): Theo, this is the third time this week. You're so forgetful (inserts Eye Roll emoji).

For a low-tech approach, give learners paper featuring speech bubbles where they'll write dialogue and draw emojis. If your class has smartphones, they can craft dialogues in *WhatsApp*, take screenshots, and email them.

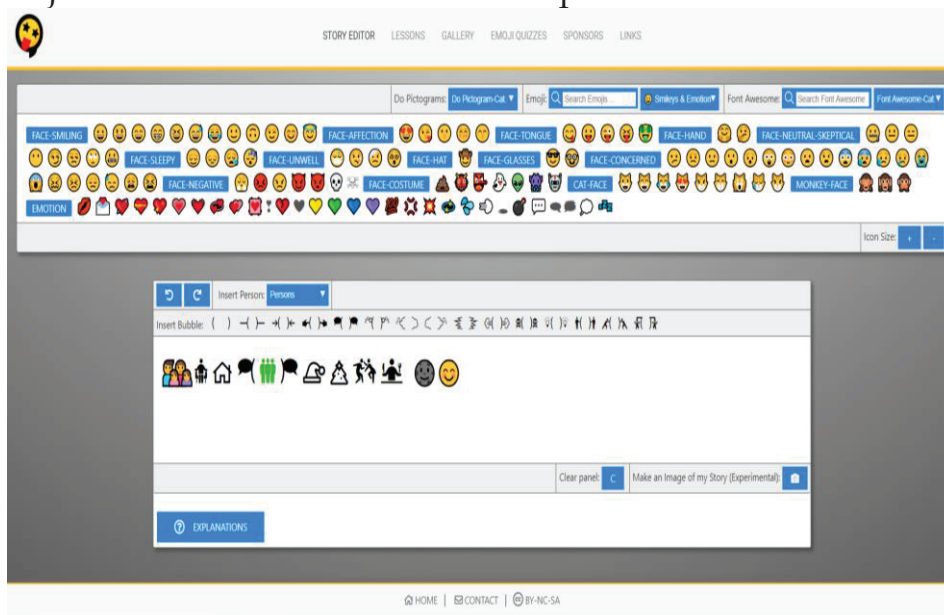
## Digital tools

Use emoji libraries to deliver the message:

- <https://emojipedia.org/> (a)
- <https://getemoji.com/> (b)
- <https://openemoji.org/> (c)
- <https://unicode.org/emoji/charts/full-emoji-list.html> (d)

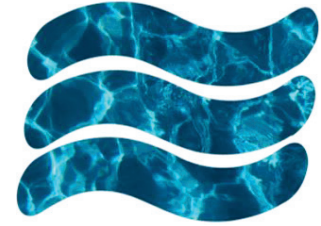


Also, students can work on the platform *Icon Stories* (<https://www.icon-stories.ch/>) with the story editor. On the top panel, there is a variety of themed icons and emojis organized categorically, the dropdown menus allow users to switch between these themes and incorporate verbs or actions into a story with the “Do Pictograms”. There are also speech bubbles that may be used to show the character’s thoughts or conjunctions. Then emoji stories can be downloaded in a picture format.



One more way to make an Emoji Message is to use some emoji translators, for instance, *Vista Social platform* ([Translate text to emoji with this emoji translator | Vista Social](#)). A user can write a brief plot of the story and a platform generates it into an emoji story. Although the number of printed letters and spaces is limited to 200 it’s a good tool if there’s a lack of time. While using the translators it is important to mention that not all concepts have emoji analogues so select the necessary words for translation but then use expanded vocabulary while writing texts based on these emojis.

## Word Challenge



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- to improve learners' creative writing;
- improve overall language proficiency, including grammar, syntax, and vocabulary usage.

### Procedure

1. You can engage students in a word challenge activity following the reading exercise. Choose a recently taught word and prompt students to construct a sentence incorporating it. Students then share their sentences aloud, exchanging them afterward.
2. Next, students use these sentences as story prompts to craft creative narratives. This approach fosters the development of creative writing skills among students.
3. After students have written their stories, encourage them to share their narratives with the class. Facilitate a discussion around the diverse storylines created from a single sentence prompt, highlighting creativity and storytelling techniques.
4. Engage students in peer review sessions where they exchange stories and provide constructive feedback to their peers. Encourage discussions on plot development, character arcs, and the use of the sentence prompt within the narratives.

### Variation

1. Instead of open-ended storytelling, assign specific genres (e.g., mystery, fantasy, sci-fi) for students to develop their narratives using the given sentence prompt.

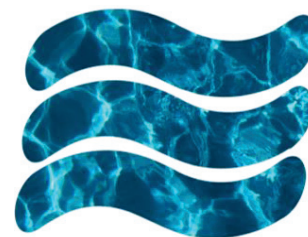
2. Rather than writing stories, challenge students to transform the given sentence into different forms, such as changing it from a statement to a question, from past tense to present tense, or from active voice to passive voice.

3. Set a time limit for writing, encouraging students to focus on creativity and fluency within a restricted timeframe.

### Digital tools

You can use a random word generated by the *Word Finder* (<https://www.thewordfinder.com/random-word-generator/>), challenging students to craft sentences that include the randomly generated word.

## Free Writing



### Use it...

- to enhance learners' writing skills;
- to improve learners' creative writing.

### Procedure

1. Explain the free writing technique: it entails continuous writing without interruption for a set duration, setting aside concerns about grammar. It embraces a lack of structure, form, or stylistic rules, and fosters the free flow of thoughts, allowing ideas to bounce and wander, even if they seem unrelated.
2. Provide the assigned topic (or allow individual selection for personal projects or writing).
3. Instruct students to engage in freewriting about the topic for a specified duration. During this time, their aim is not to compose an essay but to jot down any thoughts, opinions, anecdotes, or details related to the given subject.
4. Explain that this exercise isn't graded, relieving the pressure on grammar, spelling, or transitions.
5. After the allotted time, prompt students to stop writing and review their work. Encourage them to identify ideas suitable for further development into longer pieces of writing or integration into their ongoing projects.

### Variation

1. Employ students' freewriting to write down what they already know and what they seek to learn about a particular topic.
2. Instead of a single-word topic use a statement or set of questions for students to explore through their freewriting session.

### Digital tools

1. Writing apps like *Scrivener*. It is designed for writers and provide distraction-free writing environments, making them suitable for freewriting sessions.
2. Writing prompts websites (*Writing.com*, *750 Words*). These websites offer writing prompts and timers that can be used to stimulate freewriting sessions for students.

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