

Hands-on Activities for the Classroom

Resource package from Brandon and Rachel Gilmore

A. Word order game

This game can be used for students at any level (beginners, intermediate, advanced). Have your students use their memory, their text book, magazines, song lyrics, etc. to write all the nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and conditionals they can on a sheet of paper. Having each of the parts of speech in different colors would help enforce word order and the function of each part of speech, i.e. noticing patterns. Remember to tell the students to make many articles, prepositions and conjunctions since they are used in almost every sentence. Cut out the words and separate them into their parts of speech. After a sufficient amount of words are made, have the students dump out the words and create their own individual sentences, this can be done individually or in small groups. Go around to each group and make corrections to the sentences by moving words around, moving words apart to show there needs to be another word added, or taking a word out because another word needs to be inserted. After they are finished with a sentence have them make another.

You can increase the difficulty by making them create another sentence after the first sentence but they have to insert the proper pronoun in the second sentence for the noun they used in the first sentence.

This activity can be used to enforce word order and/or the function of any of the main parts of speech.

This activity can be used at any grade level.

B. Cloze passage with music (attachment B)

Take any song in English and write down the lyrics to the song. You can go to the websites www.lyrics.com or www.google.com and get the lyrics to any song in English. It is best to copy and paste the lyrics from the website onto Microsoft Word. Pick any of the words you want and simply erase them and write down a blank. In class, play the song once or twice, then pass out the lyrics with blanks and then have the students listen to the song and fill in the blanks with the correct word. You will most likely have to play the song 2-3 times for the students. This activity could also be done by writing the lyrics with the blanks on the board and having the students just write down the correct words.

It is best to go around to every student and make corrections after the song is finished but before you play it again. This gives the student the opportunity to make corrections and listen for the word again and you can also tell the student that they are close to what the actual word is. This gives them motivation to listen more intensely and it also keeps them excited to listen to the song for a second, third or fourth time.

This can be done individually or in small groups of two or three.

This can be done at any grade level. You will need pick a song that is on the students vocabulary level and the song will need to be at a speed that the students will allow the students to hear the words.

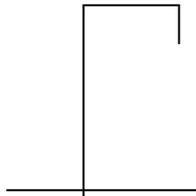
This activity is good to enforce new vocabulary, parts of speech, listening comprehension, listening skills, spelling, or a warm up after a long break. Students also get a chance to hear and see expressions and colloquial language.

C. Jeopardy

I pick 5-6 categories of questions based on the material the students are studying in class and I write 4-5 questions for each category on separate sheets of paper. The question is on one side of the paper and on the other side I write points from 100-400 or 500 depending on the number of questions. The questions that are worth 100 points are easier than the questions worth 200, 300, 400 or 500 points. The students are split into 3 or 4 teams and they take turns picking a category and trying to answer the question. If they get the answer right, the number of points on the back of the question is added to their team's tally, but if they get the answer wrong, that number of points is SUBTRACTED from their tally. The team with the most points at the end of the game, wins! It's a great way to review material with your students and they LOVE playing this game!

D. Hang-man

Pick a vocabulary word from the unit that you are working on, or a fun word that the kids know and put dashes on the board to represent the number of letters in the word. For example, if the word was "party" then you would draw _ _ _ _ _ on the board. Draw a hangman's platform, like this:



Call on a student to give you a letter from the alphabet that he or she thinks is in the word. If the letter is in the word, then write the letter in the blank. If the letter is not in the word, then write the letter beside the hangman platform and draw a part of the hangman's body on the noose. I usually draw the head first, then the body, followed by the arms and legs (and if I want to give the kids some extra chances, I also draw on hair, eyes, and a mouth). You will play this game today so it will help answer any other questions you might have.

E. Tic tac toe

Pick 9 words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, anything!), phrases, tenses, or questions that you want your students to master and write them on the board in a tic tac toe grid. Split the class into two teams, one team will be "X" and the other team will be "O". Have them take turns picking one of the blocks and successfully showing they understand the item in the box. The first team to get three Xs or Os in a row, wins! For example, if you want to test your students' knowledge on the past tense of irregular verbs, you could set up a grid like this:

Grow	Run	Speak
Make	Go	Fly
Buy	See	Hit

If a group can say the word from the box correctly in the past tense, they get an X or O. (Grow-grew, run-ran, speak-spoke, make-made, go-went, fly-flew, buy-bought, see-saw, hit-hit.)

F. Letter game

This game is effective for students who are learning or reviewing the alphabet. On pieces of paper or cards, write down all of the letters of the alphabet (or you can have each of your students write down a few letters on a sheet of paper until you have all 26 letters). Give each student one or two different letters and randomly call out letters of the alphabet (“Where is the letter A? F? Z? I? J? G? E?...”). If a student has the letter that you have said, they raise it up in the air. It checks students understanding of the letters and helps clear up confusion about which letter is J and which is G as well as the different between all of those vowels!

G. Dialogue scatter

Some textbooks have dialogues included in the lessons, other textbooks don’t but you can always write a dialogue of 4-10 lines (you may want more sentences if your students are more advanced). Write or type the lines of the dialogue on a sheet of paper four or five times (depending on how many small groups you want to have) and then cut each of the sentences out. In small groups of 3-5 students, have them put the 4-10 sentences in order to make a dialogue and then read it outloud. It’s great practice for students and an interesting way to introduce a dialogue.

H. In-class theater

My students love this one! If you have a dialogue in the textbook (or if you have creative students!) give them 5-7 minutes to practice a scene or dialogue in small groups of 2-5. Then have all of the groups “act out” their dialogue or scene for the class. The dialogues/scenes can be the same or different. It’s always fun if you have a jacket, hat, or some sort of costume for the students to use when they “perform.” Theater helps students practice oral pronunciation which is important and to be more comfortable speaking English.

I. Powerpoints

If your school has a computer lab, then you may have the powerpoint program. It’s a great program that students can use to make cards or presentations about a topic. I have taught students from 3rd to 8th grade how to use the powerpoint program. You start with a blank template and have the students type the topic of the lesson on the slide (in English), then using different buttons (like the font button under the format title) they can change the colors of the slides, the style and size of letters, and insert pictures. It gives your students technological practice while they type English and apply some creativity to their slides (no two are alike!).

J. Scavenger hunts

If you want your students to practice following directions, navigating using a map, or becoming familiar with names of different rooms or places in a building, this is a great way to teach them about it. Split the class up into small groups of 3-5 students and give each group a different “clue” that will lead them to a different place in the building. When they get to the room or place that is described on their first “clue” then they will find another clue that will direct them to another location. You can have them follow as many clues as you want (you may want 4-6 clues

for more advanced learners, 2-4 clues for beginners) until all of the groups reach the same finish line. The first group to get there, wins! I did this with my students to celebrate the American holiday St. Patrick's day. I told them they were hunting for a leprechaun and the class was split up into four groups. One group had clues that sent them to the secretary's office, library, gym, and then to my cabinet. Another group went to the breakfast store in the school, to the security booth at the entrance of the school, to the library and then to my cabinet. It's ok if you have groups going to the same location, as long as they aren't going there at the same time. I used the "hunt" to teach my students words like "first floor," "stairs," "basement," and "foyer." They had a great time and it was a "hands-on" way to learn!

K. Reading, translating, and writing books

Students in all of my grade levels (3rd-8th) read, translate and write books. Reading books in English helps their comprehension skills, translating the books tests their comprehension and writing their own books encourages them to use English in a creative way. I usually use children's books because they are the easiest and most interesting for my students. If you don't have any English books, you can use Bulgarian language children's books and have the students translate the story into English, and you can read the English version out-loud. I have my younger students make books out of sheets of paper with crayons or colored pencils. If we are studying fruits then they make a book where they draw a picture of an apple and write the word "apple" under the picture. Then they will draw a picture of an orange, grapes, banana, and any other fruit we have studied. It's a great way to help kids who learn visually or kinesthetically because they get to "create" their own learning tools.

L. Clothing relays

This is a great way to teach words for clothing to younger learners. Divide the class into two teams and teach them the words for the clothing that you want them to learn (I taught my kids the words pants, sweater, hat, scarf, jacket, gloves, and shoes.) Have the students write down the words and practice saying them aloud. Then put two sets of actual clothing (2 pairs of pants, 2 hats, 2 scarves, 2 jackets, 2 pairs of gloves, and 2 pairs of shoes) in front of them. In teams, each child has to come to the front of the room (one at a time) and PUT ON all of the items of clothing as fast as they can and then as they take off the clothes, they have to tell you (in English!) what all of the items are called. The first team to have all members put on all of the items of clothing and pronounce the words in English, wins!

M. Crafts

N. Hidden object

If I am teaching my students a group of new words like "ruler", "umbrella", "apple", "pencil", or other smaller items that I could BRING WITH ME to class as a visual, then I hold up the items and teach them the new words. After the repeat the names of all of the objects a few times, I ask the students to close their eyes and I remove one, two, or three items from the group. I hide the items under a jacket or under the desk and then ask the students, "What's missing?" They have to tell me (IN ENGLISH!) which items are gone. When they have guessed all of the items correctly, I ask them to close their eyes again and I take away different objects. It's a great activity for reinforcing vocabulary and for testing their memory of the new vocabulary words.

O. Using a ball as a teaching aid

I always bring a small ball with me to class. When I ask questions, I throw the ball at a student and he/she answers the question. Sometimes I have class activities where the students ask each other questions and throw the ball around the room, asking and answering questions. It's helpful because it makes answering questions more fun and ensures that all of the students are paying attention, because if they aren't paying attention and I throw the ball at them, they will drop it or be startled and start listening more attentively.

P. Four corners

To get the kids up and moving, I usually play the four corners game. If I am studying letters, numbers, or time with smaller students then I write on a sheet of paper different letters, numbers, or times in each of the four corners of the classroom (one in each corner). I write the four different letters, numbers, or times on smaller pieces of paper and crumple them up on my desk. I tell the students to get up and to go to different corners of the classroom. When I say "stop" they have to stay in the corner and I pick one of the sheets of paper from my desk up and read it aloud. The kids who are in the same corner as the letter, number or time that I just read are out and have to sit down at their desks. The other students play again, picking a different corner each time. The last student is the winner. For example, if we are studying letters I may put the letters J, G, E and A in four different corners. When I say "stop" and pick up a piece of paper, if the sheet of paper has the letter E on it, then all of the students in that corner have to sit down. With older students I give them a questions with four possible answers (like a multiple choice question) and I write the letters A, B, C and D in the corners. The students have to stand up and go to the corner of the answer that they think is correct. The students who are correct have to answer different multiple choice questions and pick the correct "answer corner" again. The last student in the game, wins!

Q. Sentence scramble

To help the students practice sentence structure I take sentences from activities, dialogues, or create some and write them down on a sheet of paper. Then I cut out all of the words and in small groups the students have to put the words in the correct order to form a sentence. It's great hands-on practice for sentence structure and tests the knowledge of the material.

R. Authentic assignments

Authentic assignments are any real-life task that shows students how they can use their knowledge of English to help them in every-day activities. If you have them research something on the internet in English, write a poem, translate a song, translate a recipe from English to Bulgarian so they can make it at home, make a brochure in English to help tourism in the town, or perform a play in English to raise money for a cause...all of these activities make the students apply their English knowledge in a real way and can be a great way of increasing their understanding and level of comfort with the language.

S. Around the world

You can use this game to review, as an assessment tool, or to check comprehension. Pick a topic or subject (letters of the alphabet, numbers, adjectives, imperatives, present tense, past tense, interrogatives, or subjects like politics, animals, history, soccer, etc....) and start with a student sitting in the corner of the room. He or she has to stand up and to say a sentence/word based on

the topic or subject. For example, if you were teaching beginners the numbers from 1-20, the first student might say “one”, the next student would say “two” the following student would say “three” and so on... when a student misses an answer they have to sit down and you keep playing until only one student is left. If you want to test your students’ knowledge of past simple tense, you may tell all of the students that they have to say a sentence in past-tense and all of the sentences have to be different. If they can’t think of a sentence then they are out. If you want to encourage discussion in English you could pick the topic of soccer and have all of the students in the classroom say a sentence about why they like or don’t like soccer and who they think the best soccer player is and why.

T. Total-physical response

This is a basic technique used for teaching beginners new words. If you are teaching your students words like “desk”, “blackboard” “pencil” or “paper” you would teach them by pointing to the object and saying the word. Point to a desk and say “desk.” Keep saying the word until they repeat it after you. When you feel they know the word, just point to the object and have them tell you what the object it. You can also use this to teach action words like “sit down” “stand up” “close the door” “run” “skip” “jump” and so on... it’s an effective method to help students remember the words.

U. Group competitions

Anytime you can implement a game into the class where two sides of the class compete or the boys compete against the girls in a game, the students are going to pay more attention and be more involved in the class. If I’m worried that my students will be too noisy when playing a competitive game, I play music softly in the room and tell them that if they are too loud for me to hear the music then the game will stop immediately. It helps keep the noise level under control.

V. Flashcards

Flashcards can be made using paper, cardboard, anything that you can write on. I write the words on small cards and hold them up in class so the kids can say the words or translate them for me. I also made flashcards that had all of the Bulgarian and English pronouns written in different colors on different cards and my students had to match up the flashcards. Sometimes I will give small groups of students a set of 20 words in English and Bulgarian and they have to match them up. Flashcards are a great hands-on learning method to use at all age levels and with all types of material.

W. Word searches and cross-word puzzles

You can go to the following web-sites and enter words into their program and it will make a crossword or word search for you to use with your students. Word searches and crosswords are great ways to reinforcing vocabulary and spelling and the kids really enjoy them!

www.searchamateur.com/corkboard/Crossword-puzzle.html - 60k

puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/

www.happychild.org.uk/wks/english/ssm/crosswords01.htm - 33k

www.creativity-portal.com/becreative/activities/wordsearch.html

www.qualint.com/wordsheets.html

X. Partner games

Any games, activities, work, or dialogues that the students can do in pairs always encourages the students and teaches them how to work together. When you can do a class activity in pairs, the kids can help each other with the material and feel more confident about their work.

Y. Who am I?

To reinforce asking and answering questions I like to play the “Who am I?” game with my students. I write down the names of different people and tape the piece of paper with a name on it to the back of each student. Then I have all students stand up and walk around the room. They all have names on their backs and they need to find out which name is “theirs” by asking questions about themselves. Two students pair up and by answering and asking questions they can find out which name they have been given. For example, if a student has the name “Bruce Willis” on their back then they could find out who they are by asking the following questions: “Am I a man or a woman?” MAN “Am I a famous singer?” NO “Am I a movie star?” YES “Am I in action movies?” YES “Am I usually a good person in the movie?” YES “Am I Bruce Willis?” YES! If the kids need a little hint, I write the names of ALL of the people on the board and they have to look and decide who they are.

Z. In class experiments (attachment G)

Collaborate with any of your colleagues and find out what your students are or will study. Then create experiments for your students that will reinforce what they are studying in another subject. You and your colleague can work out what they need to do. Make step by step instructions for what the students need to do in order to do the experiment.

This activity is suitable for small groups.

This is great to introduce and enforce vocabulary. It is a great imperative exercise.

This can be done with Physics experiments, Chemistry experiments, Biology experiments (planting flowers, seeds, etc.), etc.

Attachment B

Where The Green Grass Grows
Tim McGraw

Six lanes
Taillights
Red ants marchin' into the _____
They disappear to the left and right again
Another supper from a sack
A ninety-nine cent heart attack
I got a poundin' head and an achin' _____
And the camel's buried in a big straw stack

I'm gonna live where the green grass grows
Watchin' my _____pop up in rows
Every night be tucked in close to you
Raise our _____where the good Lord's blessed
Point our rocking chairs towards the _____
Plant our dreams where the peaceful river flows
Where the green grass grows

Well I'm from a map dot
A _____sign on a black top
I caught the first bus I could hop from there
But all this glitter is gettin' dark
There's _____growin' in the city park
I don't know who my neighbors are
And there's bars on the corners and bars on my _____

I'm gonna live where the green grass grows
Watchin' my _____pop up in rows
Every night be tucked in close to you
Raise our _____where the good Lord's blessed
Point our rocking chairs towards the _____
Plant our dreams where the peaceful river flows
Where the green grass grows

I'm gonna live where the green grass grows
Watchin' my _____pop up in rows
Every night be tucked in close to you
Raise our _____where the good Lord's blessed
Point our rocking chairs towards the _____
Plant our dreams where the peaceful river flows
Where the green grass grows

Attachment G

Physics 9B

Names of people in your group: _____

Group name _____

1. Follow that ball

a. Instructions:

- 1) Drop the ball into the sand mixture from a distance of 1 meter. Measure how deep a hole the ball leaves.
- 2) Smooth out the sand. Now drop the ball from a distance of 1.50 meters. Measure how deep a hole the ball leaves.
- 3) Smooth out the sand. Now drop the ball from a distance of 2 meters. Measure how deep a hole the ball leaves.

b. Observations:

- 1) Describe what happened with each drop; i.e. was the hole bigger or smaller with each drop.
- 2) What section of the Physics book talks about why the hole gets bigger or smaller?
- 3) Why does the hole get bigger or smaller with each drop?

2. Balloons and whirling

a. Instructions:

- 1) Make believe the ball at the end of the rope is the Earth. Hold the other end of the rope in your hands. You are the sun.
- 2) Swing the ball around and around, in as large a circle as you can. As you swing the ball faster, can you feel it pulling on your arms? This is something like the way the Earth moves around the sun. But there is nothing tied to the Earth to hold it to the sun. The force of gravity holds the Earth.
- 3) Watch what would happen to the Earth if there were no gravity. Keep swinging the ball then let go of the rope. Wow! Aren't you glad there's gravity?
- 4) On Earth everything that has weight is pulled down by gravity.
- 5) Blow up both balloons to the same size.
- 6) Attach the balloons to the ends of the rope that is attached to the hanger.
- 7) Hold out your arm in front of you. Hang the hanger over your index finger. Let the hanger dangle until it hangs still. Now use the pushpin to pop one of the balloons.

b. Observations:

- 1) What happened after you popped the balloon?
- 2) What is the weight in each balloon?
- 3) What is the cause of what happened after you popped the balloon?

3. Are you full of hot air?

a. Instructions:

- 1) Blow up the balloon. Then pinch the end closed.

- 2) Now place a ping-pong ball on a table or floor. Put the end of the balloon next to the ball. Open your fingers just a bit, to let a little air out of the balloon at a time.
 - b. Observations:
 - 1) What happens to the ping-pong ball when you let the air out of the balloon?
 - 2) Why does the ball move?
 - 3) Which Principle of Mechanics is at work with this experiment?
 - 4) What causes the ball to stop?
4. Don't bail on me now!
- a. Instructions:
 - 1) Stack several books on the floor. Then prop the strip of board against the books to make a ramp. Hold the car at the top of the ramp, then let it go to roll down the ramp.
 - 2) Flip the board over and do the same thing again.
 - b. Observations:
 - 1) What is the difference between the way the car rolled down each time?
 - 2) What is the cause of the difference?
 - 3) Since you let go of the car, what was the force that started the car rolling?
- a. Instructions:
 - 1) Have someone stand on a chair with the cup. Drop the cup with the handkerchief and strings attached to the cup by holding the handkerchief in the middle.
 - a) Options: (observe each time what happens)
 - i) Drop the handkerchief attached to the cup again from a higher place.
 - ii) Drop the handkerchief attached to the cap again and have someone blow up into the handkerchief as it drops.
 - b. Observations:
 - 1) What happens each time with each drop?
 - 2) Why is there a difference in the way the cup drops?
 - 3) What is the cause of the difference? (the more specific the better)
5. Start your engines!
- a. Instructions:
 - 1) Place the car behind the start line that is marked on the floor.
 - 2) Have one person push the car with a strong push in a straight line.
 - 3) Have three people carry a stopwatch to record times.
 - 4) One person record the time from when the car passes the start line until the car stops.
 - 5) The other person records the time it takes the car to pass from the start line to point A.
 - 6) The other person records the time it takes the car to pass from the start line to point B.
 - b. Observations:
 - 1) What was the speed of the car?
 - 2) What is the acceleration/deceleration of the car from point A to point B?
 - 3) From point A to point B, did the car accelerate or decelerate? How can you tell?
 - i) Optional task: See if you can get the car to accelerate from one point to another using things in the classroom?
- a. Instructions:
 - 1) Launch the airplane with the rubber band.
 - b. Observations:
 - 1) Record the average velocity of the plane.