

# HOW TO TEACH YOUNG LEARNERS LIKE A PRO

25 TOP SECRETS EVERY TEACHER OF YOUNG LEARNERS SHOULD KNOW

THEY WILL AMAZE YOU  
AND SURPRISE YOU,  
BUT DON'T THINK  
THAT JUST BECAUSE  
YOU'LL BE TEACHING  
COLORS  
AND ANIMALS,  
IT'LL BE A  
**BREEZE**

KIDS WILL  
ALWAYS KEEP YOU  
ON YOUR TOES.  
YOU'LL MOST LIKELY FEEL  
EXHAUSTED AFTER EVERY CLASS  
**BUT OH, SO HAPPY!**

 TEACHING CHILDREN CAN BE IMMENSELY REWARDING, BUT SOMETIMES IT'S JUST NOT THAT EASY



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# Teaching English to Children Under 5

## ALTHOUGH TREMENDOUSLY REWARDING, TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 5 CAN BE A DAUNTING TASK.

These little learners are full of energy and enthusiasm, which you may put to good use, but to keep them interested and motivated, classes have to be fun. You must also keep in mind that there are language learning goals that need to be met – after all, they're not enrolled in classes to merely have fun. They need to start learning English.

So, to better target English classes to children under 5, the first thing you should consider is your young learners' characteristics. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children 3 to 5 would still be in the pre-operational cognitive stage.

As an ESL teacher you need to understand that children at this stage essentially:

- Present an egocentric intuitive intelligence– it's hard for them to see the viewpoint of others - and there is no logical thought
- Are capable of symbolic thought, which means they can mentally represent the world around them through words, images, and symbols, i.e., “cat” can be any cat and not just theirs
- Attribute life and thinking to inanimate objects, i.e., clouds cry because they are sad
- Are able to classify objects, i.e., all the blue blocks, all the animals, all of the large toys vs. the small ones, etc.
- Cannot grasp abstract concepts, but only concrete objects or physical situations
- Are able to engage in make believe
- Have memory skills
- Use imagination
- Are able to understand the differ-

ence between past and future, although they can't grasp the concept of time expressed in days, weeks, months, years

The biggest development for children at this stage is language, accompanied by a great deal of sensorimotor activity.

### So, what does all of this mean to you as an ESL teacher?

It is obvious that since children at this stage can't read or write, most of the English language learning will have to be imparted through sensorimotor activities, games, stories, and videos just to name a few. Children under 5 also have a very short attention span, which means you may have to switch activities every 5 minutes or so.

So, in the ESL classroom for very young learners, you should keep in mind the following essentials:

- You need to have tons of toys and realia to use in games and activities. This includes, cars, planes and all types of transport, animals, tea sets and cooking utensils, plastic fruits and vegetables, as well as flashcards of varying sizes.
- Repetition is key. Greet them every day with the same song, or greeting till they naturally say it back. It doesn't matter if you spend an entire class hour only asking questions with “Do you like...?”, as long as they spontaneously answer, “Yes, I do”, or “No, I don't”.
- It will get VERY physical. You'll need to jump, hop, move your arms, and clap your hands, which means you'll end up exhausted, but oh, so exhilarated.
- Make sure videos are short. Remember they have short attention spans. Make the viewing short, but to the point, making it thus more effective. Ask them to count how many birds, children, or fruits they see in the video. Ask them to raise their hands as soon as they see a zebra, lion or any other animal.

- Act out role plays with puppets. Children enjoy them, and it's a very effective way to teach ways to answer a question or replies to greetings.
- Music and singing are highly effective, but especially if they are accompanied by movement. Songs like “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”, or “This Is the Way We...” accompanied by actions are great ways to teach vocabulary or verbs.
- Keep it fast paced and engaging. Switch from one activity to another and use fillers if needed.
- Arts and crafts and mini-projects are wonderful ways to teach vocabulary, seasonal activities and holidays.
- Don't worry about what they can't do (read or write). Focus on what they CAN DO and make use of their abilities. Most under 5s can count to ten, so board games with dice are great for the ESL classroom.

## KEEP IN MIND THAT CHILDREN AT THIS STAGE UNDERSTAND MORE THAN THEY ARE ABLE TO PRODUCE VERBALLY.

They may not say a whole lot in English, particularly 3-year olds, but that doesn't mean they are not learning. Their flexible little brains are taking it all in, and soon enough they'll be spouting off some greetings and short answers right back at you.

Above all, **give them a chance to be fully immersed in the English language.** Speak to them in English all the time, and illustrate what you wish them to do if they don't understand. Those of us who have taught little ones will readily attest to the fact that they are blessed with a unique ability to accept the new language with nothing but natural curiosity and openness. If they watch a video in English or listen to a song, they won't very likely demand a translation, unlike their adult counterparts. Which makes them more often than not an absolute pleasure to teach.

# How to Teach Preschoolers:

## Preschool Games and Activities

PRESCHOOL IS SO MUCH FUN. IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO TEACH A SECOND LANGUAGE TO CHILDREN STILL TRYING TO GRASP THEIR OWN AND WHO CANNOT YET READ.

IT CAN ALSO BE REALLY ENJOYABLE BECAUSE THESE STUDENTS HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY TO LEARN LANGUAGES MORE QUICKLY AND ARE USUALLY VERY ENTHUSIASTIC.

### HOW TO TEACH PRESCHOOLERS

#### 1 ACTIVITIES

Keep everything as simple and short as possible. These students do not have long attention spans and are easily distracted so you should try to be the most interesting thing in the room at all times.

Students may also have a hard time sitting still during class so plan activities that let them move around. Simon Says is excellent for preschoolers.

You can also have them make groups with the same number of people as the number you say aloud so if you say "Four" students have to make groups of four. This is another very fun, fast moving, and active game. With decks of vocabulary cards that have pictures instead of words, students can play simple games in small groups.

A very basic game is to spread the cards face up and the first student to slap the correct card when you call out a word gets to keep it.

The student with the most cards at the end of the game wins. You can also conduct some team based activities such as Chinese Whispers, which encourages students to be quiet and patient.

#### 2 SONGS/GESTURES

Students at this age do well with songs and gestures. You can have songs for each part of the day to help them learn and remember certain vocabulary for instance, a morning song might include getting up, brushing teeth, and eating breakfast. You can also use songs in your lessons for speaking practice since it is less intimidating to sing-a-long with the class than to speak individually.

You should create gestures for different words because this will make it easier for students to remember new vocabulary.

Choose gestures that you are comfortable with and that are simple enough for you to do repeatedly throughout the course. Teaching preschoolers requires a high energy level and you may feel silly at first but these students can be a real pleasure to work with and they will certainly appreciate your efforts.

#### 3 WORKSHEETS

Worksheets for this age group are less common. Unlike worksheets used for older students, preschool worksheets do not need to have any words on them. In most cases worksheets for this age level should not have words on them at all however it will depend on your school. Either way, you can still use worksheets to practice material and test comprehension, for example, you can ask students to draw a picture while you tell a story. The story would be have to be very short and simple but if you tell a story about a tree and a student draws a house then it might be time to get those flashcards out again.

You can also use coloring pages and do matching activities where you ask students to match the pictures of two words you say aloud. This also serves as a simple comprehension test.

#### 4 STORIES

While your students will not be reading much in your class, they may enjoy hearing some stories especially if the lesson is during a quieter part of their day. The best stories for this age group, regardless of the activity you have in mind, are repetitive. This ensures that students catch the main points. Stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears and One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish might be appropriate for your students at this level. If students have heard the story more than once, you can ask them to tell you the story based on the illustrations.

Students often enjoy this type of activity in their native language so you may as well include it in your lessons. Start with the most basic story you can find to see if your class enjoys having story time.

#### OVERALL WHAT YOU TEACH AT THE PRESCHOOL LEVEL WILL BE QUITE LIMITED.

You can usually cover topics such as body parts, colors, numbers, weather, emotions, appearance, and routines. You will have to introduce new vocabulary slowly and do lots of practice activities each day.

Every lesson should be focused on speaking, listening, and **having fun**.

# Teens and Tweens: 4 Effective Ways to Reach Young Learners

**YOUNGER LEARNERS CAN BE BOTH FUN AND FRUSTRATING DEPENDING ON THE TIME OF DAY, THE CYCLES OF THE MOON, AND THE DISTRACTIONS THAT ALMOST EVERY NEW DAY CAN BRING.**

Students have a lot on their plate these days from pressures at school to extracurricular activities to hormones and social awkwardness. Follow these tips and you will find yourself in the hip and cool category with your teen and tween learners.

**TRY THESE 4 MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REACH YOUNGER LEARNERS**

## 1 USE TECHNOLOGY

It's inevitable. No matter what country you are teaching in, teens' primary distraction is technology and social networking. From Facebook to Angry Birds to texting to online gaming, we teachers are up against a lot of outside factors. The best way to get your younger learners to turn off cell phones and tune in to your lessons is to provide what they want. Don't fight it. Students crave new and distinctive ways to study and practice language. If it can incorporate some cool graphics, provide some involved simulations and allows for independently-paced activities, your students will be mesmerized. There are so many websites out there dedicated to enhancing English proficiency, you really have your choice of online games, quizzes, and collaborative activities! You can utilize these by presenting them in front of the class and incorporating them into a classroom activity. Depending on where you are, many students have computers at home and believe me, if they are introduced to something on the internet that sparks their interest, they will play with it at home. If you are lucky enough to have a computer lab at your disposal, by all means use it! There are suitable collaborative activities that are specifically designed to engage teens and tweens that might involve things like

solving puzzles, competing, and trial and error. The graphics and topics are often what pulls them in, and the challenge of completing levels can keep them hooked. The best part is often the programs focus on developing two to three skills at a time. Be an innovator for your students, and they will not only be much more receptive, their language skills will increase. You can find free sites focused on vocabulary, listening activities, critical thinking, pronunciation, just to name a few.

## 2 HUMOR WORKS WONDERS

Like I said earlier, teens and tweens tend to be under a lot of pressure and they are going through a lot. You want your classroom to be a place where they don't feel those same pressures. It is important to have firm guidelines and meaningful expectations with younger learners, but it is also really important to have a good rapport with them. One way to do this is to make learning fun, entertaining, and even at times, goofy and silly. Asian students can be notoriously serious and focused, but that doesn't mean that they don't have a funny bone. If you can incorporate activities that stress fun and competition without too much forced language practice, you will have found one key to success.

Also, if there are particularly dry topics that you'll be covering, find ways to have fun with it. Instead of going through dry drill for an upcoming test, create a Jeopardy game complete with teams and scorecards. You could even dress up if your students know who Alex Trebeck is. If you can be natural with teens and tweens, and show them your sense of humor and sarcasm, you will gain their trust. You may even get them to loosen up and stop being so cool all the time!

## 3 RELATE TOPICS TO THEM

One mistake a lot of teachers make is forgetting about student relevance. Language learning is flexible in that you can incorporate almost any

topical lesson that you want. Focus on what the teens and tweens are interested in and engaged by. You can gain a lot of interest if you are discussing things that are relevant to your learners. If you are overseas you can let them educate you. Find out who the popular singers are and do some translations with their songs. If you have a class that is obsessed with the World Cup, incorporate it into your lessons. Have them make presentations on topics that interest them like their hobbies, favorite musicians or movies, and give them a venue to share their knowledge. Teens love showing off what they know, and they will give you ideas on how to do this if you just listen to them. Be culturally aware and don't just bring your culture to them, let them share what is important to them.

## 4 ALTER YOUR ACTIVITIES

Teens and tweens definitely need a lot of variety in lessons, and differing their practice will help increase their language retention rate. Lessons that are focused on hands-on and interactive activities without being overbearing or intimidating work best for this age group. It's important to give them the opportunity to put into practice what they are learning and to incorporate different types of activities in one lesson. Varying what the students are doing on any given day can lead to more fluid lesson. Integrate games, presentations, question rounds, and any other form of interactive activity on a daily basis. Getting them out of their chairs, allowing an acceptable amount of noise (within reason) and providing structure within a fun atmosphere all work wonders for younger learners!

**TEACHING YOUNGER LEARNERS LIKE TEENS AND TWEENS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE STRESSFUL OR FRUSTRATING.**

You can make a big difference in the amount students' will learn and retain if you apply these strategies. **Don't forget to come to your younger learners with an open mind, patience, and a supportive attitude!**



# How To Teach Young Learners: One Step At A Time

**YOUNG LEARNERS, THOSE ATTENDING PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN, WILL NOT HAVE ANY PERSONAL REASON FOR STUDYING ENGLISH.**

It is simply another subject that they have to study at school or that their parents have told them they need to learn. At this point in their lives, they may not know or comprehend how important these classes can be. They might view your classes as simply another fun daily activity and that is just fine. Even at this early age, you can encourage them to develop an interest in learning English which will stay with them long after they have finished your classes.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND TEACH YOUNG LEARNERS BETTER

### 1 WHAT YOUNG LEARNERS WANT

Students at this level are just starting their academic careers. School may be intimidating for some of the students in your class so, in order to encourage everyone to participate, it is important to make your lessons relaxed and fun. YL Students will be learning very basic material but you can design creative lessons that get students moving around and speaking with one another. Young learners are generally very enthusiastic about songs, especially if they can sing along, and active games. Be sure to provide lots of encouragement and positive feedback. You want to create a safe, stress-free environment that everyone can enjoy learning in.

### 2 HOW YOUNG LEARNERS BEHAVE

Keep exercises fun and short because these students have short attention spans and are easily distracted. Over-acting and projection will help keep the focus on you. Teach students how to behave in a classroom by asking

them to be quiet while you are talking and raise their hands if they have questions or want to answer a question. This may not be directly related to ESL but it is important that students learn good behavior early on - it will make their transition to primary school easier.

Teach them to respond to basic classroom English phrases such as "Please sit down." because these are expressions that they will hear repeatedly throughout their study of English. For students at this age, you are responsible not only for starting to teach them English, but also for preparing them for their next level of education. Students will perform better in their classes if they behave well and have a good understanding of basic principles.

### 3 WHAT TO FOCUS ON

The primary focus of these lessons will be on communication and laying a solid foundation for further English coursework. Students should practice the different sounds of the English language and learn material such as the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes. You will introduce vocabulary words gradually and may choose to study some simple structures that relate to everyday life too.

It could be that reading and writing never enter into your classes but a focus on speaking and listening will help students become more comfortable and confident with English.

### 4 MORE YL TIPS

There are many other things you can do to ensure that students succeed in class. There is no need to assign homework at this stage but be sure to track individual and class progress so that students can visually see what they have learned and how they are doing. Encourage students to try their best and create a constructive learning environment where students do not need to worry about making mistakes. Create activities and exer-

cises that are entertaining. Help students learn how to interact with one another as well as how to speak English. Students will also feel more comfortable if you stick to a regular schedule so if you decide to make changes, implement them over a period of time rather than all at once.

Constantly review and avoid introducing too much new vocabulary at a time. Students may not remember material from one day to the next so repetition is important. The more students are exposed to certain material, the faster they will learn it. This is how native speakers learn English, by listening to people around them and expanding their range of vocabulary gradually.

**THESE LEARNERS CAN BE A REAL PLEASURE TO TEACH BECAUSE THEY DO NOT FEEL STRESSED BY THEIR STUDIES AND APPROACH EVERYTHING WITH YOUTHFUL INNOCENCE.**

You play an important role in helping them develop into lifelong learners.

**Foster a love of learning by creating lesson plans that appeal to them, suit their maturity level, and focus on what will help them excel in future English courses.**

# Teaching Kids English: 10 Things to Consider

## TEACHING CHILDREN CAN BE IMMENSELY REWARDING, ANYONE WHO HAS TAUGHT CHILDREN CAN TELL YOU THAT.

But it's not fun and games all the time, and sometimes it's just not that easy. English teachers who wish to teach children must be aware of the challenges and difficulties they may encounter, and prepare accordingly.

Here are the top 10 things to consider if you're serious about teaching kids English:

### 1 ARE YOU REALLY UP FOR IT?

If you want to teach kids English because you think it's easy, then this is not the job for you. Teaching children demands a great deal of creativity and energy. Kids will always keep you on your toes! They will amaze you and surprise you, but don't think that just because you'll be teaching colors and animals, it'll be a breeze. You'll most likely feel exhausted after every class, but oh, so happy!

### 2 A LITTLE PREPARATION GOES A LONG WAY

Never make the mistake of showing up for class with little or no ideas, and thinking that you'll figure it out as you go along. Preparation is essential, mostly because you'll need to gather lots of teaching materials. Seasoned teachers may be able to improvise an entire lesson with only a whiteboard and some markers, but why risk having a class that turns out to be a hellish nightmare? You can plan an entire week of lessons or a full month, but make sure you have a lesson plan for every class.

### 3 TRY TO CATER TO MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Young ESL students have strengths and weaknesses and the best way to take advantage of their strengths and help them learn effectively is to cater

to their learning styles or multiples intelligences, namely Visual – Spatial, Logical – Mathematical, Bodily – Kinesthetic, Musical – Rhythmic, Intra-Personal, Inter-Personal, Naturalist, and Spiritual. How can we accomplish this?

#### Let's see some examples:

- For musical – rhythmic intelligence learners, teach an ESL element with a song, like Rock Around the Clock for telling time.
- For bodily – kinesthetic intelligence learners, teach body parts with a game of Simon Says, or sing Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.
- For visual – spatial intelligence learners, use maps, charts, and all types of visual aids. Teach them the different types of stores and locations they may find around town with a big map-like board game, and have them “visit” the different locations by throwing the dice.

### 4 DON'T LET THEM GET BORED

If children are bored they won't pay attention, and they won't learn. You don't have to clown around all the time, either, - they're in class to learn, not to be entertained by you. Your job is to make learning engaging and fun.

Here are some ways to do this:

- Once they've been sitting and focused on a task for a while, get them out of their seats for a more active game. They should never remain seated for the duration of the class, unless they're teens.
- Use realia, or real life objects in class. No matter how colorful or big, students sometimes get tired of learning everything through flashcards.

### 5 MIX IT UP

ESL classes may include singing, dancing, and jumping, as well as writing, reading, or listening. The best

ESL lessons combine the right mix of teaching strategies. You may begin class with a short song, then move on to a reading exercise. The best rule of thumb is to switch between quiet, independent tasks to those that require action and movement.

### 6 BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH PARENTS

Unlike teaching adult students, when you teach the little ones you have to interact with their parents as well.

These must be informed about:

- Your goals, i.e., what you hope to accomplish throughout the year
- The children's learning goals, i.e., the syllabus for the school year
- Their children's progress, i.e., if they have achieved their learning goals satisfactorily

It is also recommended to encourage parents' active participation in their children's English learning. Even if they don't speak English themselves, they should be encouraged to ask the kids what they've learned, share songs, etc.

### 7 GATHER AN ARSENAL OF MATERIALS

When you teach children English it is essential to have a box of materials that can be adaptable to any game or activity. Must-have items are:

- a pair of dice
- flashcards
- blank bingo sheets (that can be filled in by students with either words or pictures)
- small toys – balls in several sizes, toy vehicles, animals, etc...
- bean bags
- puppets

### 8 REMEMBER IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT THE GAMES

Each game or activity you propose should target a specific learning goal or ESL element. It's not about coming

to class to play. ESL games are highly effective teaching strategies as long as you know how to fully utilize their potential.

## 9 TEACH IN CONTEXT

Lessons should be planned in accordance with learning goals. And vocabulary, grammar, and language should be taught in context. For example, when teaching children foods in English, it should be within a meal context like breakfast, lunch or dinner, and should never be a list of items they must study or memorize.

## 10 KEEP THEM MOTIVATED

As kids get older and reach their pre-teen years, some ESL games and activities may not interest them as much as they did in the past. Find out what does interest them. What kind of music do they like? What do they enjoy reading? What sports do they play? Which sports stars do they admire? Writing interview questions for their favorite NBA player will be a lot more interesting than just a list of questions in simple present.

**THE MOMENTS SHARED WITH YOUR YOUNG LEARNERS WILL FAR OUTWEIGH ANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES OR DISADVANTAGES COMMONLY ASSOCIATED TO TEACHING CHILDREN. JUST MAKE SURE THAT LEARNING ENGLISH IS NOT A CHORE FOR THEM, BUT RATHER A POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, ONE THAT THEY WILL REMEMBER FOR YEARS TO COME. MAKE SURE THEY HAVE FUN LEARNING, AND YOU'LL HAVE FUN TEACHING THEM TOO!**



# Adults And Children: The Differences Every Teacher Should Know

## TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CAN OFTEN BE AN EXCITING CAREER FOR MANY.

Whether you are choosing to do it on a gap year, or as a full time career, you are likely to come across a wide range of different people. Sometimes we may be required to teach children, even though we do not have experience in the area. Some language schools will give a mix of students. There will be those there who are looking to improve their English for general use. There will be those who are looking specifically for business English whilst others simply want to progress. It is important to garner, in the first class, what the actual intentions of the student are before going ahead with the plan. This way, you will find it easier to tailor a class to the specific needs of that student.

Before going ahead, however, you need to remember that adults, children and indeed teenagers are all different. Children learn in different ways to their older counterparts. As a result, you need to be able to make sure what to include in certain classes and what to leave out.

## THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADULTS & CHILDREN YOU SHOULD KNOW

### 1 CHILDREN AND LEARNING

One of the first things you should remember about kids is that their brains have more elasticity than those of adults. You could say that their brains are not “formed” yet, so to speak. As a result, it is easier for children to learn a new language. Try to remember your own personal experience, if you know a foreign language. If you learned it at the age of 7-10, learning new words most likely came easier to you, and you probably found yourself understanding simple phrases quite easily. However, as we become older, taking on a new language becomes a lot more difficult.

### 2 GAMES, STORY-TELLING AND MORE

It is also important to include age ap-

propriate materials in your classes. For example, children are not going to be interested in reading articles about the state of the economy, or even the fashion industry. In fact, most kids generally won't like reading articles at all! Other techniques need to be employed.

**GAMES:** Both adults and children love games. Therefore it is important to include these as much as possible in the class. In doing this, the teacher will be able to let words sink in easier. Often they can include games such as Hang Man, Pictionary, Simon Says and much more.

**STORY TELLING:** This is another effective technique. All children love story time. Find a simple fairy tale to tell the children, or make one up yourself! Afterwards, ask questions by putting the characters in different situations (“Sally’s grandmother is ill, what should Sally do?”). This way, kids can come up with their own answers. Effectively, you will be able to get the children to write their own stories. This can be incredibly beneficial in terms of their production skills.

**ATTENTION SPANS:** Children also tend to have short attention spans, so it is important for you to realize this. Long, drawn-out exercises which involve a lot of silence will not work. The kids will become agitated, start fidgeting and lose interest. Keep them engaged at all times. Posing questions, getting everyone involved in the exercise, and generally keeping them on their toes is always a good idea and can prove very effective.

### 3 ADULTS AND LEARNING

For older people, learning a language can be a challenge. There are some who do this professionally for translator jobs, and will generally have a gift for this. But for many adult learners, this is going to be new territory. Specifically when it comes to learning English, many might have had previous instruction in school as children. This is particularly true of those who live in Western European countries.

## 4 TOPICS OF INTEREST, HUMOUR AND ACTIVITIES

Keeping adults engaged is just as important as doing so with children! You might find that there are some students who are intent on learning, and will do their best to concentrate. This may not always be the case, therefore it is important to keep the class as interesting as possible.

**ACTIVITIES:** Games are possible option for adults as well. A lot of the time, they might have be tailored to suit adults. More “grown up” type games and activities will be useful in this regard. Debates are often a great way to get adults talking. Often, the students will end up speaking more and arguments can break out. As long as it does not get out of hand, this can be incredibly positive. The less you have to do, the more of a success the class is!

**HUMOUR:** It is also a good idea to have a sense of humour. Just be aware how humour translates in different cultures. In Germany, for example, the people are notorious for being humourless. This isn't necessarily the case, as it can differ from one region to the next.

**TOPICS OF INTEREST:** If you are teaching business people, then topics related to what they are doing (for example, someone who works with pressured air) will probably spark up the students' interests a bit more. The Internet is a wonderful resource in this sense, and you can find information on almost anything with the click of a mouse. Remember, most adults will also like to take a logical approach, but overall with both children and older students, using the language in a practical way is the most beneficial method.

# Ants in the Pants? Enchant Your ESL Students with These Great Chants

Where did Humpty Dumpty sit? Who helped put him back together after his tragic fall? If you know the answers to these questions, it is because you've repeated the famous nursery rhyme countless times. And THAT is the power of chants.

Chants are fun and easy to learn, mainly because they usually rhyme and can be easily repeated. But they are more than pure fun. Most are great sources of vocabulary and help improve pronunciation. Plus, they help restless students focus.

## HOW TO USE CHANTS IN YOUR ESL CLASS

### 1 CLASSROOM RULES CHANT

Download this simple chant at <http://busyteacher.org/7162-classroom-rules-chant.html>. You may even print it and make it into a poster. It's a great, easy way to teach and review classroom rules with your students. Repeat it several times, and they won't soon forget the rules.

### 2 MY HOUSE

This is a fun way to teach the rooms in a house and some of the things you find in them.

Bedroom, bathroom, living room, kitchen.  
Bedroom, bathroom, living room, kitchen.  
This is my family's house.

Sink in the bathroom. Sink in the kitchen.  
Sink in the bathroom. Sink in the kitchen.  
This is my family's house.

TV and sofa are in the living room.  
TV and sofa are in the living room.

This is my family's house.

And you can easily expand the chant to other rooms in the house. As you can see, it doesn't matter if the words don't rhyme: the essential element in the chant is repetition.

### 3 NURSERY RHYMES

Nursery rhymes are timeless classics that most people remember because they are repeated so often. TeachChildrenESL has nursery rhymes in PDF files that you can download and print for your class. Of particular use in the ESL classroom are:

- Hey Diddle Diddle ([teachchildrenesl.com/filez8932/songs/diddle\\_diddle.pdf](http://teachchildrenesl.com/filez8932/songs/diddle_diddle.pdf)) – Practice simple past forms of verbs like laugh, run, and jump.

- Humpty Dumpty ([teachchildrenesl.com/filez8932/songs/humpty\\_dump-ty.pdf](http://teachchildrenesl.com/filez8932/songs/humpty_dump-ty.pdf)) – Also features verbs in simple past.

### 4 COUNTING BUBBLE GUM

This chant/game will help your young learners practice their counting skills and have fun while they do it. Have your students sit in a circle on the floor. Go around the circle and tap each head as you say: Bubble gum, bubble gum, in a dish, how many pieces do you wish? (student says a number). Count the number of heads indicated and the last student is eliminated from the circle. This student must stand up and eliminate another in the same way. The last student left standing wins!

### 5 HOW MANY DAYS?

This is the chant everyone learns to remember how many days are in each month – and a great way to practice them in English:

Thirty days has September, April June and November.

All the rest have 31, excepting February alone.

And it had 28 days time,  
But in leap years February has 29.

### 6 APPLES AND BANANAS

Here's a fun, but also challenging chant. Students review vowel sounds.

I like to eat, eat, eat apples and bananas  
I like to eat, eat, eat apples and bananas  
I like to ate, ate, ate ay-ples and ba-nay-nays  
I like to ate, ate, ate ay-ples and ba-nay-nays  
I like to eat, eat, eat ee-ples and bee-nee-nees  
I like to eat, eat, eat ee-ples and bee-nee-nees  
I like to ite, ite, ite i-ples and by-ny-nys  
I like to ite, ite, ite i-ples and by-ny-nys  
I like to ote, ote, ote oh-ples and bo-no-nos  
I like to ote, ote, ote oh-ples and bo-no-nos

I like to oot, oot, oot oo-ples and boo-noo-noos

I like to oot, oot, oot oo-ples and boo-noo-noos

### 7 ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE

Another great way to review numbers one to ten.

One, two,  
Buckle my shoe.  
Three, four,  
Knock at the door.  
Five, six,  
Pick up sticks.  
Seven, eight,  
Lay them straight:  
Nine, ten,  
A big fat hen.

### 8 GRAMMAR CHANTS

Now, here's your chance to get creative and make your own chant! Remember that rhyming is not absolutely necessary, very often it's the repetition that works best. Here's an example of a chant you can say to practise simple present in both affirmative and negative forms:

Teacher: I

Class: I

Teacher: I see you.

Class: I see you.

Teacher: He

Class: He

Teacher: He sees you.

Class: He sees you.

Teacher: I

Class: I

Teacher: I don't see.

Class: I don't see.

Teacher: He

Class: He

Teacher: He doesn't see.

Class: He doesn't see.

Teacher: We

Class: We

Teacher/Leader: We speak English.

Class/Group: We speak English.

**NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF SIMPLE REPETITION!** Students learn words, structures, and pronunciation. And don't be surprised if you hear them chanting as they walk down the hall. They may not be able to get your chants out their heads!

# Phonology in the Classroom: It's Time to Teach Rhyme

**FOR THE ESL STUDENT, RHYME HAS GREAT VALUE. LEARNING ABOUT RHYME WILL INCREASE THE AWARENESS YOUR STUDENTS HAVE OF ENGLISH PHONOLOGY, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR PRONUNCIATION AND PHONICS.**

Speakers of languages with different phonetic make up than English will find it especially important to learn the appropriate and complete set of sounds in English.

Not only that, understanding rhyme and the sounds that make it possible are necessary before a student can become a fluent reader.

## HOW TO TEACH RHYME IN YOUR CLASSROOM

### 1 RHYMING WITH TPR

TPR, or total physical response, is an ESL teaching method which teaches by associating physical movement with foreign language learning. You can use TPR techniques with your students when practicing rhyme. Walk around your classroom reading two words at a time, some rhyming pairs and others not rhyming. When your students hear a pair that rhymes, they should jump up from their seats.

Have your class take their seats again and listen for the next rhyming pair. This activity can be a fun game for your students as they listen and physically respond at the appropriate times.

### 2 RHYMING WITH LITERATURE

Dr. Seuss is one of the most beloved authors of our time as well as a master of rhyme. You can do several activities with his work that challenge your students understanding of rhyme. One simple option is to photocopy a few pages from his books, pages that have several rhymes on them.

Then write out one word of each rhyming pair. Challenge your students to see if they can fill in words that will complete the rhyme. Following Dr. Seuss' example, allow students to make up their own words to complete a rhyme even if it becomes nonsensical. You can then read the actual text out loud to your class and have your students see how many words they chose the same as the doctor.

This is also a good time to mention rhythm and rhyme when it comes to English sentences.

In a similar vein, nursery rhymes can be employed in the same manner. These childhood classics use rhythm and rhyme to tell short stories that kids love. Try reading one aloud and pausing whenever a rhyming word is needed, and see if your students can supply the missing word. For example, you may start, "Hey diddle, diddle, the cat and the..." encouraging your students to shout out any words that might complete the rhyme. Use the classics "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star", "Jack Sprat Could Eat No Fat" and any others that come to mind.

You may even want to copy and distribute copies to your students allowing them to illustrate their own classroom nursery rhyme book that you can later compile.

### 3 RHYMING WITH GAMES

Rhyming just might give you the excuse to bring some silliness into the classroom. You can declare a rhyme day in your classroom when you start the rhyming fun off by calling your students by rhyming names rather than their actual names. As you call attendance, call out a name that rhymes with each of your students' names, and challenge them to respond. If you cannot think of a rhyming name for your students, simply make one up. Your students will still understand the concept even if you have to make things up to meet the rule.

Then, continue your day by calling students by rhyming names, and encourage your students to do the same.

Another easy rhyme game you can play is a rhythm-based circle. Have your class sit on the floor with legs crossed and start a percussive rhythm. With a four beat pattern, slap the legs twice, clap once and then do nothing on the fourth beat. This fourth beat is when you will say a word that your students will have to rhyme. For example, (slap, slap, clap) "Boy!" The group would continue (slap, slap, clap) and the next person would say, "Toy!" You can continue with the same rhyme pattern until no one else can think of another rhyme. Then change the word and play again. Either work your way around the circle, point to the people who should answer, or just let your students call out their ideas.

They will have fun with the game and learn more about rhyming in the process.

**WHENEVER YOU ARE TEACHING RHYME IN AN ESL CLASS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT THAT RHYMING WORDS ARE NOT ALWAYS SPELLED THE SAME.**

This is a perfect lead in to phonics and spelling, topics that are always good to review with nonnative English speakers. Ultimately, have fun with your class. Speakers and writers use rhyme for fun and creative expression, and you should encourage that in your students as well.

**When your students are having fun in the classroom, they will be motivated to learn and remember more of what you teach.**



# How to Drill: Drilling Activities for Your English Classroom

**AFTER INTRODUCING NEW VOCABULARY WORDS, GRAMMAR POINTS, OR SENTENCE STRUCTURES, YOU HAVE TO DRILL THEM WITH YOUR CLASS.**

There are many ways to drill new material. Using a variety of drilling methods in your classes will help make this portion of the lesson more interesting and keep students focused.

## HOW TO PROCEED

### 1 CHORAL REPETITION

Choral repetition is a commonly used method of drilling. Students simply have to repeat words or phrases after you. This is a good method because it means that students are given excellent model pronunciation immediately before they are asked to respond.

Going through vocabulary this way many times in a single lesson will be boring for your students and they will be less inclined to perform well.

Break up the monotony by *changing the speed or volume you use* and have students change their responses accordingly. Using this method, students are not called on individually to pronounce words therefore you will need to check individual pronunciation and comprehension separately. Integrating these checks into your drill activities will keep students alert because they will never know when you may call on them.

### 2 DRILLING WITH FLASHCARDS

Drilling using flashcards can be useful as well. In the introduction, show students both the image and word sides of each flashcard. When you start drilling words for the first time, show students the word side of the flashcard so they can practice reading and pronouncing it.

Later on, rather than show students the word you want them to pronounce,

show them the image. This will help check their comprehension of the material. With flashcards, you can also challenge your students when they become more familiar with certain vocabulary by flipping through the cards at a faster rate.

### 3 COMPREHENSION

Asking for volunteers or calling on students to give you a synonym, antonym, or translation of a new vocabulary word will check individual comprehension. **It is always nice to ask for volunteers as opposed to calling on students individually** but generally a volunteer will be more confident in his answer so this will not properly show whether or not the class understands the material.

When you find it necessary to single out particular students who are not participating in drill activities, calling on them for answers is an easy method of focusing their attention on the lesson. Doing comprehension checks is also a good way to break up the drill activities a bit.

### 4 DRILLING IN PAIRS

As material becomes more familiar, you may want to conduct short pair activities where a student's comprehension is tested by his partner. To do this with a vocabulary list for instance, have student A read the translation of each word in random order while the student B says the word in English. Student A can then place a checkmark next to all the words student B got correct and then the students can switch roles.

With this method students can check each other and have visual proof of how well they performed afterwards which they can refer to when practicing material on their own or preparing for exams.

Conducting an activity such as this on a regular basis will help students review vocabulary often and should not take more than five minutes even with

fifteen to twenty vocabulary words. **It may still be necessary to practice using choral repetition** before performing pair activities so that students are reminded of the proper pronunciation of the vocabulary.

### 5 GAMES

Breaking your classroom up into sections where each section says one portion of a new structure is another way of drilling material. In small classes you can conduct some drilling activities in a circle.

The more variation there is to an activity, the more students have to pay attention but it is best to start off with the simplest, easiest variation of a game and build on it as opposed to trying to explain a complex activity from the very beginning.

Challenging students but not overwhelming them is important in maintaining their attention and participation.

**DRILLING IS GENERALLY NOT THE MOST FUN PART OF TEACHING OR LEARNING ENGLISH BUT IT IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP WHEN LEARNING NEW MATERIAL. VARYING YOUR APPROACH CAN MAKE IT MORE ENJOYABLE AND ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY.**

# How To Teach English Using Games: The Original Hangman

THIS ALL-TIME FAVORITE IS FOR COMPLETE BEGINNERS OR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS. IT IS USEFUL FOR SPELLING, DICTIONARY WORK, STUDENT INTERACTION AND EMPOWERMENT, FAMILIARIZATION WITH PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES, TEACHING NUMBERS AND LETTERS TOGETHER AND SIMPLE EDUCATIONAL FUN. IT IS DESIGNED SIMPLY TO REMIND US OF THE TEACHING APPLICATIONS OF THIS WORD GAME IN ITS BASIC FORM WITHOUT THE FRILLS.

This game has a very simple format, but can be built upon to practice not only simple vocabulary, but also the use of vowels and consonants in word creation. Common letters can be elucidated as well as many language structures such as prefixes and typical word endings.

## HOW TO PROCEED

### 1 INTRODUCE THE RULES

Introduce the rules by initially demonstrating a word on the board without the gallows or the noose. Personalizing the word adds reality and therefore it is a good idea to choose the name of one of the students. They will probably be surprised to find their name contains some of the 'English vowels' i.e. A,E,I,O,U. Make a line for each letter of the word and count out the number of letters and write the appropriate number underneath.

Draw their attention to the name e.g.. "It is a five letter word. It has 2 vowels. The first letter of the word is ..."

Get your students to check the spelling of their own names and their partners to their left and right and delight in their discovery of this striking similarity with the English Language.

### 2 DEMONSTRATE

This is a group game for everyone. Begin with a demonstration on the board so that students can clearly visualize how to play.

Then a simple description. The students have to guess your mystery word. "This word has a certain number of letters" and they have to elicit them one by one. Ensure the rules are understood by concept checking.

As they call out a letter of the alphabet the teacher will cross it out from A-Z written on the board for reference and put that letter in the mystery word, or draw a body feature on the Hangman as appropriate. It is important to show visually that for each letter missed, one body part is drawn on the Hangman.

The object of the game is to guess the word before being hanged. The students normally have 9 attempts (Head, neck, body, arms, legs and feet), but optional features can be added if the word is too difficult to guess (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hair).

### 3 PRACTICE

Practice vocabulary already introduced, if appropriate e.g. popular hobbies. As the game focuses largely on letters and spelling practice, also incorporate pronunciation of the targeted words and by numbering the letters teach the practical usage of cardinal and ordinal counting.

Once the unknown word has been ascertained, speaking should be encouraged to use the vocabulary in context and thus add to the language content.

### 4 PLAY HANGMAN!

Initially the game may be played as a group activity and dictionaries are permitted as this encourages future usage, when relevant. The students can guess the full word at any time, but you should impose a penalty if wrong. This is to prevent random and careless guesses and keep control of the students and the game.

To encourage student empowerment the person who correctly guesses the word can then come to the board and chose a secret word himself/herself for the next game.

Do not distribute any handouts with instructions. The game and its rules can be explained verbally and visually.

The students can sit in a horseshoe configuration using seats only as this activity does not require pens, papers or desks. This will also enable moving people around easily if smaller groups are utilized later in the game.

IT MAY BE USED AS A WARMER/ CLOSER OR FILLER DEPENDING ON THE TIME AVAILABLE.

# The Best Shows/Movies for a Children's ESL Video Lesson

## IF YOU WANT TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR LISTENING COMPREHENSION, NOTHING WORKS BETTER THAN VIDEOS.

But this begs the question: which movies/TV shows should we show them in class? Clearly this is not a case of "anything goes", particularly with young learners who often lack enough vocabulary to understand a full-length feature film in English. So, to eliminate the guesswork on your part, here is a list of the best videos to show your young learners - movies and shows that will not only entertain them, they will also help them hone those listening skills!

## TRY THESE SHOWS & MOVIES FOR YOUR NEXT CHILDREN'S ESL VIDEO LESSON

### 1 SESAME STREET

The American children's TV series has produced solid, educational content for over 40 years. The series features short segments, videos, and songs targeted to very young children, content that is highly appropriate for young English learners of ages 3-5. The best part about the Sesame Street videos is that teachers can access them in multiple ways. SesameStreet.org has a Video page where you can access very short video segments that help children polish their counting skills, for example, or say the alphabet in English, among many others. Most of the videos are less than a minute long and are great fillers or ways to complete an activity.

You can also watch the videos on Sesame Street's YouTube Channel, or order the videos from Amazon.

### 2 DR. SEUSS

Dr. Seuss' books and silly rhymes have entertained children for decades. His work is also available on video, and though most of it is fantastical and features characters that are out of this world, the rhymes are great for pronunciation practice. Also, most stories have an important message

you can discuss with you class. You can also watch The Lorax with your class and discuss the effects of pollution and the importance of preserving our trees. Or watch a short excerpt about the Sneetches: it presents a very relevant discussion point regarding prejudice and discrimination.

### 3 CHARLIE BROWN

Charlie Brown is a boy that most children can easily relate to. He has a group of friends he likes to play baseball with, and has a dog – a very special one. Snoopy is not your typical canine buddy, but we would love to have a dog like him. This is why the Peanuts cartoons have fascinated children of all ages for decades. Several movies and TV specials have been made based on the Peanuts gang, the most popular and the best ones to watch with your ESL class being the holiday specials like It's the Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown, It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown, or A Charlie Brown Christmas.

### 4 YOUTUBE GEMS

YouTube has come a long way from being simply the video sharing site where we could watch people's home videos, jokes and silly gags. Thousands of videos with educational content are uploaded on a daily basis by ESL teachers and schools. A quick search should give you dozens of options to watch with your class. One noteworthy YouTube channel is DJCKidsMedia. The children's book and DVD publisher has a YouTube channel filled with short, engaging videos that can teach your young learners to tell time, count to 10, or phonics for the letters of the alphabet. Be sure to check out this YouTube channel and others, but before you show your class any video on YouTube, make sure you see it first to check for any inappropriate content.

### 5 ANIMATED CLASSICS AND FEATURE FILMS

As far as animated or feature-length children's films go, the sky's the lim-

it. There is a large variety to choose from, but for the purposes of your ESL class, please remember the following. It's essential that you choose a movie, not only for the entertainment value, but one that is a good fit for your student's ages and levels. As these movies are longer, you may opt to show just one scene or a few, and not the entire film. If you choose any of the classics you may have the added advantage that your students will probably have already seen them in their native language, thus giving them better chances of following the plot and dialogue.

#### Some of the classics we recommend are:

- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – BusyTeacher.org has this great worksheet for you to use.
- Toy Story 1, 2 or 3
- Puss in Boots
- Finding Nemo

## TIPS FOR SHOWING VIDEOS TO YOUR CLASS:

Always have a lesson plan for a video lesson, or make sure the video fits into one. **Never show a video "just because"** - even if it is a 2-minute filler, it should still serve a purpose within your lesson goal, like review something they've been practicing, like the alphabet, for example. If you want to take an entire class hour for a video lesson, that's fine, just makes sure you allow plenty of time for your students to complete a warm up (pre-viewing activities), as well as viewing and post viewing activities.

#### ALWAYS REMEMBER: THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU SIMPLY SHOWING A VIDEO TO YOUR CLASS.

This is about maximizing their learning opportunities and helping them hone their listening skills. If you manage to give them a special treat with a fun movie at the same time – so much the better!



# From Chaos to Order – How to Deal with Large Preschool Classes

If there is one word that defines preschoolers, it's energy. A far cry from the shy teens that try to hide in a corner of the class, or the adult learners that are attentive and intent on learning, preschoolers just want to have fun! Most don't have goals for learning – they learn English because they're told to. But they soon discover (and with our help) that learning English is fun, and they meet our suggestions for activities with great enthusiasm.

The problem arises when you have a large group of young learners. The usual complications of teaching a large class are compounded by the fact that preschoolers can't read or write, least of all in English. Most activities will be games, TPR or crafts. They often get a little too enthusiastic, noise levels rise, smaller children get pushed, objects get thrown, and general mayhem ensues.

## HOW TO DEAL WITH LARGE PRESCHOOL CLASSES

### 1 PROBLEM # 1: YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SPACE

Unless you have a huge classroom, you won't have enough room for TPR and activities that require racing, running, hopping or dancing.

#### **Solution:**

While we can't control the size of our classroom, we can make the most of the space we do have. Instead of sacrificing these activities and keeping students at their desks, have them do versions of these activities while they stand on the same spot. Instead of racing to the board, they can raise their hand first. They can still spin around or touch their nose, head, etc. See if you have enough room to have them sit in a circle (or two concentric circles!) on the floor. They can still pass objects around, clap their hands, etc. but they won't bump into each other or the furniture!

### 2 PROBLEM # 2: STUDENTS CAN'T SEE FLASHCARDS, ILLUSTRATIONS OR THE BOOK

When you have a large class, there will inevitably be students who will be too far

from the front of the classroom to see what you're showing them. This leads to complaining ("I can't seeeee!"), wailing or even students standing and walking up to get a better look.

#### **Solution:**

The best solution involves having large-sized flashcards, the bigger the better! It's not hard to find big posters and illustrations that everyone can see. You may also want to consider blowing up copies of some illustrations or pages in your book. Finally, if all else fails, simply walk around the classroom and let everyone have a good look up close, particularly if you're reading a story.

### 3 PROBLEM # 3: CLASS IS TOO LOUD

Of course, you'll want everyone to participate, but the more children you have, the louder it gets. They may be singing quite nicely, but the teacher next door will find it disturbing to her class.

#### **Solution:**

Establish clear rules regarding when to speak (i.e. they must raise their hands first, not interrupt you or a classmate when they're speaking, not shout, etc.) Regarding songs, chants or other loud activities, try to keep these to a minimum and make them last a few minutes. Introduce different "volume" levels, for example, start singing a song very softly and raise your volume as you repeat, till you finally sing it loudly.

### 4 PROBLEM # 4: LIMITED MATERIALS

This may be one of the biggest hurdles to overcome. The larger the class, the more copies, the more flashcards, the more glue, scissors, markers, etc. you need. Your school should be able to help you with some of these resources, but they will probably not buy more toy animals, plastic vegetables and fruits, or even more expensive supplies.

#### **Solution:**

Here's where you'll have to get creative – and crafty! Don't have enough flashcards for a game? Have your students make some first! Do you run out of crayons faster than you can buy them? Gather broken crayons from other classrooms

and teachers, and recycle them – make new ones! There are lots of activities you can do with your class by recycling materials they can bring from home – just ask each student to contribute, and soon enough, you'll have more than enough!

### 5 PROBLEM # 5: ZERO TO MINIMUM INDIVIDUAL INTERACTION

And this is one of the biggest hurdles to overcome if you want your students to learn. The more students you have in your class, the fewer opportunities they will have to speak individually, and the fewer chances you'll have of interacting with each one.

#### **Solution:**

This will take a lot of attention on your part, but you have to make sure you hear from each of your students at least once in each class. Try to spread out your interactions with the children so you're not left only speaking to those who are the most enthusiastic. If you have a couple of eager beavers competing to answer all of your questions, praise them for their enthusiasm, but tell them that you'd also like to hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet.

Another great way to maximize interaction is the "divide and conquer" technique. Split the class into two groups. Say you're reading a story about Christmas. Tell Group A to draw something related to the holiday, for example how they celebrate it with their family. Read the story to Group B, followed by a Q&A session, while Group A completes their drawings. Then ask Group B to draw something related to the story, while you read to Group A. This strategy works great, provided you have enough space to set a group aside and not have them distract the other group. But the effort is well worth it, as you'll have more students participate in answering questions.

### TEACHING PRESCHOOLERS TAKES LOADS OF PATIENCE AND EVEN MORE CREATIVITY.

You may not have enough space, time or materials, but make use of the resources you do have. And your little ones' enthusiasm is one of the best resources there is!

# 5 Effective Ways to Calm Your Students Down

IT IS ALWAYS GREAT TO SEE YOUR STUDENTS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT LEARNING AND THE ACTIVITIES YOU SO CAREFULLY PREPARED FOR THEM BUT ONCE THEY HAVE GOTTEN ALL RILED UP, IT IS TIME TO BRING THEM BACK DOWN SO THAT YOU CAN SEND THEM TO THEIR PARENTS OR OTHER TEACHERS WITHOUT UPSETTING ANYONE.

Additionally if students are very loud and energetic at the very beginning of class, you will have to curb their excitement a little in order to complete the rest of the activities for your lesson.

Here are some strategies for dealing with students who are bouncing off the walls of your classroom.

## HOW TO CALM YOUR ESL STUDENTS DOWN

### 1 SIT DOWN

Students who are seated are more restrained and subdued. If students are running around the classroom or having a heated discussion, ask everyone to go back to their desks and sit down. The physical state of sitting in their chairs will help them relax. Standing is a great stance for action while sitting is more a state of rest. Some students may fidget at their desks but sitting is already a big improvement and this is less likely to distract other students.

Once learners have taken their seats, shift their focus immediately to an activity so that they do not become bored or lose interest in the lesson. It is important for students to focus their energy on learning English so help them put it to good use by effectively managing your classroom.

### 2 EXERCISE

An activity requiring lots of energy that will tire students out could make them a little more calm during the rest of your lesson.

If your young learners cannot sit still at the beginning of class, give them the chance to use that energy during the warm up and then continue with your lesson.

Some simple TPR games like Head and Shoulders or Simon Says would be perfect for reviewing body parts, writing relays would be good for slightly older students and even just simple exercises like jumping jacks or running in place should help learners settle down.

For some students these types of exercises will actually energize them more so experiment to see what works best with your classes. Different groups of students may require different tactics.

### 3 QUIET TIME

Active exercises can be a lot of fun, especially with young learners, but after students have gotten out of their seats and moved around a bit, bring their heart rates down with a quiet activity such as reading or writing. Students can take their time silently reading through an article or begin writing their individual answers to short answer or essay questions before you turn these activities into class activities to check pronunciation, comprehension, and grammar points.

These types of activities are good for calming a class down but should be avoided if students lack energy as you risk them falling asleep.

### 4 FOCUS

Get students to really focus by conducting an activity such as a circle exercise or something similar that is fast paced. This will take advantage of their energy but because they never know whose turn it will be next, they have to be quiet and pay attention in order to perform their part well.

Another game that is exciting but requires that students remain calm and

quiet is Chinese Whispers where students work in teams to see who can correctly pass a sentence from team member to team member the fastest.

### 5 TOPICS

A topic that interests your students will also make them more attentive. Keep your learners in mind when deciding what to talk about in class. Students who are focused will not have the inclination to move around a lot nor will they be easily distracted. These are both likely to happen if students are overly excited or energized.

If you are not sure what your students are interested in, simply ask them or take a poll of various topics to see what they are most eager to learn about.

AS YOU CAN SEE THESE APPROACHES ARE VERY DIFFERENT BUT THEY CAN ALL BE EFFECTIVE WHEN USED PROPERLY. THE METHOD YOU CHOOSE DEPENDS ON YOUR STUDENTS AND HOW THEY REACT TO ACTIVITIES.

Be sure to use the one that will be most efficient for the type of students you have in your classroom. Luckily this becomes less of a problem as students get older and in adult classes you will rarely have similar issues. If you struggle with this, change your approach to classes in order to resolve it and look on the bright side, at least no one is sleeping.

# Stickers for the Little Ones: Motivation Booster or Evil?

## NOTHING MAKES A CHILD PROUDER THAN SHOWING OFF A NEWLY ACQUIRED STICKER.

It gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment. It's proof and evidence of a job well done. Children connect to real objects more than abstracts, and reward stickers are the one tangible item they need to feel encouraged to keep working in class. Words like, "Good job!" are simply not enough if they don't come with the visible "seal of approval". It's good to teach children about things like responsibility and the importance of learning, but it just doesn't sink in if they don't have something tangible to hold on to. Still, the use of reward stickers in the ESL classroom should not be taken lightly. Teachers must be aware of the fact that a highly visible sticker chart will be very well received by some students, but not all of the children will be happy with the arrangement.

## PROS AND CONS OF SCHOOL STICKERS:

### PROS:

- Of all of the things you may use to reward your students for their efforts, school stickers are the least questioned by parents. Unlike candy or small toys, stickers are the most harmless: all other "gifts" may be construed as a form of bribery.
- Teacher stickers (those that are designed for school use) are much more affordable, in fact, as they can easily be bought in bulk. You can even find printable stickers online and print them on some full size label paper.
- They are highly effective in classroom management, whether you wish to deal with behavior problems, or simply get a little more cooperation from your young students.
- It gives children something to look forward to: it gives them an achievable goal (young children simply do not relate to learning goals).

### CONS:

- Students who don't do as well will not get as many stickers - they may in fact get none. If the teacher wishes to reward a student with one to

provide some encouragement, the others may question the decision or even say it's undeserved. So, you're leaving the field wide open for disappointment, resentment, mistrust and a host of other negative feelings.

- Students who typically do well in class will move jump through hoops to get more stickers, and the more they get the more they want. This sometimes makes it difficult for teachers to encourage shy students.

## PUBLIC REWARD VS. PRIVATE REWARD:

The reward chart hanging on the wall will show exactly how many stars each student has, and is visible to all students, which encourages healthy competition. After all, we live in a highly competitive world, right? However, there are times when the reward chart makes students feel less than good about themselves, particularly those who have very few stickers in comparison to others who have many. Privately rewarded stickers will still boost their confidence and motivate them to keep working. Moreover, a teacher may choose to reward a shy student with a sticker, and if this is done privately, there is a little more leeway. So, we must all be aware of the risks posed by public rewards if we choose to employ them, whereas with private rewards there are none. Here are some great ways to reward children with kids stickers:

### CLASSIC STAR CHART

Make a chart with the children's names listed on the left side. Give each a star sticker for good behavior, completing a task first, picking up the most toys, etc. You can reward countless types of behavior, but if you use this type of public reward make sure you reward different types of things, not only class performance. For example, a child who seems to have a hard time learning won't get any stars for winning games, but he or she may get plenty for helping you tidy up. Give them a prize from a grab bag after they collect 10 stars. They will certainly work hard to earn that prize!

### STICKER ALBUMS

Give each student a sticker album they will keep for the duration of the

course. You can make them yourself, and they can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish. As you reward each child with a sticker, they stick it in their albums, and for every 5 they collect, they get a special, larger one or a "limited edition" sticker. The best thing about this reward system is that the kids get to keep their albums, plus it's a lot more private than the wall chart in plain sight. Students choose whether they wish to show the amount of stickers they've collected, or keep it to themselves.

### STICKER EXCHANGE

This can work with either the public wall chart or private sticker album. Have a number of prizes of varying value on display somewhere in the classroom. The system works like this: once a child has collected a certain number of stickers, say 5, he or she has the opportunity to trade them in for a prize of lower value, say a candy bar. Or they may choose to wait till get collect some more for a bigger, more expensive prize, say 20 stickers for a book. The teacher circles or checks the stickers they have traded in: there's no need to actually remove them from the chart or album. This is a great way to teach children to save, plus a thing or two about patience and planning.

### CUSTOM STICKERS

For more targeted rewards use stickers that have been designed with specific messages, like stickers for playground behavior, collaboration, spelling, etc... This way, you have the chance to reward students for particular skills or behaviors, and they'll have more chances to earn stickers.

## THE REAL KEY TO EFFECTIVELY MOTIVATING YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH REWARD STICKERS IS FINDING WAYS TO MOTIVATE THEM ALL, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFICULTIES LEARNING ENGLISH.

In these cases, you may choose to reward them for the best drawing or the neatest handwriting. But remember that all students deserve praise for one thing or another. If you keep this one thing in mind, all of your young learners will receive the boost of confidence they need. The possibilities are almost limitless!



# 5 Non-Verbal Ways to Do Error Correction

EFFECTIVE ERROR CORRECTION IS ONE OF THE THINGS ESL TEACHERS STRUGGLE WITH THE MOST.

If you correct them too much, you might make them feel discouraged and compromise their fluency for the sake of accuracy. If you correct them too little, they'll continue making the same mistakes. Achieving the right balance is a daunting task, although not an impossible one. And when doing on the spot correcting, do you simply supply the right answer? Although it is certainly an option, you should sometimes give your students the chance to correct themselves.

There are several verbal strategies you may use, like **asking them to repeat what they've just said**, or **repeating the sentence yourself but pausing** to let the student fill in the "blank" correctly.

However, here are the 5 best non-verbal ways to do error correction.

## HOW TO PROCEED

### 1 USE A GRAMMAR FLAG

Once you have your students actively engaged in some drilling exercises, use a little red flag to "flag" their mistakes. **The flag goes up if they make a mistake** and students instantly know they should go back and say it again. You may also use the flag in others types of activities, or whenever you wish to work on accuracy.

### 2 USE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Students are sometimes self-conscious enough without having to endure constant corrections. So, how can you effectively correct them and not stomp on their confidence in the process? When a student makes a mistake, like saying a verb in the past tense incorrectly, use an *exaggerated* facial expression to signal the mistake.

**Give them an open-mouthed, wide-eyed stare. Or arch an eyebrow.** The more "theatrical" the facial expression is, the funnier it'll be. You'll be effectively signalling that a mistake has been made, but students won't take it so seriously.

### 3 USE GESTURES

Another very effective way to show students they've made a mistake is through gestures, some of which may be specific to the kind of mistake. Teachers typically **gesture backwards** with their hands or point to the back to show students they haven't used the verb in the past. Students often use the wrong pronouns: it's quite common to hear a student say, "*She went to the movies with your boyfriend.*" To which you simply reply by pointing to yourself with a look of shock or surprise.

You may also implement a gesture to indicate that students should repeat something, or say it again, and if they repeat the mistake, you can raise a finger to show them where in the sentence the mistake is, though they have to figure out what they are doing wrong.

### 4 USE VISUAL REMINDERS

Very often students forget the final "-s" in the simple present, third person singular. You may have a big **S** stuck on a wall that you can point to on such occasions, or point to something that will trigger the right response, like the picture of an S-shaped snake.

Visual reminders are also great for vocabulary-related mistakes. A student may say "*childs*" instead of "*children*". You point to a picture of a group of children to indicate that something is wrong, while the student has to figure out he or she used the wrong plural.

### 5 USE FINGER COUNTING

How can you correct mistakes in word order in a non-verbal way? Finger counting is simply perfect for this! Say a student used the wrong word order to ask a question: "*You are a teacher?*" Ask the student to repeat the question and then show him or her how you count the words on your fingers.

Show the student how the first two fingers are in the wrong order, so that the student understands the question should start with "Are you..."

YOU CAN GET AS CREATIVE AS YOU LIKE WITH YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, GESTURES, AND VISUAL REMINDERS. REMEMBER HERE THAT THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN FROM THEIR MISTAKES, AND IF YOU SIMPLY SUPPLY THE RIGHT ANSWER, THEY MAY NOT FULLY INTERNALIZE IT.

Some teachers have even been known to hum well-known songs to trigger the correct response, like Depeche Mode's "*People are People*" when students make the classic mistake, "people is"!

# How to Add Language Points to Your ESL Crafts

**ARTS AND CRAFTS PROJECTS ARE A GREAT FIT IN THE ESL CLASSROOM. THESE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES CATER TO ARTISTICALLY-TALENTED CHILDREN, PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH SOME TIME TO WORK QUIETLY, AND GIVE THEM THE POSSIBILITY TO PRODUCE SOMETHING THEY CAN PROUDLY TAKE HOME.**

Crafts are great ways for them to show off what they've learned! However, as language learning is our primary concern, we need to make sure we take advantage of crafts time to teach a relevant language point.

## **WHEN CHOOSING THE CRAFT ACTIVITY:**

1. Choose a craft for its potential for language teaching (how much language you will be able to teach with this particular activity) rather than its artistic appeal. In other words, it is important to consider first what you want to teach, and only then find a craft that will help you meet your language goals.
2. Consider that your best choice may be something less "artistic" or which involves less sophisticated tools, like a simple painting with watercolors or a drawing activity like a cartoon. Sometimes we are fascinated by the wide range of materials we can use, and we forget what it is we want to teach. Remember that we are ESL teachers, not art teachers. Don't let yourself be swayed by a "cool" art project.
3. Don't be afraid to adapt a craft project to suit your language teaching needs. A Springtime Mobile Project may be easily turned into a fall, summer or winter mobile project with the proper adjustments in the vocabulary list.

## **HOW TO MAKE YOUR ART PROJECT MORE LANGUAGE-ORIENTED**

### **1 WHAT TO ADD TO MAKE AN ART PROJECT MORE LANGUAGE-ORIENTED:**

- Vocabulary – Introduce a set of new words they will learn and practice through this exercise. This is a particularly useful strategy when you're teaching students about a particular holiday like Cinco de Mayo, Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, etc. and you want to do it through a craft project.
- Reading – Have students read a short story and ask them a question at the end. Have them supply their answers in a picture, clay model, or collage of magazine cutouts.
- Listening/Viewing – same as above, except this time you read the story or play an audio track. Or show your students a video. Ask students to watch to the video for the London 2012 Olympics song, Survival by Muse. Students pay close attention and write down the sports they see. See who can name the most! Students then draw/paint a picture of their favorite Olympic sport. Make it class project! Students work together on a large poster board, each one drawing one sport.
- Speaking – Speaking tasks typically involve role plays. Why not ask students to make their props? For a shopping role play, they can model the items that will be on sale out of clay, or draw them or cut them out from magazines. Or say you want to have your students practice making polite requests. Ask them to draw different fruits, vegetables or food items on cardboard and have them paint their foods. When they're dry, students set a table with their items and ask each other to "Pass the salt, please" or "Could you please pass me an apple?"

- Writing – Students create a comic

strip, thus combining their drawing with writing. You may also have them illustrate a story, or create a book as a group.

You can introduce language points in three distinct moments: before, during or after the art or craft project. Let's look at some examples.

### **2 BEFORE THE ART PROJECT**

Language points that are ideally introduced before the project typically involve new vocabulary. Introduce the new words in groups of four to five, check for comprehension by asking questions or asking students for examples, and finally they will be ready to start their art project. This works great for vocabulary related to holidays or special celebrations. For example, introduce Christmas vocabulary and then have students make tree decorations based on the items they learned.

### **3 DURING THE ART PROJECT**

If you make your students chant or sing while they complete their project, they can very easily practice a specific grammar or language point. Also, try teaching them a step by step process as they work on their project. Say you want to teach them verbs like cut, glue, put, stick, etc. you can teach these new verbs as you instruct them step by step.

### **4 AFTER THE ART PROJECT**

This is very simple and easy to do if you ask them to draw or paint a scene, and then give them instructions to write a story based on their picture. You can specifically instruct them to set the story in the past, present or future.

### **ESL CRAFTS ARE TREMENDOUS FUN FOR ESL STUDENTS.**

But they are also wonderful language teaching tools. Don't let these opportunities go to waste and give your students a valuable lesson instead.

# 10 Creative Spelling Teaching Ideas

Spelling can often come across as a challenge to many people, both adults and children. With the English language, it can be doubly excruciating to learn.

Teachers of English need to be sure that their spelling is immaculate, as it can often reflect badly on you if your spelling is not up to scratch. Even if you have difficulty (a lot of people suffer with mild to severe forms of dyslexia), a good idea would be to have a dictionary close by. This will allow you to be sure, especially if a student asks a question. Techniques of spelling are taught differently, depending on the age of the students and of course their current level of language. It can be something of a challenge if you're teaching the Roman alphabet to individuals who come from places like the Far East, Russia or the Middle East. Often their own languages will use a different alphabet such as Arabic or Cyrillic. Before you decide to set about teaching spelling, it is important to realize just where each of your students is coming from. But rote learning isn't the only thing that is going to help. You need to be creative in your style in order to grab and keep the students' attention.

## HOW TO TEACH SPELLING

### 1 THE ABC SONG

Everyone has learned this in school. It is probably one of the most simple and effective ways of teaching in rhyme. This is particularly effective with children. When it comes to languages where the Roman alphabet is used, they will have their own versions of this song. Sometimes they are similar, sometimes the letters are pronounced completely differently. It is important for you as the teacher to give the English pronunciation and make sure that the students apply it correctly. This activity is generally for beginners, and afterwards it will serve as a practical basis for learning to spell words, both simple and complex.

### 2 HANG MAN

Most of us have played Hang Man at some point in our lives. The teacher will usually start with a blank board, and draw out "gaps" for where the letters of a specific word go. Get one of the students to stand at the top of the class and ask them to think of a word. The students will then ask the student what letters are in

the word. If it is correct, then the letter will be put in one of the gaps. If not, then the man slowly gets "hanged", first with the drawing of the noose, the head and all the limbs. This can be incredibly effective for students to see how a certain word is spelled out as it is slowly revealed to them!

### 3 PERSONAL DICTIONARIES

Whether you have a class of children or adults, a good idea is to use a personal dictionary. Have them divide it into different sections for each letter at the beginning of the course. Any word the students are unfamiliar with or have difficulty spelling can be put into this dictionary. It is a great way of building up a quick reference, especially for words that constantly crop up.

### 4 USING SCRABBLE SQUARES

This isn't so much Scrabble - it is using the scrabble squares. A variety of different games can be made from this. An idea would be to get an article and jot down the unfamiliar vocabulary. As an activity for afterwards, play a game involving these. Get the students to spell out a word with their cubes and go around and check them. Write up the words as they originally appear on the board, and with those that are spelled incorrectly, ask the students what is wrong with them and why they are incorrect. This will allow the student to correct their own mistakes, which can help them to be more cautious in the future.

### 5 SPELLING RULES

English is notoriously difficult when it comes to spelling. Therefore, there is a variety of different rules which are associated with it. Here in an example: "I" before "e" except after "c". An example can be seen in the words "receive" and "conceive". However, due to the nature of English, there are exceptions, such as in "science". To help students get their heads around this, write down all the rules and get them to write it down in their personal dictionaries.

### 6 FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONS

This ties in with the last point. It is a good idea to focus on the exceptions, such as words like "science". Have the students write these down in their dictionaries. As a language learner myself, I found compiling my own list of words

I found difficult to be incredibly helpful. Now as a teacher, I find it to be just as useful for students.

### 7 REGULAR SPELLING TESTS

Most people who attended school in an English speaking country has been subjected to the painful thought of spelling tests. Usually they are held on a certain day of the week. The students are given a list of words to learn for the week, and then tested on them usually at the end of class. Offer rewards for those who get everything right! This will further motivate the students to learn.

### 8 WORD OF THE DAY

Having a specific word, particularly one that has difficult or unusual spelling, during every class will expose the students to new spelling structures. Not only will this allow for much more familiarity with strange words, but a discussion can be brought up from it. Often it will work as a great filler if you happen to have some time left at the end of class!

### 9 "BOWLING"

As a quick test of the student's spelling ability, have everyone stand up. Throw various words at random students and see if they are able to spell them. If not, they have to remain standing. Often this will motivate them to learn the words correctly, as nobody wants to be left standing on their own.

### 10 SPELLING BEE

In certain countries, Spelling Bees are quite popular with younger people. Often they can be a great incentive for people to learn. Hosting a mini spelling bee in the class is often a great way of motivating younger learners, especially if there is a reward involved. It can be a lot of fun. Get your students to try and organize the competition themselves, organizing who will be the judges, the participants etc.

**ALL OF THESE METHODS COME WITH THE PURPOSE OF HELPING STUDENTS TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH NEW WORDS.** We cannot stress the importance of building up a personal dictionary enough. Having a quick reference is often a life saver and, over time, the students are gradually going to need it less and less.



# Getting Kids Ready to Write: 4 Easy Strategies for ESL Teachers

## PUTTING A BLANK PIECE OF PAPER BEFORE SOMEONE AND ASKING HER TO WRITE CAN BE INTIMIDATING, AND THE CLEAN WHITE PAGE CAN ACTUALLY HINDER THE WORDS FROM COMING.

No one is more susceptible to this fear of the blank page than kids. That is why stressing writing as a process is so important with young students. A big part of the writing process is getting kids thinking about what they will write, or prewriting, before we ask them to put words on the blank page. Following are some ideas you can use to get your kids' heads in the right place before they set their pencils to that empty page.

## GETTING KIDS READY TO WRITE: TRY THESE 4 EASY STRATEGIES

### 1 THE RULE OF THREE

Something as simple as folding a piece of paper into three columns can be enough to motivate your kids to get their ideas on the paper. Ask each person to divide his paper into three sections, either by folding or by drawing lines down the page and then label those columns beginning, middle and end. Then, as your students are thinking about a story that they might write, have them make notes on something that could happen at the beginning of the story, in the middle of the story, and at the end of the story. By getting some possibilities down on paper before writing the story, your students will have an easier time moving the story forward and will ensure a solid plot which clearly has a beginning, middle and end, an achievement that does not always come easy for children.

### 2 THE KWL CHART

Before setting your students to some research and then a report on any given subject, have them start with a KWL chart. Like the previous activity, your students should begin by dividing their papers into three sections, but

this activity is designed for nonfiction writing, not fiction. Therefore, rather than labeling the columns as sections of a story, your students should label the sections what I know, what I want to know, and what I learned. They can then spend a few minutes filling out the first column with facts and information they already know about the subject they are researching. Then have your students ask themselves some questions about the topic they are going to research. What do they want to know? Have them make some notes in the second column. Now it is time to do the research. As your kids read, have them take notes in the third column, writing down information as they discover it. When it is time to write the report, have your students use the information on the paper as an outline for what they will say about their research.

### 3 THE DAILY REPORT

Whether your students are getting ready to write a fiction or nonfiction piece, you can use the daily report to help them generate ideas before they tackle writing the entire piece. Start with a review of the question words in English: who, what, where, when, why and how. Then, ask questions or have your students ask questions that begin with each of these words. For example, for a fictional piece you might ask, "Who appears in the story?" For a nonfiction piece ask, "Who was on the scene of the event?" After everyone has some answers to who question, move on to what questions. Working through the question words one at a time is similar to how a reporter writes an article. You may want to put your students into small groups or do this activity as a class, but make sure each person is writing about their own topic on their own sheet even if the whole class is coming up with the questions together. Once everyone has answered at least one question beginning with each word, ask students to go back and read what they have written. They can use these basic facts to outline the final piece and

then go through the process of writing it.

### 4 STAR POWER

Your students can generate ideas for a nonfiction paragraph with a simple star organizer. Have your students draw a large, five pointed star on one side of a piece of paper. If you have already talked about topic sentences, ask each person to write the topic sentence for their paragraph in the center of the star. If you have not talked about topic sentences, this is the time to do it. You could also have your students simply write the topic of the paragraph in the middle of the star. Each of the arms of the star is for the details that will support the main idea. Challenge your students to write one sentence in each of the arms. Once those sentences are written, the paragraphs are practically finished. Show your students how to start a paragraph by indenting and then copying the six sentences that are inside the star. Finish the paragraph with a concluding sentence and the writing assignment is complete.

**THESE ARE ONLY SOME OF THE STRATEGIES WITH WHICH YOU CAN GET KIDS READY TO WRITE. USE THESE IN YOUR NEXT WRITING CLASS, OR CREATE SOME OF YOUR OWN. THE MAIN POINT IS TO GET KIDS THINKING ABOUT AND TAKING NOTES ON A SUBJECT BEFORE THEY HAVE TO WRITE A COMPOSED AND COMPLETE PIECE.**

During these activities, make sure your class does not fret over grammar or spelling mistakes as these notes are purely for their own use. The final draft is when they should be careful about spelling and grammar. Getting your kids ready before they write does more than take away the fear of the blank page. It improves the quality of their writing and makes the words come more easily. If you have fun with these writing readiness ideas, your students will, too, and that is something every teacher should want!

# 3 Great Ways to Inspire Young Learners to Write

Children in ESL classes are notoriously shy about writing in general. It is really critical for their language development that they receive early and constant exposure to writing opportunities.

## TRY THESE 3 GREAT WAYS TO INSPIRE YOUNG LEARNERS TO WRITE

### 1 FREE FLOW AND CREATIVITY

Perhaps one of the reasons children can be reluctant to write creatively is they are insecure about their spelling, grammatical or structural skills. It is a good idea to remove these anxieties by supplying ample opportunities for creative processing that doesn't pick apart structure and syntax. The focus should be on the expression. For some children, devising a complete sentence may be really intimidating. There are several ways you can navigate around their fears, and provide creative options. First off just try thinking about writing in a different way. Give them an opportunity to string words together in poetic ways that don't necessarily rely on punctuation or traditional meanings. Supply them with some jumping off points, like some familiar vocabulary that they need to include in their writing. Choose different types of words, and provide an explanation or discussion of those words after the writing. An example could be: write six lines and include these three words in your poem: Mother, happy, blue. They could then share their writing with a partner or simply turn it into you.

Free flow writing is another way to accomplish a similar writing exercise and could be a bit longer. This is almost like journal writing, and can be done to varying degrees with many different levels and ages. You can devise it however you would like as long as the end product of writing is not judged on grammar, punctuation or spelling. You can give students a topic and tell them to write for five or ten minutes. Be sure to tell the students not to get hung up on the writing itself, but just to write whatever comes to mind.

Example topics could be things like:

- *Tell about your day today...*
- *describe your last birthday...*
- *what will you bring to class for show and tell.*

The topics can be as low level or as advanced as the students' abilities and you can connect them to the lesson's theme for relevance or use them to review past topics or lessons. Obviously you want to choose topics that the students would enjoy writing about (see our Creative Writing Prompts Parts 1-5!), have some knowledge base, and have some language to express themselves. Follow-up activities to free flow writing could be numerous. You could have students read each other's compositions and use it as an opportunity for peer correction. You could also have the students read what they wrote and have their classmates ask them questions about what they wrote. A third option would be to collect the writing and go over it individually with the students. You want to make sure that free flow writing is just that, and that students don't feel inhibited by what their writing may be lacking. The focus is on creativity. There are lots of other options to focus on grammar, punctuation, and syntax.

### 2 ILLUSTRATE WRITING AND SHARE

Combining drawing with writing is a wonderful way to engage students, especially really young learners. There are numerous ways to do this to facilitate a feeling of freedom and to allow students to express themselves in two modalities. One possibility would be to have the students do something like a scaled down graphic novel. Depending on the country you are teaching in, these may be hugely popular. Tell students to choose a hero and a villain (great vocab lesson), and then write one scene or frame of a story. Once they have a few frames written, they can accompany that with as simple or as involved drawings as you would like them to get into. They can then share their creations with one another, and you can easily make this an ongoing project making sure that the language objectives are clearly defined. Another way to incorporate illustrations is to have each student draw a picture. You could give them a topic or leave it wide open. Give them a time

limit, and collect all of the pictures when they are done. Then redistribute the pictures making sure that no one gets their own. You can then have students write on any number of topics. They could describe the picture that they see or create a story around it. The purpose is again to be creative and to make writing a pleasurable activity that students want to engage in.

### 3 CREATE A STORY AS A GROUP (STORYBOARD)

Often in higher levels, an inventive writing activity is organizing a collaborative effort among students to write a story. You can adapt this for younger audiences by also including drawings. This could be an entire week long lesson where each day students engage in a different part of the writing or drawing piece. It is also a wonderful way to remind them of all that they have been learning regarding writing, structure, and syntax. Start by introducing the concept of writing and illustrating a story together. Review the elements of a story and brainstorm with the class all the things the story will need to be complete (characters, setting, plot, conflict, etc.). Then it will come time to determine what the story topic is going to be. Decide ahead of time how you will present this—by dictating it, brainstorming about it, or choosing randomly out of a hat. Then put students into groups. This is up to the teacher's preference. Assign the students their daily task per group and be sure to give them deadlines. The students among different groups will have to work together so that the story has some flow. Sometimes doing the illustrating or storyboarding first will provide the students with a guide to follow when they write. Think it through and determine what will work best for your particular group. The end product could be copied and bound so that all students have a book that they wrote.

### WRITING IS NOT JUST ABOUT STRUCTURE AND PRACTICAL ELEMENTS.

It is also about self-expression and creativity. Opening students up to the world of the written word doesn't have to be painful or frustrating. With a little creativity and spirit, even your youngest learners will pick up the pen and surprise you!

# What Do You See? 8 Steps to Teaching Basic Vocabulary

Picture books are a useful tool for the ESL teacher, especially when she is teaching younger students.

Picture books can be a great help in reading and writing lessons and can even be the basis of a conversation class. For vocabulary lessons, simple books with repeating phrases are particularly useful. One such book is Bill Martin's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown\\_Bear,\\_Brown\\_Bear,\\_What\\_Do\\_You\\_See%3F](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Bear,_Brown_Bear,_What_Do_You_See%3F)) which teaches basic colors and animal vocabulary.

If you have beginning students who need a lesson or a review on colors and animals, here are some activities you can try. Your kids will have fun, and they will learn as they play with Martin's prose.

## HOW TO TEACH BASIC VOCABULARY

### 1 GET READY

**Start by reading the book to your class.** It is best if you can introduce the book before you plan to do the rest of the activities so your students have some familiarity with it.

### 2 MAKE MASKS

**On the day you plan to start the activities, read the book to your class again.** After you read, give each student a picture of one of the animals in the book, and ask them to color the animal like the one in the book.

Make sure you have at least one of each animal represented in your class, and having multiples of the animals is okay, too. Have each student cut out his or her picture and glue it to a paper plate. Then, have them glue or tape a tongue depressor to the plate. Each person now has a mask which shows one of the animals in the book.

### 3 ROLL CALL

**With your students holding**

**their masks, read the book again and have each person stand when his animal is speaking.** Have your students sit down again when the next animal speaks. After you read the entire book, say each animal again and have your students stand for their animal.

### 4 REVIEW THE ROLES

**On the following day, repeat the activity.** Then have student exchange masks and read the story again. They should stand when the animal on their mask is speaking. If any of your students have learned the chant, encourage them to say it along with you.

### 5 LOOK AND SEE

**Then rearrange your students so they are sitting in the same order as the animals in the book.** Starting at the beginning of the line, ask each student what he sees. "*Sam, what do you see?*" for example. The student should answer with the name of the animal next to him. He can say either the animal's name (e.g. *red bird*) or the entire phrase (*I see a red bird looking at me*).

To make sure everyone has practice with more than one animal, have your students exchange masks and repeat the activity. Continue until every student has had the opportunity to be each of the animals in the book.

### 6 REVIEW

**On the third day, prepare for your color and animal lesson by hanging poster paper in the front of your room, one page for each of the animals, and glue a picture of each animal to a poster.**

Distribute the masks again before reading the book one more time, and encourage your class to chant along with you. Many of them will be good at it by now.

Like the previous two days, have each person stand when his animal is

speaking.

### 7 WHAT DO YOU SEE?

**Tell your students that now you are going to play a game.** You will say their name and ask them what they see. They should respond by naming an object in the room as well as its color. For example:

*"Hyun, Hyun, what do you see?"  
"I see a brown desk looking at me."*

Give each of your students at least one turn.

### 8 A CLASS COLLAGE

**Then, make available to your students some old magazines.** Tell each person that she should find one picture among the magazines for each of the animals, and the color of the object should match the color of the animal. When a student finds an appropriate picture, have her come to the front of the room and point out the poster where her picture belongs. She should also tell you the color of her object. Then have her glue her picture to the correct poster.

Give your class enough time so everyone can find one picture for each of the animals. When you finish, you should have a collage of magazine pictures for each color in the book. You should also have a good read on how well your students have learned their colors.

**THESE ARE SIMPLE ACTIVITIES THAT TEACH SIMPLE VOCABULARY, BUT IF YOU ARE TEACHING YOUNG ESL STUDENTS, YOUR CLASS WILL LOVE IT.**

Once your students know their colors and animals, there are many follow up activities you can do to reinforce their new vocabulary.



# How to Teach Numbers

## NUMBERS ARE TYPICALLY TAUGHT EARLY ON IN ESL COURSES.

This means that students generally have very limited English abilities so it is best to proceed slowly, taking several classes if necessary to cover the material. The first time numbers are introduced, limit them to numbers one through ten and then build up to one hundred. Larger numbers can be introduced at another time.

## HOW TO PROCEED

### 1 WARM UP

Your students are, at this stage, probably beginners so try to review material that was covered in the previous lesson and keep lessons enjoyable so that students will not develop an aversion to your classes. Lessons prior to this may include letters so you can play letter bingo. Each student should have a five by five grid. Have them fill in the grid with letters and then say letters at random until one or more students have gotten bingo.

### 2 INTRODUCE NUMBERS

Use flashcards to introduce numbers one through ten. Flashcards should have both the numeral and the word for each number. This will probably also include introducing some new vocabulary so choose words that will be used often in your classroom and words where the plural form is made by simply adding -s. Words like teacher, student, book, pencil, and desk would all be appropriate. Use choral repetition for pronunciation practice and then drill using the flashcards.

### 3 PRACTICE NUMBERS

If your students are not familiar with the Latin alphabet, they have probably been using worksheets to practice forming letters of the alphabet. You can use a similar worksheet to help them practice writing out numbers like one, two, three, etc. This is a good opportunity for them to practice letter and word spacing. If your students are familiar with the Latin alphabet, matching or fill in the blank exercises may be more appropriate.

### 4 CHECK

With beginners, it is important to check comprehension frequently. Students may be confused or hesitant due to lack of understanding but will often be unwilling or unable to ask for help. A group activity will get your students on their feet. One activity is to make groups with the same number of people as you call out. For example if you say "Four" students should make groups of four and when you call out the next number they should run around trying to get into appropriately sized groups. Another activity is to split the class into two to four teams. Each group should determine in what order students take turns and be given a portion of the board to write on. When you say a word aloud, the student whose turn it is should run to the board and write the numeral. If your students do very well, tell them they have to spell out the word and maybe later on, as a review activity, students have to spell out the word of the number that comes after the one you say aloud. At the end of the game, the group with the most points wins.

### 5 INTRODUCE MORE NUMBERS

When your students are confident using numbers one through ten, introduce numbers zero to one hundred. Focus primarily on the numerals and pronunciation. It is a lot of new material to take in but there is a pattern so stressing one through ten as well as multiples of ten will be really important. The difficult part for most students will be eleven to nineteen and confusing numbers like thirteen with thirty. Keeping this in mind, practice difficult areas more often than others.

### 6 PRACTICE

Make decks of cards for numbers zero to one hundred with numerals on one side and words on the other. For the purposes of this activity have students spread out the cards numeral side up. Students should play in groups of three to six. When you call out a number, the first student to say and smack the appropriate card gets to keep it. The winner

is the student with the most cards at the end of the game. If your students are struggling with certain numbers, feel free to also write the numeral on the board but be sure to say it first. You can use this same deck later on to practice reading and the difference between -teens and multiples of ten.

### 7 PRODUCE

Since you recently used bingo in your warm up, students should be familiar with the game. Ask them to fill out new grids with numbers zero through one hundred and play multiple times. You can also play another group activity where students stand in a circle and take turns saying numbers in order from zero to one hundred. Perhaps students say a number and then the name of the classmate who will say the next one or some other variation to keep things interesting. When they have mastered that, you can ask them to skip numbers with threes and sevens, including thirteen and seventy for example, to make it more challenging.

### 8 REVIEW

Worksheets may be an appropriate review activity but any activity you played during your numbers classes, could be conducted again as a review.

NUMBERS ARE USED OFTEN DURING ESL COURSES. ESPECIALLY BEFORE LESSONS ON TIME OR SOMETHING SIMILAR, A REVIEW IS GOING TO BE NECESSARY. STUDENTS WILL MOST LIKELY CONTINUE TO BE CONFUSED BY THE PRONUNCIATION OF CERTAIN NUMBERS SO SPECIAL SHORT CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES MAY BE A NICE BREAK FROM OTHER TOPICS AS THEY ADVANCE THROUGH THEIR ENGLISH STUDIES.

# How to Teach Shapes

**STUDENTS MAY NOT OFTEN USE SHAPES IN THEIR EVERYDAY CONVERSATION OR ENGLISH LESSONS BUT IT IS STILL WORTH TEACHING YOUR STUDENTS CERTAIN BASIC SHAPES ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE GOING TO TELL THEM TO "CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER." ON THEIR WORKSHEETS OR EXAMS.**

Knowing basic shapes can also be useful when students try to explain objects that they do not know the word for because if they can describe something accurately enough, you will be able to give them the correct vocabulary word. This article provides some ideas and activities on teaching shapes to preschool and kindergarten kids and teenagers.

## HOW TO PROCEED

### 1 WARM UP

Shapes are another topic for very beginners so it is worth spending time reviewing the previous lesson. If you choose to do the production activity suggested in this lesson, you may want to devote some time to reviewing numbers, description words and body parts as well. You can simply ask students to name the body part or number you are pointing to as a class or by volunteering. You can also review all this vocabulary using flashcards or by eliciting vocabulary from your students to see what they can remember.

Warm up activities for beginning students may take up to ten minutes of your class time depending on how much material you feel the need to include. When it comes to vocabulary, repetition is the key.

### 2 INTRODUCE SHAPES

Drawings on the board or flashcards will be the easiest way to introduce shapes. You may choose to only teach square, rectangle, circle, and triangle but feel free to include other vocabulary such as star and diamond if appropriate.

Use choral repetition for pronuncia-

tion practice and drill by pointing to the drawings on the board or using flashcards. If you are only using basic shapes and working with young learners, have them make the shapes using specific hand gestures as they practice the words. This will help reinforce what the new words mean.

### 3 PRACTICE SHAPES

After practicing the vocabulary as a class, have students practice writing the words by labeling images on a worksheet or making sentences for each image. For example, if there is a picture of a circular clock, students can write "It's a circle." while if there is an image of a photograph, students can write "It's a rectangle."

You can also continue practicing as a class by naming familiar objects or objects in the classroom and having students tell you what shape they are. Students should be encouraged to use full sentences when responding to these questions.

### 4 PRODUCE

At this stage in the lesson students should be able to produce their own material. You could have them write as many objects as they can think of for each shape, for instance. You could also conduct an activity which combines students' knowledge of shapes, numbers, descriptions and body parts.

Assuming you have covered all of these topics, you can do this activity called Monsters. Have students work in pairs sitting back to back. First give students time to draw a monster on the top half of their worksheets. Student A will then describe his monster to his partner while Student B listens to the description and draws a monster based on the description he is given. Students will say sentences such as "He/She/It has one small nose. It's a circle." When Student A is finished describing his monster, students should switch roles.

When both partners have described and drawn a monster, have students compare their drawings. It is amusing to see how different they are even if

students were listening carefully.

### 5 REVIEW

If possible, it may be fun to get the class moving and working together. In the last minutes of class have students position themselves to create the shape you call out. For example, if you say "Triangle." students should try to organize themselves into a triangle.

It may be a bit of a challenge but depending on the class, may be quite enjoyable as well. It is good to conduct activities, such as this one, which require cooperation among your students.

**SHAPES MAY NOT BE THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION OF MATERIAL THAT STUDENTS STUDY AND THIS VOCABULARY IS UNLIKELY TO COME UP REPEATEDLY IN THE COURSE BUT TEACHING BASIC SHAPES IS STILL NECESSARY.**

**LATER ON WHEN STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT THE ADJECTIVE FORM OF THESE WORDS, SUCH AS CIRCULAR AND TRIANGULAR, AT LEAST THEY WILL BE BUILDING UPON PREVIOUSLY LEARNED MATERIAL.**

# Kids and Money:

## How to Teach Money Skills

### HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU LEARNED TO DEAL WITH MONEY?

Depending on the age of your students, they may or may not have learned how to do this in their own language and with their own currency so it is important when talking about money in English classes not to focus on math. Luckily money is an easy prop to make and is involved in lots of real life situations so talking about money is an excellent chance to do a role play activity.

### HOW TO TEACH MONEY SKILLS

#### 1 WARM UP

As if numbers were not hard enough, talking about money just complicates things. Use the warm up to practice numbers by playing Bingo or another number game. Then you can generate interest in the topic by asking how much things cost.

Having props on the desk that you know the cost of and students should know the cost of will have them intrigued from the moment they walk through the door. Waiting to talk about the items on the desk until after the warm up will engage them further.

#### 2 INTRODUCE

Now that you have already introduced the question "How much does this cost?" or "How much is this?" you can model the response when students tell you their answers. If a student says "500 yen!" you can say "It costs 500 yen. Very good!" or, to elicit another response, "It costs 500 yen! Really?" Use whatever the local currency is in these lessons. For advanced or business students, it is important to learn about different currencies but for primary school students, dealing with just one is sufficient.

Certain currencies will be more challenging to teach because for instance with \$1.25 you could teach students to say "one dollar and twenty-five cents"

or "a dollar twenty-five." Be sure to settle on one structure to use so that your students will not be confused.

#### 3 AMOUNTS

Ask students to think of items that cost certain amounts of money for example \$1.50, \$5, \$10, \$20.75, \$50 and \$100. The cent amount is obviously not that important but it gives students more practice saying these amounts correctly. Y

ou can list the items in columns on the board for students to use later on in class. This is usually very interesting because young students sometimes have a very odd perception of cost and their suggestions may be totally off.

#### 4 PRACTICE

Have students write down an item and its cost. It can be any item and any cost they choose. Once everyone has written something down, have students walk around the class asking "How much does it cost?" and writing the answers down on a worksheet. Students should respond like this "The \*insert item name\* costs \*insert cost.\*" based on what they initially wrote on their worksheets.

Students should get ten answers and ten signatures to complete the activity.

#### 5 PRODUCTION

Now you can introduce a model dialogue or a role play activity. Students already have lots of practice asking and answering the target structure so expand this to include more phrases and create something similar to a real life conversation. For a short activity simply write the model dialogue on the board with some blanks where students can fill in an item and cost using the lists you made on the board. For a longer activity have students work in groups of 3-4.

You can give each group a different

location or scenario to build their role play around. Each student should have a minimum of two or three lines.

As a class you can come up with some extra phases before handing out the scenarios. This way, students have material on the board to draw from when creating their dialogues. Perhaps this first class period can be for writing and practice.

You can encourage students to bring in props for the presentation lesson. It is up to you whether or not students have to memorize their lines. If not, you could provide props and students could complete the whole activity in one class period.

#### 6 REVIEW

If you are teaching in another country, conclude the section on money by showing students the currency from your country. You can compare the appearance of your currency with the currency students are most familiar with. Students usually find this type of activity quite interesting.

### MONEY CAN BE A CONFUSING TOPIC FOR STUDENTS.

A common error is saying "dollar" for instance, at the wrong point in the sentence and dealing with cents or large numbers can also be frustrating.

After some practice, your students will get the hang of it.



# A Super-Engaging Elementary Lesson on Adjectives

**YOU HAVE COVERED NOUNS AND VERBS, AND THE GRAMMAR CURRICULUM HAS YOU MOVING ON TO ADJECTIVES WITH YOUR ESL STUDENTS.**

Still, you want them to have fun and make a personal connection with the material you teach even when you are teaching grammar. Here is an activity you can do with your elementary level ESL students that will get them thinking creatively and using adjectives appropriately, and they will have fun, too!

## HOW TO TEACH A SUPER-ENGAGING ELEMENTARY LESSON ON ADJECTIVES

### 1 WHAT IS WINTER?

**Start by asking your class to describe the weather in winter.** What clothes do people typically wear in the winter? Why do they wear these clothes? If your students are willing, allow some of them to share a personal story of when they were outside in winter weather and how it felt.

If they do not have a story to share, you might want to share a story of your own, perhaps the first time you saw snow or an experience sledding or skiing.

### 2 READ THE MITTEN

**After your discussion, read your class *The Mitten* by Jan Brett.** This charming story tells the tale of how a mitten left behind became a cozy place for several animals to hide from the winter cold.

### 3 RETELL AND IMAGINE

**Ask your students to retell the story of the mitten as you show them the pictures.** As they retell the story, ask what it might have felt like when each animal crowded into the mitten. As you do, your students will naturally offer descriptive words for each of the animals. You should point

out that words which describe things or people are adjectives.

### 4 LIST ADJECTIVES

**Close the book and ask your students which animals crowded into the mitten.** Write each animal on the board as they say it. Then, taking one animal at a time, ask what words they can use to describe that animal. You should allow your students to use their dictionaries as they offer adjectives that can be used to describe each animal. Make a list of adjectives under each animal on the board. You will want to include words like *fuzzy, soft, prickly, sharp, warm, little, big, lumpy* and others on your list.

### 5 AN ACTIVE ADJECTIVE GAME

**You can review some of these adjectives by playing a game with your students.** On her website, Jan Brett has pictures of the animals in her book, which are designed to be used as masks. Print enough of these so each student has a mask to use during the game. Allow students to cut out their masks and then attach a tongue depressor to the bottom.

Now ask your students questions using the adjectives you listed on the board. *"Who is fuzzy?"* If their animal is fuzzy, the student should stand. Repeat with a different adjective. Your students should notice that some adjectives can be used to describe more than one of the animals from the book.

### 6 CHOOSE AN ANIMAL

**After playing the game, ask your students to think about their favorite animal.** This can be an animal from the story one that was not in the book. Ask your students, *"What words on the board can be used to describe that animal?"* Put your students into groups of three and ask them to describe their animal to the group. Encourage students to think of other adjectives that can describe their animals and their friends' ani-

mals. Each student should make a list of these adjectives that describe the animal he chose.

### 7 DESCRIBE YOUR ANIMAL

Now that your students have thought about their animals and made a list of the adjectives to describe it, **have your students write a paragraph describing the animal they chose.** In their paragraph, they should use several adjectives to describe their animal.

### 8 MAKE A CLASS BOOK

**Once each student is finished with their paragraph, give them time with your classroom computer or take them to the computer lab to type out their paragraphs.** Using the paint program on the computer, they can draw a picture of their animal. Have students spell check their paragraphs and print them out.

You can then compile the paragraphs and pictures into a classroom book. Make this book available to your students during independent reading time.

**WHETHER YOUR STUDENTS ARE STUDYING ESL OVERSEAS AND ARE NEW TO THE IDEA OF WINTER OR YOU ARE TEACHING ABROAD AND HAVE NEVER SEEN SNOW YOURSELF, YOUR STUDENTS WILL LOVE THIS CHARMING TALE OF HOW WINTER BRINGS ANIMALS TOGETHER!**

Not only that, they will learn how to use adjectives to describe these winter animals and their own favorites, too. The end result will be a book that your class will treasure for the entire year.

# How to Teach the Verb "To Be" to Beginners

## THE VERB "TO BE" IS THE FIRST VERB STUDENTS LEARN IN THEIR ENGLISH STUDIES.

It is used extensively in the English language and will allow students to create simple sentences with the vocabulary they have learned to date.

## HOW TO PROCEED

### 1 WARM UP

For this first lesson, it is best to focus on only the *I, You, He/She/It* structures which you can build upon in later classes. If students have not really done a lot of activities with the words *he, she, and it*, you may want to consider simply using names in the practice activities. Once you have determined what you would like to cover in the first lesson, use the warm up activity to review the vocabulary students will need later on in the lesson. A short simple drill activity would be ideal.

### 2 INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

During the introduction section of your lesson, introduce any new vocabulary you plan to use in this lesson. Some emotions and adjectives would be good because students will then be able to form complete meaningful sentences. Introduce words such as *happy* and *sad* if students have not yet learned them. **Use flashcards to drill vocabulary** and have students complete some simple worksheet activities for further practice.

### 3 INTRODUCE "TO BE"

Show students how to make sentences such as "*I am happy. You are happy. Jenny is happy.*" Ensure that students understand how the subject and forms of the verb are paired. You can practice this before introducing the full sentence structure you would like students to learn. Call on students to make sentences choosing a subject, verb, and adjective from columns on the board.

Without introducing the question form "*Is she happy?*" you can use such questions to test comprehension and students should understand what you are asking. Have them answer by saying "*Yes, she is happy.*" so that they continue to practice saying the target structure.

### 4 PRACTICE SIMPLE

You can use worksheets for practice. Have students complete a fill in the blank exercise where they must choose *am, is, or are* to complete sentences to ensure that they understand which form of the verb agrees with certain subjects. You can also have students match sentences with images or with translations for practice and to test comprehension. As a class check the answers before continuing on.

### 5 PRACTICE COMPLEX

Students can then complete an activity such as **Battleship** for further practice. You can adapt this classic game for use in the classroom. While it can be time consuming to explain, especially to beginners, your students will enjoy playing and it can be used to practice a wide variety of topics. To play Battleship students should work in pairs using a worksheet. For this class, the grids on the worksheet might have *I, You, He, She, Jenny, Ms. Smith* in the first column and *happy, fun, from Korea, sad, silly, from America* in the first row. Students then practice sentences such as "*I am silly.*" to try to locate and sink all of their opponents ships first.

There may not be enough time in the first lesson to begin this activity but devoting the second lesson entirely to Battleship would give your students lots of speaking practice.

For a third class, introduce the question that goes along with this target structure and have students play using the same worksheet but by making questions such as "*Is Ms. Smith*

*from America?*" The really great thing about this activity is that students essentially have to speak in order to play whereas with board games students may be tempted to simply roll the dice and move their pieces around the board without really practicing English.

### 6 REVIEW

As a general review activity you can divide students into groups and **play Hangman** with sentences or words from their textbook. It is perhaps not appropriate to play the original game in your classroom so you can just adapt it so that no one actually hangs. One adaptation is to simply have a very large fish where when students guess incorrectly, a little fish gets closer and closer to being eaten. This is not very accurate as you can either draw the game out or end it whenever you choose.

Another method of playing is to assign a point value to certain things. For example, if a group guesses the letter *a* and there are three in the sentence, the group would get three points. A correct guess of the entire sentence would be five points while there should be a penalty for guessing the entire phrase incorrectly but no penalty for guessing a letter that is not used. You can alter the scoring anyway you would like to make it more appropriate for your class.

**ONCE YOUR STUDENTS ARE QUITE CONFIDENT WITH MAKING THE SENTENCES PRACTICED IN THIS LESSON, YOU SHOULD INCLUDE THE PLURAL WE, YOU, THEY AS WELL. AS THE FIRST VERB THEY STUDY, "TO BE" IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR STUDENTS AND IT IS ESSENTIAL TO GET THEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE FORM OF THE VERB IS AFFECTED BY THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE.**