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ABSTRACT

This periodical is a source of practical teaching advice for adult English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers and tutors since 1991. Articles and ideas are contributed by the experienced teachers and tutors among the readership. Among the topics covered in this volume are the following: tips on teaching older students, preparing students for the workplace and real world, ideas or role-playing games, conversation activity ideas, getting to know the library, a party game "people mixer," book reviews of new ESL books, ideas for a cooking activity. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse For ESL Literacy Education) (KFT)

Hands-On English

Anna Silliman, Editor

Volume 9, Numbers 1-6

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Do you like giving advice?

A year ago, we printed a request in this column for volunteers to serve on our new Advisory Board. We thought this would be a nice way to get some regular feedback about our publication from the field.

The great eight

And, wow! we got results! Right away we heard from eight friendly professionals who were willing to donate some time to help *Hands-on English*. And the help they provided over the past year went far beyond our expectations!

Board members shared with us their ideas on the role of the publication, and their suggestions for it. Many of their ideas we were able to implement right away—the occasional ‘Citizenship update’ column for example, came out of a discussion of teachers’ needs.

Each Board member contributed in a different way—some provided feedback after each issue, some sent occasional messages with thoughts and ideas, some shared their own writings, or detailed notes of their own classroom work, some submitted articles which have reinvigorated this publication.

Every Board member contributed great enthusiasm, which was a tremendous boost to this editor. We were amazed to learn that while the practical, useful nature of HOE is definitely what everyone appreciates about it, the *community* that HOE readers form is an important feature, also.


A new wave

At this time we’d like to open up our Board to some additional members. (The current Board will continue serving another year, if they are able to.) If you are interested in participating in *Hands-on English* more directly and would like to serve on the Board, please feel free to contact the editor about it! We look forward to your input.

Up to this point our communications with the Board have been informal and sporadic. We’re hoping this summer to implement an email list online that will make interaction easier among Board members. In the meantime, if you’d like to contact any of our current Advisory Board, please look on our website for their email addresses.

Lots of goodies

We hope this issue will bring you lots of useful ideas for working with your students.

Happy teaching! 

—the Editor



Hands-on English

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May/June 1999

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

Advertising

We are pleased to bring you advertisements from high-quality publishers in the field as a good source of information on materials. Ads bring us only 3% of our operating funds; our main source of income is subscriptions. You, our subscribers, are the reason we exist and we are accountable primarily to you.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to \$200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request. 🖐

H.O.E. online

Hands-on English is now on the Web! You can find us at:

www.4w.com/hoe

Be sure to see the **current events activity** there, written expressly for you and your students!

See you there!



Editor Anna Silliman hopes you will send in your great teaching ideas to share with our readers!

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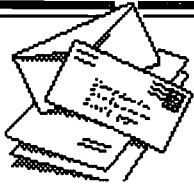
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9-1

Letters



...cards,
email
messages
& calls

Call for holiday activities

"I really enjoy your activities. I am able to use some of them with my middle school students.

"I am looking for new holiday activities throughout the school year."

—Denise Drzyzgula
Milltown, New Jersey

Perhaps readers can share some of their own activities, or point us toward resources to recommend? Thanks—Editor.

Language-specific resources?

"I find the crossword puzzles very helpful. Are there any language specific websites? I tutor a Chinese person. Do you know any specific Chinese-English resources, websites, etc.?"

—Leslie Wizelman
Towanda, Pennsylvania

*One thing that comes to mind is that there are some Chinese newspapers that have English-language versions online. It's possible one of these might provide some lesson material for you and your student. You could try looking at:
<www.webwombat.com.au/intercom/newsprs/index.htm> to see newspapers from countries all over the world, including the U.S.*

Any other suggestions from our readers?

News affects ESL

As we went to press with this issue, the word on the news was that Kosovo refugees would start arriving in the U.S. If there are more, will there be new students in your program? If there are a many more, how will programs respond to meet their needs? We'll be very interested to hear what develops! Let us know what your program is doing. 🐾

Hints & tips

Silent staging

Many teachers use role plays in class, where students act out dialogues, stories they've read or situations. But have you ever tried having students *mime* a role-play?

If you ask students to do this, they will be surprised and amused, and some interesting benefits will result. First, their comprehension of the story will be exhibited through their actions (they will be thinking and acting but not speaking). Second, they will be less nervous about being in front of the other students, since they don't have to worry about the language. Third, the 'audience' will be surprised as well and will pay much closer attention to what is going on. And finally, when students later do the role *with* the dialogue, they will be much more confident after having practiced it silently.

Here are some suggestions for making use of this technique. Have the students meet in small groups and choose roles for a story or situation they have already studied. In their groups, they can talk about how to do the role-play, or practice it together.

Next, have one group come forward and ask them to present the roleplay to the class, but without speaking! (If they are not sure what to do you might take one role yourself to demonstrate.) Once they have finished, ask the rest of the class to describe what happened (they will retell the story.)

Now have the same students present the silent roleplay again, but this time ask students in the audience to speak the dialog for the actors; sort of a live voice-over. If they know the story well enough, they should be able to do this, and the results will likely be funny. Notice that the speakers don't have to worry about acting, and the actors don't have to worry about speaking, but everybody is concentrating on the meaning of the story.

After running through this a few times, your silent actors may feel they would like to speak the lines of the roleplay themselves—by this time they'll be pretty good at it, so they can present the story again in the traditional way. Alternatively, other silent actors could take the stage, while the experienced ones provide the dialogue for them. 🐾

From the field: Tips on teaching older students

Editor's note: The following are helpful suggestions which we feel certain are right on target for creating the kind of atmosphere in which older students can learn best. As a matter of fact, though, it is good to keep in mind that there are students of all ages who are easily overwhelmed; these tips may help them as well.

We have many so-called *elderly students* in our Lao Family English Education Program. Most of them are refugees who have suffered great loss and have determined for themselves that age is their barrier to learning a new language and becoming comfortable in a new culture.

Providing these students with small successes to build self-esteem can make a huge difference in attitude, motivation and endurance. Some suggestions:

1. Set apart the 'elders' as often as possible, so they can work together. Let them support one another without feeling threatened by what they consider fast-paced youth.

2. Work in the smallest-sized groups as possible, but avoid one-on-one until they feel comfortable with individual attention.

3. Assess what they know (not what they *claim* to know) in small doses and document it.

4. Also do a needs assessment—what do they want to learn? A sample list may be necessary here as many will not be able to articulate what they want other than 'English.' Then focus on their choices.

5. Give these learners what they consider education to be: very traditional top-down, book, paper and pencil lessons. Don't try to revolutionize their thinking. Instead, slowly introduce communicative methods, hands-on procedures and abstract topics, but always root the lessons in the concrete.

6. Use as many objective, repetitive tech-

niques as can be comfortably handled. At every lesson, expand on previous topics, such as weather, physical conditions, date, etc. Give a spelling list and test. Flash vocabulary cards and use dictation and other such tasks they feel competent to handle. The routine will establish trust and confidence.

7. Make use of their experiences and abilities. Build lessons, dialogues, and discussions around what they know and appreciate. Let them choose vocabulary topics. Expect extra chatter, and don't outlaw native language interaction.

8. Repeat, review, reinforce. What they know one lesson may be gone the next. Homework handouts and tapes should not introduce new material, but assure and remind them of accomplishments.

9. Show them initial assessment documents again when they have made obvious progress. Acknowledge and encourage often.

Task oriented, but low-key

Finally, don't expect specific progress within set time frames. The elderly don't need to be pressured. They do often need a comfortable, personable place to feel stimulated without being confused and overwhelmed. Respect them and their experiences, but set clear, realistic expectations and routines. ↗

This article is contributed by Jean Hanslin of the Lao Family English School in St. Paul, Minnesota, in response to a reader request in our last issue. (Jean also serves on the HOE Advisory Board.)



Reading activity:

A newspaper treasure hunt

Here's a fun, low-stress newspaper scanning activity. It will give your students some practice in reading and talking about the newspaper, while they familiarize themselves with what's available there at the same time.


We feel that using the newspaper is similar to using a dictionary—it may seem intimidating to students at first but the more they play around with it the more likely they will be to become independent users.

We have prepared one worksheet for literacy level students—you may have to help them understand the questions. The other one is for beginning and intermediate students. They should be able to work on this independently.

If you have advanced students, you can prepare a similar worksheet for them

by adapting the intermediate worksheet to include likes and dislikes. For example, "Find 4 ads about an apartment for rent. Choose two that you like and two that you don't like. Explain why." With this additional assignment, students will have to not only scan but also evaluate.

How to do it

It would probably be most fun to do this activity in pairs or groups of three. Bring in a pile of local newspapers (they don't have to be the same edition) and give one to each group. Also give them some scissors, glue or tape, large pieces of paper or poster board and some markers so they can present their results. When the students are finished with their treasure hunt, they can read the other groups' posters to compare their answers. 

Level A (literacy)

1. Find the names of 4 countries.
2. Find 4 ads about something to eat.
3. Find 4 big letter "M"s.
4. Find 4 big letter "A"s.
5. Find 1 big letter "Z."
6. Find 4 pictures of people, with their names.
7. Find a number larger than 1,000,000 (one million).
8. Find the name of 2 sports.
9. Find a picture of a computer.
10. Find a picture of a tree.
11. Find the word "school."
12. Find a map.

Level B (beginning, intermediate)

1. Find 4 ads about an apartment for rent.
2. Find an article about your city.
3. Find something about the weather in the U.S.
4. Find an ad for a children's movie.
5. Find a coupon.
6. Find something funny.
7. Find a letter to the editor.
8. Find 2 ads for clothing.
9. Find 4 ads for something to eat.
10. Find the names of 4 countries. Why are they in the news?
11. Find 2 maps.
12. Find pictures of 4 people, with their names. What are they doing?

Current events: Hot spots in Europe

Fill in the map!

Because of the current conflict in the Balkans, we thought your students might be especially interested in a map activity about Europe. On the next page is a blank map, and a list of 23 places for your students to find. They can do this in one of three ways:

1. **Use an atlas** or world map to locate each place, then copy the name on the appropriate blank. Or,
2. **Listen** to the description below as the teacher reads about each country; write the name of the country in the correct blank. Or,
3. **Read** the descriptions below and follow the instructions to fill out the map. (Do this in small groups.)

Note: Before they start, discuss the points of the compass and mark N, S, E and W on the map.

Description of map:

The country in the southwest corner of your map is Italy. Some people think the shape of this country looks like a boot.

To the north of Italy is an area of water. This is called the Adriatic Sea. Along the sea are five countries. The small country to the north is Slovenia. South of Slovenia is Croatia. Croatia is on the north and the west of Bosnia.

South of Bosnia is Montenegro. (Montenegro is not really a country; it's an independent part of Yugoslavia.) South of Montenegro is Albania, and south of Albania is Greece. Macedonia is north of Greece and directly east of Albania.

The country in the middle that touches Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Croatia is Serbia. All of these places used to be one country, called Yugoslavia.

Bulgaria is southeast of Serbia. Romania is northeast of Serbia. Northwest of Serbia is Hungary.

The country to the west of Hungary is Austria. The country to the north of Austria is the Czech Republic. The country to the east is Slovakia. All of these countries used to be one country, too.

To the west of Austria and the Czech Republic is Germany. East of Germany, and north of the Czech Republic is Poland. North of Poland is a small piece of Russia. Northeast of Poland are two countries, Lithuania and Belarus. Northeast of Belarus you can see part of Russia.

South of Russia and Belarus is Ukraine, and in the south part of Ukraine is Moldova, an independent part of Ukraine. These countries used to be one country, called the Soviet Union.

South of Ukraine you see Romania again, south of that is Bulgaria, and south of that Greece again. One more country is still on this map—you can see part of Turkey in the southeast corner.

One place you hear about a lot on the news is Kosovo. Where is it?

Match the capitals

Which capital city goes with which Balkan state? Look in an atlas or in a newspaper to find out.

Albania	Belgrade
Bosnia	Podgorica
Bulgaria	Sarajevo
Croatia	Skopje
Macedonia	Sofia
Montenegro	Tirana
Serbia	Zagreb

Follow-up: newspaper scanning

Bring some recent newspapers and news magazines for the students to look through. Have the students try to find something about each of the countries on the map. This can be done by students at any level:

Literacy level students can circle the names of the countries when they find them. Beginners can copy a sentence they find for each country.

Intermediate students can write a sentence about something that is happening in each place they find in the paper.

Advanced students could pick one country and read an article about something that happened there.

Focussed listening

Especially for beginning students, ask them to listen to the evening news and check how many of these countries are mentioned.

Further research

Which countries belong to NATO? See if your students can find this out by looking in newspapers or on the Internet. Hint: there are some new members now. 🐾



Places in Europe...



Find these places and write their names on the map. (21 are countries, 2 are states.)

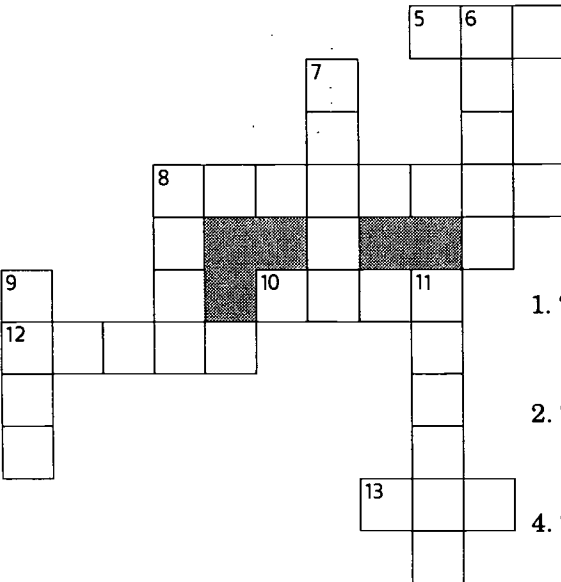
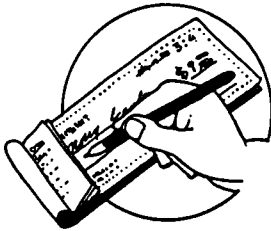
Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine.

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Paying for things

Level A (easier)

Across clues

- Customer: "This is a nice washing machine but I don't think we'll _____ it today." Salesman: "If you want, you can put it on layaway with 20% down."
- "Where are you going?" "I have to go to the _____ to cash my paycheck. I'll be right back."
- When you rent an apartment, you usually have to pay one _____'s rent for a deposit.



Word list:

back
bank
buy
cash
dollar
good
medicine
money
month
move
order
pay
send
store
thank
write

Down clues

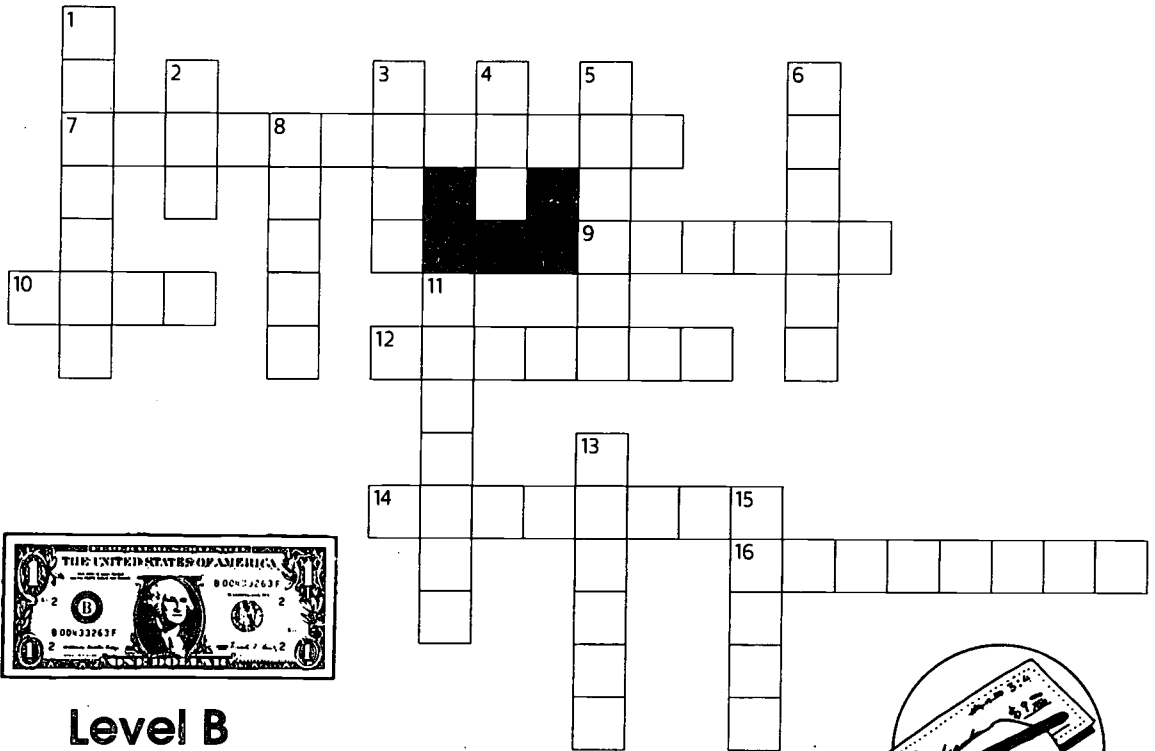
- "Can I borrow \$10 from you until tomorrow?" "Sure, no problem, you can pay me _____ next week."
- "Excuse me, is there a _____ machine near here?" "Yes, there's an ATM right over there." "Thanks!"
- "Would you like to go shopping with me?" "Not really. I don't want to spend any _____."
- Grocery clerk: "That's \$45.19." Customer: "Here's \$50." Clerk: "Your change is \$4.81." Customer: "_____ you."
- Clerk: "That will be \$29.95." Customer: "Can I _____ a check?" Clerk: "Yes, if you have some ID."
- I would like to _____ to a bigger apartment, but we can't afford it yet. Maybe I'll get a better job in a few months.
- "How do you like your job?" "It's OK. The pay is _____, but the benefits are not so good."
- My brother got a speeding ticket. He had to pay a 50 _____ fine.

- "This radio I bought is no good." "If you have the receipt, you should take it back to the _____ for a refund."
- "My son is sick, so we have to buy him _____ every month." "Does your insurance pay for the prescription?" "Yes, for part of it. We pay about \$10."
- My uncle got a car loan so he could buy a new car. Every month he has to _____ in a car payment to the bank.
- When you buy a money _____, you have to pay a small fee, about 75 cents.
- I have to _____ my telephone bill by the 21st.

Paying for things. . .

Word list:

afford
 ATM
 benefits
 bill
 borrow
 change
 check
 deposit
 fee
 fine
 layaway
 payment
 paycheck
 prescription
 refund
 spend



Level B

Down clues

- When you rent an apartment, you usually have to pay one month's rent for a _____.
- When you buy a money order, you have to pay a small _____, about 75 cents.
- My brother got a speeding ticket. He had to pay a 50 dollar _____.
- "Excuse me, is there a cash machine near here?" "Yes, there's an _____ right over there." "Thanks!"
- "Can I _____ \$10 from you until tomorrow?" "Sure, no problem, you can pay me back next week.
- Grocery clerk: "That's \$45.19." Customer: "Here's \$50." Clerk: "Your _____ is \$4.81." Customer: "Thank you."
- Clerk: "That will be \$29.95." Customer: "Can I write a _____?" Clerk: "Yes, if you have some ID."
- My uncle got a car loan so he could buy a new car. Every month he has to send in a car _____ to the bank.
- I would like to move to a bigger apartment, but we can't _____ it yet. Maybe I'll get a better job in a few months.

- "Would you like to go shopping with me?" "Not really. I don't want to _____ any money."

Across clues

- "My son is sick, so we have to buy him medicine every month." "Does your insurance pay for the _____?" "Yes, for part of it. We pay about \$10."
- "This radio I bought is no good." "If you have the receipt, you should take it back to the store for a _____."
- I have to pay my telephone _____ by the 21st.
- Customer: "This is a nice washing machine but I don't think we'll buy it today." Salesman: "If you want, you can put it on _____ with 20% down."
- "How do you like your job?" "It's OK. The pay is good, but the _____ are not so good."
- "Where are you going?" "I have to go to the bank to cash my _____. I'll be right back."

Note: The above puzzle is also used with the Level C (harder) clues on the next page.

Paying for things. . .

Level C (harder)

Across clues

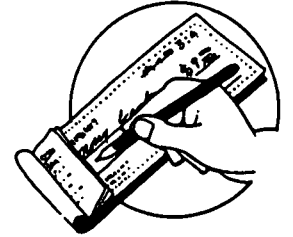
7. When your doctor wants you to take some medicine, he gives you a _____.
9. If you return an item to the store, they will give your money back to you. This is a _____.
10. This is something you have to pay; it usually comes in the mail.
12. A store will keep an item for you for a few weeks until you finish paying. This is called _____.
14. Health insurance, vacation, overtime are some _____ of a job.
16. Some workers get this at the end of every week; some get it every two weeks.

Down clues

1. After you move out of an apartment, you can usually get your _____ back.
2. When you get your drivers license, you have to pay a _____.



Note: These clues go with the puzzle on p. 9.



3. If you break the law, you might have to pay a _____.
4. This means 'automatic teller machine,' where you can withdraw money from your bank account.
5. To _____ money means you use someone else's money for a short time, then you pay it back.
6. When you pay for something at the store, be sure to count your _____. If it's not correct, ask the clerk if there is a mistake.
8. People pay for things with cash, with credit cards, or with a _____.
11. Most people who own a house have to send a _____ every month to the bank.
13. I can't _____ a new car, so I'm looking for a used one.
15. Here's some good advice: Don't _____ all your money. You should save some, too.

Notes to the instructor about the puzzles:

We have a couple of really nifty puzzles for you on pages 8 and 9. The special feature of these puzzles is that they are based on exactly the same example sentences! **Level A** is for beginners, or students who may need some review. The missing words are general, all-purpose words. For example:

I have to (pay) my telephone bill by the 21st.

Level B is for intermediate level students, and while the sentences are the same, the missing words are more specific vocabulary related to financial transactions. For example:

I have to pay my telephone (bill) by the 21st.

Your students may want to do both puzzles. While reading and talking about the examples in Level A, they will be learning and reviewing the vocabulary they need to do Level B. (Level C is in-

tended for more advanced students. Many of the clues are based on definitions rather than examples.)

Related activities

These puzzles would fit in nicely with any unit on money. This topic can generate a lot of interesting discussion. Remember, though, that even relatively new arrivals probably have plenty of understanding about money matters, so be sure to find out what they already know as a starting point.

One interesting way to do this is to invent an imaginary person and describe his finances in detail. Give him a job, decide how much he earns, have the class make up a budget for him, list his expenses on the board. Then you can discuss his options—can he afford to buy a car? How can he save money on his food expenses? etc. Everyone enjoys giving advice, and if the students pool their ideas some creative solutions may emerge. 🖐

Grammar grab-bag: Talking about time

Verb tense review

Here's an easy way to give intermediate or advanced level students some practice with verb tenses while enjoying some conversation in small groups. Students can practice these forms:

Simple present: "What do you usually do at noon?"

Past continuous: "What were you doing on Saturday at lunchtime?"

Simple past: "What did you do yesterday after supper?"

Future: "What are you doing tomorrow at noon?" Or also, "What will you be doing on December 31st at midnight?"

Preparation

Make enough copies of the time wheel below for each group of two or three students. If the wheel is mounted on stiff paper it will hold up better. Make a spinner, also out of stiff paper, and mount it on the wheel with a straight pin or thumbtack. (If the hole in the spinner is wider than the pin, it will spin better.)

How to do it

Decide with the students which verb tense they will practice. Discuss the times of day on the wheel so that everyone understands them. Also, note that we say *at* noon, *at* midnight, *at* lunchtime, but *in* the mid-afternoon, *in* the mid-morning, *in* the early evening.

Have one student start by spinning the wheel; another student asks him or her the question about this time of day. The student gives an answer and the next student spins. Have them continue this for a given time period—15 minutes might be about right.

Some students might want to play again, this time practicing a different tense.

Follow-up

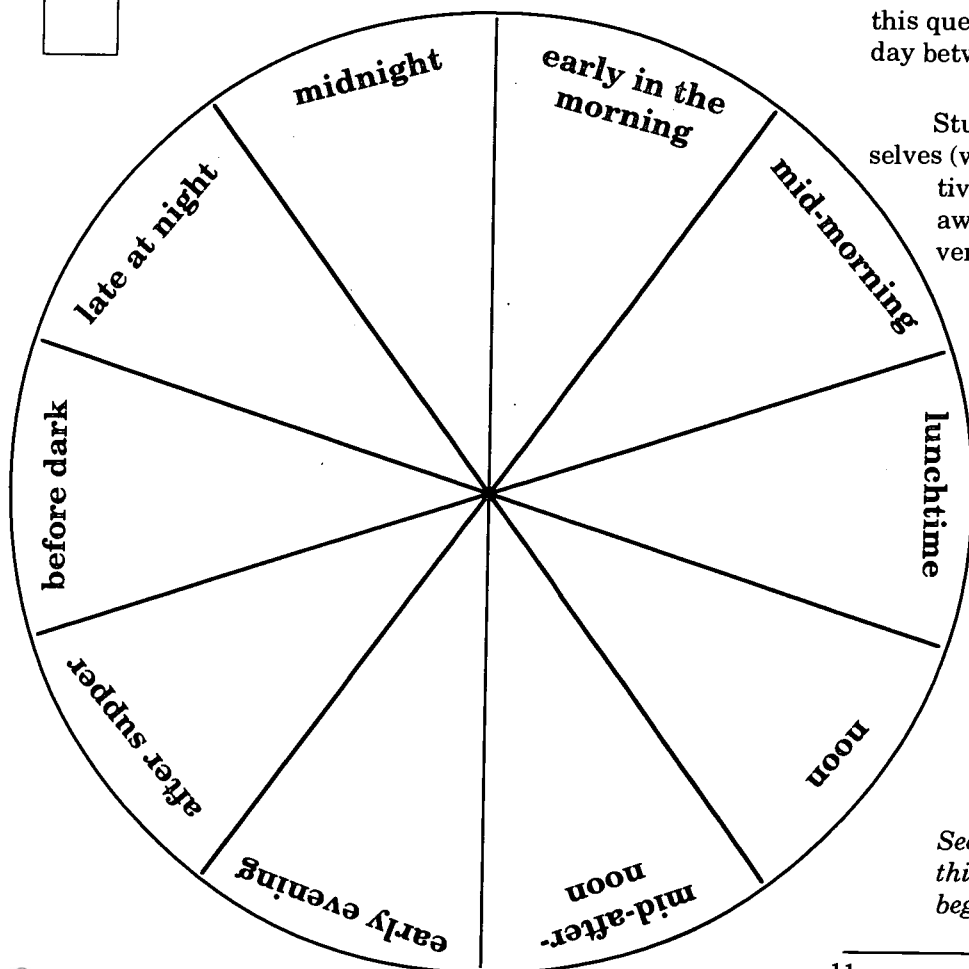
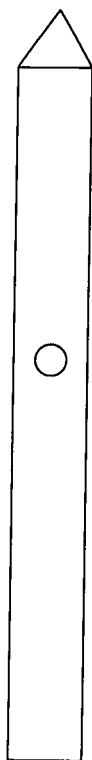
It would be great to follow this up immediately with a short writing activity, so students can reinforce what they've just practiced orally. For example, you could have all the students write in response to this question: "What did you do on Saturday between breakfast and lunchtime?"

Why it works

Students enjoy talking about themselves (who doesn't?) in this low-stress activity, but at the same time they are aware that they are practicing the verb tenses they've studied. 🖐

Tip: An easier way to make a spinner is to place a paperclip on the wheel, then put a pencil point down on the center of the wheel, through the end of the paperclip. With one hand you hold the pencil, with the other one you spin the paper clip!

See the next page for a version of this activity that works with beginning level students!



Talking about time, cont'd. . .

For beginners

This is essentially the same activity as the one on the previous page, except that the language is much simpler and it will work better with beginning students.

Again, your students can practice any one of these forms:

Simple present: "What do you usually do at 7:00 am?"

Simple past: "What did you do yesterday at 9:00 pm?"

Future: "What are you doing tomorrow at 1:00 pm?"

How to do it

Have the students sit in pairs or groups of three. Decide which tense the students will practice. Write a model sentence on the board and do one example so the students can see how the activity works. Then let them take turns spinning and asking and answering questions.

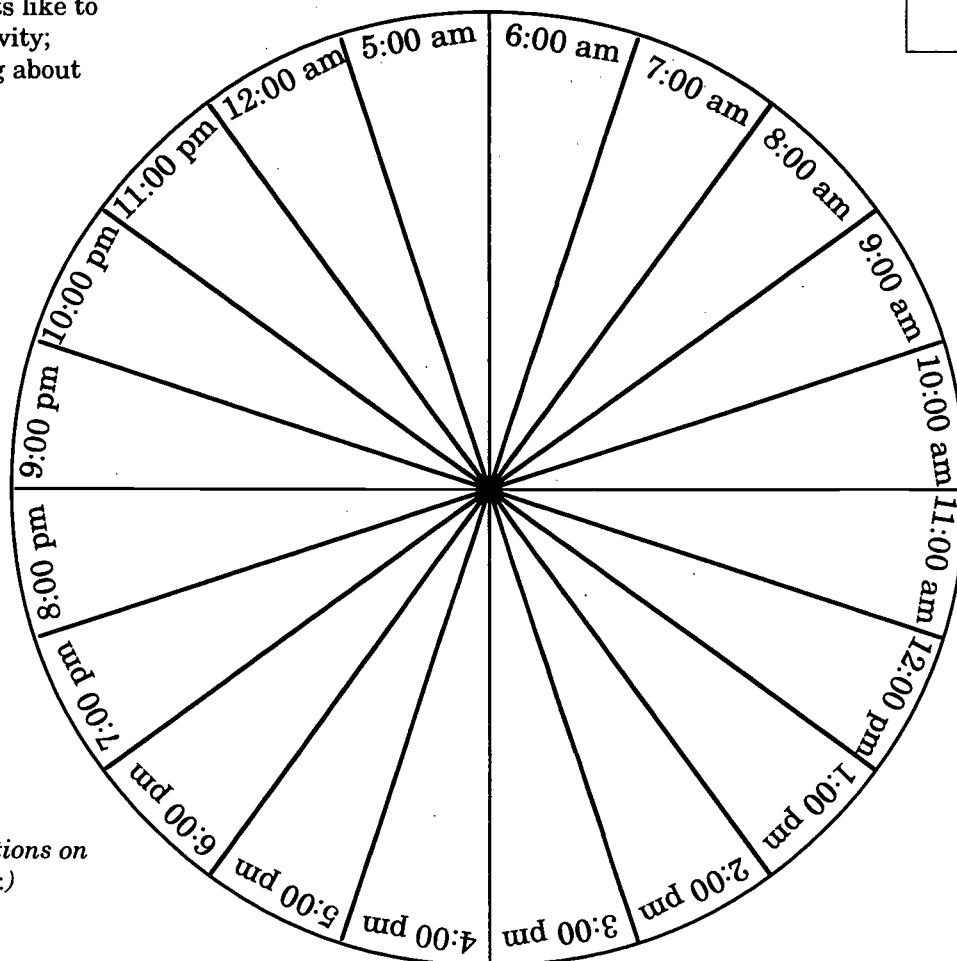
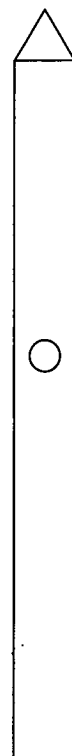
Don't be surprised if students like to take quite a long time at this activity; there is something very absorbing about it.

Follow-up

Once they are ready to stop, it's a good idea to do at least a short writing activity to reinforce the oral work. Ask the students to pick three times in the day, and write (for example) what they usually do at that time. This also makes a good homework assignment.

Why it works

This activity provides a lot of repetition which is good for beginning students, but it is *meaningful* repetition, as each question can bring an unexpected answer. 🖐



(See the previous page for instructions on assembling the wheel and spinner.)

Editorial: Speaking up

Recently we were waiting in line to take care of some business (we don't need to say what), when we noticed ahead of us a Vietnamese man being treated very rudely by an American employee. Quickly, we donned our Super Teacher cape (the bright blue one with the special pocket for index cards), and stepped forward to help. It took only a couple of questions to find out what the man needed; a minute or two to get the matter taken care of.

What special skills did we apply to this problem? X-ray vision? A diplomacy diploma? Fluency in foreign language? None of the above. Willingness to listen is all it takes.

Later (still wearing the cape) we made a complaint to the employee's supervisor and were relieved to hear from him that this behavior wouldn't be tolerated. We expect that employee will be more polite next time.

Preparing students

We can't excuse discriminatory behavior—in fact, we were really pretty angry about this incident. In thinking back to what happened, though, we started to wonder what we as ESL teachers could do to prepare students better for dealing with the real world. Here are a few things we thought of:

1. Speaking up—We need to give students practice in speaking loudly, or at least firmly and confidently. Even if a student's English is pretty good, if he's speaking quietly and timidly his message may not get across.

How can we do this? Some classroom exercises like the popular "Jazz Chants" can get students speaking up confidently, at least in the classroom. You can make up your own chants with the language your students are practicing, and have fun with them. Roleplaying is another technique that can get students more and more confident about asking and saying things. Roleplays can and should be incorporated into even the very earliest lessons.

Some discussion of cultural expectations might help, too—we do expect people to speak up, whereas in some cultures it may seem rude to do so.

2. Explaining—We have to give students practice in explaining things they don't know the exact word for. The fact is, they'll never know every single word they

need; even native speakers don't. But they can gain some skill in describing what they mean. One game that helps practice this is a version of *Password* (there's one called *Just-a-Minute* published for ESL) in which they have to explain a word (like *refrigerator*) without saying it. For intermediate students this is very good practice. For more advanced students, you could use vocabulary from a recent lesson to play this game.

It might be good to remember during a lesson that even if you know what the student is trying to say, letting them explain it first is better than helpfully providing the word or phrase they are looking for. The explanation is just as valuable as the word itself; the process is as important as the product.

3. Knowing your rights—In principle, the more students understand about how things work here, the less intimidated they will feel. This may be a difficult issue because in some ways rights for foreigners *have* eroded in recent years. Still, this is a democracy and persons engaged in legal behavior shouldn't be afraid.

The technique of 'problem-posing' or discussing hypothetical situations in class that students encounter in the real world, leads to a discussion of all the various options. Some of these options might be the students' own strategies, some might be strategies they didn't know were available to them. For example, what to do if a supervisor harasses you, etc.

This teaching technique isn't too hard to learn, once you see an example of how it works. (See *ESL for Action, Problem Posing at Work* by Elsa Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein, Addison-Wesley Longman Publishers.)

In an ESL classroom, students generally experience sympathetic listeners. We once overheard a beginning level student (whose speech was very difficult to understand) say rather wistfully, "My ESL teacher is the only one who can understand me!" In general, it's a good thing that teachers are so good at understanding, because from comprehension comes learning and communication.

But, in the real world, many listeners are *unsympathetic*. What else can we do to prepare students for this? 🖐️

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

A to Zany, Community Activities for Students of English by Lynn Stafford-Yilmaz (1998 University of Michigan Press) 185pp, spiral bound. ISBN 0-472-08501-8.

Would you like to get your students out into the community, learning about the culture while they practice their English? This is a really fun book with lots of good activities for intermediate and advanced students.

There are 26 chapters, each on a different topic, such as garage sales, newspapers, older adults, supermarkets, etc. Each of these chapters can be done independently. The content focusses on cultural observations the students make in the field.

The first section of each chapter is in-class preparation. For example, in the garage sale chapter, students look at some photos of a garage sale and discuss what it is. They describe their experience with garage sales, and explain whether they have these in their home country. They look through the classified ads of a local paper and find garage sales they would want to attend.

The next section is the community assignment, which the students can do on their own as homework, together in pairs, or as a group. They are asked to do "research" and take notes of what they observe. For example, at a garage sale they have to list four items they saw for sale, as well as the price. They have to guess how many people were there. They have to write down any things that surprised them or made them laugh, and so on. They are also encouraged to talk with people there, and suggestions are given for doing this.

The third section is the class discussion of the field trip, with several questions to find out what the students learned and what opinions they have. This can be done in small groups. Finally, each chapter has several optional activities which students can do if they have interest or time. Some of these involve interviews, for example interview an American who has held a garage sale.

We think this is a lovely book, full of good ideas. Many students would enjoy and benefit from these activities. —Editor

Chalk Talks by Norma Shapiro and Carol Genser (1994 Command Performance Language Institute) 190pp, ISBN 0-929724-15-1.

If you teach beginning level students, how do you get them to start communicating? This is the fundamental question the authors address—their answer is a simple drawing system that allows the teacher to record and explain a student's story with pictures. These pictures can then be used for language development; telling and retelling the story, vocabulary, writing, discussion.

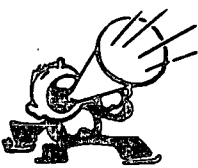
The technique the authors have developed shows you how to elicit 'student-generated' lessons which are meaningful and interesting and relevant. In a 25-page section at the beginning of the text they explain and show clearly how to do this. There is a dictionary of symbols which is the last 100 pages of the book—you can reproduce these for your students as needed, or use them for ideas on how to draw different concepts. The symbols are easy to draw and anyone can learn to do them.

We have to mention that the index in this book is especially useful. Not sure how to explain 'wheelchair' to your students? Find it in the index, turn to the picture and you can quickly draw it on the board.

The rest of the book consists of reproducible lessons which you could use in class, or which you could study and use for inspiration in making spontaneous lessons with your own students.

There is something elegant and wonderful about this technique. It is so simple, and yet if implemented it would profoundly affect how we teach beginners.

—Editor




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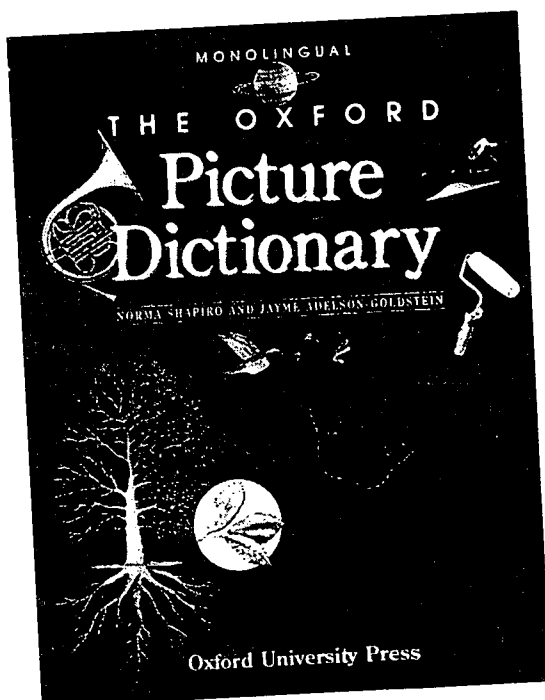
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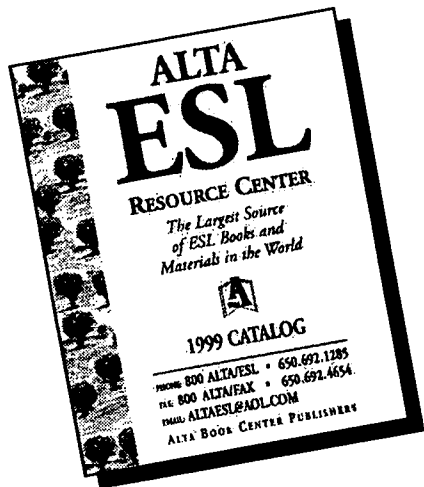


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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Handshakes for all

Well, things have been hopping around here, and we have lots of news to report. First of all, our Minigrant competition results are in, so we can report to you the projects we'll be funding in the coming year:

Our top picks for '99

Janet Burroughs, an ESL teacher at the LEAP program in New York City, is planning a project to help her adult immigrant students learn job interviewing skills. Understanding the expectations of employers in this country is a key part of this effort.

Amy Cordes, an ESL teacher at Keystone Oaks School District in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has a project in which her current students will make welcome kits for new ESL students. She hopes the results of the project will make it easier for both new students and teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Carol Janiga, a teacher at the Salt Lake County Aging Services program in Salt Lake City, Utah, will institute an intergenerational pen pal project for her ESL students and local school children. Her plan would overcome the relative isolation of her students and provide a cultural experience for all.

Carol Moseley, a tutor and coordinator at Literacy Volunteers of Bay County in Panama City, Florida, will help her students to plan and implement a food collection and distribution project in the local community. Among other things, the project is intended to give students valuable experience in workforce skills.

Michael Neterer, a teacher at the International Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota, has an innovative technique for teaching telephone skills to his adult refugee learners, using a working phone and recorder in

the classroom. He hopes this will help boost students' confidence and teach them problem-solving skills.

Each of the above instructors will receive a small grant from *Hands-on English* to help support their work, and you'll be hearing reports in future issues with more details about their projects. (One of our award-winning projects from last year is written up on page 4 of this issue.)

Like to know more about our Minigrants? These are awarded annually and applications for next year will be available in January, the big '00. More details appear on our website, at www.4w.com/hoel/minigrants.html

New names on the Board

As if that weren't enough excitement for one summer, we are also welcoming six new members to our Advisory Board. These are: **Karen Bordonaro**, an ESL teacher and librarian at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York; **Lynette Bowen**, who directs a church ESL program and does university teaching in Plainview, Texas; **Sandy Campbell**, adult education instructor at a technical college in Kirkland, near Seattle, Washington; **Janet Christensen** instructor at Oregon State Correctional Institution in Salem, Oregon; **Lorraine Dutton**, I.E.P. instructor at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and **Janice Langland**, workplace education instructor in Granger, Indiana.

Along with the great eight who already serve on our Board (listed on page 2), these folks will lend their ideas and wide experience in the field to making *Hands-on English* an even more useful publication! We think you'll notice the difference. ✎

—the Editor

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?


We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

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About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to \$200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request. 

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9-2

Letters



...cards, email messages & calls

Organizing wisdom?

Donna Criddle writes to ask if anyone has some wise ideas about how to neatly keep teaching materials and samples, etc. so that they can be located and retrieved easily. She says she seems to have things coming out of the filing cabinets, on bookshelves at home and everywhere else. Has anyone found some easier way?

Editor's note: This describes my situation, too. I suspect a lot of ESL teachers have this problem. Please send your solutions, before it's too late!

Testing query

"Does anyone have any good suggestions for a standardized test of reading for ESL students? Currently I am using the TABE, but the vocabulary section is problematic for them. We use the CELSA here as an entrance/placement test to the college, so that's out for use in my class. We also have the new CASAS tests which we will be field testing...but which are very "work" focused and don't test comprehension as well as I'd like. I would like to find a test that tests their ability to use a variety of reading strategies and reading comprehension. Any ideas would be appreciated."

—Sandy Campbell, Seattle, WA
sandycampb@aol.com

Distance learning?

We get lots of inquiries here at *Hands-on English* about online certification programs, or degree programs in TESOL. Unfortunately, we know nothing about this and have no information to share. Does anyone know of a reference or a website where people can find such info? Or, do you know of any good programs that offer TESOL training at a distance? Please let us know if you do. Many thanks!
—Editor.

Thinking about teaching

We had a nice conversation on the phone with Norma Shapiro, author of *Chalk Talks* which we reviewed in our last issue. She had an interesting comment about teaching which we thought we'd

paraphrase for you to think about: It's helpful to see your class as a laboratory, and your teaching as experimenting to find out what works. If you are constantly paying attention to your students, you'll discover a lot about how they learn.

What a great bookstore!

We were walking toward our local Barnes & Noble bookstore a couple weeks ago, when we happened to notice a large poster in the window advertising "Literacy classes." We thought this was wonderful, and such a good idea, for a bookstore to help people learn to read! Our heart was filled with warm feelings, but as we got closer to the door we got a better look at the poster—it said "Literary classics."

Maybe we've been working too hard? Or maybe we need to stop postponing that trip to the optometrist... 🐾

Hints & tips?

Sorry, no tips for you this time! What we wanted to tell you instead is that we're preparing a new collection, '40 MORE hints and tips,' for a future issue, and we need your input!

A few years ago we asked a lot of teachers about their favorite ESL teaching tip, and we published the results in an article, "40 helpful hints & tips, for making your ESL teaching easier and better!" (Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 6) Since then the article has been posted online on our website, where it's been very popular. You can see it at www.4w.com/hoel/40tips.html

We think it's high time for an update, and we'd love to hear from you if you have a favorite tip you'd like to share with other teachers. If we get enough responses, we'll put this in our fall issue, to help everybody get the new school year off to a good start.

Thanks! Enjoy the rest of your summer! 🐾

—Editor

★ Minigrant award winner: Many Hands Make a Handbook

The first steps

The initial planning for this project took place in early fall. The long list of tasks to produce the handbook included: brainstorming topics; learning vocabulary for document production, such as 'editor' and 'draft'; preparing interview questions; interviewing teachers, staff and students; writing and editing copy; taking photos and writing captions; setting the order of the contents; publicizing the handbook; and creating cover art.

The students take it on

Janet worked with an evening class, and Beth with afternoon students. Early in October, students eagerly came up with a long list of possible handbook topics. One need they brought up was for information about non-ESL classes, such as vocational training and GED preparation and other "mainstream" options.

We worked on getting a clearer idea of what a 'handbook' is, refining the list of topics, and writing interview questions. In pairs, students began to interview school personnel. A vice-principal talked about the development of the programs and a custodian showed students around the campus and talked about safety issues. The Director of Adult Education shared her expertise about the history of the ESL program. The adult High School Program coordinator provided much sought-after information about preparing for a diploma or GED.

Later, groups of students observed classes at different levels and interviewed teachers. (These visits also enabled our students to publicize the project.) Students studied the descriptions of levels that are provided to ESL teachers, and then re-wrote them in simpler English, sometimes adding information they had gleaned from their classroom visits.

One group of students focused on producing a list of community resources. This work became a project-within-a-project and eventually generated a very useful list of over 70 "places to know." Another section that sprang from discussions of community resources took us by surprise. It is listed as "Have Some Fun!" Once again, students showed enthusiasm

for a variety of activities which would enhance their English learning experience, and they wanted to have some fun while doing so!

Project opportunities for students who didn't want to write included photography, preparing a map, and drawing illustrations for the cover artwork. One student went so far as to fly a helicopter over the school so that a photographer could take aerial photos of the campus!

Highlights of the project

Student learning in reading, conversation, writing and editing happened throughout the project. Students read and adapted real-life materials. They had extensive interviews and discussions that were not teacher-directed. Discussing and editing other students' writing, the students saw common problems in grammar and grappled with others' ideas on subjects of immediate concern to them.

This project required students to write for a specific purpose and audience. While grammar points came up, the emphasis was on completeness of information and appropriateness of tone. Sometimes students spontaneously re-wrote articles, feeling the articles could be shorter or, alternatively, could include a crucial point such as whether students needed to show ID to register for a class.

Twenty copies of the handbook were distributed to each ESL class and teachers received training on ways to use the handbook as a resource and a teaching tool. All students now have the opportunity to benefit from the work done through the minigrant project.

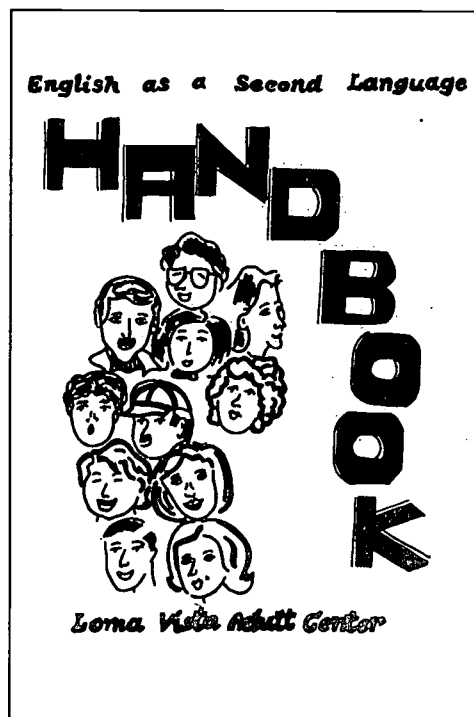
What we teachers learned

We were amazed at how well students worked together. They were more than ready to "pinch hit" for each other as needed. We can't forget to mention those little 'miracles' that occurred along the way, such as the

By Janet Weil and Beth Lenahan, teachers at the Loma Vista Adult Center, Mt. Diablo Unified School District Adult Education, in Concord, California.

For this project, the students created an information handbook about their Adult School for other students. They did this over a period of many weeks.

Although originally Janet and Beth were inspired about it as a writing project (one of the standards for the National Institute for Literacy Equipped for the Future initiatives is that students learn to "convey ideas in writing"), it is clear that the students used a wide range of language skills, as well as problem solving and interpersonal skills, to complete the Handbook.



Handbook, cont'd...

two new students who appeared during the last week before printing. They announced they wanted to work on the handbook project and quickly refined some articles before the deadline.

Perhaps the biggest eye-opener was our deeper appreciation for student-directed learning. For many students, the freedom offered by this project was very

challenging. They voiced concerns about "doing it right" and "giving [the teachers] what we wanted." They also questioned their abilities with the English language more critically when faced with creating something of their own. In all, this project gave students a meaningful opportunity to discover and apply their English voices to help the school community. 🐣

The 24-page handbook included a map, many photos of students and facilities and lots of articles.

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This 'Successful Student' list was compiled for the handbook by the students. They also listed the points in order of importance.

How to be a Successful Student

1. Have a desire to learn.
2. Pay attention to the teacher in class.
3. Always be on time for class.
4. Don't try to translate every word you don't know when you read something. Try to understand it by using the other words and ideas in the sentence.
5. Review your work at home every day and do your homework constantly.
6. Tell the teacher if you are going to be absent or if you have an appointment. It is important that the teacher knows you will come back to class.
7. Attend class every day and believe in yourself. Know that you are improving your English if you come to class every day.
8. Try to speak only English in class and practice as much as you can.
9. If you are in a class higher than the Intermediate level, use an American English dictionary.
10. Bring everything that you need to learn: books, pencils, paper and a dictionary. ♥

Cultural activity: Communicating with gestures

Every culture uses gestures (or non-verbal signals) to some extent to supplement verbal language. For example, nodding to show agreement, showing 'thumbs down' to indicate a veto. Often these gestures are culture based, which means what is polite in one culture may seem rude in another, and vice-versa.

It's useful to introduce ESL students to non-verbal language they may encounter in this culture. At the very least, this might prevent some misunderstandings. Ideally, knowing about these gestures will help them to communicate better.

Your students can fill you in on what kinds of non-verbal communication is common in their cultures. Here are some questions you could ask them:

- How do you usually greet someone in your culture?
- Are greetings the same for men and women?
- How do you signal 'Yes'?
- How do you signal 'No'?
- How do you show that you don't like something?
- How do you show that you like something?
- How do you signal 'goodbye'?
- In a restaurant, how do you show the waiter that you'd like the check?

Charades

First, introduce these concepts and demonstrate the gestures. It helps if you give some examples.

1. I don't know (shoulder shrug, or shrug with both hands raised). Example: Who do you think will be the next President?
2. Great! (thumbs up, or OK sign). Ex: Maria gave an excellent report to the class.
3. Happy to meet you (handshake). Example: This is my uncle from Germany.
4. Alright! (thumbs up, OK sign). Example: The class is having a party tomorrow.
5. Good bye! (wave with palm out, bend fingers toward palm). Ex: Have a good trip!
6. You're crazy! (finger circle at head, or wave hand down) Ex: Let's drive to California.
7. Maybe (shoulder shrug). Ex: Do you want to go to Burger King?
8. A little angry; leave me alone (crossed arms, looking down).
9. Certainly! (head nod, thumbs up, OK sign) Ex: Would you like to take the test tomorrow instead of today?
10. I forgot! (hand clapped to head) Ex: Where were you yesterday? We were supposed to meet at the library.
11. Hello! (wave with palm out) Ex: Is that Juan over there? I haven't seen him in a long time.
12. Me? (point at chest) Ex: I would like you to teach the class tomorrow.

Further resources

You can find information about non-verbal communication around the globe, including North America, on a website called The Web of Culture, at <http://www.webofculture.com/edu/gestures.html> A few ESL textbooks deal with gestures, including:

The ESL Miscellany, Pro Lingua Associates. Has a chapter with nearly 50 gestures explained and illustrated. Can be used for any level. (Available from Alta, 1-800-ALTA/ESL or on the web at www.altaesl.com)

Face to Face; Communication, Culture and Collaboration by V. Zanger, Heinle & Heinle Publishers. Has two chapters on non-verbal communication. Students are asked to interview a native speaker and report what they learned. Best for motivated intermediates or high intermediates. (Available from Delta, 1-800-323-8270 or www.delta-systems.com)

Beyond Language; Cross-Cultural Communication by D.R. Levine and M.B. Adelman, Prentice-Hall Regents/Pearson. Has a good chapter on nonverbal communication for advanced students or for teacher reference. ➤

This article and the accompanying activities are based on a presentation by Jill Kramer and Cheryl Ernst at the spring '99 Ohio TESOL conference.

Both Jill and Cheryl serve on the Hands-on English Advisory Board.

Charades, cont'd...

To play charades

After the class has discussed the gestures on p. 6, distribute the cards below. Each student takes a turn, acting out their gesture, while the other students

guess the word.

If you and your students have discussed other gestures you can add a card for each one and mix all the cards together.

I don't know	Great!	Happy to meet you
Alright!	Good bye!	You're crazy!
Maybe	leave me alone	Certainly!
I forgot!	Hello!	Me?

A role-playing game

Provide the students with cards, each one having a noun or situation and an adjective that describes a feeling that can be shown nonverbally. Twelve examples are given below; you might think of some of your own examples to add.

The students have to get the audience to guess the words by acting only. For example, for the words "telephone/bored" the student might mime the action of being startled by a phone ringing, then answer the phone, then yawn, roll his or her eyes, etc.

telephone bored	friend angry	homework score excellent
TV show sad	Book very interesting	letter in love
movie exciting	cookies from a friend wonderful!	test score disappointing
birthday party surprised	taking notes sleepy	telephone bored

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Keeping cool in the summer

Vocabulary

Here are some words to talk about before you do the puzzle:

work/vacation: Why do some people travel in the summer?

light colors/dark colors: What kind of clothing do you wear in the summer?

sun/shade: Where do you feel cooler?

warm/cool: What can you do to cool off?

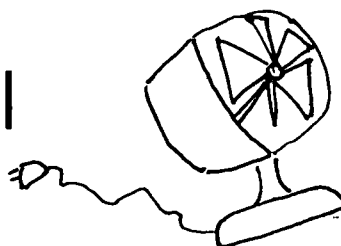
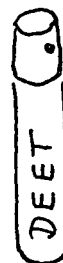
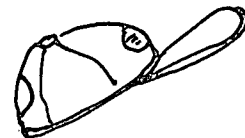
cold/hot: Do you prefer summer or winter?

forget/remember: What should people do when they go outside?

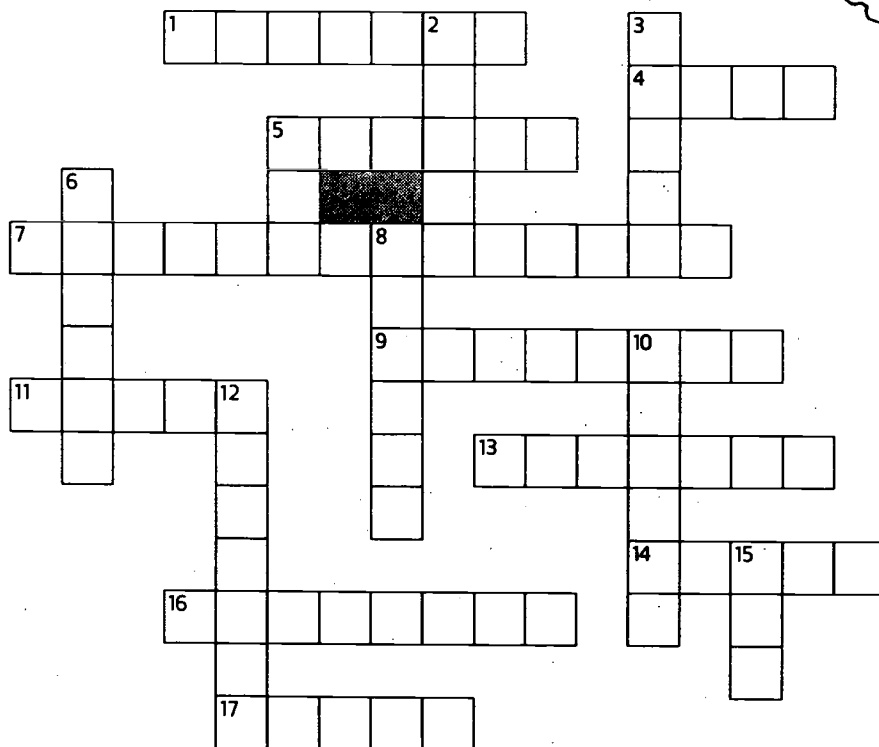
turn off/turn on: Do you use an air conditioner or a fan?

shoes/sandals: Which are more comfortable?

go on a picnic/stay home: What do you like to do in the summer?



Keeping cool



- Word list:**
- air conditioner
 - bicycle
 - bites
 - drink
 - fan
 - forget
 - heat
 - ice
 - insect
 - inside
 - light
 - outside
 - picnic
 - sandals
 - shade
 - sweat
 - swimming
 - vacation

Keeping cool, cont'd...

Level A (easier)

Across clues

1. "Where is your son?" "He went outside to ride his _____."
4. My sister lives in Texas. She said the _____ was really bad there last summer.
5. My skin is red and it hurts. Yesterday I was out in the sun and I got a sunburn! Next time I won't _____ to use sunscreen.
7. I'm too cold. Can we turn off the _____?
9. My nieces love to go _____. They go to the pool every day in the summer.
11. We went for a walk in the park and I got three mosquito _____. They itch!
13. "Do you want to go _____?" "No, it's too hot. Let's stay inside."
14. Don't forget to _____ plenty of water if you go outside in the heat.
16. "Where is your brother? I didn't see him at work." "He has _____ this week, so he took his family on a trip."
17. If you work outside in the summer, you will probably _____ a lot.

Down clues

2. If you go out in the sun, wear _____ clothing. It's cooler than dark clothing.
3. "The sun is so strong! I don't want to get a sunburn." "Why don't you sit under that tree? There is some _____ there."
5. If you don't have an air conditioner you can turn on a _____ to cool off the room.
6. "Do you want to go with us to the park on Saturday? We're having a big _____." "OK. What should I bring?" "Everybody is bringing lots of food. Maybe you could bring something to drink." "I'll bring some lemonade."
8. "I don't like mosquito bites, so I always put on _____ repellent. Do you want some?" "No thanks, I don't like that stuff."
10. Are you hot? Why don't you come _____ and cool off.
12. In the summer I don't like to wear shoes because my feet get too hot. I prefer _____ instead.
15. "Would you like something to drink? We have Pepsi." "Thanks, that would be nice." "Do you want _____ in it?" "Yes, please."

Level B (harder)

Across clues

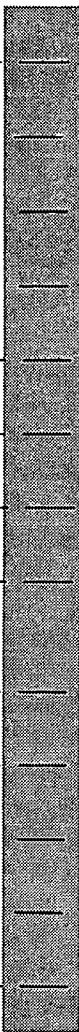
1. Children like this two-wheeled vehicle.
4. The _____ in summer sometimes makes people sick.
5. Opposite of 'remember.'
7. This appliance is used for cooling homes and buildings.
9. This water sport is very popular in summer.
11. Insect _____ sometimes itch.
13. Opposite of 'inside.'
14. You should _____ liquids when exercising in the heat.
16. Time off from work, with pay.
17. This is moisture you get on your face and body when you are very hot.

Down clues

2. White or yellow are _____ colors.
3. Outside, but not in the sun.
5. Another appliance for cooling rooms.
6. A meal in the park.
8. Another word for 'bug' is _____.
10. In a house, or in a building you are _____.
12. Casual summer footwear.
15. Frozen water, used in drinks.

Puzzle: A hidden message

There is a secret message hidden in this puzzle. First, answer the questions. Then you can read the message, to find out what everybody hates about summer!



_____ = *is the opposite of 'cool.'*

_____ = *is the opposite of 'hot.'*

_____ = *shoes you can wear in summer.*

_____ = *when you leave your job, but not for vacation.*

_____ = *if you have this, your skin gets red.*

_____ = *having a meal outside.*

_____ = *you feel very, very warm.*

_____ = *start the air conditioner.*

_____ = *do it every time, don't forget.*

_____ = *time away from work.*

_____ = *not in the house.*

_____ = *the warmest time of year.*

_____ = *put this on your skin if you go outside.*

Note to instructors:

The puzzle on this page would be a good follow-up activity, after doing the puzzle *Keeping cool* on pages 8 and 9 of this issue. The two puzzles are based on the same vocabulary.

In back issues:

We published a different multi-level crossword puzzle on this same topic, called *Summertime* in Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 8 and 9.

If you're starting to think about fall, there was a reading and crossword puzzle called *The U.S. school system* in Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 8 and 9. 🐾

Conversation activity: Talking about plans, hopes & dreams

Summer is a good time to think about plans for the future, both for students and teachers.

The best way to introduce this activity is to demonstrate talking about your own plans first. Write the four time-frames on the board, along with the question, "What are your plans for the future?" Then give the students some examples about yourself, both from your personal or and professional life. For example, "In the next three months I am planning to...get my son ready for college/attend a teachers' conference," etc.

Next write the question, "What are your hopes for the future?" and demonstrate by answering this for your own examples. "I hope my son does well in school," or "I hope to get lots of good ideas for teaching."

You can write some phrases on the board to help students get started, for example, "I am planning to..." and "I hope to.../I hope that..."

Next have the students meet in pairs for the interview. It's probably best for this activity if they choose their own partner, as they might prefer to talk about these things with someone who knows them. The students ask questions, listen and take notes as they do the interview.

Writing follow-up

When the students have finished talking, have them exchange papers so that they are looking at notes about their own plans. Then, have each student write about their own plans and hopes, to be handed in to the teacher. You can later give each student feedback on their writing.

Not all hopes and plans are meant to be shared with the public, so you should make any posting or publishing of these writings optional. If students do wish to share these, though, they may be able to suggest strategies to each other on how to achieve certain goals. These suggestions could be made in the form of a letter addressed to the writer.

Why it works

Sometimes people whose lives are in transition don't realize that they *do* have a plan. It can be helpful to articulate goals in terms of stages and to talk about them in concrete terms. In addition, talking with other people about your hopes can give you encouragement and support. ➔

Interview:

Tell me about your plans for the next:

two weeks

three months

year

ten years

What do you hope for in this time?

From the field:

In-house paper highlights student citizenship success

Our adult literacy program here in Minneapolis has been fortunate enough to receive generous funding for citizenship instructional materials, classes, and application workshops. As a result, many eligible students are now applying for citizenship, and it seems that we have more new citizens than ever before! I'd like to share with you an idea that *Hands-on English* readers may want to try with new citizens in their ESL programs.

Sharing their stories

After hearing that several of our students had passed their citizenship interviews with the INS, I decided to put together a newsletter called *New Citizen News* to highlight their success. I devised a brief questionnaire (see below) and then spoke with each of the students, all of whom were eager to share their interview stories.

At the Bloomington, Minnesota INS office, applicants must answer several questions about U.S. history and government, write 1 to 3 sentences from dictation, and answer personal background and

“moral character” questions from their citizenship application. This is a daunting task, but nine out of the ten students I talked to passed on their first try.

Helpful reading material

The newsletter was a big hit with students in our citizenship classes, and students in our regular ESL classes enjoyed it as well. I tried to keep the language level simple enough for a Level 3 (out of 7) ESL student to understand. As students read the stories, they were surprised that they already knew the answers to many of the civics questions, and they didn't think that the dictation sentences were too difficult. When they realized that people of all ages, nationalities, and English abilities can and do pass the INS interview, they were very encouraged.

The students whose stories were included in the newsletter were honored to have their accomplishment recognized, and their fellow classmates were proud of them for passing. As more of our students become citizens, we hope to feature their stories in future editions of the *New Citizen News*. ↩

by **Beth Easter**,
Citizenship coordinator
at Lehmann Adult
Education Center in
Minneapolis, Minnesota.
You can contact Beth at:
beaster@mpls.k12.mn.us

Interview Questions for the *New Citizen News*

1. Name: _____ 2. Native country: _____
3. Age: (optional) _____ 4. When did you come to the U.S.? _____
5. Why did you leave your country? _____
6. Why do you want to become a U.S. citizen? _____
7. Tell me about your INS interview. When was it? _____ How did you feel before the interview? Were you nervous? _____ Was the INS officer friendly? _____ Did anyone from your family come into the interview room with you? _____
8. What questions about U.S. history and government did the INS officer ask you?
9. What sentence(s) did you write at the interview?
10. (Optional) What do you want to tell other students who are getting ready to have their citizenship interview?

The first issue of the newsletter was four pages long, and featured stories about eight different students.

This is from page three of the newsletter:

More Interview Stories

Bo Luu is in the Level 3 class at Lehmann Center. He came to the U.S. from Vietnam in 1985. He says, "It's good for me to be a citizen." His brother, daughter, and son are citizens too.

Bo is 71 years old. He failed the citizenship interview two times last year, but he passed this year on March 29. Now he is very happy.

Bo remembers all the questions from his interview. The INS officer asked:

- How many branches of government are there?
- What are the names of the two senators from your state?
- Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- What are the main political parties in the U.S.?
- How many stripes are on the flag?
- Why are there 13 stripes?

The INS officer asked Bo to write this sentence:

I have a clean shirt.

After Bo wrote the sentence, the officer said, "You write beautifully!"

New Citizen News

Issue #1

April, 1999

10 Students Pass!

Ten students from the Minneapolis Public Schools Adult Literacy program recently passed their citizenship interviews at the INS office in Bloomington. The students from Lehmann Center are **Bo Luu, Bo Luu, Talkhum Meyyerov, Mariya Reznik, Mshawa Cherif, and Faduma Hassana. Zahra Azad** from Pratt School and **Yongdeanne Yongphouthone** and **Choua Moua** from Northside ABE also passed. The students will soon take the oath of allegiance at a special ceremony and become U.S. citizens.

(Congratulations! We're proud of you!



New citizens Talkhum Meyyerov and Mariya Reznik will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in September.



We want to say a big THANK YOU to the teachers who helped the students get ready for their interviews: **Linda Kelley, Betsy Lemaal, Barb Darlene Gibbs and Ruby Jones** at Lehmann; **Laura Rutmanis and Anne Donwell** at Pratt; and **Northside. Thanks also to our other citizenship teachers, Jan Miller at Andersen and Ken Simon, Becky Hasek, and Rachel Javney at Olsou.**

Interview Stories

Talkhum Meyyerov, 75 years old, is a Level 3 student at Lehmann Center. His wife, Mariya Reznik, is in the Level 3/6 class there. They came to the U.S. from Azerbaijan in June, 1993. They left because of the civil war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. They want to be citizens because they want to have the same benefits as people who were born here.

Talkhum and Mariya passed the citizenship interview on April 8. Talkhum answered all of these questions during the interview:

- What do the stripes on the flag mean?
- What color are the stripes?
- What is the 50th state?
- Name one purpose of the United States.
- Why did the Pilgrims come to America?
- What holiday did they celebrate for the first time?
- The INS officer also asked, "Why did you come to America?" and "Where did you study English?" The officer asked him to write this sentence:

I have lived in Azerbaijan for a long time. "Yes." The officer asked, "How did you vote if you're not a citizen?" Mariya answered, "I voted in my country." Then the officer asked, "Did you ever talk to a policeman?" Mariya answered, "Yes," and the officer was surprised. "Why did you talk to a policeman?" he asked. "Because," said Mariya, "after our second day in the U.S. we went outside and lost our way. We asked a policeman for directions."

Mariya answered these questions correctly:

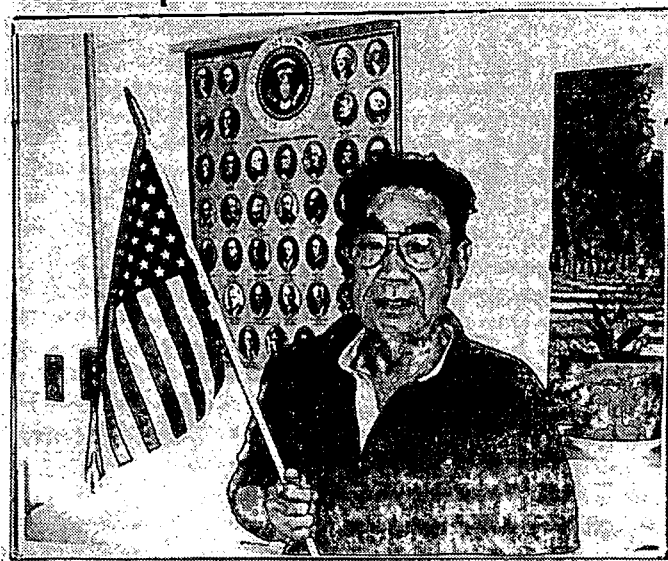
- Who discovered America?
- In what year?
- Who were the names of Columbus' ships?
- Who gave Columbus the money for his voyage?
- What is the basic belief of the Declaration of Independence?

- What is the constitution?
- Who was Patrick Henry?
- Who wrote the Star Spangled Banner?
- What is July 4?
- Who was president during the Civil War?

Mariya wrote this sentence:

The president works in Washington, D.C. Mariya says some people think that the women officers are nicer than the men, but she says, "If you study, it's not important if the INS officer is a man or a woman."

Bo Luu was very happy to pass the citizenship interview.



Idea file: A role-playing game



"People in the news"

Have some current newspapers or news magazines handy, and some blank index cards. Have the students browse through the newspapers and generate a list of names of people who are in the news right now. For example, the President, the head of NATO, the Secretary-General of the U.N., the mayor of your city, etc.

Next have each student choose one of these figures to represent in the role-play. You can make this concept clear by selecting one yourself, and explain "I am Bill Clinton," for example. Give each student a blank index card and have them write a short summary of who they are and what they do (they can refer to the newspapers again to get this information).

Now, clear away the tables and have the students stand up. They can bring along their index card for reference. Have the students pair up and introduce themselves, explaining who they are and what

they do. Probably they will want to ask each other some questions, too.

At intervals, ask the students to change partners and do this enough times so that they each have a chance to talk with everyone.

As a final step, the students could try to compile a chart of who was who, and why they are famous. If this step is too difficult, though, you could give the students a dictation about the activity instead.

Why it works

The students get to select the people that interest them to talk about. They get to have some fun while discussing serious, adult topics.

Variations

You can do this activity with famous Americans in history (we published this version in Vol. 1, No. 5 of *Hands-on English*). You could also do it with the characters from a story the students have read.

Here's an activity that's fairly easy to set up, can be adapted to almost any level and gives your students practice in speaking and listening, as well as a little reading and writing.

Keep this idea handy, for when you need an activity in a hurry!

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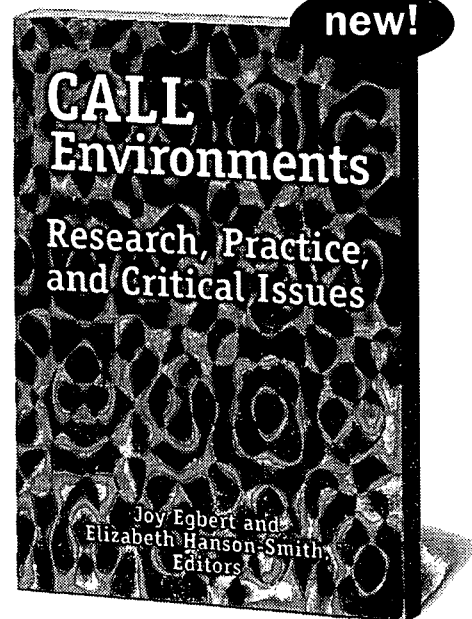
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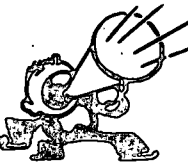
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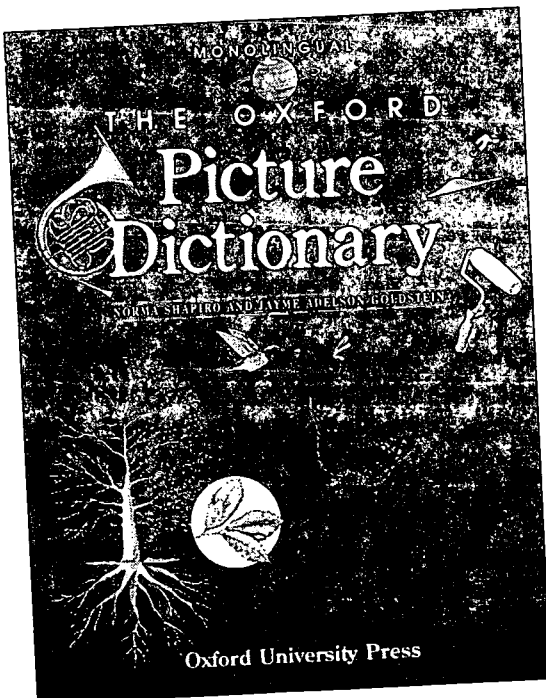
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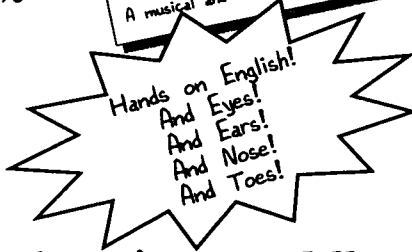
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Hands-on English

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Where to get free books

Don't forget the library

Greetings! We hope your teaching or tutoring is getting off to a great start this fall! Among other things in this issue, you'll find some activities about getting to know the public library (a puzzle on page 8, a field activity on page 10) which we hope will benefit your students. This topic was inspired by a letter we received from **Lety Banks** in Livermore, California. She wrote:

"Many of my students come from countries where there is no easy access to the libraries, and other students just have never been to one. So introducing this valuable resource to them helps them become independent learners!"

Lety is right that there's a cultural aspect to our libraries. Access to books and other information is one of the foundations of our democracy, and the establishment of free public libraries in nearly every community in the country is an important part of our history. Even today there are few other countries where this many resources are available to anyone and everyone.

A good beginning

Also in her letter, Lety explained that she likes to give her students an introduction to the library as a part of their ESL course. She said: "I give a lesson about how to use the public library at the beginning of the semester or school year so students can take advantage of the resources offered there. I developed five lessons to help my students get acquainted with the library as part of my graduate work, and I cannot tell you how useful those lessons have been."

Many teachers have developed such lessons and these are often customized to the specific facilities available to them in their location. You may wish to develop something like this too, but we thought we could at least give you a start with some more general library activities. The puzzle in this issue, for example, is probably general enough to apply to any library, and the field activity is easy to adapt to your own situation if necessary.

Cost is a factor

In this era of economic well-being, buying some books for personal use doesn't seem like much of a burden to many people. If you are a new immigrant, though, your money will likely be spent on things more directly related to survival. For this reason, the books available free at the library are a great blessing to immigrants and their families. If they learn to take advantage of this resource, they will have an invaluable learning tool.

The people factor

Besides the books, newspapers and other information available there, another valuable resource in almost every library is the librarians and staff. We've always found these people dedicated to helping others to an extent you rarely see anywhere, except, well, among ESL teachers themselves. If you can introduce your students to some library people, and encourage them to approach library staff with questions, you'll have given your students another valuable tool as a bonus. ✎

—the Editor

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range of our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

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About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to \$200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request. 🐾

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See you there!

Hints & tips

Our readers are always looking for ideas to improve their teaching. Do you have tips you'd like to share? We'd love to pass these along to our network of hard-working teachers and tutors.

Picture cues for irregular verbs

We recently spoke with Peggy Wahlen, ESL Director at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. She has a wonderful idea for practicing irregular verb forms and we couldn't wait to tell you about it.

Peggy has carefully selected a large color photograph to represent each verb on the students' list. She cuts these photos from magazines such as *National Geographic* and mounts them on brightly colored tagboard. These are laminated for durability. The photos can be used to introduce and discuss the verbs in context, and later pulled out and passed around for verb practice, instead of flash cards.

Her choice of photos is imaginative—for example, a picture of a butterfly coming out of its chrysalis illustrates the verb “become.” A photo of a wedding party illustrates “begin.” A lot of time has gone into considering and collecting these but of course they will be useful for many years.

We think this is a lovely way to bring what is necessarily rote grammar practice out of the flat realm of black and white print and into the more multi-dimensional realm of true language.

Doesn't this make you want to run right out and start clipping?? ☞

Organizing ESL stuff

In our last issue, one of our readers had asked for some suggestions for organizing all that stuff that seems to fill up filing cabinets, drawers, desks, etc. for easy retrieval.

This editor used to use the ‘archeological system,’ which means that most materials are stored in large piles; their location is determined by how long ago they were last used. For example, one August a fellow teacher asked us about a Martin Luther King lesson; we dug down approximately two and a half feet back to February, and *voilà!* there it was. Unfortunately, this system has a certain (ahem) informality to it that may not appeal to everyone. Not to mention safety issues from unstable strata.

Many of our readers are better organized than this. Several readers told us about color-coding systems they use, and

while we admire those who have such a system, setting this up and sticking to it seems like a lot of work.

One reader, Sr. Christel Nolan in West Hartford, Connecticut, has found something that does seem like a good solution, though, especially for filing cluttered things. These are clear plastic file bags, attached to hanging file rods that allow you to store them on your existing hanging file frames. She sent us an ad from a mail-order company that sells these for under \$20 for a set of ten. (Signatures@, 19465 Brennan Ave, Perris CA 92599, 1-800-833-8617. Item #11-62387-3.)

Sr. Christel wisely points out, though, that something like this could be made inexpensively from zip lock or food storage bags, and you could attach these to regular hanging file folders somehow.

In any case, the idea is useful because the bags are closed on three sides so little items like cards and pictures won't fall out, they are easy to put away in a filing cabinet, and because they are clear it's easy to see what's in there. ☞

Tips trickling in

In our last issue, we announced that we're collecting your tips for a new hints & tips article, called “40 More Tips.” We're interested in any ideas you have, big or small, that make your teaching easier and more fun. These are still coming in and we're collecting them for a future issue. Let us know if you'd like to contribute a tip! Thanks. ☞

Letters

We received this letter from Sally Wessels, at T-S-T BOCES in Ithaca, New York:

“We all enjoy HOE, especially since its focus is exactly on our kind of students. Any additional articles on project-based teaching will be read with interest. Also—helping refugees get ready for work long before they really have enough English!”

We'd love to hear from readers who have ideas on either of these issues. —Editor ☞

Multi-level dictation: How to learn English

Here's a multi-level dictation activity about a topic everybody is usually thinking about at the beginning of the school year—strategies for success in studying English.

Preparation

Make lots of copies of each of the dictation levels A, B and C. We like to recommend that you enlarge these before copying, to make it easier for the students to write on them. Level D, the hardest, is a blank sheet of paper.

Introduction

You might begin by presenting the four strategies from the reading below orally to your students. Ask students to share any additional ideas they have for study strategies that work. For example, sometimes a student will bring a tape recorder to class and tape a lesson. Other students say they benefit from watching TV. Or perhaps you can relate to your students strategies that former students used successfully.

Once this topic has been discussed, read the text to them, explaining as you go along if there is anything they don't understand.

How to do it

Let the students decide which level to try first. You can explain that Level A is easiest, and they will see this when they look at the worksheets. Pass out a worksheet to each student and begin the dictation.

We think a dictation is most effective when you read each sentence at a normal speed (not artificially slowly), and then pause for as long as needed between sentences. You can repeat each sentence as many times as the students wish, though.

Once the dictation is finished, have each student pair up with another student who has a different level of worksheet in order to check their work. They can be of assistance to each other in correcting the dictation, because they have different information on their sheets.

Very often in this kind of exercise, the students like to try the dictation again but at a higher level, so be sure you have extra worksheets available in case they would like to repeat it. 🖱️

How to learn English

Do you want to learn English very well? Here is some advice for you about how to study English. There are four important steps.

First, try to speak English with other students when you are in class. It's hard work but it's good practice for you.

Second, write down any new words you learn and keep them in a notebook. Every day you should read these words again, so that you will remember them.

Third, when you are at home, look at your school lessons again. Practice saying things out loud. If you do this for a few minutes every day, it will help you to improve your speaking.

Fourth, write in a journal every day for at least ten minutes. You can write about what happened today, or any other topic. If you remember to do this every day, your writing will improve.

These four things will help you to learn English. But there are also many other ways that students can learn. What advice can you give for other students?

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 16 sentences long (175 words).

Vocabulary needed:
*advice
remember, improve
learn, study, practice
journal*

Level A

How to learn English

Do you want to learn _____ very well? Here is some advice for _____ about how to study English. There are _____ important steps.

First, try to _____ with other students when you are in class. It's hard work but it's good practice for _____.

Second, write down any new _____ you learn and keep them in a notebook. Every _____ you should read these words again, so that you will remember them.

Third, when you are at _____, look at your school lessons again. Practice saying things out loud. If you do this for a few _____ every _____, it will help you to improve your speaking.

Fourth, _____ in a journal every _____ for at least _____ minutes. You can write about what happened _____, or any other topic. If you remember to do this _____, your writing will improve.

These _____ things will help you to learn _____. But there are also many other ways that students can _____. What advice can you give for other _____?

Level B

How to learn English

Do you _____ English very _____? Here is some advice _____ about _____ English. _____ four important steps.

First, _____ English with _____ when you are _____. It's hard work but it's _____.

Second, _____ any _____ words you _____ and _____ notebook. Every day _____ these words _____, so that you will _____ them.

Third, _____ home, _____ your school lessons again. Practice _____ things out loud. If you do this _____ every day, it will _____ your _____.

Fourth, _____ in a journal every day _____ at least _____. You _____ what happened _____, or any other topic. _____ to do this _____, your _____ will improve.

These four things _____ English. But _____ also _____ that students _____. What advice _____ for other students?

How to learn English

Do _____ English _____? Here is
_____ about _____ English.
There _____ steps.

First, _____ other _____
_____. It's _____ but it's
_____.

Second, _____ any _____ and
_____. _____ you should
_____, so that _____ remember
_____.

Third, _____, look _____
_____ again. _____ things out loud. If
you _____, it
will _____ improve _____.

Fourth, _____ for
_____ ten minutes. You can _____
_____, or _____ topic. If you _____
_____, _____ writing will
_____.

_____ four things _____
_____. But _____ that
students _____. What _____ for
_____?

Tools & techniques Bulletin boards for ESL

We received a letter from **Elizabeth Bakker** in Lakewood, California, with some information about how she uses bulletin boards in her ESL classes. Elizabeth has the advantage of a background in elementary education, and so she appreciates how much bulletin boards can enhance the classroom—we thought this might spark some ideas for your own bare walls.

About class topics—any topic the class is studying lends itself to student-made posters or a display of pictures. For example, health, nutrition, junk food, etc.

Student writing—Elizabeth likes to use the book *Drawing Out* (by Sharron Bassano and Mary Ann Christison, Alta Book Center ISBN 1-882483-32-4) for

ideas to get the students writing. For example, if they won some prize money, how would they spend it? Her students made a drawing or cut out a picture to illustrate their paragraphs; this student work is all posted on a bulletin board.

Current events—a space for newspaper clippings. Students can read these during breaks or when they have extra time.

“Wonderful class of '99”—in this space, her students shared writings, drawings and photos about themselves and their interests.

Seasonal topics—holidays, events and the seasons are all occasions for a display of interesting visuals for students to discuss or write about. ✎

Vocabulary: New words warm-up game

by *Seena Sweet*,
Center Manager and
ESOL teacher at
Steinway Adult
Learning Center,
Queens Borough Public
Library, in New York,
NY.

Here's a simple activity that will help your students build their vocabulary and remember new words. It reinforces vocabulary they have learned in previous classes, and is appropriate for all levels of learners. It is also a good class warm-up as students begin to arrive to class. You can organize your papers for your lesson while the students are playing the game. There is also minimal preparation and materials.

How to do it

The only materials you need are one small manila envelope and some scrap paper. During the last 5-10 minutes of each class session, ask students if they learned one new word or expression. ("Did anyone learn a new word today?")

When each student identifies a word that they have learned, hand them a small piece of scrap paper and ask them to write down the word. You can help them with the spelling, if necessary. They do not have to write their name on the paper. Each student must choose a different word—no duplicates.

Then, collect all the words and put them into the envelope.

Word game

At the start of the next class meeting, ask one student volunteer to pick out a word randomly from the envelope. Instruct the student to look at the word, but not to show it to anyone else. Next, have them write dashes on the board, illustrating the number of letters contained in the word (like Hangman or Wheel of Fortune). The board should look like this: _ _ _ _ _

For beginning level learners, you may want to model this game first; then choose a student for the next word.

The rest of the class takes turns trying to guess the word by naming letters of the alphabet. They can play in teams or individually. They can get points or a prize if they guess the word. After they guess the word, ask them to use it in a sentence.

An alternative game

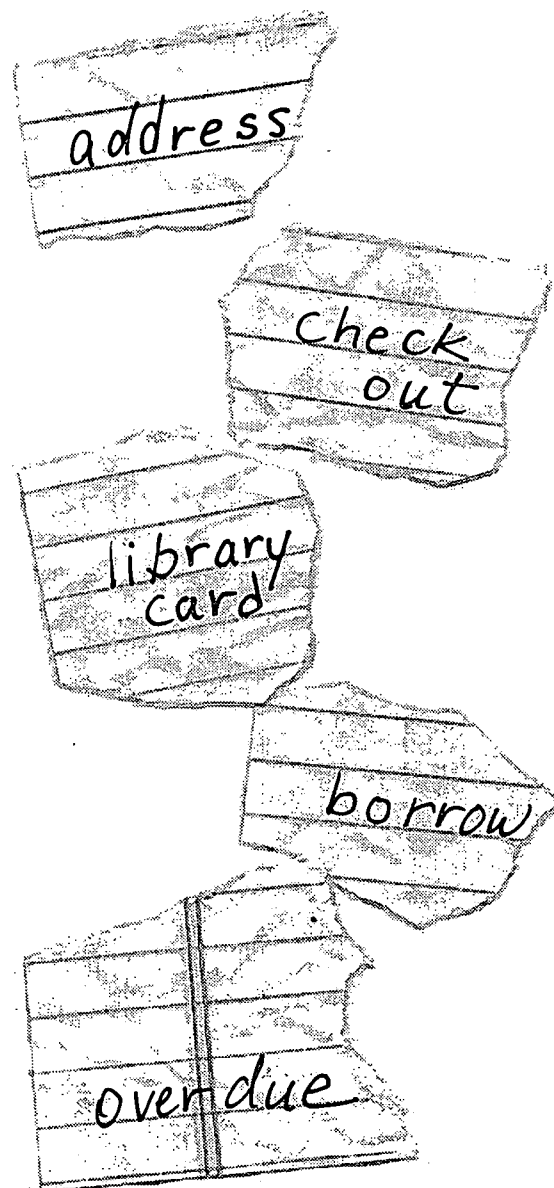
Another option for reviewing the students' words is to have one or more students pantomime a word, as others guess.

In either case, choose only about 2-3 words per session. As students begin to understand the game, they can alternate "hosting" it next time around.

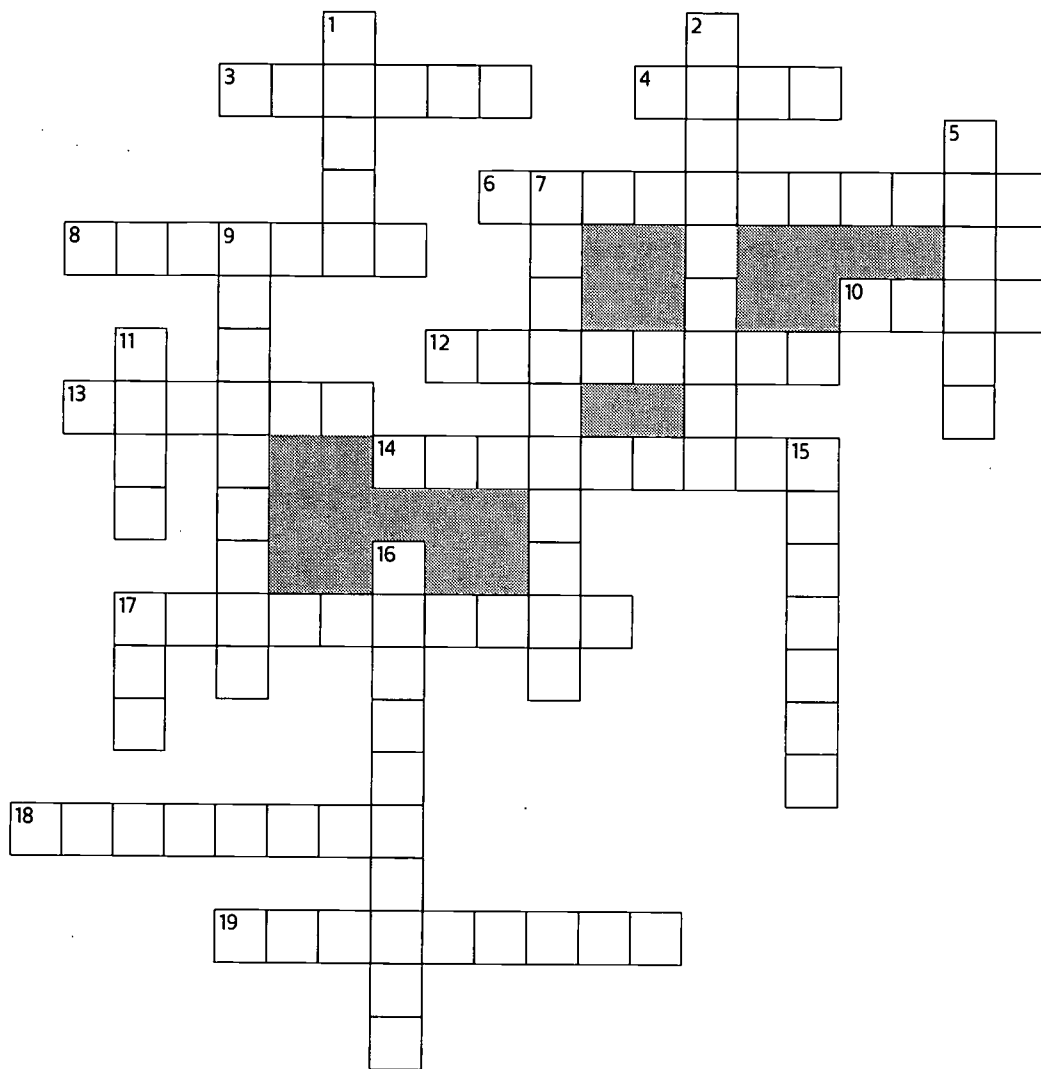
After a while, you'll have an envelope full of words and expressions, which can serve as a class dictionary. Students can then publish it on the computer!

Why it works

The students are selecting the material themselves that they feel is most important for them to review. The activity is task-oriented and fun at the same time. ✎



Multi-level crossword puzzle: The library



Word list:

address
bilingual
borrow
card
checkout
dictionary
downstairs
due
find
fine
hours
information
librarian
look up
magazines
newspapers
reference
section
upstairs
videos

Note to the instructor:

Here is a crossword you can use in conjunction with a visit to the public library. Before doing the puzzle, though, it might be useful to teach the following three terms. Also, because 'check out' and 'look up' are a little tricky, it's a good idea to review these and use them again in follow-up lessons.

Here are some sample sentences; write them on the board and see if your students can fill in the blanks.

Hours

What are the school office hours? ___ to ___
 What are the hours at the post office? ___ to ___
 What are the library hours? ___ to ___
 If you call on the telephone to ask about the hours, what do you say?

Check out

(Can or can't?)

You ___ check out books at the library.
 You ___ check out dictionaries.
 You ___ check out videos.
 Can you ___ magazines?
 Can you ___ music tapes?
 What do you say, when you want to borrow a book?

Look up

Example: What is the telephone number of the school?
 "I don't know, but I can ___ it ___ in the phone book."
 What does 'bilingual' mean?
 What is the address of the library?
 What is the capital city of Turkey?

Level A (easier)

Across clues

3. "Excuse me, I need to _____ a phone number. Do you have a telephone book here?"
4. "Can you help me _____ a book?" "Sure. Do you know the title or the author? I can look it up for you."
6. "Where can I find _____ about colleges?" "Ask the librarian over there—she'll help you." "Thanks"
8. "I would like to apply for a library card." "OK. Please write your name and _____ here."
10. "My daughter wants to borrow this book. Can she use my library _____?" "Yes, you can check it out for her."
12. "Excuse me, where are the ESL books?" "They're _____, on the second floor." "Thank you."
13. "Did you know you can borrow movies from the library?" "Really? I didn't know they had _____."
14. These are not books, but you can read them in the library. They usually have a lot of pictures.
17. "Excuse me, I'm looking for a Russian-English _____." "We have one in the reference section. Please come with me."
18. You can't _____ the dictionaries. They have to stay in the library.

19. "I'm looking for a _____ dictionary for Spanish and English." "We have some right over there." "Thank you."

Down clues

1. "What time is the library open tomorrow?" "Our _____ are 10am to 6pm every day."
2. If you can't find something, ask a _____ to help you.
5. "I'd like to _____ this book, please." "Sure! Do you have your library card with you?"
7. Every week, the library gets _____ from many cities in the U.S.
9. "Can you tell me where the encyclopedias are?" "Yes, they're right over there, in the _____ section."
11. If you bring a book back late, you will have to pay a small _____. It's about 30 cents a day.
15. "Do you have children's books here?" "Yes, we do. The children's _____ is over there, next to the window."
16. "Excuse me, where are the newspapers?" "Newspapers are _____, in the basement."
17. "This book is _____ in two weeks. You have to bring it back by October 15th." "Thank you."

Level B (harder)

Across clues

3. You can use the computer to _____ any book in the library.
4. How do I _____ books about American history?
6. You can find _____ about many different subjects in the library.
8. You can look up the _____ and phone number of the library in the telephone book.
10. To get a library _____, fill out an application and give it to the librarian.
12. To get to the 3rd floor, go _____.
13. If you have a VCR, you can check out _____ to watch at home.
14. *Time*, *Newsweek* and *National Geographic* are three _____.
17. This is a reference book you can use to look up new words.
18. When you are ready to _____ your books, take them to the front desk of the library.

19. A _____ dictionary has two languages.

Down clues

1. The library _____ are 10am to 7pm.
2. A _____ can answer many questions.
5. If you _____ a book from the library, don't forget to take it back.
7. The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times* are all _____.
9. The _____ section has dictionaries and encyclopedias.
11. If you return the books on time, you won't have to pay a _____.
15. The children's _____ has small chairs.
16. To get to the basement, go _____.
17. The _____ date is inside the book.

Multi-level dictation: Library puzzle follow up

Here are some dictation sentences you can use as a follow-up or review of the material in the library puzzle. Intermediate students can write these on a blank sheet. High beginners can use the first worksheet, which gives some clues. Lower level students can also participate, by using the second worksheet. Their job is to fill in the missing letters in the words they hear. 🖱

1. On Saturday the **library** hours are 10am to 3pm.
2. If you don't know where to find something, ask the **librarian**.
3. I'm looking for a bilingual **dictionary** for Chinese and English.
4. Do you have yesterday's **newspaper**?
5. You can't check out any books if you don't have a library **card**.

1. On _____ the _____ are _____ am to _____ pm.
2. If you _____ where to _____ something, _____.
3. I'm _____ for a _____ for Chinese _____ English.
4. _____ yesterday's _____?
5. You can't _____ any _____ if you don't have a _____.

1. L _ BR _ R _
2. L _ BR _ R _ _ N
3. D _ CTION _ R _
4. N _ WSP _ P _ R
5. C _ RD

Field activity: Getting to know the library

Out of the nest...

Many teachers organize a trip for their class to the public library. But have you ever thought of sending the students on their own instead? Information that students discover on their own and report back to class is much more interesting and valuable than that which they just listen to and absorb. It may be a less efficient way to get information, but it can be a good experience for the students and a chance to interact on their own with people in the neighborhood.

Preparation

Check with your public library beforehand to make sure this activity won't interfere with their work, but chances are

they will be delighted to have your students visit and learn about the library.

On the next page we have a worksheet for your students which you may want to customize by adding any items of interest specific to your library. You should also adjust it for the language level of your students. It may be best, for example, to use fewer questions for lower level students. In fact, for beginning level students you could assign just a couple of questions and have them go to the library together in pairs.

After discussing and practicing the questions in class, students can complete this assignment outside of class time. Later, have the students report back to the class what they discovered. 🖱

Getting to know the library

1. What is the name of the library?
2. Find out the address of the library.
3. Do you know how to get there?
4. What are the hours of this library?
5. Find out what you need to get a library card.
6. Find out how long you can keep a book if you borrow one.
7. Find out how much the overdue fine is per day.
8. Find out if they have tours available for students.
9. Find out if there is a special program for children. When is it?
10. Find out if there is an ESL section. Where is it?
11. Find out if they have any books in your language.
12. Find out how many different newspapers they have.
13. Find out the names of three magazines at the library.
14. Find out if they have computers for people to use.
15. Look at the people you see at the library and answer these questions:
How many people did you see?

How many were adults and how many were children?

What were the people doing?

Tools & techniques: Easy-to-make reading materials

A digital camera makes it quick and easy to snap a photo, then put it into a word-processing document, which you can print out so that each student can have one. Reader Janet Hinkle uses this technique to prepare stories for her students. She writes:

"I like to create my own reading materials. I use my digital camera to take pictures of local, familiar surroundings, then write the story to go with the pictures. Then I create a worksheet to go with the reading which reviews the new vocabulary and checks reading comprehension.

"Although I am no expert in writing materials, the students like to work with topics they are familiar with—these topics

are endless. This fall is my first time using the digital camera for lesson making. Always before I used clipart. Real images will be fun.

Another digital idea

"Last year I used a digital camera to take photos of each student. Then they wrote a short story about themselves. I put them all into a word-processing document, printed, photocopied and assembled them in booklet form to give to the students. They loved reading about each other.

"If you don't have a digital camera, you can use a scanner to scan any photo and import it into a word-processing document. Scanner prices are very reasonable now." 🐾

*A contribution from
Janet Hinkle,
Waterford, California.*

This technique provides a lovely opportunity for teachers and students to talk about real things from outside the classroom.

Here's a sample lesson Janet shared with us:



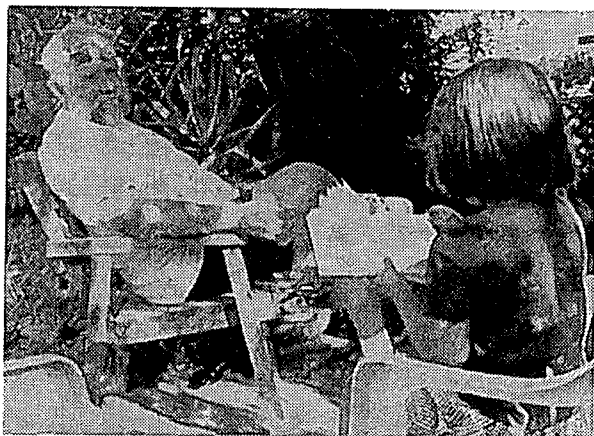
MY GRANDDAUGHTER

This is Schylar. She is four years old. Schylar is my granddaughter.

Schylar is outdoors. She sits in a white chair. She holds a book. See her book? It is a little book. The name of the book is, "The Tale of Peter Rabbit."

Schylar likes to read. She reads her book to Jack. Jack listens to Schylar read the book. She reads "The Tale of Peter Rabbit."

Jack likes to listen to Schylar read.





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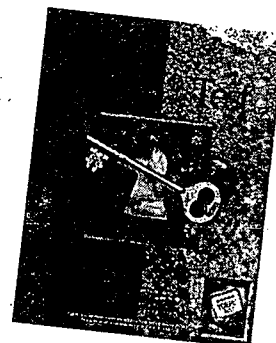
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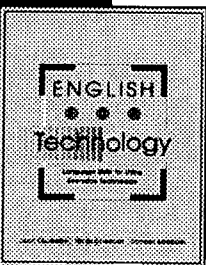


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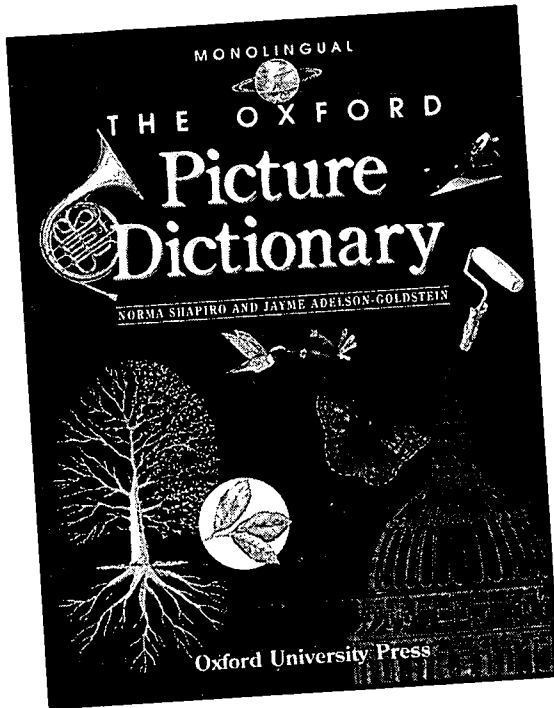
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News & notes

Calendar of ESL events

Our online events calendar is updated to include meetings and conferences for this fall. Check it out, to see if there are any going on in your area—a conference is a great way to meet colleagues! See www.handsonenglish.com

Newspaper for ESL students

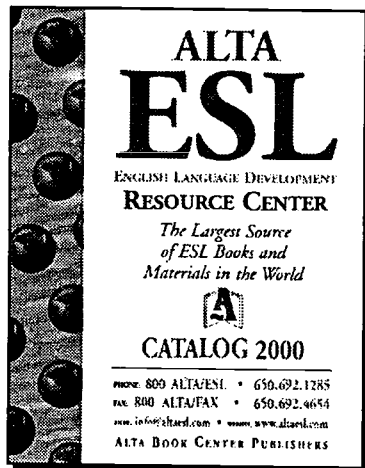
Have you seen *Easy English News*? This paper is designed specifically for

adult ESL students. It's a 12-page tabloid style newspaper with photos and news stories on current events and issues. The reading level is suitable for intermediate students but is adaptable to lower levels. A glossary helps students with unfamiliar vocabulary.

You can get a free sample of this paper by writing to: Easy English News, P.O. Box 2596-H, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410. Fax: 201-791-1901. Or email to the editor, Elizabeth Claire, at eceardley@aol.com

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Resolutions

What kind of New Year's resolutions do ESL teachers make? Although resolutions are made to be broken, the winter holidays often provide some breathing space for teachers and a little time to focus on other aspects of teaching besides classroom work. So perhaps a resolution is a good idea. Here are some possibilities:

Get together with other teachers.

You've been meaning to do this, right? Maybe just meet for coffee, boost morale and exchange ideas.

Write up an activity. You had a really great lesson this fall and you've been meaning to write it up, maybe send it in to a journal, or your regional TESOL newsletter, or (hint, hint) to *Hands-on English*. Now's the time to do it, while it's fresh in your mind.

Read something inspiring. If you're like us, you don't have time while you're teaching to read professional material unless it's targeted exactly at the problems you're trying to solve. Now's the time, though, to take a breather and let your mind wander through a thoughtful book. Maybe you have a title on a list, or get out those catalogs and pick one.

Take a cruise on the web. Searching the Internet takes a lot of time and you probably haven't explored as much as you'd like to. There may be some interesting ESL materials there that you didn't know about. It's easier to deal with computery things when you have some leisure and aren't under a deadline.

Finally, if we may be so bold as to offer you some advice, don't pick something horrible like cleaning your office as your Year 2000 resolution. Pick something that will open up horizons, instead. —Editor.

Tips for teaching resolutions

Do your students know about the custom of making (and breaking) New Year's resolutions? On page 12 of this issue, we offer you a reading passage about New year's resolutions, which you can read and discuss with your students. There is also a model conversation, which your students could use to interview each other about their good intentions for the upcoming year!

Grammar

On page 13 we offer a related grammar exercise, giving the students an opportunity to practice the future structures *going to* and *not going to*. We hope they will have fun with this exercise.

To expand the grammar exercise, have students also write sentences about the actual resolutions of the other students in the class. For more advanced students, discuss the structure *try to*, as in: *He's going to try to lose some weight*. (This has a more complex meaning, implying that we aren't sure he will succeed.) These students could do the grammar exercise again, orally or in writing, this time inserting the phrase *try to* in each case.

Follow up

Watch your local paper for an article about New Year's resolutions which your students might enjoy reading. This time of year the topic frequently comes up. ➡

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?


We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

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Your editor, Anna Silliman, looks forward to hearing from readers with their teaching ideas, comments & queries!

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9-4

Letters

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emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.

No quick answers on assessment

In a previous issue, a reader inquired about testing and assessment of adult ESL students. We always have trouble with questions on testing, because it's such a difficult topic. We received some very helpful correspondence from Donna Criddle pointing out that there are a lot of alternatives to standardized testing. She mentions several resources on this topic, which, if you have time for a little research project might be of interest.

First of all, Donna directs us to the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education (NCBE) whose website is www.ncbe.gwu.edu This site, while not exclusively about teaching adults, has an enormous amount of information of possible interest to adult ESL teachers, including articles on vocational topics. One article from 1995, "Assessment of English Language Learners in Adult Education Programs" lists about 20 resources on alternative testing. We found it at: www.ncbe.gwu.edu/miscpubs/lists/adult.htm Careful browsing on this site may yield many more relevant items.

Secondly, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) has a very rich site with a lot of resources applicable to adult ESL students. So rich, in fact, that it may take you quite a bit of time to find your way around this site. A set of materials published by NWREL called "Assessment: A Development Guidebook for Teachers of English-Language Learners" (2nd edition, 1999) by Robert D. Martinez is available for sale on the site. The book explores alternatives to standardized testing in measuring proficiency in English, in reading and in math.

To locate this resource, go to the NWREL site, www.nwrel.org and click on 'Resources.' From there select the 'Products and Publications Database' and do a search for the title. Browsing some more on this site may reward you with other useful items.

Happy surfing!

Fan mail

"We have about 50 students of all levels. We teach weekly in a church setting. *Hands-on English* is a great help to our teachers in supplementing the basic text. Thank you for your great work!"

—Marilyn Stone
Oklahoma City, OK

"I have *always* found something to use in H.O.E. It's awesome! Thanks so much for being there!"

—M.D. Kennedy
Pittsburgh, PA

"Great! Keep it up."

—Anonymous


Editor's note: Your comments keep us going. Thanks!

Hints & tips

Games

As holiday season looms once again, you may be searching around for suitable fun activities for a class party. Here's a quick list for starters:

- Pictionary—a commercially available game you can play in teams; any level student can play. (Someone you know probably has a copy of this in a closet.)
- Categories—a fast-paced word game you can play with individuals or teams. We described this in Vol. 6, No. 5.
- Musical chairs—we described some language learning variations of this in Vol. 6, No. 4, especially suitable for beginning students.
- One minute conversations—that's all there is to it. Students talk about anything they want to but have to change partners after one minute. Noisy but fun!
- Role-play activities—for example don't miss the 'Party game' role-play in this issue (p. 10) which is a lot of fun, and is also noisy.

Do you have a favorite party-time activity? We'd love to hear about it! Drop us a line and let us know what works with your students. Thanks! 

Language building activity: Vocabulary squares

I teach an open-enrollment parent English class at one of our local elementary schools. All students are Hispanic. Most students are literate beginners, though some are barely literate and others can almost do GED level work. Here's an activity that has worked well for us in class. Like a lot of teaching ideas, it's easier to demonstrate it than write it down, but I think other multi-level, open-enrollment teachers might enjoy this activity anyway.

Purpose of the activity

There is always a need to review old vocabulary and add new words to my students' conversation and writing abilities. 'Vocabulary Squares' combines several ideas into one activity. With my literate beginners, it took about an hour to go through the listening/speaking part; my group was not familiar with this kind of activity and it took a few extra minutes to demonstrate the instructions. Then the students really got involved in the activity!

I wanted to review prepositions of location (next to, to the left, to the right, above, below, etc.) and expand upon our new unit on food. In the previous class, I had introduced vocabulary for fruits and vegetables. Here's the activity that pulls the vocabulary together in all four language skills.

How to do it

Step 1: Students divide a blank piece of paper into eight squares. They number each square one through eight. I draw a blank sample page on the board for them (see drawing on next page).

Step 2: For listening practice, I dictate to the students where to write one vocabulary word. For example, I tell the students, "Write or draw 'onions' in square number 1." (Drawing allows my low-literate students to participate.) I do a quick check of their work, then write "onions" in square #1 of the board sample.

Next I tell them, "Write or draw 'beans' in the square below 'onions.'" After repeating this several times and allowing

students to clarify with each other, I ask the class, "Which number has 'beans' in it?" When they tell me number 2, I write "beans" on my board. These two examples help to clarify the instructions.

Step 3: I dictate six other words to them, using prepositions of location. Some examples:

- Write or draw 'limes' next to 'onions.'
- Write or draw 'peaches' in the bottom right corner.
- Write or draw 'grapes' below 'limes.'
- Write or draw 'avocados' in the bottom left corner.
- Write or draw 'pumpkins' above 'avocados.'
- Write or draw 'carrots' next to 'pumpkins.'

Step 4: After filling in all eight squares, we use my board to check answers. They tell me which number had which food—for example, #3 is pumpkins. If there is disagreement among students about which word goes with which number, I repeat the instructions but do not give the answer. The class then decides on the right answer. Also, I do not check for spelling since this is primarily a listening practice, though students often self-correct as I write answers on the board.

Step 5: For speaking practice, students do a chain drill in small groups of 4 to 5 students. Student A chooses a vocabulary word from the list. Student B chooses an appropriate answer.

- a. Where are the grapes?
- b. The grapes are above the carrots.

Then B turns to C:

- b. Where are the onions?
- c. The onions are in the top right corner.

Then C turns to D:

- c. Where are the beans?
- d. The beans are to the left of the grapes.

(Notice that all of the vocabulary words for this example are plural, so the sentences all use 'are.' For my students, mixing singular and plural forms would have been an overload for this lesson. A slightly more advanced class could handle more grammar.)

by *Lynette Bowen*,
ESL teacher for the
Parent English Class,
LaMesa Elementary
School in Plainview,
Texas. Lynette also
serves on the *Hands-on*
English Advisory
Board.

Tip for tutors:

This activity is well-suited for pairwork or small groups, and is easily adaptable to the level of your student. For very beginning students, you could start by moving small pictures around the squares; graduate to written words when the student has mastered the new structures.

Vocabulary squares, cont'd. . .

The nice thing about this speaking activity is that it is structured enough to give my new students the ability to participate but interesting enough that it gives my regular students the opportunity to choose one of several good questions or responses. Pretty soon, their conversation goes beyond my list of vocabulary words (Yeah!).

Step 6: For writing practice, students get out a clean sheet of paper and I return to my sample on the board. They dictate to me the location of the different fruits and vegetables, then I write the sentences on the board. For a greater challenge, tell the students to dictate two ways of describing one location. For example: "The peaches are below the carrots and next to the avocados." After doing so much listening and

conversation, students are very ready to focus on spelling and grammar as we write.

Step 7: As a follow-up, students create their own vocabulary squares and dictate to each other. The whole process can be repeated with students taking more initiative.

Adapting to higher levels

Vocabulary Squares can easily be adapted to a more advanced group by adding more squares, eliminating the numbers in the squares, mixing plural and singular forms, expecting good spelling the first time, having students dictate to each other, and so on. Or, pair more advanced students with lower-level students, with the advanced students taking the role of the teacher. 🖱

Step 1:

Following instructions, students divide a sheet of paper into 8 squares

They number each square.

1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

Step 2 & 3:

Students listen and write each word in the correct space.

They use these squares in pairs or small groups for speaking and writing practice.

1 onions	5 limes
2 beans	6 grapes
3 pumpkins	7 carrots
4 avocados	8 peaches

Cultural activity: An awards ceremony

Congratulations!

A social custom that is frequently seen on local and national television, as well as in schools, is the award ceremony. Handing out awards in class can be a fun way to practice this custom, while recognizing students' efforts, giving positive reinforcement and boosting morale at the same time. It's also a good way for students to practice their English in an adult context. Here are some ideas on how to conduct such a 'ceremony.'

Find a context

To introduce the idea it would be helpful to show students a real-life example. Check your newspaper for stories about awards—presidents and mayors tend to hand out awards on a daily basis, and often these are written up in the news with a photo. Students can read and discuss these.

Another typical example is a school awards ceremony. See if you can get a tape or photo of such an event from your school to show your students.

How to do it

If you have a small group, each student can select an award category from the list (next page). That student then decides who in the group should receive the award.

If you have a large class, divide the students into committees of 3 to 5 people. Each committee will discuss a category and select an awardee.

In either case, students may consult with each other while pondering their selections.

Prepare the award

Once the awardees have been selected, hand out blank certificates for the students to fill out. They should write the awardee's name, the date, and the kind of award. As an additional step, if you wish students can also write a letter to the awardee informing them of their award.

Presentations

You can model a presentation yourself so that the students will know what to say. Write the text on the board as a starting point; students can add additional comments as appropriate if they wish.

Give the students a chance to practice their presentations in small groups or in pairs. They might want to write down what they will say.

The ceremony

Call the class together and begin the ceremony by announcing each award in turn. If you have a podium (or even a box on a table) ask each person making an award to come forward one at a time to make their presentation. When each awardee's name is called, they will also come forward to claim the award, shake hands and give a response if they wish. The audience may applaud.

For a touch of real-life drama, someone could take a photo of each presentation.

Ideas for awards...

These awards may be somewhat lighthearted, but they should be nonetheless sincere or the students will be embarrassed. You can include awards for work that your students have done recently, for example highest test scores, most progress on test scores, longest essay, most interesting essay, etc. (although some of these can only be awarded by the teacher who has this information). Other classroom events can provide award material, for example "Funniest joke," "Best story," "Best cookies," etc.

Follow up

After the awards ceremony, students can interview the awardees in small groups and write a report about one person they interviewed. Alternatively, students can write a report about the entire ceremony. Once corrected, this can become part of the class archives.

Why it works

Adult students often blossom when given a commanding role, and it is a good exercise for that reason. In addition we have found that when given the opportunity students are very appreciative and supportive of each others' efforts, so they will enjoy providing the formal recognition. ➡

On the next page is a model of an awards presentation—your students can use this format for their speeches.

Awards, cont'd. . .

Presenter: "This award is for (*best class attendance, etc.*). Will (*awardee's name*) please come forward."
"(*awardee's name*), I'd like to present this award to you for (*reason for award*). Congratulations, and keep up the good work."

[Gives award and shakes hands]

Awardee: "Thank you very much."

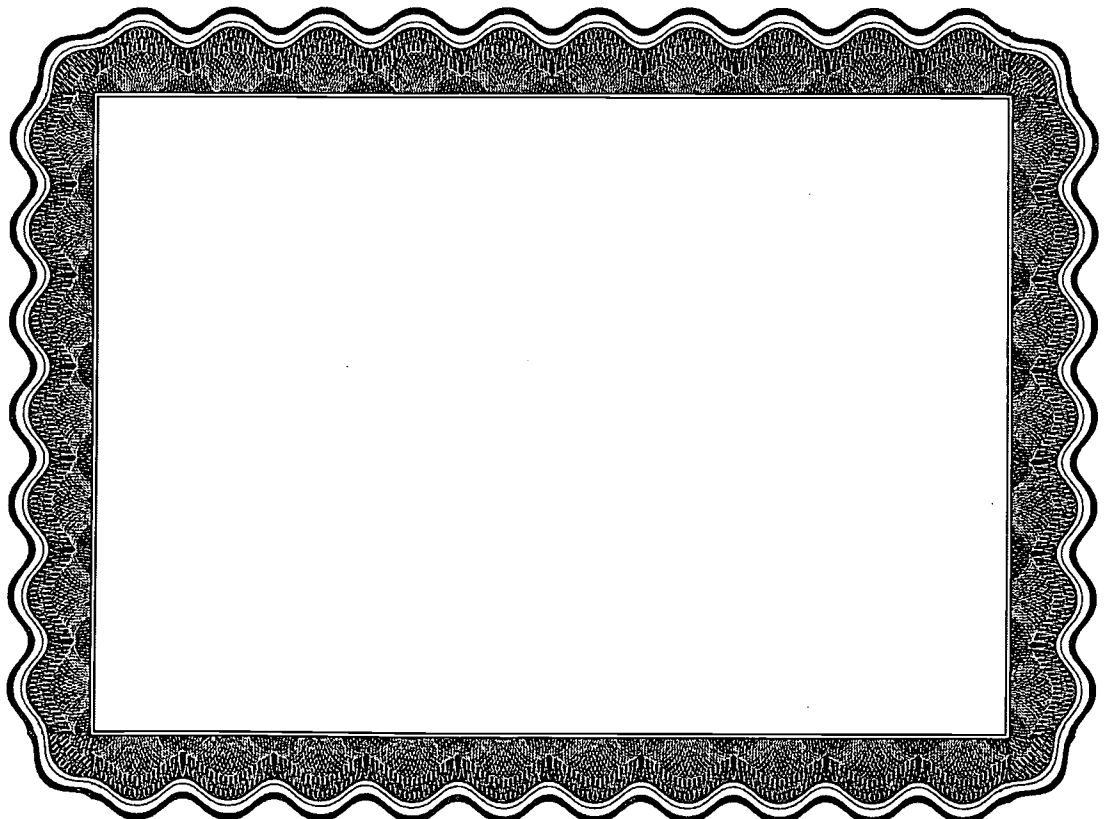
Audience: [applause]

Award categories:

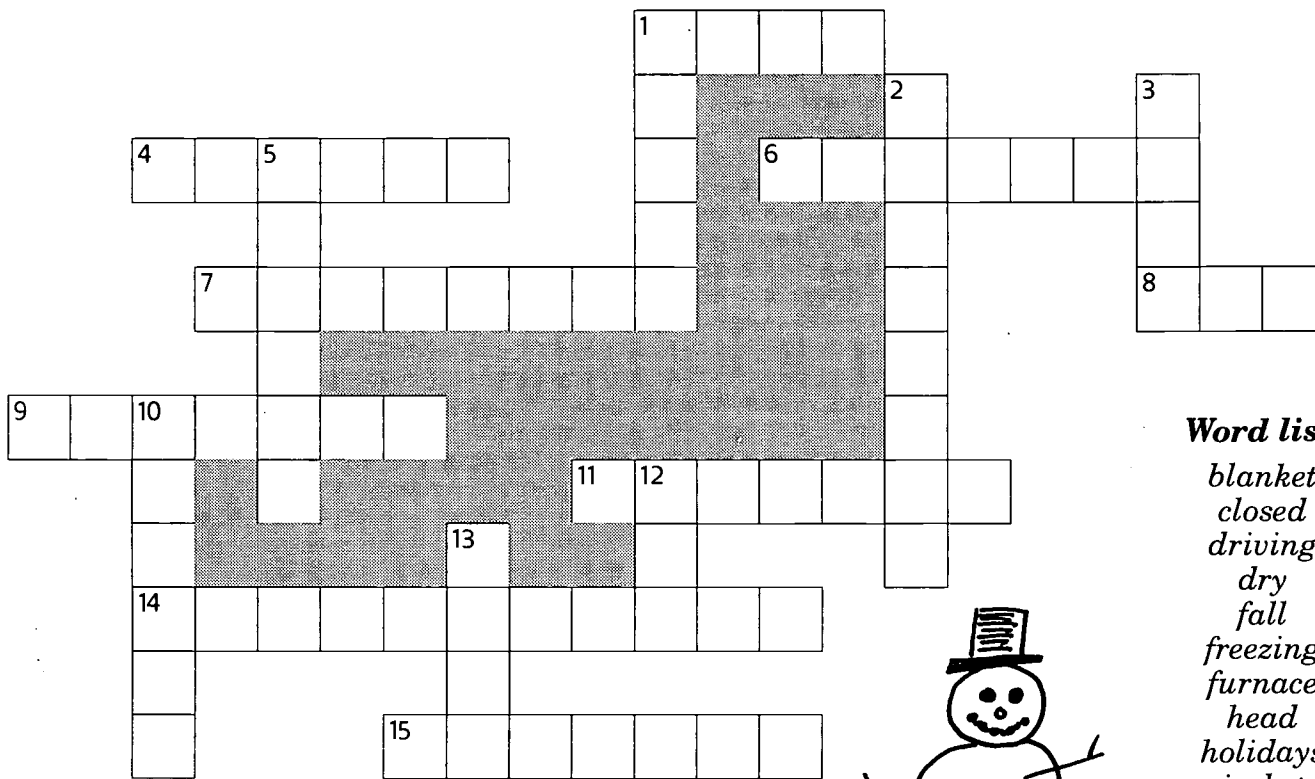
- The student whose English has improved the most— "Most Improvement."
- A student who is never absent— "Best attendance."
- A student who is always on time for class— "Most Punctual."
- The student who comes the longest distance to school— "Longest Commute."
- A student who helps the other students— "Most Helpful Student."
- A student who makes the class happy— "Most Cheerful Student."
- A student who overcomes the most obstacles— "Best Effort."
- The student who studies the most out of class— "Hardest-Working Student."
- A student who listens very carefully in class— "Best Listener."
- The student who knows the most irregular verbs— "Highest Verb Score"

(You can probably think of more good categories for awards that apply to your students.)

Below is a half-sized award form which you can enlarge, reproduce and give to your students to fill out before their presentations. Of course, some students may wish to design their own forms if they have time and artistic ability!



Multi-level crossword puzzle: Keeping warm in the winter



Word list:

blanket
closed
driving
dry
fall
freezing
furnace
head
holidays
jacket
mittens
New Year's Day
red
snow
socks
turn up



Note to the instructor:

Here's a seasonal crossword we hope your students will enjoy. Before starting the puzzle, you might want to review some vocabulary with students. Here are some discussion ideas to help you do this:

Fahrenheit/Celcius: What temperature is comfortable for you?

turn up/turn down: What can you do to save money in the winter?

snow/ice/sleet: What is good about snow? What is bad about it?

hat/socks/mittens: What can you do to keep warm in the winter?

Prepare the puzzle

As always, be sure to make extra copies of the puzzle and clues so that students can try both sets of clues if they wish to. They can try Level A first, then do Level B which is slightly harder. You can make the

puzzle easier by supplying the students with the word list, or make it harder without the word list. Let the students decide how much challenge they would like.

Follow up

There's an additional puzzle on page 10 with the same vocabulary. Students can use this for review or for homework.

Writing

A writing activity about how to stay warm in winter is another good follow up. Here's a suggestion for a writing topic:
"Toshio lives in Hawaii. Recently he got a good job in Chicago, so he's moving there with his family.

"Please write him a letter, giving him some advice about preparing for winter weather!"

(Hint: You can use the sentences in the puzzle for help.) ➡

In back issues:

- For a puzzle about **having fun** (good preparation for the holidays), see Vol 8, No. 4.
- Another puzzle about **winter** appeared in our Vol. 6, No. 5.

Level A (easier)

Across clues

1. "What are those children doing outside?" "They're making a _____-man."
4. If you wear a sweater under your _____, you'll keep warm.
6. "My apartment is cold because the _____ isn't working right." "You should call the landlord."
7. There are several _____ in the winter, like Christmas and New Year's.
8. If you wear boots, your feet will stay warm and _____.
9. Children should wear _____ or gloves on their hands when it's cold.
11. _____ a car can be dangerous in the winter.
14. This winter holiday comes on January 1st in North America.
15. You need this on the bed in winter.

Down clues

1. If your feet are cold, you can wear two pairs of _____.
2. Thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit is the _____ temperature for water. It's the same as zero degrees Celcius.
3. If it's cold and windy, it's a good idea to wear a hat on your _____.
5. School will be _____ if there is a lot of snow. You can hear about it on the radio.
10. "I'm cold! Please _____ the heat!"
12. The wind and the cold make my nose _____.
13. Be careful if you walk on ice. It's easy to _____ down.



Level B (harder)

Across clues

1. Some people don't like _____, but I think it's beautiful.
4. This is an item of warm clothing.
6. This machine heats your home.
7. During the _____, people have parties and eat special foods.
8. This means the opposite of 'wet.'
9. These keep your hands warm in winter.
11. I don't like _____ in winter weather. I prefer to take the bus.
14. This holiday comes after Christmas and before Valentine's Day.
15. If you drive in winter, you should keep a _____ in the car, in case you have to wait in the cold.

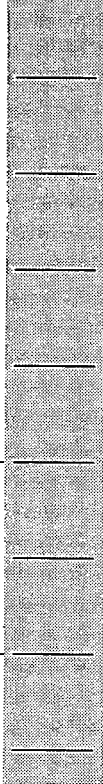
Down clues

1. These are items of warm clothing for your feet.
2. _____ rain is called 'sleet.'
3. It's important to keep your _____ warm if you go outside.
5. School will be _____ today because of the storm. All the students should stay home.
10. If the room is too cold you can _____ the thermostat.
12. "Your ears are _____! You should wear a hat!"
13. "It's icy here! Be careful, don't _____!"



Puzzle: A hidden message

There is a secret message hidden in this puzzle. First, answer the questions. Then you can read the message. Find out what everybody likes about winter!



_____ = *clothing on top.*

_____ = *means school is cancelled.*

_____ = *you might hurt yourself if you do this.*

_____ = *winter weather; with snow, ice and cold.*

_____ = *when the temperature is low.*

_____ = *wear this when you go outside.*

_____ = *this starts January 1st.*

_____ = *this is white and cold.*

ESL games: The party game

This is the best “mixer” activity I’ve ever used. It’s a delight every time. I’ve often used it near the beginning of the semester, when the students don’t know each other too well yet, but it would be fun for an end-of-semester event too.

There are 19 role cards, but 12 of them are the main characters—these are marked with a dot. You really should have at least 12 players for this game. (If there are 11 you can take one role yourself.) Add the secondary characters if there are 13 to 19 students. For a larger class, make two different sets and run two games simultaneously.

As you hand out the role cards, tell students not to show them to anyone. I like to give the young roles to older people, and vice-versa. If you think the students have a sense of humor you can also give men’s roles to women, and vice-versa.

Once the students have read and understood their cards, explain to them that they are at a party and that they should introduce themselves to the other guests. You can demonstrate by introducing yourself (in your role) to one of the students.

As the students begin talking, they will gradually discover that all their roles are related, and they will begin to solve the puzzle. Sometimes it’s difficult to know when to stop this activity! I usually wait until the puzzle is solved. If some students are still talking, let them continue while the others draw a family “tree” on the blackboard.

Over the years I’ve had many amusing experiences with this game. I played it with a class of refugees from Vietnam—when they discovered I was their grandmother I thought we’d never stop laughing. ☞

Editor’s note: I learned this activity from another teacher many years ago when I was teaching in Germany. I think it may have come originally from the Pilgrims Language Courses in England. There is a different version of this game in Christopher Sion’s “More Recipes for Tired Teachers” (1991 Addison-Wesley). Another version appears in “Action Plans” by Macdonald & Rogers - Gordon (1984 Newbury House).

The party game, cont'd...

The following 12 are the key characters and you'll need a student for each role:

How to play

This game might take 10 - 15 minutes, depending on how fast students catch on.

Usually it goes on longer because it's so much fun.

Hand out role cards to the students (see instruction on previous page) and give them a few minutes to read and study them. Then ask the students to assume their roles and join a party. Begin the action by introducing yourself (in your assumed role) to a student.

- My name is Paul Smith.
I'm 18 years old and single.
I have one brother, Bill.
I have two cousins—Carl and Sarah.
My father is Fred Smith.
- My name is Carl Jones.
I'm 18 years old and single.
My father is Tom Jones.
I have a sister and two cousins.
- My name is Sarah Jones.
I'm 16 years old. My mother is Betty Jones.
My brother is Carl Jones.
I have two cousins.
- My name is Barbara Jones.
I'm 64 years old.
My husband is Ed Jones.
I have a son, Tom Jones.
I have two grandchildren.
- My name is Victor Smith.
I'm 65 years old. I'm married.
My wife is Mary Smith.
We have two children and four grandchildren.
- My name is Bill Smith.
I'm 20 years old. I'm single.
My mother is Debbie Smith.
I have one brother, Paul.
- My name is Debbie Smith.
I'm married. My husband is Fred Smith.
We have 2 children.
- My name is Mary Smith.
I'm 62 years old.
My husband is Victor Smith.
I have two children, Fred and Betty.
They are both married. I have four grandchildren.
- My name is Ed Jones.
I'm 66 years old. I'm married.
I have one son. I have two grandchildren.
- My name is Betty Jones.
I'm 45 years old. I'm married.
My husband's name is Tom.
We have two children.
My mother is Mary Smith.

- My name is Tom Jones.
I'm 45 years old. I'm married.
My wife's name is Betty.
We have two children.
We also have two nephews.

- My name is Fred Smith.
I'm 45 years old. I'm married.
My wife is Debbie Smith.
We have two sons.
My mother is Mary Smith.

The remaining 7 are secondary characters and can be omitted:

My name is John Vincent.
I'm 61 years old and single.
I have a sister, Mary.
She's married. Her husband is Victor Smith.

My name is Frank Smith.
I'm 100 years old. I'm married.
My wife is Mabel Smith.
We have two sons.

My name is George Smith.
I'm 65 years old. I'm single.
I have a twin brother.
His name is Victor.

My name is Mabel Smith.
I'm 95 years old.
My husband is Frank Smith.
We have two children, George and Victor.
They're twins.

My name is Anna White.
I'm 84 years old.
My husband's name is Ralph.
We have one daughter.
Her name is Barbara. She's married.

My name is Jane Jones.
I'm 60 years old.
I'm single. My brother is Ed Jones.

My name is Ralph White.
I'm 85 years old.
My wife's name is Anna.
We have one daughter.
Her name is Barbara Jones.

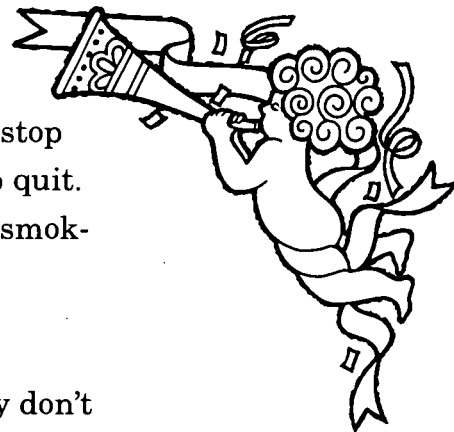
Reading: New Year's resolutions

A new year is a time for a new start. Some people want to make a change in the new year, so they make a "New Year's resolution." A resolution is a decision. You decide to do something that is important to you. It's like a promise to yourself.

Change is sometimes difficult. For example, it's difficult to stop smoking. So when New Year's Day comes, some smokers decide to quit. They make a New Year's resolution—"This year I'm going to stop smoking."

Many people make New Year's resolutions, but usually they don't keep them. Later they start smoking again. Why? Because their New Year's resolution is too difficult.

Do you want to make a change in your life? You can make a New Year's resolution to do something about it. But here's some advice: make a resolution that is not too difficult. Step by step is a better way to change something.



Conversation:

Fiona: "Are you making any New Year's resolutions?"

Jim: "Yes. I need to get more exercise. I'm going to walk one mile every day."

Fiona: "That's a good idea. I hope you can do it."

Discussion:

What kinds of resolutions do people make for the new year? (Write a list.)

Ask some of the other students about their New Year's resolutions.

Grammar grab-bag:

"Next year I'm going to stop smoking."

Talking about the future with 'going to' and 'not going to.'

Here's a grammar exercise related to the reading on page 12 which will help students reinforce an important grammar structure.

Although we seem to use *will* and *going to* interchangeably in talking about the future, there is some difference in their meaning. *Will* is often a prediction

about the future that we think will likely come to pass (*It will rain on Tuesday*); *going to* often reflects our determination to do something in the future but it is not necessarily a prediction (*I'm going to win that gold medal*).

A New Year's resolution is the perfect example of something we are determined to do in the future, that will likely not come to pass. ➡

1. Charlie wants to lose weight.

(What New Year's resolution will he make?) Next year, I'm going to lose some weight.

(What will he resolve *not* to do?) Next year, I'm not going to eat as much food.

2. Susanna wants to quit smoking.

(What New Year's resolution will she make?) _____

(What will she resolve *not* to do?) _____

3. Yvonne wants to get more exercise.

(What resolution will she make?) _____

(What will she resolve *not* to do?) _____

4. Mateo wants to eat more vegetables.

(What resolution will he make?) _____

(What will he resolve *not* to do?) _____

5. Maria wants to read more books.

(What resolution will she make?) _____

(What will she resolve *not* to do?) _____

6. Han wants to save more money.

(What resolution will he make?) _____

(What will he resolve *not* to do?) _____

7. Tasha wants to get a new job.

(What resolution will she make?) _____

(What will she resolve *not* to do?) _____

On the market

Reviews of useful materials for ESL

"Using the Newspaper to Teach Basic Living Skills" by Jean Bunnell (1988, 1998 J. Weston Walch Publisher, P.O. Box 658, Portland, ME 04104, 1-800-341-6094, www.walch.com) ISBN 0-8251-3726-8. 133pp.

This wonderful resource, although apparently written for mainstream adult education students, is perfect for adult immigrant students as well. The book includes 54 carefully organized activities each with a reproducible worksheet. These can be adapted for many different levels.

The activities cover practically every aspect of the newspaper, including advertising, world news, community services, obituaries, advice columns, sports and more. Some activities invite students to look at a newspaper on the Internet. Each worksheet requires students to find information in the paper, but also relates that information to their own lives.

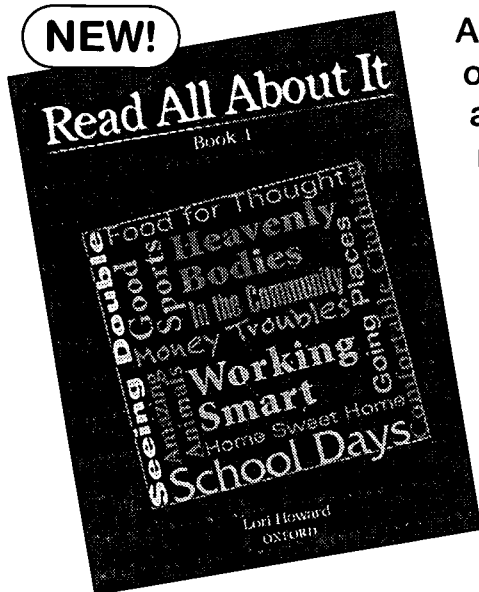
We like the way that many of the activities incorporate math skills. For example, in the chapter on weather, students note the average temperature every day for a week. The students then plot these temperatures on a graph. Other suggested activities include graphing both the highs and lows for each day, or graphing temperatures from different locations for comparison. This exercise is simple to do but allows for a wide range of discussion.

Another activity on comparison shopping has students compare similar items in two grocery store ads to find out which store has the lowest prices. They can also continue this over a period of weeks to determine if the same store has consistently lower prices, and whether there is any price fluctuation.

We think there are lots of good ideas here that will help your students get more familiar with the newspaper and the community while practicing many skills. ←

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News & notes

Online opportunity

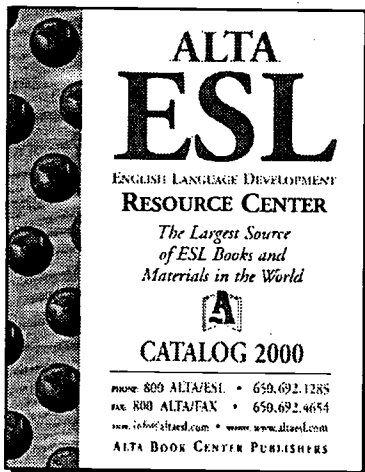
We recently stumbled across a website called "TOPICS Magazine." It's an online magazine made up entirely of student writings. Students from all over the world have contributed short pieces on a wide range of topics, including violence in the media, computer issues, holidays and cultural events, and many more. Many of the pieces include a color photo.

Students can log on and browse through the magazine, or you could select one piece which might interest your students. The writings we looked at seemed to be at a high intermediate or advanced level, but intermediate level students might also be interested.

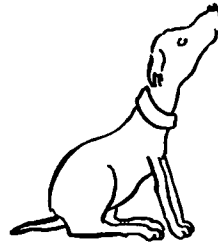
The site is run by Sandy and Thomas Peters. Pay them a visit at: www.rice.edu/projects/topics/Electronic/Magazine.html 

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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A colorful issue

Happy You-Know-What! We hope your millennium is getting off to a good start.

In dazzling color?

In this issue, we hope to brighten your winter a bit with some activities about colors—a puzzle, a game and an activity about the cultural meanings of colors. And among all the other activities in this issue, we hope you'll find many that your students enjoy.

On page 13 you'll also find a reader survey form which we hope you'll take the time to fill out and send us. We always benefit so much from what our readers tell us! Please take a moment to do this. Thanks!!

Sneak preview

Are you always looking for materials for your students? We get so many questions about resources that we finally decided to do something about it—write a book that would help people locate the right ESL materials.

Over the past year and a half your loyal editor has been working on this resource book, with co-author Abbie Tom, an ESL teacher in North Carolina. Our book is called *Practical Resources for Adult ESL* and will be published soon by Alta Book Center Publishers! We are excited about this event.

We have included over 260 reviews of ESL titles which we think are the most useful ones for teaching adults, and we hope this will make it easier for teachers and tutors to find and select materials. Beginning teachers should find it especially

useful, but we think experienced teachers will find resources there they didn't know about as well.

The book should be available by early March—we'll mention it in our next issue of course, but if it's available sooner than that we'll post a notice on our website. You can also find out about the book on Alta's website, www.altaesl.com.

Conference goes

March will be rolling around soon and with it the annual TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference. This year it will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia from March 14–18.

Your intrepid editor is planning to be there, and we hope to run into any of our readers who are attending! It's always refreshing to meet HOE readers in person. Sorry, we won't have our own exhibit there, but you may find us hanging around the Alta booth, anxiously watching the book sales! We'll be pleased to meet you there and say "hi."

Happy teaching!

—the Editor.

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?


We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

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Be sure to see the **current events activity** there, written expressly for you and your students!

See you there!



The editor, Anna Silliman, looks forward to hearing from readers with your teaching ideas, comments & queries!

66

Technology question

"Please stay as 'hands-on' as possible. Do you have any ideas about teaching ESL (low-level) students to use computers—word-processing, Internet, etc.?"

—Myriel Eykamp
Arlington, MA

*Many teachers have recommended a text called **Keystrokes to Literacy** as a way to introduce students to computers. The book has step-by-step lessons that are not overwhelming; they would be suitable for tutoring. (The book is published by NTC/Contemporary, www.ntc-cb.com, ISBN 0-8442-0679-2)*

Do any of our readers have internet suggestions for beginners?

Group things

"Your hands-on activity ideas for working with different level ESL *groups* are most valuable! Thanks for adding adaptation ideas to accommodate multilevels."

—a reader in Bellevue, WA

We're always looking for more of these kinds of activities! Multi-level teaching is challenging. We will be most grateful to anyone who has suggestions or activities that work in this environment.

A fan note

"...always use something from your issues. Find them practical, entertaining and focused. Thanks."

—Lucy Baddeley
Santa Monica, CA

Hints & tips

Sorting students into groups

If you like to use group activities from time to time in your class, you probably already have some techniques for forming these groups. Depending on the activity, it sometimes works fine just to ask the students to choose their own groups.

Often, though, part of the reason for the group work is to "mix" the students a little and give them a chance to work with different people. Over the years we've seen some interesting ways to do this. One teacher we observed used pieces of yarn in a clump—each student took hold of an end, and, when the pieces were untangled, found their partner at the other end. It was amusing to watch the entire class trying to unweave the strands.

The card trick

An elegant technique for forming a variety of different groups, even in a large class, is to use a regular 52-card deck of playing cards. Keep the cards in order by number, and as the students come to class hand each one a card.

Now you can easily put people in groups of any size. There are many different

possible combinations, so you can have students change groups for different activities. Here are some possible groupings:

To divide the class in half (max 26 people in each group), call for the reds and the blacks to sit together. (Or even #'s and odds)

To divide the class in four groups (max 13 people each), call for the different suits to sit together.

To get groups of two, call for the same #'s and same colors to sit together (i.e., both black fives).

For an alternative pairing, call for a partner with the same #'s but different colors (i.e., a red five and a black five).

To get groups of four, call for the same #'s but different suits to sit together.

To get groups of eight, call for two sets of numbers (2's and 4's, for example) of different suits to sit together.


Groups of three is trickier—ask them to look for two people with numbers in sequence (i.e., 2,3,4) but any suit. ➡



Reading activity: Another newspaper search

We think that helping students get familiar with your local newspaper, even beginning level students, is a real benefit. In the classroom the paper can provide reading and discussion material that is related to the world outside. Although a newspaper can be challenging for ESL students, this activity is relatively low stress.

Bring in several copies of your local newspaper, and have the students work together in small groups. Level A is suitable for literacy level students (with some help), Level B for beginning or intermediate students, and Level C for high intermediate or advanced students.

Have each group present its results to the class, either orally or as a poster. 

A few months ago we published a "Newspaper treasure hunt" which readers told us was fun and useful. So, we've compiled a new one for you here, this time including an advanced level as well.

*Thanks to **Debbie Shields** in Red Bank, New Jersey for her input on some of these items.*

Level A

1. Find four pictures of people—two men and two women.
2. Find an ad for something to eat. What is the price?
3. Find an ad for something for your home. What is the name of the store?
4. Find the number "9".
5. Find 3 large letter "N"s.
6. Find a question mark.
7. Find the name of your city.
8. Find a dollar sign.

Level B

1. Find a picture of someone who lives in this city.
2. Find a picture of someone who lives in Washington, D.C.
3. Find the word "education."
4. Find the name of your state.
5. Find a cartoon.
6. Find an article about a sport that you you like to play or watch.
7. Find a number larger than 1,000 (one thousand).
8. Find a forecast for tomorrow's weather.

Level C

1. Find an article about a difficult problem.
2. Find an ad for an apartment that is too expensive.
3. Find the scores for a recent sports event. Who won?
4. Find an article about politics.
5. Find some information about a movie.
6. Find an article about someone who died.
7. Find a letter to the editor.
8. Find an article that would be interesting for the other students in the class.

Conversation activity: Taking a guess


Often students who feel they don't know the correct answer, or who are afraid of making a mistake, will say nothing unless they are sure it's correct.

You can help students to overcome this somewhat by teaching them the language we use when we're guessing, and then provide them with an activity where it's okay, where it's even respectable, to make estimates.

First, write the model phrases on the board and pronounce them for the students. Next, give an example, such as a big jar of beans, or better yet a jar of sand, and ask

"How many beans do you think are in this jar?" Ask each student to make a guess, using one of the model phrases.

Now, give each student a card and ask them to work in pairs. The students should ask each other to guess the answer to their questions. Change partners and repeat the exercise until everyone has heard all the questions.

Finally, have the students report to the class what the best answer to their question might be. (Notice, though, that no one knows any of these things for sure.) 

- I guess. . .
- I think maybe. . .
- I would estimate about. . .
- I think approximately. . .
- It could be about. . . / There could be about. . .

How many telephones are there in this city?	How many people live in Canada?
How many human beings will there be in the year 3000?	How many McDonald's restaurants are there in the world?
How many words are there in today's newspaper?	How long would it take to walk around the world?
How many employees work for the CBS television network?	How much water does one person drink in a year?
How many cats and dogs live in this country?	How many leaves are there on one large tree?
How many different languages are there in the world?	How many computers are there in the world?
How much would it cost to build a new school?	How much will it cost to fix my car?
How many years will it be before people live on Mars?	How many chairs are there in this building?

Grammar grab-bag:

"Sunday is more relaxing than Monday."

Making comparisons

Here is a lesson by **Wendy Lancourt**, an ESL teacher in the New York City area. It was thoughtfully presented to us by her colleague, **Fiona Armstrong**.

Getting ready

The preparation for this lesson is a formal presentation of the grammar rules for comparatives. Briefly, these are:

One-syllable adjectives, which use *-er*.

For example, *smaller than*.

Two (or more)-syllable adjectives, which use *more than*. For example, *more interesting than*.

Any adjectives ending in -y, which change to *-ier*. For example, *easier than*.

Many ESL grammar texts can provide you with structure practice activities for these rules. At this point, it's appropriate to do some mechanical types of exercises so that students become familiar with the comparative forms.

Group work

Once the students have reviewed the structures they will need, have them sit together in groups of 3 or 4 students each. Give each group a copy of the list on the next page for them to read through.

The students should select 10 pairs of items from the list to compare. Then together they should come up with some comparisons of these.

In Wendy's Level 2 class, students produced some wonderful comparisons, such as: "TV is more immediate than a movie theater," "A lion is more social than a bear," "Your grandmother is more experienced than your mother," and many more.

Put it in writing

As the students work, they can write their creations on large sheets of newsprint, so that when they are finished the other students will be able to read their sentences as well.

You can read and discuss all the students' comments together with the whole class to wrap up the exercise.

Follow up

In a subsequent lesson, have the students write a dictation based on some of the comparisons they wrote. This is an excellent way to review and reinforce the structures that were learned, using ideas that the students produced themselves.

Why it works

Unlike a regular grammar drill, in this lesson the students get to choose which topics to discuss. In addition, with the topics provided here the students have a chance to express their opinions, not merely give correct answers. The result is a structure lesson that is based on the students' own interests and ideas.

This exercise will work well with a multi-level group. Students can write more (or less) according to their level, and still benefit from the activity. Beginning level students especially will benefit from reading and listening to the other students' work.

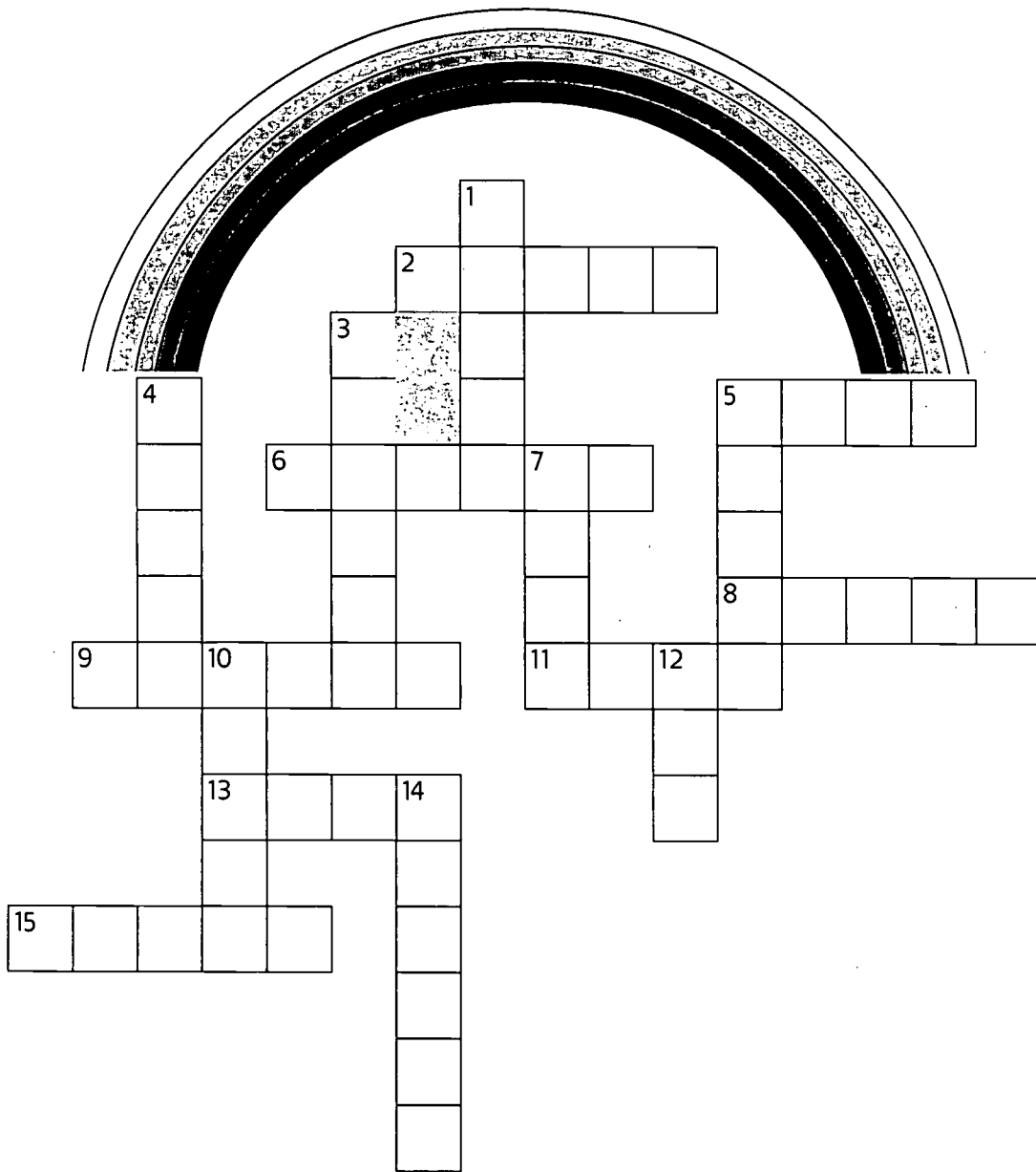
One of the exciting features of using student writings in class is that these writings provide you with material for future lessons. Not only dictations, as mentioned above, but grammar practice, readings, discussion ideas and even tests with a student-centered focus. ←



Compare. . .

America	-	-	-	-	-	Your country
Madonna	-	-	-	-	-	Mother Teresa
rice	-	-	-	-	-	potatoes
cats	-	-	-	-	-	dogs
a rainy day	-	-	-	-	-	a sunny day
the Atlantic Ocean	-	-	-	-	-	the Hudson River
lions	-	-	-	-	-	bears
you at age 10	-	-	-	-	-	you now
your grandmother (or father)	-	-	-	-	-	your mother (or father)
your apartment here	-	-	-	-	-	your old home
your country's food	-	-	-	-	-	America's food
Sunday	-	-	-	-	-	Monday
Monday	-	-	-	-	-	Friday
the drums	-	-	-	-	-	the violin
television	-	-	-	-	-	movie theater
ice cream	-	-	-	-	-	steak
President Clinton	-	-	-	-	-	President Lincoln
a valley	-	-	-	-	-	a mountain
a glass of orange juice	-	-	-	-	-	a glass of tomato juice
boxing	-	-	-	-	-	dancing
a mouse	-	-	-	-	-	a rabbit
a frying pan	-	-	-	-	-	a soup pot
the English language	-	-	-	-	-	your language
Cuba	-	-	-	-	-	Miami
summer	-	-	-	-	-	winter
a letter	-	-	-	-	-	a phone call
walking	-	-	-	-	-	taking the bus
yesterday	-	-	-	-	-	today

Multi-level crossword: What color is it?



Word list

black
blue
brown
clear
dark
gold
gray
green
light
multi
orange
purple
red
silver
white
yellow

Teaching notes

At a time of year when the skies are gray, the days are short and the view out your window may be a little bleak, what a good time to think about colors!

This puzzle is not intended to be challenging, but your students may find it useful for review, or they may want to do it just for fun. Level A is a little easier than Level B.

To make a literacy-level version of this puzzle, use the clues at the right, but substitute swatches or samples of color for the words. The students should first match

each color with the correct word on the word list, then write it in the puzzle grid. ➡

Literacy level

Across:

2. green
5. blue
6. orange
8. clear
9. silver
11. dark
13. gray
15. white

Down:

1. brown
3. purple
4. multi
5. black
7. gold
10. light
12. red
14. yellow

Remember to bring extra copies of the puzzle and clues! Students often enjoy trying the puzzle again at a different level.

For a follow-up vocabulary game, see page 10.

'Color' puzzle, cont'd. . .

Level A

Across clues

2. What color is a dollar bill?
5. A U.S. flag has three colors: red, white and _____.
6. What color is fruit that is like a lemon, but not yellow?
8. What color is a window?
9. What color is a dime?
11. The opposite of "light" is _____.
13. My grandmother's hair is _____.
15. What color is snow?

Down clues

1. What color is coffee?
3. "That's a beautiful blue dress." "It's not exactly blue, it's _____."
4. A rainbow has many colors. It is _____-colored.
5. What color are the letters on this page?
7. What color is a wedding ring?
10. Coffee is dark brown; tea usually looks _____ brown.
12. What color is a "STOP" sign?
14. What color is a lemon?

Level B

Across clues

2. Grass and trees are this color in the summer time.
5. The sky is this color during the day, when there are no clouds.
6. This color has the same name as a kind of citrus fruit.
8. Glass usually has no color. It is _____.
9. Some coins are this color.
11. Wood is sometimes _____ brown.
13. When it's raining, the sky looks _____.
15. Usually paper is this color.

Down clues

1. In the winter, most trees and grass are this color.
3. This is a beautiful color, similar to blue.
4. A rainbow is _____-colored.
5. Many people wear brown or _____ shoes.
7. An expensive necklace or ring is sometimes this color.
10. Beige, taupe and tan are different words for the same color, _____ brown.
12. If you see a street light that is this color, you have to stop.
14. On a street sign, this color means be careful.

Vocabulary activity: Color game

Colors:

Items in the room:

black

blue

light brown

dark brown

clear

gold

gray

green

orange

purple

red

silver

white


yellow

How to play

Have students work in small groups. For this activity, students at different levels can work together. Give each group a copy of the worksheet.

For beginning or low-intermediate level students, the object can be to list three items in the room for each color. For more advanced students, you can set a time limit instead (20 minutes, for example) and let students list as many items as they can in that time.

In each group, only one student should be designated to use the dictionary, to look up any items the students don't know the word for (an ideal task for a student who happens to be colorblind). Picture dictionaries or bilingual dictionaries might be useful for this exercise.

More advanced students should also describe where the item is located in the room. 

Cultural activity: Colors—what do they mean?

black
blue
brown
clear
gold
gray
green
multi-colored
orange
red
silver
white
yellow

1. Pink is the traditional color for a new baby girl. Light _____ is the color for a new baby boy.
2. When we think about old people, we think of this color. "In thirty years, I'll be old and _____."
3. A "___ flag" is a warning of danger.
4. When someone dies, many people wear this color for the funeral. _____
5. On Halloween, you see this bright color with black on cards, pictures and costumes. _____
6. When something is easy to understand, we say it's _____.
7. This is the color of something that is very valuable. _____
8. People wear this color on St. Patrick's Day. We think of Ireland when we see this color. _____
9. Pumpkins are this color. We see pumpkins on Halloween and at Thanksgiving. _____
10. On the Fourth of July, people in the U.S. celebrate Independence Day. You will see many decorations with the colors of the flag. These are: _____, _____ and _____.
11. When we feel sad, sometimes we say "I feel _____." There is also a kind of music with this name, because the music sounds sad.
12. In the Olympic Games, a _____ medal is for the athlete who is number two.
13. This color reminds us of something that is clean. Soap is usually this color, too. _____
14. On Valentine's Day, you often see this color. It's the color of a heart, so it stands for "love." _____
15. When people see a _____ rainbow in the sky, they think it's good luck.
16. Dark _____ is the color of the uniform for sailors in the Navy. That's why we call this color "navy _____."
17. Many people who travel on the water in a boat or on a ship feel sick, or nauseous. When this happens, we say their face looks _____.
18. A young woman who is getting married often wears this color for the wedding. _____
19. When a man and a woman have been married for 25 years, they celebrate their 'silver' wedding anniversary. After 50 years, they celebrate their _____ anniversary.
20. When green vegetables are not fresh, sometimes they look yellow or _____.
21. This color means "CAUTION," especially on street lights and street signs. _____
22. When a person knows how to grow plants very well, we say he or she has a "_____ thumb."
23. When we think of night time, we think of this color. _____
24. When a student writes a mistake, sometimes the teacher marks the paper with this color. _____

Teaching notes

Colors are associated with certain customs, holidays, cultural events and traditional symbols. Students can use this worksheet to find out how many of these meanings they already know. You can then

discuss these in small groups or as a class. Greeting cards for holidays and special events sometimes demonstrate these customs nicely—if you have any of these you can bring them in to show the students. ➡

Hints & tips:

Gearing up for the census

As you may already know, every ten years for more than two centuries the U.S. has taken an official count of its people. The next census will be this spring, in April 2000. We wanted to provide you with some information about this event, so that you can discuss it with your students. They may feel more comfortable participating if they have some familiarity with the process.

Importance of being counted

The information about the population is used by all levels of government to decide where to put highways, schools, daycare programs, even 911 facilities, as well as election districts. Businesses use the information to decide where to put stores, housing, and healthcare facilities. Nonprofit organizations use the information to decide what kinds of services to provide, including ESL and other services to immigrants. Participating, according to the Census Bureau, can have a positive effect on your community.

The answers are confidential

By law, the answers you give on the census forms cannot be shared with any other government agency, not even the FBI or the INS or the courts. There are strong privacy measures in place to ensure that no one can get this information about you. (See the Census website for their statement about this.)

If you have students who might be reluctant to give information to a government agency, you can try explaining this policy as well as the benefits to be gained from a full count.

Here's the plan

The majority of census forms will be short, with basic information about you and your family members. A small percentage of forms will be longer, to gather more detailed information about income, etc. We have heard that some schools will organize drop-in centers to help those with language or literacy difficulties to fill out the forms.

Get local info

Contact your local Census Bureau office to find out if they have materials you could

use in your classroom. Some centers may even have a speaker available who would like to visit your class.

In many areas there is a project called the Complete Count Committee, which is a partnership of the Census Bureau with local governments and agencies. If there is one in your area, it's possible they have an outreach program to benefit your students. (Try inquiring at the Mayor's office or county government offices.)

Teaching materials

If you visit the Census Bureau website, you will see that there are some very nice educational materials designed by Scholastic for use in K-12 classrooms. Unfortunately, these are probably not suitable for your adult ESL students. We learned that there are materials being planned for adult ESL which may be available at the site by the end of January, but we were unable to preview these for you.

There is plenty of interesting information already available on their website, however, which you might be able to use to create your own lessons. There are some fact sheets, information about the questions and what the data is used for, promotional materials and of course state-by-state data from the last census.

Jobs available

The Census Bureau is hiring a lot of people as 'enumerators' at a reasonably good hourly wage. The job requires you to pass a basic skills test. It is possible that in your area there is a need for people with multilingual skills, so your students may be interested in this information. Contact your local Census office for details.

Where to go


The website for the U.S. Census Bureau is:

www.census.gov

The Minnesota Literacy Council should have some census activities available in February at:

www.themlc.org

If we learn of any other good resources for teaching ideas on this topic, we'll post these on the Hands-on English website:

www.handsonenglish.com
under Special Announcements. 

United States Census 2000

Fold & mail this form,
or fax it to us
at 402-826-3997.

Dear Readers,

It's been several years since we did a formal survey, and although we do hear from many of you occasionally, we thought it was time to get some real feedback!

If you can take a moment to fill this out, tear it off and mail it to us, we will be very, very interested to hear from you! We'll report the results we get in a future issue, so you can find out what others are saying as well.

(Your name is not necessary unless you would like a response.)

Thank you very much! Your input will help us to create a better, even more useful publication.

— the Editor.

Our features:

Crossword puzzles
Multi-level dictations
Idea file
Grammar grab-bag
ESL games
Cultural activities
Readings
Vocabulary activities
Minigrant reports
From the field (reports)
Hints & tips
Tools & techniques
Book reviews
Letters from readers
Editorials
News & notes
Advertising

Hands-on English Reader survey

We'd really like to know what you think about *Hands-on English*, and what we can do for you that would be of greatest benefit!

Name: (optional) _____, Customer number C - _____

Approximately how many years have you subscribed?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Customer service

Have you received all of your issues so far? Yes No

If not, which issues are you missing? _____

Can we improve our service to you in any way?

The publication

Is the level of our activities usually appropriate (or adaptable) for your students?

Yes No If not, is the level too high for your students or too low?

What features of *Hands-on* have been the **most** helpful to you?

What features are **least** helpful?

What kinds of articles, topics or features would you like to see in future issues?

Other comments?

The website

Do you have access to the internet? Yes No

How useful would an expanded *Hands-on English* website be for you?

very useful possibly useful probably not useful don't know

What (if anything) would you hope to see there?

Our publicity

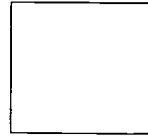
Do you have any suggestions about how we can let more teachers know about *Hands-on English*?



Hints & tips?

Use this space to include a teaching suggestion to share with our readers!

.....



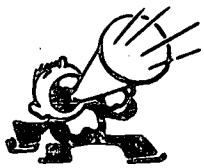
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.....

Thanks for participating in our survey! We look forward to hearing from you. —Editor.



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HOE has extras

Hands-on English has copies available of all our back issues! They are \$5 each but if you order 10 or more the price is only \$4 each. Contact the office or order from our website. A list of these issues, with a brief description of the contents of each one, is available on our website—see: www.handsonenglish.com

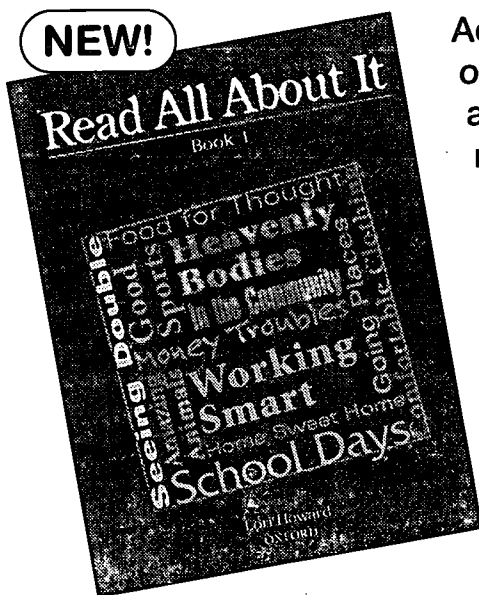
Going to a conference?

If you are giving a workshop or attending a conference and would like to share *Hands-on English* with your colleagues, we'd be delighted to send you a packet of sample issues. This is a great help to us in spreading the word about HOE, and it can enhance your presentation as well.

Feel free to contact us about getting your hands on some copies of *Hands-on!* 

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Minigrants available

By the time you read this, the application forms for the *Hands-on English* 2000 Minigrant awards will be available. If you previously requested an application, you should be receiving it soon in the mail.

If you haven't requested these forms yet but are interested in applying, please feel free to contact our office to request that we

send you an application. The deadline for applying is April 30.

We have a lot of fun awarding these small grants every year to instructors with innovative teaching ideas. Later we are able to bring you reports on the teaching projects, so that these good ideas get spread around.

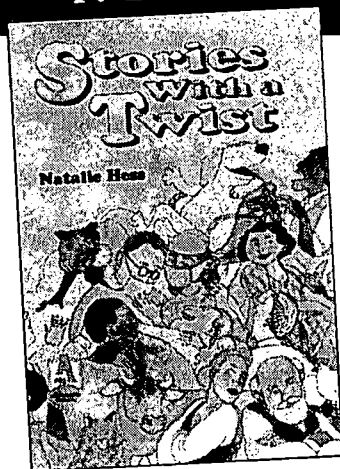
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by Natalie Hess

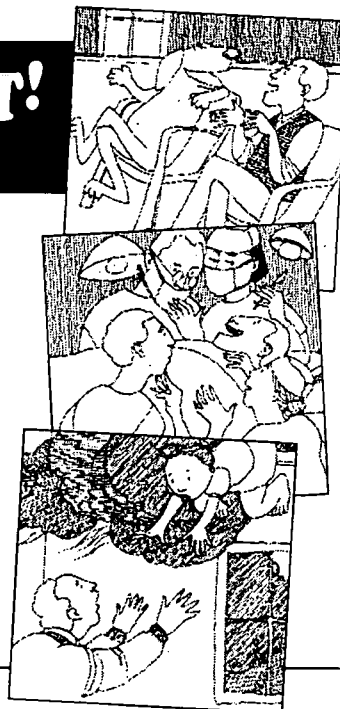
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English 

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL

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A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Web doings

New on our site!

We thought you'd like to know that we have made a lo-o-o-ng index of all our past issues available on our website. This document gives a detailed description of each article in all of our back issues.

Occasionally people ask us how they can locate activities in back issues, and we hope that this will provide the solution. To use this index you can either open the file online or you can download it to your computer. Then you can browse through it or search for key words. (More details appear on our website.) Happy hunting!

Current events activities

Recently we posted an activity on our website about "U.S. Primaries" by Paula Cosko. By the time you read this the primary elections will be less interesting since each party's nominee is already established, but you might like to keep this teaching idea for future reference.

We've also posted an easy-to-read story about the upcoming U.S. census called "Census 2000" contributed by Jill Kramer. We hope that this article will give you the opportunity to explain and discuss the census with your students. (Note: if you don't have internet access we can fax this article to you upon request.)

As we get more information and teaching ideas about the census, we will post these on our website (see the Special Announcements page). Already there are some links there to other programs that have prepared classroom materials about the census. We hope you'll let us know about any other resources or teaching ideas. Thanks!

Book companion site

As you may already know, your editor has co-authored a resource book called *Practical Resources for Adult ESL* which is now available from Alta Book Center. The book contains reviews of useful materials in our field. Since there are always new titles coming out, though, we decided to supplement this book with a 'companion' website.

On the companion site you will find quick reviews of any new materials we've heard about since the book was published, updates on the information in the book and any input from readers about the materials they use with adult ESL students.

If you are looking for specific ESL materials you are welcome to contact us—we'll post reader queries there in hopes that fellow teachers may have suggestions! We hope you'll also contact us if you know of good teaching materials we may have missed. We may want to post the information for others. (Look for a link to the Companion site on our main page, www.handsonenglish.com/).

Update service

Finally, we discovered a nifty way to let you know when new activities have been posted on our website. You can sign up to receive an email message from us when there's been an update! This may save you the trouble of always checking back and also will help to make sure that you don't miss anything.

To sign up for this service, look for instructions at the bottom of our main page.

Happy surfing, and as always, happy teaching! —the Editor. ➡

Hands-on English

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(M.A., Teachers College Columbia U.)

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

Advertising

Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent.

About our Minigrants program

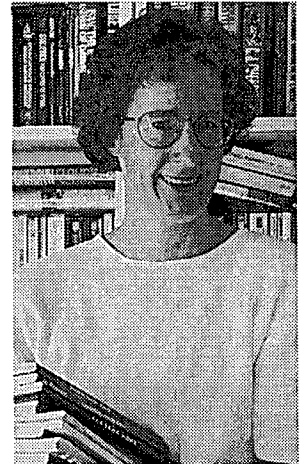
Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to \$200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request. ✎

H.O.E. online

Hands-on English is now on the Web! You can find us at:
www.handsonenglish.com

We have two new **current events activities** there—one on Census 2000 and the other on U.S. political primaries.

See you there!



Your editor, Anna Silliman, looks forward to hearing from readers with their teaching ideas, comments & queries!

Letters: Results from our Reader survey

"I keep each issue in a notebook for reference!"

"I like the practical stuff that I can copy and immediately use."

"I'm new to ESL teaching, so I'm still finding my way. HOE has helped me immensely. I've recommended it to others."

"HOE is one of my favorite sources for ESL conversation groups."

"I like the varied levels of each activity."

"Thank you! Thank you!"

"Isolation is a problem for those of us who are one-on-one volunteers. Your publication helps keep me in touch with the ESL education community. It restores my connection to that community."

About what kind of activities readers would like to see on our website:

"Usable ideas—things I can read and say, 'Oh hey, I can do that tomorrow!'"

So far we've received 45 surveys from our subscribers. This is a good response, as we know how busy you all are! Respondents represented both new and long-time readers, with a third saying they've subscribed 2 years or less, a third 3–5 years and another third for 6–9 years. We thought you'd like to hear what everyone is saying, so here is a summary.

Don't stop

Overall, the message we got from you was "Keep doing what you're doing!" and "More of the same!" Those who responded seem satisfied with HOE.

Most people (93%) said that the level of the activities is appropriate or adaptable to their students. A few mentioned that our activities are still too high for their lowest level students, and a couple of people mentioned they are teaching more advanced levels.

Among the activities that are most helpful, 69% mentioned the puzzles, and many listed multi-level activities and dictations as very useful. The next most popular categories included grammar, hints and tips, games, cultural activities, conversation and general activities. Many people also commented that they like "ready to use lessons" which includes all of the above.

Also mentioned as useful were citizenship, current events, situational activities, readings, and book reviews.

Least useful?

Most people left this question blank. A couple of people mentioned that higher level activities are not so useful to them. Several mentioned that they tutor individuals so whole-class or large group activities are less useful. A few people mentioned our least 'hands-on' features (reviews, letters, ads, news & notes, minigrant reports) as less useful than the other materials.

What they'd like

We asked you to let us know what kinds of articles or topics you'd like to see, and most responded that they want more of the same—hands-on, adaptable, multi-level activities. In addition to that, there were lots of good ideas proposed. We're including a detailed list here, because you might have

an activity to share that would help someone who is looking for just that topic. This might spark some ideas:

- current events activities, or exercises on timely topics.
- holiday activities, or stories about holidays and cultural topics in simple language.
- lower level activities, suitable for non-literate students or for complete new beginners.
- higher level activities, suitable for IEP students including TOEFL grammar.
- ideas or lessons for a substitute teacher!
- citizenship activities.
- reading maps and graphs.
- using visuals in the classroom.
- helping students with listening and speaking more colloquial English.
- intonation.
- workplace lessons.
- cross-cultural activities (i.e., students getting to know each others' cultures?).
- student stories!
- using humor in the classroom.
- lessons on everyday life (shopping, banking, etc.).
- lessons on content area (related to work or school subjects?).
- short quizzes to use at the beginning of lessons.
- resources useful for teaching adults.

Internet?

On our survey, 6% of those responding said they don't have access to the internet. Of the 94% who said they do, though, several commented that they are still "novices" at using it. When we asked how useful an expanded *Hands-on English* website would be, 31% said very useful, 42% said possibly useful, 4% said probably not useful, and 13% said they didn't know.

Most who answered this question thought that they would like to see lessons and activities to download and print, similar to what's in our regular publication. One good idea was to include different levels on the website (maybe a good place for higher level stuff?). Some interesting suggestions to make the site more interactive, a place to exchange ideas, gave us a whiff of what fun the future might bring.

Thank you again for all of your thoughtful comments! —*Editor*.

Hints & tips

Studying games

"I had a writing text which was eliciting sentences with relative clauses. One question asked about a game that you played when you were a child. Most of my students described 'Hide and seek' or 'Tag.' Great vocabulary, and great process practice.

"I used to play 'Jacks.' A cultural gem! So I bought some and taught them to play. I even gave it for homework to practice during a study break.

"Don't always stick to your lesson plan and/or book. Get 'real' with your students!"

—Carol Harmatz-Levin
Pittsburgh, PA

Make-a-restaurant

"When talking about foods and restaurants, we discussed fast food restaurants. We used Macdonald's as an example.

"The students then designed a fast food restaurant (on paper) serving their ethnic foods. They had to name their restaurant, pick 4–5 entrees, 2–3 side dishes, beverages, 2–3 desserts, and prices."

—Carole Harris
Minnetonka, MN

Editor's note: How about having them also decide which cities to open the restaurant chain in? Or how many employees they'll need, etc.?

In-class scavenger hunt

"We play a scavenger hunt game when learning directions. Leave clues at each area telling where to go for the next clue. Example: "Go up the stairs and to the right." Or: "Look under the table." I also put a clue in the phone book. It said: "Look under 'physicians' in the yellow pages."

—Lisa R. Romie
Huber Heights, OH

Structured descriptions

"For writing and speaking practice in the present and past tenses, I use *Look Again Pictures* (Alta Book Center Publishers, ISBN 1-882483-70-7).

"First I give my class a simple structure: 1) general statement. . . , 2) In the center. . . , 3) On the left. . . , 4) On the right. . . , 5) Conclusion. . ."

"Then we write a short descriptive paragraph together about one of the pictures. Put this on the board.

"After 3 or 4 of these exercises, I found that they could take a picture they had never seen, and describe it aloud—using these same simple structures! Then they follow this up by writing their descriptions and reading them to the class.

"They can do this exercise in the present and past tenses." —Sr. Maisie Lufkin
New York, NY

Editor's note: Although this exercise is very structured and would work well with beginners, it's nice that the content of the exercise is open-ended! Students can make their own observations, and more advanced students can write longer descriptions.

Word game

"I have used the Milton Bradley game *UpWords* with my students. It's great for teaching word families—simple and quick."

—Audrey McBurney
Ada, MI

Editor's note: We haven't seen this game but it appears to be similar to Scrabble, except you can play on top of other tiles as well as next to them. This is available where toys are sold. There is a computer version as well (Windows only)—see www.hasbrounteractive.com.

Colloquial English practice

"For a warm-up activity I make 2 stacks of cards with different sets of common contractions. Each card has the word on one side and an example sentence on the back (e.g., gotta/I gotta go to the bathroom).

"In pairs, students practice these by demonstrating their cards to each other. Let them figure out what they mean and encourage them to speak naturally."

—Yuki Yamamoto
National City, CA

Not only did our readers send us their feedback, they also sent in a flood of hints & tips! Here are some which we thought you would enjoy.

Tools & techniques: Students evaluate ESL tapes

by **Connie Hartshorn**,
Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Connie writes:

"We have an excellent county library system (Hennepin County) with wonderful resources for ESL learners. I decided on a whim to check out 10 audio tapes for English learners. Right now my students are listening to each tape for 10 minutes, then stopping the tape and evaluating it for English learning. They will write their comments on an evaluation form (see below).

"They are excited about many of the tapes they are evaluating. Next week we will compile the evaluations and type up a list of the tape and their comments."

"Then, we will learn how to reserve library materials online from our computer lab. This follows a field trip which we took to the nearby library where students obtained library cards and completed a library exercise."

Library unit

Prior to their trip to the library, Connie's intermediate and advanced students read and discussed a one-page description of the library and its services. This reading fo-

cussed on what you can find at the library, how to find it, and how to borrow materials.

The students also filled out library card applications in class a week before the trip, so that when they arrived at the library their cards were ready for them.

At the library they received a questionnaire to help familiarize them with the library—they had to look around and discover the answers to these questions themselves. Once they got back to school, they learned how to access the library online from the computer lab.

Why it works

The tape exercise is a quick way to demonstrate clearly to students that there are lots of materials available to them that might be useful. In connection with a library unit, it gives them tools to become independent learners.

If there is time, it would be interesting to ask the students who would benefit from each tape. Beginners? Advanced students? Polish speakers? College students? New arrivals? Everybody? This is a nice way to approach the topic of learning styles and different needs. ←

Audio Tapes - Evaluation

Name of Tape	student initials	excel- lent	good	fair	poor	Comments

Grammar grab-bag: “Can you swim?”

Practice with *can* and *can't*

Here's a grammar practice activity suitable for beginning level students. They will practice *can* and *can't* while talking about themselves and getting to know their classmates better.

How to do it

Have each student write a sentence about something they can do, and another sentence about something they can't do. You can model this for them on the blackboard by writing about yourself. For example:

“I can swim.”

“I can't speak Vietnamese.”

You can help individual students with vocabulary if they need it. Once they have written these two sentences about themselves, ask the students to read their sentences aloud. While they are doing this, put any new vocabulary on the board so everyone can see it.

Expanding the list

Now that students are warmed up to this exercise, ask them to write 3 more things that they can do, and 3 more things that they can't do. Again, you can help them as they work on this.

This time, the students won't read their sentences aloud. Instead, have each student choose 2 things from their list—one they can do and one they can't—and write these items on a slip of paper. You can demonstrate this on the board by writing “swim, Vietnamese.”

Collect the ideas

Gather all the slips of paper together, and have one or two students write all of the items on the board in one long list. (If there are duplicates, they don't need to write the words twice.) The list may look something like this:

swim
cook very well
drive a car
speak Polish
etc.

Each student should copy this list onto a sheet of paper, creating their own questionnaire form.

Student interviews

Now, tell the students that they should try to find someone who can do each of these things. To find the answers, they will need to circulate around the room and ask the other students questions. For example, “Can you swim?” If they find someone who answers “Yes, I can” they should write down the person's name on the form.

There will be some things on the questionnaire that no one can do, so you may want to set a time limit to this exercise. Once the activity is finished, you can ask the students how many names they wrote down and declare the person with the most names the “winner.” Then, you can go over the form together as a group. At that point, it may be interesting to find out how many people in the class really *can* swim!

Why it works

Because the questions have been contributed by the students, each student will know that there is at least one question that he or she can answer “yes” to, and they will be looking forward to hearing that question. At the same time, students may be practicing new vocabulary as they are asking the other questions.

Also, it's always nice to have an activity that gets students out of their seats and generates some noise!

Pronunciation tip

It's sometimes hard to hear the difference between the words *can* and *can't*. We always tell students that Americans have this problem, too, because the words are so close in sound. Because of this, we frequently ask for clarification (“Did you say yes you *can* or no you *can't*?”).

When emphasizing these words, we often make the vowel sound in *can* longer (“I said, yes, I *caaaaan*.” The vowel sound in *can't*, however, stays very short when we emphasize it, so this word sounds more abrupt (“I said, no, I *can't*.”) and the final *t* is more clearly pronounced. If you can explain this distinction to your students it may help them, both in understanding others and in being more clearly understood. ➡

Conversation activity: Neighborhood interview

An interview is a really good way to give students a chance to talk at length. They can interview one partner, then if there is time they can repeat the same interview with a different student.

If you are tutoring a student, it works well to have the student interview you first, then you take a turn and interview the student. This gives the student time to get familiar with the questions before answering them.

After the interview, the students could follow up by writing something about their own neighborhood. More advanced students could write about one of the people they interviewed instead.

Tell me about your neighborhood.

1. Where is your neighborhood?
2. How long have you lived there?
3. How long does it take you to get from home to school?
4. Is your neighborhood noisy or quiet?
5. Is there a supermarket near your home?
6. Where do you buy food?
7. What other stores are near your home?
8. Is there a bank near your home?
Do you have a bank account there?
9. What else do you have in your neighborhood?
10. Do you know your neighbors? Tell me about them.
11. What do you like about your neighborhood?
12. What do you dislike about your neighborhood?
13. How long do you plan to live in this neighborhood?

Reading activity: Spring cleaning

I like spring, but I don't like spring cleaning! There is a lot of work to do in my home.

The kitchen floor is dirty. The kitchen cupboards are messy. There is some old food in the refrigerator. There are some empty jars in a box.

The windows in my home are dirty and it's hard to see out. There are many papers on the table and chairs. The rug needs cleaning. The wastebasket is full. The air inside the house doesn't smell good. There is dust on everything.

There are lots of dirty clothes in the bedroom. The closet is messy. There is a lot of work to do here!

It's a nice day outside—I think I'll go for a walk. Happy spring!

Discussion

What things do I need to do in my home?

Matching

Which job goes with each problem?

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. The kitchen floor is dirty. | a. Put them away. |
| 2. The cupboards are messy. | b. Recycle them. |
| 3. There is old food in the refrigerator. | c. Sweep the floor. |
| 4. There are empty jars here. | d. Vacuum it. |
| 5. The windows are dirty. | e. Wash them. |
| 6. There are papers everywhere. | f. Throw it away. |
| 7. The rug needs cleaning. | g. Organize them. |
| 8. The air is bad. | h. Do the laundry. |
| 9. There are lots of dirty clothes. | i. Open the windows. |

Note to the instructor:

This story is a good introduction to the multi-level crossword puzzle on 'Spring cleaning' on the next two pages of this issue.

You and the students can read this story together, or you can read it aloud to them. Or if you prefer, you can present it as a story about yourself! (My students would never believe me when I told them my house was messy—they assumed what I was telling them was fiction!)

The vocabulary matching exercise gives students a chance to review or learn the words they'll need for the puzzle on the next two pages.

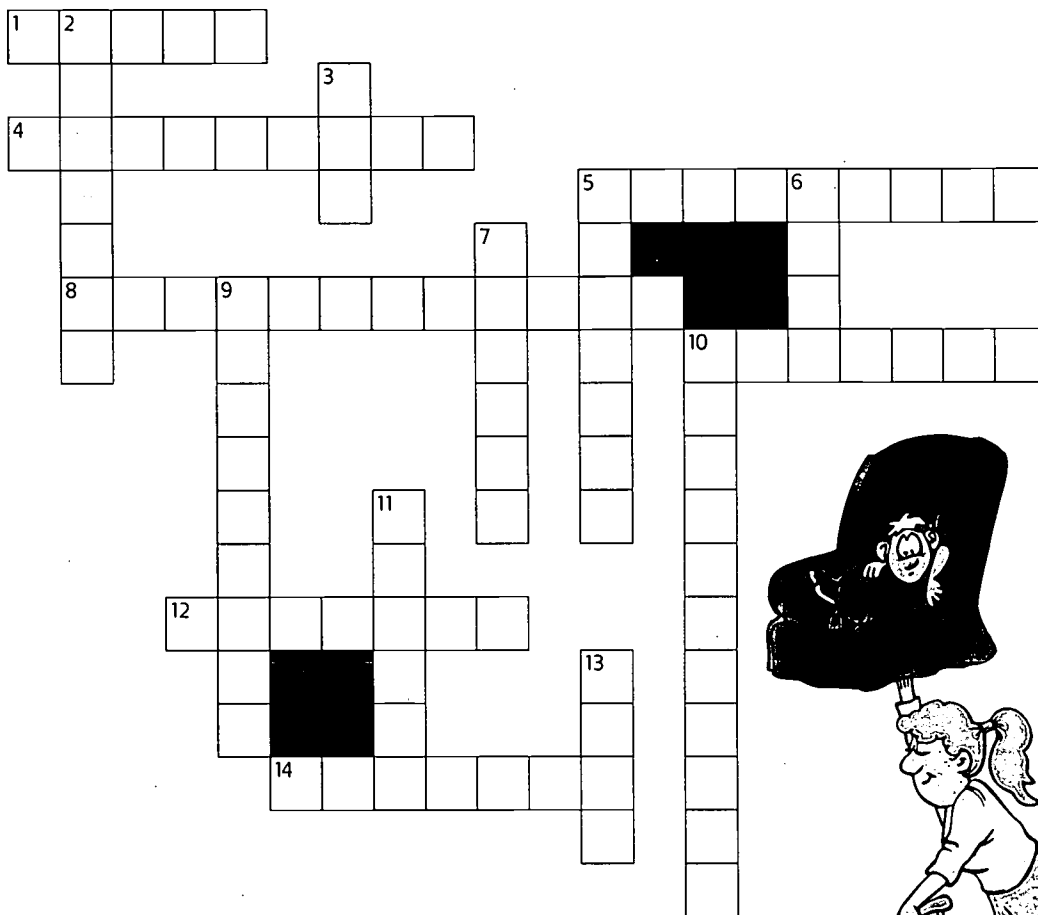
Level A of the puzzle is easier, and asks students to fill in the missing nouns. Level B, which is slightly more challenging, uses similar examples but asks the students to fill in the verbs.



Multi-level crossword puzzle: Spring cleaning (Level A)

Word list

closet
clothes
cupboards
floor
furniture
junk
kitchen
laundry
oven
papers
recycling
refrigerator
rug
wastebasket
windows (2 times)



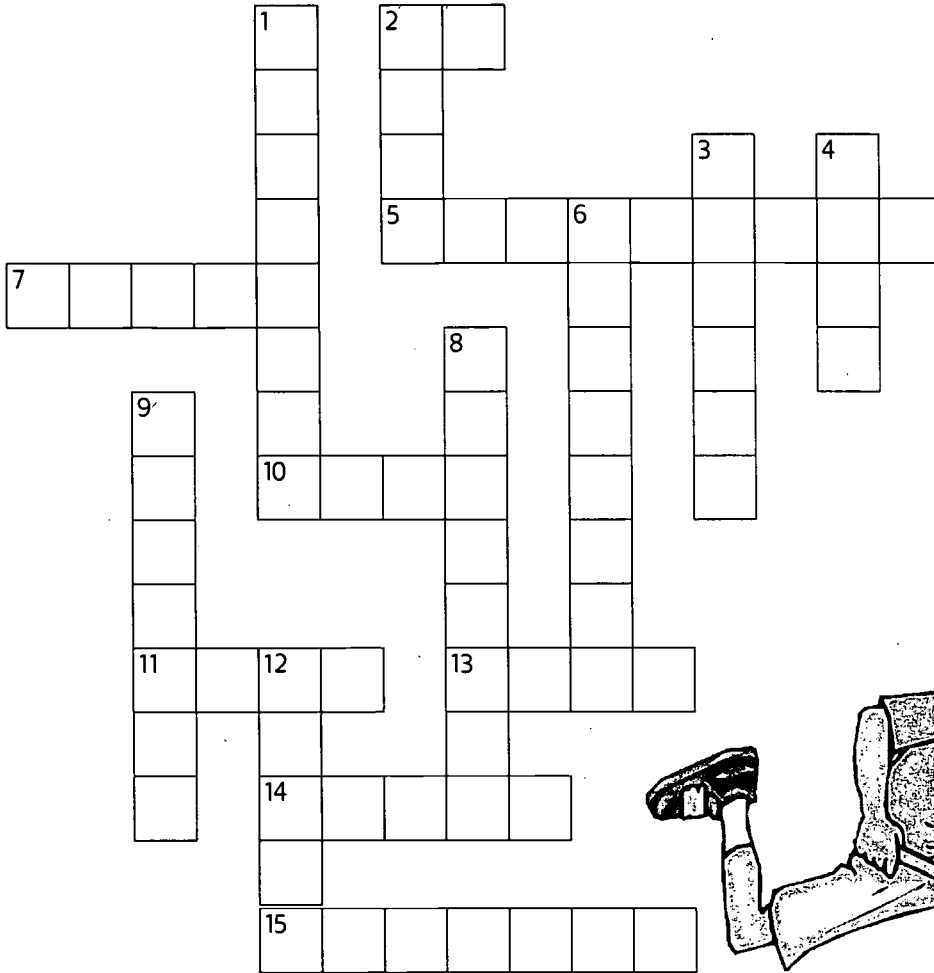
Across clues

1. Where's the broom? I have to sweep the _____.
4. There is dust on the table and chairs. It doesn't look clean, so I'm going to dust all the _____.
5. The kitchen is messy. We have to put everything away and organize the _____.
8. There is some old milk in the _____. I think we should throw it away.
10. The _____ are dirty! I can't see outside.
12. We need some fresh air in the house. We should open the _____.
14. Be careful! I just washed the _____ floor. It's still wet.

Down clues

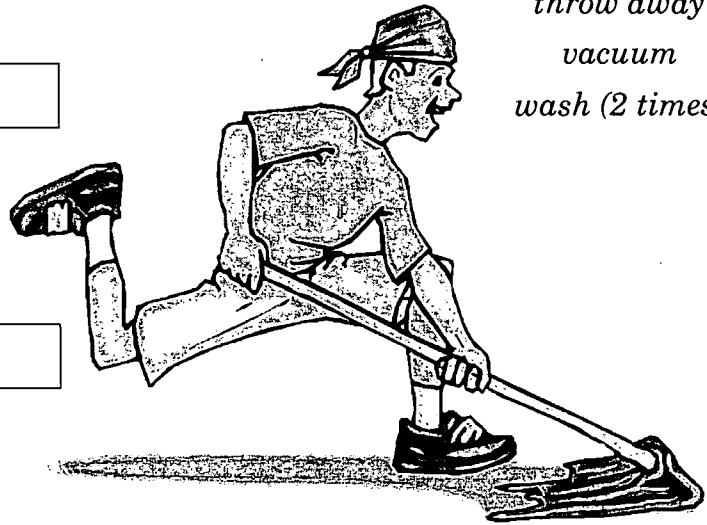
2. We have a lot of dirty clothes. It's time to do the _____.
3. I'm going to vacuum the _____ in the living room.
5. It's spring now, so we don't need warm coats and sweaters. I'm going to put away the winter _____.
6. I already cleaned the stove. Now I have to clean the _____.
7. Last night I was doing my homework. Now I have to put away all the books and _____.
9. We have a lot of cans and empty jars. We should take them to _____.
10. I threw away a lot of old papers. Now I have to empty the _____.
11. There are a lot of clothes in the _____. I need to clean it out.
13. What is this stuff? We don't need it. It's _____.

Spring cleaning (Level B)



Word list

clean
clean out (2 times)
do
dust
empty
open
organize
put away (2 times)
sweep
take
throw away
vacuum
wash (2 times)



Across clues

2. All the clothes are dirty. We need to _____ the laundry.
5. There's some junk here we don't need. Let's _____ it _____.
7. I want to bake bread tomorrow, but the oven is dirty. Today I have to _____ the oven.
10. "What are all these empty jars for?" "I'm going to _____ them to recycling."
11. My mother-in-law is coming for a visit, so I'm going to _____ the windows.
13. It's too hot in here. Can you _____ the windows to let in some fresh air?
14. Tomorrow is garbage day. We have to _____ the wastebaskets and take out the trash.
15. I'm glad that winter is over. Now we can _____ the coats, hats and sweaters.

Down clues

1. I can't find my shoes! It's time to _____ the closet. There's too much stuff in there.
2. I'll wash the floor; you can _____ the furniture.
3. There's a lot of dirt inside the car. You can take it to the car wash across the street and _____ it for 50 cents.
4. "Did you _____ the kitchen floor?" "Not yet; I didn't have time."
6. The cupboards are messy and it's hard to find things. It's time to _____ the shelves.
8. Something smells bad. It's time to _____ the refrigerator.
9. "Please _____ your homework papers. It's time to eat."

Multi-level dictation: TV violence

Here is a multi-level dictation activity on a topic that we think will be of interest to students, whether they are parents or not.

Preparation

Our readers tell us that students like these multi-level dictations, because they can try the same exercise at different levels. For example if they succeed at the lowest level, they might want to try the dictation again at a higher level. Therefore it's a good idea to come prepared with extra copies of the worksheets. When you make copies, you might want to enlarge these to make them easier to write on.

Introduction

You can begin the activity by asking students the question from the beginning of the reading passage—Do you think television is bad for children? Ask them to explain why or why not and write any new vocabulary that comes up on the board.

Next, read the passage aloud to the students, and explain any parts they don't understand. When the students are familiar


with the story, you are ready to start the dictation.

Writing

Let each student decide which level to try first. Level A is the easiest, Levels B and C are harder, and the most challenging level would be "D", which is a blank sheet of paper.

Read the passage at normal speed, pausing between sentences to give the students time to write. You can read the passage as many times as the students wish. When they are finished writing, have students at different levels work together to make corrections. For example, Level A can help Level B make corrections because there is more information on the lower level sheet.

Follow up

After the dictation work is finished, students may wish to discuss this issue and propose solutions. We've included some discussion suggestions below. 

TV violence

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 11 sentences (89 words).

Vocabulary needed:

violence, watch, control, choose, allow

Do you think television is bad for children? Many people say there is too much violence on TV. Children who watch TV see fights, shooting and killing. They are too young to understand this.

Some parents try to control what their children watch. They choose TV programs that are good for children. Or they don't allow their children to watch TV.

But children like to watch TV. They want to watch the same programs that their friends watch. This is a problem in some families. What should parents do?

Discussion

Which TV programs do you think are OK for young children (under 10)? Why?

Which TV programs do you think are bad for young children? Why?

What things can children see on TV that they don't understand?

What can parents do? (Some words to use: decide, allow, control, choose, discuss)

TV violence

Level A

Do you think television is bad for _____? Many people say there is too much violence on _____. Children who watch _____ see fights, shooting and killing. They are too _____ to understand this.

Some _____ try to control what their _____ watch. They choose _____ programs that are _____ for children. Or they _____ allow their children to watch _____.

But children _____ to watch TV. They _____ to watch the same programs that their _____ watch. This is a _____ in some families. What should _____ do?

TV violence

Level B

Do you think _____ is _____? Many people _____ there is _____ violence _____ TV. Children who _____ see fights, shooting and _____. They are too young _____ this.

_____ try to control what their children _____. They choose _____ that _____ good _____ children. Or _____ allow their children _____.

But children _____ TV. They _____ the same programs that _____ watch. _____ problem in some families. What _____ parents _____?

TV violence

Level C

_____ television _____ children? Many _____ too much violence _____. Children _____ see fights, _____ and killing. _____ to understand _____.

Some parents _____ what _____ watch. _____ TV programs that _____. Or they _____ to watch TV.

But _____ TV. They _____ programs _____ friends _____. _____ problem _____. What _____?

From the field: Learning by cooking

Contributed by **Jean Kebis**, Ozark Literacy Council in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

You want a really "hands-on" lesson? Jean often cooks this recipe with a group of students. It includes most of the cooking terms on pp. 46–47 of the *Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary* (the red one). It has enough steps so everyone can do something. And it can be completed in one session, so everybody can immediately eat and enjoy!

Follow-up ideas: Put each sentence on a separate piece of paper. Ask students to arrange them in the correct order. Also, you can give a dictation from this recipe. Literacy level students, instead of writing the dictation, can select the correct sentence from the papers as they listen. ➔

Shrimp and Pasta Salad

Shrimp

1. Mince 2 garlic cloves.
2. Heat 4 tablespoons salad dressing.
3. Add shrimp and garlic.
4. Stir fry for 3–5 minutes.
5. Cool in refrigerator.

Dressing

1. Combine 1/4 cup vinegar, 3 tablespoons water and a package of Salad Dressing Mix (Italian).
2. Shake well.
3. Add 1/2 cup oil.
4. Shake again.

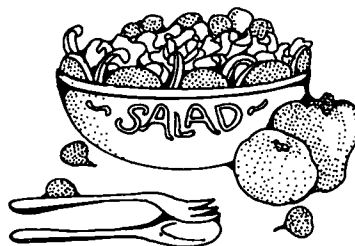
Pasta

1. Add salt to some water.
2. Boil water.
3. Add pasta.
4. Bring to a boil again.
5. Cook for the number of minutes written on the package.
6. Drain. Rinse with cold water.
7. Pour some of the dressing on the pasta. Toss.
8. Cool in refrigerator.

To Finish Salad:

1. Chop bell pepper.
2. Cut up some broccoli.
3. Slice 4 mushrooms.
4. Peel and chop 1 onion.
5. Cut cheddar cheese into small cubes.
6. Slice radishes.
7. Grate parmesan cheese.

Mix together: pasta, shrimp, cheese, vegetables. Add more dressing if needed.



On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

English for Everyday Activities; A Picture Process Dictionary by Lawrence J. Zwier (1999 New Readers Press) ISBN 1-56420-222-4. 96pp. (Supplementary materials are also available.)

In teaching beginners or literacy-level students there seems to be an endless need for more picture series for the students to work from. This book provides you with another good source of these—there are 61 of them with clear, colorful drawings that illustrate such everyday topics as cleaning the house, shopping for groceries, answering the telephone and going to the bank.

Each series is a detailed, step by step description of an action. Brushing your teeth, for example, is demonstrated with 9 steps. Each picture has a caption explaining the action and a vocabulary list is given on the same page.

Because each series is so detailed, there is quite a bit of vocabulary—much more than you would want to teach beginners in one lesson, in fact. A creative teacher will find many ways to use these picture series, though. How about presenting them without the captions and using them for listening, storytelling and retelling? You will find pictures here on almost any lifeskills topic your students are working on, and these can provide you with a useful supplement to your other lessons.

For intermediate or advanced students, the book would be most useful for browsing, review and reference. Unlike most dictionaries which give individual words, this one presents complex actions with all the words and phrases necessary to describe it.

If we were learning a foreign language ourselves, we would like a reference like this one. ↵

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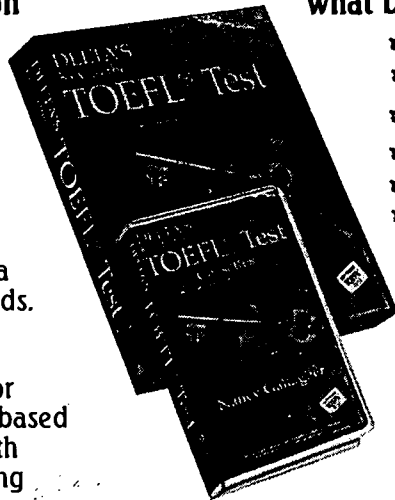


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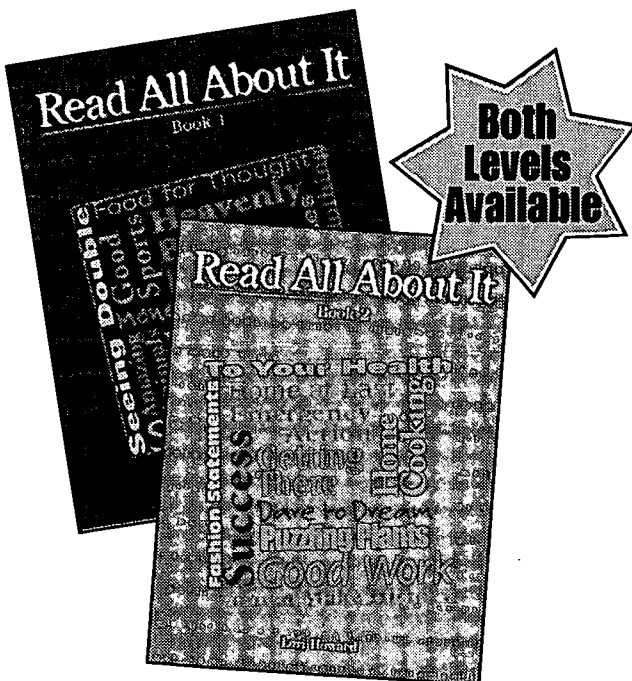
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Going to a conference?

If you are giving a workshop or attending a conference and would like to share *Hands-on English* with your colleagues, we'd be delighted to send you a packet of sample issues. This is a great help to us in spreading the word about HOE, and it can enhance your presentation as well.

Feel free to contact us about getting your hands on some copies of *Hands-on!* 📧

High-interest articles, news stories, and poems



Adult and young adult students have the opportunity to read, listen, speak, and write about engaging topics in depth and to reinforce and expand their knowledge of related vocabulary.

Read All About It 1 and 2 can be used independently, or as a supplement to The Oxford Picture Dictionary.



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Visit Oxford at: www.oup-usa.org/esl/

Minigrants reminder

Hands-on English has Minigrant applications available upon request. Applications for this year's awards are due April 30.

Outside reading

We recently read an interesting book about refugees world-wide. Written by journalist Mark Fritz, it's called "Lost on Earth; Nomads of the New World" (1999 Little, Brown and Co.).

The author uses carefully chosen anecdotes to convey the concept of vast movements of people. This makes the book easy to read. We found some of the stories in the book extremely sad, but came away feeling that we had a new perspective on recent events, and a better understanding of the enormity of the refugee problem.

Some teachers might recognize their students among the people chronicled in the book. ➡

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