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ABSTRACT

This newsletter is designed to help English and a second language teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas. The articles are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors. Each issue includes some of the following regular features: "Letters"; "Hints and Tips"; "Tools and Techniques"; "From the Field"; "Reading"; "Multilevel Dictation"; "Multilevel Crossword Puzzle"; "Cultural Activity"; "Conversation"; "On the Market"; "News and Notes"; "Grammar Grab-Bag"; "ESL Games"; "Conversation Activity"; "Reading Activity"; "Listening Activity"; "Vocabulary Activity"; and "Idea File." Cover articles include the following: "Fresh Ideas for Spring"; "Warming Up for the Olympics"; "A Flurry of Fall Activities"; "Teaching as a Sport"; "Difficult Conditions"; and "'Tis the Tax Season." (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (KFT)

**Hands-On English:
A Periodical for Teachers and Tutors of Adult English
as a Second Language, 2000-2001**

**Anna Silliman, Editor
Volume 10, 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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Fresh ideas for spring

This is very likely a busy time for most ESL teachers and tutors—winding things down before a summer break, taking care of testing and assessment reports, keeping your lessons interesting in spite of nicer weather. We hope that this issue will bring you some useful ideas that will make your teaching easier!

Teaching ideas

This issue includes quite a crop of hints & tips, due to the great input we got from our reader survey. Jack Bailey sent us an article about his 'Class Starters', which are a great way to keep your class lively and student-centered right from the first minutes of class. You can use these right now, or incorporate them into your teaching next semester. Mayo Hart's 'Thursday options' describes one way to run a multi-level class. You'll be glad we printed it in this issue, because if you'd like to try it you may need time this summer to prepare!

Vocabulary

Also in this issue, we present a somewhat silly reading passage called 'The best job in the world,' which we hope will help your students learn and review job vocabulary they will need for the multi-level crossword puzzle in this issue, 'On the job.'

Do your students know common acronyms, like CBS, NBC, ABC, which appear in most news stories? We've included a simple matching exercise to help them focus on what these mean, then a puzzle as follow-up.

Speaking

Claire Russell sent us an interview activity, 'Getting to know you,' which we think is lively and fun and is adaptable to any level.

Reading . . . for you

We've reviewed two titles in this issue of interest to instructors. One is an interesting cross-cultural study, 'The Spirit Catches You...' recommended by Abbie Tom. The other title is a much-needed study of the difficult issue of assessment in adult programs.


Historical note

As you can tell from our volume number, this is the beginning of our 10th year of publishing HOE!!! We are surprised to see this anniversary so soon, as it still seems like we've just begun. Where did the time go? We'd like to give a warm thanks to all our readers, contributing authors, Board members, advertisers, and other friends for helping us along. With your continued help, we'll keep going as long as HOE is needed!

Coming soon . . .

In our next issue, we hope to include something about the U.S. political system to help your students understand what's going on in the upcoming elections. If you have ideas, tips or activities on this topic you'd like to share, we'd be delighted to hear from you! (Well, to tell the truth we'd be delighted to hear from you in any case.)

Happy teaching, and enjoy the spring!

—the Editor. 

Book swap?

Carole Harris of Minnetonka, Minnesota is looking for older editions of the textbook *Expressways* (not the newest one); all four levels. If you have copies of this text you can sell, swap or give away please contact her at carolebharris@juno.com.

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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.

Advertising

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

H.O.E. online

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

You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, updates on resources and more.

See you there!



HOE Board member Jill Kramer (left), brainstorming with editor Anna Silliman.

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Letters

"I'm pleased to have HOE as an affordable resource. . . There's something for everyone. I keep back issues, and often pull out useful ideas for lessons or something that ties in with what I'm teaching."

—L.M.

More about reader surveys

Since we reported to you in our last issue, we've received 28 more survey forms from readers. These included lots more interesting comments and useful ideas! Please be assured that, although we don't report here on every one, we do read and consider them all. We'll refer to your thoughtful input frequently over the next few months.

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

Delivery problems?

We've heard from two readers (one in Alaska, one in Puerto Rico) who have not been receiving their issues in a reasonable time. We can fix this (we hope) by sending these by first class mail. Most of our issues are sent by bulk mail, which saves us money, and these usually arrive almost as fast as by first class.

If your area is not served well by the bulk mailing don't hesitate to contact us and we'll try to improve your service. We want everyone to be equally happy with their HOE delivery! —*the Editor*.

material for intermediate and advanced students. The site is at www.cagle.com and includes work from 54 different newspaper cartoonists, organized by topic. You'll find lots of cartoons on Elian, for example!

Plan a trip

"I have the levels 3 and 4 students plan a trip for one week, with a schedule, daily diary, daily expenses, modes of transportation and activities. They write a paragraph on each day and give a speech using an overhead with a map. They do this project with a partner. The discourse between partners as well as compromising and planning involves much talking."

—*Dian Zahner*

Airway Heights, Washington

A student-made phrasebook

"Because I teach English for Special Purposes (workplace English) to housekeepers and waiters who are at a very low level, I find that creating *with them* a simple phrase book (in this case, English and Spanish) is a good beginning to help them to gain confidence. They are grateful for a handy resource to refer to while on the job."

—*Eleanor Raheem*

Pelham, New York

Hints & tips

'Hands-on' vocabulary

"I like to put many small objects in a paper bag (clip, penny, piece of thread, needle, bottle cap, etc.). I ask the students what they think is in the bag. We take the things out one by one, discuss the name of each. Then we put them back and try to remember all the things. Or, each student takes one thing and we ask, 'Who has the ___?' Students like the game aspect."

—*Susan Gosman*

Holyoke, Massachusetts

Editor's note: This is a great way to review vocabulary on almost any topic. The items can be chosen around a theme and could include pictures as well as real objects.

Political cartoons

Myriel Eykamp in Arlington, Massachusetts wrote to tell us about a website she's found that is a great source for political cartoons on current issues and has lesson plans for teachers as well. These are not specifically designed for ESL, but might be useful anyway, particularly as discussion

You're the first! Ordinal numbers

"After teaching the ordinal numbers, I reinforce them with my students the next class time by saying to the first student entering the room, 'You are the first student in the room.' To the next I say, 'You are the second student in the room,' and so on. Then in the following class, when all the students are in the room I say, 'Maria was the first student in the room. Who was the second student here?' etc. In the following class, I have each student tell me 'I'm the ___ student in the room.' The students seem to enjoy this activity. It corresponds to the Three Step Lesson of the Montessori Method."

—*Pauline Lemaire, S.P.*

Casa Guadalupe, Yakima, Washington

Fearless writing

"When doing a creative writing activity with lower level learners, have them use a smaller piece of paper (a half or a quarter of a page). They won't be as intimidated because there won't be as much blank space to fill with words!"

—*Linda McKinney*

Sioux City, Iowa

Tools & techniques: Class Starters

On a typical day, my adult education class students trickle in, greet each other and glance up at the board for the day's Class Starter. They then begin active pair discussions that last anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes.

Some examples of what they might see on the board include:

- A) Every time you stand up, you lose this. What is it?
- B) Misako hadn't studied all quarter so she pulled an all-nighter just before the final exam. To pull an all-nighter = _____?
- C) What does "Pre" mean in preschool, preview, premier and president?

Good use of time


As the name implies, Class Starters can be used very effectively to begin classes while allowing students to warm up to the new language in a low stress context. Other advantages that I've encountered include:

- Students get a regular opportunity to meet/talk with others.
- No "dead air" as students wait silently for teacher to officially begin class.

- Uninterrupted time for the teacher to set up the day's lessons.
- Class Starters encourage inductive thinking.
- Also they encourage student-student interdependence.
- Gives students who arrive early a worthwhile language task.
- Content can be easily modified for any class level.
- Many Class Starters often can lead to cross-cultural discussions.

Another beauty of these Class Starters is the great diversity of content you can use each day. I've used the examples included here and I'm sure you can think of many more. Let me know!

A few notes on technique:

- It will take a little practice to get the students into the habit of looking at the board and beginning without your prompting.
- I sometimes give out pieces of candy to those who solve especially tricky questions. I'm always amazed how a little reward can even motivate adults! Enjoy! 

—by **Jack Bailey**,
Santa Barbara Adult
Education, Santa
Barbara, California.
jbailey@west.net

Jack says: "Check out my web site for more resources for English language teaching professionals." <https://www.west.net/~jbailey/>

Idioms in context

(Internet Resource: <http://eslcafe.com/idioms/>) •The computer is down this morning but it should be up and running soon. •Keep an eye out for the bus. It should be arriving soon. •What movie do you want to go to? I can't make up my mind. You decide!

Proverbs

•You can't have your cake and eat it too. •A stitch in time saves nine. •Don't burn your bridges behind you.

Tongue Twisters

(Internet Resource: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html>) •Red lorry, yellow lorry, red lorry, yellow lorry. •Six thick thistle sticks. Six thick thistles stick. •Sam's shop stocks short spotted socks.

License Plates

CAN8IV (California native), I URNDIT (I earned it), SELEBR8 (celebrate)

Multiple-word verbs in context

Internet Resource: <http://eslcafe.com/pv/>
•The umpire called off the game. •The fireman put out the fire. •Diana ran out of gas on the freeway.

Riddles

•What was given to you, belongs to you exclusively and yet is used more by your friends than by yourself? (Your name) •What runs around town all day and lies under the bed at night with their tongue hanging out? (Your shoes) •Why isn't your nose 12 inches long? (Because it would then be a foot.)

Prefixes and suffixes

•What does "Co" mean in conversation, co-worker and community? •What does "Sub" mean in subway, submarine and submerge? •What does "er" mean in painter, teacher and baker?

Scrambled recent vocab words
Unscramble these animals. ODG BZAER
HALEPTEN

Scrambled Sentences

Same as previous one, with sentence words.

Sorting

Sort the following nouns into things you *take* or *make*: a nap a phone call notes a bed sense a picture a shower a decision

Sort the following verbs into their ending sound. "D", "T" or "ID": expected waited decided attended asked looked helped waved described played danced hugged

Sort the following verbs into Regular or Irregular groups: see sew lift write mix eat invite run paint hope be fry

Conferencing

•List as many things as you can that are blue. •List as many verbs or expressions beginning with *have* (Have a party/a seat/a headache, etc.) •List things that you travel in. •List synonyms of "good"

Find the Oddball

What word doesn't belong in the following group? Why?

1. a) basketball b) soccer c) tennis d) baseball
2. a) shoes b) socks c) gloves d) shirt
3. a) reggae b) folk c) classical d) jazz

Picture Differences

Students study two nearly identical pictures and discover differences. (Resource: "Look Again Pictures" by Judy Winn-Bell Olsen)

Ranking

•Rank the following according to size: Apple / Strawberry / Grapefruit / Watermelon / Apricot •Rank the following aspects of this city from best to worst: Affordability / Public Transportation / Weather / Night Life / Nature •Rank the following from most to least important in your life: Money/ Health / Love / Friends / Wisdom

Discussion questions

•Is this a good city for children? •What do you need more of—money or love? •What has surprised you most about the U.S.?

Vocabulary Mingling

Pass out cards containing examples of recent vocabulary. Ask students to stand and mingle around the room. When finding a partner, each student should describe their word with a definition or context. Their

partner tries to guess the mystery word. When both partners have successfully guessed the other's word, they exchange cards and move to another person. For example: Microwave Oven—"This is a common kitchen appliance used to heat food quickly." Or "If you want to make popcorn in 2 or 3 minutes, you can use a _____."

Connecting Words

Find a partner. Choose an A and B partner. Take partner A's first name. For example, "Carlos". Partner B must think of a word in English that begins with the last letter of this name—"S". They can say, "snow". Now Partner A continues with a word starting with "W". Continue to play, without repeating words, until someone can't think of an appropriate response in 20 seconds or less.

Cartoon Story Completion

Use the overhead to project a cartoon series with the conclusion missing. Students hypothesize a viable ending.

Word Forms

What other forms can you think of for the word "direct"? (direction, directive, directional, directionality, directness, directly, etc.)

Match the Adjectives

(From "Five Minute Activities" by Penny Ur and Andrew Wright) Think of something that could be described by all 3 of these adjectives: a) Important / Dangerous / Heavy (example: Car, Army or Mother-in-law!) b) Beautiful / Cold / Big c) Tall / Thin / Thirsty

Picture Memory

Using an overhead, show the class a busy scene depicting many actions and objects. Conceal the image and ask pairs to recall as much as possible.

Review

Additionally you could use Class Starters to review recent class material. For example: •Have students fill in sentence blanks requiring recent vocabulary or grammar. •Sentence correction based on topical grammar or recent conversational errors. •Have students rewrite given sentences using recent vocabulary. 🖐

From the field:

"Thursday options"—a smorgasbord of ESL

At the TESOL conference last March, we were pleased to run into **Mayo Hart** of Minnetonka, Minnesota, a long-time HOE reader and enthusiastic ESL teacher. She described for us a "self access" project that her program developed, originally as a response to a crowding problem.

Because of a scheduling error in her building, their program discovered that on Thursdays they had 3 classes scheduled, but only 2 classrooms! Turning disaster into opportunity, the teachers got together and designed a learning environment that would work for all the students in the space they had available. They called it "Thursday options," because the teachers provided a choice of activities and the students had the "option" of choosing which ones to work on.

Each teacher selected and prepared activities which students could benefit from by working on their own. For example, a listening activity in which students play a tape to find the answers; a reading activity in which students match a set of photos to their written descriptions; a grammar worksheet to be completed on the computer; a 'conversation nook' in which students choose a topic card and discuss it with a partner.

All these tasks were then placed throughout both classrooms, and students circulated to select and complete them. The atmosphere was more like a lab than a classroom, with students moving from task to task and the teachers functioning as monitors and facilitators during the class time.

To insert some structure into what might otherwise be a somewhat chaotic class, there were some ground rules. For example, students had to complete at least 3 different activities (so they couldn't just sit at the computer the whole time). A time limit of no more than 20 minutes was placed on each activity, again ensuring that students have diverse experiences and that some of the popular activities would be available to more students. Finally, at the end of the class students had to hand in a sheet describing which tasks they had completed, along with any of their finished work.

Mayo explained to us that at first there were some problems with this approach. Some of the students didn't want to participate—perhaps because it seemed too informal to them, or because they preferred the leadership of a teacher. Gradually, though, she says, as students got used to the idea it became a huge success.

Students realized that they could take advantage of the time to work on the things they most needed help with. (Adult students usually know what they need to practice!) They could get some 'one on one' help from a teacher, which was usually not possible in a traditional classroom. And they learned to enjoy making their own choices. Mayo believes this is because they were taking some responsibility for their own learning.

Why it works

There are a number of reasons why this kind of class can benefit students:

- It's multi-level.
- It enhances student independence in learning.
- It allows for some individual attention from teachers.
- It accommodates many different kinds of student learning styles.
- Where more than one class participates, students benefit from the expertise and ideas of additional teachers.

On the other hand...

There is a down side to this kind of project. Mayo admits that it was a tremendous amount of work for the teachers to prepare all the material for Thursday options, and while some of the activities can be recycled, of course new ones need to be added each week. If you have colleagues to work with, though, it can be a lot of fun for both teachers and students.

Finally, the informality of this kind of work will not appeal to every student. Teachers have to be prepared to maintain a certain amount of rigor to overcome the sense that it's a waste of time. ➡

—Contributed by **Mayo Hart**, an ESL teacher in Minnesota, shown below (left) meeting with editor Anna Silliman.



Editor's note: I can't resist telling you an anecdote. Many years ago I tried this technique with a group of students in a summer intensive program at a community college. Most of the students seemed to enjoy the work and quickly became absorbed in the various tasks.

One student, a young Iranian whose education and level of English was more advanced than the others, was a little bored. He came over to chat with me and as we looked around the room at what the other students were doing, he said in a friendly way, "I see you don't really have an English program here."

Reading activity: The best job in the world

We hope your students will have fun with this story! It's a good introduction to the multi-level crossword puzzle about jobs on the following two pages of this issue.

In back issues: We published a multi-level crossword on 'Looking for a job' in Vol. 1, No. 5, page 4.

I really love my job! I work for a good company. My supervisor is very nice and all the employees are friends. We get a big paycheck every week, and we have good health benefits. We get two hours for lunch, and coffee breaks in the morning and in the afternoon.

The work isn't difficult—it's fun. Every three months, the company gives everyone a raise. We also get lots of holidays and three weeks vacation time. Nobody ever quits their job at this company! It's the best job in the world.

There is just one small problem. This job is only a dream!

Discussion

What's good about this job?

Matching

Match each word with its correct meaning.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. job | a. for example, health insurance |
| 2. company | b. a short time off from work, usually 10 minutes |
| 3. employer | c. the money you earned |
| 4. employees | d. time off from work, usually a week or more |
| 5. paycheck | e. a business |
| 6. benefits | f. people who work for a company |
| 7. break | g. leave your job |
| 8. holiday | h. the work you do |
| 9. vacation | i. the person (or company) that pays you |
| 10. quit | j. a day off work, with pay |

Writing

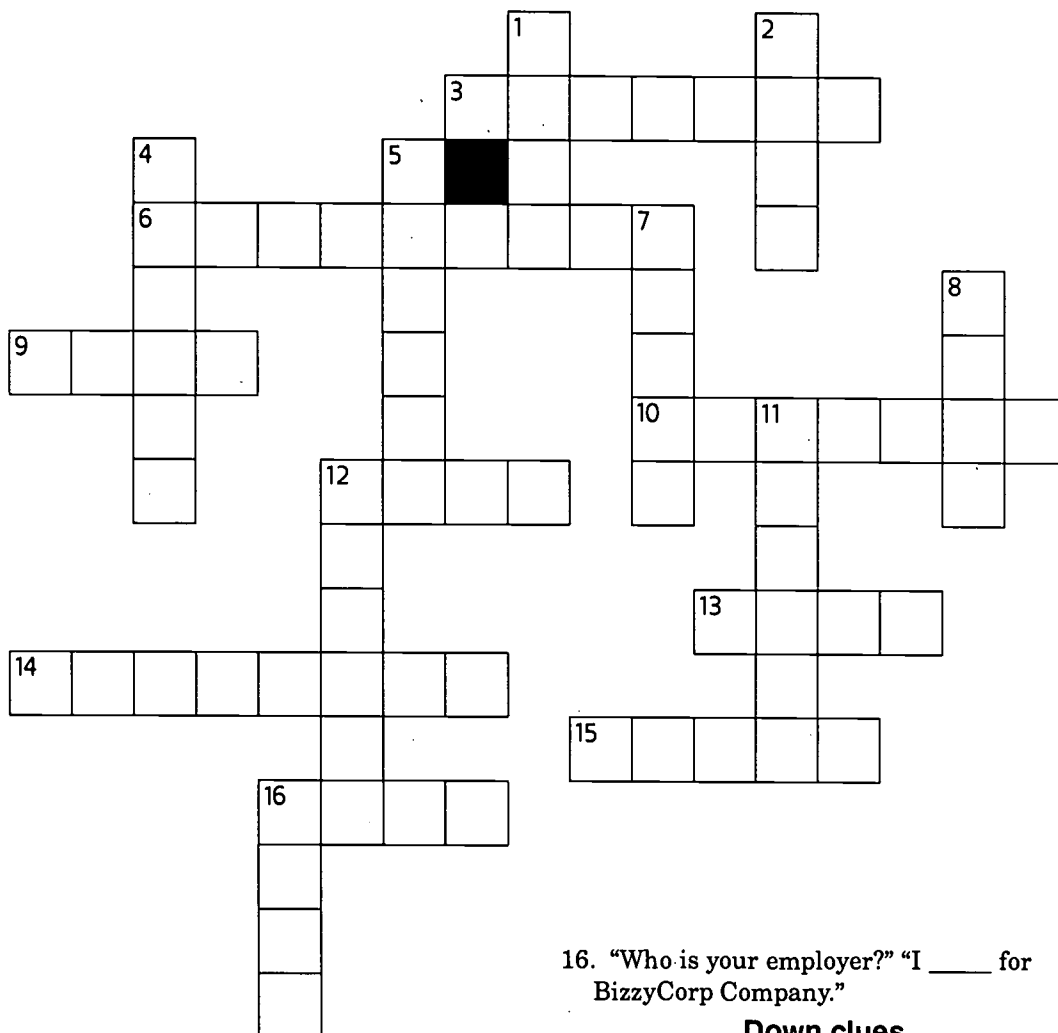
Write about your dream job.

Write a true story about a job (yours, or somebody else's).

Multi-level crossword puzzle

On the job

Level A



Word list

*business
call
course
employees
have to
health
here
hour
looking
manager
many
name
o'clock
small
want
week
work
works*

Across clues

3. My supervisor got a promotion, so she's a _____ now.
6. There's a meeting tomorrow of all the _____. Our supervisor wants to discuss safety rules.
9. "We have a break at 10:00. Do you want to have some coffee?" "No, I have to make a phone _____."
10. Jim got fired last week, so now he's _____ for another job.
12. "Where's Hung?" "He's not _____ this week. He's on vacation."
13. "Did you get a raise?" "Yes, I'm getting five cents more per _____."
14. I know somebody who quit his job and started his own _____.
15. My brother _____ for BizzyCorp. He likes his job.

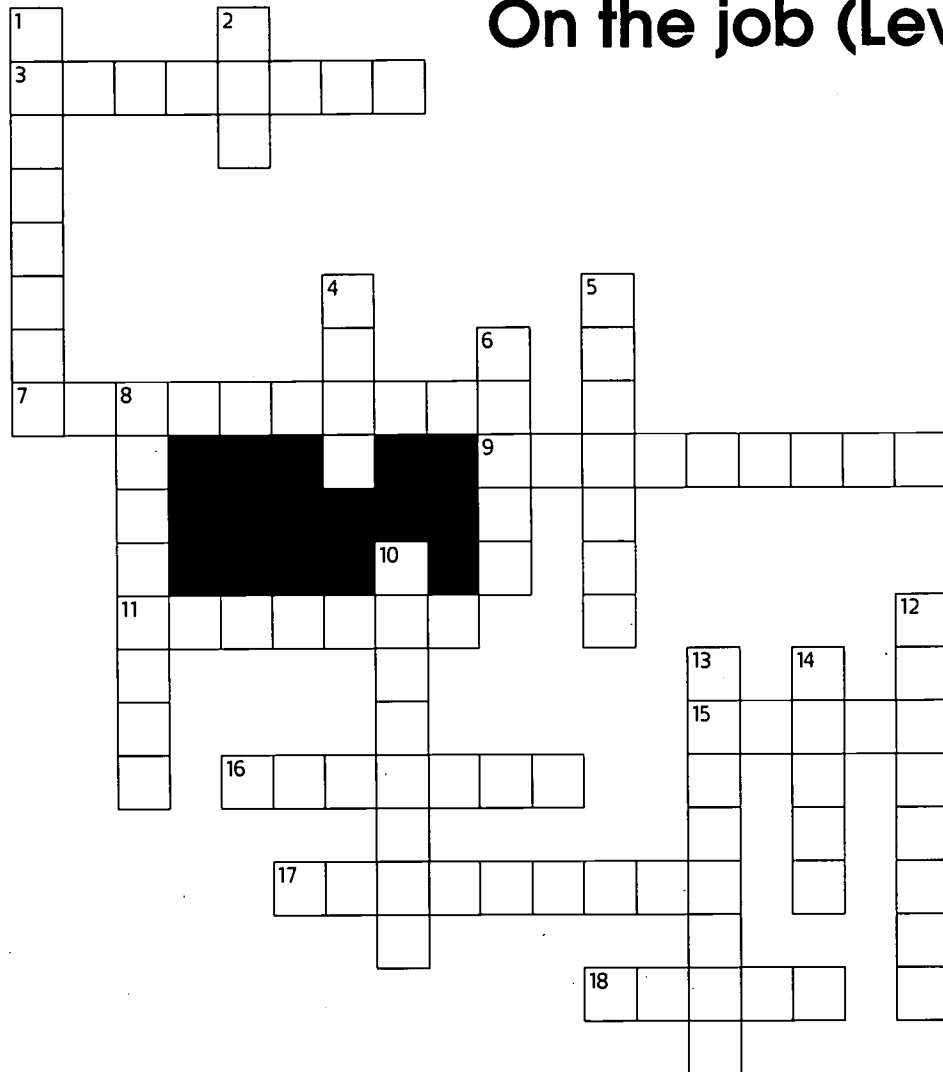
Down clues

1. "Who is your employer?" "I _____ for BizzyCorp Company."
1. "Who is your supervisor?" "Her _____ is Jill."
2. "Do you get a paycheck once a _____?" "No, in my job we get paid every two weeks."
4. This company has good benefits. There's _____ insurance for everybody.
5. I am taking a computer training _____ for three months.
7. "Do you work for a big company?" "No, it's _____. We have only 3 employees."
8. "How _____ employees work here?" "About 150."
11. "Can I talk to Mr. Smith?" "Sorry, he's at lunch. Can you come back at one _____?"
12. "Is next Monday a holiday?" "Yes, but I _____ work that day."
16. "Do you _____ to work overtime this week?" "Sure!"

On the job (Level B)

Word list

benefits
break
company
employees
employer
fired
holiday
job
lunch
meeting
overtime
paycheck
promotion
quit
raise
supervisor
training
vacation



Across clues

3. "Who is your _____?" "I work for the BizzyCorp Company."
7. If you're not sure how to do your job, please ask your _____.
9. This company has 150 _____ working here.
11. We don't work next Monday because it's a _____.
15. I think I will get a _____ in 3 months. That means I will earn more money.
16. Tomorrow I have a _____ with my supervisor. We will discuss my work.
17. If you take a training course you might get a _____ to a better job.
18. "How much time do you get to eat _____?" "Thirty minutes."
2. I enjoy my _____. The people are friendly and the pay is OK.
4. "Where's Bill?" "He got a better job at another company, so he _____ last week."
5. "What is the name of the _____ where you work?" "It's BizzyCorp."
6. "Where's Maria?" "She's taking her _____. She'll be back in five minutes."
8. After work I'm going to the bank to cash my _____.
10. After you work here for one year, you can get some _____ days.
12. My boss wants me to work _____ this week, so I can earn some extra money.
13. I'm taking a _____ course for three months so I can learn some new skills.
14. "Where's Jim?" "He doesn't work here any more. Yesterday the boss _____ him."

Down clues

1. "Do you get _____ at this company?" "Yes, we have health insurance."

Cultural activity: Organizations in the news

Your students will run across a lot of acronyms in newspapers and on television; even in daily life. To native speakers many of these seem like words—we know what the letters mean but have to stop to think what they stand for! These can be confusing to newcomers.

Following are some that students are likely to run across. You might want to add to this exercise any local organizations that might apply, such as your power company, local banks, subway, train and bus lines, insurance companies, local universities—anything the students might need to know.

How to do it

First, have students match the acronym with the name of the organization. This is

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| CBS | American Broadcasting Company | This company makes cars. |
| NBC | America Online | This is a police department for the U.S. |
| ABC | American Telephone and Telegraph Company | This organization is for a sport you play on the ice. |
| CNN | Cable Network News | Young people like to watch the videos on this TV station. |
| MTV | Columbia Broadcasting System | This company makes computers. |
| IRS | Federal Bureau of Investigation | This is a military organization for many countries. |
| INS | General Motors Corporation | This is one of 3 big commercial TV networks in the U.S. |
| FBI | Immigration and Naturalization Service | This company delivers packages in brown trucks. |
| IBM | Internal Revenue Service | This country is located in North America. |
| AT&T | International Business Machines | This organization is for people who have guns. |
| UPS | Los Angeles | This is a very big city in California. |
| AOL | Music Television | This is a television network in the U.S. |
| GMC | National Basketball Association | This network has news on cable TV and on the Internet. |
| UN | National Broadcasting Company | This organization is for a sport you play on a wood floor. |
| NATO | National Football League | You apply to this organization for citizenship. |
| USA | National Hockey League | This organization is for a sport you play on the grass. |
| LA | National Rifle Association | Most countries in the world belong to this organization. |
| NFL | North Atlantic Treaty Organization | This company has an Internet service. |
| NBA | United Nations | This is a government organization that collects taxes. |
| NRA | United Parcel Service | This is another commercial television network. |
| NHL | United States of America | This is a long-distance telephone company. |

pretty easy. If you have advanced students, they might try to see how many they can guess before doing the matching exercise.

Next, have students match the name of the organization with its function. (They can use the dictionary for this if they need to.) Finally, have students decide which of the 5 categories each organization fits under.

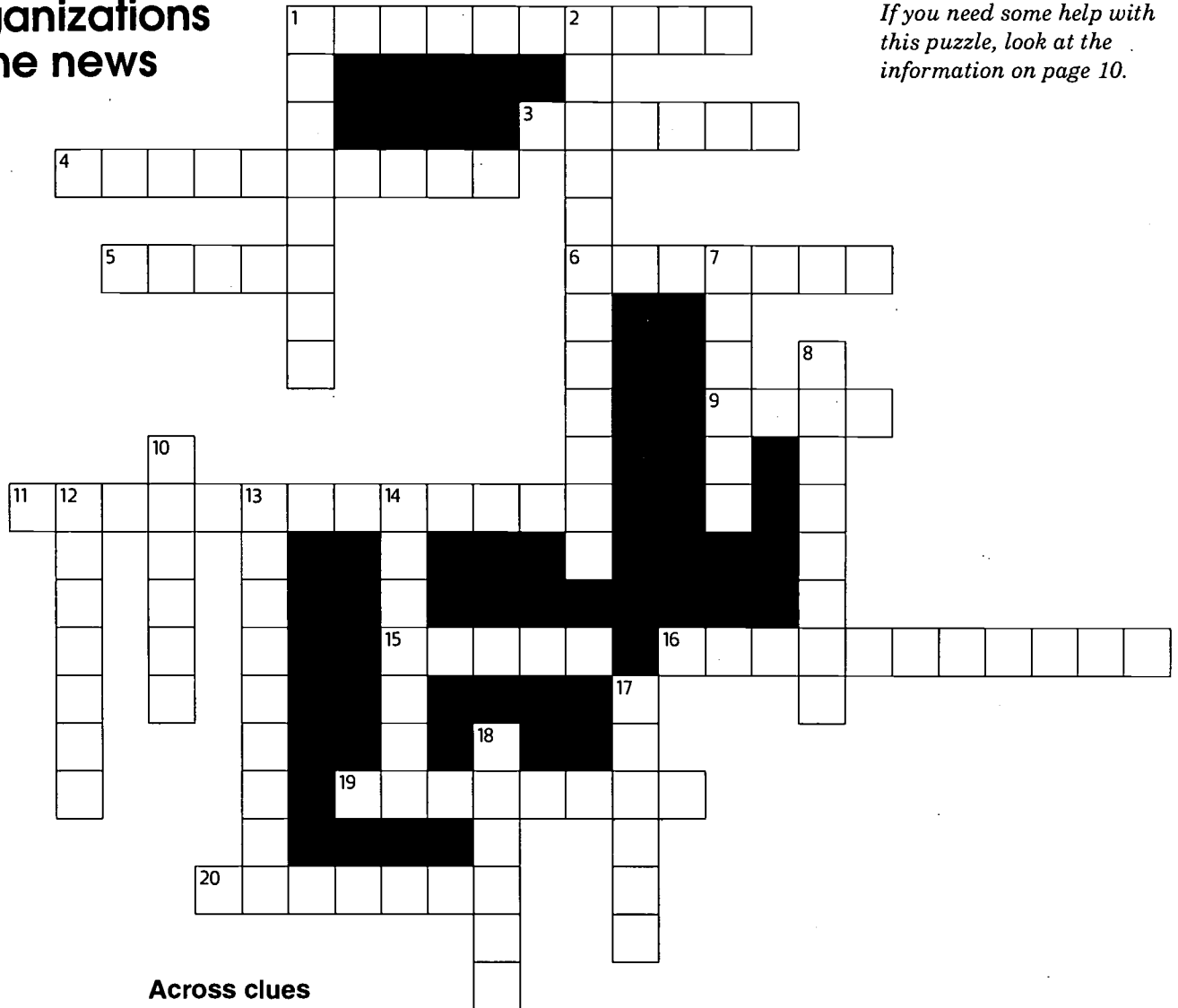
As a wrap-up, the class could start compiling a reference list. More names can be added over time, and the list copied and sent home with each student for personal reference. ➡

*The idea for this exercise comes from reader **Linda Phipps** in *Midwest City, Oklahoma*.*

Categories Make a list of which organizations belong to each of these categories: 1) a company, 2) a government organization, 3) a private organization, 4) a sports organization, 5) a place.

Organizations in the news

If you need some help with this puzzle, look at the information on page 10.



Across clues

1. NBA is the National _____ Association, a sports organization.
3. GMC, or General _____ Corporation, is a very big auto maker.
4. CBS, or Columbia Broadcasting System, is a _____ network.
5. CNN is _____ Network News, a television network.
6. NBC, or National Broadcasting _____ is a big commercial TV network.
9. LA stands for Los Angeles, a _____ in California.
11. The FBI is the Federal Bureau of _____. They fight crime in the U.S.
15. The NRA is the National _____ Association, a gun organization.
16. INS is the _____ and Naturalization Service. If you are new to this country, you already know about them.
19. NFL stands for _____ Football League, a sports organization.
20. The IRS is the Internal Revenue _____, which collects taxes.

Down clues

1. IBM is a company called International _____ Machines. They make computers.
2. ABC is the American _____ Company, one of three big commercial TV networks.
7. UPS, United _____ Service, delivers package in the U.S. and other countries.
8. NATO is a military organization called the North _____ Treaty Organization. It includes countries in Europe and North America.
10. NHL stands for National Hockey _____, a sports organization.
12. The UN, or United _____, is an organization of world governments.
13. AT&T, American _____ and Telegraph, is a long-distance phone service.
14. AOL stands for _____ Online, an Internet service.
17. USA stands for the United _____ of America.
18. MTV is a television station. You can watch music _____ there.

Conversation: Getting to know you

Breaking the ice

In my Level 5 intermediate class, we have a combination of students—those who were in L5 last session, those who have moved up from L4, and half a dozen new people. I'm particularly concerned with forming a community among folks who would naturally form cliques otherwise. Thus, I offer you the following icebreaker.

In the spirit of "everything I encounter could be an ESL lesson," I adapted something I received in email. You know those emails we get with information about a friend—the kind we copy and put our own answers to? Of course, the idea is to find out things about your friends that you never would have asked about or known otherwise. Many of the questions would not be appropriate for ESL, but some are. So I started cutting and pasting from one I recently received, then added more fun questions.

In my class of 26 students, the rule was that each person had to speak to every other person at least once. We went over all the questions, including pronunciation, and then I let them loose for about 45 minutes. Then we came back together and shared a lot of the answers. Some of the questions that inspired the most laughter and conversation were 2, 4, 10, 17, 18, 20, 29 and 30. Number 6 also told me a lot about how many students were arriving to class hungry — obviously important.

This activity did exactly what I intended it to do, and I think it helped everyone (especially the brand new folks) to realize that they were not alone in how much they didn't know. The great part about this kind of activity is that I could easily do it again with 30 completely different questions. In addition, I believe it could be adapted to most levels, even true beginners. ➡

—by *Claire Russell*,
ESL teacher and Coordinator at *La Comunidad Hispana in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania*.

To adapt this activity for beginners, you can assign each student just one question! Each student polls all the other students about the same question, then reports the results to the class. (See an article about this technique by Fiona Armstrong called "The one question interview" in Vol. 2, No. 1, page 6.

Get to know your classmates by asking them the following questions. You must ask at least one question of every student!

1. What is your favorite TV show?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

2. Do you sing in the shower?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

3. What is your favorite thing about the United States?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

4. Do you think thunderstorms are cool or scary?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

5. What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

6. Did you have dinner before you came to class? If yes, what did you eat?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

7. What is hardest for you about learning English?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

8. What is your favorite number?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

9. Do you have children? If yes, how many? Where do they live?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

10. What's under your bed?

Name: _____ Answer: _____

11. What do you like best about yourself?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
12. What are your favorite foods?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
13. Are you left-handed, right-handed, or ambidextrous?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
14. What is your dream car?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
15. What is your favorite kind of flower? What color?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
16. Do you have any pets? What kind?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
17. If you could go anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
18. What is your best friend's name? Where does she or he live?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
19. What is your marital status?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
20. Do you like snow?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
21. Who is your favorite singer or band?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
22. What do you miss most about your native country?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
23. Do you drive? If yes, do you like to drive?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
24. Where were you born (city and country)?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
25. Who is your favorite actor or actress?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
26. Do you have brothers or sisters? If yes, how many?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
27. What are your favorite movies?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
28. If you could have any job, what would it be?
Name: _____ Answer: _____
29. If you could meet one famous person, who would it be? (This person must be alive.)
Name: _____ Answer: _____
30. If you could meet one famous person from history, who would it be? (This person must be dead.)
Name: _____ Answer: _____

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Assessing Success in Family Literacy and Adult ESL, Revised Edition. Edited by Daniel D. Holt and Carol H. Van Duzer (2000 Center for Applied Linguistics) ISBN 1-887744-51-7. 135pp. Available from Delta Systems Co., Inc. 1-800-323-8270, www.delta-systems.com.

Whenever readers ask us about assessment, we are usually at a loss—the issue is complex and there are no easy answers that we know of. Assessment and testing seem beyond the scope of *Hands-on English*. Also, assessment guidelines often seem to be handed down from the federal, state, local and program levels and are not really up to the teacher in the classroom.

What is the role of the teacher in student assessment? This book argues there should be an ongoing collaboration by the program, with the teacher and the learners, to determine what should be learned, how it should be learned, and how to gauge whether something has been learned and what the benefits are.

This can't be done with any standardized test. We know that no such test tells very much. Our diverse programs have many goals—not just imparting certain information to students but helping them to use new skills to make changes in their lives. Assessing this requires some alternatives to standardized tests, and these alternatives are discussed in detail here.

Summer reading?

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child and her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures by Anne Fadiman (1997 The Noonday Press) Paperback ISBN 0-374-5256-41, 341pp. Available from trade bookstores.

As ESL teachers, we often hear our students' tales of contacts with "the real world." *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* is just such a story. It focuses on a Hmong family in Merced, California and particularly their daughter, Lia, who suffers from severe epilepsy. As the severity of their daughter's seizures increases, the parents are expected to administer numerous medications (with instructions in English)

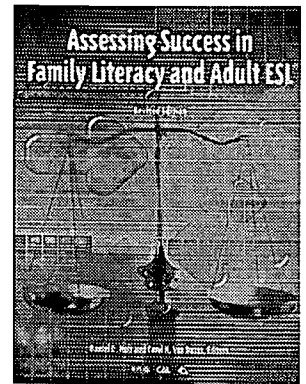
We highly recommend the short section on intake assessment (pp44–48) which gives excellent suggestions on how to approach a first interview with a student, and a detailed description of what can be learned in just one class period about a student's skills. These observations are used to establish a baseline for further assessment later in the program. They are also used for curriculum planning and placement, to help the student best meet his or her goals.

Chapter 4, on assessing progress, may be the most directly useful section for the classroom teacher. How can you make assessment learner centered? How can it reflect the real-life progress of the student? Several examples are given for student self-assessment that will help with this, including a "Can-Do" checklist (p.95) that students use to evaluate their own progress in their ability to communicate.

The topic of assessment is difficult to enter into. It's somewhat theoretical, it's complex and it has its own terminology. This book, by providing concrete examples of assessment tools, such as the "Observation Measures" and the "Can-Do" List, provide you with material you can easily grasp and put to use in your classroom immediately.

Beyond that, it will be up to your program to establish a framework for assessment that includes alternative, student-centered tools, as outlined in this book. — review by Anna Silliman, Editor. 🐾

and to communicate with doctors, social workers and other employees of the health care system. The author presents the story with great sympathy and understanding for the family, interweaving background information on Hmong history and culture as well as on this particular family's story with the ongoing events in young Lia's life. The reader also gets a sense of the frustration of the health care workers at their inability to communicate with the parents, not only linguistically but also culturally. While the book focuses on a Hmong family and community it is relevant to all ESL teachers for the insight it provides into one immigrant family's struggle. —review by Abbie Tom, Durham, North Carolina. 🐾



We have a crisis in testing in this field. Most standardized tests show whether the students have learned all their past tense verbs, or if they understand a raft of idioms. But who cares about this? For most of our students, what they need to learn is how to march into their kid's elementary school and talk with the teacher, apply for a job or straighten out a question with their employer. Success on these complex tasks are truly a victory, while a low score on a test can be demoralizing and misleading.

What can we do to balance the demands of the system for more standardized scores, with the real needs of our students? —HOE

Editor's note: You'll find a number of interesting reviews of Fadiman's book on Amazon's website, www.amazon.com



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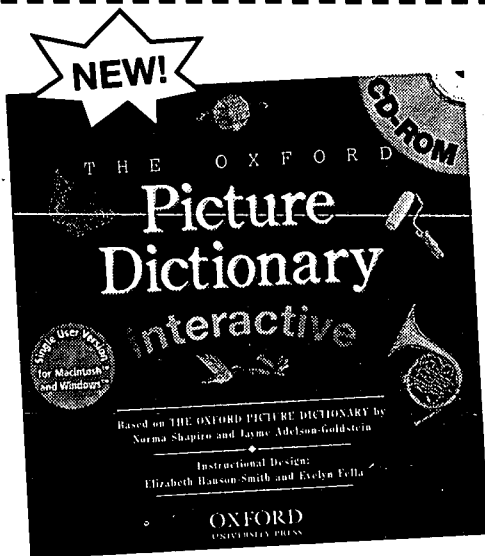
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Summer travel

Recently we learned about Global Volunteers, a non-profit organization based in Minnesota. They organize teams of volunteers (many of them teachers on summer 'vacation') to participate in short-term projects in locations overseas and in the U.S. Activities might include teaching, or other kinds of service. This is 'travel that feeds the soul.'

There is a fee involved to cover meals and expenses (this varies according to location), and participants pay their own transportation. We know of a retired teacher who participated in one of these programs and enjoyed it.

For more information, call 1-800-487-1074 or see the Global Volunteers website: www.globalvolunteers.org ←

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Hands-on English

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

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Warming up for the Olympics

In September the summer Olympics will begin in Sydney, Australia, warming the hearts of ESL teachers everywhere, because the Olympics make such good teaching material. Why the Olympics? What is it about these games that always sparks our students' enthusiasm?

First of all, it's a truly international event. We can't think of any other world event (except war) that draws so much public attention. Sports, like music, seems to speak to nearly everyone. Second, it provides a lot of public recognition to individuals and teams from other countries, giving immigrants far from home something to be proud of. And finally, the Olympic games are really about personal challenge. Many people, especially our students, can relate to the effort involved in overcoming obstacles and achieving a goal.

So, this issue brings you three great activities about the Olympics—a multi-level dictation, a multi-level puzzle, and a fun classroom activity called 'Mini Olympics.' If, at the time you receive this issue, it still seems a little early for this topic, check out our website for an activity about the Olympic torch, which is right now on its journey through Australia, heading toward Sydney. There are some nice human interest stories online about the ordinary folks who get to carry the torch for a leg.

In past issues

Over the years we've published various activities having to do with the Olympics. For a grammar activity on relative clauses, see "He's the one who got the gold" in Vol. 2, No. 2, page 4. For a roleplay/interview

activity about athletes, see Vol. 6, No. 2, page 7. And for a reading passage about the winter Olympics, see Vol. 7, No. 5, page 6. There is a verb tense activity accompanying this text.

If you have intermediate or advanced students, you might want to look at a reading and vocabulary activity we published in February 1998 on our website, called "Olympics—Trying hard to win." It's all about what it takes to succeed as an athlete. There is a fairly long reading passage, a vocabulary matching activity and a puzzle, as well as writing topics. Students can write about what they are doing to achieve their own goals.

One last teaching tip about the Olympics—stay on the lookout for interesting photos in the media coverage of these events. You know, the 'thrill of victory, the agony of defeat' type of picture. You can use these in the classroom for interesting conversation and writing activities.

Coming next issue. . .

You may be surprised this fall when we mail each subscriber *two* copies of the September/October issue! We'd like to ask you to pass one of them along to a friend or colleague who might be interested in subscribing. Thanks a lot (in advance) for your help in spreading the word about HOE.

Happy teaching, and enjoy the rest of the summer!

—the Editor. 🖐

Hands-on English

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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!

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Multi-level dictation: The summer Olympics



Once again, we've prepared one of our popular multi-level dictation exercises, on a topic we think your students will enjoy.

Using this text

When giving a dictation it is always best if the students are already familiar with the text you are dictating from. Perhaps you could read this text together first in one session, then do the dictation exercise in a following session. Another approach is to discuss the topic fully first, using other materials such as newspaper articles, photos, etc. so that the ideas and vocabulary are firmly established. Then read this text aloud and discuss it with students before beginning the dictation.

Preparation


Separate the four levels, A, B, C and D and make photocopies for the students. It is best to enlarge the print first on your copier, so the text will be easier to write on. Make extra copies of each level so that students can try the dictation at more than one level

if they wish to. Some students may want to try an easier level first, and when they've completed that successfully, repeat the dictation at a higher level. Other students may want to switch to a lower level if they find the one they're doing is too frustrating.

How to do it

Once the students are familiar with the text, have them choose a level to try. Level A is the easiest. (If you provide them with a word list to work from, even literacy level students might attempt this one.)

Levels B and C are harder; this time we've provided Level D which just gives the right number of blanks as the only clues. Students who want to challenge themselves even more can try Level E, a blank sheet of paper!

Give the dictation at natural speed, pausing between sentences for students to write. Repeat the passage as often as needed. When finished, students can work together to correct their writing. 

The summer Olympics

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 12 sentences (120 words).

Vocabulary needed:

athletes, countries, games, sport, ceremony, medal, events.

travel, practice, prepare, compete, watch.

Every four years athletes from many countries travel to one place for the summer Olympic games. Almost two hundred countries play in these games.

Before they can go, the athletes have to practice their sport. They work hard to prepare. They have to be the best athletes from their country. Only a few athletes can go to the Olympics.

When the Olympics start, the athletes compete to see who is the best in the world. At the end of each event there is a ceremony for the winners. The three best athletes get a medal.

This year there will be swimming, diving, running, hockey, tennis and many other sports. We can watch these events on TV. Will you be watching?

Discussion

Are you interested in the summer Olympics? Why or why not?

Which sports do you enjoy playing?

Which sports do you like to watch?

Where does the money come from for the Olympic games?

Why do they give drug tests to athletes?

What does an athlete have to do, to prepare for the Olympics?

Level A

Every _____ years athletes from _____ countries travel to _____ place for the _____ Olympic games. Almost _____ hundred countries _____ in these games.

Before they can _____, the athletes have to practice their sport. They _____ hard to prepare. They have to be the _____ athletes from their country. Only a _____ athletes can go to the _____.

When the Olympics _____, the athletes compete to see who is the best in the _____. At the end of each event there is a ceremony for the _____. The _____ best athletes get a medal.

This year there will be _____, diving, running, hockey, tennis and _____ other sports. We can watch these events on _____. Will _____ be watching?

Level B

Every _____ athletes _____ travel to one place for the _____. Almost _____ play in these games.

Before they can go, the athletes have to _____ their _____. They _____ to prepare. They have to be _____ from their country. _____ athletes can _____ Olympics.

_____ the Olympics start, the athletes compete _____ who is the best _____. At the end _____ there is a ceremony _____. The three best athletes _____.

This year _____ swimming, _____, running, _____, tennis and _____. We _____ these events _____. Will you _____?

Level C

_____ athletes _____ travel _____ for the summer _____. _____ two hundred countries _____.

_____, the athletes _____ their sport. They _____. They have to be _____ can go to the Olympics.

_____ the Olympics start, the athletes _____ in the world. _____ there is a _____ for the winners. _____ get a medal.

_____ swimming, diving, running, hockey, tennis _____. We can _____ you _____?

Multi-level crossword puzzle: The summer Olympics

Level A

Across clues

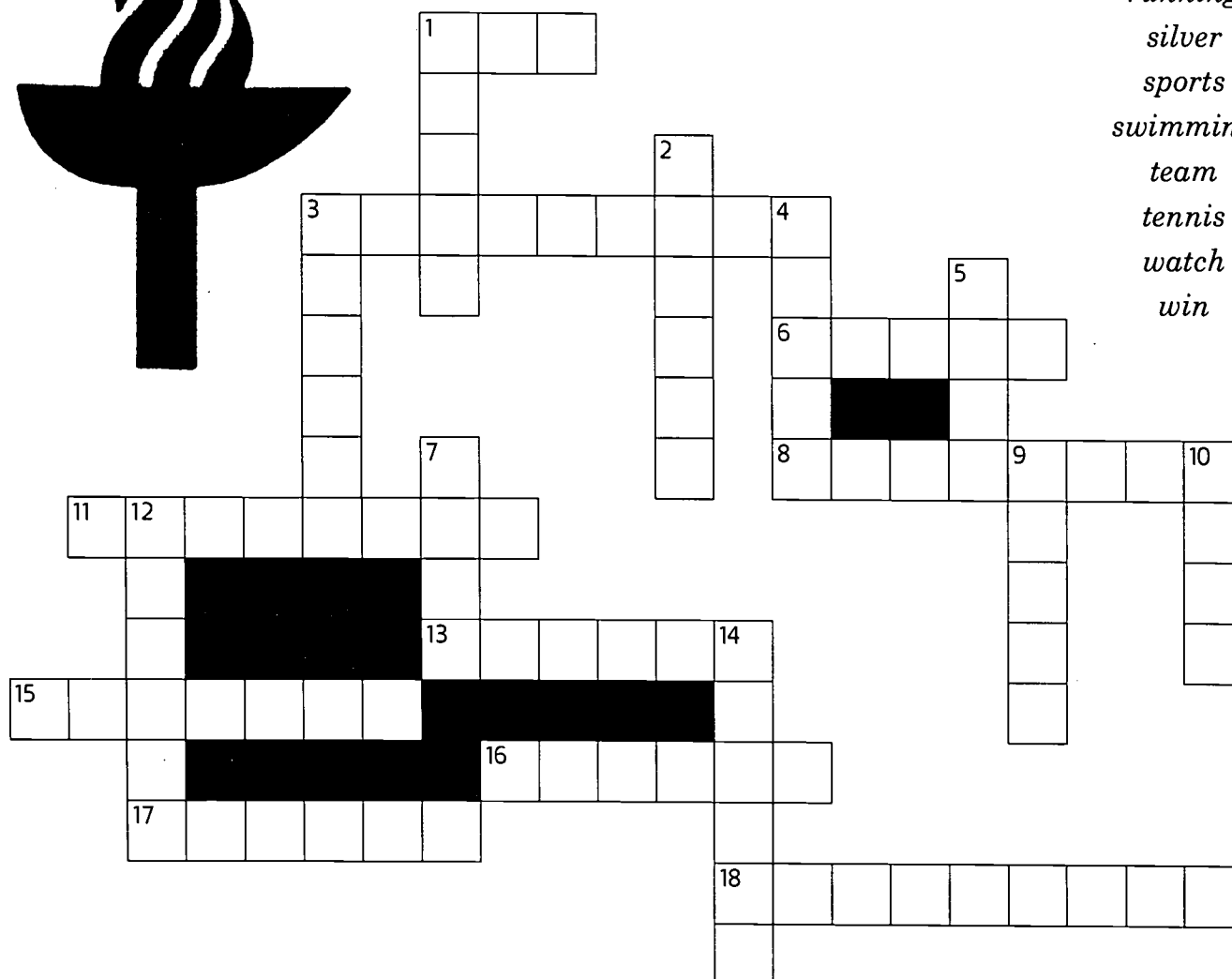
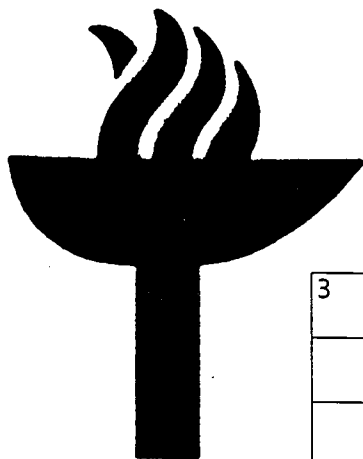
1. Opposite of 'lose.'
3. In this sport you ride on two wheels.
6. You need this to pay for a ticket.
8. This is a water sport.
11. The people who play sports are _____.
13. In this sport athletes jump into the water.
15. For this sport you need only your feet.
16. These people give the score.
17. Swimming, diving and hockey are all _____.
18. Australia, Japan and Canada are _____.

Down clues

1. You can _____ the Olympics on TV.
2. Winner Number 2 gets a _____ medal.
3. Winner Number 3 gets a _____ medal.
4. There will be several hockey _____ at the Olympics.
5. A group of players from one country is called a _____.
7. To find out about the games you can _____ the newspaper.
9. The winners get a gold, silver or bronze _____.
10. Winner Number 1 gets a _____ medal.
12. A sport with two people hitting a ball.
14. The first Olympics were in _____.

Word list

*athletes
bicycling
bronze
countries
diving
games
gold
Greece
judges
medal
money
read
running
silver
sports
swimming
team
tennis
watch
win*



Level B

Across clues

- Every athlete hopes he or she will ____ a medal.
- The 'triathlon' has three parts—running, swimming and ____.
- It costs a lot of ____ to go to the Olympics.
- In _____, there are strict rules about how you can move in the water.
- The best ____ from every country compete in the Olympics.
- It's beautiful to watch athletes ____ into the water.
- An athlete needs long legs and speed for this sport.
- The ____ gave her a low score because she made a bad mistake.
- People who like ____ also enjoy watching the Olympics on TV.
- Nearly 200 ____ participate in the summer Olympics.

Down clues

- Do you prefer to play sports, or to ____ them?
- The second best athlete in each event receives a ____ medal.
- The athlete in third place receives a ____ medal.
- The summer Olympic ____ are held every 4 years.
- Which hockey ____ do you think will win this year?
- You can ____ about the Olympics both in the papers and on the Internet.
- He won fourth place in the race, so he didn't get a ____.
- The best athlete in each event receives a ____ medal.
- For this sport you need two people, two rackets, a ball and a net.
- The Olympic flame starts in ____ and travels to the country where the games are held.

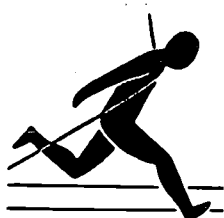
Level C

Across clues

- One athlete said: "It doesn't matter if I ____ a medal. It's an honor just to be here."
- In this sport the athletes usually go a very long distance.
- The ____ for the Olympics comes partly from advertising.
- An athlete needs good coordination, strong muscles and good breathing skills for this sport.
- _____ have to work very hard if they want to compete in the Olympics.
- This sport requires both swimming and gymnastics skills.
- _____ a short distance is called a 'sprint;' a long distance is called a 'marathon.'
- These experts watch carefully and give athletes a score for each event.
- For some people, the Olympic games are the most important ____ events in the world.
- Big ____ usually send more athletes to the Olympics than small ones.

Down clues

- The parents of some athletes will travel to the Olympics so they can ____ their sons and daughters play.
- If my country's team doesn't win a gold medal, I hope they win a ____ one.
- You can be very proud if you win a ____ medal, although it is not as good as a silver or gold one.
- Some people think the Olympic ____ have become too commercial in recent years.
- When you play on a ____, you have to watch and listen to the other players very carefully.
- You can ____ longer articles about the Olympics in news magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek*.
- "Go for the gold!" means trying to win a gold ____.
- The highest award is the ____ medal.
- For this sport, the audience is usually quieter than for hockey or other sports.
- The original Olympic games were more than two thousand years ago in ancient ____.



From the field: Mini Olympics in the classroom

Students compete in events!

Here's a 1 to 2-week activity that involves everyone in a class, or can even involve an entire program. Hold a customized Olympic competition on site! Friendly, spirited competition can focus on any theme and will promote tremendous language exchange.

The activity is a great motivator, involves everyone, even at varied levels of language proficiency, and requires use of all four language skills in small groups.

Skills needed

The in-class Olympics will reinforce creating/keeping appointments/schedules, following directions, writing, reading and understanding instructions, clarification requests, negotiating and numbers/math skills. The teacher can step in as facilitator where needed, but for the most part the learners control and create this event, and ultimately they will beam with pride over their accomplishments.

If there are several ethnic/language groups represented, the students could be grouped according to background. However, for a number of reasons it may be wiser to group students arbitrarily or randomly. Each team then can choose their own 'national' identity and give themselves a name. This provides students with the greatest opportunities for natural language practice in English, and ensures that the 'national' or team spirit is all in fun. Two to six learners per team works fine.

How to do it

In this activity each team will do the following (with the help of a facilitator):

1. Create an identity for themselves by choosing a name, and develop a logo (or flag).
2. Determine one event for competition among all the students. (See list of ideas below.)
3. Give the event a title, write directions or rules for its implementation, and print them on a poster.
4. Secure or create props as needed, and be sure that the space available is adequate.
5. Announce each event to the rest of the

class; give brief instructions using posters or demonstrations.

6. Decide which one or two members of each team will participate in each event, and sign up (see sign-up sheet on next page).
7. Determine which team members will facilitate the team's own event, and set up the competition schedule (see example).
8. Announce and post schedule, and encourage spectators to observe when not participating.
9. Prepare a Gold, a Silver and a Bronze medal for the winner of the team's event.
10. Compete!
11. Hold award ceremonies.
12. Determine overall winning team by tallying all medals awarded. (Gold=3 points, Silver=2 points and Bronze=1 pt.)

Ideas for events

The competitive events can include grammar drills, pinning the tail on something, a beanbag toss, word games (scrambled sentences, for example), blowing up balloons to explosion, map reading exercises, or a spelling bee. Anything goes!

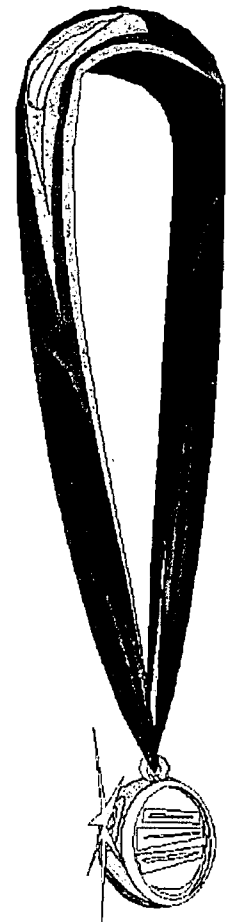
To involve the most number of people, no individuals should compete in more than two events. Each event should involve at least one competitor from each of the other teams. There should be a variety of activities, so that there is something for everyone, regardless of age, language proficiency or athletic ability.

Follow-up suggestions

- The students can write cheers for their team. Here's an example:
The Sunshine Team!
We're round, we're hot
We're a bright yellow spot!
S-H-I-N-E
We're the team for me!
Shine, shine, SUNSHINE!
- Choose a song for the team, adapt the lyrics and sing it in support. Sing the same song at the award ceremonies.
- Write experience stories about the events.
- Write news articles.
- Take photographs, label and describe.
- Search for and review media coverage about the upcoming (real) Olympics.

—by *Jean Hanslin, Lao Family English School in St. Paul, Minnesota.*

Jean says that when she taught Swedish students she built Olympic events like this one for them around the topic of Vikings (did they have a hammer throwing event??).



Let the games begin! ➡

A sign-up sheet

Each team writes in the names of the students who will participate in each event.

| | Event A <i>Eraser Toss</i> | Event B <i>Balloon</i> | Event C <i>Categorize</i> | Event D <i>Pushpin</i> | Event E <i>Find Error</i> | Event F <i>Spelling Bee</i> |
|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Team A | xxxxxxx | | | | | |
| Team B | | xxxxxxx | | | | |
| Team C | | | xxxxxxx | | | |
| Team D | | | | xxxxxxx | | |
| Team E | | | | | xxxxxxx | |
| Team F | | | | | | xxxxxxx |

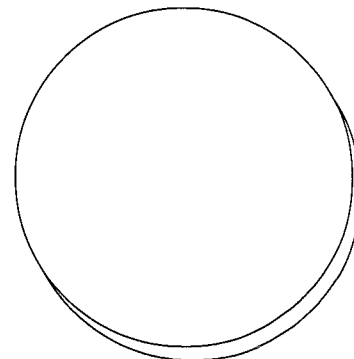
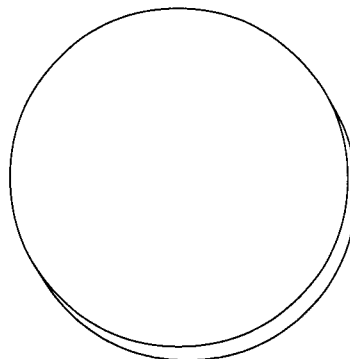
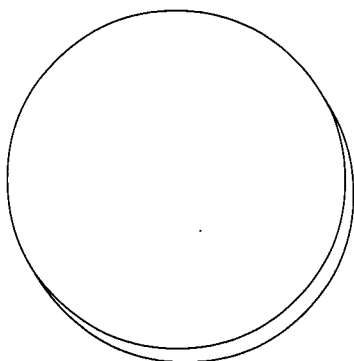
Competition schedule

This is just an example to show how the scheduling can be arranged. Each group should get a copy of this so they know when and where the events are being held.

| TIME | Room 1 | Room 2 | Room 3 | Room 4 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9:00 | Event A | | Event B | |
| 9:30 | | Event C | | Event D |
| 10:00 | Event E | | Event F | |

Blank medals

Students can design a medal for each event, in three different colors (for Gold, Silver and Bronze).



Grammar grab-bag: Tuning in to phrasal verbs

“We want to learn more idioms” is a common request from my students. “We want more grammar” is the other (I teach in a content-based program where grammar is not the main focus). Well, I have combined the two into an engaging lesson on PHRASAL VERBS (sometimes known as PVs). I know phrasal verbs aren’t exactly idioms, but many of my students believe they are, and ESL idioms texts often lump these together.

Phrasal verbs always include a verb and one or more prepositions. Some are quite literal in meaning; some are less literal and so their meanings have to be learned just as idioms do. Idioms, however, can include many other forms besides just verb plus preposition, and their meanings are never literal. So, once I have diligently explained this difference, we proceed. Here’s what I do:

Steps

First, select phrasal verbs appropriate for your level. They can be found in the students’ text, in an article the students are reading, or can be simply those you believe the students need. Make cards with the phrasal verbs and make separate cards with the meaning (only 1 meaning per card. For phrasal verbs with multiple meanings, I put the number of possibilities next to the phrasal verb and write separate cards for each of the selected meanings). Be sure to use both two- and three-word phrases AND include phrasal verbs that have more than one meaning. (See the example list on the next page.) I like to have enough so that each student gets 3 to 4 cards. Also have a few extras for practice before the activity begins.

In class, talk about phrasal verbs and how they are used. Be sure to mention that any pronoun needs to be inserted between the verb and preposition (as in “Turn it off!”) and that the verbs still take tense (as in “He turned it off.”). Working together as a group, use the few extras that you prepared by writing them on the board and asking students to guess their meaning. Try to think literally, try to visualize, whatever it takes to help them guess the meaning.

Then, I pass out the phrasal verb cards and the meaning cards, and give the class time to mingle with each other looking for their match. Although the students frequently don’t know the correct meanings, they can guess and try to make connections. I help with tips only after everyone has given up and depending on the group. When they think they have a match, the pair of students has to write a sentence using the phrasal verb as correctly as they can on a piece of paper. Those cards then go out of play. Students can continue with another set.

Follow up

At the end of the activity, I collect the sentences, then type them for peer editing in the following class. I also leave a blank line after the sentence so the students can write in the meaning of the phrasal verb. Be sure to correct any spelling or drastic grammatical errors because these tend to cause a shift in focus away from the phrasal verbs. Students then verify that the phrasal verbs were constructed properly and that the meaning is correct. The student who wrote each sentence can help explain the meaning. This acts not only as an error analysis, but also as a vocabulary activity.

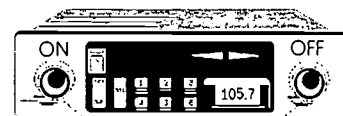
Related ideas

As homework or a follow up activity, have students find an article and identify all the phrasal verbs and try to guess their meanings. They can then bring the article and their list to class to share. Maybe the students can find common phrasal verbs, and keep a list, etc.

Keep the cards to use later as a “Human Dictionary” type review activity. Students receive cards. Using one at a time, they have to describe the word without using the word. This can be done in small groups or as a class.

This is a fun, practical way of learning. All three learning types are accommodated (aural, visual, and kinesthetic) and all skills are practiced (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). ➡

—By **Cheryl Ernst**.
Cheryl teaches ESL in an intensive program at the Harvard Extension school, Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



“Turn the radio off!”

These examples might be appropriate for intermediate or high intermediate students.

The phrases and their meanings are cut apart and distributed randomly to students, who then talk with their classmates to find the correct matches. Then they write an example sentence for each one.

| Phrasal Verb | Meaning |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| do over | repeat a task |
| fill up | fill to capacity |
| fill out/fill in | complete (a form) |
| give away | donate, give to someone free |
| give back | to return |
| hand in | submit, turn something in |
| hang up | put something on a hook |
| turn on | switch on the power |
| turn off | switch off the power |
| turn up | raise the volume |
| turn down (2) | lower the volume / reject |
| talk over | discuss |
| get over | to recover |
| run into | meet by chance |
| come up with | invent |
| make sure of | verify |
| drop out | quit |
| get rid of | dispose of, eliminate |
| get along with | have a good relationship with |
| look forward to | anticipate with pleasure |
| walk out on | abandon |
| break down | stop functioning |
| drop by | visit without an appointment |
| drop off | deliver |
| eat out | eat in a restaurant |
| grow up | get older |

Online sources

Check these sites for more phrasal verbs and example sentences.

• **Guide to Grammar and Writing**, compiled by Charles Darling of Capital Community College in Hartford, Connecticut. This massive grammar resource is useful for ESL and mainstream students. There are some phrasal verb quizzes and a list of phrasal verbs with examples. <http://webster.comnet.edu/hp/pages/darling/grammar.htm>

• **Phrasal Verb Page** on Dave's ESL Café by Dennis Oliver. A nice list of phrasal verbs especially for ESL students, plus a list with definitions and examples for each. <http://www.eslcafe.com/pv/>

Events of the month—a calendar game

This is called the Calendar Game. Once you have created the board and written some information cards for each month, you can re-use them each year. The game includes not only cultural information but reading, listening, speaking and fun.

Making the board

If you wish, you can buy a large poster-size calendar pad each year, or draw a large calendar for the month on a piece of newsprint. If you want to make a permanent gameboard, make a posterboard size calendar with the name of the month at the top and the names of the seven days under that. Then for the numbered boxes, make posterboard strips that attach with velcro. These are not always in the same position from month to month, and by moving them around you can recycle your gameboard. (See illustration.)

Each strip is approximately 3 inches wide by 12 inches high, divided into 5 sections. You will need one strip for each day of the week. These five sections are numbered in the upper right corners (if you number them in the center, they will be covered by cards later.) One strip has 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. Another has 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. The third has 3, 10, 17, 24, 31. The last four strips need only four sections each; cut off the excess. The fourth has 4, 11, 18, 25. The fifth has 5, 12, 19, 26. The sixth has 6, 13, 20, 27. The seventh has 7, 14, 21, 28.

I also make strips with the names of the months on them which I attach at the top with more velcro. Thus I can change the month from one to another by replacing the name strip and moving the date strips, so they fall under the correct days. (For February and April, I attach blank squares over the unneeded dates.)

Information cards

Now I make cards for every date that month; some days have several cards. Searching through various calendars and the Internet, I type up cards about holidays, events, and historical happenings. For example, in April, they read cards about:

April Fool's Day
Daylight Savings Time

the establishment of the U.S. Mint
the adoption of our flag
the assassination of Martin Luther King
our entry into WWI
the beginning and ending of the Civil War
the beginning of the Revolutionary War
National Library Week
Jackie Robinson
the first manned space flight
Thomas Jefferson
Abraham Lincoln
income tax
the sinking of the Titanic
Palm Sunday
Passover
Good Friday and Easter
the San Francisco earthquake
a state holiday
Shakespeare
a local festival
Secretary's Day
the first U.S. TV broadcast

(It was a busy month!) Then I put the dates on the backs of the cards (such as "30").

Counting your chips

Students are given 15 chips each. If you don't happen to have some of these in a closet somewhere, you can usually buy them anywhere games or cards are sold. Students also get a game piece. These need to be different from each other's so they can be easily identified. I've used chess pieces, spools of thread in different colors, etc. In addition you need a good number of chips left over for the Bank (maybe 50).

How to play

Students roll the dice to see how many days to move and read a card for that day. If it was a positive event, the card will direct them to collect a certain number of chips from the Bank. If it was a negative event, the card will tell them to pay some chips. Assassinations, war, and income tax, for example, could cost them from 1 to 5 chips. (For Income Tax, everyone else had to pay *them* one chip!)

Customized items

I also made fun cards. If a student has a birthday on one of the days, everyone will

—by **Linda Phipps**,
Midwest City,
Oklahoma. Linda has
11 years experience as a
volunteer teacher, and a
great arsenal of ideas.

Editor's note: Linda tells us she got the idea for this game from a book called "Games and Butterflies" by Katherine Kennedy and Ellen Sarkisian (1979 New Readers Press).

*Unfortunately this book is **out of print** and is no longer available, unless you can find it in a library somewhere. The book's version included cards with more generic style messages, while Linda's version has specific cultural and historical events. This makes the game of great interest, especially to students who are citizens or wish to apply for citizenship.*

have to pay him a chip. On a Friday, I make a Payday card—pick up 10 chips. On a weekend, a Free Day at Home card. I have also made multiple 'good' and 'bad' cards for gaining and losing chips. For example: "You're very tired. You thought about just staying home from school today, but instead, you came to English class! Pick up 5 chips." And: "You have the week off! Your family is going out of town for the week starting tomorrow. But at 6:00 you notice a sore throat. By 8:00 you have a fever. The aches and chills start at 10:00. Lose 3 chips and go to bed."

Organizing tips

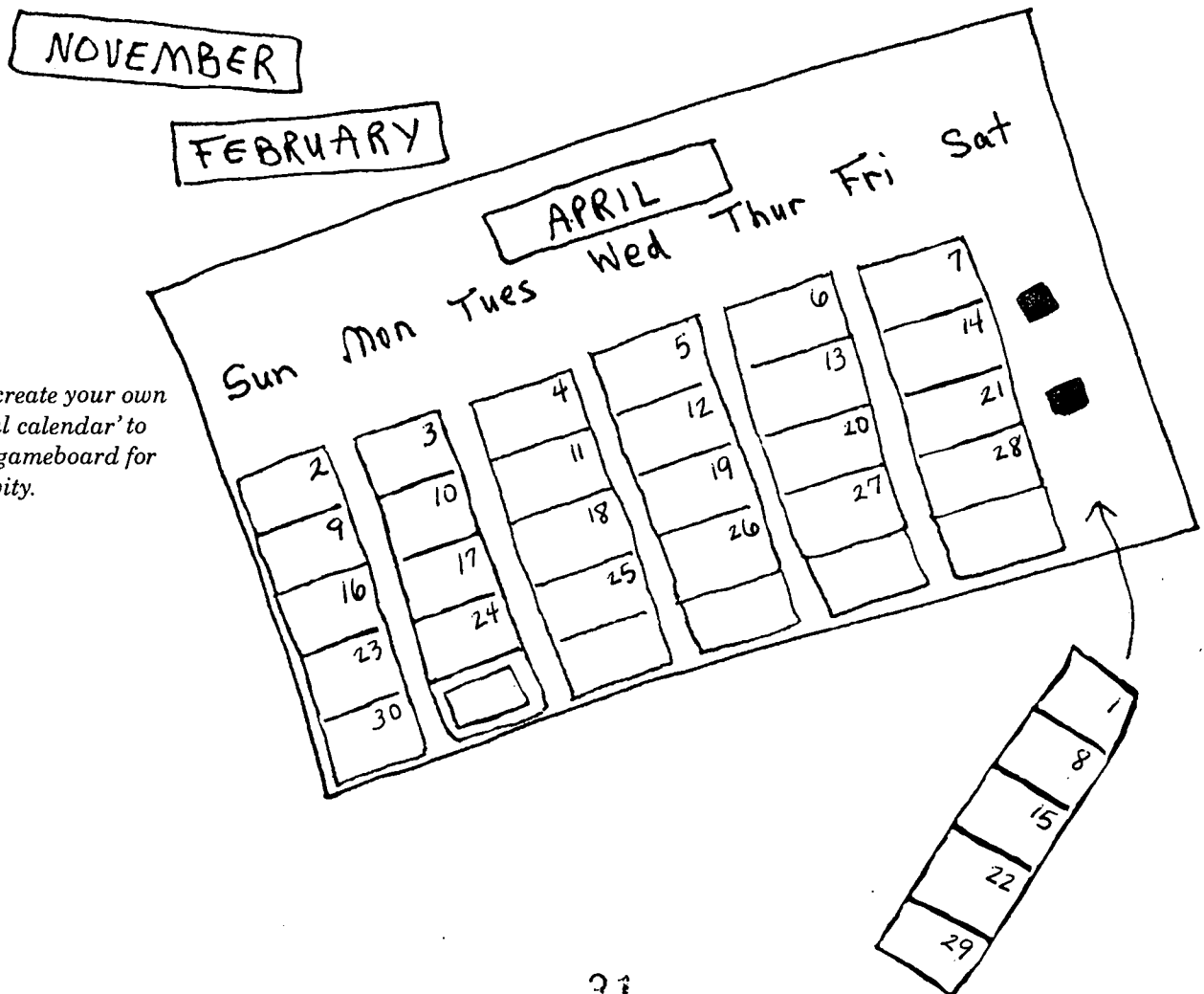
I place each card upside down on a date. The holidays and events are on red cards; I use those first. They go on specific dates. The customized cards are divided into pink ones for bad events and yellow for good events (the students never seem to figure this out!). These can go on any date. As a

card is read, it is then put aside and replaced with a new card on that date. This makes the game more interesting and fun.

Several cards can say "Go back to Friday" or "Return to the first of the month" instead of losing chips. This makes it take longer for a student to get to the last date. When someone does get there, the game is over and everyone counts the chips. The person with the most is the winner.

Finally, even a large number of students (10–12) can play successfully together around one table if the gameboard is placed on a lazy Susan or some kind of turntable. That way it can be carefully turned to face the student whose turn it is.

The more students who play, the more fun they have. The moaning and groaning, laughter and cheering almost always attract others to come and see what in the world we are doing! ➡



You can create your own 'perpetual calendar' to use as a gameboard for this activity.

Conversation activity: "What should I do?"

Giving advice

What do you say when someone asks you for advice? They have a problem, but perhaps you don't know the answer. Or, perhaps you do have an opinion but you don't want to tell them what to do.

We have some diplomatic ways of dealing with this situation, which include discussing the pros and cons and asking the person to describe the problem in more detail. This activity teaches your students some key phrases to use and gives them a chance to practice these in a role-play about giving advice.

First, give the students an example and ask them what they would say if someone asked their advice. The students may already have ideas, phrases and strategies for this situation. Next, teach some of the phrases below and have the students practice saying them.

I'm not sure.
It's up to you.
There are pros and cons to both.

It depends on what you need.
It depends on what you want.
It depends on. . .

To start the activity, explain that each student will get a role card with a problem on it. They should ask the other students for advice. Here is a sample dialog:

Student 1: Can you give me some advice? I can't decide if I should apply for a new job or keep my old job.

Student 2: It's up to you. Do you like your current job?

Student 1: Yes, but the new job pays more.

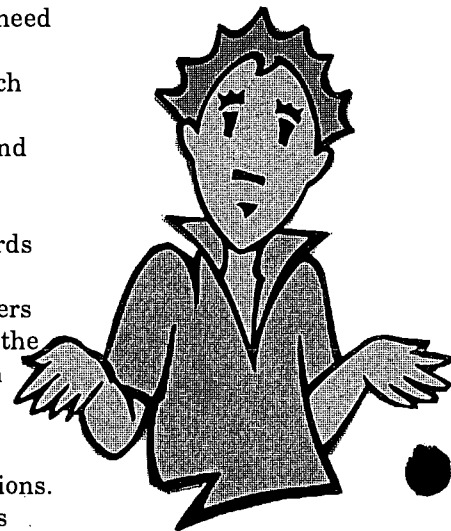
It's far from my home, though, so I'd need to get a car.

Student 2: Maybe it depends on how much the car costs.

Student 1: You're right. There are pros and cons to both jobs.

Have the students take their role cards and work in small groups. Each student presents a problem to the group, who offers suggestions. Put a list of key phrases on the board, so that students can refer to them and use them in their responses.

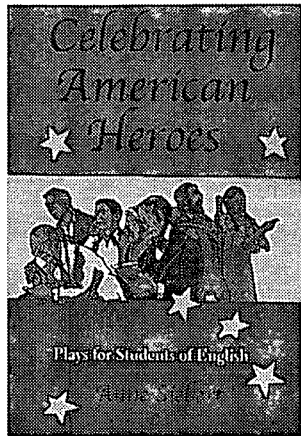
These dilemmas will generate some interesting discussion and creative solutions. As a follow-up, the student conversations can be transcribed and used for reading and discussion. ➡



| | |
|---|---|
| Should I buy a new car or a used car? | Should I have children now or wait a few years? |
| I can't decide if I should study accounting or computer science. | I don't know if I should stay here or return to my country. |
| Should I get a part-time job or a full-time job? | My son can't decide if he should get a job or go to college. |
| Which is better, a large car or a small car? | My mother has a bad hip. She can't decide if she should have surgery or not. |
| Is it better to speak English with my children at home, or to speak our first language? | My uncle wants to start a business. I can't decide if I should lend him some money. |
| I have some pain in my side. I can't decide if I should go to the doctor or not. | We are going to visit my relatives in California. I can't decide if we should drive or fly. |

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials



To order call Pro Lingua at 1-800-366-4775 or visit www.ProLinguaAssociates.com

Celebrating American Heroes; Plays for Students of English by Anne Siebert (2000 Pro Lingua Associates) ISBN 0-86647-127-8. The Student Play Book is 74pp. A Teacher's Guide is also available.

This is a unique and wonderful book of 13 short plays in praise of American historical figures like Betsy Ross, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Jackie Robinson, and the first astronauts to land on the moon. The tone of the plays is passionate—they are exciting and fun but involve serious subjects such as war, slavery, race relations, sacrifice, hard work, effort. The language isn't all "easy"—some of the main roles would be best for intermediate students or higher—but there is a special role for beginning students as part of the Chorus.

Like a 'Greek chorus', this group speaks in unison and adds commentary to the action. For example, in a play about Harriet Beecher Stowe, the Chorus describes the public reaction to the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation: *The crowd went wild! / Everybody cheered! / They clapped! / They*

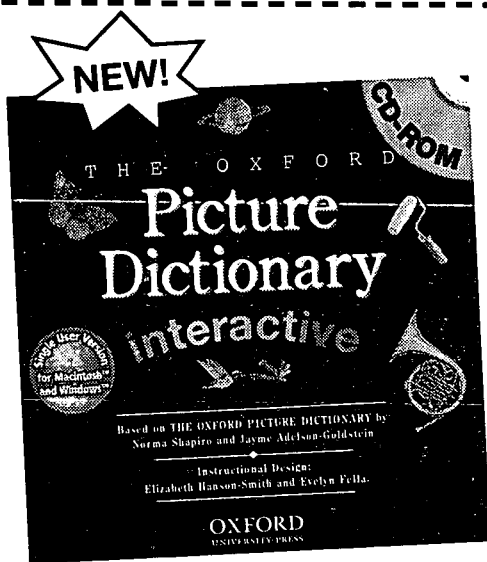
waved! / They stood on chairs! Imagine 20 voices giving these lines and you'll get a sense of what fun this could be. Everyone gets to participate in the play, even in a multi-level class.

You could think of these plays as "Jazz Chants" but with cultural and historical content. That is, all the students get to speak lines in loud, confident voices which is good for pronunciation, intonation and fluency. At the same time they are portraying and discussing meaningful issues from history.

You don't have to be extremely brave to put on a play with your class. The Teacher's Guide gives you short, clear instructions on how to proceed. Students get to read their lines from the script, and props can be very simple. We think these plays will bring a level of excitement into the classroom and give students the unforgettable feeling that they are participating in American history.

(By the way, if you do one of these plays with your students I would *love* to visit your class to see it!)

— review by Anna Silliman, Editor. 🐾



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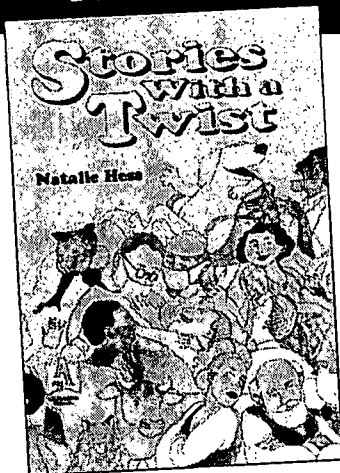
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For All of Life's Twists...

STORIES with a TWIST!

by Natalie Hess

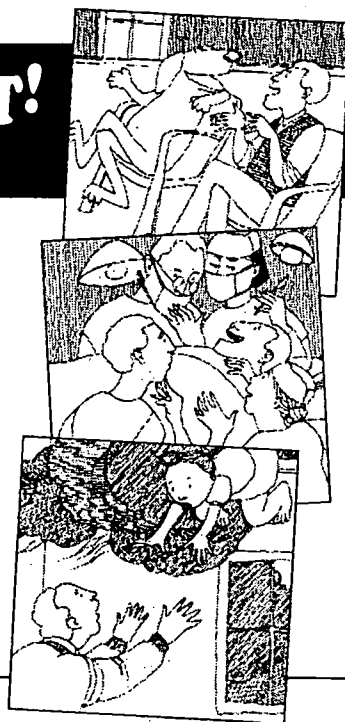
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News & notes

Your input is needed!

Have you used our multi-level crossword puzzles with your students? You may be able to help *Hands-on English* by sharing some of your experiences. We are starting to put together a collection of all our multi-level puzzles to be published as a book. Many readers have expressed an interest in having these together as one resource.

We'd like to include any hints and tips you have about how to make the best use of these

puzzles! Do you have stories about your students working on the puzzles? Quotes of things they said, or problems they ran into? Anecdotes about specific puzzles that worked well, or ones that didn't? Do you have suggestions for other teachers about the puzzles that might give them some good ideas for the classroom? If so, please write or contact the editor at: anna@handsonenglish.com

Of course, if we use your tip we'll cite you, and you'll become famous. Thank you! 

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A flurry of fall activities

...for our far-flung fans!

We hope that the fall season is getting off to a good start for you and your students! We've heard from some readers already that the Olympics activities in our last issue have been useful. The next big event on the horizon, of course, is the presidential election in the U.S. this fall. In this issue we've included some tips (see p. 3 and p. 12) on teaching about elections, but be sure to check our website for more up-to-date ideas.

Award winners!

We're happy to announce that *Hands-on English* has awarded five small grants in our annual Minigrants competition. The Year 2000 awardees are:

Katherine Adams, teacher in the Even Start Family Literacy Program at Tegeler Career Center in Pasadena, Texas. Her students will be preparing an informational display on home safety, to be presented at a community health fair next spring.

Rose Galindo, teacher at El Paso Community College, ESAL Division in El Paso, Texas. Rose is designing a multi-level language unit for her students, based on TV soap operas. She is hoping some of them will get 'hooked' on the stories and continue watching them after the unit is finished. (Part of the grant money is for Kleenex.)

Janene Lewis, teacher in the Core Curriculum Intervention Program at Huston-Tillotson College in Austin, Texas. Janene is designing an all-skills ESL unit based on silent films. The students will practice verb tenses, vocabulary, speaking, writing and reading using classic segments from the silver screen.

Jolene Olson, teacher with Literacy Volunteers of America—Northern Wyoming, at Sheridan College in Sheridan, Wyoming. Jolene's students will work to design a board game about their community. This game will then circulate from site to site, helping other students to learn more about what's available in their community.


Kathy Usery, teacher in the ESL Program at Laurel County Adult Education and Literacy, in London, Kentucky. Kathy's students will prepare a reference guide to their community for new arrivals. The guide will include a student-led scavenger hunt as an orientation technique.

Congratulations to all of these innovative teachers on their exciting projects. We plan to bring you reports in *Hands-on English* when the projects are completed—these may inspire some good ideas that you can use in your own classes. To find out more about our Minigrants program, visit our website, www.handsonenglish.com.

New Board members

As you may know, the editor of *Hands-on English* benefits from the enthusiastic input of some teachers out in the field who have volunteered to serve on our Advisory Board. A new member joining the Board this fall is **Linda Phipps**, volunteer teacher in Midwest City, Oklahoma (see an article by Linda on page 11).

Are you an idea person? Do you love teaching ESL? If so you might consider participating on the HOE Advisory Board! Please contact us if you are interested. Thanks!

—the Editor. 

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

You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, updates on resources and more.
See you there!



Your editor, Anna Silliman, is never too busy to talk with a subscriber!

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Letters

...calls,
emails, &
faxes from
readers

Food safety info

Lynette Bowen contacted us to say "Just found a really good website for this fall's ESL classes. If you go to www.foodsafety.ufl.edu, you'll find all sorts of stuff about the Fight BAC! campaign, including reminders on preparing safe lunches for kids, puzzles to go with food handling tips, etc."

We checked this out, and found the National Food Safety Database, a joint project of the USDA (U.S. Dept of Agriculture) and an institute of the University of Wisconsin. There is a lot of interesting material there about food and food preparation, including consumer-related information and a section for educators. If you have time to browse, you may find some good lesson ideas.

More for low-beginning level?

Allen Chalfen in Portland, Oregon writes to say: "Keep up the great work. One request: more beginner's stuff. Thanks."

We hear this message from several of our readers who are working with entry-level students. We are trying harder to include activities that will work with this level, and hope that you will find some exercises in this issue that your beginners can benefit from!



The HOE-mobile, as it was loading up to take your Hands-on English issues to the post office!

Meanwhile, if you have some tips or activities that work well with beginners we hope you'll share them with our readers. Thanks! —*Editor*

Making a difference

We received a letter from Dianne Scott, in Leesburg, Florida, about how she and her ESL class studied the U.S. elections 4 years ago. They devoted quite a bit of time to this and learned some difficult vocabulary. The students wrote to the campaign headquarters of both parties requesting information, and were surprised when they received not only letters in reply but photos and buttons, etc. They studied the ballot and held a mock election in class. Those students who were citizens got help filling out voter registration cards.

The students had a chance to discuss politics in small groups, and Dianne reports "One Iranian student always looked over her shoulder to see if anyone had come into the classroom before she spoke. She never overcame her fear of speaking out."

For many of the students, Dianne admits, some of this information was too much to handle. However, "it was fun, and a great challenge, for the future leaders in the class..." We'd like to thank Dianne for reminding us that indeed, our students might run for office some day!

About the multi-level puzzles

Many readers have told us their students love the multi-level crossword puzzles in *Hands-on English*. We've been asking people to share any experiences they've had in using the puzzles, and have heard back from a couple of teachers already. If you can tell us which puzzles worked well, which ones had problems, and what kinds of activities you've done with them, we'd love to hear from you. Someday, we hope to collect these puzzles in one volume—your input will help to make this a better, more useful resource. Thank you!! 🐾

Reading activity: Voting rights—a story.

I have a friend who is 92 years old. Her name is Harriet Miner. She is in good health. She likes to read and talk with her friends. She told me this story:

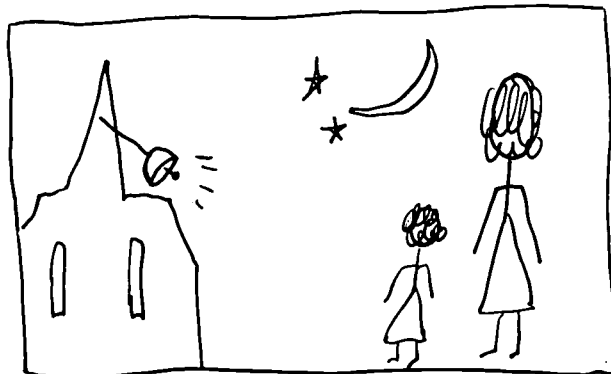
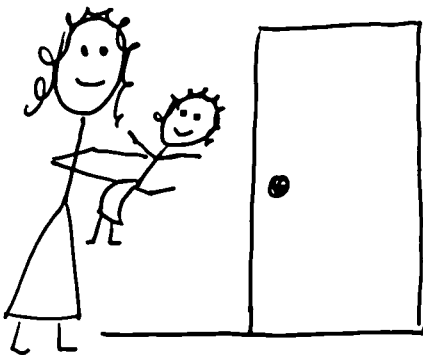
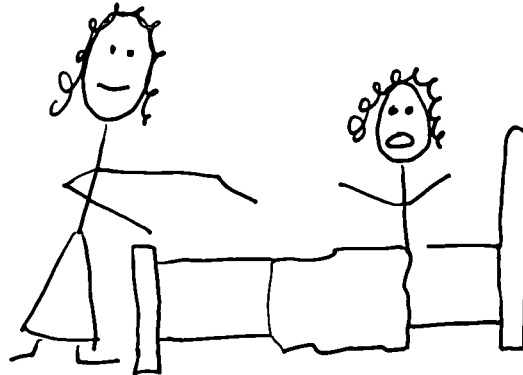
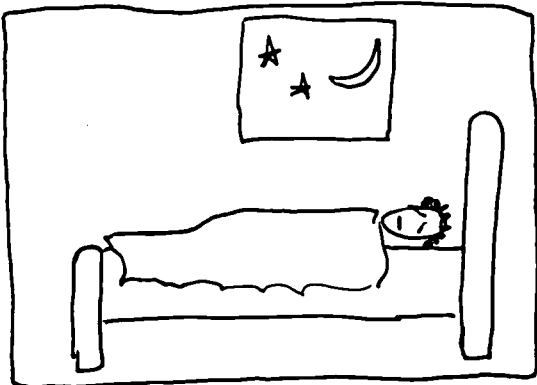
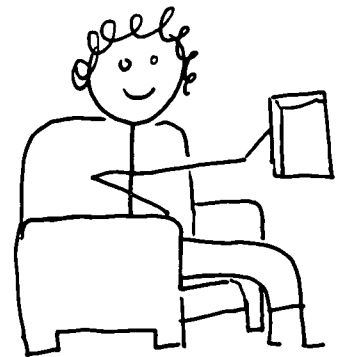
“This happened when I was twelve years old. The year was 1920. We lived in Kearney, a small city in Nebraska.

“Late one night, when I was sleeping, my mother came into my room. She woke me up. ‘What’s the matter?’ I asked. She said, ‘I want you to see something.’ She picked me up and carried me outside.

Although it was late at night, many lights were on. All the church bells were ringing loudly. ‘What does it mean?’ I asked my mother. ‘It means that now women can vote,’ she said. ‘I want you to remember this night.’

by Anna Silliman,
Editor. This is a true
story! It surprises me
that the right to vote for
women in the U.S. is so
recent that someone now
living can clearly
remember the event.

Note: The town in the
story is pronounced
‘Carney’ as in carnival.



Listening activity

A fun way to reinforce comprehension is to read a sentence about the story that is *not* true, and have the students correct you. For example, you read “My friend is 22 years old” and the students volunteer “That’s not true, your friend is 92 years old.” You respond, “Oh, yes, that’s right, my friend is 92.”

Students take some delight in correcting the teacher. You can ham it up by pretending you can’t remember the story correctly. Or, if you wear glasses you can pretend you’re having trouble reading the sentence correctly. Either way it’s an amusing exercise.

Before starting, make sure the students are already very familiar with the story. 🖐

1. My mother told me this story.
2. My friend is 22 years old.
3. She is in very bad health.
4. She doesn’t like to read.
5. The story happened in 1989.
6. She was 2 years old when this story happened.
7. When she was young, she lived in New York City.
8. Kearney is a big city in Nebraska.
9. This happened one morning, while she was sleeping.
10. One night, her father woke her up.
11. Her mother picked her up and took her to school.
12. It was very dark outside.
13. The night was very quiet.
14. When they went outside, she asked her mother, “What is your name?”
15. Her mother said that now children can vote.
16. Her mother wanted her to forget this night.

Retelling the story

Once students have done the listening exercise successfully, they are ready to try retelling the story. Have them do this in pairs, making use of the pictures if they wish. They can switch partners and tell the story again, for extra practice. (They will be

picking up ideas from each other, so retelling several times is very beneficial and will result in a better and better story.)

Then, if any students are confident enough they can tell the story again for the whole class.

Discussion

What historical event can you remember?
When it happened, what were you doing?
What did you think?

What historical event can your parents remember? Did they tell you about it?

Homework

Try to find an American who remembers the Depression. This was a time in the 1930’s when many people lost their jobs and many people were poor. Ask them to tell you about the Depression. How did their family live? What do they remember?

Tip: Sometimes retirement homes welcome visitors and you might be able to arrange for your class to socialize with the retirees. 🖐

Conversation: A photo wheel

Here's a speaking activity that's especially suited to beginners, but any level student can participate. Students work in small groups. They take turns commenting or asking a questions about pictures.

Preparation

On the next page, we've supplied you with an example 'photo wheel.' Since we didn't have photos to share, we included instead cartoon pictures that might evoke some discussion (why is he upset, etc.). However, you can use any pictures for this activity, and you will probably want to use some real photos as in the suggested variations below.

The students will work in small groups of 3 or 4, so make one or two wheels for each group, attaching the pictures or photos you and the students have decided on. Also prepare a spinner for each wheel, and have a push-pin available to hold it in place. (Make sure the hole in the spinner is large enough so that it turns freely around the pin.)

How to play

Ask the students to take turns spinning. Each student spins, then makes a comment about the selected picture. This could be a simple description ("She is sleeping." or "He is wearing a shirt.") or an opinion ("I think she is tired because she's been working all night.") Any time a student can't think of something to say, they can ask a question instead ("Do you know his name?") which another student will try to answer.

The most important rule is that each statement must be different. If someone already said, "He is reading a paper," the next student to get that picture must say (or ask) something else.

You may want to set a time limit on the group activity so that it doesn't get tedious. Students may want to switch to a different wheel and try new pictures.

Follow up

Once the students have talked about all of the pictures, they are prepared for any number of interesting follow-up activities. For example, to extend the speaking practice, each student could select one of the pictures and tell the class about it. (The

student can make use of the ideas generated in the small group beforehand.)

For writing practice, each student could select one picture to write about, again based on some of the ideas discussed in the group. These stories can be passed around and read by the other students.

Literacy-level students can dictate their story to the instructor, who writes it down and assists them in reading it back (similar to a *language experience* story).

Variations

The key to the success of this activity will be in the choice of pictures. We think that the best idea is to have the students select the pictures! Here are some suggestions:

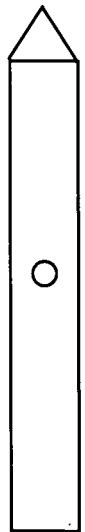
About the students!—Get a snapshot of each student (use an instant camera if you can) and arrange these on a wheel. If there are a lot of students, make different sets of wheels—students can take turns with these. They can also be photocopied for multiple sets. The task for the players is to say something about the student ("His name is José"), or to ask a question about him or her.

About the families!—Ask students to bring in photos of some members of their family. Give students access to a photocopier so that the original photos won't be damaged or lost. (If you can scan these into a computer and print them out, even better!) Arrange the wheel and the groups so that the students can ask questions about each other's relatives as they play.

The families variation would be great for a tutor working with one student! Each of you can contribute some photos and you can take turns asking and telling.

About politics!—Have students clip photos of political candidates from newspapers and magazines. Include some local candidates as well as national ones. Students who know something about these candidates will get a chance to explain or voice an opinion; students who are unfamiliar with these politicians can ask questions ("Which party does he belong to?"). This variation may seem best for more advanced students; however beginners have political

Tip: Once you have fastened each photo (or photocopy) to the wheel, tape a piece of clear plastic (like overhead acetate, or a report cover) firmly over them. This will prevent fingers and spinners from catching on the paper edges.



You'll need a spinner for this game, made of tagboard or plastic. Use a push-pin to hold it in place while spinning.

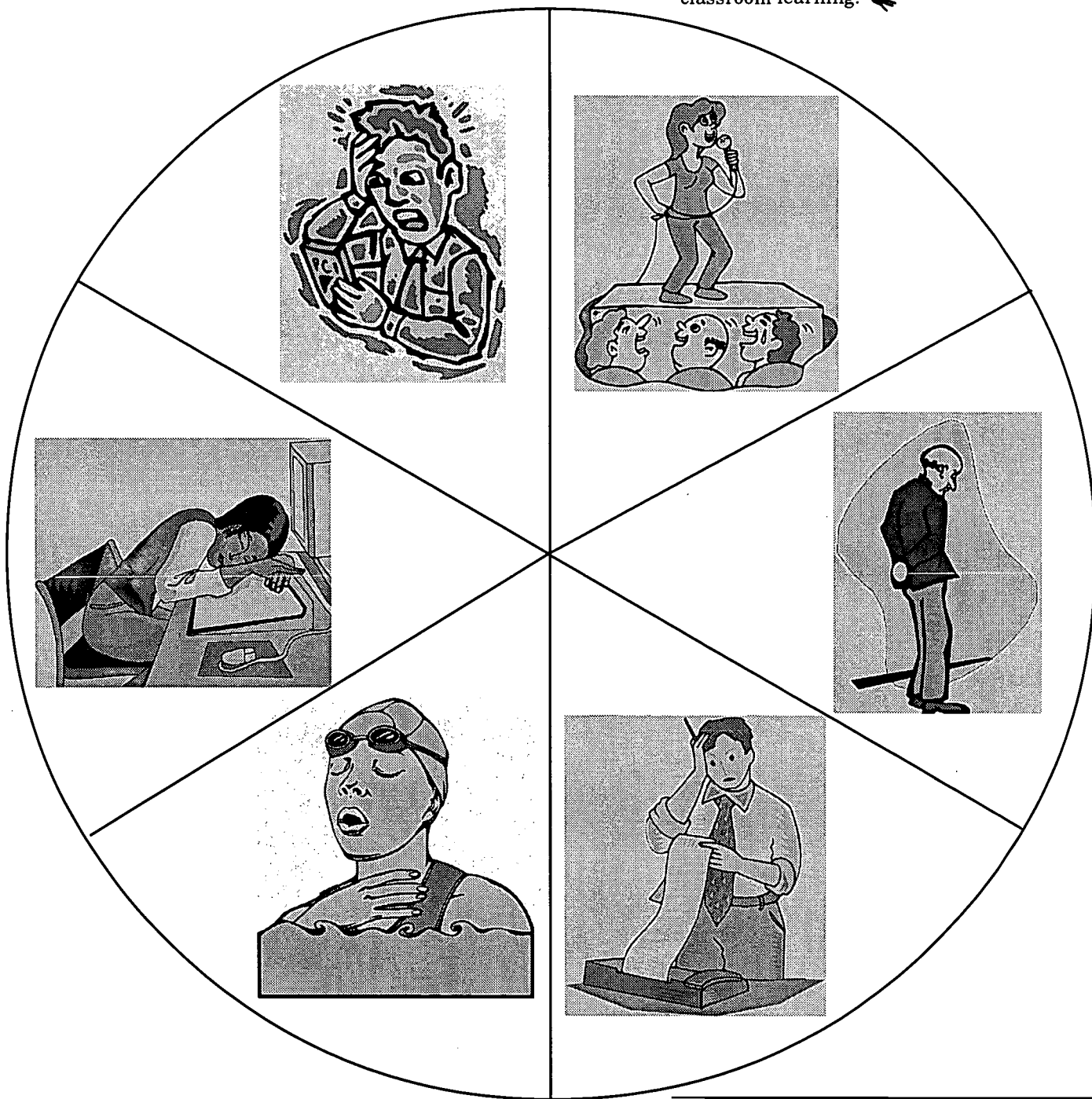
opinions too and they might enjoy it as well.

About the Olympics—Students can clip photos of athletes from newspapers and magazines for this variation. If each student contributes a picture or two of an athlete they know about, then at least someone in the group will be able to answer questions.

About history—Pictures of famous people in history will work too, and this might be of interest to students working toward their citizenship exam.

Why it works

The activity starts with non-verbal input that everyone can understand. It is multi-level, because each student contributes what they are able to. The turn-taking makes it less overwhelming for beginning students. Students will get ideas and vocabulary from each other as they talk about the pictures. Following up with writing reinforces this learning. And finally, if the content is about the students and their families, or about issues outside the classroom, the activity has an important human dimension beyond just classroom learning. ➔



Multi-level crossword puzzle: Changes for fall



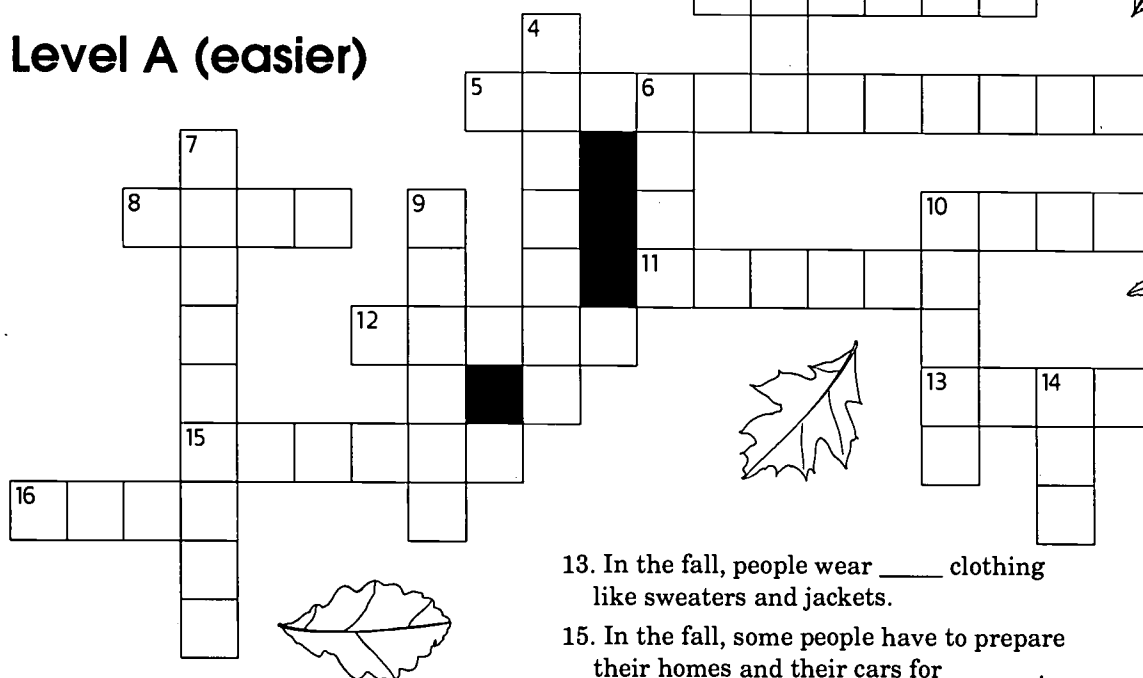
Note to instructors—Here are some discussion topics to help prepare your students for this puzzle:

- What changes happen in the fall?
- What special crops are in season?
- What foods are traditional in the fall?
- What national events take place in fall?
- Are there local fall events in your area?
- What do people like about fall?
- How do local people prepare for winter?

Have your students select Level A or Level B to start on. Notice that the clue sentences are exactly the same, but the missing words are different. Add the word list only if students need help. ➡



Level A (easier)



Across clues

2. In the fall, school teams play _____ games, not baseball.
3. In the fall, the weather doesn't get warmer, it gets _____.
5. In late fall, people in the U.S. and in Canada celebrate a holiday called _____.
8. The new school year starts in the _____.
10. In the fall, we turn the clocks an hour _____, not forward.
11. Some people prefer _____ because they don't like cold fall weather.
12. In the fall, parents buy pencils, _____ and school supplies for their children in school.

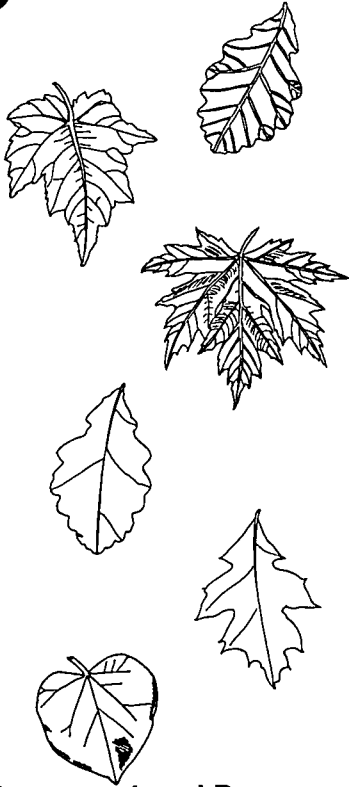
Down clues

1. Some people love the fall because of the beautiful _____.
4. In the fall, the days become _____, not longer.
6. In the fall, you will hear a lot about politics and voting on the TV _____.
7. A children's holiday in the fall is called _____.
9. In the fall, many trees lose their _____.
10. In the fall, the grass doesn't look green, it looks _____.
14. In the fall, the leaves on some trees aren't green; they turn _____ and orange.

Level A Word list

- back*
- brown*
- colors*
- cooler*
- fall*
- football*
- Halloween*
- leaves*
- news*
- paper*
- red*
- shorter*
- summer*
- Thanksgiving*
- vote*
- warm*
- winter*

Level B (harder)



Across clues

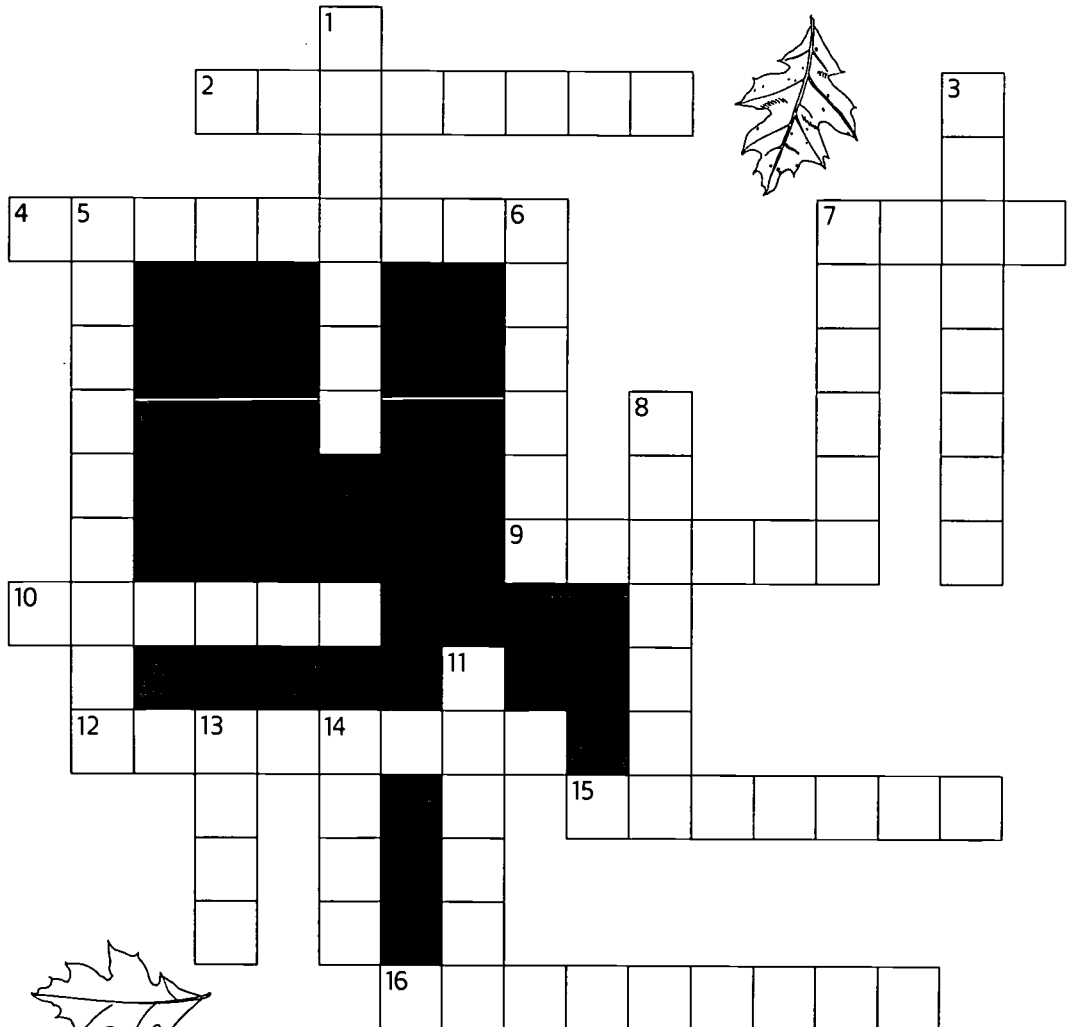
2. In the fall, people wear warm _____ like sweaters and jackets.
4. Some people love the fall because of the _____ colors.
7. Some people prefer summer because they don't like _____ fall weather.
9. The new school year _____ in the fall.
10. In the fall, the grass _____ look green, it looks brown.
12. In the fall, parents buy pencils, paper and school _____ for their children in school.
15. In the fall, some people have to _____ their homes and their cars for winter.
16. In late fall people in the U.S. and in Canada _____ a holiday called Thanksgiving.

Down clues

1. A children's _____ in the fall is called Halloween.
3. In the fall, you will hear a lot about _____ and voting on the TV news.
5. In the U.S., citizens can vote in _____ in the fall.
6. In the fall, many trees lose their _____.
7. In the fall, we turn the _____ an hour back, not forward.
8. In the fall, the _____ doesn't get warmer, it gets cooler.
11. In the fall, the days _____ shorter, not longer.
13. In the fall, school teams _____ football games, not baseball.
14. In the fall, many trees _____ their leaves.

Level B Word list

beautiful
become
celebrate
clocks
clothing
cold
doesn't
elections
holiday
leaves
lose
play
politics
prepare
starts
supplies
weather



Vocabulary activity: Find the new words

How many new words can your students find in the letters that spell "Autumn leaves"? For literacy-level and beginning students, write each letter on a card or slip of paper first. These students can search for words by moving the letters around. High-beginning and intermediate students with literacy skills won't need this help—they can search for words by visualizing.

Here are some words that we found:

Man, men, meat, mean, meet, name, neat, eat, let, leave, lean, Lee, lame, see, sent, seat, sat, seam, steam, slam, slant, seven, tea, tame, team, TV, vest. There must be many more.

You can try this game also with "Thanksgiving," and "Happy Holidays." ➡



Listening activity: Which season?

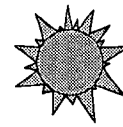
Discuss the words Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter with your students. Give them a copy of the blank worksheet and show them how to put a check mark under the correct answer. Read each question aloud.

1. The weather is hottest in this season.
2. The weather is coldest in this season.
3. The weather is a little bit warmer, but not hot.
4. The weather is a little bit cooler, but not cold.
5. Maybe you will see snow in this season.
6. October is in this season.
7. July is in this season.
8. January is in this season.
9. May is in this season.
10. New Year's Day is a holiday in this season.
11. The Fourth of July is a holiday in this season.
12. Easter and Passover are in this season.
13. Halloween is in this season.
14. People watch football games in this season.
15. People go swimming in this season.
16. They have high school graduation in this season.
17. Children begin school in this season.
18. What season is it now?
19. Which season do you like best?
20. In what season is your birthday?

Spring



Summer



Fall



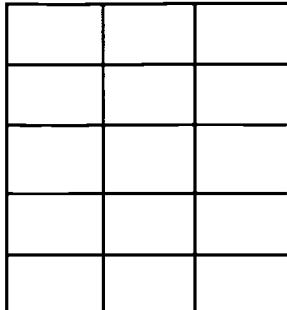
Winter



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Idea file: Vocabulary review game

Contributed by
Linda Phipps, volunteer
ESL teacher in Midwest
City, Oklahoma.



This game provides some good language practice as well as vocabulary review. It's a great activity for low beginners or literacy level students, but can be adapted easily for more advanced students, depending on what words are selected.

Preparing the materials

You need 15 small pictures for one game. Make 2 copies of this set of pictures. Cut each set up and mount the pictures on small cards (especially if you plan to re-use them). You now have two identical sets of cards.

Cut a poster board in half and draw lines on each half, dividing each of them into 15 squares—3 across and 5 down. The squares should be large enough for the picture cards to fit in them. These game boards can be laminated for durability, but it's not necessary.

How to play

The game works best with two people. Each student takes a game board and a set of the cards. They sit so that they can't see each other's game board—an open notebook standing on the table can provide a barrier.

The first student arranges the cards on his or her board in any order. The second student takes a card from his or her own stack and describes it to the other student. "It is a pink elephant." The first student now describes where that picture is on the board: "Put the pink elephant on the right side in the second square from the top." Or, "Put it above the picture of the man who is mowing his lawn," etc.

When all the cards are in place both boards should look the same. Now the students switch roles and play again.

Class sets

If you have several sets of these ready, many pairs of students can play at once. They like to finish one set and trade with others to play it again and again. I have 6 sets, so 12 students can play at the same time. This took 90 pictures (+90 copies) plus the poster boards.

Creating games

You can draw your own pictures, using vocabulary the students have been learning

in class. You could also use numbers on the cards—13, 27, 30—for students needing practice with numbers. "Put the number 5,000 in the middle square."

For beginning literacy students, the game could even combine pictures with sight words they are learning to read. "Put the word EXIT in the first box on the left," etc. For entry level students who are not yet able to describe the locations of the squares, you could number the squares first. "Put the car in square number 7." This technique will make the game less frustrating for them, but still provide good practice.

Surprisingly, this activity is also good practice for high beginners and intermediate students. They need the practice of describing where something goes clearly enough for someone else to follow the directions. You can make the vocabulary more sophisticated and appealing by selecting items from the newspaper: "Put the picture of George Bush in the second row of the first column, next to the picture of Al Gore," etc.

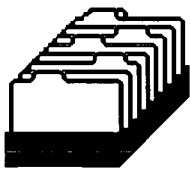
Student-made games

Once all the students are familiar with this game, you can even have *them* select the pictures or the vocabulary to be practiced. These could be cut from magazines, or from photocopies of lessons the students have already studied in class. If each pair of students creates a different set, there will be a lot of interest in trying out each other's games!

Why it works

It is a structured, non-threatening activity that gives students practice in speaking, listening, asking and correcting. They will use a lot of language in negotiating the locations of each picture. In fact, this is a 'language puzzle' that the students will have some satisfaction in solving successfully.

Because the students 'design' the puzzle they work with, they can feel some ownership of the activity. If students have helped to select the pictures, they will surely be practicing vocabulary that they feel is important to learn. ➔



We've often suggested that an "idea file" of handy, ready-to-use activities is a great benefit to adult ESL teachers. You never know when you might need an idea in a hurry!

This one might take a half hour, and is suitable for rounding out a lesson, or for reviewing a past lesson.

Hints & tips

Election coverage

If you think your class will be discussing the upcoming elections this fall, you may want to prepare yourself to answer questions about what's going on. The following inexpensive guide, while too advanced for most of your students, should help you in making the events clear to them.

Choosing the President: A Citizen's Guide to the 2000 Election. Published by the League of Women Voters. "A thorough, nonpartisan and voter-friendly guide to the players and events of this presidential election year. Especially valuable for students and first-time voters." Pub #2017, \$12.95. To order call: 1-888-287-7424, or email: lwv@pmds.com

For more general information about how elections proceed, consult any ESL citizenship textbook.

There will be a zillion websites with election coverage. We want to tell you about only one—DemocracyNet (www.dnet.org), sponsored by the League of Women Voters and Grassroots.com. On this site, your students can type in their zip code and get the names of all their local candidates. In many cases there are short statements from the candidates on different issues. You can also find links to current office holders, in case your students want to write to their representative in Congress, for example.

Do they vote?

If any of your students can vote in this election, do what you can to help them understand or navigate the ballot. This may be complex and daunting, even to native speakers, let alone to new citizens! Your newspaper will publish the ballot a few days before the election.

Check the *Hands-on English* website later this fall—if we learn of useful tips we'll post them there.

Interview activity

A few years ago (Vol. 2, No. 1) we published an article by Fiona Armstrong, outlining her wonderful "One question interview" technique. Recently we heard from reader Marilyn Kwitkin, who reminded us how useful this activity can be for beginning students. Marilyn sent us this description of

how she used our 'Neighborhood interview' questions with her class:

"The students work in pairs, and every pair is given only one question to work on. One of the students is the speaker and the other is the recorder. The pair asks every other student in the class the same question. Each student wears a number, so the interviewers can know when they have surveyed all of the other students, or which ones they might have omitted.

"Each pair of students then tallies the results to their question and presents the information to the class. For example, the tally for question #1, 'Where is your neighborhood?' might look like this for my area in New York:

10 students from Hempstead
5 from Mineola
3 from Westbury, (etc.)

"One student reads the question to the class and the other presents the results. The level of reporting can be raised by asking the students to present the information in percents or to make a graph to present the data. This is certainly within the capabilities of my adult students.

"I have used this activity with my class as a warmup to any new topic that I am introducing. It arouses interest and builds a common vocabulary about a topic with very little preparation." —Marilyn Kwitkin

We are reprinting the neighborhood questions here (from Vol. 9, No. 6) as they will be very useful this fall with a new group of students!

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?

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

What materials work well with very beginning students, or with pre-literacy students? Two teachers gave these visual materials a "thumbs up."

TPR Student Kits (various titles available) published by Sky Oaks Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 1102w, Los Gatos, CA 95031. See catalog on the website: www.tpr-world.com

My favorite material for students who just arrived into this country is the *TPR Student Kits* put out by Sky Oaks Productions. These are expensive (\$10–\$12 for each student), but very, very effective. They consist of a vinyl picture for each student, say of a kitchen, and separate small vinyl pictures that can be put onto that picture. The teacher says, demonstrating, "Put the table in the kitchen," or whatever. The students see the table and do what the teacher did. Later, when you say, (still demonstrating), "Put the table away," some people remember which item was the table and others watch and copy. The kits come with lesson plans, but I also add my own activities.

The kits are designed for listening comprehension, so people will learn English as naturally as they learned their original language, but I find my adults are too eager to be satisfied with that. To the listening comprehension, I add pronunciation, then writing and reading exercises.

Pronunciation: These items can be used for "Listen and Repeat" practice, holding up the cat and saying, "Chair" while each student repeats, etc.

Next I add writing/reading. After we have made a picture using the given lesson plans, I write some of the words on the board and let the students copy them. Then we read the list aloud, point to the objects, etc.

One way to review the written words is to play 'Hangman' using only the words of things they see in front of them. I never stop when the man is created, I just keep adding fingers, toes, buttons, whatever, until the class gets the word correct. This game is good for associating letters with sounds, and it's also good to drive home the point that every word has at least one vowel. I write the

vowels under the hangman and erase each one as they have been requested.

Of all the kits in this series, the two most valuable are The Home and The Kitchen. Also good is the U.S. Map. Next come The Hospital, Fun in the Snow, and The Town. Although I have some reservations about each of these, there is some valuable vocabulary in them. The Town is olde European and doesn't look or live like an American town (kiosk, string bag, fruit stand, European traffic signs). Better for Americans, but too large to use comfortably in a classroom setting, is the 4 IN 1 kit (community, school, work, leisure) that takes four times as much space as the others.

Note: Useless beyond words are the Grocery Store, the Department Store and the World Map (which only teaches the names of continents!).

—Janice Langland, Granger, Indiana

Another fan

"For beginning students, among the materials I would recommend without hesitation are the TPR kits—I love them!! So do my students. The kits are sturdy and reusable. Considering the average cost of a consumable text, the TPR kits are a steal."

—Lynette Bowen, Plainview, Texas

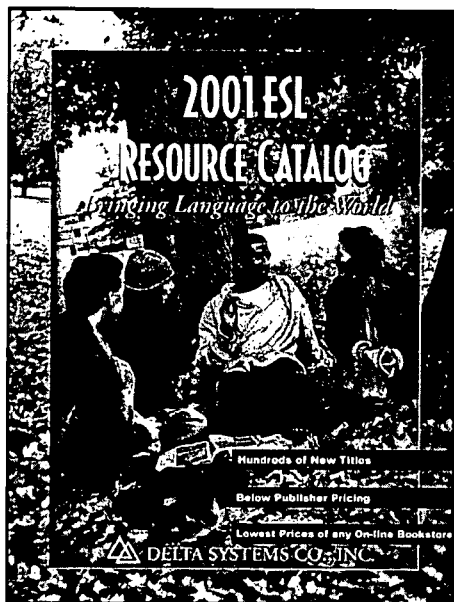
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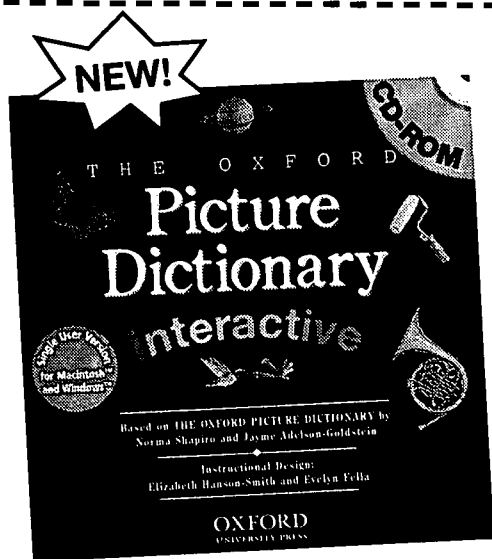
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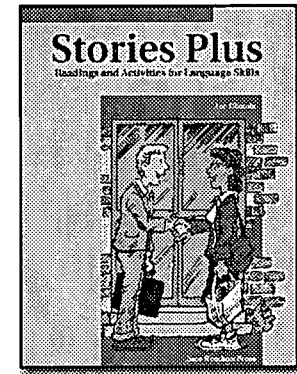
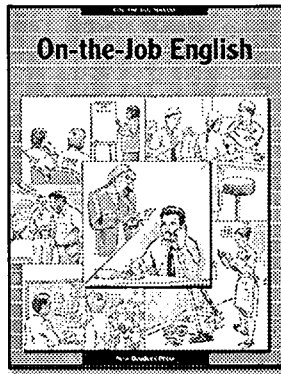
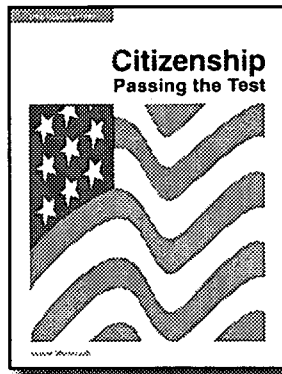
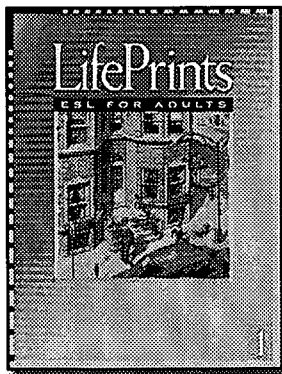
Returning Home to an Apartment
Dan got back to his building.

Preparing Cold Cereal
Paul poured some cereal from the box into his bowl. She poured in some milk. ... and Jennifer poured sugar on her cereal.

Making a Phone Call
Jenny looked up Kim's phone number in the phone book. Then she dialed the number.

Hi, Dan. Hi, Kim. This is Jenny. When Kim answered ... Jenny said hello and identified herself.

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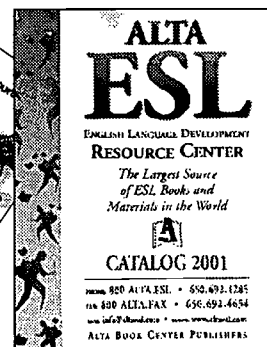
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News & notes

Who reads HOE?

If you would like to see a list of some of our long-time subscribers, please visit our website and take a look! You'll see a list of programs that serve adult ESL students all across the U.S. and in Canada. All of them read and use *Hands-on English!* In some cases they've also given us their website address, so you can find out more about their program.

If you don't see your program listed, but would like to be included, feel free to send us

your information. We'll be delighted to include your program as well! See the list at:
www.handsonenglish.com

We think this list is a nice way to show curious readers in which kind of environments the publication is useful. But it is also a wonderful way for us to recognize our long-time friends, and for you to see where some of your fellow subscribers are!

We look forward to hearing from you! ➡



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

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Teaching as a sport

During the past Olympic games, and on into the fall sports season, we started having somewhat silly thoughts about what it would be like, if teaching were treated in the media in a similar way that sports now is.

First of all, our students' successes would lead the news, such as: "...In a surprise result today, the local ABE program awarded 27 GED certificates, compared to only 19 in a neighboring town. Stay tuned for interviews with some of the awardees."

Student performances would be interpreted in a positive light: "...While only half the Level 1 ESL students will move on to Level 2 this quarter, their coach is proud of the progress they've all made. 'Everyone has worked hard,' she said. 'By this time next year they will be the best team we've ever had.'"

Working through the pain

If learning is treated as a sport, then students won't be seen as deficient for lacking English skills but rather they'll be seen as having potential. They'll be 'rookies,' not dummies. The amount of effort and hard work that each student puts into their achievement will be praised, not ignored. "She's come a long way since last year and has attended every class despite taking care of three children at home. It's amazing." Also, students who keep trying despite failure will be honored for their stamina and dedication.

And the certain strengths that individual students have, like those of athletes, will be appreciated, not taken for granted. "So far, he's one of our most fluent players, and we expect him to go all the way to the


top. The coach is working with him to strengthen those verb forms..."

Teacher as athlete

Another picture that is fun to imagine is yourself, the teacher, as the athlete. For example, "All eyes are on the present perfect event. We've seen her teach this lesson in the trials and if she has a good day today no one can stop her..."

During the Olympics we kept hearing "...a lot of preparation has gone into this event." If you've been in this business for awhile, doesn't that describe you, too? Some teachers have spent years gathering and preparing materials, practicing techniques, spending hours and hours attending to details. Their preparation for each class is not just the night before but all the years before that as well. Someone like this is a "veteran of the game."

To prepare for an important event athletes use a number of techniques. "Focus" was frequently mentioned in interviews with Olympic athletes, or "getting into the zone" before an event. Athletes who succeed are known to be totally focused on their sport. This is what it takes in teaching, too—good preparation requires not only having your materials ready but also having your thoughts pulled together and your attention entirely on the students.

Some athletes explain that they "visualize" before an event, imagining exactly what they will do. This technique is excellent for lesson preparation as well and can help your plans work better. So, as you're getting ready for your next lesson, imagine the cheering crowds!
 —the Editor. 

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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!

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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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Hints & tips

Do you have a tip for our readers? ESL teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

Student-to-student dictation

Linda Phipps in Midwest City, Oklahoma has written to suggest that our multi-level dictations (such as the one on page 12 of this issue) can also be done with the students working in pairs. One student reads while the other student writes, then they switch roles. This means that the reader has to speak clearly enough for the writer to understand. (As in any dictation this technique will be most successful if the students are already familiar with the story material.)

Editor's note: Over the years we've published about a dozen of these multi-level dictations. You can find these indexed on our website; a printed list of our back issues is also available on request.

Two teaching tips from a teacher overseas

Rosalba Politi writes, "I am currently teaching English in Japan (this is my third year) in the public schools. I teach Junior High School students as well as Elementary students. I also teach an adult English conversation class once a week for the town. There are two tips I would like to pass on that I have used which have been successful."

Guest Speaker Day: I try to invite another English teacher from another English speaking country to come and do a presentation about their respective countries or a cooking workshop. I usually try to do this once a month in a 2-hour special workshop for my classes. When teaching a foreign language I really think it is important to introduce cultural aspects. It teaches students that English is indeed a 'living language' and not just something to be dissected in a textbook.

Student Show-and-Tell: once every two weeks I select a student to give a 10-minute presentation of a topic of their choice. I select the student randomly by putting their names in a hat. The student gives their presentation while the other students listen. We then have a discussion period where each student in the class must come up with at least one question for the presenter. This gives each student the

opportunity to talk about something that interests them as well as use the foreign language.

—Rosalba Politi, English teacher
Naie, Hokkaido, Japan

Current events tip

"I want to thank you for the Olympics lessons [Vol. 10, No. 2]. They were great! I used all of them, except for the game. (My class only meets 6 hours a week, so I felt I couldn't take the time.) I also used the lessons found on your website.

"I'd like to recommend to other teachers using "The MiniPages" found in the newspaper. This is a syndicated section that appears every week in newspapers around the country. It's really for children, but the English isn't easy. I adapt it for my ESL classes by making up comprehension exercises, questions on content, vocabulary matching, and true/false questions.

"I always use the word search puzzle and then ask the students to make up sentences using some of the puzzle words. What's great about the MiniPages is that there is usually information on current topics. There were 3 devoted to Australia, Sydney and the Olympics. They are an excellent source of information and related activities."

—Judy Delahoyde
Medina, Ohio

Holiday email cards

If your students have access to a computer and the internet, you might like to introduce them to email greeting cards, or virtual greeting cards. These are available free at many websites, for every imaginable occasion including holidays and other events. Students can select a card, address it to a friend and type in a personalized message.

An easy way to locate such cards is to go first to Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com), click on the category "Entertainment," then look for the entry "Virtual Cards." Yahoo offers its own card service, or you can select one of the dozens of other choices. Happy hunting! ➡

Tools & techniques: Out-of-class activities

Are you looking for ways to encourage your students to practice their English actively outside of class? Here are some great ideas for out-of-class assignments that will engage students in various aspects of life around them. When the students report back to the class about what they found, the topic becomes part of a class discussion.

How to do it

These questions are not meant to be done all at once—rather the students pick one, gather the information on it and then report back to the class. This could be a weekly event. The students can use the sheet as a record of the work they've done. For some notes they will need to use a separate sheet. ↩

*These practice exercises were contributed by **Dee Robinson** in Arlington, Texas. She always uses the 2nd column to write some positive feedback about the student's effort.*

Practice exercises: Beginners

| | Date completed | Shared with class | What I learned |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. List items in your refrigerator and read the list to your class. | | | |
| 2. Name three streets near your home. Tell a teacher your home address. | | | |
| 3. Bring a copy of the local newspaper to class. | | | |
| 4. Count and list the names of the different cooking oils in the grocery story. | | | |
| 5. List five American names and pronounce the names. | | | |
| 6. What TV and radio stations do you watch and listen to most often? | | | |
| 7. Bring a picture of something you like to do to class. Tell the class about it. | | | |
| 8. Greet three people in one day with a smile. | | | |

Practice exercises: Intermediates

| | Date completed | Shared with class | What I learned |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Bring a recipe to class. Name the food items you will need to buy. | | | |
| 2. Tell your teacher the directions to your home from the school. | | | |
| 3. Tell the class about your favorite TV program. Why do you like it? | | | |
| 4. Locate an ad for a furnished apartment. Bring the ad to class. Tell the class about the apartment. | | | |
| 5. Ask a grocery store employee to help you find the instant tea. | | | |
| 6. Ask 3 Americans their first name and ask if they know the meaning of their name. | | | |
| 7. Ask an American to tell you about their home town. How big is it? What is it famous for? | | | |
| 8. Greet three people in one day with a smile and "Hello!" | | | |

Practice exercises: Advanced

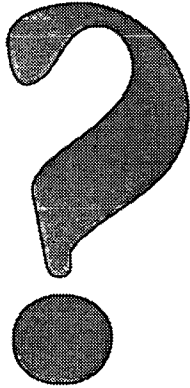
Date completed Shared with class What I learned

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Call an airline. Get cost and flight information to New York round trip, for Dec 15-Dec 26th. | | | |
| 2. Ask an American for advice. Is it better to buy a new or a used car? | | | |
| 3. Bring a recipe to class. Tell the class how to prepare it. | | | |
| 4. Call the newspaper office. Ask how to place a classified ad. Ask about the charges. | | | |
| 5. Listen to a TV newscast. What was the big news that day? | | | |
| 6. Ask a store manager what the store policy is about returning unsatisfactory products. | | | |
| 7. Tell the class about the things that people in your country laugh about. | | | |
| 8. Greet three people in one day with a smile, "Hello," and "How are you today?" | | | |

Grammar grab-bag: A 'questions bee'

This activity contributed by **Linda Phipps** in *Midwest City, Oklahoma*.

Here's a fun way for your students to practice forming questions. Many teachers find that students need this practice at all levels.



Preparation

If you would like to have the students read the cards, copy the list below and cut the items apart. Otherwise, the instructor can read each item aloud (this works best if your students have trouble understanding each other).

You may wish to add some question topics to the list below. Look through some recent lessons and pick items that have been covered in class. You can also add some questions about individual students. For

example, "Ask about the person who plays the piano."

How to play

Divide the class into two teams. A student from one team will draw a card and read the sentence aloud for the other team. For example, "Ask about the number of students in this class." (If you prefer, you can read the card aloud yourself.) A student on the other team will try to form a correct question, such as: "How many students are in this class?" Then the other team will attempt to answer the question correctly. For example, "24." One point is awarded for each correct question, and one point for each correct answer. On the next turn, the teams switch roles. ➡

the number of students in this class

the age of this school

the address of this school

the name of the teacher

the number of letters in the alphabet

the price of a stamp

the colors in the American flag

the contraction for "will not"

the number of states in the United States

the number of players on a basketball team

the opposite of "up"

a synonym for "good."

the name of the business that sells Big Macs.

the name of a business that is in your city.

the telephone number you call in an emergency

the state that is south of your state

the colors of your state flag

the reason that O.J. Simpson is famous

the month we celebrate Labor Day

the color of local police cars

the time people usually eat lunch

the current president

the previous president

the temperature today

the date today

the location of the nearest place to eat

the month we celebrate New Year's

the colors in the American flag

the number of chairs in this room

the contraction for "do not"

the opposite of "interesting"

the date your federal taxes are due

a synonym for "bad"

the telephone number of the school

the time people usually eat dinner

the reason that Princess Diana was famous

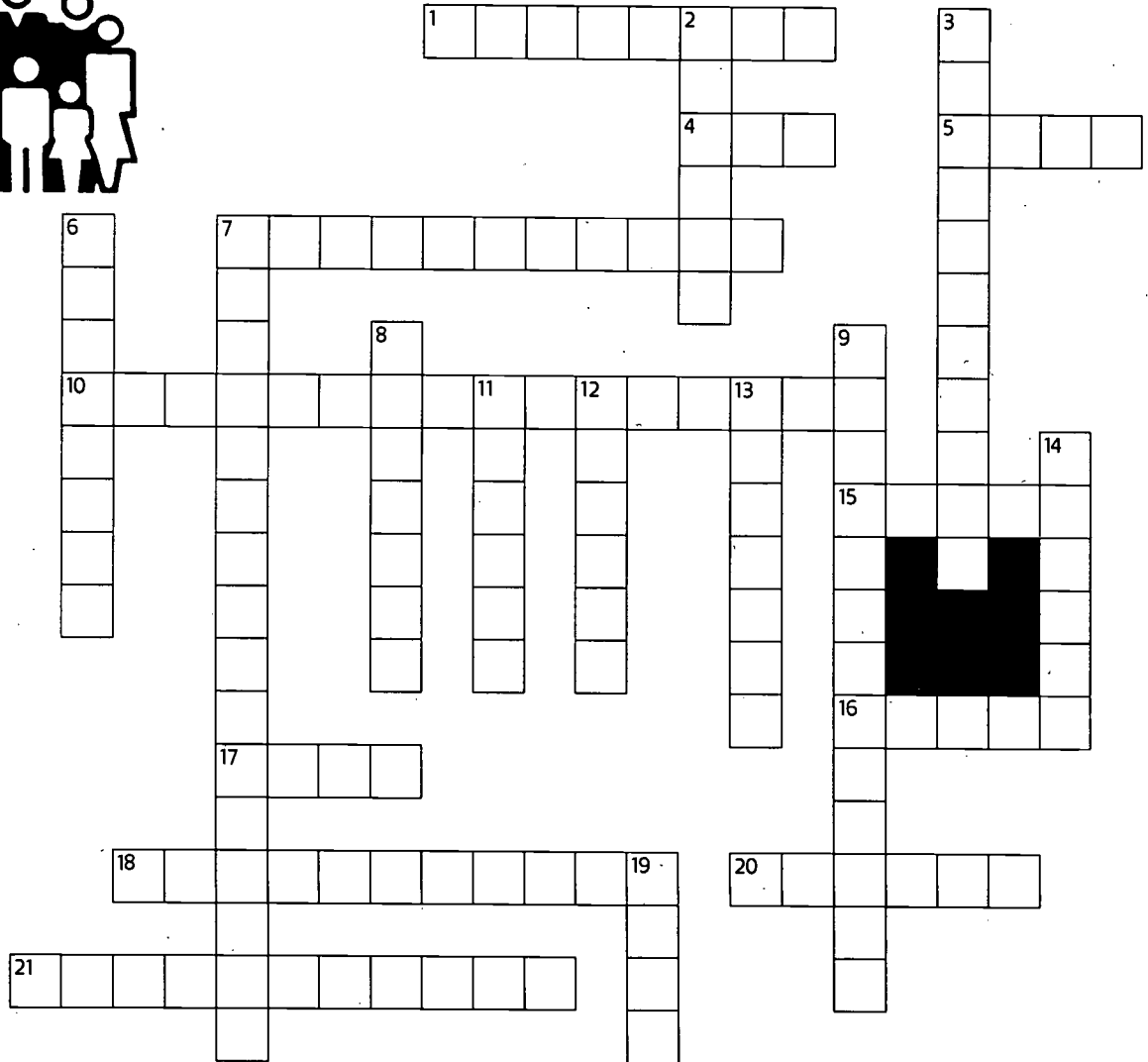
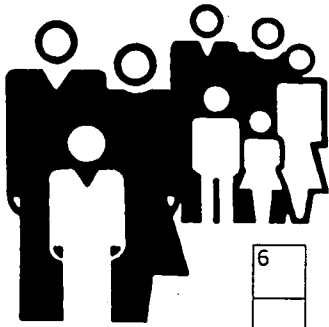
the first President of the U.S.

the location of the nearest exit

the time now

the number of floors in this building

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Relatives



Level A (easier)

Across clues

1. Your son's son is your _____.
4. Your male child is your _____.
5. Your father's sister is your _____.
7. Your mother's mother is your _____.
10. The father of your grandfather is your _____.
15. Your brother's daughter is your _____.
16. Your mother's brother is your _____.
17. Fathers, uncles and brothers are _____.
18. Your wife's father is your _____.
20. Your female parent is your _____.
21. Your husband's mother is your _____.

Down clues

2. Your mother's daughter is your _____.
3. Your father's father is your _____.
6. Your female child is your _____.
7. The mother of your grandmother is your _____.
8. Your father's son is your _____.
9. Your daughter's daughter is your _____.
11. Your sister's son is your _____.
12. Your male parent is your _____.
13. The man you marry is your _____.
14. Mothers, aunts and sisters are _____.
19. The woman you marry is your _____.

**Level A & B
Word list:**

- aunt*
- brother*
- daughter*
- father*
- father-in-law*
- female*
- granddaughter*
- grandfather*
- grandmother*
- grandson*
- great-grandfather*
- great-grandmother*
- husband*
- male*
- mother*
- mother-in-law*
- nephew*
- niece*
- sister*
- son*
- uncle*
- wife*

Level B (harder)

Across clues

1. He is his grandmother's _____ .
4. If you have a boy, that child is your _____ .
5. My cousin's female parent is my _____ .
7. She is older than your parents.
10. My _____ was born in 1868. His son was my grandfather.
15. If your sister has a daughter, that girl is your _____ .
16. My cousin's male parent is my _____ .
17. Your men relatives are _____ .
18. You married his daughter, so he is your _____ .
20. My father's wife is my _____ .
21. If you marry her son, she is your _____ .
3. He is your mother's father.
6. If you have a girl, that child is your _____ .
7. My _____ was born in 1870. Her son was my grandfather.
8. He has the same mother as you, so he is your _____ .
9. My great-grandmother's _____ is my mother.
11. If your sister has a son, that boy is your _____ .
12. My grandfather's son is my _____ .
13. My mother's _____ is my father.
14. Your women relatives are _____ .
19. The person your father married is his _____ .

Down clues

2. She has the same mother as you, so she is your _____ .

To the instructor:

Talking about families

There is nothing more interesting than the topic of families for discussion! However, many adult ESL teachers are hesitant to use students' own families as classroom discussion material. Students uprooted from their homeland may have lost relatives in tragic circumstances, or have left behind relatives they may never see again.

These students may certainly be interested in sharing stories about their families at the right time, but it could be an unsuitable topic, or too personal, in a typical open classroom discussion.

For that reason, the best way to learn and practice family vocabulary may be first of all in a general context. For example, most picture dictionaries have a section on family members. You can use the pictures and charts they provide to explain "uncle," "sister," etc.

The puzzle we've included here is a good follow-up to review this vocabulary. To start, show the students the word list and ask them to write these words in order according to age group (Great-grandparents first, etc.).

Then offer them the puzzle to work on. Students may want to try both levels, so make extra copies to bring along. For beginners, have a picture dictionary handy in case they need some help.

A role-playing game in which students discover they are related to each other ("Oh! You're my brother!!") can be a riot and a great ice-breaker; we provided an example of this type of game in Vol. 9, No. 4 of *Hands-on English*.

As the next step, the most interesting way to talk about family relationships is with stories. In this issue we've provided you with a story of one of the most famous (or infamous?) families—the royal family of England. Some of your students may already be familiar with their story.

Further resources

For beginning and even pre-literacy students, the ESL series *Collaborations* (Heinle & Heinle Publishers) provides short stories about real students and their families. Another popular source of stories is the *True Stories* series by Sandra Heyer (Pearson Education). ↩



Reading: A royal family

Preparation

If you can bring in some pictures of these famous people to illustrate the story it will help to make it more real and memorable. Check with a librarian to see if there is a picture book available. Some libraries also keep picture files so be sure to ask if you don't find what you're looking for.

Ask your students to discuss what they know about Princess Diana. Do they remember the news coverage when she died? What do they think happened?

Read the story

Read (or tell) the story aloud to the students. Then, give each student a copy of the story and let them read for themselves. Depending on the level of your students, you may want to read it again together.

A family tree

For vocabulary practice, have the students do the family tree exercise on the following page. They read the description of each family member and try to place each name in the correct blank. Have the students compare their trees to check the answers.

Question-and-answer

When the family tree is complete, students can use it to answer the 10 questions that follow. As a follow-up exercise, have students sit in pairs looking at the chart. They can take turns posing questions for each other to answer, such as "Who is the sister of Prince Charles?"

Dictation activity

Also in this issue you will find a multi-level dictation based this story. We've provided four levels for your students, ready to use. This dictation would be a great follow-up activity for another session, after the students have become thoroughly familiar with the story.

More stories

As a follow-up activity, students could write or tell about a famous family they know about, such as politicians or royalty in their country, or actors, musicians and other celebrities.

Why it works

Nothing makes an ESL lesson more effective than a gripping story. The drama, intrigue and politics between the lines of the story is what makes for an interesting adult discussion. ➔

Below is a reading passage about Princess Diana and her family. It's very possible that your students already know something about this family! The story provides an opportunity for your students to practice family vocabulary and even to discuss family controversies.

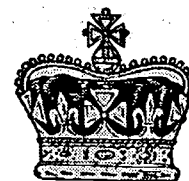
A royal family

Princess Diana was killed in a car accident in 1997. Her husband was Prince Charles of England. They were married for 15 years, but then they divorced in 1996. They had two sons, William and his brother Henry.

Diana's mother-in-law was Elizabeth, the Queen of England. She is the grandmother of Diana's two children. The boys also have a great-grandmother, who is 100 years old. She is the Queen's mother. Because Queen Elizabeth has one sister, Margaret, the boys also have a great-aunt.

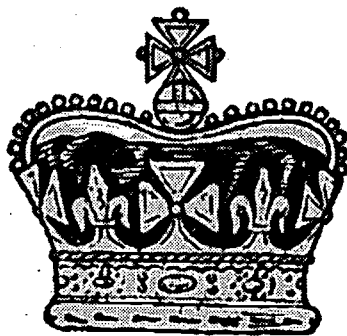
Before she died, Diana's sons lived with her. Now they live with their father. Diana had one brother and two sisters, and Prince Charles has two brothers and one sister. So William and Henry have six aunts and uncles.

Will Prince Charles be King of England some day? Or will his son William be the next King? No one is sure.



*Key vocabulary:
killed, married, divorced,
Princess, Prince, Queen,
King.*

Vocabulary activity: Royal family tree



Fill out the chart

Here is a list of people who are related to Charles and Diana. Write each person's name in the correct place on the family tree.

- William is Diana's oldest son.
- Henry is Diana's second son.
- Andrew is a brother of Prince Charles.
- Edward is another brother of Prince Charles.
- Anne is the sister of Prince Charles.
- Jane is Diana's sister.
- Sarah is also Diana's sister.
- Charles Spencer is Diana's brother.
- Diana's father was Lord Spencer.
- Diana's mother is Lady Frances.
- Prince Phillip is Charles' father.
- King George VI was Charles' grandfather.
- Lady Elizabeth is the mother of Queen Elizabeth.
- Margaret is the sister of Queen Elizabeth.

What are their names?

Look at the family tree and find the answers to these questions.

1. What is the name of Prince Charles' sister?

2. What is the name of Princess Diana's mother-in-law?

3. What is the name of William's great-grandmother?

4. What is the name of Prince Phillip's sister-in-law?

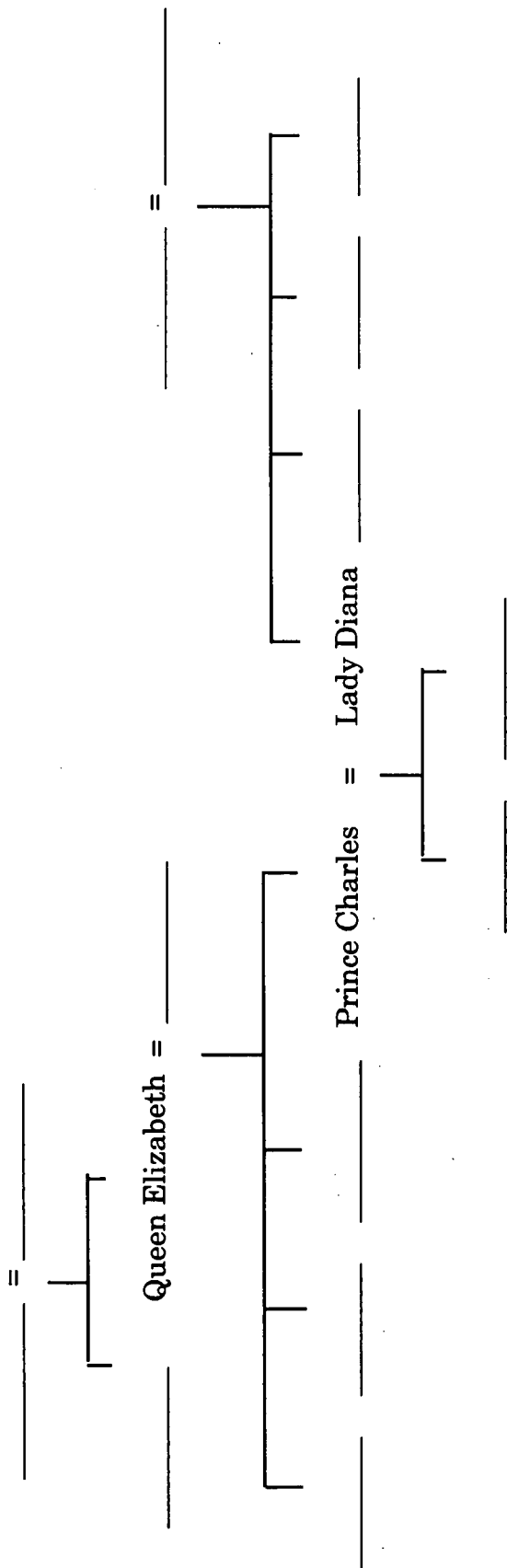
5. What is the name of Diana's brother?

6. What are the names of Queen Elizabeth's grandchildren?

7. Who was Prince Phillip's daughter-in-law?

8. Who is Prince Charles' aunt? _____
9. Who is Queen Elizabeth's husband?

10. Who was Diana's father? _____

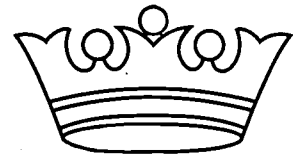


Multi-level dictation: A royal family

This dictation exercise is based on the reading passage on page 10 of this issue. Once students are familiar with the story, you can have them choose which level to try, and students can try the dictation again at a higher level if they wish.

Because many of our readers have beginning literacy students, Level A requires

the students only to listen, read along and fill in the *numbers* from the story. The missing words in Level B are mostly family vocabulary (as in the 'Relatives' puzzle in this issue). Level C has some key phrases missing, and Level D has most of the words missing. For an even more advanced Level E, have students start with a blank piece of paper. ↩



A royal family (Level A)



Princess Diana was killed in a car accident in _____. Her husband was Prince Charles of England. They were married for _____ years, but then they divorced in _____. They had _____ sons, William and his brother Henry.

Diana's mother-in-law was Elizabeth, the Queen of England. She is the grandmother of Diana's _____ children. The boys also have a great-grandmother, who is _____ years old. She is the Queen's mother. Because Queen Elizabeth has _____ sister, Margaret, the boys also have _____ great-aunt.

Before she died, Diana's sons lived with her. Now they _____ with their father. Diana had _____ brother and _____ sisters, and Prince Charles has _____ brothers and _____ sister. So William and Henry have _____ aunts and uncles.

Will Prince Charles be King of England some day? Or will his _____ William be the next King? No one is sure.

A royal family (Level B)



Princess Diana was killed in a _____ accident _____ 1997. Her _____ was Prince Charles of England. They were _____ for 15 years, but then they _____ in 1996. They had two _____, William and his _____ Henry.

Diana's _____ - _____ - _____ was Elizabeth, the Queen of England. She is the _____ of Diana's two children. The boys also have a _____ -grandmother, who is 100 years old. She is the Queen's _____. Because Queen Elizabeth has one _____, Margaret, the _____ also have a _____ - _____.

Before she died, Diana's _____ lived _____ her. Now they live with their _____. Diana had one _____ and two _____, and Prince Charles has two _____ and one _____. So William and Henry have six _____ and _____.

Will Prince Charles be _____ of England some day? Or will his _____ William be the next King? No one is sure.

A royal family (Level C)



Princess Diana was killed _____ in 1997. Her husband _____ Prince Charles of England. They _____ for _____, but then _____ in 1996. They _____, William _____ Henry.

_____ was Elizabeth, the _____. She is the grandmother _____. The boys _____ great-grandmother, who _____ Queen's _____. Because Queen Elizabeth _____, Margaret, the boys _____ great-aunt.

_____ she died, Diana's sons _____. Now _____ their father. Diana had _____, and Prince Charles has _____. So William and Henry _____ and _____.

Will Prince Charles be _____ some day? Or will William be the _____ King? No one _____ sure.

A royal family (Level D)



Princess Diana _____ in _____ Prince Charles _____ for _____, but _____ in _____, William _____ Henry.

_____ Elizabeth, _____ She _____ Diana's _____ great-_____, who _____ Queen Elizabeth _____, Margaret, _____ great-_____.

_____, Diana's _____. Now _____ Diana _____, and Prince Charles _____ So William _____ Henry _____.

_____ Prince Charles _____? Or _____ William _____ King? _____.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Match It! A Collection of Index Card Games for Learners of English by Sharon Elwell and Raymond C. Clark (2000 Pro Lingua Associates). ISBN 0-86647-132-4. 91pp. \$25. Photocopyable.

As we can tell you just by looking at the mail we get here at *Hands-on English*, adult ESL instructors are always looking for ready-to-use materials to supplement their lessons. And from our own teaching experience we remember that finding material that is flexible, re-useable, suitable for adults and multi-level classes AND is not too expensive is like striking gold. This book is one of those nuggets.

Match It! is a collection of over 80 ready-to-use matching games on topics perfect for ESL students. The basic game is very simple—it is played like ‘Concentration’ where students turn over the cards and try to find matching pairs. For example, in the Holidays game *Labor Day* matches *September*. In the Numbers game *five* matches *5*. In the Antonyms game *wide* matches *narrow*. In the Driving game *buckle* matches *the seat belt*. And in the Family game on page 26 (a perfect supplement to activities in this issue of HOE!) students match *uncle’s wife* with *aunt*, etc.

Some of the advanced games, for example on idioms, may not be useful for beginning students but most of the book is suitable for beginning and intermediate students, or for mixed levels. Brief, clear instructions show you how to prepare the game and play, and several variations are provided in case you want to try something different. Best of all, every single game has some brief notes with tips or suggestions for playing, and ideas for expanding that topic further if you wish.

In general, this is an activity for pairs or small groups, so if you are tutoring one student you’ll find this material very useful as well. The benefit of this kind of card game is that it provides concentrated, low-key vocabulary practice and an opportunity for conversation. It’s a fun, student-centered way to review important vocabulary and therefore is a useful tool in your repertoire of teaching techniques.

—Reviewed by Anna Silliman, Editor

What makes a good program?

Program Standards for Adult Education ESOL Programs (April 2000, TESOL, Inc.) Item #52000. \$14.95. Call 888-891-0041 to order or see www.tesol.edu.

For decades adult ESL programs have been on their own in terms of deciding what their quality standards should be. This has been one of the more frustrating aspects of our field, as well as being, ironically, one of the things that makes it so much fun to teach in. (A lack of standards gives you plenty of freedom, right?) In order to prove your program’s worth though, you need some concrete measure.

Finally, after years of work by dedicated educators in the field all across the country, there is a published set of standards that is designed to work for all types of adult ESL programs, of any size, anywhere in the U.S.

This document describes 8 areas that are important in every ESL program:

- 1) program structure, administration and planning;
- 2) curriculum
- 3) instruction
- 4) recruitment, intake and orientation
- 5) retention and transition
- 6) assessment and learner gains
- 7) staffing, professional development and staff evaluation;
- 8) support services.

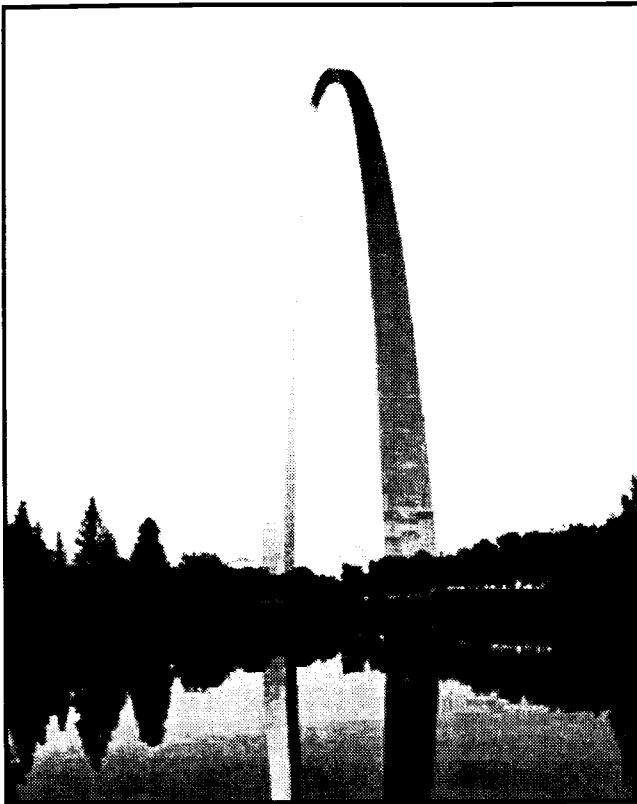
Whether you are hoping to improve your current program or launch a new one, these guidelines should help. ➡

Advertising

The ESL Miscellany; The New 21st Century Edition. The single most useful resource for teachers of English at home or abroad is now updated and revised for the year 2000. This book is a teacher’s compendium of useful information on our changing world, on language, culture, technology and more. Photocopyable resource book \$28: ISBN 0-86647-095-6.

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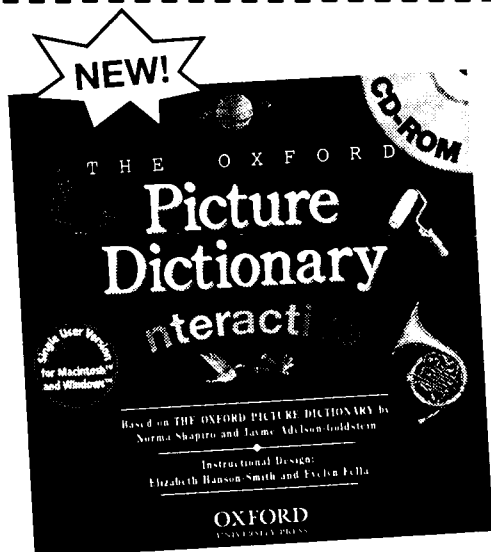
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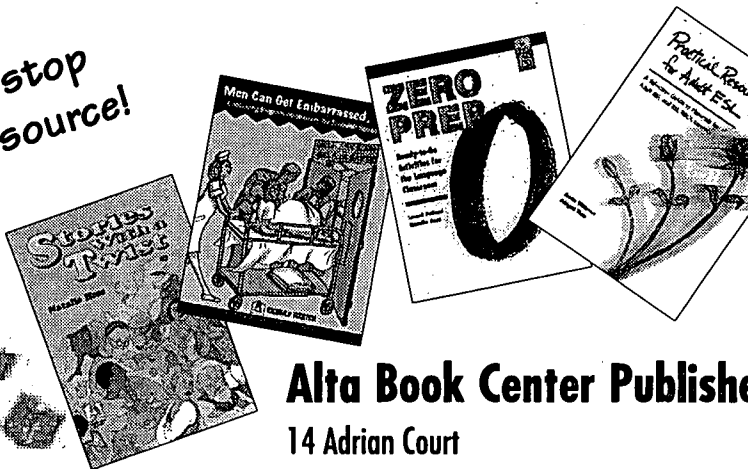
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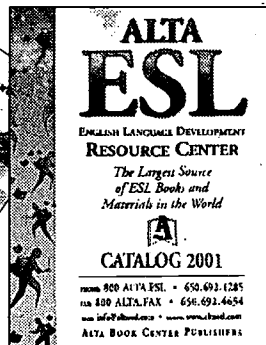
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News & notes

Online courses?

We have heard from increasing numbers of teachers that they are looking for teacher education courses online. Recently we ran across an article that covers this topic, entitled "Online Professional Development for Adult ESL Educators" by William B. Hawk. The article is posted on the NCLE website and, like all NCLE publications, it is carefully written, thorough and detailed. The author lists 5 degree programs currently available online, and offers advice on what to look for in such a

program. Other resources and links in the article provide you with a good starting point to find out more.

Go to <http://www.cal.org/ncle/> and then look for "What's new"—you'll find the article listed there.

While you're there, note that NCLE also has a very good, annotated links page that lists other websites of interest to adult ESL educators. This section is called "Worth a Visit," and it definitely is. ➡



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Hands-on English

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

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Difficult conditions

Over the years that we've been sending out *Hands-on English* to instructors in widely scattered adult ESL programs, we have had the impression that conditions in these programs were gradually improving. Could we be wrong about this? Recently we received this message:

"Our school efforts seem more daunting than ever with increased assessment and documentation and more mandates to accomplish the impossible. New personnel can't believe all the paperwork and longtimers are so discouraged that the energy levels are way down."

Too many mandates

The teachers in that program are pressured by more and more requirements they have to meet, but also no doubt by their own concern for the difficulties that the students face and the urgent need for students to learn English quickly. Yet they feel powerless to control the job.

Does this by any chance describe you? What can an instructor in this business do, when the job becomes overwhelming or discouraging? From experience, we can tell you that there are three main ways to deal with this kind of adversity—you can cope with it, you can try to change it, or you can take a new direction. The solution you choose depends largely on your own personality and strengths.

Coping, or just toughing it out. Some people are able to ignore what goes on outside the classroom and put all their focus and energies into their classroom teaching, keeping their attention primarily on the students themselves. Some of the most

effective teachers we know fit this category; they just don't let anything distract them from the craft of teaching language. Many of the innovative techniques that the ESL field has developed come from this type of focused educator.

Working to change the system. Some people enjoy picking a battle to fight and, in addition to their classroom teaching they work toward constructive change in education policy in their program, school district or state. We have many people like this in our field; they have a lot of energy and determination. They can unfortunately be susceptible to burn-out because the dual effort takes a superhuman amount of energy. We frankly admire these people.

Going on to something new. Some people, frustrated by their efforts to cope or to effect change, decide to take a new approach. They find a different way to serve students, such as starting their own school or learning service, applying for a grant to work on a separate project, going overseas. They might create materials, put up a website or even launch a publication (as we did!). Some of our colleagues in this category move into jobs in elementary or secondary schools, or even enroll in a degree program.

There is no doubt about it, teaching adult ESL is challenging for many reasons. We predict the pressures will continue to increase, in many cases. How individual teachers find the best, most effective niche depends on their own personality and personal strengths. But wouldn't it all be easier if we had networks to connect us? How can we accomplish this?

—the Editor. 🐾

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About the publication

Our 10th year! *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.



Your editor, Anna Silliman, is never too busy to talk with a subscriber!

NEWS:

U.S. postage costs just went up, but *not* our rates!! Our subscription price will stay the same this year. We want to keep HOE affordable for everyone. ➡

H.O.E. online

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

You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, updates on resources and more.
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Letters

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etc.

Election cookies?

Linda Phipps wrote to tell us that, as she usually does every four years, she studied the U.S. election process with her students this fall. The plan was to have a class celebration for the conclusion of the election on November 8, the day after Election Day. . . needless to say, the celebration had to be postponed, and postponed, and postponed.

In December, Linda wrote "They greet me every class with 'Where's the cookies? I thought we would be celebrating and having cookies by now? It isn't over yet?!!!!!!'"

Our 'sports' editorial

In our last issue, we published some thoughts about what teaching would be like, if it were viewed more as sports are viewed. We were astonished at the responses we received about this article! We had a number of requests to reprint, and some interesting comments. Here are a few of them:

"I am writing with a request. Your 'editorial' in the November/December 2000 issue "Teaching as a Sport" was so terrific and moving for me that I would like your permission to share it with adult education administrators and teachers in southern Illinois. . . I think it would be wonderful if more teachers looked at their profession in this light. Having adults experience success and begin to have hope is probably the hardest task for teachers to accomplish. Your editorial, I feel, could be a springboard for teachers to do some personal reflection and possibly change some of the strategies they use. Thank you for considering my request."

—Patti Painter

Southern Illinois Professional Development Center, Edwardsville, Illinois

"I am writing in regard to your front page article in *Hands-on English*. I really like and whole heartedly agree with it! I have often felt that if teachers, students, and parents were cheered and applauded for giving 'life' their best effort, this would be a better place to live. Since 'education' seems to be the general buzz word on the current political scene, I would like to use your article to make this point. I am writing to ask your permission to send your article to

our local newspaper. I believe that it is definitely worthy of sharing and needs to be read by the general public."

—Kathleen Schou
Dickinson Adult Learning Center
Dickinson, North Dakota

"I enjoyed your comments about athletics and the profession. My husband, an ex-coach as well as a teacher really enjoyed your comments as well. Keep up the good work."

—Dianne E. Scott
(HOE Advisory Board member)
Leesburg, Florida

Need HOE index?

"I hope I've missed something: is there an index for HOE? I have every issue since May '93, but I sometimes need to find an idea/topic FAST. Please tell me you've been wise enough/had time enough to compile an index/guide! Thanks!!!!!!!"

—Dottie Shattuck
Central Piedmont CC, Charlotte, NC

Yes indeed! We have an index that includes all the articles from the past 10 years of Hands-on English. It's in the form of a 'PDF file', and you can find it on our website. Go to our main page, and look for a link to the "LONG INDEX" there. You'll also find instructions in case you're not familiar with using this kind of file.—Editor

Query about ESL for medical training

We received an inquiry from Vicki Phillipi in Lincoln, Nebraska about ESL materials for nursing assistant trainees. She explained:

"My interest in ESL comes from being an instructor for the Basic Nursing Assistant Course. We have many students from many cultures at varying ESL levels. I am always trying my best to individualize their training as much as possible in this setting with the ultimate goal being not only their ability to complete the course, but most importantly to comprehend the material and apply their knowledge. Therefore, I am especially interested in any material covering basic medical subject matter."

If you know of some specific materials designed for ESL students, please contact Hands-on English and we'll pass the word along! Thank you! —Editor. 🐾

Grammar grab-bag: “What have they been doing?”

Present perfect continuous ...for beginners!

This grammar structure, the present perfect continuous, is often taught as an advanced structure, but in fact it's one that beginners will often run into in conversation. Native speakers use it commonly for questions like “How long have you been working at this company?” and “What have you been doing lately?” so students should have at least some familiarity with it at an early stage.

Here is a nice way to get your students comfortable with the present perfect continuous. It's a structured grammar exercise, but one that students can have a little fun with and be creative with. And because the answers are open-ended, the more advanced students can participate without getting bored.

Preparation

Before using the exercise, make sure that the students are at least a little bit familiar with the grammatical form. For example, in a previous lesson the students could practice asking and answering the question: “How long have you been living in the U.S.?”

Before copying the worksheet on the next page, write a different student's name in each blank. (Be careful not to embarrass anyone—if you think there's a chance a student will be embarrassed, use the name of someone else instead, such as another teacher or staff member.)

The exercise

Hand out the worksheet and do the first two examples aloud with the students. If necessary, write the form on the board to help them get started:

he *has* *been* *-ing*
she
they *have*

Give the students time to write their answers. Circulate and help individuals if

necessary. When the students are finished, call for various answers to each question. Students can volunteer to read their answers aloud.

Alternative answers

Note that there are some good answers to these questions that do *not* involve the present perfect continuous structure. “Maybe he's been sick,” for example, is a natural and correct response that a native speaker would be likely to use. If a student offers such an answer, make it clear to everyone that it is acceptable usage.

Follow-up

Use these same sentences in a dictation for reinforcement. Later you could practice this form orally again with several “How long. . .?” questions. This is the most common usage the students will meet. For example:

How long have you been living in this city?
How long have you been working at your job?
How long have you been studying English?
How long have you been sitting here?

Why it works

This activity gives the students a chance to be a little silly and creative. At the same time, they know they are practicing real grammar and real language they can use.

Special note:

Sometimes students are disappointed if they find their own name is missing on an exercise like this. If you have more than 12 students, consider including some more questions on a second page. Use other medical conditions or emotions for your examples. ←

This is one of our favorite grammar exercises of all time, because the students write the examples about each other, and there's usually a good bit of laughter—a sure sign of real comprehension.

Technical note:

We often use the present perfect and the present perfect continuous interchangeably—to talk about something that started in the past and continues in the present, about an action which is repeated, or about a past event which occurred at an unspecified time. The present perfect continuous emphasizes that the action is still in progress now. Key words with both structures are *lately* and *recently*.

What have they been doing?

Write your ideas in the blank spaces.

1. _____ has red eyes. What has he been doing?

Maybe he's been watching too much T.V.

2. The teacher has blue ink on her hands. What has she been doing?

Maybe

3. The students all look very tired. What have they been doing?

Maybe

4. _____ speaks English very well. What has he been doing?

5. _____ knows all the new vocabulary. What has she been doing?

6. _____ hasn't been to class for a few days.

7. _____ isn't hungry.

8. _____ has lots of money.

9. _____ doesn't have any money.

10. _____ has a sore throat.

11. _____ is very tired.

12. _____ looks very sad.

13. _____ seems very nervous today.

14. _____ has a headache.

ESL game: Putting on clothes

This may be the silliest game we've ever published in *Hands-on English!* But it's a fun way for beginning level students to review clothing vocabulary.

Guessing game

Have each student draw a card with the name of an item of clothing on it. (You can also use picture cards for this if you wish.) Make sure each student knows what the item of clothing is, but don't show the other students.

Next, one student does a pantomime of putting this item on, while the other students try to guess what it is. Let each student take a turn. (If your class is large, you can divide into smaller groups first.)

Why it works

Although the activity may be ridiculous, it will most certainly be memorable!

Other resources

For clothing vocabulary, your students can refer to a picture dictionary. Beginning students can try the **Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary** which shows about 45 basic items quite clearly. Intermediate students can look at the **Oxford Picture Dictionary** (black cover) to find over twice as many items as well as illustrations of different fabrics, different necklines, different styles, etc. (Oxford University Press, 1-800-451-7556, www.oup-usa.org/esl.)

For other learning activities involving clothes, we really like the ideas suggested in **The Card Book, Interactive Games and Activities for Language Learners** by Abigail Tom and Heather McKay (published by Alta, 1-800-ALTA/ESL or online at www.altaesl.com). In one activity, for example, the students buy and sell their clothing cards to one another. ➡

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| socks | jacket | running shoes |
| jeans | sweater | scarf |
| shirt | winter boots | warm coat |
| swim suit | dress | T-shirt |

Vocabulary: Shopping for clothes

You can use this story to introduce some of the phrases the students need to express their opinions about clothing.

An amusing way to practice these phrases is to have some photos of patently unsuitable clothing—a bright orange parka? A jacket with sequins? Whatever photos you can find in magazines and catalogs. Then have the students discuss these in pairs, asking “Do you like this one?” or “This one looks good—what do you think?”

Some useful phrases:

don't like it/like it/like it a lot
like this color/don't like this color
like this style/don't like this style
need a smaller size/need a larger size
try it on
doesn't fit/fits well
too big/toosmall
too short/too long
too heavy/too light
too tight/too loose
hand wash/machine wash/dry clean only

Yesterday I went shopping with my sister. I said, “I need a new jacket.” We went into a clothing store.

“Do you like this one?” she asked. “No, I don't like it,” I said. “I don't like this color.”

My sister looked at the jackets. “Here's a good one,” she said. “Try it on!”

“It's too big,” I said. “It doesn't fit. I need a smaller size.” She looked at the jackets again. “This one looks good,” she said. “Try it on.”

“It's perfect!” I said.



About the crossword puzzles

On the next three pages you'll find puzzles about shopping for clothes. Each of the three puzzles uses exactly the same examples as clues, but different words from the sentences are missing.

In Level A, an easy word is missing from each sentence. In Level B, a key word is missing. And in Level C, a whole key phrase is missing.

Preparation

The students should first be at least somewhat familiar with the clothes shopping vocabulary above. (You can read the example story, discuss clothes shopping with the students and even do some role-playing.)

Make extra copies of each of the three puzzles, as students very often like to try the puzzle at more than one level. For example, students who start with Level A will become more familiar with the vocabulary as they do

the puzzle, so that they can then attempt Level B or C.

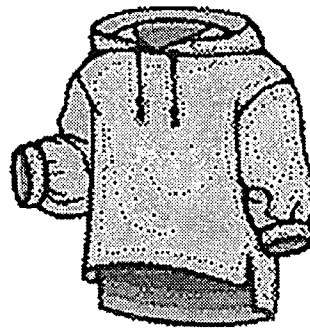
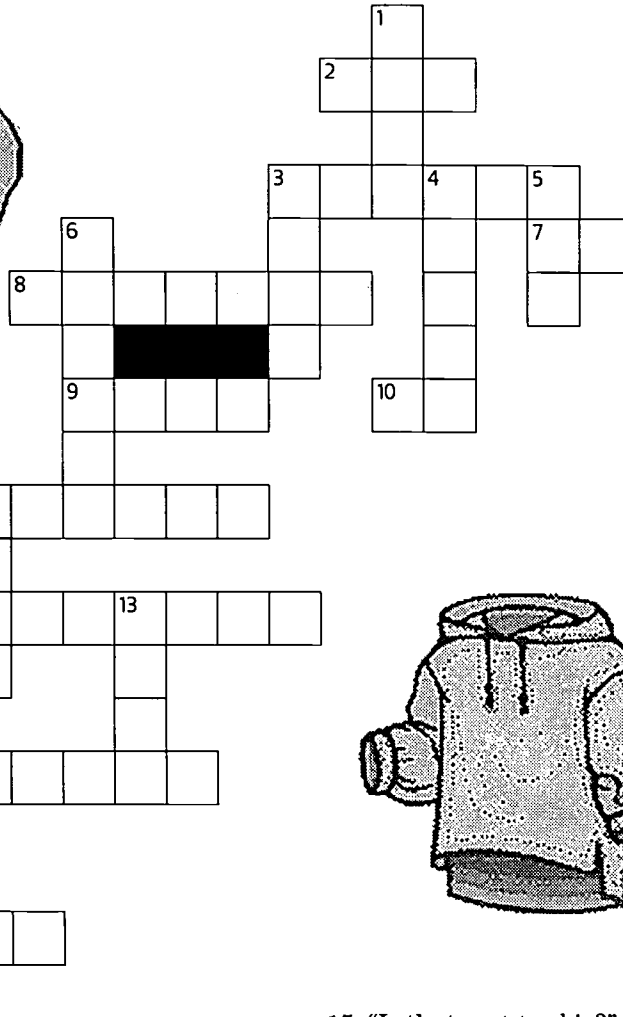
Related puzzles

We've printed other puzzles about shopping. See Vol. 7 No. 5 (Jan/Feb 1998) for a multi-level crossword puzzle “All about shopping.” Another puzzle in Vol. 9, No. 1 (May/June 1999) deals with using money in daily life, and is called “Paying for things.”

Beginning students

For beginning level and literacy level students, you can find a picture store “Shopping for a Coat” in *Action English Pictures* published by Alta (1-800-ALTA/ESL, www.altaesl.com), ISBN 1-882483-71-5. The story shows a man trying on and buying a coat in 15 frames with no words. You can use the pictures to teach vocabulary and for telling and retelling a story. ➡

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Shopping for clothes



Word list

big
clean
cooler
doesn't
don't
good
it
larger
like (2 times)
machine
on
short
small
smaller
too
warmer
wash
well

Level A (easier)

Across clues

2. This coat is much too _____. I need a smaller one.
3. This shirt is much too small. It _____ fit.
7. "This looks nice." "Would you like to try it _____?"
"Yes, sure."
8. "I like this sweater. Is it _____ washable?" "No, but you can hand wash it."
9. "How do you like this sweater?" "It's perfect! It looks _____ on you. I think you should buy it."
10. "Do you like this scarf?" "Yes, I like _____ a lot."
11. "That jacket looks good. Are you going to buy it?"
"No, it's too light for winter. I need something _____."
12. It's too big. Can I try a _____ size?
14. "That's a nice sweater." "Yes, but it's too heavy for summer. I need something _____."

Down clues

1. "Here's a red sweater." "Oh, I _____ this color! It looks beautiful."
3. I like this shirt, but I _____ like this color. Do you have it in blue?
4. Daughter: "I like this skirt!" Mother: "It's too _____. You need a longer one."
5. "Do you think this dress is _____ long?" "Yes, it is, but we can hem it up."
6. It's too small. Can I try a _____ size?
11. "I like this T-shirt. Is it machine washable?" "Of course, it's cotton. You can _____ it in hot water."
13. "How does this hat look?" "Sorry, I don't _____ it."
14. "I like this jacket. Is the fabric washable?" "No, it's dry _____ only."

Level B (harder)

Word list:

- color*
- don't*
- dry*
- fit*
- fits*
- hand*
- heavy*
- larger*
- light*
- long*
- longer*
- lot*
- perfect*
- size*
- this*
- too*
- too big*
- try*
- washable*

Across clues

1. I like this shirt, but I don't like _____ color. Do you have it in blue?
3. It's too small. Can I try a larger _____?
4. "Do you think this dress is too _____?"
"Yes, it is, but we can hem it up."
6. "I like this T-shirt. Is it machine _____?"
"Of course, it's cotton. You can wash it in hot water."
8. This shirt is much too small. It doesn't _____.
9. "I like this jacket. Is the fabric washable?"
"No, it's _____ clean only."
10. "Here's a red sweater." "Oh, I like this _____! It looks beautiful."
12. "Do you like this scarf?" "Yes, I like it a _____!"
14. It's _____ . Can I try a smaller size?
15. "That's a nice sweater." "Yes, but it's too _____ for summer. I need something cooler."

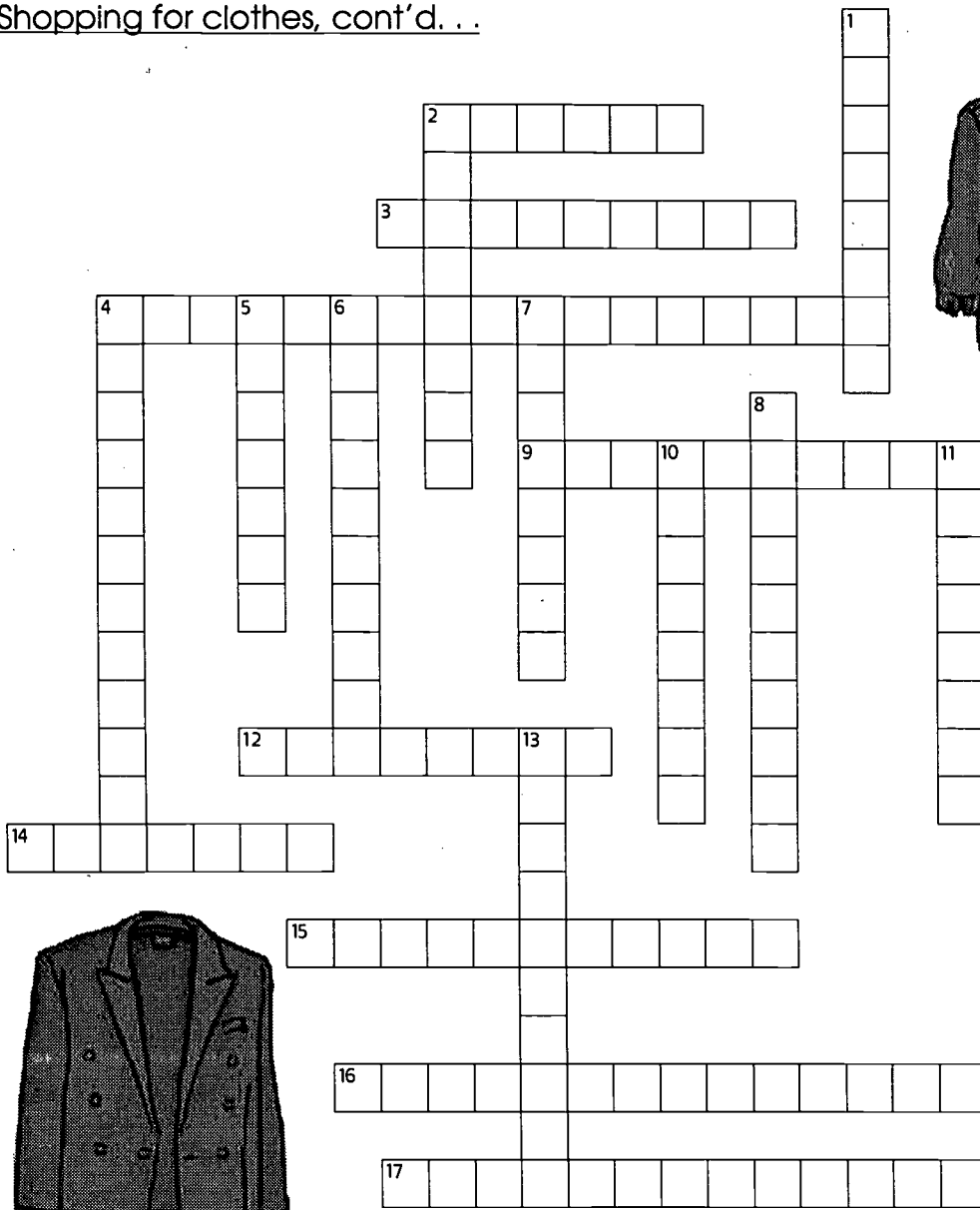
16. "This looks nice." "Would you like to _____ it on?" "Yes, sure."

Down clues

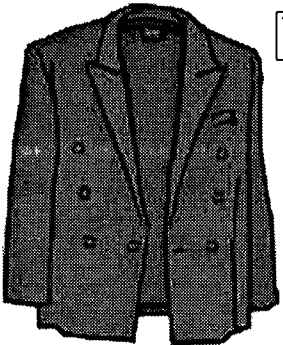
1. This coat is much _____ big. I need a smaller one.
2. "Is that coat too big?" "No, it _____ very well. I'll buy it."
4. "That jacket looks good. Are you going to buy it?" "No, it's too _____ for winter. I need something warmer."
5. "How do you like this sweater?" "It's _____ ! It looks good on you. I think you should buy it."
7. "I like this sweater. Is it machine washable?" "No, but you can _____ wash it."
11. Daughter: "I like this skirt!" Mother: "It's too short. You need a _____ one."
12. These pants are too small. I need a _____ size.
13. "How does this hat look?" "Sorry, I _____ like it."



A crossword puzzle grid with 16 numbered starting points for clues. The grid consists of white squares for letters and black squares for empty space. The numbers are: 1 (top right), 2 (top middle), 3 (top left), 4 (middle right), 5 (middle), 6 (middle left), 7 (middle), 8 (middle), 9 (middle), 10 (middle), 11 (middle), 12 (middle), 13 (bottom left), 14 (bottom left), 15 (bottom right), 16 (bottom left).



- Word list**
- doesn't fit*
 - don't like it*
 - don't like this color*
 - dry clean only*
 - fits well*
 - hand wash*
 - it's perfect*
 - larger size*
 - like it a lot*
 - like this color*
 - machine washable*
 - smaller size*
 - too big*
 - too heavy*
 - too light*
 - too long*
 - too short*
 - too small*
 - try it on*



Down clues

Level C

Across clues

2. This coat is much _____. I need a smaller one.
3. This shirt is much too small. It _____.
4. I like this shirt, but I _____. Do you have it in blue?
9. "How does this hat look?" "Sorry, I _____."
12. "Is that coat too big?" "No, it _____. I'll buy it."
14. "This looks nice. Would you like to _____?" "Yes, sure."
15. It's too big. Can I try a _____?
16. "I like this sweater. Is it _____?" "No, but you can hand wash it."
17. "Here's a red sweater." "Oh, I _____! It looks beautiful."

1. Daughter: "I like this skirt!" Mother: "It's _____. You need a longer one."
2. "That's a nice sweater." "Yes, but it's _____ for summer. I need something cooler."
4. "I like this jacket. Is the fabric washable?" "No, it's _____."
5. "Do you think this dress is _____?" "Yes, it is, but we can hem it up."
6. "How do you like this sweater?" "_____! It looks good on you. I think you should buy it."
7. "I like this sweater. Is it machine washable?" "No, but you can _____ it."
8. "Do you like this scarf?" "Yes, I _____!"
10. These pants are _____. I need a larger size.
11. "That jacket looks good. Are you going to buy it?" "No, it's _____ for winter. I need something warmer."
13. It's too small. Can I try a _____?

ESL game: Some dictionary scavenger hunts

Here are three quick games to help your students get some practice using the dictionary!

A good learner's dictionary for intermediate through advanced students is the **Longman Dictionary of American English** (Pearson Education) ISBN 0-8013-1823-8. Compared to most monolingual dictionaries, the definitions are easy to understand.

A new, easier version for high-beginning through low intermediate students is the **Longman Basic Dictionary of American English**, ISBN 0-582-33251-6.

Game 1

In the first game, students are given a list of words they are already familiar with (in this example, items of clothing.) The task is simply to find each word in the dictionary and note the page number. If you wish, the students can play this as a race to see who can find all the words first. If you have a multi-level class, have students at similar levels race against each other, not against the rest of the class. The purpose of this game is help students get "fluent" at paging through the dictionary.

Word:

Page number:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| jacket | |
| coat | |
| hat | |
| jeans | |
| sweater | |
| clothes | |
| sock | |
| pants | |
| scarf | |
| underwear | |
| shirt | |
| blouse | |
| skirt | |
| dress | |
| glove | |

Game 2

In the second game, below, the students see a list of words they may be unfamiliar with (here the words are all parts of a jacket). They have to work out the meaning of each word using the dictionary, then draw a diagram to show the meanings. The purpose of this game is to get experience pulling meanings out of the dictionary.

Word:

Meaning:

Draw a picture:

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| sleeve | | |
| collar | | |
| button | | |
| hem | | |
| lapel | | |
| lining | | |

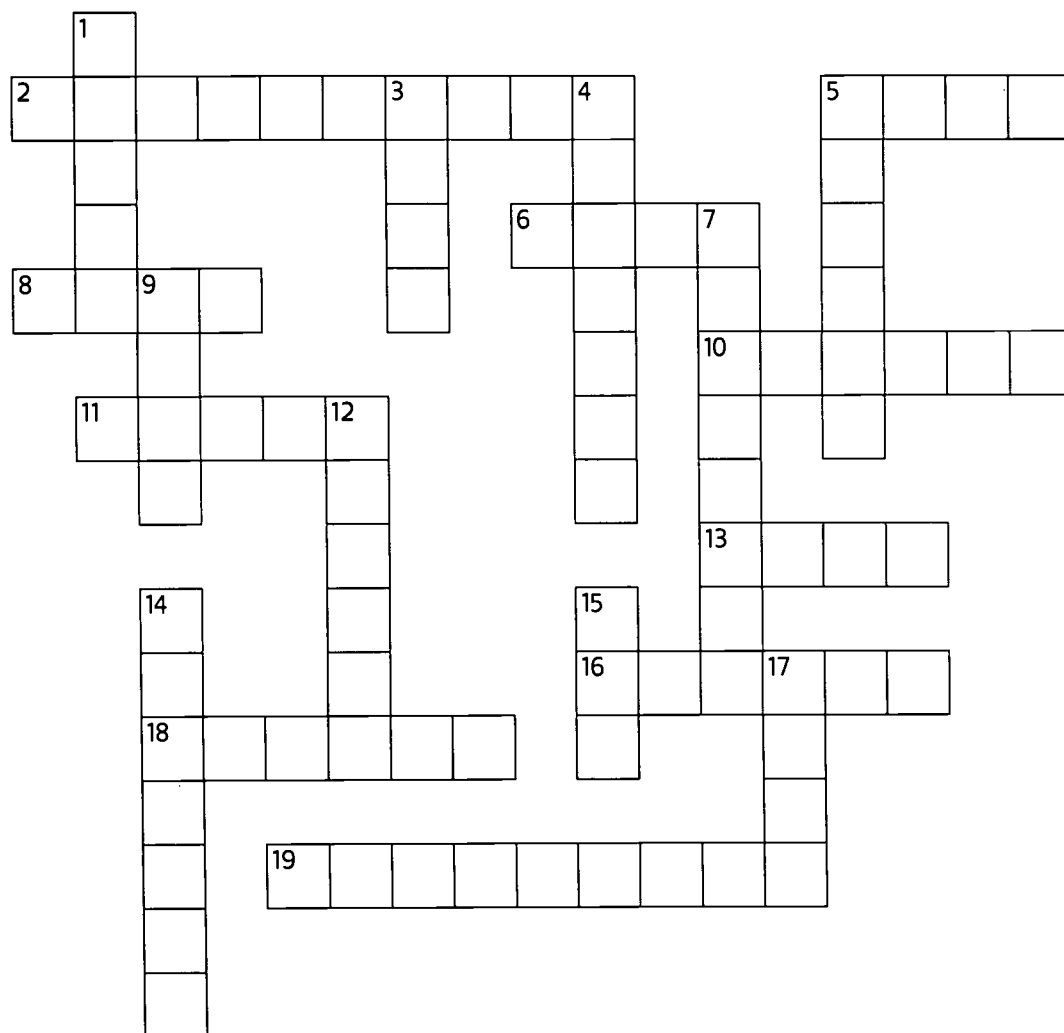
Game 3

Students work in pairs. They sit facing each other, each holding a copy of the same dictionary. They take turns asking:

"What is the first [dictionary entry] word on page 204?" or, "What is the last word on page 16?" Each student can ask 10 questions.

This is a good listening activity because it gives students a chance to practice asking for corrections if they don't understand. "Did you say page 227?" "No, I said 237." Another purpose of this game may be to give students practice pronouncing unfamiliar words. ➡

Puzzle: Dictionary puzzle 3



In past issues:

We've published two other very similar dictionary puzzles, in Vol. 2 No. 2, and in Vol. 3 No. 3. These are all suitable for high beginners or low intermediate students who are just starting to use a monolingual English dictionary.

This puzzle is a fun way for students to get familiar with the dictionary and to learn what kinds of information is there. They can find not only definitions, but abbreviations, verb forms, synonyms and spellings as well.

Use an English/English dictionary to find the answers to this puzzle!

Across clues

2. Which is the correct spelling?
innagurate, inaugurate, inaugerate
5. A *carp* is a kind of _____.
6. A *gumbo* is a kind of _____.
8. Is the word *convince* a noun, a verb, or both?
10. A synonym for *oration* is _____.
11. *Lichen* is a kind of _____.
13. Is the word *paint* a noun, a verb, or both?
16. "C.I.A." is the abbreviation for Central Intelligence _____.
18. "M.D." is the abbreviation for _____ of Medicine.
19. The word *cop* is an informal word for _____.

Down clues

1. A *cobra* is a kind of _____.
3. The past tense of *ride* is _____.
4. Which is the correct spelling?
ecanomy, econamy, economy
5. A synonym for *blossom* is _____.
7. The abbreviation *a.s.a.p.* means "as soon as _____."
9. A synonym for the word *regulation* is _____.
12. The past tense of *teach* is _____.
14. "F.B.I." is the abbreviation for _____ Bureau of Investigation.
15. A synonym for *devour* is _____.
17. Is the word *visitor* a noun, a verb, or both?

From the field: Help for new teachers

This is the first in a series of articles we plan to bring you by Abbie Tom, with practical advice for new teachers on how to get started.

Quite often, we hear from brand-new (starting tomorrow!) ESL instructors, asking us at *Hands-on English* for advice about where they should begin. What is best for the students? they ask. It's hard to come up with an answer to this urgent question.

Fortunately, we know Abbie Tom, ESL instructor at Durham Technical Community College in North Carolina. She's offered workshops to teachers on just this topic. We asked Abbie for some advice—what useful tips would she give to someone in this situation? Here's what she wrote:

Begin with questions

Dear new teacher:

Welcome to a new and challenging job. If you are like many new adult ESL teachers and tutors, you have come to the field with minimal training but with considerable good will and enthusiasm. So where do you begin? Perhaps the best way to start is by asking your students **questions**. You can ask students questions directly if they already know some English or in their first language if you or a colleague are able to do so. If you are not able to ask questions directly, find out all you can about the students through other sources such as employers, community sponsors, churches, or from their children's ESL teachers.

Listening is key

In addition, listen carefully during your class meetings and you will quickly learn a lot about your students. The first set of questions I'd suggest has to do with who your students are. Where are they from? What is their first language? How old are they? What is their previous education? Do they work? Are they married? Do they have children?

These questions can help you understand the interests and language needs of your students. A single 19-year-old man working in a restaurant will have some different interests and needs from a 52-year-old grandmother. A person who didn't get much education previously or who is just learning to read requires a different ap-

proach and may have different goals than someone who came here already with an advanced degree.

Now that you know something about your students, ask the next question: What can they do in English? Many students who come to adult classes have been in the United States for some time. They have rented apartments, paid bills and worked. They may be able to understand more than they can say. But, they may not know how to read and write in English. (Some may not read or write in their first language, either.) Other students may have learned to read and write English in school in their home countries but may be unable to listen or speak. You can learn about their listening and speaking skills through individual interviews.

Some interview tips

Start with easy questions (What is your name? Can you spell it, please? How old are you? Where do you live? When did you come here?) If the student can answer these questions, ask more open-ended questions: Tell me more about yourself. Tell me about your family. Tell me about your job. What did you do in your country? How did you prepare to come here? How is this city different from your home town? The answers will show you not only whether the student understands the questions but also how well he or she controls vocabulary and grammar (verb tenses and articles, for example), whether his or her pronunciation can be understood, and how willing he or she is to take risks by going beyond the simplest answer.

It is also important to find out the student's level of reading and writing. This can be done through a formal examination such as the *BEST Test*. Less formally, you can check reading by providing short passages at various levels and asking questions to see if the student has understood them. Selections from ESL readers can be used. You can check writing skills by asking the student to write something, perhaps about his or her own life.

...continued next page

“They may already understand more than they can say...”

Why English?

The last question, one which will shape the content and organization of your class, is: What do your students need and want to be able to do in English? Most adult ESL students do not have academic plans. The way many of us learned languages in school, first studying about the language through grammar and vocabulary lists and only later being allowed to use it for real communication, does not work for them. They need to be able to use English to communicate immediately.

As you plan your teaching, think about what the students need to be able to do in English in their daily lives: give personal information (give and spell first and last names, give and write down phone numbers and addresses), make phone calls, buy food, go to the doctor, understand instructions.

Ask your students how they need to use English. If possible ask their employers or others who know them. Try to put yourself in their shoes: what would you need to know in order to carry on daily life in a foreign

country? Which of these requires only listening and speaking? Which also rely on reading and writing?

Learning about your students is an ongoing process. If you listen carefully, you will learn more from them every day. As your knowledge increases, you can modify your teaching to include what you have learned.

Good luck, and enjoy your class!

Yours, Abbie

To be continued... in future issues! ➡

Abbie Tom teaches ESL in North Carolina and is co-author of several books for ESL teachers.

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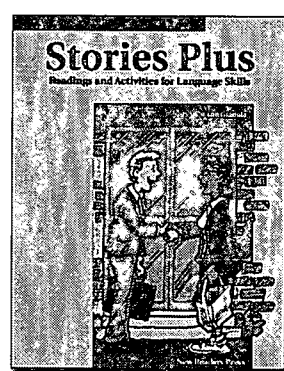
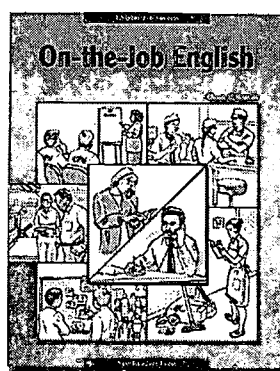
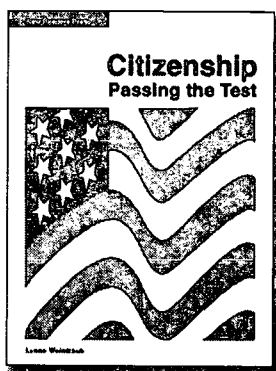
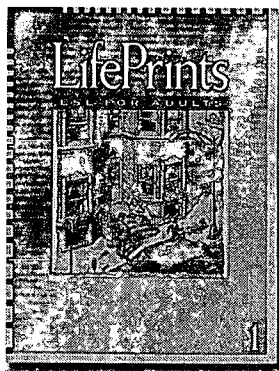
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Paco: Hello. I'm constipated. I need medicine.
Pharmacist: Sure! Try this.
Paco: I tell you I'm constipated and you give me a laxative? ¿Estás loca?
Pharmacist: Loca? Listen, this is what people take when they're constipated!
Paco: I'll never understand English speakers!



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News & notes

Minigrants available

It's that season again, when we at *Hands-on English* (for the 10th year in a row!), mail out applications for our annual Minigrant competition. These are small grants—only up to \$200. What can possibly be the point of such a small grant? Well, the point is to encourage creative ideas in the classroom, and to give recognition to teachers for their work.

The Minigrants are not intended as funds to start a new program or to purchase core materials. But teachers and tutors who have a teaching idea they'd like to try and who need some special supplies for this, are welcome to apply.

See more information about these grants on our website, and contact the HOE office for an application form. The deadline this year is June 30, 2001. ➔



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Hands-on English

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

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'Tis the tax season

As winter's icy grip is finally broken, our thoughts turn to... not to crocuses, sunlight and lambs frolicking on the meadow, but that other harbinger of spring, the income tax return.

We were interested to find, as we looked into this topic, a lack of ESL material available. Most materials that we've looked at for adult students, including citizenship texts, skip over this lightly if they mention it at all. Of course, it's not appropriate for ESL teachers or tutors to help their students with their tax returns. Still, as well as being a matter of personal business, taxes are a huge social phenomena and an issue that is much discussed in public. We know that your students have to do taxes, and we think that they may be interested in participating in the discussion also.

The two things that you can do as an ESL instructor to help your students with taxes are to familiarize them with the process, and to connect them to community resources where they can get professional assistance. We hope that the tax activities you'll find in this issue will give you and your students first of all an opportunity to discuss the tax filing process.

Taxing activities

On page 6, you'll find a reading passage more or less on the topic of procrastination, which includes a multi-level dictation that all your students can participate in. On page 8, there is a scrambled sentences story about the filing process (get the forms, sign the return, put on a stamp, etc.) that you can use for several different kinds of language practice. And finally, on pages 9 and 10, a multi-level dictation using the basic vocabulary related to filling out taxes.


Where to get help

The other important task is to help your students connect to the professional advice and proper resources in your community that they can use to complete their personal business. Here are some ideas for you; however we recommend that you (or your program) generate your own customized handout for the students that is geared to your community.

Where to find forms: You can go to your local IRS office (they usually have extended hours this time of year) for any forms you need. Basic forms can also be found at any post office branch, many libraries and some banks. Many forms can also be downloaded and printed from the IRS website, at: <http://www.irs.gov>

Where to find assistance with the forms:

- Your local IRS office can answer many questions. Frequently they have foreign language speakers available, and sometimes they give workshops out in the community—it may be worth a phone call to ask about this.
- Community colleges and other school programs frequently offer free tax clinics.
- Federal agencies such as refugee programs that serve your students often provide tax help.
- Local agencies (such as Hispanic organizations) frequently specialize in tax help for the population they serve.
- The personnel department at the students' place of employment may have free tax help.
- Churches, temples, religious organizations will very often assist people in finding tax help.
- If the student already has a lawyer, check with that office to see if they do taxes.
- Any licensed tax preparer will do the job for a fee—usually under \$50 for a simple return.
- Ask your city's Chamber of Commerce if they are offering free tax help.

—the Editor. 

Hands-on English

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About the publication
Our 10th year! *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!

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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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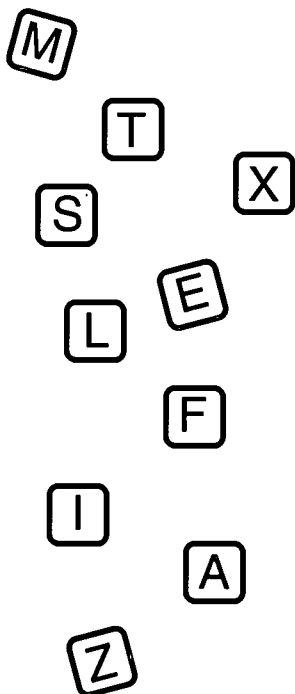
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Hints & tips

All of these marvelous teaching tips come from **Linda Phipps**, volunteer teacher in Midwest City, Oklahoma.



Linda says: "This game will work with any level; I've played it with a class of 15 advanced students and they seemed to enjoy it."

Easier Scrabble

Pass out Scrabble tiles to a group of students, as if to play Scrabble. (You can also write letters on cards for this, referring to the Scrabble instructions to see how many of each letter to make.) Students draw tiles by turns and spell out any word they can with their pieces, but unlike in the real game, they don't *have* to connect their word to the others.

Team Scrabble

Divide the class into two teams, at separate tables. Spread the Scrabble letters on the tables, one set for each table. Each team uses and reuses the letters as quickly as they can to make words. Their team receives a point for each letter in each word. You'll need one person from each team to record the team's words on paper (or on the board) for teammates to see, so there will be no repeat words. Another student can take the task of tallying the points.

At the end of the game (after a specified time), points are added up and the final tally announced. A bonus could be given for the longest word a team spelled (double points?).

Scrabble word game

Prepare each student a card with four definitions of vocabulary words previously learned down the left side and spaces for the letters that spell it, out to the right of each definition. For example, "When the weather is wet, we say it's _____." This tells them how many letters are in the word and gives them a hint to help decide what the word is. (Note: each student's card can have different questions but should require the same number of letters to complete, to be fair.)

Dump all the Scrabble tiles on the table, face down. (You can use more than one set if there are a lot of students.) Have a spinner with numbers 1 to 5. Students take turns spinning to see how many Scrabble tiles they can take. They use the letters they drew to help spell the words on the card, and then the next time around they return any unneeded letters to the pile. The first student to complete their card wins.

One set of tiles may be enough for up to about 5 students; after that they might start running out of letters before the game is over.

Variation: For literacy-level students you can try placing the vowels face up, the consonants face down. The students can decide whether to choose a vowel or draw for a consonant with each turn.

Fast, simple vocab review!

Here's a quickie warm-up or class starter to help your students review new words; this works great with any level.

Put a list of 10 to 15 new words from a recent lesson on the board. Divide the class into two teams. Give a clue about one of the words on the board. For example, "It's a part of the body." The first team to guess the correct word ("leg") from among the words on the board wins one point. Another clue might be "it ends with the /g/ sound." Once students are familiar with this game they can try to give clues to each other.

Reading numbers

This is good practice for students at any level and helps them become more fluent at pronouncing numbers in English.

Create a deck of cards consisting of one digit on each card. Shuffle these and divide them among the students. Next, lay down three cards, for example 352 and read the number aloud, "three hundred fifty-two."

Now the students take turns placing one card on top of any of the three digits they choose, and then reading aloud the resulting number. For example placing a 4 over the first card results in "four hundred fifty-two." As they get better at this, they should do it as rapidly as possible. **Variation:** Place a dollar sign to the left and include a decimal, then lay out four numbers like this: \$15.95 ("Fifteen dollars and ninety-five cents.") Students continue taking turns changing one digit and reading the number as before.

Reading long numbers

Using the same number cards, have students take turns laying down a card. First one digit (student reads the number aloud), next add a card to make two digits (read that number aloud), then three digits, etc., into the millions.

Tutors, too

All of the word and number games on this page will work very nicely with one or two students. ➡

Grammar grab-bag: "Dear B.A. Knowitall"

Advice columnist

Are you looking for ways to teach your students to express their opinions, make suggestions and practice 'modals of advisability' (could, should, ought to)? Here's a creative activity to incorporate all of these and to get your students interested in letter writing at the same time. The students will play the role of an advice columnist, responding to fictional problems with their own advice.

How to do it

First, introduce your class to the advice columns in a local newspaper. Distribute examples of letters from syndicated columnists such as *Ann Landers* or *Dear Abby*, to give them an idea of what an advice column is. You might discuss the popularity of these columns. Why do people read them? Why do people write to them? And why don't people sign their real names?

Give each student some paper, the handout below and one of the letters to respond to. (If you prefer, you can write the phrases they will need on the board.) Go over any of the expressions the students may not be familiar with. It's a good idea to practice these orally with the entire class, perhaps using an example 'problem.'

Start writing

Next, explain that the students will write an answer to the letter they have received. Give them some help with vocabu-

lary in case they don't understand the letter. Also give them a chance to switch to a different letter if they prefer.

Give the students enough time to compose a response. If any students finish quickly, they might like to choose a second letter as well. When the letters are finished, students may be very interested in reading each other's letters.

Adapting to your students

These materials are probably most suited to high intermediate or advanced students. The activity is very easy to adapt to lower levels, though—choose fewer example phrases to teach, and prepare some simpler problem letters. For students who aren't yet skilled in writing, try doing the exercise orally instead, perhaps in pairs. After they have discussed their answers, you can write some of their responses as they dictate.

Why it works

Everybody loves giving advice! Since the problems are fictional, no one risks getting their feelings hurt while discussing personal matters.

Follow up

Students could meet in small groups to read and discuss the letters they wrote. Other students may want to agree or disagree with the advice that was given. Students could write an additional, follow-up letter about this as homework. ➔

Contributed by Julia Farthing Kitay, ESL Instructor at Pittsburg Adult Educational Center in Pittsburg, California. (Julia says "B.A." is a play on words that can have two interpretations. You'll probably guess what they are.)

Who can resist giving advice? We think you and your students will enjoy this multi-faceted activity.

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| You could... | I personally believe (that)... |
| You should... | Why not...? |
| You ought to... | Why don't you...? |
| You had better... | Perhaps you could... |
| You might try... | If I were you, I would... |
| I honestly feel that... | What about _____-ing...? |
| I strongly believe that... | Try _____-ing... |
| I'm convinced that... | In a case like this, I would... |
| Without a doubt... | In a situation like this, ... |
| In my opinion... | I suggest you... |

Pretend that you are an advice columnist named **B.A. Knowitall** and that people write to you for advice. Every day you answer these letters in the newspaper.

Read a letter that one person sent you about a problem. Then write an answer to that person. Give some advice or suggestions about what to do.

You can use some of these phrases in your letter.

Grammar grab-bag, cont'd. . .

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a daughter who wants to get married but I think she is too young. She just turned 18 and is now a legal adult. How can I convince my child to finish her education first?</p> <p>Proud but Perplexed Parent</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend who is always in need of money. For the third time this week he has asked to borrow money from me. He's my best friend and I don't want to rebuff him. How should I handle this situation?</p> <p>A Flustered Friend</p> |
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>Although I have a boyfriend, I just met someone new. I think he is very attractive. Should I dump my boyfriend and pursue a relationship with this person? Or should I stay faithful to my boyfriend?</p> <p>Wondering Woman</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend who is only 15 years old and wants to quit school to have a baby. I think this is a stupid idea. How should I tell her this?</p> <p>Older and Wiser</p> |
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend at school who is using illegal drugs. He often shows up to class "high." One of these days he is going to be arrested and he won't be able to pursue his dreams in life. How can I help him?</p> <p>A Tortured Teenager</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend who came to the United States illegally and he is having a hard time finding work. How can I help him?</p> <p>Compassionate in Concord</p> |
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend from a foreign country who is very homesick. She tells me she wants to return to her native country because she misses her friends. However, the political situation in her country is volatile at this time. What should I tell her?</p> <p>A Fazed Friend</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend who is constantly getting drunk at all night parties. I'm afraid she's becoming an alcoholic. I want to tell her not to drink so much. What should I do?</p> <p>Baffled</p> |
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a co-worker and friend who just got fired by our boss because of his rudeness. Many people think he is "smart-mouthed." Though many people have asked him not to be so rude, he just doesn't seem to listen. How can I tell him he shouldn't be so rude?</p> <p>Concerned Co-worker</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a friend who has a lot of "one night stands." Recently, she told me that she had unprotected sex with new partner and she's afraid now that she may have gotten AIDS. What can I do to help her?</p> <p>Hesitant in Hampshire</p> |
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>Yesterday I saw my neighbor slap his little daughter. This is not the first time either. I feel outraged. Is there anything I can do to make the abuse stop?</p> <p>A Nosy but Nice Neighbor</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>My parents are getting divorced and each has asked me if I want to live with them. I love both my mom and dad very much and don't know what to do. How do I make a choice?</p> <p>A Torn Teenager</p> |
| <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I am having a hard time paying my bills. I am also trying to pay my own way through college but now I am in debt. Should I drop out of school and get a job or should I stay in school until I graduate?</p> <p>A Starving Student</p> | <p>Dear B.A. Knowitall:</p> <p>I have a foreign friend who is planning to marry an American in order to get citizenship. She does not love him, although he loves her. Won't this lead to a nasty divorce? Should I say anything to her about her plan?</p> <p>Worried in Washington</p> |

Multi-level dictation: Income tax

Here is another one of our ever-popular multi-level dictations, on the ever *unpopular* topic of taxes. We hope your students enjoy this exercise.

Preparation

To begin with, make photocopies of the worksheets on the opposite page. It might be easiest for the students if you cut these apart and enlarge each one on your copier first. Then make extra copies of each level, as students often like to try the exercise more than once, at different levels.

Starting the activity

Find out if any of your students have already filed their taxes, and if so ask them to explain how they did so.

The most effective kind of dictation is one in which the students are very familiar with the text they are writing. So, you can decide whether to hand this story out and read it together with them, or to discuss the topic and read the story to them before they see the text. In any case, they should be very comfortable with the ideas and the vocabulary before starting the dictation.

Income tax

In the U.S. we have a saying: "Nothing is sure except death and taxes." This means, everybody must pay taxes and we can't change this.

Each year, Americans know they must do their taxes by April 15. They have to fill out some forms. Sometimes they have to pay. Sometimes they get money back from the government. This is called a *refund*.

You can send in your tax forms any time in February, March or the first half of April. But some people wait until the very last day. On April 15 you will see many people at the post office. They are mailing in their taxes. Why do they wait until the last minute?

Questions

1. Many people say they feel nervous about their taxes. Why is this?
2. "Procrastinate" means wait and do it later. Why do people procrastinate on their taxes?
3. Do you think doing your taxes is difficult or easy? Why?

Dictation

Have the students choose which level to try (Level A is the easiest). The first time you read the text through, have the students read along on their worksheet, but not write anything. This will help them get a sense of how much writing they need to do. Then read each sentence at a natural speed, pausing between sentences to let students write. You can repeat the text as many times as the students wish.

Corrections, please

The beauty of this exercise is that when they are ready to check their work, students can work together. The beginning level students will have more information on their text than the advanced students and can therefore help them check their work. To take advantage of this feature, have students at different levels work together.

Next, ask if any students wish to try again. Often students who succeed at a lower level want to try again at a higher level. Advanced students can try writing on a blank sheet of paper. ➡

Adapting this activity to literacy-level students: If you supply them with a word list they can succeed at Level A by copying the correct word into the space. Here is the list:

15
and
April
February
can't
day
first
forms
minute
money
pay
pay
people
people
tax
taxes
taxes
they
this
U.S.
year

This is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 12 sentences (115 words).

Vocabulary needed:
fill out, send in, pay, mail in, get back, wait taxes, forms, government, post office

Note about tax deadline: Because April 15 falls on a Sunday this year, taxes are due April 16, 2001.

Income tax—Level A

In the _____ we have a saying: "Nothing is sure except death _____ taxes." This means, everybody must _____ taxes and we _____ change this.

Each _____, Americans know they must do their _____ by _____ 15. They have to fill out some _____. Sometimes they have to _____. Sometimes they get _____ back from the government. _____ is called a *refund*.

You can send in your _____ forms any time in _____, March or the _____ half of April. But some _____ wait until the very last _____. On April _____ you will see many _____ at the post office. _____ are mailing in their _____. Why do they wait until the last _____?

Income tax—Level B

_____ we have a saying: "Nothing is sure except _____." This means, everybody _____ and we can't _____ this.

_____, Americans know they _____ their _____ by _____. They have to _____ some forms. Sometimes they _____. Sometimes they _____ from the _____. This is _____ a *refund*.

You can _____ any time in February, March or _____ April. But some people wait until _____. On April 15 _____ at the post office. They _____ in their taxes. Why _____ until the _____ minute?

Income tax—Level C

In the U.S. _____: "_____ except death and _____." This means, _____ and we can't _____.

Each year, _____ their taxes _____. They _____ some _____. Sometimes _____. Sometimes _____ from _____. _____ a *refund*.

_____ your tax forms _____, _____ or the first half of _____. But _____ until _____. _____ you will see _____. They _____ taxes. _____ until _____?

Reading activity: Filling out your income taxes

Put the strips in order

Here's a scrambled sentences activity about the process of completing your taxes.

For each pair or small group of students, make a copy of the thirteen sentences below, cutting the story up and shuffling the strips. Let each group sort through the strips and try to put them in the correct order.

When the students are finished, ask for one group to read the first strip aloud, the next group to read the second strip, and so on. See if the class can agree on the correct order.

Speaking activity

Ask each group to turn over every third strip. Then let someone try to read the complete story, filling in the missing strips from memory. If they succeed, try again by turning over every second strip!

Writing activity

Shuffle the strips and distribute them among a group of 3 or 4 students. In the correct story order, each student will read out his or her strip, while everyone writes the sentence as dictation. When finished, all the students should have a written copy of the story. ➡

Filling Out Your Income Taxes:

Get a "W2" form from your employer.

Get some tax forms.

Find someone to help you fill out your tax forms.

Put your name, address and Social Security number on the form.

Don't forget to sign the form when it's finished.

Make a copy of the tax form to keep for yourself.

Put the forms in an envelope.

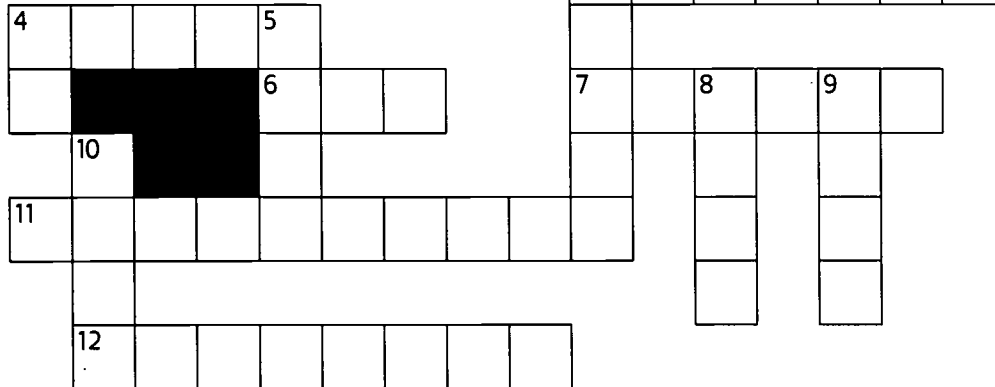
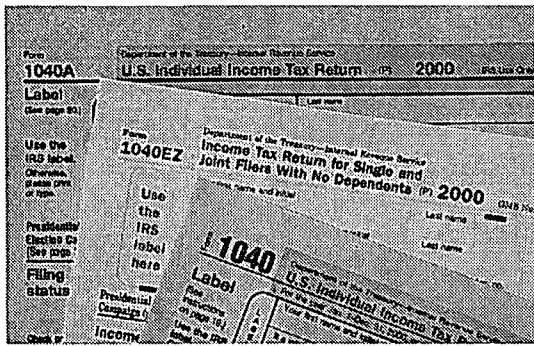
If you owe money to the IRS, put a check or money order in the envelope too.

Put a stamp on the envelope.

Mail your tax forms to the IRS.

Wait for your refund check (if the IRS owes you money).

Relax until next year.



Word list

- 1040
- dependents
- file
- fill out
- forms
- IRS
- keep
- name
- preparer
- refund
- sign
- Social
- W2
- wages

Level B (harder)

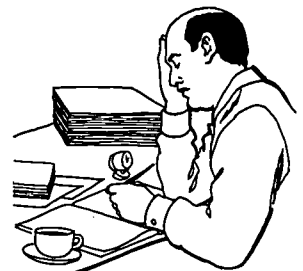
Across clues

2. The number on the main tax form is "_____".
3. "Do you know how to _____ your tax forms?" "No, but my uncle has a lawyer to help us."
4. The money your employer paid you last year is called your _____.
6. The "_____" is the office that takes care of taxes.
7. If the IRS owes you money, you will get a _____.
11. If you have children under 18 years old, they are your _____.
12. "Did you do your taxes by yourself?" "No, I went to a tax _____."

Down clues

1. You have to write your _____ Security number on the tax form.
3. "Did you send in your taxes?" "Not yet, I don't have the right tax _____."
4. The "_____" form is a small piece of paper that tells you how much money you earned last year.
5. Remember to _____ your name on the tax form before you mail it to the IRS.
8. You have to _____ (send in) your taxes by April 15.
9. On the top of the tax form, you write your first and last _____.
10. Don't forget to _____ a copy of your tax form for yourself.

This puzzle has exactly the same clues as Level A, but the words that are missing are harder.



Conversation: "Did you do your homework?"

by *Elizabeth*

Bakker, ESL teacher in Lakewood, California.

Elizabeth calls this an "autograph" activity. It's a great Monday morning exercise, because it gets the students talking a lot as they interview each other. Whoever can answer 'yes' to a question gets to sign their name to the paper.

An interview activity

This is a fun conversation activity in a familiar format—each student gets a copy of the sheet below. They interview other students, trying to find someone who can answer 'yes' to a question and getting their autograph.

This exercise is especially useful to practice forming questions with that very troublesome helping verb, "Did". For beginning students, you'll need to go through each example first to make sure students understand how to form the questions.

For example, #1. *went shopping* — students should know how to form the

question: Did you go shopping this weekend? For students who are just learning this form, they probably will need to practice each question first, or write them out before starting the activity.

We have found that even intermediate or high intermediate students need specific practice with these forms from time to time, so the activity will be beneficial for any level of student.

The first person who completes all 12 gets a prize. You can follow up by asking the class, "What did Monica do this weekend?" She went shopping, etc. 🖱

What did you do this weekend?

Walk around the room and ask your classmates about what they did this weekend. Have them sign their name on the line if they answer "yes" to your question.

1. went shopping

2. ate in a restaurant

3. visited friends

4. visited a family member

5. wrote letters

6. called a friend

7. did some homework

8. went out of town

9. went to the park

10. went to a party

11. went to the movies

12. cleaned the house

Help for new teachers, part 2: 'Theme teaching'

Dear New Teacher,

In my last letter I wrote about how to find out who your students are, what they know and what they want to learn. In this letter I want to share some ideas about how to organize a course for adult ESL students.

I feel very strongly that the best way to organize an adult class is around a theme, such as family or housing or health. These are practical themes which interest students because they are closely related to their own lives. Every student comes to the class with some knowledge and experience of them. Studying these themes not only gives students practice in English but provides them with content that is directly useful.

Continuity

As a theme is carried over from one class session to the next, the students have a sense of continuity and predictability. They don't feel that they are starting something new each time. What they learn in one class they use again in future classes.

Themes also make multilevel classes function more smoothly. The entire class can be working within one theme at different levels. Similarly, when different volunteers teach a class each time, themes can provide continuity from one session to another.

One theme might last a week or more, depending on how often the class meets and how complex the theme is. In the course of working on a theme the students practice listening, speaking, reading and writing. Grammar and vocabulary are easily integrated and are more meaningful when they are used in a context, not just taught and forgotten. Don't worry if at the end of a unit, the students haven't mastered everything they might need to learn about a theme. Themes can be revisited in subsequent levels.

Now let's look at some specific themes and examples of what they might include. Once you start thinking along these lines, you'll find a wealth of ideas for teaching within each theme. The possibilities are unlimited!

Personal Identification:

- tell first and last name, telephone number, address, age, date of birth, country of

origin, native language, marital status, occupation and any other information which is pertinent to your students.

- say and understand numbers (telephone numbers, addresses, age and dates)
- spell aloud names, street names, countries and native languages
- understand information questions
- use months and dates (birthdays and other important dates)
- ask information questions of others
- understand and use "I," "my," "you" and "your"
- fill in simple forms or survey classmates and write down their personal information
- read stories which include the personal information of others

Community:

- use a map of the community
- learn the names and locations of important places in the community
- understand and give directions
- use location words
- learn about the public transportation system, read route maps
- learn to call 911
- read advertisements for local businesses
- read about the history of the community

Family:

- use relationship vocabulary (mother, father, etc). Students can make their own family tree to help them understand the vocabulary.
- use pronouns and possessives (he/she, his/her)
- ask and answer personal information questions about family members
- share family pictures with each other
- read stories about families
- write about a family member (perhaps based on a simple reading you can make up about your own family)

Daily Activities:

- learn vocabulary of daily activities (I get up, I cook breakfast, etc), which can be introduced with pictures (picture cards, picture dictionaries) or mime
- understand and use days of the week and times
- use *before* and *after* correctly in sequences of activities

by *Abbie Tom*

This is the second in a series of articles with practical advice for new teachers. Abbie is a veteran ESL instructor in North Carolina and is co-author of several books for ESL teachers. Her main ESL focus is on adult students.

Part 1 in the series appeared in our last issue, Vol. 10, No. 5, p. 13.

"Themes can provide continuity from one session to another. . ."

- write and talk about daily schedules; compare them with those of classmates
- read about the daily activities of others

Money and banking:

- know and name the denominations of US currency
- understand pros and cons of various forms of money (cash, ATM cards, credit cards, debit cards, money orders)
- know how to use banking services

Food:

- learn vocabulary of food and food preparation (picture cards or picture dictionaries are helpful)
- read newspaper supermarket ads
- understand prices from dictation
- learn US measurements
- recognize count and noncount nouns
- practice articles showing quantity (a/an, a lot, a few, many, much)
- learn about meals and times
- learn to state food preferences
- learn to give and understand simple directions for cooking

Clothing:

- learn the names of common articles of clothing
- learn color and size words
- use the correct sequence for colors and other adjectives (before the noun)
- describe orally and in writing a person's clothing

- understand prices and sale prices
- listen to/tell stories about a special item of clothing

Health:

- learn vocabulary for body parts and common symptoms and ailments (a picture dictionary is very helpful)
- practice doctor appointments (making the appointment, going to the office, explaining the problem)
- read medicine labels, directions and warnings
- know how to use resources for medical care (doctor's office, urgent care, emergency room, 911)
- listen to/tell or read stories about medical emergencies

Other themes that are of great interest to adult ESL students and that provide plenty of opportunities for language learning include: Housing, Cars, Weather, Schooling, Jobs.

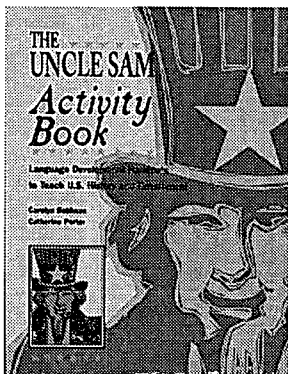
I hope you enjoy playing with themes while planning your ESL course. In my next letter, I'll give an example of planning one lesson to include as much varied language practice as possible.

Until then, enjoy your class!

Yours, Abbie ↵

To be continued in our next issue. . .

On the market Reviews of useful ESL materials



Available from Alta Book Center, 800-ALTA/ESL, www.altaesl.com

Review by **Jill Kramer**, ESL instructor at Columbus Literacy Council in Columbus, Ohio.

The Uncle Sam Activity Book: Language Development Handouts to Teach U.S. History and Government by Carolyn Bohlman and Catherine Porter (2000 Contemporary Books) ISBN 0-8092-0491-6 (a cassette tape is also available) \$19.95

Teachers of citizenship classes are always looking for hands-on materials to help their students prepare for the naturalization process. Low level material has been scarce. In 1998, New Readers Press published "Citizenship: Passing the Test" by Lynne Weintraub, which helped fill the gap. Now *The Uncle Sam Activity Book* brings us more student-centered activities.

The book contains a variety of reproducible handouts to teach US history and government. Activities are at different levels

making it suitable for multi-level classes. There are whole class, pair and individual activities.

At the beginning of the book are teachers' notes for each activity. These notes are clearly written and spell out the materials needed, type of activity, level and which of the 100 INS questions it pertains to. The suggestions for follow-up activities are useful for multi-level classes.

There are 53 reproducible handouts, many with clear illustrations. There are maps, matchups, listening comprehension, bingo, pictures, strip stories, songs, skits and more. The information gap activities, especially those with maps, make for worthwhile pair work. I have used several of the handouts with success. My students enjoyed

Review, continued from page 13. . .

matching strips about the three branches of government and their functions. It was challenging, but they learned a lot. The authors labeled it as a beginning/intermediate level but it required a high beginning level of reading. (I gave the beginning level students some help as they matched their strips.)

The authors include a list of the 100 INS questions conveniently divided into topics. There are also lyrics to well-known patriotic songs such as "This Land is Your Land." A cassette tape is also available but I have not used it.

Teachers of citizenship classes will find themselves reaching for this book often to reinforce and review topics. It isn't a complete text in itself but it is a much needed supplement.

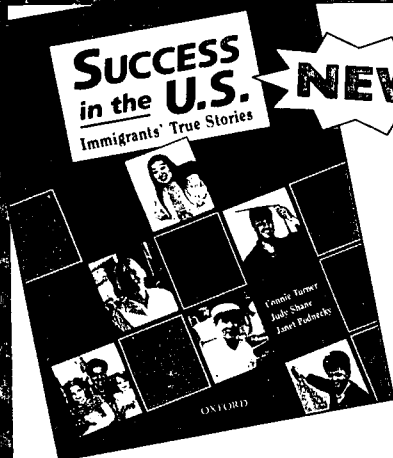
—Jill Kramer 

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Real Basics; A Beginning ESL Text for Immigrants by S.E. Treadgold. (2000 New Leaf ESL Materials) A clear introduction to the patterns, concepts and vocabulary beginning-level immigrants will need to navigate in their new language and culture. ISBN 0-96637-05-2-X. \$15. The *Teacher's Companion* has reproducible games, scrambled sentences, pictures and cards.

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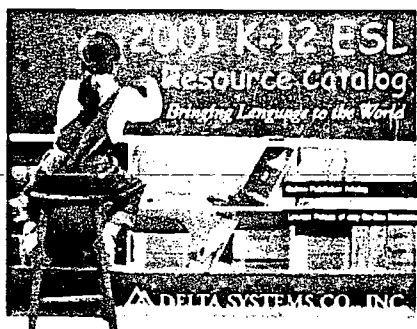
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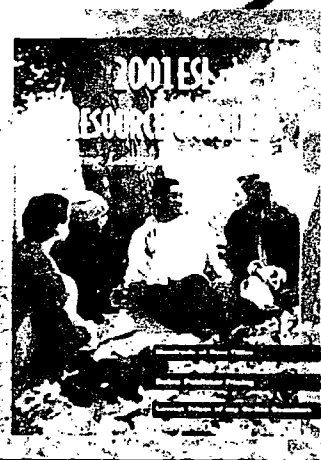


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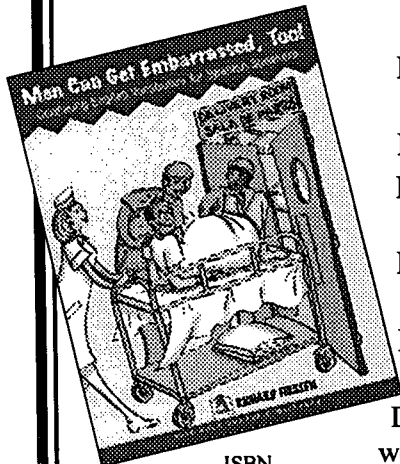
Confusing English Vocabulary for Spanish Speakers

by Richard Firsten

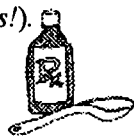
Paco: Hello. I'm constipated. I need medicine.
 Pharmacist: Sure! Try this.
 Paco: I tell you I'm constipated and you give me a laxative? ¿Estás loca?
 Pharmacist: Loca? Listen, this is what people take when they're constipated!
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News & notes

In past issues

If it's still winter where you are, you might want to use our "Winter" crossword puzzle in Vol. 6, No. 5, or our puzzle on "Keeping warm" in Vol. 9, No. 4. For early spring topics, see the puzzle "Spring cleaning" in Vol. 9, No. 6 and a multi-level dication called "Planting seeds" in Vol. 8, No. 6. And, don't forget to check our website for any new current events activities.

Minigrants available

Do you know about the Hands-on English Minigrants? Each year we award several small grants for innovative teaching projects. You can find more information about these grants on our website, or contact the HOE office for an application form. The deadline this year is June 30, 2001. ➔



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