

Free Activities from *New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary*

The [New Ways series](#) is a collection of activities and exercises for classroom practice. Here are several great activities for teaching vocabulary from [New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary](#).

What Is It?

Levels Intermediate +	Aims Individualize the revision of vocabulary
Class Time 10 minutes	Resources Activity sheet

Procedure

1. Prepare a sheet containing several sets of sentences such as:

It is like water.
Everybody has it.
It is warm when it belongs to people.
It is cold when it belongs to a fish.
It is usually red.
It is in your body.
What is it?

2. The learners work on the sheets in their own time and at their own speed. They mark their work from an answer key.

Caveats and Options

1. Arrange the sentences in a set so that the first sentences do not give a lot of information.
2. This activity can be used to teach vocabulary if the actual word is used instead of *it*. The learners respond by writing the L1 translation of the word.

Contributor

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Follow Your Character

Levels Intermediate +	Aims Focus on a particular type of vocabulary
Class Time 30 minutes	Resources Video segment

Students pool their knowledge of vocabulary and create a coherent passage describing one character's activities in a video passage. When video is used for language learning purposes, students often focus on just the dialogue. This activity is a way of focusing students' attention on a different set of vocabulary items. By reducing the volume and giving each group a specific character and giving each group member a specific part of speech, the cognitive load is significantly reduced. This enables students to focus on aspects of the video passage and hence vocabulary that they would not focus on with more listening-based approaches.

This type of cooperative group work encourages students to pool their knowledge of vocabulary and teach each other. There is a considerable amount of interaction and negotiation of meaning that takes place as students work to create a paragraph to present to the class.

Procedure

1. Choose a section of video from 20 seconds to 1 minute in length that has a lot of action and several characters.
2. Split the class into enough groups so that each group has one character to watch.
3. Each person in the group should watch the character and be in charge of taking note of the vocabulary related to one of the following categories: (a) actions, (b) objects, (c) descriptions of objects or people, and (d) descriptions of actions.

Play the video two or three times. Turning the volume off might help the students focus on the task.

4. The students' task will be to pool their vocabulary and from this group of words create a complete description of their character's role in the scene.
5. Have them write a paragraph for one of the group members to then read to the class.

The following is an example from the introduction to "The Simpsons," a popular U.S. TV show, which I have used in my class.

First Bart leaves school on his skateboard. He is wearing a yellow striped shirt and short pants. He drives dangerously past three people on the sidewalk. Homer throws away a green radioactive rod that almost hits him. Finally, Bart jumps over the car and goes into the house and sits on the old couch with the family.

Contributor

Eric Bray is Academic Director at the Kyoto YMCA English School, in Japan.

Word Building

Levels Intermediate +	Aims Develop knowledge of word forms Extend the range of meanings for known words
Class Time 20 minutes Prep Time 5 minutes	Resources None

Procedure

1. Choose a set of words or forms to work with. These could be prepositions, prefixes or suffixes, phrasal verbs (e.g., the preposition *against*; or the suffix *-ful*).
2. Ask students to form groups and to think of many ways in which the word can be used. In the case of *against*, for example, students might produce:

Lean *against* the wall.
I'm *against* your suggestion.
For and *against*.
It's *against* my expectation.
I'm not *against* what you say.
It's *against* the law.

3. Set a time limit and let students use their imaginations. By pooling their resources, they should be able to generate at least six or more examples.
4. Ask groups to read out their examples. Give further explanations concerning usage. Correct any unacceptable explanations and give reasons.

After all the examples have been gathered, get the class to classify them into meaning groups or to find the underlying meaning of the item.

Contributor

Ronald Jackup is a freelance ESL teacher and writer.

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