
SELECTED ACTIVITIES for the LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

The following provides some activities that can be utilized in the classroom.

The games are provided as examples, for instructors to use as they deem appropriate.



☒ "That's an unusual view!"

Language	Naming and describing objects (<i>It's a...</i>) or expressing ignorance (<i>I don't know</i> or <i>I've no idea</i> or <i>It could be</i>). In Variation I, the phrase: <i>It's part of ...</i> is used.
Skills	Listening and speaking
Control	Guided.
Level	Beginners.
Time	10-15 minutes.
Materials	Chalk board or overhead projector (OHP). In the variations, magazine pictures.



Preparation

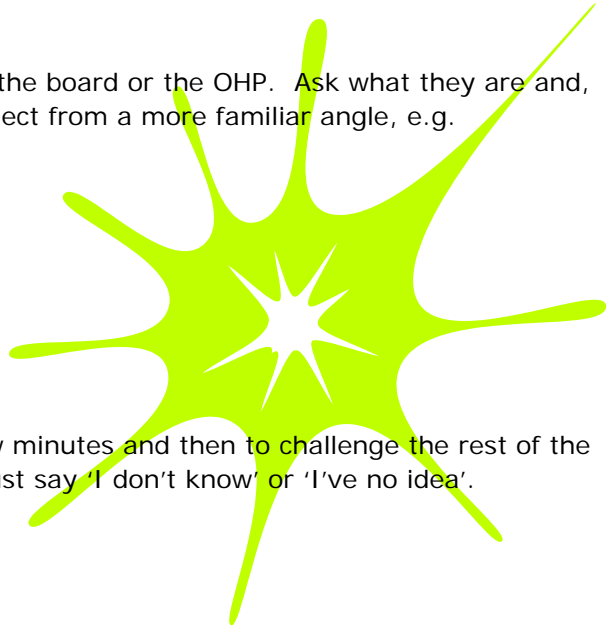
Prepare a few drawings of unusual views of common objects on a sheet of paper for the OHP.

Procedure

Class work, optionally leading to group work.

Draw several examples of unusual views of objects on the board or the OHP. Ask what they are and, once identified, draw or show a picture of the same object from a more familiar angle, e.g.

- Teacher: What's this?
Learner 1: It's a woman's face.
Teacher: She hasn't got any eyes or nose!
Learner 2: It's a beefburger.
Teacher: Yes. It's a beefburger from above.



Ask the learners to prepare ideas of their own for a few minutes and then to challenge the rest of the class or group. If the learners cannot answer, they must say 'I don't know' or 'I've no idea'.

Variation 1

Class work, optionally leading to group work.

Use pictures from magazines etc. These may be unusual views of objects or parts of objects which you have cut out.

If you show parts of objects the learners should say 'part of', i.e.

- Learner 1: It's part of a wheel.

Variation 2

Class work, optionally leading to group work.

Show a small part of a picture as you pull it from an envelope. Let the class guess what it might be.

Alternatively, you may show a small part of a picture on the OHP by covering it with a piece of paper that has a hole cut in it. The hole may be a slit, a circle, a square - or shaped like a keyhole.

activities



"Predicting pictures"

Language	Future with <i>going to</i> . Exclamations of pleasure (i.e. <i>marvellous!</i>) and of regret (i.e. <i>what a pity!</i>)
Skills	Listening and speaking
Control	Guided
Level	Beginners / Intermediate
Time	10-15 minutes
Materials	Magazine or catalogue pictures, pieces of card



Preparation

Collect 15-20 pictures of objects from a catalogue or magazine.

Alternatively you may draw them. Mount your pictures on a piece of cardboard which are all the same size.

Procedure

Class, group or pair work.

The learners should first familiarize themselves with the pictures on the cards. Then mix all the pictures and lay them in a pile, face down.

Players take it in turns to try to predict the next picture; if they are right they take it and if they are wrong they place it at the bottom of the pack, i.e.

Learner 1: It's going to be a typewriter. No! What a pity!
(What a shame!) (puts it underneath the pack)

Learner 2: It's going to be a kettle. Yes, it's mine! Marvellous!

fun

games



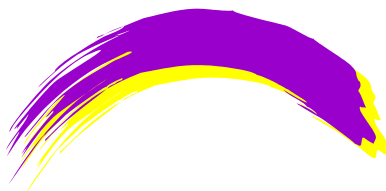
"Happy Twin"

Language	Describing pictures of objects and people
Skills	Listening and speaking. Variation 3 also includes reading
Control	Free
Level	Intermediate
Time	10-15 minutes
Materials	Pictures, either from magazines or drawn; envelopes; or written instructions



Preparation

Collect 16-20 pictures of single objects or people from magazines, or draw them. Most of the pictures should form pairs of *identical* objects or people. Mount them on pieces of cardboard which are all the same size. Put all the pictures into an envelope, together with the instructions for the game. Note how many pairs there are. One sort of pictures will be needed for each pair of learners.



Procedure

Pair work. The aim is for two players, working together, to collect all the pairs.

The pictures should be mixed and placed in a pile face down. Each player takes a turn to pick up a card *without showing it to the other*. Then each player describes his/her own card *without letting the other see*. The players can also ask each other questions.

If they decide they have a pair, they place them on the table. If the cards *are* a pair, they put them on one side. If the cards are not a pair, they put them back in the pack.

fun

Variation 1

Class work.

You must make enough pairs of pictures for each learner to have *one* picture. For example, if you have 20 students you must have ten pairs of pictures. (The pictures can be *very* simple and very small! You can easily get ten small drawings on one sheet of A4 paper which you then photocopy to get a pair. If the drawings are all similar, it will be more difficult and produce more discussion! Cut the sheets of paper up and you will have 20 drawings.)

Give each learner one picture. Each learner must then find which other learner has the same picture. The level of difficulty of language is determined by the drawing you choose to do.

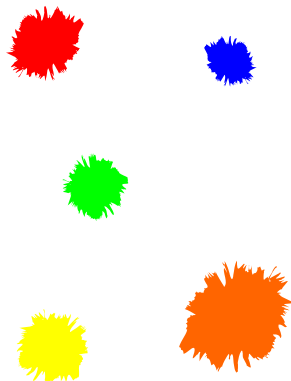
Variation 2

Pair work.

Ten or twelve pictures must be laid at random face down in front of each pair and others which are similar. Each player must pick up one picture. Through discussion they must find out whether they have an identical pair. When they decide that they have or have not got an identical pair, they may look at the pictures.

If they have correctly judged the pictures to be a pair, they should put them on one side. If they are not an identical pair, the pictures should be laid down again, face down, and all the pictures shuffled around at random. When they have correctly identified all the pairs, the game is over.

Of course you can make the game shorter by having fewer pictures! You can make it more difficult by having many similar pictures!



Variation 3

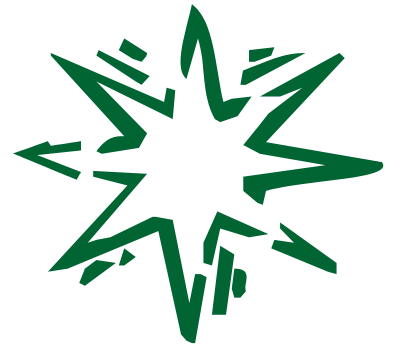
Pair or group work.

Instead of pictures you give each learner a piece of paper on which are written a number of individual words or sentences. All the papers should have some words in common; there will be two of each kind.



“Describe and draw a picture”

Language	Describe pictures, asking questions, making comparisons, encouraging, praising, criticizing.
Skills	Listening and speaking, and, in Variation 3, reading and writing.
Control	Free.
Level	Intermediate / advanced.
Time	15-20 minutes.
Materials	Magazines pictures or line drawings, paper and pencils. Chalk board in Variation 5.



Preparation

Select from magazines any pictures which show a number of different objects. The objects should be clear in shape and the pictures should preferably not include people. It is amusing if the objects are bizarre in some way - but this is not essential.

Alternatively, the language can be limited if the original is a simple line drawing or the language may specify if the original is a technical diagram.

For each pair of learners you will need one picture, a piece of paper and a pencil.

Procedure

Pair work.

One learner describes the picture to the other who must try to draw it. *The other must not see the original*, e.g.

Learner 1: There is a square table in the picture. It is in the middle of the picture.

Learner 2: About here?

Learner 1: Yes... well, a little further down.

Learner 2: Is it like that?

Learner 1: No, not quite, the legs are too long.

games

fun

When the 'artist' and his 'patron' have done as much as they can, the original and the copy should be compared, i.e.

Learner 1: Oh, the table legs are too long!

Learner 2: I told you they were. But you wouldn't change them.

Variation 1

Pair work.

The 'artist' is asked by the 'patron' to add detail to an existing picture (which you have supplied). The detail might be, for example, buttons on a coat, hair, windows. The detail might be colour.

To produce this nearly complete picture, you would have to take a line drawing and make enough photocopies of it for half the class. Then white out parts of the same drawing (with typist's correction fluid) before making copies for the other half of the class. The 'patron' would get the complete picture and the 'artist' the incomplete picture.

Variation 2

games

Class work.

Instead of the instructions and description of the picture being given by a learner, they can be given by you (or a tape recording) for the whole class. Each learner draws his/her own picture.

Variation 3

Pair work.

This variation involves descriptive writing. Each learner is given a picture to describe in writing. When the descriptions are ready, they are exchanged with a neighbour, who must then try to make a drawing based on the description. When the drawings are complete, they may be compared with the originals and the differences discussed.

activities

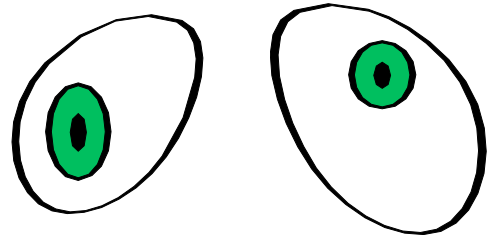
Variation 4

Pair work.

The 'patron' describes an object but does *not* describe its function or name it. The 'artist' tries to draw the object as it is described and may ask questions to improve the representation.

Group work.

Alternatively, the game may be played in a group with two or three players listening to the description, watching the drawing and guessing what the object might be.



Variation 5

Class work leading to pair work.

Draw, or ask a learner to draw, a picture on the board.

Now ask another learner to draw a picture on the board, a copy of the first drawing. As he/she does so, encourage the class to make helpful comments, e.g.

Class: His head is too big.
His legs aren't long enough.
His body is too fat.
The stripes are too narrow.
His trousers are too wide.
His face is too ugly.
That's better.
Good.



Organize pair work in the usual way. Each learner should draw a picture and take it in turns to copy his/her partner's.



"Picture/text matching"

Language	Matching words (single words, sentences and paragraphs) to pictures. Discussing and, in the variation, writing biographical notes (i.e. age, likes and dislikes, beliefs, occupation, etc.)
Skills	Reading with listening and speaking. The variation also entails writing
Control	Controlled
Level	All
Time	Depends on the length and complexity of the texts
Materials	Pictures and pieces of card



Preparation

You must collect four or five pictures and write a description of each picture on a separate piece of paper or card. If you wish to increase the complexity, then include similar, though not identical, information in each text.

Of course, the preparation could be carried out by the students themselves and be used to challenge each other. Four or five pictures and texts are enough for one pair.

Procedure

Individual or pair work.

This is one of the great families of games in language learning! There are suitable variations of this game for students at all levels of proficiency. In the most elementary of all the variations of this game the learner is given four or five separate picture cards and on separate cards the words which name the objects in the pictures. The aim of the learners is to match the appropriate text to each picture.

The same procedure can be used at any level of proficiency. At a slightly higher level the students can be asked to match sentences to pictures and the teacher may ensure that there are some things common to several of the pictures in order to make the matching more difficult. The texts could be dialogue, instead of description.

Variation

Pair or group work leading to class work.

Give each pair (or group) a magazine picture which is, effectively, a study of someone. The person should not be known to the learners. The pair (or group) must study the portrait and try to imagine as much about the person as possible: age, work, likes and dislikes, character, rich or poor or average, beliefs about society and social behaviour, etc. These interpretations should be written down by each learner. The learners in the pair (or group) may work together on the text.

You then collect all the portraits and display them. When you have done this, all the learners circulate inspecting the picture for a few minutes.

Then take the first description at random. Read it out (you would probably ask who wrote the description). The aim is for the other pairs (or groups) to decide which of the portraits is being referred to.



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