

**КЗ «Ковельська міська гімназія
імені Олени Пчілки»**

Group work activities



***(методична розробка для вчителів
загальноосвітніх навчальних
закладів)***

Н.В. Бурим

м. Ковель

2019

ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

Бурим Надія Василівна

Посада : вчитель англійської мови

Педагогічний стаж: 19 років

Кваліфікаційна категорія: спеціаліст вищої категорії

Методична розробка містить вступ, в якому подається короткий опис групової роботи як технології кооперативного навчання, звертається увага на саму організацію дітей в групи та завдання класифікуються щодо їх використання для розвитку різних видів комунікативних вмінь. Збірник містить опис різноманітних завдань для групової роботи учнів на уроках англійської мови. Завдання та форми роботи спрямовані як і на розвиток окремих комунікативних вмінь, так і на комплексне оволодіння іноземною мовою. Робота в групах є найкращим способом мотивації учнів та їх залучення до іншомовного середовища.

ЗМІСТ

I. Вступ.....	4
II. Розвиток говоріння.....	6
III. Розвиток читання.....	17
I V. Розвиток слухання.....	21
V. Розвиток письма.....	22
VI. Список використаних джерел.....	30

Introduction

As a cooperative learning technique, group work is a great way to motivate and engage students. For most students, being called on by the teacher to answer a question in front of their peers can be a frightening experience. Even if they think they have an idea about the answer, they are often not sure if it is correct. If they don't know the answer panic can occur and usually dead silence is the result. This kind of atmosphere can promote a fear of making errors which is counterproductive to language learning. Taking risks and making errors is all part of effective language learning. However, in a small group, there is a sense of security because they are working with their classmates to come up with an answer or accomplish a task. There is no pressure on one solitary student. As a group or pair they share the responsibility for the work. They are also allowed the freedom to come up with answers that reflect their own thinking.

Using a variety of seating arrangements and groupings of students is important as it allows learners to practice different types of things. Working with others gives students the opportunity to interact with a variety of people and learn from one another. It also encourages cooperation which will help students get along in class and could reduce the number of student outbursts too.

Students can work in groups or form teams for role plays, races, games such as board games or card games, and discussions. Groups give students the opportunity to create more complex dialogues, explore relationships between characters, pool knowledge together, and have a more social learning environment. Additionally there is a better chance for self correction or peer correction and for a discussion on a wider range of thoughts and opinions with larger group sizes. On the other hand, individual speaking time is limited when working in groups. You can increase the amount of speaking time students have by decreasing the size of groups to three or four people. If you are in a large class and want all the groups to present material at the end of the lesson, larger groups may be necessary but limit group size to about six.

However, group work is a difficult technique to teach. Much of the actual teaching of group work is laying down important principles for the actual work to take place. Here are some tips and principles that help create successful group work lessons.

Instructions

○ 1

Discuss with the class the advantages of group work. Many students are not convinced of the benefits of cooperative learning. Brainstorm with the class some of the benefits of working as a team and in groups.

○ 2

Start the lesson by teaching the whole class together. Provide enough ground material that is necessary and important for carrying out the group task. Explain to the class that their success on the task depends on how well they understand the material and help their fellow students.

- 3
Go through a trial run of instructions and explanations, modeling wherever necessary. Understanding the task is critical for success. Encourage students to also ask their peers for help and clarification. Make sure students understand that you will act as a facilitator as you visit from group to group. Keep the instructions very short and simple.
- 4
Assign group responsibilities. Responsibilities can include a time keeper, a group secretary who takes notes, and a group helper who is in charge of making sure everybody understands.
- 5
Distribute a group accountability page. Group accountability is an important part of group work. On this page, students should fill out the following information: 1. The names of the students in the group and those who are present . 2. The group name (if applicable). 3. The date. 4. The group task. 5. What each member of the group does. 6. What each member of the group will do for homework. Make sure that each member records his/her homework assignment. Collect these pages at the end of the lesson. These accountability forms represent 10 percent of their final group contribution grade.
- 6
Give a time limit for group work. If you are working on a long-term in-class assignment like research projects, make sure students know how long you plan on using group work. Make sure students know exactly how much time will be devoted to group work. Tell students 5 minutes before the end of the group work activity that they need to start finishing up.
- 7
Give students time to finish the necessary activity.
- 8
Always leave 5 to 7 minutes before the end of the group work activity for summing up the group work activity and/or allowing students to reflect on what they had learned.

Group work can be used to develop different communicative skills.

Developing Speaking Skills

Communicative Output Activities

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are *discussions* and *role plays*.

Discussions

After a content-based lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, it is essential that the purpose of the discussion activity is set by the teacher. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. For example, students can become involved in agree/disagree discussions. In this type of discussions, the teacher can form groups of students, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, and provide controversial sentences like “people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel”. Then each group works on their topic for a given time period, and presents their opinions to the class. At the end, the class decides on the winning group who defended the idea in the best way. This activity fosters critical thinking and quick decision making, and students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with the others. For efficient group discussions, it is always better not to form large groups, because quiet students may avoid contributing in large groups. The group members can be either assigned by the teacher or the students may determine it by themselves, but groups should be rearranged in every discussion activity so that students can work with various people and learn to be open to different ideas. Lastly, in class or group discussions, whatever the aim is, the students should always be encouraged to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification, and so on.

Discussions, like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way. To succeed with discussions:

- Prepare the students: Give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it.
- Offer choices: Let students suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vacation, or news about mutual friends. Weighty topics like how to combat pollution are not as engaging and place heavy demands on students' linguistic competence.
- Set a goal or outcome: This can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.

- Allow students to participate in their own way: Not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic. Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the discussion is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Role Play

One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. They practise small dialogues using the roles they've been given. Often they are given 'role cards', which could be just the name of the role, or sometimes they are given instructions as to what to do. Have students role play certain situations that they may encounter when traveling abroad or doing business. For example, you can have them role play checking into a hotel or meeting a business acquaintance.

Role plays can lead to interesting discussions on topics that learners don't often get a chance to talk about. They can be set in specific contexts, and created to practise specific target language or vocabulary. Learners often feel that role plays free them up - they feel less restricted, because they are playing the role of somebody else.

Have you ever used any of the following twists to role plays?

Introduce strange variations: "You are a pair of sports shoes. You feel used and abused. Nobody really takes care of you - you are dirty and smelly" or "You are a red sports car. Convince the buyer that they should purchase you, and not the practical, grey family car next to you."

Try 'real-play': In this version of role play, learners play themselves. You can provide a situation, or the learners can come up with their own. You could ask learners to choose a problem or situation that they might want to work on, and then they create a dialogue based on the situation. Roles could be switched, and learners could role play each other. For this type of role play, make sure a framework is set: What is the situation? Who are the people in the role play? How do they know each other? What kind of result do you want to have?

Students usually find role playing enjoyable, but students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels may find them intimidating at first. To succeed with role plays:

- Prepare carefully: Introduce the activity by describing the situation and making sure that all of the students understand it
- Set a goal or outcome: Be sure the students understand what the product of the role play should be, whether a plan, a schedule, a group opinion, or some other product
- Use role cards: Give each student a card that describes the person or role to be played. For lower-level students, the cards can include words or expressions that that person might use.
- Brainstorm: Before you start the role play, have students brainstorm as a class to predict what vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions they might use.
- Keep groups small: Less-confident students will feel more able to participate if they do not have to compete with many voices.
- Give students time to prepare: Let them work individually to outline their ideas and the language they will need to express them.
- Be present as a resource, not a monitor: Stay in communicative mode to answer students' questions. Do not correct their pronunciation or grammar unless they specifically ask you about it.
- Allow students to work at their own levels: Each student has individual language skills, an individual approach to working in groups, and a specific role to play in the activity. Do not expect all students to contribute equally to the discussion, or to use every grammar point you have taught.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the outcome of their role plays.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the role play is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Simulations

Simulations are very similar to role-plays but what makes simulations different than role plays is that they are more elaborate. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she brings a microphone to sing and so on. Role plays and simulations have many advantages. First, since they are entertaining, they motivate the students. Second, as Harmer (1984) suggests, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students, because in role play and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw activities are more elaborate information gap activities that can be done with several partners. In a jigsaw activity, each partner has one or a few pieces of the "puzzle," and the partners must cooperate to fit all the pieces into a whole picture. The puzzle piece may take one of several forms. It may be one panel from a comic strip or one photo from a set that tells a story. It may be one sentence from a written narrative. It may be a tape recording of a conversation, in which case no two partners hear exactly the same conversation.

- In one fairly simple jigsaw activity, students work in groups of four. Each student in the group receives one panel from a comic strip. Partners may not show each other their panels. Together the four panels present this narrative: a man takes a container of ice cream from the freezer; he serves himself several scoops of ice cream; he sits in front of the TV eating his ice cream; he returns with the empty bowl to the kitchen and finds that he left the container of ice cream, now melting, on the kitchen counter. These pictures have a clear narrative line and the partners are not likely to disagree about the appropriate sequencing. You can make the task more demanding, however, by using pictures that lend themselves to alternative sequences, so that the partners have to negotiate among themselves to agree on a satisfactory sequence.
- More elaborate jigsaws may proceed in two stages. Students first work in input groups (groups A, B, C, and D) to receive information. Each group receives a different part of the total information for the task. Students then reorganize into groups of four with one student each from A, B, C, and D, and use the information they received to complete the task. Such an organization could be used, for example, when the input is given in the form of a tape recording. Groups A, B, C, and D each hear a different recording of a short news bulletin. The four recordings all contain the same general information, but each has one or more details that the others do not. In the second stage, students reconstruct the complete story by comparing the four versions.

Story Completion

This is a very enjoyable free-speaking activity for which students in their groups sit in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on. They write down and then present their stories.

Playing Cards

In this game, students should form groups of four. Each suit will represent a topic. For instance:

- Diamonds: Earning money
- Hearts: Love and relationships
- Spades: An unforgettable memory
- Clubs: Best teacher

Each student in a group will choose a card. Then, each student will write 4-5 questions about that topic to ask the other people in the group. For example: If the topic "Diamonds: Earning Money" is selected, here are some possible questions:

- Is money important in your life? Why?
- What is the easiest way of earning money?
- What do you think about lottery? Etc.

However, the teacher should state at the very beginning of the activity that students are not allowed to prepare yes-no questions, because by saying yes or no students get little practice in spoken language production. Rather, students ask open-ended questions to each other so that they reply in complete sentences.

Picture Narrating

This activity is based on several sequential pictures. Students are asked to tell the story taking place in the sequential pictures by paying attention to the criteria provided by the teacher as a rubric. Rubrics can include the vocabulary or structures they need to use while narrating.

Picture Describing

Another way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and having them describe what it is in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

Ranking activities

Create for your students a list of possible adjectives describing personality. Students work in groups and they have to agree on three most important characteristic of a person (That person can be a friend, a teacher, etc).

Guessing activities

Students can work this activity in small groups or pairs. Student A chooses the name of a famous person. The other student has to find out the identity of Student A by asking questions (yes/no questions). It's a very good activity for practicing "questions".

Problem-solving activities

The students work in groups. Give to Student A, a bizarre story and an explanation of the background. Student A has to tell the story to the rest of the group. The other students have to ask Student A questions and discover the background.

Project based activity

Ask students to prepare a radio news program. The news doesn't have to be real; whatever news they prepare is just fine as long they use proper English and the news program is presented in a "professional" way. Record the news (using a mobile phone) then listen to it together and give the feedback.

Surveys

Surveys are a useful way to practice target language in a fun way. Most language teachers have used the common survey: "Find someone who", which is so easy to adapt based on your target language. If you're teaching present perfect, students can go around with a list "Find someone who... has eaten fish twice this week." "Find someone who... has been abroad." For a 'friendship' theme: "Find someone who... has a friend on their street." "Find someone who... likes friends who are older." These activities can be very personal and require learners to formulate their own questions based on the prompt.

Take it a step further: students can write their own surveys. You can provide the topic, e.g. "What kind of student are you?" and put learners in groups to prepare five or six questions each, with choices. For example: "When do you usually do your homework?"

- as soon as I get home
- right before I sleep
- before school the next day
- I don't do my homework!

Then you can form new groups with one student from each of the first groups. They survey their new group members, then go back to their original groups, share their findings, come to a conclusion and prepare a short presentation for the rest of the class.

Discussion boards

Discussion game boards are a fun way to get students asking and answering questions in pairs or groups - using the target language or topic of your choice. You can print an empty game board too - and ask students to create their own questions!

Ball throwing game

Throw the ball to a learner who has to say something e.g. how they are feeling, an introduction to themselves, what their future plans are, etc. The learner then throws the ball to someone else who has to speak. This continues until everyone has had a chance to say something. You can also do this by asking learners to make a question and then throw the ball for someone else to answer it.

Survival

Divide the learners into groups of 5 or 6. Describe a survival scenario to them. E.g. crashed in a jungle miles from anywhere. Give them the task: they have to decide which 8 items out of a possible 20 they would take with them on their search for help and why. The teacher needs to decide what the 20 items are or the class can brainstorm 20 items and this can be written on the board. Either each group presents their reasoning to the class and the class votes on the best choices or they are regrouped as in a jigsaw task and they have to agree on 8 things to take. As a follow-up task, the group can make up the story of their trip and then be interviewed by reporters.

Onion rings

Make sure you have enough space for this -- you could do it outside.

Divide the class into two. One half stands in a circle facing outwards; the other half stands in a larger circle around them facing inwards. Each learner should be opposite another learner.

Tell them they have 2-3 minutes to ask and answer as many questions as possible.

Tell the outer circle to move onto the next learner. Stop when they've come 'full circle.'

This can be used for any functional language and for practising any language in a more interesting way

Structured Controversy

Divide the class into groups of four. The instructor identifies a controversial topic in the field covered in the course and gathers material that gives information and background to support different views of the controversy. Students work with one partner, forming two pairs within the group of four. Each pair takes a different side of the issue. Pairs work outside of class or in class to prepare to advocate and defend their position. The groups of four meet, and each pair takes a turn stating and arguing its position while the other pair listens and takes notes without interrupting. Each pair must have a chance both to listen and take notes and to argue their position. Then all four talk together as a group to learn all sides of the issue. Next, each pair must reverse its position and argue the opposite position from the one it argued before. Lastly the group of four as a whole discusses and synthesizes all the positions to come up with a group report. There may be a class presentation in which each group presents its findings.

Roundtable

Students in small groups sit in a circle and respond in turn to a question or problem by stating their ideas aloud as they write them on paper. The conversation can go around the circle, each student in turn, more than once if desired. After the roundtable, students discuss and summarize the ideas generated and report back to the class.

Reciprocal Peer Questioning

The instructor assigns outside class reading on a topic. The instructor asks students to generate a list of two or three thought-provoking questions of their own on the reading. Students bring the questions they have generated to class. Students do not need to be able to answer the questions they generate. Students then break into teams of three to four. Each student poses her questions to the team and the team discusses the reading using the student-generated questions as a guide. The questions of each student are discussed within the team. The team may then report back to the class on some key questions and the answers they came up with.

Name the Thing

Name the Thing requires picture cards. Have the students work in small groups, and lay out for each group a set of three or four pictures of similar, but not identical items, such as four similar cars. One person holds a matching picture of one of the items displayed on the table, and uses this as a reference for answering questions asked by the other students. These students ask questions to narrow down their choices and pick the correct matching picture. The more advanced students can do the questioning, as this is harder than coming up with answers. A tip for this game is to first demonstrate it at the front of the class and then ask students to each collect a set of pictures for the game to play at the next lesson. The teacher can then keep the best of those sets for future use.

How it's Made

How It's Made simply requires directions on assembling something. It is always fun to do peanut butter sandwiches or some other simple food, and actually bring in the ingredients to practice with. Each student is given one step in the process, and they must discuss their step with the others and decide where they fit in. It can also be done with blocks or a simple puzzle or model Lego. Give the more advanced students more steps and/or more complex instructions. The beginners have something simple, like putting the wheels on the Lego car. You can actually photocopy the instructions that come with the model – making them a bit bigger, and cut them up, giving out a paragraph or two per student. It's best to have one model to every three or four students to allow for plenty of speaking practise.

How It's Made Variant: Another way to play this if you have no instructions to hand is to simply have a rule where a student cannot move any piece without saying something. If a

student wants to pick up a piece off the table and try it to see if it fits on the model or in the puzzle, or stick it with another piece, he or she **MUST** say something in English.

For example, using a puzzle with a picture that includes some red flowers: advanced students give a running commentary of their actions, "I'm just going to see if this small red piece fits on here... it looks like it might be part of a flower. Oh no, it doesn't fit". Whereas a beginner might say, "I think this is a flower", or "it fits/it doesn't fit". Alternatively you can have students practise and repeat any kind of sentence or grammar that you are learning, and it does not have to be related to the theme of the puzzle or model at all. So a beginner could say "I like pears" and this will give them the right to try a piece on the model or puzzle. If working with several groups they can race each other to see who finishes first.

Telephone

Divide the teenagers into groups of four or five. Ask each group to declare a listener, who goes into the hall and receives a single line or phrase in English. When they return, ask each group to line up with the listener at the head of the line. Then the listener whispers the line into the ear of the person next in line, who transfers the line on. Have the player at the end of the line speak the phrase out loud and see how different it is from the original line.

Hot Seat

Divide the class into small groups and have them pick a group leader. The group leader is seated so he cannot see the board, and the teacher writes 10 English words on the board. Those in the group spend one minute going down the list and trying to get the leader to say the English words indicated. The teammates may only use English words to encourage their leader to guess. Each team takes its turn and the winning team is the one with the most words guessed.

Word Association and Alliteration

For these games, students can either be in groups or just at their desks. Prepare words ahead of time from units you have been studying in class. Begin by saying only one word and giving each student a turn to say and write an associated word. Similarly, choose one letter and start by saying a word that begins with the letter. Then students in groups proceed, giving each student a turn to say a word that begins with the same letter.

What's the Word?

This conversation game is suitable for most intermediate to advanced ESL students. It encourages speaking practice and is a fun way to review vocabulary. Write a list of vocabulary words on the board. Divide the students into two teams and have one member from each team stand at the front of the classroom. The students have one minute to carry

on a natural-sounding conversation, using as many vocabulary words as possible. Points are awarded each time a word is used accurately. This game can be modified to suit numerous lesson plans. Instead of vocabulary words, use grammar points or a list of idioms or expressions. When teaching more advanced classes, increase the game's difficulty level by allowing students to challenge their opponents' word choices. For example, if a student uses a word incorrectly, his opponent has the chance to win the point by explaining why the usage was incorrect.

Snake Game

Place a set of similar flash cards on the floor in a squiggly line. Divide the class into two teams and have the teams start at either end of the line. When you say "Start," the first student in line from each team must stand next to the card and use the vocabulary word in a sentence. He can then move on to the next card. Both students will be approaching each other. When they meet, they must play Rock, Paper, Scissors, and the winner gets to continue, but the loser must go to the end of his team's line, while the next team member starts from the beginning. The first team to complete the entire "snake" wins.

Song Retelling

Depending on the language capabilities of the students, retelling can begin with a simulation of the action within the song. Then, the students retell the story of the song in their own words, in a round, with each student contributing as much as he or she can in one sentence. As an extension of this activity, students could work in groups to illustrate scenes from the song. The groups could then retell the story using their illustrations.

The dramatic description word game

Compile a list of nouns from the course book unit you're covering or the theme you're teaching around. Write the nouns on strips of paper and then fold the papers in half, so the word isn't visible. Members of the class take it in turns to choose a piece of paper.

At this point, you can take the activity in at least two different ways.

- Firstly, one learner can unfold their word and collocate their noun with an adjective. This continues around the group, with the other learners having to choose a different adjective for the noun. For instance, if the first learner chooses 'tall' to go with the noun 'mountain', the next learner could choose 'rocky', then the next 'snowy' and so on. Continue until the group runs out of ideas and then allow another learner to pick a word.
- Secondly, a group, depending on how easy or difficult you judge the noun to be – picks a noun and then has to provide a number of adjectives that 'work well' with that noun. For example, for mountain they might choose 'tall, rocky, snowy,' and 'Himalayan.' The adjectives are read out to the class, who must then guess the noun.

Rating Activities

Choose a list of related words: animals, famous people, food, subjects, types of exercise etc. Then choose a criteria by which the students will rank these words. For example: useful, beautiful, helpful to society, healthy, and so on. The students must then (in pairs or small groups) place the items in order. To do this they must discuss their choices - of course.

- When the pairs have decided, you could combine pairs, and they must agree on a new list with their partners. This can pyramid until you have a class discussion. It's important that the students try to persuade their classmates, and not just agree because it's the easiest thing to do. Therefore, pre-teaching some relevant language, is very helpful.

Train compartment

You can make many ESL discussions similar to this. Each group of students imagines they are in a train compartment. They are travelling some distance. Give each student a sentence written on a slip of paper. They must engage in conversation and try to bring the discussion around to the topic on their piece of paper, then they must insert their sentence into the discussion. The students must guess what the other students' sentences were.

Group speaking activities can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

Developing Reading Skills

Buddy Reading

This multilevel ESL activity works for small groups . For writing and reading, students are divided into groups of 3 for buddy reading, and editing. Buddy reading involves one student reading and the "buddy" helping to make sure that the reader is pronouncing the words correctly. The buddies also ask questions after the reading to check comprehension.

You will need to model this for the group first, but with adults it is often a very easy multilevel activity for them to pick up since it is similar to studying together outside of class. Higher level students are able to monitor lower level students, and interestingly, having lower level students monitoring higher level students often works to help the higher level students become more aware of fossilized errors that they are making.

Jigsaw Reading

Jigsaw reading is quick to prepare. You simply select a reading, pre-teach the vocabulary and grammar, preferably with games, and divide the reading into parts. Students read their parts of the article or story silently to themselves. Advanced students should be given longer and more challenging passages, and lower level students the short, simpler parts. After reading, you can have the student either write a summary of the article or story, or give it orally. Finally, working together, the students try to reconstruct the article in the correct order, and check it against the original article.

The crazy adjective story

A simple way of developing adjective use is with a simple story, gapped so that no adjectives are present. Pre-prepare a series of adjectives on small cut out pieces of paper. Give the learners the story and get them – in groups or individually – to put the adjectives in what they consider to be appropriate places. You can either share a ‘correct’ version or you can get the learners to compare they placement and discuss the differences without reference to a ‘correct’ version.

Character Studies

This works well when using a class reader. Choose some of the main characters from the story. Create a grid on the board [or photocopy]. Write the names of the chosen characters along the top. Then write personal information down the left hand side. For example: age, interests and hobbies, education, family background, problems in life, ambitions... In small groups, students can discuss their answers. When finished it can be interesting or amusing to compare the ideas from different groups.

Reconstruction of a Text

Find a short text and photocopy it. Cut the sentences out and paste them to pieces of card. Give each student a card. They are not allowed to show their text to the other students, but must read it aloud. The group must decide on the order of the sentences. A more difficult version is to have the students memorize their sentences, and put them face down when speaking.

Comprehension Check

You can use post-its to check your students' reading comprehension as well as teach them how to write a summary. Break your class into groups of four to six students, and assign a reading selection to the group. Once everyone has completed the selection, have your students close their books, and give each person three post-it notes. On each of these notes, each person writes one event or piece of information from the reading selection. Encourage your students to write the most important events, and check to make sure everyone has some understanding of what they have read by reading the notes.

Then, the groups of students come together and put all their post-its in sequential order. They will find it challenging to remember all the events in the reading selection. Once the events are in order, you can show your students how to write a summary from the main points they chose from the story. Your students will not become bogged down in the details of the story when they write from their own highlights!

Corrections

Spotting and correcting writing errors is always a challenge for students. Here's an engaging game for practicing this important skill. Divide the class into three groups, and then writing a sentence on the board, but misspell words, leave out or put in incorrect punctuation, use incorrect tenses and capitalization.

Have group A make fixes on the board for 30 seconds. Give them one point for each correct fix. Now let groups B and C raise their hand to point out any missed or incorrect fixes. They get two points for each correct answer. Repeat with the next group, and so on.

Backwards cloze

From a paragraph written on the board summarizing a topic, erase one word at a time and have students 'read' the paragraph each time, inserting the missing words along with the words still left on the board.

Word/definition matching

In groups, have students match words from the reading with their definitions on separate cards.

Customizing the text.

From a passage you propose to use with your class, select a dozen or so words. Write these down. Then select a sheet of 30-40 different words (not only synonyms) from which alternatives to those in the text can be chosen. Give the students the reading passage. Slowly say the words you have originally chosen while students underline them in the passage. Give out the sheet of the 30 – 40 words. Ask students to select substitutes from the sheet for the words underlined in the text. In groups, have students look at and discuss each other's choices.

Developing Listening Skills

Attitude of the speakers

Learners in groups listen to short conversations and choose from a list of adjectives which best describe the speaker's attitude or intonation. (e.g. Is the speaker: excited, bored or surprised? Or is their voice fast, flat or high pitched?)

To use learners own knowledge to support what they hear

Using a topic or situation learners are familiar with, play the audio with gaps (mute the volume or interrupt with a louder sound at strategic points) and get the learners to discuss in groups and guess which words are missing.

Functional phrases and patterns

Ask learners to identify how many topics the speakers talked about. Give them the tapescript and get them to highlight where the topics changed, by underlining the phrases the speaker used to indicate a topic change. (E.g. On the other hand...; Oh, I nearly forgot...; This might not be related but...; Do you know they also...).

Dictogloss

It is a classroom dictation activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for reconstruction.

e.g.

Learners discuss the sea. Explain the task and read a short text on the sea to the class, who just listen. Read the text again, and the learners take notes. In groups, the learners then reconstruct the text.

Dictogloss is often regarded as a multiple skills and systems activity. Learners practise listening, writing and speaking (by working in groups) and use vocabulary, grammar and discourse systems in order to complete the task.

Developing Writing Skills

Joined up text

Give learners a short text with no spaces between words and with punctuation marks and capital letters missing. Learners in groups should discuss and rewrite the text, putting in spaces, punctuation marks and capital letters where required.

Picture story

Give learners a sheet of paper with five or six pictures randomly spaced. The pictures should include the main elements of a story, e.g. a character(s), a place, an object, an activity etc. Learners work in pairs to make up a short story using all the pictures, verbally. They should note down the order the pictures occur in their stories by numbering them. Learners then work with a new partner and retell their stories to each other. The new partner should listen carefully and note down the order the pictures occur in the new story by numbering them, using a different coloured pen or pencil.

Learners can then repeat this process with a third partner, so that they have three different stories using the same set of pictures.

Ask individual learners to choose the version they like best, and write a first draft of the story. Editing and writing a final draft will be done next lesson.

Collaborative story

Ask learners to sit in groups of five or six. Give each learner a piece of writing paper. Dictate the first sentence of a story, e.g. "One dark, damp night a boy woke suddenly in his bed." All learners should copy down the sentence at the top of the paper. The teacher should then ask them to write another sentence or two answering the question "What woke the boy?" All learners should write their own answer to the question after the first dictated sentence, so that it seems like a story.

Then, the learners pass their paper to the next learner in their group. Now, the next learner should add the next sentence or two of the story "What did the boy do next?" Each learner should read the sentences that have gone before and make her/his addition follow to make sense. Repeat this a few more times, with each learner adding a bit more to the story they receive, then passing it on to another learner who should add a little more. After a few additions, tell the learners they should now write the end of the story. This is the first draft.

Describe and match

Find and cut out pictures on a theme from magazines or catalogues. For example, the theme could be 'the countryside' or 'furniture' or 'fashion'. The pictures should all be similar. You will need the same number of pictures as learners. You could ask learners to find such pictures at home and bring them in. Divide learners into 2 groups.

Give one picture to each learner, who should write a paragraph describing their picture, without using any proper nouns. Encourage them to use prepositions to describe where things are and adjectives to describe what things look like. Collect in all the written descriptions.

Then distribute the written descriptions to other group learners – NOT the learners who wrote them. Learners should now read the descriptions they've been given and match them to the picture they think they describe. All learners should then check to see whether any of the descriptions have been mismatched, in which case they should move them. Ask the writers to check whether the readers matched their descriptions correctly.

From notes to text

Tell learners you have a friend who is applying for a part-time job – and she needs help with her application letter. Here is the job advertisement:

Do you enjoy helping people? Are you knowledgeable about the local area?
COME and JOIN our CARING TEAM at the TOURIST OFFICE
We need a cheerful part-timer to answer the phone on Saturdays and help tourists make the most of our town. Please send your application letter to the manager...

Your friend has provided some notes to include in the application letter:

- *Like helping people – volunteer at old people's home*
- *Worked part-time in uncle's office answering phone*
- *Have lived here for 15 years*
- *Many school trips to local parks and museums*
- *Free on Saturdays*

The learners should turn the notes into a complete application letter.

School magazine article

Divide learners into small groups. Each group should produce an article for the school magazine. The theme for the article is 'Go green!' Give learners access to the Internet to collect ideas, and enough time to plan and write a first draft. Collect the work in to edit, then return it to the learners in the next lesson for them to rewrite into a final draft. Publish the articles in the school magazine and encourage learners from other classes to comment on them.

Opposite postcards

Divide learners into two groups, A and B. Give each group a different postcard: Group A's postcard should describe a positive holiday experience, group B's postcard a negative holiday experience, e.g.

A: Went to a fantastic museum yesterday, then some great shops. Everything's such good quality and so cheap! Weather's lovely too – I feel so relaxed!
B: Weather's very bad – hotel is uncomfortable and dirty! There's nothing to do. Went shopping yesterday, but everything is so expensive. I want to come home!

Each learner should rewrite their postcard, changing it from positive to negative (Group A) or negative to positive (Group B), e.g.

A: Went to a boring museum yesterday...
B: Weather's lovely – hotel is so comfortable and clean! ...

Learners then 'send' their postcards to another learner – A to B, B to A. The learner should now rewrite the postcard they've just 'received', changing all the negatives to positives and vice versa. Finally, show learners the original versions of the postcards to see if they used the same expressions, or whether they found different ways to express meaning.

Student Interviews

Choose a topic that you feel will interest the students. Ask students to write five or more questions about this topic (students can also come up with the questions in small groups). Once they have finished the questions, they should interview at least two other students in the class and take notes on their answers. When the students have finished the activity, ask students to summarize what they have found out from the students they have interviewed.

This exercise is very flexible. Beginning students can ask each other when they do their various daily tasks, advanced students can make up questions concerning politics or other hot topics.

Three Picture Story

Choose three pictures from a magazine. The first picture should be of people that are in some sort of relationship. The other two pictures should be of objects. Have students get into groups of three or four students to a group.

Show the class the first picture and ask them to discuss the relationship of the people in the picture. Show them the second picture and tell them that the object is something that is important to the people in the first picture. Ask students to discuss why they think that object is important to the people. Show them the third picture and tell them that this object is something that the people in the first picture really don't like. Ask them to once again discuss the reasons why. After you have finished the activity, have the class compare the various stories that they came up with in their groups.

Jumbled Sentences

Choose a number of sentences from the last few chapters (pages) that you have been working on in class. Make sure to choose a nice mixture including adverbs of frequency, time signifiers, adjectives and adverbs, as well as multiple clauses for more advanced

classes. Give a set of jumbled versions of the sentences to the groups and ask the students to reassemble them.

Vocabulary Trees

Ask students to choose a room in the home or a particular subject area. Students should put this room or subject area into the middle of a piece of paper and then think of all the various related vocabulary, such as the various types of objects found in a room, and add these words around the central room or subject. Under each of these further categories, students should list the various objects in the category. Divide students in groups where they compare and complete their trees.

Character studies

For ESL discussions this activity works best with pictures of people you know, or know something about. Photocopy 3 or 4 pictures of people from magazines or the internet. It's best to use people who show some character, not models in fashion magazines. Give each group a different picture.

The students can be asked to make notes on personal details of the person in the picture. Age, occupation, interests, problems in their life, ambitions, family background, education and so on. Picture can then be exchanged with other groups. It's interesting for the groups to compare their notes, and to see if their ideas match reality - although this is not the object of the activity.

Putting words into Categories

Placing things in categories is a common ESL activity. Give the students a list of objects, animals, interests, sports, famous people, cities, subjects, types of media, languages, foods, personality types.....and then ask them to put them into categories: essential, very useful, useful, not useful; positive, negative; healthy, unhealthy; inborn, learned; or allow the students to come up with their own categories. The students should do this in pairs or small groups and say why they think each word should be put in a particular category.

HAIKU

After studying a topic, like the cultural foundations of family, work with students to compose a haiku on the board. Give the rules of haiku: a poem of 17 syllables and three lines (five syllables –seven- five), and a single vivid image. Work together to create a haiku on the board or show an example:

Tangled together

In the bed early morning

My young family

Students can work then in groups to create their own haikus.

Erasing words

Write on the board about 10 words that are *difficult to spell* and give the class a minute to 'photograph' them in their minds. Point to and read aloud each word, then erase it. In groups have students try to write down the list of words from memory as each word has been erased.

Recalling words

Write on the board between 15-20 words the students have recently learned. Make sure all the words are understood. Give students a minute to examine them, then erase or conceal them. In small groups, have students try to recall and write down as many as they can.

Predicted meanings

Write 8-10 unfamiliar words on the board from a text to be read. Have students take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. Students write the words down on the left hand column. On the right column have students write down 3-4 words suggested by each word. Then have students, in groups of 3-4, compare what they have written. Then refer students to the text where the original words are located.

Writing definitions

Review what students have been studying. Select up to 20 words you wish them to remember. On this list be sure to select five words each from different parts of speech or all 20 from the same part of speech. Ask them to write definitions for each word but not to mention the word they are defining. They should be analytical definitions, not simply synonyms. Have groups exchange definitions and guess each other's words.

A to Z vocabulary.

Periodically assign each student a letter from the alphabet. Tell each to find two words that begin with their assigned letter and related to the content being taught. They must then copy the sentences in which the words occur and write two original sentences using the words in their correct context. Bring students together in groups of four, selectively or at random. Have them exchange words and definitions and have each student use at least four of the words from their exchanges in a paragraph.

ABC Summarizing

List letters of the alphabet vertically and ask students to write a word, phrase or sentence beginning with that letter of the word that is related to the topic.

KWL Chart.

On paper with three columns marked 'Know' 'Would like to know' and 'Learned' (this last column to be used later), students in groups write down what they know and would like to know about a topic.

Projects

There are many ways learners can be initiated to carry out projects. The major aim of the activities / tasks learners do should enable them read books, newspapers, listen to radio, watch TV, consult websites, talk to people, observe events and proceedings, interpret and report. This clearly indicates that the learners work with language i.e. use language for meaningful real life purposes.

A list of projects with a short description.

Short Term

1.Designing a brochure for tourist about your town / village.

Have a brain storming discussion with the group about the idea / theme and ask learners to chalk out a plan of action for the project. Learners plan and allocate work to each member of the group and collect required information. They work together to design the brochure based on the collected data. The collected information from various sources- interviews, photos of monuments, facts and figures about the village, etc. will now be scrutinised and shaped into a poster / brochure to present it to a visitor attractively. The brochure is made by the group using colourful ink, crayons, etc and the same is presented to the class.

Long term

2. Class Newspaper

Students are briefed about the aim of the project and the possible outcome. They discuss the plan and decide on the various activities and contents of a news paper by analysing available news papers. Students allocate work among themselves and decide who takes interviews, who reports events like festivals, accidents, etc. who writes the draft news items, who editing and final writing by hand or printing (using computer), etc. They work on for some time to collect data and develop the newspaper with in the given time frame. Then the newspaper is published with illustration, pictures, etc. Possible follow up activities can also be thought of.

Following are some topics / themes for project work for various stages

3. Biographical profile of a person / personality in your area

Students in group meet a person in their village / town and interview him / her to develop a profile of the person and write into a report.

4. Writing autobiographies

Each one in the group writes his / her autobiography and compile them to present to the class.

5. Quotable quotes

Students consult books, magazines and newspapers to collect quotes of great people and proverbs and compile them to theme / alphabetical order

6. Writing review of movies

Students watch some movies over a period of time and write review of them. They can also compare the reviews with the ones published in newspapers.

7. Book review

Students read books of their choice and write reviews of them. They can consult with the newspaper, magazine or journals to know how to write a review.

8. Varied ways of reporting an event in newspapers.

Students are asked to read three or four newspaper and follow a particular or some stories. They analyze the news stories and comment on them.

9. Collecting views and opinions of people on a particular issue or problem

Students take current issue or problem and ask for the opinion of people about the issue and report it with graphical representations.

10. Writing article to newspapers / magazines

Students write articles to newspapers / magazine on a current problem or issue. This could be done as individual as well as group activity. Teacher has to guide them well from thinking about the idea to getting the article published.

11. Writing letters to the editor on a particular issue.

A group of students are encouraged to write letters to the editor in response to some of the articles / issues published in the newspaper.

12. Develop and conduct quiz competition

Students in groups develop questions for quiz content in the school / class. They decide how to conduct the quiz, collect information/ ideas for quiz questions, design question and answer card for all questions, and then conduct the quiz competition. The process from the beginning to the end is to be written as a report.

13. Collection of folk songs

Students in groups collect folk songs from their locale / village, categorise them into various themes like children, nature, romance and love, devotional, poverty, etc., then they attempt to write the summary of each folk song they collected. They can also find connections between the folk songs and the history / events of the village. The same is to be presented in a report form.

14. Translating folk song from Indian language to English or vice versa

Students in groups will collect songs from their mother tongue and translate into English. This requires a lot from students and teachers. It may be twenty or so poems / songs from an Indian language or from many languages. They may do it in many stages and can also compare the songs with available translations. The same is presented to the school library.

15. Watching a serial in the mother tongue and report the same in English or vice versa

This is to exploit what is considered not so good a habit. Students in groups watch a serial for a week or month and write episode wise summary of the same. They can report it with an introduction and a conclusion, commenting on the theme, acting, characterisation and other of the serial.

16. Designing greeting cards for an occasion

This may be done as group or individual activity. Students design greeting cards for an occasion, Diwali, Pongal, New year's eve, Christmas or such an occasion using the locally available resources and display for sale in school.

17. Conducting surveys and reporting them

- a. Eating habits survey
- b. Pocket money survey
- c. Sleeping and play routine survey
- d. Study habits survey
- e. Person of the year survey
- f. Use of tobacco

Students develop a questionnaire and contact people to collect information about the habits they intend to survey. They write a report based on the data collected. The whole process from developing questionnaire is reported

18. Language and art of advertisements

Students collected advertisement from various sources like billboards, wall notices, pamphlets, newspapers, etc. and analyse how the use of language in them. Advertisements from many languages can also be used.

19. Planning a tour / trip

Students in group plan a tour or trip a tourist spot located nearby place. They collected the money required from each student, book the vehicle for travel, or book train ticket, book hotel / guest houses for stay, etc. and decide the places to visit. After the tour / trip they write a report.

20. Developing a blog on the web and coordinate the same with friends

Students in groups develop a blog on web, design and develop materials-print, visuals, songs, etc. and ask other students to comment on each one's posting on the web.

21. Holidays and Festivals of the locale

Students in groups do projects about the festivals of the locale and report how people celebrate, the food eaten during the festival, dresses, rituals, purpose and reason for the festivals, etc.

23. Developing a radio / audio programme

Students in groups develop an audio / radio programme consisting of songs, speeches, talk shows, interviews of people from the locale. This can be done multilingual or bilingual. Students plan, write scripts, develop questionnaires and audio record the same after many trials. The final product will be recorded and the same is produced to the class / school assembly.

RESOURCES

<http://eslvietnamzone.com/developing-oral-fluency-good-activities/>

<http://courses.britishcouncil.org/teachertraining/course/view.php?id=134>

<http://busyteacher.org/4265-pair-work-vs-group-work-whats-better-for-the.html>

<http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/sections/groupwork.html>

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kayi-TeachingSpeaking.html>

http://www.teachingenglishgames.com/Articles/ESL_Multilevel_Activities.htm

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>

http://www.ehow.com/info_8014036_games-activities-teaching-english.html

http://esl.about.com/od/esleflteachingtechnique/a/lmh_speaking.htm

<http://www.tesolzone.com/esl-discussions.html>

<http://www.tips-for-teachers.com/>