

Letting the Learners Take the Strain
University of Leicester, 5.02.2011

Activities for practice in:

1. Numbers

- Bingo;
- Number patterns, easy maths;
- Line up in the right order; discover your position in the line by asking others their number;
- Card games: pelmanism (turn 2 cards over from a pack and say what they are; carry on until you find matching pairs). Pair work: hold up a card for your partner to guess; give clues e.g. 'higher', 'lower';
- Back to front numbers: learners reverse a given number e.g. 379→973;
- Allocate a number to each member of the group; call out number, person whose number it is stands up, calls the next number;
- Allocate a number to each letter of the alphabet. Learners create messages using the code.

2. Instructions

- Yoga in real life (health and safety!) or create models from plasticine and bend into shape following instructions;
- Make a maze in the classroom; learners take it in turns to guide each other through (health and safety);
- Satnav in target language;
- Form filling (online good source);
- Learn a dance (salsa/tango) (beware health and safety);
- Pair work: one person with an image gives instructions to partner to enable him/her to recreate image without seeing it.

3. Negatives

- Give negative facts about yourself ('I don't speak English');
- Discover what people do for a living by only asking negative questions ('you don't work in an office?');
- Awkward customers: each person makes a positive statement ('I like chocolate') others in the class disagree ('I don't');
- The useless shop: 'there's no butter'; they haven't any cheddar'.

4. Gender and number

- Grouping and sorting exercises: (pick out masculine; sort singular from plural);
- Gap fill exercises: replace missing words in a text;

- Brainstorming: nouns, then sorted into masculine, feminine, plural; Use colours to differentiate.

5. Personal details

- Pictures of well known people for impersonation;
- Guess the celebrity by asking questions;
- Describe a member of the group for others to guess;
- Loop PowerPoint: questions that might be asked; learners stop the Ppt and respond to the question they have stopped at;
- Prompt cards: learners introduce themselves and a third party;
- Changing identities: give learners a new identity that is one of a couple (Posh and Becks e.g.) they must find their 'other half';
- Word and image grids to support description of a picture/scene.

6. The weather

- Matching symbols and phrases;
- Use weather for present, future and past tense practice
- Placing symbols on a map (listening/smartboard exercise;)
- Linking weather to seasonal activities (hobbies; sports);
- Ideal weather linked to places to live;
- 'If' clause practice: 'if it rains, I'll stay in';
- TV weather broadcasts for listening comprehension.

Memorising

- Labelling household objects;
- Leaving lists of language to be learned in strategic places in the house;
- Train your pet to be bilingual by talking to them in the target language;
- Using CDs/MP3 files to support regular learning linked to daily routines such as driving to work; ironing etc.;
- Mime: link words to gestures, facial expressions;
- Mind maps: map words according to context or family;
- Songs and rhymes ('head and shoulders, knees and toes');
- Creating stories from a given set of words;
- Grouping words in contexts;
- Flashcards;
- Visualising;
- Word association: link words that sound the same;
- Making use of cognates;
- Acrostics;
- Pictionary;
- Teach someone else what you have learned