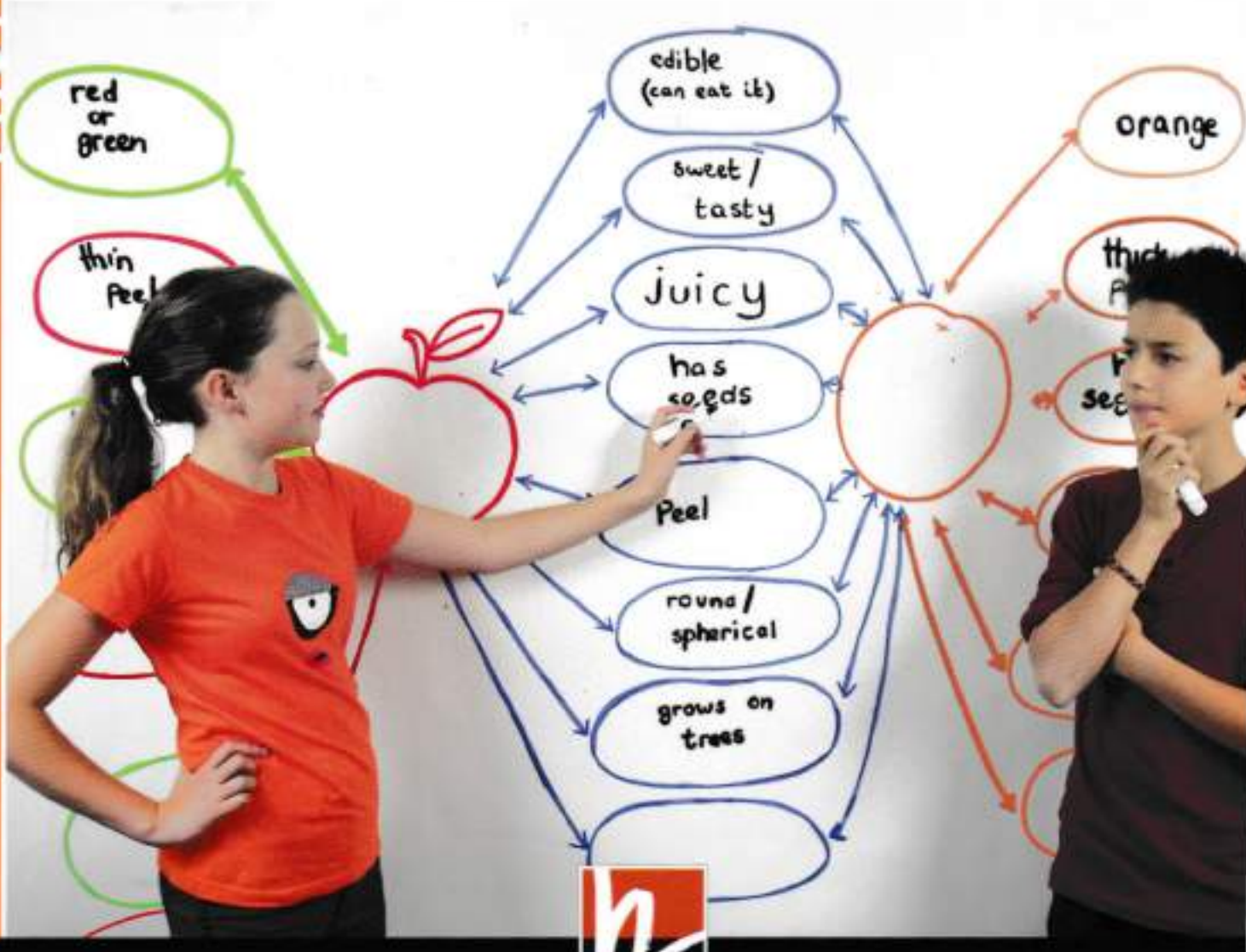
PHOTOCOPIABLE RESOURCES

CAMBRI

Herbert Puchta • Marion Williams

Teaching Young Learners to Think

ELT-Activities for young learners aged 6 - 12



HELBLING

Contents

Contents

Contents

Introduction

As they progress through their years of formal education, children need to acquire far more than the factual knowledge prescribed by curricula. They need to leave school equipped to face the challenges of a changing and unpredictable world. To do this they will need to develop a range of problem-solving and decision-making skills that enable them to assess new information, understand unexpected problems and find appropriate ways of tackling such situations and of evaluating their success.

Many school curricula, however, are built upon systematic, error-free learning involving correct answers, the assimilation of facts, and reliance on the teacher for assessments of success. Yet life is not neatly packaged. It requires logical and creative thinkers who are able to access, interpret and question evidence, and to use information strategically in order to make wise decisions and solve unpredictable problems, both at work and in society generally.

An article in the newspaper 'The Times' in 2011 describes the interview process for entry to Oxford University in the UK. Examples of the questions asked of candidates included 'Why do lions have manes?' and 'What heat does a hot air balloon need to lift an elephant?' These questions do not have correct answers as such, but rather 'are designed to help would-be students to show their potential by thinking on their feet'. Far from anticipating 'correctness', the tutors are interested in how logically and imaginatively an interviewee approaches a new idea or problem. This is the type of thinker sought by leading universities.

This book is designed to develop both language and the ability to think. It provides a selection of activities to engage young learners in purposeful use of language while at the same time using different thinking skills in order to complete the tasks.

Who this book is for

If you are a teacher of English as a foreign language to young learners in a primary or a lower secondary school and you would like your students to develop their thinking skills while having some meaningful language practice, you will find the activities in this book fit the bill. They can be used alongside any course book or teaching programme. You will find it easy to choose activities that are appropriate for your students, either by selecting a specific thinking skill that you want to develop or by using an activity in order to revise or practise a particular language area in a way that is more cognitively challenging than the kind of revision or practice activities that you are using otherwise – or you may just want to break from your usual classroom routine and surprise your students with an activity that develops their thinking skills.

Introduction

If you are a teacher working at a school with an intensive bilingual (as it might be called in some countries) or ESL programme, then you too will find a range of activities in this book that are especially suitable for your teaching context. Teachers working within such programmes often look for activities that are cognitively challenging while at the same time offering a 'real' content focus (as in CLIL – *content and language integrated learning* – where the focus is on the simultaneous teaching of language and the 'real' content one would normally find in a primary or secondary curriculum for subjects other than TEFL). The activities in this book offer students real-life thinking tasks, and involve them in dealing with information in such a way that it enriches their own thinking. They also help the students to organise information, and to develop, structure and evaluate their own thinking process; it therefore equips them with tools for lifelong learning.

If you are a teacher trainer working in pre- or in-service courses and believe that language teaching is a 'total human experience' (to quote a well-known dictum by Earl Stevick), then you may want to demonstrate to your trainees that teaching English as a foreign language can go beyond the teaching of the language and offer them excellent opportunities to help their students become better learners and thinkers through, and while learning. It would be advisable to get your trainees to explore some of the thinking tasks in this book themselves so they get a taste of the approach before trying the activities with their own students. You may also want to recommend to your trainees some of the books we have listed in the bibliography on pp. 223-224.

Why this approach?

The rationale for combining the teaching of thinking skills with the teaching of a language is twofold. The first reason is concerned with the cognitive engagement of the learner in the task. There is a danger when activities are designed for second language learners of removing any intellectual challenge in the attempt to make the activity linguistically comprehensible. Children are frequently disenchanted by over-simple activities which are designed to suit their language level but are often way below their cognitive potential and therefore fail to provide a challenge. In presenting a cognitive challenge, we aim to keep the learners engaged in the activity. Children need to be challenged; they are capable of a high level of thinking if encouraged to do so.

The second argument is a linguistic one. Materials designed to teach a foreign language generally involve learners using the target language in order to communicate a piece of information to another person. Thus the language is meaningful. This is the basis of the communicative approach. The activities in this book require the learners to complete a task with a real purpose which is non-linguistic; to invent something, to solve a problem, to conduct an experiment. Language is the means of carrying out the task: the teacher therefore needs to help learners with the appropriate language for completing the task.

Introduction

In this book the children are using the language for a real purpose, that is, to solve problems and to think together. They are therefore engaged in meaningful language use which develops their language ability, while at the same time learning to think.

Can thinking be taught?

This is, of course, the key question and research gives mixed results. It is certainly true that thinking ability can be learnt: it can develop and improve, and that the teacher can play an important role in this. In 1999, Carol McGuinness reviewed the research into thinking skills on behalf of the Department for Education in England, and concluded that pupils benefit from being coached in thinking, and that success was due to good teaching methods, in other words, learning thinking works well when supported by the teacher (McGuinness, 1999). There are a number of research articles that document the success of different programmes of teaching thinking. A list of these can be found on the website for Kestrel Education under research articles (www.thinkingschool.co.uk). In the UK, Kestrel Education, in conjunction with the Cognitive Education Centre at the University of Exeter, is now engaged in a national movement promoting the teaching of thinking in schools, running seminars and workshops on the subject and giving schools 'accreditation' as so called 'thinking schools'.

The manifestation of the growth of the thinking skills movement is evident in the growing number of courses on teaching thinking. A look at the list of books provided on the Kestrel website gives some indication of what is available. In this introduction we can only review a few key courses. One well-known programme for teaching thinking is Feuerstein et al.'s *Instrumental Enrichment* (1980), which was developed in Israel (see Sharron & Coulter, 1996, and Williams & Burden, 1997, for descriptions of this programme). This is a highly structured programme of 14 groups of exercises aimed at developing the skills of careful analysis, systematic planning and organisation, and problem-solving strategies. There is also an emphasis on applying the strategies learnt in new and unfamiliar situations, this is called 'bridging'. The programme has been used around the world with a range of age groups and abilities. Evaluations show positive improvement in thinking abilities, and point in particular to the importance of the teacher's role in coaching or mediating the thinking process (see p. 15 for an explanation of mediation.) *The Somerset Thinking Skills Course* (Blagg et al., 2003) was developed in England based on *Instrumental Enrichment*, and also shows positive effects on thinking skills.

A somewhat different approach is taken in Matthew Lipman's *Philosophy in the Classroom* (Lipman et al. 1980). His *Philosophy for Children* programme has been widely used in primary classrooms in around 30 countries. The programme is based on children engaging in philosophical discussions and working as a 'community of enquiry' where they generate and answer questions about philosophical issues.

Thus it taps into children's natural curiosity, engages them in a search for meaning, strengthens reasoning and argumentative skills and enhances their self-esteem as well as their ability to work as part of a community.

There are also a number of different 'thinking tools' available. These include *Habits of Mind*, *Thinking Hats* and *Thinking Maps*. *Habits of Mind* is concerned with having a disposition towards behaving intelligently when faced with a problem: it includes such things as gathering data through all the senses, listening, persisting and thinking flexibly, and applying past knowledge to new situations (see Costa and Kallick, 2009). The six *Thinking Hats* provide a method of thinking constructively. Each of the six coloured hats represents a different mode of thinking: the white hat calls for information known, the red hat is about feelings and intuition, and the black hat is about judgement of what won't work. Then the yellow hat is about positive feelings, the green hat about creativity and new ideas, and finally the blue hat is concerned with managing the thinking process (see de Bono, 1999).

Visual tools, as they are called, are frequently used to help us to organise our thinking: people often draw a diagram intuitively when they are thinking. We have included David Hyerle's *Thinking Maps* here, as we have drawn on them in developing our activities in this book. *Thinking Maps* are visual organisers that help us to represent the cognitive processes that we use to make sense of our world, such as comparing and contrasting, understanding cause and effect, and classifying things (see Hyerle, 2008).

Through his research into human intelligence, Howard Gardner (1993) has clearly shown that there is no such thing as a single unitary mental capability that can be called intelligence, but that there are instead multiple intelligences. Gardner argues very convincingly that IQ tests and schooling in general usually only draw on two of the human intelligences, the linguistic and the logical-mathematical. Gardner, however, proposes eight different intelligences to account for a much broader spectrum of human capabilities that our thinking skills draw on. An application of the Multiple Intelligences theory to the teaching of teenagers and adults can be found in Puchta and Rinvolucri 2005.

One other issue that is frequently debated is whether thinking should be taught as additional to the curriculum – sometimes called a 'bolt on' approach – or whether it should infuse the curriculum, becoming part of each child's life through every subject they are taught; for a full discussion of this issue see Burden and Williams, 1998. Meanwhile, we subscribe to the infusion approach, which provides part of our rationale for teaching thinking **through** a foreign language.

Introduction

What is involved in the thinking process?

Each of the *Thinking Programmes* outlined is based on a theoretical model of what is involved in thinking. Different people have broken down the thinking process in different ways; a summary of some of these can be found in Burden and Williams, 1998. As we are unable to outline them all here, we will focus on the model from *The Somerset Thinking Skills Course* developed by Blagg et al. (2005). It is based on *Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment*, and has guided the approach used in this book.

Blagg and his co-authors differentiate between what they call 'cognitive resources' and 'cognitive strategies'. Cognitive resources are the basic tool kit that we use in order to think and to solve problems. There are four kinds of cognitive resources. The first is our *conceptual understanding*; this is our understanding of concepts such as number, size, shape, position, time, space and hierarchy. These concepts allow us to build a coherent model of the world. Therefore we have grouped a number of our categories in this book around these concepts.

The second type of resource we have is the *skills and procedures* we use to solve a problem. These include such skills as focusing and scanning, analysing the stages in a task, describing, comparing, classifying, visualising and brainstorming. These skills enable us to process information, to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, and to organise, memorise and retrieve information. All of these skills are addressed in the activities in this book.

The third resource we have is our *knowledge and experience*. We have knowledge of the world and of the symbols, conventions and rules we use, as well as knowledge of how to work with others. This knowledge enables us to interpret and represent information in different ways, to appreciate different viewpoints, and to work effectively with others. Finally, the Somerset model stresses the importance of developing *verbal tools*, which include the language, vocabulary, language register and language forms that we need to communicate successfully and express our meanings accurately. Naturally our approach to teaching thinking and language draws strongly on the cognitive resources that are connected with verbal tools. Consequently our approach does not include the development of cognitive strategies that focus on, for example, understanding geometric patterns or certain numerical tasks that do not involve language.

Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) provide a helpful analogy to distinguish between cognitive resources and cognitive strategies. They refer to a soccer team consisting of eleven players, each with different experience and skill; these are the resources that can be used tactically by the team. The strategies, however, might need to change from game to game. Thus cognitive strategies can be seen as 'higher level general control processes concerned with the selection and coordination of specific cognitive processes for particular purposes'. In their handbook, Blagg et al. (2005) explain that cognitive strategies can be seen as 'higher level general control processes concerned with the selection and coordination of specific cognitive processes for a particular purpose' (p 10).

Introduction

Blagg et al.'s sequence of cognitive strategies forms the basis of problem solving and strategic thinking. This sequence consists of a cycle of *gathering and organising information*, using all our senses to explore and clarify information, and then *defining the problem*, which involves analysing the problem into parts and translating it into a task with clear goals. The next stage is *generating alternative approaches*, which entails considering possible procedures used in previous problems, and anticipating difficulties. This is followed by a *planning* stage, involving selecting a course of action, planning ways of recording, checking and evaluating work, and preparing to implement alternative strategies if necessary. *Monitoring and checking* comes next. This involves assessing efficiency and revising procedures where necessary.

But it is not enough just to solve a problem. The next stage is concerned with *communicating* solutions clearly, using precise and appropriate language and logical evidence to justify points of view. Also necessary is *transferring and generalising*; this involves considering how the problem-solving techniques used can be transferred to other contexts, and extracting principles that will apply to other tasks. This is an important skill for children to acquire. Blagg et al.'s final step is *evaluating* the strategies used and the solutions found. Throughout this book we have incorporated such a problem-solving cycle when compiling the notes for teachers.

Another aspect that must not be forgotten is the dispositional and attitudinal side. Students need to develop a disposition towards thinking where they are positive about approaching new challenges and problems, and are inquisitive, open-minded, and reflective rather than impulsive. Thus positive attitudes and self-esteem are important. Our beliefs will affect our actions, in particular our beliefs about the nature of our abilities. For example, if we believe that we can become better thinkers we are more likely to make an effort to improve. On the other hand, if we believe that ability is a fixed quality in an individual while at the same time we have a poor self-image of ourselves as thinkers, we are unlikely to make an effort to improve. Any attempt to enhance children's cognitive abilities must consider their beliefs about their capabilities.

How the book is organised

This book contains 80 activities designed to teach language and thinking. They are grouped into 13 categories of thinking which roughly follow a sequence from basic to higher-order thinking skills. However these categories overlap, and an activity grouped in one category will of course involve many other thinking skills. For example, the *Spot the differences* activity on page 197 is in the category *Solving problems*. However the activity also involves surveying information carefully, giving accurate and relevant information, recognising the needs of the listener, applying focused listening, following instructions, and asking clear and relevant questions.

Introduction

The categories are: *Making comparisons; Categorising; Sequencing, Focusing attention; Memorising; Exploring space; Exploring time; Exploring numbers; Creating associations; Cause and effect; Making decisions; Solving problems* and *Creative thinking*. These categories are based on those found in Feuerstein's *Instrumental Enrichment* programme and are strongly influenced by *The Somerset Thinking Skills Course*, which followed on from *Instrumental Enrichment*. We have not included some of Feuerstein's categories, such as 'syllogisms', which involve very little language use, and we have added some of our own with a view to the needs of language learners; but we do not claim they are exhaustive.

Each section has a brief introduction describing the importance of the main thinking skill that the activities in the section focus on. Then each activity starts with a brief overview of some key information. You will find a description of the main **thinking skills** involved in the activity, and a short discussion of the skills concerned where this is helpful. You will also find a summary of the **language focus**, though of course the children should be encouraged to use any language they have at their disposal as creatively as possible. There is also an indication of the **language level** (e.g. post-beginner, elementary, etc. and its Common European Framework of Reference level, e.g. A1). A suggested **time** is given; however you might wish to extend or vary the activity. Under **preparation** you will find notes of what you need to do before the lesson. Most of the activities contain **photocopiable worksheets** to assist you.

This is followed by a section called '**in class**' which provides clear steps for you to follow, including examples of the language that you can use in class, and hints on how to model the process of solving the particular task. However we would encourage you to be creative about the way in which you decide to teach the activities. The steps are not intended to be a straitjacket; provided you follow the basic guidelines below for the teaching of thinking, you can be as inventive as you wish.

We also provide answers where these are appropriate. However we would stress that sometimes children come up with alternative solutions which are often very creative. Provided they can justify their solution this should be encouraged. Help them search for the 'best' answer rather than always focusing on the 'right' answer.

How to use this book

If you want to find out more about the thinking behind this book and get some pointers as to the theoretical basis of teaching thinking skills, you will benefit from reading this introductory chapter as well as the short introductory texts to the 13 different sections of the book. If, however, you are already familiar with the concept of teaching thinking skills and have chosen this book for its practical activities you may prefer to select an activity for classroom use straight away.

Introduction

An obvious starting point when selecting an activity is the table of contents. It gives you an overview of the 13 categories you will find in the book, each aimed at developing a specific cognitive skill. For a concise overview of the activities that also provides information about the language level, the thinking skills area, the estimated running time, the age of the students and the name of each activity we recommend the teacher's quick reference guide on pp. 225-231.

While the order of the activities roughly follows a cline from basic to higher-order thinking skills, the intention is not for you to use the activities sequentially. Quite the contrary – in order for the ideas presented in this book to work for your particular classroom, we would like to suggest that you select activities according to various criteria that suit your learners. An activity may be selected according to a topic being followed in class, the language being taught, a cognitively challenging way to consolidate vocabulary, or a challenge that will suit the age group.

It was our aim in writing this book to give you a set of practical and easy-to-follow activities for immediate use in your classroom. However, you may want to adapt our suggestions so they suit the needs of your own classes even better. A fair range of the activities can be varied and used again and again with different topics and different vocabulary, thus providing a rich source of ideas for the classroom while at the same time giving your students valuable training in cognitive skills.

The teacher's role in teaching thinking

As a teacher you play a crucial role in developing children's ability to think. The important point is that the children should be free to think without criticism for producing a wacky or off-the-wall idea. Indeed, creative thinking is to be encouraged and all ideas should be valued. In addition, it is essential that children do not feel inhibited about expressing an idea because they do not have the language to put it over correctly; errors are an integral part of the learning process and must not be discouraged. You need to accept all contributions and where appropriate help the learner with the language needed to express their idea.

It is particularly important to allow time for the children to think carefully about what they are doing; to survey the information given, to plan a strategy, and to take a systematic approach to solving the problem. In many classrooms, children are rewarded for being 'quick' or the first to put their hands up, but unfortunately this often leads to impulsive guesses or simplistic answers rather than creative or well thought out solutions. So you will need to constantly remind the class to take time to think.

You also have a role as listener, and will need to listen to all suggestions and solutions, making it clear that they are all being taken seriously. It is often necessary to challenge a child, e.g. by asking questions such as *Why do you think this?*, *How do we know?* or *How did you work this out?* In this way, the students learn that impulsive suggestions are not enough, they need to be backed up with reasons. The fundamental point that the aim of a thinking class is to seek 'best' answers and not always 'right' ones is so important that we are restating it here: it reflects real-life decisions where we frequently need to come up with choices for possible solutions so we can find the best fit for a given situation. Once several solutions have been suggested and backed up, the students can engage in selecting the best fit.

Most important is to help your students develop a 'thinking habit' where they approach all tasks in a thinking way and develop the habit of responding to challenges and solving problems rather than being put off by something that appears to be too complex.

One of the key proponents of teaching thinking, Reuven Feuerstein, provides a useful set of guidelines for teaching something, known as 'mediation theory'. His procedures are particularly pertinent to the teaching of thinking, so we outline them briefly here. Feuerstein argues that effective learning depends on the nature of the interaction between two or more people. A teacher or parent interacts with a learner in various ways to help him or her move to the next layer of knowledge, skill or understanding. This is known as the 'zone of proximal development', or ZPD. However, peers can also help each other to progress in this way through their social interactions. Thus, talk is important in the learning process.

Feuerstein identifies 12 ways in which teachers can help learners to learn and ultimately become fully effective learners, able to learn independently. The most important of these is conveying purpose and a clear intention. He states that any activity must have purpose for the learner, and it is the teacher's role to explain this purpose to the learners so that the task has value to them personally. Second, teachers must ensure that learners understand precisely what is required of them and, equally important, that they feel willing and able to tackle the task in a focused and self-directed way, an important step towards autonomy.

Other ways in which teachers should mediate are by building up feelings of competence, the sense of 'I can'. This is done by helping learners to take control of their own behaviour by teaching skills and strategies to think and solve problems, showing learners how to set their own goals and evaluate their own progress, and encouraging learners to respond to challenge, an important life skill. In addition the 'thinking classroom' will encourage co-operative learning, a sense that every individual is valued, and a sense of belonging. Feuerstein's theory of mediation is outlined in Williams and Burden, 1997.

Here is an example of mediation, based on Solving Problems 11; the teacher is mediating the process of understanding the nature of the problem by getting the children to think about all the information given.

Teacher *What do you need to do?*
Student *We must think what man give parcel.*
Teacher *Right. We need to work out which man to give the parcel to. What can you see?*
Student *Much men.*
Teacher *Lots of men. Yes. What else?*
Student *A man looking.*
Teacher *OK, what's he looking for?*
Student *The man to give the parcel.*
Teacher *What else can you see?*
Student *A message.*
Teacher *How do you know it's a message?*
Student *The man, er, reading a letter. This is the letter.*
Teacher *OK. So what do you need to do?*

The above is an example of what is often called 'scaffolding'. This language is scaffolding both the thinking and the language. We have provided several examples of this in the guidelines for the individual activities. Essentially, if a class find the problem difficult, you can ask questions that direct their thinking, help them understand and formulate the nature of the problem, and help them to break the problem down into smaller parts. For example you might ask, '*What information do we have?*', '*What exactly do we need to do?*' '*What's the first thing we need to find out*', etc.
Learners also need to learn self-monitoring strategies as part of the thinking process. They need to learn to check solutions, spot their own mistakes in thinking and plan new strategies accordingly. These are essential principles of teaching thinking. It is a part of your role to help learners to develop such strategies.

The use of the mother tongue

The question of whether students in monolingual classes should be allowed or even encouraged to use their mother tongue in the foreign language lesson is a frequently debated one. We would like to briefly touch on this issue because of the nature of the activities presented here. You may be asking yourself: *If these activities are meant to develop students' thinking skills, to what extent are my students supposed to be able to do this in English?*

Our own beliefs can be best described by saying that in the foreign language class the students' mother tongue should be used *as little as possible, but as often as necessary.*

as long as it facilitates learning. There is no doubt that the primary aim of the foreign language class is to develop students' L2 competencies, and that works best when students get fully engaged in the process of decoding relevant pieces of text in the foreign language (for example when they listen to or read a story), and when they learn to use the foreign language to express themselves in meaningful ways.

Unsurprisingly, teachers frequently report that it is more difficult to get students to use the foreign language (as against their mother tongue) as a means of communication when they are at a low language level. It seems particularly difficult to get such students to use the foreign language to express themselves, especially in phases when they become personally and emotionally involved in the learning process, as they do not yet have the means to say or write things appropriately in the L2. This is of course often the case with young learners. Most of the activities in this book are for post-beginners and elementary students. We have developed them carefully and given lots of practical suggestions as to what you can do to scaffold the students' foreign language so they gradually gain more and more confidence in using it. It is up to you whether you give students the space for a short discussion in their mother tongue when, for example, they want to talk about the solution to a particularly challenging activity. We are convinced that such phases are to the benefit of the students as long as they are confined to just occasional use of L1 when needed.

There are various strategies that you can use in order to guide students towards using the target language more frequently. The most important one is that you yourself use the language as often as possible, and at the same time make sure that what you say is comprehensible to the students. This will often require using language that is only slightly above the students' level of competence, and employing all kinds of means to aid comprehension, such as mime and gesture, realia and drawings. It will also require you to scaffold the students' language by giving them prompts (in written form or by 'whispering' language you think a student might want to produce), so that students have available to them the structures and vocabulary they need to express themselves with growing confidence in the L2.

Students often need to be reminded of the importance of using the foreign language, especially when they are still at a level where it is much easier for them to communicate in their mother tongue. Appropriate reactions (e.g. *Sorry?*) can be useful to encourage their use of L2 when you are walking round the class listening to students during phases of pair and group work. A very powerful way of scaffolding students' language – at least initially – can be for you to repeat in English what a student has said in their mother tongue. Another is to begin the sentence in English for the child, for example, '*I see. You think that ....*' However, such support techniques need to be accompanied by you encouraging the students to try and say as much as possible in the foreign language, without any feeling of fear. In addition, what we need to avoid at all costs is students not even wanting to try because they trust you will do the L2 work for them.

The role of errors

Errors are a natural part of learning and are an intrinsic part of the students' interlanguage, i.e. their developing language system. Errors are not only unavoidable, but they are signs of the students' learning. They are often referred to as 'a window into the learning process'.

Interestingly, whereas many teachers still find it difficult to accept the idea that errors are a sign of learning and that the way towards language correctness is a long and winding road along which students need to make mistakes, research shows that students need to get plenty of opportunities to use language and – make errors. We can confidently assert that there is no more efficient way towards successful communication other than via the learning that takes place when mistakes are made and occasional breakdowns in real world communication occur. It is such experiences that help students gradually notice how the efficiency of their communication can be improved by using the correct form (or word, or chunk of language). It is true for learning to think, and indeed, anything else.

To develop their cognitive skills, students need the freedom to make mistakes, to experiment with their thoughts, to try out paths that lead to dead ends instead of the goal. Errors are useful: they help the individual student or the whole class reflect on their way(s) of thinking, and improve and modify their cognitive strategies and their (learning) behaviour.

You can help students enormously by dealing with their learning processes (especially when they lead to 'wrong' answers) professionally, i.e. in a non-judgemental way. Those teachers who discourage students who come up with wrong answers, or even criticize them or make fun of them, can have detrimental effects on their students' self-image and their motivation (despite their momentary failure) to carry on learning. Instead, it is often enough to ask a gentle question or even give a mere hint to enable students to get a different perspective on a task. Sometimes it may help to simply repeat what the task is and give the students more time (while making a few encouraging remarks or nodding at them in a supportive way). Finally, when you notice that a student has got stuck and there is the danger of them losing confidence in themselves, it may be an idea to ask another student to work with him or her. It can be amazing sometimes to see how skilful students can be at helping each other.

Final note

Most of all, we hope you enjoy using the activities provided in this book. We have enjoyed writing them. And we hope that as result you will develop your own abilities to teach children to think.

Comparisons

Making comparisons is one of the basic building blocks of decision making, problem solving and abstract thought; as such it is a skill that is essential in all aspects of life. It is necessary, for example, in reading, which involves comparing shapes in order to recognise words. Making comparisons is an essential part of absorbing new information and students need to learn to organise information by relating it to what they already know; this involves comparing new information to old. The very act of comparing things affects the way we perceive something as we begin to discover qualities in an object or person that we did not previously see.

Making comparisons involves using other skills such as focused attention, systematic exploration of information, careful and accurate use of labels, and attention to detail. It often involves using tools such as mind maps to record and organise information. At a higher level, comparing things leads to creative thinking and seeing attributes previously not recognised. More complex comparisons involve recognising and understanding different attributes in an object, such as size, shape, colour, taste, or orientation.

Making comparisons is a skill that can be developed. If the ability to compare things is inadequate this can lead to serious disabilities. For example, if children are unable to make comparisons their memories can suffer as they cannot store information adequately by relating it to what is already stored. This can lead to an inability to perceive and use more than one piece of information at a time, which in turn can lead to impulsive and erratic behaviour.

The activities in this section focus on making comparisons. However, comparisons are an essential part of several of the other activities in this book such as *Spot the differences*, *Solving Problems*, *If...* In using the activities in this section it is important to allow your students time to focus their attention, systematically explore the information given, and record it carefully and accurately.

1 Odd one out

Language focus Vocabulary review

Thinking skills Comparing items and recognising a category, identifying something that does not belong to the category

Age 6–8

Level Post beginner / A1 upwards

Time 15–20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1. Hand out the worksheet. Ask students to work in pairs and match the words with the pictures by writing numbers 1–25.
2. Get students to read out their answers.
3. Explain to the students that this is an 'Odd one out' activity. Do the example from the worksheet with the class. Show them how they need to cross out the odd one out, in this case *boot*. Ask them why it is the odd one; in monolingual classes, use the students' mother tongue if needed.
4. Ask the students to complete the activity in pairs.
5. Go through the answers, saying each word clearly.

Variation This activity can be adapted for other vocabulary items.

Although the current activity is designed for students in the first year of learning English, it could be adapted to higher levels and ages by using more complex concepts, for example abstract nouns or feelings.

Answers

B 19 chair, 4 *bicycle*, 21 bed, 2 table, 16 sofa
C *9 ice cream*, 13 melon, 25 banana, 23 peach, 20 strawberry
D 24 eye, 14 nose, 9 mouth, 7 ear, *28 hand*
E 15 car, 18 bus, 24 train, *32 shoe*, 31 lorry
F 26 river, 27 *umbrella*, 33 trousers, 11 dress, 17 shirt
G 28 leg, 1 arm, 10 hand, *30 glove*, 5 head

Odd one out | Worksheet

1 Match the words with the pictures. Write 1–35.

Example

A	6 schoolbag	12 pen	25 book	4 boat	22 exercise book
B	chair	bicycle	bed	table	sofa
C	ice cream	melon	banana	peach	strawberry
D	eye	nose	mouth	ear	hand
E	car	bus	train	shoe	lorry
F	coat	umbrella	trousers	dress	shirt
G	leg	arm	hand	glove	head

2 Cross out the word that is different in each line above.

2 Same or different?

Language focus Words describing the following concepts: size, shape, colour, direction, age, number

Thinking skills Careful observation of details; comparing details; focusing on the relevant differences in various objects; abstract thinking

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20–30 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet, one per student. For step 1, use a red and a white sheet of paper and pictures of, e.g., an old man and a child, large enough to hold up to the class. For step 3, assemble some pairs of drawings or objects.

In class

1 Teach the concept words in the following way:

- for *colour*, show a white piece of paper and a red piece of paper. Say: *Look. This is a piece of paper, and that's also a piece of paper. This one's white, and that one's red. What's different? The colour. The colour's different. This one's white, and that one's red.*
- for *age*, show pictures of an old man and a child.
- for *number*, draw 5 circles on one side of the board, and 3 circles on the other.
- for *shape*, draw a triangle, a circle and a square on the board.
- for *size*, draw a small and a large tree on the board.
- for *direction*, draw an arrow pointing to the left and an arrow pointing to the right.

2 Practise the words so students can use them with ease.

3 Use drawings or real objects to explain the meaning of the words *same* and *different*. Practise them using various examples of objects in the classroom.

4 Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Do the first example together with the students. In monolingual classes, explain to them in their mother tongue, if necessary, that they may have to think carefully to see what's the same and what's different about the two pictures.

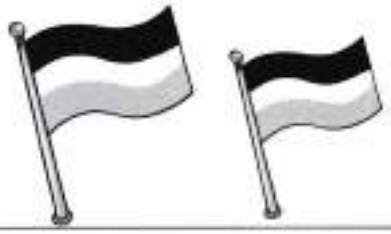
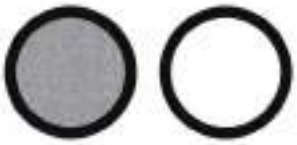
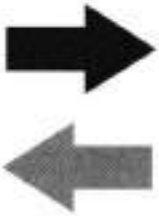
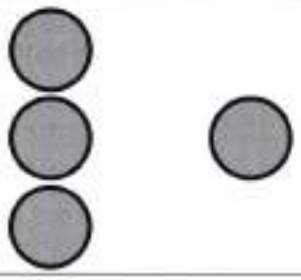
Answers

1) size: *different*
2) size: *different* / colour: *same*
3) size: *same* / age: *different*
4) size: *same* / colour: *different*
5) size: *same* / colour: *same*
6) size: *different* / shape: *different*
7) size: *different* / age: *different*
8) size: *same* / shape: *same*
9) size: *different* / colour: *different*
10) direction: *different* / colour: *different*
11) size: *same* / colour: *different*
12) size: *same* / number: *different*

Note This activity is based on an idea from *The Somerset Thinking Skills Course*, by Nigel Blagg et al.

Same or different? | Worksheet

Look carefully. What is the same? What is different?
Write *s* (= same) or *d* (= different).

1 	2 	3 
Size:	Size: ..... Colour:	Size: ..... Age: .....
4 	5 	6 
Size: ..... Colour:	Size: ..... Colour:	Size: ..... Colour: .....
7 	8 	9 
Size: ..... Age:	Size: ..... Shape:	Size: ..... Colour: .....
10 	11 	12 
Direction: ..... Colour:	Size: ..... Colour:	Size: ..... Number: .....

3 Me and my friend

Language focus This activity can use a number of different language items: *same, different, he/she likes ____, he/she is (adjective), he/she is a ____, he/she has got a ____, he/she loves to ____*; vocabulary of personal features, e.g. *long hair, red hair, glasses, blue eyes*, etc.

Thinking skills Identifying similarities and differences. This activity, if done well, requires a fairly deep level of thinking about comparisons and contrasts. It can be difficult for the students, and also revealing to find similarities that they have never thought of before. For more advanced classes, a more sophisticated use of language can be required, leading to a greater depth of thinking.

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Ask two students to come to the front of the class. Write two headings with the names of the students on the board, e.g.

Mark *Emma*

Ask the class to tell you three things about Mark, e.g. *boy, tall, likes swimming*. Write them under the heading *Mark*.

2 Ask them to tell you three things about Emma, e.g. *girl, long hair, good at tennis*. Practise the language: *She's a girl. She's got long hair. She's good at tennis* etc. Write language prompts on the board and practise them so the students are at ease using them.

3 Make sure the students understand the words *same* and *different*. Ask: *What is different about them?* E.g. *Mark is a boy. Emma is a girl.* Continue with examples to see if they understand this concept clearly.

4 Ask: *What is the same?* E.g. *They are students. They are in class.*

5 Hand out the worksheet. Explain they are going to work with a partner. They need to decide things that are *different* and things that are *the same* and write them in the appropriate columns. Help with vocabulary where necessary, and collect new words on the board. Help, if necessary, with the structure *We're both*.

6 Ask them to draw a picture of themselves and a picture of their friend in the two frames.

7 Finally ask them to share some solutions with the rest of the class.

Me and my friend | Worksheet

Work with a friend. Find out things that are the same and things that are different for both of you.

My name: ________	My friend's name: ________
Things that are different	
Things that are the same	

4 Cars and bicycles

Language focus Vocabulary practice, descriptive words

Thinking skills Comparing and contrasting; recognising same and different; recognising that Venn diagrams can be used for attributes of things; explaining; giving reasons

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards. More advanced users of English will produce more sophisticated answers

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Draw two overlapping circles on the board. Write *dogs* at the top of one and *cats* at the top of the other. Ask the class what is the same about cats and dogs. E.g. *animal, has 4 legs*. Write this in the overlapping part. Ask what is different. E.g. *barks* and *meows*. Write these in the correct circles. Ask the students to tell you more things that are the same and different.

2 Make sure they understand the words *same* and *different*.

3 Hand out the worksheet and ask them to put words in the appropriate places. Individual words, phrases or sentences are fine.

4 When they have finished, ask students to compare their solutions with a partner. See if they want to add any more words to their own diagrams.

5 Ask them to compare their diagrams with a different person and again see if they want to add more words.

6 Finally ask for some suggested answers. Ask the class if they agree. If someone doesn't agree, ask why; encourage creative thinking. This activity can encourage some interesting discussion for more advanced students.

7 Note there are several possible correct answers; accept any solution that is plausible.

Extension The students could be asked to create their own pairs of objects and ask their partners to complete them.

Cars and bicycles | Worksheet

Write what is the same and different about each of these pairs of objects.

cars

bicycles

bananas

pineapples

trees

flowers

5 What they've got in common

Language focus Describing people; use of *both*

Thinking skills Observing people's appearances; making comparisons (by analysing what they have in common and what's different about them)

Age 8–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation None

In class

1 Ask two students to come to the front. Say to the class what the two have in common by thinking aloud, so the students get a model of the kind of thinking (and talking) you want them to do, e.g.

Mmh. Let's see. We've got Emma and Charlie. A boy, and a girl. Emma's blonde, and Charlie's got black hair. But let's see what they've got in common. Mmh. I need to look. Ah. They're both wearing T-shirts.

2 Write the following sentence on the board:
Emma and Charlie are both wearing T shirts.

3 Ask another two students to come to the front. Again, start comparing them by thinking aloud. Encourage the class to help you. Help students with language if necessary.

4 After some time, ask students to find things they know the pair of students have got in common but that cannot be seen, for example, *They both like ice cream*. Carry on like this until there are about 10 sentences on the board. Example:

They're both wearing T shirts.
They've both got curly hair.
They're both wearing shorts and T-shirts.
They've both got brown eyes.
They both like ice cream.
They both go to class 3A.
They both live in Green Street.
They're both called Mario.
They've both got the same favourite football club: Barcelona.
They're both 10.

5 Ask students to think of pairs of people outside of the class. Tell them to think what they've got in common and talk about their findings.

Extension Put students in groups of three. Tell them that each student should find out five things that are the same about the other two students in their group.

6 Apples and oranges

Language focus Vocabulary: descriptive words and phrases

Thinking skills Comparing and contrasting; recognising similarities and differences; using graphic representation to organise ideas

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards. This activity can be used at different levels, more advanced students will produce more varied and creative vocabulary in their bubbles

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of Worksheets A and B for each student. Bring an apple and an orange

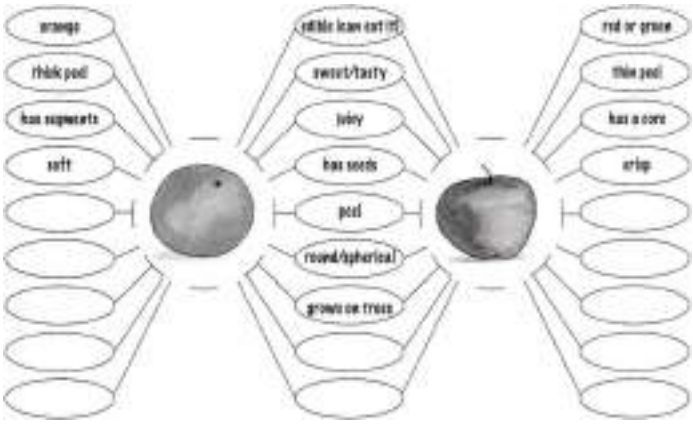
In class

1 Show the apple and orange. Ask for some words that describe them. Get students to complete Worksheet A

2 Hand out Worksheet B, ask the students to work in pairs and look at the double bubble. Explain that they will write words that describe both in the centre bubbles, and words that describe only one in the side bubbles. So the words in the centre are about what is the same. Those at the side are about what is different. Do one or two together if necessary

3 When they have finished, they can compare with another pair and see if they want to add more words.

Answer A possible answer to Worksheet B is shown here. There are many possible solutions, and these will depend on the level of English

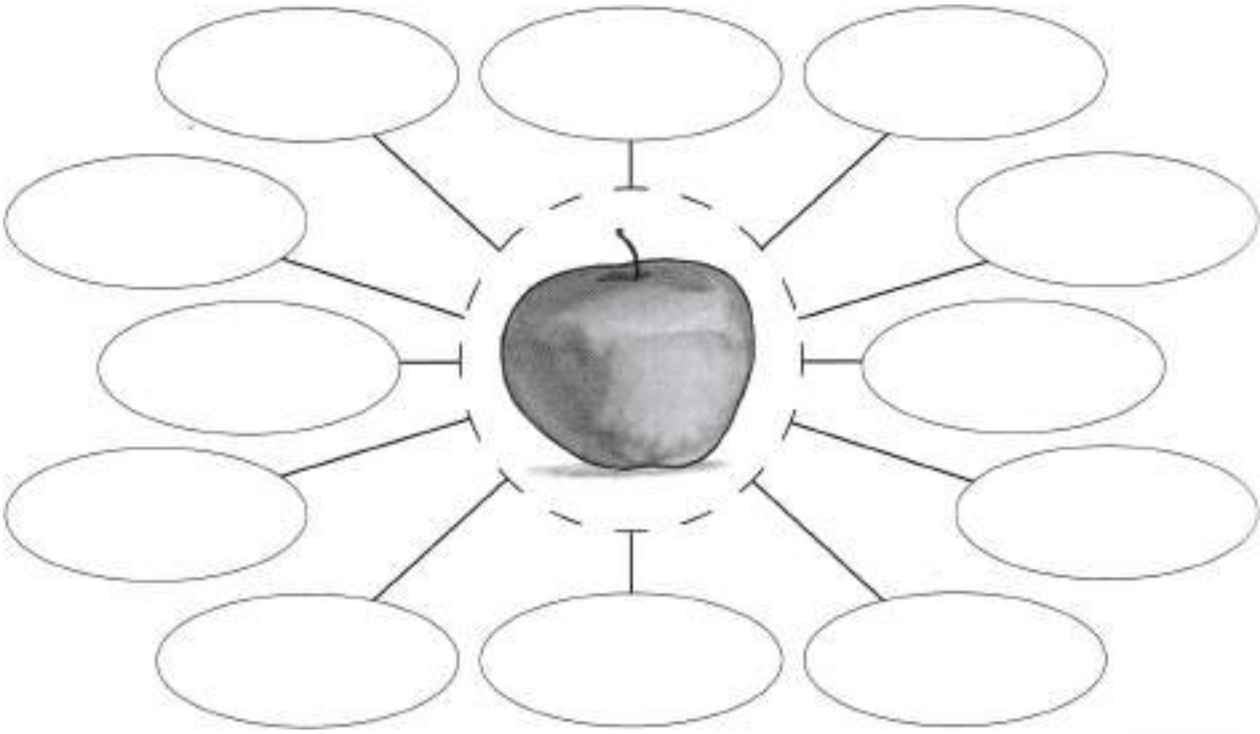


Variation This activity can be adapted to compare other pairs of items, e.g. car and bicycle; aeroplane and bus; plant and animal. At a more advanced level it could be used to describe abstract words or feelings

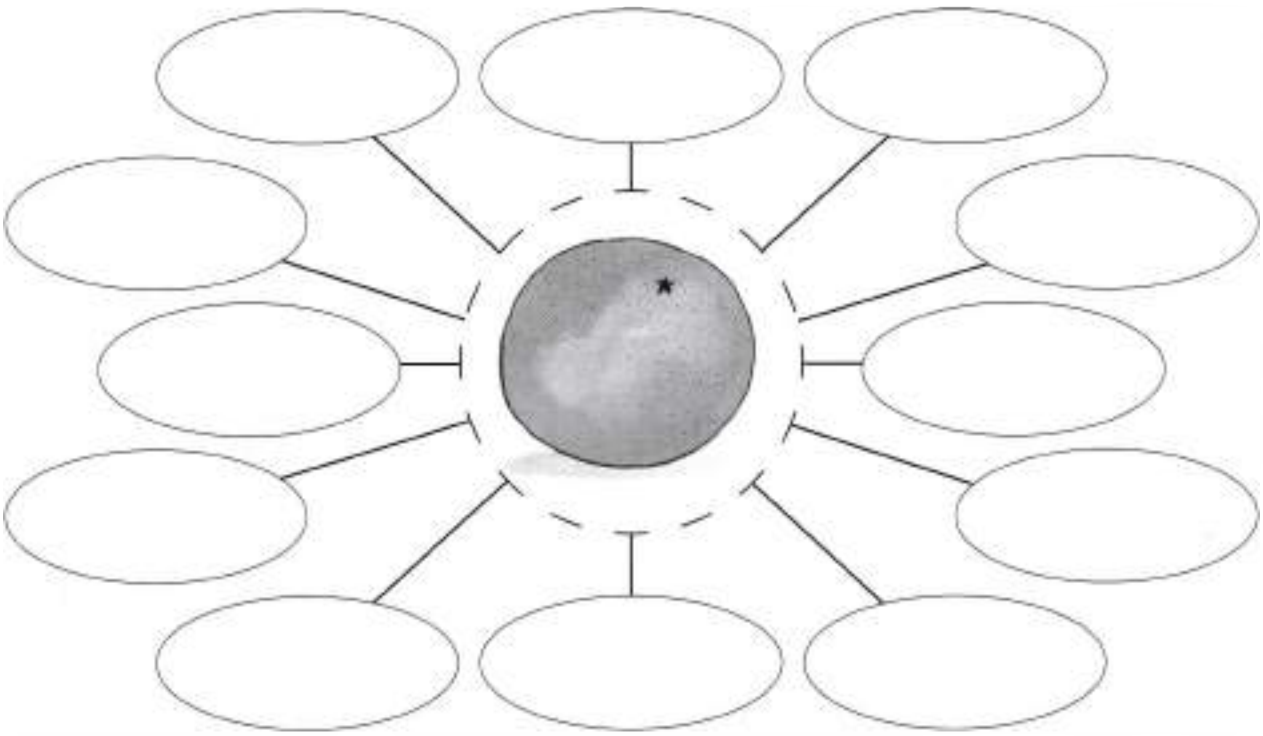
Note The double bubble map comes from David Hyerle's *Thinking Maps*

Apples and oranges | Worksheet A

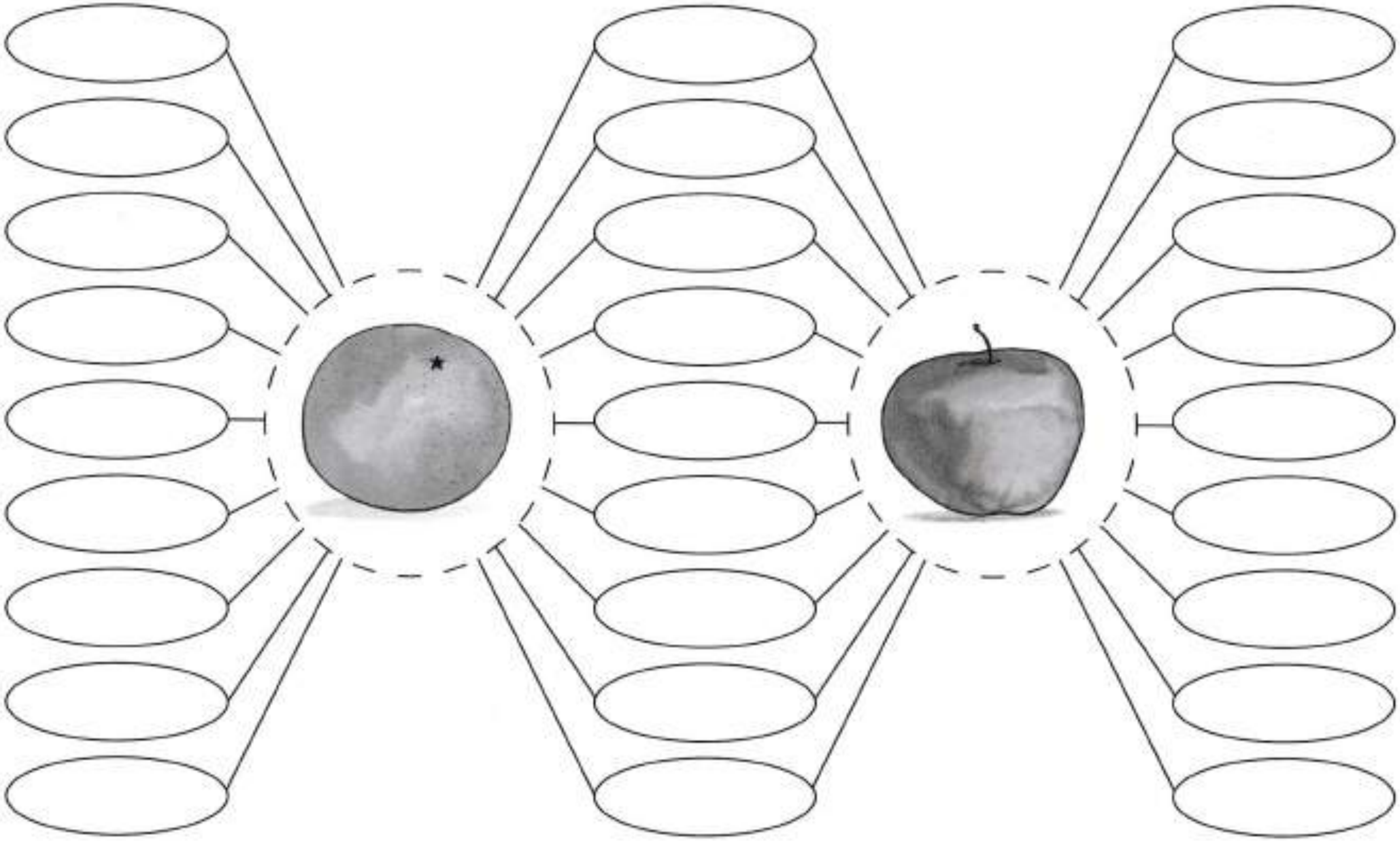
1 **Write words that describe an apple in the bubbles.**



2 **Write words that describe an orange in the bubbles.**



3 **Now write words that describe both an apple and an orange in the middle bubbles. Write words that describe only one in the side bubbles.**



Categorising

We live in a world where we constantly classify things; we sort objects when we put them away there are detailed classifications of plants, animals and many other things, and we classify people into different types. In this way we organise and control the world we perceive around us leading to a greater feeling of security. Children need to learn how to control information by organising it into categories. This requires being able to see connections between concepts and is an essential part of logical thinking.

Categorising involves discriminating between things, comparing things and seeing associations of different types between them. It also involves understanding that there are different ways of grouping things rather than just the first that comes to mind, which might be a low level way of grouping things. So for example we might group the same set of objects according to colour (at a lower level), or function (at a higher level). We also need to understand complex relations such as hierarchies. In order to categorise things we need to systematically gather data, examine it carefully, and search for attributes that can form the basis of a classification system.

The activities in this section involve students in sorting things according to different criteria. The activities also involve using visual tools such as Venn diagrams to help them organise information.

1 Find the home for the word

Language focus Revising vocabulary

Thinking skills Categorising, understanding concepts of groups of words, making associations between category and movement

Age 7–10

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

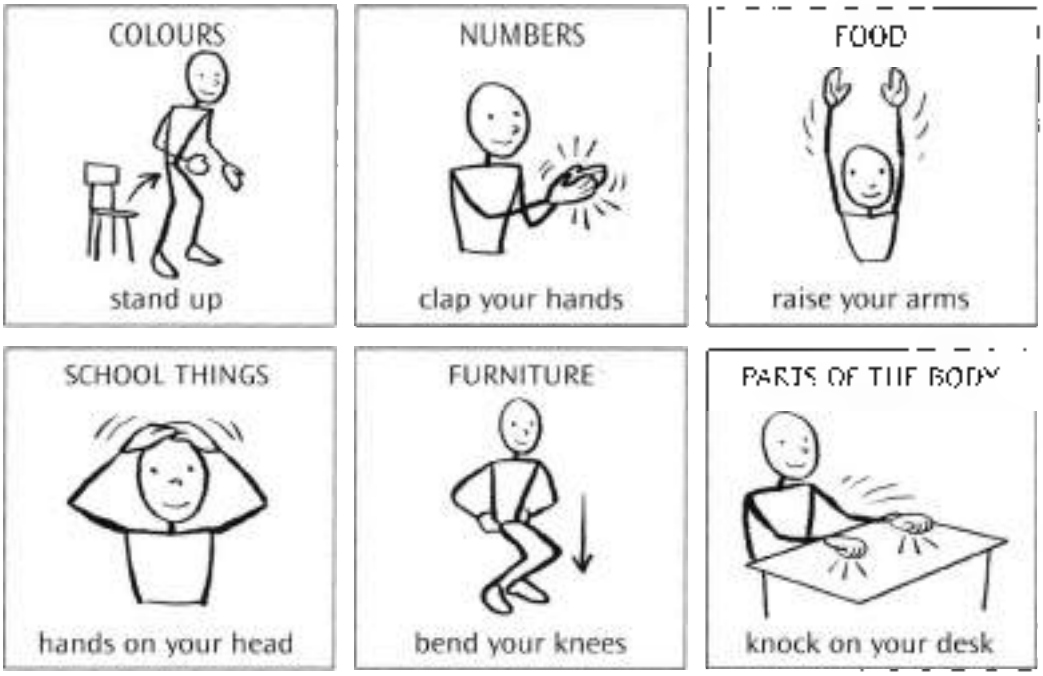
Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Prepare a list of words that you have taught that can be grouped in semantic fields. Prepare blank paper slips for step 3. A box or bowl to collect the slips.

In class

1 Brainstorm words the students have learnt that belong to a semantic field, e.g., *green, blue, orange*, and invite your class to call out more words that belong to this field. Then write *colours* on the board. Carry on like this with other lexical sets, spacing out their names on the board ready for step 2.

2 When you have six different categories on the board, draw, e.g., a figure standing up under the category *colours*. Ask the students, in pairs, to guess what you're drawing. Then add to each remaining category a simple picture with a label that clearly suggests a certain movement, e.g. *clap your hands* etc. Your board may then look like this:



3 Invite the students to write words from the different lexical sets on little slips of paper. Collect them in, using your box or bowl.

4 Draw out a slip of paper. Read out the word. The students have to do the matching movement.

5 After the students have made the appropriate movement, check their understanding of the words. Examples:

Point to a ...

Show me a ...

Draw a ... on the board.

Mime ...

Variation 1 Ask a student to come out to the front to take over from you.

Variation 2

1 Write the category names on large cards and the words on small ones.

2 Use Blu-Tack or sellotape to fix the category names on the walls of the classroom.

3 Hand out the cards with the words to the students.

4 Call out a student's name. The student stands up, reads out the word on their card, and fixes it on the wall next to the respective category name. Carry on like this by calling out other students, one at a time.

Note You may want to introduce the following language so the students can talk about their choice:

belongs to

I'm not sure if ... is a ... or a ...

I don't know what ... means.

2 Market day

Language focus Vocabulary for fruit and vegetables

Thinking skills Categorising, sorting, concept of sets

Age 6–9

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student. Bring in some fruit and vegetables; otherwise some pictures of fruit and vegetables and Blu-Tack or sellotape. For the variation, assemble a collection of boxes etc.

In class

1 Write the words *fruit* and *vegetables* on the board. Ask the class to tell you names of fruits and vegetables they know. If pictures are available, stick them under the appropriate heading. If all students get the idea, make sure they understand the difference between fruit and vegetables.

2 Ask the students to work in pairs. This means they use the language orally while discussing where things go, and they can help each other with the vocabulary.

3 Hand out the worksheet. Read the instructions. Tell the students to draw the fruit and vegetables in the right bags. Then ask them to write the number of each picture next to the correct word.

4 Finally go through the answers as a class.

Answers

1 **Fruit:** apples, pears, cherries, peaches, strawberries, kiwi fruit
Vegetables: potatoes, cabbage, peas, carrots, onions, beans, turnips, peppers, lettuce

2 13 potatoes, 10 cabbage, 3 apples, 2 pears, 12 carrots, 14 onions, 6 pears, 7 beans, 5 turnips, 1 peppers, 8 lettuce, 9 cherries, 11 peaches, 4 strawberries, 15 kiwi fruit

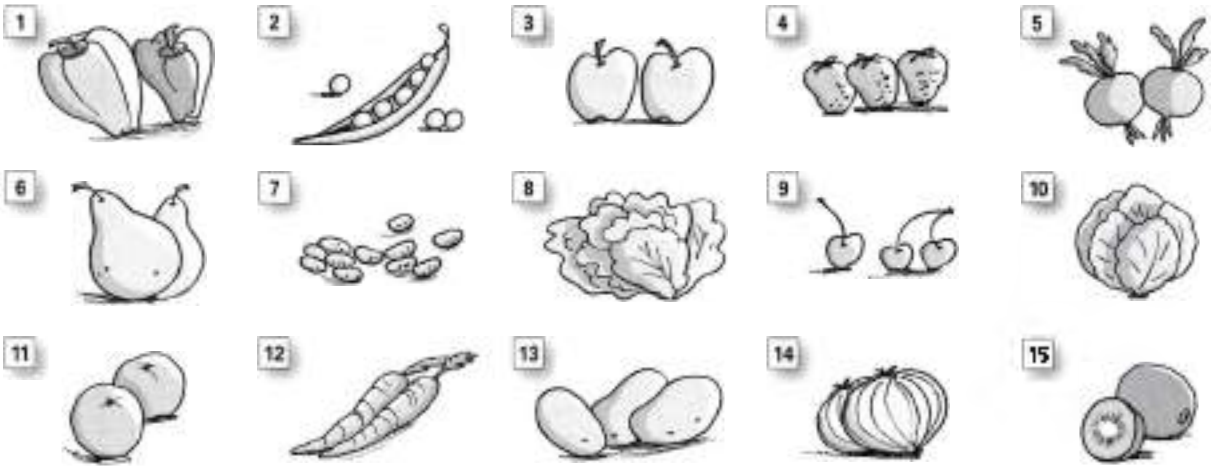
Variation Sorting activities can be used with other lexical sets that you want to revise with your students. You may want to give them more than two categories to sort things into. They can put items in boxes, jars, drawers, cupboards etc.

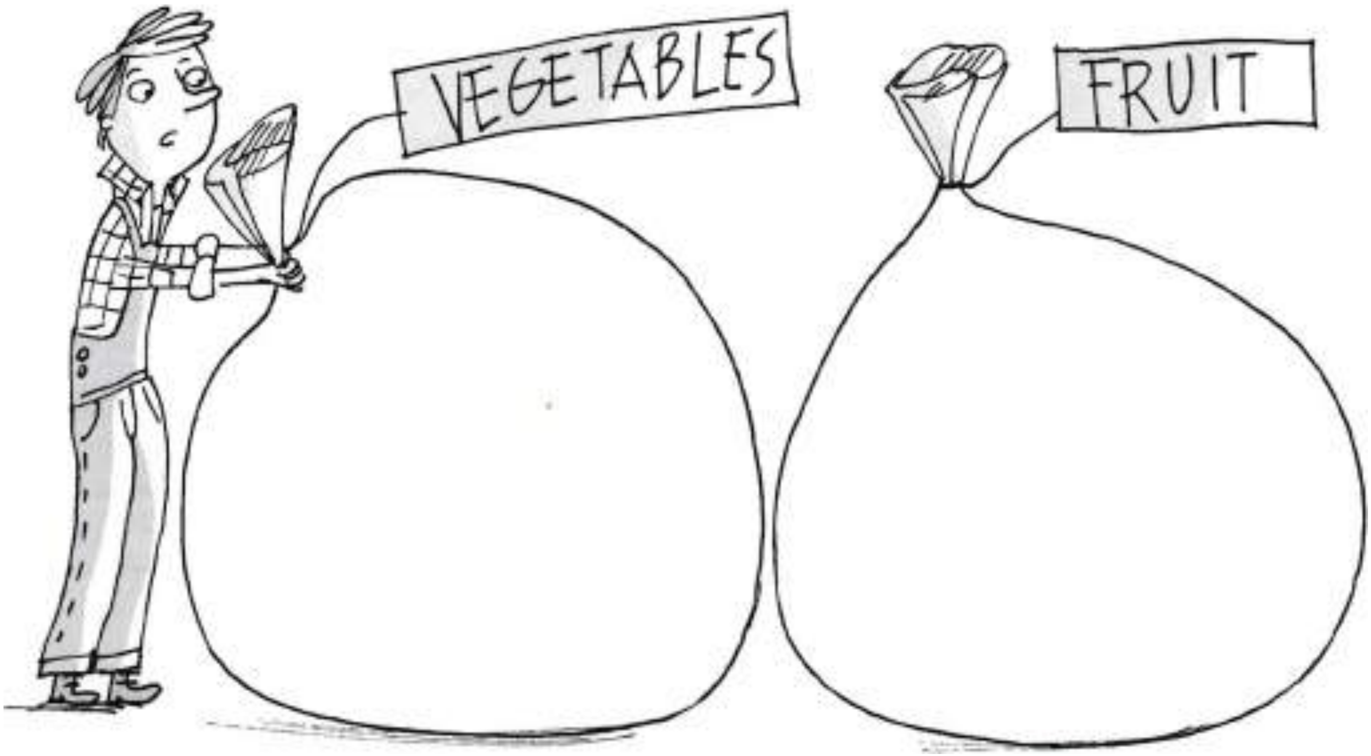
Notes You may appreciate various websites that offer you free images, though do remember to respect copyright laws. Alternatively you may want students to sort words only.

And if any especially bright student starts thinking outside the box and wondering whether, e.g., a tomato is a vegetable or a fruit, you can tell them it is both, because in biology it is a fruit and in cooking it is used as a vegetable.

Market day | Worksheet

1 Mr Smith is packing fruit and vegetables to take to market. He has got a bag for the fruit, and a bag for the vegetables. Draw the fruit and vegetables in the correct bags.





2 Now match the pictures with the words. Write the numbers.

☐ potatoes	☐ onions	☐ lettuce
☐ cabbage	☐ pears	☐ cherries
☐ apples	☐ beans	☐ peaches
☐ peas	☐ turnips	☐ strawberries
☐ carrots	☐ peppers	☐ kiwi fruit

3 Word trees

Language focus This is a useful way of reviewing vocabulary after the students have learnt a number of new words. It helps them to remember lexical sets, and as it is visual it helps them to remember both the meaning and the spelling of the words.

Thinking skills Categorising, recognising word classes, memory strategy

Age 6–8

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Hand out the worksheet. Explain that these are word trees; each of the words on the left belongs to one leaf on one of the trees.

2 Look at the animal tree. The word *cat* is already there. Ask what other words can go on this tree.

3 Ask the students to work in pairs and write the other words on the leaves on the correct tree. It is important to work in pairs so the students say and use the words.

4 When they have finished, ask them to suggest a name for each tree. Listen to all suggestions and select one for each. Some possibilities are *animal tree, clothes tree, transport tree / vehicle tree, food tree*.

5 Finally, ask the class whether they can think of any other words to put into the empty leaves. They can keep the worksheets and continue to add words as they learn new vocabulary. Alternatively they can take them home and see what words they can find by asking other people.

Answers

Animal tree: *horse, cow, sheep, dog, goat, deer, cat*
Clothes tree: *trousers, hat, skirt, jacket, shorts*
Food tree: *banana, sausage, pizza, melon, ice cream*
Transport tree: *bicycle, car, taxi, bus, train, truck*

Variations

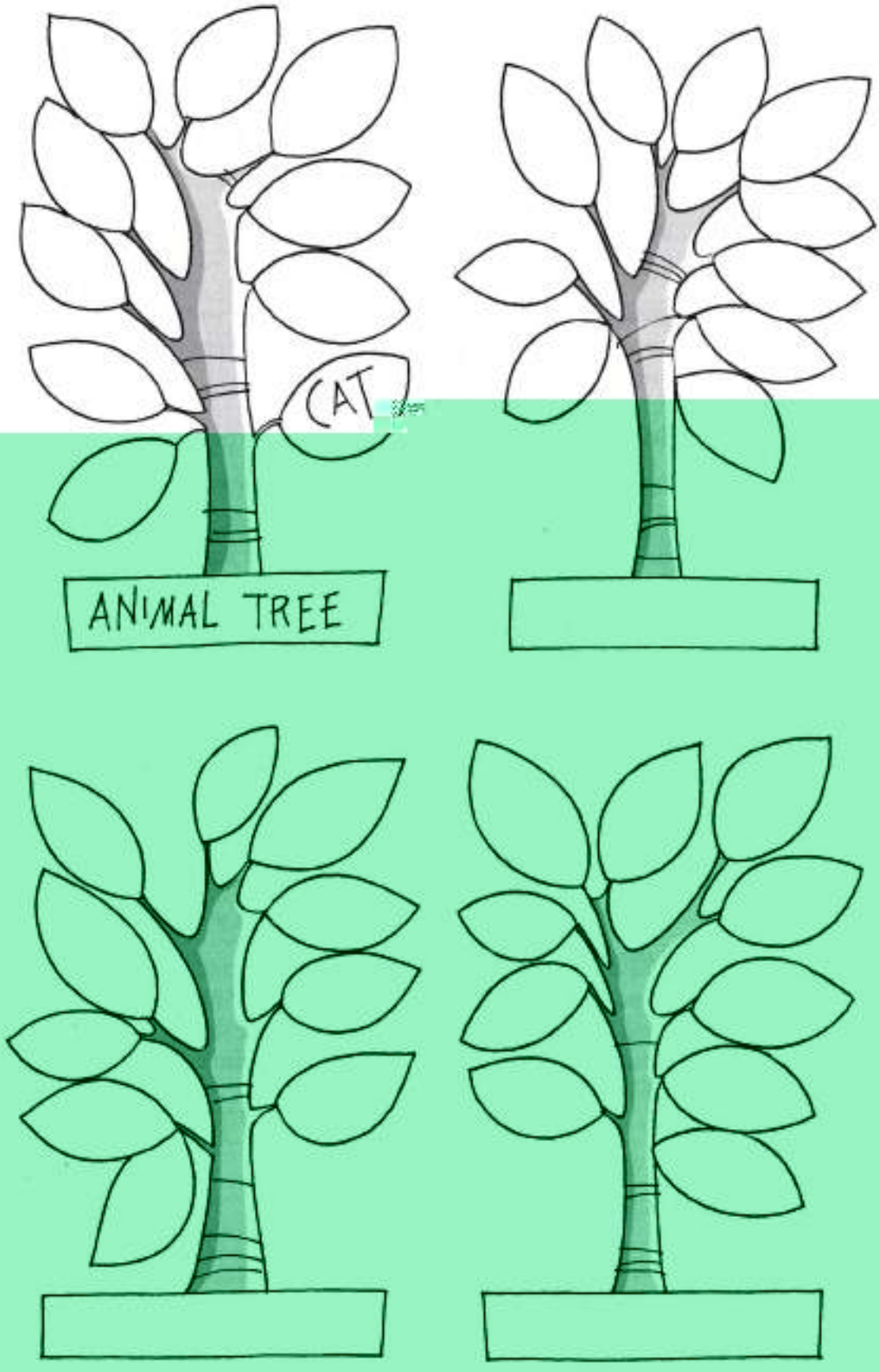
1 This idea can be adapted to use with different word classes, e.g. furniture, body parts, people, occupations, buildings. It can also be adapted for higher levels of English, using more sophisticated words.

2 The authors have successfully used the activity by drawing large trees and pinning them on the wall. We handed out blank leaves on which the students wrote words, which they then stuck onto the relevant trees with Blu Tack.

Word trees | Worksheet

Write the words onto the correct trees.

taxi
pizza
cow
hat
banana
skirt
sheep
car
truck
jacket
sausage
goat
bicycle
trousers
deer
shorts
bus
melon
train
ice cream
dog
horse



4 Transport

Language focus Vocabulary of transport

Thinking skills Categorising, recognising categories that overlap; understanding Venn diagrams and what they represent; giving reasons for choices

Age 8–11

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare one copy of the worksheet for each student. Ensure there is a range of small, portable red and blue objects, and if possible a red-and-blue one, lying around in the classroom.

In class

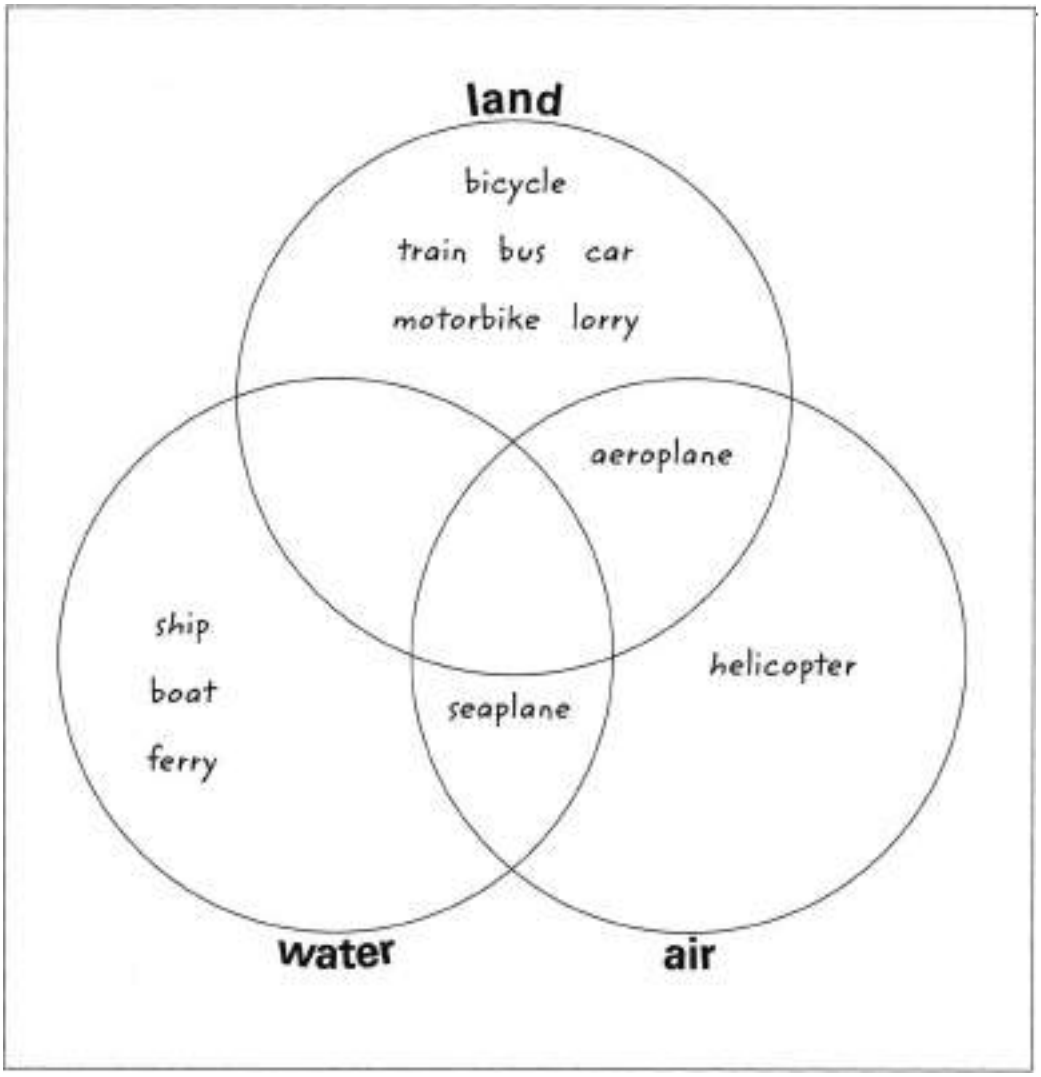
1. Draw two intersecting circles on the board. Label them *red things* and *blue things*.
2. Pick up some red objects and some blue ones from around the classroom and ask which circle they go in. Then ask where to put something that is blue and red.
3. Ask students to name any vehicles they know, write them on the board as the students call out names.
4. Put the students into pairs and hand out the worksheet.
5. Ask the students to write the number of each picture next to the correct word. Then ask for answers and check the students know the names of the vehicles.
6. Explain they are going to sort them into the three circles *water*, *air* and *land*. Remind them that some vehicles might belong to more than one category.
7. When they have finished, ask the class for solutions and build up a diagram together on the board. If there is disagreement, ask them to explain why they think the item should go there. They could use language such as:

   I think the ___ goes here as it travels on ____ and ____

8. When they finish, they can add any more they can think of, e.g. *tractor, canoe*. Help with the words if necessary and write them on the board. In this way more advanced students can develop their diagrams further.

Answers

7 ship 10 aeroplane 3 car 11 bus 12 bicycle 2 motorbike
1 helicopter 4 train 5 boat 9 ferry 8 seaplane 6 lorry



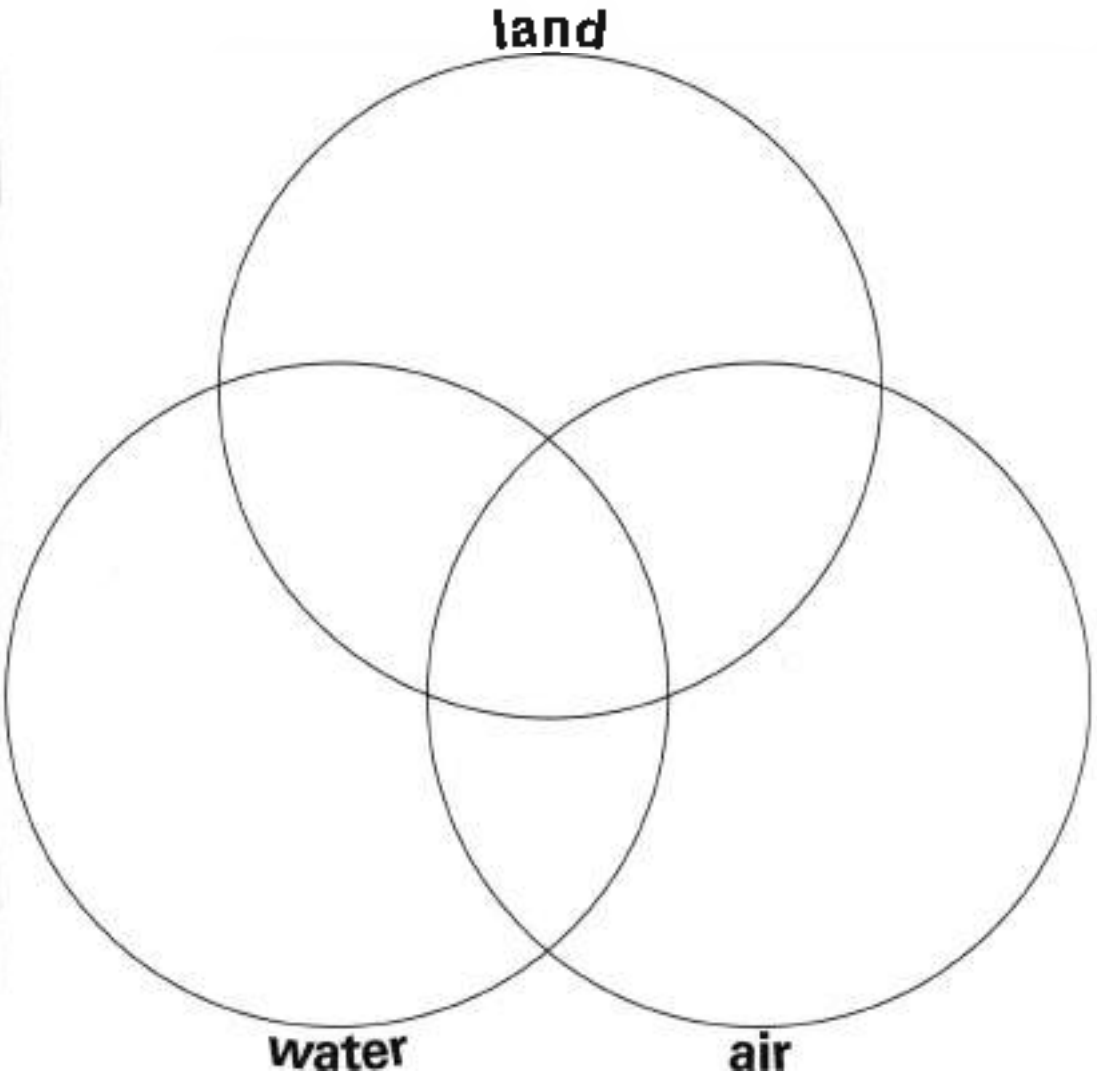
Extension Pairs who finish could look up further items on the web or a picture dictionary, and add these.

Variation Venn diagrams could be adapted for other lexical sets using objects, or, for more advanced classes, abstract words; for example 'happy words and sad words.

Transport | Worksheet

1 Some vehicles travel on land. Some travel on water. Some travel in the air. Look at the pictures and write the correct number next to the words below.

- ship
- aeroplane
- car
- bus
- bicycle
- motorbike
- helicopter
- train
- boat
- ferry
- seaplane
- lorry



2 Write the vehicle names inside the correct circle. Some might belong to more than one circle.

3 Now think of some more vehicles and write them in the correct circles.

5 The zoo

Language focus Names of animals; prepositions of place (*in the field*); vocabulary: *cage, field, aviary, pool, fence, dangerous*
Structures: *It needs to go in the ...; I think the lion should go in the ...*; giving reasons using *because*

Thinking skills Categorising, decision making, using prior knowledge, giving reasons, persuading

Age 8–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards. When using this activity for students with a higher level of English, ask them to give more detailed explanations about the decisions they make and try to persuade their classmates to agree with them.

Time 40 minutes

Preparation Copy Worksheet A and B for each student. Pictures of animals, scissors, gluesticks (optional).

In class

1 Ask the class to name animals from a zoo. Write them on the board. Ask them to act or make the sound of the animals.

2 Explain to the class they are going to make a zoo and that each animal needs to be put in a suitable place. Ask them to explain why this is important, e.g. *because a lion is dangerous*. Teach the word *dangerous*.

3 Teach the words *aviary, cage, pool, field, fence*.

4 Hand out Worksheets A and B. Students work in pairs. They draw the animals in the appropriate places or cut them out and stick them there. Tell them they can add fences if they need to separate any of the animals. They can also draw trees if they wish.

5 Ask for answers. If there is disagreement, ask for reasons. Accept any reasonable argument.

Depending on the level of your students, this part can be done with very basic language. Write prompts on the board if necessary, e.g.:

A lion is dangerous, so it needs to go in a _____

A parrot can fly, so it needs to go in the _____

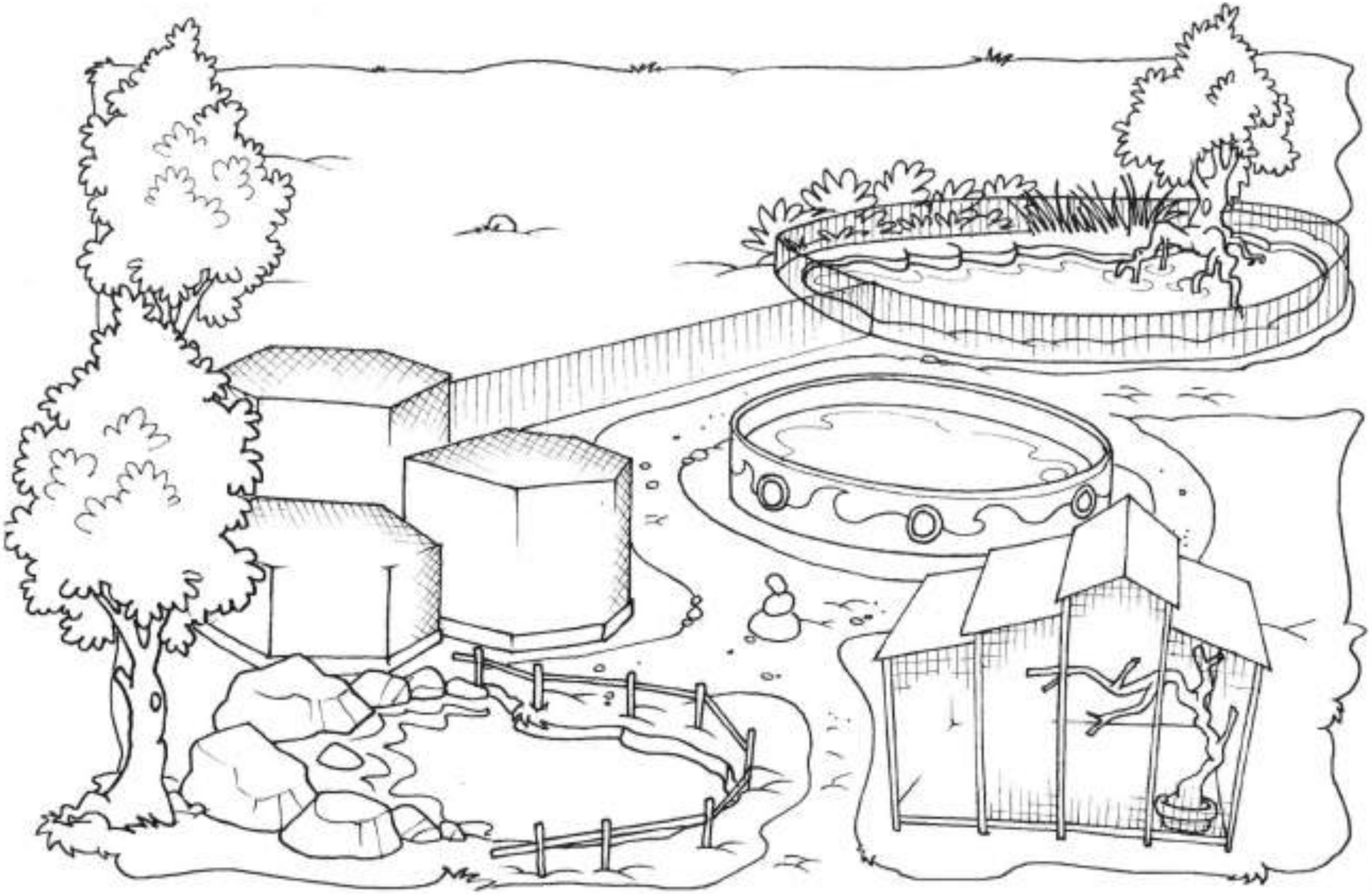
If the language level of your students is more advanced, you can introduce more complex language, e.g.:

The lion should go in _____ *because* _____

I think the parrot should _____ *because* _____

Answers
aviary: *peacock, parrot, eagle*
pools: *shark, penguin, crocodile*
cages: *tiger, lion, wolf*
field: *goat, horse, cow, deer, elephant, camel, zebra, giraffe*

1 **Build a zoo for the animals and birds on the next page. Animals living in water need a pool. Birds need an aviary. Dangerous animals need a cage. Animals that are not dangerous go in the field. Draw the animals and birds in the places.**



The zoo | Worksheet B


goat


tiger


peacock


horse


parrot


eagle


cow


deer


lion


shark


zebra


wolf


elephant


penguin


camel


giraffe


crocodile

2 Complete the sentences

1 _____ _ _____ go in the aviary.

2 _____ _____. go in a pool.

3 _____. _ _____ go in cages.

4 _____. _____ go in the field.

6 Words, words, words

Language focus Vocabulary revision, talking about word structure and meaning, spelling

Thinking skills Categorising; analysing (word structure); comparing; giving reasons

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Make one copy of the worksheet for each student. For the variation, prepare a copy of a text for each student or select a text from the course book you are using with your class

In class

1 Ask students to call out English words they like. Write them on the board.

2 Ask students why they like the words. If necessary give them prompts, e.g.:

because it sounds nice.
because it reminds me of.
I like … because I know how to spell it.
because it's a difficult word
because it's easy to remember.

3 Use the words on the board to make sure your students know the meaning of the following: *syllable, plural, noun, a silent letter* (depending on the level of your class, this could either be a silent consonant, as the *k* in *knee* or the *b* in *comb*, or it could be the 'magic e' as the *e* in *cake*).

4 Hand out the worksheet. Tell students to find out what they have to do. Then ask them what they have to do, and write the tasks on the board. Example:

- *count the syllables*
- *group the nouns*
- *count the letters*
- *find the plural nouns*
- *find the words with a silent letter*

To illustrate how to do the bar chart in exercise 3 on the worksheet, ask students to count how many words on the board have the same number of letters, e.g. 1 word with 1 letter (a), no word with two letters, no word with 3 letters, 2 words with 4 letters each etc. Then show them how they can turn their count into bars on the bar chart: 1 word with one letter means that only 1 square in the first vertical column gets coloured in, 2 words with 4 letters each means that 2 squares get coloured in the 4th vertical column etc.

Note The idea for this activity comes from Janet Baker Smith's book *101 Brain-based Instructional Strategies*

Words, words, words | Worksheet

1 **Look at the words on the board. Find out the number of syllables the words have got. Count them and write the number.**

Words with one syllable: _

Words with two syllables ___

Words with three or more syllables: _

2 **Find the nouns among the words on the board. Can you put them in groups? Write the groups on the back of this worksheet. For example:**

Things to eat: *ice cream, beefsteak*

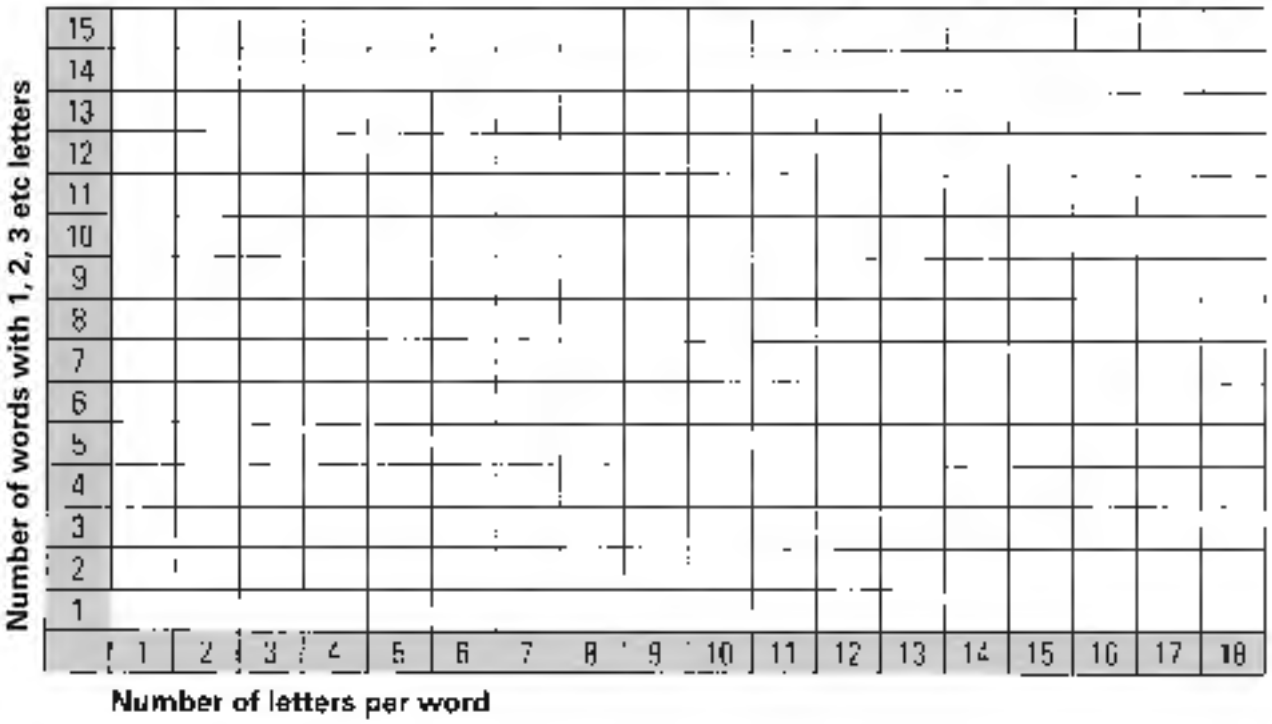
People: *teacher, pilot, clown*

Sports: *football, swimming*

3 **Look at the number of letters the words on the board have got. Classify them. Use a coloured pencil to make a bar chart. Ask your teacher to help you.**

Numbers across the bottom of the chart = numbers of letters per word

Numbers down the side = number of words with 1,2,3 etc. letters



4 **Find words that are plural and write them here:**

_____

5 **Find words that have a silent letter and write them here:**

_____

7 Sorting animals

Language focus Vocabulary for animals; verbs of animal movement: *fly, swim, walk, run, slither, jump, hop, crawl, waddle; can/can't; I think ____ goes in _____; I would like to be _____ because I could/would _____ _____.*

Thinking skills Categorising; recognising overlapping categories; understanding Venn diagrams, accessing information, using prior knowledge; decision making; presenting solutions

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student. Provide access to the internet or a range of reference books on animals.

In class

1 Ask students to tell you names of any animals they know. Ask them to act or make the sounds of each so they understand the meanings.

2 Ask: *How does a _____ move?* Elicit or teach movement words: *It flies, waddles, slithers, jumps, hops, swims, walks, runs.* Ask the students to mime the actions.

3 Hand out the worksheet and explain the task. Ask students to work in pairs to decide where the animals go. Some will require general knowledge, students could be asked to look them up on the web or in books.

4 When they have finished they write answers to questions 2 and 3.

5 Ask them if they can think of any more animals to add to the diagram.

6 Ask for answers. If there is disagreement students could be asked to look up answers at home and bring them to the next lesson. Alternatively they could be sent to look up the information in the library or on the web.

7 Finally ask one or two students which animal they would like to be and why. Model the structure *I would like to be a _____ because I would be able to ____ / could _____.* Then students complete the sentence individually.

Answer

Note Some of these are difficult. For example, a baby hippopotamus can swim but an adult doesn't as it is too heavy and generally propels itself along the bottom of a river bed. So it could go in either category. We suggest you ask the children to look this up if there is a disagreement and come to class with a suggestion.

Sorting animals | Worksheet

1 Write the animals inside the correct circle.


hippopotamus


crocodile


goose


salmon


owl


bat


tiger


swan


snake


duck


elephant

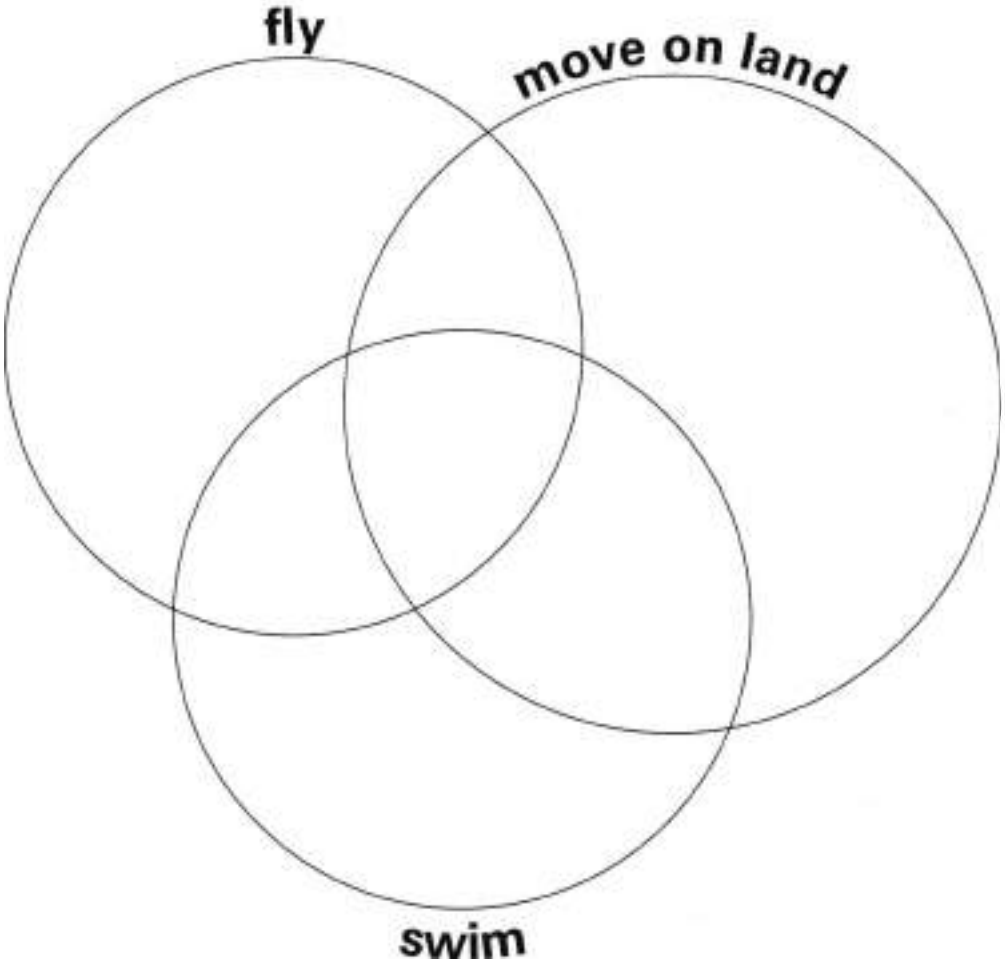

eagle


spider


bee


shark


dog



2 Which animals can do all three: fly, move on land, and swim?

_____

3 Can any animal in the world fly only? _____ Why/Why not? _____

_____

Sequencing

Sequences are a significant feature of our lives. Events happen in a sequence, instructions are given in a logical sequence, a story usually consists of a chain of events, language is a sequence of words, numbers contain a sequence, we prepare a meal with a sequence of actions. Recognising sequences and being able to put things and actions in a sequential order is an important aspect of being able to function in day-to-day life, and is necessary for higher-order cognitive functioning such as problem solving, and for giving clear, logical explanations.

Following instructions involves acting in a defined order. This activity requires children to restrain impulsiveness and wait for the relevant piece of information, to decode and interpret the information, to refer to relevant cues, and clarify ambiguities. Giving instructions entails understanding the needs of the listener, ensuring clarity of language, and taking a logical approach to sequencing information.

The activities in this section cover different aspects of sequencing: recognising patterns; putting words and concepts in order; recognising sequences of events; giving and following instructions; and recognising sequence in a story.

1 What's missing?

Language focus Vocabulary revision

Thinking skills Pattern recognition, sequencing, memorising

Age 6–9

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Create a worksheet (see note). Copy it, one per student, and cut each copy in half.

In class

1 Hand out a copy of the upper half of the worksheet to each student.

2 Do the first row by reading it out rhythmically, together with the students:

schoolbag – pen – schoolbag – pen – schoolbag – pen – schoolbag – pen

3 Ask them what is missing, and encourage them to complete the row by drawing the missing picture (a schoolbag). Give them a few minutes to complete the other rows. If they cannot complete some of the patterns, get them to walk round and talk to at least three other students and ask them what drawings they have made and why. In monolingual classes, these discussions will happen in the students' mother tongue.

4 When they have all finished, ask different students to read out the solutions to the class so that they can all check their own.

5 Then ask a student to read out any one of the rows. When the student has finished, the others look at their worksheet and say which number they believe the row was.

6 Next, challenge them if they can tell, without looking at the worksheet, which of the rows has been read out. Give them about a minute or so to look at the worksheet and try to remember the rows before they put the sheet face down on the desk. Ask two or three students, in turn, to turn up their worksheet to read out a row, while the other students guess its number.

7 Hand out the lower half of the worksheet and ask them to create their own logical patterns using any of the words they already know in English that can also be drawn. Tell them to leave one or two frames free in each row or pair of rows.

8 Ask the students to write their name on their worksheet. Collect the worksheets and hand them out randomly. Tell students to complete the logical sequences on the new worksheet.

9 The students close their eyes. One student reads out a row of pictures. The others listen and check whether it is a logical sequence. If they believe it is, they raise both their arms.

Extension As a further step or in a follow-up lesson, you may want to tell the students that you are going to read out a logical sentence now. Ask them to listen carefully and knock on their desktop if they can spot a mistake. Ask them to tell you the correct word instead.

Answers

1. school bag – pen
2. ruler – pencil
3. rubber – pencil
4. pencil case: the cartoon is a diagonal one

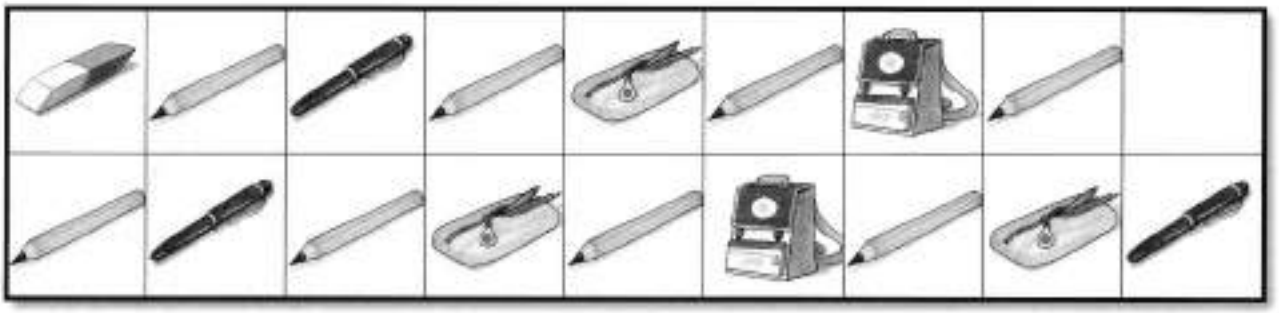
Note The worksheet is just an example; the exercise will work best if you create your own, based on the vocabulary you want to revise with your class.

What's missing? | Worksheet

1 

2 

3 

4 

Name .....

1

2

3

4

2 Put in order

Language focus Vocabulary, mainly verbs of action

Thinking skills Sequencing, recognising order

Age 7–9. This activity is suitable for young children as it contains picture prompts to assist with meanings of the words

Level Beginner / A1 upwards

Time 15–20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Write five numbers on the board: e.g. *seven, twenty, ten, one, four*. Ask the class to tell you the right order. Write them in the correct order.

2 Put the students into pairs so they can help each other with the words in the activity.

3 Hand out the worksheet. Explain they need to decide on the right order and write numbers in the boxes to show the order.

4 Finally ask for solutions. For each sequence ask individuals to read out their order. For each, ask if anyone has a different order. Continue like this till you have heard all suggestions.

If someone has a different order with a good reason, accept it. For example, in no. 2 some students will have a different routine to their day. The following are suggested answers.

Answers

1) (in shopping) cut vegetables, cook, eat, wash up
2) wake up, have a shower, get dressed, eat breakfast, go to school, eat lunch, go home, do homework, eat supper, go to bed
3) plant, water, grow, pick fruit, eat
4) baby, child, teenager, young man, old man
5) open door, get in, start car, drive, arrive, park
6) morning, midday, afternoon, evening, night

Note Reading out the answers provides the children with the opportunity to use and hear the words several times.

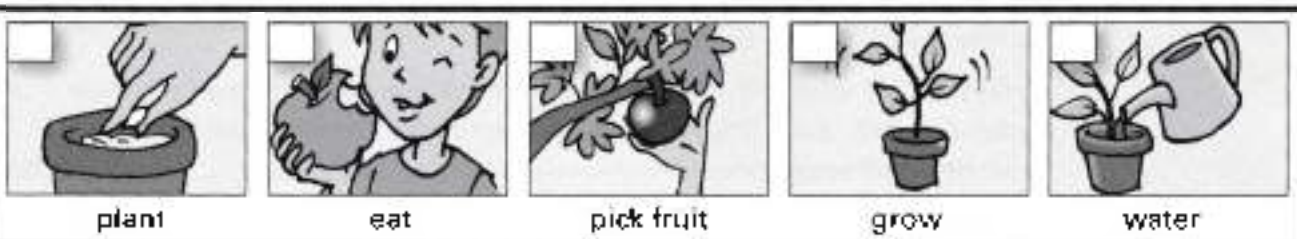
Put in order | Worksheet

Number the pictures in the correct order.

1

2

3



4

5

6

3 Language friends

Language focus Facilitating the students' awareness of language structures; helping them to remember structures with the help of their 'muscle memory'

Thinking skills Recognising linguistic patterns; applying knowledge of linguistic patterns

Age 6–10

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 5–10 minutes

Preparation Decide on a language area you want to practise, and create cardboard pieces of that structure (each approx. 10 x 20 cm) in two different colours (see the examples below).

In class

1 Ask three (for this example) students to come to the front of the class. Give them each a card in one colour, e.g. green. Assuming the structure you want to practise is *indefinite article + noun*, these cards could contain the following words

and on the back of the card:

house	*a house*
orange	*an orange*
pens	*six pens*

2 Ask three more students to come out. Give a yellow card to each of them

a	*an*	*six*

3 Now these students each have to find their match. They go up to the student who they believe is their match, and (if this is culturally acceptable in your class) reach for their hand. The other student checks the answer on the back of their card, and, if the choice is correct, they take the first student's hand. They walk back to the class, and the other students give them a big hand. If the solution is not the correct one, the first student has another, and then another go.

Example 1 Indefinite articles *a/an* plus nouns vs. number plus plural noun

six	*house*
an	*pens*
a	*orange*

Example 2 Personal pronouns

and on the back of the cards:

My best friends are Claire and Mark.	It's a four-wheel drive.	*My mum's got a new car. It's a four-wheel drive.*
Tom's my brother.	We both love maths.	*Tamara and I go to the same class. We both love maths.*
My best friend's name is Sandra.	You're such a naughty dog.	*Come here, Fido! You're such a naughty dog.*
My mum's got a new car.	Your photos look great!	*Well done, Kylie and James. Your photos look great!*
Ms Terrell's my English teacher.	She's ten.	*My best friend's name is Sandra. She's ten.*
Tamara and I go to the same class.	He speaks English and Spanish.	*Tom's my brother. He speaks English and Spanish.*
Come here, Fido!	She knows lots of great stories.	*Ms Terrell's my English teacher. She knows lots of great stories.*
Well done, Kylie and James.	They're in my class.	*My best friends are Claire and Mark. They're in my class.*

4 A fruit smoothie

Language focus Describing a process; listening; language of instructions: *cut, add, put, switch on, switch off, pour*

Thinking skills Identifying and sequencing tasks as part of a larger process; memorising

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation For each group of 3–4 students, prepare a copy of the set of pictures on the worksheet. Cut the page up so students can arrange the pictures in any order. Optional: bring in pictures or realia for step 1.

In class

1 Introduce or revise the following words and phrases. Use realia or pictures or draw on the board with labels, as shown here, to exemplify the meaning of the words and phrases:

2 Mime the words and say them at the same time. Then say the words without miming them, and get students to mime them.

3 Ask students to close their eyes and listen to the words as you say them. Get them to repeat the words and phrases after you with their eyes closed. Vary your voice e.g. whisper one word, say the next one in a low pitched voice, sing the next one, shout the next one etc.

4 Rub out the words on the board. Point at a drawing and elicit the words from the students.

5 Write numbers against the drawings. Give your students 15 seconds. Tell them to remember each word with its respective number. Then ask them to close their eyes. Say a number and ask students to say the respective word.

6 Put students in groups. Hand out to each group a set of the nine pictures as shown on the worksheet. Ask them to arrange them in such a way that the sequence makes sense to them.

7 Give students a few minutes to decide on what seems the most logical sequence to them.

8 Ask them to present their sequence by miming the action and talking about it. Scaffold the students' language by prompting words they need. Write the sentences on the board.

9 You will probably end up with a set of instructions like this:

Take a banana, a kiwi fruit and some strawberries.
Cut the fruit into small pieces.
Put the pieces of fruit in a blender.
Add a cup of low fat yoghurt.
Add half a glass of orange juice.
Switch on the blender.
Switch it off.
Pour the smoothie into cups.
Drink your smoothie with a friend. Yummy!

Answer

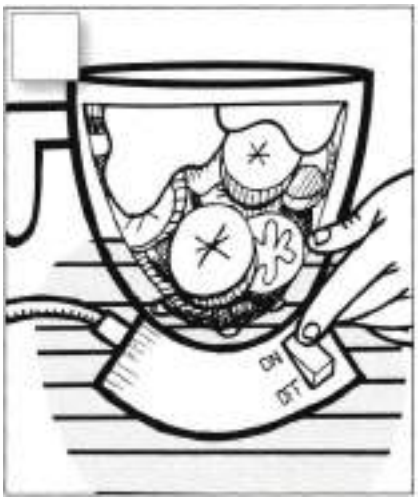
6	8	1
9	7	3
5	2	4

Variation Rather than cutting the pictures up so students can rearrange them physically you can give them a copy of the worksheet and ask them to put the actions in order by numbering them 1–9. This is far more demanding, as students need to visualise the sequence rather than actually trying it out by moving the pictures around.

Note The idea for this activity comes from *The Somerset Thinking Skills Course*, Nigel Blagg et al.

A fruit smoothie | Worksheet

Write numbers to put the pictures in the correct order.



5 Story time

Language focus Language of narrative, past tense, sequencing words: *one day / night, then, a few days later*

Thinking skills Logical sequencing, recognising clues from the information given, planning a strategy and checking solutions

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 15 minutes for each story. However, they can be done in different lessons

Preparation Decide how many stories you wish to work on in the lesson. Make a copy of Worksheets A and / or B for each group of three. Cut the stories into strips so there is one sentence on each strip. Include the title on a strip. Keep each set of strips intact, e.g. with a paper clip, or in separate envelopes, so the pieces don't get lost. Include the illustration with the story. The best way is to stick the illustration on the front of the envelope.

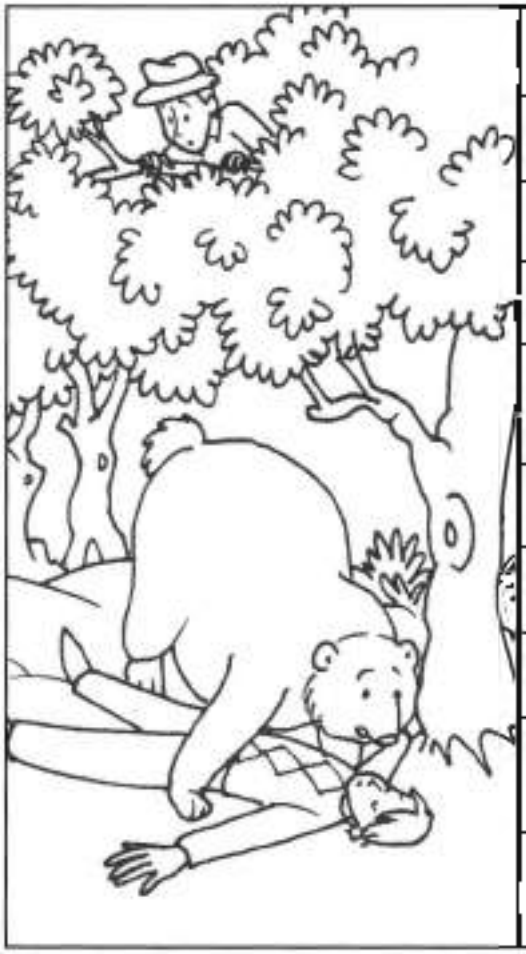
In class

1. Divide the class into groups of three.
2. Give each group a jumbled story. Ask them to lay the strips on the desk.
3. Ask them to find the title; make sure they understand the meaning of the words in the title.
4. Then ask them to look carefully at the sentences and arrange them into a story.
5. Allow 5 or 10 minutes, as needed. Then ask a member of one group to read out the first sentence, a member of another group to read the second sentence, and so on. Continue till they have gone through the whole story. Ask who got the whole story in the right order.
6. Ask them in groups to decide what they learnt from the story. Collect suggestions on the board.
7. Finally you can ask them to explain anything they did to work out the answer: e.g. looked for words like *then, but, a few days later*.
8. Continue with other stories.

Answers See worksheets on next page.

Note The stories are from *Aesop's Fables*.

Story time | Worksheet A



The men and the bear

Two men were travelling together.

They met a bear and were afraid.

One man climbed a tree and hid.

The other fell on the ground and pretended to be dead.

The bear came up and smelt him.

Then it went away

The other man descended from the tree.

He asked 'What did the bear whisper in your ear?'

The man replied; 'Never travel with a man who deserts you.'

The boy and the wolf

A boy was watching the sheep every night.

Three times he called 'Wolf! Wolf!' in the night and the neighbours ran out to help.

But there was no wolf and the boy just laughed

One night he saw a real wolf.

He cried 'Wolf! Wolf! Help me!'

This time the neighbours didn't come to help.

The wolf ate all the sheep.

Story time | Worksheet B

The fox and the bird

A bird sat on the top of a tree with a large piece of meat.

A fox saw the meat and wanted to eat it.

The fox said 'You are such a beautiful bird. I bet you don't have a beautiful voice too.'

The bird wanted to show off her voice.

So she opened her beak to sing.

The meat fell out.

The fox quickly ate the meat.

The lion and the mouse

One day a lion was sleeping.

A mouse ran on him.

The lion woke up.

He grabbed the mouse with his paw.

'Let me go,' said the mouse. 'One day I shall help you.'

The lion let the mouse go.

A few days later, the lion was caught in a net.

The mouse ran past and saw him in the net.

The mouse chewed the string.

The lion escaped.

'Small friends can be good friends,' said the mouse.

6 Describe and draw

Language items Positions: *right, left, on top of, underneath, bottom*, vocabulary of personal and household items, and shapes

Thinking skills Following instructions clearly; giving clear instructions in a logical sequence; describing; recognising what information a listener needs

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes for each activity, they could be done in different lessons

Preparation Prepare copies of Worksheets A and B for each student.

In class

1 Explain to the students that you are going to describe a picture and they will draw it. Tell them to pick up their pen and paper.

2 Say: *Draw a big rectangle to go round your picture.* Now give instructions slowly for the students to follow. For example: *In the top right corner there is a ball. Underneath the ball there is a bicycle. To the left of the bicycle there is a boy. In the top left corner there is a sun. Under the sun there is a flower.*

3 Repeat the instructions as often as needed. When they have finished, draw the picture on the board as you say the instructions.

4 Ask the students to tell you the instructions you gave. Collect the words on the board: *top, bottom, on top of, underneath, to the left of, corner.*

5 Hand out Worksheet A. Revise the names of the objects.

6 Put the students in pairs. Tell them to each create their own arrangement in the top rectangle, drawing the pictures given. They must not let their partner see.

7 Now tell them to describe their arrangement to their partner very clearly so their partner can understand and draw it in the bottom rectangle. They must not let their partner see their drawings. They take turns.

8 Finally they look at each other's pictures and see if the instructions were clear.

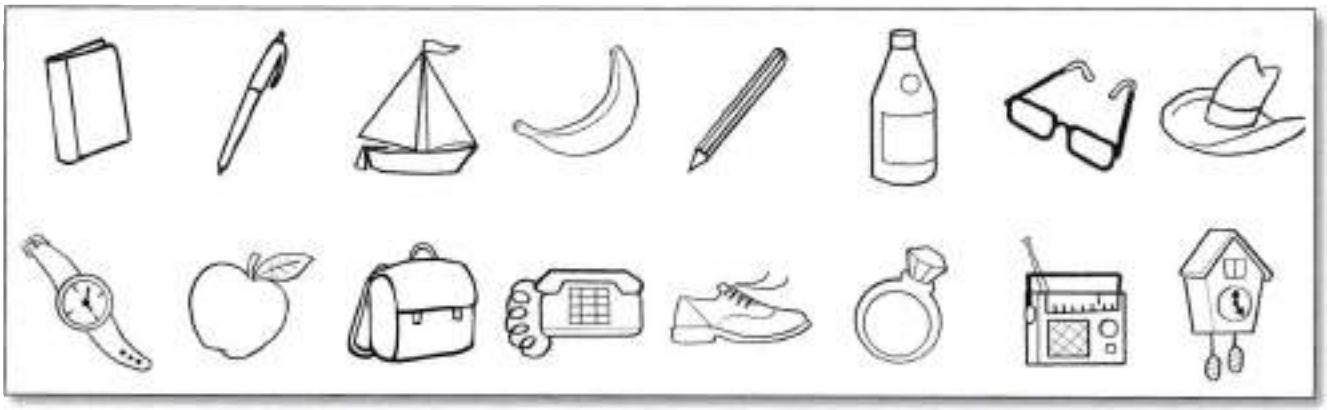
Variations

1 Carry out this activity with shapes. These are provided on Worksheet B. Students can arrange shapes on the page and describe them to their partner.

2 The activity can also be carried out with other objects that the students select.

Describe and draw | Worksheet A

Draw the objects in the rectangle below. Then describe your picture to your partner.



Draw your partner's picture here.

Describe and draw | Worksheet B

Draw the shapes in the rectangle below. Then describe your picture to your partner.

Draw your partner's picture here.

7 A magic spell

Language focus Vocabulary of recipes: *boil, add, stir, crush, put ___ in ___*. language of instructions: listening

Thinking skills Logical sequencing

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes. Alternatively this activity could last over two lessons, with the second worksheet completed in the second lesson.

Preparation Bring to class a picture of a witch and a recipe book. Prepare a copy of Worksheets A and B for each student.

In class

1 Show a picture of a witch. Ask: *Who is this? What does a witch have? What does a witch do?* Tell the students they are going to write magic spells.

2 Hand out Worksheet A. Explain: *This is a witch. Her name is Cackler. She's making a spell. She has got some very big saucepans. She's stirring one of the saucepans.* Ask them to do the action of stirring.

3 Read each sentence to the class in the right order and ask them to number the pictures. Read them again as many times as necessary.

Recipe

1 *Boil some water in a saucepan.*
2 *Put 25 flowers in the water.*
3 *Add a spider's web.*
4 *Crush 15 beans and add them to the mixture.*
5 *Add a hair from a horse's tail.*
6 *Put 2 white feathers in the mixture.*
7 *Stir well.*
8 *Say, 'Abracadabra, hey presto!'*
9 *The mixture turns into gold!*

4 Now read the sentences again and ask the class to mime each one. Then all shout: *Abracadabra, hey presto!* together.

5 Tell them they will each make their own spell. Write on the board: *A spell to _____*. Ask for ideas and collect them on the board.

6 Hand out Worksheet B and ask the students to write their own spells. This activity could be done in pairs. Tell them to ask you for any new words they need, this enables them to be imaginative. Write the new words on the board for the other students to use. Illustrate them where possible.

7 Display the spells on the wall. Give them time to read each others work.

Answers

5	4	9
2	6	8
3	7	1

A magic spell | Worksheet

Listen. Number the pictures in the correct order.

A magic spell | Worksheet B

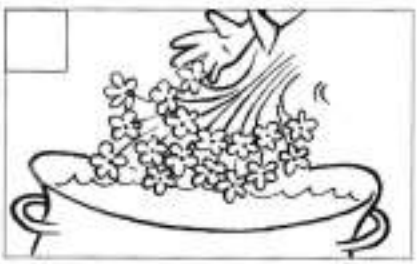
Write your own spell!

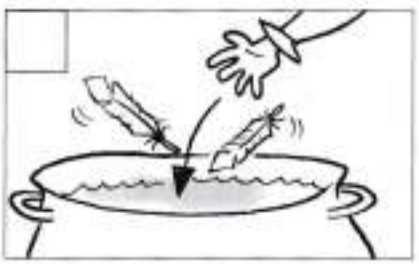
add | stir | crush | boil | put ___ in ___ | saucepan

A spell to

A magic spell | Worksheet A

Listen. Number the pictures in the correct order.





A magic spell | Worksheet B

Write your own spell!

add	stir	crush	boil	put ___ in ___	saucepan

A spell to

8 What's the right order?

Language items Language concerned with descriptions of size, length, weight, days, age, speed

Thinking skills Sequencing, recognising the concept of order in length, size, number, weight, days of the week, age, speed; recognising accuracy of meanings

Age 10–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1, as the activity involves using some more difficult vocabulary than usual, and recognising the meanings of the concepts they represent

Time 15 - 20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student. Have three objects ready for step 2.

In class

1 Illustrate the concept of order. Call three students out and stand them in order of height. Say: *They are in order of size. Marcos is the tallest and Maria is the smallest.*

2 Put three objects in a row and illustrate the concepts in the same way. Say: *They are in order of size. The bag is the biggest and the pencil is the smallest.*

3 Hand out the worksheet. Ask the students to complete it in pairs. Tell them to ask the meaning of any words they don't know, and collect these words on the board.

4 When the pairs have done as much as they can, ask them to find another pair and compare answers.

5 Finally, ask for answers.

Answers

1 *big – little – large – enormous*
2 *millimetre – centimetre – metre – kilometre*
3 *long – short – tall – gigantic*
4 *weightless – light – heavy – overweight*
5 *first – second – third – fourth*
6 *yesterday – today – tomorrow – next week*
7 *Monday – Wednesday – Friday – Saturday*
8 *early – on time – late*
9 *standing – slow – fast – high-speed*
10 *crawl – walk – run – sprint*

What's the right order? | Worksheet

Write the words in order from smallest to largest, earliest to latest and slowest to fastest.

tiny | enormous | little | large

1 _____

metre | centimetre | kilometre | millimetre

2 _____

gigantic | short | tall | tiny

3 _____

heavy | light | overweight | weightless

4 _____

twenty-one | thirty-four | seventeen | five

5 _____

tomorrow | yesterday | next week | today

6 _____

Wednesday | Saturday | Monday | Friday

7 _____

early | late | on time

8 _____

fast | high-speed | slow | dawdling

9 _____

run | walk | crawl | sprint

10 _____

Focusing attention

Children who have learnt to pay attention are a pleasure to teach, but more important is a child's ability to focus attention has great value for the development of their mind. From an early age children need to learn how to focus their attention as a key basic cognitive skill without which a number of so-called higher-order skills (e.g. comparing, differentiating, categorising and logical-critical thinking) cannot be developed. A lack of ability to focus attention can lead to haphazard and unfocused responses and an inability to concentrate.

Many children these days are easily distracted by the fast-moving pictures that are a common part of their sensory environment. Helping students to focus their attention in spite of these environmental challenges is a key task for you as a teacher. Children need to learn how to gather data using their senses – by looking, listening and sensing accurately over a sustained period of time – and they have to learn to block out anything that might distract them from doing that. If the lesson is challenging and fun, students will be more prepared to 'pay that price'; however they also need to develop the ability to concentrate when a task is less enjoyable.

When learning a foreign language, focusing one's attention is an important skill, and one that is required in order to observe and understand things about the new language. Without, for example, noticing the importance a certain structure has on meaning over another structure, students cannot learn how to express themselves accurately and communicate meaningfully.

So this section contains some activities that will help your students learn how to focus their attention effectively.

1 How many are there?

Language focus Vocabulary revision; asking for quantities; answering questions

Thinking skills Memorising, focusing perception and attention, counting

Age 6–10

Level Beginner / A1 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Use Worksheet A or Worksheet B; make one copy per student.

In class

1 Hand out a copy of the worksheet to each student and ask them to put it face down on their desk. Make sure the students know the words for the items of clothing (or shapes, depending on which of the two worksheets you have chosen).

2 Tell them that they can look at their worksheet as soon as you clap your hands. Tell them they should look at the drawings carefully so that they will be able to answer questions about them later. Tell them they should put their worksheets face down on the desk when you clap your hands a second time.

3 Clap your hands. Give your students about 15 seconds to look at the worksheet before you clap your hands again.

4 Ask them for the number of objects in the drawings, e.g. *How many caps are there?* Write the students' answers on the board. Tell them to turn the worksheet over and check, then write the correct number in the box beneath.

5 Carry on in the same way, asking for the other objects in the picture.

Answers

A: 3 caps, 4 T-shirts, 2 pairs of jeans, 1 skirt, 2 belts, 1 dress, 4 jumpers

B: 3 circles, 4 squares, 4 triangles, 3 rectangles

Variations

1 Depending on the level of your class, other structures to be used with the same activity/worksheet could be:

I think there are … (skirts).
Do you think there are more (belts) than (dresses)? – Yes, I do/No, I don't.
I think there are as many/more/fewer … than … .
I'm not sure if there are as many/more/fewer … than …

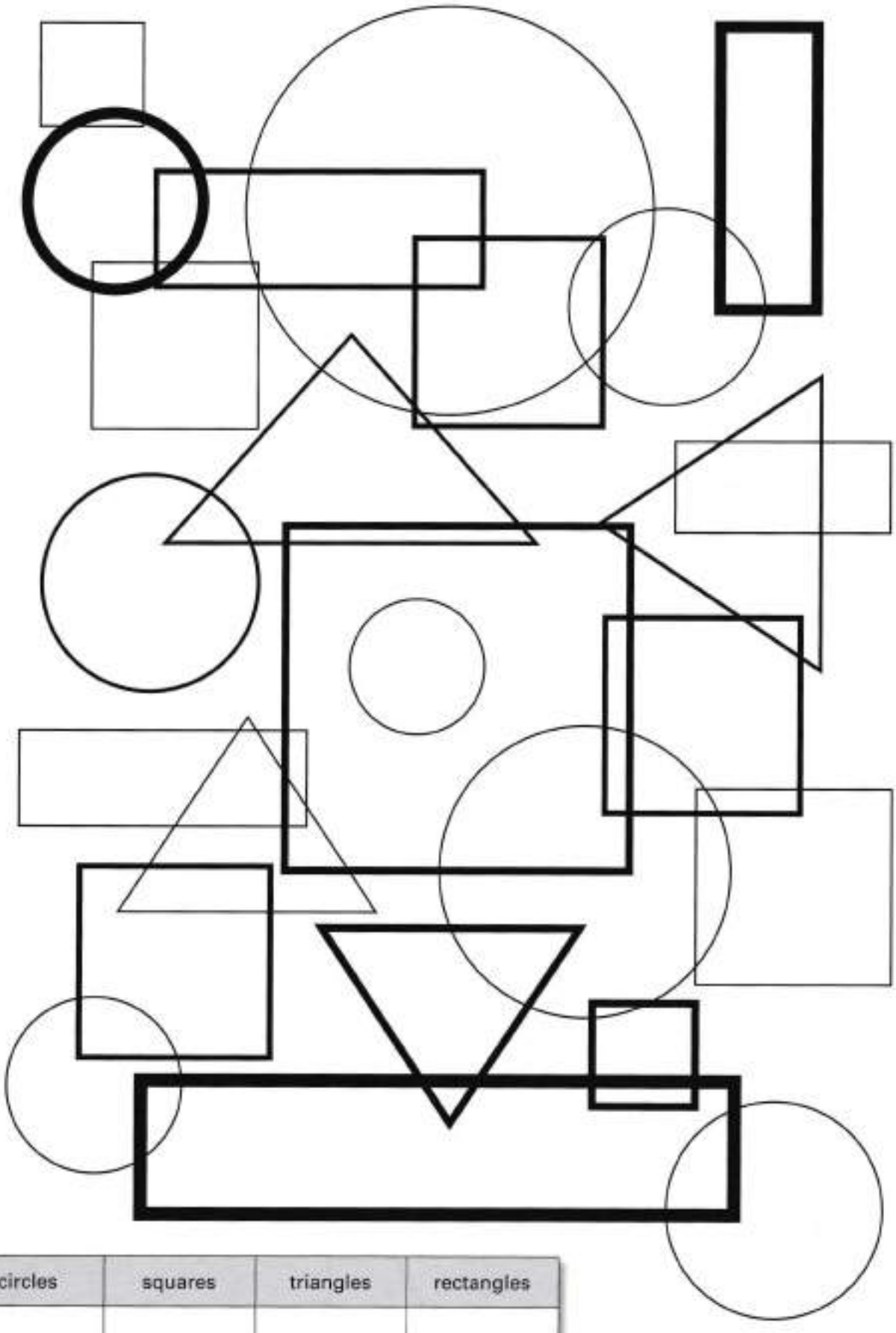
2. Create a worksheet for any set of words you would like your students to revise. Select words for objects that can easily be drawn. In a frame, draw various numbers of each of these objects, outlines only, in different sizes, overlapping each other.
3. The students work in pairs. They each do a drawing with lots of objects they know the names of and ask their partner to remember the objects in the same way.

Note Robert Fisher, author of *Teaching Children to Think*, has stressed that focusing attention and perception is one of the most important basic thinking skills that children need to learn while they are young in order to be able to develop so-called higher-order thinking skills later in life.

How many are there? | Worksheet A

caps	t-shirts	pairs of jeans	skirts	belts	dresses	jumpers

How many are there? | Worksheet B



circles	squares	triangles	rectangles

2 Squares, circles and triangles

Language focus Simple numbers: asking for and specifying a quantity of things; shapes

Thinking skills Noticing; thinking laterally; counting

Age Any

Level Post-beginner / A1

Time 5–10 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each student

In class

1 If your students don't know the words *square*, *circle* and *triangle* yet, introduce and practise them.

2 Copy the first figure from the worksheet onto the board. Tell students to look at it. Ask *How many squares are there?* It is likely that some students will immediately call out an answer. If their answer is other than 14, tell them that they should take their time and think a bit.

3 Get students to write their answer next to the figure on their worksheet.

4 Ask individual students what their answers are:

How many squares are there? Then,
Who agrees with (James') answer?
What do others think?

5 For each 'wrong' answer, ask one (reasonably self-confident) student to come to the front and demonstrate to the class how they got to their answer. But don't call out any of the students who have got the right answer.

6 Point out the 'right' answer and give students a bit of time to figure it out. Ask a student who got to that answer to explain to the class how they got there.

7 Carry on in the same way with the other figures on the worksheet.

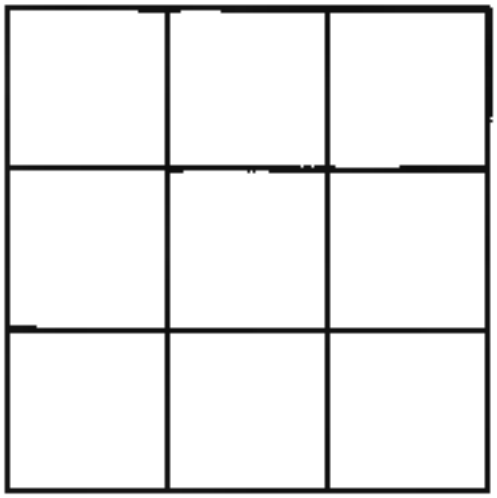
Answers

14 squares
4 circles
11 triangles

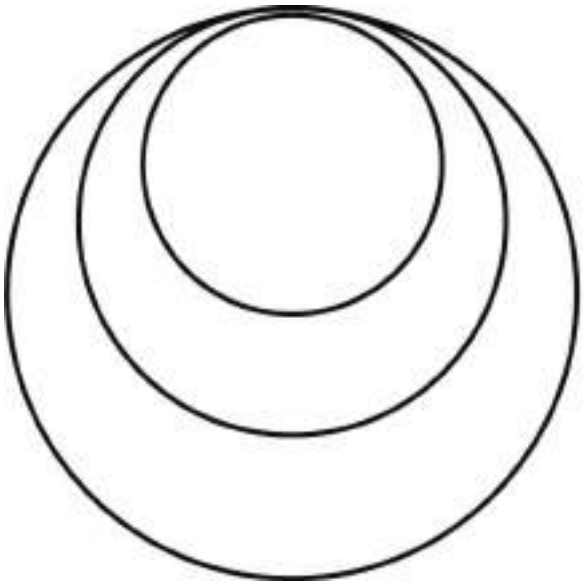
Note In step 5, it is very important that you show a non-judgemental attitude to the students' 'wrong' answers. Students frequently tend to laugh about what they perceive as other students' wrong answers. So make it clear here that making mistakes is a very important step towards getting it right.

Squares, circles and triangles | Worksheet

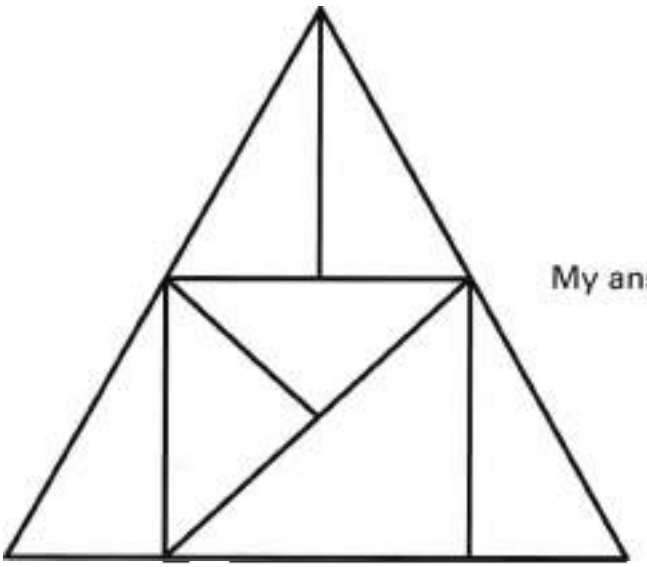
How many squares / circles / triangles are there? Write the numbers.



My answer: _____



My answer: _____



My answer: _____

3 Action stories

Language focus Decoding meaning; text reconstruction

Thinking skills Dealing with ambiguity, hypothesising and verifying hypotheses about meaning, using context and mime to decode meaning; sequencing

Age Any

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 30–40 minutes

Preparation Copy Worksheets A and B for each student. Decide if any of the key words of the action story need to be pre-taught.

In class

1 If necessary, pre-teach key words with the help of pictures or mime. N.B. it is not necessary to pre-teach all the words, as it is one of the advantages of the *Total Physical Response* method used in this activity that students will be able to guess the meaning of sentences in a holistic way, and gradually learn to verify their hypotheses about meaning.

2 Get your class to stand in a circle.

3 Say the action story below sentence by sentence. Each time, say the sentence and carry out an appropriate action at the same time. Invite your students to imitate your actions. After three or four sentences, start again from the beginning.

Say:	Do this:
You're walking to the train station.	Walk on the spot.
Your bag's very heavy.	Act as if carrying a heavy bag as you are walking.
You're hot and tired.	Wipe your forehead. Look tired.
You sit down on the bag.	etc.
You fall asleep.	
Suddenly you wake up.	
You can hear something in the distance.	
You jump up, pick the bag up and run.	
Too late! The train has left.	

4 Repeat the story with the sequence of actions described several times. When you notice that your students can carry out the actions without problems, give them instructions again in the same order, but this time do not carry out the actions any more.

5 Gradually begin to jumble the order of the instructions. The students carry them out.

6 Hand out Worksheet A. Start by saying any of the sentences on page 82 – but not the first one – and ask students to point to the respective picture. Carry on like this with the other pictures, in jumbled order.

7 Now read the sentences from the action story in the correct order to your students and have them number the pictures.
You're walking to the station.
Your bag's very heavy.
You're hot and tired.
You fall asleep.
Suddenly you wake up.
You can hear something in the distance.
You jump up, pick the bag up and run.
Too late! The train has left.

Answer

7	5	2
1	8	9
3	6	4

8 Hand out Worksheet B. Ask the students to look at the graphic representation of the first sentence. Read the sentence together with the students. Repeat the sentence and elicit the language from them. When you have repeated the sentence several times, ask them to hear your voice saying it in their head. Proceed like this with the rest of the sentences.

9 Ask them to write the sentences.

Note The idea of working with action stories is based on James Asher's *Learning Another Language through Actions*. You can find action stories with photocopiable worksheets in Günter Gerngross and Herbert Puchta's *Do and Understand. 50 Action Stories for Young Learners*.

Action stories | Worksheet A

Listen. Number the pictures in the correct order.

Action stories | Worksheet B

Can you 'read' the story?

1 Y_____re w_____ t__ th__  st_____.

2 Y_____  's very h_____.

3 Y_____ h____ and t_____.

4 Y___  on the  .

5 Y_____ f_____ a_____.

6 S_____ y_____ w_____ u__.

7 Y_____ c_____ h_____ s_____ i__ th___ d_____.

8 You _____ u__, p_____ th_____  u____ and  .

9 T_____ l_____! Th_____  has l_____.

4 Overlapping songs

Language focus Fun with song lyrics

Thinking skills Focusing attention: applying rhythmic patterns to text

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 5 minutes

Preparation Select two songs that your class have already learned; perhaps *Happy Birthday* as song A, and *Ten Green Bottles* as song B

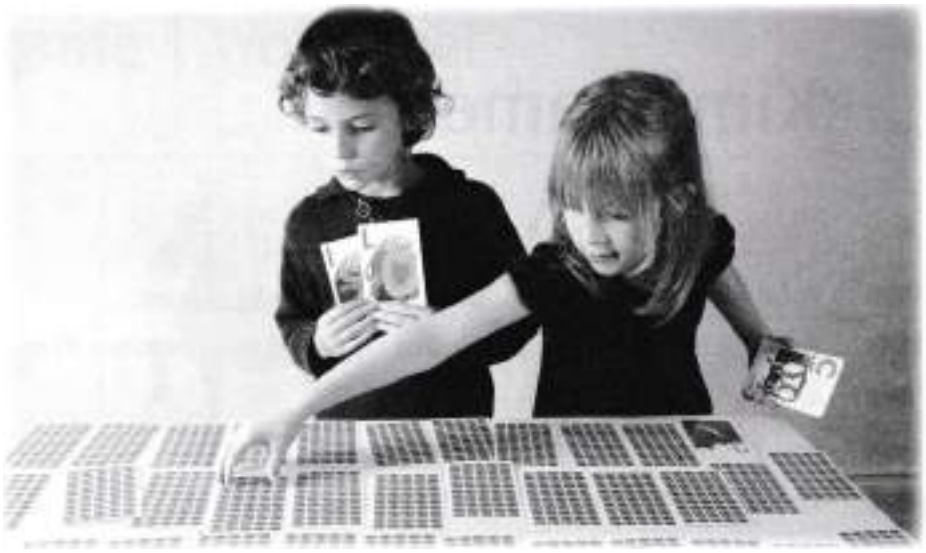
In class

1 Revise the two songs with your class: sing song A first and then song B

2 Ask the students to say the lyrics of song A, keeping to the rhythm of the song. Then tap out together with the class, the rhythm of song B. Ask the students to try to sing the lyrics of song A to the rhythm of song B (and later, vice versa).

Notes We learnt this from Maria Rinvolucri

For a range of modern and original songs for young students, see *Grammar Songs and Raps*, Puchta, Devitt, Gerngross and Holzmann.



Memorising

Over the last two decades or so, the skill of memorising seems to have received less recognition as an important educational activity than it did in the past. Rote learning, for example, is often regarded as something that should be avoided, as if learning a poem had some kind of negative effect on the child's ability to think, or develop their problem-solving skills and creativity.

There is clear evidence, though, that developing one's memory is an essential part of learning, and good memory skills are required to develop the full potential of our brains. The very process of thinking depends largely on our ability to hold information available in our minds to look at it from different angles and to combine it with our prior knowledge which again wouldn't be available without having a good working memory. Such abilities all involve memory skills, and are essential for drawing conclusions, solving problems or creating new things, the most important abilities that education needs to help develop in a child.

Developing memory skills depends on the ability to focus attention, organise information, make associations between the new and the known, chunk the information we need to remember (it is easier to remember a two-eight number if we break it up into four groups of three-eighty), practise and consolidate or revise.

Children with poor memory skills will not learn successfully and they will find it difficult to think coherently and follow a thought process through to its logical conclusion.

It is apparent that good memory skills are essential for learning a foreign language successfully. This is most evident in the fact that not remembering new words is a frustrating experience when trying to communicate in a foreign language.

So here are some activities that will help your students develop these all-important memory skills.

1 Kim's game

Language items Vocabulary practice in content area chosen by teacher

Thinking skills Training the memory. Thinking of strategies to remember items

Age Any

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 15 minutes. This makes a useful ending to a lesson

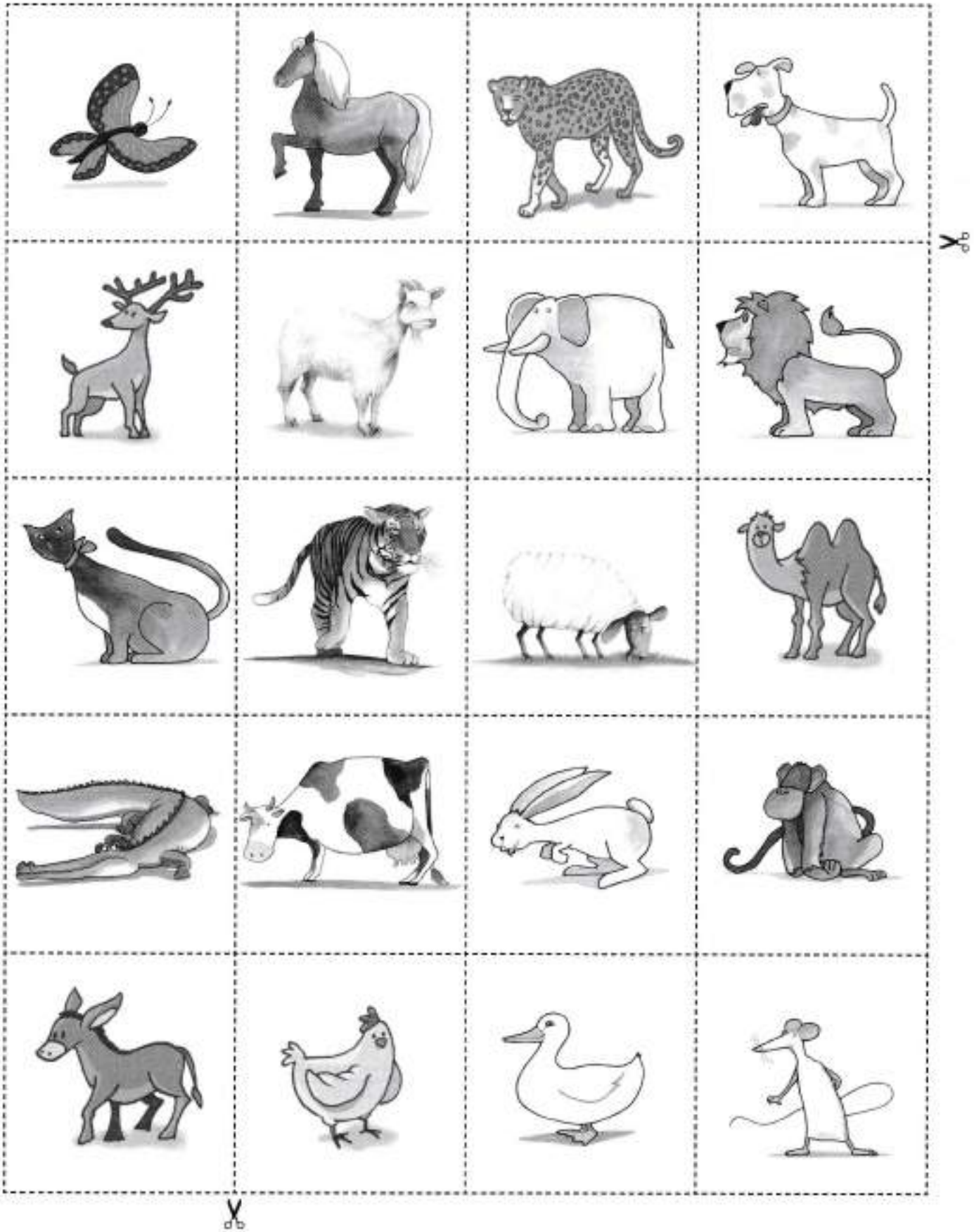
Preparation Use the worksheet. Alternatively there are a number of books with pictures for language learning. Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each pair of students. If your students will be cutting up the cards, bring in a supply of scissors. Schools may like to cut the worksheets up and laminate them for future use

In class

1. Put the students in pairs. Give each student a number 1 or 2. Hand out the worksheet. Ask them to cut the pictures so that each item is separate. Then spread the pictures out on their desks. Alternatively you can cut them before the lesson.
2. Go through the names of the items together saying: *Point to a …; Show me a …, etc*
3. Explain that they will have to remember what is there. Ask them in pairs to say each name in English together until they can memorise them all.
4. Ask no 1s to raise their hands, then no 2s raise their hands. Tell no 2s to shut their eyes. No 1s remove one (or more) picture(s) and hide it/them. No 2s then look at the remaining pictures and say which is missing.
5. Repeat this procedure with no 2s removing the pictures.
6. The process can be repeated several times. Ask how many were correct, and see if they improve as they practise the game.
7. Finally ask the students to turn the pictures so they are facing down and recall all the items they started with.
8. Then ask them to tell you how they remembered them. Were there any interesting memory strategies? E.g. mnemonics, making associations, visualisation

Variation This can be used for any word classes, e.g. *food, sports, colours, transport, furniture, clothes*, etc.

Kim's game | Worksheet



2 Pairs

Language focus Vocabulary related to content area chosen by the teacher

Thinking skills Training the memory, matching

Age Any

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 15– 20 minutes

Preparation Make copies of Worksheet A or B; one copy for each group of three students. Cut them into squares so that they are identical when face down.

In class

1 Divide the class into groups of three. Give each group a set of pictures and words.

2 Ask them to match the pictures with the words and to make sure they know all the names. They can test each other in their groups by pointing to a picture or a word and the other student saying the name.

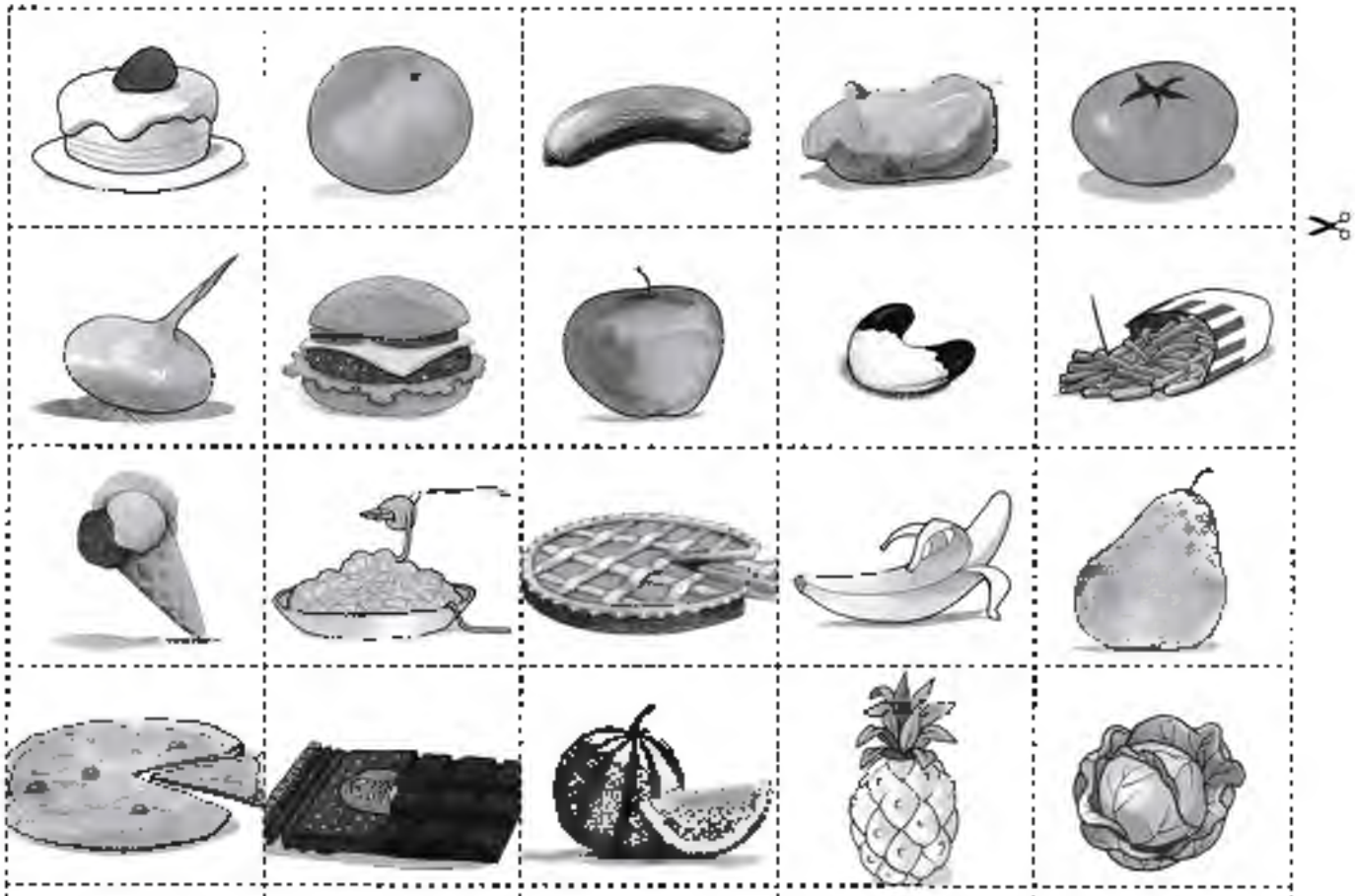
3 Tell them to turn the cards over and shuffle them so they are all face down on the desks, spread out, not overlapping.

4 Explain the game by demonstrating with one group. Each student in turn turns over two cards. If the picture and word matches they keep the pair and turn over another two cards. If they don't match they turn them back over. The winner is the one who wins most pairs.

5 They can repeat the game several times and see if they improve.

Note This game is normally called *Pelmanism*, but we have used the name *Pairs* to make it clear to the students what it is. This game can be used on different occasions to practise different vocabulary sets.

Pairs | Worksheet A



apple	tomato	banana	cabbage	onion
hamburger	chips	ice cream	pineapple	spaghetti
pear	orange	pizza	cake	biscuit
potato	melon	chocolate	pie	sausage

Pairs | Worksheet B




















skirt	trousers	socks	dress	shirt
T-shirt	cap	sweater	jacket	coat
vest	shoes	sandals	scarf	gloves
shorts	track suit	pyjamas	boots	swimming costume

3 Sing a song

Language focus Pronunciation and intonation

Thinking skills Memory strategies: rhythm and rhyme

Age Any

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 5–10 minutes

Preparation Select a song suitable for your class

In class

1 Pre-teach any words of the lyrics that the students might not understand.

2 Say the first line of the song in the rhythm that it has when it is sung.

3 Get your students to repeat the line in the same way. Carry on like this with the other lines of the song until the class can confidently recite the lyrics.

4 Ask your class to form a circle. Walk around inside the circle, and hum the melody. Get the students who are near you to pick up the melody and hum along with you. Walk around the circle several times, until finally all the students are humming the melody.

5 Start singing the song. Get the students to gradually join in.

6 When they can sing the song well, tell students to drop the last word in each line and sing it using their inner voice only and replace it with, e.g., snapping their fingers.

7 Depending on the class, you could proceed like this with the last but one word, then get them to additionally drop the first words in each line etc.

Note We learnt the idea of getting students to pick up a tune and hum along with the teacher from Angela Horak.

4 Test your memory

Language focus Nouns: language of interaction

Thinking skills Developing memory strategies

Age 8–12

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

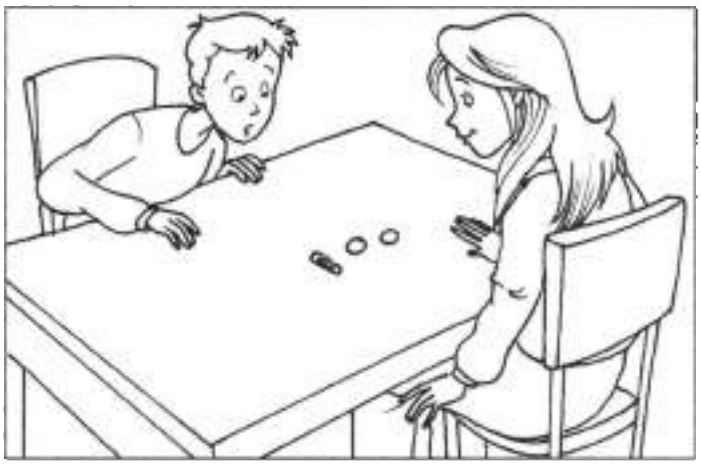
Time 15–20 minutes

Preparation Ask each student to bring three coins, three paperclips and three buttons to class. Bring some spares and a range of objects to demonstrate the activity.

In class

1 Demonstrate the activity with a student; sit down at a desk with the student, and ask the other students to stand around the two of you, forming a circle. You have three coins, three paperclips and three pencil sharpeners on the desk in front of you.

2 Put three of the objects in a sequence in front of you, so that the student can see e.g., coin – coin – paperclip. Tell the student in front of you to remember the sequence well, starting from left to right (from their perspective).



3 Tell the student that they can look at the sequence as long as they want. When they think they can remember it, they should nod their head (or simply tell you that they are ready). Then cover up the sequence of objects. It is now the student's turn to say the objects in exactly the same order as they saw them, from left to right.

4 When the student believes they have completed the sequence correctly, remove the cover so that they can check.

5 If the student's reconstruction of your sequence was correct, repeat as described above, but this time use four objects. Carry on like this, adding one more object each time the student's reconstruction is accurate.

6 Ask your students to do the activity in pairs, using the objects they brought to class.

Variations Instead of showing a sequence of objects, you can:

1 'read it out' to the student without them seeing it. The student reconstructs the sequence in the same way as described above, remembering it with the help of their auditory memory.

2 blindfold the student (or ask them to close their eyes) and ask them to find out about your arrangement by feeling it with their fingers. Then they say the sequence as described above.

Note This technique is excellent for facilitating the students' memory skills, especially if carried out repeatedly over a period of time. We learnt it from Michael Grander at a workshop in Winzenburg, Germany.

5 Remember the picture?

Language focus Language of description: *there is, there are*, prepositions of place: *small, large, to the left of, to the right of*, vocabulary related to content area chosen by the teacher, listening skills

Thinking skills Developing visual memory skills, spatial awareness and direction, giving accurate and systematic descriptions

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 onwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Select a content area, and create a worksheet or use the worksheet provided, making a copy for each student

In class

1 Pre-teach any vocabulary that your students will need to know. If you choose the example given here, it may be words like: *small, large, downstairs, upstairs, in front of, behind, window, bush, pear tree, apple tree, flower bed, to the right of, to the left of* etc.

2 Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Ask them to look at the pictures carefully, and try to remember them visually. This can be done in various ways. They can for example:

- look at one of the pictures first, then close their eyes, trying to see the picture in their mind's eye, then open their eyes again, to compare their remembered images with the ones on the page etc.
- trace the objects in the picture with their index finger and, while they are doing so, try and remember what the picture looks like.

3 Allow a few minutes so that the students can memorise the pictures.

4 Ask them to close their eyes. Describe one of the four pictures to them, e.g.:

In Thomas' house, there are three small windows downstairs and there's a large window upstairs. In the garden behind the house there's a flowerbed. There's a large bush to the right of the flowerbed. In the garden in front of the house there's a pear tree.

Ask them to open their eyes and write Sophie's name under the picture of her house.

5 Ask the class to close their eyes again, and carry on describing the other pictures in the same way.

In Daniel's house, there are three small windows upstairs and there's a large window downstairs. In the garden behind the house there's a flowerbed. There are small bushes to the right of the flowerbed. In the garden in front of the house there's an apple tree.

Ask them to open their eyes, write Daniel's name under the picture of his house, and then close their eyes again.

In Megan's house, there are three small windows downstairs and there's a large window upstairs. In the garden behind the house there's a flowerbed. There are small bushes to the right of the flowerbed. In the garden in front of the house there's a pear tree.

Ask them to open their eyes, write Thomas's name under the picture of his house, and then close their eyes again.

In Sophie's house, there are three small windows upstairs and a large window downstairs. In the garden behind the house, there's a flowerbed and a large bush to the right of the flowerbed. In the garden in front of the house there's a pear tree.

Ask them to open their eyes and write Megan's name under the picture of her house.

6 Finally, check their answers by getting them to describe Sophie's (Daniel's etc.) house to you. It may be helpful to write key language on the board and help them with pronunciation before they give their descriptions, e.g.:

In Sophie's house	*there is ...*	*upstairs*
	there are ...	*downstairs*
In the garden	*behind the house*	*there is ...*
	in front of the house	*there are ...*
There is a	*to the right of the ...*	
	to the left of the ...	

7 Ask students to put their worksheet face down on the desk in front of them. Describe one of the pictures to them. Students listen and say the name of the respective child.

8 Ask students to work in pairs. Each of them looks at the drawings. Partner A describes one of the pictures to B. B says the name of the respective child.

Answers

House 1	*Sophie's house*
House 2	*Daniel's house*
House 3	*Thomas's house*
House 4	*Megan's house*

Note The activity facilitates paying attention to detail and choosing language carefully in order to accurately describe what the students see or remember. This is a skill needed, for example, in asking and telling the way.

Remember the picture? | Worksheet

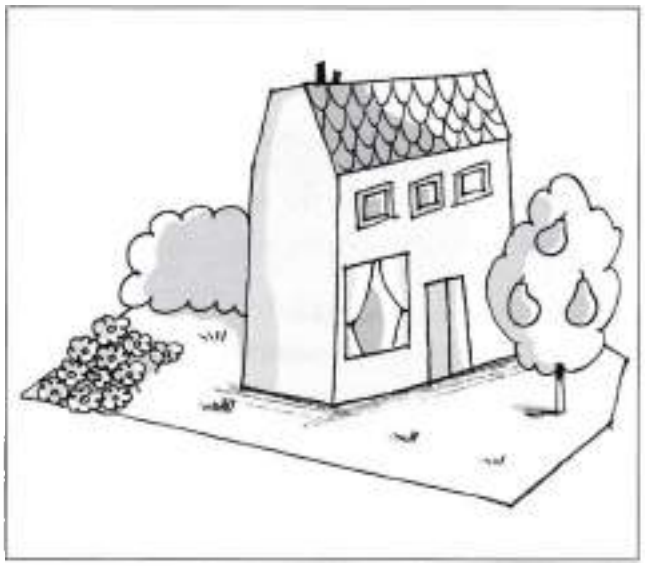
Listen. Write the correct names under the pictures.

Megan

Thomas

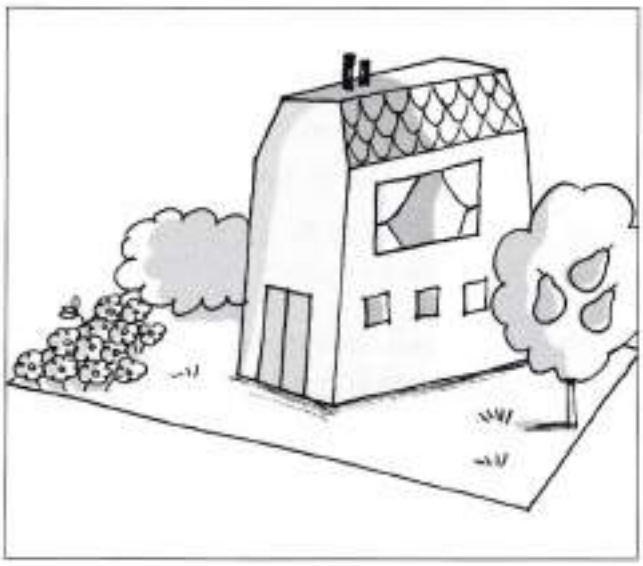
Sophie

Daniel

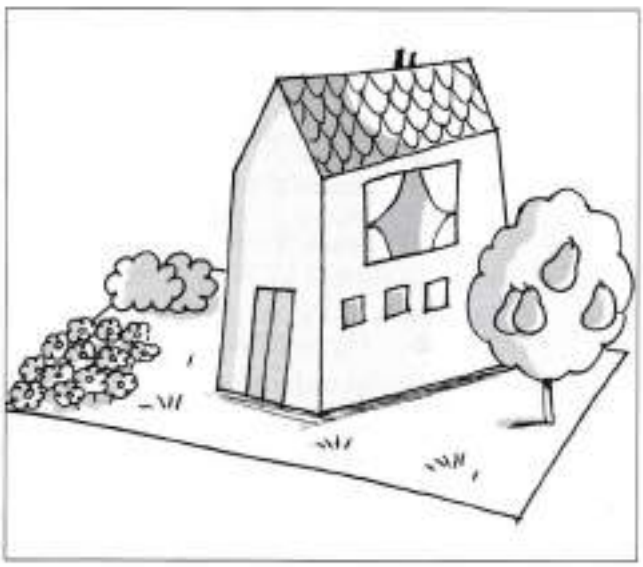


1 _____

2 _____



3 _____



4 _____

Exploring space

We live in space – in a room, a home, a town, a world. All individuals need a reference system with which they can understand and have some degree of control over the space they live in. Without this, they could not live in a social world. For example, we need to find our way back home, move about in the world, build a house, agree on places to meet people, drive cars.

Individuals need to develop a sense of position – where they are, distance – how far, direction – left, right, up, down, proximity, closeness and perspective, as well as an understanding of two and three dimensions. At a more complex level, the ability to imagine a change in position of an object or person, or in one's own position – is one of the basic building blocks of hypothetical thinking and problem solving. For example, answering the question "What if the box turns right?" requires skills of predicting, visualising, and hypothesising. In addition, the ability to understand a position in relation to someone else, i.e. to put oneself in someone else's shoes and imagine the positions of objects around them – is an important part of higher-order thinking and decision making.

A poorly developed sense of spatial awareness can lead to a poor grasp of reality. If they are unable to see relationships in space, children will have trouble locating events and objects in context, making it difficult to analyse a situation or problem. Some are ill children see their surroundings only in egocentric ways – i.e. in relation to themselves, and are unable to see them in relation to other people – they will have profound difficulties in solving problems.

The activities in this section involve working with different dimensions of spatial awareness leading to high-order mental manipulation of concepts of space.

1 The cinema

Language focus Positions: *left, right, between, at the end*

Thinking skills Spatial awareness; recognising positions – *right, left* – and transferring this to a pictorial representation; problem-solving

Age 8–9

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Ask three students to come to front of the class and stand in a row. Teach the language: *on his right, on her left, in between, at the end.*

2 Ask students to complete the worksheet.

3 When they finish, ask the students to check answers in pairs.

4 Draw the picture on the board and, as a class, go through the steps of working out the answers. Scaffold the thinking processes, e.g., *What's the first name we can write down?* (Mary's at the end) *Which end?* (We don't know.) *OK, who's next to Mary?* (Jane's on her left.) *So which end is Mary?* etc.

Answer

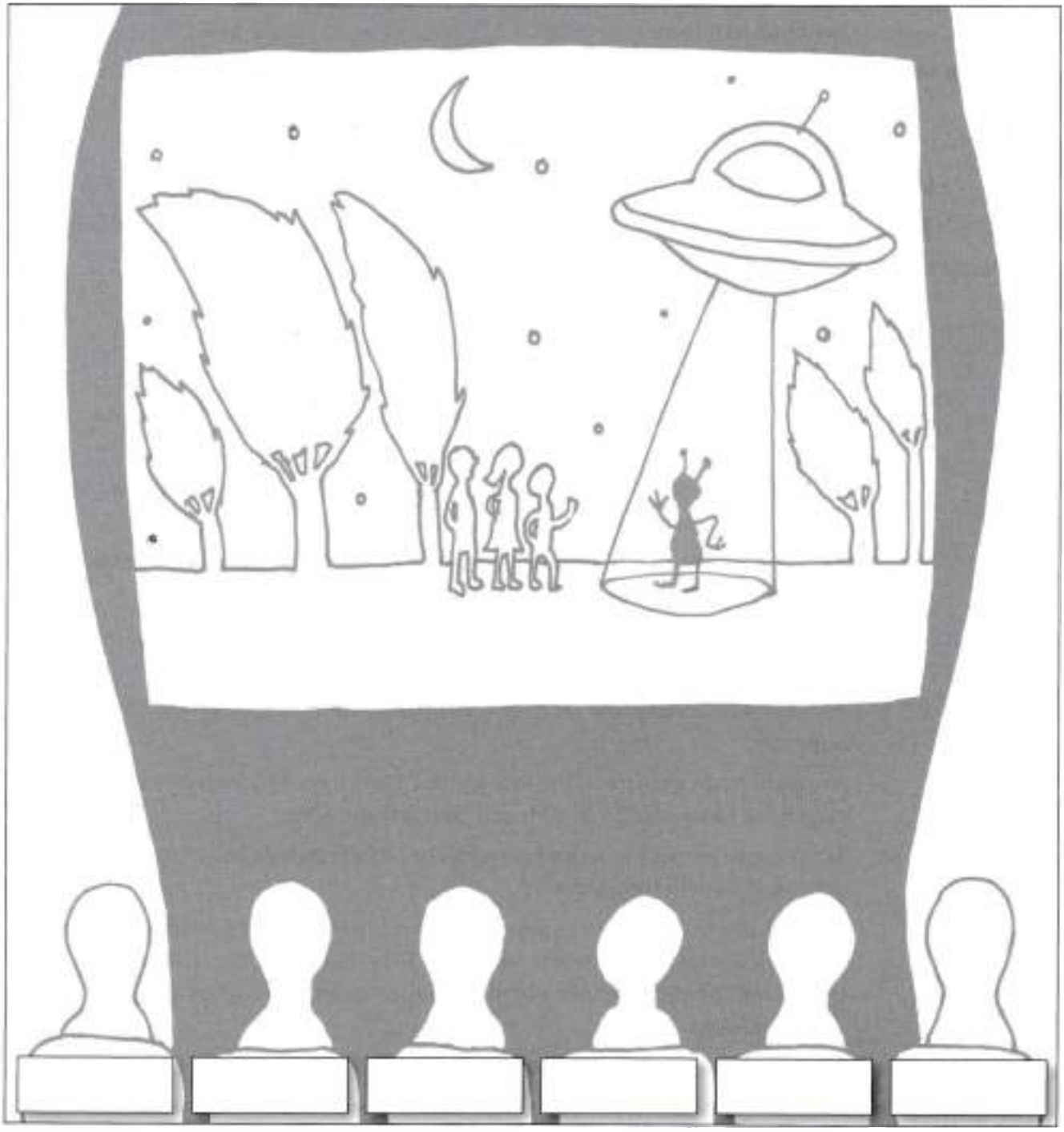
Paul	Kate	Susan	Peter	Jane	Mary

Variation This activity can be adapted and used on other occasions with different names and positions. More advanced students could create similar problems for their partners to solve.

The cinema | Worksheet

Jane is at the cinema with her friends. Write their names under their seats.

Mary is sitting at the end of the row. Jane is on her left and on Peter's right. Susan is between Peter and Kate. Paul is at the end of the row.



2 Where's Tom?

Language focus Prepositions of place: *in front of, behind, on the right, on the left*, names of buildings in a town

Thinking skills Orientation in space: directions, visualising position from within a picture, mentally rotating an image in space

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time One or two lessons of 30 minutes. (Exercise 3 could be done in a second lesson.)

Preparation Prepare a copy of Worksheets A and B for each student

In class

1 Teach vocabulary: *in front of, behind, on my right, on my left*

a) To 1 student: *Point to your right. Point to your left. Point in front of you. Point behind you*

b) Ask individuals: *Who's on your right? Who's on your left? Who's behind you? Who's in front of you?*

2 Ask the students to tell you some names of buildings, e.g. *supermarket, tower, post office*, and write the words on the board

3 Give out Worksheet A. Check the students understand the vocabulary: *tower, shop, park, hotel*

4 Ask students to complete exercise 1. Ask the students to check their answers with a partner.

5 Ask them to do exercise 2, the first picture. They then find someone who has drawn the same version of Tom and compare answers.

6 Ask them to repeat the procedure with the second picture, drawing a different version of Tom in the centre.

7 Now ask students to work in pairs. They can use Worksheet B to draw their own plan of a square with different buildings. They draw a picture of Tom in the centre and ask their partner where the buildings are, e.g. *Where's the museum? It's behind Tom.*

8 Ask them to swap partners and repeat this with someone else.

9 They can continue to change partners and repeat the procedure.

Answers

1 A Tom facing us:
The tower is *behind him*
The hotel is *on his right*
The shop is *on his left*
The park is *in front of him*

B Tom has turned to his right:
The tower is *on his right*
The hotel is *in front of him*
The shop is *behind him*
The park is *on his left*

2 Pic 1:
The tower is *behind him*
The hotel is *on his right*
The shop is *on his left*
The park is *in front of him*

Pic 3:
The tower is *on his left*
The hotel is *behind him.*
The shop is *in front of him.*
The park is *on his right*

Pic 2:
The tower is *in front of him*
The hotel is *on his left*
The shop is *on his right*
The park is *behind him*

Pic 4:
The tower is *on his right.*
The hotel is *in front of him.*
The shop is *behind him*
The park is *on his left*

Note This activity was inspired by Feuerstein's *Instrumental Enrichment* programme.

Where's Tom? | Worksheet A

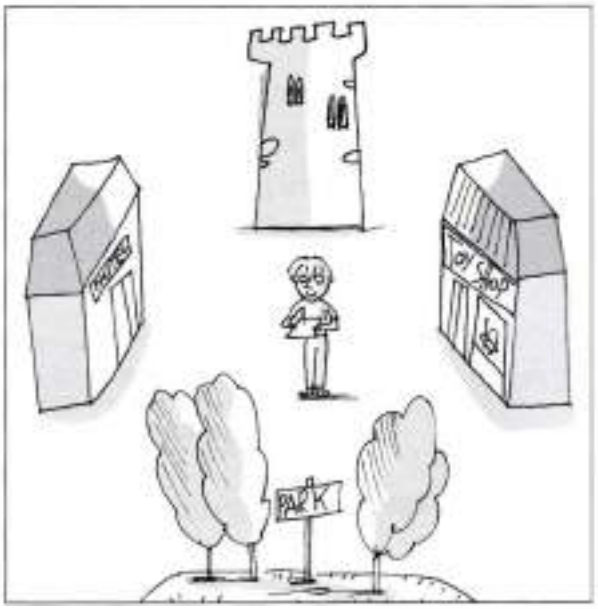
1 A Look at the picture of Tom. Write *in front of him, behind him, on his right,* and *on his left* in the blanks.

The tower is _____ him.

The hotel is _____.

The shop is _____.

The park is _____.



B Tom now turns right. Finish the sentences.

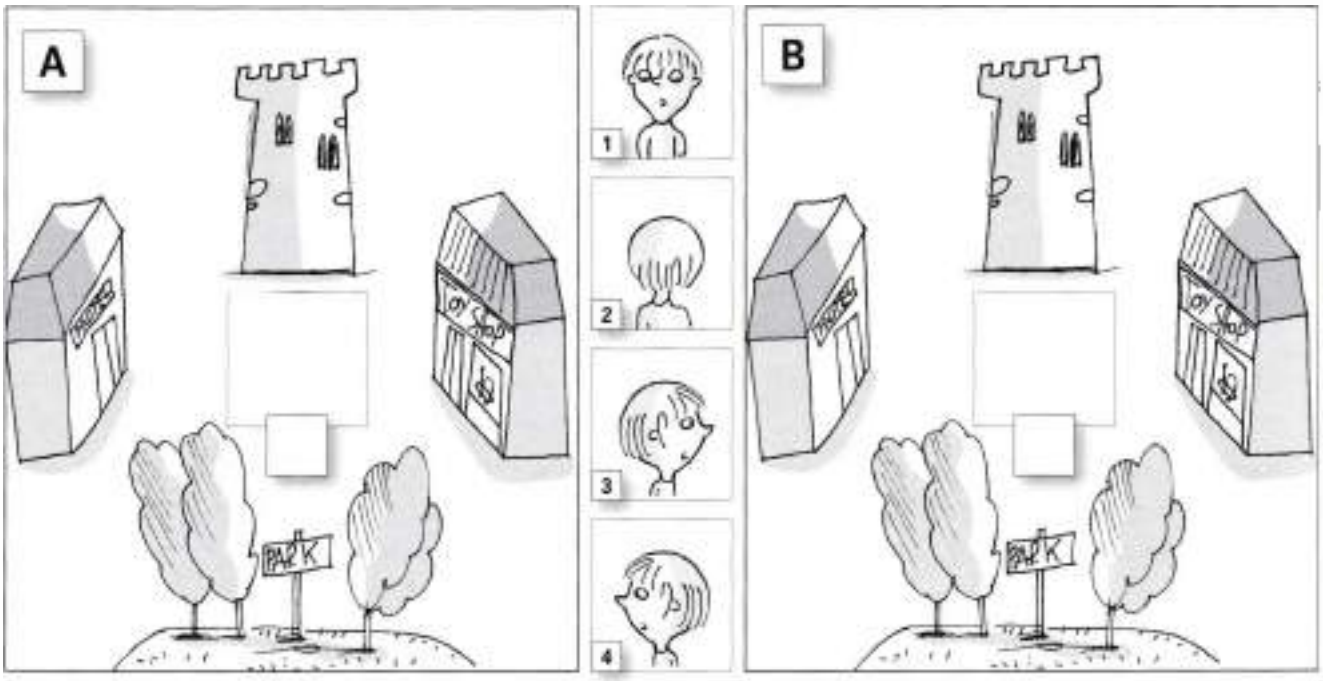
The tower is on his _____.

The hotel is _____.

The shop is _____.

The park is _____.

2 Choose one of the pictures of Tom for A and for B. Draw him like that in the square each time. Now complete the sentences.



The tower is _____.

The hotel is _____.

The shop is _____.

The park is _____.

The tower is _____.

The hotel is _____.

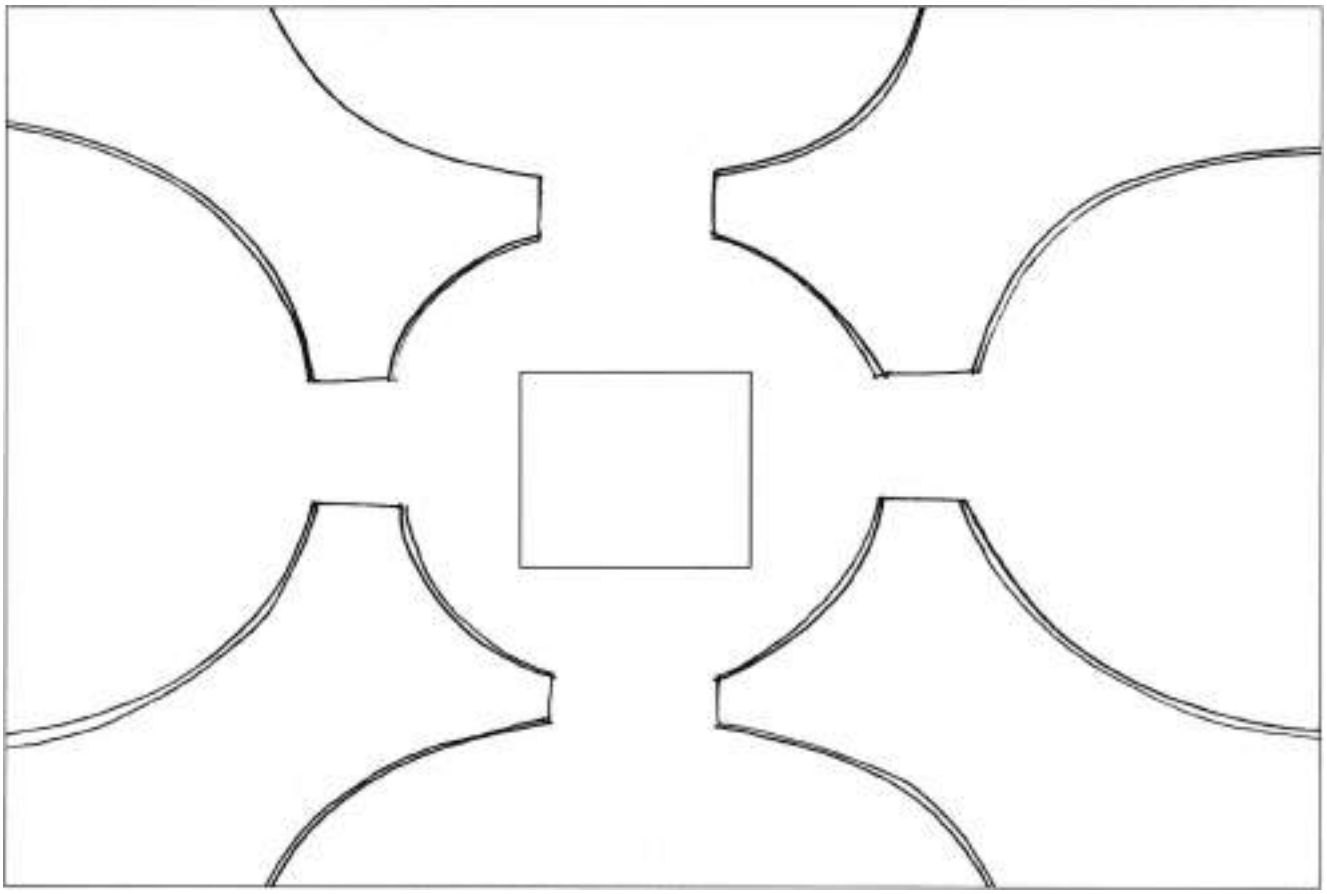
The shop is _____.

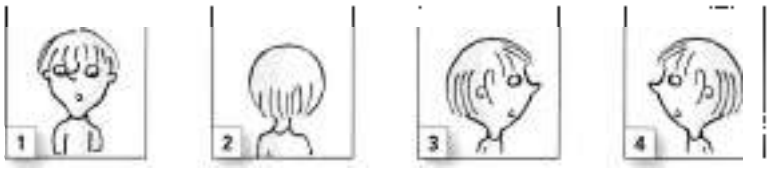
The park is _____.

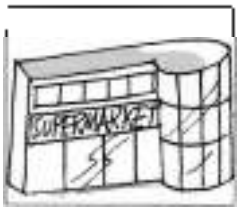
Where's Tom? | Worksheet B

3 Now draw your own plan. Choose buildings for your plan. Draw one of the pictures of Tom in the centre. Ask your partner where the buildings are in relation to him.

Example: *Where's the playground? – It's in front of Tom.*



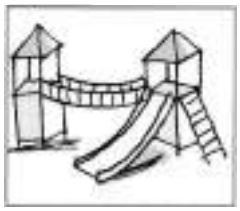




supermarket

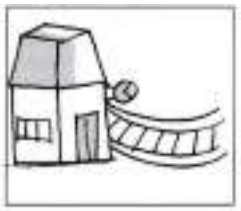
cinema

toy shop

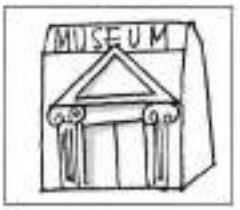

playground

cafe

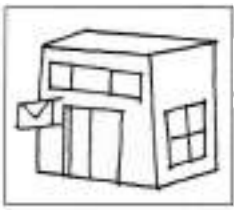

ice cream stall


railway station

bank



museum


post office

3 The classroom

Language focus Positions: *to/on the left/right of, between, behind, in front of, next to, on her left/right, front row, at the back*

Thinking skills Understanding of spatial orientation; holding more than one piece of information in the mind to solve a spatial problem; problem-solving skills of systematically surveying the information, recognising information that is irrelevant, creating a strategy, and checking solutions

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Make sure the students understand the phrases concerned with position. Ask a student to stand up. Ask the class: *Who is on her right? Who is on her left? Who is in front of her? Who is behind her?* etc. Repeat this several times.

2 Hand out the worksheet. Tell students that they need to read the information and write the names in the desks. Explain that they may find this difficult, and they will need to tackle it slowly and systematically.

3 When they have worked on it for some time, tell them to find a partner and work together to solve it.

4 Finally, work with the class to work out the solution. If we are to teach thinking strategies, it is important to model a problem-solving strategy, e.g.

What is the first piece of information we have? OK, Susan is in the front row.
What is next? She is between Jane and Peter.
Do we know who is on the right and who is on the left? No we don't know, so there are two possibilities.
What is the next piece of information? Danny is to the right of Jane.
So where is Jane?

Continue in this way till the problem is solved.

Answers

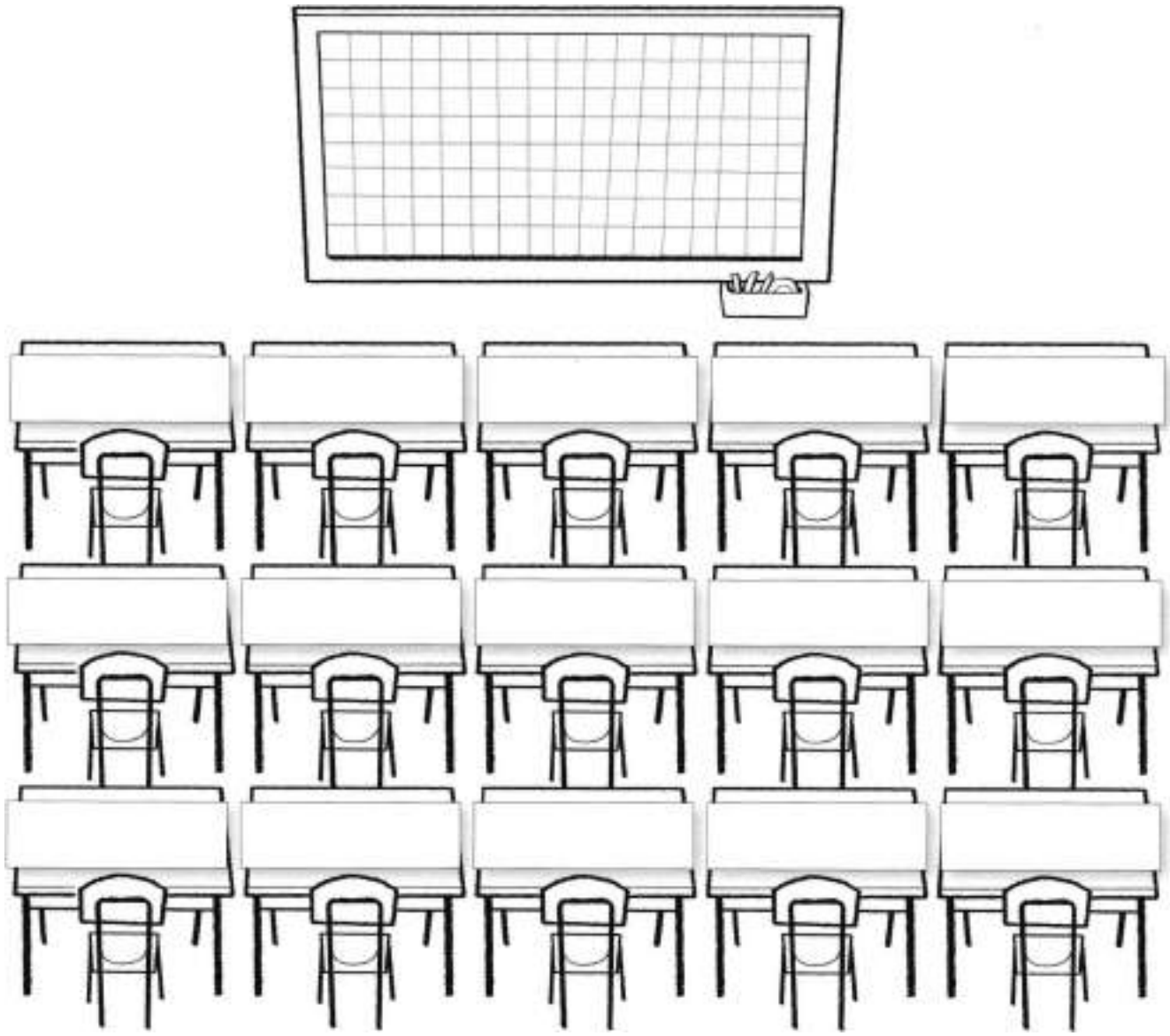
1		Whiteboard		
Peter	*Susan*	*Jane*	*Danny*	*Richard*
David	*Mark*	*Sarah*	*Tom*	*Fred*
Chris	*Anna*	*Donna*	*Claire*	*Jessica*

2 15

The classroom | Worksheet

Read the information. Write the names in the correct desks.

1 Miss Robertson is arranging the seating in her classroom. Susan is in the front row. She is between Jane and Peter. Danny is to the right of Jane and to the left of Richard. Mary is behind Susan; they are good friends. Mary's other friend Sarah is next to her. Sarah has Don next to her. Don's friend Fred is next to him. Mary is on David's right. Donna is at the back next to her friend Claire. Claire is next to Jessica, who is behind Fred. Donna has Anna on her left and Anna is on Chris' right.



2 How many children are in Miss Robertson's class? __ _

4 Little Marton

Language focus Prepositions of place: *between, next to, opposite, other side of*, vocabulary of buildings in a town

Thinking skills Spatial orientation, recognising spatial orientation from a map; problem-solving skills (surveying information given, planning a strategy, checking solutions). This activity also involves recognising that solving the problem doesn't necessarily involve using the information in the order in which it is presented.

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation A copy of the worksheet for each student

If possible, bring in pictures of the different buildings in a town. Alternatively draw some of the following pictures on the board: a bank, a post office, a chemist, a newsagent, a greengrocer, a butcher, a baker, a florist, a supermarket, a station, a bus stop.

In class

1 Revise the words *opposite, between, next to, on the other side*. Call students out and stand them in rows. Say: *Maria is between Gunter and Yan* etc.

2 Revise names of shops, using pictures if available, or simple board drawings as above.

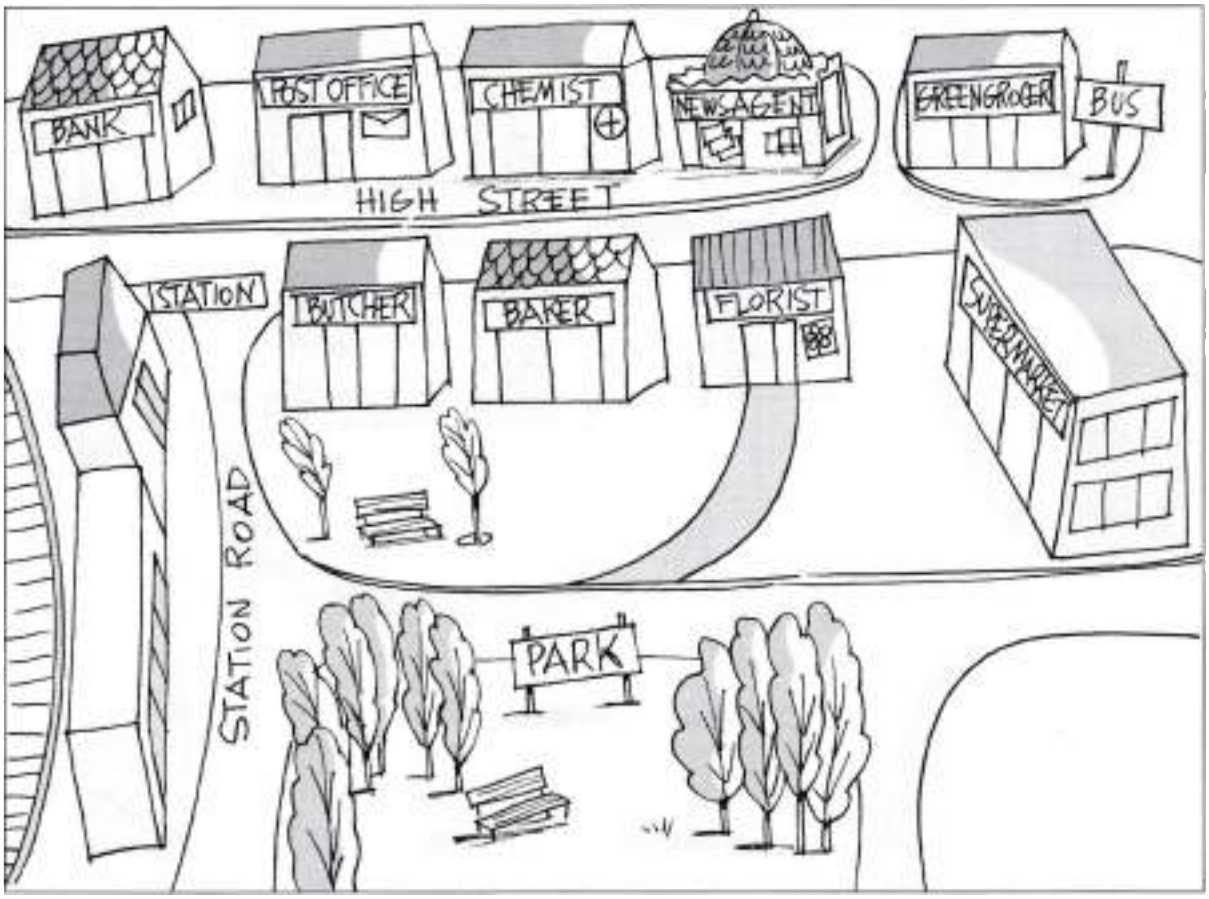
3 Hand out the worksheet. Explain that this is a map of a town called Little Marton. Ask the students to read the sentences and write the names of the shops on the plan.

4 Tell them to compare answers with another student and work together to solve any remaining questions.

5 Go through the answers, modelling the problem-solving strategies, e.g.:

What do we have to start with? (A map, buildings, a bank.)
What is the first piece of information we can use? etc.

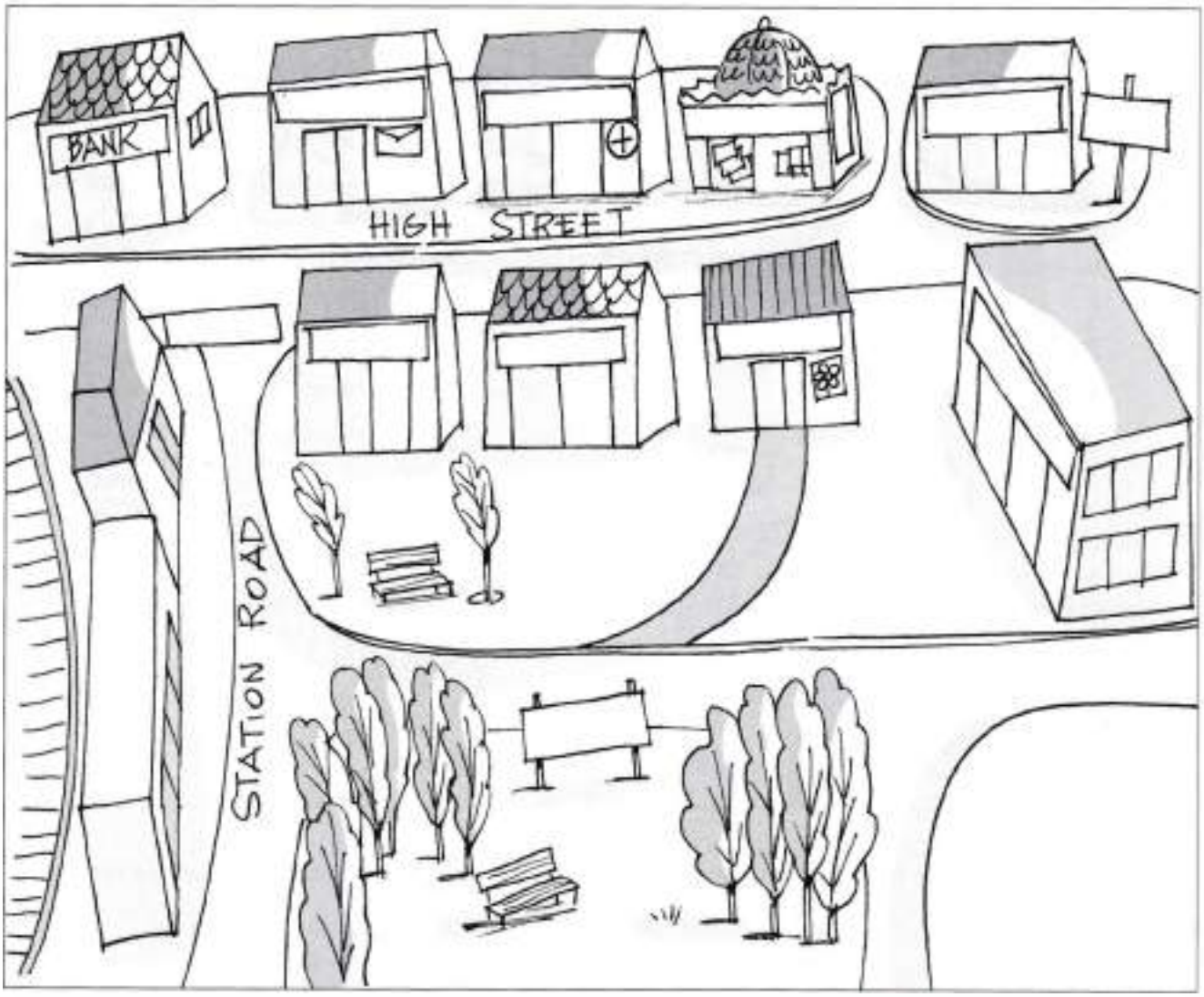
Answers



Variation The students could draw their own maps and create similar puzzles for their partners.

Little Marton | Worksheet

Read the sentences and write the names of the buildings/places on the plan.



The post office is next to the bank.

The butcher is opposite the post office.

The baker is between the butcher and the florist.

The chemist is between the post office and the newsagent.

The florist is next to the supermarket.

The greengrocer is opposite the supermarket.

The station is in Station Road.

On the other side of Station Road is a park.

The bus stop is next to the greengrocer.

5 Find the treasure

Language focus Language of instructions, directions: *north, south, east, west*, land features: e.g. *lake, pond, hill, tree, rock, ruin*

Thinking skills Sense of direction (north/south/east/west, right/left); following a sequence of instructions on a map

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Bring a map to class, and a compass if possible. Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

1 Teach directions – ***North, South, East, West*** – using your compass or the compass rose on the map.

2 Hand out the worksheet. Explain to the class that they need to use the map in the worksheet to find the treasure. Ask them what features they might find on a map: *lake, hill* etc.

3 Ask them to complete the activity in pairs.

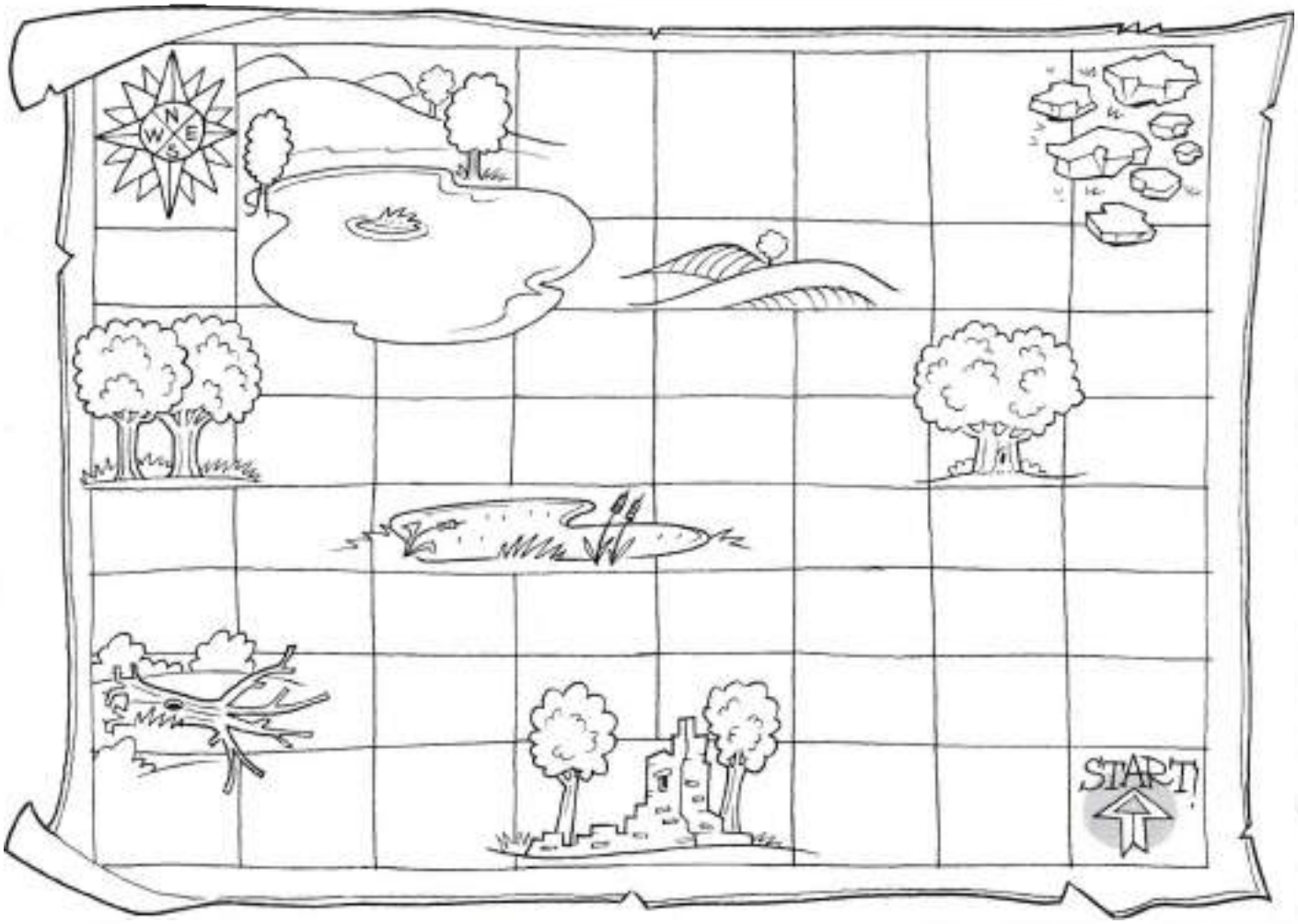
4 Finally ask for answers. Model the process of reaching the solution.

Answer The treasure is under the rocks.

Variation The students can decide where the treasure is hidden and write their own instructions.

Find the treasure | Worksheet

Jill and Ben have found a treasure map.
Follow the instructions and find the treasure.
Where is the treasure?
Draw a line to show the route Jill and Ben took.



Go three squares north. Then go three squares west till you see the pond. Now go two squares south to the ruins. Here turn right and go three squares west to the fallen tree. Go four squares north to the lake. Go four squares east and then two squares north. Turn right and walk forwards for two more squares. The treasure is hidden here in a box.

Exploring time

Time is an essential part of our everyday lives. We constantly need to refer to the point when things happened or will happen. We divide time up in an arbitrary way into seconds, minutes, hours and so on so that we can impose some order on our world rather than live in chaos. This enables us to live in a social world and communicate with others about it. In this way we can arrive at a place at the same time as others, and plan when to leave home to arrive somewhere punctually. Children need to develop a sound sense of time to control and plan their lives in a rational way.

There are a number of different concepts involved in understanding time. These include the standard ways of dividing time up, and the notion of speed, as well as historical time: past, present and future. Understanding time also involves an appreciation of comparatives: faster and slower, longer and shorter time; and also relative times such as *late, early, after, before*. In addition, there is the need for an understanding of how the sections of time are put together: i.e. how seconds combine to form minutes, minutes combine to form hours and so on. Another concept that is difficult for many people to grasp is a sense of the actual length of a minute or an hour. Also related to time is a knowledge of how it is measured and which instruments are appropriate for which aspects.

Those who have a poor grasp of time tend to be centred in the present, and have a limited orientation towards the past or future. This can lead to impulsiveness and a sense of instant gratification in wanting things at the present rather than understanding the frequent need to wait. A poor grasp of time can also lead to difficulty in planning and organising one's day: leaving homework till the last minute, or not leaving enough time to arrive somewhere punctually, leaving others waiting.

The activities in this section explore the ways in which time is divided up, and the concepts of longer and shorter time, as well as some of the vocabulary associated with time.

1 Exploring time

Language focus Vocabulary of time: *second, minute, hour, day, week, fortnight, month, year, century*; *longest* and *shortest*; *longer than* and *shorter than*; numbers

Thinking skills Concept of time and how it is divided up; understanding length of time; comparing; ordering

Age 7–10

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student. If available, have a large teaching clock with movable hands or a digital teaching clock, and a calendar.

In class

1 Distribute the worksheet.

2 Ask the students in pairs to brainstorm any words they know about time and write them in the big circle. Allow about five minutes for this part.

3 Ask students to tell you some of their words. Accept any reasonable response even if the link is loose.

4 Ask them what we measure time in. Give one or two examples to get them started: *minute, hour* etc. Use the clock and calendar to illustrate, otherwise write times on the board.

5 Ask them to complete exercise 2.

6 Ask for answers, starting with the shortest. As each student gives you an answer, write it on the board. Ask the class if they agree.

7 Ask the students to complete exercise 3. Tell them they can write numbers or words. Do the first sentence together if necessary.

8 Check answers.

9 Ask, *Which is longer, a month or a year? Which is shorter?* Model the language: *A month is shorter than a year.*

10 Ask them to complete exercise 4.

11 Ask the students to compare answers with a partner.

Answers

2 second – minute – hour – day – week – fortnight – month – year – century

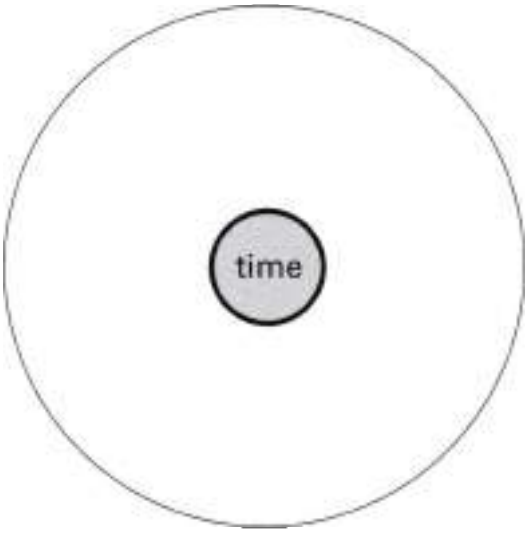
3 1 There are 60 seconds in one minute.
2 There are sixty minutes in an hour.
3 There are 24 hours in a day.
4 There are seven days in one week.
5 There are 12 months in one year.
6 There are 100 years in a century.

4 1 An hour is *longer than* a minute.
2 A second is *shorter than* an hour.
3 A week is *shorter than* a month.
4 A year is *longer than* a month.
5 A minute is *longer than* a second.
6 A month is *shorter than* a year.

Note The 'circle map' used in part 1 is based on David Hyerle's *Thinking Maps*.

Exploring time | Worksheet

1 Write any words about 'time' in the big circle.



2 Write the words on the line below so the shortest is first and the longest is last.

month | day | second | year | minute | fortnight | week | century | hour

SHORTEST LONGEST

3 Complete the sentences.

1 There are _____ seconds in one minute.
2 There are sixty minutes in _____
3 There are _____ hours in one day.
4 There are seven days in one _____
5 _____ months in one year.
6 There are _____ in a century

4 Write *longer than* or *shorter than* in the spaces.

1 An hour is _____ a minute.
2 A second is _____ an hour.
3 A week is _____ a month.
4 A year is _____ a month.
5 A minute is _____ a second.
6 A month is _____ a year

2 How long is a minute?

Language focus *How often/How many ... can you ... ? ... times* numbers

Thinking skills Understanding time; estimating

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation For the first part of the activity, you need a watch that indicates the seconds.

In class

1 Tell the students that you are going to ask them to close their eyes for what they believe is exactly a minute. Ask them to focus on themselves only and open their eyes only when they individually believe that one minute is over. They should also raise their hands. Ask them to sit quietly and not disturb others after they have opened their eyes. Tell them that you are going to write on the board the seconds that each of them has had their eyes closed.

2 Give a signal that they should close their eyes. Stand near the board and watch the class. Whenever someone opens their eyes, write the seconds on the board. Signal to them nonverbally that they should keep quiet.

3 When all the students have finished, repeat the exercise.

4 Give the following (or similar) instructions and ask students to follow them.

Draw a flower.	*Jump.*
Say an English sentence.	*Bend your knees.*
Name a pet.	*Sing Old MacDonald.*
Write an English word with six letters.	*Whisper 'Five fresh fish for Frank'.*
Write an English word starting with H.	*Take off your shoes and put them on again.*

5 When the students have had enough practice so that they can follow the instructions even in random order without any problem, write them on the board.

6 Write the following language on the board and practise questions with the class referring to the actions above.

How many ... ? How often ... ?
How many ... can you ... in a minute? ... times

8 Ask a student to come to the front. Tell them that you are going to ask them to

do an action from the board and they should do it lots of times very fast.

Ask them, e.g.:
How many pets can you name in a minute? or
How many times can you take off and put on your shoes in a minute?

9 Then the student does the action. The class counts slowly from 1 to 60, and you or a student you have nominated calls out *Stop!* when the minute is over.

10 Do the activity with several students. Depending on the level of your class, you may want to follow this up with the students doing the activity in pairs, maybe in one of the following lessons.

Notes Depending on the level of your class, you may want to keep the two question categories apart and practise only one category at a time.

The idea of students' inner timing of a minute is from Maria Montessori. The second part of the activity we have learnt from Günter Gerngross.

3 More than or less than?

Language focus *More than, less than, same as*, vocabulary of time: *second, minute, hour, day, week, month, year, half, quarter*, numbers including high numbers

Thinking skills Knowledge of the components of time and the way these are related understanding the concepts of greater, less and same; mathematical manipulation

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Revise vocabulary associated with time. Ask: *What do we measure time in?* Elicit: *second, minute, hour, day, week, month, year*.

2 Ask: *How many months are there in a year?* Is *eleven months more than a year?* Is *a week less than a year?* Make sure the students understand *more than* and *less than*. *What about 12 months? It's the same as a year!*

3 Hand out the worksheet. Ask students to complete it individually. Then compare answers with a partner.

4 Finally ask for answers and write them on the board as the students give them to you.

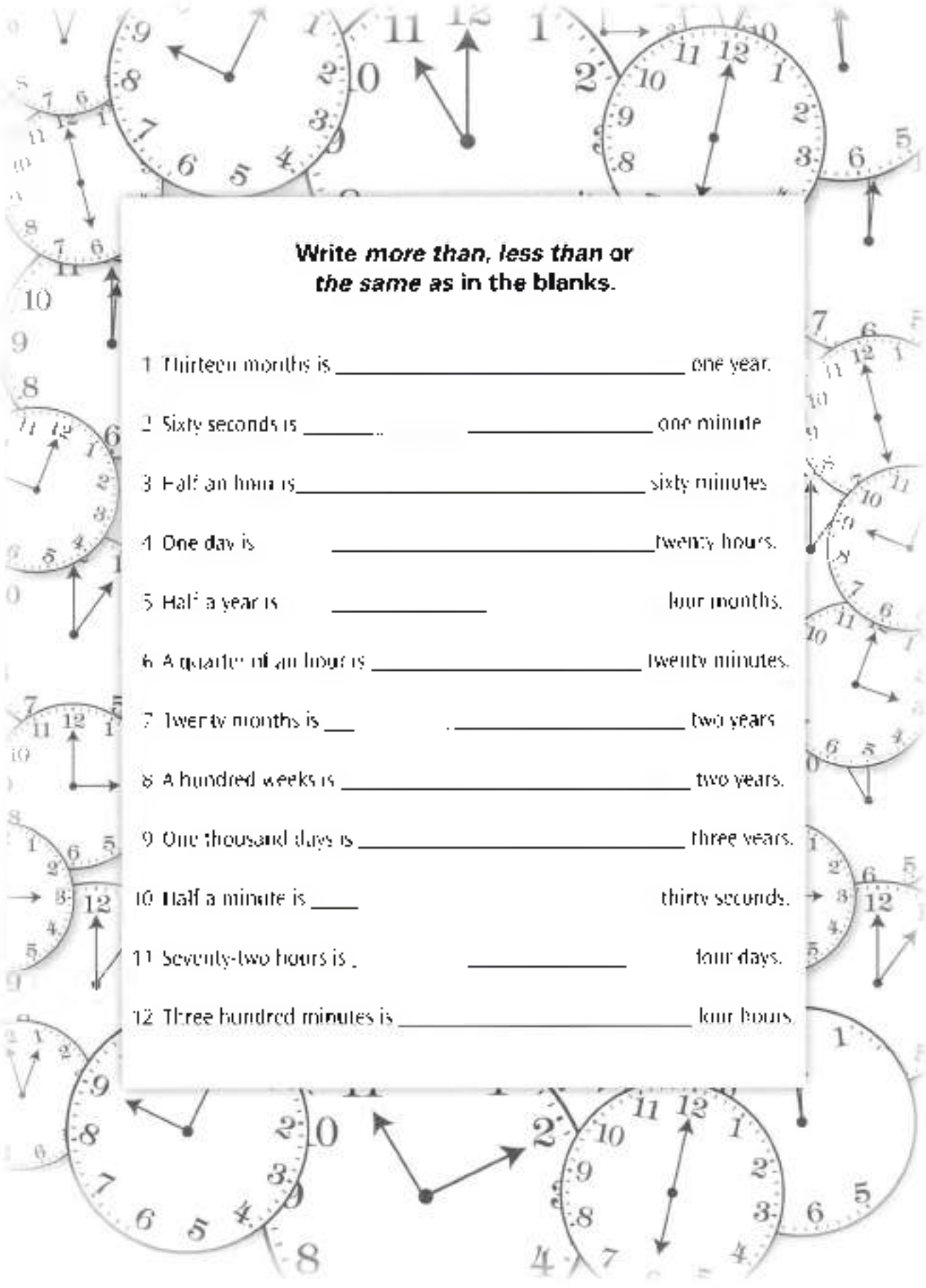
Answers

1 *Eleven months is more than one year.*
2 *Sixty seconds is the same as one minute.*
3 *Half an hour is less than five minutes.*
4 *One day is more than seven hours.*
5 *Half a year is more than one day.*
6 *A quarter of an hour is less than twenty minutes.*
7 *Seven months is less than two years.*
8 *A fortnight is less than two years.*
9 *One thousand days is less than three years.*
10 *Half a minute is a lot more than thirty seconds.*
11 *Seventy-two hours is less than four days.*
12 *Three hundred minutes is more than five hours.*

Variation A more advanced class can work in pairs to make up similar problems. They can swap these with another pair who answers them.

Note This activity was inspired by Reuven Feuerstein's *Instrumental Enrichment* programme, *Temporal Relations*.

More than or less than? | Worksheet



Write *more than*, *less than* or *the same as* in the blanks.

1 Thirteen months is _____ one year.

2 Sixty seconds is _____ _____ one minute

3 Half an hour is _____ sixty minutes

4 One day is _____ twenty hours.

5 Half a year is _____ four months.

6 A quarter of an hour is _____ twenty minutes.

7 Twenty months is _____ _____ two years

8 A hundred weeks is _____ two years.

9 One thousand days is _____ three years.

10 Half a minute is _____ thirty seconds.

11 Seventy-two hours is _____ four days.

12 Three hundred minutes is _____ four hours.

4 Time words

Language focus Vocabulary associated with time, and names of word classes

Thinking skills Categorising; recognising how words are related in word classes; using diagrammatic representation for sorting; concepts associated with time (divisions of time, measurements of time; different times of day, seasons, lateness and earliness)

Age 10–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation One copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Ask students to brainstorm words connected with time. Build up a mind map of these on the board.

2 Hand out the worksheet. Ask the students to work in pairs. Explain that they are going to sort the words into five groups and give each group a name. Allow enough time for pairs to discuss their solutions.

3 Ask for suggested answers for each circle. If there are disagreements, ask them to say why they have put the words there. Listen to all suggestions.

4 Finally ask for suggestions for labels. Write them all up on the board. Ask them to tell you which is the best label and why. There are several possible answers.

Answers

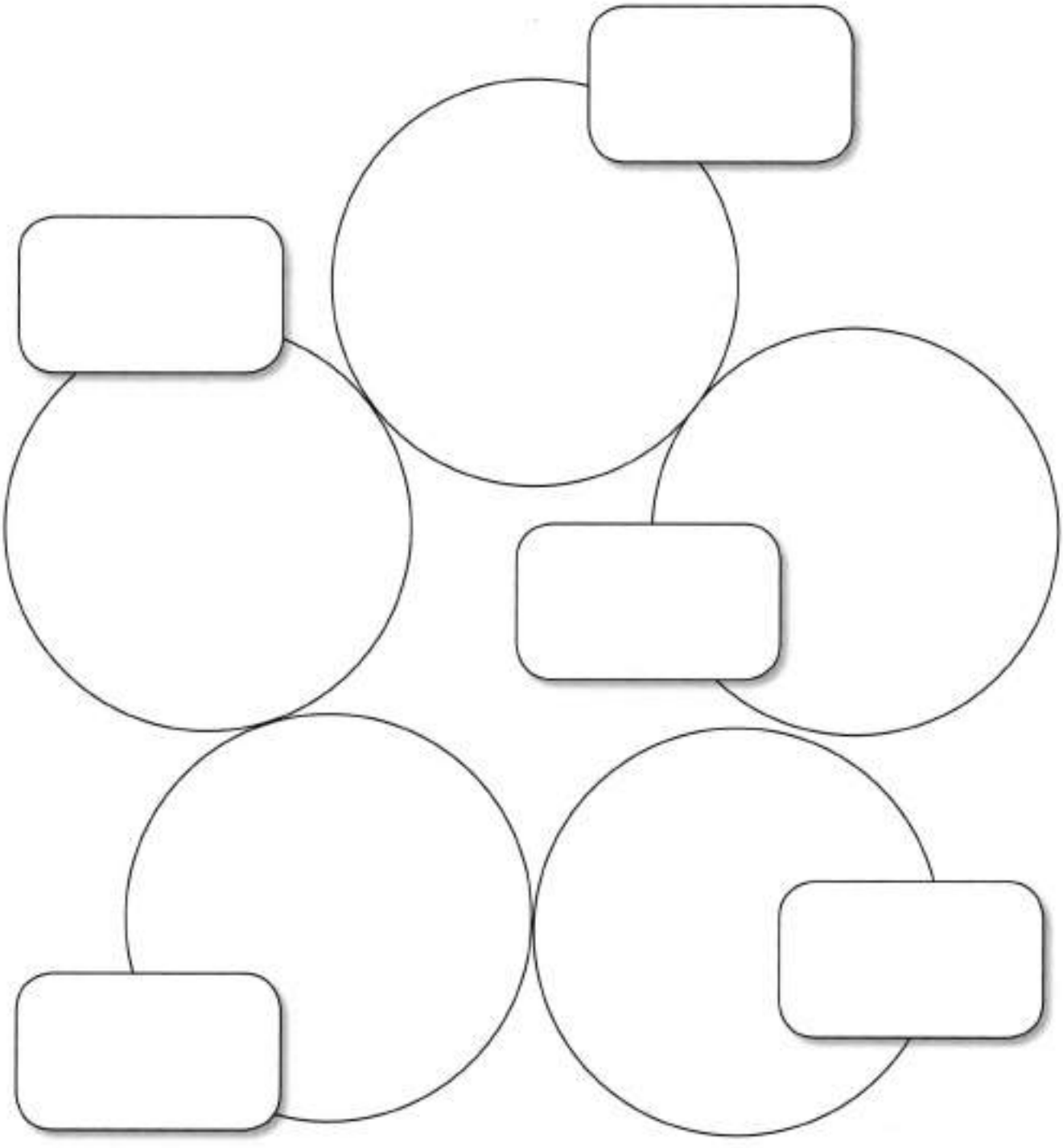
Seasons: *spring, summer, autumn, winter*
Things that measure time: *watch, clock, stopwatch, sundial*
Times of day/parts of the day: *morning, afternoon, evening, night*
Punctuality: *early, late, prompt, punctual*
How time is divided up: *second, minute, hour, day*

Note The idea for this activity came from Reuven Feuerstein's *Instrumental Enrichment* programme.

Time words | Worksheet

These are all words to do with time. Sort them into groups of four and write them in the circles. Give each group a name.

hour | autumn | clock | night | second | watch | day | punctual | afternoon
summer | early | morning | winter | sundial | prompt | evening
minute | spring | stopwatch | late



Exploring numbers

Many parts of our lives are built up with numbers, and an understanding of numerical concepts is fundamental to playing an active part in society. Understanding numbers is more than simple arithmetic: it involves generating concepts of quantities, reducing relationships between things, measuring, using relevant information, comparing, and reducing, inferring and generating rules.

A key element in numerical thinking is being able to recognise patterns. Recognising a number sequence, for example, entails identifying a pattern, working out the changes that occur from one to the next, seeing principles, generalising from the principles, and predicting the rest in the sequence. Another important skill is estimating as it helps to develop a sense of quantity. Without this we would be lost in many situations in daily life from not knowing how much paint to buy to paint a room, for example, to not being able to plan the time needed to actually carry out the task.

Numbers permeate much of our thinking, thus numerical concepts and other aspects of thinking overlap. Many problems involve manipulating numbers and many of the decisions we make entail understanding the consequences of numbers: what to buy, how much to buy, sharing out sweets, how much to sell something for, setting up a business. We also need numbers to understand and record information like weights, age or temperatures.

The activities in this section involve many aspects of numbers, including more playful ones. They include recording information, guessing quantities, playing number games, and solving puzzles.

1 Height and weight

Language focus Talking about height and weight; numbers

Thinking skills Estimating, comparing, drawing conclusions

Age 8–10

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 10–20 minutes, depending on the number of students in your class

Preparation For this activity you will need a tape measure fixed on the wall to measure children's height, and scales to check their weight. For the upside down game in step 1, write some numbers on cards, big enough so all students in your class can easily see them. Copy the worksheet for each student, cut it in half.

In class

1 Play various games to revise numbers from 1 to 150. Examples:

- *What's the next number?*

  Say a number; students quickly have to say the next number.

- *What's the previous number?*

  Say a number; students quickly have to say the previous number.

- *Can you read it upside down?*

  Start with one card. Show it briefly to your class, but hold it in such a way that the students can only see it upside down. Get them to call out the number.

- *Stand up or clap your hands*

  Tell students that you'll say a number. Whenever your number contains a '7', they should stand up; whenever it contains a '1', they should clap their hands. (You can do many variations of this.)

- *Back writing (if your students' culture permits)*

  Ask students to work in pairs. Student A turns their back to student B. Student B uses A's back as a 'board'. They first 'clean' the board (by giving them a nice back rub), then they 'write' one of the numbers (using their index finger) on A's back. A has to guess the number, and then they swap roles.

2 Give each student a copy of the upper half of the worksheet. Get them to guess their own height and their weight. Give them a minute for that.

3 Ask students to say what they think their height and weight is. If necessary, write language prompts on the board:

I think I'm (149) cm tall.
I'm probably (39) kg.

4 When students say what their guesses are, comment on them by comparing their guesses with what others have said, for example:

Ah, that's interesting. You think you're __ cms. That's taller than James thinks he is. He thinks he's __ cms.

5 Use the measuring tape and the scales to check children's height and weight. Then get them to note their own correct figures on the worksheet. They can then mill around and ask other students for their weight and height, and note down other students' names, weights and heights on their worksheet.

Amy, how tall are you?
How many kilos are you?

6 Collect the worksheets.

7 Repeat the activity after, say, a few months using the lower half of the worksheet.

Note Although this is at first a guessing activity, students will gradually learn to use evidence as a basis for their guesses. They will start comparing their own height and weight with others', and draw their conclusions from the information.

Height and weight | Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

How tall are you? How many kilos are you?

My guess:	My real height / weight:
I'm ..... cm.	I'm ..... cm.
I'm ..... kg.	I'm ..... kg.

Some of my classmates:

Name	Height	Weight

Name: _____ Date: _____

My guess:	My real height / weight:
I'm ..... cm.	I'm ..... cm.
I'm ..... kg.	I'm ..... kg.

Some of my classmates:

Name	Height	Weight

2 How many pebbles?

Language focus Talking about quantity; numbers

Thinking skills Estimating; comparing; checking solutions; drawing conclusions

Age 6–10

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation For this activity you will need quantities of various objects in different containers, e.g. pebbles in a bucket, sweets in a jar, tennis balls in a shopping bag etc – maximum about 30 of any one type of object.

Copy the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Revise numbers.

2 Show students e.g. a bucket with some pebbles in it. Ask: *How many pebbles are there in the bucket? Can you guess?*

3 Write down all the students' guesses on the board. Then ask one student to come to the front of the class and count the pebbles.

4 Carry on like this for some time, using other objects and containers if you like.

5 Hand out a copy of the worksheet, one for each student. Make sure the students know what they have to do and understand the language on the worksheet. Then ask them to put their worksheets face down on the desk in front of them.

6 Explain that you will only give them about 15 seconds to make their guesses for both pictures. Say that there is no way they can make precise counts. Tell them that you are curious about whose guesses get closest to the real numbers of objects.

7 Tell students to turn their worksheets over, and give them about 15 seconds to write down their guesses. Then say: *Stop!* Give them about 5 seconds to finish. They then have to put their pens/pencils on the desks so they cannot make any changes.

8 Ask students to count the numbers and write them down on their worksheets.

Answers

1: 12 triangles / 14 squares / 17 circles
2: There are 32 people on the beach. 15 of them are wearing a hat / 20 of them are wearing sunglasses / [illegible] of them are lying in deckchairs.

Variation Tell students to make up similar puzzles for each other and give them to their partners.

How many pebbles? | Worksheet

1 How many are there? Write down your guesses.

2 Then check, and write the real numbers.

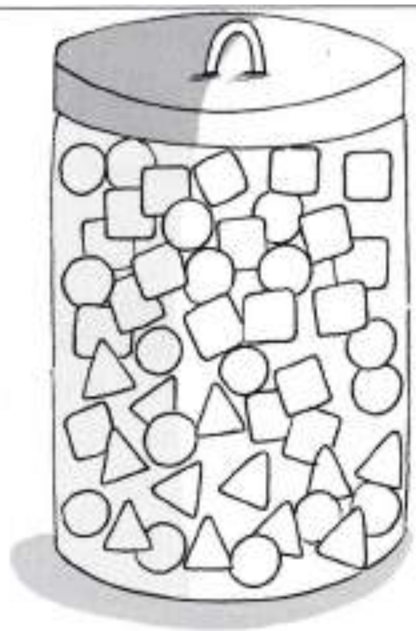
A

My guesses:

_____ triangles

_____ squares

_____ circles



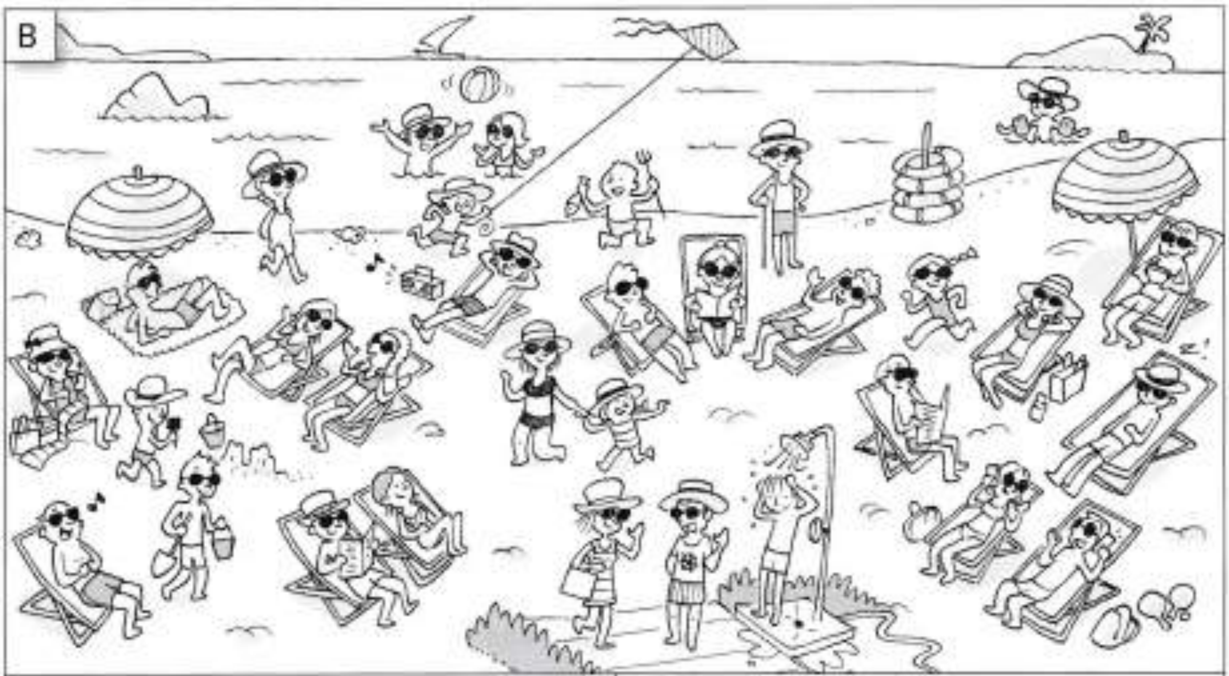
The real numbers:

_____ triangles

_____ squares

_____ circles

B



My guesses:

_____ people are wearing a hat

_____ people are wearing sunglasses

_____ people are lying in deckchairs

The real numbers:

_____ people are wearing a hat

_____ people are wearing sunglasses

_____ people are lying in deckchairs

3 Fizz buzz

Language focus Numbers

Thinking skills This is a challenging activity requiring students to know the order of numbers in English and to know their three times table well. They will need to concentrate on the game which requires keeping two rules in their heads.

Age 9–12

Level Post beginner / A1 upwards. For more advanced students, insist they move faster, or give them a more difficult number to work with, e.g. seven.

Time 5–10 minutes

Preparation You might like to write up a prompt sheet, to help you catch mistakes.

In class

1 Explain to the class they are going to play a number game. Ask them to say numbers in order along the row as you point to the individuals. Student 1 says *one*, student 2 *two* etc. until they get the idea of numbering in order.

2 Now explain that every time the number can be divided by three they have to say *buzz* instead. Start numbering again to demonstrate.

Student 1 *one*
Student 2 *two*
Student 3 *buzz* etc.

3 Now ask everyone to stand up. Students say the numbers in turn: *one two buzz* etc. If someone makes a mistake they are out of the game and sit down.

4 Now explain that as well as saying *buzz* they must say *fizz* if the number contains a 3, eg. 13, 23 ... 30. If the number is divisible by three as well as containing a 3 they say *fizz-buzz*.

E.g.: *One, two, fizz-buzz, four, five, buzz, seven, eight, buzz, ten, eleven, buzz, fizz, fourteen, buzz.*

5 Ask them to stand up and play the game again. If someone makes a mistake they are out of the game and sit down. Continue till you have a winner or several winners.

Variations

1 This can be done with any number once the students know the game. It makes a useful 5- or 10-minute activity at the end of the lesson.

2 You might like to tell the students to shout out when they hear a mistake, too.

Note This is based on a traditional English game.

4 Puzzles

Language focus Numbers; *(one) more than*, *____ less than*, *next to*

Thinking skills Analysing information given systematically; finding a strategy; making logical deductions; checking solutions

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 15 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Hand out the puzzles and ask the students to read the problems and try to solve them.

2 If they can't solve them, ask them to talk to another student to work it out together.

3 Ask for solutions. Ask someone with the correct solution to explain to the class how they worked it out.

Answers

1 1 Tom scored 7 goals
2 Tim scored 6 goals
3 Sue scored 2 goals
4 Mike scored 5 goals
5 Sam scored 3 goals
6 Will scored 1 goal

2 1 Jason gave away 2 sweets
2 Anne gave away 3 sweets

3 The order is: *Mr Black, Mr White, Mr Green, Mr Brown*, (or exactly the opposite: *Mr Brown, Mr Green, Mr White, Mr Black*)
Hint: First you find that Mr Brown and Mr Green don't live next to Mr Black, so Mr Black only has one neighbour and must be at one end of the row. He has to live next to Mr White.
Then, Mr White doesn't live next to Mr Brown, so he must live next to Mr Green.
So Mr Brown is at the other end of the row.

4 Simon is 4
Freddie is 2
Stephanie is 6

Puzzles | Worksheet

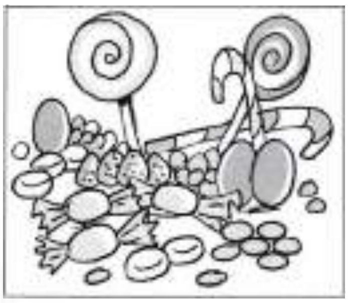
Work out the answers.

1 

Tom, Jane, Sue, Mike, Sam and Will played a game of football. Mike scored 2 more goals than Sam. Sam scored one more goal than Sue. Jane scored 3 more goals than Sam. Tom scored 2 more goals than Mike. Sue scored one more goal than Will. Will scored one goal.
How many goals did each child score?

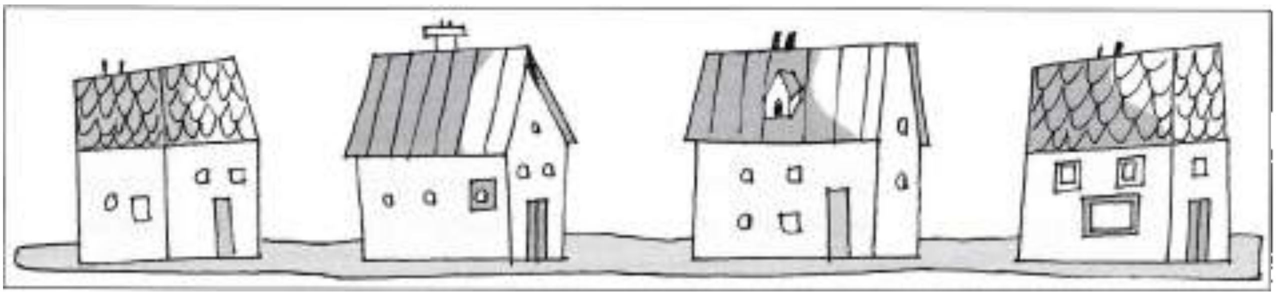
Tom scored _____ goals.	Mike ____________
Jane scored ____________	Sam ____________
Sue ____________	Will ____________

2 Four children hunted for sweets in a sweet hunt. Joan found 6 sweets, Anne found 7, Sue found 2 and Mary found 1. Their parents told Joan and Anne to give some sweets to Sue and Mary so they all had the same number. How many sweets did Joan and Anne give away?



Joan gave away ___ sweets.   Anne gave away ___ sweets

3 Mr Brown, Mr Green, Mr Black and Mr White live in a row of houses. Mr Black doesn't live next to Mr Brown. Mr Green doesn't live next to Mr Black. Mr White doesn't live next to Mr Brown. What order do they live in?



____________   ____________   ____________   ____________

4 Stephanie is three times as old as Freddy. Freddy is two years younger than Simon. Simon is twice as old as Freddy. How old are the children?

Simon is ________   Freddy is ________   Stephanie is ________

5 Maths maze

Language focus Language of mathematics: e.g. *plus*, *minus*, prepositions of place, numbers below 100 (Worksheet A), 100 – 1000 (Worksheet B)

Thinking skills Numerical thinking; strategic thinking

Age 8–12 (depending on the number set used)

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Make one copy per student of either Worksheet A or B (your choice depending on the level of your students), or develop your own grid and copy it.

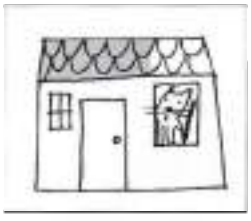
In class

1 Teach: *plus* and *minus* with the help of simple maths tasks, e.g.:

What's three plus five?

What's ten minus seven?

2 Revise the set of numbers you have selected. Then teach the meaning of the following phrases with the help of simple drawings:



in the house

in the box

under the tree

in the bag

on top of the mountain

3 Hand out a copy of the Maths maze to each student. Tell them that they are going to find the path to some treasure. Tell the class that the treasure is either in the house, in the box, under the tree, in the bag or on top of the mountain.

4 Point to the first column of the Maths maze and tell the students to read this column together with you, from top to bottom. Continue in the same way for each of the other columns.

5 Now explain to the students exactly what they have to do. Tell them that the numbers on the worksheet are a maze. Say that you are going to give them a maths task, e.g. 15 – 3 (*fifteen minus three*). They will look for the result in the first column, 12, and cross through the number.

6 Explain that the next answer will be one of the numbers in the second column. The number will be on the same level (11) or diagonally above (18) or below (3).

7 Now ask the students which of the numbers in the third column can come after 18, and so on. The number in the last column will lead the way to the treasure.

8 Now start with the tasks. The students listen and cross out the appropriate numbers as instructed. They then tell you where the treasure is.

Notes

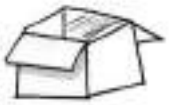
1 In monolingual classes, it may be necessary to explain in the students' mother tongue how the Maths maze works.

2 The same grid can be used several times. The students use a different colour crayon to mark each path differently.

3 The students can later play the Maths maze game in pairs or small groups. In this case, ask them to use the blank grid and write in numbers themselves.

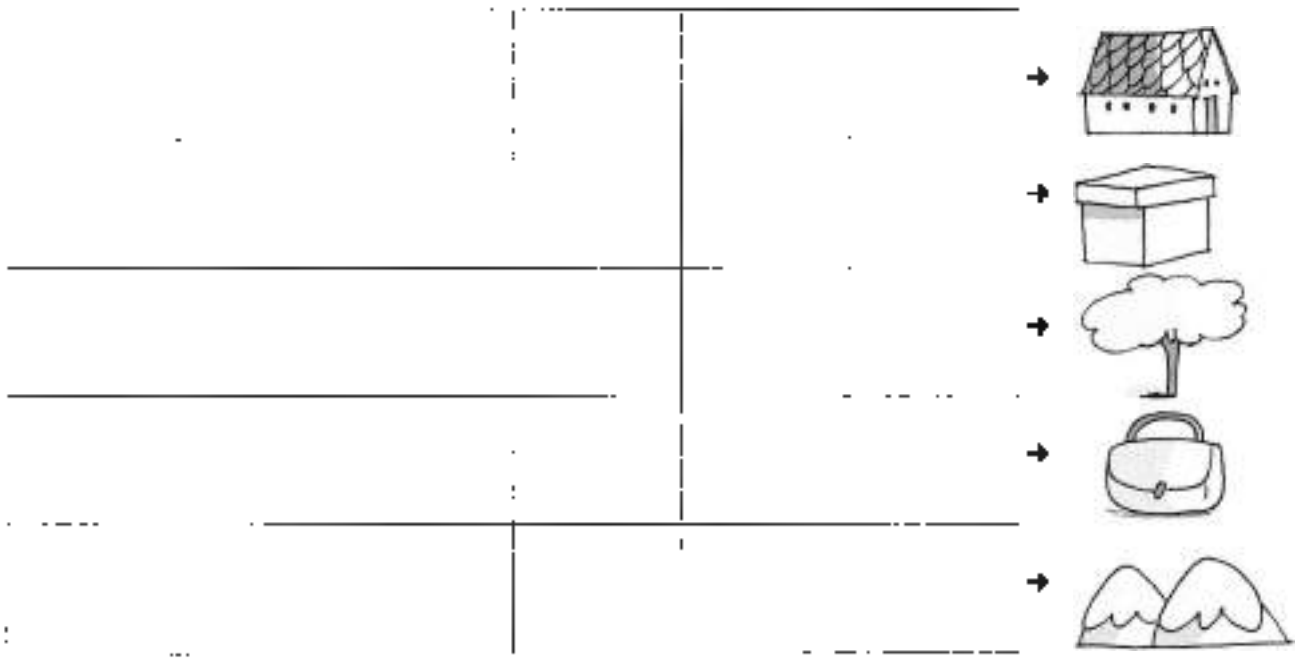
Maths maze: 1–99 | Worksheet A

1 Listen carefully to your teacher. Think, and circle the numbers. Find the way to the treasure.

4	14	0	5	2	3	→ 
9	18	1	20	11	29	→ 
12	11	17	19	19	11	→ 
6	3	13	13	13	17	→ 
8	0	7	7	12	14	→ 

2 Complete the sentence with the correct answer.

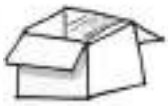
The treasure is _____.



The treasure is _____.

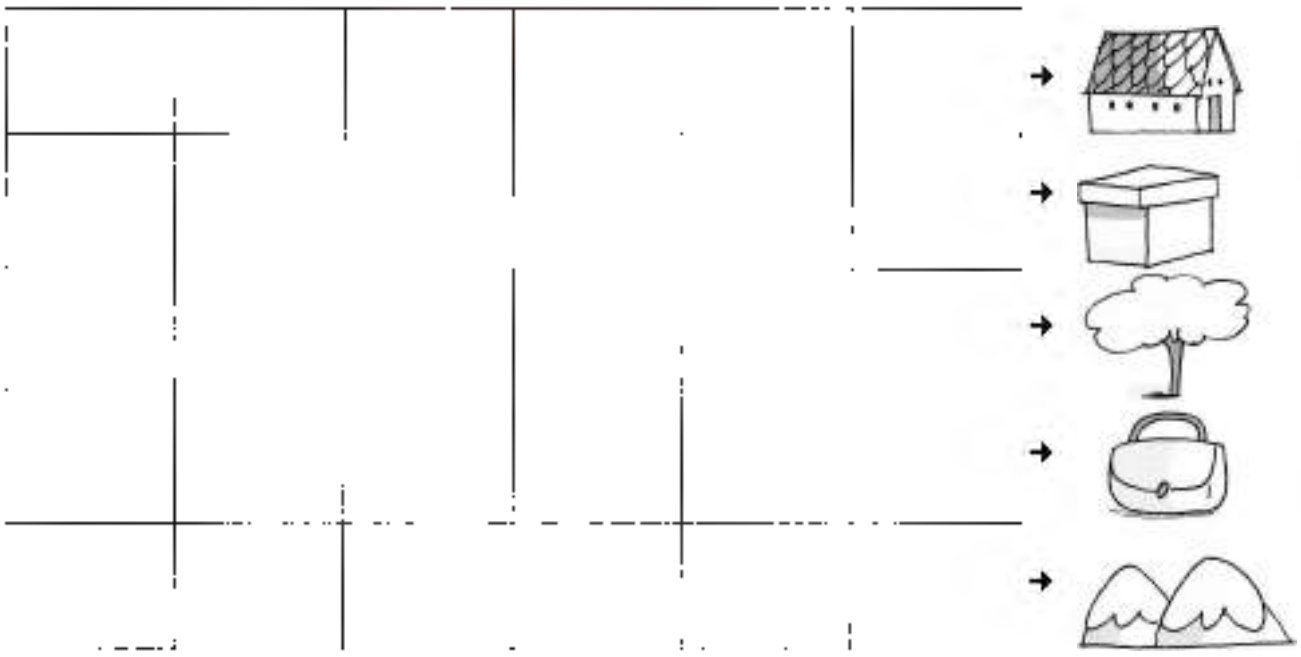
Maths maze: 100–1000 | Worksheet B

1 Listen carefully to your teacher. Think, and circle the numbers. Find the way to the treasure.

100	165	100	190	100	312	→ 
120	111	101	120	220	219	→ 
200	135	200	190	690	706	→ 
500	900	1000	970	999	82	→ 
350	700	400	750	950	320	→ 

2 Complete the sentence with the correct answer.

The treasure is _____



The treasure is

6 How old are they?

Language focus Numbers; months, dates; expressing age; comparatives, superlatives

Thinking skills Numerical calculations; understanding time and sequence of months; transferring information into tabular form

Age 8–11

Level Elementary / A2

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

1. Do stick drawings of three children – shortest on left, tallest on right – and give them names. Write their ages – 6, 10, 15 – under them. Ask *How old is* _____? *How old is* _____? *Who is the oldest? Who is the youngest?*
2. Model the sentences: _____ *is four years older than* _____ _____ *is six years younger than* _____.
3. Revise the names of the months.
4. Hand out the worksheet. Ask the students to try to work out the answers to exercises 1, 2 and 3.
5. When they have finished, ask them to compare answers with a partner. If they have different answers, they should explain to each other why they think their own answer is correct.
6. Go through the answers with the class. You may need to ask some students who are right to explain their solutions to the class.
7. Now ask them to do exercise 4. They need to mingle and ask others when their birthdays are. They complete the chart.

Answers

1. Fred's 16/sixteen years old.
   Susanne's 10/ten years old.
   Patrick's 7/seven years old.
   Danny's 8/eight years old.
   Fred's the oldest.
   Patrick's the youngest.
2. Susanne's the oldest. Ellie's the youngest.
   Ellie's 3/three months younger than Lucy.
   Lucy's 3/three months younger than Susanne.
   Susanne's 6/six months older than Ellie.
3. Danny's the oldest.
   Jo's the youngest.

How old are they? | Worksheet

Read, think and complete the sentences.

1 Maria and Simon have four children. Susanne's ten. Danny's two years younger than Susanne and a year older than Patrick. Fred's twice as old as Patrick. Write their ages.

Fred's ___ years old.	Danny's _____ years old.
Susanne's _____ years old.	_____ 's the oldest.
Patrick's _____ years old.	_____ 's the youngest.

2 Susanne has two friends. Her birthday is in March. Ellie's birthday's in September. Lucy has a birthday in June. They were all born in the same year.

Who's the oldest? _____ Who's the youngest? _____

Complete the sentences: write the numbers and *older* or *younger*.

Ellie's _____ months	_____ *(older / younger)* than Lucy.
Lucy's _____ months	_____ than Susanne.
Susanne's _____	_____ than Ellie.

3 Here are the birthdays of Jo, Tom and Harry. They're all ten.

Jo	February 4th
Tom	December 6th
Harry	August 19th

Today's July 17th.
Who's the oldest? _____
Who's the youngest? _____

4 Ask six friends: When's your birthday? Write the birthdays in the table.

NAME	BIRTHDAY

Who's the oldest? _____
Who's the youngest? _____

Creating associations

Arriving at a successful conclusion, for example in problem solving, often requires the flexibility to step out of familiar thinking paths and to try something new and unknown. The keys to being flexible are a non-judgemental attitude and a readiness to take certain risks, as we do not know for sure what the outcome of following our intuition rather than our experience might be. Creating associations will occasionally lead to dead ends and may require several further rounds of creative thought before arriving at a hoped-for outcome.

Creating associations is about making connections between things that we do not normally see connected. Frequently, it is such associations that lead to new discoveries. In order to allow our creative thought processes to flow, we need to allow ourselves to think freely and flexibly. Discovery often goes hand in hand with surprise effects, and the joy of finding new things and an element of playfulness and fun are essential ingredients for this process. Making associations successfully means letting go of what we are used to thinking, and being prepared to take risks, as not every outcome will be a successful one.

For our students, making creative associations is at the very core of applying their foreign language skills and knowledge. Using a foreign language successfully is not about repeating dialogues from course books by heart, or about reiterating sentences previously learnt. Students need to be prepared to take a step into the unknown and take risks. Developing students' ability to create associations helps them get ready to do just that!

1 Hot and cold

Language focus Groups of vocabulary items, according to the teacher's choice

Thinking skills Making associations between things, creative and imaginative thinking, explaining and giving reasons

Age 8–12

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards. Older children at higher levels will be able to produce more sophisticated solutions.

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each group of three

In class

1 Draw two large circles on the board. Draw a small circle in the middle of each. Write the word *loud* in one of the small circles. Ask the students to tell you names of things that are loud. As they suggest things, write them in the big circle. Then write *quiet* in the centre of the other circle. Ask them to tell you things that are quiet and write them in the other circle.

2 Hand out the worksheet. Ask the class to work in threes to put the words in the circles in exercise 1. To get them started, ask them to suggest one example for each. Help with the vocabulary where needed.

3 Ask for solutions. Individuals could have different interpretations; e.g. *an ice cream* could be associated with *cold*; it could also be associated with *hot* as you eat one when you are hot.

4 Ask them to think of more words to put in the circles. Tell them they can be as creative as they like in thinking of things that make them think of *hot* or *cold*; for example, they could think that *blue* or *white* belongs to *cold* and that yellow is *hot*. Or they might associate a sound with *hot* or *cold*. These might be personal associations. Help with vocabulary where needed.

5 Ask them to tell the class some of their new words. Ask them to explain why the word makes them think of *hot* or *cold*. I.e. *I think yellow is hot because the sun is yellow*. Accept any suggestion.

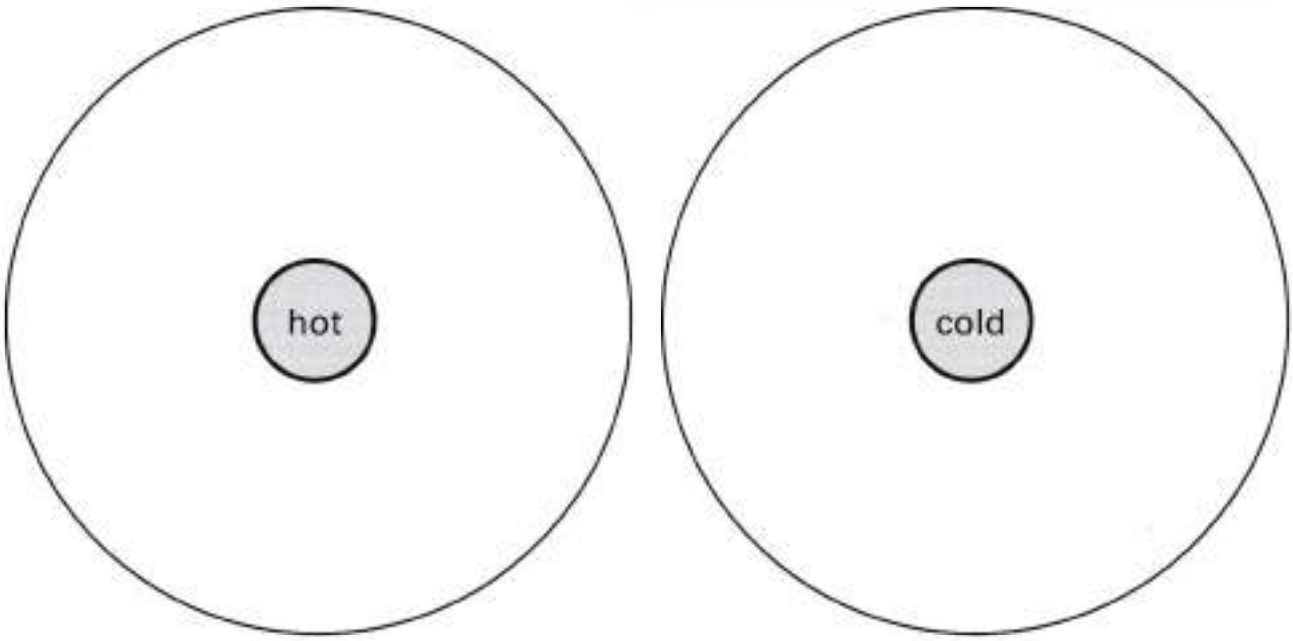
6 Tell them they can colour the circles in an appropriate colour.

Extension At a higher level, the words and phrases can be written down on separate lines to create group poems.

Variation This activity can be used with many different pairs of prompts, e.g. *happy–sad*, *red–yellow*, *fast–slow*. It can generate some lively discussion and lead to creative thinking and creative writing.

Hot and cold | Worksheet

1 Some of the words are related to *cold*. Some relate to *hot*. Write each word in the circle you think is best.




snowflake


sun


penguin


skis


swimming costume


toboggan


sunflowers


suntan lotion


polar bear


swimming pool


ice cream


icicle


fire


snowman


glacier

2 Think of more words that can go in the circles, and write them in.

2 Chair in the middle

Language focus Sentence building, language revision

Cognitive skills Creating associations, creative thinking, visualising

Age 8–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 10–20 minutes

Preparation Prepare slips of paper. Select words or phrases that need revising, and write a word or phrase on each of the slips. Put them all into a box.

In class

1 Set up a circle of chairs, with one chair in the middle. Ask one student to sit on the chair in the middle and the others to sit in the circle. Give the box containing the paper slips to the student in the middle.

2 He/She calls one of the other students, then takes out two of the paper slips and reads out the words or phrases on them. The student who has been called tries to create something meaningful out of the two words/phrases, however fanciful it may be.

3 If the sentence is acceptable, give a non-verbal signal to indicate this. In this case, the student who has said the sentence and the one in the middle swap their positions. The student who is now in the middle draws two more slips of paper and calls another student (not the one who was in the middle previously) etc.

4 But if the sentence is not acceptable, give a non-verbal signal to say so. In this case the student in the middle asks another student or other students for help.

5 If the student in the middle has asked three students but none of them has been able to come up with something meaningful, help them and take your turn by sitting on the chair in the middle.

Note This is a variation of a technique we learnt from Mario Rinvolucri.

3 From handclaps to words

Language focus Speaking and listening

Thinking skills Making associations; keeping to a rhythm

Age 10 upwards

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 10 minutes

Preparation None

In class

1 Ask your students to stand in a tight circle, with you amongst them. Tell them that you'll clap your hands, then the student next to you on your right is to clap their hands immediately after you. Then the next student on the right will clap their hands and so on. Ask them to clap their hands with as short a break as possible between the individual claps. They pass the clapping rhythm round the group.

2 You will probably notice that the handclaps do not follow very smoothly one after the other, and there are frequent breaks of varying length in between them. So when it is your turn again, act as if you were 'catching' the handclap in mid air.

3 Ask your students to close their eyes for a minute and think of a set of dominoes falling one after the other. Ask them to observe in their imagination how smoothly that movement goes. Ask them to transfer the image of the falling dominoes onto the handclap activity.

4 Ask them to get ready for the next round of handclaps. Get each student to stand with their body slightly turned in the direction the handclap should move towards. They should hold their right hand on top and their left hand underneath, palm up, and start the clapping movement immediately after the person before them has started moving their hands. Start the clapping again.

5 Watch how this change increases the speed, and praise them a lot. Practise until the handclap is passed round in a smooth movement and the activity becomes pleasurable not only from an auditory but also from a visual point of view.

6 Do the handclap activity again, in both directions.

4 From words to story

Language focus Speaking and listening

Thinking skills Making associations

Age 10 upwards

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 15–20 minutes

Preparation None

In class

1 As a warm-up, do handclapping as in step 6 in the last activity.

2 Sit in a circle with your students. Tell them that this time you are not passing handclaps around, but words. You will start, and say a word; the student on your right should say a word that they associate with the word you have said. Then the next student on the right says another word, and that again should somehow be associated with the word before etc. Remind them of the handclap activity and tell them to say the words quickly and smoothly.

3 After a few minutes, do another round of words, but this time they should call out words that they believe have nothing at all to do with the word previously said.

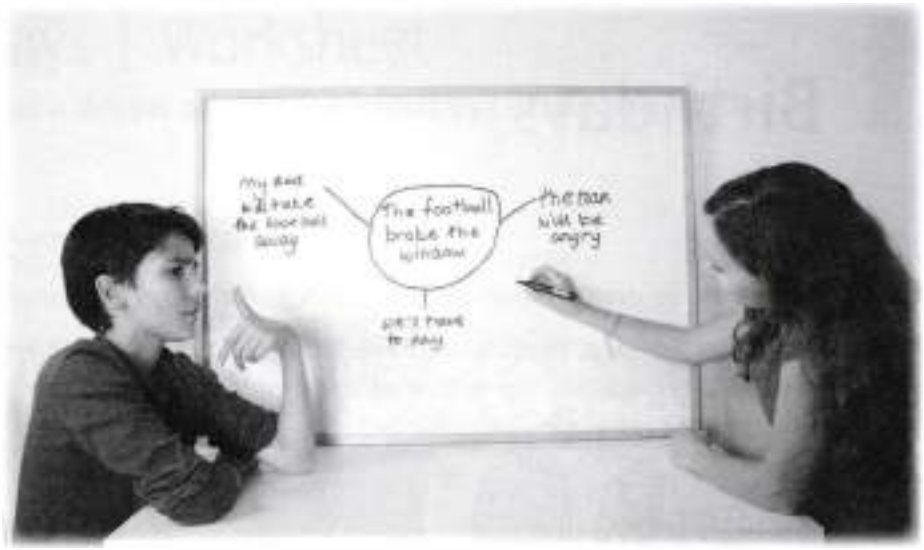
4 Tell them that you are going to tell them a story. They can influence your story by calling out words. You will integrate any word they call out into your story. Here is part of a transcript of such a story done in a class:

Teacher: *Once upon a time there*
Student 1: *king*
Teacher: *Right. Once upon a time there was a king. He was very happy.*
Student: *aeroplane*
Teacher: *He was so happy because his wife had an aeroplane. A little, red plane.*
Student: *cow*
Teacher: *So one day the king's wife and the king were flying their plane. But you know what happened? They saw this cow. And the cow was crying. She was very sad.*
Student: *teacher*
etc.

Note Step 4 usually creates tremendous fun and laughter in a class. There are two main reasons for that. First, children love stories that offer absurd content and unexpected twists. Secondly, the absurdity and unexpectedness comes directly from the children.

You will probably find that the activity works much better when it follows the warm-up handclapping. It usually helps create rapport and self-confidence and overcome shyness. It works in a step-by-step manner, and goes from non-verbal to verbal student participation. This increases the likelihood that even shy children who otherwise do not often speak will also take part actively in the phases of the activity where speaking is essential.

Variation Once students know well how the activity works, they can have a go at taking over the role of storyteller from you.



Cause and effect

The educated mind has the ability to understand the effects of one's own behaviour towards other members of society and towards oneself. This ability is intimately tied up with learning to be responsible for one's behaviour, accepting responsibility for one's actions, making decisions, and modifying one's actions if necessary. Understanding the relationship between cause and effect is a rational and analytical process that is based on the ability to manage one's own impulsiveness and act in a self-disciplined way, despite the fact that this may lead to the delayed gratification.

Children who have learnt to understand what consequences their own behaviour can have are more likely to develop the attitude of thinking before they act, and of anticipating the different choices they have in determining their own actions and behaviour. For example, if a child wants to buy something they need to save up for, they might while saving the money feel that they would prefer to buy something else, something cheaper, because they can buy it immediately, without having to make an effort; however, some children will know that if they give in to such temptation, they are choosing immediate gratification and the chances are high that they will regret it later.

Understanding the relationship between cause and effect is at the very root of scientific thinking. When children are young, they often form their own beliefs about how things work, and many of these beliefs are based on impulses rather than on precise observations. In order to develop an understanding of the relationship, they need to learn to ask questions about how things work, develop theories, experiment and find evidence so their theories can be proved or disproved.

1 Birthdays

Language focus Names of the months, possessive's: *(Linda)'s birthday is in (June).*

Thinking skills Deductive thinking, looking carefully for implicit clues and cues; paying attention to details, recognising the nature of the problem; distinguishing important from unimportant information

Age 8–11

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each student. Make a birthday chart from a big sheet of poster paper landscape with the months of the year written in felt pen along the top. A few coloured felt pens.

In class

1 Teach or revise the names of the months.

2 Ask students what months their birthdays are in.

3 Show the chart, and mark the students' birthdays by writing underneath each month the name of each student whose birthday is in that month. If there is more than one student in a month, use different colours for them.

4 Hand out the worksheet. Wait for the students to react. Give them plenty of time to work out what the task is. First what they have to do. If necessary, help the students by scaffolding the discovery process through guided questions, e.g.:

What can you see?

What information do we have?

What's the problem?

Are there any clues that could help you to work out what to do?

5 Note that they should write all six birthdays on the worksheet. They should be able to work this out themselves.

6 When they have finished, compare their answers.

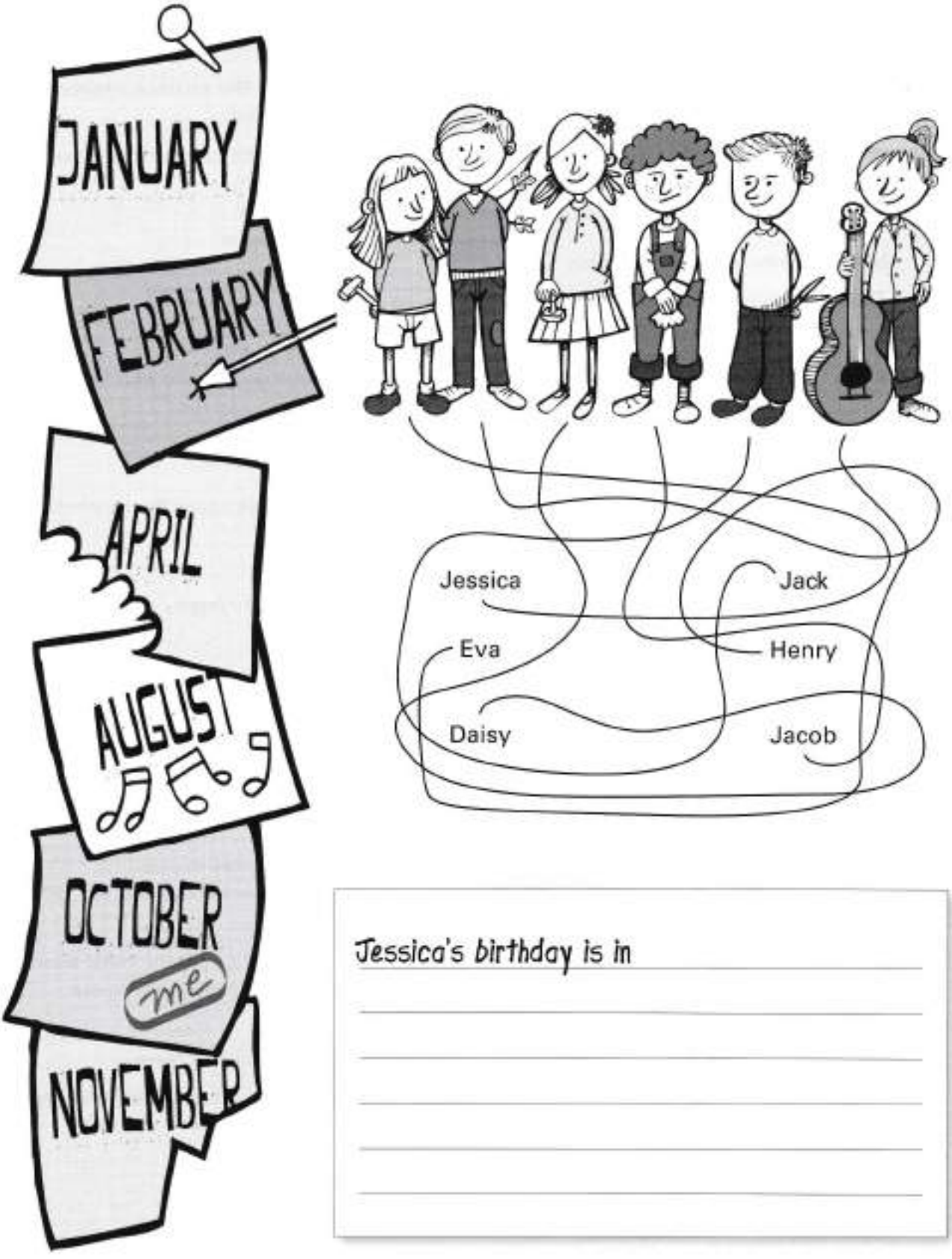
Answers

Jessica's birthday is in January.	*Eva's birthday is in August.*
Steve's birthday is in February.	*Dave's birthday is in October.*
Jamie's birthday is in April.	*Jack's birthday is in November.*

Notes We learnt this activity from Günter Gerngross.

Birthdays | Worksheet

Look carefully. When are their birthdays? Write sentences.



Jessica's birthday is in

2 The weather

Language focus *Will*-future for making predictions, language to talk about the weather, expressing past *(I thought ...)*

Thinking skills Predicting what will happen, looking for evidence that helps to make predictions; recording and checking one's predictions

Age 8–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time Lesson 1: 15–20 minutes

Lesson 2: 15–20 minutes

Preparation For Lesson 1, bring a thermometer to class, and make copies of the worksheet for each student.

In class: Lesson 1

1 Teach or revise language that students need in order to talk about the weather. For example:

What's the weather like today?
- *It's rainy / windy / sunny / cloudy / cool / mild / cold / hot / foggy / snowy*
- *It's (21)°C.*

What will it be like tomorrow?
- *It'll be rainy /*
- *It'll rain / snow*
- *There'll be / there won't be thunderstorms / a lot of rain / snow*
- *The temperature will be (17)° in the morning*
- *The maximum temperature will be*

2 Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Fill in today's weather together with the class. Then ask them individually to predict the weather for the next day, get them to write their predictions on the handout.

3 When they have finished, get them to share their predictions with the class. More advanced classes can say why they make these predictions: *I think it will rain because ..., I think it will be hot because ...*

4 Tell students to write their names on the worksheets, and collect them.

5 Tell students to make a note, next day, of the weather that actually happens then.

In class: Lesson 2

6 Hand out the students' worksheets with their predictions. Get them to check their predictions against the notes of what actually happened the next day, and talk about their findings. If needed, write language prompts on the board and help students to use them properly. Examples:

I thought it would be sunny / cloudy / rainy / ... today
I thought the temperature would be
I thought there would be sunshine / rain / a storm
My prediction was right / wrong

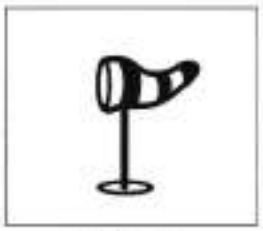
Note Predicting works best when children have their predictions on sensory evidence (for example they can see dark clouds coming up on the horizon and thus predict it'll be rainy quite soon). Therefore it is a good idea to repeat the weather-predicting activity several times, so that students can learn to look for that evidence.

The weather | Worksheet

Name .....

1 What's the weather like today? What will it be like tomorrow?

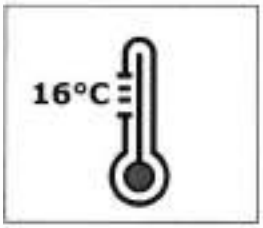

rainy


windy


sunny


cloudy

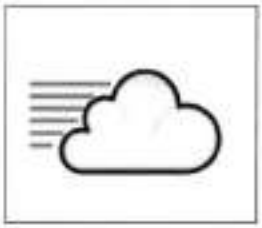
cool



mild

cold

hot


foggy


snowy


thunderstorm


icy


sunny intervals


showers

2 Write sentences about today's weather.

3 Write down your predictions for tomorrow.

3 What happened next?

Language focus Past tenses; expressing cause and effect using linking words: *because, as* and *so*

Thinking skills Recognising cause and effect; anticipating the possible effects of actions

Age 9–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1

Time 20–30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

1 Distribute the worksheet. Explain that each statement in the left-hand column leads to something happening in the right-hand column. Ask the students to join the sentences by drawing a line between them. If necessary, do one together as an example. Give them some time to finish.

2 When they have finished, go through each item and ask for answers. For each item see if anyone has a different answer. Let them know that this is acceptable. A key aspect of teaching thinking is that solutions can be different and creative. For example, for *The girl ran into the road* the suggested answer is *The car stopped quickly.* However, *She got very wet.* is also possible. In this case ask the student: *Why?* The student could well say: *It was raining outside.*

3 For exercise 2, demonstrate ways of joining the parts up, e.g.

The girl forgot her umbrella. So she got very wet.
The girl got very wet because she forgot her umbrella.
As she forgot her umbrella, the girl got very wet.

These can be written on the board as models.

4 This activity has answers supplied. However it is possible for a student to find an alternative answer. If so, ask them to explain why they think this is possible, as described above.

Answers

1 The girl ran into the road. The car stopped quickly.
The football broke the man's window. He was extremely angry.
The girl forgot her umbrella. She got very wet.
The woman left the food on the table. The dog ate her dinner.
The children heard strange noises in the night. They were very scared.
The car broke down far from any houses. The driver had to walk.
The driver forgot to lock his car. Someone stole the luggage.
There was a stranger in the garden. The dog barked loudly.
The temperature went below zero. The water froze.
The team won the football match. They were all delighted.

2 The above sentences can be joined using *and, because, as, so, or and so*, as the students choose. Accept anything that is appropriate.

What happened next? | Worksheet

1 The left-hand column shows different things that happened. Each caused something in the right-hand column to happen. Write numbers to join the two sentences.

1 The girl ran into the road.	___ The dog ate her dinner.
2 The football broke the man's window.	___ The driver had to walk.
3 The girl forgot her umbrella.	___ The water froze.
4 The woman left the food on the table.	___ Someone stole the luggage.
5 The children heard strange noises in the night.	___ The dog barked loudly.
6 The car broke down far from any houses.	___ The car stopped quickly.
7 The driver forgot to lock his car.	___ They were all delighted.
8 There was a stranger in the garden.	___ He was extremely angry.
9 The temperature went below zero.	___ They were very scared.
10 The team won the football match.	___ She got very wet.

2 Now write ten longer sentences, joining the two pieces of information up. You can start each sentence with the first piece or the second piece.

4 What will happen if you ...?

Language focus *if*, use of *might* and *will*

Thinking skills Understanding cause and effect, distinguishing definite results of action from possible results

Age 9–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

1 Explain that the students are going to look at *What will happen if ...*. In monolingual classes, you may need to explain this in their mother tongue. Give an example, put a breakable object on the edge of your table and make an action as if to push it off. Ask: *What will happen if I push it?* (*It will fall off.*) Ask: *What will happen if it falls off?* (*It might break.*) Give more examples if needed.

2 Hand out the worksheet. Explain that the pictures on the left show different things happening. The students need to decide what *will* happen or what *might* happen, and join each sentence on the left to the relevant one on the right. They can ask you to explain meanings of words they don't know.

3 Ask the students to give you answers. Individuals check their own solutions. If anyone disagrees they can explain why.

4 Finally ask why some of them use *will* and some use *might*. Explain that *will* is definite and *might* is possible.

Answers

The following are suggested answers. If the students are creative they could think of alternative answers provided they can justify them.

What will happen if you ...

1 play football in the street? You might break a window.
2 put a glass on the edge of a table? It might fall off.
3 leave a tap running? There might be a flood.
4 run across the road? A car might hit you.
5 forget to bring your umbrella? You might get wet.
6 don't turn the lights off? You will waste electricity.
7 leave your bike unlocked? It might get stolen.
8 run very fast? You will get hot.
9 don't do up your shoelaces? You might fall over.

What will happen if you ...? | Worksheet

Write numbers to join the questions and answers.

What will happen if you ...

play football in the street? ___ It might fall off.

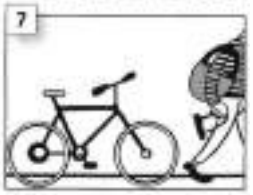
put a glass on the edge of a table? ___ You will waste electricity.

leave a tap running? ___ It might get stolen.

run across the road? ___ You might get wet.

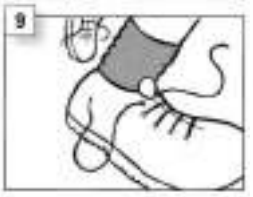
forget to bring your umbrella? ___ You might hit a window.

don't turn the lights off? ___ You might fall over.



leave your bike unlocked? ___ You will get fit.

run every day? ___ There might be a flood.



don't do up your shoelaces? ___ A car might hit you.

5 *Might* and *will*

Language focus Use of *if* (conditional) with *might* and *will*

Thinking skills Predicting consequences of actions, logical thinking, explaining, justifying, persuading

Age 9–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1

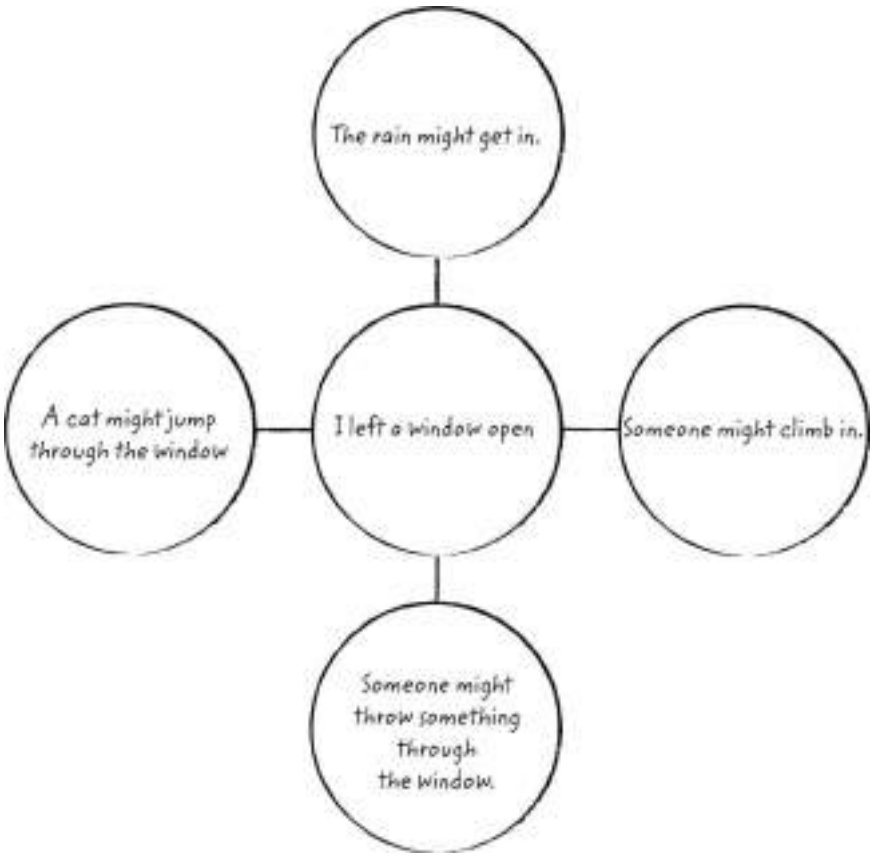
Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Write on the board: *I left a window of my house open.* Put a circle round it.

Ask the students: *What might happen?* Build up a bubble map on the board with their suggestions. Accept any suggestion. Continue till you have about eight ideas.



Emphasise that these *might* happen. And they might not.

2 Now say: *The sun has set. It's night. What will happen tomorrow morning? (The sun will rise.) What might happen now? (We might see stars. We might see the moon* etc.) You can build up another bubble map.

3 Emphasise the difference between *might* and *will*.

4 Divide the class into groups of three. Hand out the worksheet. Explain that the students need to fill in the columns according to what they think *might* happen and what *will* happen. Leave ample time.

5 Ask for solutions. There are a number of possible answers. Accept anything that is reasonable and backed up with an explanation. E.g. a student might say: *If you don't water plants, they* ***will*** *die.* However, another student might say: *They* ***might*** *die.* Ask: *Why?* And that student, reasoning that outside it rains, would answer: *They are outside.*

6 You could build up more bubble maps as the students give you answers.

Answers There are no definite answers to this. You will, however, find that there are not many examples of *will* and far more examples of *might*, because *might* provides a much wider variety of scenarios. E.g. if you play football every day you *will* get fitter. But if you don't water plants, it depends on whether they are outside and what the climate is like and whether they're in an exposed or sheltered place etc., so they *might* die.

Note We got the idea of using a bubble map from: David Hyerle.

Might and *will* | Worksheet

What might happen? What will happen?

Things that might happen	Things that will happen
If you don't water your plants ...	
If you run in front of a car ...	
If you play football every day ...	
If you lose your door key .	
If you don't lock the front door ...	
If you leave a tap running . .	
If you are late for school ..	

Making decisions

We make decisions every day of our lives. We decide what career to follow, which university to attend, what to give someone as a gift, what to do if we upset someone or damage someone's property. Making the right decision will have a marked impact on what happens to us next. They are all about making sound judgements. Bad decisions lead to many of the situations we hear about every day: businesses failing, banks collapsing, accidents happening.

The process of decision making follows a number of logical steps: defining the situation, considering all possible actions, calculating the possible consequences of these actions, and choosing a line of action. This involves being able to assess the pros and cons of each possible action. An inability to predict possible outcomes of action will lead to poor decisions and even criminal behaviour such as riots, looting and hooliganism. Decisions can be taken by individuals or by a group. A group decision will also entail making suggestions, explaining, negotiating, and communication.

There are a number of decision-making models used in business situations, for example, we introduce the *plus–minus* model in activity no 6, Pros and minus. The activities in this section involve the children in a number of different decision-making situations where they are required to consider consequences of their actions, leading to an improvement in this fundamental life skill.

1 Cars, cars, cars

Language focus Different types of cars; people; giving reasons

Thinking skills Making assumptions about the needs of people in different life situations; paying attention to detail; understanding important clues; comparing; matching; distinguishing important from unimportant information; giving reasons

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30–40 minutes

Preparation Copy Worksheets A and B; one of each per student.

In class

1 Give a copy of Worksheet A to each student. Read the words for the different types of vehicles to the students. Get them to practise the pronunciation, but don't explain the meaning of the words yet.

2 Teach the word *vehicle*.

3 Ask students to work in pairs and match the words with the types of vehicles by writing the names in pencil underneath the pictures.

4 Compare the students' ideas about the types of vehicles. Help them with the meaning of the words if necessary.

Answers

1 van
2 pick-up truck
3 double-decker bus
4 jeep
5 lorry
6 vintage car
7 coach
8 sports car
9 motorbike
10 racing car
11 electric car
12 ice cream van

5 Then give each student a copy of Worksheet B. Make sure your students know the meaning of all the words and can pronounce them.

6 Tell them to match the words with the pictures by writing the numbers in the boxes.

Answers

4	3	9
8	2	7
5	1	6

7 Ask them if they know what they have to do next. If necessary, elicit from them that they should think about which type of vehicle is the most suitable for each of the people in their specific life situations. They can use the same vehicle more than once if they like. In monolingual classes you may need to explain this in the students' mother tongue. They should think carefully and decide which type would be best for which of the people, and write it on the line under the person. Tell them that you'll give them about five minutes to make their decisions.

8 When students have finished, tell them to say what their decisions are. Try to elicit the reasons for their decisions and help them with language if necessary. Example:

S1: I say the van is the best car for the mother.
T: OK. Why do you think it's the best car for her?
S2: She have four children. When they going in the car, have much ... erm ... much take with.
T: That's right. When the mother goes somewhere with her children, they've got lots of things to pack. What things does she put in the car when she goes away with her children?
S1: Eat for the children.
T: OK. She takes some things to eat, some food. What else?
S1: To play.
T: Things to play with. OK. She takes some toys for the children. What kind of toys?
S2: Much.

Notes

1 It is important to keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to exercise 2. Firstly, there are more types of cars than people, so there are no one-to-one matches between cars and people. Secondly, it's the idea of the activity that the decisions are made by the students. And last but not least, colleagues who tried out the activity have said that students occasionally come up with perfectly logical explanations for suggestions the colleagues themselves would not have thought of. What's interesting for you is to hear why students have made which decision.

2 The idea for this activity comes from *The Somerset Thinking Skills Course*, by Nigel Blagg et al.

Cars, cars, cars | Worksheet A

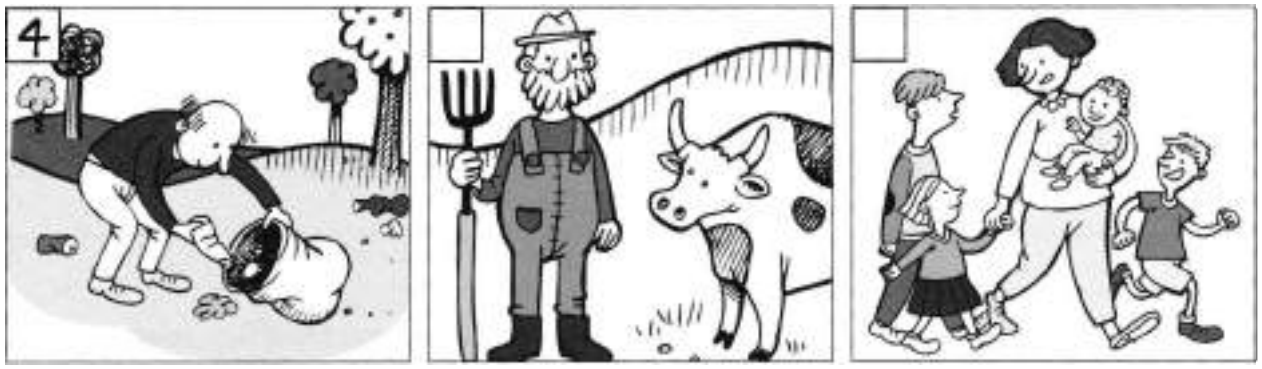
Match the words with the vehicles. Write them on the lines.

toy car	vintage car	pick-up truck	motor home
racing car	electric car	sports car	lorry
coach	jeep	van	double-decker bus

Cars, cars, cars | Worksheet B

1 Match the pictures with the people. Write numbers 1–9.

1 a family going on holiday
2 a 18-year-old girl
3 a farmer
4 a person who cares a lot about the environment
5 a person who collects old machines
6 an olderly couple
7 a racing driver
8 a 2-year-old
9 a mother of four children



2 What's the best vehicle for each of them? Think, and make decisions. Write the type of vehicle underneath the people.

2 Which animal?

Language focus Adjectives and verbs to describe animals

Thinking skills Analysing the qualities of animals; creative/lateral thinking; self-reflection; decision making; giving reasons

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 25–30 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each student. Bring a supply of colouring pencils/felt pens

In class

1 Hand out a copy of the worksheet to each student. Make sure your students understand the meaning of the words. Get them to practise the words, especially the pronunciation.

2 Explain that each student should now decide on a colour for each animal and make the frame around the animal in that colour. Give one or two minutes for that.

3 Tell students to think carefully and decide which of the adjectives/verbs on the worksheet best match the animals or their personalities. Ask them to think carefully and circle the words in the colour of the animals they go with. Give students an example by 'thinking aloud', e.g.

OK. Let me think. Mmh. My best friend's got a cat. She's a lovely animal. She's very friendly (mime circling the word 'friendly' on the worksheet) *When I visit my friend, the cat always comes to say hello. But also, she's very determined* (mime circling the phrase on the worksheet) *She always does what she wants.*

4 Give students enough time (4–5 minutes), and encourage them to ask you for other words/phrases they might want to ascribe to the animals.

5 Ask students to decide which of the animals represents them or their personality best. Ask them to complete the sentence on the worksheet. If necessary, give them an example.

I'm like a butterfly. I'm very colourful and I can never sit still. I like moving around.

6 Ask them to report back to the class and give reasons for their decision. If necessary, help them with the language they need.

Note This activity is based on an idea in Janet Baker Smith's *101 Brain-based Instructional Strategies*.

Which animal? | Worksheet

1 Choose a colour for each of the animals, and make its frame that colour.

butterfly

dog

mouse

cat

2 Decide which of the words and phrases go with which animal(s). Circle the word in the colour of the animal(s).

friendly | helpful | clever | intelligent | colourful | awake | beautiful | strong
quick | careful | shy | independent | elegant | patient | loyal

has got a good memory | likes being with people | understands people well
loves meat | loves playing | runs and jumps a lot | is very determined
can fly | can swim well | can run very fast | has got a good sense of smell
sees very well | hears very well | doesn't make a lot of noise | is very noisy

3 Then decide which of the animals is most like you. Write a sentence.

I'm like a ______________ because ______________________________

____

3 What a pity!

Language focus Numbers: language of playing a game

Thinking skills Numerical skills: adding up numbers; making decisions about taking a risk

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation A dice for each small group of students.

In class

1 Make sure your students have a good command of the basic language they need in order to play a game:

It's my turn. It's your turn. It's (Sandra's) turn
Throw the dice.
What's the score?
I'll carry on
I'll stop now

2 You may want to introduce a rule that students have to use English while playing the game. So if a player says something in their mother tongue, the other students in the group can call it out in English and the player loses their turn.

3 Put students into small groups. Tell each student to have pen and paper ready to note their score.

4 Ask them to take turns in throwing the dice. Each player can throw the dice as often as they want, adding up their points as they go. They can decide to stop their turn after any throw resulting in 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and can keep all their points and add them to any points they achieved in the previous round(s).

5 But if they throw a 6, they lose all the points they have achieved in this round, and call out *What a pity!* The turn passes to the next player.

6 The player who scores 100 first wins the game.

Variation Once the students are familiar with the game, they can come up with their own rules.

Note We learnt this activity from Robert Fisher's *Head Start. How to Develop your Child's Mind*.

4 Who's got an idea?

Language focus Describing a situation; giving reasons; making suggestions; listening

Thinking skills Identifying a problem situation; identifying possible consequences of an action; brainstorming and evaluating possible solutions; giving reasons; deciding which solution is the best; cooperating with a partner

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each student

In class

1 Hand out a copy of the worksheet to each student. Tell them to look at the pictures and say what the problem is in each one of them. Encourage your students to suggest various answers for each picture. Accept these in a non-judgemental way, and write them on the board.

2 If necessary, help the students with language by writing the problems on the board. For example:

T: *What about picture 1? What's the problem?*
S1: *Vase. The boy playing in the house and vase break.*
T: *Uhuh. The boy was playing and he broke the vase.* (writes it on the board)
S2: *The mother angry.*
T: *OK, you think the problem is that the boy's mum's angry.* (writes it down) *Where's the mother?*
S2: *She come in in a minute.*
T: *OK. Any other idea?*
S3: *Yes, the cat break the vase.*
T: *I see. So the boy found the broken vase on the floor. The cat broke it.*
S4: *Yes, the problem is that the mother say the boy broke it.*
T: *You think the boy's mum doesn't believe it was the cat that broke the vase. I see.*

3 When you've discussed all the problem situations with the class, go back to each of the situations and decide together with the students which of the suggestions 'the real problem' is, in other words which one describes the problem most accurately.

4 Ask the students to make suggestions on how to solve the problems. Again, encourage the class to come up with more than one suggestion for each problem, and write them on the board. If necessary, write language prompts on the board, for example

He/She/They should ...
I think he/she/they could ...
It would be a good idea to ...

5 Finally, ask the students to look at the various suggestions on the board. Get them to work in pairs. Each pair looks at one problem situation and decides which of the ideas suggested they think would work best. Tell them to explain their reasons for choosing the idea.

If necessary, help the students with language. Write some prompts on the board:

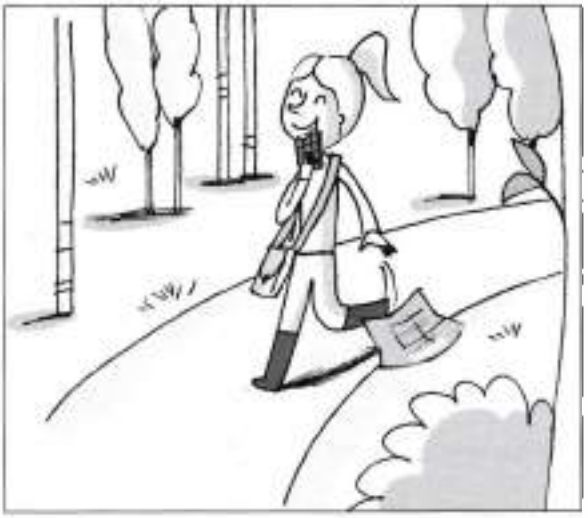
We have discussed the problem of ...
We think the boy/man/person should ...
We think this is the best solution because ...

Note The idea for this activity comes from: James Bellanca and Robin Fogarty *Blueprints for Thinking in the Co-operative Classroom*, p. 126.

Who's got an idea? | Worksheet

1 **What's the problem in each picture? What should the people do? Think of as many ideas as you can.**

2 **Then choose the best idea. Say why you think it's the best idea.**



5 Selecting presents

Language focus Talking about what someone likes and is interested in, making suggestions, saying what presents one would give to somebody, giving reasons

Thinking skills Imagining the outcome of a decision, planning, making decisions, giving reasons for making decisions, expressing a plan in words; using a visual tool to mind map, as a thinking tool

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 40–50 minutes

Preparation None

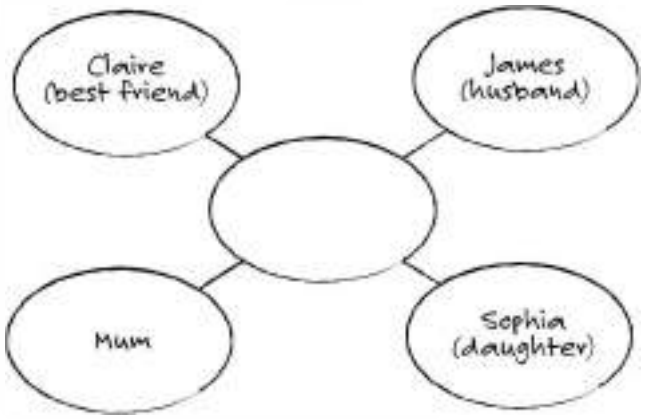
In class

1 Ask your students to think of four people that mean a lot to them. These could include members of their family, friends, fictional or real heroes etc. Say that you are also going to do the same for yourself.

2 Ask them to write the names of these four people on a piece of paper. Do the same with the names of the people you have selected. Ask the students to put their piece of paper face down on their desk.

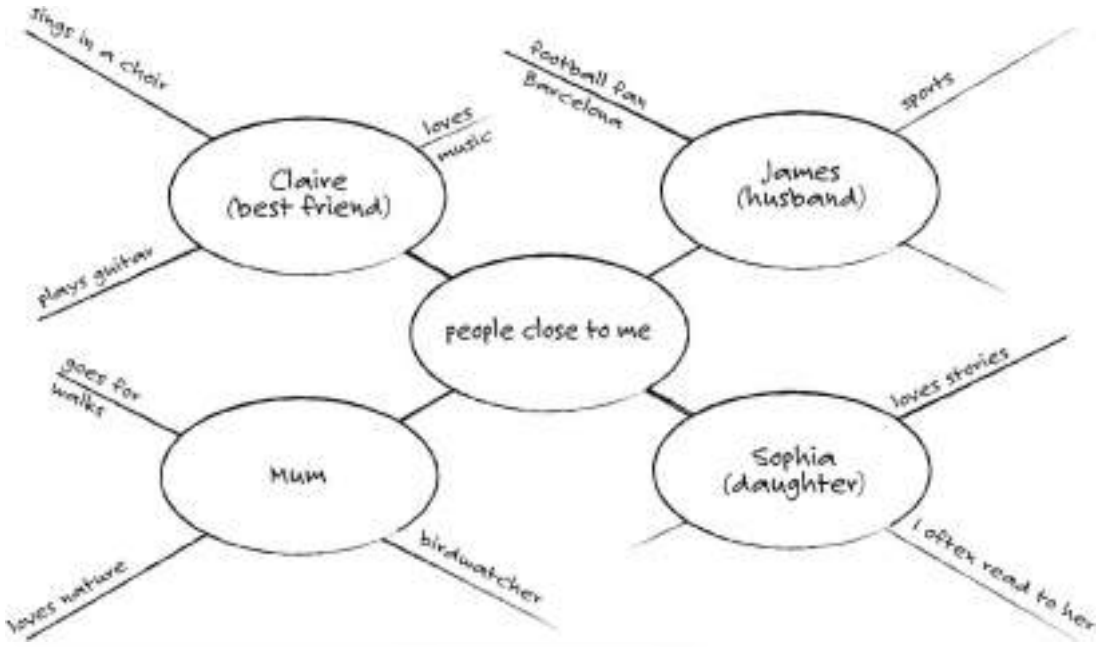
3 Read out the four names you have written down. Start creating a mind map showing the names of the four people that mean a lot to you. Give your students a bit of information if necessary so they know why these people are important to you. A colleague created the following mind map:

4 Ask the students to do the same with their four people. Tell them to write a word of their own choice in the centre of the mind map.



5 Say that you'd like to give each of the people in your mind map a present. Start with one of the people and think of what this person likes. Give an example. As you speak, make notes on your mind map and add small drawings. The colleague who created the mind map on page 172 said the following (and, while speaking, completed the mind map as shown below).

My daughter Sophia is 4. She loves stories. I often read stories to her. My Mum loves going for walks. She likes nature. She loves birdwatching. James, my husband, is a great football fan. His favourite team is Barcelona. My best friend Claire's hobby is music. She plays the guitar and she sings in a choir.



6 Give your students a few minutes of thinking time. Ask them to think about suggestions for presents for the four people in your mind map. Tell them that it is important to think carefully before we buy or make someone a present. If necessary introduce and practise language, e.g.:

I think your ... might like a ...
I think you could give ... a .
Why don't you give him/her a ?
You could give him/her a ...
I'd give him a ...

7 Then ask them to make suggestions. Example.

S1: *Your husband likes football. His favourite team is FC Barcelona. Why don't you give him a Barcelona T-shirt?*

8 Add all the students' suggestions to your mind map.

9 Look at all the suggestions and say, *OK. I'm going to make my decisions now. I'm going to get my ... a . etc.*

10 Ask them to work in groups of four and tell each other some more about the people in their mind maps, e.g. what they like, what they are interested in etc. Tell them to add words and drawings to the mind maps as they are talking.

My ... is interested in ...
He/She likes ...
His/Her hobby is ...
He/She often ...

11 Ask students to work in pairs and look at each other's mind maps. Then make suggestions to each other about presents for the people in their partner's mind map. Tell them to add all their partner's suggestions to their own mind maps.

12 Ask them to make their decisions. Give them two minutes to think carefully about all the suggestions. Then get them to say, for example:

These are my decisions. I'm going to get my ... a ... etc.

Extension You could get your students to write a short text about the presents they'll give to the people. If necessary, read out a model to your students. For example:

My best friend loves comics. I'm going to give him a comic book, maybe Superman.
My sister's name is Emily. She's 13. Her hobby's ...

Note We learnt this activity from Robert Fisher's *Head Start: How to Develop your Child's Mind*.

6 Plus and minus

Language focus A range of language items could be used in this activity depending on the level of the students. It lends itself to *could, would, might*, e.g. *We would get fit. We might spend too much money.*

Thinking skills Weighing up pros and cons (pluses and minuses); predicting positive and negative results of actions; making decisions. This task models an important decision-making strategy.

Age 10–17

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation A copy of the worksheet for each student. Alternatively, the students can copy the four tables from the board.

In class

1 Explain to the class (in mother tongue if necessary) that they are going to learn to use a well-known decision-making strategy called Plus and Minus.

2 Write on the board: *a fast sports car*. Under it write two headings, ***plus (+)*** and ***minus (–)***.

3 Explain (in English): *Bobby wants to buy a fast sports car. There are reasons why this is a good plan and there are reasons why it is not a good plan. Give me one reason **for** the idea.*

Possible responses: *He will have fun. His friends will like it.*
Write these under the plus heading.
Then say: *Give me a reason **against** the idea.*
Possible responses from students: *It uses too much petrol. It is dangerous to drive fast. It is expensive.*
Write their suggestions under the minus heading.

4 Continue to build up the list of pluses and minuses, using the students' suggestions, however fanciful. Help them with the language if necessary.

5 At the end, count the number of pluses and the minuses, and see which is the largest.

6 Tell the class they are going to create their own plus and minus lists. Split them into groups. Hand out the worksheet.

7 Working in groups allows for more creative thinking and a range of ideas. While they are working, walk from group to group and help with language if necessary. Ask the students to count the plus points and the minus points.

8 Finally ask some groups to read their solutions out. The solutions can be displayed on the wall.

Variation For more advanced classes, you could ask the students to make suggestions as to what topic they would like to assess; write their suggestions on the board and ask them to choose two to work on.

Note The idea is adapted from the *Plus, Minus, Interesting 'PMI' technique*, a lateral and creative thinking strategy used in Edward de Bono's *CoRT Thinking Programme*.

Plus and minus | Worksheet

You and your friends are trying to decide what to do at the weekend. There are four suggestions. Make a plus–minus list for each, and then make a decision.

- go shopping together
- go for a long bicycle ride in the country
- go for a picnic
- go to the cinema.

+	go shopping	–

+	go for a bike ride	–

+	go for a picnic	–

+	go to the cinema	–

Our decision is to _____ _____ _____.

7 What should we do?

Language focus *might, will, could, should*; expressing reasons using *because*

Thinking skills Predicting outcomes of actions; thinking of solutions; making decisions about actions

Age 9–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1 onwards

Time 30 minutes to do the class activity. The worksheet could be given as a follow-up lesson

Preparation Prepare a worksheet for each student. You can use the worksheet here or create a similar one using a different incident

In class

1 Explain a situation to the class. For example.

You and your friends are riding your bikes fast. One of you crashes into a parked car and damages the car.

Draw a circle on the board. Write inside it: *The car is damaged.*

Ask the students: *What will happen?* Build up a mind map as in the worksheet using all their replies. Help with language if necessary, e.g.:

The driver will return and see the damage. The driver might be very angry. It will be expensive. The driver might tell the police. The police might visit our parents. Our parents might stop us from riding our bikes. etc

2 Stress the difference between *will* and *might*.

3 Tell the class they now need to decide what they should do. Write in a circle: *What we should do.*

4 Build up a mind map using the students' ideas, e.g.:

- *write a note apologising*
- *wait for the driver to return*
- *run away*
- *go and tell our parents*
- *write down the car number*, etc

5 Now ask them in groups to decide which is the best action to take. They will need to give each other reasons.

Model: *I think we should . because .*

6 Finally, ask each group to give you their solution with a reason, e.g.:

We think we should because

Write the solutions on the board.

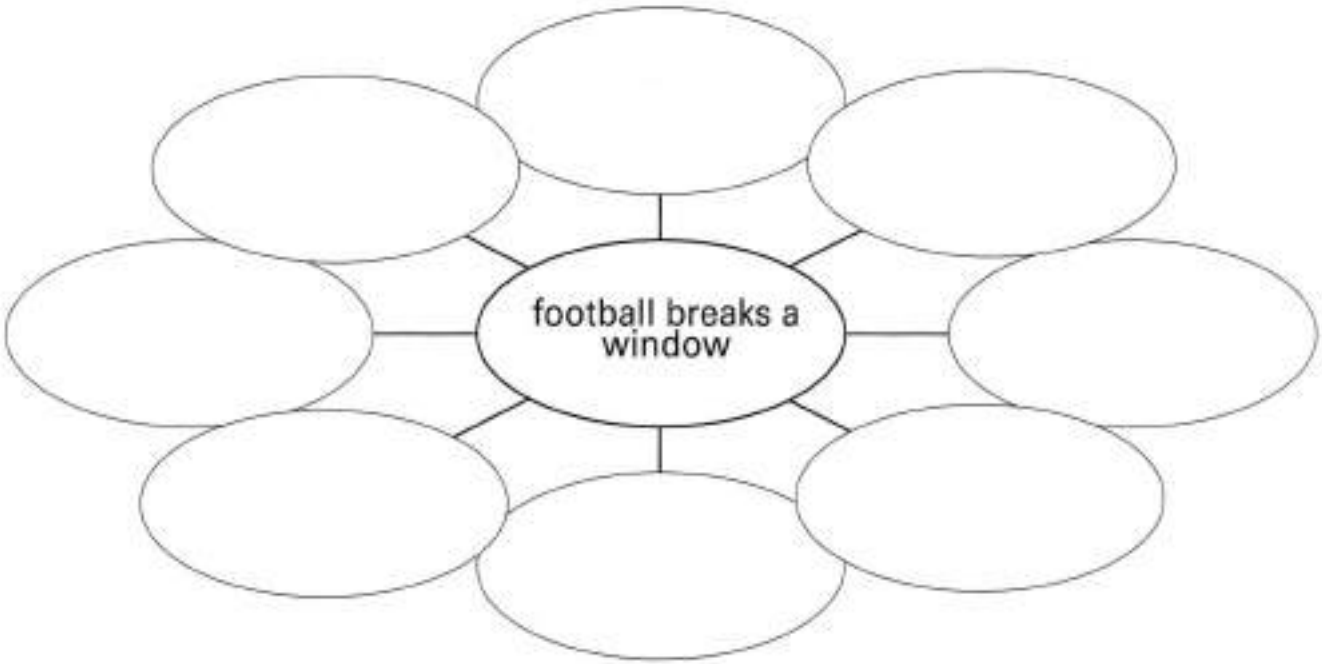
7 You could take a vote as to the best solution.

8 The worksheet could be completed next or in a separate lesson. Arrange the students in groups of four so they can discuss the consequences and possible solutions, and work as before. When they have finished, ask for answers as before, and write them on the board. Again, you could take a vote on the best solution.

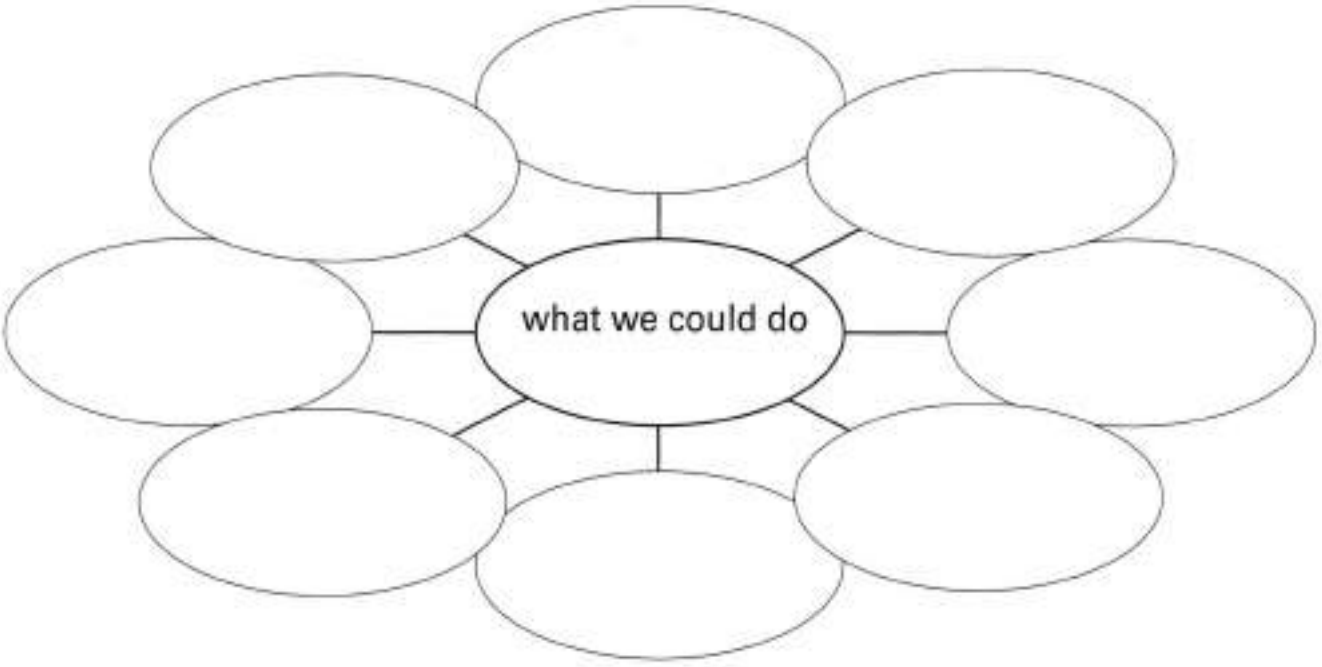
Variation This activity could be repeated using different situations. You can ask the students to brainstorm situations from their own experience that they could discuss.

What should we do? | Worksheet

1 You and your friends kick a football into a window of a neighbour's house and break it. What might happen? Write in the circles.



2 Now decide what you could do about it.



3 Now decide which of these actions you should take.

We think we should _____

_____

because _____

_____

Solving problems

This section brings a whole range of different thinking skills together in order to solve problems. We constantly face problems in our day-to-day lives: finding out where a place is, working out what to do if a machine breaks down, planning a complicated schedule, managing a business meeting. What is needed to solve problems is strategic or tactical thinking that applies many of the different skills we have already discussed to focus on the problem and come up with an appropriate solution. Most problems have many possible solutions; there isn't generally a right answer but several answers, none of them perfect, from which we can choose the best for the particular situation. Most problems presented at school, however, look for one correct answer rather than being related to the more complex realities of life.

Solving problems also requires the right disposition, not being put off by a problem, facing the challenge positively, believing that a solution is possible, remaining calm and focused.

The focus of the activities in this section is on helping children to develop problem-solving strategies. The simplest is an *understand - plan - do - review* sequence. The first step is recognising the nature of the problem. This will entail surveying the information given carefully to see what is known. The second is making a systematic plan to solve the problem. This involves not jumping to hasty conclusions or making wild guesses, and needs time for careful thought. Scientists, for example, take time on this step. The third stage is putting the plan into action. It is important to observe what happens, spot dead ends, and reform one's strategy accordingly. The final step is reviewing what happened.

This section provides a number of problems for children to solve. They are both challenging and fun. It is essential that the children are allowed time to think carefully and plan what to do, and that all answers are considered valuable. It is also important that you model the stages of the problem-solving process, and to help you do this we have provided a number of models in the guidelines.

1 Danny's family

Language focus Vocabulary of family members: *mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister*; possessives 's'; structures to introduce people to one another: *This is my ____. He/She is called ____.*

Thinking skills Recognising clues from pictures where information is missing, memorising information given and using it to solve a problem

Age 7–9

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

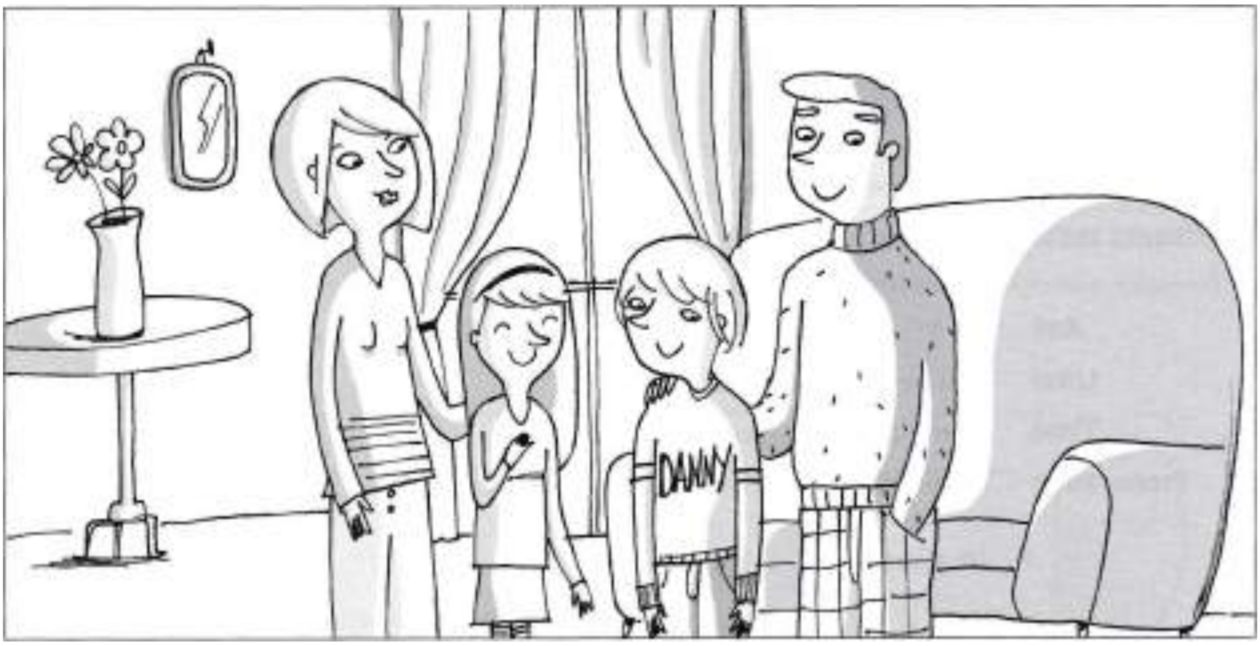
1. Draw a family of mother, father, son, daughter using stick figures. Label them Peter, Jane, John, Susan. Teach the vocabulary *mother, father, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister.*
2. Ask: *Who has a brother? Who has a sister?*
3. Hand out the worksheet and ask the students to fill in the blanks.
4. Ask for answers. Ask them how they know.
5. Now pair them, and ask them to draw their own families on the worksheet and tell their partners in English who the family members are. If necessary model the language: *This is my brother. This is my sister* etc. When they have finished they can repeat this with another student.
6. If they want other family words, write these on the board.

Answers

1. Maria = Danny's *mother*
2. Tim = Sarah's *father*
3. Maria = Tim's *wife*
4. Tim = Maria's *husband*
5. Sarah = Maria's daughter
6. Danny = Tim's son
7. Maria's son = *Danny*
8. Tim's daughter = *Sarah*

Danny's family | Worksheet

1 Here is Danny with his family. Finish the sentences.



Sarah is Danny's sister. Maria is Danny's 1 ____________________. Tim is Sarah's 2 _ _ _ _ _ _ _. Maria is Tim's 3 _ _ _ _ _ _. Tim is Maria's 4 ____________________. 5 ____________________ is Maria's daughter. 6 ____________________ is Tim's son. Maria's son is called 7 _ _ _ _ _ _. Tim's daughter is called 8 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

2 Now draw your family. Tell your partner who they are.

2 Who are they?

Language focus Vocabulary of family members: *mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandmother;* possessive 's

Thinking skills Deducing missing information without picture clues; holding information in memory

Age 8–11

Level Post beginner / A1 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Draw a picture of a family on the board and teach/revise the names of family members: *mother, father, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, granddaughter, grandson*

2 Hand out the worksheet, and ask the students to work out who each person is using the information given. Ask them to complete the sentences.

3 Ask them to compare answers with a neighbour. If there are differences, ask them to explain why they think their answer is correct.

4 Go through the answers together.

5 Ask them to draw a picture of the family in the box provided.

6 Finally, ask them to complete exercise 3, and then go through the answers together.

Answers

1) 1 Jane = Tom's *sister*
2 Tom = Anna's *son*
3 Anna = Tom's *wife*
4 Jane = Tom's *daughter*
5 Tom = Jane's *father*

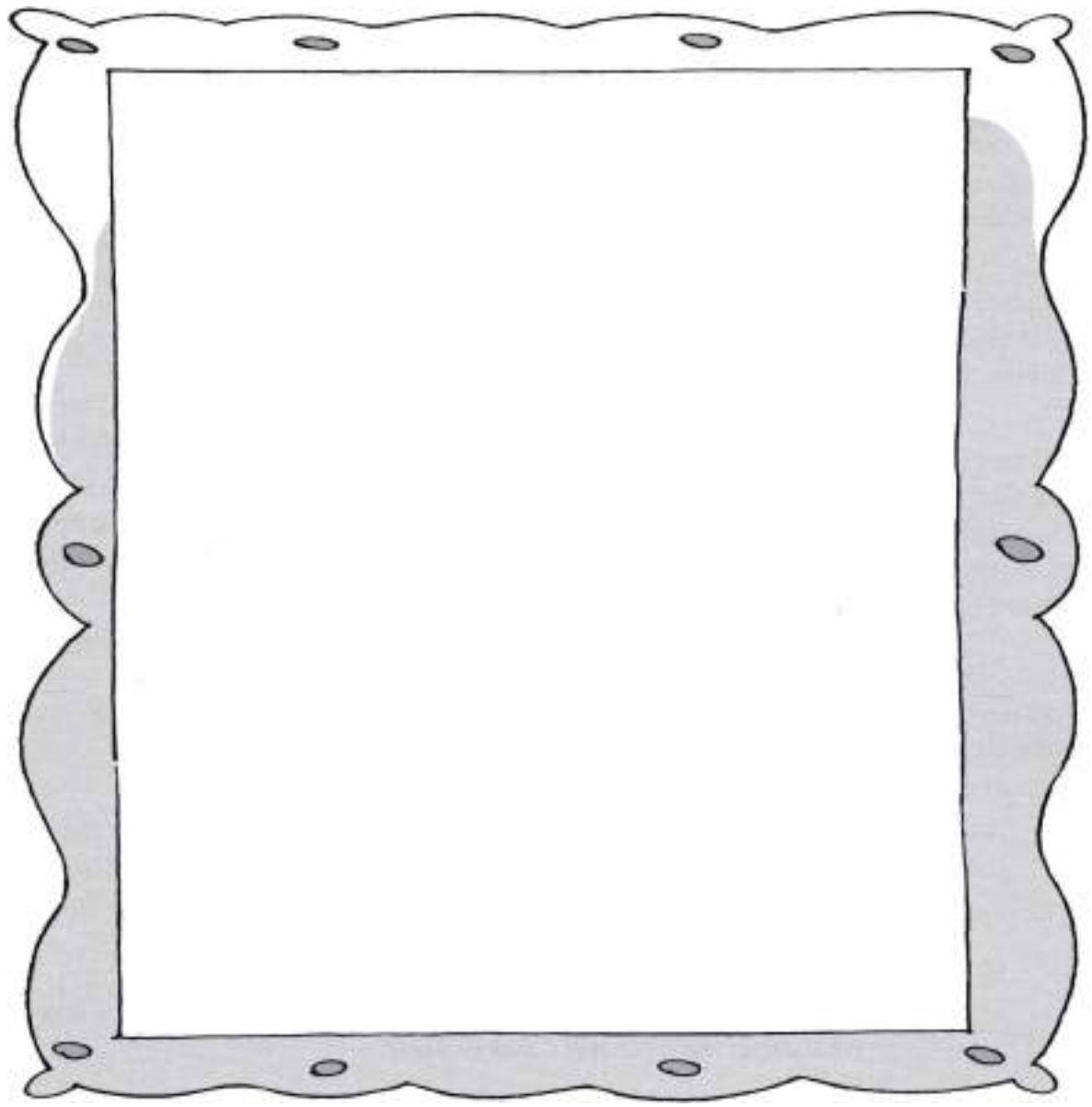
3) The woman is Jane's *grandmother*. Tom is the woman's *grandson*.

Who are they? | Worksheet

1 Tom arrives home. Anna says, 'Here's my husband.' Jane says, 'Hello, Dad.' Jim says, 'Here's my father.' Complete the sentences.

1 Jane is Jim's _____	4 Jane is Tom's _____
2 Jim is Anna's _____	5 Tom is Jim's _____
3 Anna is Tom's _____	

2 Draw a picture of the family. Write their names.



3 A car arrives and a woman gets out. Anna says, 'My mother has arrived.'
The woman is Jane's _____. Jim is the woman's _____.

3 Will it sink or float?

Language focus Making predictions (*will*-future); hypothesising, verifying one's hypotheses, vocabulary for various materials and objects

Thinking skills Thinking about the outcome of a scientific experiment, applying one's knowledge about the world, predicting, hypothesising, testing and checking one's predictions, drawing conclusions

Age 6–8

Level Post-beginner / 'A' upwards

Time 20–30 minutes

Preparation A copy of the worksheet for each student, or if you want to use other materials/objects in the experiment, create your own worksheet to copy.

A transparent (and steady!) bowl of water, and various materials/objects for students to test for sinking or floating, e.g. a sheet of paper, a cork, a coin, a matchstick, a stone, a pencil, an eraser, a balloon, an empty plastic bottle, a rubber ball, Styrofoam, wood etc (see worksheet).

In class

1 Show your students the materials/objects you have prepared. Ask them to name them. Teach and practise the words they do not know yet.

2 Draw on the board a bowl of water. Take two objects (one that would float on water, the other one that would sink), and ask students for their predictions. For example:

T: *OK, now have a look at these two things here. Do you remember what they are called in English?*

S1: *Cork*

T: *Good. A piece of cork. What about this?*

S2: *A coin*

T: *That's right. So we've got a piece of cork and a coin. Look. If I put the cork in the bowl of water* (mimes it using the drawing on the board), *will it sink?* (makes gesture of cork going under) *Or float?* (shows how cork is floating on surface of bowl of water) *Will it sink or float?*

S1: *Float*

T: *It'll float, you think? OK.* (writes *float* next to the word *cork* on the board) *What about the coin? Will it sink or float?*

S1: *Sink!*

S2: *Float!*

T: *Uhuh. <u>You</u> think it'll sink – and <u>you</u> think it'll float. OK. We'll see later who's right.*

3 Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Give them time to think and write down their predictions.

4 Present the bowl of water. Invite individual students to come to the front and take one of the objects/pieces of material. Ask them: *What do you think will happen?* and get them to answer with *It'll sink* or *It'll float*.

5 Then ask them to put their chosen object in the water and see if they are correct.

6 Get the students to look at their worksheet and tick or cross out their predictions. Ask questions such as:

How many of you got this right?
How about you, [Name]? Did you get it right or wrong?

Extensions

1 Encourage the students to think of other materials/objects. Tell them to choose only those objects/materials that can be tested in a bowl of water. Get them to draw pictures of those objects/materials on the back of their worksheets and again make their predictions. These could be checked in a follow-up lesson, as students would need to bring their objects/materials to class.

N.B. You may want to check, however, what the objects are that students have written down, to make sure they are safe and can easily be brought in school (it might not be a good idea, for example, if one student decides to find out if his parents' wedding rings sink or float).

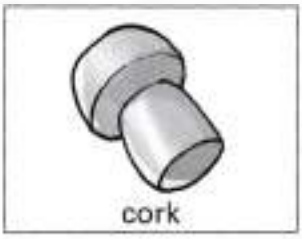
2 In good classes, the activity can be used to introduce or practise past tense. In a follow-up lesson, quickly revise the words for the objects with your students and write them on the board. Then ask questions, e.g., *What happened to the rubber ball?* Write, *It sank / It floated* on the board and get students to repeat the sentences. Repeat your question and elicit the correct answer from the students.

Note When we tried the activity out with a group of children, they found out that the sheet of paper sank after some time. However, one of the boys in that group took a piece of paper and folded it into a boat. He was proud to show to classmates and teacher that in this way the paper didn't sink, but floated.

Will it sink or float? | Worksheet

Write It'll sink or It'll float.

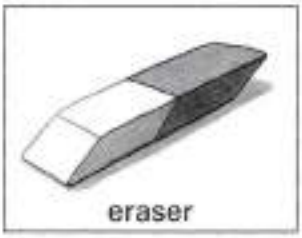
Name: _____


cork

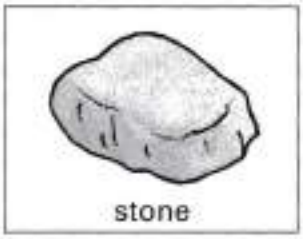
It'll _____


ball

_____


eraser

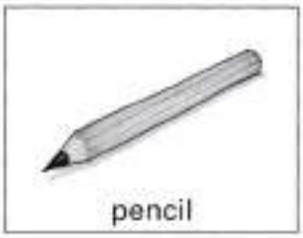
_____


stone

_____


coin

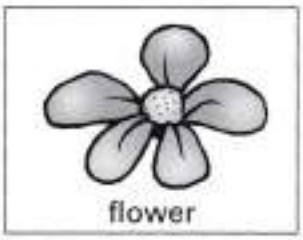
_____


pencil

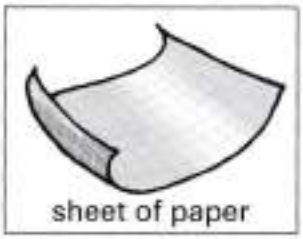
_____


balloon

_____


flower

_____


sheet of paper

_____

_____


empty plastic bottle

_____


wood

_____


matchstick

_____


full plastic bottle

_____

4 Some puzzles

Language focus Vocabulary of family members: *mother, father, son, daughter, husband, wife, grandmother, grandchildren, cousin*; understanding question forms: *Who is ...?, How many does ... have?*; possessive 's

Thinking skills Problem-solving skills: manipulating several pieces of information mentally. NB These puzzles are not easy to solve; they become increasingly complex, and this activity is therefore suitable for older children.

Age 10–12

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Revise the names of family members.

2 Hand out the worksheet. Ask the students to solve as many problems as they can.

3 Ask them to compare answers in small groups. If they disagree they should say why.

4 Finally go through the answers. Question 8 is particularly difficult. Model the problem-solving process.

Answers

1) *3*
2) *6*
3) *Martin*
4) *Mark*
5) *1 mother and 2 sisters*
6) *12*
7) *5*
8) *105 sec*

Extension For more advanced classes, each student could be asked to write a puzzle like the ones on the worksheet on a slip of paper. They hand them in. Pull out puzzles at random, read them out, and ask the class to solve them.

Note Puzzle 8 is a traditional English rhyme.

Some puzzles | Worksheet

Can you solve the puzzles?

1 Ron and Mary are brother and sister. Ron has three brothers. How many brothers does Mary have?

_____

2 Sue has three sisters and two brothers. How many children does Sue's mother have?

_____

3 Amy's mother is Martha's daughter. Who is Amy's grandmother?

_ ___ ___

4 Mark's son is called Paul. Paul's son is George. Who is George's grandfather?

___ ___

5 David's mother has four children – two girls and two boys. How many brothers does David have? How many sisters does he have?

___ _

6 Danny's grandson is called Sam. Danny has one daughter called Liz and no sons. Who is Sam's mother?

_____

7 Mary says, 'I have eight grandchildren.' One of the grandchildren is called Chris. Chris has one brother and one sister. How many cousins does Chris have?

_____

8 John is looking at a photo.
He says:
Brothers and sisters, I have none.
That man's father is my father's son.
Who is the photo of?

5 What do they like?

Language focus Using the present simple to express likes, vocabulary of sports; *has/have got*; ...'s *favourite toy(s) is/are*

Thinking skills Recognising the nature of a problem, exploring information systematically, planning how to solve the problem, comparing, hypothesising, analysing

Age 8–11

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 15–20 minutes

Preparation Prepare a worksheet similar to Worksheets A and B below, or use one or both of them. Make a copy of each worksheet per student.

In class

1 Ask the students to work in pairs. Tell them they are going to solve a puzzle. Tell them to look carefully at all the information given, and remind them that solving a puzzle sometimes requires quite a bit of time, so they should not hurry but think carefully.

2 Hand out a copy of the worksheet. Make sure the students understand the language in the instructions. Then give them enough time to discuss their strategies in pairs and work out the solutions.

3 Ask the students to read out their solutions.

4 If there are students in your class that cannot do the activity, pair them up with someone who has successfully solved the puzzle and ask them to explain how it works. Alternatively, get students to talk about how they solved the puzzle (in pairs or as a whole class activity).

Answers

A

2 Claudia likes *football* and volleyball. 4 Ben *likes swimming*.
3 Simon likes riding his bike and *football*. 5 Max *likes volleyball and swimming*.

B

1 2 Harry has *got* 2 black cats and a hamster.
3 Alex and Emma have got *a tortoise and two dogs*.
1 Olivia *has got a dog*.

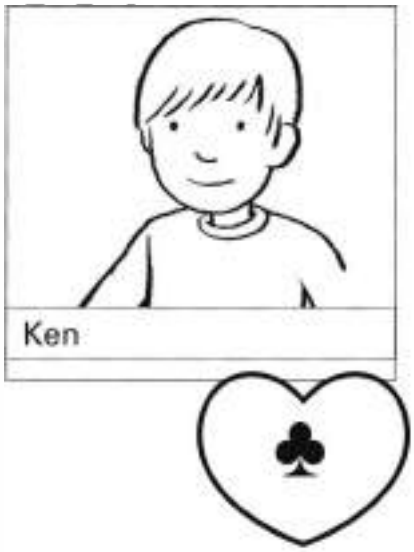
2 3 Charlie's favourite toys are *a computer game and a model plane*.
4 Oliver's *favourite toy is a puzzle*.
5 Jack's *favourite toys are a model plane* and a helicopter.

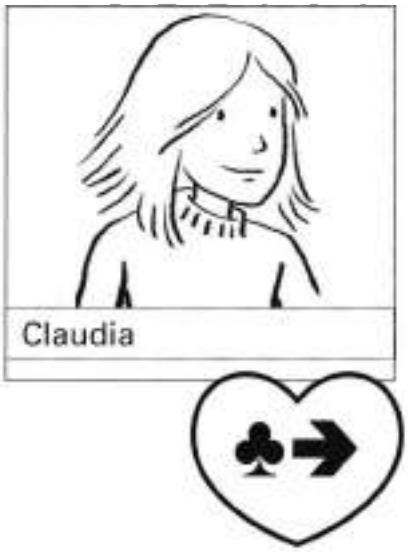
Variation You could use numbers as symbols instead of the icons suggested here.

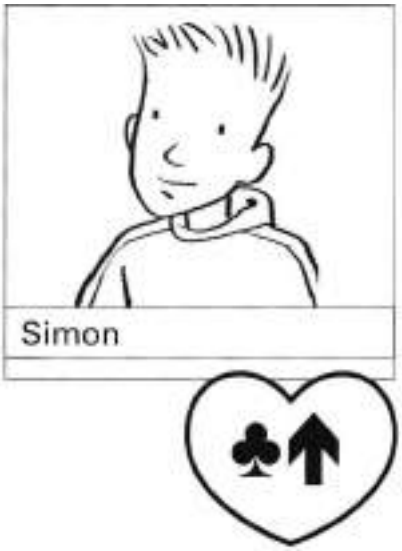
Note Many children love writing secret messages. This activity draws on that sense of fun.

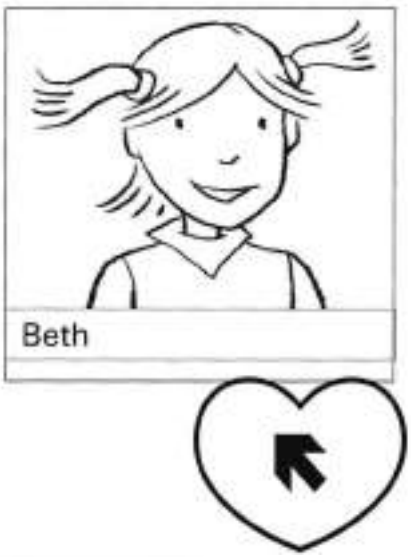
What do they like? | Worksheet A

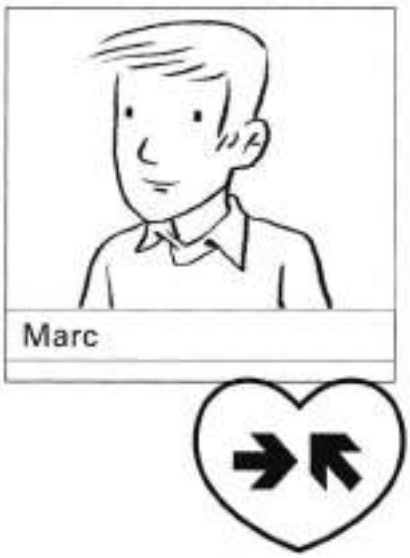
Look at the drawings and the symbols. Then read the sentences. Work out what each symbol means then complete the sentences.


Ken


Claudia


Simon


Beth


Marc

1 Ken likes football.

2 Claudia likes _____ and volleyball.

3 Simon likes riding his bike and _____.

4 Beth _____ swimming.

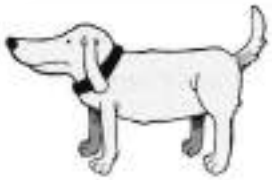
5 Marc _____.

What do they like? | Worksheet B

Look at the drawings and the symbols. Then read the sentences. Complete the sentences about the children.

1 Pets






Olivia ♦


Harry ✿✿✚


Alex ♦✚♦


Amy ✿✚✚


Emma ✚♦♦

1 Amy has got a cat and two hamsters.
2 Harry _____ cats and a hamster.
3 Alex and Emma have got a _____ and _____ .
4 Olivia _____ dog.

2 Favourite toys





Oliver ✖


Lucy ○


Charlie ▼○


Jack ★○


Hannah ▼★

1 Lucy's favourite toy is a model plane.
2 Hannah's favourite toys are a computer game and a helicopter.
3 Charlie's favourite toys are a _____ and _____ .
4 Oliver's _____ .
5 Jack's _____ and a helicopter.

6 How many words?

Language focus Revision of vocabulary; spelling skills

Thinking skills Analysing, moving letters around in one's visual short-term memory; risk taking

Age Any

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Write words in block letters on big sheets of paper; examples:

HOLIDAYS CHOCOLATE INTERNET FOOTBALL

MOBILE PHONE COMPUTER BIRTHDAY HANDBAG

There should be enough space between the letters so students can easily cut out the individual letters of the word. Bring in one pair of scissors per group of 4–5 students.

In class

1 In block letters, write the word ELEPHANT on the board. Ask students to use any number of letters from the word in any order, and try to make as many new words as possible. Give them some help if necessary. Examples:

HEN NET HAT TEN EAT LET ANT PEN

2 Put students in groups of four or five. Give each group one of your words.

3 Tell the students to cut up their word. The students should try and make as many new words as possible out of any number of the letters from their word, used in any order.

4 Whenever a group thinks they've found a new word, they present it to you by standing in a line, with each student holding one letter. If the word is correct, the group can write it down on a piece of paper. If a word they want to present has more letters than there are students in a group they can 'borrow' as many students as they wish from another group.

Variation The task is more difficult if the students don't cut the letters up but have to visualise the words contained in the big word.

7 Invitation letters

Language focus Language of letters, expressing time: *at 1 pm*, expressing date: *on 17th March*

Thinking skills Working out what information the reader needs, and spotting what is missing

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

1. Revise expressions of time and date, e.g. *School starts at 9 am. Christmas is on 25th December.*
2. Hand out the worksheet. Explain that in each letter there's some information missing. They can complete the letters as they wish.
3. Ask for some answers. Accept any reasonable answer.
4. Ask if there is anything in the letters they do not understand.

Extension The students can write invitation letters to each other.

Note The idea for this activity came from Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment programme.

Invitation letters | Worksheet

In each of the letters there is some information missing. Fill in the missing information as you choose.

1

Dear Paula
I would like to invite you to my birthday party at my house on May 15th

_____

I hope you can come.
Maria

2

Dear Kirsty

My Mum can drive me to town at 12.30

_____

to go shopping.
Can you come with me?
Linda

3

Dear Granny

I hope you are well. Could I come and visit you at 12 noon _____

I am looking forward to seeing you.

Anna

4

Dear Jill

Would you like to come to play at my house on 17th May

_____

Janie

5

Dear Tom

How are you? I got a new football for my birthday. Can you come and play football with me at 10am _____

_____

_____

Mike

8 Spot the differences

Language focus Clothing; colours; structures: *In my picture there is ... The boy/girl has ...*; vocabulary: *standing, sitting, walking, carrying, wearing*

Thinking skills Surveying information carefully, giving accurate, clear and relevant information; recognising how much information is needed by a listener; concentrated listening and acting on information, asking clear questions

Age 9–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 30 minutes to complete both pairs of pictures

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each pair of students. Cut each sheet up into the two pairs of separate pictures. Clip the pairs together so there is an A with a matching B, to make it easier to distribute to the pairs of students.

You might like to give each pair of children the same pair of pictures. As an alternative, you could give half the class one set of pictures and half the class the other set.

In class

1 Revise vocabulary for clothing if necessary.

2 Put the students into pairs. Give each student A one picture from the pair, and student B the matching one. Tell them they mustn't let their partner see their picture. They should hide it behind a book.

3 Explain that there are six differences between the pictures. They have to describe their pictures very carefully to each other and identify the differences. Emphasise that they mustn't speak too loudly or the other pairs will hear their answers. They are allowed to ask each other questions.

4 At the end, ask the students to tell you what differences they have found. The others can check whether they are correct.

5 Each pair can then have a go with the other pair of pictures. Ask them to assess whether they were more successful the second time.

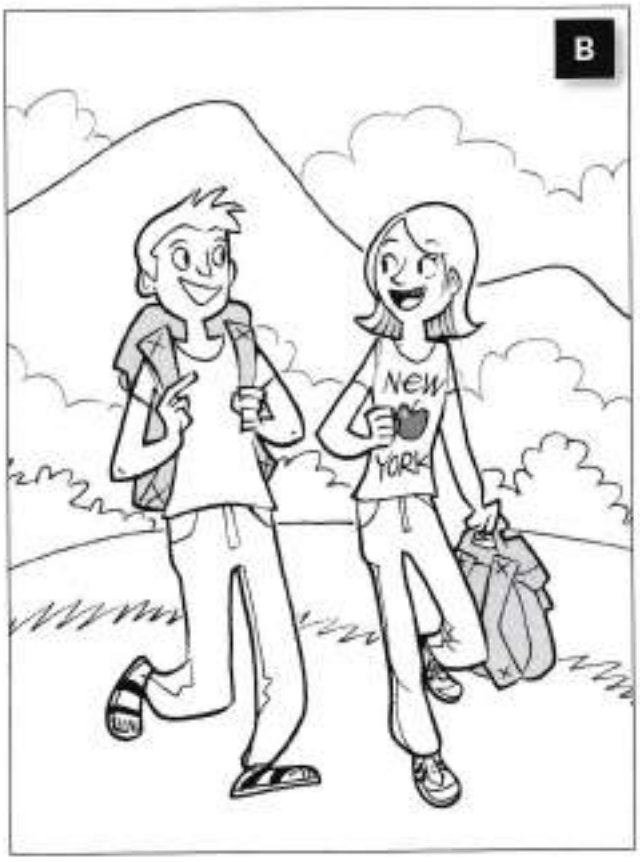
Answers

1 *boy: standing/on bike, girl's cap, black/white*
girl's hair: loose/tied back, boy: gloves/no gloves
boy: t-shirt design/plain, girl: socks/ no socks
2 *girl: sandals/trainers, girl's t-shirt: London/New York*
girl: watch/shoulder bag, boy: trainers/sandals
boy: cap/no cap, girl's hair: black/blond

Spot the differences | Worksheet

1

2



9 The secret code

Language focus Decoding the meaning of a sentence written in code

Thinking skills Logical thinking: deductive thinking, applying rules carefully

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time Lesson 1: 20–30 minutes

Lesson 2: around 30 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each student.

In class: Lesson 1

1 Write the following message on the board and ask the students to guess what it means.

HPPY BRTHDY!

2 Elicit from the students that the message is HAPPY BIRTHDAY! Tell them that the message is in a code. The key is that all vowels are left out. Give them another message to decode, for example:

THS MSSGE S FR CLVR CHLDRN

3 When they've come up with the sentence *This message is for clever children*, ask them to use the same code to write a sentence on a slip of paper.

4 Ask one student to come to the front of the class, quickly check their sentence and correct it if necessary. Then ask the student to write their message on the board using capital letters. Ask the class to decode the message. Carry on like this with several students.

5 Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Tell them to read the story. Make sure students have understood what the story is all about.

6 Give them a few minutes to decode the message. If necessary, scaffold by asking questions that guide the students in their process of working out the code. Examples:

What's the problem?
Why can't they understand the sentence on the banner?
Who do they ask?
Does that person know what to do?
What does he/she say?
What does that mean?
How could you find out what it means?
Are there any clues?

Answer WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS

In class: Lesson 2

1 Discuss with your class what message the people on earth should send to the people in the spaceship.

2 Students can then encode their message, and draw a picture of the next situation in the story, maybe with humans holding a banner with the message they want to send to the people from the spaceship.

The secret code | Worksheet

When the spaceship landed, people on earth were very worried. They didn't want to go near it. They were scared. They stayed away from it and looked at it from far away through their telescopes. They saw a word written on the space ship. It said 'LIMSY'. Nobody knew what it meant. The people went to the biggest library in town. They looked in all the dictionaries. They couldn't find the word Limsy. They checked on the internet too. But they couldn't find it.

For three days and nights, nothing happened. Then on the fourth day, the door of the spaceship opened. Out came some little green men. On their heads, they had little antennae. They climbed down a ladder. When they set foot on the ground, two of the little green men stepped forward. They put up a large banner. There was a message on the banner. It said:

The people of the earth looked at the message on the banner. They didn't understand it. Then they had an idea. They asked the oldest and most intelligent person in town, Professor Wiseman. The professor looked at the banner through her big telescope. She didn't say a word for half an hour. Then she said, 'It's easy. It's a code.'

'A code?' the people said. 'Can you please explain the code to us?'

'Of course,' the professor said. 'Just look at the spacecraft. What does it say?'

'LIMSY,' the people said. 'But that's nonsense!'

'Nonsense?' the professor laughed. 'Nonsense? That's not nonsense! That's the key to the code!'

'What do you mean?' the people said. 'Please tell us!'

'Look!' the professor said. 'If you write out the alphabet, and then you start with the word LIMSY and write the rest of the alphabet except for L-I-M-S-Y, you get the code.'

The people did what Professor Wiseman said. They wrote on a big piece of paper:

Normal	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Code	L	I	M	S	Y	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	N	O	P	Q	R	T	U	V	W	X	Z

They looked at the letters and shook their heads. 'Sorry, Professor. But we still don't understand the message!'

Can you find out what the message on the banner is? Write it here.

10 The ice cream machine

Language focus Describing the functions of a machine and how to use it

Thinking skills Lateral thinking; analytic reasoning; evaluating ideas; selecting the best solution for a problem

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 onwards

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Copy the worksheet for each student

In class

1 Present a problem situation and create a simple drawing on the board that helps to explain the situation. Example:

Imagine it's 10 o'clock at night. I'm driving home from a friend's place. Suddenly my car stops. I've run out of petrol. The next filling station is far away. What could I do?

2 Ask students to make suggestions. Help them with language if necessary and write their suggestions on the board. Examples:

You could walk to the next filling station.
You could phone someone and ask for help.
You could go home by bus.
You could stop another car.
You could wait for someone to help you.
You could sleep in the car.

3 Look the suggestions and ask your class to find advantages and disadvantages for each of them. Examples:

Walking to the nearest filling station.
Advantages: you can do that on your own.
Disadvantage: it might take a long time.

4 When you've gone through all the suggestions with your class, ask them to say which they think is the best suggestion.

5 Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Tell them to look at the picture. Say that Leo has got a problem – ask the students to guess who Leo is and why he has got a problem.

6 Tell them to read what Leo says. Make sure they understand the message.

7 Tell them that they should especially think of and show three things in their picture:

- how one can switch it on and turn it off
- what ingredients one needs and where to put them into the machine
- what kind of ice cream the machine produces and where it comes out

8 Give them 10 minutes to draw their ice cream machines.

9 Put all the ice cream machines on the wall and encourage students to talk about their machine. Help them with language if needed.

10 In the next lesson, tell students that inventors often work on a new invention for a long time. Tell them to take their ice cream machine off the wall. Give them another copy of the same worksheet or a blank sheet of paper and encourage them to improve their machine.

11 Students can then write a few sentences on the worksheets.

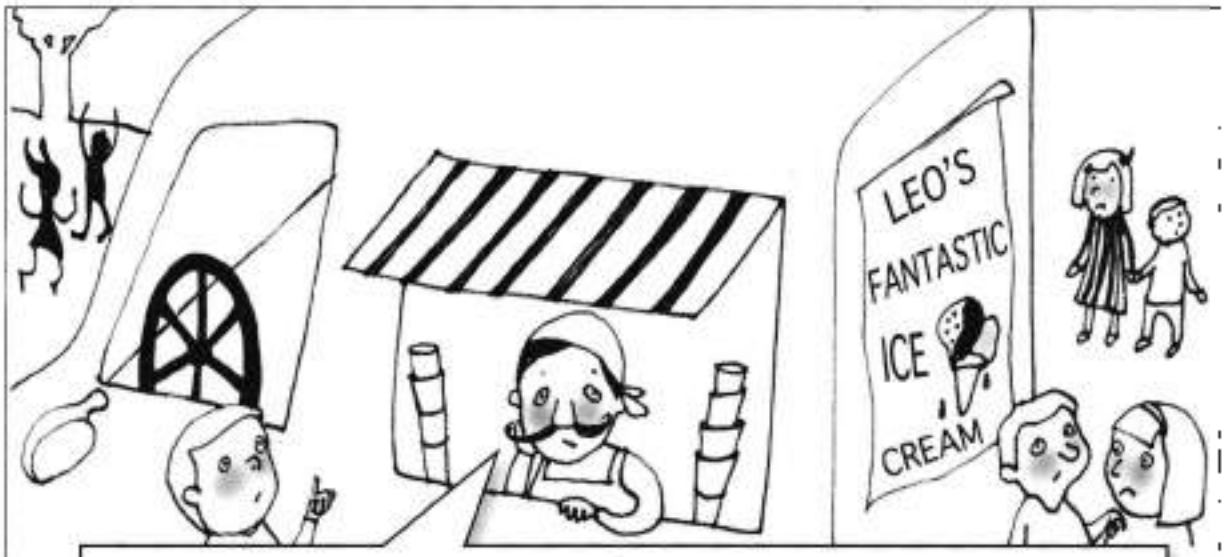
12 Display all the students' creations on the walls of the classroom.

Note The idea for this activity is based on a suggestion that comes from Jane Potahl's *Creative and Critical Thinking (Intermediate)*.

The ice cream machine | Worksheet

1 Look at the picture; can you guess what Leo's problem is?

2 Then read what he says.



Hi! My name's Leo, and I make the best ice cream in the world. But I've got a big problem. Please can you help me?

It's terrible! Today's such a beautiful day. It's hot and sunny, and lots of children want to buy my ice cream. But my machine's broken down. I can't make any ice cream any more! Today's Sunday, so I can't get a mechanic to look at my machine.

I need your help. Can you please design the perfect ice cream machine for me? If you help me, I'll give you a big ice cream every day for a whole year. Please, please, *please* help me!

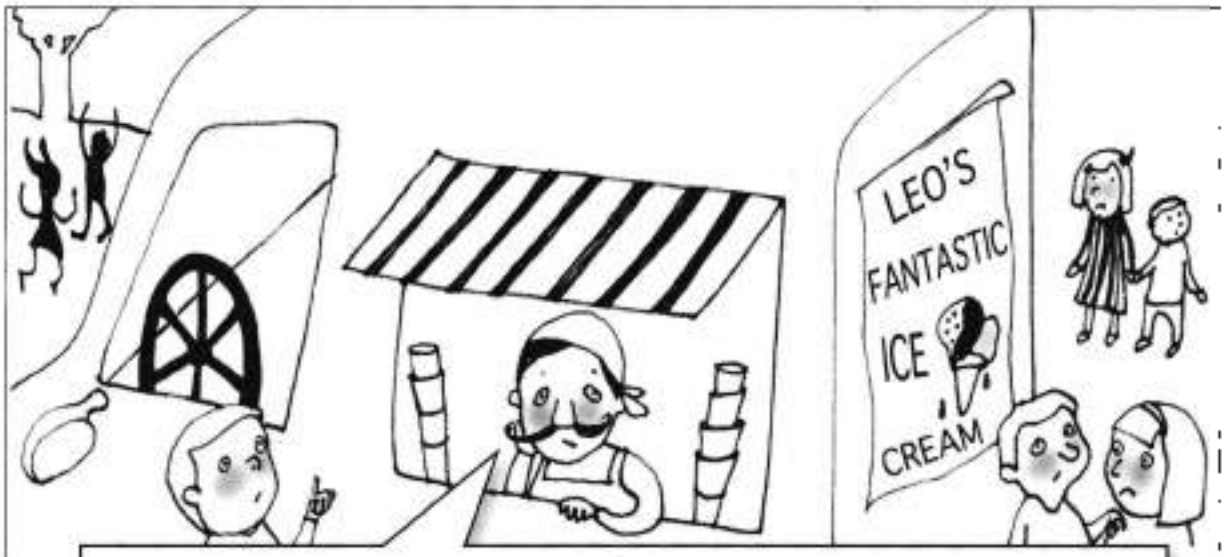
3 Draw the perfect ice cream machine for Leo. Use the questions to help you.

- How can you switch it on?
- How can you turn it off?
- What ingredients do you need to make the perfect ice cream?
- Where do you put them into the machine?
- What kind of ice cream does the machine make?
- Where does it come out?

The ice cream machine | Worksheet

1 Look at the picture; can you guess what Leo's problem is?

2 Then read what he says.



Hi! My name's Leo, and I make the best ice cream in the world. But I've got a big problem. Please can you help me?

It's terrible! Today's such a beautiful day. It's hot and sunny, and lots of children want to buy my ice cream. But my machine's broken down. I can't make any ice cream any more! Today's Sunday, so I can't get a mechanic to look at my machine.

I need your help. Can you please design the perfect ice cream machine for me? If you help me, I'll give you a big ice cream every day for a whole year. Please, please, *please* help me!

3 Draw the perfect ice cream machine for Leo. Use the questions to help you.

- How can you switch it on?
- How can you turn it off?
- What ingredients do you need to make the perfect ice cream?
- Where do you put them into the machine?
- What kind of ice cream does the machine make?
- Where does it come out?

11 The spy

Language focus Various

Thinking skills Surveying information carefully; understanding the nature of a problem; dealing with ambiguity; spotting clues; working out a strategy; checking and reviewing solutions; assessing solutions

Age 10–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1 upwards

Time 15 minutes

Preparation Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student.

In class

1 Hand out the worksheet.

2 Explain to the students that a spy has a package and has to pass it on to another spy. In monolingual classes, you may have to do some of this in the mother tongue. He has a letter in code telling him which man he needs to give the package to. Teach the words *spy* and *code*.

3 Put the students into pairs. Tell them to look carefully at the information in the letter and work out what they have to do; they need to take their time. Don't give any hints, as all the information is there. Tell them to quietly put their hands up if they solve the problem.

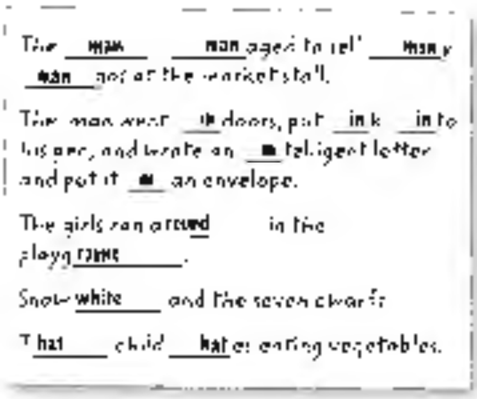
4 Give the pairs some time to think and work out their strategies.

5 If the class gets stuck, don't give answers. You need to model the problem-solving process. Ask: *What do you need to do?* (Work out which man to give the parcel to.) *What can you see?* (Words and lines.) *What goes on the lines?* (Words.) *Are they whole words?* (Parts of words.) *Can you recognise any words?* … *Now, try again.*

6 If they are still stuck, ask: *Can you see any patterns?*

7 Finally, ask for solutions, and ask students to explain to the class how they worked it out.

Answer


The man ___ man aged to sell many man goes at the market stall.

The man went in doors, put in k in to his pen, and wrote an in telligent letter and put it in an envelope.

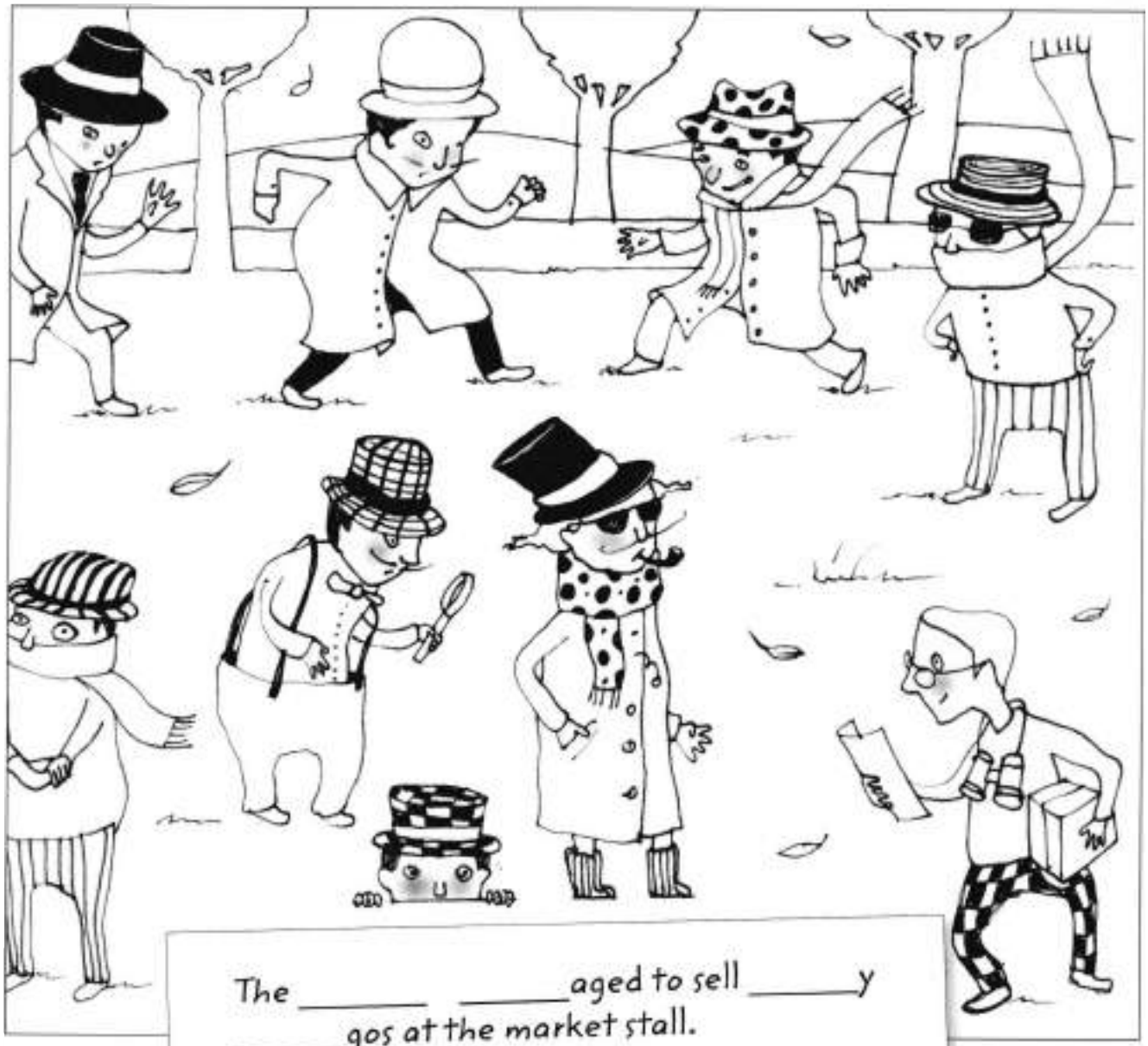
The girls ran around in the playground.

Snow white and the seven dwarfs

That child hates eating vegetables.

The spy | Worksheet

The spy needs to give a parcel to the right man. He has a letter in code telling him which is the right man. Who is it?



The _____ _____aged to sell _____y _____gos at the market stall.

The man went ___doors, put ___k ___to his pen, and wrote an ___telligent letter and put it ___ an envelope.

The girls ran a_____ in the playg_____.

Snow _____ and the seven dwarfs.

T_____ child _____es eating vegetables.

Creative thinking

Much formal education focuses on analytical thinking: following logical arguments to arrive at a correct answer. However it is also important to develop the kind of thinking that focuses on exploring ideas and generating different possibilities, often called creative thinking.

In an anecdote about Walt Disney, one of the most creative minds of human history, an associate of his reportedly said something along the lines of, 'The amazing thing about Walt was that he was not just one person, he was like three people in one. Walt the Dreamer, Walt the Realist, and Walt the Critic!'

This anecdote goes to the very core of the creative process. In order to create something new we need to go into a mental state that activates our imagination. The key to imagining things successfully is a non-judgemental attitude; creating a story in a group for example, does not work if unusual ideas are shot down. In the creative phase, unusual ideas, known as 'out of the box' or 'blue sky' thinking, are required. Creativity often works best when playfulness and humour are part of the process, and an important aspect of creativity is the awareness of ownership: the feeling of having created something new. Therefore, developing students' creativity is also an important way of helping them to become more self-confident.

If an architect is to build a stunning new building, they have to think beyond what anyone has thought of before them. But their idea will be a mere castle in the air if it is not followed up by a realist phase, where the dream is put into a concrete plan of action. Careful structuring and planning – translating the dream into a step-by-step realisation – is what is needed next.

And finally, the dream needs to be evaluated carefully. We need to look for ways of improving the dream, of finding flaws in it, so that it can become solid reality.

1 Make a monster

Language focus Body parts, numbers: *has, is called.*

Thinking skills Thinking creatively with unusual information; synthesising and using new information; creating and using a table

Age 6–8

Level Post-beginner / A1

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Bring in a dice for each pair of students (see note). Prepare a copy of the worksheet for each student

In class

1 Revise body parts. Teach the new words: e.g. *horn, wing, tail.*

2 Tell the students they are going to make monsters. Hand out a worksheet for each student and a dice for each pair to share. Check they understand the words *legs, eyes,* etc. Teach the word *dice* and the phrase *throw the dice*. Explain that they will throw the dice for each body part, e.g. if they have chosen *legs* and the dice shows a 6, they write *6* next to *legs*. Complete a table on the board if necessary as an example, asking individual students to come to the front and throw the dice.

3 When they have thrown the dice seven times they can draw their monster in the box using the information in the table. They can then colour their monster.

4 Finally they complete the text by filling in the blanks.

5 Display their monsters around the room.

Notes When dice have not been available, the authors have successfully used hexagonal pencils: the children write numbers 1 to 6 on each of the six sides of a pencil, which was rolled on a desk.

This activity was inspired by Bellanca & Fogarty's *Blueprints for Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom.*

Make a monster | Worksheet

1 Throw the dice. Fill in the table.

Monster parts	Number
legs	
eyes	
horns	
wings	
hands	
ears	
tails	

2 Draw your monster.

3 Fill in the gaps.

My monster is called _____ It has ___ legs and ____ hands. It has ____ eyes and ____ ears. It has ____wings and ___ horns. It also has ____ tails.

2 I'm a river

Language focus Language fun, metaphorical use of language

Thinking skills Creativity; metaphorical thinking, visualising, dealing with ambiguity; lateral thinking; kinaesthetic skills

Age 10–12

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards

Time 20–30 minutes

Preparation A half-metre piece of string for each pair of students.

In class

1 Introduce words of feeling, e.g. *happy, sad, tired, scared, angry, bored* and *enthusiastic*, and practise them in various ways, for example by getting students to show the respective feeling when you say one of the words.

2 Ask your students to work in pairs. Give each pair a piece of string. Ask partner A to close their eyes. B lays out the piece of string on the desk in front of A so that it expresses one of the feelings.

3 With her eyes closed, A should feel the piece of string in front of her, and try to guess the feeling that B wanted to express.

Is it happy? *No, it isn't.*
Angry? *Yes.*

4 Introduce a number of nouns describing things that can be seen in nature, e.g. *cloud, tree, flower, star, river, mountain.*

5 Ask your students to think of their own feelings right now, and choose one of the nouns on the board. If their feeling is, e.g., happy, and the word they have chosen is, e.g., star, they should draw a picture of a star that expresses happiness. Give them five minutes for this.

6 Ask each student to come to the front of the class, show their picture and say a sentence, e.g.:

I'm a river and I'm bored.

Variation When the students have finished their pictures, collect them all in. Put them on a wall and have the students stand or sit around them in a horseshoe arrangement. If necessary, give them language such as:

Maria, I think you are this cloud. You are feeling happy today.

Notes The idea of using pieces of string to express feelings is based on an exercise by Andrew Wright.

3 Fun with poems

Language focus Listening for details in a poem

Thinking skills Creativity; language play; visualising; dealing with ambiguity; understanding another person's thoughts

Age 10 upwards

Level Post-beginner / A1 upwards depending on the poem you choose

Time 30–40 minutes

Preparation Select a poem, or use one of the two poems below. Note that poem 1 uses far more advanced vocabulary than poem 2.

In class

1 Ask the students to have a blank piece of A4 paper and a pen ready. Tell them that that you are going to read out a poem to them. Tell them roughly what the poem is all about. If necessary, pre-teach key words.

2 Tell them that while they are listening they should make as many drawings evoked by the poem as possible. They should draw all over the page, not in any linear order. Ask them to draw fast and not to worry about what their drawings look like. Tell them not to worry if they are not able to hear or draw everything. They can be imaginative with their ideas, however unusual they may be.

3 Read the text at a very slow, but natural, pace.

4 Tell them that you are going to read the text out again. Ask them to work in pairs. They should sit shoulder to shoulder, each student looking at their own and their partner's drawings at the same time, while you are reading out the text again. Tell them that whenever they recognise a part of the text in their partner's drawings, they should point at it. If the artist agrees with this, they nod their head, if not, they shake their head. Tell them it is important that they point and look at the drawings at the same time.

5 After reading the poem out, you may ask the class what they liked or did not like about the activity.

Note This activity offers various advantages:

- it helps those students who feel they would never make a quick sketch of something to overcome their block and do a quick drawing;
- it simultaneously activates various sensory and intelligence areas;
- it is good listening training;
- it teaches new words;
- it helps them deal with ambiguity, and above all
- it's great fun!

William's Toys

William has a dump truck
And piles of blocks
William has some stamps
And coins
And thirty-seven rocks,
A racing car, a dancing bear,
A lion that can roar
William has a helmet
That his uncle Arthur wore
He has pencils. He has soldiers
He has crayons. He has hats
And nuts and bolts,
A tricycle and seven cowboy hats,
Guns that squirt,
A turtle and a baby guinea pig,
A set of trains, some cars and cranes,
And shovels, small and big,
Paints in pots, and brushes,
A telescope, a clock
That comes apart, a tugboat
And a set to make a dock
With a lighthouse and a line,
Some glasses without glass,
An arrowhead that William found
And William took to class,
Marbles, checkers, packs of cards,
And books, and books, and books,
Shells from summer beaches,
And stones from summer brooks,
Leaves, now dry, a butterfly
Pinned neatly to a board
A motorboat that's broken,
A silver rubber sword
An ambulance that winds and winds
To make the siren's noise
William says he's bored because
He needs some other toys

(Karla Kuskin)

The Animals' Summer Party

The moon is bright,
and there's a party tonight.
The lion and the duck
are dancing rock n'roll
The pig and the snake
are eating lots of cake
The cat is really cool,
She's swimming in the pool.
The hippo and the fox
are wearing purple socks
But the sheep is asleep
'Oh, wow!' says the cow.
'The moon is bright
and there's a party tonight!'

(Pachla/Gerngross)

4 20 ways to use a paperclip

Language focus *-ing (making, mending etc.); you can*

Thinking skills This activity involves thinking creatively

Age Any age

Level Elementary / A2 upwards. More advanced students will use more advanced language and vocabulary.

Time 10 minutes

Preparation Bring a box of paperclips to class. If you want to demonstrate mending glasses you'll need a broken pair of glasses such as sunglasses: the paperclip can attach the handle to the glasses (practise first, to ensure you can do it)

In class

1 Give every student a paperclip. Divide the students into groups of four. Ask them to think of twenty uses for a paperclip. Tell them to use their imagination. Ask for one or two examples to get them started: e.g. *bracelet, mending a pair of glasses, making a hole, cleaning nails, clipping a pen to my belt, making a necklace, making an earring.* Demonstrate some uses if possible.

2 When they have finished, ask groups in turn to tell you a use. Continue getting one idea from each group till they have run out of ideas.

3 You can teach the language: *You can make a … . You can use it to* … to express their ideas. At a lower level you can just accept individual words and phrases.

4 Finally, take a vote on the most creative idea.

Variation This activity can be used with any objects – rubber bands, erasers, pencils, pieces of paper etc.

5 A miming game

Language focus Revising questions, guessing questions and answering them

Thinking skills Creativity, interpersonal skills (especially empathy). The task involves thinking about how to sequence the mime to convey information clearly, recognising the amount of information another person needs, and when more information is needed

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation None

In class

1 Write six questions on the board and check the students' understanding. For example:

a) What's your telephone number?
b) What's your favourite colour?
c) What's your favourite food?
d) What's your favourite pet?
e) What are your hobbies?
f) What are you good at?

2 Tell the class to work in pairs. Ask them to have pen and paper ready. Partner A selects a question from the list, and asks the question through mime only. B answers the question also by means of mime or by 'writing' the answer or 'drawing' a simple picture on A's back with a finger. Advise the students to 'write' in capital letters.

3 When the first question has been answered, A makes a note (using pen and paper this time) of the question they asked and the answer they believe they got, while B makes a note of what they believe the question was and of the answer they gave.

4 When each pair of students have completed all the questions and answers (and they have asked and answered three each), they compare notes.

Variation This activity can be used with all kinds of other questions. Examples:

- *Who's your favourite friend?*
- *How old are you?*
- *When's your birthday?*
- *Where's your favourite singer from?*

Note Kinaesthetic children often find it hard to see objects in their mind's eye. This exercise is ideal for them because when someone writes or draws something on their back, they can more easily bridge the gap between their strong kinaesthetic awareness and their less developed visual one. Regular use of such exercises can therefore contribute significantly to the child's cognitive development.

6 What are they like?

Language focus Describing someone's physical appearance; imitating someone else's pronunciation/intonation

Thinking skills Visualising a person; using clues to hypothesise or make deductions, in this case using oral clues to make visual hypotheses

Age 11–12

Level Elementary / A2 upwards

Time 15–20 minutes

Preparation Select a listening dialogue, e.g. from the course book you are using

In class

1 As a warm-up, ask the students if they can imitate someone whose mother tongue is English saying a word or a sentence in their own language. You could also ask them to think of a famous English speaking person, a real character or a fictitious one, e.g. from a cartoon the students know, and what it would sound like if this person said a word or a sentence in the students' mother tongue.

2 Play your dialogue twice. If necessary, work on the language so that the students understand it.

3 If necessary, introduce language to describe someone's physical appearance, e.g.:

	is	*tall* *short* *young* *old*
I think he/she ..	*has got*	*long black/short fair/etc./ hair.* *a big/small nose* *a small/wide mouth.* *small/big ears.* *green/brown/etc. eyes.*
	smiles a lot *looks grumpy.* etc	

4 Tell the students that you are going to ask them to close their eyes and imagine that they can see the speakers while they are listening. Write down the names of the speakers on the board, and ask students to tell you what they think each of the people looks like.

5 Ask the students to listen again with their eyes closed and select one of the speakers. They should then imitate what they believe the body posture of this person is, and say a word or a sentence as if they were the other person. Play the tape, and give them some time to practise for themselves before you ask them to say the words/sentences in front of the whole class.

6 You may want to extend the activity and get two students to act out the dialogue, each in the role of their imagined speaker. Give them one or two minutes to prepare for this and ask them to look at the printed dialogue in their course book – but if the course book gives illustrations of the characters, it may be a better idea to write the dialogue on the board so that the students can more easily access their own imagination.

Notes This activity works best if the students do not have an existing mental image of the character they are supposed to identify with. It is best used with characters that are not represented through pictures in the course book.

This activity is based on an idea from: Mario Rinvolucri

7 That's a good idea because ...

Language focus Talking about ability; giving reasons to explain why something is a great idea

Thinking skills Appreciating somebody else's ideas; listening attentively; creativity; reasoning; co-operative thinking skills

Age 10–12

Level Elementary / A2 onwards

Time 20–30 minutes

Preparation None

In class

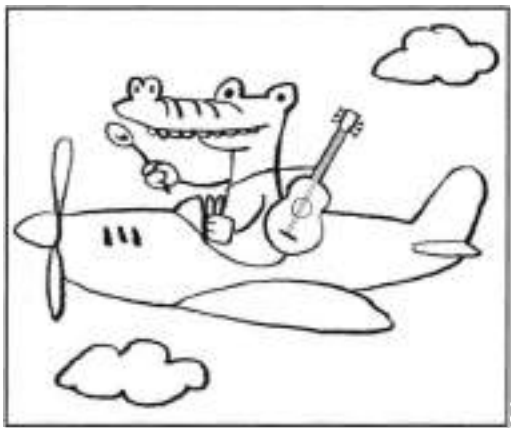
1 Give students a few examples of great things humans can do, e.g. *design houses, fly to the moon, cook delicious food* etc. Ask students to think of more examples. Write the students' suggestions on the board. Make sure the list contains at least 10–15 examples, such as:

Humans can

play a musical instrument
program a computer
fly a helicopter
tell jokes
tell stories
drive a car
cook spaghetti

2 Ask students to brainstorm a list of animals. Write these animals on the board.

3 Tell students each to pick one of the animals as their best friend and to imagine that this animal has human abilities. Ask them to select three of the abilities on the board and do a drawing that shows the animal doing them.



This is my best friend.
His name's Croc Croc.
He can fly a plane.
He can play the guitar.
He can cook spaghetti.

4 Ask one student to come in front and present what their 'best friend' can do. When they mention the first thing their friend can do, say why this is a good idea, and invite the students to come up with their own suggestions as to why this is a good idea, as well. It is important that you scaffold the students' language as we can see in the example here:

S1: *This is Croc Croc.*
He's my best friend.
He can fly a plane.

T: *That's a good idea. It's a good idea because you can go with him and see the world.*

(To the class) *Let's find more reasons why this is a good idea.* (Giving another example) *That's a good idea because he can fly to Africa and see his family. What else?*

S2: *That's a good idea because holiday with Croc Croc.*

T: *That's right. Anna can go on holiday with him.*

T: *What else?*

S3: *That's a good idea, he can flying you to school.*

T: *He can fly Anna to school. Imagine that! Croc Croc and Anna landing their plane in front of the school every morning!*

5 Carry on like this with the other two abilities that your student's 'best friend' has. Then ask other students to come to the front of the class and do their presentations.

Extension When your students are familiar with the language needed, you can ask them to continue making 'That's a good idea' comments, working in groups.

Notes The ability to accept ideas that others have come up and expressing one's appreciation of someone else's ideas is an important social skill.

This activity is based on an idea by Bellanca and Fogarty's *Blueprints for Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom*.

8 What would happen if ... ?

Language This is a challenging task, requiring a pre-intermediate language level. It is a good way to use the *would* form in a meaningful situation.

Structures: *What would happen if ...?, would*, comparatives (e.g. *happier, fitter*)

Thinking skills Thinking creatively, thinking about cause and effect; imagining possible consequences; explaining solutions

Age 11–12

Level Pre-intermediate / B1 upwards

Time This activity could take one or two lessons.

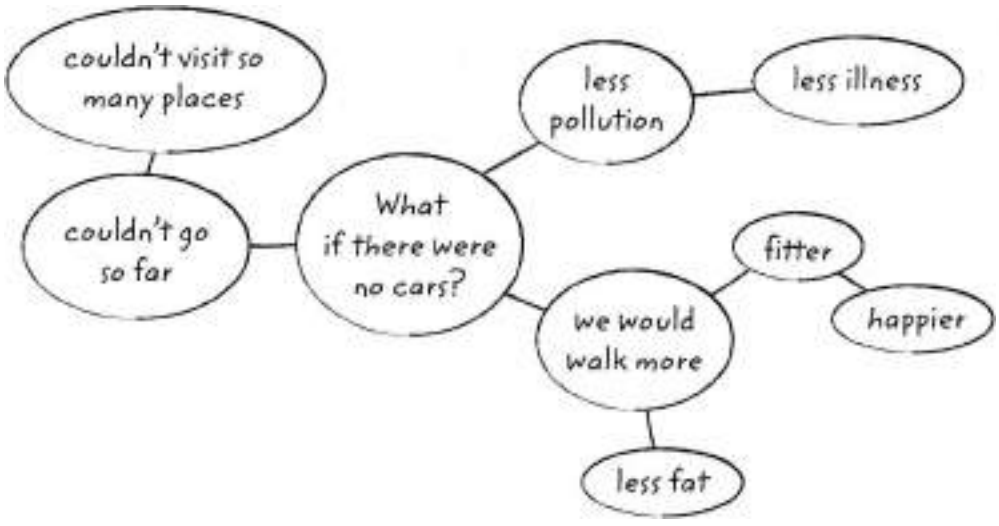
Preparation For each student, prepare a copy of the worksheet, and have a supply of large sheets of paper for step 4.

In class

1 Tell the class that they are going to imagine the world as a different place.

2 Write *What would happen if there were no cars?* in a circle on the board.

3 Ask the class for suggestions and build up a mind map using their suggestions. An example of a partially completed map is shown, but it is important to use the students' ideas, however fanciful.



Ask for their feelings – *How would you feel?* – and add their answers to the map.

4 Hand out the worksheet, and tell them they will make mind maps in pairs. Ask each pair to choose one *What if* question from the worksheet, and complete the mind map. They could pick up a large piece of paper from you to complete it on, so the map can expand. There is no need for complete sentences: notes are appropriate for mind maps.

5 Ask some of the pairs to present their mind maps to the class.

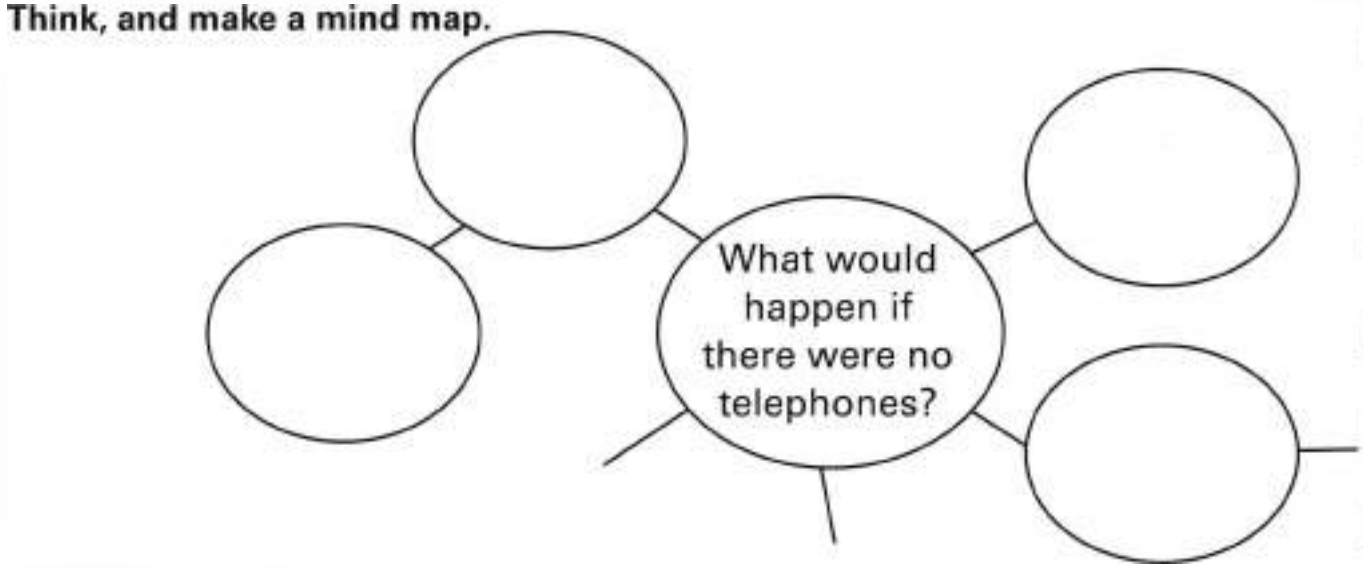
6 Display the mind maps around the room.

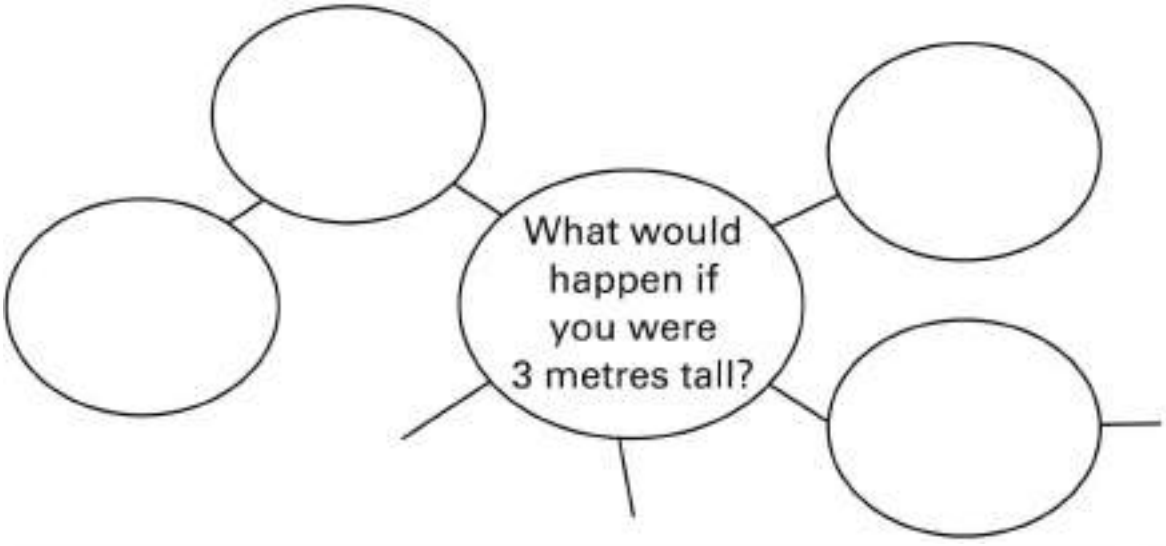
7 They could work on one of the other mind maps from the worksheet in another lesson.

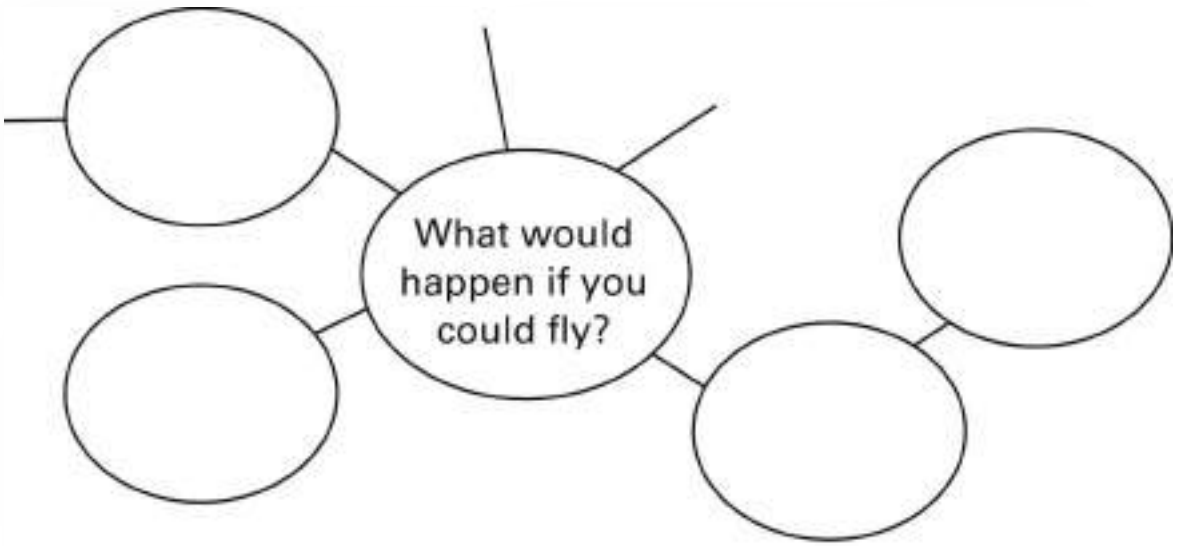
Variation Ask the class for suggestions for other *What if* questions and write them on the board. For example, *What if animals could talk?* Now ask them to work in pairs, choose their own *What if?* question and create their own mind map together.

What would happen if ... ? | Worksheet

Think, and make a mind map.







CAMBRIDGE

Herbert
Puchta

Marion
Williams

Teaching Young Learners to Think offers 80 lessons with photocopiable worksheets devised to develop key thinking and language skills in young children.

A selection of activities, organised in categories from basic to higher-order thinking skills, engage young learners in meaningful use of language while enhancing cognitive abilities through real-life thinking tasks.

All tasks carefully match both the cognitive and language level of the students and will create hours of fun and motivation for both teachers and learners.

Ideal for use in ELT classes, bilingual programmes and CLIL-based curricula.

ISBN 978-1-107-63852-5

www.helblinglanguages.com