



VOLUNTEERING WITH ESL LEARNERS

T U T O R T I P S

Since 2005, VESL (the Volunteer ESL Tutor Training Project) has supported the professional development of volunteer ELL tutors throughout the city of Calgary. The project is funded by [Calgary Learns](#) and is the collaborative effort of three Calgary ELL service providers with long standing volunteer programs: Bow Valley College, the Calgary Public Library, and the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society.

The tutor tips in this document were created by English language learning instructors who have facilitated previous VESL workshops.

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Activities

Canadian Culture Activity

This framework may be used to create an activity to help learners understand one of our national symbols – the beaver. This activity is aimed at learners who may still be in the ethnocentric stages of intercultural sensitivity and who are at an intermediate to advanced level.

Step 1

Brainstorm everything you know about the beaver. Consider at least the following while brainstorming:

- Characteristics of the animal
- How the characteristics represent Canadian values
- Role of the beaver in Canadian history
- Where the symbol of the beaver is used
- When and how the beaver became Canada's national symbol

Step 2

Do some research, so you are prepared to answer questions. This will also help you come up with a suitable list of websites in case you need to provide some suggestions to your learners.

Step 3

Divide your learners into groups. Give each group some points to research. You can choose to divide the points equally, or according to the learners' ability (we rarely have an entirely homogenous group of learners). Give them a couple of days to do their research. Inform them that they will eventually use the information to make a poster and present it to the rest of the class.

Step 4

Have each group make a poster to illustrate their research. Give learners sufficient class time over a couple of days to come together in their groups to share the information they have gleaned, and to plan and make their posters. You may need to supply the necessary materials.

Alternatively, they could create the poster using software such as Microsoft Publisher and have it printed. This will also help develop their computer skills.

Step 5

Have learners display their posters and present the information to their classmates, or to another class.

Step 6

Have learners research a symbol that is important in their culture, prepare a poster, and present the information to the rest of the class. Provide the learners with a list of points (refer to Step 1).

Giving Advice

Insert Picture

Dear Ann Flanders.....

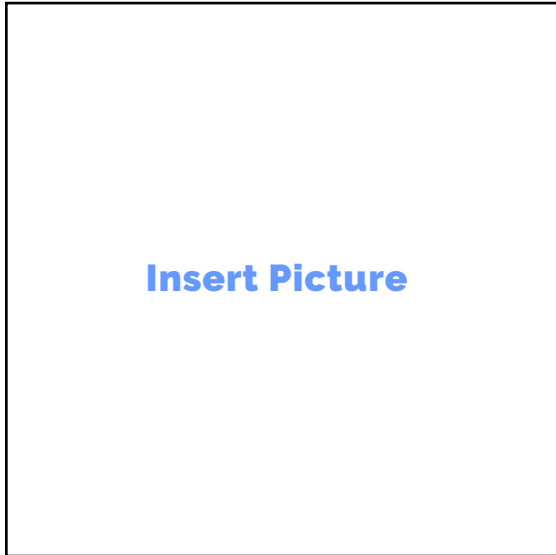
Dear Ann,

I will be arriving in Calgary in just a few weeks. I can't wait to see old friends and start my classes at Bow Valley College. Can you tell me the rules about living in Canada? What about driving a car - is a license necessary? Will I have to pay GST when I shop? I don't know much about the laws in Canada. Can you help me?

Signed,
Excited to be here!

-
- Inform the writer of at least three necessities of living in Canada.
 - When you have organized your ideas - answer the letter.

Giving Advice



Dear Ann Flanders.....

Dear Ann,

I am an 18 year old student who will be graduating from high school very soon.

I want to find a job, but I don't feel ready. I don't know what to do to prepare for a job interview. I know my hair is too long and I wear jeans all the time. Also, I'm often late for class. I need some advice on how to better prepare for meeting someone for an interview. Help!

Signed,

A confused teenager

-
- Offer 3-4 pieces of advice. Use the clues in the letter to guide you.
 - When you have organized your ideas, answer the letter.

Idiom Jigsaw Activities

What is a “Jigsaw” activity?

Much like a jigsaw puzzle, a jigsaw activity breaks up one task into multiple parts. For example, you may have a reading passage that is 4 paragraphs long. Instead of each student reading the entire passage, break the passage up into paragraphs for different learners (IE: Student 1 will read Paragraph 1, Student 2 will read Paragraph 2, and so on). Once the learners have read the paragraph that they are responsible for, they will get into a larger group with learners from each paragraph and present their section.

What are the benefits of using Jigsaws?

This is a great way to hold learners accountable. They must fully understand their paragraph/content because they are responsible for teaching it to others. Also, learners must pay attention to when others are speaking because they will be giving new information that is needed to understand the reading passage completely.

How can I use Jigsaws with idioms?

- Divide your learners into small groups (3-5 in each group).
- For a “Colours” theme, you can give each group a different idiom. For example, Group 1 receives “seeing red,” Group 2 receives “black and blue,” and Group 3 receives “tickled pink.”
- In each “expert” group, learners must discuss the idiom they have been given and talk about its meaning. They can also draw a representation of the idiom.
- Now, divide your groups again so that each group contains one learner from the previous Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3.
- The learner who discussed “seeing red” will present his/her idiom, discuss the meaning, and show their image. The rest of the group will listen to the presenter, write notes, and ask questions. Together they can now come up with situations of when the idiom would be used, sentences, etc. Each learner takes a turn presenting their idiom.

How can this activity be altered for different levels?

- For basic learners, choose idioms that are appropriate for the learner with not a lot of new vocabulary. Don’t choose too many idioms to be presented on one day. 3-5 idioms should be plenty for one session.
- For intermediate and advanced learners, you may choose to do a larger number of idioms in each group. Learners can work together or individually to first think about the meaning of the idiom and how they would use it, and then get together with the same idiom group to discuss the meaning. For advanced learners, you may also add a research component to this activity.

Tips and Suggestions

Make sure that the learners have a good understanding of their idioms and/or passage before they present it to other learners. This can be accomplished in a number of ways:

- Have your learners from the same idiom groups meet together first (in an “expert group” as described above) to discuss their idioms and meanings before they present to other learners.
- Alternatively, you can have learners complete a handout or write down the meaning for you, the tutor, to check before they begin presenting to other learners.
- Walk around and listen to learners when they are presenting to catch any errors in meaning that you find.
- Always finish your session by reviewing the idioms in a large group setting. This will provide deeper meaning for learners as you are often more able to describe the idioms in a clear way, so you may be able to catch any misunderstandings.

In the House

Objective: To practice the use of prepositions with typical Canadian-style furniture and rooms in a house.

Vocabulary

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| sofa | coffee table | lamp | plant |
| armchair | rug | telephone | cabinet |
| television | bookshelf | painting | |

Prepositions

| | | | |
|---------|-------|------------------|-------|
| in | on | beside (next to) | above |
| between | under | over | below |
| | | painting | |

Materials

colourful advertising flyers, scissors, a large table

Procedure:

The tutor can bring in the colourful fliers or ask the student(s) to collect & bring to class. After a discussion of rooms in a house, concentrate on one room in the house. Then cut out all the pictures of furniture for that room. Repeat the words & decide if you want the student(s) to write as well.

1. Sit at the table with your learner(s).
2. Imagine that the space in front of you on the table is a room and the paper cut outs are “furniture” pieces that you are arranging in the room.
3. Take one piece of “furniture” and place it in your room. Using the prepositions noted above, tell the learner where to place the other ‘pieces’ of furniture.
4. Repeat the process. This time, the learner will give you directions.

Other Options

When studying the topic of Neighbourhood practice prepositions of location by designing a ‘typical’ community in Calgary on a large piece of flip chart paper. If you and/or the student(s) are creative, draw the stores and places on pieces of ‘coloured’ paper that would be found in an area of a few blocks. If not, gather more fliers from the daily newspaper and cut-out. Give directions and have the student(s) move and/or find the places that you are requesting. The places can be affixed and the ‘community map’ used for an exercise to practice “Giving Directions”. The paper can be rolled up or attached to the wall.

This is a very flexible idea and one that can provoke loads of dialogue!

Making Sentences for Authentic Activities

You can help your students to see how they can use the grammar you've been learning by giving them authentic activities for practice. One authentic situation that unfortunately everyone must go through is visiting the doctor.

In our workshop we discussed the importance of many production activities for helping learners remember the concepts. After you've completed the warm up, you can present the new grammar and vocabulary. In the case of the doctor's office, you may choose some new vocabulary words related to health problems or ailments. **As a rule, don't introduce too much new grammar and vocabulary in one lesson, as it's difficult for the learner to absorb.** You could use the following activities more than once, applying different concepts each time. For example, one day you could address new vocabulary, and at the next lesson you could introduce the new grammar and review the new vocabulary from last time. On both days, you can use the same free production activities.

Activity #1: He Has/I Have (Beginner/Intermediate)

Get your beginner learners making sentences with this activity.

- Have learners sit in a circle.
- One person starts by saying a **simple** sentence about their ailment.
- The next person in the circle reiterates what the last person said, and then describes their own situation.
- It continues around and around the circle until all ideas are exhausted.
- For example:
 - Person #1: I **have** a sore throat.
 - Person #2: He **has** a sore throat. I **don't have** a sore throat. I **have** a cold.
 - Person #3: She **has** a cold. I **don't** have a cold but I do **have** a fever.

They can practice irregular verbs (verbs that don't end in -ed in the past) in sentences. You can also see here that Person #3 created a **compound** sentence for added complexity.

Activity #2: Doctor and Patient Role Play (Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced)

Can you get more authentic than this? Perhaps if you wear a lab coat and a stethoscope! Have learners role play doctor and patient to practice new vocabulary and grammar. Get your beginner learners making sentences with this activity

- Provide the “patient” with a stack of cards with ailments, like “cough” or “stomach ache” and provide the “doctor” with a list of remedies for these ailments.
- The patient will draw one card with an ailment from the pile, and when they describe their problem the doctor will respond with a remedy.
- Provide both the “doctor” and the “patient” with a simple dialogue like the one below for them to insert their own simple, compound, or complex sentences.

Example:

Doctor: Now, what seems to be the problem?

Patient: (Simple) *I have a cough. I cough many times every day.* (Compound) *I have a cough. My cough is not bad during the day, but at night it's very bad. I can't sleep.*

(Complex) *I have a bad cough. When I try to sleep, I cough a lot. Because I cough so much, I cannot sleep.*

Doctor: And how long have you had these symptoms?

Patient: *About one week.*

Doctor: Are you taking any medications?

Patient: *Just some Tylenol.*

Doctor (referring to their remedy sheet): Okay, I'm going to prescribe some antibiotics for you. Take one in the morning and one at night, and get lots of rest.

Remind your learners that this is only for practice and by no means sound medical advice! This activity was adapted from the following website: http://bogglesworldesl.com/doctor_roleplay.htm

At <http://bogglesworldesl.com/> you can find many other activities that practice authentic activities, such as giving directions or making phone conversations.

Many times these activities will need to be simplified or adapted so that you do not overwhelm your learners with too many new vocabulary words or grammar concepts.

Map Reading & Directions

**Note to volunteer tutors: the activities below would probably take a number of hours to complete and could be split up over several sessions.*

Outcomes: to read directions, to write directions, to use maps

Following some vocabulary warm up activities: *How do we get from the lobby to class? How do we get from our class to the library?* etc. distribute the following directions and three highlighters to learners: *(Please note: these directions can be adapted for any neighbourhood/place).*

Follow these directions. Where will you end up?

- Leave City Hall and exit onto 2nd Street
- Turn left and continue to the corner
- Turn left at the corner, and continue for 2 blocks
- Turn left and continue to the intersection with 8th Avenue
- Cross the road and continue West along 8th Avenue
- Keep walking until you see HSBC on the other side of the road
- Turn left and walk along until you reach 9th Avenue
- Turn left
- Follow 9th Avenue until you are standing in front of the Provincial Hotel
- Turn right. You are now facing your destination!

Green highlighter = verbs

Yellow highlighter = directional vocabulary

Blue highlighter = unknown vocabulary

In partners, learners are to highlight all of the verbs, the directional vocabulary and any vocabulary that is unfamiliar to them.

Whole Group Discussion

What are the unknown words? What are the directional words? What other directional words do we know? What are the verbs? What is the same about all of the verbs? Their endings?

Put two pairs of learners together to form groups of 4. Distribute a city map. Locate the building in which they study on the map. Then, as a group, practice following the directions and using the map. *Where do we end up?*

Model standing with your back to the building and turning left and right. All groups to agree on the final destination. *Can they envisage what is there?*

Hit the streets! In their groups, and supported by the volunteer, learners are to take the written directions and the map and determine if their map reading prediction was correct.

Follow up

Learners to practice and rehearse using imperative verbs by writing their own directions and setting navigational challenges for other learners in the class. Activity could be followed by the use of imperative verbs in street signs, instructions, recipes etc.

Newspaper Activities

Here are some suggestions that can be used with **any** issue of a newspaper with intermediate and advanced learners.

1. Small group activity: writing and answering questions

- Divide learners into small groups and ask each group to choose a different story. Each group reads & discusses the story together.
- Give each person in each group a small piece of paper on which to write a question. (Each group should have a different color.)
- Learners write their questions and trade them with another group's questions. They read the story, write the answers to the questions and hand them back.

2. Small group activity: summarizing

- Select several stories that you want the learners to read and summarize. Divide the learners into groups. Each person reads a different story and then tells the others in the group what the story was about.

3. Create a headline

- Cut out stories without their headlines. Ask learners to read the stories and write headlines for them. Compare their headlines with the ones that are in the newspaper.

4. Write the caption

- Cut out some of the pictures from the newspaper without any captions.
- Give learners the pictures. Ask them to write their own caption for each picture. Compare with the actual captions.

5. Interview activity

- Learners write these two questions and answer them for themselves (after reading the newspaper). "What story did you like?" "Why did you like it?"
- Learners ask their classmates the same questions and write their answers. (e.g.: "Rosa liked the story about sports. She liked it because she likes to play soccer.")

6. Jigsaw reading for newspaper stories

Choose a story that can be divided into three or four parts. Or choose three or four different stories.

The learners are divided into small groups, called EXPERT groups. Each expert group is given one part of the story to read and learn.

The learners are then re-divided into HOME groups. Each home group has representatives from each of the expert groups. Each member of the group now teaches and shares his/her part of the story with the rest of the home group. The time given to “sharing” depends on the difficulty and length of the material. Learners must not show their part of the text, but must present it orally.

Nine Squares: An ESL Literacy Activity

Nine Squares is aimed at developing ESL literacy learners' sight words and phonics. This activity is easy to do with any planned reading activity.

Here's how this activity was used after reading the story, Food From Home, a free, printable book:

http://www.esl-literacy.com/readers/phase1/developing/food_from_home.pdf

Both the book and the attached activity are aimed at ESL literacy learners.

Here are the instructions for Nine Squares:

- After reading the story three or four times, the teacher hands out the worksheet and reads over the words in the word bank two or three times.
- Next, the teacher reads the words and learners copy them into the appropriate box. For instance, the teacher says, "Number 1: money" and continues in this way until the nine boxes are completed, each with a word from the word bank.
- Once the grid is filled-in, it is time to reinforce the learners' reading of these words. The teacher says one of the words and the learners shout out what number it is.
- Then it can be done in the opposite order, where the teacher says a number and the learners say the word. Random order forces learners to read the words rather than just memorize the order.
- After doing this a few times over, learners work in pairs and practice in pairs where one learner is the "teacher" and says a number and the other learner is the student and has to read the words.
- Finally, the teacher and class should read the story again together. Learners can find words from the word bank and circle them in their story as a final activity.

This activity provides the opportunity for learners to work with the same words multiple in isolation and in context. This method is called whole-part- whole because it starts with the whole (book), examines the parts (nine words with three different first sounds) and then goes back to the whole (book).

Food From Home

| | | | | |
|------|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| to | Mary | buys | burger | money |
| milk | Tuesday | brings | tea | |

| | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. | 9. |

Shopping Habits - Food and Shopping

Instructions

Part 1: In-class Survey

Students need to have a good command of the present tense before using this activity. Go over the present tense the lesson before.

1. Elicit/ pre-teach the following questions and answers:

- a. Where do you usually go to do your shopping?
- b. Who do you go with?
- c. How long are you there for?
- d. When do you usually go?
- e. How often do you go there?
- f. How do you go there?
- g. Why do you go there?
- h. What do you usually buy?

2. Give the handout.

Part 2: Writing

Do the writing in class or for homework.

Part 1: Speaking: In-class Surveys

| Name | St. | St. | St. |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| where/shopping | | | |
| who/with | | | |
| how long/there | | | |
| when/go | | | |
| how often/go | | | |
| how/go | | | |
| why/go | | | |
| what/buy | | | |



| Name | St. | St. | St. |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| where/shopping | | | |
| who/with | | | |
| how long/there | | | |
| when/go | | | |
| how often/go | | | |
| how/go | | | |
| why/go | | | |
| what/buy | | | |



Talking about Money

Instructions and Ideas

This is a speaking warm-up activity about prices. It can be done in groups or one to one. The most important point to remember is that the prices should be in the same currency, so that you are comparing apples to apples and not apples to watermelons.

There are several currency converters online that you can use:

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

This activity is a good starting point for other discussions:

What is the average salary in your country?

How often do you shop?

Where is the best place to buy _____?

Would you download music illegally?

Would you download a movie illegally?

and so on

Price Compare

How much is a chocolate bar in your first country?

How much is a chocolate bar in Canada?

| | Your First Country | Canada |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| a DVD movie | | |
| a music CD | | |
| a camera | | |
| a TV | | |
| a new car | | |
| a house | | |
| university tuition per year | | |
| a litre of milk | | |
| a pound of chicken | | |
| an apple | | |

Talking about the New Year

- Write the date January 1 on the whiteboard.
- Ask students what is important to Canadians about this date? Elicit that it is the start of our calendar year.
- Pass around the calendar and ask students to talk about a special day in their home country. Provide them with prompts: On this day, This is a special day because, It is traditional on this day, It is the custom on this day etc...
- When all students have contributed, explain that the January 1 is an important day for Canadians because it signifies a new start, fresh beginning, new opportunities and chances.
- Introduce the term resolution. Have any students seen this word before? Discuss New Year's resolutions as promises people make to themselves. For an example, someone who eats chocolate every day and wants to stop could promise: This year I will only eat chocolate on the weekends.
- Distribute the resolution cards to students and split them into groups of four. Each student is to read their card to themselves, think about what they will promise to do and then share this with the group. Encourage them to be as truthful or ridiculous as they like and be prepared to ask questions or give more information to the others in their group.
- After everyone has shared, mix the students up into different groups and have them all exchange cards with someone in the group and repeat the activity.
- This activity could be followed by work on the future tense, explaining the difference between [be] going to and will.

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

This year I will stop....

Think – and Speak – on Your Feet

Give each learner a small piece of paper. Ask each learner to write a question on it that would be a good question for a discussion, or that would relate to a theme you have been discussing in class. Learners could write a question or, if you prefer, a statement. If you have a lower level class, ask each learner to write a word on each piece of paper. Learners do not write their names on the papers.

The tutor collects all the pieces of paper and puts them in a container. Then, every learner selects one of the papers and has to speak about whatever topic or word is written on it. The tutor should specify the allotted period of time, perhaps two minutes, or three minutes. For advanced levels, explain that in that time speakers have to present a catchy beginning or introduction, reasons or facts in the body of their speech, and then a catchy wrap-up conclusion. If you try this activity more than once, you will see learners gain more confidence speaking, and they will enjoy the challenge of thinking on their feet.

Examples

Higher Level:

If you have been doing a theme unit on families or families in Canada, give the learners the topic of FAMILIES for this activity. They might come up with questions or statements like:

“At what age should parents leave their children home alone?” or “Children should never be left home alone.”

“Children in Canada are spoiled.”

“Is it better to have a big family or a small family?”

To springboard to a writing activity, after all the questions have been read and answered, ask each learner to choose ONE question or topic that was most interesting to them and ask them to write a paragraph or essay about it.

Lower Level:

For a unit on families, ask learners to write one family word on their piece of paper, such as “grandmother” or “mother-in-law” or “sister”. When a learner chooses a word, he or she has to make a sentence or two about that word, such as “My grandmother lives in Colombia.”

For a unit on classroom objects for a lower level class, learners write down names of objects, the papers are shuffled, and students select a piece of paper and then match the word on the paper to the actual object in the classroom.

You may want to give the questions a quick read when you are collecting the pieces of paper from each learner. You want to make sure there aren't any duplicate questions, and you may also want to take out any potentially problematic questions. You could suggest wording to the writer to make the question more appropriate.

Wrap Up Activities

We often spend a lot of time planning the warm up and main activities for our tutorial sessions, but the wrap up gets little attention. The wrap up is actually one of the most important parts of a tutorial session as it reminds the learners of what they have learned and why it is relevant to them. An effective wrap up will encourage learners to remember and use what they have learned between classes. In your wrap up, remind learners of the focus of the lesson, connect it to their daily lives, give them examples of how they can use the language learned, and check for questions.

Here is one idea for a fun wrap up activity

1. Group the learners into pairs or small groups (so that they feel more confident answering the questions).
2. Give each group a piece of paper.
3. Pose a question to the groups that relates to the focus of the tutorial session.
4. The groups must write the answer to your question on the paper and bring it up to you at the front of the class.
5. See which group can come up with the answer to your question first. All answers are acceptable; there are no right or wrong answers.
6. Once all of the groups have brought their answers up, share them with the class.

Here are some examples for the types of questions you could ask

- What is the most important thing that we learned today?
- What is one thing that you will tell your friends and family about what we talked about today?
- What did our class focus on today?
- What are three things that were new for you in today's class?
- What word from today's class will you use every day this week?
- What was your favorite part of today's class?
- Why did we focus on "_____" in today's class?
- When will you use what we learned today?
- Where will you use what we learned today?
- What are three things from today's class that you want to learn more about?

Games

The Category Game

Step 1

Develop a list of 8-10 categories. Keep in mind the level of the students and the vocabulary that they might know.

E.g. countries, things in a kitchen, things that are red, types of cars, or flowers

It is often good to have a couple of lists like these, so that you can play multiple rounds.

Step 2

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 depending on class size.

Step 3

Give each group a copy of the list. Each group should have the same list because they are in competition with each other.

Step 4

Choose a sound that you have been working on; it could be a consonant or a vowel sound. Tell the students that they have to think of words for each category on the list that have that sound somewhere in the word. Remember that consonants will be easier than vowels.

Example:

Letter chosen - /I/ (short I)

Boys name - Phil

City - Chicago

Fruit - fig

Step 5

Take It Up: Each group receives a point for any word that they had that the other groups didn't. If you have time play another round with a new list.

* If you really want a challenge you can do it with syllables or stress patterns.

Get to Know You Game

This game is a fun activity that allows learners to get to know one another. All you need is a few decks of cards.

- First, divide the learners into groups of 4 or 6.
- Next, place a deck of cards face down on each table.
- Each student is given the following two pages of questions.
- Taking turns, a learner takes a card from the deck and reads what type of card it is, for example, queen of hearts.
- Next, the same learner matches his/her card to the question with the same symbol.
- The learner then asks the group his/her question. They all answer.
- Then the next learner takes his/her turn.

This game enables learners to practice pronunciation, ask questions and provide opportunities to answer. Questions can be adjusted to various levels.



- A What do you do everyday after school?
- K What is the date today?
- Q Count to ten.
- J Describe the clothing of another student.
- 10 What did you have for lunch yesterday?
- 9 What floor is our classroom on?
- 8 What is the name of the 25 cent coin?
- 7 What is your favourite colour?
- 6 Ask another player a question.
- 5 What is your favourite season?
- 4 What job do you want to do?
- 3 What is your favourite kind of fruit?
- 2 What is your address?



- A What is your phone number?
- K What is your favourite sport? Why?
- Q How many provinces does Canada have?
- J Where do you come from?
- 10 What is the capital of Alberta?
- 9 Describe the Canadian flag.
- 8 What colour is your country's flag?
- 7 What is the weather like today?
- 6 What was the weather like yesterday?
- 5 What is the capital of Canada?
- 4 When did you come to Canada?
- 3 Name the vowels.
- 2 What did you have for breakfast this morning?

 (hearts)

- A Alberta is between what two provinces?
- K What year is it?
- Q What floor is the computer lab on?
- J Say three things you like to do.
- 10 What is the name of the 10 cent coin?
- 9 Say the days of the week.
- 8 What is the name of the dollar coin?
- 7 What does a teacher do?
- 6 What do you do?
- 5 What time do you go to bed at every night?
- 4 Say the months of the year.
- 3 What is your favourite dessert?
- 2 What picture is on the nickel?

 (diamonds)

- A Where do you go food shopping?
- K Describe our classroom.
- Q Name one place to visit in Calgary.
- J What is your favourite thing to have for dinner?
- 10 What holiday do you like the best? Why?
- 9 What is the two dollar coin called?
- 8 What do you do in the evening?
- 7 Where do you go shopping for clothes?
- 6 What time is it now?
- 5 What is a sport that you can play in the winter?
- 4 What do you do on the weekend?
- 3 What did you do last weekend?
- 2 How many people are in your family?

Pronunciation Bingo Game

ESL learners need multiple exposures to a word. However, how can you provide multiple exposures to a word without boring learners to death?

Consider using BINGO as either an introductory or a culminating activity to a thematic or pronunciation unit. Learners do not seem to get tired of playing this game, especially if there are prizes involved, and they will be reviewing and repeating new vocabulary as they have some fun. This is a listening and speaking activity, and it will assist students with spelling.

Extra Supplies

In addition to photocopies of the blank bingo card, you will need bingo chips. These can be purchased at dollar stores or you can use corn kernels, paper clips or coins.

Instructions

1. Choose at least 30 words you would like students to review or practise. For example, if you are teaching the “th” sound as in the word “month” then choose at least 30 words that have this sound. You can review the two “th” sounds at the same time and choose some words with the “th” sound in “month” and some words with the “th” sound in the word “then”.
2. Use the bingo **template** provided or create your own.
Add the new vocabulary words at the bottom of the page. Make copies of the page for each student.
3. Print out the practise words on individual index cards or slips of paper for the “callers”.
4. Give slow and careful instructions to the students about what to do next.

Students randomly choose a word from the list at the bottom of the page and copy it into any square. Students must only use each word once and they will not be able to use all the words, as there are more words than squares. Make sure you allow ample time for this step. Encourage students to cross out a word once they have written it on the bingo card so they do not use the same word twice.

5. Explain the meaning of vertical, diagonal and horizontal. Students will need to make a row of five words in order to win.

To Play:

Now that the cards are ready, hand out chips for everyone. Begin the game. Shuffle the vocabulary cards. This activity is a lot more fun if students are the callers because they will get additional practise with pronunciation.

Give a card to a student and ask him/her to read it out loudly and clearly. He/she can also spell the word for classmates. Keep the “called” words in a separate pile. Continue until someone has made a row, at which point he/she calls out “BINGO”. Then check their row of words with the pile of called words. Sometimes a person may think they are a winner but they have misunderstood, in which case the game continues.

The winner of the first bingo game becomes the caller for the next game. In this way, the activity can take place with little instructor intervention.

BINGO

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| | | FREE | | |
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The Swatter Game

Fly swatters can be easily found at most dollar stores in a variety of bright, fun colors. They can be used in so many ways - to practice sound discrimination, numbers, vocabulary, etc. Best of all, this lively activity gets students up and moving about while learning!

Basic Instructions

1. Write target sounds/numbers/words scattered across the board or tape to a wall.
2. Put two chairs in front of the board or wall and place a fly swatter on each. Leave some room between the chairs and board for students to run.
3. Divide class into two equal teams.
4. Have one student from each team sit in the chairs with their backs to the board. The remaining students line up behind the student in the chair.
5. The teacher carefully says one of the target words on the board.
6. The students stand, run and find the word on the board.
7. Students get one swat and the first student to hit the word with their fly swatter gets one point for their team.
8. If neither student hits the right word, the next students are up and no points are awarded.
9. Repeat until everyone has had at least one turn.

Note: For a later round, you may ask a student to act as the “caller” instead of the teacher.

Variations

1. Pronunciation:

Choose a sound you want to differentiate. For example, the R/L first position. Write word pairs scattered across the board - river, liver, rice, lice, road, load, rare, lair, rap, lap, red, led, etc.

2. Numbers:

Write a variety of numbers that have similar sounds such as 3, 13, 30, 4, 14, 40, 15, 50, 6, 16, 60, and so on.

3. Vocabulary Building:

Low level - Pictures could be used along with or instead of words.

Higher level - Follow the first round of listening with giving clues or definitions to differentiate vocabulary words. For example, for a clothing vocabulary - find something that you can wear on your feet or for family vocabulary find a male family member.

Vocabulary

Helping Learners Remember Vocabulary

One way to help learners remember new vocabulary, is to give them handouts with blank word webs to help them remember the meaning of the vocabulary.

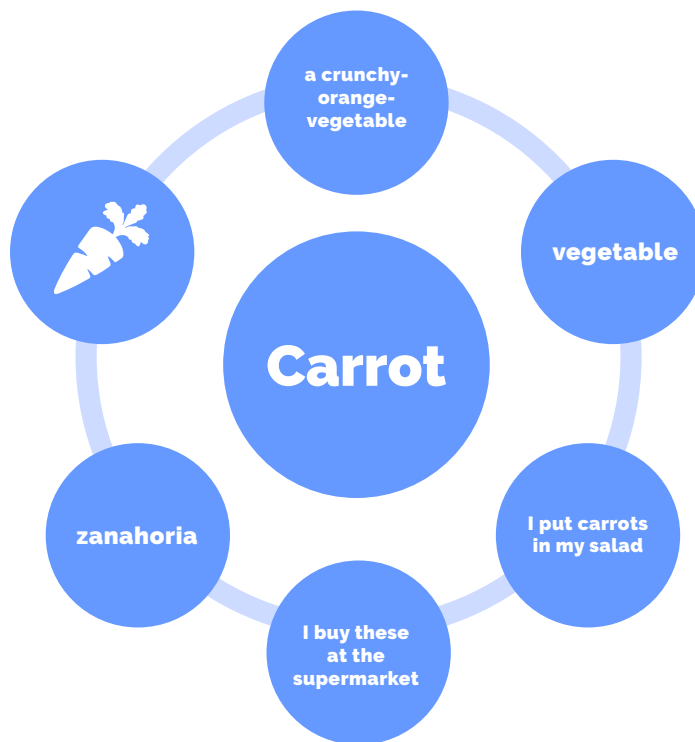
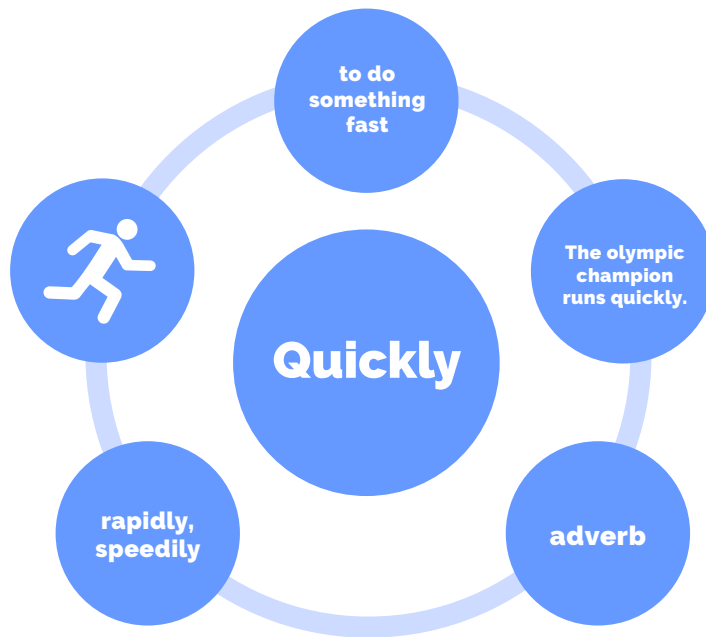
In the middle circle, have the learners write the word,

In circles around the word, have them insert clues that will help them remember the meaning of the word and how to use it. Depending on their level, you could include some of the following:

- A definition of what the word means
- A sentence using the word
- A translation of the word in their own language
- A situation when they would use the word
- A category that the word belongs to
- What part of speech the word is
- Synonyms
- Antonyms
- An illustration that will help them to remember the word

For example:





Vocabulary Building with Flashcards

These activities work well with beginning level ESL learners.

The website: www.mes-english.com has free flashcards and related activities in a wide range of topics for ESL learners. These flashcards can be used in a number of different ways to help learners build their English vocabulary. Each series of activities listed below should be done over a number of lessons, building on complexity and giving the learners time to process information and practice vocabulary.

Building Oral Familiarity with Vocabulary

1. Go to the mes-english website.
2. Click on “flashcards” at the top of the page.
3. Select the topic you are focusing on from the list on the left hand side of the page and double click on it.
4. Print out a set of large flashcards, small game cards and a handout for that topic from the website. Make multiple copies of the small game cards and the handouts for your class.
5. Create a set of full or half page flashcards and a set of small game sized flashcards with the words to go with the picture flashcards you are using (You will need to type these out, as mes-english does not have them). Make multiple copies of the small game word cards for your class.
6. Start by building oral vocabulary. Show the learners the large flashcards one by one in class, and ask if anyone knows the words. Go over them orally, showing them the pictures, acting them out if possible and discussing what they mean. Have the learners repeat the words (and act them out if possible) as you hold up the pictures. The more active the learners are, the better they will remember the words.
7. Once you have gone over them a few times orally, then hold the pictures up randomly and ask the learners to tell you what the pictures are.
8. Give the learners the small game cards (pictures only) - one set for each learner or one set for each group. Say the words randomly, and have the learners hold up the corresponding picture card. Once the learners feel comfortable with the vocabulary, have different learners take turns calling out the words and checking to see if their classmates are holding up the correct picture card.
9. You can also have the learners work in pairs, taking turns holding up the cards and asking their partner: “What is this?” While they are doing this, you should circulate around the room, listening for accurate answers and assisting when necessary.

Connecting Written Words to the Vocabulary

1. Once the learners are comfortable using the vocabulary words orally, begin to use the written word flashcards in combination with the picture flashcards. Begin with the picture flashcards once again, eliciting the vocabulary orally. As the learners tell you the word for each flashcard, put it up on the board and print the word below it.
2. Give each of the learners a copy of the handout from the website. You can either print it out with the words on it, or white them out before you copy it and have the learners copy the words from the board.
3. Review the words, pointing at them randomly and having the learners tell you what they are.
4. Remove the picture flashcards from the board, leaving the written words that you printed below them on the board. Give each learner a flashcard or a couple of flashcards. Ask them to put the flashcards on the board above the correct words.
5. When all the flashcards are in the correct spot, review the words as a class, noting the spelling and patterns in the words.
6. Next, remove the words you have written on the board and give each learner a marker. Ask the learners to go up to the board and write the words for one or two flashcards of their choice. Allow them to take the handout with them to copy if they need to. Copying reinforces what they are learning. Check the words as a class.
7. Give the learners a set of small game cards (pictures) again. Hold up the large written word flashcards that you created and say each word. Have the learners hold up the corresponding picture cards. Once the learners are comfortable with this, hold up the word cards, but do not say the word. See if they can read the word card themselves and hold up the corresponding picture.
8. Hand out the small game cards that you have created with the written words. Hold up the large picture flashcards one by one and see if the learners can hold up the corresponding word cards.
9. Hand out the small game cards that you have created with the words and the picture game cards. Have the learners match the picture game cards to the word cards individually, in pairs or in small groups. Circulate around the room, assisting when necessary, pointing out cards that students need to reconsider and answering questions.

10. Take one set of picture game cards and one set of word game cards. Select the same number of vocabulary words as half of your learners. Hand out the cards (one written word card and one picture word card for each vocabulary word) randomly, with half of the class getting picture cards and half of the class getting word cards. Have all of the learners walk around the class at the same time, saying the word for their card. Each learner with a word card must find the learner with the corresponding picture card. When everyone has found their partner, go over the words as a class, having the learners say their word and hold up their matching word/picture cards.

11. When you feel the learners are comfortable with the written vocabulary words, separate the class into teams. Divide the board up into the same number of spaces as teams. Give each team a marker. Hold up pictures one at a time and each team should send up one person to write the word on the board. The learners who are not writing are responsible for assisting the writer orally by yelling out how to spell it or suggesting corrections if necessary. The first team to write the word correctly gets a point (or each team that has written it correctly when everyone is finished gets a point, depending on how competitive you want to make it). This works well as a fun warm up over a series of days to help the learners practice.

The mes-english website also has word finds, crosswords, matching sheets, dice, gameboards and BINGOs that you can print off and use in the classroom with the learners. These also help to reinforce vocabulary. Scroll down the page when you are on the page of the topic that you want, until you see “Tools for Educators.” Click on the type of activity that you want to print off or click “make it.” Select your topic again and follow the instructions. There are also ideas for games in the classroom on the mes-english website. Have fun with these activities while helping your learners build their vocabulary.

Word Clouds

Word clouds are an interesting and creative way to engage learners in a variety of tasks and they're easy to make.

What is a word cloud?

A word cloud appears as a group of different-sized words with the size of the word based on how often the words occur in a text. The most frequently occurring word is the biggest. The website where you can create your own word cloud is www.wordle.com.

How do I create a word cloud?

Go to www.wordle.com, Choose 'Create'. Simply paste or type the text you want to use into the text box you see on the screen, hit 'go' and it's done! You can change the font, colour, rough shape and orientation of the words.

Who can use a word cloud?

- learners at just about any level

How can I use a word cloud?

- Before reading, use it to get your learners to predict what a reading passage is about.
- Ask learners to make sentences using the biggest word in combination with other words in the cloud. You could specify the number of words the learners have to use in their sentence depending on their English level.
- After reading, get the learners to retell as much of the reading as they can remember using the word cloud as a prompt. Ask each learner to give one sentence and build up the retelling around the class. No-one can repeat what a previous learner has said. (Good for listening!)
- For higher level learners, use a word cloud to predict topic and main idea.
- Use a word cloud to introduce a new theme. Learners can guess what the theme is and what they'll be learning about.
- Create a word cloud to introduce new vocabulary.

Points to be aware of

- For ESL learners at lower levels it's better to keep all the words horizontal.
- Keep the font simple so the words are easy to read.
- Word clouds created using Wordle have to be printed out. They cannot be copied and pasted in the program. (If you want to save a word cloud, you can do so, but you need to be a little computer savvy. There are videos on You Tube that can help you. One can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjxTM-0UaJ0>)

