

ACTIVATE YOUR ENGLISH

WORKSHOP AT 'Da Collo' Conegliano - December 2015
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WARM UPS, GAMES & EXERCISES FOR SECONDARY EFL STUDENTS

Students who are relaxed, cheery and confident make better learners and lessons which begin with relevant warm ups convey a message that energetic participation is fun, productive and expected. However, the key word is relevant and the best warm ups relate to the content and purpose of the activity which follows and prefigure the learning challenge involved. Thus warm ups should be linked to pronunciation and articulation practice, vocabulary building, listening skills, developing fluency etc etc.

I've chosen some examples of different categories of warm ups to try out and consider how, when or if you might use them.

TRIGGERS - useful, memorable short phrases to aid learning - my favourites -

Don't be afraid of making mistakes.

If in doubt, check it out.

Don't be an 'if only'.

Listen, listen. listen, try, try, try ,speak, speak, speak.

Believing is achieving.

Use it or lose it.

Don't be silent - it's lonely. ETC ETC

Speak, devise, remember, create.

SONGS - for listening, pronunciation and articulation practice - students are so immersed in trying to remember the tune they forget to be afraid of speaking.

Row, row, row the boat gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.

Row, row, row the boat gently down the stream,
If you see a crocodile, don't forget to scream.

Sing, repeat, learn, make a round or chorale.

My bonny lies over the ocean, my bonny lies over the sea,
my bonny lies over the ocean, please bring back my bonny to me.

2,

Chorus - Bring back, oh bring back,
please bring back my bonny to me, to me,

Bring back, oh bring back,
please, bring back my bonny to me.

2nd verse - Last night as I lay on my pillow,
last night as I lay on my bed,
last night as I lay on my pillow,
I dreamt that my bonny was dead.

Chorus etc. Sing it first and then add in the listening/fun element which is that you stand up or sit down on every word that begins with a b. Slowly at first, then see how quickly and accurately they can do it. Great fun.

BRAIN GYM - physical exercises which must involve an opposite crossing motion designed to connect the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

Right hand to left shoulder, left hand to right shoulder, right hand to left knee, left hand to right knee, right hand to left ear, left hand to right ear etc etc etc - build a rhythm.

LISTENING GAMES - ideal for developing listening skills and specific vocab - eg parts of the body (simon says) or prepositions (on the pavement)

ON THE PAVEMENT , IN THE ROAD - circle formation - on the pavement, take a step back, in the road, take a step forward - if you are already there, don't move - only move on the correct preposition - that is if you move on ' in the pavement' you are out (sit down).

SIMON SAYS - the all time favourite for AYE students - preteach vocabulary for parts of the body and action verbs - lean, clap, bend etc. The game is very simple - every instruction prefaced with Simon Says you follow - no Simon says - no movement. Move and you are out. Students get better as they practise this, so teacher needs to be trickier and faster. Have a class championship.

Etc etc.

TONGUE TWISTERS - great practice for articulation and vocal dexterity. Eg -
Peggy Babcock x3
Fife 4 Forfar 5

3.

Red lorry, yellow lorry.

She sells seashells on the seashore.

Thistlers and thatchers think thorough thoughts.

Betty Botter bought some butter etc.

etc etc.

Speak, practice, create, devise.

YES, NO INTERLUDE - Good for promoting fluency, different ways of using language and learning the difference between open and closed question forms.

Pair work - A and B - A the questioner - interviews B who is not allowed to answer yes or no but has to find alternative ways to answer - questions and answers must make sense. Help the students to get the idea by doing an example with repeated questions etc. Change over etc.

JUST A MINUTE - again excellent for promoting fluency and wider use of vocabulary.

Pair work - A the speaker B the listener/timer. The idea is that the speaker must try to speak for one minute on a given topic without repetition or hesitation. They may repeat the subject word and use any number of definite and indefinite articles. Give the subject - eg single word subjects like - hamburgers or elephants eg - give the speakers 30 seconds to think - all start/speak at the same time - listener times/ listens for errors . Check how long speakers did and change over. With all these exercises, expand usefulness with post exercise discussion, questions, feedback etc

FIND THE WORDS - observation and vocabulary building -

Small groups of 3/4- choose a useful phrase with sufficient words and combinations of letters - ACTIVATE YOUR ENGLISH is a good example - groups have 10 minutes to find as many other words as they can in the given phrase - all words must be at least two letters and no plurals are allowed. At the end of the time, groups count and read out their word list which wise students note down (groups check other groups list). Pick up any obvious errors or misspellings.

ALPHABET TENNIS - vocabulary use and quick responses

Pair work - A says a word beginning with A, B a word beginning with B, A a word beginning

with C etc - go through the whole alphabet. Change pairs, do different versions - opposites (very difficult) only adjectives, only nouns etc

STORY CIRCLES – for fluency, descriptive language development and listening etc

Various versions are useable - as follows -

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Single word story circle – round the circle once or twice – tell the last student they will have to finish the story. Try to create atmosphere and quality descriptions. Teacher starts with eg ‘once upon a time a small green man was walking etc’ – that is control subject and style.

Single word etc – as above but teacher says what kind of word for each speaker – eg adjective, adverb, noun etc – useful for practising descriptive language.

Short phrase – etc – as above but each speaker adds a short phrase.

Adjust forms to suit the teaching purpose and make the task more cumulatively difficult

ALIBIS AND ADVOCATES – for small groups of more advanced students only – excellent listening, speaking and quick response practice.

Circle of students being interviewed by a police detective – the point being that they are all the same person and therefore must listen very carefully to what has been said so their answer is consistent. Teacher is detective – uses tricks – like ‘Did you say your name was Alphonse ? ‘ when it was previously established as Andrea. Any student who provides a wrong/inconsistent answer is out.

Advocates is exactly the same game except that when a student is asked a question by the detective, they cannot answer. The person standing on their right answers for them as their advocate.

CIRCULAR DEBATE – again for more advanced students to develop fluency, vocabulary and communication skills, especially formal language. Formal debates with larger groups work well with sufficient numbers and time but this format is useable for smaller groups for ten minute versions.

Student circle – decide on a motion ie. something relevant and interesting eg ‘This house believes that all students in full time education over the age of 16, should be paid a living allowance’. Announce the motion, give people time to think what their view is, teach them the vocabulary and language forms –eg to finish, ‘thus it is that I urge you to vote against the motion ‘, house, motion, vote etc – chose a starting point and the debate begins with teacher as the chair announcing the motion. Each speaker is limited to 2 minutes and may either

present their case or react to the previous speaker or some combination of the two. At the end of the circle of speakers, the motion is put to the house, a vote is taken, and the chair announces the result and whether the motion is carried or defeated.

5.

ETC ETC - the possibilities are endless. Develop your own armoury of warm ups, games and exercises to generate energy, enthusiasm and an active and engaged group of learners. Many teachers are nervous of such activities for fear of losing control, especially in activities which involve moving around - don't be. Plan and manage effectively in the same way you would any other learning style.

I hope that you found the short workshop useful and I hope you feel encouraged to try out some of these activities and indeed devise more for yourself and with your students. I would be very pleased to hear from any member of the workshop with your ideas and experiences at john@whitfieldplace.co.uk -

May I remind you that we depend upon teachers like you to help us recruit students for our AYE Summer Schools. We do not advertise but rather work with teachers who recommend our courses, thus ensuring that we attract the right level and calibre of students, unlike various other organisations.

We offer a teacher commission of E100 for each student recommended who actually attends a course. We also offer a free place for any teacher bringing a group of six students or more (a small exception is that you have to pay for your flight) and we also offer 2 bursaries per course for any student especially recommended but who would struggle to afford the course fees. Contact our Agent _ Morena Santandrea - phone number and email address are on the brochure and website.

I hope that we shall meet again next year.

Best wishes,

John L. Norman.

Director - Activate Your English.

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