

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW HANDBOOK

FOR EFL TEACHERS

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Introduction

There is so much material online for teaching English that it can become overwhelming and impossible to choose from, differentiate or compile.

Am I just adding to that overwhelming confusion? Hopefully not.

The intention of this handbook is to provide everything you need, all in one place!

I strongly believe students respond well to material that is specifically chosen with them in mind, focusing on learning real English and making learning, vocabulary and grammar relevant. There is no time for complementary or alternative activities with a textbook, as we are just trying to get through the course. Working with our own material means we can move at the pace necessary, review grammar and vocabulary as appropriate, and play!

This does not preclude exam preparation, for which students will need specific material.

Designed for levels B1 to C1, and suggesting tried and tested activities used in the classroom environment with Spanish students, you will find specific, practical and concise ideas for activities which make learning fun in class. These range from ideas for songs, films, games and vocabulary to suggestions for topics and grammar, novels and stories as well as tips, techniques and links to online material available to download.

This Handbook has been compiled thanks to over 20 years of hands-on experience, learning from other teachers and from students, experimenting, and of course investigating the wonderful world of the Internet.

I hope it is of use. Enjoy, and make learning English fun!



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SONGS, FILMS, SERIES

If you have doubts about what you can or can't use in the classroom, do consult with your centre. If you prefer not to use songs or film, encourage your students to do so at home, giving them suggestions of what to watch or listen to, and have a feedback session in class of what they have come across.

You can also give them a worksheet to take home. (These can also be used in class.) They can choose from a list of songs or films and series that you provide, as not all students will have access to the same content. Suggestions for worksheet questions follow below. If watching at home, there is a risk that they will watch films in their own language, so include some questions about language (vocabulary, idioms, accents, who was easy or difficult to understand and why!)



Songs

Using songs is enjoyable and useful for colloquial phrases and vocabulary as well as good for listening. There are many activities you can do with songs and plenty of ideas you can find online. I tend to prepare the lyrics with gaps. Another option is to prepare some lines jumbled up. Once you have finished the song, you can write random words on the board and students need to identify the phrase it comes from by singing the line! You should encourage students to sing the whole song, but I'd suggest not going too hard on those that don't!

Bear in mind age groups when choosing lyrics and music style. Some students may prefer songs they've heard, while others may enjoy older classics. I try to find relatively modern songs they may not be familiar with but which provide plenty of vocabulary and have a positive message.

So, below are some examples of songs that the students have enjoyed. I've also used other songs by the same or similar style artists. So do explore genres and artists' back catalogues.

Break me out; The Rescues

Rude; Magic

Secrets; One Republic

Bad Day; Daniel Powter

Mama Said; Lukas Graham

Budapest; George Ezra

Castle on the Hill; Ed Sheeran

Viva la Vida; Coldplay

Lemon Tree; Fools Garden

Less than Zero; The Weeknd



Suggestions for song worksheet questions:

Write down any new vocabulary or phrases.

What did you like or dislike about it?

Identify any metaphors or colloquial language.

How did the song make you feel?

How does the singer feel?

What do you think the song is about? (This can be quite a difficult question!)

Films and Series

Watching films, with subtitles in English, is a subliminal way of absorbing English. Conversation or writing afterwards is useful.

Be careful with films as they can become boring if they are long and the students find it difficult. They often enjoy episodes of series more, be that comedy or drama, as long as they are stand-alone.

Below are some examples of films and series that students have enjoyed. The suggestions for films are based on teenagers. If you are working with adults, other choices may be more appropriate.

The Princess Bride: a must-view for all students, in my opinion!

Mr Bean: always good for complementary activities; description of the episode, adding dialogue and so on.

Revolting Rhymes: These two animated episodes based on Roald Dahl's alternative vision of fairy tales are great for thinking about alternative interpretations and the meaning of fairy tales.

Would I Lie to You: BBC Panel Show available on YouTube. It is more for older students because of content and level. That said, it is also a good format to use for activities in class.

The Goes Wrong Show: Watch with subtitles in English; all ages love it! Find the link at the end of this Handbook.



Dr Who is a great go to.

Here are some enjoyable stand-alone episodes (from the 2005- reboot):

The Girl in the Fireplace. Season 2 Ep 4. B1+ onwards

The Shakespeare Code. Season 3 Ep 2. B1+ onwards

Blink. Season 3 Ep 10. B1+ onwards

Vincent and the Doctor. Season 5 Ep 10. B1 onwards

A Christmas Carol. Season 6 Special. B1+ onwards

Robot of Sherwood. Season 8 Ep 3. B1 onwards

Rosa. Season 11 Episode 3. B1 onwards

Kerblam. Season 11 Ep 7. B1+ onwards

The Witchfinders. Season 11 Ep 8. B1+ onwards

Nikola Tesla's Night of Terror. Season 12 Ep 4. B2 onwards

Suggestions for film worksheet questions:

How does the main character feel?

What do you think happens after it finishes?

Write an alternative ending.

Which character did you like best and why?

Why did or didn't you enjoy it?

Which moments did you like and why?

What did you not understand?

Which parts made you feel happy, sad, nervous, and so on?



NOVELS

Graded readers are great to get students interested in real English.

As a firm believer in reading as a tool for life, I am admittedly strongly biased in favour of using literature in the classroom if at all possible.

However, be very careful in your choice of novel. Many teens are averse to reading in general and doing it in class can seem like a chore. If you can, find something that has a TV or film version to complement the reading. This can make it more dynamic, especially when you compare the two versions. I suggest reading first, then watching the section to see if the adaptation matches students' impressions. Acting out scenes can also be a fun complementary activity.

If reading a novel seems like too much, there are plenty of graded short stories and compilations online. Short stories lend themselves to discussion, imagining the before and after, and are stand alone, which means you do not spend endless classes working on them!

Links to graded readers are available at the end of this Handbook.



39 GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

There is an abundance of material for games online. However, we tend to stick to games which we know. Here I suggest some games which have worked very well in class for students. These games should cover you for the whole academic year!



Word Games

RELAY VOCABULARY A-Z. 20 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

Divide the class into a maximum of three teams. Divide the board into three columns. They work as a relay team to write words from a category on the board, for example, animals A-Z. But, they have to look at what the other teams have written, and only get a point if their word is different and correctly spelt. Each person can write only one word, but can skip a letter and write the next, and another teammate can go back to the one missed.

You can follow up with questions: Which animal is most like you? Which profession would you never do? Which sport is the hardest to learn? Which food would you like to try?

WORDLE. 10 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Highly popular and great fun. There are many versions online with any number of letters, British, American English and for kids, with an unlimited number of games.

BOGGLE. 10 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Traditional Boggle. Students have three minutes to write as many words as they can make from random letters on a grid. I recommend the British Council Learn English website, where the game is called Wordshake.

TABOO. 20 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: MAKE CARDS (OR BUY A GAME / DOWNLOAD FROM INTERNET)

Students have to describe a word without using certain taboo words.

Plenty of ideas online or make your own!

FIRST LETTER, LAST LETTER. 20 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

FrienD, DreaM, MotheR... Take turns in the group until you have 20 words. Write them on the board as they are said, then make up a story using all the words.

CATEGORY CHALLENGE. 15 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE CATEGORIES AND WORD LISTS.

Choose a category: Things that are green. Teacher gives the student a list of seven words. They must describe these words to their partner (who knows the category) without saying the word. They need to guess all the words in a time limit.

An alternative is to give one student a category, and they have to think of words to say to their partner so they can guess the category. Again, with a time limit.

BOMB. 10 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Bomb can be played in different ways. If you don't have a "bomb", you can find random timers on the internet which "go off" at random intervals. The easiest version is to choose a category and students have to say a word in that category, in turn, around the group, passing the bomb. Whoever the bomb explodes on gets a point. Obviously the objective is to have no points at the end of the game.

WORD ASSOCIATIONS. 10 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

Two hot seats. Students take it in turns to say a word, associating one with another. If they hesitate or repeat, another student takes their place. Who will last the longest?

ODD ONE OUT. 20 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Give some suggestions for categories, for example sport, animals, or clothes. They write four words: Snake, Wolf, Panda, Penguin, and a reason: Snake because it doesn't have legs. The class has to guess which the odd one out is and why. There can be more than one valid answer, but they have to try to guess the word and reason the student has chosen.

FIVE THINGS. 30 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Two or three teams. Each team has a category; for example

things that are blue, or red, or green. They have to make a list of 5 things and the other teams have 10 opportunities to guess what their five words were. If they do not guess correctly, teams can write a short clue for each word. Write the words on the board as the game progresses. At the end you can give students three minutes to invent a micro story using all 5 words of one of the other teams.

PASSWORD. 10 MINUTES. PREPARATION: A LIST OF WORDS TO PLAY WITH.

Look for Password, Jimmy Fallon on YouTube to see how it works. Very easy to prepare and fun to play. Two teams get the same word and they have to give clues to their teammate, only using one word. The teams take it in turns until someone guesses correctly.

Speaking Games

ABC CONVERSATION. 10 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE SCENARIOS.

We improvise conversations with a scenario; for example, in a clothes shop. Two students participate. Each response needs to start with the next letter of the alphabet. *How are you? I'm fine.* Watch clips from Whose Line is it Anyway on YouTube.

CONVERSATION WITH QUESTIONS. 10 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE SCENARIOS.

We play as above, but not alphabetically. We only use question forms. *Can I help you? Have you got any peaches?*

ONE MINUTE TALK ABC. 10 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

Ask students for a letter of the alphabet. Then solicit three nouns starting with that letter. Choose a student who then picks a number out of a hat and has to talk about the corresponding word for one minute.



ADVERB AND NOUN. 15 MINUTES. PREPARATION:

WRITE LIST OF ADVERBS AND NOUNS.

Create a list of adverbs and topics. Pick a student and randomly choose one word from each column, for example School / Arrogantly. They have to talk for a minute about the topic in the manner of the adverb. Students guess what the adverb was.

ONE WORD STORY. 10 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

As it sounds. We create a story (or a sentence for lower levels) saying one word each. See how far it gets before it makes no sense!

HIDDEN WORD. 15 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: LIST OF GENERAL TOPICS AND ANOTHER OF RANDOM WORDS.

The students take it in turns to talk for a minute about a topic and include the random word surreptitiously. Listeners need to guess which their word was, for example School /Umbrella.

BACKWARDS INTERVIEW. 15 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

This is complicated so an alternative version for lower levels is for them to think of an answer to a question and the other student has to ask the question.

The more complicated version is to go as far as they can with an interview. They perform an interview with, for example, an imaginary sports star and interviewer. Start the conversation with goodbye.

TWO TRUTHS ONE LIE. 20 MINUTES. PREPARATION:

STUDENTS WRITE THREE FACTS.

This can be spread over various classes as it takes a little time. Everyone writes two truths and one lie about themselves and students have to ask questions about the statements in order to guess which the lie is. Students must answer truthfully about their truth, but can obviously invent the story around their lie. Avoid things like *I have 2*

sisters when they only have one, or I went to France last year when it was the year before.

WOULD YOU RATHER. 10 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: THINK OF SOME OPTIONS.

Example: Be able to talk to animals or speak all the languages in the world.

Plenty of ideas online!

Make sure students give reasons for their choices.

WH- QUESTIONS. 15 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Each student writes a question on a piece of paper. The teacher collects them and then they pick one question sight unseen, read it aloud and answer it. Make sure the questions have the potential for interesting answers, not *What's your favourite colour?*

HIDDEN WORD STORY. 15 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: WRITE SOME RANDOM NOUNS ON SEPARATE PIECES OF PAPER.

Each student picks a word without showing anyone else. One person starts to tell a story. They have to include their word in their section of story. The next student continues the story. The rest of the class write down which word they think each student had. Check at the end when everyone has participated.

Improvisation Games

SIT STAND BEND. 20 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE SCENARIOS.

You can look for YouTube links to *Whose Line is it Anyway* to see how it's played. Basically, you give a situation to three students; parent teacher conference for example. They improvise a scene while someone always has to be standing, one bending and one sitting. When anyone changes, the others have to adapt. Try to encourage them to move with purpose, as in if they are angry, they may suddenly stand up. It means they have to improvise

in English, as well as be aware of their fellow actors and their own positions! It is quite a challenge, but enormous fun. Get your more outgoing students to try first.

PARTY QUIRKS. 20 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE CHARACTERS.

From Whose Line is it Anyway. One person is the host and there are three guests. You give each guest a role, for example, Cinderella, Red Riding Hood and Sleeping Beauty. They join the party one by one and need to act as if they are that person, and the host needs to guess who they are, interacting with them. You can adapt by using three professions, three emotions, or whatever you want. Tell guests that they cannot make it too obvious. If you are Cinderella, maybe you are searching for your shoe.

BUS TRIP. 15 MINUTES. PREPARATION: WRITE PHRASES ON STRIPS OF PAPER.

Prepare various random phrases on strips of paper. Give them out and ask students (maximum 4 or 5) to imagine they are getting on a bus and want to start a conversation. They need to use their phrase in the conversation, hopefully subtly! The aim is for the students watching to guess what the phrases were.

I'm very hot. You stole my sandwich. When do we arrive?

ZAPPING. 15 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

Assign a TV programme to pairs of students (soap opera, documentary, quiz show, Masterchef and so on.) Explain that you will be channel hopping between programmes and they need to improvise. Give them two minutes to prepare orally in pairs. Then skip between them with a remote control for varying amounts of time, repeating some if you want to, but they have to continue their programme.

FROZEN PICTURE HEADLINES. 25 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: THINK UP SOME STRANGE HEADLINES.

Make groups of 4 (maximum). Give a group a headline. *Cat stuck in a tree.* They have ten seconds to create a frozen picture of the event. Then, you unfreeze them and they improvise a dialogue.

MICRO ROLEPLAY. 30 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: WRITE SHORT DIALOGUES.

Prepare a three or four sentence dialogue which they must interpret with different emotions and in different situations. They can then expand it into a full conversation. For example; *I have something to tell you. What? I'm your sister. No.*

They could be happy, angry, nervous... They could be two friends, a boss and employee, a very old person and a very young one...

MIME A MESSAGE. 15 MINUTES. PREPARATION:

PREPARE PHRASES ON STRIPS OF PAPER.

Students are staying at a hotel but have lost their voice. Prepare a list of phrases which students must mime while the class has to decipher their message. For example, *There's a cockroach in my bath. Please send someone.*

Miscellaneous Activities

DESERT ISLAND / TIME CAPSULE. 30 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

What would they take to a desert island or put in a time capsule for 100 years in the future? Students think of 10 objects with reasons. You can then compile a list on the board, and choose 10 in a debate from all of the ideas.

20 QUESTIONS. 10 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

The traditional game, with variations from Who am I? to Where am I? to What am I? Remember they can only answer yes or no, so solicit questions with Can, Is, Has, Do, Should...

FIZZBUZZ. 5 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

In a circle, we count 1, 2, 3.... Then we explain that on multiples of 3, instead of saying the number, we say, elephant (for example). Multiples of 4, zebra, of 5, lizard... So the students count 1, 2, elephant, zebra, lizard, elephant, 7, zebra, elephant, lizard... and so on. If students make a mistake they sit down until there is only one left standing.



DICE CHALLENGE. 30 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE 12 CHALLENGES.

Think of 12 tasks. Students roll dice and need to perform the task assigned. You can play this in teams. Sing the chorus of a song, count backwards from 20, name 5 things that are red in 10 seconds... Teacher assigns points according to how well they performed the task.

MEMORY DIALOGUE. 20 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE A DIALOGUE.

Find a dialogue (from a textbook, for example). Dictate and students write it on the board (around 10 lines). Get students to read it, and then start rubbing out parts randomly. The next pair has to reproduce the dialogue. After each pair, you rub out more so that the last pair ends up with only the first letter of each sentence. If they listen well, with repetition, they should be able to do it!

PRONUNCIATION. 40 MINUTES. PREPARATION:

MAKE A LIST OF WORDS AND ANAGRAMS.

Make a list of commonly mispronounced words (cultural, parents, comfortable, vegetable...) Write them as anagrams on the board. Teams take it in turns to identify any word, spell it and pronounce it correctly. The word remains on the board until a team has succeeded. They cannot write anything. It is up to the teacher on how strict to be with pronunciation rules!

WINK MURDER. 15 MINUTES. NO PREPARATION.

The teacher chooses a detective, who waits outside. Students stand in a circle and close their eyes. The teacher pats one person on the head and that person will be the murderer.

No-one knows who the murderer is. All the students have to think of some "last words". The murderer has to "kill" by winking. The detective stands in the middle of the circle and, depending on how big the group is, has two or three opportunities to guess who the murderer is. Encourage students to be very dramatic when they "die" with their last words!

BROKEN TELEPHONE. 10 MINUTES.

NO PREPARATION.

One person thinks of a short sentence and it is passed

around the group by whispering one person to the next.

Will the sentence still be the same when it arrives home?

SIMON SAYS/ GET IN ORDER. 10 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: MAKE A LIST OF ORDERS

Get in order: Students have 10 seconds to stand in order, for example, birth month, house number, shoe size. They can speak to each other to do it.

Simon Says: They follow the orders individually.

IDIOMS AND PHRASAL VERBS. 25 MINUTES.

PREPARATION: CHOOSE SOME PHRASAL VERBS

AND IDIOMS. CUT UP THE IDIOMS INTO TWO PARTS.

FOR PHRASAL VERBS, CUT UP VARIOUS VERBS AND PREPOSITIONS, WITH MORE THAN ONE OF EACH VERB AND PREPOSITION.

One activity which is a lot of fun is pinning a variety of verbs on one wall and prepositions on another. One student from each team collects as many as they can in one minute, but can only take one verb, then one preposition, and so on. They then consult with their team and only get a point if they can put the verbs into a sentence.

With idioms, they have to collect the two halves in the same way. First halves are on one wall, second halves on the other.

Another way to play is students picking out a phrasal verb or idiom from a hat and then a card which says either: Draw, Mime or Definition. Students must get their teams to guess the expression. With phrasal verbs, make sure they are verbs they have studied or else it will be impossible! With idioms, they can depict them literally and the teacher can help if they don't know the meaning.

GRAMMAR

A basic grammar checklist follows below. Students don't tend to retain grammar well just by reading it in a textbook. Plus, textbooks don't tend to have enough practice to consolidate it.

So this is an alternative way to teach grammar:



1 Explain the grammar on the board with examples. You can use a textbook for your own reference.

In this scenario, you are working with grammar separately from topics, but you can put it in context through Steps 2 and 3.

2 They copy the outline, then they write ten sentences using said outline.

Some topics lend themselves to grammar: For example, Future Tenses and Technology, Reported Speech and Crime, Past Tenses and Storytelling, and so on.

Ask them to write sentences in affirmative, negative and interrogative. Give them ideas to get the ball rolling.

3 Practise with games. There are plenty online, including a free PDF: Fun With Grammar by Suzanne W. Woodward, which you can find online, and Bamboozle; link at the end of this Handbook.

4 Do a worksheet to consolidate learning.



B1

All Verb Tenses + Used to
 Passive (Present and Past simple)
 -Ing- ed- infinitive: Verb and Adjective patterns
 Conditionals 0-2
 Linkers
 Modals: have to, must, can, should, may
 Comparatives, Superlatives
 Reported speech: Basic, orders, questions
 Articles / Determiners
 Quantifiers (many, much, few...)
 Countable and uncountable nouns
 Adjectives and Adverbs
 Relative pronouns
 Questions and question tags
 Prepositions and prepositional phrases
 Phrasal verbs

Higher levels

Inversions
 Ellipses
 Cleft Sentences
 Emphatic Language
 Gradable / Non gradable adjectives / Adverbs
 Relatives (of whom)
 Modifiers (not nearly as)
 Impersonal Passives: He is said to be...
 Pronouns: Themselves...

B2

All Verb Tenses + Used to
 Passive / Causative All tenses
 -Ing- ed- infinitive: Verb and adjective patterns
 Conditionals (0-3) and I wish, Mixed conditionals
 Linkers
 Modals: Past, speculation, deduction; Should have,
 Could have, Must have...
 Comparisons
 Reported speech + Reporting Verbs
 Articles / Determiners
 Quantifiers (many, much, few...) some, any
 Countable and Uncountable nouns
 Adjectives and Adverbs, Adverbs of degree
 Relative pronouns
 Questions and question tags
 Prepositions and prepositional phrases
 Enough, too, very, such
 Rather: I'd rather, rather than, rather big
 Phrasal verbs

VOCABULARY TOPICS AND GAMES

The most common topics that should be covered are below along with some suggestions for activities.

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

If the material you are working with does not have any particular topic vocab, you can choose a topic and simply work on vocab.

1 Brainstorm topic vocab and add any important words that are missing. You can find lists online. Write on the board for students to copy.

2 DO the topic: Depending on the topic in question you could suggest a dialogue/role play to write and act out. Write a story. Prepare a monologue. Have a debate. For example, if you are covering food, ask them to present a recipe with all the steps. If you are covering technology, prepare a debate on the pros and cons. If you are working on descriptive adjectives, write a description of a person.

3 To test, you can use any of the Vocabulary Games I list below.

HEALTH

Parts of the body
Fitness and Diet
Role play at the doctor
Give fitness advice

FOOD AND DRINK

At the restaurant
Cooking verbs
Food nouns
Present a recipe
Roleplay a problem at a restaurant

CRIME / SOCIETY ISSUES

Crimes and punishments
Criminals
Act out crimes and class guesses.

EDUCATION / PROFESSIONS

School Subjects
School building
Jobs
Equipment / Material
Explain the pros and cons of a job
Debate which subjects are the most important to study

ENVIRONMENT / ANIMALS / WEATHER

Animals and Descriptions
Idioms
Environment and climate
Do a weather forecast with a map on the board
Describe an animal to be guessed



HOBBIES / FREE TIME / SOCIALISING / SPORT

Sports, Equipment

Music

TV

Literature

Hanging out

Explain how to play a sport

Prepare a book / film review

FAMILY / FRIENDS / RELATIONSHIPS

Members of your family / Family Tree

Personality

Emotions

Appearance

Describe a family member or friend

TECHNOLOGY / FUTURE

Inventions

Space

Internet

Debate the pros and cons of technology

Speculate about the future

Discuss which inventions are the most significant

SHOPPING / MONEY

Going shopping roleplay

Types of shops

Debate: online shopping or in person

Clothes, Descriptions

Fashion show commentator and models

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Places to visit

Methods of transport

Tourism and sightseeing

Travel complaint / Travel review

MEDIA / COMMUNICATION

Advertising

Television / News

Create an advert / Create a TV schedule

HOME / TOWN / CITY

Rooms of the house / Buildings

Debate benefits of living in City and Country

Describe your home

Prepare a guided tour / visit to a town

ENGLISH CULTURE / REAL ENGLISH

Roleplays and real situations, in reference to topics detailed.

Compare English and Spanish culture (timetables, food, free time, teenagers, climate...)

THEME WEEK

A fun break from the normal course is to have a theme week. This could be anything. If anyone plays an instrument they can bring it to class. You could have a week of board games to play in class. On international book day, they could bring in their favourite books to share or talk about.



VOCABULARY GAMES

These can be used whenever you need to review topic vocabulary.

HANGMAN. 15 MINUTES.

Traditional game to review vocabulary.

NOUGHTS AND CROSSES ANAGRAMS. 15 MINUTES.

Write anagrams of vocab to be reviewed in a noughts and crosses board. Divide group into two teams. They only get the square if they can spell and define the word.

PASS THE BALL. 15 MINUTES.

Stand students in a circle. Teacher says a word from the vocabulary. A ball is thrown to a student who has to spell it and say the meaning. You can stop them if they go wrong and they have to pass it to someone else.

HOT SEAT. 15 MINUTES.

One student sits with their back to the board. Teacher writes a word from the topic being studied on the board and the student asks yes/no questions to the class to guess the word.

You can also do this in teams with two students guessing.

SPLIT SYLLABLES MATCHING. 15 MINUTES.

Write a selection of the vocabulary on the board, but split into syllables. Class must make the words. You can either do this in teams as a race and they write the words, or individually and students guess as soon as they identify a word. In this case, when they have guessed correctly, teacher rubs off the word. In both versions they only get a point if they also know the meaning.

PERSONAL VOCAB TEST. 30 MINUTES.

Students choose ten words from the topic that they think are useful to remember. They write them on a piece of paper in English or Spanish depending on how you want to test. They then pass the paper to their left and they have 20 seconds to write as many translations of the words they know. After 20 seconds the paper is passed again, and so on until it finds its way back to its owner. Students can change things if they see a mistake. There will be some repeated words, which is fine as the more they see a word the easier it is to remember. Also, they will see words that another student knows, which they didn't, so if it comes up on another paper, they will remember it, (hopefully!).



20 DEFINITIONS. 30 MINUTES.

Teacher gives a definition of a word from vocabulary studied. Students look for the word from their list and write it down. This part is not a test, just a review. When they have all the words, they write a definition in English without looking back. It doesn't matter if they repeat the definition the teacher gave. The point is to see, write and retain the vocabulary.

BINGO. 20 MINUTES.

Write 20 words on the board. They choose 8 and write them into a 4 x 4 grid.

Teacher calls definitions, not the words themselves.

Students can call Line or Bingo.

MASTERMIND. 15 MINUTES.

The classic game; a cross between Hangman and Wordle. On the board the teacher marks how many letters in the word with dashes, as in Hangman. They guess a word and the teacher writes it, indicating letters in the correct place and letters in the word but in the wrong place. Continue until the word is identified.

SENTENCE RACE. 20 MINUTES.

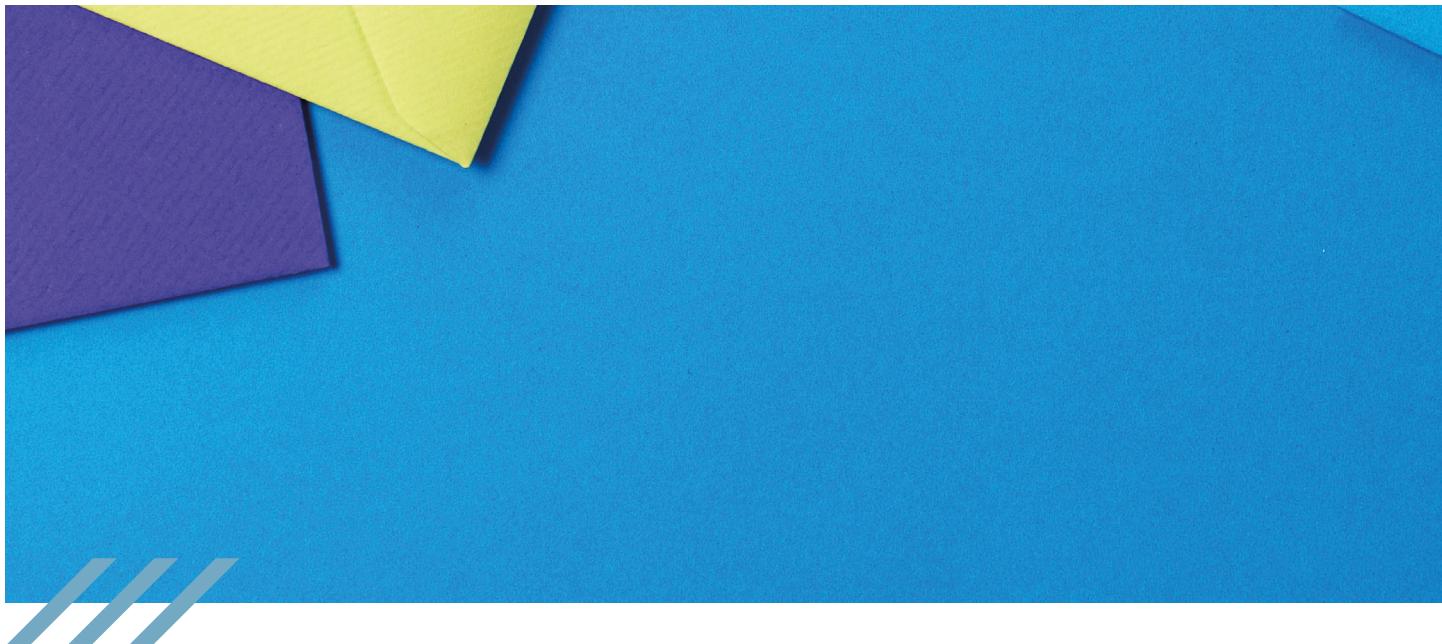
Make two teams. Teacher calls a word. One member of each team writes a sentence on the board containing the word. The first person to complete a valid sentence gets a point. A valid sentence, if the word is cat, is not *I have a cat*. Make sure there is context.

WHAT'S MISSING? 20 MINUTES.

Choose 10 words and write them randomly in English and Spanish on the board. Then rub out some of them and students must decide what's missing and match the pairs.

TIPS AND USEFUL LANGUAGE

This section includes common mistakes to keep an eye out for, suggestions for learning phrasal verbs and idioms, as well as some common verbs and adjectives that come up in exam questions. The teacher will need to work with students to develop use of vocabulary and language.



COMMON MISTAKES

Use of commas: If a clause is complete, you cannot separate it with a comma. You can use a linker (and, but, because), a relative pronoun (which), or a full stop.

Etc: Don't use etc. or '...'- Write "and so on" or, put "or" before the last word of your list.

How is he / What's he like: The first refers to his physical/mental state, the second to his appearance or personality.

Like and As: *Like* to introduce an example and for similarities. *As* for everything else!

I think so / I don't think so NOT *I think no.*

I agree / I disagree NOT *I am agree.*

I didn't do anything / I did nothing NOT *I didn't do nothing.*

Prepositions of time: On Monday, In June...

Last week NOT *the last week.*

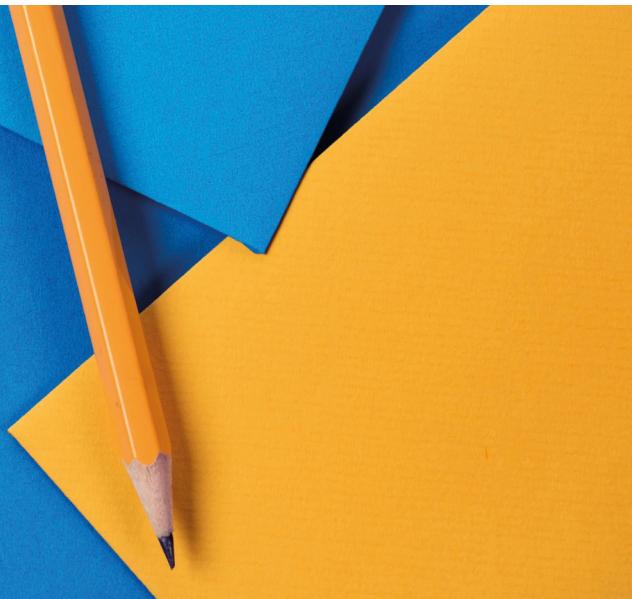
The same as NOT *the same than.*

Depend on NOT *depend of.*

Question tags: isn't it? or right? NOT *no?*

Pronunciation: -ded / -ted pronounce as a separate syllable.

It doesn't matter / I don't mind NOT *It doesn't mind.*



Tell / Say to: *Tell* for orders and accounts. NOT *He said me that.*

I want you to go NOT *I want that you go.*

Can: We need to remind students that *Can* is used for ability. Common mistakes include *It can rain* instead of *It could / may rain*. *It can be a good idea* instead of *It could be a good idea*.

Will /would: Similar mistakes to can / could occur here.

After a Preposition: Verb in -ing form. Differentiate between *to* as a preposition or part of the infinitive.

Overuse of certain words: I think, nice, interesting, really.

PHRASAL VERBS

I have made a list of typical verbs and prepositions so that students can make their own list of phrasal verbs or give examples in a sentence. These can be used to make 2 or 3-word phrasal verbs. Get students to brainstorm those that they know, add others and put them into sentences for context. You can then play games as previously listed.

Get	Turn
Put	Come
Take	Run
Break	Pick
Set	Pass
Look	Call
Make	

Prepositions

Off	Into
On	Through
Down	Of
Up	To
Away	Back
In	Across
Out	Against
With	Over
For	Under
After	

IDIOMS

Idioms are extremely useful for speaking and for writing articles and letters. We need to encourage students to use them, but without going over the top! There are myriad idioms to be found on the internet. Below is a selection of those which I feel can be used in the aforementioned tasks. They are also useful for life in general. Students feel awkward using them, but we need to teach them that they are very common in everyday language. It would be useful to write an example sentence for each, as well as add any new idioms which are discovered.

You can look up categories online: animal idioms, body idioms, food idioms and so on.

Let your hair down

Have Itchy feet

Be snowed under

Live out of a suitcase

Let the cat out of the bag

Pull your leg

Break a leg

A Storm in a teacup

Piece of cake

See eye to eye

Be in the same boat

Break the ice

Under the weather

Have your head in the clouds

Head over heels

Cool as a cucumber

Hit the road

Get cold feet

Be on the tip of my tongue

Be on Cloud 9

Not my cup of tea

USEFUL VOCABULARY FOR EXAM QUESTIONS

Students are often asked questions relating to intentions or reactions in Reading and Listening tasks. The vocabulary below will help them become more familiar with the types of questions asked. I suggest writing examples with each adjective and verb. In the case of adjectives, they should also learn the accompanying prepositions.

It's also useful to work on Prefixes and Suffixes with adjectives where necessary. Working with opposites, prefixes and suffixes to adjectives in general is very important for the development of vocabulary.

With verbs, apart from knowing the vocabulary, it is important to know the grammar structures following each verb. It would be a good idea to write an example sentence with each verb. For example: *I suggest going / I suggest you go*.

ADJECTIVES AND VERBS

Annoyed	Take place
Keen	Improve
Delighted	Warn
Pleased	Suggest
Upset	Advise
Concerned	Apologise
Anxious	Encourage
Grateful	Attend
Disappointed	Remind
Confident	Allow
Aware	Persuade
Satisfied	Regret
Blame	Complain
Introduce	Avoid
Take part	Reject
Arrange	Refuse
Discuss	Congratulate
Request	



EXAM TECHNIQUES

The following exam techniques are written specifically for the students.

READING AND LISTENING:

Usually, you will understand most of the text or audio. The problem comes with techniques to complete the tasks. Think about the intention of the text and the whole idea. Focus on the question, and remember that all the possible answers will be mentioned in one way or another, but only one will answer the question. Tasks call for interpreting feelings and opinions, but you won't hear/read the exact words. Look for synonyms and clues, such as pronouns and linkers in reading tasks, but don't stop reading at the gaps. Different tasks require different techniques, (particularly in reading tasks.)

Super tip for Listening: Listen to the end before deciding on your answer. Go with your first instinct if you still have doubts after the 2nd listening. Be very sure if you change your answer. I would honestly say 85% of the time your initial instinct will be the correct one unless you're absolutely sure you want to change.

WRITING AND SPEAKING:

These concise tips are valid both for Writing and Speaking

Answer the question they are asking: It's very easy to drift off and write what you want to write, or talk about what you want to talk about and this can make a lot of your output irrelevant.

Avoid repetition of expressions and structures: "I think" is a repeat offender.

Be specific: Give examples and/or reasons, even if they don't specifically ask "why?"

Can I invent? Well, of course you can, but you do risk getting mixed up, particularly in speaking tasks. It is also harder to think of examples and reasons.

CLOSE:

Content: Have I answered the question?

Language: Have I used a variety of grammar and vocabulary?

Organisation: Are my ideas logically ordered?

Style: Have I used the right tone for my reader?

Edit: Have I checked my work? Can I make it better?

Make a Plan: This will help you to include all the points necessary and stick to the word count as well as avoid repetition and disorganisation.

Use your own words: Avoid repeating phrases used in the task, questions or instructions.

WRITING TIPS

I'd recommend that you prepare some useful phrases for each type of writing. You'll find material online or in textbooks. I don't want to make this Handbook longer with a whole list that you can find easily!

So, to the Tips.

If there is a choice of tasks, choose wisely. Remember, think of this as an opportunity to show your level of English, so a task that may, at first sight, seem easier, might not give you that opportunity. Similarly, if you want to write, say, an article, but do not have much vocabulary or ideas on the subject given, you should probably choose a different task.

As a checklist we can use this model.

Content:

Answer the question fully and with reasons. Make sure what you write is relevant to the question. Use your own words.

Language:

Use a variety of Vocabulary, Grammar, Expressions and Structures, for example, inversions, cleft sentences, passives and so on.

Be careful about choosing appropriate vocabulary (formal or informal). Don't mix the two!

Organisation:

Plan your paragraphs.

Keep an eye on your word count, for example Intro 20, Body 50 + 50, Conclusion 20. Use paragraphs, and make sure your writing progresses logically using linking words and phrases. Be careful of repetition. Make sure there is a beginning, a middle and an end. Better to have few ideas well developed than many only mentioned in passing.

Style:

Who are you writing for? Make sure your tone and choice of language is appropriate for the reader (formal, neutral, informal), and for the type of writing (Essay, email...) Do not mix formal and informal language.

Edit:

Check your work and see where you can "upgrade"

vocabulary and structures.

Techniques for paraphrasing:

Positive to negative: **It's cold today** becomes **It's not very warm**

Active to Passive: **The cat ate the mouse** becomes **The mouse was eaten by the cat**

Synonyms: **The house is very big** becomes **The house is enormous**

Noun/adjective/verb: **I was disappointed by the result** becomes **The result was a disappointment**

LETTERS / EMAILS

With informal language you can use contractions and question tags.

With formal language, be careful of choice of vocabulary and use structures with would, indirect questions and so on.

Don't forget your opening sentence before you start answering the question; *Great to hear from you* and remember to include a closing phrase; *Let me know what you think* before you sign off. These depend on whether you are writing formally or informally.

Normally, they will be testing language for inviting, requesting and giving information, apologising, suggesting, or giving opinions and information, so make sure you are familiar with ways to write all of these.

ESSAY

Your introduction should present what you are going to talk about, with a general statement.

Your second and third *body paragraphs* should give arguments with a maximum of two points, well developed, per paragraph. You can do this in different ways. If it is an



opinion essay, present one idea with pros and cons, then a second idea with pros and cons. In a for and against essay, evaluate the pros of the topic and then the cons of said topic.

It rather depends on what type of essay it is.

You should give your opinion in your conclusion, after a short summary.

Remember to use formal and impersonal language, using 3rd person, passives and rhetorical questions. Don't use contractions.

REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

Use a Title and Headings for each section.

Generally speaking we will be using neutral or formal language, writing for an authority, head teacher, town council and so on.

In a report you need to provide an objective evaluation of a current or past situation with recommendations for improvements.

In a proposal, you also need to use language of persuasion and reasons as you are suggesting something new.

NEUTRAL / INFORMAL WRITING

A note: Sometimes we find it confusing to differentiate between a review and a report. A report tends to be formal, and though your opinion is given, the expression of those opinions is more objective. You are presenting the information for an authority which needs to evaluate the results.

In a review, we can afford to be much more subjective, and remember that we are writing more in the style of an article, catching the reader's attention and using much more descriptive, emotive vocabulary.

ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

Remember that this type of writing has to capture the attention of the reader so make sure you have an interesting title and first paragraph, in order to get the reader's attention. You can use a question or imaginary situation.

Depending on who you are writing for, use neutral

or informal language. You can use questions and exclamations.

Give personal and subjective opinions. Express feelings and reactions.

Use descriptive language and a variety of adjectives / adverbs as well as phrasal verbs and idioms, judiciously.

A Review is a type of article.

In a review, it's usual to make a recommendation

Use your choice of vocabulary to express positive and negative opinions.

STORIES

Be careful of tenses: Generally we use past simple, past continuous and past perfect.

Use descriptive language: *Creep*, instead of *walk quietly*.

Create atmosphere.

Use linkers and adverbs: *Unfortunately, Suddenly, Afterwards, In the end*.

Make sure you provide a beginning, middle and end.

Something should happen and there should be a resolution.



SPEAKING

Prepare some useful phrases for each type of speaking, including individual talk, voicemails, opinion, evaluation, likes and dislikes, summaries, agreeing and disagreeing or discussing with a partner.

Marking: Based on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, communication with a partner and examiner, linking and expressing ideas clearly. Don't forget the general impression you give as this also weighs in evaluation.

Tips

Try not to translate in your head. It's better to use phrases and structures that you know in English. If you translate you can make mistakes, and it doesn't sound natural.

Practise talking for a minute about anything so that you get used to how long you have to speak for. When doing a talk, you usually have a time limit, say one minute.

Make sure to organise your ideas. Thinking in paragraphs for an individual talk can be helpful to make sure you have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. This also avoids undue repetition and ensures that you answer the task fully.

Don't stop speaking until they stop you. With timed tasks in general, take advantage of the time. Remember, this is your chance to showcase your ability, so don't think of it as an exam, but an opportunity!

Relax, and be yourself! We have a tendency to sound inexpressive in what is an unnatural exam setting. Speak clearly and audibly. Speaking fast is not always a sign of fluency, and words can get lost, impeding comprehension.

Make eye contact with the person you are speaking or listening to, if doing an exam in person.

Try not to be silent. If you need time to think, try to cover it with "That's an interesting question" or "I've never thought about that before". Actually saying something will get your ideas moving.

If you get blocked, stop, take a breath and start again, or move on to something different. The more you struggle with a block, the worse it becomes.

DON'T end sentences with: "And things like that... And... I don't know... So... And that's all..." **FINISH YOUR SENTENCES!** If working with a partner, make sure you get the opportunity to speak, but don't dominate your partner. *Use your own words!* Don't repeat the format of the question. For example:

"What is your favourite type of holiday?" "My favourite type of holiday is..."

Practise alternative expressions to give your opinion, ask someone for theirs and agree or disagree. It's also useful to practise different ways of suggesting and speculating.

Remember to use expressions to include your partner and to respond.

If you can't think of anything to say, use personal examples, or alternatively, if you are answering a personal question and have little to say, go general!

Always try to give reasons or examples for what you say.



LINKS TO MATERIAL

These links are valid as of April 2023.

VIDEOS

There are countless YouTube channels for learning English. But how do we know which are useful for what we are looking for? The answer is that we don't, unless we spend a whole load of hours trawling through material. So I suggest avoiding YouTube teaching videos, not because they aren't good, but because it is extremely time consuming. I would suggest only using them if you are looking for a specific topic or grammar point, and there are many which will be useful.

That said, as a starter, here are a couple I have used focusing on the curiosities of English.

[Anglophenia - YouTube](#)

Short videos based on the difference between British and American English, from the point of view of a Brit. Intermediate to advanced.

[Dr Geoff Lindsey - YouTube](#)

Videos mainly related to pronunciation. They are fun and interesting, but for advanced levels.

[Mischief DVDs | Our Work | MISCHIEF \(mischiefcomedy.com\)](#)

Great comedy shows. *The Goes Wrong Show* as mentioned in Films section..

GAMES

[Baamboozle | The Most Fun Classroom Games!](#)

These are activities sent in by teachers, predominantly for grammar and vocabulary. There are some mistakes, so choose wisely, but great for grammar and vocabulary if you can find the right game!

DRAMA AND PLAYSCRIPTS

Plays for children and teenagers, tried and tested when I was working as a drama workshop leader for Spanish students learning English. These are for sale in print format in the links below.

Student scripts

[Let's Act in English. A Collection of Plays for ESOL Students de Josiane Hebden](#)

Teachers' Book

[Let's Act in English A Collection of Plays for ESOL Students de Josiane Hebden](#)

LINKS TO MATERIAL

These links are valid as of April 2023.

READERS

Graded Readers to buy

[Oxford Bookworms Library Teacher's Site | Teaching Resources | Oxford University Press \(oup.com\)](#)

Free Short Stories

[Story zone | LearnEnglish \(britishcouncil.org\)](#)

Short stories graded as A2-B1 and B2-C1

Other Publishers are available!

GENERAL MATERIAL

[British Council LearnEnglish Teens | Free resources for teens to help improve your English](#)

[Learn English Online | British Council](#)

In my opinion a one-stop-shop for all the material you need! Investigate for yourself!

It caters for A2-C1. Some of the material is only available to work on online, but most of it is available for download. Some material for B2 is also suitable for B1+. Some material for C1 is also suitable for B2+.

[Home | Onestopenglish](#)

One Stop English. Paid subscription site, but very good if you are prepared to pay.

[Hillside Press ELT | elthillside.com](#)

Vocabulary, Grammar and Readers, all free to download. Levels A1-B2.

Go to Teacher's Resources and then level, then to Photocopiable Material.

[Woodside Weekly](#)

Digestible Bitesize English lessons without the overwhelm straight to your inbox.

There are, as well you know and I have said before, pages and pages of online material.

The sites and links I have listed are trusted. Beware of those that are not. Be judicious. It is very tempting to download vocabulary and grammar worksheets, and while the majority of sites may be perfectly harmless, some have a lot of advertising, or can be difficult to navigate, or have material which has been posted but not checked and in which there are often mistakes.

So, that said, be careful, but be imaginative!



LINKS TO FREE EXAM PREPARATION MATERIAL ONLINE

My recommendations are based on Oxford, Cambridge and the British Council, as these are the exams I am familiar with and trust. Other exams are available.

It's worth investigating all other areas of the sites as each has extra ideas for classes, not only exam preparation. This includes handbooks, vocabulary lists, writing and speaking tips, and so on.

Trinity

[ISE - Integrated Skills in English exams | Trinity College London](#)

British Council Online

Look for APTIS ESOL Exam

Oxford Online

[Get ready for the Oxford Test of English | Oxford University Press \(oup.com\)](#)

[Oxford Test of English | Oxford Test of English - El Examen Schools exam](#)

Cambridge

[B1 Preliminary for Schools preparation | Cambridge English](#)

[B1 Preliminary preparation | Cambridge English](#)

[B2 First for Schools preparation | Cambridge English](#)

[B2 First preparation | Cambridge English](#)

[C1 Advanced preparation | Cambridge English](#)

So that's all folks! Happy teaching!

espanglisher

PROFILE

Josiane Hebden, alias Espanglisher, is a teacher, writer and drama workshop leader who has lived and worked in Spain for more than 25 years. Her experience ranges from teaching English to Spanish students, including preparation for exams from B1 Level onwards, to theatre in English workshops for all ages, as facilitator, director and writer. She has also written articles, short stories and a compilation of plays in English for EFL students to perform.

Check out the Espanglisher blog: Articles, stories, links to Espanglisher podcasts, transcripts and more!

For anyone interested in language, linguistics, culture and storytelling.

<https://espanglisher.wordpress.com/>