

Grammar Games

Cognitive, affective and drama
activities for EFL students

Mario Rinvoluceri

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yes is a pleasant country
if's wintry
(my lovely)
let's open the year

both is the very weather
(not either)
my treasure,
when violets appear

e e cummings

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Introduction

To teachers of languages other than English

I happen to be a teacher of English and so this book is aimed initially at teachers of English and works on English structures.

The exercises and games could act as adequate frames for the teaching of any grammar under the sun. If you want to use the games in this book for teaching *your* language you will find them extremely easy to adapt. Good luck!

What's in the book?

Section I presents traditional games like 'Noughts and crosses', 'Snap', 'Monopoly' and 'Snakes and ladders', modified to allow students to work in small groups and show themselves and you how much or how little grammar they know. Less traditional game frames in this section include 'Auction', 'Double or quits' and 'The money game'.

I use the word 'game frame' because, though each game in this section is offered as working on a particular grammar area you can fill each frame with whatever grammar content you want. The particular grammar content proposed in the section is only there by way of exemplification.

This section has the students working cognitively on grammar: they are asked to think consciously about what is correct and what is incorrect.

Section II is a collection of Silent Way, or Silent Way inspired exercises in which students build sentences and paragraphs in warm cooperation with each other rather than in competition. Your role is to give silent feedback to individuals and to the class, but only when absolutely necessary. II.14, 'With your back to the class', has you sitting with your back to the class giving them four signals, two with your head and two with your hands! Work from this section will allow you to enjoy being productively quiet in the group, while observing the students in full activity.

The average teacher in Europe today notches up a score of about 60–70% teacher-talking time in his or her classes. Just 35% or less is left to the students! The exercises in Section II could bring your teacher-talking time down to less than 5% of the overall exercise time.

Section III moves right away from cognitive work on grammar. In these exercises the students are asked to write and say things about themselves and people who are significant to them within a set of structures prescribed by

the teacher. The students' focus is on *what* they are saying not on the form they are using. *They* control the content, *you* control the structures.

These exercises have the students practise given grammar points while thinking and feeling about human relationships. If you find this work relevant to the way you teach you will find more activities of this sort in *Grammar in action*, C. Frank and M. Rinvoluceri (Pergamon, 1983).

Section IV, Grammar through drama, has the students off their chairs practising grammar through movement, shouting, and writing on each others' backs. Excellent for jaded classes or for groups with lots of unspent energy that needs to be channelled.

Section V is a ragbag of useful grammar-practising activities which I find it hard to classify properly.

Level?

Each exercise is proposed for a given level ranging from beginner to advanced. This refers simply to the grammar content of that particular activity. By changing the grammar content you can, in many cases, use the game or exercise frame offered at a higher or lower level. If you look at I.6 you will see that the level stated is intermediate and the grammar worked on present perfect + for/since. The game proposed in I.6 is 'Snakes and ladders'. By putting appropriate sentences of your own choice on the boards the students play on, you could use the game at post-beginner or advanced level.

Choice of structures

If you glance through the table of contents you will notice that a great many of the exercises work on the present simple and past simple. In most course books these two tenses are given the same amount of space as less used tenses like the past perfect, past continuous and present continuous. In some textbooks more time and effort is budgeted for the present continuous than for the present simple, despite the fact that the latter is used about eight times more frequently in English than the former.

I decided to give more exercise space to the most frequent tenses in the English verb system.

If you think I am wrong, all you have to do is delete these two tenses from the exercises they occur in and fill the frames with the structures you want to work on with your students.

Where do these games fit into a teaching programme?

Hard to answer because I don't know how you teach. In my own teaching I have used this sort of game in three ways:

- a) diagnostically *before* presenting a given structure area to find out how much knowledge of the area is already disjointedly present in the group;
- b) after a grammar presentation to see how much the group have grasped;
- c) as revision of a grammar area.

I do not use grammar games as a Friday afternoon 'reward' activity – I use them as a central part of the students' learning process.

Grammar is serious!

Grammar is perhaps so serious and central in learning another language that all ways should be searched for which will focus student energy on the task of mastering and internalising it. One way of focusing this energy is through the release offered by games.

Teenagers are delighted to be asked to do something that feels like an out-of-class activity and in which they control what is going on in the classroom – they become subjects, while for a lot of the 15,000 hours they spend in school between 6 and 16 they are the *objects* of teaching. The Belgian businessman who came out to coffee after a grammar game saying 'Ce n'est pas bête du tout', was expressing his surprise that a game could be fun and serious at the same time. The point is that the fun generates energy for the achievement of the serious goal.

Can I let my students see wrong sentences?

In Sections I and II students have to decide, in the course of a game, if a sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect. This means that they are presented with quite a number of incorrect sentences.

Some teachers feel this is pedagogically bad – the argument goes that students will imprint the wrong sentences they see. I would suggest that this does not in fact happen in grammar games because the students are wary of each sentence they see and make very conscious judgements about which are correct and which incorrect. You don't willy-nilly imprint what you are highly wary of. There is more to the human mind learning a foreign language than Skinner conditioning his pigeons' responses.

Do these games require a lot of preparation?

For the games in Section I you have to master the rules and do a certain amount of copying of material. Once you have done the physical preparation you can re-use a game without further work in subsequent classes.

If you want to use the game frames I have suggested for structure work of your own choice, you will have more work to do, but if you decide to do this you will be the sort of person who likes this kind of extra work!

The games in Section II mostly require no physical preparation at all but you may find trying to be silent in class an experience you need to prepare yourself for internally.

Section III activities will take up almost none of your out-of-class time and will afford you a view of your students that you are unlikely to get through most traditional exercises. You will have a chance to observe the students discovering more about each other as people but *through* the target language.

The only preparation you need for Section IV, apart from making a few cards for one of the activities, is to warn the colleagues teaching either side of your classroom that they may hear a bit of noise during the period. Here I am making the serious point that, as language teachers, we have as much right to get our classes producing a volume of sound as do music teachers. There would be a strong case for sound-proofing our classrooms so that our work does not disturb that of other colleagues. How can we teach language in decorous silence?

To use Section V you simply need to do a spot of copying.

Four advantages of *Grammar Games*

- 1 The students have to take individual responsibility for what they think the grammar is about.
- 2 The teacher is free to find out what the students actually know, without being the focus of their attention.
- 3 Serious work is taking place in the context of a game. The dice-throwing and arguing lightens and enlivens the classroom atmosphere in a way that most people do not associate with the grammar part of a course. The 'game' locomotive pulls the grammar train along.
- 4 Everybody is working at once – the 15–30 minutes the average game lasts is a period of intense involvement.

Feelings about grammar

Meeting and interiorising the grammar of a foreign language is not simply an intelligent, cognitive act. It is a highly affective one too. Little work seems to have been done by psychologists or linguists on learner feelings towards specific ligaments of the target grammar and the change in these feelings as the learner moves from one level of language command to the next.

I am only at the beginning of the exploration of this field but I have found it helps to make students more conscious of what is going on inside them if you ask them to introspect from time to time during a course as to which structures they like in the target language and which they dislike, and why.

I simply ask students to write down three grammar structures and three exponent sentences they like and three they don't. Students then come to the board and put their sentences up under two headings:

NICE

UGH

They then explain why their sentences are 'nice' or 'ugh'.

Examples

A native speaker of French who had reached intermediate level in Spanish said she really liked the *ando* verb endings in Spanish, as in 'estaba caminando', because they gave a strong feeling of the progressive, of on-goingness, of continuation.

The same person said she strongly disliked Spanish first person singular preterite endings, as in 'recibí'; they seemed ridiculous to her and she regularly got them wrong.

A native speaker of German who had reached near native competence in English said many German speakers reject:

What does he look like?

not only because in German you say 'Wie (*How*) sieht er aus?', but also because as children learning their own language they were taught that 'Was' (*What*) is rude and should not be used.

A native speaker of Italian learning English at post-beginner level strongly objected to the construction:

How old are you?

He found it particularly ridiculous that English speakers even say this to a very *young* baby.

A post-beginner Portuguese speaker was unhappy about the mutual irregularity of:

drINK – drANK

thINK – thOUGHT

She felt it should either be: **dRINK – dROUGHT**
(rhyming with ought)
or: **tHINK – tHANK**

This chimes with 5 year-old native speakers of English who often give *brang* as the past of *bring*.

An Italian post-beginner learner of English reported that these sentences used to annoy him a lot.

You'll remember to close the door, won't you?

Yes, I will.

He said he used to dislike the auxiliary verbs being made to carry the meaning of the main verb. This was his feeling a month previously. He said he now found the English way of using auxiliary verbs in place of the main verb elegant and acceptable. You couldn't do this in Italian.

This student's evidence suggests an evolution of feeling towards the target language structures. Was all his emotion centred on grammar structure? He told us the sentence about closing the door was said to him by his landlady. Maybe the month had given him time to adjust to her as a person, and thus to her utterances, and thus to their form? What I am suggesting is that the socio-linguistic aspect of attitudes to grammar structures can't be ignored.

A native speaker of German with a post-beginner's grasp of English disliked:

What's your mother like?

because the answer to the question should be *my mother likes chocolates*.

A French speaker at post-beginner level in English disliked:

This is the book you're looking for.

because he felt the omission of *that* is barbaric. The omission made the sentence almost meaningless to him.

A Brazilian disliked the expression:

I'm sorry.

because it is routine, falsely polite, insincere.

A post-beginner Italian loved:

Lovely day, isn't it?

because of the music and spring of the intonation.

A post-beginner French learner liked:

I'm going to take my dictionary.

because it was really clear, as in French.

A German speaking post-beginner learner from Switzerland very much liked:

What was it like?

as she found it neat and rounded.

An intermediate learner from Italy liked:

Official notices

because adjective-noun order in English is different from Italian and, he found, much better.

An intermediate German speaker liked:

I wrote a letter with a beautiful pen.

He gave instant comprehension as his reason for liking the sentence – he said that when there is a *did* in the sentence he had to think before he could extract the meaning.

An intermediate Italian learner was unhappy with:

Does she need anything?

because she always leaves out the *es*.

A German intermediate speaker of English liked:

Do you like England?

Yes, I do.

because in German the answer would simply be *Yes*. She felt the English way is stronger and more definite.

Another German intermediate student liked:

I didn't get it.

because in German you would have to say *understand it* – she felt *get* was quicker, more direct, less pompous.

A lower-intermediate Spanish student disliked:

I wonder if you would mind opening the door?

In her own words: 'I don't like this sentence because I think it is not very usual and when I had tried (*sic*) to use it I never can because I think I will be ridiculous.'

A post-beginner Turk disliked sentences with **must/mustn't**. As far as I could gather he disliked the concept of obligation.

Whom does it belong to? sounded bad to a post-beginner German learner who strongly wanted to transfer the *to* to the front of the sentence.

To most students it comes as a new dimension that they have, and that others round them have feelings about constructions in the target language. It helps them to realise that the process of learning a new language besides

being cognitive is deeply affecting. It makes the learning process a good deal more interesting.

If you run grammar-feelings-sharing sessions at intervals through a course students are able to see how their feelings change as they move through different stages in their command of the language. II.19 and II.20 are exercises that may help in this context.

Application of these ideas to lexis teaching

See *Learning English words*, J. Morgan and M. Rinvoluceri (Oxford University Press, 1986).

Section I Competitive games

I.1 Headless sentences

GRAMMAR: Present simple passive

LEVEL: Upper-intermediate

TIME: 15 minutes

MATERIALS: One copy per three students of both the **sentence bodies** and the **sentence heads**

In class

- 1 Organise your class in threes and tell them they are going to compete in finding appropriate 'heads' for 14 'headless' sentences. Give out the sentence bodies. Set them a 7 minute time limit. Tell them to write in the sentence beginnings they think are correct.
- 2 When time is up pick one person from each triad and give them the sentence heads. Ask them to go back to a triad that is not their own and score that group's sentences.
- 3 Ask the scorers to tell their scores to the class and adjudicate on any points of doubt.

Note

This is a type of exercise in which the student is internalising the target structure, in this case the passive, by silently reading it, mumbling it, reading it aloud and thinking about it. This kind of exercise facilitates production of the structure at a later stage in the learning process.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this exercise type from Mike Lavery, the author of *Active viewing plus* (Modern English Publications, 1984).

Sentence bodies (You need 1 per three students.)

- is played by two or four people, often on grass.
- is played with big men in parks in Germany.
- is watched by millions more than play it.
- a try can be converted into a goal.
- is dominated by the Chinese.
- is an event often won in the Olympics by black competitors.
- is enjoyed in countries that used to be directly oppressed by Britain.
- is/are played mainly by men in pubs.
- tends to be played by rich people with a small, pitted ball.
- are betted on by all sorts of people.
- is played with nothing but a simple board and small round counters.
- a man may not be hit below the belt.
- is banned in China, but the Chinese love to play it.
- the big balls have to end up as close as possible to the little ball.

Sentence heads (You need 1 per three students.)

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Tennis... | Darts... |
| Chess... | Golf |
| Soccer... | Horses |
| In rugby... | The Japanese game 'Go'... |
| Table tennis... | In boxing... |
| The 100 metres... | Mah-jong... |
| Cricket... | In bowls.... |

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Variation: Tailless sentences

This exercise continues work on the passive, bringing in the past, present and future.

Sentence bodies – Punishments (You need 1 per three students.)

- In Europe witches used to be
- One punishment for an adulterer is to be
- Students in French schools who misbehave are never
- English school children are often
- In the 19th century English criminals were often deported to
- In a few Muslim countries thieves have their hands
- Enemies of the French Revolution were
- Slaves who tried to escape often got
- The only English king to be executed was
- Until a few years ago murderers in England were
- Murderers in the USA are still sometimes
- If you are caught without a TV licence in the UK you may be
- If you park in the wrong place your car may be
- If the police think you have been drinking and driving you will be

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Sentence tails – Punishments (You need 1 per three students.)

- ... burnt.
- ... stoned to death/divorced.
- ... caned/beaten.
- ... given detention.
- ... Australia.
- ... cut off.
- ... guillotined.
- ... flogged/caught.
- ... beheaded.
- ... hanged.
- ... electrocuted.
- ... fined.
- ... towed away/wheel-clamped.
- ... breathalysed/arrested/prosecuted.

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I.2 Noughts and crosses

GRAMMAR: Determiners: some, any, much, many, etc.

LEVEL: Post-beginner to lower-intermediate

TIME: 15 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Divide the class into team A and team B. Put a noughts and crosses grid (9 squares) up on the board and make sure that everybody knows the rules of the game.

Someone from team A comes and puts a cross in one of the squares. Then someone from team B comes and puts a nought in another square. The aim of the game is to get a row of three noughts or crosses in any direction.

- 2 Now draw this grid on the board:

SOME	A FEW	ANY
MUCH	A LOT OF	TOO MUCH
MANY	SEVERAL	A PAIR OF



- 3 Tell team A they have 20 seconds to choose a particular square and produce a correct sentence using the word on that square. If they take longer than 20 seconds they lose their turn. If they produce a sentence, ask team B to say whether it is correct or not. If team B's judgement is correct accept it and if it is wrong correct it. If team A's sentence is correct, give them a cross in the corresponding square.
- 4 Team B then plays in the same way, with team A judging their sentence and you the correctness of team A's judgement. As the game develops the teams are forced to try and make sentences with the more difficult words in the grid.

Note

This game frame can also be used successfully with the following language areas:

'false friends' e.g. sensible/sensitive
become/receive
large/long

phrasal verbs
irregular past participles
irregular past simple

Acknowledgement

I first heard of this exercise from Julian Quail, a Pilgrims colleague.

1.3 The dice and grid game

GRAMMAR:	Irregular verb parts
LEVEL:	Post-beginner to upper-intermediate
TIME:	30 minutes
MATERIALS:	One copy per two students of the verb grid One die per student

In class

- 1 Give each pair of students two dice and a verb grid.
- 2 Explain that student A rolls the two dice. Say a SIX and a THREE are thrown, he or she has to try and find verb correspondences between horizontal SIX and vertical THREE. The correspondence is STEAL–STOLE. He or she then looks at vertical SIX and horizontal THREE and finds SWEPT–SWEEP. The player writes down (on another piece of paper) the verb pairs found on the appropriate square. The player marks the square(s) on the grid with his or her initial.
The aim of the game is to find more correspondences than one's opponent.
If a player throws the dice and finds no correspondences the turn passes to the other player.
During the game, go round helping with the pronunciation of the verb forms.
- 3 After 8–10 mins play, stop the students and ask them to write a *five* sentence story about anything they like as long as they incorporate the following past tense forms: BIT
FORBADE
SWEPT

Verb grid (You need 1 per two students.)

		1	2	3	4	5	6
		BLED SWEPT BEAT	BROKE TORN BITTEN	STOLE TAUGHT	BIT TORE FORBADE	STOLEN BROKEN BEATEN	WOUND FORBIDDEN SWEPT
		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
1	TEAR BITE	→					
2	BREAK BEAT	→					
3	TEACH SWEEP	→					
4	BLEED	→					
5	WIND FORBID	→					
6	STEAL	→					

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Note

'The dice and grid game' is also very useful for getting students word-building in preparation for exams such as the Cambridge First Certificate in English. The next grid is based on the kind of word-building students have to do in FCE.

Word-building grid (You need 1 per two students.)

		1	2	3	4	5	6
		BALL SIGHT DROP	CUFF BOW	ENGINE FUL SHIP	PICK Y	FALL ARM CASE	ESCAPE BILL
		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
1	HAND LESS	→					
2	YARD STAIR	→					
3	SHAPED LINK	→					
4	WRECK READER	→					
5	FIRE RAIN	→					
6	WRIGHT SEEING	→					

I.4 Auction

GRAMMAR: Mixed structures
LEVEL: Lower-intermediate
TIME: 50 minutes
MATERIALS: One mallet or hammer
One auction sheet per two students

In class

- 1 Ask students if any of them have been to an auction. Ask questions of those who have. Introduce necessary words like *to bid*, *auctioneer*, *a bid*, *What am I bid?* *hammer*, *Going*, *going*, *gone!*
- 2 Pair the students off and give each pair an auction sheet. Tell them that some of the sentences on the sheet are correct and some incorrect. They are to read through and decide which sentences are correct and which incorrect. In the auction that is to follow they are going to have to bid for sentences, the aim being to buy only correct sentences. Tell them each pair has £5,000 for buying sentences and ask them to note down in the *budget* column of their auction sheets how much they are willing to bid for a given sentence. They may not spend more than £5,000 in the auction. The winners of the auction are the pair with the most correct sentences *and* the most money left.

As the students work on the sentences and discuss their budgeting in pairs deny them all language help – it is up to them to take responsibility for what they think they know.

- 3 Before starting the auction tell them you will not accept bids of less than £200.

START THE AUCTION:

- a) Read out the first sentence in a lively, persuasive way, even if it happens to be wrong, and then ask for bids.
- b) Keep the bidding moving fast, keep up a fast patter to convey the excitement of an auction room.
- c) When you come to the 'going, going, gone' stage, be ready to accept last minute bids. When a sentence has been auctioned off make sure students keep a note of the buyer and the amount in their *bought* columns.

- d) After each sale tell the group if the sentence is correct or not and in the latter case give the correct version. Do this fast, so as not to break the 'auction' mood! *Postpone explanation of the grammar involved until after the game.*
 - e) Start the auction with the first sentence but then auction the rest of the sentences in *random order* – this heightens the feeling of expectancy.
- 4 Follow-up the grammar points the students did not understand during the auction.

Variation 1

Once you have led an auction session yourself, have a student or students as auctioneers the next time. With a class of 30 you might have three groups of nine students bidding in three separate auctions, with three separate auctioneers. You will need different auction sheets for each auction and each auctioneer must be given a key. If you don't have different auction sheets people in group A will be listening to what is going on in groups B and C! With nine or ten people per group, budgeting and bidding should be done individually, not in pairs.

Variation 2

You can auction grammar problems that come up in written homework. Don't mark the homework. Take out 12–15 mistaken sentences, re-write half of them correctly and mix them up with the uncorrected sentences so you have a fully student centred auction sheet. Do the auction in the normal way. Then give back the uncorrected homework and ask them to find each other's mistakes.

Acknowledgement

The idea of applying the auction frame to grammar work came to me after having led a values clarification auction as suggested in *A practical guide to values clarification*, Maury Smith (University Associates, La Jolla, Cal., 1977).

Auction sheet (You need 1 per two students.)

	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Bought</i>
1 I wanted that you should know what happened.	_____	_____
2 What did you want to tell me?	_____	_____
3 What happened to your sister last night?	_____	_____
4 I always've wanted to visit Spain.	_____	_____
5 What killed whom and when?	_____	_____
6 Was you pleased to see your mother again?	_____	_____
7 Usually I live in a large town in Switzerland.	_____	_____
8 Oh dear, I must have caught a cold!	_____	_____
9 Nice to see you both – did you meet yourselves yesterday in town?	_____	_____
10 What'd your father say if he heard about it?	_____	_____
11 I'm have a nice warm bath every day.	_____	_____
12 Yes, it's true, I am agreed with you.	_____	_____
13 Excuse me, is there a possibility to have a meal?	_____	_____
14 If I want to learn the language, I must go to French.	_____	_____
15 She was shot while trying to escape.	_____	_____

Auction sheet–key

Sentences 2,3,5,7, 10 and 15 are correct.

The other sentences should be:

- 1 I wanted you to know what *was happening/had happened*.
- 4 *I've always* wanted to visit Spain.
- 6 *Were* you pleased to see your mother again?
- 8 Oh dear, I must have *caught* a cold!
- 9 Nice to see you both – did you *meet/meet each other* yesterday in town?
- 11 *I have* a nice warm bath every day.
- 12 Yes, it's true, *I agree* with you.
- 13 Excuse me, *can I/could I* have a meal?
- 14 If I want to learn the language, I must go to *France*.

I.5 Snap

GRAMMAR: Question tags

LEVEL: Lower-intermediate

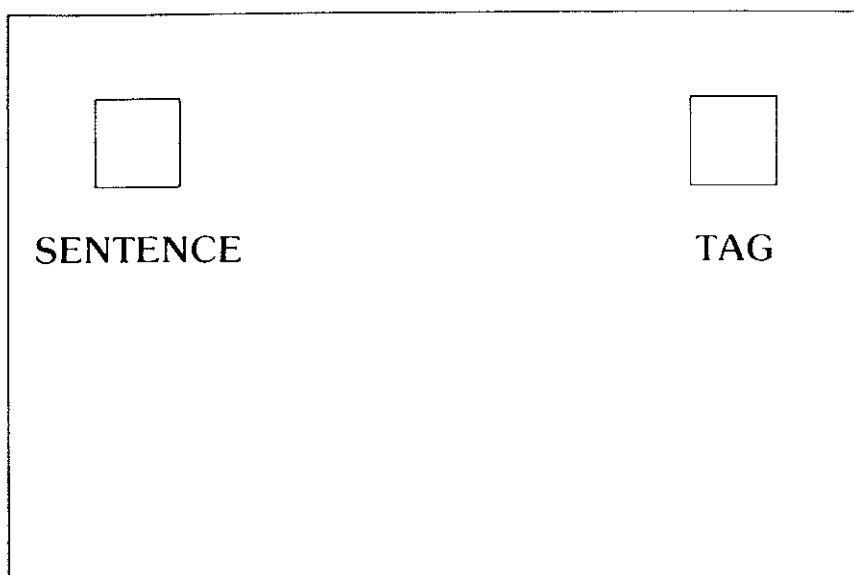
TIME: 20–40 minutes

MATERIALS: One set of 72 cards per three students, which can be made by the students the first time you play.

In class

- 1 Divide your class into groups of three.
- 2 Give each group three sheets of A4 sized paper. Ask them to fold and tear each sheet into 24 small squares. Each group of three students should end up with 72 small squares.
- 3 Copy the 72 sentences and tags on pages 25, 26 and 27 onto the board as fast as you can. Ask the students to copy each sentence and each tag onto a separate small square. Ask each student to help with the copying. When they have finished, each triad should have 72 sentences and tags on 72 different squares of paper.
(If you have enough scissors, you could copy pages 25, 26 and 27 and let the triads simply cut out their squares.)
You only have to involve the students in this 'game-making' activity the first time you play 'Snap'. After the game you can collect in the sets of 72 squares, store them in separate envelopes, and have them ready for the next group you want to play the game with.
- 4 Demonstrate the game to the class by playing it with one student while the others watch:
 - a) Ask the student to sit *next to you* at a table, facing the class.
 - b) Give the student a set of snap cards; ask him or her to shuffle them well.
 - c) Draw two boxes on a piece of paper in front of you both and mark one box SENTENCE and the other TAG.
 - d) Ask the student to give you half the cards and to keep the other half (you each get about 36).
Each put your cards *face downwards* on the table.
 - e) The student turns one of his or her cards over and puts it in the relevant box, *face upwards*. You do the same; the student does the same and so on.

- f) As soon as either of you sees that the *sentence* and the *tag* in the boxes fit together grammatically, you shout 'SNAP'. The first one to shout 'SNAP' gets all the cards in both boxes.
- g) The aim of the game is to get all the cards in your own pile.



- 5 The students play in threes. Two players must sit side by side. The third student is to note down all the SNAP sentences in writing. The players organise themselves with a sheet of paper with two boxes marked on it. They play the game while you go round helping those who have not yet fully understood the rules and disallowing wrong SNAP sentences like: 'You divorced him, haven't you?'
- 6 When the game has run for 10 to 15 minutes, stop everybody and ask the 'secretaries' from each triad to write up a few of their SNAP sentences on the board. Get the students to read these sentences out fast, making sure they don't include a wrong pause between the first part of the sentence and the second.

Grammar note

The game as set out here deals with tags for sentences in the future, present simple, past simple and present perfect. At this stage you may well not want to deal with sentences where the tag and the main clause carry the same polarity, e.g. 'You've been here a long time, have you?'

The game has examples of the will/would tags for imperative sentences and of *nobody* taking the plural in the tag part of the sentence as in 'Nobody's coming, are they?'

The irregular tag: 'aren't I?' occurs.

Advantages of grammar 'Snap'

'Snap' allows students to work on *recognising* what goes with what, without having to embark immediately on oral production. The nature of the game forces them to speed up their recognition.

What structures can you use 'Snap' for?

Any structures where students have to recognise quickly whether two or three parts fit together. If you teach German you could use 'Snap' for agreement of article, adjective and noun. If you teach Spanish you could use 'Snap' with split sentences working on *ser* and *estar*. In English you could use it to make students aware of which nouns take *a* and which take *an*.

Variation

Prepare sets of 40 cards that have the *correct completion on the back*. If you are working on question tags you would have the sentence on the front of the card in large letters and the tag on the back in small ones.

Pair the students off and give each pair a set of cards. Each student takes half the set. Student A holds up his or her card and B has to supply the completion. If B completes to the satisfaction of A (who has the 'model'), then B gets the card. A holds up two more cards one after the other and again B tries to complete. Then they switch and B holds up three cards (not simultaneously) for A to try to complete. The aim of each student is to get all the cards in his or her pile.

While the first game gets the students working on recognition, this variation challenges them to produce.

Acknowledgement

Lesley Randles, writing in *Take five*, Centre for British Teachers, Colchester (subsequently published as *Take 5* by Mike Carrier, Harrap, 1981), describes lexical 'Snap' in which half the cards have words on them and half the pictures that correspond to the words. She also proposes sets of cards with synonyms, opposites and homonyms.

The variation above is an idea I learnt from Julian Quail.

Cards (1) (You need 1 set of 72 cards per three students.)

LEND ME A BIRO,	WOULD YOU?	YOU'RE A GENIUS,	AREN'T YOU?	HAVEN'T YOU?	ARE YOU?
HAVEN'T YOU?	ARE YOU?	YOU BORROWED MY BIKE,	DIDN'T YOU?	THEY WORK HARDER THAN US,	DON'T THEY?
I'M RIGHT,	AREN'T I?	I'M WRONG,	AREN'T I?	YOU DON'T LIKE HIM,	DO YOU?
NOBODY LOVES ME,	DO THEY?	WOULD YOU PLEASE?	HAVE YOU?	HAVE YOU?	AREN'T YOU?

Cards (2)

GIVE ME A FAG,	WOULD YOU?	YOU KNOW,	DON'T YOU?	I'M STUPID,	AREN'T I?
NOBODY KNOWS,	DO THEY?	WOULD YOU?	WOULD YOU?	DIDN'T YOU?	DID THEY?
YOU'RE NEW,	AREN'T YOU?	YOU LOST THE GAME,	DIDN'T YOU?	YOU PASSED,	DIDN'T YOU?
PISS OFF,	WILL YOU?	NOBODY CAME,	DID THEY?	NOBODY RANG,	DID THEY?

Cards (3)

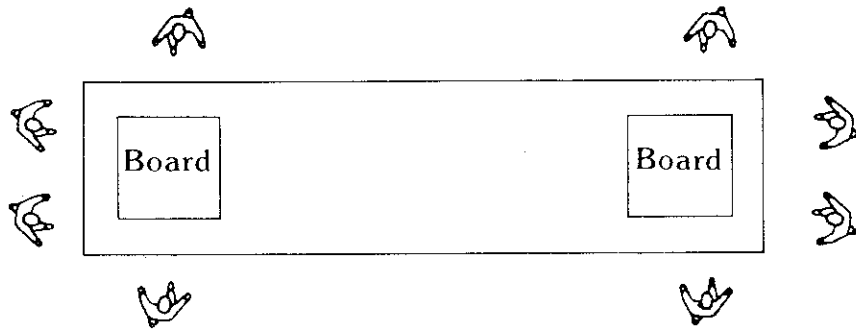
I'M LATE,	AREN'T I?	YOU DIVORCED HIM,	DIDN'T YOU?	AREN'T YOU?	AREN'T I?
DO YOU?	AREN'T YOU?	YOU'RE NICE,	AREN'T YOU?	YOU'VE FELT HOMESICK,	HAVEN'T YOU?
HAVEN'T YOU?	HAVE YOU?	WILL YOU?	DID THEY?	YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT WITH MY HUSBAND,	HAVE YOU?
YOU'RE LATE,	AREN'T YOU?	YOU'VE BEEN HERE A MONTH,	HAVEN'T YOU?	YOU'RE NOT SWISS,	ARE YOU?

I.6 Snakes and ladders

GRAMMAR: Present perfect + for/since
LEVEL: Intermediate
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: One board per four students
One die per four students

In class

- 1 Divide the class into fours and give each group a board and a die. Ask the students to sit so they can all see the board properly:



Ask each student to choose a coin to represent him or herself and to place the coin on START.

- 2 Explain that the aim of the game is to get from START to FINISH. Some of the sentences on the board are correct and some are incorrect. Explain/demonstrate how you play:
 - a) The first player throws the die and advances to the square indicated. If there is a sentence on that square the player says whether it is correct or incorrect and, in the latter case, tries to correct it.
The other three students act as jury and have to decide if the player is right or wrong in his or her judgement. If all three, or two out of three, agree with the player, then he or she *goes forward three squares*. If they disagree with the player, the player *moves back three squares*. If the player lands on an empty square then none of the above happens and he or she stays there. It is then the next person's turn.
A player who lands on a square at the foot of a ladder must go *up* it. A player who lands on the mouth of a snake must go *down* it.

- b) The winner is the first person whose score takes him or her to or beyond FINISH.
 - c) If a player lands on a sentence that has already been discussed, he or she automatically goes on to the next *unworked-on* sentence.
 - d) If a person in the group feels that the others are wrong about a grammar point, he or she should note down the number of its square and ask the teacher at the end of the game.
- 3 Ask the groups to start playing. At first your time will be taken up with answering queries about how to play. Once they settle down to play watch carefully for situations where both the player and the others in the group *agree* on a *wrong* verdict. Don't say anything to them and don't interrupt the game but make a note for after the game. Students will certainly ask your advice when they can't agree on a given sentence. Tell them you will deal with the point *after* the game. Ask them to play on according to the rules. It is vital that you *withhold your knowledge* during the game or you will kill it. The real pleasure and value of the game lies in the students realising and defending their own grammar criteria.
- 4 When most groups have finished, stop everybody and ask if there are disagreements over any of the sentences. If a student in Group A comes up with a disagreement do *not* give him or her an authoritative answer. Refer the problem to the other groups – very often they will give Group A the answer – only give the answer yourself as a last resort. This way the students teach each other.
This is also the time to bring up any sentences where everybody in a group was wrong.

Variation 1

Give pairs of students a blank board and invite them to choose 16 bits of grammar they find hard and to write 16 sentences round these structure areas, half of them correct and half incorrect. Ask them to write their sentences onto the board, leaving every second square blank. They can then add *a few* snakes and ladders. Go round helping the students. In later classes, students play each other's games.

Variation 2

Don't mark the students' homework. Just read through it carefully and pick out 16 mistaken sentences, choosing the mistakes you want the whole group to focus on. Turn 8 of the 16 sentences into correct equivalents. Mix up the correct and incorrect sentences and fit them onto the board. Copy the resultant board so that there will be one copy per four students.

Don't give back the homework – ask them to play the game. In the usual way go through any doubts after the game is over. Then give back the unmarked homework and ask them to read it through. This way they find their mistakes, or some of them, for themselves. The second board, on page 32, is an example of a lower-intermediate class's homework mistakes transposed to a 'Snakes and ladders' board.

Grammar note for board on p.31

6 is correct, though many students are unhappy about the *for* in final position.

8 is correct *and* clearly refers to the future.

24 is correct and refers to the future.

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Chris Sion, the editor of the *Pilgrims Recipe book for tired teachers*, 1980 (Addison Wesley, 1984) where the grammar 'Snakes and ladders' idea was first published, for his help with improving the rules.

Board – Present perfect + for/since (You need 1 per four students.)

31	32 WHAT'VE YOU BEEN DOING WITH YOURSELF THESE LAST FEW MONTHS ?	33	34 WELL, THEY'VE LIVED IN THE SAME FLAT 6 YEARS AGO.	35 FINISH
30 SHE'S ARRIVED LAST WEEK.	29	28 SHE HASN'T WRITTEN FOR AGES.	27	26 THEY ARE TOGETHER 3 MONTHS NOW.
21	22 HE HASN'T STILL COME.	23	24 HOW LONG ARE YOU WAITING ?	25
20 SHE'S BEEN WANTING TO TELL ME EVER SINCE WE FIRST MET.	19	18 I HAVEN'T YET SEEN HIM.	17	16 THEY'RE STAYING WITH US SINCE CHRISTMAS.
11	12 THEY'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR 3 MONTHS	13	14 SHE WORKED AT IBM FOR 15 YEARS.	15
10 HE'S LIVED IN LONDON SINCE 8 YEARS.	9	8 I'M STAYING FOR 2 DAYS.	7	6 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN ENGLAND FOR ?
1 START	2	3	4 I AM HERE SINCE MONDAY.	5

Board – Homework correction (You need 1 per four students.)

31	32 SAVER MILK IN THE FRIDGE AND A LOT OF PLAYS...	33	34 ... WHEN THE FATHER WASHS THE CAR...	35 FINISH
30 SHE WAS VERY HAPPY BECAUSE SHE COULD DO HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW A LOT OF FAVOURS.	29	28 ROBERT'S FATHER WAS AN OLD MAN WHO DIDN'T WORK.	27	26 I IMAGINE ROBERT'S HOUSE HEAR IN THE CITY.
21	22 A LOT OF FOOT ON THE TABLE...	23	24 ... THAT NOW THE PARENTS HAVE TO CHANGE THEMSELVES.	25
20 SHE COULDN'T DRY THE PLATES BECAUSE HER MOTHER-IN-LAW TOLD HER SHE DIDN'T LIKE THIS.	19	18 WHEN THE WIFE IS GOING SHOPPING WITHOUT MOTHER SHE BUYS COMPLETELY OTHER THINGS.	17	16 THE FATHER'D LIKE TO WASH THE CAR...
11 THEY ARE INTO A SUPERMARKET LOOKING ALL THE PRODUCTS.	12 SHE IS VERY ANGRY SO THEY DECIDE TO LEAVE THEIR SON'S HOUSE.	13	14 CAPS IN THE SINK, RICE AND FLOWERS ON THE SHELF...	15
10	9	8 SHE WANTED A LOT OF MONEY.	7	6 I WOULDN'T LIKE TO MEET HER BECAUSE I WAS VERY ANGRY.
1 START	2	3	4 HIS MOTHER WAS A WOMAN VERY TALKATIVE.	5

I.7 Double or quits

GRAMMAR:	Usage problems with like, pay, can, listen, want, be, born, die, etc.
LEVEL:	Intermediate
TIME:	20 minutes
MATERIALS:	A bag of coins: kopeks, dimes, centimes, yen, pennies or whatever is handy One quiz sheet (for your use only)

In class

- 1 Divide the students into between six and eight teams, groups of four if there are 28 people in the class, pairs if you have 14 students or less.
- 2 Explain that the teams are going to compete in an oral grammar quiz. The aim of each team is to get as much money as possible – shake your bag of coins!
- 3 Start the quiz by reading the first sentence from your quiz sheet – if this sentence is incorrect make sure you can read it convincingly; you must not give away by your tone of voice or look that it is incorrect. Pick a team and ask: ‘correct or incorrect?’ Give them time for a quick consultation (up to 20 seconds). If their answer is right, give them *two coins*. If they think the sentence is incorrect and they are right say: ‘Please correct the sentence.’ If they do this successfully give them *five coins*. Now offer them the chance of *double or quits* in the shape of another sentence. If they choose to *double* they risk losing the money already won – the prize money for the second sentence is the same as for the first, two coins and five coins. If they choose to *quit*, you move on and offer the second sentence to another team.
You may of course offer *double or quits* if a team has rightly said their first sentence is correct.
Do not offer *double or quits* again when a team has successfully got through their second question – turn to another team. Go round the teams in turn.
- 4 Work through the 16 sentences at a fast pace – enforce the 20 second rule by having a watch in front of you.
- 5 Work on any grammar points that people in the class were not happy with during the quiz.

Variation

You can make more quiz sheets by using errors that come up in students' written homework. Don't mark the homework. Lift out 16 mistaken sentences, re-write half of them correctly and mix them up with the uncorrected sentences, so you have a fully student-centred grammar quiz sheet. Do the quiz in the normal way. Then give back the unmarked homework and ask them to find each other's mistakes.

Acknowledgement

The format of this quiz is an adaptation of the format used in the British TV programme 'Mr and Mrs'.

Quiz sheet on verb usage

- 1 Do you like something to drink now?
- 2 Let me pay your dinner.
- 3 The general dead yesterday.
- 4 Would you like to come through, please?
- 5 I really like cycling in the rain.
- 6 We want you to feel at home here.
- 7 Are you born in 1965?
- 8 I can to help you, I think.
- 9 Did you listen the concert?
- 10 I like very much reading.
- 11 I am born in Cardiff.
- 12 They listened the radio.
- 13 We can probably do it for you.
- 14 She wants that you understand.
- 15 Did you pay the car in cash?
- 16 Would you like coming to the cinema?

I.8 Find who

GRAMMAR: Past simple active/passive
LEVEL: Lower-intermediate
TIME: 20 minutes
MATERIALS: One completion sheet per student

In class

- 1 Go through any vocabulary from the completion sheet that the group may find hard.
- 2 Give each student a completion sheet. Tell them the object of the game is to find people in the group who had done to them or did the various things on the completion sheet. So student A might ask student B 'Were you conceived in December?' If B says 'yes', then A can write down B's name on his or her sheet next to:

..... was conceived in December
- 3 Tell the students that the winner is the person who gets *most names soonest*.
- 4 Get the students standing up and milling – encourage a cocktail party atmosphere with quick changes of partner – impose a fast rhythm by yourself darting round asking questions to fill in your own completion sheet. The game forces speed and the courage to be rude in the target language.
- 5 Finish the game off by putting the students in a circle and asking:
Who did you find who was conceived in December?
Who did you find who was born at home?
etc.

What structures can you use 'Find who' for?

I have successfully used it for practice of future tenses, present simple (habits), present perfect (achievements/failures), mixed tense practice and practice of the simple past of irregular verbs, e.g.:

Find a person who, when aged between 3 and 10...

rode a bike

bit his or her father

broke his or her leg

had mumps

clung to his or her mother on the first day of school

fought other children a lot

slept in the afternoon, etc.

In constructing your own completion sheets round a given structure for a group you know, make sure that most of the sentences will have a person from the group attachable to them. Don't put in sentences that require no search at all, e.g. in the week after your national football cup final do not give a group of 14 year-old boys a completion like '...who has recently watched a football match'.

Avoid competitions that stress embarrassing socio-economic differences between students.

Acknowledgement

I was first taught this exercise by Jim Brims and later found it suggested in Gertrude Moskowitz's *Caring and sharing in the foreign language class* (Newbury House, 1978). Both Brims and Moskowitz propose the exercise principally as an ice-breaker – here I am suggesting it for rapid, speed practice of a given pattern.

Completion sheet: Past simple active and passive (You need 1 per student.)

- Name(s) Find a person who...
- was conceived in December
- was born at home
- was born in June
- was breast-fed
- readed*..... liked carrots as a child
- was looked after for three months by a grandmother or an aunt
- was sent to kindergarten at the age of 2
- was an only child
- was sent to school at 5½
- was forced to eat fish
- was made to clean his/her teeth
- had more than 15 cousins
- was dressed-up for Sundays/feast days
- was spanked for stealing apples/yams/grapes
- disliked birthdays
- was given a bike at the age of 6
- was often made to stand in the corner
- was caught smoking, at 7
- was sent away for holidays

I.9 Grammar tennis

GRAMMAR: Parts of irregular verbs
LEVEL: Post-beginner
TIME: 10 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Bring two students out to the front of the class – they sit facing each other. You are by the board and have the role of umpire and secretary.
- 2 To start the game student A ‘serves’ by saying the *past participle* of an irregular verb he or she knows, e.g. hidden.
If A gets the past participle wrong, e.g. hided, you give him or her a second chance (like the second service in tennis). If A still gets the past participle wrong then B gets a point and you tell the players and the class what the correct form is, writing it up on the board.
It is now B’s turn to respond to the ‘service’ and give the *simple past* form of the same verb. B only gets one chance. If B is right then A has to give the *infinitive* of the same verb. If B is wrong then you give the correct form and write it up on the board, following which A gives the infinitive.
- 3 Now B serves, choosing a new irregular verb he or she knows. The ‘service’ is always the past participle, etc.
- 4 The first person to get five points is the winner.
- 5 Repeat the process with a new pair. Keep the games short and snappy. Write up the parts of the verbs on the board as they are got right or as you have to correct them. Insist that the ‘spectators’ at the grammar tennis game refrain from helping the players.

Other language you can teach with this game

I have had students practising:

language / nationality / country
Turkish Turk Turkey

adjective / comparative / superlative
good better best

Acknowledgement

The game frame comes from *100 + ideas for drama*, Anna Scher and C. Verrall (Heinemann, 1975).

I.10 The best sentence

GRAMMAR: Phrasal verbs
LEVEL: Upper-intermediate to advanced
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In first class

1 Divide the students into four groups.

2 Give each group four phrasal verbs e.g.:

<i>Group A</i>	<i>Group B</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>Group D</i>
put off	catch on	walk out on	draw up
bring about	come up with	put up with	get down to
hint at	cut down on	back up	face up to
put across	part with	enlarge on	turn out for

3 For homework ask each student to write one illustrative sentence to bring out clearly the meaning of each of the verbs allotted to his or her group. Tell the students that in the next class they will be voting, within their groups, on which sentences best illustrate the meanings of the four verbs.

In second class

1 Ask the students to sit in the same groups as in the first class.

2 Ask them to take the first verb allotted to their group: each person is to read out his or her sentence illustrating that verb. Within each group they then vote on which is the best sentence in terms of making clear the meaning of the verb. They do this for the other three verbs. At this stage there may be disagreements as some verbs have more than one possible meaning. Go from group to group correcting inadequate sentences.

3 Rearrange the students into new groups so that each has people from A, B, C, and D in it. Ask the students to teach each other their set of verbs using their own illustrative sentences and the one(s) judged best in their original group.

Other language you could teach with this game

Difference in meaning between remember to + infinitive/remember + ing.
Similar differences with forget/regret/stop/go on.

Acknowledgement

Beverley Sedley taught this exercise in a seminar at the Department of Linguistics, Cambridge.

I.11 Dominoes

GRAMMAR: Word-building: prefixes and suffixes

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 15–20 minutes

MATERIALS: One set of 56 dominoes per three to six students

Before class

Copy as many sets of dominoes as you have groups of three to six in your class.

In class

- 1 Put the students in circles of three to six round a flat surface. Give each group the two pages of dominoes and ask them to carefully fold and tear the pages to create dominoes. Ask someone in each group to shuffle them and deal them out. People should not show their dominoes to other players.
- 2 Player A in each group starts by laying down a domino. The player to his or her right then lays down a domino one end of which matches one end of A's domino. If the left side of A's domino is SANE and the next player lays down a domino with IN on its right side this is a correct match.
- 3 Play continues round the circle – if a player can't lay down a domino he or she misses that turn. The winner is the first person to get rid of most of his or her dominoes.
- 4 You should go from group to group and be available to help when people want to know if a particular match is correct. Give them immediate feedback.
- 5 Keep the domino sets in envelopes for later use with another group.

Acknowledgement

The domino set given here was devised and tested by Paul Davis. I had tried to use the domino frame for practising parts of irregular verbs but this had proved a mess. Paul discovered that the multiple matchings in word-building neatly fit the domino frame.

Dominoes (1) (You will need 1 set per three to six students.)

centralise	delight	LY	DE	FUL	IM	reliable	young
Y	UN	FUL	IR	ice	twenty	LESS	IR
FUL	UN	smoker	grey	LESS	NON-	ABLE	IM
responsible	old	LESS	DIS	ABLE	IR	breakable	bullet
LESS	DE	ABLE	IN	magnetise	water	LY	IR
ABLE	DE	honest	rust	PROOF	IN	PROOF	DE
regular	dust	Y	IN	PROOF	IN	balanced	break



Dominoes (2)



comfort	profit	European	hour	relevant	enjoy	tolerant	tune
sincere	rust	personal	pain	possible	water	frost	harm
obey	dust	stick	colour	rational	crunch	patient	avoid
sane	mother	Y	DIS	practical	coward	PROOF	UN
advantage	fortnight	ISH	IM	Y	IM	comfortable	pain
ISH	NON-	LY	DIS	visible	help	ISH	DIS
LY	NON-	fiction	power	ISH	UN	FUL	NON-

I.12 The money game

GRAMMAR: Peer correction of spontaneous speech
LEVEL: Post-beginner to advanced
TIME: 15–30 minutes
MATERIALS: 80–120 coins (10 each for one group of 8–12 students)
One sheet of paper marked ‘The speaker is right’
One sheet of paper marked ‘The challenger is right’

In class

- 1 Ask 8–12 students to form a central ‘players’ group round a flat surface, be it a table or the floor. Get the other students to space themselves round the ring of players so they can watch what’s going on. (If the class is small, e.g. 10 students, there will be no spectators.)
- 2 Give each player 10 coins and lay down the two sheets of paper in the middle of the ring of players.
- 3 Explain the rules:
 - a) Player A gives player B a topic to speak on e.g. ‘houseplants’.
 - b) B starts to speak on the topic. Anybody in the group who hears B make a *grammar mistake*, or who thinks he or she hears a grammar mistake can stop the speaker and say:
‘You said: “.....”. It’s wrong.’
At this stage the challenger must *not* propose a correction.
 - c) The members of the group vote by placing *one* coin on either ‘The speaker is right’ or ‘The challenger is right’ sheets. No fence-sitting!
 - d) The teacher then gives his or her verdict. If the speaker is right he or she takes all the money from ‘The speaker is right’ sheet. If the challenger is right, he or she takes all the money from ‘The challenger is right’ sheet. The money from the other sheet is withdrawn from circulation by the teacher. This money is now out of the game.
 - e) If the teacher declares the challenger right, the latter must attempt a correction. If this is right the challenger *takes* two coins from the speaker. If it is wrong the challenger *gives* the speaker two coins.
 - f) Whether the challenge was right or wrong B goes on talking on his or her topic. After a second challenge B must stop talking and pick another student and another topic so the game can carry on.



- g) The winner is the group member with most coins after an allotted time, say 15 mins.

Acknowledgement

This exercise owes something to the BBC radio programme 'Just a Minute'. For a full description of how this can be used for grammar work see *Learning English words*, J. Morgan and M. Rinvoluceri (Oxford University Press, 1986). The exercise also owes a lot to a psychodrama exercise I learnt from Bernard Dufeu, University of Mainz.

I.13 Grammar monopoly

GRAMMAR: Past simple interrogative, conditionals, present tenses, present perfect
LEVEL: Intermediate
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: One board per four students
One die per four students
One hotelier grammar sheet per student (there are four grammar sheets)

In class

- 1 Divide the class into fours and give each group a board and a die.
- 2 To each group give out four hotelier grammar sheets, an *A* sheet, a *B* sheet, a *C* sheet and a *D* sheet. Each student takes one and becomes the owner of the corresponding hotels on the board. Tell the players to keep their sheets to themselves.
- 3 Ask the students to choose coins to represent themselves and place these on START.
- 4 Explain to the groups:
 - a) Each hotelier starts off with £10,000 marked in his or her *accounts box*. No 'money' is provided with the game so the player must keep a note of all transactions in his or her *accounts box*. A player may well find that he or she is noting down negative figures – a player may go into the red (i.e. may be in debt) to the tune of £10,000. If a player goes lower than minus £10,000, they are bankrupt and must leave the game.
 - b) The aim of the game is to get as much money as possible and to bankrupt the other players.
 - c) To start the game player X throws the die and moves his or her coin from START to the square indicated. If X lands on a blank nothing happens and the next player throws the die. If player X lands on one of his or her own hotels nothing happens.
If X lands on someone else's hotel, say a *present perfect hotel*, then the hotelier will read out one of the present perfect sentences to X. X has to say whether the sentence is correct or not. The hotelier then tells X if X's judgement was right or wrong. If X was right, he or she can stay at the hotel free of charge. If X was wrong, he or she must pay the hotelier the amount shown on the square.



If X has rightly said the sentence is incorrect he or she *may* offer a correction. If the correction is accurate the hotelier must pay X half the sum shown on the square.

d) Every time a player passes START he or she receives £500.

You should circulate to help with the understanding of the rules. Since the hoteliers have the grammar information they need, you should keep out of arguments between guests and hoteliers over grammar points. The students can ask your advice over contentious points at the end of the game. This is an excellent diagnostic time for you to really find out what notions *they* have of the grammar.

Note

The 'll in Hotelier grammar sheet C's last sentence is not pure future but expresses intention.

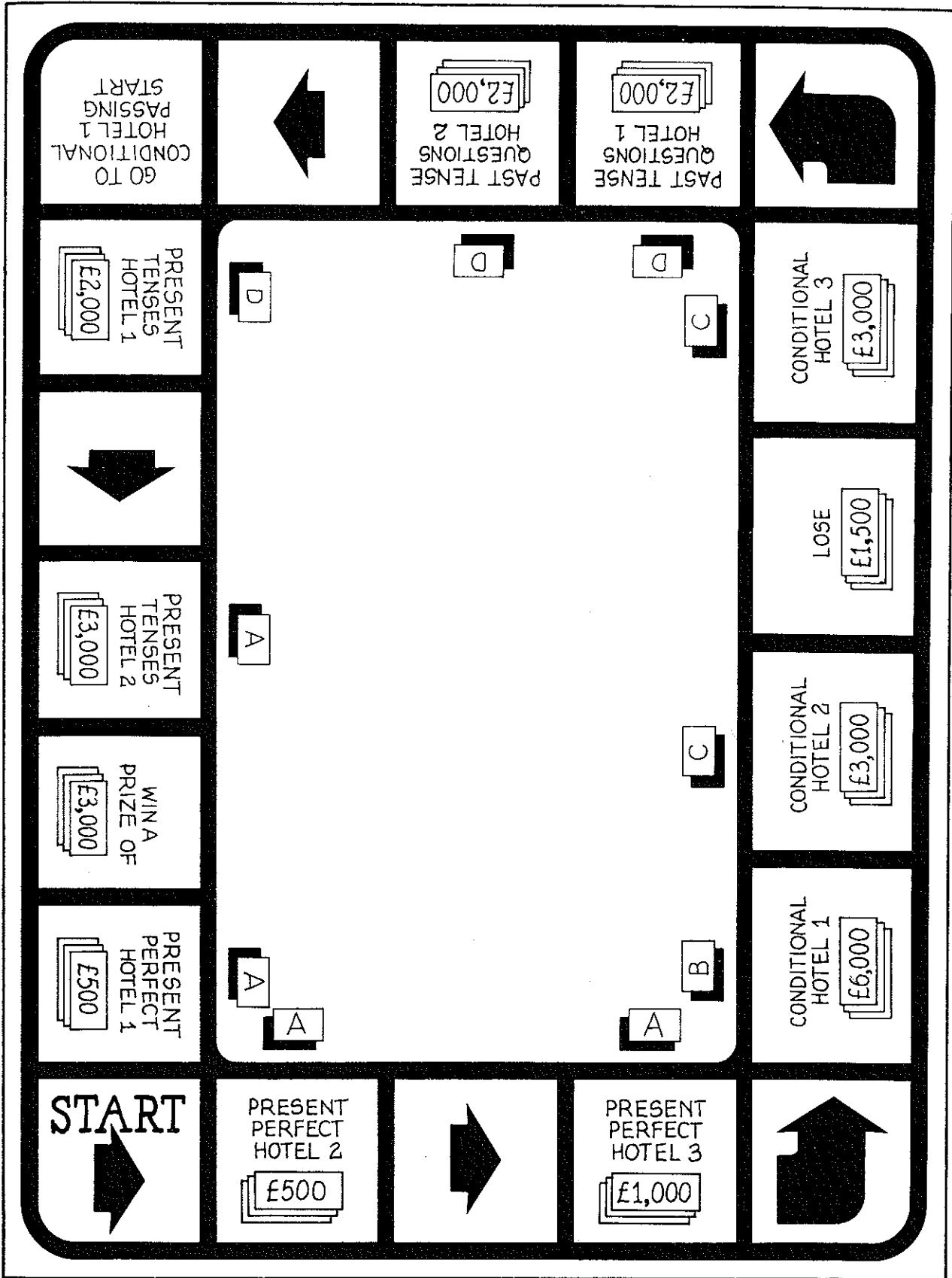
Other language you can work on with this game

The hotelier grammar sheets can cover any area of grammar structure, usage, collocation, lexical appropriateness, etc. that you wish to include in them. The game can be used at any level from post-beginner to advanced. Psychologically the game stresses appropriating and *owning* the target language grammar.

Variation: Personalised grammar monopoly

Possibly the best use for the monopoly frame is to fill it with the students' own expressions, taken from homework they have done.

Board (You will need 1 per four students.)



Hotelier grammar sheet A (You will need 1 per four students.)

Present Tenses Hotel 2

- He's coming down the field, controlling the ball beautifully –
now he shoots for goal! CORRECT
- Yes, true, I quite see your point of view. CORRECT
- What do you think about at this moment?
Should be: What are you thinking about...? WRONG
- What do you think of the state of the Venezuelan economy? CORRECT

Present Perfect Hotels 1, 2 and 3

- I am here since Friday. WRONG
Should be: I have been here since Friday.
- How long have you been learning Spanish? CORRECT
- She's been wearing black tights since 10 years. WRONG
Should be: ...for 10 years.
- I am a musician since I was five. WRONG
Should be: I've been a musician since...
- I have lived in Rome last year. WRONG
Should be: I lived in Rome last year.
- How long have you been waiting for me last night? WRONG
Should be: How long did you wait...
- Since when are you knowing her? WRONG
Should be: Since when have you known her?
- I've always loved Mozart. CORRECT

ACCOUNTS BOX

+ £10,000

Hotelier grammar sheet B (You will need 1 per four students.)Conditional Hotel 1

Wouldn't he respond if you loved him?	CORRECT
I'd've come if you would have told me.	WRONG
<i>Should be: I'd've come if you'd/had told me.</i>	
In a case like that, what'd you have done?	CORRECT
If he paid you the money, it's clear he's serious.	CORRECT
If it will rain, he won't come.	WRONG
<i>Should be: If it rains, he won't come.</i>	
If I was you, I'd tell the truth.	CORRECT
Supposing he asks you, what'll you say?	CORRECT
If I were you, I'd tell the truth.	CORRECT
If it would rain, I'd take an umbrella.	WRONG
<i>Should be: If it rained, I'd take an umbrella.</i>	

ACCOUNTS BOX

+ £10,000

Hotelier grammar sheet C (You will need 1 per four students.)

Conditional Hotel 2

- If you musted to join the army, how'd you feel? WRONG
Should be: If you had to join...
- What'd you have done in her shoes? CORRECT
- If you'd let him know, he'd be here now. CORRECT
- Had she told you, would you have be angry? WRONG
Should be: ... would you have been angry?

Conditional Hotel 3

- Sorry, but if he comes, I go. CORRECT
- It would be better that we insure the luggage. WRONG
Should be: We'd (had) better insure the luggage.
- What would have been done to him if he'd arrived late? CORRECT
- I won't go and see him, unless he'll give me an interview. CORRECT

ACCOUNTS BOX

+ £10,000

Hotelier grammar sheet D (You will need 1 per four students.)Present Tenses Hotel 1

I hate my husband, he's always going on at me. CORRECT

How does he earns his living? WRONG

Should be: How does he earn his living?

Are you believing in God? WRONG

Should be: Do you believe in God?

I am a Frenchman, I am coming from France. WRONG

Should be: I come from...

I live in London and I use to go to the park every day. WRONG

Should be: ...and I go to the park every day.

Past Tense Questions Hotel 1

What wanted you to say? WRONG

Should be: What did you want to say?

What made them leave so fast? CORRECT

Who gave these stupid orders? CORRECT

Who *did* give these stupid orders? CORRECT

Past Tense Questions Hotel 2

Did you were happy in your new job? WRONG.

Should be: Were you happy...?

Did you must get married to him? WRONG

Should be: Did you have to get...

Why didn't they dislike her? CORRECT

He fell in the river; was he able to swim? CORRECT

ACCOUNTS BOX

+ £10,000

I.14 Grammar draughts

GRAMMAR: Present simple, pronoun agreement
LEVEL: Post-beginner
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: One draughts board per two students
 One pronoun/noun sheet per two students (*white*)
 One verb sheet per two students (*black*)

In class

- 1 Pair the students and give each pair a draughts board, a pronoun/noun sheet and a verb sheet.
- 2 Ask the pairs to fold and tear the verb and pronoun/noun sheets so as to produce grammar draughts counters. (If you collect these in at the end of your class and store them in envelopes you will have them ready for future use.)
- 3 Tell the students to place the pronoun/noun counters on the black squares one side of the draughts board and the verb counters on the black squares the other side.
- 4 Now ask someone who knows the rules of draughts to explain them to the whole class.
- 5 Add this rule: a pronoun/noun counter may only take or 'eat' a verb counter or vice versa when there is grammatical agreement between them. So, for example, the *GOES* counter is in no way threatened

Verb sheet

(You will need 1 per two students.)

WONDER	STOP	BUY	REFUSE
WONDER	STOP	BUY	REFUSE
SELLS	WANT	DRINK	GOES
SELLS	WANT	DRINK	GOES
THINKS	LIVES	ASKS	HITS
THINKS	LIVES	ASKS	HITS

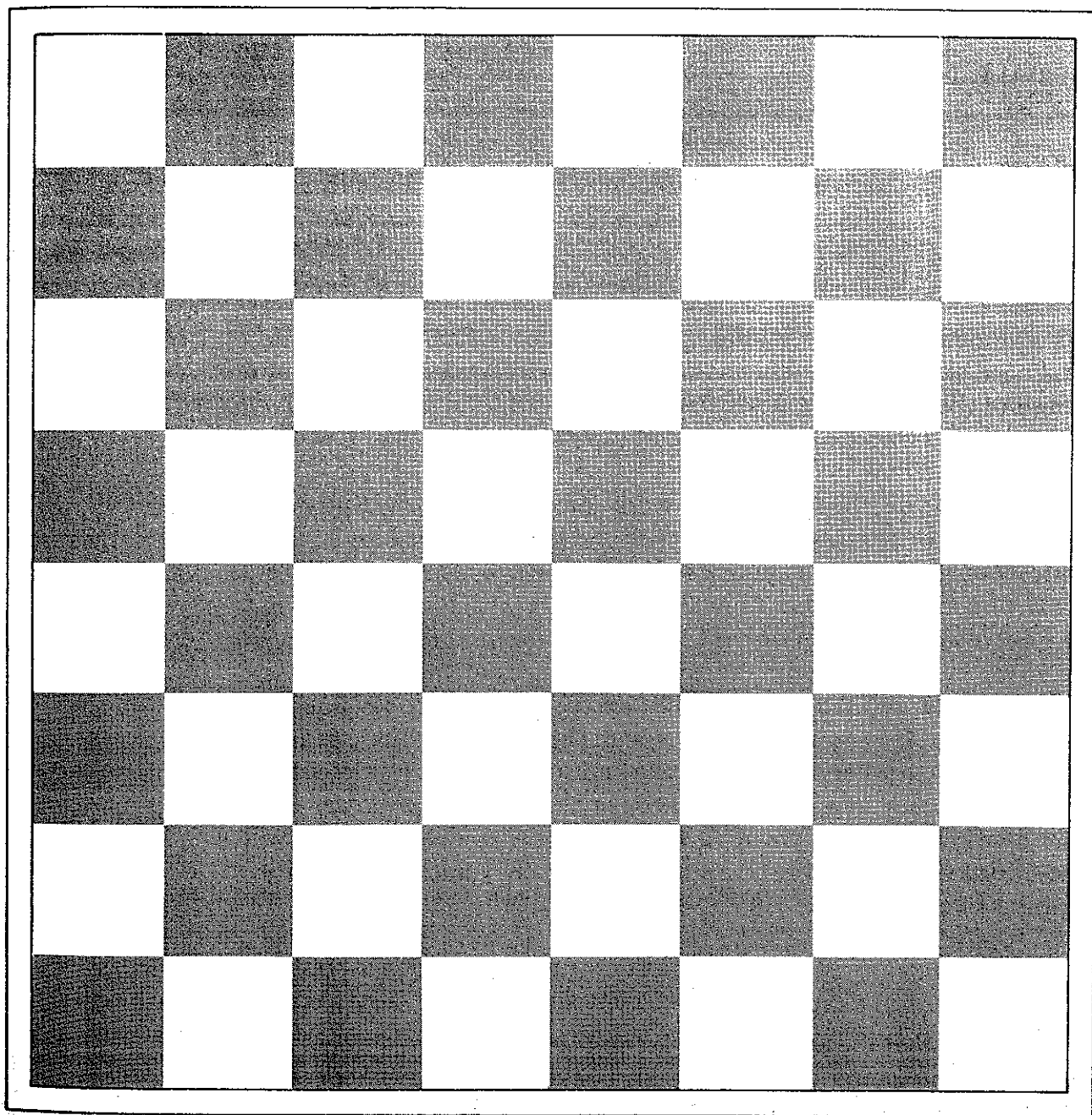
Pronoun/noun sheet

(You will need 1 per two students.)

JOHN	THE POLICE	THE MEN	YOU
JOHN	THE POLICE	THE MEN	YOU
WE	MY FRIEND	PEOPLE	I
WE	MY FRIEND	PEOPLE	I
THEY	SHE	HE	HER HUSBAND
THEY	SHE	HE	HER HUSBAND

- by the *I* counter but would be in mortal danger from a *SHE* or *HE* counter.
- 6 Invite the students to start play. There may be some who don't know the rules of draughts – if this is the case have a couple of students who do moving round the room and helping.
 - 7 If a verb reaches the pronoun/noun back line it becomes a Queen – get the student to simply mark Q on this counter. Ditto if a noun or pronoun counter reaches the verb back line.
 - 8 Give immediate feedback if people ask you grammar questions during the game.

Draughts board (You will need 1 per two students.)



Section II Collaborative sentence-making games

II.1 Rub out and replace

GRAMMAR: 'First' and 'second'* conditionals

LEVEL: Lower-intermediate

TIME: 5–15 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask someone to create a picture on the board of a man, a woman and a volcano. Be no more specific than that. Don't draw the picture yourself.
- 2 Ask a student secretary to write up this sentence (which presumes the class need practice on *if* sentences) in a speech balloon coming out of the mouth of the man or the woman:
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd really better move away.
- 3 From now on you, the teacher, can work completely *silently*. Rub out one of the words or phrases in the sentence and mime the need for a replacement word. As soon as a student volunteers one, write it in, *even if it doesn't fit*. Get the student to read the sentence with the new word in to see how it sounds to him or her. *Silently* enquire if (a) the volunteer, (b) the group is/are happy with the new word. If they are not, and they are right not to be, rub the new word out and get someone to volunteer another word. If everybody is happy with the word then rub out another word/phrase elsewhere in the sentence and so on. The aim is to end up with a completely new sentence. Through all this process you can enjoy your own silence which creates a vacuum for the students to fill; it will also afford you time to observe students in a way you can't if you are chatting away.

Note*

You will notice that the terms 'first', 'second' and 'third' conditional are always written in quotation marks in this book. This is because they are misleading terms, resulting from pedagogically motivated simplification of

descriptive grammar. In real-life English native speakers use all kinds of conditional combinations which go way beyond the neat, mendacious packaging of the so-called three conditional patterns.
For example:

'If Giovanni Basta got through my road blocks last night, then we in the police force can only be called incompetent fools.'

(If + past simple, present simple)

'If you are going to persist in refusing medication, Mr Jones, then my first diagnosis was clearly spot on.'

(If + going to, past simple)

'If I'd've known, I'd've told you.'

(If I would have + past participle, I would have)

'Had the Prime Minister known in time, we wouldn't be in this mess now.'

(Mixture of so-called third and so-called second conditional)

'If you decided to join the club, I'll certainly let you know all our fixtures.'

(Here the speaker is very doubtful about the likelihood of the addressee joining the club.)

(Mixture of so-called second with so-called first conditional)

For a descriptive grammar treatment of the conditional area see *A grammar of contemporary English*, R. Quirk et al (Longman, 1972). For exercise material on the reality of the conditional structures in English see *Well said*, J. Dixey and M. Rinvoluceri (Pilgrims Publications, 1977).

One lower-intermediate group transformed this volcano sentence in the following stages (there were also some abortive replacements I have not included):

1 run
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd really better ~~move~~ away.

2 maybe run
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd ~~really~~ better ~~move~~ away.

3 boss maybe run
If the ~~volcano~~ goes on erupting, we'd ~~really~~ better ~~move~~ away.

4 boss under-paying maybe run
If the ~~volcano~~ goes on ~~erupting~~, we'd ~~really~~ better ~~move~~ away.

5 boss under-paying, he'd maybe run
If the ~~volcano~~ goes on ~~erupting~~, we'd ~~really~~ better ~~move~~ away.

»→

- 6 boss stops under-paying, he'd maybe hope to run
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd really better move away.
- 7 **When** boss stops under-paying, he'd maybe hope to run
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd really better move away.
- 8 **When** boss stops under-paying, he'd maybe hope to **make a profit.**
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd really better move away.
- 9 **When a** boss stops under-paying, he'd maybe hope to make a profit.
If the volcano goes on erupting, we'd really better move away.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this technique at Pilgrims in the summer of 1980 from John Pint, a strong Silent Way practitioner. I do not know if the technique originated with Gattegno.

II.2 Silent sentence

GRAMMAR: Past simple
LEVEL: Elementary to intermediate
TIME: 20 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1) Ask a student to come to the board and draw a woman looking at a window ledge three storeys up – her son is crawling along the ledge.
- 2) Write up the following sentence:
'Anne came down the stairs and crossed the courtyard when suddenly she looked up and saw her tiny son in his brown dungarees crawling along the kitchen window ledge: she was just in time to catch him when he fell.'
- 3) Tell the class they are going to reduce this sentence to one word. In any one go they may take out up to and including three consecutive words. They may not add words – they may not change any endings or re-arrange words. This is how the game works:
 - a) Student A: Take out 'brown'.
 - b) Teacher silently rubs out 'brown'.
 - c) Student A reads the whole sentence aloud, minus 'brown'. As the sentence is correct the teacher silently invites another deletion.
 - d) Student B: Take out 'kitchen window ledge'.
 - e) The teacher *immediately* rubs out 'kitchen window ledge'. *The teacher makes no language judgement at this stage.*
 - f) Student B tries to read the sentence without 'kitchen window ledge' and realises it isn't possible because of the trailing 'the'.
 - g) The teacher silently writes 'kitchen window ledge' back into the sentence and invites other deletions.

It is vital in this exercise that you make no judgement about the rightness of a deletion before the deleting student has had a chance to read the sentence aloud to check their own language feeling. Obey the deleting student, however wrong they may be. If, after reading, they fail to realise the deletion is wrong then you should silently ask the opinion of the rest of the class. If the class fails to see the problem all you have to do is to write the deleted part back into the sentence.

This is *not* a precis exercise. As the students reduce the sentence further and further the meaning often changes quite radically. The students may at first be surprised at this, feeling it must be a form of precis exercise.

- 4 Once the students have reduced the sentence to one word, reverse the deletion process and tell them they are going to build a sentence by adding up to and including three words consecutively. The students may want to try and re-find the original sentence, or they may want to invent a quite new one. Up to them. Each addition must leave a grammatically correct and meaningful sentence, though the meaning will change with new additions.

Note

Given the sentence proposed above the students will do a lot of work on the past tense forms of the verbs *come*, *cross*, *look*, *see*, *be* and *fall* as they work on the reduction. During the expansion phase in step 4 they will almost certainly also work on the past tense forms of other verbs they feel they need. This much can be predicted from the 'mother sentence' the teacher provides. But much of the most important grammar work provoked by this technique is unpredictable and depends on the sequence of deletions the students actually propose. This unpredictability keeps both teacher and students on their toes and makes this one of the most beautiful exercises I know.

Acknowledgement

I learnt the reduction idea from teachers steeped in the Silent Way tradition. The re-expansion comes from Piagetian thinking. A complete example of a sentence reduction process, mapped step by step, comes on pages 98–101 of *Once upon a time*, J. Morgan and M Rinvoluceri (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

II.3 The Marienbad game

GRAMMAR: Present simple, 'first' conditional
LEVEL: Post-beginner to lower-intermediate
TIME: 10–15 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Write this text up on the board as it is printed here, in four separate lines:

Darling
I love you so much
You must never leave me
If you go, I fear I will kill myself.

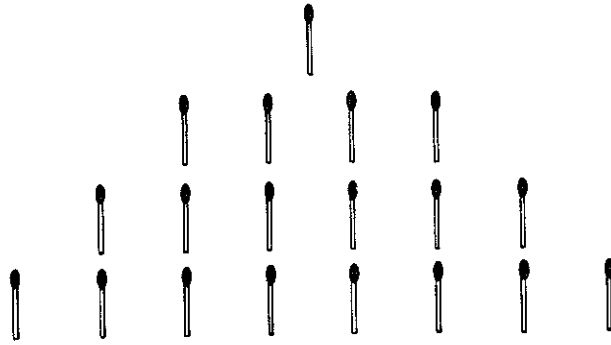
- 2 Divide the class into two teams. Tell them they are going to reduce the 'poem' on the board. Team A starts and may take out a whole line or any number of words within a line. After they have told you what to rub out get someone in team A to read out what's left. It must still be grammatically correct in English; it must also have a meaning, but the meaning will change. If team A tells you to rub out something that cannot be rubbed out, do as you are asked. At the reading stage they will realise that it is an impossible deletion. If they don't, ask team B what they think. Only impose your own criteria in the last resort. Team B now proposes a further deletion of a whole line or any number of words within one line. The aim of the game is to force the other team to take the *last word*.
- 3 The first time you play, the students are really just getting the hang of the rules; now play the game again with this extract from a poem by Adrian Mitchell:

When a man's too ill or old to work
We punish him.
Half his income is taken away
Or all of it vanishes and he gets pocket-money.

Note

I first saw this game played in a film called 'L'Année Dernière à Marienbad'. In the film it was played with matchsticks, which unlike words, have no

grammatical or syntactic restrictions on them. The main grammatical work done by the students is when they realise they cannot take out this or that word or group of words.



The students may be interested to hear the whole of the poem by Adrian Mitchell. (For copyright reasons this may not be photocopied.)

OLD AGE REPORT

When a man's too ill or old to work
We punish him.
Half his income is taken away
Or all of it vanishes and he gets pocket-money.

We should reward these tough old humans for surviving,
Not with a manager's soggy handshake
Or a medal shaped like an alarm clock –
No, make them a bit rich,
Give the freedom they always heard about
When the bloody chips were down
And the blitz or the desert
Swallowed their friends.

Retire, retire into a fungus basement
Where nothing moves except the draught
And the light and dark grey figures
Doubling their money on the screen;
Where the cabbages taste like the mummy's hand
And the meat tastes of feet;
Where there is nothing to say except:
'Remember?' or 'Your turn to dust the cat'.

To hell with retiring. Let them advance.
Give them the money they've always earned
Or more – and let them choose.
If Mr Burley wants to be a miser,
Great, let the moneybags sway and clink for him,
Pay him a pillowful of best doubloons.
So Mrs Wells has always longed to travel?
Print her a season ticket to the universe,
Let her slum-white skin
Be tanned by a dozen different planets.
We could wipe away some of their worry,
Some of their pain – what I mean
Is so bloody simple:
The old people are being robbed
And punished and we ought
To be letting them out of their cages
Into green spaces of enchanting light.

II.4 Expand

GRAMMAR: Word order
 LEVEL: Beginners
 TIME: 5–30 minutes
 MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask a student to draw Eve, Adam, the Tree and the Apple on the board.
- 2 Write a minimal sentence about the picture like this:

SHE GIVES HIM AN APPLE

Tell the students you want them to add one word where you indicate:

SHE GIVES HIM AN ^ APPLE

Write in whatever word a student volunteers and then have him or her read the new sentence. You should stay completely *silent*. If the word proposed is wrong, mime-ask the other students what they think. In the final resort you disallow the word by rubbing it out again.

Continue this process putting in 'carets' (^) *everywhere*, even in places you know no word will fit – it is important for students to discover where they *can't* put words as well as where they can.

One beginner group transformed the sentence above in the following stages; I have included unsuccessful proposals, as much of the learning lies in these:

	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		^	APPLE.	
	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		RED	APPLE.	
	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		^	APPLE.	
	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	APPLE.	
	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	^	APPLE.
	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	RED	APPLE.
^	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	RED	APPLE.
IS	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	RED	APPLE?
^	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	RED	APPLE.
YES,	SHE	GIVES	HIM	AN		OLD	RED	APPLE.
YES,	SHE	GIVES	^	HIM	AN	OLD	RED	APPLE.
YES,	SHE	GIVES	TO	HIM	AN	OLD	RED	APPLE.
YES,	SHE	GIVES		HIM	AN	OLD	RED	APPLE.
YES,	SHE	^	GIVES	HIM	AN	OLD	RED	APPLE.
YES,	SHE	ALWAYS	GIVES	HIM	AN	OLD	RED	APPLE.

Variation 1

At higher levels than beginners, you can ask the students to add *one word*, or *two words together* in the space you indicate. You can ban *one word* and *two words together*, and only allow phrases with *three words together*. Each of these changes of rule dramatically alters the type of sentence produced.

Variation 2

In the exercise described above you retain very strict control. A livelier expansion activity is as follows:

- 1 Give the students a minimal sentence *orally*.
- 2 Tell them they can add *two words together* anywhere in the sentence they want by simply repeating the sentence with their words in. It goes like this:

Teacher: 'Sports cars are expensive.'

Student A: 'Sports cars are *really very* expensive.'

Student B: 'Our *pink* sports cars are really very expensive.'

etc.

Make sure that each student faithfully reproduces the sentence handed on by the last student as well as adding his or her new words.

Disallow impossible additions. Do this silently – you talking stops them talking.

Acknowledgement

I learnt the above exercises, which come from the Silent Way tradition, from Lou Spaventa.

II.5 Contract and expand

GRAMMAR: 'First' conditional

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 10–20 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

1 Ask a student to draw on the board a Japanese girl in a kimono looking questioning by the side of a lake.

2 In a speech bubble, coming from her mouth, write:

I wonder what I'll do if he doesn't come to see me by this strange lake tonight.

3 Tell the students the aim of the exercise is to transform the sentence completely. To do this they may take out either *one word* or *two words together*, but each time they must replace them with *a phrase of three words*.

When the first student suggests a deletion and addition, rub out the word or two words, and add in the three words proposed. Ask the volunteer student to read the new sentence to see whether it works for him or her and the group. You don't need to speak at all – if the students can't make up their minds about a substitution, and if it is wrong, all you have to do is rub out the three words and put back the original one or two. When a student proposes something that is wrong, avoid commenting with your face and body – you can be silent and still very unneutral.

One intermediate class transformed the above sentence through the following stages. Wrong sentences have been omitted.

I really don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come to see me by this strange lake tonight.

I really don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come to see me by this strange *sea of tears* tonight.

I really don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come to see me by this strange sea of tears *some enchanted evening*.

I really don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come to see me by this *marvellous and incredible* sea of tears some enchanted evening.

I really don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come and see me *close to that* marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

I really don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come to *die in agony* close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

I really don't know *just how well* I'll do if he doesn't come to die in agony close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

I really don't know just how well I'll do if he *isn't actually able* to die in agony close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

I really don't know just how well *my old grandfather*'ll do if he isn't actually able to die in agony close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

I really don't know just how well my old grandfather'll *get to heaven* if he isn't actually able to die in agony close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

Some of us really don't know just how well my old grandfather'll get to heaven if he isn't actually able to die in agony close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

Some of us really don't know just how well my old grandfather'll get to heaven, *though his wife* isn't actually able to die in agony close to that marvellous and incredible sea of tears some enchanted evening.

II.6 Sentence collage

GRAMMAR: Let/have something done
LEVEL: Lower-intermediate
TIME: 5–15 minutes
MATERIALS: Strips of paper and Blu-Tack

Before class

Take a sentence with the structure you want to work on built into it, e.g.

Listen mum, if you let me have my hair cut the way I want, I'll have it done by your hairdresser.

Copy each word of the sentence onto separate strips of paper, using a felt pen and writing in capitals. Put a blob of Blu-Tack on the back of each strip of paper.

You will need a set of the words that make the sentence for every five to seven students in your class.

In class

- 1 Ask a 'Picasso' from the class to draw a picture of a girl of 13 talking seriously to her mother.
- 2 Split the class into groups of five to seven – have one group at the blackboard and the other groups round the walls of the classroom. Give each group a set of the words in the sentence (shuffled), two to four words to each student, and ask them to find *a* sentence into which *all* the words fit grammatically and intelligibly.
- 3 Do not interfere or help – let the students argue among themselves where the words should go. They may well end up with sentences that are different from your original one, which is fine.

The sentence above might well turn out:

Listen hairdresser, if you let me have my hair done the way I want, I'll have it done by your mum.

or:

Listen mum, if you let me have my hair cut, I'll have it done by your hair-dresser the way I want.

or:

I'll listen: mum, if you let me have my hair cut by your hairdresser, have it done the way I want.

Sentence collage is quite a neat form of initial presentation of a new structure. The work of creating the collage focuses everybody's attention very powerfully.

Variation

Once students get used to sentence collages you can give them word sets with certain key words left out, say three in a sentence set of 20 words. In place of the three missing words you give the students three blank slips of paper. They decide what the words should be.

II.7 Your words – my grammar

GRAMMAR: Present perfect continuous

LEVEL: Lower-intermediate

TIME: 15–20 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Write a sentence in the target structure on the board, e.g.

Who's been eating my porridge?

Explain to the students that you want them to write sentences that have exactly the same grammar as the above sentence, but all the words apart from the one in the box, *been*, must be different and must be their own words. So the first word must be an interrogative pronoun, the second an auxiliary verb, the third no change, the fourth a main verb + ing, etc.

From the above sentence students produce sentences like:

What's been killing her flowers?

Which ones have been chasing our cat?

- 2 Ask the students to write their sentences on the board – do not correct their sentences before they get them up on the board. Now ask the class to decide which sentences are right and which wrong – allow the students as much room as possible in this discussion.

The first time you do this exercise with a class there may be some confusion in the students' minds as to what exactly you are after. It is therefore important to start with a short, simple sentence.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this exercise from the Silent Way tradition in the person of Lou Spaventa.

II.8 Give a meaning

GRAMMAR: Varied structures
LEVEL: Lower-intermediate
TIME: 5–15 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

1 Write on the board:

I am a hotel.

Tell the students they can change the meaning of the sentence by *adding one word only*. Write up their suggestions. One class gave me the following:

I am not a hotel.

I am a hotel manager.

I am a hotel porter.

I am a hotel failure.

I am never a hotel.

I am running a hotel.

Only *I* am a hotel!

I am selling a hotel.

I am a hotel receptionist.

2 Now give them the sentence:

He told the dustbin.

Tell the students they can add *two words*, either separately or together. Ask them to work on their own and write as many different sentences as they can. Do *not* correct them as they write.

3 Get the students to write up some of their sentences on the board and to decide as a class which are right and which wrong. You should obviously allow sentences like:

He told Mary the dustbin story.

as here the students have realised that *tell* often takes an animate object.



You should also allow sentences like:

He told the dustbin bedtime stories.

as long as everybody understands that here the dustbin is being thought of as animate.

Clearly, depending on your grammatical aims, you will vary the rule of how many words are to be added.

Acknowledgement

This exercise was invented by John Morgan when he was presented with the expansion and contraction techniques described in II.2, II.3 and II.4.

II.9 My sentences – your paragraph

GRAMMAR: Linking words

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 20–30 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask the class to tell you all the linking words they know. You might start them off by suggesting *and*, *but*. Build up a list on the board. There will be some you will have to explain/translate for people who do not know them, or are not sure they know them.
- 2 Write up on the board five open, general sentences around a theme, e.g.
Teenagers have never been pensioners.
In old age you may want to be close to your relatives.
I don't like thinking about ageing.
Some young people feel guilty about old people.
At times old people want to be independent.
Ask the students to work on their own and put the above sentences in any order they want, linking them into a two or three sentence paragraph. They may add linking words and further linking clauses or sentences to make a full paragraph. While this is going on, go round and help students who are getting linking words wrong.
- 3 Ask the students to stick their paragraphs up on the walls of the class-room; they then go round and read each other's.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this technique from Lou Spaventa. An excellent source of suitable 'empty', 'open' sentences round a theme is Caleb Gattegno's *1000 sentences* (Educational Solutions, New York, 1974).

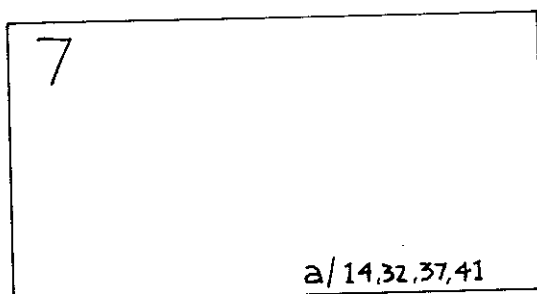
II.10 Complete cloze

GRAMMAR: Could be, must be, might equally well be
LEVEL: Intermediate
TIME: 20 minutes
MATERIALS: A large piece of cardboard or an overhead transparency
Masking cards
One copy of the picture per two students.

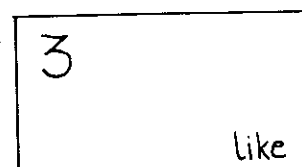
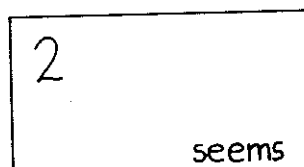
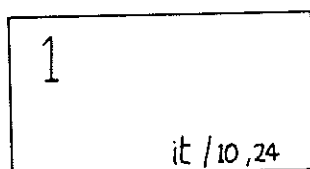
Preparation

If you have no overhead projector write the sentence you want the students to work with in large letters on the piece of cardboard. Number the words. Over each word stick a masking card and number it. At the bottom of the masking card write the word it covers in very small letters which you will be able to read but which the students won't.

If any words occur more than once in the sentence, mark the numbers of the re-occurrences on the first masking card. In the sentence which follows, *a* occurs five times so the masking card covering the first occurrence of *a* will look like this:



These numbers allow you to quickly find the other four occurrences of *a* later in the sentence. The first few words of your masked sentence should look like this:



If you have an overhead projector write your sentence on a transparency and prepare masking cards as above.

Picture (You will need 1 per two students.)



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In class

- 1 Give out the picture without comment.
- 2 Project or put up the masked sentence and tell them it refers to the picture. Explain that they will 'discover' the sentence by guessing each masked word. Tell them they can work on whichever word they like by simply referring to its number. Also tell them that each time they hit on a word that occurs more than once in the sentence you will uncover all the instances of the word.
- 3 If you are working with the sentence on card, stand *with your back to the class* and keep looking up at the masked sentence. Try to react to class's guesses as fast and *neutrally* as possible.

The complete cloze sentence

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
IT SEEMS LIKE THIS MUST BE A TRICK PICTURE: IT COULD
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
EITHER BE A NAKED WOMAN SITTING WITH HER LEG BENT
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32
ROUND OR IT MIGHT EQUALLY WELL BE THE FACE OF A
33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42
FAT, MIDDLE-AGED MAN WITH A BIG NOSE AND A LOPSIDED
43
MOUTH

Note

The complete cloze is an excellent exercise for introducing a new structure or set of structures to a class.

Acknowledgement

I first met the complete cloze idea in Graham Davies and Christopher Jones's micro-computer programme *Storyboard* (Wida Software, 1982), based on ideas by John Higgins. There is certainly an added attraction in doing the exercise on the little screen with green letters but the method set out above allows you to do essentially the same thing but without having to spend around £3,000 to get a class of 30 students round six micro-computers. Complete cloze is one of several exercises that can be reclaimed from the computer by the blackboard-only teacher.

II.11 Cloze dictogloss

GRAMMAR:	Present simple/past simple
LEVEL:	Intermediate
TIME:	20 minutes
MATERIALS:	One copy of the poem per student
	One verbs in the poem per two students
	One nouns and pronouns in the poem per two students
	One other words in the poem per two students

In class

- 1 Tell the students that you are going to read them a short poem. Ask them to note down all the key words they catch as they listen. After the reading their task will be to re-construct the poem as closely and accurately as possible. Tell the students you will read them the poem *once only*.
- 2 Allow a couple of minutes for the writing down of key words following the reading.
Then offer the students either all the verbs in the poem, all the nouns and pronouns in the poem or all the other words in the poem. Have all the people who choose verbs sit together, etc. Give out the cloze version chosen.
- 3 When you do 'Cloze dictogloss' for the first time, break the rule on reading the text once only, as students never realise how closely they *must* listen in the exercise until they have experienced the blankness of not having listened well. So give them a second reading, with the cloze version they have chosen in front of them.
- 4 Give time for the students to 'marry' the key words they have written with the cloze version chosen. Many more words will come to mind in doing this.
- 5 Allow people from the three different groups to work together in pairs or threes. In this way they fill out their texts further.
- 6 Have a student come to the board and write out a complete version, with the help of the class.
- 7 Give everybody a copy of the poem.

Note

The cloze dictogloss technique can be applied to any short passage. For useful grammar work it is sensible to choose an authentic piece of writing

that happens to be loaded with the structure you are after and poems are especially useful as their structure loading is often backed by the full weight of the message, as with the contrast between present and past in 'Walking Tall'.

Acknowledgement

Teachers at Pilgrims were taught the dictogloss idea in 1980 by Jane Lockwood, who had learnt it in her work in Australia. The idea was mentioned in a 1963 edition of *ELTJ*. A further use of dictogloss is suggested in *Once upon a time*, J. Morgan and M. Rinvoluceri (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Poem (You will need 1 per student.)

Walking Tall

Whenever I see
 A new block go up,
 I think of us as kids,
 Impatient to grow;
 How slow it seemed at first,
 The others so far ahead,
 Above –
 Almost out of sight.
 (Would we ever reach your height)
 Then, overnight,
 There we were
 Up there among the best of them,
 And there we remain –
 Stuck on the top
 Of our separate buildings.

Alan Maley

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Verbs in the poem (You will need 1 per two students.)

Walking Tall

see
 go up,
 think of ,
 to grow;
 seemed ,
 – ,
 (Would reach)
 , were ,
 remain – ,
 Stuck

Nouns and pronouns in the poem (You will need 1 per two students.)

Walking Tall

I
block
I us kids,
;
it
others
-
sight.
(we your height)
,
we
them,
we -
top
our buildings.

Other words in the poem (You will need 1 per two students.)

Walking Tall

Whenever
A new
as
Impatient ;
How slow at first,
so far ahead,
Above -
Almost out of
(ever)
Then, overnight,
There
Up there among the best of
And there -
on the
Of separate

II.12 Present perfect poem

GRAMMAR: Present perfect simple
LEVEL: Elementary to intermediate
TIME: 20–30 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Give the students this list of words (on the board, dictated, etc.):

we/us/our
see/saw/seen
have/has
work/s/ed
face/s/d
enemy/ies
and
the
of
to
it
the
to
an

- 2 Tell them to write as many different sentences as they can, working in pairs and using *only* the words given above. Their sentences can include some of the words given or all of them.
- 3 Put the pairs together in fours to read their sentences to each other.
- 4 Put the fours together in eights.
- 5 Read the Arthur Truscott poem to the students or write it on the board.

The beauty of this exercise is that the group partially writes Thurston's poem by following the same restrictions as he imposed on himself. The reading of the poem comes as a big boost to a group of non-native learners.

Acknowledgement

Alan Maley's work from *La littérature potentielle* by Oulipo (Gallimard, 1973) set me thinking in the direction of the above exercise.

Poem (For copyright reasons this may not be photocopied.)

COLLECTED SPEECHES OF P. ARTHUR TRUSCOTT
TRAVELLING BY RAIL
BETWEEN VLADIVOSTOK AND GRAND RAPID FALLS

We have seen the face of the enemy and it works.
We have worked to see the face of the enemy.
We have enemy work to be seen and faced.
We have faced the enemy work and seen.
We have to face the enemy and work.
We have to face the enemy to see.
We and the enemy have to face.
We face the enemy to have work.
We work to have an enemy to face.
We have to have an enemy to face work.
We have faced the enemy work and it's a have.
We have faced the work of HAVE and it's the enemy.
We have the face of the enemy.
Have the enemy – will face work.

Robin Thurston

II.13 From pattern sentence to poem

GRAMMAR: Revision of structures recently learnt

LEVEL: All levels except beginners

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: None

Preparation

Choose six representative pattern sentences from the textbook you are using – try and choose the ones that are most suggestive. In testing we used the following taken from the textbook being used (Robert O'Neill's *Kernel lessons plus*, Longman, 1973):

We've been doing this for years.
Her friend told her what to do.
It's getting harder and harder.
I haven't broken it, have I?
If I told my fiancé, he'd be angry.
It's supposed to give satisfaction.

In class

- 1 Dictate or write up on the board the six pattern sentences you have chosen.
- 2 Tell the class you want them to write a poem, a letter, a story or a dialogue in which they use at least three of the given sentences. They may incorporate the sentences into longer ones but the pattern sentences must not be internally altered. They can work individually or in pairs.
- 3 Have the students stick their writing up round the walls and go and read each other's.

Acknowledgement

La littérature potentielle by Oulipo (Gallimard, 1973), offered me the original idea that you could create a poem out of sentences as bizarre as pattern ones. John Morgan then told me that he has frequently used this technique in his classes.

II.14 With your back to the class

GRAMMAR: Interrogatives: present simple, past simple, past continuous
LEVEL: Elementary to intermediate
TIME: 20 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Write three words at the top of the Board e.g. *explosion, manager, roof*. Tell the students these are three key words in a story you have in your head. They are to ask YES/NO questions to try and discover what happened in the story. They are to come up and *write* these questions on the board, as the exercise is going to be entirely silent.
- 2 Sit with *your back to the class*. Explain that as soon as a student has written a question on the board you will give a THUMBS UP signal if it is grammatically correct and a THUMBS DOWN signal if it is wrong. If the signal is THUMBS DOWN then the writer of the question and the class have to try and correct the mistake.
Once the sentence on the board is correct, you will either nod your head vigorously to indicate YES to the question, or shake it from side to side to indicate NO to the question.
- 3 During the silent, written questioning you may want to give the class another clue – write an extra key word on the board.

The story

The manager of a Sports Centre woke up one morning to find there had been a very heavy fall of snow. He realised that the flat roof of the Centre was in danger of collapsing.

He got on the roof to shovel off some of the snow. His extra weight made the roof cave in causing the air inside the hall to compress and blow the doors out, hence the explosion.

Note

When you first do this exercise with students they are somewhat shocked at working only with your back. They soon get used to it, though, and your back allows you to be much more neutral than you would otherwise be. You interfere less with their learning process.

This is a fiercely grammatically focused exercise and initial interest in the story soon shifts to getting the questions correct.

Acknowledgement

This exercise derives from a marriage of Gattegno's Silent Way with the idea of puzzle stories. For other uses of puzzle stories, see *Once upon a time*, J. Morgan and M. Rinvoluceri (Cambridge University Press, 1983) and *Challenge to think*, C. Frank, M. Rinvoluceri and M. Berer (Oxford University Press, 1982).

II.15 Correcting homework

GRAMMAR:	Mistakes from homework
LEVEL:	All levels above beginners
TIME:	30–40 minutes
MATERIALS:	One team A worksheet per two or three students One team B worksheet per two or three students A large piece of card per six to eight students

Preparation

Select 12 representative mistakes from your students' homework. Put half of them on the team A worksheet and half on the team B worksheet. Write correct versions of the mistakes on team A's worksheet onto the team B worksheet and vice-versa. Wrong sentences and corrected sentences should be mixed together on each worksheet. Do not mark the students' homework.

In class

- 1 Do not give back the students' homework yet. Divide the class up into groups of six to eight. Split each group up into an A team and a B team. Give out the appropriate worksheets and ask the students to work in their A or B teams deciding which sentences are correct and which wrong. Tell the A and B teams to work quite separately.
- 2 During this phase your task is to walk round and listen to the thinking and discussion. Students will ask your opinion – at this stage refuse all help. If you intervene you will kill the exercise.
- 3 When most of the groups have worked through their sheets give each pair of A and B teams a large piece of card to stick up on the wall in their part of the classroom. One person from each pair of teams acts as secretary, writing on the card.
Tell all the A teams to read out their first sentence. The B teams then have to read out their corresponding sentence. Working cooperatively the two teams decide which is the right version; the secretary writes this up on the card.
- 4 Now ask the secretaries to read out the sentences their group consider to be correct. Allow discussion before giving your authoritative feedback. It is not until this stage of the lesson that you actually do any overt teaching.

- 5 Give back the homework and ask the students to mark each other's. There will be plenty more mistakes than the ones you put on the worksheets. These may or may not get worked on. Don't worry – you can't usefully correct everything.

Note

You will find that the students do not confine themselves to working on what to you are the 'obvious' grammar points in the sentences. They often end up expressing doubts about areas of grammar that were not in question at all when you prepared the worksheets.

The worksheets given here, to illustrate the activity, were based on the mistakes made by a group of lower-intermediate students whose mother tongues were Spanish, Portuguese, German, French and Italian.

Team A worksheet (You will need 1 per two or three students.)

My friend is 25 old.
They didn't have modern machines.
My uncle likes too much good meals.
How are you? Have you had a good day? (UK)
I like the ski.
I hope you will enjoy yourself.
How are you? Did you have a good day? (US)
My brother wants to do good exam results.
We walked slowly to Trafalgar Square.
The cupboard of the bathroom.
The first time in my life.
I have been in London 4 years ago.
People could not travel as fast as today.
They had no modern machines.

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Team B worksheet (You will need 1 per two or three students.)

I like skiing.
They had not modern machines.
My friend is 25 years old.
My brother wants to get good exam results.
The bathroom cupboard.
I like to ski.
How are you. Do you have a good day?
My friend is 25.
We walked slowly to the Trafalgar Square.
My uncle likes good meals very much.
The first time in my live.
People could not travel so fast than today.
The cupboard in the bathroom.
I was in London 4 years ago.
I hope you will enjoy.

© Cambridge University Press 1984

II.16 Mistakes dictation

GRAMMAR: Mistakes from homework

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: One copy of the correct version of all the sentences dictated for each pair of students

Preparation

Extract 14 or so sentences from the homework with representative mistakes in them. Prepare and copy a sheet on which all the sentences are corrected. Prepare a dictation in which half the sentences are corrected and half are left as they were written. Mix the right and wrong sentences together. Do not correct the homework.

In class

- 1 Tell the class that you are going to give them a dictation in which half the sentences are mistaken and half are right. The sentences are from their homework. Their task is to take down the correct sentences as they hear them and to correct the sentences they know to be wrong immediately.
- 2 Give the dictation at a slow, steady, deliberate pace. Read the wrong sentences exactly the same as you read the correct ones.
- 3 Allow the class time to work over the dictations in pairs. Circulate and listen but do *not* help at this stage.
- 4 Give each pair the correct version you have prepared.
- 5 Give back the homework and ask the students to mark each other's. They may miss mistakes. This does not matter, since the main thing is to get students to really work on *some* of the mistakes.

Rationale

The dictation format is useful in this correction exercise as it forces the students to make quick right/wrong decisions and, in the dictation phase, does not leave time for a great deal of agonising. Sometimes, with some people, the quick decisions are the best ones.

II.17 Memorising structures

GRAMMAR: 'Mixed' conditionals

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 15 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Write the first two verses of the poem (by Langston Hughes) on the board:

CROSS

My old man's a white man
And my old mother's black.
If I ever cursed my white old man
I take my curses back.

If I ever cursed my black old mother
And wished she were in hell,
I'm sorry for that evil wish
And now I wish her well.

- 2 Read the poem to the class and explain any unknown words.
- 3 Rub out a couple of words from any of the eight lines and ask a student to read the two verses as if the words were still there. Rub out one or two more words, and after each rubbing out ask someone to read the full eight lines. Little by little the students are 'reading' more and more words that aren't there, in other words committing the poem and the structures to memory. If a word is forgotten, point to the exact place where it was before – this spatial cueing often brings it back to mind. Finally the students should be able to 'read' the two verses from a completely blank board.
- 4 Now write up the last verse, *below* the space where the first two no longer are:

My old man died in a fine big house,
My ma died in a shack.

I wonder where I'm gonna die,
Being neither white nor black?

Ask someone to 'read' the whole poem.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this technique from Dorothy Brown on a teacher training seminar in Sydney, but am fairly sure that it was one of the earliest techniques used in EFL, dating back to the fifties or earlier. The technique can be used with any memorable piece of writing.

II.18 Defining birds and brothers

GRAMMAR: Indefinite article, present simple third person singular and plural
LEVEL: Post-beginner
TIME: 30 minutes in first class and 30 minutes in second class
MATERIALS: One copy of the bird page per pair of students

In the first class

- 1 Ask all the students to write seven sentences starting:
A bird... Birds...
Tell them the sentences should describe characteristics common to *all* birds. The sentences should lead towards a definition of what a bird is. As they write, go round helping with words and correcting.
- 2 Pair the students and ask them to read each other's sentences and see how many of them apply to *all* birds. Give out the bird page.
- 3 Ask one student to come and write on the board. Each pair of students proposes their best definitional sentences and the 'secretary' student writes them on the board. If a sentence is wrong in grammar or spelling ask the class to correct it. Don't pre-empt them by correcting the error yourself.

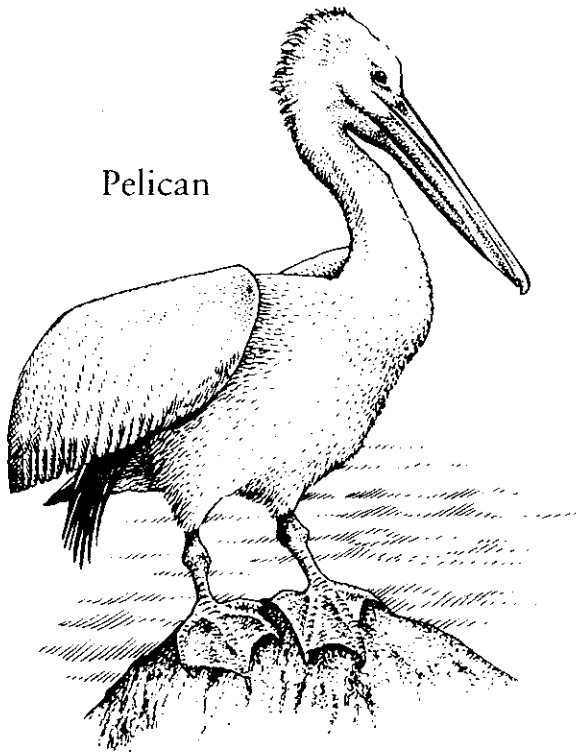
In the second class

- 1 Ask all the female students to write seven sentences starting:
A brother... Brothers...
Ask all the male students to write seven sentences starting:
A sister... Sisters...
Emphasise that they are to write about siblings in general, not about their own particular brother or sister. Since this is hard and people tend to think of their own experience, the concept of *indefiniteness* is made very clear. This is especially useful for students from languages like Chinese, Turkish and Japanese where the grammar concept does not exist.
- 3 Ask a male and female secretary to come to the board and build up a series of parallel statements about sisters and brothers.

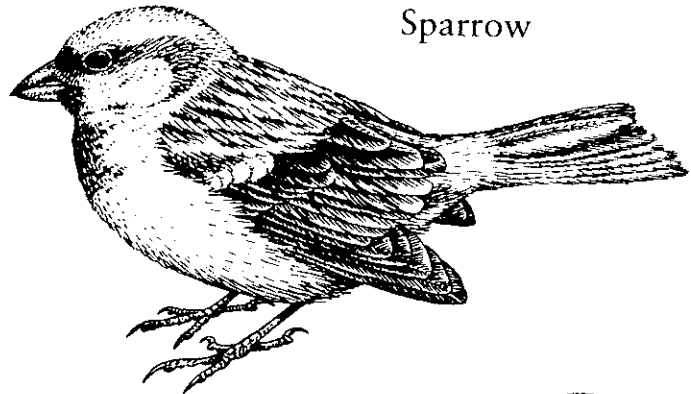
Acknowledgement

The stimulus for creating the activity came from *Your memory*, by Alan Baddeley (Penguin, 1982).

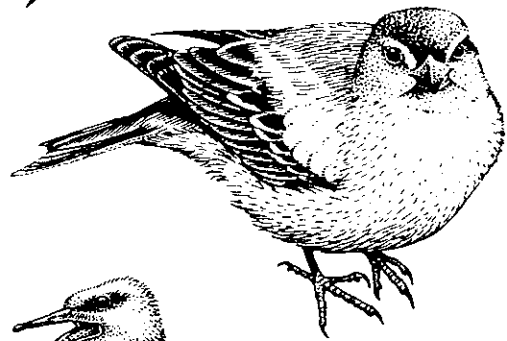
The bird page (You will need 1 per two students.)



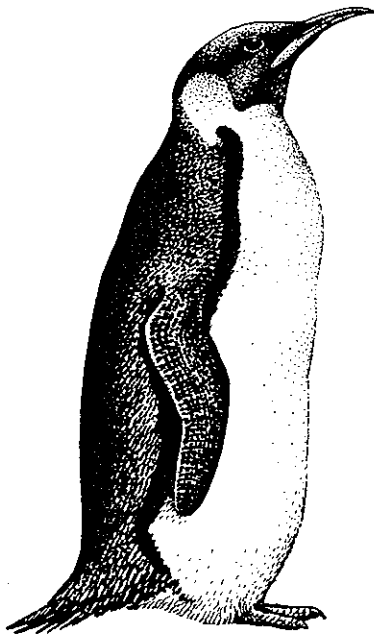
Pelican



Sparrow



Chaffinch



Penguin



Ostrich

II.19 Rating wrongness

GRAMMAR: Mistakes in written work

LEVEL: Post-beginner and beyond

TIME: 30–40 minutes

MATERIALS: A sheet of mistakes drawn from the students' uncorrected homework;
one sheet per two students

In class

- 1 Write half a dozen language mistakes in the students' mother tongue(s) up on the board. Ask them to work in pairs and grade the sentences' 'wrongness' on a scale of 0–5.
Ask for their judgement on each sentence. Allow their criteria to emerge without imposing your own. Refuse to comment if they ask you to.
- 2 Give out the mistakes sheet. Ask them to rate these sentences on a 0–5 'wrongness' scale, as they have just done for the mother tongue sentences. Help pairs who are not sure what is wrong with a given sentence.
- 3 Pick five or six of the target language sentences and ask for the pairs' ratings. Allow discussion – don't impose your own criteria.
- 4 Now ask the students to read through each other's homework and correct it, adding a 0–5 rating for each error.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this exercise from John Morgan.

II.20 Right that seems wrong and wrong that seems right

GRAMMAR: Patterns proposed by the students

LEVEL: Post-beginner and beyond

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask the students to work on their own and write down five sentences they *know* are wrong but that feel right to them.
- 2 Now ask them to write five sentences they know are correct English but which all the same *feel* wrong to them.
- 3 Ask the students to read out some of the sentences from both categories and explain why they feel the way they do. For many people this is a novel and curious linguistic awareness activity.
- 4 To help students deepen their awareness of feelings of grammatical rightness and wrongness in the target language, have two envelopes pinned up in your classroom, one marked:
Right that feel(s) wrong
and the other marked:
Wrong that feel(s) right
Invite students to put new sentences they find that fit either category into the appropriate envelope.
Every now and then ask the class to look at the sentences so collected and discuss them.

Note

The activity described above may seem strange to some people. Here are some sentences that students I have worked with produced:

Wrong that feel(s) right

French: I like very much the drums.

French: I go always to the cinema.

Italian: I have been to London last week.

German: I am here since last week.

Right that feel(s) wrong

French: I have a button missing.

French: I beg your pardon. (She had aurally interpreted *beg* as *big*, and so the phrase seemed monstrous.)

German: I have to have a bath. (Makes nonsense if you transpose it to German.)

Greek: Much money (ridiculous, as money is clearly countable)

French: I am used to living in Cambridge. (a confusing construction)

As you can see, the feelings of the students are partly based on features where there is a clear contrast between the mother tongue and the target language grammar – in other cases the reasons for their feelings are more complex and intriguing. To help students become conscious of these feelings is already a big step forward. (See Feelings about grammar, page 5.)

Acknowledgement

I learnt this exercise from Paul Davis.

Section III Awareness activities

III.1 Times of day

GRAMMAR: Present continuous to express habitual action

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: One time grid per four students
One die per four students

In class

- 1 Give every four students a time grid and a die. Explain that the numbers on the grid are times, starting at the bottom lefthand corner with 6.00 am. Ask each student to find a coin to represent him or herself and to place it on the time he or she gets up on a normal working day.
- 2 Ask the first player in each foursome to roll the die and move forward the number of squares shown on the die. He or she should then tell the others what *he or she is usually doing* at this time. Insist that the student starts with the time, e.g.
'At 7.15 I am usually having a shower.'
If the action mentioned is very vague like 'I am starting work', the other students in the foursome should question the speaker. Then the next student in the foursome rolls the die, etc.
- 3 Once most people have reached the time when they have got to work and started work it is best to ask the whole class to move their coins forward to around half an hour before they finish work in the afternoon or evening. The periods of transition seem to be the most interesting ones in this game. An incidental aim of the game is to reach Finish.

If you are teaching secondary school students ask them to do the whole game not about themselves but about a member of their family who works.

Grammar note

Many teachers associate the present simple with habitual action. When the above game has been tested with native speakers of English they have always

used the present continuous. This is because (a) a time is mentioned, and (b) the speaker is visualising and describing a scene.

Acknowledgement

A similar exercise, focusing on the years in a person's life, comes in *Grammar in action*, C. Frank and M. Rinvoluceri (Pergamon, 1983).

Time grid (You will need 1 per four students.)

9.30	9.45	10.00	10.15	10.30	11.00 P.M.	10-2-11
9.15	9.00	8.45	8.30	8.00	7.45	
6.15	6.30	6.45	7.00	7.15	7.30	
6.00	5.45	5.30	5.15	5.00	4.45	
3.00	3.15	3.30	3.45	4.00	4.30	
2.45	2.30	2.15	2.00	1.45	1.30	
12.00	12.15	12.30	12.45	1.00	1.15	
11.45	11.30	11.15	11.00	10.45	10.30	
9.00	9.15	9.30	9.45	10.00	10.15	
8.45	8.30	8.15	8.00	7.45	7.30	
START 6.00 A.M.	6.15	6.30	6.45	7.00	7.15	

III.2 Animal habits

GRAMMAR: Present simple to express habitual action
LEVEL: Post-beginner to lower-intermediate
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: One completion sheet for each student

In class

- 1 Ask one student to come to the board to be the class's secretary. He or she writes down all the animal, bird or fish names the students can think of. The words should be written all over the board in disorder.
- 2 Ask each student to choose an animal, bird or fish that he or she can associate with. Tell them to avoid cats, dogs and other pets. Ask each student to draw his or her animal. Ask them to hold up the drawing and make the noise this animal/bird/fish makes.
- 3 Give out the completion sheets. The students work on the completions individually – they are writing as their animal *in the first person*.
- 4 Ask the students to get up and mill around. Tell them to find a *suitable* partner and read their completions to each other. It might be dangerous for a spider to pair with a hen.
- 5 Then ask the students to find the most *dangerous* partner they can and read their sentences again to them.

Completion sheet (You will need 1 per student.)

I normally eat

At night I

I am afraid of

When I have to move I usually

If I want to find a mate, I

I don't eat

..... is/are afraid of me.

During the day I

I live in

My mother taught me to

My young usually live in/on/under

I normally live for

III.3 My view of you

GRAMMAR: When, as soon as, just before, just after, the moment, etc.,
whenever + present simple

LEVEL: Elementary

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: One sentence stem sheet per student

In class

- 1 Give out the sentence stem sheets and ask the students to complete them as accurately as possible, working individually.
- 2 Put the students in threes. Don't let them show their sheets to each other. It is best to mix students who have not sat next to each other during the writing phase.
Ask students B and C to guess the first thing student A does when he or she gets up. They should guess as many times as necessary to get close to the truth. Student A then reads out the relevant sentence. Then A and C guess about B and so on.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this projective technique from Helen Green who used to work at the Marble Arch Cooperative, London.

Sentence stem sheet (You will need 1 per student.)

The first thing I do when I get up in the morning is

Just before guests arrive I

Just before I go to sleep,

When something scares me, I

Whenever I forget something,

The moment I hear the phone ring,

As soon as I get home in the evenings,

The last thing I do before going off to sleep at night is

Just after having a bath/shower, I

As soon as I realise another person is angry with me, I

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III.4 Brain storming structures

GRAMMAR: Present perfect, let/make
(in Variation 1, future, present simple, conditional)
(in Variation 2, modals)

LEVEL: Elementary to intermediate

TIME: 30–40 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Write up on one half of the board:
Good experiences I have never had
and on the other:
Bad experiences I have never had
- 2 Get two students with small handwriting to stand ready at either half of the board. Ask the rest of the students to propose experiences of either sort they have *never* had:
I haven't ...
I have never ...
I haven't ... yet.
The appropriate secretary writes the sentences up. Let this brain storming go on until both halves of the board are completely covered with present perfect sentences. Maybe 20–30 sentences on each side.
- 3 Ask the students to pair off and choose, for them, the five best experiences never had and the five worst experiences never had.
- 4 Group the students in fours or eights depending on the size of the class, so the pairs can report to each other on their five best and five worst experiences.

Variation 1

- 1 On one side of the board write up:
Things my parents made me do at ... (+ age)
On the other:
Things my parents let me do at ... (+ age)

- 2 As above, with two secretaries. In each case make sure the student giving the sentence explains the situation sufficiently for everybody to understand its significance. So, for example:
'They let me play basketball at eight'
became quite dramatic when the student explained that this meant her having to travel a long way and walk quite a distance alone in the dark in a fairly dangerous part of suburban Rome.
- 3 Now ask the students to write four sentences with *make* and four with *let* about their children or their possible future children.
Tell them to use the present simple or the future if they are already parents.
Tell them to use the 'second' conditional (If I had children aged ..., I'd ...) if they are early teenagers.
If they are childless young adults ask them to use the 'mixed' conditional (If I have children aged ..., / 'd...).
Ask them to mention the *age* of the child in each sentence.
- 4 Group them in fours to discuss their sentences.

Variation 2

Other structures that could be practised by grammar brain storming:

Things I can do

Things I ought to be able to do

Things I must do

Things I need to do

Acknowledgement

Paul Davis suggested the structures in Variations 1 and 2.

III.5 From puzzle to punishment

GRAMMAR: Past perfect, past simple passive

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 45–60 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Dictate the following:

Crime and punishment

A man got on the train and sat down in a compartment which was empty except for one lady. She took her gloves off. A few hours later the man was arrested by the police. They held him for 24 hours and were then logically forced to let him go free.

GARDEN

LOVER

30 YEARS

VANISH

JAIL

- 2 Tell the students that the two paragraphs above and the key words all come from a mystery story and they have to act the detective and question you. You only answer YES or NO.

Solution

Thirty years before, the gloved lady had been married to the man on the train. She and her lover had disappeared and left the country. Before vanishing they had cut off the two middle fingers of her left hand and buried them in the garden. The police found the fingers while investigating her disappearance and accused the man of murdering his wife and burying the rest of her elsewhere. He was jailed for 30 years for a crime he had not committed.

He did not recognise her at first on the train. When she took off her gloves he did. He killed her. The police had to release him as he had served his life sentence before committing the crime it was for.

If the students need help in their questioning give them more clues. Once they establish the root of the problem as 30 years before the moment in the train it will be natural for them to need to ask questions in the past perfect.

- 3 Give the students a couple of instances of times you were punished as a child, using this kind of pattern:

'I was beaten by my father for pulling the hearts out of young cabbages when I was six.'

Give real personal examples.

Ask them to write four or five sentences on the same model, describing things they got punished for as children. Ask them to include the agent and their age at the time.

Now tell them of a time you were punished for something you did not do.

Ask them to write a paragraph describing when this happened to them.

Finally ask them to write a few lines about a time when they were not punished for something they should have been punished for.

- 4 Put the students in small groups to read out their sentences and paragraphs. Encourage them to say more.

III.7 Exchanging routines

GRAMMAR: Habitual use of the present simple
LEVEL: Elementary
TIME: 30 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask each student to write down ten things he or she normally does on a Sunday, or the normal free day in the week in your country.
e.g. I get up at ...
I have ... for breakfast.
At 10 o'clock I go to ...
I usually sleep in till 10.
- 2 Pair the students. Tell them not to write anything but to try and memorise what they hear as accurately as possible.
A reads routine to B.
B reads routine to A.
(Hamid: I usually sleep in till 10.)
- 3 Ask the students to move round the room and form new pairs.
B takes A's identity and tells routine to C.
A takes B's identity and tells routine to D.
(I'm Hamid and I usually sleep in till 10.)
- 4 The students change partners again. They take on the identity of the person whose routine they have just heard, memorising the sentences as well as they can.
C takes A's identity and tells routine to E.
D takes B's identity and tells routine to F.
(I'm Hamid and I usually sleep in till 10.)
- 5 Ask each student to go to the person whose mangled routine he or she has just heard. He or she assumes their identity and itemises the routine.
E tells A his or her routine.
F tells B his or her routine.
(I'm Hamid and I usually sleep in till 10.)
The person in question then reads out the original ten sentences.
There is often a big gap between the two versions.

Acknowledgement

A group of Bavarian Volkshochschule teachers were shown the principle of role reversal in a seminar at Buchenried in November 1983 and asked to invent activities incorporating the idea. Exchanging routines was one of several exciting exercises to come out of this session.

III.8 It reminds me of ...

-
- GRAMMAR:** It reminds me of + noun/gerund, I remember + noun/gerund,
It makes me think of ...
- LEVEL:** Elementary to lower-intermediate
- TIME:** 15 minutes
- MATERIALS:** A very large collection of snapshots, preferably family ones, in which you yourself don't appear. If you have a class of 30, you need over 100 snapshots. The snapshots need to be loose, so they can be spread on a table
-

In class

- 1 Spread out the photographs and ask all the students to choose one that reminds them of some scene, incident or time in their lives.
- 2 Write up on the board:
It reminds me of ...
I remember ...
It makes me think of ...
- 3 Ask them to write three sentences about their picture, expressing a different memory idea in each one.
- 4 Group the students and ask them to show each other their pictures and read out their sentences, enlarging on their memories where possible.

Acknowledgement

An elder sister exercise to this one is to be found in *Once upon a time*, J. Morgan and M. Rinvolucri (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

III.9 Things I wish I'd known at 18

GRAMMAR: I do wish I'd ... , If only I'd ... , I wish I'd ...

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 15–20 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Write up these sentences written by the best-selling novelist, Catherine Cookson, about her teens:

I do wish I'd known more about sex – at that age I still thought that babies came through kissing.

I wish I'd known in those early days that I had the ability to draw.

Oh, if only I'd had an education at that age!

- 2 Ask the students to pick an age in their past and write five sentences expressing their regrets about that time:

I wish ...

If only ...

I do wish ...

- 3 Put the students in threes to compare regrets.

III.10 Gripes auction

GRAMMAR: I wish + present or timeless verb
LEVEL: Intermediate
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask one student to come to the board. Ask the other students to express their complaints about their relatives using these patterns:

I wish X + past tense
 + would
 + could, etc.

Each time a student shouts out a sentence the person at the board writes it down. In this way you build up a pool of 20–30 complaints about relatives.

- 2 Pair the students and allot each pair 1,000 dollars. Tell them they are going to an auction where they can pay to get rid of their complaints. They have to work as a pair and decide which relative-directed complaints they want to spend money on getting rid of. They then have to budget how much they feel like spending on each complaint.

- 3 When the pairs have had enough budgeting time, start the auction. Do this in style. Abandon your teacher role and become an auctioneer:

‘Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to this complaints auction. For a little money you can get rid of really serious problems with your families. How much am I bid for complaint number 1? 50 dollars from the lady in the corner? 50 dollars, 50 dollars, any increase on 50?’ etc.

Don’t accept bids of less than 20 dollars. Keep up a fast rhythm. Don’t auction the complaints in order. Make sure no pair spends over their 1,000 dollar allocation. Don’t auction all the complaints if the pace begins to flag.

Note

I chose relatives for the example in the exercise above, but you could choose any group it feels acceptable to complain about. Working with foreign

students studying in the UK, I suggested they voice their gripes about their landlords. Sentences like these came tumbling out:

I wish she'd change my sheets more often.
I wish the house wasn't so horribly cold.
If only my landlady would learn to cook.
I wish her son would stop kicking me, etc.

Acknowledgement

The idea of a values auction comes from Maury Smith's book, *A practical guide to values clarification* (University Associates, La Jolla, Cal., 1977). Application of this frame for getting rid of things you don't want is a reversal I learnt from Denny Packard.

III.11 Our lives

GRAMMAR: Past simple
LEVEL: Post-beginner
TIME: 30–40 minutes
MATERIALS: Ten small sticky labels per student
One die per three students
One large sheet of paper per three students

In first class

Give each student ten labels. For homework ask the students to write one sentence on each label about important things that have happened to them in the past. On each label they should also write the month and year in which the thing happened, e.g.

September 1970
I spent my first
day at school.

July 1975
I went by plane
for the first time.

March 1978
My aunt died in
hospital - she was
34.

In second class

- 1 Ask the students to work in threes. They are to read the sentences on the other two people's labels and correct their grammar. You go round and help.

- 2 Give each threesome a large sheet of paper and a die. Ask the students to stick the 30 labels on the sheet of paper in chronological order.
- 3 Now student A in each threesome throws the die and moves to the label the number from the chronological beginning that his or her throw indicates. The person *whose label it is* speaks for one minute about the event described by the sentence on the label.
Next B throws the die and moves to the label indicated. Again the owner of the label describes the event, etc.
If a player lands on a label already discussed, he or she moves on to the next undiscussed one.
- 4 The activity ends when all the players have completed the course. At this point some students insist on going back to one of their undiscussed labels and speaking about it. Great.

During the speaking you go round helping with words they need and doing some discreet correction.

Acknowledgement

This is a variation of an exercise in *Grammar in action* by C. Frank and M. Rinvoluceri (Pergamon, 1983).

Section IV Grammar through drama

IV.1 The shout in the circle

GRAMMAR: Present simple, third person singular

LEVEL: Beginner to elementary

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Form the class into a standing circle and ask one student to stand in the middle of the circle. Ask the student in the centre to tell the others the daily routine of someone he or she knows well, e.g. 'My father gets up at 7.00', etc.
Every time the teller uses a verb the whole group must shout out the verb, e.g. 'GETS'. If the teller says the verb incorrectly the circle must try to chorus the right form.
When the first teller's turn has finished, get the circle to clap him or her vigorously – this raises the energy level.
- 2 Before he or she leaves the centre of the ring get the first teller to designate the next person to come into the centre and repeat the exercise, etc.

Note

This exercise can be used with any area of grammar you want the students to highlight for themselves. You can ask the protagonist student to describe his or her living room and have the circle shout out the spatial prepositional phrases. You can ask the protagonist student to compare him or herself to each other person in the group; the group shout out all the comparative adjectives they hear. Instead of shouting people can whisper, croak or say the verb, etc., romantically, thoughtfully or sadly.

Acknowledgement

In the original drama technique that I learnt from Mike Gradwell, the participants have to shout out the last word or two words of what the circle centre person has said, which pushes the protagonist to say some more.

IV.2 Same and different

GRAMMAR:	I'd like you to + infinitive, comparatives: as ... as ..., ... er than ..., more ... than ..., less ... than ..., the same as ..., different from ..., similar to ..., we both ...
LEVEL:	Elementary to intermediate
TIME:	25 minutes
MATERIALS:	None

In class

- 1 Get the whole class sitting in a big circle. You should also be in the circle, sitting with an empty chair beside you. Start the game off like this:
'Patricia, I'd like you to sit next to me because you're younger than me.'
The student crosses the circle and sits down next to you, leaving an empty chair the other side of the circle. One of the students either side of the empty chair invites someone to sit next to them, adding a reason couched in the comparative form.
- 2 You may want to stop the game at some point and do some blackboard work on the different patterns they find they need to use.
You may also want to change the rules of the game so that someone opposite the empty chair says to someone next to it:
'I'd like to sit next to you because ...'

Note

Another use of this exercise as an ice-breaker and name learning device is put forward in *Grammar in action* by C. Frank and M. Rinvoluceri (Pergamon, 1983).

IV.3 From word to story

GRAMMAR: I want you to, past simple
LEVEL: Post-beginner
TIME: 20–30 minutes
MATERIALS: A full set of word cards per ten students
One pin per student

Preparation

Using a thick marker pen prepare word cards for the following story. These cards will be pinned to the students' clothing. If you have 30 in your class, you will need three sets of word cards.

Store your word cards for each of the six sentences in the story in separate envelopes.

Here is the story:

- 1 A WOMAN VERY MUCH WANTED TO HAVE
A BABY BUT SHE COULDN'T.
- 2 SHE WENT TO SEE ALL THE DOCTORS SHE COULD
FIND – NO GOOD.
- 3 SHE WENT TO A HYPNOTIST WHO SAID 'I WANT
YOU TO RELAX.'
- 4 'I DON'T WANT YOU TO WORRY. I WANT YOU TO
GO TO SLEEP.'
- 5 'I WANT YOU TO BECOME A HEN AND LAY AN
EGG.'
- 6 SHE LAID AN EGG! LATER ON SHE HAD A BABY.

In class

- 1 Divide your class into standing circles of ten. Give each student in the circle a pin and a word card from the first sentence. Ask the students to pin the word cards to their fronts.

- 2 Ask the students to re-arrange themselves in their circles until they have put together a sentence that makes sense.
- 3 As soon as a circle has got a correct sentence, ask them to lay it out in order on a table or desk top near them. Give them the second sentence, and so on.

Note

You may well not have a class of 10 or 20 or 30. When you put the words on to cards you can alter the number of words you put on each card and so make the sentences fit your particular class size.

Alternatively, you can, supposing you have 27 people in your class, organise them into three circles of nine, and have the tenth card in each circle on the floor where everybody can see it.

This technique can be used with any structure-loaded story – it is an excellent way of introducing a structure for the first time.

Acknowledgement

I first learnt the idea of people as words in a sentence in an *All's well* (by Sagot et al, Didier, 1974) class in the Adult Migrant Education Service centre in Bankstown, Sydney, Australia.

IV.4 Back-writing

GRAMMAR: Irregular plurals

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS: Cards with irregular singulars and plurals on them

In class

- 1 Have the students stand up and take a partner. Tell them to imagine that their partner's back is one of those white boards that someone has written on with an indelible pen. They must try and rub it clean. A rubs B's back. Ask them to change round. B rubs A's back.
- 2 Ask A to write any irregular plurals he or she can remember on B's back. B then writes the singular form on A's back.
e.g. A writes OXEN
B writes OX
Tell the students to write slowly and to write in capitals (with their fingers).
- 3 Start handing students cards with nouns on, some in the plural, some in the singular. In this way you feed new material into the exercise and the back-writing becomes a learning as well as a revision process.
The cards could have words like these on them:

LOAF	GENII	GENIUSES
SCARF	TEETH	SCARVES
MANSERVANT	HYPOTHESIS	FORMULA
SCARFS	LICE	BROTHERS
LOUSE	MEMORANDUM	MEMORANDA
BROTHER	MENSERVANTS	BRETHREN
FORMULAS	LOAVES	ANALYSES
TROUT	FISH	CORPUSES
LEBANESE	CORPUS	HYPOTHESES
GENIUS	FORMULAE	TROUT
CORPORA	MEMORANDUMS	TOOTH
ANALYSIS	FISH	



- 4 Finish the exercise by asking a student to come to the board and, with the help of the others, list all the singulars and plurals that have been worked on round the room.

Grammar note

English is in a state of flux at the moment over the plurals of many words of Latin and Greek origin. Many nouns that used to take Latin-sounding plurals, e.g. corpus – corpora are now being regularised and given English plurals, e.g. corpus – corpuses. For a full analysis of this area, see Quirk's *A grammar of contemporary English* (Longman, 1972).

Back-writing is useful for vocabulary revision and for work on any language elements that match each other, e.g.

infinitive – past participle

names of countries – names of languages

and for work on collocation, e.g.

one student back-writes SEA and the other replies with DEEP BLUE.

Acknowledgement

I learnt back-writing from colleagues in France who had learnt the technique in seminars run by Eve Ogonowski.

IV.5 Experiences

GRAMMAR: Present perfect interrogative, *they* used as unisex singular pronoun

LEVEL: Elementary

TIME: 15 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Ask one person to go out of the room.
- 2 The group designates another student as 'it'.
- 3 The person outside comes back into the classroom and has to ask present perfect questions about the designated person's experiences. The class may answer only YES or NO. The outsider has to guess who 'it' is from the answers. This sort of question will be used:
Have they ever been to ... ?
Have they been in this class since September?

Note

For the game to work efficiently people need to know each other fairly well.

This game structure can be adapted to practising other verb structures,

e.g. past simple

future

'second' conditional, etc.

Section V Miscellany

V.1 Verb search

GRAMMAR: Irregular verbs

LEVEL: Post-beginner

TIME: 10–20 minutes

MATERIALS: One verb search sheet per two students

In class

1 Give each pair a verb search sheet. Tell the students there are a large number of irregular verbs buried in the sheet – they will find infinitives, pasts and past participles. Their task is to unearth as many verb parts as they can as fast as they can. Every time they unearth a verb part they are to jot it down and also jot down the other two parts and its meaning in their own language.

Warn them they may find verb parts going horizontally, vertically, and diagonally, as well as backwards.

2 After about 5 minutes' search ask the students to change pairs. Do this a couple of times during the exercise.

While this is going on go round and check that they are trying to jot down the other parts of the verb – help especially with pronunciation – get them to say the parts of each verb they have written down. You will have to go fast to get round the whole class – your speed will help to heighten their sense of urgency in the search.

Note

The search idea can be used for getting students to focus on different sets of words which they have to commit to memory,

e.g. Irregular comparatives and superlatives and those that require a spelling change like *happy/happier*

Verbs that only take the infinitive

Verbs that only take the gerund

If you are teaching Spanish you can use this technique for focusing on root changing verbs, e.g. *rogar/ruego*, etc.

Verb search sheet (You will need 1 per two students.)

K	E	P	T	Q	D	E	R	T	D	R	E	A	M	T
Y	U	I	U	O	P	R	A	S	D	F	G	H	E	W
H	K	L	C	Z	X	C	I	V	B	M	E	E	T	I
I	D	A	B	G	E	I	D	V	O	R	H	V	Y	S
D	A	E	O	R	R	P	K	T	E	W	X	O	W	L
D	M	A	N	B	V	E	C	X	Z	N	A	S	D	E
E	A	T	U	F	E	T	W	Q	W	E	R	T	U	P
N	Y	E	O	P	P	A	S	D	F	S	P	E	N	T
Z	O	K	H	S	F	U	O	P	W	A	P	H	E	Y
M	N	V	B	W	C	X	G	H	J	B	U	Y	O	W
C	A	E	T	O	U	S	G	K	G	O	T	A	T	F
T	A	G	O	N	E	Y	T	N	O	U	G	A	T	T
W	H	T	G	R	S	T	H	O	U	G	H	T	O	F
T	E	M	C	B	O	T	I	Q	E	H	E	Y	O	N
Z	M	X	C	H	V	N	N	O	U	T	N	E	J	K
H	I	H	R	H	A	N	K	S	O	U	D	T	O	T
O	I	R	I	V	U	S	W	I	T	P	F	Z	K	I
Q	W	D	E	D	R	R	Y	P	A	E	G	V	E	L
E	M	E	Y	T	E	A	T	F	D	F	I	N	D	A
C	O	T	T	Y	A	G	I	E	O	K	I	M	P	U
J	O	Z	A	T	U	N	E	U	X	U	P	W	I	E
C	A	T	A	L	U	T	N	P	D	O	N	O	R	T
F	F	A	L	L	O	D	T	U	I	Q	M	U	N	D
W	E	R	T	L	A	S	Y	N	E	M	A	N	U	T
F	O	F	A	L	L	E	N	Y	W	I	N	D	L	Y

Verb search sheet: Teacher's master

K E P T D D R E A M T
 R M E E T
H I D D E N G R E W I V E N S L E P T
 A T E E W N S P E N T
 P S P E N T
C A T W O N G O T B U Y
 T H O U G H T T H O U G H T
 C T H I N K T H O U G H T
H I D H I D U R T J O K E D
 D E R T F I N D
 U O W O U N D
F A L L D N W O U N D
 F A L L E N W I N D

V.2 Translation 'Call my bluff'

GRAMMAR: Mixed structures

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 15–30 minutes

MATERIALS: One translation sheet per two students

This frame can only be used for classes where the students all share the same mother tongue. The example given here is for French speakers learning English.

In class

- 1 Pair the students and give each pair a translation sheet. Tell the students that they have to decide which of the translations into English are correct. Sometimes one translation is right, sometimes more than one. Sometimes none of the translations are right – when this is the case they are to write in the correct translation themselves.
- 2 Ask the students to change pairs two or three times during the course of the exercise.
Go round observing but *do not help* the students, even if they ask you. In this exercise they are checking their own criteria about the grammar of the two languages.
- 3 Ask a student to write up on the board the six correct translations he or she has decided on. Allow discussion of contentious points – only come in yourself in the last resort. What they teach themselves will stick much longer than what you dictate to them.

Translation sheet (You will need 1 per two students.)

- 1 *J'y suis allé la semaine dernière.*
 - a) I am gone there last week.
 - b) I am last week gone there.
 - c) I went there last week.

- 2 *J'ai toujours voulu la voir.*
 - a) I wanted always to see her.
 - b) I always wanted to see her.
 - c) I have always been wanting to see her.
 - d) I've always wanted to have it.

- 3 *Est-ce qu'il est toujours chez vous?*
 - a) He is still at you?
 - b) Is he always with you?
 - c) Is he with you yet?
 - d) Is he still at your house?
 - e) Is he still with you ?

- 4 *Qu'est-ce-que vous avez fait hier soir?*
 - a) What were you doing yesterday evening?
 - b) What have you done yesterday evening?
 - c) What did you yesterday evening?
 - d) Yesterday evening, what've you done?

- 5 *On est là depuis samedi soir.*
 - a) We have been tired since Saturday evening.
 - b) One has been here since last Saturday evening.
 - c) We've been here since last Saturday evening.
 - d) We are here since Saturday evening.

- 6 *Elle habite Grenoble depuis au moins 5 ans.*
 - a) She inhabits Grenoble for at least 5 years.
 - b) She's lived in Grenoble at least 5 years.
 - c) She lives Grenoble since at least 5 years.
 - d) She has lived in Grenoble for at less 5 years.
 - e) She has been living in Grenoble for at least 5 years.

V.3 Verbs to story

GRAMMAR: Regular and irregular past simple

LEVEL: Post-beginner

TIME: 30–40 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

1 Write these words up on the board or dictate them:

PUT	RAN	SAW
PUT ON	WENT IN	SAID
WENT OUT	ATE UP	JUMPED OUT
WALKED	PUT ON	ATE UP
STOPPED	LAY DOWN	HEARD
PICKED	CAME	CAME IN
SAW	KNOCKED	KILLED
ASKED	SAID	LIVED
ANSWERED	WENT IN	

- 2 Check the students understand all the verbs – explain unknown ones.
- 3 Put the students in pairs. Tell them all the verbs come from a very well known children's story. Ask them to work together to decide which story it is and to tell the story to each other in English.
Different students may decide on different stories – this is fine, allow stories other than Little Red Riding Hood, from which the verbs were taken. Go round helping, especially with the pronunciation of the past tenses.
- 4 Get the students to change partners and to tell the story as they have re-constructed it to a new partner. Before this stage rub the words off the board and get them to turn their verb lists over (if they have them) so that the telling is more flowing and natural, even if things get left out.

Note

This technique works much better with stories that are likely to be well-known to the group than with completely unknown stories.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this technique from Christine Frank who tells me she heard it from Pat McEldowney.

V.4 We are furniture

GRAMMAR: Past and present simple passive, spatial prepositions

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 30–40 minutes

MATERIALS: Furniture cards

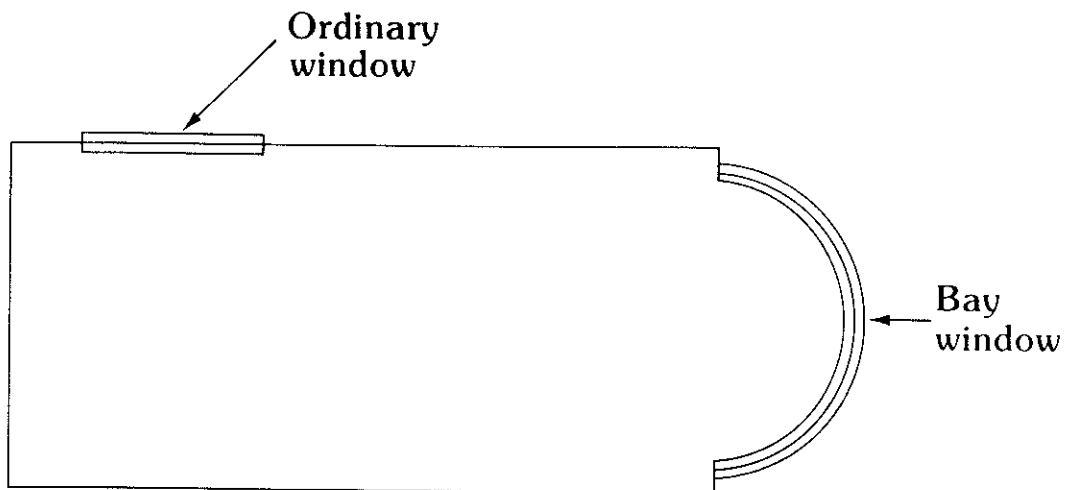
The furniture cards provided here are designed for groups of 14 (28,42) students. If you have 14 students you will need one card for each of them. If you have 28 students you will need two sets of cards, if you have 42, three sets of cards.

For different class sizes you will have to add or take away cards. Always add if you can, as taking away cards reduces the connectedness of the remaining cards in the set.

In class

- 1 Pick out any difficult vocabulary from the cards and pre-teach it. Find new contexts – do *not* use the contexts given on the cards.
- 2 If you have a class of 26–30 divide them into two groups. Give one set of cards to one group and one set to the other group. Each student should have a card. You may have to write an extra card or two for your particular class size.
- 3 Tell the students to *learn by heart* the information on their cards. Give them time to do this. Check that they have by going up to a student, taking away his or her card and getting him or her to whisper the contents of the card into your ear.
- 4 When the students have memorised the information, remove the cards. By now some students will be bored and others will be mystified. Tell the two groups, who are to work separately in two parts of the room:
'You are 14 parts of a room or pieces of furniture in this room. I want you to get up and talk to each other, *using only the information on your cards*. Your aim will be to organise yourselves into the room, with all the furniture in the right place.'

Before they start, quickly draw the following plan of the room:



- 5 The students now mill around and exchange information – check that they are only using the information from their cards. Let them get on with the job of positioning themselves. The confusion this entails will force plenty of practice of spatial prepositions.
- 6 When everybody is in position get them to say the contents of their card.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this exercise type from Lou Spaventa. The exercise he used was called 'Cocktail Party' and the student cards had on them family relationships, not spatial relationships. The students discovered that they were all members of one family.

Furniture cards (1) (You will need 1 set per fourteen students.)

I'm a grand piano and I stand in the bay window.
I was built in 1850.
I was last tuned 6 months ago.
I don't like my modern piano stool.

I know the piano doesn't like me.
I was given to the family by a friend.
I am made of pine wood.

I am full of music scores.
I stand with my back to the wall, at one end of the bay window.
I don't like pine wood stools.

I was re-painted last year.
I am the big bay window at the end of the room.
At the opposite end of the room I can see something big, made of mahogany.

I was built at the same time as the piano.
I am a big bookcase of dark wood.
Opposite me is the bay window – to my right is the china cabinet.

I am full of china.
Opposite me is the ordinary window.
To my right is the door.

I am made of wood and glass.
To my left is the china cabinet.
Opposite me is a writing desk.
I swing on my hinges.

I am an elegant writing desk.
There is a pile of dust between me and the bookcase.
There is a vulgar ping-pong table between me and the music cupboard.

Furniture cards (2)

I am a little pile of dust.
I am between the desk and the bookcase.
I was forgotten here three months ago.
I am very sad.

I can be folded up and put away easily.
I am used a lot by the children.
I stand opposite the door and between the ordinary window and the music cupboard.

I am the sofa.
I have my back to the ping-pong table.
I face the mantelpiece.

I lie on the floor between the sofa and the mantelpiece.
I was made in Iran 40 years ago.
I was last shaken out 2 weeks ago.

I am not much used.
I am near the Persian carpet.
I am an armchair and I have my back to the bay window.
I was inherited from a great aunt, just like the sofa.

I am the mantelpiece.
I was installed at the same time as the bay window, which is on my right. I am opposite the ordinary window.
The glass and wood door is to my left.

V.5 Memory tricks

GRAMMAR: Past simple
LEVEL: Lower-intermediate
TIME: 30 minutes
MATERIALS: Story (for your use only)

In class

- 1 Send four of your better students out of the room with an exercise they can do outside in about 15 minutes.
- 2 Dictate a story to the others. The story should be fairly easy for the language level of the class, e.g. at lower-intermediate level:

Story

The time: about 200 years ago in Paris. The streets were full of people. They were angry. They broke shop windows, they burned down houses, they were rioting.

A colonel came to clear a square. His soldiers raised their guns. There was silence.

The colonel stood on a wall.

'Ladies and Gentlemen,' he shouted, 'I have orders to fire on the mob. I can see only good, honest people. I want all the good, honest people to leave the square, because I want to fire on the mob!'

Two minutes later the square was empty.

- 3 Make sure they understand all the words in the story.
- 4 Explain that one student in the group is to prepare to read the story aloud to one of the four who have gone out. Then this student will be allowed to ask two questions about the story. The second 'outside' student will be brought back in, and the first one will tell the story he or she heard to the second one. During this telling the group are to note down how the story gets changed using these three categories:

Things added

Things left out

Things changed



- 5 'Outside' student A comes back in. A group member reads him or her the story *twice*. He or she has the right to ask two questions about the story. 'Outside' student B comes back in and A tells the story as he or she understands it. B can ask A two questions. C is brought in and B tells the story. C can ask two questions. D comes in and C tells the story to him or her. D can ask two questions. D then tells his or her by now much modified story to the group. Finally someone in the group reads out the original story. Meanwhile the people in the group have been taking notes.
- 6 Put the three categories up on the board and ask people to volunteer what was added, left out or completely changed/distorted.

Acknowledgement

I learnt this technique from Patty Farrands and Helen Green in the course of a seminar at Marble Arch Cooperative, London. I believe the idea originated with Bartlett's memory experiments in Cambridge in the 1930s.

V.6 Exchanging socks

GRAMMAR: So as to, to, in order to, although, because, as a

LEVEL: Intermediate

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS: None

In class

- 1 Tell your students how you were sitting in a bus/tube/train and there were two young men sitting opposite you. One of them was wearing white socks and another was wearing black socks. These two suddenly exchanged one of their socks. They got off the train wearing a black sock and a white sock each.
- 2 Tell the students to write sentences giving as many different reasons as they can for this odd behaviour using these words/phrases:
The men exchanged socks so as to ...
to ...
in order to ...
although ...
because ...
as a ...
- 3 When most students have written between eight and 12 different reasons, ask them to get together in fours and decide on the three best hypotheses the group has come up with.
- 4 Ask each foursome to write its three best sentences on the board.

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