

“Developing Young Language Explorers – Culture in the Young Learner Classroom Based on *Next Move* series”

by John Cruft

Activity Ideas for using big picture unit openers

Two team dialogue

Procedure

1. Ask students to identify the characters in the picture.
2. Split the class into two and have each group play the role of one of the characters
3. Repeat and encourage students to use expression and correct intonation
4. Try asking students to do the dialogue in a whisper first and then build up to a shout
5. Have students try out the dialogue in pairs

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

It's a great way to boost confidence of students by conducting the dialogue as a whole class first before they move into a pair to practice. The variety of focus on intonation using whispers and shouting can also help motivate and engage the class with the dialogue.

Guess the country

Procedure

1. Bring in some pictures and word cards related to the country context you are studying .
2. Ask students to identify the pictures
3. Ask students to match the words and pictures (you can do this on the board or handout the pictures and word cards to different students and have them try and find their matching partner).
4. Ask students to identify the corresponding items in the student book

Materials Needed

Some picture cards representing the country you are studying. Word cards that match the pictures.

Rationale

Creating a visual context for the country can help raise student curiosity and activate their background knowledge. Often students will know far more than we as teachers give them credit for. The matching and identifying task also helps the students to start thinking more critically.

'I spy'

Procedure

1. Write the sentences "I spy with my little eye something beginning with B" on the board
2. Students have to look at the big picture and guess or write down something from the picture beginning with that letter e.g. bear.
3. Repeat with different letters.
4. When students are comfortable with the game ask them to play in pairs or groups.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

This helps students to begin to think more critically and make connections between letters and key vocabulary. It's also a great way of developing sentence structure, while at the same time developing vocabulary.

True or False actions

Procedure

1. Write down some simple true or false sentences about the picture e.g. the bear is big?
2. Ask students the true or false questions.
3. Students have to do a certain action if the sentence is true and a different action if it's false e.g. if true students must stand up and turn around, if it's false they must touch their nose.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

This is a great way to develop listening skills. The fact that students have to get physically involved also helps them engage in the activity. This activity can also lead to personalization where the teacher asks questions that connect the picture to the students' own lives.

Drawing dictation

Procedure

1. Dictate a simple picture using the key vocabulary from the big picture in the course book. Students listen and draw their own representation.
2. Alternatively, students could draw and label their own representation of the big picture.
3. They could also annotate or label the picture and display for other classes to see.

Materials Needed

1. Paper
2. Crayons / coloured pens

Rationale

It's a great way to recycle the key vocabulary from the big picture and personalize the language learning at the same time. If you choose to do the dictation, this is great listening practice.

Activity ideas for using texts

Key word actions

Procedure

1. Write key words from the text on the board and ask students to underline them in the text
2. Encourage students to develop actions for the key words
3. Now read the text together and students must do the actions when they read/hear the key words.
4. They can then try in pairs with one student reading and one doing the actions.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

By helping students associate key words with actions we can help develop comprehension and enhance understanding of the text. We can also bring a lot of fun and enjoyment to the text even if the text is dense. It's important to stress that it is not essential for students to understand every word here and by focusing on key words students are building up their understanding of the text.

Stop teacher!

Procedure

1. Read the text together as a class.
2. The teacher purposely makes mistakes and the aim is for students to listen and spot the mistake.

3. If they hear a mistake from the teacher they must shout Stop Teacher!,
4. The student(s) then rereads the sentence again correctly
5. The teacher continues. Repeat the process with more mistakes.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

This is a great way for students to engage in the text and given them a reason to read or listen. They need to pay careful attention to the teacher here. The activity also has a competitive element to keep the students motivated.

Sentence Reconstruction

Procedure

1. Write down the separate sentences of the text.
2. Cut up the sentences and place them in an envelope.
3. Each group will need one copy of the sentences.
4. Handout the sentences to different groups and they must try and reconstruct the text by putting the sentences in order.
5. When they have finished they take it in turns to retell the text.

Materials Needed

1. Cut up sentences of the text
2. Envelopes

Rationale

This is a great way to get students communicating and collaborating together in groups. It also hands students a problem-solving task where they need to try and remember the text. The activity then provides a great platform for producing or retelling text.

Activity ideas for personalization tasks

Mini-books

Procedure

1. Handout a blank piece of paper for students.
2. Walk students through the process of making a mini book or show them this video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21qi9ZcQVto>
3. On each page they create their own information or country profile.
4. The aim is to fill the book with different country profiles (maybe in comparison to their own countries).

Materials Needed

1. Paper
2. scissors

Rationale

It's a great record and evidence of learning. They are creating a piece of work for each unit of the book which integrated the key language from the unit as well as a personalized drawing, description etc. which can be kept as a record or taken home to show parents.

Posters or collage

Procedure

1. The aim is for students individually or in groups students design their own poster about a country (in comparison to their own country).
2. Handout the materials
3. Students fill their poster with information about the country they have been learning about
4. Students also show information about their country (as a means of comparing the two countries)
5. You can assign different roles for each students in a group e.g. artist, writer, designer. They create and annotate their poster
6. Groups can present back to the rest of the class orally or paste the posters around the class for other students to read.
7. Paste the posters around the school for other classes to read.

Materials Needed

1. Coloured A3 paper
2. Pictures or photocopies of pictures from the course book
3. Scissors
4. Glue

Rationale

This is a great way to have students communicating and collaborating in groups. They can add a lot of their own creativity here,

while at the same time reviewing the key target language from the lesson (unit). The poster also gives a great option of a final presentation. Again it provides good physical evidence of learning.



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