Macmillan English

Notes for Parents

Ideas for Learning at Home

Your child is learning English with *Macmillan English*. There is lots you can do as a parent to help your child with their English lessons. Some of the activities below can be done by parents who don't speak any English. They are marked with a ☆.

General tips

Take an active interest in your child's English work. Your child will pick up on your enthusiasm.

Make the English work you do with your child enjoyable by playing some of the games on this help sheet. Give your child plenty of time to answer questions or to do activities.

Be positive and give praise for anything good your child can do. Don't just comment on mistakes or your child will feel a failure.

Make an English star chart. If you have any small stickers give your child one every time they do well in an activity and try hard in English. This is very motivating and gives children a visual record of progress.

Getting the best from the coursebook

Many coursebooks have characters that appear throughout the book in stories and in activities. Ask your child to introduce you to the characters. You can ask questions like, *What's her name? How old is she? What does she like? What colour are her eyes / is her hair?*

☆ Look at the stories that your child has done in class. Ask your child to point to the pictures while you listen to the story on the course CD.

☆ Ask your child to teach you a song from the coursebook. This will give your child more confidence and they will also see that you value using English. With dialogues, ask your child to act these out with you.

Get your child to tell you about a reading text in the coursebook. Then ask your child to read the text and answer any questions about it in the coursebook. Allow your child to do this at their own pace – don't rush your child while reading.

Ways to practise vocabulary

☆ Use the time when you are watching TV or are out and about in shops, restaurants, the supermarket and similar places with your child. Are there any English words in the programmes or on the posters or menu, for example? Ask your child to describe the things they see and tell you how to ask for those things in a shop or restaurant. They could also write vocabulary words in a notebook.

The activities below can all be done using magazine pictures or your own photos. This is an excellent way in itself to review the vocabulary in your child's coursebook.

There are many simple activities that you can use to help your child revise vocabulary. These are often similar to games children play in their own language. You can try using some of these games as well as those suggested below.

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☆ ***Which is the missing picture?***

This activity practises vocabulary and can be done with words from different topics.

Place a selection of up to eight cards on the table in front of you. Ask your child to say the words one by one. Next, tell your child to close their eyes while you take away one of the pictures. Then ask your child to say which picture is missing.

☆ ***Say it if it is true***

This activity gives practice of words used in full sentences.

Place up to ten pictures on the table in front of you. Then point to one of the pictures and say the name. If you say the correct name, your child should repeat it. If you say the wrong name, they should be silent.

Describing activities

Show your child some pictures illustrating people doing different activities and encourage your child to use the future or the past tense by asking questions. For example: Picture of a shopping centre: *What will we do tomorrow? Where will we go together? Will you buy a dress/book?*

You can also talk about the past by asking: *What did you do yesterday/last week? Where did you go? What did you enjoy best? Would you like to go again? Why?*

☆ Show interest in what your child is learning. Ask your child to write some English words and expressions in a notebook and tell you what they mean in your language.

Inventing a story

Encourage your child to use their imagination inventing a story. They can start from a picture you show them. For example: **a monkey eating a banana.** *The monkey is eating a banana. He is very hungry because yesterday he didn't find any food. Now the monkey is very happy!* When your child finishes telling the story encourage them to write it and illustrate it to make their own story book.

Changing the end of a story

Your child's coursebook has several stories. Ask your child to tell you what it is about. When they have finished ask them to change the ending. This activity will help develop your child's imagination and gain confidence in speaking.

Grammar

Long sentences

This activity practises making full sentences.

This game can be played with two or more people taking part. The aim is to create a very long sentence. Start a sentence with a phrase e.g. *I went to the shops and bought …* then add an object e.g. *two apples*. Your child then has to add another item to the list e.g. *I went to the shops and bought two apples and three bananas.* You should then continue in this way until you or your child can't remember the full list. You can also play this game starting with these phrases to practise these areas of language: *For my birthday I got …* (toys & possessions) *I went for a walk and I saw …* (animals, places) *I saw a monster with …* (parts of the body).

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Colour the words

This activity helps children to see patterns in language. You will need to make some word cards using card and different coloured pens. You can use this system:

black	*I, you, he, she, we, they* (subject pronouns)
blue	*like, love, hate* (verbs)
green	*am, is, are, do, does* (auxiliary verbs)
red	*isn't, aren't, don't, doesn't* (negative auxiliary verbs)
purple	*juice, milk, cola, lemonade* (nouns)

With your child, place all the words on the table. Choose one of the categories, e.g. nouns and ask your child to find similar words. Do this for the other types of words. Then with your child, either show them how to make a sentence, or ask them to help you make a sentence.

Finding words

Cut up different letters from a magazine and put them in a bag. Ask your child to select one from the bag without looking. Then ask them to write as many words as possible that start with the chosen letter. Once they have finished they can check their spelling in a Dictionary.

You can increase the difficulty of this activity by saying that the aim is to find a word beginning with the selected letter that represents: an object (noun), an activity (a verb), a quality (an adjective).

☆ ***Say it if it is true***

Select some correct grammar sentences from your child's coursebook. Write the words in these sentences on pieces of card or paper (a word on each piece). Then mix them up and ask your child to make sentences from the words.

Using the Working with Words CD-ROM Dictionary

Show your child different images. For example: animals or people representing different professions. Ask them to check the definition in the dictionary and read it out loud to you. Encourage them to say something else about the word they have just found. If they don't know what to say, ask them to use the word in a sentence.

Make more questions

Look at the Language Book and Working with Words CD-ROM together and add some questions (and answers) to an existing exercise.

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