

Top deck

Parent help sheet

Your child is learning English with *Top Deck*. 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.

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 his own pace – don't rush your child while they are reading.



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For younger children

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 say the words. They could also write the words in a notebook of real English that they see in the world around them.

The activities below can all be done using picture 'flashcards'. These can either be downloaded from our website www.macmillanyounglearners.com or you could work with your child to make these cards. 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.

* *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 flashcards 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.

Guess which flashcard!

This activity practises asking questions and giving short answers. Place a set of flashcards on the table in front of you. Secretly choose one and encourage your child to guess which it is by asking questions e.g. Is it green? No, it isn't. / Is it yellow? Yes, it is. You can take turns playing this game so your child asks as well as answers questions.



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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).

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 him how to make a sentence, or ask him to help you make a sentence.

For older children

Ways to practise vocabulary

* If your child has access to a computer, ask them to note down the English words and expressions they see on different websites. Your child could note these in a notebook and tell you what they mean in your language.

Grammar

* 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.

