

## 11 Games, questionnaires and problem solving

This last chapter of part C contains a ‘mixed bag’ of vocabulary practice activities. Most of these would be particularly useful for revision and further practice rather than presentation, and on the whole, they require very little preparation time. Many of the activities described would be useful as warmers or end-of-class activities.

### i) PYRAMID GAME

*Level:* Intermediate upwards.

*Suggested procedure:* Choose about twelve lexical items you have taught in the previous few days and write them on a piece of paper in two columns. Thus:

<i>Student A</i>	<i>Student B</i>
a bend in the road	traffic lights
to skid	the boot of the car
the bumper	to swerve
to run someone over	to crash into something
foggy	a fork in the road
a zebra crossing	a careless driver

This vocabulary forms a clear lexical set but you may decide to make a more random selection.

Make as many copies of the columns as you need for your class and cut them in half. Put the students in pairs, facing each other, and give six of the items to one student in each pair. To this student explain that he has to define the words as quickly and clearly as possible so that student B can say what the word is. Student A can then go on to define the next word. He mustn't use any of the words on the card. It is usually clearer if you demonstrate to the group as a whole first:

e.g. Teacher: It's a long, yellow fruit with a skin you can't eat.

Students: Banana.

When student A has defined all his words and student B has guessed them, give student B his group of words to define for student A.

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978-0-521-31709-2 - Working with Words: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary

Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman

Excerpt

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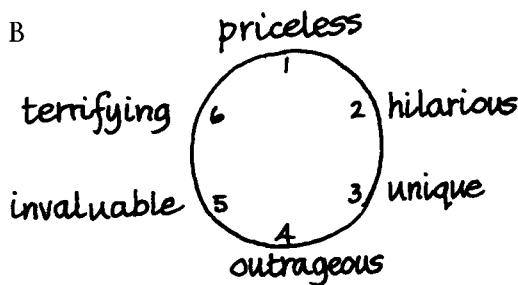
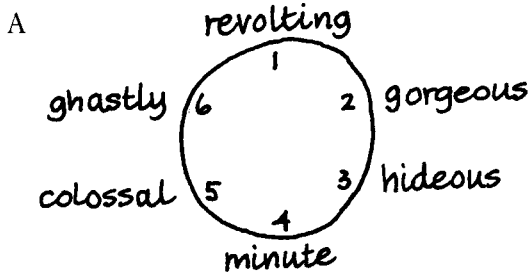
It is useful at the end to discuss as a group how the students described their items; this can provide an ideal opportunity to introduce and develop different ways of paraphrasing and defining.

*Comment:* This activity is an enjoyable way of revising and, if done on a regular basis, can give students valuable practice in paraphrase, circumlocution, etc.

## ii) COMMON FEATURES

*Level:* Advanced. (This game is a further practice activity for the material on page 140.)

*Suggested procedure:* On the blackboard draw two circles and add the vocabulary thus:



Divide the students into small groups and give each group a dice. All groups do the following activity at the same time.

One student in each group throws the dice twice; the first throw corresponds to dial A and the second to dial B. If, for example, he throws 5 the first time and 6 the second, his two words are 'colossal' and 'terrifying'. The group then has to make a note of the two words and think of something or someone which includes these two words

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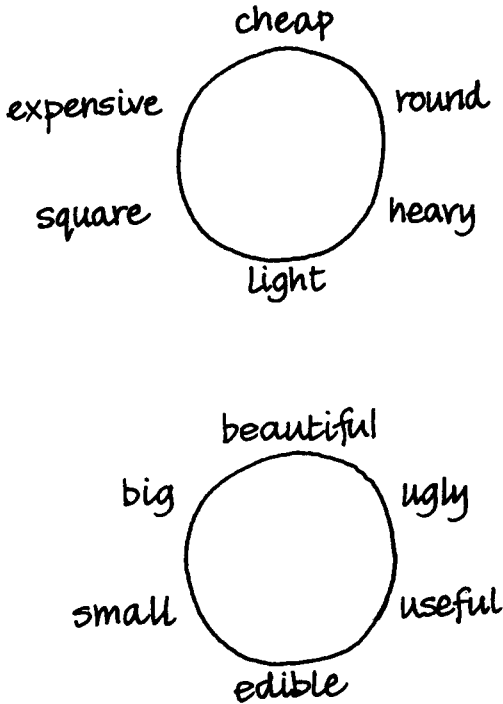
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in their meaning (e.g. King Kong). The next student in the group takes his turn to throw the dice and the groups thus build up a set of about five to six two-word combinations and an example for each.

Now bring the whole class together, and ask the first group to tell their *example* (i.e. King Kong). The rest of the class then have to decide which two adjectives from the circles were the ones they had thrown.

*Comment:* For a low level, the same activity could be done with simple vocabulary e.g.



*Note:* Students may need more help from the teacher or a bilingual dictionary in finding examples if they are a lower level.

## iii) NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

*Level:* All levels.

*Suggested procedure:* Draw two grids on the blackboard, filling in the squares on one grid with various headings and leaving the other one blank. The choice of headings depends entirely on the type of group and the items you wish to revise; here are two examples:

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preposition	past tense	adjective	clothes	furniture	sport
opposite	noun	spelling	shopping	food	work
pronunciation	adverb	verb	transport	cinema, theatre, T.V.	health

Before the lesson you should have prepared three or four questions on each of your chosen headings.

Divide the class into two teams and explain that the object of the game is for each team to try and secure a straight line of noughts (or crosses) on the grid; the line may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. In order to get a nought (or cross) in one of the squares the team must answer a question asked by the teacher based on the heading of their selected square. So, if team A want a nought in the top left hand corner they must answer a question on prepositions e.g. complete the sentence 'I'm not very keen ... tennis'. If the team cannot answer the question they do not get their nought in the square, but the question is not passed to the other team. As the teams answer questions correctly you put the noughts and crosses onto the empty grid on the blackboard.

*Comment:* We first encountered this game (as applied to the EFL classroom) in the Teacher's Book to *Contact English 1* (Colin Granger and Tony Hicks, 1977). We have used it very successfully with a wide range of classes and found it to be a very enjoyable way of revising vocabulary items from previous lessons.

## iv) PELMANISM

*Level:* Intermediate upwards (although the vocabulary examples given here would be upper-intermediate or advanced).

*Suggested procedure:* Write a list of partial synonyms which you wish to revise with your class (about eight to twelve pairs of words will be sufficient) e.g. man/guy, child/kid, a pound/a quid, mad/round the bend.

Write each of these items on small pieces of card:

a man	a guy	a child	a kid
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duplicating your sets according to the size of your class.

Divide the students into groups of four to five and give them a

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set of cards which they place face down on a level surface in front of them. The first student turns up any two cards to see if they are partial synonyms; if they are, he keeps them, and if not, he turns them face down again, and the next player takes his turn. If the player turns up two partial synonyms (e.g. man/guy) he has to state the difference between them (i.e. 'guy' is more colloquial) to the satisfaction of his group. The winner is the student who accumulates most sets of cards. The game can be played several times in a row.

*Comment:* Although any vocabulary items can be recycled in this way, this is a particularly useful activity for revising items which students need to know for receptive purposes. With this particular example, the slang words may sound rather incongruous when spoken by students, but they may be useful items to recognise and understand in an English-speaking community.

## v) QUESTIONNAIRE – 'MAKE' VERSUS 'DO'

*Level:* Intermediate.

*Suggested procedure:* Pre-teach the collocations of 'make' and 'do' listed in the questionnaire. You could display a set of visuals illustrating the vocabulary and ask the students to decide which verb ('do' or 'make') is used in each case; they could use dictionaries or shared knowledge to do this.

*Practice:* Give the students a copy of the questionnaire and ask them to carry out a class survey to find out whether these activities are predominantly carried out by men or women. Point out that they must use the appropriate verb in their question:

e.g. In your house, | who does the shopping?  
| who makes the most money?

At the end of the group work, it may be fun to compile the results.

*Comment:* This is a controlled practice activity with a communicative aim. It also revises the 'household activity' vocabulary.



*Classroom activities*

STUDENT ACTIVITY

**'MAKE' AND 'DO' – a questionnaire**

In your house, who *does* or *makes* things?  
 Ask the other people in your group and fill in the information about them.

Who *does* or *makes* these?

	<i>a man</i>	<i>a woman</i>	<i>either</i>	<i>who? you / your brother / wife / friend / father / etc.</i>
<i>the shopping</i>			X	Juan or mother or sister
<i>the washing-up</i>				
<i>the cooking</i>				
<i>the bed(s)</i>				
<i>the cleaning</i>				
<i>the decorating</i>				
<i>the most money</i>				
<i>the ironing</i>				
<i>a mess</i>				
<i>most of the decisions</i>				

*Games, questionnaires and problem solving*

vi) MARRIAGE QUIZ (*LASDE*)

*Level:* Upper-intermediate.

*Suggested procedure:* Allow students to work together to discover the meaning of the italicised words using shared knowledge and dictionaries. Ask them to guess the answers to any questions they don't know: this will make the correct answers more interesting! This activity can be done as a team game with points awarded for good answers. Students can then discuss the differences between marriage in Great Britain and in their own countries.

*Comment:* Another approach here would be to give the students extra supplementary reading material; *Life in Britain* (Brookes and Fraenkel, 1982) has a paragraph on weddings where the answers to some of the questions could be found. Alternatively, this information could be given to half the group who in the feedback could then correct the guesses of the other half. It is often possible to link vocabulary teaching and cultural information in this way.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

**MARRIAGE QUIZ – see how much you know about English marriage!**

- 1 When do people *get engaged*?
- 2 What happens to the *bride* and *groom* during a wedding?
- 3 Why wouldn't you see any women at a *stag party*?
- 4 What happens in a *registry office*?
- 5 Who pays for the *reception*?
- 6 If you were asked to *toast* the bride and groom, what would you say?
- 7 Where do most people spend their *honeymoon*?
- 8 Why can't a *bachelor* also be a *bigamist*?
- 9 Can anyone be a *spinster*?

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vii) HAIR PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITY (MARRIAGE LINES)

*Level:* Upper-intermediate upwards.

*Suggested procedure:* This activity is a useful follow up to the semantic field exercise on page 104. Students can either do this in pairs in class or on their own for homework.

(The answers are: 1 Mr Foyle's 2 dark hair 3 Mr Foyle is bald.)

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*Comment:* Try doing this activity yourself. It's virtually impossible to do it without repeatedly mumbling the relevant vocabulary either aloud or 'in your head'. It would be simple to vary the vocabulary and for example, describe the people as living in a cottage, detached house, semi-detached house, terraced house, etc.

STUDENT ACTIVITY**Marriage Lines\*\***

Messrs Lagan, Foyle, Bann and Erne are neighbours. Three of them are married. One of the four is bald, one redheaded and one dark-haired.

Mr Erne isn't redheaded, nor is he dark-haired, but is married.

Mr Lagan isn't bald nor is he fairhaired, but is single.

Mrs Bann is blonde but her husband is neither dark-haired nor bald.

Mr Foyle doesn't have either fair or dark hair.

Mr Erne's wife is dark-haired while the bald-headed man has a redheaded wife.

With this set of facts, can you work out the following:

1. Whose wife is a redhead?
2. What colour hair has the single man?
3. Mrs Foyle's husband has which hair colour?

(from *Gyles Brandreth's Book of Puzzles and Brainteasers*.)

*Further reader activities*

- 1 Devise a quiz (similar to the one on p. 169) which practises/ revises vocabulary on one of the following topics:
  - a) politics
  - b) education
  - c) illnesses
  - d) entertainments
  - e) sports
- 2 Devise a pelmanism game (see p. 166) with twenty paired words to revise one of the following:
  - a) work vocabulary (see p. 136 for some examples)
  - b) 'extreme' adjectives (see p. 141)
  - c) clothes vocabulary (e.g. 'jeans' versus 'trousers', 'boots' versus 'shoes', 'shirt' versus 'blouse')
- 3 Devise a questionnaire to practise/ revise relevant vocabulary for one of the following:
  - a) You and your personality.
  - b) Holidays and travel.
  - c) Leisure activities.