

## 1 Simpler, shorter activities

### 1.1 What's in my bag?

<b>Outline</b>	Students guess what the teacher has in his or her bag.
<b>Level</b>	Beginner (A1)
<b>Age</b>	Young
<b>Time</b>	10 minutes
<b>Language focus</b>	Vocabulary (concrete nouns); question forms (see Variation 2)
<b>Preparation</b>	You will need a bag with 10–15 items in it that the students can name in English. Make sure that these include not just routine objects you would be expected to carry around, such as a pencil or a mobile phone, but also unexpected ones such as a baby (pictured) or an elephant (toy representation).

#### Procedure

- 1 Display the bag, and tell the students 'I have ten (or however many you have) things in my bag. Can you guess what they are?'
- 2 When a student guesses correctly, take out the item and put it on your desk, or somewhere that all the class can see it.
- 3 Continue until all the items have been guessed. (If this process takes too long, however, reveal the last few objects to the students rather than asking them to guess.)

#### Variations

- 1 Instead of putting the item on your desk, give it to the student who guessed it (they have to give it back to you later!).
- 2 If you want to make sure students practise question forms, tell them they can't just call out words but must ask a proper question ('Do you have a... in your bag?' or 'Is there a... in your bag?').
- 3 An easier version is to write up on the board 20 or so different items that the students know, including both routine objects that you might really have in a bag and totally incongruous ones like those suggested under 'Preparation' above. Then invite them to guess which ten are actually in the bag: 'I think there's a... in your bag'; 'I don't think there's a... in your bag.' Can they get them all in fewer than 15 guesses?
- 4 Instead of using a bag, have an envelope containing 10 or 15 pictures, and challenge students to guess what they are. In this case, you might call an individual student to the front of the class, give him or her one of the pictures and invite the class to guess what it is in direct interaction with the student.

### *Discussions and More*

#### Follow-up

Invite individual students, or pairs, to prepare a similar bagful of objects and ask the class to guess (you also participate in the guessing!).

 **Tip**

In general, actual objects (realia) are far more eye-catching and interesting in the classroom than are pictures. So when doing activities that involve teaching or reviewing concrete nouns, try to find actual objects or miniature representations of them to use in class.

## 1.2 Guess the picture

<b>Outline</b>	Students guess what is in a picture.
<b>Level</b>	Beginner–Elementary (A1–A2)
<b>Age</b>	Any
<b>Time</b>	10 minutes
<b>Language focus</b>	Vocabulary, yes/no question forms
<b>Preparation</b>	You will need a set of 20–30 small pictures, such as those shown on page 20, depicting items that the students know how to say in English. These can also be downloaded from the Internet, or cut out from magazines.

### **Procedure**



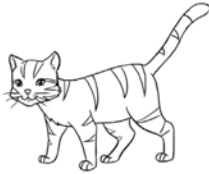


- 1 Pick up a picture from the pile and invite students to guess what it is. Tell them they can have only three direct questions, naming the item they think it is, so they have to ask a few indirect questions first to be sure that their direct question is likely to be right.
- 2 They raise their hands to ask questions such as ‘Is it an animal?’ or ‘Is it in this room?’ in order to narrow down the possibilities. When they are fairly sure they know, they can try to guess the actual item.
- 3 The student who guesses the picture gets it (but gives it back later!).
- 4 Repeat the process four or five times.

### **Follow-up**

Prepare lots of extra pictures, put the students into groups and give each group a set of 10 or 15 pictures. They place these face down and then take turns picking up one of the pictures and inviting the other members of the group to guess what’s in it.

### **Tip**

When working in a full-class interaction, it’s usually a good idea to repeat each student’s contribution clearly, correcting if necessary. This ensures that all students hear it and are exposed to the correct version. Exceptions to this are, of course, if the student says something correctly and loudly enough for all the class to hear.

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### 1.3 Chants

<b>Outline</b>	Students recite by heart chants that replicate the rhythm of natural speech.
<b>Level</b>	Beginner (A1)
<b>Age</b>	Young
<b>Time</b>	10 minutes
<b>Language focus</b>	(See Variation 2.)
<b>Preparation</b>	Select a chant, such as one of those shown on page 22, or compose your own.

#### **Procedure**

- 1 Perform the chant you have chosen, emphasizing the strong beats (in capital letters) with finger-clicks or claps. In the following example, the row of dots indicate a ‘rest’ or pause for a beat:

HI ... LOU ... HOW are YOU?  
HI ... LOU ... HOW are YOU?  
HI ... KATE, i'm FEELing GREAT and  
HOW ... ARE ... YOU?

- 2 Begin by asking students to repeat just the first line after you, two or three times.
- 3 Continue, gradually adding more lines until they can say the whole chant by heart.
- 4 Encourage them to add gestures: for example, shaking hands with a partner when they say ‘Hi’, pointing to the partner at ‘How are you?’ and to themselves at ‘I’m feeling great.’ The dialogue can later be performed by pairs of students, each one taking a different role (Kate/Lou).
- 5 In the next lesson, ask the class to recall and recite the whole chant.

#### **Follow-up**

- 1 In later lessons, ask students to perform the chant in small groups or in pairs, dividing the lines between them so that the chant comes out as a conversational exchange (but maintaining the rhythm).
- 2 Afterwards, suggest that they recite the chant, either in chorus or individually, varying the tempo, volume and voice pitch: for example, performing it very slowly or quickly; loudly or softly; with a crescendo or diminuendo; at a high or low pitch.

#### **Variations**

- 1 With slightly more advanced classes who can read fluently, write up the chant on the board at the beginning. Erase segments as they are learnt by heart so that by the end you have erased the whole chant and students can recite from memory.
- 2 Chants can be used to practise specific language points, such as grammar or vocabulary. See, for example, the last two samples on page 22 for chants that practise forms of the present simple.
- 3 You can find many more examples in Carolyn Graham’s books (see *Further recommended reading* at the end of this book).

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1 WHAT? ... WHAT? i DON'T understand ... (× 2)

please SAY it AGAIN (× 3) [CLAP ... CLAP]

ENGLISH, ARABIC, FRENCH ... (× 2)

ENGLISH, ARABIC (× 2)

ENGLISH, ARABIC, FRENCH.

(or substitute any sequence of words with 2, 3 and 1 syllables)



2 DO you like DANcing? YES i DO ... (× 2)

HE likes DANcing, HE likes DANcing!

I like DANcing TOO!

DO you like FOOTball? YES, i DO ...! (× 2)

SHE likes FOOTball SHE likes FOOTball!

I like FOOTball TOO!



3 he DOESn't like DEAN ... NO? why NOT ...? (× 2)

he DOESn't like DEAN be CAUSE he's MEAN,  
but HE likes DOT, a LOT!

she DOESn't like BILLY ... NO? why NOT ...? (× 2)

she DOESn't like BILLY be CAUSE he's SILLY,  
but SHE likes DOT, a LOT!

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## 1.4 Interrupt me

<b>Outline</b>	Students interrupt a story with questions.
<b>Level</b>	Elementary–Intermediate (A2–B1)
<b>Age</b>	Any
<b>Time</b>	10 minutes
<b>Language focus</b>	Question forms
<b>Preparation</b>	Prepare a personal anecdote to recount to the class.

### **Procedure**

- 1 Tell the students you are going to start telling a story. As soon as anyone thinks of a question to ask about it, he or she should raise a hand.
- 2 When a student raises his or her hand, stop, listen to the question and answer it. For example: ‘Yesterday morning I left home ... Yes, Alan?’ ‘What time did you leave home?’ ‘At seven o’clock.’
- 3 This continues until you manage to finish the story (or don’t!).

### Follow-up

Ask one of the students to be the storyteller. In this case, you yourself, as well as the other students, may raise your hand and ask questions.

### Variation

Instead of using a story, you could begin a set of directions or instructions. For example: ‘Let me tell you how to prepare a Spanish omelette ...’. Alternatively, you could recount a description: ‘This is what the view is like from the top of the building ...’.

### Note

Very often, two or more questions are asked at the same point in the story; the result is that most of the time is in fact taken up with student questions rather than storytelling, which, of course, is what we are aiming for here: the more student talk the better.

## 1.5 Say things about a picture

<b>Outline</b>	Students brainstorm all the things they can think of to say about a picture.
<b>Level</b>	Beginner–Intermediate (A1–B1)
<b>Age</b>	Any
<b>Time</b>	10 minutes
<b>Language focus</b>	(See Variation 3.)
<b>Preparation</b>	You will need at least two pictures showing plenty of detail and activity that can be displayed on the board (see the examples on pp. 25–6). Vocabulary represented in the pictures should be appropriate to the proficiency level of the students. You will also need a watch or clock with a second hand.

### Procedure

- 1 Do not (yet) display any pictures to the students.
- 2 Put students into groups of three or four and elect one of them to be the ‘secretary’ (but reassure them that the secretary does not have to write very much!).
- 3 When they are ready, explain that from the moment you display the picture, they should start saying sentences about it. They may not start until you say ‘Go’ and will have exactly two minutes until you say ‘Stop’. The secretary has to write a tick (✓) for every sentence that is said, but should NOT try to write them out. The secretary may also contribute sentences of his or her own.
- 4 Look at your watch to check the time, display one picture and say ‘Go’.
- 5 Stop the talking after exactly two minutes and ask groups how many ticks they have.
- 6 Tell them they are going to do the same again, but with another picture, and must try to break their previous record; if they got 15 ticks the first time, they now have to get at least 16!
- 7 Repeat the procedure with the second picture.

### Follow-up

For homework, ask students to write out at least ten sentences about one of the pictures. These can be ones they remember from the activity or ones they invent themselves.

### Variations

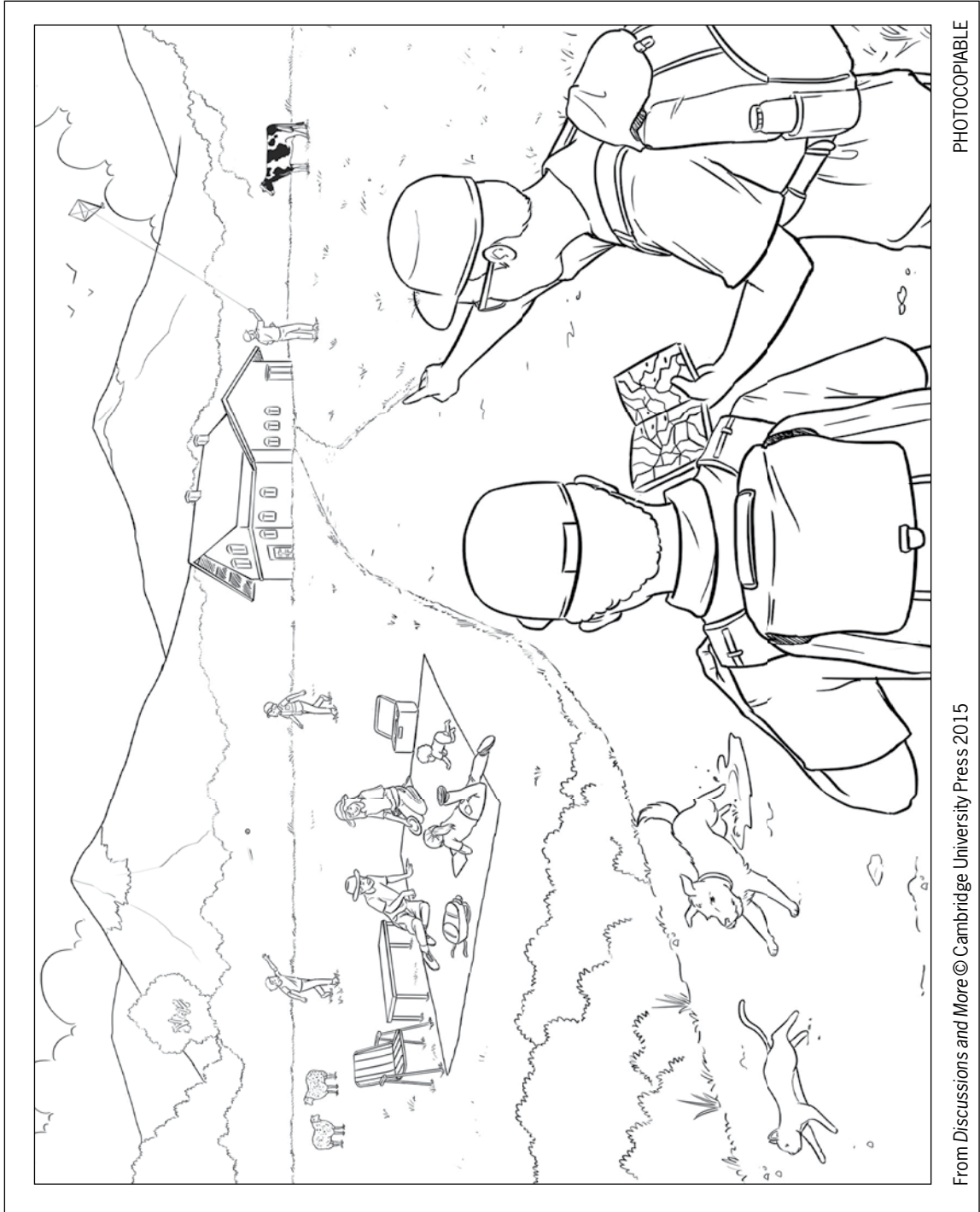
- 1 For younger learners, one minute is enough for producing sentences.
- 2 Beginners can be asked to say only words or brief phrases about the picture rather than complete sentences.
- 3 If you want to practise a particular grammatical feature, you can limit the student responses accordingly: for example, you might ask them to focus on prepositions of place, or action verbs in the present progressive, or the phrase *There is/are*.



### Tip

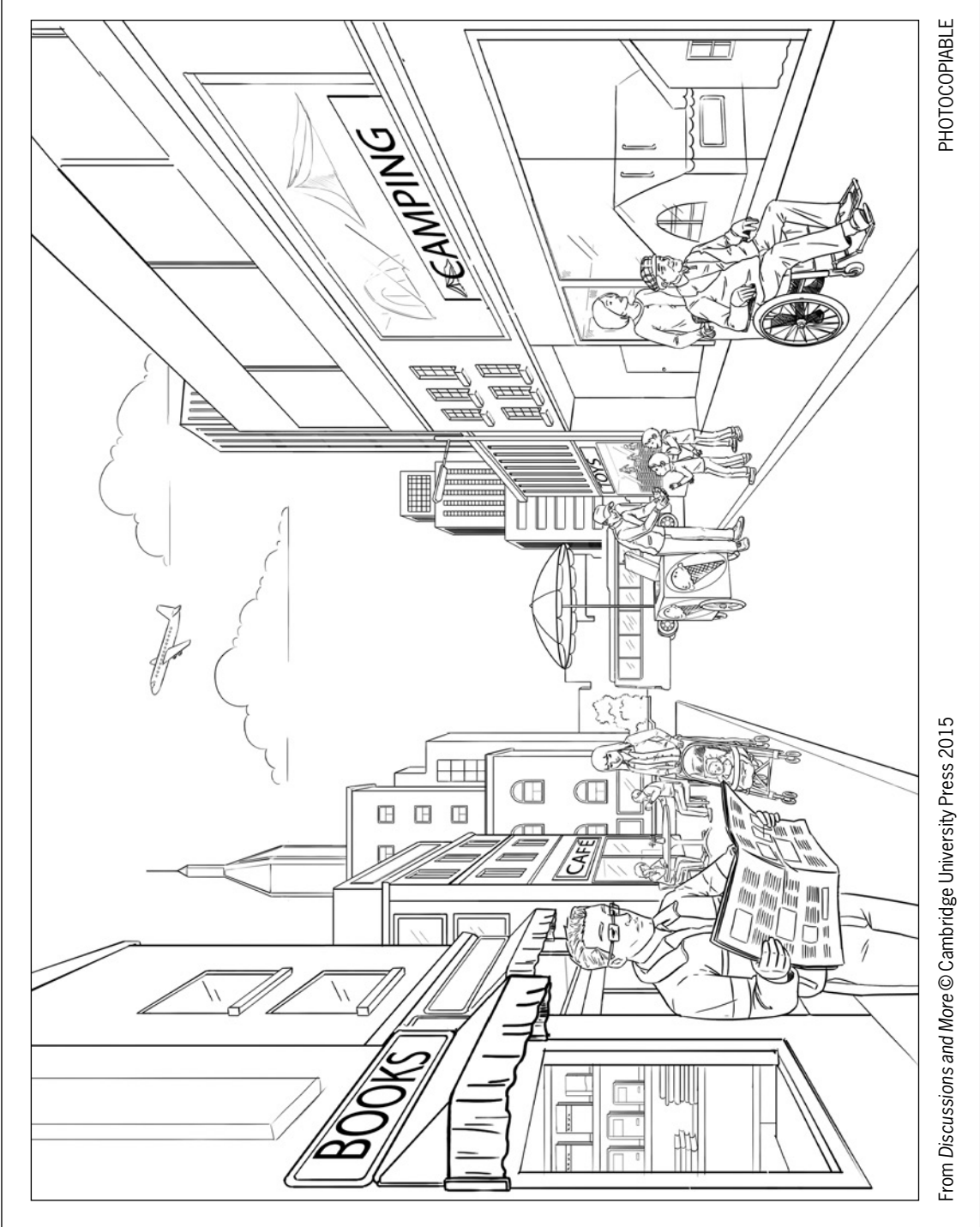
When you need to display a particular picture to the entire class, it’s best to project it on the board if you have the necessary technology. Alternatively, you may be able to enlarge a picture to an appropriate size using a photocopier, or walk round the class displaying an A4-size picture as you talk about it so that all students get to see it.





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