

Engagement Activities or Warmers

Start by imagining you are a student. It's 9 o'clock on a grey Monday morning. You may be tired, thinking about the weekend just passed and in no mood for the English lesson about to follow.

What would 'hook' you into taking an active interest in the lesson?

A simple 5 minute fun exercise which introduces the theme of a lesson – an engagement activity, sometimes called a warmer - at the beginning of your first class each day can help in a number of ways:

1. It helps students to begin thinking in English.
2. It stimulates their interest quickly and encourages active participation.
3. It gives them an idea of what is to follow, perhaps by introducing a theme.

On a Monday morning injecting some energy into your class may be your prime concern. For this reason team games, speaking activities or some sort of competition are all good ideas (especially with younger learners). You can make such games out of the following ideas:

1. *Traditional games*: I spy, hangman, pictionary etc.
2. *Board relay*: Write a list of revision questions or anagrams on the board. Divide students into 2 teams and line students up one behind the other so there are 2 lines. The first from each team runs to the board to solve the first clue, writing the answer on their side of the board. They run back, hand the pen to the next team member and the process continues. The winners are the most accurate and fastest team.
3. *Pronunciation games*: such as:
Rhyming words - students find the rhyming pair amongst similar sounding words like boat, boot, ship, sheep, foot, loot.
Tongue twisters - Red lorry, yellow lorry (repeat) etc. for students to practise.
4. *Memory games*: 'I went to the market and I bought....'
Each student starts with this phrase and repeats the previous contributions, adding their item to the list at the end.

Exercise

Create some engagement activities for your classroom

Think of three more engagement activities and explain them in the Answer Booklet:

GO TO ANSWER BOOKLET, QUESTION 1 (6 marks)



For a good example of an engagement activity, see the following video clip: (also part 2 of the 'Train to Teach English' CD-ROM):

<http://www.youtube.com/user/globalenglishtesol#play/uploads/11/giqOTWofPtI>



Also see the following which shows an engagement activity to introduce the theme of a lesson (or part 3 of the CD-ROM):

<http://www.youtube.com/user/globalenglishtesol#play/uploads/9/K7IZCHBnDOA>

Tips

Play Games with English and Word Games with English (Heinemann) are 2 ranges of books with short exercises which make excellent engagement material.

Use the engagement activities to revise specific things. For example in 'I went to the market...' make the students add a colour to their item if studying adjectives of colour. Or add an activity in the middle of your class if you feel the lesson would benefit from an energy boost.

Now that we have looked at possible ways to begin the lesson, let's move on to talk about Classroom Management. This means how you manage yourself and your students to achieve the aims of your lesson. We will look at how to make your classes successful and how to get the best from your physical surroundings, as well as your students.