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# *English Is It!*

**(ELT Training Series)**

Grup de treball ICE-UB: *From English  
Acquisition to English Learning and Teaching*

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ANA MARIA FUENTES, LOURDES MONTORO (COORD.)

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*“Education is not preparation for life; it is life itself” (John Dewey)*

## Introduction

Lourdes Montoro  
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The Research group *From English Acquisition to English Learning and Teaching* is registered at the Institute of Professional Development Teaching (ICE), at the University of Barcelona. It started in September, 2013, and, at present, it is composed of **Rosamaria Fàbrega, Ana Maria Fuentes, and Lourdes Montoro** (coordinator).

All members are teachers of English: Ana María Fuentes and Rosamaria Fàbrega (secondary education and vocational training) and Lourdes Montoro (adult English teaching). R. Fàbrega and L. Montoro are also teacher trainers. R. Fàbrega is teaching *Foreign Language Learning* at the Teacher Training School at the International University of Catalonia (UIC Barcelona); L. Montoro has taught at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) and at the Teacher Training School at the University of Barcelona. The group professional bios are located after their article abstracts.

The group shares work ethics, vocation, and senior professional careers. Their human and academic background enhances the group with specialties such as art, films, group dynamics, computer science, interpretation, literature, mass media, music, philosophy, sports, theatre and translation. The group analyses the work of those teachers who we all know, and who, day after day, do admirable teaching works of art, making a difference in their students' lives and in theirs, and from which schools and educational system very much benefit.

We have all met excellent teachers who are so submerged in their daily lessons, administrative chores and the constant updating of professional life, that they are not given the chance to consider research or publications. *English Is It! (ELT Training Series)* was created with a view to providing opportunities which can make up, somehow, for this gap. The aforementioned members are the permanent teaching staff in the group; they investigate their different areas of expertise in their classes, expose them to the group and make proposals, which are later turned into articles.

To do that, all members have extensively trained to spend the most time in the writing process in order to give the least work to the reader. They have both been succinct and explicit, and tried to say what they meant while meaning what they said. They bear in mind that, unlike training sessions, there is no audience in front, who can ask for clarification; therefore, all the planning, the sequencing, the explanations and details have been considered under this premise.

With articles meant for immediate implementation, all members have aimed at clear, yet thorough texts, which include images, charts, lists, questionnaires, tables, photos... to facilitate the reading. They also include bibliographical and web references. In general, the articles summarize what regular classes stand for each member and all: they show the picture of a human teaching forest, where we can observe distinct areas in its vegetation, with individual human plant life and a didactic ground which is covered by them all.

Long-time quantitative and qualitative work has taken their classes to the documents in writing into which they have turned, like flowing creeks in the forest above referred. And this has all been part of the learning processes which all members have undergone, and a consequence of them too.

From original theses, which were presented individually and welcomed by all members, they proceeded to the defences of their general didactic framework, basically the inclusiveness of the basic pillars in teaching English as a foreign language, and also the sequentiation of the contents, with cohesiveness lighting all the way too.

Exceptionally for this issue, Volume 7, and for the next one, Volume 8, Ana Maria Fuentes laid out her multi-level didactic proposals early in 2015-2016. She implemented them in full and simultaneously at the end of the school year, when they had been planned for. Not to miss both perspective and detail work of her EFL teaching and learning timed scenario, all her work and findings were put into writing and handed to the group in June 2016.

Without leaving aside the authors' teaching style, this group has pretended to blend everybody's work in and ensure that balancing the articles out in the group teaching environment was possible: that their work could leave their classrooms for a while, and reach out for other colleagues in the field.

As pointed out earlier, all articles in this volume have stemmed from the basics in lesson planning, whether, depending on their nature, they are fully or partially pointed out and/or described: topics, levels, organization, timing, objectives, contents - procedures and concepts (communicative structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, culture) and attitudes-. Materials are also pointed out, as well the general development of activities along with references, evaluation and comments.

The group also counts on an **ADDENDA** section, which welcomes other teaching professionals, as well as allows the permanent staff members of the research group to present other academic works. It is also open to alumni among the members of the group, so that further pedagogical interventions from them can be considered in the future.

In the *Addenda* section included in this volume, the group presents the work of three guest EFL teachers: **Elisenda Abad**, who also participated in previous volumes, as well as **Teresa García** and **Agustí Lloberas**. Their abstracts and their bios, as well as the group permanent members' are presented next.

None of these articles would have been possible without the group supervisors at ICE: **Francesc Amorós**, continuing primary and secondary teacher training coordinator; **Mercè Martínez**, Director of Continuing Teacher Education, and **Mercè Gracenea**, secretary of the institution, who supported the group research work from the start, and turned it into what it is: *English Is It! (ELT Training Series)*.

## Abstracts from the authors

**ROSAMARIA FÀBREGA**

**Beyond Geeks: Google Forms to Help All in EFL Teaching**

As teachers, we are perfectly aware that students should take exams from time to time. Whenever they take an examination, we wonder if they reached the knowledge which we led them to. An examination is an experience that should not be traumatic for students; on the contrary, it is there to encourage their learning processes. However, some teachers experience tedium when having to spend hours correcting mechanical exercises whose final results could be obtained differently. This article presents *Google Drive*, specifically *Google Forms*, that contribute to solve this problem. The title starting with "Beyond Geeks" has been carefully chosen to encourage us all not to be afraid of using ICT tools when correcting is it. They are especially useful when we really want to avoid meaningless mechanical tasks, which need not be done thirty times if planned ahead, and which can simply be automatically done, and at once.

**ANA MARÍA FUENTES**

**Seize the Assignment While You Can: 7th and 8th Grade. Part I**

This article describes some useful types of assignments to propose our students of 7th and 8th grade such as videos, presentations, games and activities. I provide a thorough analysis of final assignments, looking into the typology of activities, activity plan, steps for assignments and finally, evaluation. With the experience of several years, I consider that these end-of-year activities provide the students with the opportunity to explore interpersonal relationships, language awareness and creativity. Besides, final assignments can be a rich source of assessment for teachers as today's evaluation criteria can be too limiting for both teachers and students. I apply the same methodology in the last years of junior high and high school. The didactic proposals regarding these levels will be presented in "Seize the Assignment While You Can: 9th, 10th Grade, and Senior High School. Part II", which will be published in the next volume.

**LOURDES MONTORO**

**American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries**

Based on different pillars, this teacher went from introducing American culture as part of the syllabus to designing specialized courses for EFL upper-intermediate and advanced students, and teachers in training. Participants were exposed to a general knowledge of American culture and American English through the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. They got acquainted with realia, guests, institutions, independent study, oral practice with American teaching assistants, and worksheets. In this article, Part 1, she presents the main frame and initial itineraries that were followed: oral presentation, written workshop, guided field trip to the North-American Institute, three questionnaires on history, general facts, and main cities. The courses were rounded up with Graduation work and the ceremony itself.

**LOURDES MONTORO**

**American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 2: American English through Spelling and Vocabulary**

American English shows through grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. Part 2 presents first

a brief overview on grammar, yet focuses on introducing students to American spelling, and vocabulary through six worksheets. To learn on spelling students were asked to classify words by it, and deduce their regular rules, and also to work with words which did not follow a rule. When working on vocabulary, participants were asked to distinguish between British and American terms related to building floors, employment, food, government, home, office, politics, transportation, and units of measurement. In all cases, students could work individually, in pairs, or in groups, and could consult the Internet, the class American teaching assistants, and the teacher. Being student-centered, different work paces were expected, which allowed for individual tutoring on different aspects. Keys to worksheets are included

**LOURDES MONTORO**

**American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: From Two American Movies and a Song to Three Video Sessions**

Part 3 presents three samples of video exploitation related to the teaching of American culture in the EFL teaching context. Each of them focuses on different areas which this teacher wanted to cover in her American culture courses: American Celebrations, US Residency legal issues, and the fifties. They are presented through three video excerpts based on Stevie Wonder’s 1985 classic hit: “I just called to say I love you”; The dynamic and formal interview shown in Peter Weir’s 1990 movie: *Green Card*; and The Hollywood-like beginning in Curtis Hanson’s 1997 movie: *L.A. Confidential*. After each video session is introduced, the worksheet and corresponding key follow. They facilitated self-learning, different learning paces, and opportunities for tutoring participants into other areas in the syllabus, and of their personal interest. Students were monitored by the teacher, while American teaching assistants were also available to them.

**LOURDES MONTORO**

**American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 4: Internet Worksheets**

Part 4 presents how the Internet was used to help students in American culture courses deepen their understanding and knowledge. Six worksheets, to which participants were directly exposed, are presented here. The first one took them to a general American studies page, courtesy of the University of Colorado at Boulder, which led them to other general areas such as news and information, science and environment, art, photography and music. The remaining five worksheets were designed to help students follow specific itineraries of their interest: history, immigration services, geography, American holidays (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King, Valentine's Day, Easter, Memorial Day...), American states, and American colleges and universities. They were all related to the different components which the courses covered, and which were presented in part 1.

**ADDENDA**

**ELISENDA ABAD**

**“Lights, Camera, Action!”: An Awarded Motivation Booster within a Learner-centered Project**

Fostering students’ motivation is a challenge that English teachers face in every class. Based on observing her learners and listening to their voices, this teacher created a project named “Lights, Camera, Action!” which boosted motivation and brought her students’ personal and academic potential together. It consisted of shooting three-minute short films to end up creating a twenty-minute class film while implementing

some basic competences and the English ESO syllabus. This article presents the three main parts of the project: before starting the project, while doing the project and after doing the project. It also gives details of all the stages which the 4<sup>th</sup> ESO students from both classes went through along the project.

**TERESA GARCÍA**

**Exploring Building Bricks to Foster Creativity and Communication Skills. A Cross-Curricular Approach**

Toy bricks or blocks are undisputedly one of the most successful ways of playing. In this article, this teacher claims them to be one of the best forms of learning too: not only for the youngest pupils, but for all the different stages of EFL learning development, certainly including older ones. Toy bricks play the role of angular stones acting as a way to enhance English communication and collaboration skills while practising mathematical concepts, hereby trespassing into the increasingly extended CLIL methodology. A cross-curricular approach is presented. It intends to be a starting point, an ignition key to a whole new other world of ideas that hold this popular material as a main guest.

**AGUSTI LLOBERAS**

**Does It Pay to Make Your Own Linguistic Card Games?. Theoretical Framework**

When the Spanish educative system started to change with the LOGSE, I realized that my classes needed to adjust to the new conditions which were making my profession disappointing. To change my teaching style, and to increase my students' performance, I considered using card games. After exploring the market, I concluded that very few things were suitable for my pupil's and my own needs. I decided to make a number of linguistic card games, which have had a very positive effect in my teaching. I present my experience as a game-maker, and point to the possibilities of making different kinds of games depending on the linguistic issue which we want to cover. Finally, I describe how the efficiency of self-made games can be checked, as well as refer to how pre-college students can collaborate in that through their Research Projects.

**AGUSTI LLOBERAS**

**Does It Pay to Make Your Own Linguistic Card Games?. YOU KNOW: A Practical Example**

In the first article I described the theoretical framework in which I develop my task as a game-maker. The main message was that as teachers, we must be thorough and consistent at the time of choosing, implementing, and assessing the game and the linguistic issue that we are going to deal with. In this article, I explain the process that is to be followed to make our own linguistic card-games. In order to do so, I describe how I adapted the popular *UNO* into *YOU KNOW* and made one of my favourite games. I emphasize the selection of the linguistic materials and the design of the cards. Then, I describe how and when to play, as well as how to organise the class in such a way that the resulting "chaos" stays within reasonable limits. Finally, I include an appendix with the *YOU KNOW – CLASSROOM SURVIVAL KIT* version. The reader can print it out and cut the cards out to obtain three different decks of the game.



## Professional bios

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### RESEARCH GROUP



**Rosamaria Fàbrega** has been a Secondary English teacher since 1985. She comes from a family devoted to teaching, and has exchanged teaching experiences in England, Ireland and the US. She is currently teaching “Aprenentatge de les LlengüesEstrangeres” at UIC Barcelona in the Faculty of Education and English in a Secondary Public School. She loves New Technologies and has a blog (<https://rosafabrega.wordpress.com/>) to help her students work in an autonomous way.



**Ana María Fuentes** holds a BA in English Philology and a postgraduate course in Textual Translation Analysis from the University of Barcelona. She has also specialized in Text management for professionals at the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She has taught English in Catalonia for fourteen years. She enjoys exploiting drama and audiovisual projects in class as well as new technologies to support students’ learning process and group dynamics.



**Lourdes Montoro** is a professor of English at Escola Oficial d’Idiomes in Barcelona. She initially taught all levels, from elementary school to high school and vocational school. She has also taught at university, both in Barcelona (UOC and UB), and the United States (UW-L). She is also a teacher trainer, a translator and a critic reader. She has specialized in American culture, English-speaking countries, paremiology and project work.

### GUEST TEACHERS



**Elisenda Abad** holds a BA in English Philology and a master’s degree in Teaching English as a foreign language in Secondary and Upper Secondary Education, Vocational Training and Language schools from Universitat de Barcelona. Since 2011, she has been teaching English in private language schools, and private and public high schools in Barcelona. Currently, she is working at a public high school. She has created her own wiki site through which she shares her own EFL teaching material.



**Teresa García** is an English primary school teacher and a teacher trainer, who also holds a BA in Journalism. Her studies in [King's College London](#) helped her gain experience and insight into the British educational system. She has extensively taught at the preschool, primary, secondary and adult levels, both in public and private schools. She is interested in implementing cross-curricular strategies in the public educational system. At present she is working at a municipal school in her city, Cerdanyola del Vallès.



**Agusti Lloberas** has been an English teacher since 1987. He has worked at [Ins Joan Miró](#) since 2001, successfully implementing linguistic card games as part of EFL learning processes, and presenting them in *Jornades d'Intercanvi Pedagògic del Baix Llobregat*. After creating his blog [Agustí's Place](#) in 2018, he presented it at the *Macmillan Teacher's Days*. He is also interested in applied linguistics, and has extensively worked on computational linguistics at the Facultat de Psicologia at Universitat de Barcelona.

# Beyond Geeks: *Google Forms* to Help All in EFL Teaching

Rosamaria Fàbrega  
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I love teaching very much, and I have enjoyed what my profession has been for nearly thirty years. However, I believe that enjoying what we do is not enough in order to be a good teacher. A proficient teacher needs preparation, dedication, and improvement in order to reach out to students. Teachers are trainers: they need to help students in their learning process.

As it happens with many other things in life, teaching also has its advantages and disadvantages. Yet, the only thing that I do not like in my profession is spending long hours correcting mechanical examinations. When my free time is spent on preparing lessons, reading, observing and tracking the students' progress, I have a great time, and, as a consequence, I remain motivated and challenged, and my classes become much better because they are simply well prepared.

When my time has to be spent on scoring a large amount of systematic grammar and vocabulary exercises, and on counting final average marks, I have to reduce the time which I like having to prepare classes, and this fact ends up diminishing the quality of my work when preparing potential exciting and interesting teaching sessions.

Another aspect which I take into account is that there is no balance between the hours spent on corrections, and the students' direct and usual reaction: they often only pay attention to their final grade; that is disappointing, which does not help either. So, it is clear to me that firstly, I do not like wasting my time, and, secondly, I want my students to be aware of their own mistakes, so that they can advance in their learning itineraries, and do better the next time.

Additionally a teacher is not an accountant, and, I must admit that sometimes I have felt as if I was acting as a machine. I have often dreamed that I wish there was a machine that could correct for me. Fortunately, with the help of technology, my dream has come true, and technology has freed me from the burden of correction.

In this article I am going to present the solution which I found and which I have experienced since 2012: *Google Forms*. On the one hand, *Google Forms* solve the mechanical part that we, theoretically, as teachers, are to do; on the other, they also help in having students focus in their learning awareness. Last but not least, they can be very satisfying when we hear our students say to us: "*You are the only teacher who gives the results on the very next day!*". Who can say no to giving a try to a pedagogical and technical proposal which seems to be a win-win in so many aspects?

Fortunately, a machine can not correct everything. There will be always other assessment elements that contribute to learning as well as to grading, for example compositions, where a human, teaching and professional mind is needed. Assessing written compositions or other

creative written practices is usually very enjoyable for us, the teachers. In fact, writing is the last fundamental skill which students are to master. And in my classes, it is also a *sine qua non* condition which students have to fulfil before their exams are mechanically scored.

When I do exams through *Google Forms*, there is always a composition which is included in the exam; and students have to pass it before being allowed to do the *Multiple Choice* section, for instance, and correct it. If students do not write their compositions, the mechanical part is not scored. I usually do this to also avoid students answering questions at random.

Unfortunately, whether we like it or not, the words *examinations* and *teachers* are tightly connected. This article is eminently practical, and, as the reader will see, beyond being related to the purpose of solving English exams scoring, it can be implemented in any curriculum subject.

I especially recommend the system which I am about to present when dealing with large classes. When we are not afraid of using ICT tools, and correcting is it, *Google Forms* become especially useful to avoid meaningless mechanical tasks, which, otherwise, we would be repeating over and over again, as many times as the number of students that we have been assigned.

If we anticipate to that and technically plan ahead, this correcting dull and burdensome task can simply be automatically done for us -not by us -, and at once, and it can be done at any computer or device, and, what is more, is low in consumption. The system which I will describe keeps students practising for one hour, while the teacher needs to invest just one minute to check the final scores. I am going to explain my experience in using *Google forms* in order to help assessment.

To enjoy the following reading, you just need to be familiar with using technology, whether you area tech-lover or not. My advice to get started with these forms is to begin preparing a short test to gain practice, become confident, and learn the ropes about it. Once you can successfully do it with 5 or 10 exam items (= questions), tests can easily and gradually expand to longer ones. At present, I can work with tests which include a maximum of 110 items.

To apply the system which I use, I would like to introduce you to the procedure, which I will explain in two parts:

a/ using a <i>google</i> form to generate exams
b/ using an <i>excel</i> spreadsheet to generate the exam keys

### **A/ USING A *GOOGLE* FORM TO GENERATE EXAMS**

1. Think about which parts in a given examination (grammar, listening, pronunciation, reading, vocabulary...) could be answered through either *Multiple Choice*, *True-False*, or *Yes-No questions*.

Once you have that in mind, type your exam, and next, print it out too. It is important to realize that students should first answer the exam on traditional paper. From my experience, this should be so for two reasons:

- a/ Students are blocked out from any access to the Internet and this prevents them from cheating.
- b/ Sometimes there are not enough computers for all.

Additionally, you must be aware that there might be a weak Internet connection at times, which has not been the case in my classes; however, it is important to anticipate and be ready to be in control at all times. Next I am going to exemplify these first explanations with an exam which I recently prepared, and which depicts the three types of exercises which I just pointed to. The image below shows two skills (Listening and Reading). The listening exam has two exercises. In the first exercise students need to match the two columns:

**LISTENING**

Listening total

**1 Listen to five young people talking about following fashion. Choose from the list (A-F) which problem each person mentions. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter which you do not need to use.**

- Speaker 1 [ ]
- Speaker 2 [ ]
- Speaker 3 [ ]
- Speaker 4 [ ]
- Speaker 5 [ ]

- A the cost of clothes
- B the range of fashions available
- C the time it takes for delivery
- D the lack of sizes available
- E clothes which are badly made
- F the colours available

**2 Listen to a young woman talking about setting up a fashion company and underline the correct answer.**

- 6 Anna decided to set up an online fashion company selling **children's / women's / men's clothes.**
- 7 Anna used **money borrowed from her family / her own money / money borrowed from a friend** to set up her business.

In this second exercise, students need to circle the right answer. In the reading, students are asked to fill in the blanks:

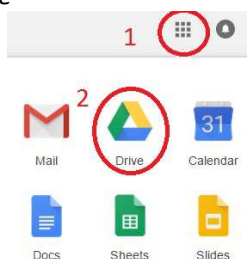
**READING**

1 Read the article about personality tests. Five sentences have been removed. Which sentence (A-F) fits each gap (1-5)? There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

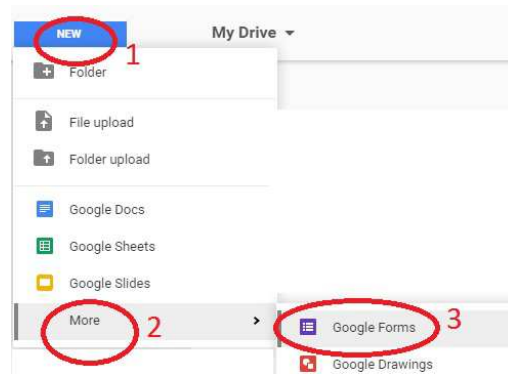
(From *New English File, 3rd Edition* - Oxford University Press Upper-Intermediate)

2. Once the exam is prepared, it is time to transfer it to a *google* form. You will find next the steps which are to be followed:

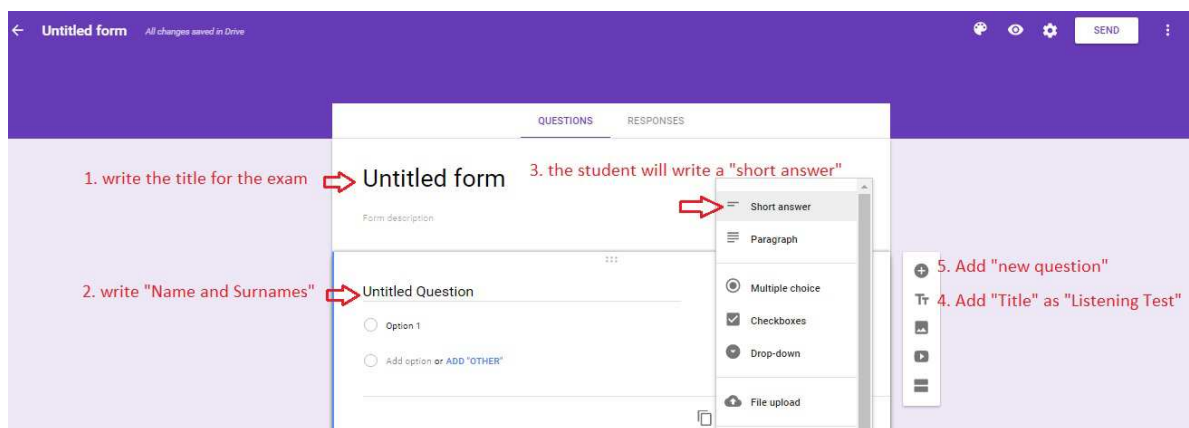
- a) Go to your account on *google drive*



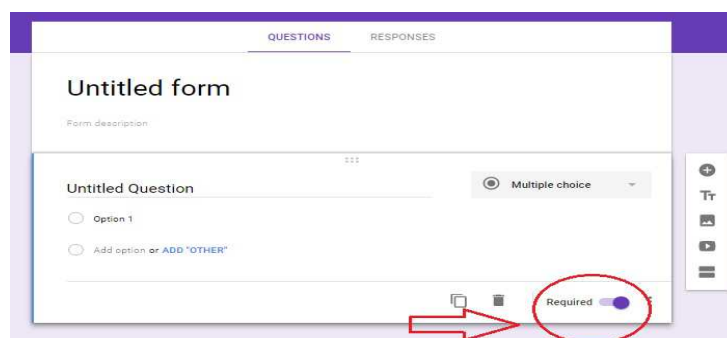
b) Click on "NEW" --> More --> Google Forms



c) The form presents the blanks to be filled with questions. Where you read "Untitled", you have to write the name (= the type) of exam (E.g.: grammar, listening, pronunciation, reading, vocabulary....). The first question blank which I recommend to fill in is the one corresponding to the place where students will later write their names and surnames. After that, you can proceed with the questions as such, and include them all.

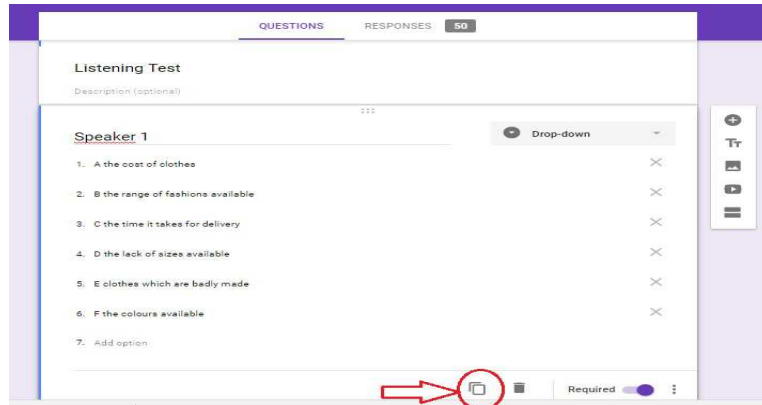


d) Also do not forget to mark each question as "obligatory"; this way all questions are taken care of, and must be necessarily answered.

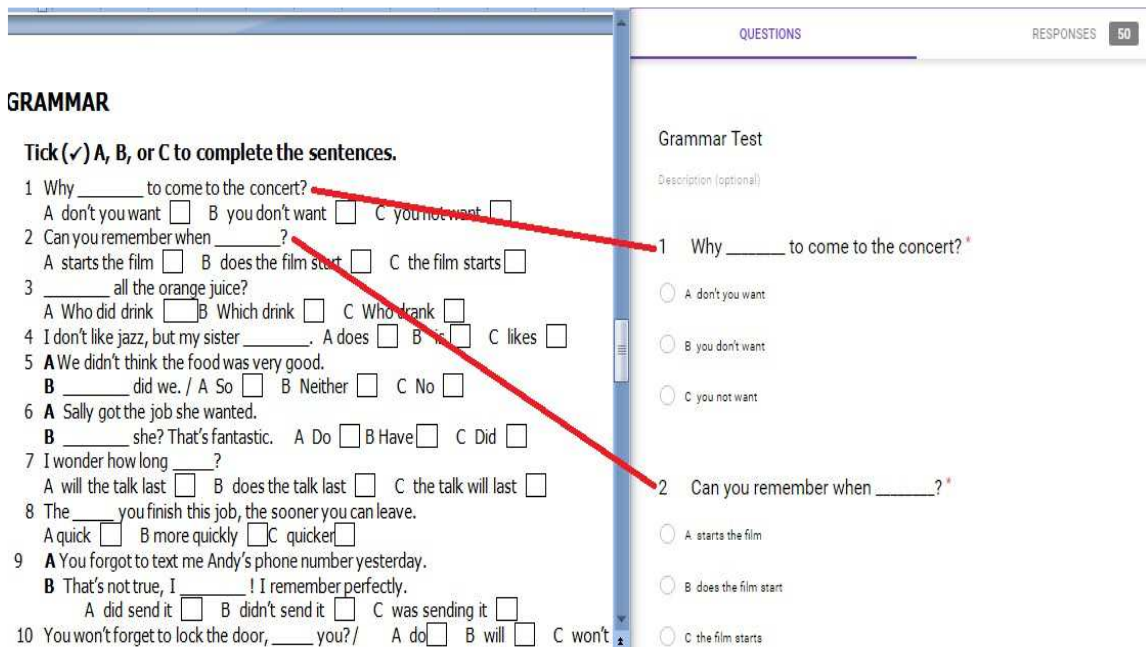


e) Once you have chosen the kind of question which you need (the menu on the right will provide you with that), you can duplicate each question, by clicking on "Duplicate". Duplicating questions is practical when you have questions which follow the same pattern.

For example, if you are working on a *multiple choice* type of answer, you will need to insert the structure only once in the first blank; for the rest, you will just need to duplicate it as many times as the number of questions which your exam has. To modify a duplicated question, you only need to click on it once more. Needless to say that one can duplicate questions as many times as one may need.



f) Now you are ready to fill in the form with all the questions of the exam. To ease off your next step, you should simply minimize both the *Word* document (where you had originally typed the exam) and the *Google* form in this order, and place them both as side by side windows. There is no need for you to type all the sentences that you had already typed in the printed *Word* version (left). What you will only need to do is drag the questions which you had typed earlier and take them from the left document to the right one.

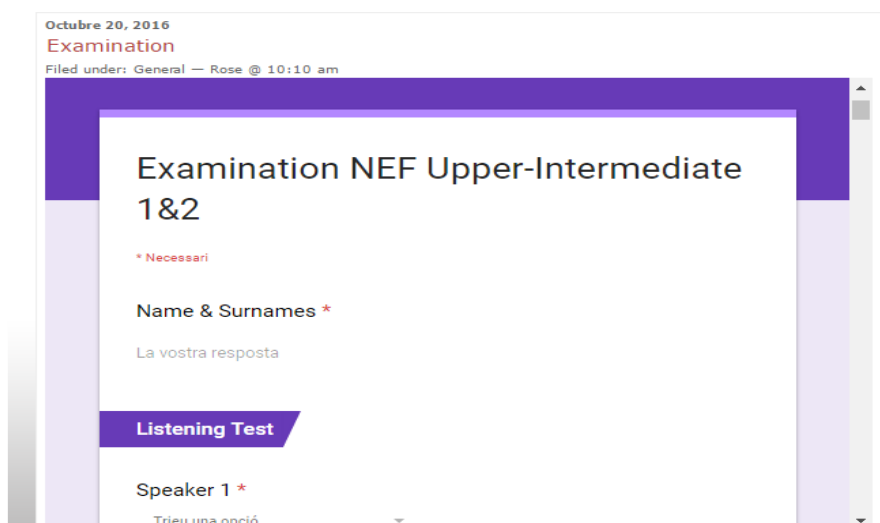


To gain practice, become confident, and master the system, I recommend you to first try with a limited number of items. Last but not least, you must bear in mind that for students to have final access to the virtual formatted exam, and have it corrected, you must have previously

embed the link (corresponding to the form which you have created) in a blog or a platform, like *Moodle*, for example. To embed the form into your blog you just need to copy the link, which is provided, and paste it as a post. This is how the form immediately becomes accessible to students:



I use my own blog (<https://rosafabrega.wordpress.com/>) and I always create posts which go with exams. I sometimes program when I want the posts to become visible. If so, I program them for 10 minutes after the exam has started. This way, I ensure that no students have access to the exam before that. The post is deleted once the exam has finished. If you are using *Moodle* or a similar platform, you can simply decide when you want your post to be visible to your students. This is how the exam in the *Google form* looks after its address has been embedded:



You have been exposed to the basic steps which *Google* forms offer. If you need further help or wish to consult a tutorial, you might like to check the one which is provided by *Google*: <https://gsuite.google.com/learning-center/products/forms/get-started/>

### **B/ USING AN EXCEL SPREADSHEET TO GENERATE THE EXAM KEYS**

In order to have automatic results, we will have to insert the right answers in the *google* form twice. What we write, and later the students will write, is stored in an *Excel* spreadsheet. The first row in the spreadsheet will act as a "key" and the second row will be the proof that the correction system has no flaw, and, that, therefore, it is working.



Once the spreadsheet includes all the responses, you will have to add a formula in its last column. I will present two basic formulas which I use with *Excel spreadsheets*:

**FORMULA 1:**

It is essential to calculate the final mark of the exam

$$=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)$$

This is what the formula means: If what you find in cell "C3" is the same as cell "C2", the result is 1 point; if not, it is "0". This formula needs to be copied as many times as items which the exam has. To do that, you must change the name of the cell to "D", "E", "F".

Once you have the formula that suits the number of items in your test, it is the same for all the exams which present the same format. As an example, if the exam has 10 items, the formula will be expressed from cell "C" to "L": C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L.

$$=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+SI(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+SI(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+SI(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+SI(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+SI(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+SI(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+SI(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+SI(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+SI(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)$$

The more items, the longer the formula. If an exam has 65 items, for instance, the formula that needs to be inserted in the last column in the *Excel* spreadsheet is:

$$=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+IF(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+IF(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+IF(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+IF(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+IF(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+IF(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+IF(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+IF(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+IF(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+IF(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+IF(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+IF(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+IF(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+IF(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+IF(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+IF(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+IF(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+IF(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+IF(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+IF(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+IF(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+IF(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+IF(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+IF(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+IF(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)+IF(AQ3=\$AQ\$2;1;0)+IF(AR3=\$AR\$2;1;0)+IF(AS3=\$AS\$2;1;0)+IF(AT3=\$AT\$2;1;0)+IF(AU3=\$AU\$2;1;0)+IF(AV3=\$AV\$2;1;0)+IF(AW3=\$AW\$2;1;0)+IF(AX3=\$AX\$2;1;0)+IF(AY3=\$AY\$2;1;0)+IF(AZ3=\$AZ\$2;1;0)+IF(BA3=\$BA\$2;1;0)+IF(BB3=\$BB\$2;1;0)+IF(BC3=\$BC\$2;1;0)+IF(BD3=\$BD\$2;1;0)+IF(BE3=\$BE\$2;1;0)+IF(BF3=\$BF\$2;1;0)+IF(BG3=\$BG\$2;1;0)+IF(BH3=\$BH\$2;1;0)+IF(BI3=\$BI\$2;1;0)+IF(BJ3=\$BJ\$2;1;0)+IF(BK3=\$BK\$2;1;0)+IF(BL3=\$BL\$2;1;0)+IF(BM3=\$BM\$2;1;0)+IF(BN3=\$BN\$2;1;0)+IF(BO3=\$BO\$2;1;0)$$

In the annex, at the end of this article, you will find a series of ready-to-use formulas which I have developed and you are welcome to use. They range from 10, 20, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 to 100 potential exam items.

**FORMULA 2:**

it is a step forward and it calculates a pass on 65% instead of the classic 50% of right answers

$$=IF(T1>=65;5+((5/35)*(T1-65));(5/65*T1))$$

Special thanks to my colleague Rafa Oliva for facilitating it to me

This is the formula that we should use if we believe that students are not supposed to pass, if they only “know” half the subject (classic 50%) and/or, if the exam follows the *multiple choice* type, and we want to anticipate to possible random answers.

If we take an exam which includes 100 items, "T1" would refer to the cell where the grade of the student is placed. The sum of 65 and 35 makes 100; and we want to have a passing mark at 65%. The formula reads: if the students’ grade is higher than 65 the mark is a 5; then, the rest of the numbers up to 100 are added to be proportionally ranged.

Finally, I would like to also show how, sometimes, 2 more marks can be added. The exam below corresponds to a test, which had 65 points for *multiple choice* exercise , 10 points for a first writing and 15 points for a second one. The total score was 90 points

A	B	C	D	BO	BP	BQ	BR	BS	BT	BU
Fecha de tiempo	Name & Surnames	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	10. Which is the correctly stressed syllable? Tick A, B, or C.	FINAL SCORE /65	Listening / 10	Reading / 15	TOTAL / 90	Pass 65%	
19/10/2016 22:49:29	rmf 22:44	B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON		10	10	15	25	2,19
19/10/2016 22:54:44	rmf 22:49	B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	65	10	10	15	90	10,00
20/10/2016 11:08:38		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	53	0	3	4,5	57,5	5,08
20/10/2016 11:12:02		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	A unconscious / UN	42	3	2	3	48	4,21
20/10/2016 11:12:13		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	52	0	3	4,5	58,5	4,90
20/10/2016 11:12:25		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	55	4	1	1,5	60,5	5,53
20/10/2016 11:16:42		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	A unconscious / UN	54	5	4	6	65	6,21
20/10/2016 11:16:48		az C the time it takes for de	A the cost of clothes	B unconscious / CON	38	6	6	9	53	4,95
20/10/2016 11:16:55		e B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	53	3	0	0	56	4,91
20/10/2016 11:17:39		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	54	3	0	0	57	5,00
20/10/2016 11:20:49		al B the range of fashions a	E clothes which are badly	B unconscious / CON	49	4	5	7,5	60,5	5,53
20/10/2016 11:21:36		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	55	9	7	10,5	74,5	7,65
20/10/2016 11:21:40		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	62	9	0	0	71	7,12
20/10/2016 11:24:41		B the range of fashions a	F the colours available	B unconscious / CON	54	7	6	9	70	6,97

Last but not least, I must refer to our students’work with regards to *google* forms. Once they have completed the exam on paper, it is their turn to write their results on the *google* form. It only takes them 2 to 3 minutes, which depends on the number of items. The devices which student scan use to fill the *google* forms with their answers can be computers, laptops, mobile phones, tablets...

If you happen to only have one computer per classroom, access to it in turns is possible too. As indicated earlier, *Google* forms do not need much Internet connection, which is very useful because that ensures that all students have access to the web page.

Students benefit from two main advantages when using *Google* Forms:

1. Quantitative scores are dealt with in the following class session
2. Qualitative results are also presented on that day.  
Students have the corrected answers projected on the classroom screen.  
They correct their mistakes, and if they have any question, they can ask me right away.

What students see when I project the key is as follows:

**GRAMMAR**

Tick (✓) A, B, or C to complete the sentences.

- 1 Why \_\_\_\_\_ to come to the concert?  
**A don't you want**  B you don't want  C you not want
- 2 Can you remember when \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A starts the film  B does the film start  **C the film starts**
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ all the orange juice?  
 A Who did drink  B Which drink  **C Who drank**
- 4 I don't like jazz, but my sister \_\_\_\_\_. **A does**  B is  C likes
- 5 ~~A~~ We didn't think the food was very good.  
**B** \_\_\_\_\_ did we. / A So  **B Neither**  C No
- 6 **A** Sally got the job she wanted.  
**B** \_\_\_\_\_ she? That's fantastic. A Do  B Have  **C Did**
- 7 I wonder how long \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A will the talk last  B does the talk last  **C the talk will last**

Students must match quantitative scores with the qualitative answers, and I must tell you that students love seeing that the counting is exact. In case, there may be a non-coincidence, students are told to stay after class and we both check the results at the computer, and fix what might need to.

I have presented a correction system which helps us both, teachers and students. When you put it into practice, you will clearly notice that students become more responsible for their learning processes and itineraries. As they are technically assisted, they become more involved in their own corrections processes, and even more willing to do immediate remedial work, and participate in the discovery of new lessons. Needless to say that the immediacy which the system provides removes unnecessary waits and tedium on both parts, ensuring quality because quantity has been, automatically and previously, been taken care of.

**ANNEX: 10 FORMULAS**

<b>10 ITEMS</b>
=SI(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+SI(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+SI(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+SI(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+SI(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+SI(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+SI(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+SI(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+SI(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+SI(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)
<b>20 ITEMS</b>
=SI(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+SI(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+SI(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+SI(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+SI(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+SI(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+SI(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+SI(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+SI(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+SI(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+SI(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+SI(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+SI(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+SI(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+SI(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+SI(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+SI(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+SI(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+SI(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+SI(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)
<b>40 ITEMS</b>
=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+IF(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+IF(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+IF(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+IF(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+IF(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)

=H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+IF(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+IF(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+IF(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+IF(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+IF(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+IF(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+IF(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+IF(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+IF(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+IF(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+IF(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+IF(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+IF(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+IF(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+IF(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+IF(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+IF(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+IF(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+IF(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+IF(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)

**50 ITEMS**

=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+IF(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+IF(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+IF(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+IF(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+IF(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+IF(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+IF(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+IF(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+IF(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+IF(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+IF(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+IF(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+IF(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+IF(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+IF(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+IF(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+IF(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+IF(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+IF(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+IF(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+IF(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+IF(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+IF(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+IF(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+IF(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)+IF(AQ3=\$AQ\$2;1;0)+IF(AR3=\$AR\$2;1;0)+IF(AS3=\$AS\$2;1;0)+IF(AT3=\$AT\$2;1;0)+IF(AU3=\$AU\$2;1;0)+IF(AV3=\$AV\$2;1;0)+IF(AW3=\$AW\$2;1;0)+IF(AX3=\$AX\$2;1;0)+IF(AY3=\$AY\$2;1;0)+IF(AZ3=\$AZ\$2;1;0)

**60 ITEMS**

=SI(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+SI(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+SI(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+SI(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+SI(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+SI(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+SI(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+SI(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+SI(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+SI(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+SI(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+SI(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+SI(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+SI(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+SI(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+SI(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+SI(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+SI(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+SI(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+SI(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+SI(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+SI(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+SI(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+SI(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+SI(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+SI(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+SI(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+SI(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+SI(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+SI(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+SI(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+SI(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+SI(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+SI(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+SI(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+SI(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+SI(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+SI(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+SI(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+SI(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)+SI(AQ3=\$AQ\$2;1;0)+SI(AR3=\$AR\$2;1;0)+SI(AS3=\$AS\$2;1;0)+SI(AT3=\$AT\$2;1;0)+SI(AU3=\$AU\$2;1;0)+SI(AV3=\$AV\$2;1;0)+SI(AW3=\$AW\$2;1;0)+SI(AX3=\$AX\$2;1;0)+SI(AY3=\$AY\$2;1;0)+SI(AZ3=\$AZ\$2;1;0)+SI(BA3=\$BA\$2;1;0)+SI(BB3=\$BB\$2;1;0)+SI(BC3=\$BC\$2;1;0)+SI(BD3=\$BD\$2;1;0)+SI(BE3=\$BE\$2;1;0)+SI(BF3=\$BF\$2;1;0)+SI(BG3=\$BG\$2;1;0)+SI(BH3=\$BH\$2;1;0)+SI(BI3=\$BI\$2;1;0)+SI(BJ3=\$BJ\$2;1;0)

70 ITEMS

=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+IF(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+IF(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+IF(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+IF(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+IF(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+IF(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+IF(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+IF(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+IF(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+IF(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+IF(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+IF(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+IF(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+IF(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+IF(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+IF(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+IF(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+IF(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+IF(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+IF(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+IF(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+IF(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+IF(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+IF(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+IF(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)+IF(AQ3=\$AQ\$2;1;0)+IF(AR3=\$AR\$2;1;0)+IF(AS3=\$AS\$2;1;0)+IF(AT3=\$AT\$2;1;0)+IF(AU3=\$AU\$2;1;0)+IF(AV3=\$AV\$2;1;0)+IF(AW3=\$AW\$2;1;0)+IF(AX3=\$AX\$2;1;0)+IF(AY3=\$AY\$2;1;0)+IF(AZ3=\$AZ\$2;1;0)+IF(BA3=\$BA\$2;1;0)+IF(BB3=\$BB\$2;1;0)+IF(BC3=\$BC\$2;1;0)+IF(BD3=\$BD\$2;1;0)+IF(BE3=\$BE\$2;1;0)+IF(BF3=\$BF\$2;1;0)+IF(BG3=\$BG\$2;1;0)+IF(BH3=\$BH\$2;1;0)+IF(BI3=\$BI\$2;1;0)+IF(BJ3=\$BJ\$2;1;0)+IF(BK3=\$BK\$2;1;0)+IF(BL3=\$BL\$2;1;0)+IF(BM3=\$BM\$2;1;0)+IF(BN3=\$BN\$2;1;0)+IF(BO3=\$BO\$2;1;0)+IF(BP3=\$BP\$2;1;0)+IF(BQ3=\$BQ\$2;1;0)+IF(BR3=\$BR\$2;1;0)+IF(BS3=\$BS\$2;1;0)+IF(BT3=\$BT\$2;1;0)

80 ITEMS

=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+IF(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+IF(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+IF(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+IF(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+IF(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+IF(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+IF(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+IF(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+IF(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+IF(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+IF(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+IF(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+IF(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+IF(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+IF(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+IF(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+IF(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+IF(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+IF(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+IF(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+IF(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+IF(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+IF(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+IF(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+IF(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)+IF(AQ3=\$AQ\$2;1;0)+IF(AR3=\$AR\$2;1;0)+IF(AS3=\$AS\$2;1;0)+IF(AT3=\$AT\$2;1;0)+IF(AU3=\$AU\$2;1;0)+IF(AV3=\$AV\$2;1;0)+IF(AW3=\$AW\$2;1;0)+IF(AX3=\$AX\$2;1;0)+IF(AY3=\$AY\$2;1;0)+IF(AZ3=\$AZ\$2;1;0)+IF(BA3=\$BA\$2;1;0)+IF(BB3=\$BB\$2;1;0)+IF(BC3=\$BC\$2;1;0)+IF(BD3=\$BD\$2;1;0)+IF(BE3=\$BE\$2;1;0)+IF(BF3=\$BF\$2;1;0)+IF(BG3=\$BG\$2;1;0)+IF(BH3=\$BH\$2;1;0)+IF(BI3=\$BI\$2;1;0)+IF(BJ3=\$BJ\$2;1;0)+IF(BK3=\$BK\$2;1;0)+IF(BL3=\$BL\$2;1;0)+IF(BM3=\$BM\$2;1;0)+IF(BN3=\$BN\$2;1;0)+IF(BO3=\$BO\$2;1;0)+IF(BP3=\$BP\$2;1;0)+IF(BQ3=\$BQ\$2;1;0)+IF(BR3=\$BR\$2;1;0)+IF(BS3=\$BS\$2;1;0)+IF(BT3=\$BT\$2;1;0)+IF(BU3=\$BU\$2;1;0)+IF(BV3=\$BV\$2;1;0)+IF(BW3=\$BW\$2;1;0)+IF(BX3=\$BX\$2;1;0)+IF(BY3=\$BY\$2;1;0)+IF(BZ3=\$BZ\$2;1;0)+IF(CA3=\$CA\$2;1;0)+IF(CB3=\$CB\$2;1;0)+IF(CC3=\$CC\$2;1;0)+IF(CD3=\$CD\$2;1;0)

100 ITEMS

=IF(C3=\$C\$2;1;0)+IF(D3=\$D\$2;1;0)+IF(E3=\$E\$2;1;0)+IF(F3=\$F\$2;1;0)+IF(G3=\$G\$2;1;0)+IF(H3=\$H\$2;1;0)+IF(I3=\$I\$2;1;0)+IF(J3=\$J\$2;1;0)+IF(K3=\$K\$2;1;0)+IF(L3=\$L\$2;1;0)+IF(M3=\$M\$2;1;0)+IF(N3=\$N\$2;1;0)+IF(O3=\$O\$2;1;0)+IF(P3=\$P\$2;1;0)+IF(Q3=\$Q\$2;1;0)+IF(R3=\$R\$2;1;0)+IF(S3=\$S\$2;1;0)+IF(T3=\$T\$2;1;0)+IF(U3=\$U\$2;1;0)+IF(V3=\$V\$2;1;0)+IF(W3=\$W\$2;1;0)+IF(X3=\$X\$2;1;0)+IF(Y3=\$Y\$2;1;0)+IF(Z3=\$Z\$2;1;0)+IF(AA3=\$AA\$2;1;0)+IF(AB3=\$AB\$2;1;0)+IF(AC3=\$AC\$2;1;0)+IF(AD3=\$AD\$2;1;0)+IF(AE3=\$AE\$2;1;0)+IF(AF3=\$AF\$2;1;0)+IF(AG3=\$AG\$2;1;0)+IF(AH3=\$AH\$2;1;0)+IF(AI3=\$AI\$2;1;0)+IF(AJ3=\$AJ\$2;1;0)+IF(AK3=\$AK\$2;1;0)+IF(AL3=\$AL\$2;1;0)+IF(AM3=\$AM\$2;1;0)+IF(AN3=\$AN\$2;1;0)+IF(AO3=\$AO\$2;1;0)+IF(AP3=\$AP\$2;1;0)+IF(AQ3=\$AQ\$2;1;0)+IF(AR3=\$AR\$2;1;0)+IF(AS3=\$AS\$2;1;0)+IF(AT3=\$AT\$2;1;0)+IF(AU3=\$AU\$2;1;0)+IF(AV3=\$AV\$2;1;0)+IF(AW3=\$AW\$2;1;0)+IF(AX3=\$AX\$2;1;0)+IF(AY3=\$AY\$2;1;0)+IF(AZ3=\$AZ\$2;1;0)+IF(BA3=\$BA\$2;1;0)+IF(BB3=\$BB\$2;1;0)+IF(BC3=\$BC\$2;1;0)+IF(BD3=\$BD\$2;1;0)+IF(BE3=\$BE\$2;1;0)+IF(BF3=\$BF\$2;1;0)+IF(BG3=\$BG\$2;1;0)+IF(BH3=\$BH\$2;1;0)+IF(BI3=\$BI\$2;1;0)+IF(BJ3=\$BJ\$2;1;0)+IF(BK3=\$BK\$2;1;0)+IF(BL3=\$BL\$2;1;0)+IF(BM3=\$BM\$2;1;0)+IF(BN3=\$BN\$2;1;0)+IF(BO3=\$BO\$2;1;0)+IF(BP3=\$BP\$2;1;0)+IF(BQ3=\$BQ\$2;1;0)+IF(BR3=\$BR\$2;1;0)+IF(BS3=\$BS\$2;1;0)+IF(BT3=\$BT\$2;1;0)+IF(BU3=\$BU\$2;1;0)+IF(BV3=\$BV\$2;1;0)+IF(BW3=\$BW\$2;1;0)+IF(BX3=\$BX\$2;1;0)+IF(BY3=\$BY\$2;1;0)+IF(BZ3=\$BZ\$2;1;0)+IF(CA3=\$CA\$2;1;0)+IF(CB3=\$CB\$2;1;0)+IF(CC3=\$CC\$2;1;0)+IF(CD3=\$CD\$2;1;0)+IF(CE3=\$CE\$2;1;0)+IF(CF3=\$CF\$2;1;0)+IF(CG3=\$CG\$2;1;0)+IF(CH3=\$CH\$2;1;0)+IF(CI3=\$CI\$2;1;0)+IF(CJ3=\$CJ\$2;1;0)+IF(CK3=\$CK\$2;1;0)+IF(CL3=\$CL\$2;1;0)+IF(CM3=\$CM\$2;1;0)+IF(CN3=\$CN\$2;1;0)+IF(CO3=\$CO\$2;1;0)+IF(CP3=\$CP\$2;1;0)+IF(CQ3=\$CQ\$2;1;0)+IF(CR3=\$CR\$2;1;0)+IF(CS3=\$CS\$2;1;0)+IF(CT3=\$CT\$2;1;0)+IF(CU3=\$CU\$2;1;0)+IF(CV3=\$CV\$2;1;0)+IF(CW3=\$CW\$2;1;0)+IF(CX3=\$CX\$2;1;0)

# Seize the Assignment While You Can: 7th and 8th Grade. Part I

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This article aims to highlight the role of assignments in learning English as opportunities to consolidate the contents of the learners' curricula. As I have done assignments every year for for fourteen years, and analysed them, to better them off in the following academic year, I have concluded that the teaching itineraries and activity plan which I am about to present are effective. This is so because, basically, these assignments make my students:

- Find motivation in the projects
- Develop interpersonal relationships
- Devise a different kind of relationship between teacher and students
- Find interest and pleasure in a class project
- Deepen into their own personal linguistic corpus and show it to other students
- Practise self-evaluation and peer evaluation
- Stimulate critical thinking

Indeed, by doing these projects I have noticed that there is always a very positive atmosphere in class. Besides, using peer assessment makes evaluation fresh and interactive because all students are actively involved, doing different things during and after their peers' presentation of their work. Students are also very creative, and the activities which they come up with are always appealing and engaging for them all.

They perfectly suit the end of the school year. Additionally, as it happens with projects, a large number of potential discipline problems are diminished when the students' rhythms, routines and group work are changed and monitored by us. Finally, I have observed that final assignments are the best opportunity to explore creativity through language awareness, enhancing motivation, collaboration while consolidating the contents of the whole year.

I have divided my pedagogical proposal, including description and analysis of assignments, into two parts, which depend on the students' level and complement each other:

"Seize the Assignment While You Can: 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade. Part I"
"Seize the Assignment While You Can: 9 <sup>th</sup> , 10th Grade and Senior High School. Part II"

## I. Introduction

The importance of assignments in teaching is undoubtedly relevant but sometimes they are taken for granted. Often teachers are not aware of the great chance that final assignments can represent for the process of learning English. Not all evaluation should be set on contents, procedures and attitudes.

Over the years I have been proposing my students different end-of-year assignments, which, with time, have turned to be a magister formula, which I have analyzed and studied as varied tasks, skills and solid parts of the curriculum.

Not only final assignments should be considered as items to be evaluated in the assessment process, but also as consolidation tasks, as encouragement for participation and as opportunities for creativity. We must bear in mind that they can also be designed to be collaborative tasks, so that students can work in small groups.

The final assignments that I am going to describe in Part I are, as indicated earlier, devised for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and set at the end of the course, or they can also be adapted to the end of every term, as a way to test the students' achievement level. They include work on other curricular areas, and can be part of the exams, tests or assessment activities that we, as teachers, normally do.

**II. Final assignments**

My analysis of assignments is organized in the following sections:

1. TYPOLOGY OF ACTIVITIES
2. ACTIVITY PLAN
3. STEPS FOR THE FINAL ASSIGNMENTS
4. EVALUATION

**1. TYPOLOGY OF ACTIVITIES.**

This section includes videos, presentations, language games, grammar summaries and exercises, which each group can choose. They are described with regards to language, competence and skills. Videos are exemplified with two presentations which I have chosen because they were the best valued by their peers. Among the different years, presentations have been connected with sports, music bands, cooking, advertisements, fashion, Hollywood stars, etc...

Language games are exemplified through references to different types which students have a choice to and introduced: Connectors, Trivial Pursuit, Dominoes, Crossword Puzzles, and Sudokus. Some of these games require skills that involve IT but others demand some cross-curricular knowledge such as science and crafts. The images which I present the students to introduce the games and brainstorm on them are included. After they create their own games and play them, each group takes them home. It is important that each group takes a different choice so that a variety of games is ensured.



**Videos**

	<b>Language</b>	<b>Key competences</b>	<b>IT skills</b>
Daily routines	Present simple Verbs for daily activities Times of the day Telling the time	Narration Description Sequencing	Video recording
My house	Parts of the house Present continuous Family members	Strategies for planning a script Creative production Phonetics and phonology	Video editing



Interview with a famous person	Present simple Present continuous Affirmative, negative and interrogative forms	Role-playing Simulation Strategies for oral production Creative production Pragmatics	Inserting subtitles  <i>YouTube/Vimeo</i>
A Recipe	Food Methods of cooking	Phonetics and phonology	



**Examples of videos**

 <p>Screenshot of "Mauro's and Marc's Pizza"</p>	 <p>Screenshot of "My favourite sport"</p>
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**Presentations**

	Language	Key competences	IT skills
My favourite animal/ my imaginary animal	Describe the animal's daily routine Times of the day Physical description Present simple	Strategies for planning written texts Strategies for oral production Adequacy, coherence and cohesion	<i>Powerpoint</i>  <i>Prezzi</i>  <i>Storybird</i>
A sport	Describe the sport's rules Equipment History Famous sportspeople	Sequencing  Description Phonetics and phonology	Video edition  <i>YouTube/Vimeo</i>





**Examples of presentations**

 <p>Screenshot of "My Cat Rufo"</p>	 <p>Screenshot of "Swimming and Mireia Belmonte"</p>
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Language games

	Language	Key competences	Skills / IT skills
Connector	School subjects Daily routines Parts of the body Physical description Houses and flats Festivals, dates Free time activities Jobs	Oral and written comprehension  Strategies for oral comprehension  Search and management of linguistic information	Electricity (build an electrical circuit)  Crafts
Domino	Sports Clothes, accessories, shops	Strategies for revision, correction, repair and presentation	Crafts
Trivial Pursuit	Character and appearance Places and directions	Lexis and semantics	
Crossword	Food, meals Musical instruments	Verbal and non-verbal strategies to overcome misunderstanding	<i>Puzzlemaker</i>  <i>Abcya.com</i>
Wordsearch	Holidays, places	Phonetics and phonology	<i>Create your own trivial pursuit cards</i>  <i>Powerpoint</i>

Models

Connector	Trivial Pursuit
	
Dominoes	Wordsearch
	

Crosswords	English sudoku

### Grammar summaries and exercises

The groups that choose this option must check the consolidation section on their textbooks and write their own summaries of some grammatical items included in the year contents. After that, they create exercises which are addressed to their classmates, and which will be done by them. The image below exemplifies the visual aids which I use, as possible models. After students are exposed to a series of them, they can start designing and creating their own.

## This - That - These - Those

Demonstratives

**English Grammar**

**singular**   **plural**

here   this   these

there   that   those

Demonstrative Pronouns   **singular** This is a red pen.  
**plural** These are blue pens.  
**Demonstrative Pronoun + Verb\***  
 \* or by itself. - e.g. Do you want **this**?

Demonstrative Adjectives   **singular** This pen is red.  
**plural** These pens are blue.  
**Demonstrative Adjective + Noun**

**this book**  
(here / close)

**that book**  
(there / not close)

**these books**  
(here / close)

**those books**  
(there / not close)

[www.grammar.cl](http://www.grammar.cl)   
 [www.woodwardenglish.com](http://www.woodwardenglish.com)   
 [www.vocabulary.cl](http://www.vocabulary.cl)

### 2. ACTIVITY PLAN

To ensure the efficiency of the final works, it is very important to lay down clear steps and establish proposal and delivery dates. Beneath I have summarized the steps of the assignment process referring to the timing, type of interaction among the whole class, teacher and group.

	STEPS	TIME	TYPE OF INTERACTION	AGENTS OF WORK
1	Presentation of the posters showing the assignments	½ session	Teacher-Class	Group
2	Preparation	1 or 2 sessions 1 or 2 hours at home	Class-home	Class
3	Class exhibition	3 sessions	Group-class	Group and class
4	Evaluation		Class-group, teacher-group	Class, Teacher

Interestingly enough, the steps in the activity plan cover a varied type of group, class and teacher interaction due to diverse types of work roles; so the students are asked to organize themselves, be active leaders in the class, while being able to listen to others in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration. I am going to fully describe the steps of the implementation of the final assignments sessions.

### **3. STEPS FOR THE FINAL ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Step 1: Presentation of the posters**

To begin, the teacher shows the posters which advertise the assignments and describe the four types of activities that they are asked to choose from: video, presentation, language games and grammar summary. The children group themselves in 3 or 4 students and choose an option out of the four types.

Then they design their assignment together and hand in a proposal to the teacher with a brief description (about two paragraphs) of what the project will be, a bullet list of what the features are and what they expect to be able to do with it. When the teacher gives the green light, they can start preparing their activities in class and also at home.

#### **Step 2: Preparation of the assignment**

The members of the group detail the name of the project, group members, the tools and processes to elaborate their work and the steps to follow and the specific task that each member is going to take. The teacher guides the groups on how to do the project, making sure that they know the skills, tools and apps to produce their works.

Students prepare their tasks using IT resources, online or paper dictionaries, encyclopedias, their textbooks and other reference books. In the case of videos, they should be uploaded to networks such as *Youtube* or *Vimeo*. The teacher can agree to devote more time for preparation in another session of 50' guiding, and assessing. Students are not always able to finish and therefore, they meet outside school and work longer.

#### **Step 3: Class exhibition**

When it comes to the delivery date and their projects are ready, they hand them in for a revision and the teacher gives them feedback and some advice for the exhibition of the

projects in class. Next, it is time for every group to share their work. To do that, the teacher designs a schedule of presentations: for example, 2 or 3 videos and 2 presentations and the remaining time for games (Dominoes, Wordsearch...). This class exhibit of assignments takes 2 or 3 sessions.

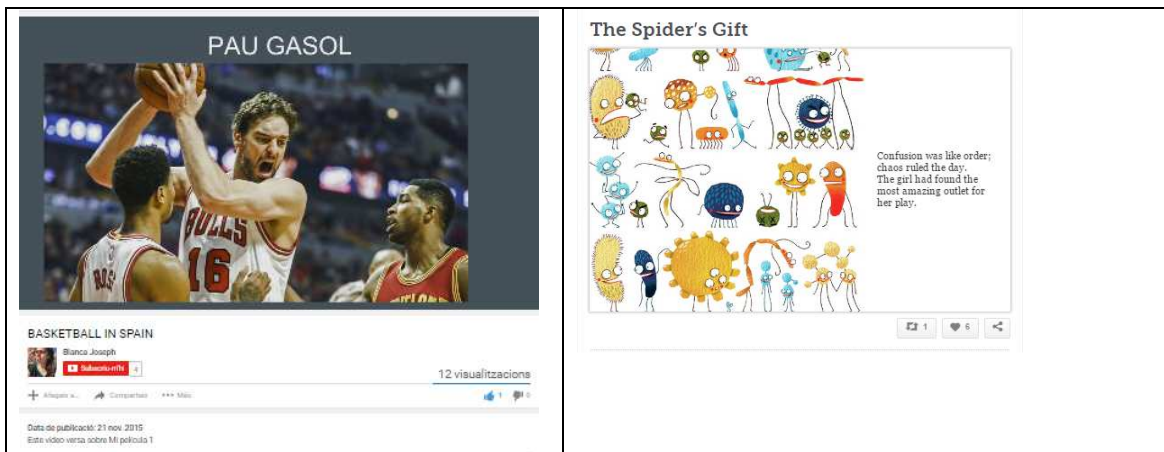
**Step 4: Peer evaluation**

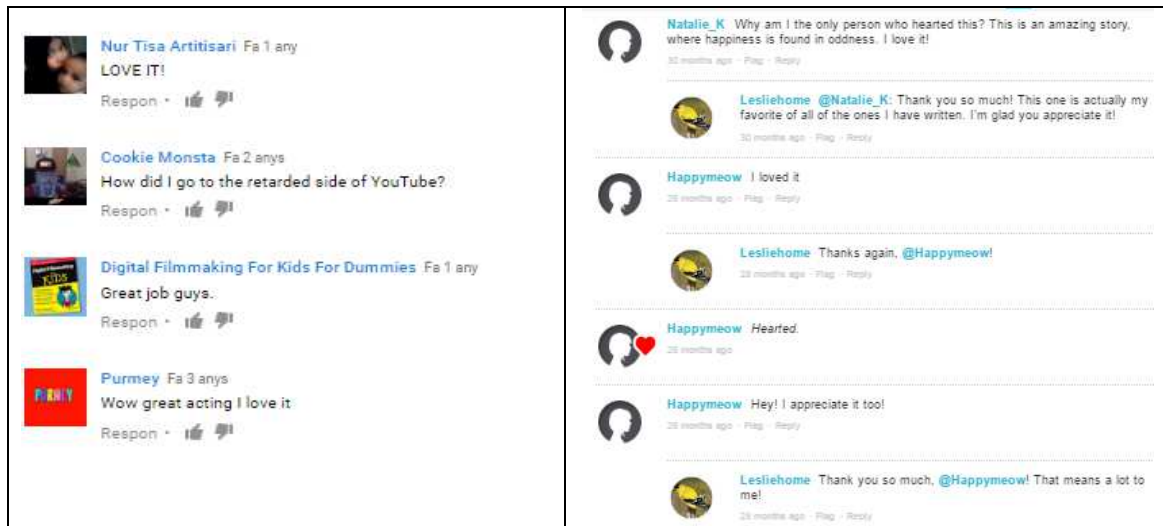
After every video or presentation the rest of the groups act as evaluators and give feedback on their peers' work. They are asked to write a comment in the *YouTube* or *Vimeo* page in which these videos are uploaded. They can also click on the like button. The comments should be encouraging and positive, never to demotivate their peers.

In the case of other assignments such as games and grammar summaries and exercises, the other groups use emoji and thumbs up signs that the teacher has prepared on cardboard to expose their opinions about their classmates' works, as a chance to congratulate them on their effort.



I have included the *YouTube* page of the project "Basketball in Spain" beneath. It shows the comment section where the students write their feedback and opinions using their smart phones, in class or at home. On the right, I have copied the *Storybird* project "The Spider's Gift". Similarly, in *Storybird* students can post comments about the presentation and also "heart" the assignment, that is, signal the comment with a red heart if they liked it a lot. Also, the group can write their thank you notes to their classmates for the congratulations.





#### 4. EVALUATION

The teacher collects information from the peer evaluation and takes notes. These and several other elements are assessed, some of which are not part of the curriculum. Obviously, the language content, the presentation in class, whether it is oral or written on paper, are of special concern, and so is the interaction among the group and between the group and the rest of the class..

Group	Language	Interaction	Presentation	Level of complexity	Mark
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
Etc.					

These factors alongside with the level of complexity of the assignment lead to the calculation of the mark. The score is included in the final mark of the year, which will range from 10 to 15% of the global, always with the agreement of the English department.

#### III. Posters

From my experience in project work, advertising the assignments, as introduced in section 3, is the first step which must be followed when working for final assignments. Next you will find enclosed the posters that I normally use to introduce the assignments:



# ENGLISH




Before ending this year, let's do the famous...

## FINAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR 1ST ESO!!!




Instructions:

- 1) Group in 3-4 students
- 2) Choose **one** of the following types of activities
- 3) Give a proposal by **22nd May** - Delivery is **2nd-6th June**
- 4) Enjoy this experience of fun, creativity and collaboration!







 Video	Don't forget to include...
A) My day	Present simple Verbs of habitual actions Times of the day Telling the time
B) My house	Present continuous for actions happening now Parts of the house Family members
C) Interview with a famous person	Ask for personal information Use question forms Present simple and present continuous

Important: You must include title, introduction and subtitles with the video file.

 My pet  /  My imaginary animal	
Describe your pet or invent one	Describe its daily routine Time of the day Physical description Present simple

Important: Include photographs, posters, videos or drawings for your presentation on *Powerpoint*, *Prezzi* or any other tool.

 Vocabulary games		 <b>KEEP CALM AND PLAY BOARD GAMES</b>
A) Connector (5 sheets of different vocabulary sets)	School subjects Daily routines	
B) Domino (made of wood or paperback)	Parts of the body	
C) Trivial (table game board, cards with questions about the topics)	Physical description Houses and flats	
D) Crosswords, wordsearch, English sudoku, pictures...	Festivals, dates Free time activities	

 My own grammar summary 	
Create your own grammar summary and exercises (include the file and key) Check the consolidation section in your student's book.	



# ENGLISH

Before ending this year, let's do the famous...



## FINAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2ND ESO!!!

Instructions:

- 1) Group in 3-4 students
- 2) Choose **one** of the following types of activities
- 3) Give a proposal by **22nd May** - Delivery is **2nd-6th June**
- 4) Enjoy this experience of fun, creativity and collaboration!



Video	Don't forget to include:
A) A Catwalk	Present continuous Verb: "to wear" Clothes and accessories
B) Sports quiz	Create a question-and-answer quiz Prepare questions about the Olympics, famous players, sports rules...
C) 2 ads	Use adjectives in the comparative and superlative form "The best/the most... in the world"
D) A recipe	Show the preparation of your favourite dish.

Important: Videos have to come with title, introduction and subtitles.

A Sport	Don't forget to include:
My favourite sport	Explain the sport's rules Equipment required History of the sport Olympic teams or players "must" and "have to" for rules



Important: Include photographs (also of you practising it), posters, videos or for your group presentation on *Powerpoint*, *Prezzi* or any other tool.

Vocabulary games	Topics
A) Connector (5 sheets of different vocabulary sets)	Jobs Sports
B) Domino (made of wood or paperback)	Clothes, accessories, shops
C) Trivial (table game board, cards with questions about the topics)	Character and appearance Places and directions
D) Crosswords, wordsearch, English sudoku, pictures...	Food, meals Musical instruments Holidays, places

My own grammar summary

Create your own grammar summary and exercises (include the file and key)



I have presented here a detailed pedagogical proposal which can be easily adaptable to teaching sessions, units, and timing, be it, months, terms, semesters or whole school years. It can be complemented with “Seize the Assignment While You Can: 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade and Senior High School. Part II”, which will be presented in the following volume. I will provide an overview on work which can be done at higher levels and also include tipology of activities, activity plan, steps for final assignments and evaluation work. For further study, a series of references is provided next.

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[http://www.fccps.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=1662:byrd%E2%80%99s-eye-view-the-teacher-entertainer&Itemid=535&lang=en](http://www.fccps.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1662:byrd%E2%80%99s-eye-view-the-teacher-entertainer&Itemid=535&lang=en)

Nurture Store, Creative Kids learning

<http://nurturestore.co.uk/word-dominoes-game-cvc-words>

Sixteen Free Printable Board games Templates

<http://hubpages.com/games-hobbies/board-game-templates>

Storybird. “The Spider’s Gift” by Lesliehome

<https://storybird.com/books/the-spiders-gift/>

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# American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries

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My most heart-felt gratitude to my first American host family in my own country, the Helms, who I met in my teens; and to all the Americans who warmly welcomed me as I stepped in their country in my early twenties: they all turned my learning experiences into extraordinary momenta, both in my personal life and my teaching.

I have taught American Culture as part of the EFL Class curriculum since the 1980s. Since the 1990s, I have also taught it as specialized courses for upper-intermediate and advanced students of English, as well as for ELT teachers in training. None of my theoretical and practical teaching on American culture would have been possible without having been supported by the following pillars:

**1/ Having lived in the United States:** been a post-graduate student, taught as a university teaching assistant, and returned to the country for over thirty summers; and having been placed in different roles: counselor, critic reader, doctoral student, family member, friend, guest, lecturer, on-call manager, researcher, tutor, village chief, visitor, volunteer, and last but not least, fond learner and visitor at heart.

**2/ Having met extraordinary American people:** administrators, directors, classmates, campers, colleagues, friends, host families, neighbors, professors, students, teachers..., to name some, and having met their families: The Bechtholds, the Berkas, the Burmans, the Browns, the Dannerbrinks, the Greggs, the Fasts, the Haskins, the Hardfords, the Hindsons, the Jaegers, the Ketchams, the Hindsons, the Lehmans, the Loyas, the McHenry's, the Malacheks, the Pedersons, the Pellingers, the Rieboldts, the Senatores, the Stephensons, the Swains, the Vosses, the Wagners, the Zimmermans...

I find Americans to be dream-pursuers, challenge-risers, cheerful, creative, direct, friendly, generous, hard-working, helpful, honest, hospitable, imaginative, independent, innovative, kind, optimistic, playful, reliable, risk-taking, time-oriented, hobby-loving, sports-loving, and last but not least, very welcoming. Part of it is said to be the result of *"The frontier days" which "are long past, but the attitude of individualism, the practice of self-reliance, and the ethic of no retreat continue to shape everything from entertainment to foreign policy"* (Collins: 2004).

From my experience, I have always admired them because, if anything, from my experience, in daily living, Americans are constantly building, and also helping others, if being as hard-working as them, whether they have been born in the United States or not. I see a kind of *Renaissance* spirit in them, which, from my view, through their open attitude and pragmatism, is easily spread out, and can be enthusiastically perceived by those who wish to.

**3/ Having easily enjoyed and learnt academically, professionally and personally there.** Having generously been taken under the wing of so many Americans in so many **homes and contexts**, allowed me to create courses which balanced out theory and practice. Additionally, I would not have wanted and/or been able to design and teach American culture without their unique direct intervention. They eagerly became consultants as courses started taking place, and that, needless to say, made a big difference in my teaching and the sessions.

4/ Having worked for **Scott Foresman** (now under Pearson), directed by Denise Marmelstein, in the eighties, who, after I was introduced to her by Roser Lumbreras, SGEL salesperson, offered me a job as a critical reader of an American EFL teaching method, which was to be published in Spain, and was to range from introductory to advanced English.

Having participated in the whole revision of 32 teaching materials: student books along with teacher's editions, workbooks and audio materials provided me with knowledge on American culture within the method, and the marketing business. What is more, besides that, as a consultant, the publishing house treated me to a visit of their main headquarters in Illinois, and to all the academic books which I may have needed to continue my own study of American culture, and to prepare myself as I teacher trainer. A win-win for me, which provided me with extraordinary didactic materials, which were very innovative and not known here, which are still being republished these days, and which I could use in my teacher training courses as well.



Private library sample

5/ Having gotten to know **Brethren Colleges Abroad** at University of Barcelona, and met Dr. Carmen Barbosa, the director in Barcelona, who, since the mid-nineties, and for over twenty years has provided me with **American teaching** assistants for courses on American culture, class and school cultural events, and facilitated student exchanges for my students.

6/ Having a **background** as a school theatre director of English plays in the nineties, which would come in handy for simulations of American scenarios (decor, prompts, music, food, posters, garlands....)

With all that building up, as I was becoming a professional, the several samples of American Culture which sprinkled my regular EFL class turned into a **specialized subject**, and different courses. Its main objective was to introduce the participants to American culture, and to the usage of resources related to it. Its **goals** specifically aimed at acquiring a general knowledge of American culture and American English; learning by doing, by being exposed to American realia, and by getting acquainted with American guests and American institutions; improving listening and reading comprehension of texts related to American culture; and developing oral and writing skills related to aspects of American culture.

**Introduction to American Culture**  
Upper-Intermediate and Advanced level  
Prof. Lourdes Montoro  
(35h, including 5 hour-research work + 4-hour American  
English oral practice with American teaching assistants)

Course sample

Other goals included compiling materials for high school and vocational school teachers in training, as well as for personal purposes; and providing participants with strategies for further study. Courses usually lasted for 35 hours, and were either taught in the first term, coinciding with the celebration of Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. They were sometimes offered in the second term, and Valentine's, Spring Break, Easter, and 4th of July were part of them. In either case, a Graduation ceremony was held at the end.

**The components** of the courses included: General U.S. facts, the history, the government, the economic and social structure, the legal system, the people, education, religion, sports, entertainment; curiosities about stereotypes (chewing gum, Coca-cola, the Pony Express, the Joshua tree, Uncle Sam...); famous Americans; Americans and their way of living; introduction to the origin of some American holidays, and their celebration; American food: description, samplings, and a pot-luck cooking contest; American English: Grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation; and travelling, studying and working possibilities in the U.S.

Courses were divided into theoretical and practical parts, which blended in. A series of worksheets were created to fulfill their objectives, include the components and facilitate their teaching and enjoyment of the sessions, some being on films, general facts, geography, graduation, history, holidays, humor, literature, main cities, news, out of curiosity facts, people, questionnaires, spelling, vocabulary, writing, and a three-day field trip. To get to know my students, pass on knowledge, keep them autonomous and centered on their own learning, and provide them with as many learning opportunities as I could think of, I:


1. Presented students with a general introductory sheet, which would allow me to get to know them, get the most of their learning experience through the syllabus, and be able to fulfill their own expectations too.
2. Introduced American teaching assistants to them through a scavenger hunt, explained that they were doing an internship with us, that they would be supporting both the teacher and the students, and that, additionally, they would assist them with individual tutoring speaking sessions to practise American English.
3. Passed an oral presentations sheet, where each student was asked to participate, through the presentation of a stereotype or a famous American biography of their liking.
4. Told them that we were going to celebrate most American holidays, that we would all decorate our classroom with authentic realia which I had, and that holiday recipes were going to be handed in to turn into treats by us all, and that we would be supervised by our teaching assistants.
5. Explained that courses had written components too: a series of compositions which they were to present on different dates.
6. Announced that we were to go on a guided field trip to the North-American Institute in Barcelona, where they were expecting us on three separate days. This field trip, taking students from history to performing arts to tourism, was already described earlier (2015, vol. 4); yet for the benefit of the general perspective of courses on American Culture, it will also be listed later, as a fundamental document, which easily got related to others, including different skills and concepts, and helped the courses advance.
7. Pointed to a series of academic worksheets following different American itineraries, which were to be completed by students, either individually, in pairs or in groups, to which they would be exposed, as the course progressed.

Next, I will refer to the general worksheets which correspond to the initial itineraries of the courses, as well as the final ones. They display a general overview of the work which was being done, and can be divided as follows:

1. GENERAL INFORMATION
2. ORAL PRESENTATION
3. WRITTEN WORKSHOP
4. FIELD TRIP
5. QUESTIONNAIRE 1: HISTORY
6. QUESTIONNAIRE 2: GENERAL FACTS
7. QUESTIONNAIRE 3: MAIN CITIES
8. GRADUATION READING 1
9. GRADUATION READING 2
10. CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

All worksheets provided a general opening and closing picture of the courses, set the methodology, presented beginning and ending key materials from general to specific through questionnaires and readings, as well as the Certificate of Award that was given on Graduation Day. Worksheets 1 to 7 are presented next. They are samples, which can be modified to adjust to teachers' needs and goals:

## **1/ GENERAL INFO SHEET**

<b>INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN CULTURE</b>	
 <small>Teacher's portable board</small>	
<b>FULL NAME</b>	
<b>EMAIL</b>	
<b>CONTACT PHONE</b>	
<b>PROFESSION</b>	
<b>STUDIES</b>	
<b>HOBBIES</b>	
<b>HOW YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS COURSE</b>	
<b>REASONS TO TAKE IT</b>	
<b>EXPECTATIONS</b>	
<b>FIELDS OF INTEREST IN AMERICAN CULTURE</b>	



### **3. WRITING WORKSHOP**



#### **COMPOSITION 1**

Have you ever been to/in the U.S.? How long did you stay? Did you go there as a tourist, as a student, for work? What was your experience like?

Or

If you haven't been there, would you like to go? Where to? Why? What are your expectations about the country so far?

#### **COMPOSITION 2**

Write an email to your new American epal. Introduce yourself; talk about your family, your hobbies, your job, your expectations..., and ask him/her questions too.

#### **COMPOSITION 3**

Find out what happened in the U.S. the year you were born, and write a report about it.

#### **COMPOSITION 4**

Write a biography of your American favorite performing artist (musician, singer, actor...)

Or

you favorite performing art, and the history beyond (Research work at Institute of North-American Studies).

#### **COMPOSITION 5**

In your opinion, what are the most common American stereotypes?. Describe them.

#### **COMPOSITION 6**

Do you like going to movie theaters? How often do you go? What kind of movies do you like best? What are your three favorite American movies - new or old -, and, why?

#### **COMPOSITION 7 & 8**

Write 2 formal emails to an American Tourist Agency. Ask them to send you, and your school general and tourist information about a certain state (brochures, posters...)

#### **COMPOSITION 9**

Plan out an imaginary trip to the United States. Include: length of trip, visits, stays, travelling within the country... (Research work at the Institute of North-American Studies)

#### **COMPOSITION 10**

According to your real experience, and/or your general knowledge about the U.S. from movies, changes in our society, this course, etc., compare life here to life in the U.S. Explain pros and cons.

## 4. FIELD TRIP TO THE NORTH-AMERICAN INSTITUTE

### FIELD TRIP TO THE MAX H. KLEIN LIBRARY. INSTITUTE OF NORTH- AMERICAN STUDIES



#### DAY 1

- T o p i c: History
- Guided tour of library
- History questionnaire
- Acquaintance with IEN bulletin
- Gifts: Gral. Envelope & Book on American History
- Composition: “Find out what happened in the U.S.the year you were born, and write a report about it”.

#### DAY 2

(Individual research work)

- T o p i c: Performing arts
- Individual research on favourite performing arts - history; music, theater, dance..., And favourite performer.
- Video on the subject, and comments about it.
- Gifts: Booklets on American Theater, and American dance
- Composition: “Write a biography of your American favourite performing artist (musician, singer, actor...)”, or “Your favourite performing art, and the history beyond.”

#### DAY 3:

- T o p i c: Tourism
- Research work on favourite holiday spots in the US.
- Writing workshop: real emails to American Tourist agencies asking for updated information on web brochures.Volunteer work.
- Gifts: A variety of tourist pamphlets from the US.
- Composition: “Plan out an imaginary trip to the United States, including: length of trip, visits, stays, travelling within the country...”



## 5. QUESTIONNAIRE 1: HISTORY

# QUESTIONNAIRE 1



Teacher's own 50-state shield

## AMERICAN HISTORY

1. How many people lived in America at the time of Columbus' arrival in 1492? Who were they?
2. Who were the Pilgrim fathers? What did they do?
3. When did the slave trade take place? How many people were involved? Etc.
4. What happened on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776?
5. What does the "Louisiana Purchase" stand for?
6. Place the California Gold Rush in American history, and explain what it was about.
7. What was the cause of the Civil War between 1860-1865? What happened?
8. Which are the immigration years par excellence? What do you know about them?
9. Find out about the Battle of Wounded Knee in the nineteenth century.
10. What is known as "The Great Depression"?
11. Describe the beginning and end of World War Two.
12. Find out about the Korean War.
13. What is known as "The Cuban Missile Crisis"?
14. What do you know about John F. Kennedy?
15. What is known as the American's third Asian war of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? What happened?
16. Who was the first man on the moon? When was that?
17. What was the Watergate Scandal about?
18. When did the "Cold War" was over? Why?
19. Who are the desert warriors?
20. When were the last elections in the U.S.? What did you learn about them?

## 6. QUESTIONNAIRE TWO: AMERICAN FACTS

### QUESTIONNAIRE 2



### AMERICAN GENERAL FACTS

1. Date of Independence
2. Form of Government
3. Number of states
4. Population
5. Major languages
6. Area
7. Highest mountain
8. Lowest point
9. Longest river
10. Longest lake
11. Major cities
12. Time zones
13. Major religious groups
14. Flag
15. Major industries
16. National symbol
17. National Anthem
18. Major public holidays
19. 3 capitals in 3 states
20. Currency and units

## 7. QUESTIONNAIRE 3: MAIN CITIES

# QUESTIONNAIRE 3: *MAIN CITIES*

(Acknowledgements to Elia Torres and Michelle Truitt)



### **CHICAGO**

What is Chicago known as?

How many storeys does the Sears Tower have?

### **BOSTON**

What is the name of the oldest house in America?

Why is Boston known as “the centre of America’s brain’s industry”?

### **NEW YORK**

How are streets and avenues distributed?

What is the population?

### **WASHINGTON D.C.**

Who was Washington D.C. named after?

Name the main political buildings and monuments on Constitution Avenue.

### **MIAMI**

What two parts is Miami divided into?

Why is Miami such a big tourist spot?

### **NEW ORLEANS**

What is the most famous quarter? Why?

What is the best time of the year to visit New Orleans? Why?

### **DALLAS**

What is Dallas associated with?

What unique merchandise does one of the world’s top department store, Neiman Marcus, sell?

### **LAS VEGAS**

Why casinos there do not have a clock or a window?

Name some of the famous clubs in Las Vegas.

### **SAN FRANCISCO**

Which is San Francisco’s main geographical problem?

Name some spots which have made San Francisco world-wide famous.

### **LOS ANGELES**

How far is it from north to south of Los Angeles?

What are the residents of Los Angeles known as?

Worksheets 8, 9 and 10 were used to introduce a Graduation ceremony in class, which, at that time, was not common here. All the work around it was very extensive, and, to my surprise, I ended up exporting it to outstanding general EFL classes of mine, who I also wanted to acknowledge through that. The work on Graduation was not only related to the two readings and the certificate of appreciation listed earlier, but also to the relevance of counting on endless lessons by Dr. Ronald Burman, emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

As a former professor of mine, he made sure that I got acquainted with what an American graduation is like. That took me to work on classroom decorations, academic quotes, speakers, speeches, the *Pomp and Circumstance* march, the seating arrangements, the podium, the making of the academic caps, the class graduation colors, the catering, the tossing of the caps.... Such an extensive number of items will be described in detail in an additional general EFL article in another volume.

Besides worksheets 1 to 10, as the course progressed, students were provided with other activity sheets on the rest of the topics mentioned earlier in the course description; since they are numerous, only samples of them have been chosen with regards to several areas which were approached in the course. They were very much enjoyed by students, and can be easily adapted to different EFL courses. They deal with American spelling, American vocabulary, video sessions on American movies and songs, and, last but not least, internet resources. They all extended classwork, and complemented all the sessions and contents which this course included. Due to their length and variety range which they cover, these worksheets will be presented in the following three articles:

- . "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 2: American English through Spelling and Vocabulary"
- . "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: From Two American Movies and a Song to Three Video Sessions"
- . "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: Internet Worksheets"

The bibliography below includes some referential books and websites which were used in the courses preparation as well as present works, which can be consulted for further study.

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## American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 2: American English through Spelling and Vocabulary

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“American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries” presented how students were introduced to general information through oral presentations, writing workshops, a field trip, questionnaires on history, general facts, and main cities. This article is focused on a specific part of the culture: its language, American English.

The Internet, the film industry, the music business and the media have made American English very attractive to students. American English shows through grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. When preparing my courses on American culture, and having American English as one of its main components, I decided to first briefly present an overview on grammar, just to make class participants aware of the changes which exist at that linguistic level. Yet, I was mostly focused on introducing them to work on spelling, being such a cultural component by itself in the United States, and certainly, to vocabulary, which, students of foreign languages, in general, simply love.

With regards to grammar, I just exposed them to samples from popular songs, and also from the scripts of well-known American movies, where they had to locate, for instance, the main following changes (which I had previously introduced), some being:

- Adjectives which are used as adverbs: “It is real good”
- Prepositions which are preferred : “On the weekend”
- Verbs in the past which show a regular form: “dreamed”
- Verbs in the past which show an irregular form: “fit”
- Irregular past participle such as “gotten” and implied meaning
- Colloquial Verbal periphrasis: “gotta”, “gonna”, “wanna”
- Use of simple past over present perfect: “I just ate it”
- Entonation or another expression instead of tag questions: “He did it. Right?”

Through visuals and close referential prompts, my students easily got down to their first oriented grammar itinerary. After that, and as different sessions developed, they were exposed to American Spelling and Vocabulary, which I presented to them through worksheets. After consulting several manuals, and assessing them, I decided to create two worksheets on Spelling, and four on Vocabulary, and their corresponding keys to cover for self-learning, and ensure student-centered practices

Spelling is a classic American skill in which, from my experience, we are not trained as early and seriously as they are in the United States; despite the fact that they do, spelling sometimes remains as a life-time hard nut to crack to a large number of Americans. I have observed that, at times, non-native English speakers who are English language graduates surpass them at that. What is more, it is not uncommon to often hear Americans ask the question. “How do you spell that?”, sometimes posed among them or to foreign visitors, who are knowledgeable in the language.

American students enter local, regional and national spelling contests. As it says in the National Bee Spelling : *“Since 1925, children across America have participated in school, local and regional bees with the singular hope of making it to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. This year, 11 million students will join in the experience”*. Such an experience and event involves fans, parents, teachers, sponsors....

This is self-explanatory of the relevance of the spelling contents in the US, and of the importance of spelling for the American society and Americans. We can also learn that: *“Nine newspapers collaborated to start the National Spelling Bee in 1925. In 1941, Scripps took over sponsorship of the National Spelling Bee. There was no Scripps National Spelling Bee during the war years of 1943–45. Co-champions were declared in 1950, 1957, 1962, 2014 and 2015. Of the 93 champions, 48 have been girls and 45 have been boys. The program experienced steady growth between the 1920s and the 1970s, and between 1980 and 1990 the number of participants doubled. In recent years the program underwent a second growth spurt — and a significant surge in popularity — thanks to live coverage on ESPN”*.

The webpage also displays the television broadcast history of the national spelling contests: *“1946: The national finals were broadcast live on NBC. 1974 and 1977: The national finals were broadcast on PBS a taped primetime special. 1994–2005: The national finals were broadcast live in daytime on ESPN. 2006–2010: The national finals were broadcast live on ABC. 2011–2015: The national finals were broadcast live in primetime on ESPN”* After having introduced students to cultural information, they were presented with two basic worksheets, which went from regular to irregular spelling:

- **American English. Spelling 1**

- **American English. Spelling 2**

In *American English. Spelling 1*, students were asked to classify words by their spelling, and deduce their regular rules. In *American English. Spelling 2*, students were challenged to work with words which did not follow a rule. As indicated earlier, keys corresponding to both practices were provided. Students could work individually, in pairs, or in groups, and were monitored by the teacher. They were allowed to consult the Internet, and were also assisted by the class American teaching assistants, if necessary. Students could work at different paces, and were expected to finish at different times, which allowed for individual coaching on other areas of the course with which they also were to get familiar.



## **AMERICAN ENGLISH. SPELLING 1**



Difference in spelling can be put in 2 groups: the first one is subject to rules. Can you figure them out, and pair the words up in the right column?:

1. color, labor, honour, colour, flavour, labour, honor, flavor
2. theatre, fiber, center, centre, meter, theater, fibre, metre
3. license, defence, offense, licence, pretense, pretence, defense, offence
4. marvellous, dialled, labelling, marvelous, traveled, travelled, dialed, labeling
5. anemia, meadiaval, foetus, anaemia, gynaecology, ginecology, fetus, medieval
6. catalogue, dialog, epilogue, catalog, monolog, dialogue, epiloge, monologue
7. kidnapping, worshiper, kidnaping, worshipper

## **(ANSWER SHEET)**

### **AMERICAN ENGLISH**

### **SPELLING 1**

Note: American English is directly provided in the answers

1. color, labor, honor, flavor
2. fiber, center, meter, theater
3. license, pretense, defense, offense
4. labeling, marvelous, traveled, dialed
5. anemia, gynecology, fetus, medieval
6. catalog, monolog, dialog, epilog
7. Kidnapping, worshipper



## AMERICAN ENGLISH SPELLING 2

Difference in spelling can be put in 2 groups: the second one has no rules.

Write the corresponding American terms to the following British words.

Look up any words which you may not know yet:

Aluminium

axe

cheque

cosy

draught

grey

kerb

mould

moustache

plough

programme

pyjamas

sceptical

tyre

vice (gripping tool)

**(ANSWER SHEET)**  
**AMERICAN ENGLISH**  
**SPELLING 2**

Note: American English is directly provided in the answers

Aluminum  
ax  
check  
cozy  
draft  
gray  
curb  
mold  
mustache  
plow  
program  
pajamas  
skeptical  
tire  
vise

After having worked on spelling, students were introduced to **Vocabulary**. American English mirrors the melting pot which the country became after the British colonization, and the large number of languages and immigration waves which made the United States into the country which it is today. American English can be seen through numerous general and specific terms, ranging, for example, from building levels to employment food, government, home, office, politics, transportation to units of measurement.

For my classes on American English I chose four daily life basic areas, which I studied and turned into the worksheets which are listed and presented next. As it happened with the work done on Spelling, students also counted on the keys, the Internet and the teaching assistants. They could continue working either individually, in pairs, or in groups. Emphasis on autonomous learning was kept as well as on individual coaching related to other course areas with which students were also to be acquainted. These are the worksheets which I introduced participants to:

- |                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>American English. <u>Vocabulary 1</u>:</b> Around the home</li></ul>      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>American English. <u>Vocabulary 2</u>:</b> Around the office</li></ul>    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>American English. <u>Vocabulary 3</u>:</b> Food and Miscellania</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>American English. <u>Vocabulary 4</u>:</b> The automobile</li></ul>       |



# AMERICAN ENGLISH

## VOCABULARY 1

Around the home

1. Write the American English for:

bat (table tennis)  
chest of drawers  
cupboard  
curtains  
cutlery  
dustbin  
flat  
greaseproof paper  
jug  
lift  
luggage  
pack of cards  
rubbish  
tap  
tin  
torch  
verandah

# AMERICAN ENGLISH

## (ANSWER SHEET)

## VOCABULARY 1

Around the home

bat (table tennis)	PADDLE
chest of drawers	BUREAU, DRESSER
cupboard	CLOSET, WARDROBE(1)
curtains	DRAPES (if opaque)
	CURTAINS (if net or lace)
cutlery	FLATWARE
dustbin	TRASHCAN
flat	APARTMENT (2)
greaseproof paper	WAX PAPER
jug	PITCHER
lift	ELEVATOR
luggage	BAGGAGE(3)

pack of cards	DECK OF CARDS
rubbish	GARBAGE, TRASH
tap	FAUCET
tin (for food)	CAN
torch	FLASHLIGHT
verandah	PORCH

- 
- (1) A closet is usually built-in; a wardrobe is movable. You have also kitchen cupboard in American English.
  - (2) Also used in British English.
  - (3) Light baggage is also known as luggage.



## **AMERICAN ENGLISH**

### **VOCABULARY 2**

Around the office

1. Write the American English for:

banknote  
bill of lading  
carriage paid  
current account  
to engage staff  
personal (phone) call  
to post a letter  
postman  
return ticket  
rise (in salary)  
scribbling pad  
shareholder  
single ticket  
the (telephone) line is engaged  
timetable  
trunk call  
unit trust

## VOCABULARY 2

### (ANSWER SHEET)

#### Around the office

banknote	BILL (e.g.poundnote but dollar bill)
bill of lading	WAYBILL
carriage paid	FREIGHT PAID
current account	CHECKING ACCOUNT
to engage staff	TO HIRE STAFF
personal (phone) call	PERSON-TO-PERSON CALL
to post a letter	TO MAIL A LETTER
postman	MAILMAN
return ticket	ROUND-TRIP TICKET
rise (in salary)	RAISE
scribbling pad	SCRATCH PAD
shareholder	STOCKHOLDER
single ticket	ONE-WAY TICKET
the line is engaged	THE LINE IS BUSY
timetable	SCHEDULE
trunk call	LONG-DISTANCE CALL
unit trust	MUTUAL FUND



## AMERICAN ENGLISH

### VOCABULARY 3

#### Food and Miscellanea

biscuit
lamp sugar
minced meat
sweets
underdone (meat)
Miscellaneous
autumn

check  
highstreet  
holiday (s)  
interval  
ironmonger's  
pavement  
(stand in a) queue  
shop  
timber (cutwood)

## VOCABULARY 3 (ANSWER SHEET)

biscuit  
lamp sugar  
minced meat  
sweets  
underdone (meat)

cookie  
cube sugar  
ground meat  
candy  
rare

### M i s c e l l a n e o u s

autumn  
cheek  
high street  
holiday (s)  
interval  
ironmonger's  
pavement  
(stand in a) queue  
Shop  
timber (cutwood)

fall  
gall, nerve  
main street  
vacation (1)  
intermission  
hardware store  
sidewalk  
line  
store  
lumber

-----  
(1) Vacation also exists in British English, where it is mostly applied to the universities and the law courts.



## AMERICAN ENGLISH VOCABULARY 4

## The automobile

bonnet  
boot  
caravan  
gearlever  
lorry  
paraffin  
petrol  
puncture  
saloon car

silencer  
windscreen

### Transportation

aeroplane  
(railway) carriage, coach  
goodstrain  
(radio) valve  
railway  
spanner  
subway  
(passage under street)  
tram  
underground  
(train; metro)

## VOCABULARY 4 (ANSWER SHEET)

### The automobile

Bonnet	hood
Boot	trunk
Caravan	trailer
Gear lever	gear shift
Lorry	trunk
Paraffin	kerosene
Petrol	gasoline, "gas"
puncture	flat
saloon car	sedan
silencer	muffler
windscreen	windshield

### Transportation

Aeroplane	airplane
(railway) carriage, coach	car



Goods train	freight train
(radio) valve	tube
Railway	railroad
Spanner	wrench
Subway	underpass
(passage understreet)	
tram	streetcar, trolley, car
underground	subway
(train; metro)	

For further study, a selection of books and web addresses is provided below. They cover American spelling compared to British, Americanisms, British and American English compared, American accent and pronunciation, American grammar, the origin of American English, and the relevance of spelling.

Two articles on other specific areas in the teaching of American culture will follow: "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: From Two American Movies and a Song to Three Video Sessions", and "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 4: Internet Worksheets". They will both throw light on the subject, and provide pedagogical materials, which can be easily adapted to suit the needs of EFL students and trainee teachers of English as a foreign language as well.

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<http://www.merriam-webster.com>

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<http://spellingbee.com/>

Practice your knowledge of American slang:  
<http://www.esl-lab.com/slang/slangrd2.htm>

Pronunciation. American accent. com. Revolutionizing Testing and Training  
<http://www.americanaccent.com/pronunciation.html>

Scripps National Spelling Bee (history, competition, prizes...)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scripps\\_National\\_Spelling\\_Bee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scripps_National_Spelling_Bee)

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# American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: From Two American Movies and A Song to Three Video Sessions

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*Animation offers a medium of story telling and visual entertainment which can bring pleasure and information to people of all ages everywhere in the world (Walt Disney)*

After “American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries”, and “American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 2: American English through Spelling and Vocabulary”, I will present now how I turned two American movies and a song into three video sessions on American culture.

Visual communication over verbal facilitate immediacy, simplicity and flexibility (Switzer, 2015) and certainly together with verbal language facilitate comprehension, interaction and communication, which is the main objective when learning a language. Since visuals instantly draw attention, American culture provided through videos is no exception, and, as such, they have been excellent EFL teaching and learning resources for long. American movies, as well as American songs through videos and sound tracks are both part of a great world-wide known entertaining industry, and, certainly, part of our lives

From the Hollywood beginnings to the modern film making, films have not ceased to present us with somehow real-like English-speaking contextualized instances, and whether we, as teaching professionals, choose movie excerpts or full movies for class exploitation, they can always take our students through the different learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, through task-based practices, and, most important, our syllabus. Needless to say that Internet has opened up an infinite well of web resources both for us, the teachers, and our students.

In this article, I will present three samples of video exploitation related to the teaching of American culture in the EFL teaching context. I have chosen them because they are each focused on different areas which I wanted to cover in my American culture courses:

- American Celebrations
- US Residency legal issues
- The fifties

They are each presented through three video excerpts based on:

1/ Stevie Wonder’s 1985 classic hit: “I just called to say I love you”

2/ The dynamic and formal interview shown in Peter Weir’s 1990 movie: *Green Card*

3/ The Hollywood-like beginning in Curtis Hanson’s 1997 movie: *L.A. Confidential*

Next, I will describe each video session, and include the worksheets which I designed for them. Keys were created to facilitate self-learning, different learning paces, and opportunities for tutoring participants into other areas in the syllabus, and of their personal interest. Students were monitored by me, and American teaching assistants were also available to students if necessary.

## **1. STEVIE WONDER'S "I JUST CALLED TO SAY I LOVE YOU"**

**(1985)**

### **American Celebrations**

I spent 1985 in the United States, as a graduate student and a university teaching assistant. I was given an academic grant. I enjoyed a great year, and I will always be indebted to the country for that. Stevie Wonder's song, through its lyrics thoroughly points to all American holidays within a year: from New Year's Day to Valentine's, to first of spring, to April rain, to May flowers, June weddings, summer time, July, harvest, Autumn, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I chose this song because with the help of a love story context, and a very catchy well-known musical tone and expression, students could easily be transported from one celebration to another, and become aware of the large number of holidays which American people celebrate, and which, through my courses on American culture, we were going to also host in class. The video which I chose for the session shows the artist live, and enhances him as a performer.

Having chosen this song and the video allowed me to:

- Present the 80s
- Take students through an American holiday year, which is so meaningful in daily American life
- Present the main American holidays in the US, which we were going to enjoy and celebrate for real in class, as months passed and courses developed
- Promote listening comprehension while enjoying visual and auditive learning
- Student center the teaching
- Promote self-correction
- Promote self-taking decision
- Promote cooperative work

Both the artist and the song were introduced in class. Further reference on him and his professional work is presented at the end of the article.



## VIDEO SESSION 1

### American Celebrations

(Stevie Wonder's "I just called to say "I love you""):  
[Concert live in London](#)

1. Do you remember the year when this song became popular?  
How do you know?

2. Fill in the blanks without watching the video.

**No ..... to celebrate**

**No chocolate covered .....to give away**

**No .....**

**No song to sing**

**In fact here's just another ordinary day**

**No April rain**

**No ..... bloom**

**No wedding Saturday within .....**

**But what it is, is something true**

**Made up of these three words that I must say to you**

**I just called to say I love you**

**I just called to say how much I care**

**I just called to say I love you**

**And I mean it from the bottom of my heart**

**No ..... 's high**

**No warm July**

**No harvest moon to light one tender ..... night**

**No autumn breeze**

**No ..... leaves**

**Not even time for birds to fly to southern skies**

**No Libra sun**

**No .....**

**No ..... to all the ..... joy you bring**

***But what it is, though old so new  
To fill your heart like no three words could ever do***

**CHORUS**

**CHORUS**

**CHORUS**

***...baby of my heart***

(Adapted from: <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/stevewonder/ijustcalledtosayiloveyou.html>)

3. Compare your version to that of your partners (in pairs or groups).
4. Correct it with the lyrics which follow, and watch the video clip.
5. Make sure that you are familiar with the different celebrations mentioned. Share your thoughts in your groups.
6. Check with your teacher for doubts, and general feedback.

## **(ANSWER SHEET)**

### **VIDEO SESSION 1**

*I just called to say "I love you"*

No **New Year's Day** to celebrate

No chocolate covered **candy** hearts to give away

No **first of spring**

No song to sing

In fact here's just another ordinary day

No April rain

No **flowers** bloom

No wedding Saturday within **the month of June**

But what it is, is something true

Made up of these three words that I must say to you

*I just called to say I love you*

*I just called to say how much I care*

*I just called to say I love you*

*And I mean it from the bottom of my heart*

No **summer's** high

No warm July

No harvest moon to light one tender **August** night  
No autumn breeze  
No falling **leaves**  
Not even time for birds to fly to southern skies

No Libra sun  
No **Halloween**  
No **giving thanks** to all the **Christmas** joy you bring  
But what it is, though old so new  
To fill your heart like no three words could ever do

CHORUS

CHORUS

CHORUS

...baby of my heart

(Adapted from: <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/steviwonder/ijustcalledtosayiloveyou.html>)

Note: This song can also be corrected through the following video clip:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqfSXkVH9ac>

## **2. PETER WEIR'S GREEN CARD**

**(1990)**

### **U S Residency legal Issues**

While choosing the video excerpt, I wanted to prepare a session around a very different topic, which revolves around the American government, and also a large number of foreigners who wish to or need to remain in the US as residents.

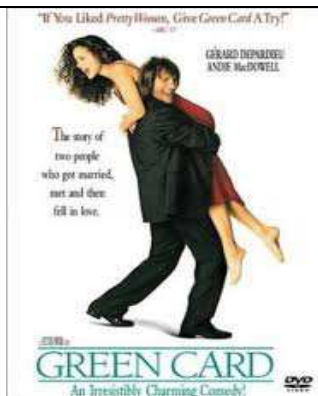
*"A Green Card holder (permanent resident) is someone who has been granted authorization to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis. As proof of that status, a person is granted a permanent resident card, commonly called a "Green Card." You can become a permanent resident several different ways. Most individuals are sponsored by a family member or employer in the United States. Other individuals may become permanent residents through refugee or asylee status or other humanitarian programs. In some cases, you may be eligible to file for yourself".* (<https://www.uscis.gov/greencard>)

Through a romantic comedy, Gérard Depardieu, plays an illegal French man in the United States, while Andie MacDowell plays an American woman who decides to rent her apartment, and enters into a marriage of convenience to help the man get his green card to be able to remain in the country. To fulfill the requests of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, they both indulge in an outstanding performance, which won the film *The Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture*.

From my view, there was not a better and more pedagogical instance of what I wanted to introduce my students to. Having chosen the excerpt of the interview which is presented next allowed me to:

- Present the movie
- Present a foreign accent speaking American English
- Take students to a simulation of what a green card interview may be about when involving romance
- Review physical traits and description, routines, American measures...
- Teach learning by doing
- Promote listening comprehension while enjoying visual and auditive learning
- Student center the teaching
- Promote self-correction
- Promote self-taking decision
- Promote cooperative work

Further reference on the movie is presented at the end of the article.



## VIDEO SESSION 2

### US Residency Legal Issues

(Excerpt from Peter Weir's *Green Card*: [Interview](#))

1. Fill out the blanks in the following chart:  
(not all of them are to be completed)

<b>Her</b>	<b>Him</b>
<u>Name</u>	
<u>Father's name</u>	
<u>Job</u>	



Likes

Favorite Food

Height

Weight

Side of bed

Color toothbrush

Face Cream

**2.** Complete this cloze:

Clerk: "Mr. Faure, as you know, we have doubts that your marriage is\_\_\_\_\_.

I have here a number of \_\_\_\_\_questions, and your answers will help us make a determination.

I want you to be \_\_\_\_\_and to the point.

I ask you to \_\_\_\_\_your right hand, and...

Do you swear that the \_\_\_\_\_you are about to give is the truth, the \_\_\_\_\_truth, and nothing \_\_\_\_\_the truth?"

**3.** Favorite descriptions of each other.

She (about him):

He (about her):

**4.** Do you know how much you weigh and how tall you are in the US? These converting tables will help you.

(**Weight:** 1 pound = 16 ounces = 453.6 grams (g))

(**Height:** 1 foot (f) = 12 inches (in) = 30.48 cm)

## **(ANSWER SHEET)**

### **VIDEO SESSION 2**

#### *Green Card*

**1.**

**Her**

**Him**

<u>Name</u>	Bronte Mitchell Faure	Georges
<u>Father's name</u>	Sydney Parrish	Rene
<u>Job</u>		Composer
<u>Likes</u>	Flowers, weeds, plants	Humming
<u>Favorite Food</u>	Salads, muesli, decaf	fatty foods
<u>Height</u>	5 feet 8	5' 11''
<u>Weight</u>	125	
<u>Side of bed</u>	Right	Left
<u>Color</u>		
<u>toothbrush</u>	Green	Green
<u>Face Cream</u>	Monticello	

## 2.

Clerk: "Mr. Faure, as you know, we have doubts that your marriage is *bona fide*. I have here a number of *detailed* questions, and your answers will help us make a determination.

I want you to be *brief* and to the point.

I ask you to *raise* your right hand, and...

Do you swear that the *evidence* you are about to give is the truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing *but* the truth?"

## 3.

She (about him): E.g.: "She has peace".

He (about her): E.g.: "He eats life". Etc.

## 4.

(Individual answers for height and weight)

### 3. CURTIS HANSON'S *L.A. CONFIDENTIAL*

(1997)

**The fifties**

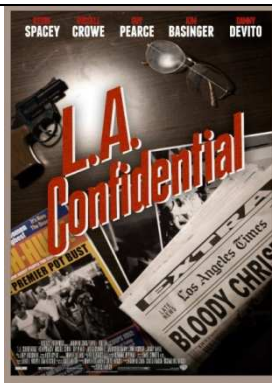
We often relate police stories to the United States, because of the numerous television series and movies. *L.A. Confidential* is based on a James Ellroy's 1990 novel, which presents a group of police officers from the Los Angeles Police Department, and the connections around celebrities, the film industry, cops corruption, gangsters, murders... The name *Confidential* has its origin in a gossip magazine which started being published in the 1950s. In the movie it is alluded as *Hush-Hush*.

Kim Basinger, Russell Crowe, Guy Pearce and Kevin Spacey star the movie, which was nominated for nine Oscars, one of which went to the actress for *Best Supporting role*; another one was given to the screenplay writers. In 2015, the United States Library of Congress registered as “culturally, historically and aesthetically significant” (<https://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2015/15-216.html>)

Having chosen the excerpt of the very beginning of the movie allowed me to:

- Present the movie
- Take students to the fifties
- Review previous knowledge of the students around that decade
- Help them become familiar with terms such as Hollywood, California, beaches, orange groves, the American dream, families, becoming a movie star, the film industry, radio and advertising, the concept of the good ones and the bad ones, cities, organized crime, the role of the police...
- Promote listening comprehension while enjoying visual and auditive learning
- Student center the teaching
- Promote self-correction
- Promote self-taking decision
- Promote cooperative work

Further reference on the movie is presented at the end of the article.



## **VIDEO SESSION 3**

### **Los Angeles and the Fifties**

(Excerpt from Curtis Hanson’s *L.A. Confidential*:  
[Beginning](#))

**1.** Fill in the blanks without watching the video:

*Come to .....*  
*The sun shines bright,*

The ..... are wide and inviting,  
and the orange grove stretches far as the eye can see.

There are jobs a-plenty and ..... is cheap.  
Every working man can have his own house,  
and inside every ..... a happy all-American family.  
You can have all this.

And who knows?  
You could be ....., become a movie star,  
or at least see one.

Life is good in Los Angeles.  
It is ..... on earth.  
Ha, ha.  
That's what they tell you anyway,  
because they are selling an .....  
They are selling it through movies, radio and television.

In the hit show "Badge of Honor",  
the L.A. .... walks on water,  
as they keep the city clean of crooks.

Yep, you'd think this place was the garden of .....,  
but there is trouble in paradise,  
and his name is Meyer Harris Cohen,  
Mickey to his .....,  
local L.A. to the nth degree,  
and his number one bodyguard, Johnny Stompanato.

Mickey C. 's the head of the ..... crime in these parts.  
He ..... dope, racket, and prostitution.  
He kills a dozen people a year.  
And the dapper little gent does it in .....

And every time his picture is ..... on the front page,  
it is a black eye for the image of L.A.  
Because how can organized crime exist in the city  
with the best police ..... in the world?

Something has to be done but nothing too original,  
....., hey, this is Hollywood.  
What worked for Al Capone, would work for the Mixer:  
"Mr. Cohen, you are under ..... Non-payment of Federal income tax".

But all is not well.  
Sending Mickey up has created a vacuum,  
and it is only a ..... of time,  
before someone with balls of brass tries to fill it.

Remember, dear readers,  
you heard here it first.  
Off the .....  
on the q.t.

and very *HUSH HUSH*.

2. Correct it with the video
3. List all slang words and their meaning.
4. Point out classic scenes from the fifties, and ask your teacher about them.

**(ANSWER SHEET)**  
**VIDEO SESSION 3**  
*L. A. Confidential*

1. *Fill in the blanks:*

*Come to **Los Angeles**.  
The sun shines bright,  
The **beaches** are wide and inviting,  
and the orange grove stretches far as the eye can see.*

*There are jobs a-plenty and **land** is cheap.  
Every working man can have his own house,  
and inside every **house** a happy all-American family.  
You can have all this.*

*And who knows?  
You could be **discovered**, become a movie star,  
or at least see one.*

*Life is good in Los Angeles.  
It is **paradise** on earth.  
Ha, ha.  
That's what they tell you anyway,  
because they are selling an **image**.  
They are selling it through movies, radio and television.*

*In the hit show "Badge of Honor",  
the L.A. **cops** walks on water,  
as they keep the city clean of crooks.*

*Yep, you'd think this place was the garden of **Eden**,  
but there is trouble in paradise,  
and his name is Meyer Harris Cohen,  
Mickey to his **fans**,  
local L.A. to the nth degree,*

and his number one bodyguard, Johnny Stompanato.  
Mickey C. 's the **head** of the organized crime in these parts.

He **runs** dope, racket, and prostitution.  
He kills a dozen people a year.  
And the dapper little gent does it in **style**.

And every time his picture is **plastered** on the front page,  
it is a black eye for the image of L.A.  
Because how can organized crime exist in the city  
with the best police **force** in the world?

Something has to be done but nothing too original,  
cause, hey, **this** is Hollywood.  
What worked for Al Capone, would work for the Mixer:  
"Mr. Cohen, you are under **arrest**. Non-payment of Federal income tax".

But all is not well.  
Sending Mickey up has created a vacuum,  
and it is only a **matter** of time,  
before someone with balls of brass tries to fill it.

Remember, dear readers,  
you heard here it first.  
**Off the record**  
on the q.t.  
and very Hush Hush

The video worksheets above are samples which show how I adapted media audio and visual materials into the teaching of American culture. The reference section which follows presents manuals and websites which can be consulted for further study.

A fourth article in the teaching of American culture will follow: "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 4: Internet Worksheets". It will provide opportunities to expand knowledge on materials which can be easily adapted to suit the needs of EFL students and trainee teachers of English as a foreign language.

## References

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A Glimpse of American culture through film / Interexchange

<https://www.interexchange.org/articles/career-training-usa/2011/11/02/a-glimpse-of-american-culture-through-film/>

Best 10 movies to watch for a foreigner trying to understand American culture

<https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-10-best-movies-to-watch-for-a-foreigner-trying-to-understand-modern-American-culture>

Department of Homeland Security Official website

<https://www.uscis.gov/greencard>

Dunar, A J. (2006) *America in the fifties* (2006). New York: Syracuse University Press.

Five things you might not know about *L.A Confidential*

<http://www.indiewire.com/2012/09/5-things-you-might-not-know-about-l-a-confidential-105871/>

Green Card Film Locations

<http://onthesetofnewyork.com/greencard.html>

Green card IMDB

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099699/>

L. A. Confidential IMBD

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119488/>

Marling, K. A. (1996) *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

MTV artists. Stevie Wonder

<http://www.mtv.com/artists/stevie-wonder/>

Stevie Wonder UK

<http://www.steviewonder.org.uk/>

Switzer, Ch. (2015) "What are the benefits of visual communication"

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/157920-what-are-the-benefits-of-visual-communication-over-verbal/>

The 100 greatest American movies

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20150720-the-100-greatest-american-films>

Top US Cultural Picks: Television and Movies

<https://www.interexchange.org/american-culture/television-movies/>

2015 National film registry. Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2015/15-216.html>

What are the best American movies to recommend to a foreigner looking to understand what American culture is really like?

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/quora/what-are-the-best-movies\\_b\\_1869233.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/quora/what-are-the-best-movies_b_1869233.html)

What movies define America

[http://www.pennlive.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2015/06/what\\_movies\\_define\\_america.html](http://www.pennlive.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2015/06/what_movies_define_america.html)

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# American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 4: Internet Worksheets

**Lourdes Montoro**  
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In memory of Eric Blum, Jane and Halbe Brown, Valerie W. Burman, Don Gregg, Rose Senatore and Jane Smith

In the previous three articles (“American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries”, “American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 2: American English through Spelling and Vocabulary”, and “American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: From Two American Movies and a Song to Three Video Sessions”), I presented how participants were provided with numerous activity sheets on the goals and components, mentioned in Part 1, in the American culture courses description. In all cases, they were student-centered, and provided chances for different learning paces and individual tutoring.

Besides the courses goals, participants’ likings and interests were also taken into account. In this article, “American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 4: Internet Worksheets”, I will explain how I used the Internet to help students in my courses deepen their understanding and knowledge, depending on their choices. Six sample worksheets to which participants were directly exposed will be presented.

Through the first one I helped them reach a general American studies page, courtesy of the University of Colorado at Boulder, which led them to other general areas: news and information, science and environment, art, photography and music. That worksheet was common to all participants. I designed the rest of the worksheets to help students follow specific itineraries of their own interest.

All worksheets were presented in the computer room on different sessions as the courses developed, the goals were being accomplished, and all the components were being included. Students expressed their preferences on them, and were free to choose any for further independent work, which they could also consider for an oral presentation or a written account, be it a speech, a composition, a poster, a creative game, a simulation, a puzzle....

All forms were admitted and shared in the class forum. Dates were assigned to each presentation, and it all started to take shape. Students could work either individually, in pairs or groups, and were welcome to be assessed by me, through tutoring sessions, as well as by the American teaching assistants. The six worksheets were as follows:

- American Culture and the Internet 1: Homage to Dr. Ronald Burman
- American Culture and the Internet 2: History, Immigration services, Geography
- American Culture and the Internet 3: American Holidays (General)
- American Culture and the Internet 4: Valentine’s Day (Sample holiday)
- American Culture and the Internet 5: American States
- American Culture and the Internet 6: American Schools and Colleges



**American Culture and the Internet 1: Homage to Dr. Ronald Burman** wanted to officially welcome and acknowledge the support received by my former professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, now Emeritus. Since I was his student, he and his wife took me under their wing to encourage all my initiatives as a learner, a teacher and a teacher trainer.

I had started teaching American Culture as part of the EFL Class curriculum in the 1980s. In the 1990s, when I decided to teach it in specialized courses for upper-intermediate and advanced students of English, as well as for ELT teachers in training, Dr. Burman became one of the main pillars. He was a very generous and active mentor, who guided me in all my academic and professional training, as I became more experienced and knowledgeable in the field.

His contribution was such and is still such that none of my theoretical and practical teaching on American culture would have been so enriching, appealing and authentic without his unconditional support. The worksheet includes a definition of culture by him, a question posed to my students by him as well, to attempt to define American culture, while he himself admits not knowing how to begin, as he also points to an address, which was certainly a superb starting point to begin with, and is still valid today.

## **AMERICAN CULTURE AND THE INTERNET**

### **1**



Prof. Lourdes Montoro

### **HOMAGE TO: DR. RONALD BURMAN**

**(Emeritus Professor, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse)**

Dr. Ronald Burman, my professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, learned through his career that defining culture or history is very difficult. He says: *“If your definition is too narrow, you are in trouble, and if it is too broad, you are also in trouble”*. What does he mean?.

He would like to encourage you to try defining "American culture." He would like you to think about how it is possible to define a nation (or many peoples) who live, for instance, in the Basque territory or in Catalonia. What makes them all "Spanish," or can they all be considered "Spanish"? - he wonders.

You, as students taking this introductory course, probably expect just that clear, easy-to-understand generalization about the American country and its people. He adds that he doesn't know where you would begin such a definition.

He explains that many scholars have started with DE CREVECOEUR's essays on America, especially the one, "What is an American?". He finally states that the website below is a very good starting point on the Internet to round up resources about studies in American culture:

<http://spot.Colorado.EDU/~cclewis/inform.html>

It includes:

**American Studies Courses on the Internet**

- [Professor Chris Lewis' Courses on the Internet](#)

**Learning to Surf the Internet**

- [Guide to Finding American Studies Resources on the Internet](#)
- [Road map Internet Training Workshop](#)

**Tools for Using the Internet Sites**

- [Internet Search Engines](#)
- [Information about the Internet](#)
- [University and Higher Education Sites](#)
- [CU-Boulder and Colorado Libraries Online](#)
- [MAASA--University Courses on the Internet](#)

**News and Information Sites**

- [Global News Sites](#)
- [American News Sites](#)
- [Magazines and Journals on the Internet](#)

**American Studies and History Sites**

- [American Studies Crossroads Site](#)
- [Major American Studies Internet Sites](#)
- [American Studies Sites](#)
- [American History Sites](#)
- [Teaching with the Internet Sites](#)

**U.S. Government and International Sites**

- [U.S. Government Sites](#)
- [American Politics and Political Debates Sites](#)
- [United Nations and Global Organization Sites](#)
- [Global Economy and Sustainable Development Sites](#)

**Science and Environment Sites**

- [Science Sites](#)
- [Global Environment Sites](#)
- [NASA and Space Shuttle Sites](#)
- [Geography and GIS Sites](#)

**Art, Photography, and Music Sites**

- [Art and Photography Sites](#)
- [Music Sites](#)

**CU-Boulder Internet sites**

- [American Studies Program Home Page](#)
- [Sewall Academic Program Home Page](#)
- [University of Colorado at Boulder Home Page](#)

Try this address, and:

1. Get familiar with it
2. Note down all the areas that interest you
3. Print any sections which you would like to have for further reading
4. Make suggestions for class exploitation.

Thank you.

**American Culture and the Internet 2: History, Immigration services, Geography** complements the work which was already presented in "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries": QUESTIONNAIRE 1: HISTORY, through which students had to answer 20 questions; and QUESTIONNAIRE 2: GENERAL FACTS, which went from date of

independence to form of government, number of states, population, major languages, area, highest mountain, lowest point, longest river, longest lake, major cities, time zones, major religious groups, flag, major industries, national symbol, national anthem, major public holidays, three capitals in three states, currency and units.

This worksheet led to quizzes on geography and history, and general information on immigration services, which were being presented through the dynamic and formal interview shown in Peter Weir's 1990 movie: *Green Card*, where a marriage of convenience to help a man get his green card to be able to remain in the country is put at stake by US officers. The role of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, as well the cast's outstanding performance have been already presented in "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 3: From Two American Movies and a Song to Three Video Sessions".

## **AMERICAN CULTURE AND INTERNET**

### **2**

Prof. Lourdes Montoro



*"Let the American Dream Be Yours"*

## **HISTORY, IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND GEOGRAPHY**

### **HISTORY**

AMERICAN HISTORY . FACT MONSTER

<http://www.factmonster.com/quizzes/amhistory/1.html>

US HISTORY TRIVIA AND QUIZZES

[http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/history/us\\_history.html](http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/history/us_history.html)

OFFBEAT. QUIZZ. DO YOU KNOW EVERYTHING IN AMERICAN HISTORY?

<http://offbeat.topix.com/quiz/16946>

### **IMMIGRATION SERVICES**

UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

<https://www.uscis.gov/>

### **GEOGRAPHY**

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW BASIC GEOGRAPHY

[https://www.buzzfeed.com/mjkiebus/how-well-do-you-know-basic-us-geography?utm\\_term=.fb63Mkv12#.vsYXRvrBD](https://www.buzzfeed.com/mjkiebus/how-well-do-you-know-basic-us-geography?utm_term=.fb63Mkv12#.vsYXRvrBD)

SHEPPARD'S SOFTWARE. WE MAKE LEARNING FUN. USA

[http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web\\_games.htm](http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games.htm)

**American Culture and the Internet 3: American Holidays** helped fulfill one of the main goals of the course: American celebrations. It was a general worksheet. Students were going to learn about them by hearing about their relevance by American teaching assistants, reading about them, and by being asked to develop one of them through oral presentations.

Different holidays were listed in the worksheet, and students could have their pick: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Martin Luther King, Valentine's Day, Easter, 4th of July and Memorial Day. As explained in "American Culture in the EFL Class. Part 1: Overview and Itineraries", depending on the term, some celebrations were held for real in class. Students already had them scheduled in the initial *Oral presentations* sheet, which was also included in Part 1.

They were the most popular ones: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's, Easter and Fourth of July. On the corresponding dates participants, teaching assistants and the teacher decorated the classroom with authentic American prompts; musical background was also provided, and seasonal food was shared (which students with the help of the assistant and the teacher made).

Workshops with games and activities were also led, as students learnt about the holidays and American culture by doing, and being an active part of them. Needless to say that the different above-mentioned oral presentations were scheduled as the course calendar developed and the different holidays fit in it.

## **AMERICAN CULTURE AND INTERNET**

### **3**

Prof. Lourdes Montoro

### **AMERICAN HOLIDAYS**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE TO THE USA. NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS:  
HALLOWEEN, THANKSGIVING, MARTIN LUTHER KING, VALENTINE'S DAY,  
EASTER, MEMORIAL DAY

[http://www.internationalstudentguidetotheusa.com/articles/holidays\\_customs.htm](http://www.internationalstudentguidetotheusa.com/articles/holidays_customs.htm)

WFSB. HOLIDAY QUIZ

<http://www.wfsb.com/category/88368/our-daily-holiday-quiz>

HOW TO CARVE MAKE A JACK-O-LANTERN

<http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Carve-a-Jacko-lantern/>

HALLOWEEN FOOD

<http://www.food.com/ideas/halloween-party-food-recipes-6177?c=13873>

HALLOWEEN

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/halloween.html>



**FLUENT THANKSGIVING VOCABULARY**

<http://www.fluentu.com/english/blog/thanksgiving-english/>



**THANKSGIVING WORKSHEETS AND ACTIVITIES**

[http://bogglesworldesl.com/thanksgiving\\_worksheets.htm](http://bogglesworldesl.com/thanksgiving_worksheets.htm)

**THANKSGIVING. FOOD NETWORK**

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/thanksgiving.html>

**120 CHRISTMAS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, GAMES AND CAROLS**

<http://icebreakerideas.com/christmas-trivia/>



**SANTA CLAUS WORKSHOP**

<http://www.santagames.net/>

**THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS QUIZ**

<http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/menus/christmas-traditions->

**CHRISTMAS**

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/holidays/holiday-central-christmas.html>

**MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DAY (QUIZ)**

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/9801/tw-king.html>

**VALENTINE'S DAY**

[http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/02/valentines\\_day.html](http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/02/valentines_day.html)



VALENTINES

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/valentine-s-day.html>

EASTER QUIZ

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/9704/bd-easter.html>

EASTER

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/photos/our-best-easter-recipes.html>



GROUNDHOG DAY QUIZ

<http://www.michellehenry.fr/ground.htm>

PRESIDENTS´ DAY QUIZ

<http://www.elcivics.com/presidents-day.html>

ST. PATRICK´S DAY

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/lb/stpat.html>



4TH OF JULY

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=bUJqcu4tWw4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=bUJqcu4tWw4)

FOURTH OF JULY

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/4th-of-july.html>



**American Culture and the Internet 4: Valentine's Day** is presented as a sample of the different worksheets on American culture which I created as students chose their holidays for their presentations. If they coincided with the major ones, the ones which were to be celebrated in class and to which I referred above, I provided them and the rest of students with specialized research worksheets. This is an example.

In those cases, I chose to present the worksheets in the corresponding seasonal tones: orange for Halloween; yellow and light brown for Thanksgiving (two sorts of the same worksheets); red and green for Christmas (two sorts); pink for Valentine's; Baby Blue, light green, and light yellow for Easter (three sorts); and red, blue and white for the 4th of July (three sorts). Colors easily brought each holiday mood to class.

## AMERICAN CULTURE AND INTERNET

### 4

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## VALENTINE'S DAY

CALENDAR, HISTORY, QUOTES

<http://www.wincalendar.com/Valentines-Day>

NINE MUST-HAVE VALENTINE'S DAY ACTIVITIES FOR THE ESL CLASSROOM

<http://busyteacher.org/4199-9-must-have-valentines-day-activities-for-the-esl.html>

ROSE MEANING AND ROSE SYMBOLISM

<http://www.whats-your-sign.com/rose-meaning.html>

SENDING A VALENTINE CARD

<http://www.bluemountain.com/ecards/valentines-day>

SIGN, AND LOVE TEST COMPATIBILITY

<http://www.lovetest.com/lovesongs.html>

SIX ROSE COLOR MEANINGS

<http://www.rd.com/advice/relationships/6-rose-colors-and-their-meanings/>

VALENTINE'S DAY QUIZ

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/mc-lb-ValD.html>

**American Culture and the Internet 5: American States** presents work on general webpages about them all and specific ones about different states. The course was first related to the original states where American teaching assistants were from, as well as the states with which the teacher was very familiar.

When browsing on the net, participants could be informed and quizzed about items such as: capitals, famous local people, state motto, state symbols, biggest cities, counties, parks, points of interest... They were welcome to choose any, relate it to the media and favorite actors and actresses of theirs, places which they would like to visit some day.... They could work on them individually, in pairs or groups, and above all, ensure that they would enjoy their choices and share their research with the rest of classmates in any form which they wish to. As they finished their searches, I scheduled their presentations.

## **AMERICAN CULTURE AND INTERNET**

### **5**

**Prof. Lourdes Montoro**  
**(BeckyTozer is gratefully acknowledged)**



### **AMERICAN STATES**

**STATE STMBOLS USA**

<http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/>

**FIFTY STATES**

<http://www.50states.com/tools/>

**STATE CAPITALS QUIZ**

<http://www.50states.com/quizzes/state-capitals.html#quiz-head>

**STATE FACTS QUIZ**

<http://www.50states.com/quizzes/state-facts.html#quiz-head>

**STATE NICKNAMES QUIZ**

<http://www.50states.com/quizzes/state-nicknames.html#quiz-head>

**ARIZONA FACT AND TRIVIA**

<http://www.50states.com/facts/arizona.htm>

**CALIFORNIA**

<http://www.visitcalifornia.com/>

**COLORADO FACTS AND TRIVIA**

<http://www.50states.com/facts/colorado.htm>

**FLORIDA**

<http://www.myflorida.com/>



HAWAII

<http://www.gohawaii.com/>

IDAHO

<https://visitidaho.org/>

INDIANA

<https://visitindiana.com/>

MAINE

<https://visitmaine.com/>

MARYLAND

<http://www.visitmaryland.org/>

MICHIGAN

<http://www.michigan.org/>

MINNESOTA

<http://www.exploreminnesota.com/index.aspx>

MISSOURI

<https://www.visitmo.com/>

OHIO

<http://www.ohio.org/>

OREGON

<http://traveloregon.com/>

PENNSYLVANIA

<http://www.visitpa.com/>

VERMONT

<https://www.vermontvacation.com/>

TEXAS

<https://www.traveltexas.com/>

WEST VIRGINIA

<http://www.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

US STATES NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/states/us-states-hub/>

**American Culture and the Internet 6: American Schools and Colleges** presented options for participant to study, be trained in their careers, and visit the United States. This was the last worksheet which they received prior to all the preparation that was devoted to a formal graduation and the lessons about it. With time most participants made it to the States and pursued their own dream of visiting the land which they had kindly wanted to formally learn about.

# AMERICAN CULTURE AND INTERNET

## 6

Prof. Lourdes Montoro



## **AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

STUDY IN THE US ONLINE DIRECTORY

<http://www.studyusa.com/>

AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES HOMEPAGES

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html>

CAREER TRAINING IN THE US

<https://www.interexchange.org/career-training-usa/internship-co-op-trainee-job/applying-j-1-visa-sponsorship/>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE TO THE USA

<http://www.internationalstudentguidetotheusa.com/articles/movies-connection-american-culture.htm>

VISIT THE USA

<http://www.visittheusa.com/>

This article, Part 4, rounds up my pedagogical approach when teaching American culture in specialized EFL courses. The contents which have been provided can be easily incorporated to similar courses as well as be adapted to different teaching sessions on culture in the regular curriculum. The four parts went from a general introduction to specific work on American spelling, American vocabulary, video sessions on American movies and songs, and, last but not least, Internet resources. They all extended class work, and complemented the teaching sessions, the goals, and the components which this course included.

None of it would have been the same without my own theoretical and practical training on American culture, which, as introduced in Part 1, counted on Dr. Ronald Burman, my professor of English in the United States, the organizations that supported me, the dear friends and families who made and make my constant updating possible, and my academic, professional and personal ties with the country. Last but not least, I must acknowledge the gracious work of the American teaching assistants who were assigned to me while in Barcelona, and the enthusiastic participation of my students. They all made it possible.

# *ADDENDA*

# “Lights, Camera, Action!”: An Awarded Motivation Booster within a Learner-Centered Project

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*To the 2014-2015 4<sup>th</sup> ESO promotion for such a memorable pedagogical travel*

In my previous two articles, I highlighted the importance of observing the students and listening to their voices when creating meaningful learning tasks. In this article, I will explain how I designed a learner-centered project, “Lights, Camera, Action!”, which boosted motivation and was based on bringing the students’ personal and academic potential together.

The project was devised as the last English assignment for two 4<sup>th</sup> ESO classes (10<sup>th</sup> grade) in order to gather up all the competences learned during the academic year. The lessons had always been focused not only on the four skills but also on all the other basic and transversal competences. Therefore, the main idea was that the students would take what they had learnt to create something by themselves and for the others. It was a task which allowed them to use their imagination by keeping their learning process student-centered. By empowering the students, motivation also rose up turning the project into more than just a class assignment.

Since my students knew from the start that they were going to make a film and that it might be shown at school and uploaded on the school blog and website, none wanted to be left behind. As a consequence, all learners found their own strategies to perform well. All the members in the groups felt proud of their creation. There was cooperative group work since students were helping each other in their lacks as well as boosting their strengths.

Students were also aware that they would first make short videos. The fact that they also knew that they were going to be put together to create a class film was appealing to them. They enjoyed seeing themselves speaking in their L2 with classmates with who they normally used their L1. They were also willing to explain all the anecdotes behind the scenes and comment on the other partners’ performances.

Allowing the students to speak out, their voices were heard and that strongly motivated them too. By doing a class project, the two groups were more united than ever before and that made the students learn more about themselves and about the others than they could have ever imagined.

This is how the project took place. It consisted of three main parts:

- |                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/ BEFORE STARTING THE PROJECT<br>2/ WHILE DOING THE PROJECT<br>3/ AFTER DOING THE PROJECT |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **1/BEFORE STARTING THE PROJECT**

From my experience, the following elements must be considered to create a suitable and successful project:

- A) An analysis of the students
- B) The general idea
- C) The objectives
- D) The length and the stages
- E) The elaboration of the students' handouts
- F) The project presentation

A) An analysis of the students

In my view, the students' age, English level, hobbies, personality and likes are key factors to bear in mind in order to come up with an engaging project. During the school year of 2014-2015, I taught two 4<sup>th</sup> ESO (10<sup>th</sup> grade) classes at a private school in Les Corts in Barcelona. It was the second year that I was their English teacher so I had had enough time to observe and analyse both groups. My conclusions were the following ones:

- ◊The students were 15-16-17-year-old-youngsters in their last year at school
- ◊ Most of the learners showed good competence in their oral and written productions
- ◊ They were friendly, outgoing, respectful and eager to participate in class
- ◊The vast majority loved recording videos, mastered plenty of ICT tools and two of them were especially talented as editors

B) The general idea

With all the previous information, I could start making connections to have a general picture of what the project which I was going to design was going to be like. The idea arose one morning when I was heading to school. I would make them shoot short films in groups of four to end up creating a class film while implementing the English ESO syllabus.

C) The objectives

Once the idea was set, it was important to think about the objectives behind the project. That would serve me to avoid beating about the bush and it would also be a frame for students. When students know what we expect them to do, they always become aware of how they are going to be evaluated too. In "Lights, Camera, Action!", I established the following objectives taking into account basic competences:

1. Competence in linguistic communication

- To integrate the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing
- To understand the others and being understood
- To read and learn the roles by heart
- To write an adequate, coherent and cohesive script
- To revise grammar structures
- To use formal and informal vocabulary and speech connectors
- To work on oral production paying attention to conciseness, intonation, pacing, pronunciation and timing
- To bear in mind non-verbal communication elements such as body language, eye contact, facial expressions, subtle movements, personal space and posture

2. Competence in social and civic skills

- To portrait everyday situations which include conflicts and misunderstandings
- To find out a solution to finish the stories with a happy ending
- To respect each other and reach an agreement
- To develop a social and a civic awareness of the world

3. Learning to learn

- To learn the roles
- To correct themselves to attain what they want to communicate
- To correct and monitor the others
- To become mindful of their own learning process

4. Autonomy and personal initiative

- To sort out how to work with classmates who one may not be friends with
- To give ideas and suggestions on when, where and how to shoot the short film
- To foster student's autonomy as well as cooperative work
- To boost each student's individual personal knowledge and skills

5. Competence in interaction with the physical environment

- To choose adequate contexts of the stories
- To contextualize the stories beyond the classroom walls
- To make the assignment more realistic

6. Competence in processing information and use of ICT

- To use any electronic device-go pros, digital cameras and smart phones-to record a three-minute short film
- To apply any editing computer program or mobile phone application to edit the video
- To show their ICT knowledge to come up with the students' own creation
- To coin a final twenty-minute class film attaching each and all the short films productions initially shot


C) The length and the stages

Having the general idea and its objectives, it was important to set the time and the stages to scaffold students in the process. For "Lights, Camera, Action!" I decided that:

- ◇The project would last for three weeks
- ◇Three sessions would be devoted to write the three-minute-scripts
- ◇The scripts would be e-mailed to the teacher
- ◇Two sessions would be dedicated to work on pronunciation, sentences stress and non-verbal communication
- ◇A week would be left to shoot the short film
- ◇Each short film would be sent to the class editor
- ◇The class editor would be the responsible for making the finished twenty-minute class movie
- ◇A session would be dedicated to watch it and comment everybody's work and final result

***D) The elaboration of students' handouts***

To ensure a real comprehension and assumption of what the learners are required to do, I believe is necessary writing and giving the students a fully detailed handout. For this project, I elaborated the following one:



## PROJECT

### Lights, Camera, Action!

**BEFORE STARTING:**

**OBJECTIVES:**

**1. Competence in linguistic communication**

- To integrate the four skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing
- To understand the others and being understood
- To read and learn the roles by heart
- To write an adequate, coherent and cohesive script
- To revise grammar structures
- To use formal and informal vocabulary and speech connectors
- To work on oral production paying attention to pronunciation, intonation, conciseness, timing and pacing
- To bear in mind non-verbal communication elements such as facial expressions, bodily moment, posture, subtle movements, eye contact and personal space

**2. Competence in social and civic skills**

- To portrait everyday situations which include conflicts and misunderstandings
- To find out a solution to finish the stories with a happy ending
- To respect each other and reach an agreement
- To develop a social and a civic awareness of the world

**3. Learning to learn**

- To learn the roles
- To correct yourselves to attain what you want to communicate
- To correct and monitor the others
- To become mindful of your own learning process

**4. Autonomy and personal initiative**

- To sort out how to work with partners you are not friends with
- To give ideas and suggestion on when, where and how to shoot the short film
- To foster your autonomy as well as cooperative work
- To boost your individual personal knowledge and skills

**5. Competence in interaction with the physical environment**

- To choose adequate contexts of the stories
- To contextualize the stories beyond the classroom walls
- To make the assignment more realistic

**6. Competence in processing information and use of ICT**

- To use any electronic device-go pros, digital cameras and smart phones-to record a three-minute short film
- To apply any editing computer program or mobile phone application to edit the video
- To show your ICT knowledge to come up with your own creation
- To coin a twenty-minute film attaching all the short films

**WHILE DOING:**

**FIRST STEP:**

- Put yourselves in groups of four. One group of three can be accepted if there is the case.
- You must write a script which will represent a daily life situation. You can talk about a situation you have been through or make a new one up.
- All your scripts must finish with a happy ending.

- You must type the script.
- It must be 2-3 minutes long maximum. Use a timer.

**SECOND STEP:**

- Show me what you have written so that I can correct if there are any language mistakes.
- After that, read it aloud so that I can also correct your pronunciation.
- E-mail me the script to have your written part graded.
- Learn by heart your part.

**THIRD STEP:**

- You will perform the script in front of the other classmates to work on pronunciation and body language. You can shoot it in class or select another location outside of the school which may be suitable for the story.

**FOURTH STEP:**

- When all the videos are shot, all the class must think of a title for your short film as well as suggest a soundtrack: a song for the beginning and another one for the end. Both must be in English and matching with the topic of the film. No Reggaeton is allowed!
- We will also have a picture taken together to include it at the end of our short film.

**FIFTH STEP:**

- When the group decides which the best take is, you must send it to me and I will send it to the class editor through *Dropbox*.
- The class editor must be someone who is good at video editing; managing applications, etc. He or she will be in charge of putting all the videos together, include the soundtrack and the credits. These students will have extra points for the project!

**ONCE FINISHED:**

- The editor will send it to me and I will upload the video on *YouTube* so that all of you can always watch your piece of work and have a nice memory of the last year at school.

**DEADLINES:**

**21<sup>st</sup> (4B) /22<sup>nd</sup> (4A) May: hand in the script.**

**4<sup>th</sup> (4B) /5<sup>th</sup> (4A) June: send the videos by *Dropbox* ([elisenda.abad@gmail.com](mailto:elisenda.abad@gmail.com)).**

**EVALUATION:**

- Written project: 50%. The language and originality will be taken into account.
- The performance: 50%. Accuracy, fluency and pronunciation will be considered for assessment. Your self-evaluation opinions will also be scored.

**E) The project presentation to the students**

For this project, I bought a clapperboard and wrote some information on it. In class, I showed the students its back side and I made them guess what it could be. Most of them knew the word in Spanish but not in English. Thus, I made gestures for the word “clap” and the word “board” to elicit their knowledge.

Once they found out the word, I turned the clapperboard and told them to make assumptions on what we were going to do. When they got it, I handed in the worksheets and we all got familiar with the instructions of the project by reading them as a group.

A great idea and an accurate planning of a project is not enough for the students to be fully involved: they need their teacher to be their lighthouse as they go along through their learning process. The way that teachers tell students what they are going to do in the following weeks is as important as the idea of the project itself. For ensuring that teenagers keep motivated in the whole process, teachers must pass on their enthusiasm and passion for their creation.



## **2/ WHILE DOING THE PROJECT**

### **A) Stage 1: Writing the scripts**

In the first stage, the learners were asked to put themselves in groups of four people. They had three sessions to compose a three-minute dialogue about a situation they normally handle. To do so, the students had to put into practice their linguistic communicative competence by managing the four skills to create an adequate, coherent and cohesive script. They could express their points of view on a wide variety of situations. However, the plot had to have a happy ending.

By doing so, the competence in social and civic skills was fostered; the students were given a voice to solve a conflict; they could mix with one another and picture their perspective of the world. In all the sessions, I was monitoring their work and answering their requests. During the class session, once finished, they had to e-mail their scripts to me so that I could check the mistakes, give general feedback and score their work. The images below show the process above-described:



### **B) Stage 2: Working on pronunciation, sentence stress and non-verbal communication**

In the second stage, two sessions were devoted to work on pronunciation, sentence stress and non-verbal communication. Each group went in front of the class and read their dialogues aloud. They not only had to be accurate in pronouncing the words but also had to take special care with regards to body-language, eye-contact and personal space.

It was then when I gave advice and feedback to each group. The classmates from other groups were also welcomed to give suggestions. By working in groups and showing respect to their partners' considerations, they were working on the competence of learning to learn and autonomy and personal initiative.

### **C) Stage 3: Recording and editing the short films**

In the third stage, the learners were given a whole week to record and edit their short films. The option of recording in class was given to those groups who could not possibly meet outside the school. Nevertheless, there was just one group who decided to do it in class. The rest of the groups chose different settings such as parts of their homes: their bedrooms, living-rooms, terraces and swimming-pools; some places in their neighbourhoods: squares, streets and parks; and beaches where they often go.

The fact of picking up the appropriate spots to record different scenes as well as wearing adequate gear for every context and occasion made the learners more competent in the interaction with the physical environment. In terms of edition, the competence in processing information and use of ICT was also highlighted. Some groups went for computer editing

programs such as *Final Cut Pro for Mac*, *Sony Vegas pro 13* and *Windows live movie maker*. Instead; others employed editing mobile phone applications as *I movie*, *Video Show* and *VivaVideo*.

They were free to attach songs in English, edit sound and image, use special effects, and do any kind of montage. Once each groups had their videos done, they shared them with me through folders on *Dropbox*. That allowed me to assess their oral production and their performance and easily send them to the class editors who could star assembling shots into the final class group film.

**D) Stage 4: Editing the class film**

In the fourth and last stage, both class groups chose how they wanted the movie to be named, the quote which they desired to show up in it and two English songs as the soundtrack. I must say that in both groups there were a couple of students who mastered ICT tools. I had talked to them at the beginning of the project and asked if they could put all the short films together to create a film for the class. To acknowledge their extra work, I gave them an extra point in the project's final mark. Both class movies, *Unforgettable time* from 4<sup>th</sup> ESO A and *Memories last forever* from 4<sup>th</sup> ESO B, were edited and produced with the help of the computer editing program *Final Cut Pro for Mac*.

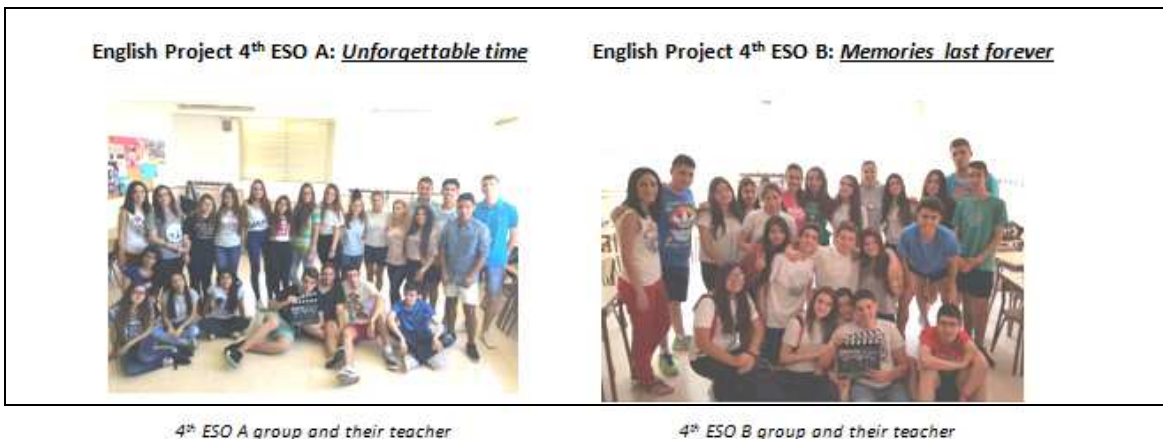
### **3/ AFTER DOING THE PROJECT**

***A) Finalizing details with the class editors***

When both class editors sent each class film to me, I checked the spelling and mistakes in the short films' titles, the order of the short films, the songs, the speed of the credits, etc. Even if the first version was acceptable, I asked them to make some changes to reach excellence. When the project was final, both class editors saved the 20-minute-films on a USB flash drive and brought them to class.

***B) Seeing the final result in class***

After the three weeks which the project had lasted, both groups had the chance to see the final result. In the first session, firstly, I showed their class video. Then, I asked them questions about their classmates' production and, finally, I made them self-evaluate their short film. In the second session, each group saw the other class group film, answered some question and evaluated their performance and work. Both groups agreed on uploading their class films on the school's *YouTube* channel. The class editor was in charge of doing it under my supervision. At present, the videos can be seen online:



*C) Evaluating the final result*

<b>SCRIPT: 50%</b>
<b>RECORDING AND EDITING PROCESS: 50%</b> (The percentage also included their own self-evaluation)

*D) Sharing it outside the classroom walls*

The project was shown to some other school groups. It was used as a listening comprehension task and as an encouragement to help them see how their English could improve as academic years pass.

Both groups and I were very satisfied with the final product. So were the English Department and the school. The institution, my colleagues, both 4<sup>th</sup> ESO groups and I decided to enter in the John McDowell Award Contest which is annually organized by Associació de Professors i Professores d'Anglès de Catalunya.

The project was awarded with a *British Council John Mc Dowell Award 2015* at the 2016 APAC Convention. The following pictures were taken along the ceremony which was held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona.



This was a competencial learned-centered project which brought students' personal and academic potential out, unified them as a group and helped them bond with their teacher. The result was an unexpected pedagogical English learning travel whose memory will always be cherished.

Teachers are welcome to pull out their students' abilities to adapt this project, to create a different one and to foster them to experiment with different computer and mobile phone editing programs. Further references can be found next.

## References

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Associació de Professors i Professores d'Anglès de Catalunya (APAC)- British Council John McDowell Award

<http://www.apac.es/john-mcdowell-award/>

Dropbox

<https://www.dropbox.com/>

English Project 4<sup>th</sup> ESO A: *Unforgettable time*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAIgq-bo5-o/>

English Project 4<sup>th</sup> ESO B: *Memories last forever*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu\\_GZji8mZk/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu_GZji8mZk/)

Final Cut Pro for Mac

<http://www.apple.com/final-cut-pro/>

I movie

<http://www.apple.com/mac/imovie/>

Sony Vegas pro 13

<http://www.vegascreativesoftware.com/us/vegas-pro/>

Video Show

<http://www.videoshowapp.com/>

VivaVideo

<http://vivavideodownload.com/>

Windows Live Movie Maker

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/18614/windows-essentials/>

# Exploring Building Bricks to Foster Creativity and Communication Skills. A Cross-curricular Approach

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*It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge (Albert Einstein)*

In a whole new world, it is becoming increasingly significant to provide students with the tools which they might use in their future. By giving them a construction block, we give them the chance to **enhance their brain activity**, furthering connections and, equally important, helping in oral interaction with their classmates and teacher alike, reinforcing companionship and consolidating basic social rules.

Obviously, throughout all this process the teacher figure cannot -and must not- remain in the master class line. If the learning process has to change, so has the educator. By this, I mean that we, as professionals, must become extremely flexible, able to react to the new situations that may arise, while being extremely alert and aware of the capabilities of our students. Sometimes an activity can take an unknown or unexpected path which provides a useful and invaluable opportunity to redirect our methodology.

As the *Pulitzer* winner Mark van Doren remarks, "The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery". I seriously believe that the educational future lies in making the students the center of their learning process, with the teacher acting as a guide and an expert who counsels.

Along this path, we can help unfold unknown abilities in our students, which might have gone unnoticed through a traditional teaching methodology. By putting new views into practice which sometimes can get a bit messy and may shoo the most cautious teachers, we allow our students' inner **creativity** to come out. As educators, we are responsible for making it possible, while we take care of not letting some students' "expansive creativity" overshadow their classmates. They are to find their own place and role.

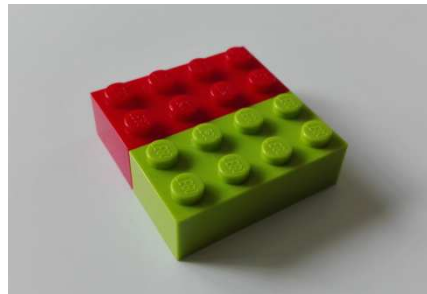
It is a widely acknowledged truth that learning by doing is one of the best approaches when it comes to teaching any subject, not to mention a foreign language. My 15-year English teacher career has led me to conclude that **learning by playing** is, no matter the age, by far, a great improvement in this educational theory.

No one can deny that knowledge is more reachable to pupils if, instead of just handing out naked theory, not only do we make them apply newly acquired concepts, but we also make them an inherent part in their discovery process, unwrapping knowledge as a Christmas toy box. This is applicable to all subjects: English, science, maths or physical education, to name some.

As the American guru Buscaglia denounced, "It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them". And that is exactly one of my goals as an educator: to tackle scientific, mathematical or literary topics using English as a lingua franca; to go from the tip of

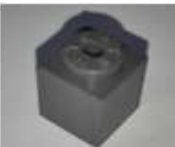





the iceberg to the whole; to absorb knowledge naturally; in the case of English, embracing it as one's mother tongue, by practising it in an encouraging and natural environment. This follows Piaget (1991), who had claimed that individual persons construct knowledge through interaction with their environment.








Among the different methodological approaches, I have focused on activities that have a commonly used object in every household and classroom as a main guest or angular stone: **blocks, toy blocks, bricks, or construction pieces**. No matter what you call it, from my experience, they always mean the beginning of a whole new world of learning, in this case in EFL.



When using these materials, which are inherently attractive to most users, I have observed that they naturally awaken some of the most creative human instincts. Last but not least, I must acknowledge the fact that they are extremely versatile and that they are suitable for all ages: from the little ones to grown-ups

Before class sessions with building blocks and to avoid misunderstandings, I always clarify first how the building bricks can be addressed. There are many ways of defining these pieces. I present next a possible combination. I refer to them by their geometrical names or features, as well as use adjectives related to numbers and size. It is advisable to display the nomenclature list in class so that pupils can have easy access to it; they can consult it, especially at the beginning, when they are not so acquainted with the pieces.

	<p>One-piece/one studded piece/cube (1x1)</p>		<p>Two studded/piece brick (2x1)</p>
	<p>Four studded brick (2x2)</p>		<p>Four studded thin brick (2x2)</p>
	<p>Six studded thin piece/plate (3x2)</p>		<p>Eight-piece rectangle/ long rectangle (8x1)</p>

 <p>Six-piece rectangle/ medium rectangle (6x1)</p>	 <p>Four-piece rectangle/ short rectangle (4x1)</p>
 <p>Wide thick rectangle (8x2)</p>	 <p>Wide thin rectangle/plate (8x2)</p>
 <p>Short/thin rectangle/plate</p>	 <p>Cylinder</p>
 <p>Medium building plate (6x4)</p>	 <p>Big building plate (8x4)</p>

Toy bricks act like ‘glue’ in the classroom. They make pupils feel part of a whole and that their actions and performances are necessary to one another. While having fun, they practise a great number of structures and the teacher finds that naturally some other structures, concepts and situations arise, undoubtedly enriching the whole process. From my experience, these classes are bound to be the starting point of many others to come.

In the first stages of primary education, building bricks can be used for recognition of basic geometrical shapes, such as *square*, *rectangle*, *cylinder*. Pupils can learn to describe and have initiative; observe, think and communicate: oral language development and enhance curiosity: formulate question.

They can do the following activities: count pieces, look for them and identify them; hide the pieces and guess through hypotheses and speculation; exchange pieces; build basic shapes and objects while identifying the pieces and the methodology used; draw objects or shapes which have been created, and outline them by using a pen, a pencil or markers.

When teaching older pupils in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, toy bricks can become a very useful tool as well. One could have a highly successful chemistry or science lesson by using blocks in order to represent molecules, atoms, or any structure which might be necessary, and also extract formulas from them. On the other hand, and from a linguistic point of view, the harder the English communicative structures get, the funnier and more challenging the activities may become.

When teaching in high school, I especially recommend to use toy blocks, or any other material that we can think of, as a way to engage pupils and motivate them. In that stage it sometimes becomes a challenge to attract and maintain our teenagers' minds interested in the lessons, not to mention participating in them. That is why building blocks can play a crucial role into keeping them eager and receptive. By manipulating these materials we make them part of the learning process and part of their group.

Additionally, the cross-curricular approach gains even more weight in the higher stages of the educational system. The document *Orientacions per a la millora de l'aprenentatge de la geometria a l'ESO* (2015) analyses the presence of geometry in the Mathematical curriculum at this stage and concludes that it should be tackled from a more experimental perspective, dwelling on problem solving and communication skills.

*Competències bàsiques de l'àmbit mathematic. Identificació i desplegament a l'educació secundària obligatòria* (2013) claims the importance of propelling the mathematical competence through activities based on living the experience of creating geometrical concepts in the first person is claimed. Both documents defend the significance of using manipulative materials in order to master concepts effectively.

When using building bricks pupils are able to practise English communication skills while at the same time they can learn about:

- Cube volume/longitude/area calculation
- Conceptual visualisation (of different geometrical bodies)
- And geometrical reasoning

These educational benefits are equally applicable to vocational training or university studies. In degrees such as Administration and Management, Architecture or Edification Projects, Design and 3D-Animation among others; building bricks can be used to represent reality and, moreover, to put negotiation situations, that have to be managed in English, into practice.

I would like to present some didactic proposals which take into consideration some of the above-mentioned premises and tackle some of the **basic competences in primary education**. There is space for creativity, writing and organizational skills, as well as for spatial skills. By arranging children into small groups they as well as the teacher are able to identify the different capabilities and act and react accordingly.

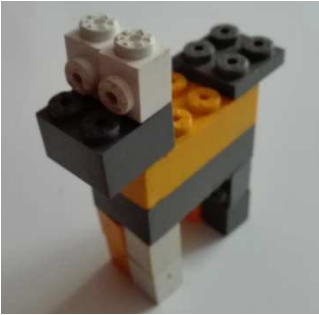
I would like to focus next on primary school activities which combine English language with the practice of specific vocabulary on geometry. I have classified them into three flexible and adaptable 50-minute lesson plans which exemplify the transition from pair-work to whole class work. They can be described as follows:

<b>Age group</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> grade</b>
<b>Areas</b>	English and Mathematics
<b>Main objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To promote collaborative work and communication skills (pupils are not only enhanced to express themselves orally, but to make themselves understood)</li> <li>- To practise specific communicative structures and natural and spontaneous structures (pupils describe, compare and practice analytical skills)</li> <li>- To get to know specific mathematics vocabulary, spatial</li> </ul>



	<p>references skills and perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To reinforce description skills by using adjectives</li> <li>- To enhance the sense of belonging to the class-group (they become part of a whole)</li> </ul>
<b>Basic competences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicative: linguistic patterns</li> <li>- Methodological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn to learn,</li> <li>- Mathematical skills - spatial reference,</li> <li>- Geometry references and concepts</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Personal: Autonomy and personal initiative</li> <li>- Social and civic skills</li> </ul>
<b>Communicative structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to ask and give addresses: <i>Excuse me, can you tell me the way to...?/Take the first/second/third on the left/right and there you are.</i></li> <li>- Suggestions: <i>Shall we take this piece...?/ Why don't we...?</i></li> <li>- Actions/Imperatives: <i>Take the blue cube/rectangle/And then put it next to the</i></li> </ul>
<b>Grammar structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepositions: <i>behind, in, next to, on, on top of, over, under</i></li> <li>- Comparatives and superlatives: <i>longer/shorter/taller than/ the longest, the shortest</i></li> <li>- Time sequencers: <i>and, finally, first, next, now, then</i></li> <li>- Present perfect: <i>We have taken...</i></li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bricks nomenclature sheet</li> <li>- Adjectives: <i>long, short, small, tall, thin, wide</i></li> </ul>
<b>LESSON PLAN 1</b>	<b>Observants &amp; Builders.</b> Pupils get to know the different types of bricks. They describe them and build them up ( <i>Pair-work</i> )
<b>LESSON PLAN 2</b>	<b>City facilities.</b> Students create a city facility ( <i>Group work</i> )
<b>LESSON PLAN 3</b>	<b>A project: The City</b> ( <i>possible extension to lessons 1&amp;2</i> ). Create a city using all the facilities and practice specific communicative structures ( <i>Class work</i> )

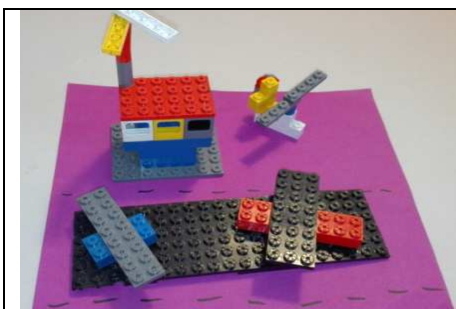
<b>LESSON PLAN 1</b> <b>Observants and Builders</b>	
<b>Specific aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To get to know the brick pieces</li> <li>- To analyse a structure and be able to orally communicate what is seen by using comparison structures</li> <li>- To understand what is being said and react accordingly</li> </ul>
<b>Grouping</b>	Pairs
<b>Materials</b>	A tray with the same number of building bricks per group
<b>Timing</b>	50 minutes
<b>Skills</b>	Listening / Speaking
<b>Communicative structures</b>	<i>Actions: Take the blue cube/rectangle/And then put it next to the</i>

<p><b>Grammar structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepositions: <i>behind, in, next to, on, on top of, over, under</i></li> <li>- Comparatives and superlatives: <i>longer/shorter/taller than/ the longest, the shortest</i></li> <li>- Time sequencers: <i>and, finally, first, next, now, then</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brick nomenclature</li> <li>- Adjectives (<i>long, short, small, tall, thin, wide</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procedure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The class is divided into two groups: <i>Observants</i> and <i>Builders</i> (5')</li> <li>- The teacher gives each pair a tray of bricks (same for every group).</li> <li>- The teacher shows a figure that has been created beforehand <b>only</b> to the <i>Observants</i>. It has to be something simple and adapted to the students' capacity. The image can be projected to appreciate detail works.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>An example: A dog</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only <i>Observants</i> can look at the image; <i>Builders</i> must turn around (5').</li> <li>- The teacher allows some minutes for the <i>Observants</i> to look at the image carefully and start giving instructions to the <i>Builders</i>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First of all they instruct their partners into the <b>pieces</b> which they have to take from the tray (5')</li> <li>- Then they have to instruct them into <b>how to put all the pieces together</b> so as to construct the model given by the teacher (10')</li> <li>- One they have finished, the teacher lets the Builders look at the original sample to compare it with their creations. The teacher goes around looking and pointing to each creation, always appraising them even though they may not have fully accomplished the objectives (5' - depending on the group).</li> <li>- Students reverse roles (same procedure) (15'-20')</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>LESSON PLAN 2</b> <span style="color: red;"><i>City facilities</i></span></p>	
<p><b>Specific aims</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To create a part of a city through collaborative work while practicing city vocabulary</li> <li>- To be able to present and analyse the facility and orally present it</li> <li>- To formulate questions regarding the composition of the facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grouping</b></p>	<p>Flexible teams of 4/5 pupils, depending on the circumstances. It is advisable to have mixed-ability groups. The idea is to make heterogeneous groups that</p>

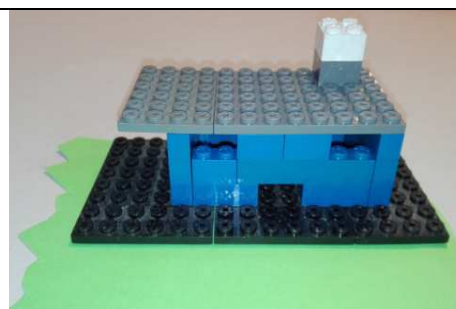
	can benefit from one another's collaboration. In each team there has to be at least one scrivener/typist who will be taking notes of the pieces that will be used.
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tray of bricks (same number for each group)</li> <li>- Coloured or patterned sheets of paper</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	50 minutes
<b>Skills</b>	Listening / Speaking / Writing
<b>Communicative structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suggestions: <i>Shall we take this piece...?/ Why don't we...?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Grammar structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present perfect: <i>We have taken...</i></li> <li>- <i>How many (specific pieces) are there?</i></li> <li>- <i>Do you have (x)? Do you want to change (x) for (y)?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Revision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocabulary: bricks nomenclature</li> <li>- Actions/imperatives: <i>Take the blue cube/rectangle/ And then put it next to the....</i></li> </ul>

**Procedure**

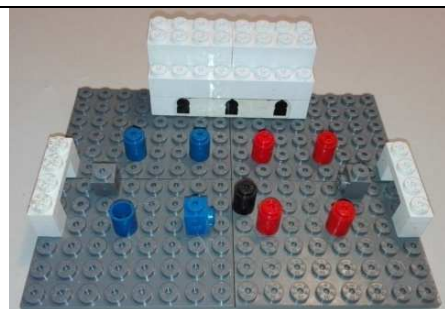
- The teacher explains that they are going to create a city (5')
- Students brainstorm some of the facilities that they can come up with regarding this topic. E.g.: *airport, fire station, gas station, hospital, police station, school supermarket...* (5')
- Each team decides which facility they want to create (5')
- They communicate it to the whole class.
- The teacher, with the help of the students, handles a identical tray to each team. They can assemble the pieces as they feel like it.
- The teacher allows them to have some access to coloured or patterned sheets of paper so that they can 'dress' their facility and differentiate it from the rest. This will be important later when the whole city is assembled. Furthermore, this also makes the activity more creative (15')



Airport



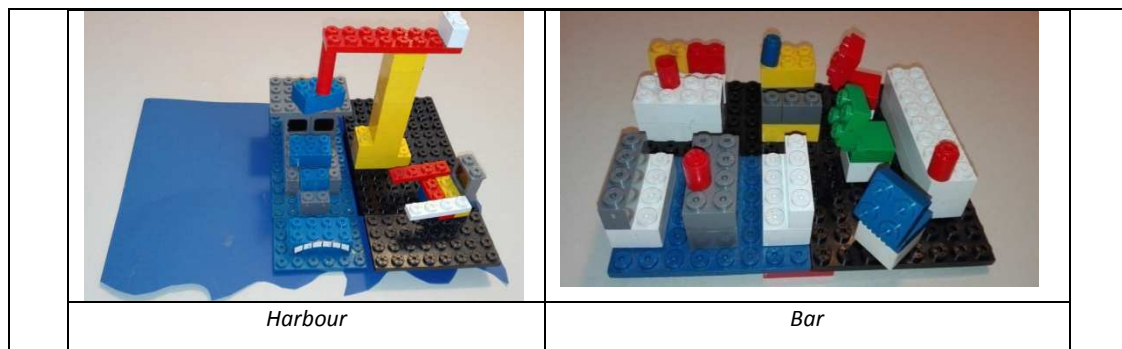
House



Football stadium



Park



- Students have to present their facility to the rest of the classmates, identifying each of the different spaces which they have created and explaining how they have done it: *This is a bar. We have taken six-piece blocks as tables and cubes as chairs.* (15')
- They have to write down two or three questions to ask their classmates after their presentation, *How many (four studded) pieces are there? How many wide rectangles...?* (10')
- The rest of the students have to guess the exact number in the minimum time possible (10').
- When finished, the teacher collects all the facilities and stores them for the next session.

**LESSON PLAN 3**

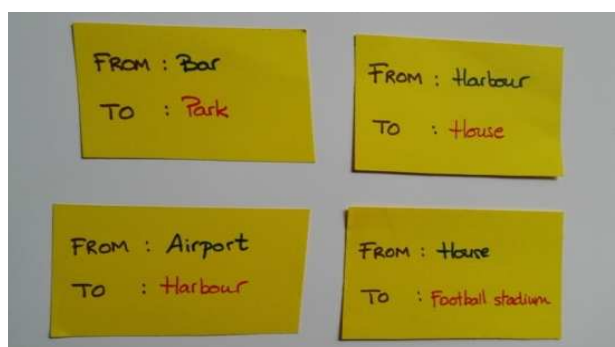
***Project: The City***

<b>Specific aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To put together all the different facilities created in the last session in order to build up a whole city while practicing certain communicative structures</li> <li>- To give and follow directions</li> </ul>
<b>Grouping</b>	Flexible teams of 4/5 pupils (same as in L. P. 2)
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The facilities created in the last session</li> <li>- Big brown/white cardboard</li> <li>- Cards with addresses' instructions (<i>From/To</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	50 minutes
<b>Skills</b>	Listening / Speaking / Writing
<b>Communicative structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Excuse me, can you tell me the way to...?</i></li> <li>- <i>Take the first/second/third on the left/right and there you are</i></li> </ul>
<b>Revision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grammar: Time sequencers (<i>and, finally, first...</i>) and prepositions (<i>behind, in, next to, on...</i>)</li> <li>- Vocabulary: Bricks nomenclature; Adjectives (<i>long, sort, tall, thin, wide ...</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Procedure</b>	
<p>(Note: This is a whole group activity which must take place in a wide area so that all pupils can easily approach all the facilities, as well as follow the teacher's guidelines)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher and the pupils put together all the facilities. They use a wide cardboard or large paper to put all the facilities on (10')</li> <li>- Students draw the pattern of the roads (5')</li> </ul>	



Sample city

When the city is assembled and the whole class has taken a good look at it, the teacher hands out a pair of cards to each team with some questions:



Sample cards

- Each group writes down the necessary instructions to go from one place to another (10')
- They choose a speaker who will be responsible for explaining what they have written.
- Another student from another group will enact what the 'speaker' is saying so that everyone can check that the directions are correct (the whole group can take part in the explanation) (15')
- While the groups are writing down their answers, the teacher goes around checking for mistakes.
- After all groups have enacted their part, some spontaneous action can be allowed, for instance, some volunteers may ask for an invented directions question while others or the whole group answer. You can also ask them to close their eyes and remember how the city was assembled, or which the facilities were (this can be an oral as well as a written activity) (10')

Taking **pictures** can be extremely encouraging when working with building bricks. Both pupils and I take pictures of invented objects and post them on the school web, blog or Moodle. I also take pictures of the process along the 3 sessions, and display them in the classroom. This way

they can keep a photographic and written record of the formation process of each facility. It can be later exposed in a mural in the classroom too. This contributes to a sense of belonging and self-accomplishment.

**Observational grids** are very important when having to correct the oral use of communicative structures. I emphasize fluency rather than accuracy since the aim of the proposals above is to let students express themselves and be creative and not to perfect in all grammatical aspects. You will find next the rubric that I often use:

<i>Collaborative work/Interactive communication</i>	<p>Have they cooperated effectively?</p> <p>Have they listened and collaborated with each other?</p>
<i>Communicative structures – Speaking</i>	<p>If there are errors, do they impede communication?</p> <p>If not, how accurate are they?</p> <p>Are they fluent enough for their level?</p>
<i>Communicative structures – Writing</i>	<p>Is their production understandable on the whole?</p> <p>Do big mistakes impede understanding of the whole piece?</p> <p>Which ones?</p>

This equally applies to the written part. The teacher should make instant corrections on the students' papers but, again, I find that there is no need for extreme mistakes' correction. I usually make a list with the most common ones and present them for oral correction in the next class.

Finally, I would like to refer to an important factor which I take into consideration when assessing: **Interpersonal communication**. Pupils have to speak up their minds; as they do that, I encourage them to pay attention to one another. They cannot forget that they are all part of a group, in which collaborative and communication activities are highlighted.

Should we want to take building bricks to adult education, the advantages would be as introduced at the start. It is commonly thought that adults cannot conceive play as a way of learning. As I see it, it is exactly the opposite: when dealing with adults, teachers have to strive to make the learning process as engaging and as meaningful as possible.

Grown-up students need as much visual support as any younger pupil might, and perhaps even more. Last but not least, from my experience, when students are given the chance to use realia such as building blocks, they not only very much enjoy their lessons, but also tend to get better academic results.

The possibilities are endless while we keep in mind that "Play is the only way the highest intelligence of humankind can unfold" (Pearce, 1977). For further study, you may like to consult the following references.

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# Does It Pay to Make Your Own Linguistic Card Games?. Theoretical Framework

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I have been a secondary school teacher for a very long time and my professional life changed when I decided to introduce card games in my classes. I first explored the market and found a disappointing landscape, with very few really suitable games. I was looking for something fun and formative or, rather, something formative and fun, but unfortunately, almost nothing satisfied these two simple conditions.

However, I did not surrender, so I felt that I had to honour those great times that I had spent with my grandpa, my sisters and cousins or my son sitting around a table with a bunch of cards in our hands: I had to use them at work. This is how I started to make versions of several classic games which I had learned in my childhood.

In this article I am going to present the theoretical framework that justifies why it really pays implementing your own games although you may sometimes have the feeling that your class is out of control. But yes, in the end you see that your students learn the linguistic contents that you chose and they even start to generalise “inventing” – generating – new sentences by means of re-cycling what you have taught them.

The article will be divided as follows:

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 How did it all begin?
- 1.2 Is there any sense in playing language games?
- 1.3 Does the effort pay?

## 2 WHAT GAMES CAN I MAKE?

- 2.1 Open set linguistic materials: *YOU KNOW*
- 2.2 Pair Games: Pattern Matching
- 2.3 Other Games

## 3 TESTING YOUR GAME'S EFFICIENCY

- 3.1 Thorough testing
- 3.2 Test Group (TG) and Control Group (CG)
- 3.3 Procedure
- 3.4 Pre-college student Research Project experience.

## 4 FINAL REMARKS

In the next article (“Does It Pay to Make Your Own Linguistic Card Games – YOU KNOW: A Practical Example”), I will present and discuss the process of making a card game.



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 How did it all begin?**

It all began when I realized I was starting to get bored with teaching the same old topics year after year. At the same time I was realizing that I was transmitting that boredom to my students. However, this does not mean that I stopped teaching such topics that are assumed as relevant in our guiding our pupils into speaking English. What I mean here is that I was not thrilled by all those exercises that require drilling and repetition to have some effect in the learner's brain.

I always tell my students that although we do not want to carry out **repetitive tasks**, we usually need repetition to get some kind of training in a number of everyday activities. Walking, swimming or riding your bike need two things: (i) the first time you realise that you can walk, swim or ride your bike and (ii) the rest of your life through which you must practise and improve them. The same happens with language: it takes tens of repetitions, maybe hundreds, until babies learn that their name is *Rick* or *Ilsa*, but once they realize that, when someone pronounces this or that name, they know that they are being called.

### **1.2 Is there any sense in playing language games?**

At least one must **take the risk**. It is true that after a conversation class or after playing games, one can have the feeling of having done nothing important. I often imagine a student getting home and being asked by their parents:

*"And well, what have you done today, honey?"*

*"Nothing", the child answers.*

And they are somehow right because they have not written anything, they have not done a formal exercise, they have not done an exam, they have not done an exercise with further corrections. Nothing. However, the one-word answer consists of a pronoun that requires an adjective: Nothing interesting? Nothing formal? Nothing fun? And the conclusion should be that they have not done anything conscious or controlled. And yes, that is what conversations and games are: unconscious and uncontrolled. That is the perfect setting to start repeating things again and again.

#### **1.2.1 Unconscious drills and content practice**

This means that, as any other human activities, language does not only require an instruction of how to make a sentence (this is what the grammar aims at). It also requires training and as far as we know, training takes place with successful repetition: tennis players, musicians, painters, chess players... they only master their activity after hard work and training.

So there we go, language needs training, and training is very often tough and boring. Here is where card games intervene. As a matter of fact, linguistic card games are drilling exercises wearing a game costume. And that is the trick: students do not think that they are doing a language exercise, rather they think that they are just playing. The teacher, however, must think that, their students are unconsciously learning.

I also compare language with chess: when you learn to play chess, the first thing you do is learn the finite amount of rules of how to set the board and how to move your finite amount of pieces according to their hierarchy; that is, you learn the grammar (rules) and vocabulary (pieces) of chess. This is what Chomsky said so long ago (Chomsky, 1957; also see Ibbotson and Tomasello, 2016 for an overview).

However, although you may know this grammar to perfection, what really matters is that you play as many games as possible against as many rivals as possible until you master the game. The same happens with grammar, you can learn the rules of the game but you cannot say that you are proficient in a language until you are able to use it to speak as many times as possible with as many speakers as possible.

### **1.2.2 Student-student and teacher-student interaction**

You can expect students to interact with each other, and that is true. Moreover, games are a chance for the teacher to interact with students as well if you decide to join a group to play. And then, the surprise comes because you really see that the kids are not consciously doing an exercise. That is why they sometimes invite you to join them and some other times they even suggest variations in the game rules.

Besides, playing groups may be organised at random, regardless of the heterogeneity of the members and the diversity of skills and abilities. The only skill required is being able to play a card game and follow a small set of simple rules.

### **1.2.3 Life skills: respect the rules and respect each other**

When play time comes, the teacher decides how to make the groups. You can choose one out of three options:

- (i) make groups at random (the most advisable because random grants diversity),
- (ii) make groups on purpose (not advisable because it might be unfair), or
- (iii) let the students make the groups on their own (the least advisable, the least fair, and the noisiest option).

In any case, once the groups are made and the game starts, you realise that along with language you are dealing with basic skills:

- **Following the rules:** as a basic skill, the kids must follow the rules and accepting them is a must, just like in real life. Sometimes very competitive students try to cheat on the game; this is a minor drawback because they must learn to respect the group in front of the individual. At the same time, the group grants that everyone sticks to the rules.

- **Negotiating:** players sometimes suggest rule changes or including new ones. You can accept on two conditions: there must be total agreement among all the players and the new rule must be adopted when no one is in disadvantage.

- **Social diversity:** given that card games exploit random, the level or particular skills that a given student has does not limit the fun of the game. This grants that there is not going to be discrimination depending on abilities, beliefs or colours. Very often, better prepared students are tolerant with those in disadvantage and try to help them.

## **1.3 Does the effort pay?**

So far, I have discussed what the connection between language games and language learning might be and all the arguments that I have found favouring this connection. The reader may think that I am blinded by the satisfaction that I have obtained or that I am selling encyclopaedias. They may be right, but I will show in *section 3* that one can assess the efficiency of carrying such activities out. So my answer to the question *does the effort pay?* is definitely YES.

For the time being, I am going to mention a number of subjective reasons why you should take the step beyond and give my proposal a chance.

### **1.3.1 Is it difficult to make your own games?**

Making your own games is not difficult at all. As I will discuss in section 2, you only need to be thorough. Under this condition you must be ready to set the limits of the topic that you want to work on and be ready to make all necessary changes. So, during game time, you have to observe your pupils and the game itself in order to make the necessary changes whenever you need to print a new version of the game.

### **1.3.2 Is it expensive?**

If you do not count your time as money, a deck of cards is really cheap. For example, with *YOU KNOW – CLASSROOM SURVIVAL EXPRESSIONS* one can practise and drill nearly thirty useful expressions. With this amount of materials I was able to have three different card decks. I printed two copies on cardboard at the cost of €9.40. This means about €1.56 per deck. So no, it is not expensive at all.

Moreover, my advice is that cardboard printing is much better and much cheaper than having your cards laminated. If you make two copies in two different colours (say blue and yellow), you can get six decks and you will find it very easy to classify them.

### **1.3.3 Can I re-use my games?**

There is a further factor that makes card games even cheaper. You can use your games with different class groups and you and your students can play again and again. Of course, you are not going to spend whole sessions playing except the day when you introduce the game. If you make your own games, you will always take them to class with you. This activity is a great end-of-class filler.

In any case, re-using your games makes them become cheaper and cheaper. On average, a card deck may last more than two years and when you see that the cards are getting worn out, time has come to make the changes that you need (introduce new expressions, take repetitive or unnecessary ones out) or just print them again!

### **1.3.4 Are card games cool?**

It depends on what you consider cool. As far as I am concerned, I am not a graphic designer, so my cards are not visually cool. However, if your concept of coolness is subject to how often people want to use them, then linguistic card games are the coolest of class activities because my students get soon hooked on them and once and again ask me if we are going to play.

So, the fact that students like the activity and they end up using the linguistic contents included in the games encouraged me to write this article.

## **2 WHAT GAMES CAN I MAKE?**

There are a number of possible games that you can make. Just think of those traditional games you used to play when you were a child. Although youngsters usually play electronic games, many students are familiar with card games – you only need to see them shuffle a card deck to notice this. Most of them have very simple rules and using the game does not need *high-tech* contexts (not even a plug).

Note that in this section, I am going to give hints of games that can be made. However, I am going to leave the task of describing them in detail for future articles.

### **2.1 Open set linguistic materials: *YOU KNOW***

Sometimes, you just want your students to learn a list of sentences. In my experience, if learners memorise a number of expressions, they end up having a collection of examples that they are going to re-cycle again and again in order to generate new sentences. Imagine that one of your students wants you to lend them a pen. If they know a sentence like

*Can you lend me a book?*

they will be able to easily rephrase it as:

*Can you lend me a pen?*

A game like *YOU KNOW* is great to help memorisation of heterogeneous expressions.

*YOU KNOW* is based in the popular *UNO* card game and it can be adapted to different needs such as learning sentences by heart, revising verb tenses, among others. Remember that *UNO* essentially consists in matching colours or numbers, so you can easily substitute colours and numbers for any collection of expressions that you want to deal with.

### **2.2 Pair games: Pattern Matching**

Pair games are very suitable for issues subject to pattern matching and are very easy to implement. An example of pattern matching can be synonym expressions or picture-word pairs. One of the few interesting games I found in the market involves prepositions of movement and position: a number of images depict a pelican in varied situations such as *next to the tree, in front of the mirror*, etc. So, there are a number of things that can be dealt with this way: prepositions of movement, countries and capital cities, phonemes and pronunciation, etc.

If you decide to make your own pair game, it is advisable to include some kind of clues that help matching the pairs. For instance, give a hint of how to interpret the image. Pair card games can be played in several ways, which means that a simple model deck can be used again and again.

#### **2.2.1 Memory**

This is the basic game that you can use to practise matching pairs and it is very popular with younger students while older ones find it silly. The original game consists of matching pairs with identical images. The linguistic version consists of pairs having image/expression, spelling/phonetic\_transcription, lexical\_verb/phrasal\_verb, country/capital\_city, etc.

#### **2.2.2 Bingo**

Once your students are familiar with the pairs you want to work on, they can learn new games that will extend the drilling over time. One of the games that you can use is *bingo*; it is a very fun and fast game and it is suitable for all ages though older students may think that it is a tricky and silly game.

Standard *bingo* consists of charts with random numbers within a particular range and a bowl containing balls with the numbers in the game. The usual thing is keeping the same design but changing the numbers for words such as irregular verbs. Regarding cards, you can consider

having two piles of cards, for instance, images and expressions. One of the piles will be the bowl with the numbers and the other one can be dealt among the group members to provide random charts.

### **2.2.3 Old maid**

This game used to be very popular in the past and is well known in different countries: In Catalonia, for instance, it is called *La mona*. It can be played with any standard decks on one condition: you take one of the cards off the deck. This way, all the cards in the deck except one have a matching pair. The game progresses as follows: players discard all of their matching pairs and then take turns to offer their cards to the next player. The game ends when everybody runs out of cards except the person who has got the couple of the discarded card. Hence the cruel name: old maids do not have a couple and remain alone (in Catalan *sol a com una mona*).

## **2.3 Further Games**

There are some more games that I have been able to use. When I made them I had in mind issues such as sentence order (*Rummy*), proposition/argument binding (*Go fishing*) or irregular verbs (*Irregular Verbs dominoes*) but I cannot think of a limit of possible linguistic applications of the games discussed so far as well as the three following ones. So experimenting the connection between class topics and games as well as establishing their limits will remain an open subject .

### **2.3.1 Dominoes**

Everybody knows how to play the classic dominoes. This game does not rely only on random, there is some kind of strategy and players are aware that if the game consists of tiles numbered 0-6, there are seven tiles containing a particular number. If a player takes this into account, they can be in advantage because they may be able to guess what numbers have not been played yet and even who has got them.

Unlike pair games, this game is not very suitable for dealing with pattern matching issues. Nevertheless, it is excellent for learning lists and internal relationships. One of the versions which I made was **Irregular verb dominoes** in which sentences having different verb forms are used instead of numbers. I did not have to ask my students whether they preferred memorising the irregular verb list or playing dominoes. Another version of this game was called **Tell the time dominoes** and it is very useful for learning numbers as well as telling the time.

### **2.3.2 Go fishing**

This game is better for older students because there is a certain amount of strategy underlying. It is based on the traditional family game where every card showed a family member (mum, dad, granny, etc.) as part of an ethnic origin: Native American, Inuit, Chinese, etc. Every player had to gather as many complete families as possible.

My version of the family game changes family members for sentences, and families for propositional collocations. For instance, the family READ may consist of sentences like

*I was **reading** a novel*  
*I **read** your message*  
*She has **read** the information*  
*You are **reading** this article*  
...

The hidden idea of the game is that learning semantic fields is essential to help learners to organise the linguistic contents in their brain.

### 2.3.3 Rummy

This game adapts a traditional one, too. Using standard playing cards, every player must gather two kinds of groups: either four consecutive numbers or four times the same number. Again, the linguistic version changes numbers for linguistic items. In this particular case, I made Sentence Rummy in which the series players had to gather were sentences following the pattern Subject + Verb + Complement + Adjunct (e.g. *Ilisa left Rick in Casablanca*).

## 3 TESTING YOUR GAME'S EFFICIENCY

### 3.1 Thorough testing

One can think, *well I made this game, so what?* I need to know whether it satisfies my expectations or not. What if my students are right when they say that they have not done anything in English class (as shown in section 2.1)? Of course, I want to know if the games which I implement help my students to learn the essential things that I wanted them to know. So what I need is a simple way of assessing the games.

Sometimes, as is the case of *YOU KNOW – Classroom Survival Expressions*, you can have the certainty because your students start using the expressions included. No problem so far. Some other times you can try asking them

*How do you say "el pelicà està a la banyera"?*

as I do with the Prepositions Pelican Game; if I hear

*The pelican is in the bath*

I am pleased and then I ask

*How do you say "el boli està a l'estoig"?*

and I hear

*The pen is in the pencil case*

then I am certain that the game is working right and I am delighted. And if they stop because they do not remember how to say *pencil case* and ask

*How do you say "estoig"?*

I could crack some fireworks because we are having a real conversation in English.

However, when I sometimes need some precise evidence, I have to test the game and I want to do it thoroughly and in the simplest way. In collaboration with 2<sup>nd</sup> batxillerat students, I have carried out several experiments in the frame of their Research Projects: they have worked well and the results have been promising (see *section 3.4* for some details).

Let us see how it all works assuming that we have decided the linguistic issue that we want to explore and that we have already made the card game.

### **3.2 Test Group (TG) and Control Group (CG)**

As described in Hatch and Farhadi (1982) and Woods et al. (1986), in order to test a game's efficiency you must start making two groups. One is going to be the **experimental group (EG)** and the other one the **control group (CG)**. This is so because we want to have all possible variables under control (note that some of these variables are going to be part of the experiment but some others might be undesired). The best option is having two different class groups in the same level.

Both groups will have exactly the same setting: the teacher introduces the linguistic issues and both of them carry out the same exercises. This is very important because the experimental conditions must be homogeneous among all the participating subjects. Once you have made the decisions in sub-section 4.1, you will have to proceed as follows.

### **3.3 Procedure**

#### **3.3.1 Initial Test**

All participating subjects must answer an initial test or questionnaire. The test will enquire about the initial state of the groups – remember that (i) you are testing groups rather than individuals, and (ii) you are comparing the results of each group against their own performance through time.

The experimenter wants to know the initial state of each group. The results of the initial test can inform of whether your students have any kind of pre-knowledge. You want to know this because, although you must expect some subjects to be familiar with the topic in question, most of them should not be proficient with the game contents.

On the other hand, if there are significant differences between groups you should decide whether these differences are connected with cognitive differences between groups or are just circumstantial differences. If the former is true, you might not get reliable results; in contrast, if the latter is true, an intergroup difference should not be relevant.

#### **3.3.2 Common Treatment and Playing**

Once the experimenter has carried out the initial test, they can introduce the topic and do whichever exercises they consider necessary, such as ask students to memorise the item list, practise, and so on. The only condition here is that there are no differences in the **Common Treatment** that **EG** and **CG** receive.

The moment has come to introduce a simple significant difference: the **EG** will be taught the game that you are trying and will use it with a certain frequency for a reasonable period of time; in contrast the **CG** will be introduced a non-related game that will act as placebo in the sense that it should not have any connection with the topic contents. Once the experiment is over, the subjects can be taught the complementary activities to grant that students are not being discriminated due to the teacher's personal interests. If the card game you implemented is effective, the students in the **CG** will soon catch up.

#### **3.3.3 End Test**

After a reasonable period of time (maybe two or three weeks) the groups will have been treated equally except for the kind of game which they used and they will be ready to do the **End Test**, which will be exactly the same questionnaire they had as an Initial Test. Once the End Test is carried out, the experimenter might get a number of possible landscapes as seen in *Chart 2*.

AFTER END TEST	PROGRESS CONTRAST	GAME EFFECT	WHAT TO DO
<b>Both EG and CG improve</b>	<b>EG &gt; CG</b> EG improves more than CG	As expected, the game helped your students to learn the subject	Keep on using your game. You can make small adjustments
	<b>EG &lt; CG</b> EG improves less than CG	The game had a negative effect because it overcomes the common treatment	The game is not useful. Modify it or just reject it
	<b>EG = CG</b> No difference between groups	Only the common treatment had an effect	The game is not useful. Modify it or just reject it
<b>One or both groups get worse results</b>	Inconsistent differences	The treatment they got was completely inadequate or some other uncontrolled variables intervened in the experiment	The experiment is not valid and you can get no reliable conclusions about the game you designed because the results are inconsistent

Chart 2: Possible differences between groups in the End Test.

The usual result should be that both EG and CG get better general results when you compare the Initial and the End Tests; this should be interpreted in the sense that your students learned the topic contents and that your effort as a teacher paid. As regards the game being tested, the expected landscape is that the EG gets better results than the CG just because the game had a positive effect in their learning process.

### 3.4 Pre-college Research Project experience.

#### 3.4.1 Educational system framework

A very good way of carrying out the thorough testing which I have discussed in this section is involving your Upper Secondary School (16-18 year old) students in your research. The Catalan school system includes writing a research project before they end secondary school (2<sup>nd</sup> Batxillerat – Currículum Batxillerat – Decret 142/2008 – DOGC núm. 5183). In this research project, students must carry out some kind of experimental research in which, among other things, they are expected to learn what the scientific method is. So assessing a card game is an excellent way of having your students' collaboration as they learn such concepts as thorough assessment, experiment, experimental and control group, and result analysis.

As I have shown in subsections 3.1-3.1, the testing procedure is quite simple and can be very suitable for a pre-college student. Note that everything that the student does in this project, should be useful for their education but there is no reason to think that it does not have to be useful for the teacher too. Before your collaborating student starts work you must agree with them on which language topic you will be working.



### **3.4.2 Things collaborating students do under your supervision**

Part of the research project should be done during the previous summer holidays, so students should be able to have all the introductory and experimental materials ready at the beginning of their last year at school. This will grant that only the experimental part, in which your collaboration is going to be essential, would be carried out during the first term of the new school year. Here is a list of things that the student should do:

- Write a description of the topic. This section will set the theoretical framework in which they are going to work in the developing process of the game. For instance, if the topic is *irregular verbs*, they must develop concepts like what an irregular verb is, what we use them for, etc.; if the topic is *verb tenses*, they must describe the different verb tenses, when to use them, etc. This is going to be part of the introduction of their project.
- Select the list of expressions that are to be included in the game. They must always use reliable sources such as dictionaries, grammar books, exercise books or even *google*. That is to say, the student must never invent the sentences or phrases present in the game. The resulting list must be organised, improved and pruned following the tutor's instructions.
- Make the game: This includes finding suitable images, if necessary, as well as real linguistic materials. Giving the cards a graphic style can be contemplated.
- Revise the initial and end test. They must build charts and basic statistical *xcel* worksheets. These worksheets will be the source for the result charts that the student is going to include in their project.
- Write a report that includes an introduction describing the linguistic issue that they are dealing with, a description of the experiment procedure, a presentation of the results and a discussion about the accuracy of the game which they developed.

### **3.4.3 Things that you should do to help collaborating students**

Your work as a tutor is going to be a support and guiding task. Your supervision and your intervention are going to be essential in the resulting research project. Here are the tasks that the tutor should do:

- Choose which experimental and control group you are going to use. Of course, this is going to determine the linguistic issue you are going to test and, at the same time, it is determined by the groups that you will be teaching during the process.
- Help the student to select the best materials out of the collection which they made in the initial process. Remember that these materials are going to be used to implement the game and to prepare the test.
- Make the initial and final tests. The test consists of any number of exercises that you will use to assess your EG and CG's initial and final knowledge of the linguistic issue (see *section 3.3*). The test must be very short. If you wish, it can include unrelated expressions that hide the real objective of the experiment.
- Pass the tests in class and check that your students do their best. This is essential if you want to obtain reliable results.

- Teach the issue that you want to be the heart of the game which you are testing. It must be as integrated as possible in the year temporisation and syllabus.
- Teach the game to the experimental group and give an alternative treatment to the control group.

#### **4 FINAL REMARKS**

Throughout the article I have made a number of statements concerning the usefulness and the complexity of making and using your own games in class. As far as I am concerned, making games has been absolutely positive: I have learned to work thoroughly and, moreover, it has been professionally enriching.

Then, I have devoted some space in describing how to test the games that you decide to make. Moreover, the assessment of games can be carried out in the framework of the Research Projects that pre-college students must do before they end upper secondary school.

I intend this article to be the general and theoretical introduction to a series of practical articles in which I am going to explain in detail how to make the different games that I have briefly mentioned in section 2.

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# Does it Pay to Make Your Own Linguistic Card Games?. YOU KNOW: A Practical Example

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In the previous article I established the theoretical framework which I follow in card game making. One of the main points is that sometimes one can find it difficult to find standardised games to use in foreign language classes. The best option is for the teacher to become a card-game maker too. I also briefly described a number of games that can be made. Different games can suit different linguistic issues which is also an advantage because the teacher can have a number of them that can be alternatively used. Finally, I discussed the need to assess what the efficiency of a particular game is, in order to make a number of decisions upon it; decisions that sometimes can range from making small changes to throwing it to the bin.

The present article exemplifies how the theoretical framework can be turned into practice. It is important to realize that the task of a card-game maker is not as complex as one may think. From my experience, as long as we stick to a well established process, the result is usually outstanding. In order to do so, I will present how I de-constructed a very popular card game like *UNO* to make a new version that satisfies particular educational needs, and which I have called *YOU KNOW*. I will also devote this article to describing the process of building your own *YOU KNOW* card game. This article will be divided as follows:

## 1 INTRODUCTION

## 2 HOW TO START

### 2.1 The Linguistic Materials

### 2.2 The source: *UNO* and *PUMBA*

### 2.3 From *UNO* to *YOU KNOW*

## 3. HOW TO PLAY

### 3.1 *YOU KNOW* rules

### 3.2 Further rules

## 4 WHEN TO PLAY

## 5 FINAL REMARKS

## 6 APPENDIX

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In “Does It Pay to Make Your Own Linguistic Games? - Theoretical Framework” I explained the theoretical background that might justify the suitability of language card games as an excellent way of complementing our teaching activities. Choosing the topic and choosing the adequate game is essential and that is the reason why I have tried a number of different games ranging from pattern-matching exercises (closed-set items such as prepositions,

irregular verbs or even verb tenses) to open-set and, perhaps, sometimes chaotic but useful linguistic issues (survival expressions or verb/complement collocations).

Since, the aim of this article is to describe the process of making a linguistic game, I am going to show how to implement the game *YOU KNOW*, in this case, exemplified for Classroom Survival Expressions. It has shown to be great as a drilling activity through which students end up learning a number of sentences that they are going to use as models for making new ones as they use them for surviving in class. It is important to bear in mind the idea that one does not need to invent a brand new game out of nowhere because traditional games have a number of advantages:

1. They are simple.
2. They have shown that they are fun.
3. They can be easily turned into a linguistic game.

## 2 HOW TO START

The only condition game making requires is consistency. I mean that before you start making a game you must decide which contents you are going to include in it. When you sit down to plan your game, the first thing that you must do is decide exactly what you want to train your students on. Then you will decide which kind of game fits better with the chosen topic.

### 2.1 The linguistic materials

When I started making the example game which I include here, I sat down with a pen and a paper and made a list of essential things I wanted my students to learn, for example:

- Classroom survival sentences
- Verb tense sentence pattern
- Irregular verbs
- Prepositions of movement
- USA States and capital cities

All five examples consist of (relatively) closed sets of items and, so far, I have made versions of the two first ones. In this article, I am going to concentrate on the **Classroom Survival Expressions** version in order to show how I proceeded to implement the card game. When I made it, my uppermost issue was having my twelve-year-old students speaking to me in English, so my decision was clear: Classroom Survival Expressions. Now, once you decide the topic, what you need is to make a list of the essential items that you want to teach. *Chart 1* shows the collection of sentences which I finally included.

TOPIC	ITEMS
<b>GREETINGS -1:</b> Expressions that I want my students to say while I'm calling the register	<i>Hello</i> <i>Good Morning</i> <i>Good Afternoon</i> <i>Good Evening</i>
<b>GREETINGS -2:</b> Expressions that I want my students to say when the class is over	<i>Good bye</i> <i>See you</i> <i>Have a nice day</i> <i>See you later</i>
<b>SURVIVAL EXPRESSIONS:</b>	<i>She didn't come / She's missing</i>

Expressions that I want my students to say at different moments of the class	<i>Sorry, I'm late. Can I come in? Can you help me, please? What is the meaning of ___? I don't understand this exercise How do you say ___ in English? Can you spell ___? Can you lend me a pencil? Can you give me a piece of paper? Can I go to the toilet? Can I open the window? Can you turn on the light? Can you turn off the light? What page, please? Can you repeat? Can you close the door? Can you unlock the door? I can't hear you I forgot my book at home</i>
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Chart 1: List of survival expressions. Twenty seven expressions allowed three different decks.

Initially, the list was longer, but then I had to prune some inessential items out, add some others, modify them, etc. Many of the sentences which I chose were going to become models for making new ones and it is great when you realise that your students start using them as models for making new sentences. For example,

*Can you lend me a pen?*

is the sentence that you must 'recycle' when you need a book:

*Can you lend me a book?,*

or a rubber or whichever item you need. Or the sentence

*Can I go to the toilet?*

can be recycled if you want to ask for permission to sit in a different place or go to the locker because you forgot something, etc.

Can I sit here?

Can I go to the locker?

Once I had my list of essential expressions finished, I needed to decide what game was best: for example if I had chosen the *State-Capital* topic, a pair matching memory game would be great. In contrast, *UNO* has proven to be very good for memorising heterogeneous lists of items.

## **2.2 The source: *UNO* and *PUMBA***

*UNO* is a very fun and it is very popular among teenagers. It is officially distributed by Mattel but it is based in the popular game called *PUMBA*. If you are familiar with *UNO* you can skip this section and go directly to 2.2.1 or, in contrast, if you want to know further details about the game you can just visit the *UNO* rules official website: <http://www.unorules.com/>.

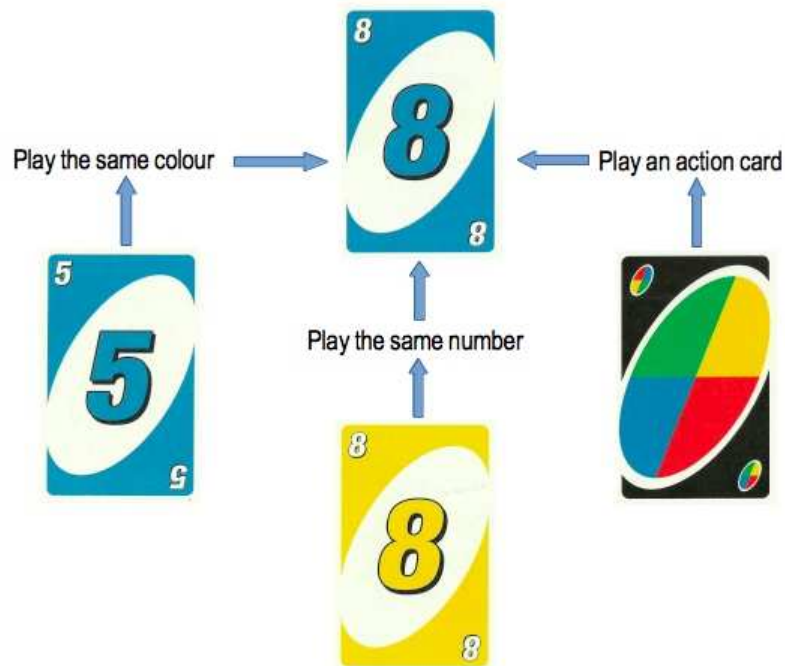


Figure 1: If the model card is 8-blue you can play a BLUE card, a NUMBER 8 card or an ACTION CARD

As shown in *Figure 1*, the game is very simple because it consists of matching cards according to the colour or number which they have. Alternatively, a variety of action cards can be played. Action cards (*Figure 2*) can be matched as well. When a player draws an Action Card, there are a number of options:



Figure 2: ACTION CARDS. Image taken from the Official UNO RULES website <http://www.unorules.com/>

As we can learn at the [UNORULES](http://www.unorules.com/) website, action cards are used in the following way:

**Draw Two** – When a person places this card, the next player will have to pick up two cards and forfeit their turn.

**Reverse** – If going clockwise, switch to counter-clockwise or vice versa.

**Skip** – When a player places this card, the next player has to skip their turn. If turned up at the beginning, the first player loses their turn.

**Wild** – This card represents all four colours, and can be placed on any card. The player has to state which colour it will represent for the next player. It can be played regardless of whether another card is available.

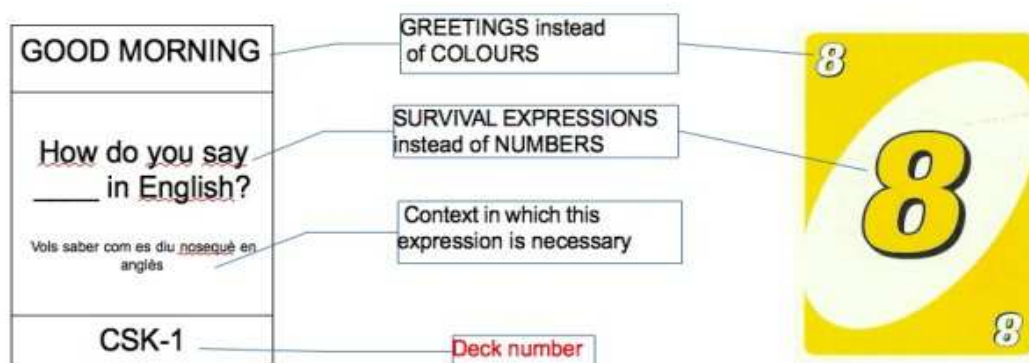
**Wild Draw Four** – This acts just like the wild card except that the next player also has to draw four cards as well as forfeit their turn. However, if the next player has another Wild Draw Four,

they can play it and the following one will have to draw eight cards [note that this might take place recursively up to four times if forthcoming players also wanted to play the same card].

### 2.3 From *UNO* to *YOU KNOW*

Since I wanted my students to practise other contents than just numbers and colours, I decided to substitute these two features for the contents which I mentioned in *section 2.1*. If you go back to *Chart 1*, you will see that there are two main groups of contents, namely, **greetings** (say hello or say goodbye) and **survival expressions**. In my particular version of the game, there are no colours because I use greetings instead.

Likewise, there are no numbers. Instead, **survival expressions** take the place of numbers. Let us see how *YOU KNOW* cards look like in contrast with the standard *UNO* cards.



*Figure 3: YOU KNOW card design. Colours become GREETINGS and numbers become SURVIVAL EXPRESSIONS*

As shown in *Figure 3*, a *YOU KNOW* card has no colours – this might not be visually cool but it has two advantages: (i) you have four further items to deal with, and (ii) printing the cards is much cheaper than pretty coloured cards. So we can say that it is divided in three (relevant) sections.

a) Let us call the top section **COLOUR SECTION**. This means that instead of RED, BLUE, GREEN and YELLOW cards that you find in the standard *UNO* game, you have four different greetings as for instance HELLO, GOOD MORNING, GOOD AFTERNOON, GOOD EVENING.

b) Let us call the middle section **NUMBER SECTION**. This means that instead of numbers 1-9 you have 9 different expressions that are going to appear four times (one for each COLOUR feature). Besides the survival expressions themselves, I included the context in which the expressions can be used in minute type fonts. I was thinking of the initial states when my students might not remember the meaning of each expression.

c) Let us call the bottom section **CODE SECTION**. This part of the card does not intervene in the game but it is very useful to classify the cards in case different decks get all mixed up. Remember that there are more than 9 survival expressions which means that we can have different decks (27 expressions provide 3 different decks). In the example, CSK-1 means that the deck belongs to **CLASSROOM SURVIVAL KIT** and it is **DECK NUMBER 1**. Regarding **action cards**, I could have had iconic instructions just like *UNO* has, but I thought that written actions might be worth to introduce further contents in the game. *Figure 4* shows a list of action cards.

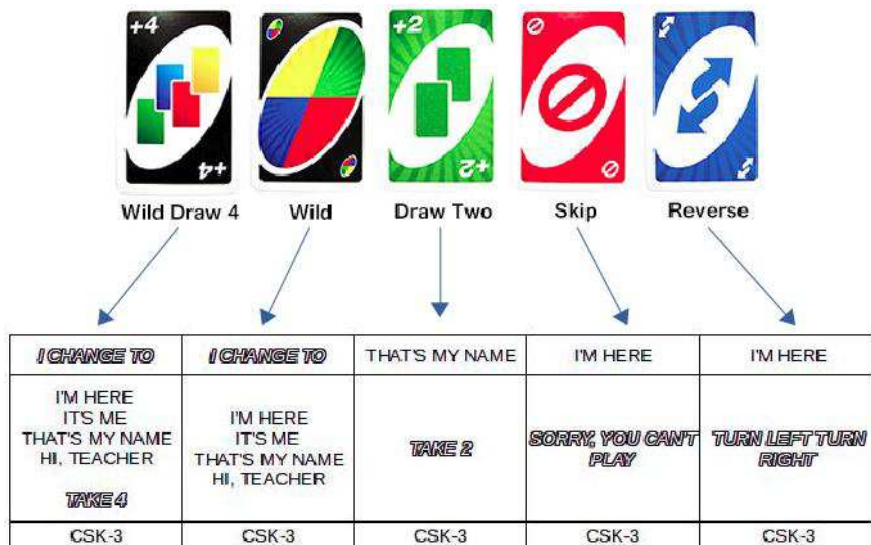


Figure 4: How ACTION CARDS are expressed in YOU KNOW.

Furthermore, and just for fun I added three more action cards: *swap your cards with me*, *swap your place with me*, *define \_\_\_\_\_*.

### 3 How to play

#### 3.1 YOU KNOW rules

In general terms, you play exactly like standard *UNO* as described in *section 2.3*. Additionally, there are some further rules that have risen out of the classroom dynamics. In this section, I am going to describe the game as though we were playing it in class with our personalised rules but everyone is free to change the rules on a single condition: the group must unanimously agree.

1. Make groups of 3-4 students and sit them around a desk. If necessary, 5 people groups can be suitable, but remember that, when this happens, the game takes longer and players must wait longer for their turn too; the result of having further unoccupied students waiting for their turn to play results in attention decay and noise level increase. So, you should better have extra copies than bigger groups (just remember that printing them is cheap). If you have 6 card decks, you can deal with a 24-30 people groups.
2. Every player starts with 5 cards dealt face down. The standard *UNO* game deals 7 cards, but then the game takes longer, so I recommend shorter games because one person wants to win more than once (just remember that having more winning chances is more motivating).
3. The rest of the cards are placed in a **draw pile** face down. Next to the **draw pile** a space should be designated for a **discard pile**. The top card should be placed in the **discard pile**. This is going to start the game.
4. If the player in turn has a card matching with the model card at the top of the **discard pile**, they can play. Otherwise, they will take one card from the **draw pile**. If they can play that card, they do, otherwise they miss their turn.
5. When the model card is an **action card**, the player must follow the instruction given.



6. The moment a player has got just one card, they must yell *YOU KNOW!* If another player says *YOU KNOW!* Before they do it, both players will swap their card stack.

7. The first player who runs out of cards wins the game. When this happens, you can start a new one. According to the standard rules, players can get points and have players in a scoring competition. In my experience, this is not necessary when you play *YOU KNOW*. However, you are free to give it a try.

### **3.2 Further rules**

There are three of additional rules that have arisen through experience:

1. When a player throws a card, they must read it aloud. If the card is an **action card**, they must give the instruction aloud as well. If they do not say the expression aloud they must draw a card from the **draw pile**.

2. When a player throws a card containing a question, the next player must provide a correct answer; if they do not answer the question they must draw a card from the **draw pile**.

3. No one can say “sorry, I’m not feeling like playing today”. Students must be aware that, although it looks like a game, they are doing a language exercise and they are not allowed to say that they do not want to do it. As usual, they must do their exercises the best they can.

Rules 1 and 2 are essential because this is the drilling part that I was discussing in the introduction. This way you grant the matching between the written language and the oral expression. Once the expressions are incorporated in the linguistic area of the brain, students start using and recycling them naturally.

## **4 WHEN TO PLAY**

This depends on the amount of students that you have in your class and your noise tolerance. Anyway, the best option is playing with up to 16-20 students, which means four or five groups playing at the same time. As regards timing, a complete hour will be necessary the first time that you introduce the game: note that the game regulations must be clearly explained. Once the students master the game, 20-30 minutes are an excellent way of changing the class dynamics without stopping doing linguistic activities.

Once students get used to the game, they start asking if the teacher has planned card games for the current class. When this starts to happen, my answer very often is “well, we are busy today, but if we work fast and well, we might play for a while”, and it usually works! So, once they are hooked, there is no problem with using games as some kind of reward.

## **5 FINAL REMARKS**

You will find next an APPENDIX including the complete three decks of my *YOU KNOW - CLASSROOM SURVIVAL KIT* that I am currently using. You can follow it either as a pattern for making your own and personal *YOU KNOW*, or you can print it and enjoy it with your students as it is. Note, however, that due to space limitations, the size is small and, although you may print them in a bigger size, the result might be too coarse grained. So the best option might be visiting my blog: [AGUSTI'S PLACE](#) where you will find a post with a ready-to-print PDF version of the game; if you just [CLICK HERE](#), the link will take you right there. Might you have any problems or might you need an editable copy, do not hesitate to contact me.

6.APPENDIX

I'M HERE	IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME
What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'un paraula.</small>	What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'un paraula.</small>	What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'un paraula.</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE	IT'S ME
What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'un paraula.</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE
Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3

IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER
How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
I'M HERE	IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME
Can I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	Can I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	Can I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
HI, TEACHER	GOOD BYE	I'M HERE
Can I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	Can I open the window? <small>Vols obrir la finestra</small>	<i>Swap your cards with me</i>
CSK-3	CSK-2	CSK-3

IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER
<i>Swap your cards with me</i>	<i>Swap your cards with me</i>	<i>Swap your cards with me</i>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
I'M HERE	IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME
<i>TAKE 2</i>	<i>TAKE 2</i>	<i>TAKE 2</i>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
HI, TEACHER	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>
<i>TAKE 2</i>	I'M HERE IT'S ME THAT'S MY NAME HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE IT'S ME THAT'S MY NAME HI, TEACHER
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3

<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	I'M HERE
I'M HERE IT'S ME THAT'S MY NAME HI, TEACHER <i>TAKE 4</i>	I'M HERE IT'S ME THAT'S MY NAME HI, TEACHER <i>TAKE 4</i>	<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER
<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>	<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>	<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
I'M HERE	IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME
Can you repeat? <small>Vols que t'ho repetixin</small>	Can you repeat? <small>Vols que t'ho repetixin</small>	Can you repeat? <small>Vols que t'ho repetixin</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3

HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE	IT'S ME
Can you repeat? <small>Vols que rth repeatin</small>	Can you close the door? <small>Vols que tanquin la porta</small>	Can you close the door? <small>Vols que tanquin la porta</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE
Can you close the door? <small>Vols que tanquin la porta</small>	Can you close the door? <small>Vols que tanquin la porta</small>	Can you turn off the light? <small>Vols que apaguin el llum</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER
Can you turn off the light? <small>Vols que apaguin el llum</small>	Can you turn off the light? <small>Vols que apaguin el llum</small>	Can you turn off the light? <small>Vols que apaguin el llum</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3

I'M HERE	IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME
I can't hear you <small>No sento el que et dius</small>	I can't hear you <small>No sento el que et dius</small>	I can't hear you <small>No sento el que et dius</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE	IT'S ME
I can't hear you <small>No sento el que et dius</small>	I forgot my book at home <small>T'has descuidat el llibre</small>	I forgot my book at home <small>T'has descuidat el llibre</small>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER	I'M HERE
I forgot my book at home <small>T'has descuidat el llibre</small>	I forgot my book at home <small>T'has descuidat el llibre</small>	<b>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</b>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3

IT'S ME	THAT'S MY NAME	HI, TEACHER
<b>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</b>	<b>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</b>	<b>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</b>
CSK-3	CSK-3	CSK-3
GOOD BYE	SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY
Can you give me a piece of paper? <small>Vols donar un full</small>	Can you give me a piece of paper? <small>Vols donar un full</small>	Can you give me a piece of paper? <small>Vols donar un full</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU LATER	HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER
Can you give me a piece of paper? <small>Vols donar un full</small>	Can I open the window? <small>Vols obrir la finestra</small>	Can I open the window? <small>Vols obrir la finestra</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2

GOOD BYE	SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY
What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>	What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>	What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU LATER	GOOD BYE	SEE YOU
What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER	GOOD BYE
Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2

SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER
How do you say ____ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ____ en anglès</small>	How do you say ____ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ____ en anglès</small>	How do you say ____ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ____ en anglès</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
GOOD BYE	SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY
May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU LATER	SEE YOU	GOOD BYE
May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	Can I open the window? <small>Vols obrir la finestra</small>	<i>Swap your sit with me</i>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2

SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER
<i>Swap your sit with me</i>	<i>Swap your sit with me</i>	<i>Swap your sit with me</i>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
GOOD BYE	SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY
<i>TAKE 2</i>	<i>TAKE 2</i>	<i>TAKE 2</i>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU LATER	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>
<i>TAKE 2</i>	GOOD BYE SEE YOU HAVE A NICE DAY SEE YOU LATER	GOOD BYE SEE YOU HAVE A NICE DAY SEE YOU LATER
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2

<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	GOOD BYE
GOOD BYE SEE YOU HAVE A NICE DAY SEE YOU LATER <i>TAKE 4</i>	GOOD BYE SEE YOU HAVE A NICE DAY SEE YOU LATER <i>TAKE 4</i>	<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER
<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>	<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>	<i>TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT</i>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
GOOD BYE	SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY
<i>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</i>	<i>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</i>	<i>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</i>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2

SEE YOU LATER	GOOD BYE	SEE YOU
<i>SORRY, YOU CAN'T PLAY</i>	Can you turn on the light? <small>Vols que encenguin el llum</small>	Can you turn on the light? <small>Vols que encenguin el llum</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER	GOOD BYE
Can you turn on the light? <small>Vols que encenguin el llum</small>	Can you turn on the light? <small>Vols que encenguin el llum</small>	I don't understand this exercise <small>No entens l'exercici</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY	SEE YOU LATER
I don't understand this exercise <small>No entens l'exercici</small>	I don't understand this exercise <small>No entens l'exercici</small>	I don't understand this exercise <small>No entens l'exercici</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2

GOOD BYE	SEE YOU	HAVE A NICE DAY
What page, please? <small>Vols saber quina pàgina</small>	What page, please? <small>Vols saber quina pàgina</small>	What page, please? <small>Vols saber quina pàgina</small>
CSK-2	CSK-2	CSK-2
SEE YOU LATER	HELLO	GOOD MORNING
What page, please? <small>Vols saber quina pàgina</small>	She's missing <small>Ita ha vingut</small>	She's missing <small>Ita ha vingut</small>
CSK-2	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING	HELLO
She's missing <small>Ita ha vingut</small>	She's missing <small>Ita ha vingut</small>	Sorry, I'm late. Can I come in? <small>Itas fet tard a classe</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

HELLO	GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON
What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>	What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>	What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD EVENING	HELLO	GOOD MORNING
What is the meaning of ___? <small>Vols saber el significat d'aquesta paraula</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING	HELLO
Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	Can you spell ___? <small>Vols saber com s'escriu ___</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING
How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>	How do you say ___ in English? <small>Vols saber com es diu ___ en anglès</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
HELLO	GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON
May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD EVENING	GOOD MORNING	HELLO
May I go to the toilet? <small>Vols anar al lavabo</small>	Sorry, I'm late. Can I come in? <small>Itas fet tard a classe</small>	<i>Define</i> ___ <small>Vols una definició d'aquesta paraula</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING
<i>Define</i> ___ <small>Vols una definició d'aquesta paraula</small>	<i>Define</i> ___ <small>Vols una definició d'aquesta paraula</small>	<i>Define</i> ___ <small>Vols una definició d'aquesta paraula</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
HELLO	GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON
<i>TAKE 2</i>	<i>TAKE 2</i>	<i>TAKE 2</i>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD EVENING	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>
<i>TAKE 2</i>	HELLO GOOD MORNING GOOD AFTERNOON GOOD EVENING	HELLO GOOD MORNING GOOD AFTERNOON GOOD EVENING
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	<i>I CHANGE TO</i>	HELLO
HELLO GOOD MORNING GOOD AFTERNOON GOOD EVENING <b>TAKE 4</b>	HELLO GOOD MORNING GOOD AFTERNOON GOOD EVENING <b>TAKE 4</b>	<b>TURN LEFT</b> <b>TURN</b> <b>RIGHT</b>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING
<b>TURN LEFT</b> <b>TURN</b> <b>RIGHT</b>	<b>TURN LEFT</b> <b>TURN</b> <b>RIGHT</b>	<b>TURN LEFT</b> <b>TURN</b> <b>RIGHT</b>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
HELLO	GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON
<b>SORRY,</b> <b>YOU CAN'T</b> <b>PLAY</b>	<b>SORRY,</b> <b>YOU CAN'T</b> <b>PLAY</b>	<b>SORRY,</b> <b>YOU CAN'T</b> <b>PLAY</b>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

GOOD EVENING	GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING
<b>SORRY,</b> <b>YOU CAN'T</b> <b>PLAY</b>	Sorry, I'm late. Can I come in? <small>Has let ted a classe</small>	Sorry, I'm late. Can I come in? <small>Has let ted a classe</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
HELLO	GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON
Can you help me, please? <small>Necessites ajuda</small>	Can you help me, please? <small>Necessites ajuda</small>	Can you help me, please? <small>Necessites ajuda</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD EVENING	HELLO	GOOD MORNING
Can you help me, please? <small>Necessites ajuda</small>	Can you lend me a pencil? <small>Necessites un llapis</small>	Can you lend me a pencil? <small>Necessites un llapis</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING	HELLO
Can you lend me a pencil? <small>Necessites un llapis</small>	Can you lend me a pencil? <small>Necessites un llapis</small>	Can you unlock the door? <small>La porta està tancada amb clau. Pots obrir?</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1
GOOD MORNING	GOOD AFTERNOON	GOOD EVENING
Can you unlock the door? <small>La porta està tancada amb clau. Pots obrir?</small>	Can you unlock the door? <small>La porta està tancada amb clau. Pots obrir?</small>	Can you unlock the door? <small>La porta està tancada amb clau. Pots obrir?</small>
CSK-1	CSK-1	CSK-1

## **References**

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