

## ***ESL Classroom: Awake, Alive, and Fun***

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### **ESL AWAKE:**

- 1) Be prepared with a lesson plan appropriate for your class level.*
- 2) Know the needs of your students.*
- 3) Have listening ears and model good grammar and pronunciation.*

### **ESL ALIVE:**

- 1) Create an atmosphere of energetic learning.*
- 2) Teach language that will be immediately useful so that the students will be excited about using it.*
- 3) Be as physical as you can, get the students moving around. Keep things as ALIVE as you can.*

### **ESL FUN:**

- 1) Lots of conversation*
- 2) Lots of laughter*
- 3) Enjoyment of learning*

## **Name Chain PLUS**

This is a variation of the well known name-chain, where the first student says his/her name, the second student has to repeat the previous name and add his/hers and so on till the teacher repeats all the names.

To make it more fun - it can be done with absolute beginners as well - the students not only say their names but have to add a movement.

e.g.:

My name is Tom. (he coughs a bit)

His name is Tom (cough) and my name is Joe (claps his hands).

His name is Tom (cough) your name is Joe (clap) and I'm Sue (she touches her cheek) etc.

This is fun if the students' movements are strange - you may even let them think of it before the beginning of the activity. (pull ear, touch nose, shake head, wink..)

Finally the Teacher reviews all the names and movements.

Follow up: The next lesson review the activity by just doing the movements, i.e. clap your hands and ask who it was to recall each others' names.

## **Introductions using musical chairs**

This is a fun way for students to mingle and learn about each other the first day of class. Arrange chairs in scattered pairs, semi-facing each other. Play some upbeat music. Instruct the students that they are to mingle around the room to the music and when the music stops they must find a chair. Beforehand a poster has been displayed listing by number 6 topics for introductory discussion i.e., name, birthplace, favorite food, favorite place, family and hobbies. The teacher rolls the die and whatever topic corresponds to the number is what the pairs will discuss. They must introduce themselves to their partner before discussing. When the music starts again, they will repeat the activity.

## **Alphabet Spelling Circle**

Divide the students in to small groups. Have alphabet cards on the table for the students. The teacher will call out one of the vocabulary words and the students work together to spell out the word. This helps the students learn their alphabet and spell words. It also causes them to converse together.

## **Musical Vocabulary**

This is an activity that can be used with all levels. You would choose the appropriate vocabulary that your level is learning. Beginners: Alphabet, Words and spelling, telling time etc... Other levels could be sentences and grammar.

Have one flashcards of your alphabet or picture of your vocabulary. Have the students form a circle. Have one flashcard less than the number of students. Have students pass the cards around the circle while you play music. When the music stops, each student will hold the card they have. The student without a card will quiz the others. If one of the students fails to say the correct word, the student without the card can take the card. The student without a card is out of the game. Take away another flash card and play again until there is only one student left. Pumpkin's emotions can be used for Halloween. See page 7.

## **MIME**

Miming is an excellent way for students to practice their tenses and their verbs. It's also great for teachers with minimal resources or who want to break up a longer lesson with something more interactive. It's adaptable to almost any language point that you might be teaching.

Before class, write out some actions on cards – like “washing the dishes” or “cleaning the house”, and put the cards in a bag. Split the class into teams. Have one student from each team choose an action from the bag. Have both students mime the action to their team. The first team to shout the correct answer wins a point. Repeat this until all students have mimed at least one action.

## **Hot Seat**

- Break the class into 2 teams.
- Place a chair next to the board, facing the class.
- Students from each team rotate turns sitting in the chair.
- Write a vocabulary word behind the student that they cannot see.
- Each team has 20 seconds to elicit the word written on the board from their teammate sitting in the hot seat.
- They can only speak English. If they speak their native tongue, erase a point from their score.

## **Pronunciation – the TH sound**

Pass out dum dum suckers to all the students. Demonstrate by practicing how to say the TH sound. Have the students stick out their tongues and lick the sucker at the same time.

Words: thank, thick, thin, think, three, thousand, Thursday

### **Sample tongue twisters:**

Not these things here but those things there.

The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday.

There those thousand thinkers were thinking how did the other three thieves go through?

I can think of six thin things, but I can think of six thick things too.

### **ESL FEUD**

Divide the students into 2 teams. Have a table at the front of the class with an object (small stuffed animal, or bell) in the middle of the table. One student from each team comes and stands opposite each other. Rotate through so that all the students get a chance to play. You then ask a question of some sort. The first person that grabs the object can try to answer the question. Ask the question, and then count 10 seconds down on your fingers. Their team can help them with the answer, but only in English. If other language is used, they lose a point. If correct, they get 1 point. If not, the other team gets a chance to answer the question.

For example: Your class is studying comparatives and superlatives. The question could be – what is the comparative of smart, kind, funny, nice, energetic, interesting, patient, stubborn, big, soft, small, comfortable, beautiful etc.. Then, what is the superlative of smart..... Then mix the questions up. You may make the questions to fit any level of teaching.

To make it even more exciting or if one team is behind by a lot of points, have a "Bonus Round," where the teams pick their best 3 players and each question is worth 2 or 3 points, or something like that.

## **INFORMATION GAP** – Charting the Way

Information gap can be used in many ways as an activity in your ESL classroom. In this activity you divide the class into pairs and distribute copies of the exercise. Each student in the pair has a different copy with information that the other student does not know. They are to ask questions to find out the missing information that the other student has on their copy. You can use this for beginners by the teacher having information and the students ask the teacher i.e. numbered squares on a blank sheet of paper. Use vocabulary words for them to fill in the blanks.

## **BINGO**

Bingo is a great tool to use in the ESL classroom. You can run off Bingo cards from the internet. A good website is [www.dltk-cards.com/bingo](http://www.dltk-cards.com/bingo) or **ESL activities**. You can make variations to fit what you are teaching your students. You can use pictures and words. This is a great activity for holidays. An example: if you are studying the past tense of verbs, prepare your cards with the past tense of the verbs. The teacher then calls out the verbs in their present tense form until a student gets five in a diagonal or horizontal row. Also, a great review for pronunciation when teaching minimal pairs. Bingo!

## **White Boards**

It's no secret that many students may find reading from a textbook dry and boring. The students can benefit from dry erase board activities. The students can rub out rather than using paper.

Use the boards for language review, dictation, asking and answering questions, writing sentences and correcting sentences. Let your imagination run!

**Adding words** - Give the students a verb, i.e. GO. Then have students add 1- 3 words before or after the verb using different subject. Sample: GO I go to school. My friend goes to school. They go to school. We go to school. You go to school.

**Silent conversation** - Tell the students they are going to have a conversation without speaking. Have them work in groups of 2 or three. Have they discuss the chosen topic i.e. "What did you do this weekend", "Tell about your family", etc. Tell them to write in short sentences.

**Information Gap** - Have partners sit back to back. Student A draws a picture on their mini-whiteboard. They then try to explain and describe the picture to their partner who will then proceed to draw it on their own mini-whiteboard. At the end, both hold up their mini-whiteboards for the rest of the class to compare and see how similar (or different) they are.

**Helpful websites:** The internet is your friend. Just type in what you are teaching and you'll find so many web sites to help you. **It is important that you specify that it is for ESL students.**

**Breaking News** - [breakingnewsenglish.com](http://breakingnewsenglish.com)

This website is so helpful in teaching up to date news to your ESL students. See **the sample on pages 8 & 9.** It has lessons for all levels.

**elcivics.com** This can be used for holiday and history lessons. Please see **example on page 10.**

**iteslj.org** This is a place where English teachers can share games and activities. It includes lessons, games, jokes etc...

**eslts.com** Glenda Reece has taught ESL over 28 years. She has helpful tips for teachers on her website.

**Esllibrary.com** This website has a wealth of ESL lessons. The lessons cover grammar, conversation, holidays, up-to-date lessons on current subjects and more. It has excellent lessons for the advanced students. Their detective series has been very successful in our advanced class. There is a charge depending on the number of teachers you have. **See page 11.**

### **BIBLE Activities**

An excellent website for Old Testament and New Testament stories in the Lipson method is: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/eslbiblestories/index.htm> . **See example on pages 12-14.**

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