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Second-Letter *y* (Inside back cover)

NICOLE BRUN-MERCER
United States

Online Reading Strategies for the Classroom

Although my undergraduate university students have grown up in a world of information and communication technologies, their comments indicate that that does not necessarily make them skillful digital readers:

"I have trouble remembering stuff if I try to read on my computer."

"I keep getting distracted when I do research online."

"I just can't focus like I can when I have a real textbook in my hands."

Learners today are expected to be digitally literate, but have they been taught how to read digital texts effectively?

Digital reading, no longer a projection for the future, is a reality today. Information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as mobile applications and the Internet, are already an integral part of students' lives. ICTs are used increasingly for personal matters but have also substantially altered the types of reading that students are expected to do in their current and future studies, not to mention their careers (Leu et al. 2011). Literacy today requires not only the comprehension of traditional print texts, but also proficiency in twenty-first-century technology (International Reading Association 2009).

While reading online has become commonplace and in many instances mandatory, readers are not necessarily engaging with digital texts effectively or efficiently. Instructors can help their students improve online reading speed and comprehension by understanding the distinctive challenges of online reading and providing sufficient strategy training and digital-reading practice. The goal of this article is to outline some of the difficulties of reading online, describe several strategies for overcoming those difficulties, and provide hands-on activities to help students practice the strategies.

THE CHALLENGES OF ONLINE READING

Reading is reading, right? Yes and no. Reading, be it print or digital, requires a number of complex skills to work in concert in one efficient and automatized operation. The expert reader is continuously using bottom-up and top-down skills throughout the reading of a text (Grabe 2009). Bottom-up skills help the reader recognize words based on knowledge of spelling, sound, sentence structure, and meaning (Nassaji 2014). If a reader does not recognize words quickly enough, reading is not fluent, and comprehension suffers. Top-down processes are also crucial, allowing the reader to draw on previously acquired information, set goals, and use strategies.

Online readers must be particularly adept at evaluating the credibility of a source.

While these underlying processes are similar for both print and online reading, there are also substantial differences between reading in print and reading online. Three differences merit particular attention. First, the Internet offers a vast volume of information. Because online readers have such easy access to so many sources, they must be able to quickly evaluate whether a site will be useful. Once they have located a potentially relevant article, they must scan and skim the text efficiently to verify that the information is, indeed, pertinent. If online readers attempt to read every text in depth, they will waste too much time on articles that turn out to be irrelevant. At the same time, as with print reading, once a reader has determined that a text will be useful, it is imperative to read that text deeply. Constantly shifting between skimming and deep reading requires great flexibility and is a skill that must be practiced (Coiro 2015). Without sufficient training, online readers tend to scan too much and not understand a text fully or, on the contrary, read too deeply and not quickly enough.

Second, a great deal of information online is not fact-checked or is published by a source that may not be reliable. As a result, online readers must be particularly adept at evaluating the credibility of a source. Even students who have heard the "Wikipedia speech"—and know not to cite information if the author is unknown or is not an expert in the field—generally have trouble recognizing bias. An online reader researching oil drilling is likely to find some sites published by the government, some by oil companies, and some by environmental nonprofit organizations, not to mention blogs written by people who are neither experts nor accountable to anyone for what they post online. In the online world, where virtually anyone can publish virtually anything, it is particularly crucial for readers to be able to critically evaluate information. Students require guidance to help them differentiate fact from opinion and distinguish evidence-supported fact from presumed fact (Dobler and Eagleton 2015).

Finally, online reading is generally nonlinear (Cobb 2017; Geva and Ramirez 2015; Kymes 2008). With a paper book, readers typically have one text in front of them; they begin on the first page and continue reading each page, following a progression of ideas imposed by the author. In contrast, online readers rarely have just one text in front of them. A web page often presents multiple texts, pictures, videos, and advertisements, all visible together on the screen. Hyperlinks sending online readers to other pages are scattered throughout. Online readers tend to click on those links, moving rapidly from one text or site to another and only occasionally returning to the original page. Constantly moving between texts, pages, and sites puts a strain on cognitive resources (Spiro, Klautke, and Johnson 2015). The temptation to check email, social media, and other unrelated sites is an additional potential distraction.

Even when online readers do not click on hyperlinks, eye-tracking research has shown that online readers tend to be distracted by advertisements and other texts located on the same page as the article they are reading (Nielsen and Pernice 2010). It is no surprise that online readers have been found to multitask and have difficulty concentrating (Baron 2017; Daniel and Woody 2013). Processing an online text efficiently (i.e., reading fluently, avoiding distractions, and thus staying "in the reading moment") is one of the greatest challenges with online reading (Dobler 2015, 487). Less skilled digital readers are not able to overcome this challenge, potentially increasing fatigue, reducing speed, impeding comprehension, and

Strategy training should begin with instructor modeling so that students understand both how to implement the strategy and why it is useful.

ultimately dampening motivation (Cobb 2017; Daniel and Woody 2013; Sandberg 2011).

Another challenge related to the lack of linearity inherent in online reading is remembering where information was found. With online readers hopping from one text to another, then to their email, then back to the original text, it is no wonder that they lose track of information. It becomes imperative to take careful note of both information and sources throughout the reading process (Dobler and Eagleton 2015). Online readers also need to be continually consolidating data, piecing together information that they learn from many different sources. Synthesizing information helps readers determine what information they still need in order to form a complete picture of an issue, and this assists them in deciding what to read next.

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

Strategy training and practice helps learners overcome the challenges of reading online and become digitally literate—able to read with sufficient accuracy, fluency, and ease. Strategy training should begin with instructor modeling so that students understand both how to implement the strategy and why it is useful. Then students need to have sufficient practice reading digital texts; training with print texts does not necessarily improve performance with digital texts (Geva and Ramirez 2015; Ortlieb, Sargent, and Moreland 2014). Strategy-training activities should be scaffolded, with guidance from the instructor at the beginning but gradually allowing students more and more autonomy. The ultimate goal is for students to be able to choose which strategies will be useful to them for any given online reading task and to implement the strategies effectively. Students are both more adept at and more enthusiastic about digital reading when they have seen an instructor model strategies and received opportunities to practice strategies with increasing autonomy (Dobler 2015; Dobler and Eagleton 2015).

Discourse structure graphic organizers (DSGOs) are excellent tools for guiding students through the use of online reading strategies. DSGOs help readers understand both text content and structure (Jiang 2012; Jiang and Grabe 2007) and are particularly important with digital texts because online reading is nonlinear. Many online texts provide insufficient informational and spatial cues for readers to create a cognitive map, and DSGOs aid readers in both navigating and recalling the text (Li, Chen, and Yang 2013).

By explicitly teaching and modeling strategies and by providing sufficient opportunities for practice, including the use of DSGOs, teachers can help learners improve their digital-reading comprehension and become autonomous learners. Yet instructors often hesitate to incorporate technology in the reading classroom due to lack of resources, information, or training (Dobler and Eagleton 2015).

This article addresses that gap by presenting strategy-training activities and DSGOs that are easy for even the most technologically reticent instructor to implement in virtually any classroom setting, with or without digital technology. Three overarching, research-informed strategies are presented in this article: (1) focus on the purpose, (2) determine credibility, and (3) consolidate information. Each strategy description begins with a rationale based on a review of the literature on online reading. Sample activities and DSGOs are then provided for ready use in the classroom.

THE STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Focus on the purpose

Successful online readers are able to focus on their reading task. First, they rapidly home in on the information they need by clearly identifying their purpose before launching their search (Cho 2013; Coiro and Dobler 2007; Zhang and Duke 2008). They start by choosing search terms that they believe will help them answer a specific question. Carefully selecting search terms before beginning a search ultimately saves time because results are more likely to be pertinent and useful.

In addition, skimming a text with particular terms and questions in mind allows readers to more quickly ascertain the relevance of the text to their search and helps them avoid becoming distracted by interesting but unrelated information. If the results appear to be off topic, efficient online readers are quick to modify their search terms rather than persist in trying to uncover information from extraneous sources.

After readers have skimmed a text to determine whether it is relevant, they must then read more deeply, remaining focused on that text. Fluency exercises using online texts complete with distracting advertisements give learners the opportunity to practice concentrating on one text. The objective of these exercises is to learn how to ignore distractions, reading both quickly and accurately.

Teaching the strategy and guided practice

To help learners develop the skills necessary for purposeful online reading, instructors must provide models, guidance, and sufficient practice. Online literacy research shows the importance of (1) clearly identifying the reading purpose (topic and search terms); (2) keeping that purpose in mind when evaluating the usefulness of a site or text; and (3) remaining focused on reading one text at a time, avoiding the distractions of unrelated texts, links, and advertisements on the same page. Following are three activities that instructors can use to develop these skills in their learners.

1. Identifying the topic and search terms

An effective and efficient search for information online begins with a clear purpose. Students should write down their topic, the questions they need to answer, and the facts they need to verify. A handout where learners fill in this information ensures that

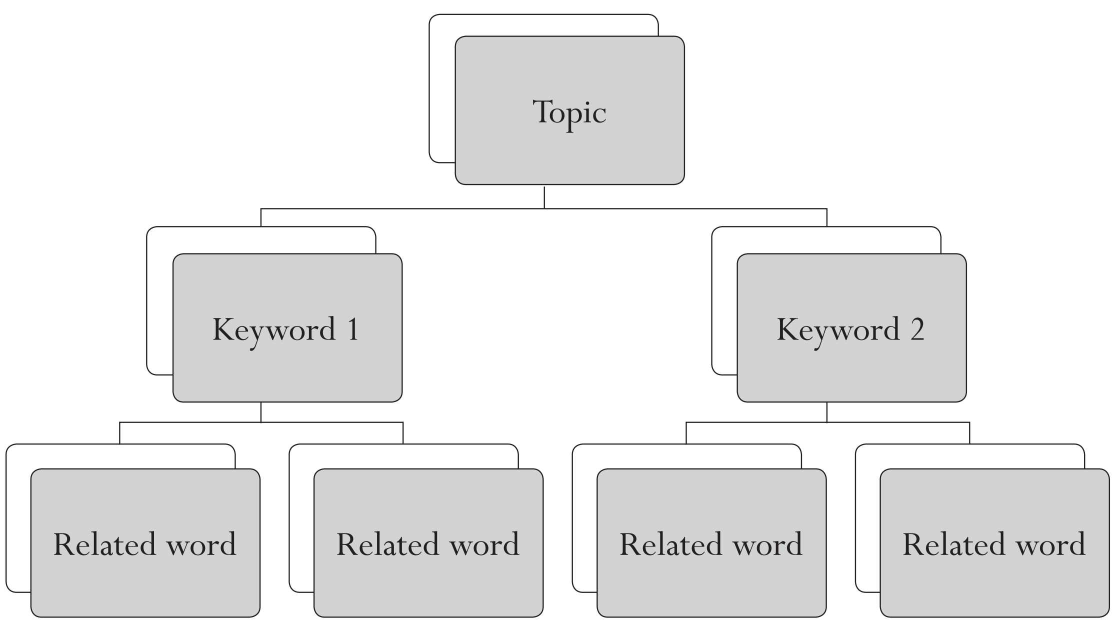

Figure 1. Concept map for developing search terms

they carry out this crucial step. Once they have clearly identified their topic, they can select keywords or key phrases to put into the search engine and brainstorm words related to their keywords.

Identifying related words is helpful in two ways. First, it is a means of verifying the relevance of a site or article. When online readers scan a text and see not only the keyword but also related words, they are more likely to have found information relevant to their topic. Second, related words are useful for refining a search if the initial keyword does not produce relevant results. Graphic organizers like the one in Figure 1 help learners with these steps.

The instructor first models this activity. The class then comes up with a topic and keywords and brainstorms related words to fill in Figure 1 together (e.g., the topic of "Amazon rain forest" might generate the keywords *Amazon* and *rain forest* and related words such as *forest*, *jungle*, *canopy*, and *tropical*).

2. Evaluating the usefulness of a text based on the reading purpose

To evaluate the usefulness of a site or text after the search has begun, learners should be continually reminded of the questions they are trying to answer. Learners can be guided through this with information organizers (see Table 1). Note that Table 1 is designed to help students keep track of sources and also to ascertain the reliability of the information—whether the information is fact or opinion.

Instructors should also model how to fill in Table 1. This graphic organizer can be adapted for students of all ages. For example, younger children may be looking for answers to questions like "What is Mount Everest?" and "Who is Mother Teresa?" They may also not be ready to distinguish fact from opinion, in which case the final column on Table 1 can be deleted.

In addition, younger children will need a great deal of scaffolding in order to understand how to use both Figure 1 and Table 1.

3. Remaining focused on one text and avoiding distractions

For students learning to read an online text quickly while avoiding the distractions of competing texts, links, and advertisements on the same page, it is important to provide opportunities to practice under real conditions. For the following online fluency activity, students in a computer lab are asked to go to a web page with a high-interest

Question	Answer	Source	Fact/Opinion
What was the Human Genome Project?	Research program intended to map and understand all human genes	National Human Genome Research Institute (2016, May 11). An overview of the human genome project. Retrieved from https://www.genome.gov/12011238/an-overview-of-the-human-genome-project/	Fact
What was the Human Genome Project?	A scientific project that claimed to be about human progress but that actually worsened social conditions	Thomsen, M. (2013, January 29). The selfish gene: The broken promises of the Human Genome Project. *Daily Beast*. Retrieved from https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-selfish-gene-the-broken-promises-of-the-human-genome-project	Opinion

Table 1. Guide for documenting sources and ascertaining reliability

An effective and efficient search for information online begins with a clear purpose.

article at or below their reading level; students in a traditional classroom are given a paper screenshot of the web page, complete with distractor texts and advertisements. (Taking screenshots is fast and easy, but the steps differ slightly depending on the operating system. Search "take screenshot" online for more information.)

Students time how quickly they read the article and answer comprehension questions. They note their reading time and their comprehension score in a fluency log (see Table 2). Fluency activities are most effective when practiced regularly, so the same log should be used throughout a course or a semester to allow students to record their progress. Note that for this to be an effective *digital* reading exercise, advertisements and unrelated texts should not be removed. Remind students that in order to read quickly, they must remain focused on their article and not get distracted by advertisements or other texts.

Practice texts can be found anywhere online, depending on student interest and course curriculum, but finding age- and level-appropriate texts for children can be challenging. For kindergarten through 12th-grade (K–12) learners, good places to start are DOGOnews (https://www.dogonews.com) and TweenTribune (https://www.tweentribune.com), which offer nonfiction texts for K–12 that include distractor texts and links. If the full article does not fit into one screenshot, it is perfectly acceptable to provide two screenshots or use just a portion of the text for the purposes of the fluency exercise, though students generally appreciate being given the full text after the exercise so that they can finish the article.

Strategy 2: Determine credibility

Successful online readers evaluate the trustworthiness of websites and cite only reliable sources (Dobler and Eagleton 2015). They favor information from sites with web addresses ending with .edu or .gov over those ending with .com, and they assign greater credibility to information published under the name of an expert author or organization. For many topics, successful online readers give preference to information that has been recently published or updated. They also examine the type of information reported and whether it appears to be substantiated fact or author opinion. Again, these strategies are critical for print-based reading as well, but print references have generally been fact-checked and edited, which is not the case with many online resources.

Teaching the strategy and guided practice

Ascertaining the credibility of a site, an author, or a text requires a great deal of explicit instruction and practice. Graphic organizers provide an excellent starting point for discussion and activities, as shown in the website credibility checklist in Figure 2.

The instructor begins by modeling how to use the checklist. Print out or project a web page

Date	Text Title	Time	Comprehension Score

Table 2. Fluency log

Online reading is not linear.

and explain that readers cannot always trust the information they find online. For the most reliable information, readers need to consider date, publisher, domain, and quality of information. They should find recent articles from a credible source, where the author is named and is likely to be reliable (e.g., a government agency, a university professor). These articles are most commonly found on .edu, .org, and .gov sites rather than .com sites. Instructors should discuss with learners the situations where opinions and unofficial sources might be used and the situations where verifiable facts are crucial.

Learners often require a great deal of guidance in distinguishing between fact and opinion and determining the reliability of a source. Comparing texts using an organizer such as Table 3 provides helpful practice. Selecting a text that presents both facts and opinions, from both reliable and less-credible sources, offers an opportunity to discuss the need to think critically throughout the reading process and not solely when selecting a source.

Younger learners can begin thinking critically about the information they read but often require more simplified worksheets; materials suitable for K–12 can be found on ReadWriteThink.org (ReadWriteThink.org is a site sponsored by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, with support from the Verizon Foundation). For nonfiction articles to help K–12 students practice reading and thinking critically, see ReadWorks (https://www.readworks.org).

Date	• last ten years • last 20 years • not recent • not indicated
Domain	• .edu, .org, or .gov • other domain
Publisher	• indicated and reliable • indicated but not reliable • not indicated
Author	• indicated and reliable • indicated but not reliable • not indicated
Information	• always factual and verifiable • sometimes factual and verifiable • factual but not verifiable • not factual

Figure 2. Website credibility checklist

Text 1			Text 2		
Information	Fact/Opinion	Reliability	Information	Fact/Opinion	Reliability
The war began on March 19.	Fact	Verifiable	The war began for economic reasons.	Opinion	Unofficial source: protestor

Table 3. Organizer for determining the credibility of a text

Strategy 3: Consolidate information and keep track of sources

Online reading is not linear. Online readers, unlike print readers, do not follow a predetermined path set by the author of one single text at a time. Instead, they choose their own paths, deciding for themselves which links to follow and whether to return to the original text. Reading in this manner disrupts the natural flow and logic that result from the carefully crafted argument laid out in a single text. As a result, online readers must continually synthesize and organize information if they hope to create a logical and coherent picture.

Moreover, the number of sites accessed and the speed with which readers jump from site to site make it easy to lose track of sources and which information came from which article on which site. Keeping a careful record of sources therefore becomes crucial when carrying out online research.

Teaching the strategy and guided practice

Once again, graphic organizers can help readers consolidate information from multiple sources. Table 4 is a sample handout where online readers can note down the full citation of and key ideas from each source. They also have room for personal reactions to what they have read and for questions raised by the text that they need to explore through further research. Finally, the table provides a section for synthesizing information from all the sources. This table allows readers to log information, keep track of sources, and begin the prewriting process through synthesis.

The layout of the graphic organizer depends greatly on the type of research being carried out and the final outcome expected from the learner. An argumentative essay presenting both sides of an issue—for and against—might be better served with the graphic organizer shown in Figure 3, on page 10. The more practice students have with using different types of organizers, the more skilled they will become at consolidating information.

Once students have been introduced to a number of different types of graphic organizers, instructors can begin to encourage learners to select the most appropriate way to organize information on their own. By

Source (full citation)	(Source 1)	(Source 2)	(Source 3)
Key points			
My comments			
Questions raised			
Synthesis			

Table 4. Form for synthesizing information

The more practice students have with using different types of organizers, the more skilled they will become at consolidating information.

gradually reducing scaffolding during online reading and researching activities, instructors can help their students become more autonomous.

CONCLUSION

Learners today are expected to read efficiently and effectively online. The time has come to provide them with sufficient strategy training and practice to meet these expectations.

Findings from research conducted over the past decade point to the substantial differences between print and digital reading and the need to practice both fluency and strategies using digital texts. This article has offered instructors strategy-training activities and graphic organizers designed to help learners with three important strategies when reading online: focusing on the reading purpose, determining text credibility, and consolidating information. The activities are easy to implement and can be adapted for a wide range of instructional settings. Now even the most technologically reluctant instructor can provide the necessary guidance and practice to equip learners with the tools they need to improve their online reading speed and comprehension.

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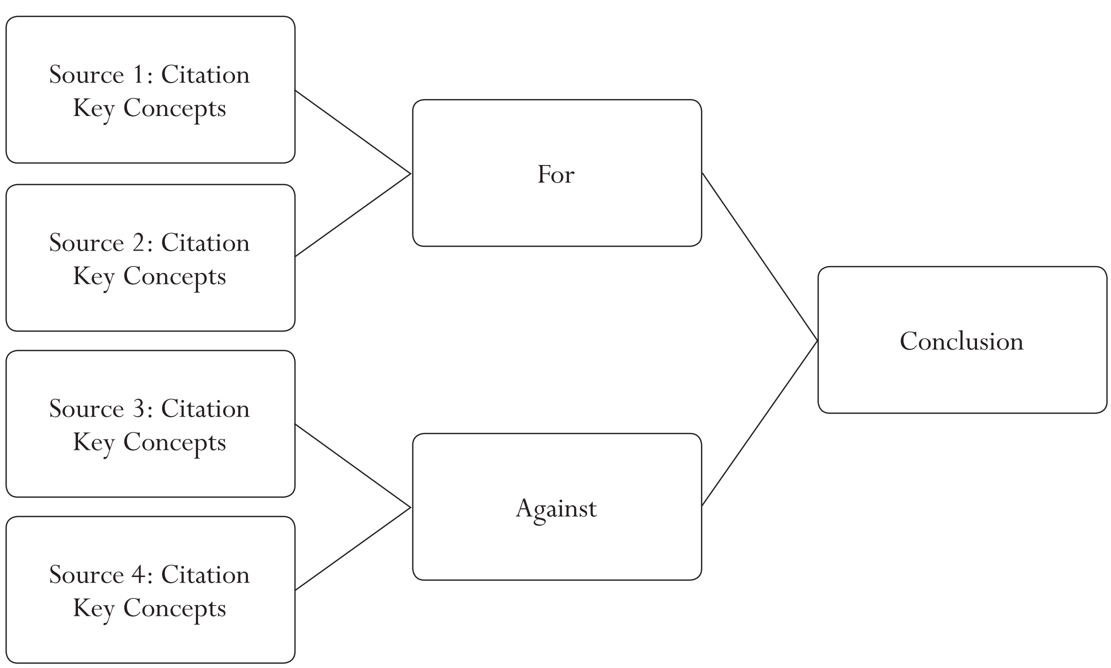

Figure 3. For/Against multiple-source graphic organizer

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Graphics in Figures 1, 2, and 3 by Nicole Brun-Mercer

JIMALEE SOWELL
United States

How to Write an ELT Conference Abstract

At a recent TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo, I heard a number of comments about writing conference abstracts:

> **"Wow, she got three proposals accepted; she must be really good at writing conference abstracts."**
>
> **"My proposal didn't get accepted: I guess I'm not good at writing conference abstracts."**
>
> **"There was an 18 percent acceptance rate of proposals this year. You have to be able to write a good abstract to have any chance."**

While the conference abstract is not the only important factor in determining acceptance or rejection to present at a conference, it is probably the most significant one. No matter how timely and relevant your intended presentation might be, if your conference abstract does not show that you have a proposal worth presenting, you risk not having your proposal accepted.

In my own experience, when I was a student in a master's degree program, we practiced writing conference abstracts for a mock conference. While this experience was meant to help us learn how to write an effective conference abstract, I felt more confused at the end of the writing exercise than I did at the beginning. In the process of peer review, everyone in my group was unsure about how to give feedback because none of us had a solid concept of the genre, of how the conference abstract should be written, or of the criteria for evaluation. Later, when I needed to write conference abstracts for actual conference proposals, I was still unsure about what to include and how to format them; it was with a surge of anxiety and uncertainty that I wrote each one.

I realized that I was not alone and that many of my colleagues were also unsure of what makes a conference abstract successful, even those colleagues with considerable success getting proposals accepted. It was my desire to make the conference abstract for the TESOL conference a better understood and more user-friendly genre for everyone in the field of English language teaching (ELT), from novices to experienced academics, that inspired this article. In the article, I do the following:

- explain what the conference abstract is
- go over challenges of writing a conference abstract
- offer suggestions for preparing to write
- outline common requirements
- provide an overview and samples of the common parts of the conference abstract

- offer a checklist for reviewing the conference abstract
- explain the promissory abstract

My hope is that readers will finish the article with an understanding of conference abstracts and a clearer sense of how to write them effectively.

WHAT IS A CONFERENCE ABSTRACT?

A conference abstract is a concise summary of a proposed conference presentation. It is a stand-alone piece of writing that explains your intended presentation to the conference committee. As the conference abstract is often the only way in which the conference committee can judge your intended presentation, it is, by nature, promotional (Swales and Feak 2000, 2009). While some conference abstracts might be similar to research-paper abstracts, it should be clear that conference abstracts are not research-paper abstracts. Conference abstracts are independent pieces of writing that "succeed or fail on their own merits" (Swales and Feak 2009, 43). It is also important to understand that conference abstracts will vary depending on session type; that is, conference abstracts for research presentations are likely to differ from conference abstracts for workshops and other kinds of conference presentations.

THE CHALLENGE OF WRITING A CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Writing a conference abstract can be incredibly difficult. In part, this is because the conference abstract is an *occluded genre*—a hidden genre that is typically not available to the general viewing public and is usually confidential in nature (Swales 1996); other examples are research proposals and college admissions essays. While some conferences provide conference abstract samples and guidelines, many do not. Even when guidelines are provided, they are sometimes vague, with statements such as, "Abstracts will be evaluated on clarity and relevance to the conference theme." Additionally, conference abstracts are usually viewed only by the conference committee (the conference abstract is different from the abstract summary in the conference program), which makes locating models of successful abstracts challenging (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995; Halleck and Connor 2006; Payant and Hardy 2016).

Adding to the difficulty is the fact that a conference abstract needs to sell a potential presentation in a limited number of words (Halleck and Connor 2006; Swales and Feak 2000). The conference abstract is often a high-stakes genre. For many institutions, conference presentations are an important part of scholarship and professional development (Halleck and Connor 2006; Payant and Hardy 2016), and rejection to a conference can potentially mean loss of funding or a lost opportunity to present work to an audience of peers (Halleck and Connor 2006; Payant and Hardy 2016). However, while the conference abstract is of paramount importance to academics, there is little guidance available on how to write one (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995; Halleck and Connor 2006; Payant and Hardy 2016).

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

In this section, I outline important first steps for preparing to write a conference abstract: deciding what to present and understanding the proposal requirements.

Deciding what to present

Which comes first: preparing the presentation and then finding a suitable conference, or finding a conference and then preparing a presentation? There is no absolute answer. You might have already written a paper or have prepared a presentation that you would like to give at a conference. In this case, you would look for a suitable conference for your presentation—a conference that fits the topic and type of presentation you have prepared. Alternatively, you might first learn about a certain conference where you would like to present and then prepare your presentation. In this case, you might not even decide what you want to present until you know what the conference theme is. For example, I presented at two Nepal English Language Teaching Association (NELTA) conferences. For the first one, I had already prepared a workshop on dialogue journals before I knew about the conference. The theme of the conference was "Transformations in ELT: Contexts, Agents, and Opportunities," which I linked to the subtheme "Developing Reading and Writing Skills Differently." For the second NELTA conference, I prepared my workshop "The Writing Process and Formative Assessment in Academic Writing" to fit the conference theme "Authentic Assessment: A Paradigm Shift from Traditional to Alternative Assessment."

Understanding the proposal requirements

The first step is to look for the *Call for Papers*, which is sometimes also called the *Call for Proposals* or *Call for Presentations*. The Call for Papers is an announcement for an upcoming conference that is soliciting speakers. The Call for Papers will announce the conference and explain how to submit a proposal. Read the Call for Papers carefully. Abstract requirements as well as the language used to describe these requirements vary from conference to conference. Follow the guidelines for submission. Falling outside the stated boundaries—no matter how interesting or relevant your proposal—could be grounds for dismissal (Fowler 2011). Some conference committees require only one abstract. Most conferences, however, ask for two abstracts: a longer one and a shorter one. The longer abstract is for vetting and will be reviewed by the conference committee; the shorter abstract is for inclusion in the conference program (if your proposal is accepted) so that conference-goers can decide whether to attend your presentation.

Although most conferences follow this formula of abstract and summarized version, terminology differs and can lead to confusion. For instance, some call the conference abstract the "abstract" and the shorter version an "abstract summary" or "summary" or even "blurb." Others call the shortened version the "abstract" and the longer version the "summary" or "session description." Some simply ask for two abstracts; a shorter one and a longer one. In this article, I refer to the longer abstract, used for vetting, as the *conference abstract* and the shorter abstract, included in the conference program, as the *abstract summary*.

Table 1 lists additional important guidelines for preparing a conference abstract.

THEMES AND SUBTHEMES

Conferences have themes and subthemes. Some themes are specific—the theme at the 8th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching (PSLLT) Conference was "The Role of Technology in L2 Pronunciation Research and Teaching"—and some are more general, such as the Africa TESOL 2nd International Conference, with the theme "New Horizons in Language Teaching." As a general rule, you want to link your presentation and, by extension, your conference abstract to the theme or subtheme. Listed subthemes can range from fairly restrictive to fairly general. Some conferences are open to receiving abstracts on topics relevant to the theme but not necessarily listed under the subthemes; for example, the Africa TESOL 4th International Conference accepted abstracts on the conference theme, subthemes, and "any other topic that has relevance to the conference theme" (https://www.africatesol.org/call-for-papers2).

Some conferences are open to receiving abstracts outside the conference theme and subthemes; for example, the Korean Association of Teachers of English (KATE) Conference has given priority to proposals that relate to the theme but welcomes all proposals with topics related to English language teaching. Unless the policy specifically states otherwise, submitting a conference abstract that is not relevant to the theme or subtheme can work against you.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF ABSTRACTS

Before starting to draft your conference abstract, it is important to have an idea about the factors that might help an abstract succeed or cause it to fail. Check the Call for Papers

GUIDELINE	DESCRIPTION
Time allotment	Make sure that what you plan to deliver in your presentation is reasonable for the time given. A proposed presentation that seems impossible to deliver in the allotted time is likely to be rejected. Consider the difference between Example A and Example B: ***Example A***: "In this workshop, the presenter will go over the history of music in composition, provide an analysis of what makes music a useful medium for helping students understand the composing process, and offer practical suggestions for helping students create compositions blended with musical scores." ***Example B***: "In this workshop, the presenter suggests there is a significant link between written composition and music and offers tangible suggestions for incorporating music in the composition classroom to improve student writing." While Example A is broad and expansive and too much to undertake in one presentation, Example B is narrow and focused.
Audience	Make sure that your presentation is suitable for the intended audience. This might relate to specific groups, such as young learners, higher-education professionals, refugee and immigrant populations, and so on.
Average length of key components	The conference abstract is usually 300 words or fewer, the abstract summary is around 50 words, and the title is generally no more than 12 words. However, requirements vary from conference to conference.
Length considerations	Write as close as you can to the word limit without going over it. Researchers (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995; Egbert and Plonsky 2015; Halleck and Connor 2006; Payant and Hardy 2016) found that, on average, failed conference abstracts were shorter than accepted ones. This is perhaps because longer conference abstracts tended to be more developed and informative than shorter ones.
Other frequently required components	Most conferences usually require a biodata (usually of 50 words or fewer). Some conferences ask for keywords to accompany the conference abstract and abstract summary.
Recycling proposals	Note that some Calls for Papers will ask that you do not submit a proposal that has been submitted to another conference.

Table 1. Important guidelines for preparing a conference abstract

or proposal guidelines for information on how your proposal will be evaluated (McVeigh 2012). Some conferences, such as the TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo (often referred to as "the TESOL Conference" or simply as "TESOL") and those at the Universidad San Sebastián in Santiago, Chile, provide their rating rubrics with the Call for Papers. Others list general criteria for evaluation, such as the "Breakthroughs in English Language Teaching in the 21st Century" conference held in Vietnam in 2018: "Abstracts must be no longer than 300 words and must be relevant to the conference theme and clearly describe the presentation's purpose, methods, data sources, existing literature and potential contributions to the field" (http://www.vnseameo.org/TESOLConference2018/). For conferences that offer rubrics or other scoring guides, a good way to plan your writing is to aim to meet the requirements for the high-score criteria on the rubric (McVeigh 2012).

THE PARTS OF A CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

One way that researchers better understand specific genres is by analyzing common features that occur in a piece of writing. Understanding what affordances and constraints are typical in a genre can help writers plan and execute their own writing. This section explains the parts of the conference abstract.

What is a *move*?

Conference abstracts feature certain *rhetorical moves*. A rhetorical move is basically a functional unit, or part of a text, that serves a specific communicative purpose (Halleck and Connor 2006). There is no specific length for a move. While many conference-abstract moves are sentence-length, a move can be made up of more than one sentence or part of a sentence, and one sentence might have multiple moves (Halleck and Connor 2006).

BREAKING DOWN THE MOVES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING MOVES IN TESOL CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Based on previous genre studies, Halleck and Connor (2006) developed a framework of moves they identified as occurring in TESOL conference abstracts. Payant and Hardy (2016) slightly adapted Halleck and Connor's (2006) framework by adding two moves: *Benefits to Attendees* and *Benefits to the Field*. While I have accepted Payant and Hardy's (2016) *Benefits to Attendees* move as an important adaption to Halleck and Connor's (2006) original framework, I have rejected their *Benefits to the Field* move because they failed to explain this move and provide concrete examples. Furthermore, the *Benefits to the Field* move could possibly have a significant overlap with the *Gap* move described in Table 2.

Table 2 identifies 11 moves and provides a brief description. The purpose of explaining each move is to clearly illustrate the parts of a conference abstract so that you can use them in your own writing. It is important to understand that while a conference abstract might contain any of the moves listed in the framework, there is no cookie-cutter mold for conference abstracts; Halleck and Connor (2006) found that not every successful conference abstract contained every move, the sequencing of moves varied, and no move was an obligatory component.

A conference abstract could possibly follow the sequence in Table 2, but the moves are not

MOVE	PURPOSE
1. Territory	Gives a background or context of the given activity
2. Reporting Previous Research	Makes reference to previous related research or work
3. Gap	States something is missing in the territory or previous research
4. Goal	Gives the aim or objective of the study or presentation
5. Means 1	Specifies the actions that lead to the goal
6. Means 2	Indicates what will actually happen (method and procedure) in the presentation
7. Outcomes	Gives the expected results of the research or other activity
8. Benefits	Shows how the research or other activity relates to the real world
9. Importance Claim	Explains why the research or activity is important
10. Competence Claim	Tells why the presenter is credible to present on the given topic
11. Benefits to Attendees	Explains what session attendees will take away from the session

Table 2. Moves in TESOL conference abstracts (adapted from Halleck and Connor [2006] and Payant and Hardy [2016])

listed in an obligatory sequence. For instance, while the *Territory* move might often appear as the first move in a conference abstract, it might not appear at all, or it might occur in a position other than the first move, or it might be embedded in another move. While the number of possible moves in the given framework might seem overwhelming, it is important to realize that Payant and Hardy (2016) found in their research that no conference abstract contained all moves, and some moves—such as the *Importance Claim* and *Competence Claim*—occur infrequently.

In the following descriptions of rhetorical moves, I give credit to several former colleagues for the examples that they generously shared. Where I was unable to readily identify examples in the work they shared, I created examples for the purpose of illustration.

Territory

The *Territory* move establishes the background of your proposed presentation and as such is usually a broad, sweeping statement. Halleck and Connor (2006, 76) found the *Territory* move "in more than half of the proposals" they examined and reported that in most cases, the *Territory* was positioned as the first move.

> ***Example:*** Assessment and evaluation are a serious and integral part of the instructional process, affecting not only students, but teachers, society, and the whole educational milieu. (Rosa Fagundes)

> ***Example:*** With the ever more rapid movement of people and ideas, explaining our own cultures and learning about other cultures are things we both can and must do more often. (William Wolf)

Reporting Previous Research (RPR)

The *Reporting Previous Research* (*RPR*) move indicates previous research related to the topic. The *RPR* is frequently positioned after the *Territory* move (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** There are many publications and teacher handbooks on assessment in Writing Workshops in K–12 settings (see Atwell 2009; Fletcher and Portalupi 2001; Urbanski 2006). (Bita Bookman)

> ***Example:*** Process writing can reduce anxiety, build confidence, and improve overall student performance (Bayat 2014; Huang 2011). (Christina Torres)

The *RPR* move can also refer to important debates or research terms (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** While Truscott (1996, 1999, 2004, 2009) and Truscott and Hsu (2008) argue that corrective feedback on grammatical items does not improve grammatical accuracy in student writing and can even cause harm, other researchers (e.g., Doughty and Varela 1998; Doughty and Williams 1998; Ellis 1998; Ellis, Basturkmen, and Lowen 2001; James 1998; Lightbrown 1998; Tomasello and Herron 1989) have found that learners benefit from explicit error correction. (Example created for this article)

Several researchers indicate that the use of citations is an important way to display insider status and to show how the current study or activity fits into the broader research context (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995; Cutting 2012; Egbert and Plonsky 2015). The TESOL conference rubric specifically mentions citations or terminology related to the field for a high rating under its theory, practice, and/or research basis criteria.

Gap

The *Gap* indicates that something related to the *Territory*, or to the *Territory* and *RPR*, is missing or somehow problematic (Halleck and Connor 2006). The *Gap* is the heartbeat of your presentation; it is, after all, the motivation behind your proposed study and presentation (Halleck and Connor 2006). Halleck and Connor (2006) found that the *Gap* occurred in more than 50 percent of proposals and that it is often introduced by the word *however*. It might also be introduced by other transitions signals, such as *nonetheless*, *at any rate*, *still*, *yet*, etc. Sometimes, though, it occurs without a transition signal.

> ***Example:*** Still, both official reports and anecdotal evidence seem to indicate that mastery of English is not where it is expected to be despite widely shared views about its importance for job opportunities and social mobility. (Elka Todeva)

> ***Example:*** However, the Writing Workshop model has not been adequately explored as a teaching and assessment model in higher education contexts, especially in first-year composition courses for English language learners. (Bita Bookman)

Goal

The *Goal* states the main aim or purpose of the study or presentation and appeared more frequently "than any other move" (Halleck and Connor 2006, 78). The *Goal* often begins with statements like "The purpose/objective of this study … " or "This study addresses … " (Halleck and Connor 2006, 78).

> ***Example:*** Using Hanauer's (2008) definition of functional and non-place identity, this research project aims to look at the lived experiences of individuals whose dual (or multiple) citizenships have allowed them to have non-place identities. (Bita Bookman)

The *Goal* is sometimes presented as several questions in bulleted or paragraph form (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** In order to develop valid and fair multiple-choice items, there are some principles that must be considered. For example, what is the construct that is being assessed? Is the item biased? How plausible are the distractors? Are the options exclusively mutual? Is there a double-key? (Bita Bookman)

Means 1

Means 1 denotes the actions that lead to the *Goal*, such as methods, tasks, and procedures (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** In this study, 55 Ivorian teachers were given questionnaires to determine the strategies, techniques, and materials they used to become competent users of English. (Example created for this article)

> ***Example:*** Dialogue journals were analyzed over the course of ten weeks for development of grammar and vocabulary skills. (Example created for this article)

Means 2

Means 2 refers to the actual methods used in the presentation and was often positioned as the final move (Halleck and Connor 2006). In some cases, *Means 2* specifically outlined what would be presented or discussed.

> ***Example:*** The session begins with a brief overview of the characteristics of a successful assessment. Then, using a video clip, sample exam sheet, exam cards, and rubric, the presenter will demonstrate this method of oral assessment from planning to implementation. (Bita Bookman)

> ***Example:*** In this workshop, participants will experience, analyze, and discuss three principles of small group work for English language learners that maximize active learning while facilitating English language development. (Leah Jordano-Kudalis)

Means 2 often made mention of audience participation, a handout, or both (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** The participants share their own experience through discussion and in the Q&A sessions. (Bita Bookman)

> ***Example:*** Handouts will be provided. (Christina Torres)

Outcomes

The *Outcomes* move denotes the expected results or findings of the research or other activity; the *Outcomes* move often starts "either with a description of the results or with their pedagogical implications" (Halleck and Connor 2006, 79).

> ***Example:*** The results of this study suggest that the color of ink used for written feedback has no sort of psychological impact on students' attitudes and beliefs regarding their written errors. (Example created for this article)

> ***Example:*** The pedagogical implications of this study suggest that English language teachers could benefit from additional training on identifying and accommodating learning disabilities in the English language classroom. (Example created for this article)

Benefits

The *Benefits* move shows how the *Outcomes* of the proposed activity (e.g., the study, project, or workshop) can be useful in the real world. The *Benefits* move was found in fewer than half of the proposals (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** … using a Tracking Chart as part of process writing instruction helps students to become self-aware of their own areas of strengths and weaknesses. (Christina Torres)

> ***Example:*** The results of this survey can help teachers of English in under-resourced EFL contexts impart strategies and techniques for successful language learning to their students. (Example created for this article)

Importance Claim

The *Importance Claim* emphasizes the significance of the particular study or presentation and is sometimes signaled by the word *importance* (Halleck and Connor 2006, 80).

> ***Example:*** In the current climate of trends towards developing better curricula for Writing in the Disciplines (WID), these findings are especially important. (Example created for this article)

Competence Claim

The *Competence Claim* states why the presenter is qualified to deliver a presentation on the proposed topic (Halleck and Connor 2006).

> ***Example:*** The presenter has more than 30 years of experience in language assessment and is the author of two books on the subject. (Example created for this article)

Halleck and Connor (2006) and Payant and Hardy (2016) found that the *Importance Claim* and the *Competence Claim* occurred in very few conference abstracts; some conference-abstract writers chose to use one or both of these moves, but most conference-abstract writers did not include them.

Benefits to Attendees

The *Benefits to Attendees* move shows what session attendees can expect to take away from the presentation (Payant and Hardy 2016).

> ***Example:*** All in all, participants will walk away from this workshop with the tools needed to energize themselves and their teams of learners for efficient and effective small group work. (Leah Jordano-Kudalis)

> ***Example:*** At the end of this workshop, the participants will be able to confidently write, review, and revise multiple-choice items for formative and summative assessments. (Bita Bookman)

FULL CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Here I present two full conference abstracts in order to illustrate how rhetorical moves might be presented in a conference abstract. You will notice that neither sample has *all* the potential moves that could occur in a conference abstract. In their research, Payant and Hardy (2016) found that the majority of the conference abstracts they analyzed followed the general pattern of starting with the *Territory*, *RPR*, and *Gap* moves, and often concluded with *Outcomes* and *Benefits to Attendees*. Although only two samples are given here, further analysis of conference abstracts would likely reveal numerous variations of moves in successful conference abstracts.

Sample full conference abstract 1

Title: Writing Assessment in Higher Education Using the Writing Workshop Model

[TERRITORY and RPR:] There are many publications and teacher handbooks on assessment in Writing Workshops in K–12 settings (see Atwell 2009; Fletcher and Portalupi 2001; Urbanski 2006). **[GAP:]** However, the Writing Workshop model has not been adequately explored as a teaching and assessment model in higher education contexts, especially in first-year composition courses for English language learners. **[MEANS 2:]** In this presentation, the presenter describes her experience implementing the Writing Workshop model and assessing students in a developmental writing course for international students in a university in the United States. The speaker will first introduce the Writing Workshop model and the opportunities it provides for systematic formative assessment of writing and grammar skills. Then, using examples and materials, the presenter will outline some challenges that a Writing Workshop may present in higher education and offers solutions. There will be time for Q&A at the end of the presentation. (Bita Bookman)

Sample full conference abstract 2

Title: Using a Tracking Chart as Part of Process Writing Instruction

[TERRITORY:] International university students need to be successful writers not just in their English classes, but also in their future university classes. One critical aspect to success at the university level is the ability to produce clear writing and critically analyze their own texts. **[RPR:]** Process writing can reduce anxiety, build confidence and improve overall student performance (Bayat 2014; Huang 2011). **[GAP:]** However, research shows that students often repeat the same mistakes in spite of multiple written corrections from instructors. **[RPR:]** Students need to understand the value of the corrections they receive in order to internalize them (Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg, and Williamson 2015). **[MEANS 2:]** The presenters will demonstrate how using a Tracking Chart as part of process writing instruction helps students to become self-aware of their own areas of strengths and weaknesses.

[MEANS 2:] In this presentation, we will actively lead participants through the Tracking Chart and its efficacy using real student writing samples. We will begin by demonstrating the Tracking Chart used in our writing classes and explaining the three areas of correction covered in the Chart: content/organization, grammar, and formatting. The participants will be divided into groups to code a piece of student writing using the Chart. The groups will then report their results to predict at what point in the semester the writing assignment was submitted. The purpose of this exercise is for the participants to understand how the Chart is a visual representation of student improvement throughout the semester for both teachers and students. We will debrief this practice-oriented presentation by revealing the correction chart data from our class cohort to show patterns of progress and finish by reflecting on the implications for the session participants' own classrooms. Handouts will be provided. (Christina Torres)

FORMATTING AND STYLE CONSIDERATIONS

One paragraph or more?

Most conference abstracts are written as one block of text, but some are divided into paragraphs (Swales and Feak 2009). There is no absolute rule on this, but since conference abstracts are typically written as one block of text, break your conference abstract into paragraphs only if you have a compelling reason to do so.

Title of your conference abstract

The title of your conference abstract should clearly reflect your intended presentation and should interest potential conference-goers

(Fowler 2011). Swales and Feak (2009) recommend crafting a title that works as an attention-getter and suggest writing a title with a colon, such as "Winning Combinations: K–6 Partnerships in Florida" (Swales and Feak 2009, 57). While an attention-getting title might help your proposal stand out, do not favor a snappy title at the expense of clarity. Conference-goers, to a large extent, choose the sessions they want to attend based on titles alone—sometimes without actually reading the abstract summaries in the conference program. Misleading titles can result in disappointed audience members who had different expectations.

Additional stylistic considerations

Table 3 lists additional stylistic considerations for developing a conference abstract.

CHECKING YOUR CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Give yourself enough time to check and revise your conference abstract. Conference abstracts that are written the night before the submission deadline will likely appear rushed and underdeveloped. A well-written conference abstract often requires several drafts (Swales and Feak 2000). If possible, get feedback (McVeigh 2012; Swales and Feak 2000). Try to get feedback from insiders in the field of ELT (teachers, researchers, administrators). Observers outside the field might be able to give cursory feedback, but they may not be able to match the degree of in-depth feedback that can be provided by someone in the field. Look to colleagues and superiors, especially those with experience submitting and reviewing conference abstracts. Give important attention to creating an error-free conference abstract. Egbert and Plonsky (2015) found that ratings were significantly higher for conference abstracts with no errors.

Use the checklist in Table 4 for self-evaluation or peer-evaluation to guide your revision. With peer-revision, it is a good idea to provide your reviewer with the guidelines for the conference you are submitting your conference abstract to.

ABSTRACT SUMMARY

Many conference proposals ask for an abstract summary that will be included in the conference program. If you need to submit an abstract summary, remember that the shorter abstract is a separate piece of writing; it is not a repetition of sentences from the abstract used for vetting purposes. Again, the purpose of the abstract summary is to help conference-goers decide whether to attend your presentation (Swales and Feak 2000, 2009). Typically, abstract summaries introduce the topic and then state what will happen in the presentation and are often limited to about 50 words. Sometimes the abstract summary will also indicate the intended audience. Following

Important Points on Style
• Do not directly refer to yourself or your institution in your conference abstract or abstract summary. Instead, refer to yourself anonymously in the third person, such as "the presenter."
• Do not use quotations; instead, paraphrase.
• Do not use footnotes.
• Do not include any figures or tables.
• Do not use abbreviations.
• Spell out acronyms in the first mention. The generally accepted practice is to write out the full name first, followed by the acronym in parentheses in the first mention—for example, "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)." You can then use the acronym CLT by itself in subsequent mentions.

Table 3. Important points on style

are two abstract summaries that indicate the associated rhetorical moves.

Sample abstract summary 1

[TERRITORY:] The Writing Workshop model can provide ample opportunities for systematic formative assessment. **[MEANS 2:]** In this presentation, the speaker describes the implementation of the Writing Workshop in a first-year composition course for international students, the opportunities for assessment in comparison to traditional models of teaching writing, some potential challenges, and possible solutions. (Bita Bookman)

Sample abstract summary 2

[TERRITORY:] International students must become academically proficient writers in a limited time frame. **[GAP:]** Even when instructors give written feedback, students often do not attend to their mistakes. **[MEANS 2:]** This practice-oriented session will demonstrate how correction tracking engages students and empowers them to take responsibility for their mistakes, resulting in improved written work. (Christina Torres)

THE PROMISSORY ABSTRACT

Ideally, you will already have prepared your presentation before you write the conference abstract. Logically, it is much easier to summarize work that has been completed than work that does not yet exist or is still in process. However, in the world of conference proposals, the ideal does not always occur (Swales and Feak 2000, 2009), and you might need to write a conference abstract for a study or presentation that is not yet finished. In such cases, you are tasked with writing a promissory

Checklist	Yes	No	Notes
1. Does the conference abstract fit all of guidelines for the intended conference?			
2. Does the conference abstract give the reader a clear idea of the intended presentation?			
3. Does the conference abstract show that in some way the presentation is innovative—a new way to deal with a problem, a new strategy, a new technique, a new approach, or a new perspective?			
4. Is there evidence that the presentation is in some way connected to the field's body of knowledge?			
5. Does the conference abstract clearly link to the theme or subtheme?			
6. Does the proposed presentation seem to fit the intended audience?			
7. Does the proposed presentation seem to fit the time allotted for the presentation?			
8. Does the word count for the conference abstract come close to or reach the limit without going over?			
9. Is the title relevant to the presentation? / Is it clear?			
10. Is the conference abstract free of grammatical, mechanical, and spelling errors?			
11. Is the conference abstract free of abbreviations, quotations, symbols, and acronyms?			

Table 4. Checklist for reviewing a conference abstract

abstract, which is a representation of what you believe you will present (Egbert and Plonsky 2015; Swales and Feak 2000, 2009). In their research, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) and Cutting (2012) found that the promissory abstract is actually rather common. However, reviewers are sometimes reluctant to accept promissory abstracts, aware that there is a chance that the work will not be finished on time or the actual presentation will be different from the conference abstract submission (Swales and Feak 2009).

Some Calls for Papers explicitly state that they do not want any proposals for studies that have not been completed, and some conferences require proposals to include papers or ask that papers be submitted prior to the conference (Curry and Lillis 2013) to ensure that presentations are not substantially different from their proposals. If you must write a promissory abstract, craft it in a way that does not show that your research is incomplete. Avoid language that would indicate that your abstract is promissory (Swales and Feak 2000), such as "My research will investigate … " and "After the data have been collected … ," and do not attempt to include any results and discussions that do not yet exist.

CONCLUSION

Because of the elusive nature of the conference abstract, coupled with the fact that it is a high-stakes, promotional genre, writing a conference abstract can be a challenging task. However, it is well worth the effort to master the task because it will enhance your prospects of getting your proposal accepted. Genre analysis of the conference abstract, though limited, helps presenters understand the rhetorical moves and potential arrangement that make up a conference abstract. An effective way to improve familiarity with the affordances and constraints of any genre is to practice. I suggest starting by writing a mock conference abstract for a presentation you have done in the past or would like to do in the future. You can then use the checklist provided in Table 4 to self-edit your proposal, get feedback from a peer, or do both. After completing this exercise with one abstract, try another presentation idea. And if you are part of a class or network of teachers, you might suggest forming a group that practices writing conference abstracts and gives peer feedback.

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Using a Case Study in the EFL Classroom

A case study is a teaching method based on the description of a real or hypothetical situation that requires a solution or action. No analysis is provided, so learners analyze the case themselves to make a decision or produce possible solutions. Case studies have been in use for several decades to train students in business, law, medicine, and other disciplines by exposing them to situations they are likely to encounter in their professional practice. Case studies are considered effective because "by presenting content in the format of a narrative accompanied by questions and activities that promote group discussion and solving of complex problems, case studies facilitate development of the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning; moving beyond recall of knowledge to analysis, evaluation, and application" (Bonney 2015, 21).

Case studies are also useful for training learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) because to find a solution to a case study, the learners need to apply linguistic skills in combination with analytical and/or interpersonal skills—the kind of situation that can occur in "real life," outside the classroom. Case studies, a form of task-based learning (TBL), allow teachers to implement the communicative approach: the central focus is on completing a task, and students use language as a tool to communicate their ideas instead of doing language exercises to practice a grammar point or lexical item. TBL is considered conducive to language learning because it is learner-centered and engages students in active learning by providing opportunities for authentic communication. The focus of the task is on meaning; it has "a clearly defined, non-linguistic outcome" (Ellis 2003, 162), and learners select the linguistic resources they need to complete the task. The teacher's role is that of a facilitator and advisor who circulates among the students and is available for language-related questions.

This article gives general guidelines for EFL teachers interested in incorporating case studies in their teaching; it also provides an example of a case study that can be used as is or as a model that teachers can adapt to their needs.

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THE CASE-STUDY METHOD

The case-study method is particularly suitable for involving students in spoken interactions, such as discussions. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the skills required for formal discussions include the "ability to follow the discussion" by "understanding points given prominence, keeping up with animated debate" and the "ability to contribute" by "probing, evaluating and challenging the

To find a solution to a case study, the learners need to apply linguistic skills in combination with analytical and/or interpersonal skills.

contributions of others and arguing one's own position convincingly" (Council of Europe 2018, 87). A case study also supports interactions through "goal-oriented co-operation" that leads to "collaborative, task-focused work," such as "discussing a document" (Council of Europe 2018, 88). Furthermore, case studies provide training in reading comprehension, audiovisual or aural comprehension (when students watch a video or listen to a recording), and possibly written and oral production, such as writing a report or addressing an audience when presenting solutions.

Case studies can be tailored to different language levels and teaching situations, such as English for specific purposes (ESP) or content-based learning (language acquisition combined with the study of a subject matter). Topics may range from everyday issues to high-content cases that require in-depth subject-matter knowledge and involve the analysis of accompanying data such as graphs, charts, and other supporting documents. The more complex the case is, the more specific the knowledge and the more specialized the language students will need. High-context cases are therefore suitable for learners who have sufficient proficiency in English and specialized knowledge about the subject; this is the case for many ESP students studying business, engineering, or other subjects. If teachers want to create their own subject-specific case studies, they may consider the possibility of collaborating with a specialist subject teacher.

Table 1 summarizes advantages and challenges of the case-study method.

CASE-STUDY TOPICS

A case study should be based on the description of a particular situation or conflict-arousing issue to which students can relate. Teachers can use ready-made cases studies that are included in some coursebook packs and found on reputable Internet sites, or they can write their own cases. Teachers can create original cases based on current affairs or on topics contained in the coursebook. Articles and other materials (videos, practical tips, PDF brochures, menus, etc.) available on

Advantages	Challenges
• Task-based learning can be implemented, and language is used to communicate. • Language skills are used in combination with other skills (e.g., business, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills). • Integration of various language skills is possible. • Different media can be included. • Some cases can incorporate role plays. • Students may generate their own cases.	• Teachers must find case studies that are suitable for their learners regarding content, complexity, and linguistic level, or they must write the case studies themselves. • Reading and analyzing longer case studies can be time-consuming. • Assessment criteria need to be carefully established, explained, and considered.

Table 1. Advantages and challenges of using case studies to support language learning

The more complex the case is, the more specific the knowledge and the more specialized the language students will need.

the Internet can either be used as source texts for the case study or be adapted for classroom use. Printed materials, such as informational and tourist brochures, are also useful. Topic areas that teachers of general English courses may consider include the following:

- planning a weekend in a specific town, reconciling the various interests of group members
- choosing a restaurant suitable for people with different dietary requirements
- planning a vacation on a budget for a group or family at a specific destination
- advising somebody on how to reduce plastic waste in daily life
- advising somebody on how to lead a healthier lifestyle
- planning an intercultural party
- evaluating a brochure
- evaluating apartment rental offers

Some publishers offer materials that can be used as short case studies for business English. For example, *In Company* from Macmillan Business offers downloadable worksheets on several business topics in English at different levels (see http://www.businessenglishonline.net/resources/in-company-second-edition-resources/worksheets/). Other online information is available on these and other business-related topics and can be accessed by entering the relevant keywords into a search engine:

- exploring reasons for the success or failure of an actual business takeover or merger
- evaluating a marketing campaign
- marketing a product
- studying the features of an energy-efficient office building
- organizing an international conference
- weighing the advantages and disadvantages of electric vehicles as company cars
- improving the accessibility of an office building
- choosing a location for a company
- choosing a trade fair to exhibit a company's products

On its website, Carleton College offers sample case studies for disciplines such as biology, business, economics, and health sciences (see https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/cases/examples.html). Davis and Wilcock (2003, 12) outline some topics suitable for case studies in science and engineering, including "to illustrate why given materials are used for a particular application" (metallic bicycle components) and "to demonstrate the application of theoretical concepts in an item of sporting equipment" (windsurfing masts).

A mini–case study for beginning or intermediate learners may be just one or two pages long (an example is presented below), while more-complex case studies can be ten pages or longer. Case studies are suitable for a range of class sizes because a large class can be divided into groups, usually of about six students. The resolution of a simple case study frequently involves making suggestions or deciding on the best option. Teachers can use a short case study after having covered a topic as a way to give students the opportunity to apply the

A case study should be based on the description of a particular situation or conflict-arousing issue to which students can relate.

language they have learned, combining it with skills required to communicate effectively in meetings and presentations. Dealing with longer, complex cases is time-consuming, so it is recommended that students read the material and answer guiding questions for homework before class. If complex case studies are used, teachers need to consider how to integrate them into the course syllabus.

IMPLEMENTING THE CASE STUDY

According to the BU Center for Teaching & Learning (n.d.), a case study usually consists of the following features:

- A decision-maker who is grappling with a question or problem that needs to be solved
- A description of the problem's context (a law, an industry, a family)
- Supporting data, which can range from data tables to links to URLs, quoted statements or testimony, supporting documents, images, video, and audio

General guidelines and steps for implementing a case study

The following guidelines can help students write a case study:

- When you are writing a case study, you are *telling a story*. Do not analyze the situation; just describe it.
- You need to address the following questions:
    - o Who are the protagonists, and what are their roles? (Change the names if they are based on real people.)
    - o What are the key problems and issues?
    - o What background information and relevant facts do others need to know to understand the case?
- Make sure your story is coherent. This means that the argumentation needs to be consistent. The order of events—the timeline—must be easy for a reader to follow, and the relationship between cause and effect in the events must be clear.
- Provide *supporting data* if necessary (links to statistics, facts about the problem, a video that provides useful background information, etc.).
- Use *paragraphs* to structure the information. Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one aspect of your story and backed up with details. When you move on to another aspect, start a new paragraph.

The case-study method usually involves the following steps:

Step 1: The teacher introduces the situation and, if necessary, relevant vocabulary.

Step 2: Everyone reads the case study and analyzes additional materials.

The following procedure can help students analyze a case systematically:

- o describe the context of the situation/problem
- o describe the main issues/problems
- o describe the causes of the problem (there is usually more than one)

- identify possible solutions
- determine the advantages and disadvantages of each option
- decide on the best solution/action

Step 3: Students discuss possible solutions, usually in small groups.

Students may visually represent the aspects of the case by drawing a mind map or mapping out the elements of the story and the relationships of the people involved, causes of the problem, and possible solutions.

Step 4: Students present and justify the solutions, usually with the whole class.

Step 5: Everyone participates in a feedback session, typically led by the teacher.

Step 6: Students reflect on the case study itself and on the procedure.

The duration of each step, particularly the reading and discussion stages, depends on the length and complexity of the case study.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE IMPLEMENTING A CASE STUDY

Teachers should address the following questions before initiating a case study:

1. Features of the case study

- What is the estimated time needed for the analysis of the case study and the presentation and discussion of solutions?
- Is the case study realistic and complex enough—does it have sufficient facts and background information, and are supporting documents provided that are essential for solving the case?
- Do students have to research additional information? If so, how can they access it? Are questions provided to guide students?
- How will solutions be presented—through whole-class discussions, with presentations, or in a final report?

2. Students' prior knowledge and motivation

- Can students relate to the situation presented in the case study, and do they have the necessary experience to analyze and solve the problem?
- Do students have sufficient linguistic competence (lexical and grammatical knowledge) to understand the text, and are they able to produce the relevant vocabulary and grammatical structures during the discussion?
- Do students have the necessary knowledge of language functions to participate in a discussion (e.g., expressing an opinion, summarizing an argument, agreeing, disagreeing, interrupting politely, holding the floor when they want to continue speaking, reaching a negotiated conclusion)?
- Are students familiar with the conventions of the genres they are expected to produce, such as writing a report or making a presentation?

3. Assessment and feedback

- Will students be assessed? If so, what skills will be assessed? What criteria will be applied?
- Will there be reflection regarding the content and procedure of the case study?

By playing the role of someone else, student interviewees do not have to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses, which makes the situation less personal and less face-threatening.

- How will feedback on language and functional skills be provided?

EXAMPLE OF A SHORT CASE STUDY

This case study is suitable for students of different backgrounds and can be adapted. It actively involves learners and creates opportunities to communicate about a situation they can relate to or are familiar with. After studying the vocabulary of character traits, learners apply it to a specific case that resembles a real-life situation. Furthermore, they use their reading skills and employ their oral skills when interacting and expressing opinions with others. They also have the opportunity to practice their writing skills in a follow-up activity. The time needed is about 45 to 60 minutes.

Procedure:

1. Elicit from students character traits that are desirable for people in helping professions; write the traits on the board. Below is a list of personality traits that are desirable for social workers:

    - empathetic (able to understand how other people feel)
    - assertive (able to express their views clearly without being aggressive and to stand up for their own and other people's rights in a reasonable and clear way)
    - persistent (unwilling to give up easily)
    - reliable (can be counted on)
    - flexible (open-minded; willing to consider different points of view)
    - resilient (able to recover easily from difficult situations)
    - patient (able to stay calm and uncomplaining, especially in difficult situations)
    - committed to the job (willing to work hard to do a good job)
    - organized (able to plan procedures effectively and manage time well)
    - self-confident (confident in one's own abilities and knowledge)

2. Have students work individually or in small groups. Tell students that they will form part of a committee that selects a candidate for a nongovernmental organization (NGO). Give each student or group a handout with the description of the candidates (see Table 2) and the Candidate Assessment Form (see Table 3). If there are no photocopying facilities available, explain the situation to the students and read the information about each candidate to students so that they can take notes. Circulate among students to answer questions later.

3. Let students fill in the assessment form in Table 3. If there are no photocopying facilities, write the assessment template on the board for students to copy.

4. In small groups, have students decide on a candidate and present their arguments for selecting him or her for the NGO position. The teacher and other students can ask further questions along the lines of the following:

    - Does it make a difference if the job is done by a man or woman?
    - How important is a person's age for this type of job?
    - Would your choice have been influenced by knowing the people's names, especially names that hint at the person's ethnicity?

5. Provide feedback on language aspects, those that were strong and those that can be improved.

6. Assign a written task or homework. Ask students to comment on the importance of relevant training, professional experience, and interpersonal skills—in general or for a chosen profession.

The role-play option

The above case study has been used with students in the field of social work who have an intermediate level of English. It is a model that teachers can adapt to suit their needs by using a job offer that is relevant for their students and by devising profiles of suitable candidates. The profiles should match the requirements of the job but should have some weaknesses to make the case more realistic. Optionally, students can be asked to role-play the job interview. Doing so allows them to experience the environment of the case instead of just using their cognitive skills to analyze it.

Who is the best candidate for the job?
Situation ASA is a nongovernmental organization that provides life skills and job-search skills to unemployed young people and to vulnerable adults in an effort to place them in a job or job training. Some of the clients have dropped out of school, and most of them have not completed a job-training program. The organization is looking for someone who will provide life-skills training for the clients to enable them to organize their daily routines, manage money, and manage frustration and conflict. The person should also be able to help clients with their application to find a job, an internship, or an opportunity for further education. Four people have been shortlisted for the job. In your opinion, who is the best candidate? Read the descriptions and fill in the assessment form.
Candidate 1 Candidate 1 is a trained school teacher. She holds a certificate in arts therapy (using art to overcome personal problems) and has implemented interesting school projects. She grew bored with her work at a private school and decided to look for a job in another sector. She is in her mid-30s and is an open-minded, creative, and assertive person.
Candidate 2 Candidate 2 is a social worker with a specialization in school social work. He has just graduated from university and has completed an internship as a street and outreach social worker. He has a friendly, patient, and reliable personality but is a bit shy.
Candidate 3 Candidate 3 is just under 30 years old. He does not have much experience as a social worker, but he has worked in various casual jobs before obtaining a social-work degree. He has lived in difficult and even dangerous conditions in some cities and has been homeless for a short time. The candidate has a cheerful and lively personality and is committed to helping disadvantaged people. However, he does not seem very interested in the paperwork and the bureaucracy that form part of the job.
Candidate 4 Candidate 4 is in her 50s. She has many years of experience as a social worker, particularly working with young people who are dealing with problems. She has changed jobs several times, mostly because she did not seem to get along with her bosses. She is an assertive person and takes a strict attitude toward her clients.

Table 2. Description of situation and job candidates

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT FORM

Assign points to each candidate by using the following scale:

1 – Meets all of the requirements

2 – Meets most of the requirements

3 – Meets some of the requirements

4 – Does not meet any of the requirements

Candidate 1

Educational Background	Relevant Job Experience	Interpersonal Skills	Strengths/ Weaknesses
1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	

Candidate 2

Educational Background	Relevant Job Experience	Interpersonal Skills	Strengths/ Weaknesses
1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	

Candidate 3

Educational Background	Relevant Job Experience	Interpersonal Skills	Strengths/ Weaknesses
1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	

Candidate 4

Educational Background	Relevant Job Experience	Interpersonal Skills	Strengths/ Weaknesses
1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	1 2 3 4 Comments:	

Table 3. Candidate Assessment Form

The students who serve on the interview panel prepare interview questions (see Table 4). They can devise an assessment sheet or use the form in Table 3; interviewees create their own profile (see Table 5). By playing the role of someone else, student interviewees do not have to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses, which makes the situation less personal and less face-threatening. After the interviews, the interview panel decides on the best candidate. The ideal number of participants for the role play is six or seven students, depending on the number of candidates. Larger groups can be divided to conduct separate role plays.

During the reflection stage, the panel's decision is discussed, and students comment on the experience of participating in the role play. The teacher gives feedback on students' performances. In addition, students should have an opportunity to make suggestions on aspects of the case study that could be adapted or improved.

STUDENT-GENERATED CASE STUDIES

An interesting option—although it may not be practical in every teaching situation—is for students to create a case study based on their own experiences inside or outside school. They might create a study on a professional situation or a problem they are familiar with, such a business challenge or the risks to privacy that the inconsiderate use of social networks entails. The case study can then be used in class for analysis and discussion, with the goal being to discuss and decide on reasonable solutions and approaches for dealing with the situation or problem. Students should have an intermediate or advanced level of English and be familiar with the case-study method.

CONCLUSION

Using case studies requires some planning and preparation but can be an exciting method in the language-learning classroom. Students are more actively engaged when solving a problem than when just reading a text and answering questions. The method allows EFL learners to practice different types of language skills in communicative situations and combine linguistic skills with analytical and/or interpersonal skills. In addition, the case-study method is highly adaptable in terms of topic areas, complexity of content, linguistic difficulty, and length. If necessary, teachers can write their own simple cases or create more-complex case studies in collaboration with colleagues who teach specific subject areas. Students themselves can create original case studies as a way to relate the method to their own interests and experiences.

You form part of the interview panel. Based on the job offer, you and the other members of the interview panel make a list of questions you want to ask the candidates about their motivations to apply for the job, their qualifications, and their experience. Include behavioral questions such as, "Tell us how you have handled a difficult situation." You also need to create an assessment form. Then interview the candidates and take notes on their answers. After the interviews, you and the other members of the panel decide on the best candidate.

Table 4. Role card for the members of the interview panel

You have been invited to a job interview. Based on the job offer, create your profile. It should fit the job profile and include strengths and one or two weaknesses (nobody is perfect). Prepare yourself for the interview: How are you going to present your qualifications, experiences, and strengths? How can you present your weaknesses in a positive way?

Table 5. Role card for the interviewees

An interesting option … is for students to create a case study based on their own experiences inside or outside school.

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Answers to *The Lighter Side*

Second-Letter *Y*

1. by
2. eyes
3. lying
4. type
5. cyclist
6. xylophone
7. gymnastics
8. python
9. lyrics
10. synonym
11. hyphen
12. pyramid
13. cylinder
14. syllables
15. mystery

READER'S GUIDE

This guide is designed to enrich your reading of the articles in this issue. You may choose to read them on your own, taking notes or jotting down answers to the discussion questions below. Or you may use the guide to explore the articles with colleagues.

For example, many teachers discuss *Forum* at regularly scheduled meetings with department colleagues and members of teachers' groups, or in teacher-training courses and workshops. Often, teachers choose an article for their group to read before the meeting or class, then discuss that article when they meet. Teachers have found it helpful to take notes on articles or write a response to an article and bring that response to share in a discussion group. Another idea is for teachers to try a selected activity or technique described in one of the articles, then report back to the group on their experiences and discuss positives, negatives, and possible adaptations for their teaching context.

Online Reading Strategies for the Classroom
(Pages 2–11)

Pre-Reading

1. Think about your reading habits. What percentage of your reading is done online? What percentage is done on paper? What about your students—do they usually read online, or do they mainly read in print?

2. What differences can you think of between how you read online material and how you read material that is in print?

3. What basic strategies do you try to get your students to use in order to improve their reading comprehension and fluency? Are those strategies the same whether your students are reading online or reading something on paper? If not, how do the strategies differ?

Post-Reading

1. Did reading the article convince you that different strategies are needed for reading online and for reading in print? If so, what are the main reasons?

2. The author presents three strategies that can help language learners (and others) be efficient and productive online readers. Choose a reading assignment that you usually give to students. How can you incorporate one or more of the strategies in that assignment?

3. Can you apply any of the suggested strategies to your reading assignments, even if your students are reading in print rather than online?

4. The author provides several organizers. Before you assign any of them to your students, choose one (such as a blank version of Table 1). Select a reading passage or article—one you have assigned to your students or one they might read when doing research. Complete the organizer, based on that reading. How easy or difficult was it to complete the organizer? How does completing the organizer yourself better prepare you to explain a similar assignment to your students?

How to Write an ELT Conference Abstract (Pages 12–23)

Pre-Reading

1. Have you ever submitted a proposal to give a presentation (or another kind of session, such as a workshop) at a conference? How did you know what to include and how to write it? What was the result?
2. Pick a topic that you would like to give a conference presentation on. Now write a draft of an abstract to explain to the selection committee what you will do in the session and what it will cover. Put the draft aside and keep it so that you can refer to it after you have read the article.

Post-Reading

1. Make a quick list of what you have learned by reading this article. Did anything surprise you?
2. If you have written conference abstracts before, do you agree with everything in the article? Does your own experience match the procedure and explanations given by the author?
3. Take out the draft of the abstract you wrote for Pre-Reading Question 2 and review/analyze it according to the information in the article. What moves did you use? If you were to revise it, what would you add, delete, or change? Consider exchanging drafts with a colleague and peer-reviewing each other's abstract, then revising.
4. If your students give presentations in class, have them submit abstracts to you before they present. What are the advantages of having them do this? How could you use the information in this article to make the assignment as productive as possible?

Using a Case Study in the EFL Classroom (Pages 24–33)

Pre-Reading

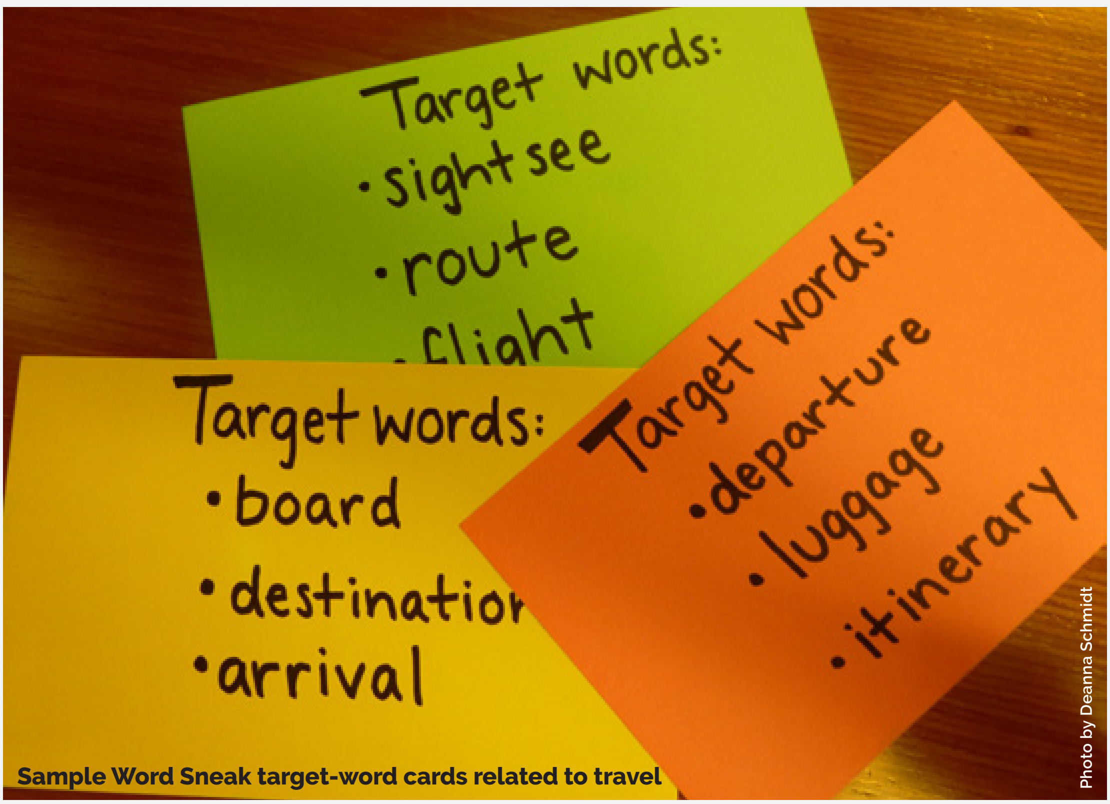
1. When you hear the term "case study," what do you think of? How would you explain what a case study is to someone who is not familiar with the term? If you are not sure what it means, what do you *think* it might mean?
2. What expectations do you have for the article after you read the title? Make a list of the courses you teach. In which course(s) do you think a case study would be the most useful for helping students reach the goals of the course(s)?

Post-Reading

1. Table 1 lists advantages and possible challenges related to using case studies. Think about your own teaching situation. For you, do the advantages outweigh the challenges? Which advantage(s) could convince you to try a case study in your teaching? Which challenge might concern you the most?
2. Return to the list you made in Pre-Reading Question 2 of the courses you teach. Now that you have read the article, in which course(s) would using a case study be most appropriate? Can you use the topic in the author's example (choosing a candidate for a position) in your classes? If not, could you adapt it so that it is a better fit?
3. With a colleague, brainstorm case-study topics that might be useful in the courses you teach. Pick a topic and plan how you would fit it into a course. What would you do first? What would be the most difficult challenges you would face?

The Tonight Show Vocabulary-Review Games

by KELLY KEEGAN



Sample Word Sneak target-word cards related to travel

I've been a fan of the American comedian Jimmy Fallon ever since he began on *Saturday Night Live* (a comedy-sketch program) more than 20 years ago. Now that he is the host of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, I particularly enjoy watching him play silly games with his celebrity guests. Luckily for language teachers, these entertaining games are often word games related to pop culture, so with a few changes, I was able to adapt two of these games to use in my English-language-learning classroom.

I teach an intensive class for college-level students that focuses on learning the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) vocabulary, so I wanted to create and play vocabulary-review games that encourage flexibility and spontaneity in authentic contexts. My students were good at memorizing dictionary definitions of the TOEIC words but often struggled when using those words freely in conversation or discussions. In many vocabulary-review games, students simply report memorized

These games give students the opportunity to practice using their vocabulary in creative and interactive ways.

dictionary definitions, but my goal was to create games that give students opportunities to use the specific TOEIC words in conversation and storytelling.

I also wanted to play games that are lighthearted and allow students to get to know one another better. These *Tonight Show* games naturally require creativity and quick turn-taking, reflecting authentic usage. As a result, students can improve their overall fluency while playing—and laugh a lot in the process. These games give students the opportunity to practice using their vocabulary in creative and interactive ways.

Note that you need to teach or assign the target vocabulary as homework before playing these games. Students should already be familiar with the meanings and common usages of the target words. The first time you play, you will need at least 20 to 25 minutes to explain the rules, demonstrate and/or model, and have students play. After that, these games could easily be used as a warm-up activity of five to ten minutes. Little preparation time is required by the teacher.

GAME 1: WORD SNEAK

The materials you will need are notecards or paper, a marker, a timer or bell, and possibly a noisemaker for each group.

The objective is for each player to "sneak" or secretly use selected target words in a casual conversation with a partner or small group without others noticing the use of the target word(s). Students must be good listeners in order to follow the flow of conversation, respond, and at the same time creatively shift the conversation so that they can use their own secret word(s).

Step 1: Explain or model how the original game is played. When Fallon plays this game on his show, he and his guest are each given five random words or names as their secret words. For example, Fallon might have a stack of cards that say *Pokémon*, *jellyfish*, *zucchini*, *ninja*, and *LeBron James*. He must begin a casual conversation with his guest (by asking a general question, such as "How was your weekend?" or "What movies have you watched lately?") and then somehow slip in his first secret word, *Pokémon*, while his guest is trying to do the same with his or her secret words. Once Fallon has successfully used *Pokémon* in the conversation, a bell rings, alerting his guest that he used a secret word, and Fallon can then move on to his second word, *jellyfish*. Fallon's goal is to use all five of his secret words before his guest finishes all five of his or her words. The game is over when both players have used all their secret words.

If you have access to the Internet in your classroom, you might begin by showing a video clip of Fallon playing this game with a guest on his show. On YouTube, you can find examples with a variety of celebrity guests. The clip with comedian and actor Melissa McCarthy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mSeY9WGYMs) is a clear example that I have used in class. If you want, you can let the students guess or discuss the objectives of this game, then explain that they will be sneaking in their own target words instead

You need to teach or assign the target vocabulary as homework before playing these games.

Make sure the prompt is on a broad topic so that students can maximize opportunities to manipulate the conversation and sneak in their word(s).

of Fallon's random, silly words. Model an example before letting the students play on their own.

If you do not have Internet access in your classroom, you can demonstrate the game with a student, with the class as a whole, or by having two students play a sample game in front of the class.

Step 2: Divide your class into pairs or small groups. Pairs will allow for maximum talk time for each student; however, if you have a large class, groups of three or four students would also work well. Give each student a notecard with at least one target word written on it. You can give each student one target word or up to five target words, depending on the time available and the abilities of your students.

Step 3: Prepare a general conversation prompt for all groups to discuss or, for advanced students, brainstorm questions with your class to give them conversation-starter ideas before beginning the game. Make sure the prompt is on a broad topic so that students can maximize opportunities to manipulate the conversation and sneak in their word(s). You might also prepare a prompt related to the topic or theme of your target words. For example, in my TOEIC class, we were studying words related to traveling. We had target words such as *departure*, *board*, *destination*, and *itinerary*, so my conversation prompt was, "Where have you traveled?" The prompts could also be tailored to help students practice specific grammar structures (past, present perfect, future, hypotheticals, modals, etc.), depending on the lesson objectives.

Once you have revealed the prompt, you might give students a short amount of time (one or two minutes) to review their word(s) and/or think about how they would like to try sneaking the word(s) into their conversation. A student with the word *itinerary*, for example, might start talking about a recent family vacation and mention how his or her father planned an annoyingly detailed itinerary for everyone to follow.

Step 4: Set a time limit of about four or five minutes. Depending on the skill level of your students, you might want to make the time shorter or longer. You don't want to give students too much time, however, because they should feel pressure to use their word(s) as soon as possible in the conversation. Give each group some kind of noisemaker for students to ring or shake when they successfully use their target word(s) in the conversation. If noise is an issue in your classroom, students can simply raise their hands or count as they move through their words. For example, after they use their first word, they would say, "One!" Even if students have used all their word(s), they should continue having a conversation until the timer goes off to end the game.

Step 5: When the timer goes off—or when you tell students that time is up and the game is over—students should share their secret target word(s) with their partner or group by showing their notecards. For an added listening challenge, you could have students guess each other's target words to see how well they were able to casually sneak the words into the conversation.

Step 6: If you have time, rotate the notecards to different partners or groups to give each student a new target word or set of words. You could also mix the pairs or groups to give students a new speaking partner, and you

The more creative and detailed the stories are, the harder it should be for the storyteller's classmates to detect a lie.

could offer a different conversation prompt to keep students engaged.

Step 7: At the end of your allotted playing time, collect the notecards from all the students. Choose a few words randomly from the stack and have students volunteer any funny or clever examples about how those words were used in their conversations.

GAME 2: BOX OF LIES

The materials you will need are notecards or paper, a marker, and a timer or bell.

The objective of Box of Lies is to tell a story that is either true or made up, using target vocabulary. Partners or group members must decide whether or not the story they heard is true by asking questions to reveal more clues from the storyteller.

Step 1: Explain or model the original game. On *The Tonight Show*, Fallon and his guest sit across from each other with a black screen between them. One at a time, Fallon and his guest choose from six to ten boxes, each with a mystery item inside. They open their chosen box behind the black screen so that their partner cannot see what is inside. Once the box is opened, they must either describe the item exactly or tell a lie and describe a completely different item. The items are always ridiculous, like miniature gnome figurines doing yoga or a dinosaur toy wearing a ballerina outfit. The partner listens carefully to the description and asks questions in order to determine whether the description is the truth or a lie. Then the partner must make a guess by shouting either "Truth!" or "Lie!" If the person is correct, he or she earns a point. Fallon and his guest play for an allotted time; when time is up, the one with the most points is declared the winner.

If your classroom has Internet access, you can show a clip of Fallon playing Box of Lies with a celebrity guest. The clip with actor Chris Pratt (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md4QnipNYqM) offers a clear example. Let the students guess or discuss the objective of this game, and then explain that they will play a similar game. Instead of having boxes with secret items, they will tell a story that is either a true experience or a fictional experience, using their given target word. Model an example before letting students play on their own. If your classroom does not have Internet access, explain the game carefully and model it to make sure students know the purpose of the game and how to play it before they begin.

Step 2: Divide your class into partners or small groups. Distribute notecards with one target word on each card. Give a stack of about six to ten cards to each pair or group.

Step 3: One student draws a card from the stack and must tell a story using the target word on that card. Unlike the mystery black boxes, this target word is *not* a secret and can be revealed to the partner or group if desired. The story can be either a true story or a creative, made-up lie. If we use the same example of travel-related TOEIC words from above, a student with the target word *departure* might tell a true story about waiting at the *departure* gate in the airport when traveling to the United States for a study-abroad semester—or a false story about an unexpected late bus *departure* that made the student miss a cousin's wedding ceremony. The more creative and detailed the stories are, the harder it should be for the storyteller's classmates to detect a lie. You

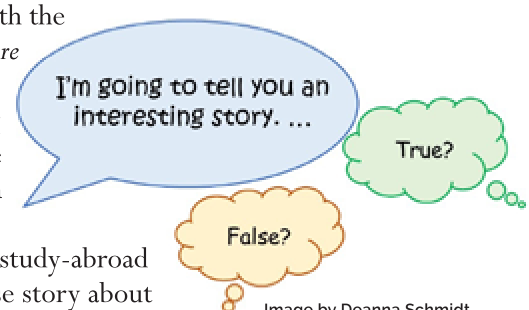


Image by Deanna Schmidt

Offering different vocabulary words and/or modifying the prompts for each level is an option for differentiating instruction.

might want to give students a minute or two (you can set a timer for this) to think about what they want to say before sharing the story with their partner(s).

Step 4: Once the story is told, the partner or group members listening to it can ask questions to gather more information before making a guess. Classmates should ask detailed questions specific to the story, such as "When did this event happen?"; "Who was with you?"; and "How long did you wait?" The storyteller's answers, facial expressions, or hesitation in answering could reveal clues about whether he or she is telling the truth. After questioning, the partner or group members must declare "Truth!" or "Lie!" by shouting out their guess. (In some classrooms, they might have to "shout" quietly so they don't disturb others.)

Step 5: After the partner or group members have guessed, the storytelling student must say truthfully whether the story was true or not.

Step 6: The next student picks a card with a different target word, and the game is played in the same way. Students can continue until all the words from their given stack are used or until the allotted time is over.

Step 7: Collect the notecards from all the groups. Draw a few cards randomly and have students volunteer funny or clever examples about how the words on those cards were used in their groups.

POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

I prefer having students play these games without keeping track of points or declaring a winner. In my experience, students seem satisfied with simply knowing that they tricked their listener(s) or used target words appropriately. If you would like to add a competitive element, you could have students or groups collect points for each successful use of a target word in either game, and winners could be declared.

In addition, teachers with students of varying skill levels might find it useful to pair or group students according to their level or abilities. Offering different vocabulary words and/or modifying the prompts for each level is an option for differentiating instruction.

Lastly, these games could be played with a target grammar objective combined with a vocabulary objective. In that case, you could include grammar on the notecards with the target words. For example, you could list the word *departure* along with a grammar focus like *present perfect*. For both games, the student would have to use the word *departure* in the story or conversation while also using the present perfect tense.

Above all, I hope you find these games useful and adaptable to your classroom and context. Using these games in my classroom has been a fun and successful way for students to get to know each other better, build fluency, and practice using their target vocabulary in an authentic context.

Kelly Keegan has been an English Language Fellow in the Philippines. She currently teaches English as a second language classes at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

MY CLASSROOM TURKEY

The office door opened with a slow, gentle knock.

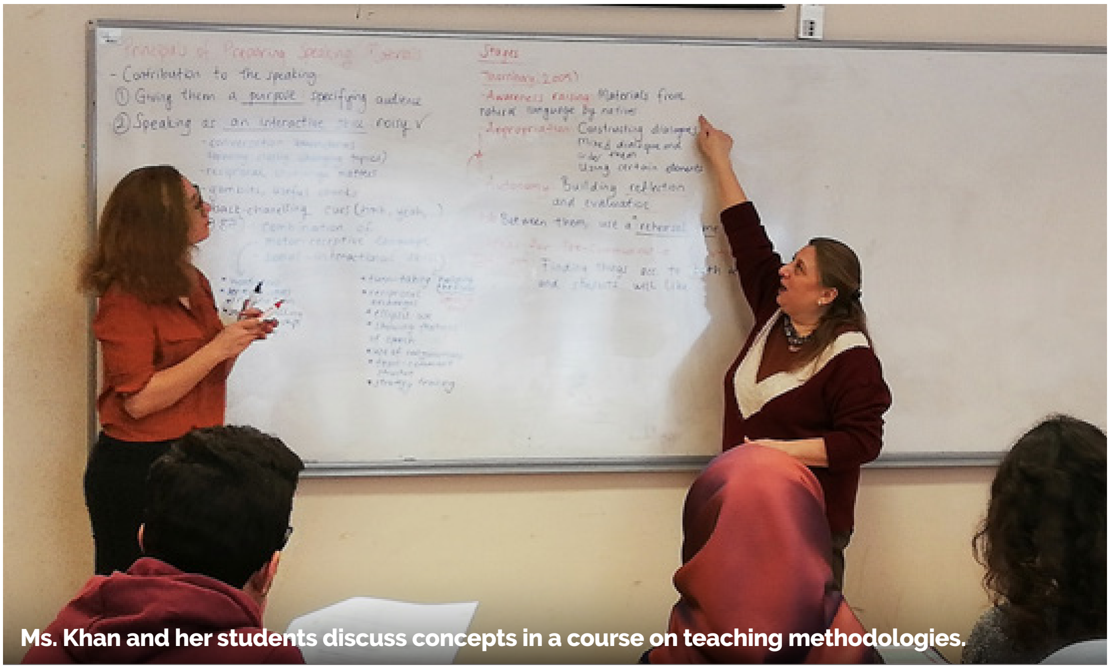
"Teacher," the woman said as she entered, smiling.

"Welcome," the teacher replied, rising from her seat and stretching her arms out to embrace the woman who entered.

The woman took out a square package and handed it to her. The teacher slowly unwrapped it, and the words captured in a white frame began to show.

Life is the biggest task, it said.

Özlem Khan outside her office in the Department of English Language Teaching at Hacettepe University in Ankara



Ms. Khan and her students discuss concepts in a course on teaching methodologies.

“This is a reflection of my journey of learning with you,” the woman said, grinning. “It’s been a challenging task … but rewarding.”

The teacher, Özlem Khan, looked at her former student and replied gently. “It’s the same for me. Every term presents new challenges but reaps new rewards.”

Ms. Khan’s sentiment reflects her approach to teaching. She fosters autonomy in her students—future English language teachers in Turkey—through instructing them on how they can use learner-centered teaching strategies in their own classrooms.

In 2013, Turkey’s Ministry of National Education enacted reforms in primary schools that focus on learner-centered evaluation methods. Within this framework, the government increased the use of English language teaching (ELT) in schools. Partly as a result of these changes, Ms. Khan, a lecturer in the Department of English Language Teaching at Hacettepe University in Ankara, takes her preservice teachers—undergraduate senior students—to primary and secondary schools throughout Ankara for them to conduct teaching lessons as a part of their spring practicum. Ms. Khan has an average of 200 students each semester, and about 50 of them are fourth-year practicum students. These students are earning their bachelor’s degrees in ELT, and they are eager to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in Ms. Khan’s courses.

“Students are very receptive to get your feedback on their teaching,” Ms. Khan says. “They are ready to engage with students in an authentic classroom setting and critically reflect on their own teaching.”

Ms. Khan is a practicum instructor, and this involves many tasks. In the fall term, she asks her practicum students to research different topics, from classroom management to communicative teaching methods, and then discuss the topics with one another. They also write about learner-centered strategies they plan to use in the classroom during the spring semester, when they go to private secondary schools and give lessons.

In the spring, in addition to observing the preservice teachers, Ms. Khan coordinates with schools, knocking on doors searching for certified teachers and asking if a school will allow students to come and deliver lessons. Teaching the practicum course means the students and Ms. Khan are in the schools with the in-service teachers and

It is not in the number of students taught that she finds motivation and inspiration; instead, she says, it is in "seeing the change in the students."

their students. The practicum students know in advance the grading criteria for their lesson demonstrations at the schools, and the host teacher also sees the criteria, which are established by the Ministry of National Education.

"By showing the in-service teachers the grading criteria, they are informed about the new trends. Every spring semester is an opportunity for me to further train practicing teachers," Ms. Khan says.

For 11 years, Ms. Khan has been teaching undergraduate students at Hacettepe University; however, her teaching career began far sooner. Before coming to Hacettepe, she spent five years teaching English language to high school students in private schools.


The Faculty of Education building at Hacettepe University, where Ms. Khan teaches

"Teaching in high schools was challenging in terms of motivating the students," Ms. Khan says. "However, it was also rewarding because once the students gained higher levels of proficiency, it felt fulfilling, as I saw their progress because of my being able to use learner-centered strategies."

After teaching in high schools, she traveled to the United States and earned a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Colorado State University and a master's in education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Ms. Khan then returned to Turkey to serve as a lecturer at Hacettepe, and she stands out as having a strong impact on Turkey's ELT community. As a lecturer, she instructs undergraduate courses to future English language teachers, focusing on teaching methodologies, materials development, applied linguistics, and teaching using literature. She has also shared her knowledge with the ELT field. With a local colleague, she recently published an article on materials development by teacher-trainees on how to teach idioms; she has written a book chapter on the principles of materials development; and she has presented at conferences on textbook analysis and materials development, with a focus on vocabulary and speaking.

For Ms. Khan, however, the greatest reward is the strong impact her preservice teachers have on their own students as they begin and move forward in their teaching careers. She inspires them to have a positive influence on others by fostering their own students' creativity and success. Fostering this creativity, for her students, often means adapting textbooks and prescribed curricular materials for a learner-centered classroom.

“I don’t want my students to be bound to prescribed materials.”

“I don’t want my students to be bound to prescribed materials,” Ms. Khan says. “I encourage them to be flexible as teachers. If they allow themselves to be bound to the textbook, then learning becomes monotonous. My practicum students are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks and materials, and they can adapt them easily before and while giving a lesson. Through this, they are able to be more curious and creative. I’m hoping once they start practicing, they can set a model for the other teachers.”

Ms. Khan also coordinates observation topics for her preservice students to integrate into the existing material covered by the teacher of a given course, and then she observes the preservice students’ lesson demonstrations and provides them feedback. Some topics she has coordinated are the teaching of the present perfect and present progressive and the differences between the two tenses.

“I have constant one-on-one meetings with my students,” she says. “I encourage them to prepare materials on their own and critically reflect on their teaching experiences and become autonomous learners.”

Ms. Khan and a student discuss a course on materials development.

One way Ms. Khan fosters her students’ creativity and autonomy is in the teaching methodologies practicum courses, where she asks students to conduct microteachings to one another and then provide structured peer feedback. “They aren’t outsiders,” she says. “They are in the learning process, so I want them to make a connection between their prior learning experiences—because they are learners themselves—so they need to understand their own learning.”

Having discussions with peers includes comparing what is learned in her classes and what might happen in real life. Ms. Khan notes that students “learn how to bridge the gap between what is learned in the classroom in their degree program and what they may experience out in the field as new teachers.” Students not only learn from conducting the teachings to their peers but also learn how to provide constructive peer feedback. Ms. Khan says, “Providing peer feedback allows them to develop their skills in critical analysis and apply it to real situations they would encounter in their careers.”

This feedback on their microteachings is in addition to the feedback received by Ms. Khan on their teaching demonstrations in secondary schools in the spring. Before delivering a teaching demonstration, her practicum students research and brainstorm strategies to handle issues faced in the classroom. Then, after conducting a lesson, they self-reflect on their teaching and compare the experience with their prior knowledge, learned through research and discussion.

One common issue faced in the classroom is the feasibility of employing group work. Ms. Khan uses group work at the university level, but in primary and secondary schools in Turkey, group work is often not employed because of large class sizes. Ms. Khan asks students, before going into their practicum teaching, to brainstorm strategies they can use to manage group work. After teaching lessons, her students conduct structured self-reflections of their demonstrations before receiving and discussing Ms. Khan's feedback. In the case of using group work, the students self-reflect on which strategies worked in their lesson demonstrations and which did not. Moving forward, Ms. Khan asks students to plan strategies they would use, not use, and modify in the future based on the learning context of the classes. Conducting these brainstorms and self-reflections furthers her students' autonomy as learners and future professionals. The learning is interactive, social, and practical.

Over the years at Hacettepe University, Ms. Khan has seen many students pass through her courses. However, it is not in the number of students taught that she finds motivation and inspiration; instead, she says, it is in "seeing the change in the students."

She then looks down at the framed words her former student gave her and reads the quote aloud in its entirety:

"*Life is the biggest task … all you need is to enjoy learning*."

Ms. Khan looks up and continues.

"The student told me these words reflected how she felt: 'I now enjoy learning, Teacher. And I'm confident now that I will be a better teacher because of what I've done in your classes.'"

Ms. Khan's hand slowly grazes over the face of the frame.

"I see the growth in the students from their first year as freshmen to their fourth year as seniors about to graduate," she says. "When they, as new teachers, are able to give *me* ideas for the classroom and tell me, 'Teacher, we could use this in the classroom'—when they then go to job interviews, they're able to create a lesson plan on the spot—I know I helped them be creative and spontaneous. I find fulfillment in knowing I fostered that

Ms. Khan proudly shows a framed picture given to her by a former student, relaying a message the student learned in her preservice teaching years.

creativity in them and that they're able to experience professional success in their lives."

In that, she encourages her students, who will go into all areas of Turkey, to reach out and, as teachers, open doors for others to travel along the journey of change and growth through the process of learning.

"That," she says, "is the ideal we're hoping for in our students and in ourselves. It's what we should all strive for."

This article was written by **Melissa Van De Wege**, who served as an English Language Fellow in Ankara, Turkey, from 2017 to 2019. Melissa has taught in higher education and has delivered teacher-training workshops on methodologies of English language teaching and the teaching of writing in the United States, Qatar, and Turkey.

Photos by Melissa Van De Wege

TRY THIS

Lip Syncs: Speaking … with a Twist

LEVEL: Upper beginner and above, including older primary students, teens, and uninhibited adults

TIME REQUIRED: 90 minutes for the entire activity, which, if necessary, can be divided over two or more class periods

GOALS: To develop speaking confidence and fluency; to build vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation awareness; to appropriately use nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expressions and gestures); to enjoy and assess lip-sync performances

MATERIALS: Chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers; pencils or pens; paper; a device to play songs (and possibly videos) in the classroom

OPTIONAL MATERIALS: A digital projector or other video playback device; a mobile phone with a video camera or other device for recording student performances; an Internet-connected computer or device that can access and play songs and videos in the classroom (Note: Teachers can download content in advance and play it offline in the classroom if an Internet connection is not available.)

OVERVIEW: Music-based instruction is common in many English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, and the benefits language learners gain from working with songs are well documented (Mobbs and Cuyul 2018). However, some teachers don't stray far from compulsory textbook suggestions for song-based activities, and learners often just sing instructor-selected songs or analyze grammar or vocabulary items in their lyrics. This article describes an alternative way of working with music in the EFL classroom.

I stumbled upon this activity concept while watching a televised lip-syncing show with my own children. While viewing the program, I thought, "Why not do a lip-sync project in my English language class?" Now, after years of conducting these projects, I have found that they motivate learners to understand a listening text, support pronunciation practice, and—perhaps most importantly—allow learners to have fun while developing their speaking confidence and fluency. In sum, lip-syncing activities, such as the one described here, can build class spirit, develop collaboration skills, and encourage language development.

PREPARATION:

1. Select a song that is appropriate for your teaching context. You might consider your students' ages, the song's messages and themes, the relationship between the lyrics and your specific language-teaching goals, and any local copyright or academic fair-use guidelines. Ideally, the song you select will have an accompanying performance video (i.e., a music video, a musical movie performance, or a recorded theater performance) as well as an online video example of an individual or group lip-syncing the song.

- Try to find an accompanying performance video that communicates the song's story or themes. Ideally, the video will clearly show the performer's mouth singing for at least part of the song.

- Search online for the song title and "lip sync" or "lip dub" to locate one or two videos of the song being lip-synced. Lip-sync performances by student groups or performers who are about the same age as your students can be motivating for your class to watch.

For example, the song "My Favorite Things" (Rodgers and Hammerstein 1965) from the movie *The Sound of Music* (1965) could be an effective choice because its lyrics are simple, the song's message is clear, and several online lip-sync videos of it are available:

- An original movie performance clip can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IagRZBvLtw

- An example of a lip-sync video can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IrfGVGAyc4

2. If you plan to use the Lip Sync Planning Worksheet (Figure 3), prepare paper copies of it and of the sections of song lyrics you will to assign to student groups. Alternatives to preparing printed materials are offered below; see Step 8 of the Procedure for details.

PROCEDURE:

1. Show the music video or other performance clip to the class without any sound. Tell learners that as they watch the silent video, they should describe out loud everything they see. Everyone can contribute at any time while the video plays (e.g., "I see lots of children and a lady." … "There's lightning." … "They're laughing!"). This description process can get silly and a bit noisy, but it creates interest in the target content and encourages learners to notice things like body language and facial expressions.

2. Scramble the words in a sentence that summarizes the main idea or actions

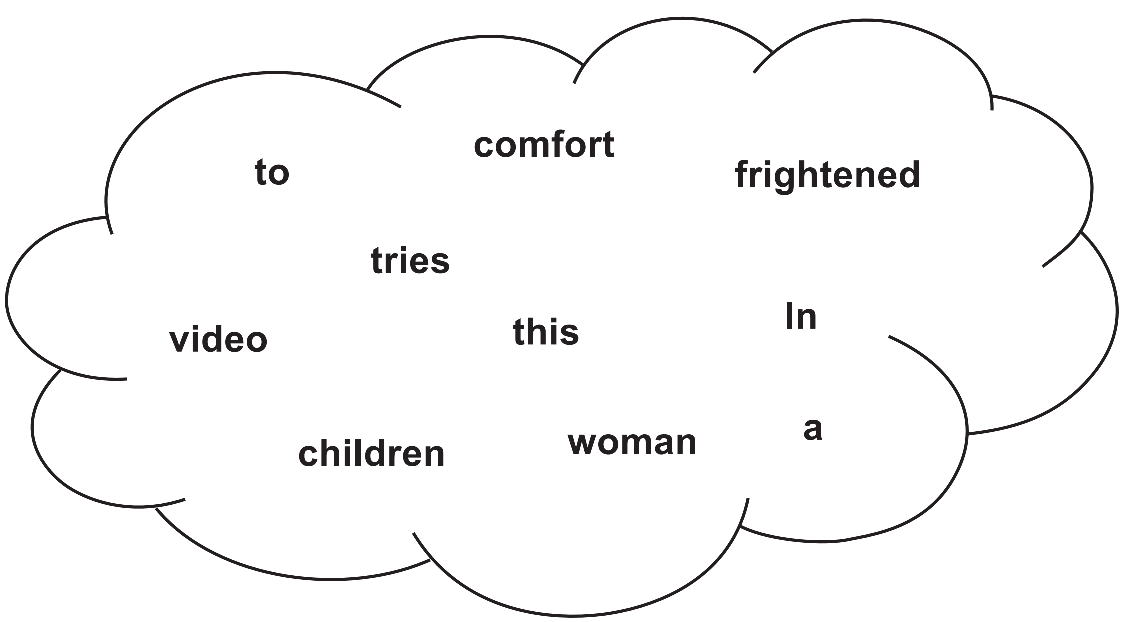
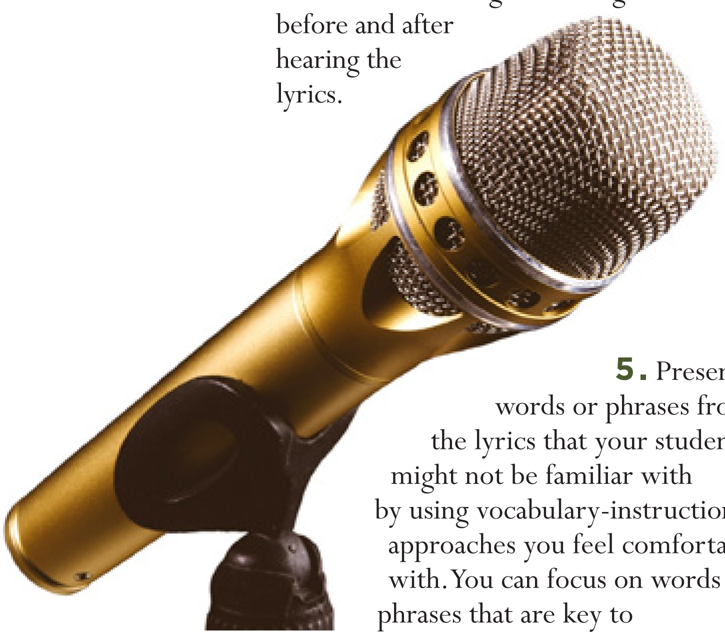


Figure 1. Example sentence scramble for "My Favorite Things"

shown in the video and write them on a board. Figure 1 gives an example of a sentence scramble related to "My Favorite Things." Tell students to unscramble the words and write the sentence down on a piece of paper. (A possible summary sentence is *In this video, a woman tries to comfort frightened children*.) Ask learners to check their answer with a classmate and to briefly discuss whether they think any other information should be added to the sentence.

3. Ask the class if anyone can name the song in the video; write the title on the board.

4. Play the video again, this time with the volume turned on. Ask learners to listen to the lyrics as they watch in order to determine whether their guesses about the song's content and themes were correct. Sometimes it is helpful to give learners a moment to listen and watch with no task so they can put the pieces together for themselves and just think. But you can also ask learners to take notes about the main content or new language that they notice, to sequence the events, or to make a list of characters or objects in the video. Afterwards, the class can have a discussion, possibly comparing what students thought the song was about before and after hearing the lyrics.



5. Present words or phrases from the lyrics that your students might not be familiar with by using vocabulary-instruction approaches you feel comfortable with. You can focus on words or phrases that are key to understanding the song's main message, or you might highlight vocabulary items that overlap with content from your textbook and curriculum. For "My Favorite Things," the vocabulary list might include *whiskers*, *copper kettles*, *brown-paper packages*, *crisp apple strudels*, etc. As a class, review other words or phrases that the students identified as unfamiliar when they watched the video in Step 4. The goal is to make learners comfortable with the song's meaning and related vocabulary.

6. Prepare the class to watch one or two lip-sync videos featuring the song. Write the term *lip sync* on the board and ask for definitions or examples from the class. Explain that the class is going to watch a lip-synced performance of the song in the video they watched earlier. Tell students to pay attention to what they like about the lip-synced performance; intermediate and advanced students might want to make written notes as they watch.

7. After students have watched the video, guide the class in compiling criteria that define an effective lip-syncing performance. Write students' ideas on the board (see Figure 2). If required, replay the lip-sync video and add items to the list.

8. Break the class into groups of two to six students. (In smaller classes, pairs might work best.) Based on your students' proficiency level, assign each group a portion of the lyrics to lip-sync. For example, you might assign upper beginners just a few lines, while advanced groups might be assigned much longer parts. You might also assign the groups different verses but have the entire class lip-sync the chorus (the part of the song that is repeated several times). If you have a large class, you can assign the same section of the song to multiple groups. Give written copies of the assigned lyrics

Good lip-sync performers …

- know the lyrics
- aren't shy
- use gestures (body movements) and their face to show feelings that match the words
- move their mouths clearly
- sing as fast or slow as the song

Figure 2. Sample learner-brainstormed criteria for effective lip syncs

to each group—or display the lyrics on the board or with a projector and let students copy down their assigned sections.

9. Pass out a copy of the Lip Sync Planning Worksheet (Figure 3) to each group or write the information on the board for students to copy.

10. Tell students they will have about 30 minutes to complete the worksheet and practice before performing their lip-synced section.

- Remind students to review the list of criteria for effective lip syncs as they prepare.
- Suggest that students within a group can watch one another practice and share advice about lip-syncing and performing.
- Tell the students that it is okay to be a bit silly and have fun with the lip-sync performances—everyone will perform, and there is nothing to be nervous about!

11. Play the song or video repeatedly while students prepare. If you have enough audio devices for each group to listen independently, have groups work in different areas of the classroom and play the song back at a low volume in their groups.

12. Monitor groups as they work and answer questions they might have.

13. When preparation time is up, arrange the groups at the front of the classroom in the order that their assigned sections will play in the song. (If you have groups with the same assigned section, they should be next to each other.) Tell students this will be their practice performance; they may refer to their planning worksheets if they need to.

Names:

1. What is the main message of this song?
2. What emotions are in this song? How does this song make you feel?
3. What gestures (body movements) or facial expressions go with your part of the song?
4. Write new words or phrases and their meanings from your part of the song:
5. Write words or phrases from your part that you need to practice lip-syncing:

Figure 3. Lip Sync Planning Worksheet

14. Play the music and let the groups lip-sync (or sing) along.

15. After one round of lip-syncing to the song for practice, review the criteria related to effective lip-syncing. Ask students to watch the other groups with these criteria in mind during the next performance; tell learners to remember individuals and groups that give a particularly effective performance, based on the list. Prepare to record the performance if you plan to do that.

16. Play the song again and let the students perform a second time (or a third time, as will likely be requested!). If you are able to record each performance, make sure to capture performances from the entire class.

17. Conduct a performance debrief with the class. Using the criteria for effective lip-syncing as a guide, ask students to share their opinions about groups and individuals who gave strong performances. Remind the class to use kind language and offer supportive suggestions for improvement; for scaffolding, give examples of level-appropriate phrases to use, such as "I like how Marta lip-synced as fast as the song" or "I think Group A did a good job of moving their mouths clearly." If you recorded the performances, you can play that video for the class and ask the students to supply feedback as they watch.

18. If time allows, close the activity by asking students to share what they liked best about the activity and what new or interesting vocabulary items or phrases they learned.

VARIATIONS:

1. **Audio-only:** Showing a performance video and associated lip-sync video(s) might not be possible in every classroom. However, if you have an audio-output device and a sound recording of the song, you can still conduct a modified audio-only version of this activity. (The *American Rhythms* and *Sing Out Loud* resources on the American English website, at americanenglish.state.gov, might be appropriate for your class.)

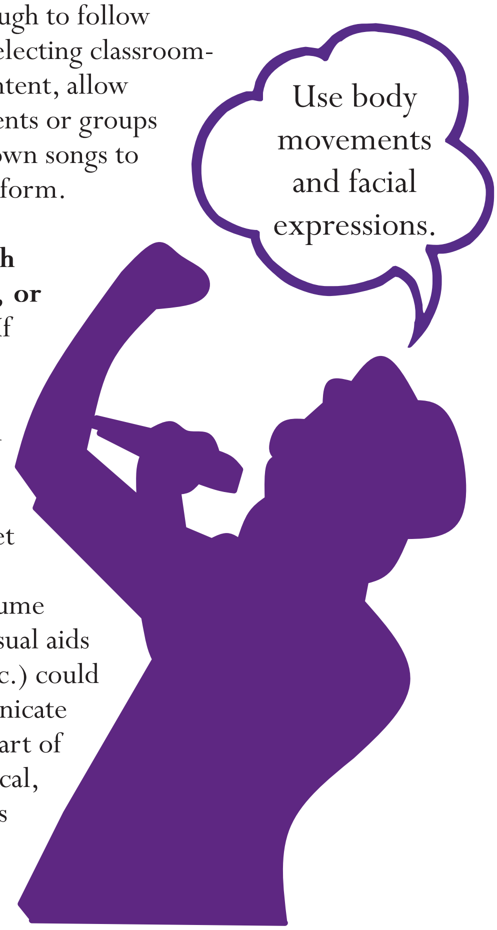
- In place of Step 1 above, have the students listen to the song once or twice to get the gist of the main themes.
- Continue with the sentence scramble in Step 2.
- Skip Step 3.
- Have students listen to the song again in Step 4.
- Complete the vocabulary presentation and explanation in Step 5.
- Present the "lip sync" concept in Step 6. If your students are familiar with lip-synced videos and can generate a list of positive lip-syncing qualities, go to Step 7. If not, and if you are feeling brave, do a short demonstration lip sync to your chosen song (try to reflect the qualities of a "good" lip sync—don't be afraid to be dramatic!), and then complete Step 7 to create the list of effective lip-sync criteria.
- Continue with Steps 8–18.

2. **Small-group evaluations:** After the rehearsal in Steps 11 and 12, assign each group a partner group. The partner groups will observe each other closely during lip-sync performances and provide feedback (after the teacher prepares the class to give supportive comments). This paired-group feedback approach can be helpful in large classes where conducting a whole-class performance observation and feedback session might not be practical. Teachers may also use this approach if they think students will be more receptive to giving and receiving feedback in a small group rather than with the whole class.

EXTENSIONS:

1. **Student-selected songs:** If your students respond well to this activity, allow them to have input in selecting the song or songs for future lip syncs. I have observed that when learners choose a song that they want to understand and have a voice in how they show their understanding, then they will engage with the song lyrics deeply and negotiate the meaning of the text.

    - *Option A (controlled choice)*: Ask students to suggest several songs they would like to lip-sync. Explain that the songs they suggest should be appropriate for the classroom in terms of language and themes. Outside class, or while students are engaged in an independent activity, review the student suggestions for content appropriateness and to make sure video material of the songs is available. Narrow down the list of suggestions to two or three appropriate options; if possible, you can select songs that suit other teaching aims. If you want the whole class to work on the same song, let students vote on the narrowed list you selected. If you plan to allow students to work on different songs, let groups choose any song from the list.
    - *Option B (free choice)*: If your students are mature enough to follow guidelines on selecting classroom-appropriate content, allow individual students or groups to select their own songs to analyze and perform.



2. **Performance with props, costumes, or visual supports:** If you conduct this activity over more than one class, you can add a question to the Lip Sync Planning Worksheet that asks students, "What props, costume pieces, or other visual aids (signs, pictures, etc.) could you use to communicate the ideas in your part of the song?" If practical, encourage students to bring items from home or create visual aids in class to use during the performance. Even if students can't actually collect or make these items, the process of thinking about what they would use during a performance encourages them to engage more deeply with the song's themes, emotional tone, and vocabulary.

3. **Performance for an external group:** To give your students a wider audience, consider incorporating a student lip-syncing performance into a school assembly, events for language learners, English Club meetings, or a parents' event.

SCAFFOLDING

If your students do not know what lip syncing is, try introducing them to the concept like this: Silently mouth a word they know (you may need to do this several times to make sure that all students can see you). Ask the learners to shout out that word when they figure out what is being mouthed. Do this for another word or two, and then have a few students mouth words to the class, or have students form pairs and take turns mouthing words and guessing each other's words. After a few minutes, you can ask, "What are we doing?" This leads to the term *lip sync*. You can return to this activity at any time for a warm-up or review.

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This activity was written by **Laura Loder Buechel**, a teacher-trainer at Zurich University of Teacher Education in Switzerland. Her research interests include the role of teacher language proficiency in relation to learner performance and standards-based grading, but her main passions are practicing what she preaches in the elementary school classroom and convincing university students to think outside the box.

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KÜRŞAT CESUR
Turkey

Opening Many Locks with a Master Key: Six EFL Games Played with a Set of Cards

Being a lucky child, I played lots of games, as my parents were primary-school teachers, and playing games is a natural part of growing up and learning. More recently, I took the opportunity to create new games while teaching a course called "Teaching English to Young Learners" to preservice teachers of English. Among these games, there are more than 20 that can be played using only one set of cards, including those described online at TenTen 4 Kids (2018a); teachers and students can make these cards by using the example template in the Appendix. In this article, I describe six of these games that I have either adapted or created.

Many games for children are played to teach or review one specific notion or function; for example, the "Directions Game" offers practice in giving instructions (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 91), and "Body Writing" helps learners review shapes, letters, and numbers (Phillips 1993, 97). The card games in this article can be used with vocabulary related to a variety of topics. What makes the games significant is that they are all played using only one set of cards that can be reproduced to create four pictures for each vocabulary item. After you have prepared the worksheet (see the Appendix) for your game cards, and by using Creative Commons–licensed images from websites such as Flickr or Google Images, you can play these games with that set of cards.

There is no "best" in English language teaching, but often there is "better." Here, I have included six of the most successful card games for teaching English. Three of the games are *rousers*, which are movement games; the other three are *settlers*, in which students listen to their friends carefully and play the games in groups at their seats (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 7).

CARD GAMES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Games are essential tools for having fun, and "children have an enormous capacity for finding and making fun" (Halliwell 1992, 6). Learning a language is not "the key motivational factor" for them (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 5). Young children typically do not come to the classroom to learn a language; rather, they want to play a game or have fun. The card games described here not only encourage children to learn a language, but also add variation to lessons.

Why to Play

Teachers can use the card games to help students practice recently learned vocabulary

(Lorenzutti 2016) or to introduce new words. The games provided here may seem to have little focus on the language, as at most students either say one word at a time (of an object, usually) or hear one word spoken by the teacher. However, the games can be made more linguistically complex if teachers ask students to form sentences, ask questions, or write dialogues for further practice using the vocabulary. Additionally, students learn from the situations described by the teacher while he or she is explaining the rules of the games or while they are playing. That is to say, students may "need and want to communicate in a meaningful and intense way in that they need to use language to have a turn at playing, to point out the rules, to challenge another player" (Korkmaz 2012, 307).

When to Play

Teachers can integrate the games into their syllabus. If they have a flexible program, they can either supplement the core material or replace activities they dislike (Lewis and Bedson 1999). Teachers can fit the games into a 45-minute period to take a break from more-serious studies or use them to give students a reward for completing a particularly difficult task. They can also be used as warm-up activities or as follow-ups to a lesson.

With Whom to Play

The card games described here can be played with young learners. Language levels of the students playing these games can range from pre-A1 to A2 levels of English. However, the games can also work with other sets of words at more difficult levels (TenTen 4 Kids 2018b). Like Lewis and Bedson (1999), I decided that classifying the games according to language level would not be realistic:

> Language level does not reflect the real challenge of the games, which you will find in the nature of the activity itself rather than in the language component. In addition, since most games have numerous variations with different language input aimed at varying age groups, giving a language level could lead readers to overlook activities which might be just what they need. (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 11)

Instead of including language levels, I have provided classification of suggested age groups for each game in Table 1.

We cannot expect that all language classes take place with ten to 16 students. Many classrooms are crowded. We need to have realistic expectations of ourselves and the learners; however, this does not mean that we should reject the idea of playing games in our classes. On the contrary, "being realistic should mean taking realities into account in such a way that good things can still happen" (Halliwell 1992, 19). For teachers with classes of more than 25 students, I have the following tips:

- "Divide a class up into smaller, more manageable groups which can play games more effectively" by splitting "players into teams" or setting up "game stations" in the classroom (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 12).
- Organize tournaments between groups. If you play the game with a limited number of students, the rest of the students do not even follow along. However, in tournaments, while two groups are playing, the others follow with interest because the result affects all groups, especially the groups that will play the following game against either the winner or the loser. In this way, everyone in the class is involved in the process.
- Rotate roles in games where one group can act as facilitator before rotating to become players, with another group then becoming facilitator. However, this might not work in games where the teacher is needed to decide whether an answer is correct, pronunciation is clear, and so on.
- Involve a large class in making and cutting game cards, such as those in the Appendix. For example, a game with 20 cards for four players in a class of 40 students would require 200 cards—and that would be for

just one set of vocabulary items. Of course, you can save the cards and laminate them for future use, but many teachers in this situation would have trouble producing this many cards. However, students can create cards either by themselves or with the help of their parents. This has an additional benefit because "if you can get parents involved from the start they will be supportive of your and the children's efforts" (Phillips, Burwood, and Dunford 1999, 13). If each student prepares the game cards of the single worksheet, there will be four cards for each item when the class plays the games in groups of four.

SIX CARD GAMES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Table 1 summarizes six games that can be played with sets of cards. It is only a rough guide, and you should "use your own knowledge of your children to judge whether the activity is suitable for your class" (Phillips 1993, 13). You can adapt the games and use variations to develop different skills with different numbers of students in different age groups.

At the end of each game description is a link to a short video that shows how the game is played. We made the videos with prospective teachers of English rather than with young learners; this was due to the difficulties of obtaining permission of all parents to have their children appear in the videos.

1. PUT INTO ORDER

I created this game after watching the popular TV program *Survivor*. The competitors run from the back to the front of the room and memorize ordered vocabulary items; they then run to the back of the room and arrange the items in the order they have memorized. They earn points if the items are ordered correctly. I realized it could be fun to play such a game with young learners.

In this game, you need four identical sets of eight cards. Each card depicts a different vocabulary item (you may increase or decrease the number of cards at your discretion). Tell the class, "I need two lines," and students form two lines at the back of the classroom. Put one set of eight cards face down on a desk next to one line of students, and another set of eight cards face down on a desk next to the second line of students. Mix up both sets of cards. At the front of the room, arrange a row of eight cards face down on a desk in front of one line of students, and another row of eight cards face down on a desk in front of the second line of students. You may also arrange the cards face down on a whiteboard or blackboard tray. This means 32 cards are needed to play the game.

The class can play the game at different levels of difficulty. They start by memorizing three cards and finish by memorizing all of the cards. For this game to be played effectively, you can give the following instructions:

> I need one student from each group. The first student in each line will come to the board, turn over the first three cards in the row, and memorize the pictures. Then, you will put the cards face down again. After that, return to your seat at the back of the class, find the correct three cards from the set of cards on your group's desk, and put them into order. The student who finishes ordering the cards first and says, "Ready" will be asked to say the words in order. If the order is correct, that person's team will get a point. The first student will go to the end of the line, and I will mix up the rows of cards at the front of the room. The game will continue with the next student in each line, who will have to memorize the first four pictures. Then the next student in each line will have to memorize the first five pictures, and so on.

For each student, check to see whether the cards are ordered correctly; if you want, you can also check for correct pronunciation. If the order is correct, that team gets a point. If not, the point goes to the other team. The group with more points at the end is the winner.

A variation of this game is having students make up a story with the words that are memorized correctly. This gives students the opportunity to practice using the target language, no matter how funny and silly the stories they make up are.

My students loved this game because they were familiar with it due to a popular TV program. Creative teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) can watch games on TV and consider how they can adapt and play them in their own classes. A video demonstration of this game can be found at https://youtu.be/PMU7WgJ5lFk.

2. PASS THE RIVER

After playing the game "What's That Card?" (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 105) with my

Name of Game	Description	Skill/Language Areas	Number of Players	Age Group
1. Put into Order	A game adapted from the TV program *Survivor*. Students try to memorize the pictures on the board and return to their seat at the back of the class, find the correct cards, and put them into order. If everything is correct, the team gets a point!	Cooperation; writing or speaking (building up stories); vocabulary; pronunciation	10–16*	8–10 10–12
2. Pass the River	Students try to guess what the card is on the stones of an imaginary river. The group that guesses all the cards and reaches the treasure first is the winner.	Concentration; memorization; social skills; vocabulary; pronunciation	10–16*	8–10 10–12
3. Stick It	You say a word, and the students find the card showing the picture of that word and stick it on the board. Whoever is first gets a point.	Listening; reading; writing; pronunciation	10–16*	6–8 8–10
4. Happy Families	Students aim to collect families (four of the same card). The winner is the player with the most sets.	Creative thinking; grammar; pronunciation; vocabulary	Best played in groups of 4	8–10 10–12
5. Repetition	Students have to repeat the words as many times as they can. The game goes on until one of them makes a mistake in calling out the names of the vocabulary items in order. The one who makes a mistake drops out of the game. The last player remaining is the winner.	Concentration; memorization; social skills; vocabulary; pronunciation	Best played in groups of 4	8–10 10–12
6. Bomb	The game is also known as "Old Maid" or "Odd One Out." Each player removes all the pairs from his or her hand and pronounces the words. The game goes on in this way until all cards have been paired except one—the Bomb, which cannot be paired—and the player who has that card loses the game.	Vocabulary; grammar; pronunciation	Can be played in pairs or in groups of 4	6–8 8–10 10–12

Table 1. Six card games for young learners (*More students can play the game when you have a tournament in the class.)

students, I adapted it to make it more competitive. You need two cards for each vocabulary item children have just learned. Divide the class into two groups and have them line up. Draw two imaginary rivers on the floor and a treasure chest at the end of each river. Put the two sets of cards face down on the floor in a mixed order. Students imagine that these are the stones of the river that they need to step forward on in order to reach the treasure. As in the game What's That Card?, you say:

> Come to the stones of the river. Try to guess what the card is and turn the card up to check whether your guess is correct. If it is correct, you can go on and guess the next card. If your guess is wrong, all cards will be turned down, and another student from your team will come to the river and start guessing the cards from the beginning. The group that guesses all the cards and reaches the treasure first is the winner.

Children have to follow the game carefully to turn over all the cards correctly and to reach the treasure. They need to play the game collaboratively to finish it successfully. As a result, the game can also develop students' social skills. A video demonstration of this game can be found at https://youtu.be/k1oK32u9bTw.

3. STICK IT

This game was adapted from a popular game called "Flyswatter," available at various English as a second language websites. In Flyswatter, each student holds one flyswatter and swats the correct word on the board when the teacher says the word. I had problems while playing this game in my classes, as students attempted to slap each other, or they complained that the word I said was nearer to the member of the opposing team. The adapted game, "Stick It," has the same fun elements but removes the problems I have noticed with Flyswatter.

To play, you need to divide the class into two groups. Two cards for each vocabulary item are needed. Put the two sets of cards face up on a table and say:

> When I give the command, one student from each group will come to the table. Each of you has the same number of cards in front of you. I will say a word—for example, *pineapple*, and you will try to find the card showing the picture of that word. Whoever finds the correct card and sticks it on the board first gets a point. At the end of the game, the group with more points is the winner.

Games with simple, clear, and logical instructions work best with young learners. The best activity in the world can be a waste of time if students do not understand it. If you have problems in the games as I did while playing Flyswatter, you can adapt the games considering your students' needs and interests.

The game can also be turned into a reading activity. Give a simple text to both students and ask them to find cards showing pictures of words that appear in the text. Whoever finds the correct cards and sticks them on the board in the correct order first will be the winner. A video demonstration of this game can be found at https://youtu.be/ud3q_4lIrFA.

4. HAPPY FAMILIES

I have played this game with my students several times in the way that Nixon and Tomlinson (2003) and Phillips (1993) suggest, where students ask each other if they have a certain card. However, I noticed that some children do not respond correctly to their friends' questions. Though they have the card in their hands, they say they do not have it, as a way to get cards themselves later on. Therefore, I adapted the game and decided to play it with the cards face up on the table. All students should see which cards their friends have.

The game requires four each of eight cards, or 32 cards in total. Shuffle the cards and deal four cards face up to four students who stand at a table. Each student tries to collect cards from other players by asking, "Have you got ________?" or "Do you have ________?" If the answer is "Yes," the other players have to give up the card that was asked for. Each time students give cards to the questioner, they will get new cards from the backup pile; every student should have four cards before a new question is asked. If the answer is "No," it is the next player's turn to ask. If players have a matching pair, they can put these cards face up in front of their game-playing cards. The aim is to collect families (a set of four of the same card). Once a player has a set of four, he or she places it face down on the table and gets a point. The game is over when there are no game-playing cards left. The winner is the player with the most sets.

This game is useful in that all forms of a sentence (simple, imperative, and interrogative) can be practiced. A video demonstration of this game can be found at https://youtu.be/RRhlsyvjJRI.

5. REPETITION

This game is similar to the one that Shaptoshvili (2002, 35) called the "Memory Game." There is also a game with the same name in which children try to find pairs of matching cards. That game is also called "Pick Up Twos" (Phillips 1993, 111) and "Pelmanism" (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 120). I have named this game "Repetition," as a student has to repeat as many target words as he or she can. In this game, you need to deal an equal number of cards to four students and say:

> The first student will start the game by putting a card on the table and saying what is on the card—for example, "Pineapple." The second student will put down a card on top of the first card and call out the names of both cards, starting from the first one—for example, "Pineapple and watermelon." The third student will put another card on top of the two cards, then call out the first two cards and the new one—for example, "Pineapple, watermelon, and coconut." The game goes on until one of you makes a mistake in calling out the names of the cards in order. The one who makes a mistake must drop out of the game. The last player remaining is the winner.

A video demonstration of this game can be found at https://youtu.be/zGP_80B6CZY.

6. BOMB

There are many card games played by adults, but few of them have been adapted to teach English to young learners. This game is similar to the popular card game "Old Maid" or "Odd One Out." My students named it "Bomb." To play the game, you need four cards for each vocabulary item, but you must take out one card from the deck; that card is the Bomb. Shuffle the cards and deal them, one at a time to each player, until all the cards have been handed out. Then say:

> Players take turns removing all the pairs from their hands, pronouncing the word, and putting those pairs on the table. If you have three-of-a-kind, you can remove only two of those three cards. One of you then will offer your hand to the player on your left, who will draw one card from it. This player will discard any pair that may have been formed by the drawn card. That player then will offer his or her own hand to the player on the left. The game goes on in this way until all cards have been paired except one—the Bomb—which cannot be paired. The player who has that card loses the game.

If you play the game with pictures of action verbs, you can practice grammar as well. While students are putting down the pairs, instruct them to form a statement—"He is playing the piano"—or a question—"What instrument is he playing?" A video demonstration of this game can be found at https://youtu.be/-pGG4zaC4p0.

Some of these card games are easy to understand and have clear and simple instructions. Your students can understand what to do after you give the instructions for the game, especially if you make use of demonstration, mime and gestures, and examples. However, some games, such as "Happy Families" and "Put into Order," have difficult rules to explain. According to Sowell (2017, 10), "instruction-giving has a direct effect on learning; a lesson or activity becomes chaotic and fails when students do not understand what they are supposed to do." In my experience, once students learn how to play the games, you will not need to give the same instructions again, as they will know what to do when you just tell them the name of the game. Sowell addresses the important issue of using the mother tongue to give instructions:

> There might be instances when the use of the L1 for instruction-giving is justified for the sake of efficiency and clarity, but there is a danger of overuse and the possibility that students and teachers will become accustomed to the comfort of instructions in the L1. (Sowell 2017, 11)

While it is useful to clarify the rules of the games using students' mother tongue, especially for young learners at the beginning level, it can be counterproductive when the students get used to it and expect it.

CONCLUSION

The games presented here are a small sample of the many games that can be played with a set of cards. You can even let your students create their own games; according to Halliwell (1992, 6), "no matter how well we explain an activity, there is often someone in the class who produces a version of their own! Sometimes it is better than the teacher's original idea."

Here, I have presented games with easy-to-prepare materials, hoping that other English language teachers will try them in their own classes. Do not hesitate to adapt or change them. Moreover, try to integrate the games that your students enjoy most into your syllabus, for "if an activity is enjoyable, it will be memorable; the language involved will 'stick', and the children will have a sense of achievement which will develop motivation for further learning" (Phillips 1993, 6). What language teachers see as enjoyable may not be true for young learners; therefore, the learners' needs and interests should be the first thing to consider. Finally, I hope you can create your own card games and contribute to the list provided in this article.

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APPENDIX

Sample Cards for Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners








Instructors can help their students improve online reading speed and comprehension by understanding the distinctive challenges of online reading and providing sufficient strategy training and digital-reading practice.

(See page 2)

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