

ESOL Online

The First Thousand Words Worksheets and Tests

Vocabulary Learning Activities

Five minute activities

These activities are good starting or finishing activities.

1. Students are given a card with either a word or definition and asked to find their partner, ie. the definition or word.
2. A card is stuck on each student's back /forehead and they have to find out their word by asking questions that can be answered with yes or no only. This can be turned into a group or whole class activity.

Matching

Students can be given a set of words and definitions cut up separately to match individually, in pairs or groups.

Go Fish

1. Enlarge the words only on a photocopier and make four copies. Cut these up. You should now have a pack of 40 cards.
2. Students work in groups of 3 -5. Each student is given 4 cards, the remaining cards are left in a pile in the middle.
3. Students have to ask for words to make up "families", eg. "Have you got 'afternoon'?". The students must give up all words they are asked for.
4. If they don't have the word they say "Go Fish" and the students who asked for the word takes one card from the top of the pack.
5. When a student gets four cards the same this is a "family" and they can place them on the table. At the end of the game the student with the most "families" wins.

Snakes and Ladders

Write the words on a Snakes and Ladders board. Students play as for ordinary Snakes and Ladders but when they land on a word they have to use the target language.

Suggested uses;

1. Students have to say the word.
2. Students have to give a definition

3. Students have to use the word in a sentence.

Variation

Write the definition on the games and ask students to give the word. Give students blank boards and ask them to find pictures for the words to make their own games.

Memory

1. Photocopy a set of words and meanings for each group or pair. Cut these up and place them face down on a table.
2. Students work in small groups, 2-4, to take turns turning over cards to find pairs. If they find a pair they keep them. If it isn't a pair they turn them back face down. The winner has the most pairs.

Universal Bingo

This game is based on one developed by Margaret Chittenden.

With this version of bingo once the cards have been made they can be re-used indefinitely with any ten words.

1. For this you will need one card for each student and something to cover the squares, eg. counters, small pieces of paper... The card should have a grid with 6 squares. Each square should have a number between 1 and 10, eg.

6	3	1
8	5	10

2. On the whiteboard write the numbers 1 to 10 and next to each one write one of the words, eg.
 1. about
 2. accept
 3. accident etc...
3. Now read out the definitions in a random order. The students will have to
 - listen to the definition,
 - look at the whiteboard and check if they have the word
 - and then cover the appropriate number if they have it.

(With very weak/new students you might simply read the word for

them to hear and identify the written form.)

4. The winner can be the student who covers all their numbers, gets the four corners, a line - you choose.

Variation

You could get students to draw a grid in their books and choose six of the ten words or six of the ten definitions to write in the squares. You then read out either the definitions or words as appropriate.

© Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand

Printed on 07 Jun 2009.