



These tried and true lesson activities will help you get your students communicating in English. The recipes work with most teaching scenarios and situations. Just modify the basic recipe with your own basic ingredients (age, level, topic).

2 Way Tasks

- 1** When you think of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), you will first think of this classic task based activity. It's also known as an "information gap".

Suggested Level: A2 and above.

Ingredients: Pair, partners. Handouts for each person, with different information.

Instructions: Provide each person with a handout. The pairs must communicate with each other in order to share their information and finish the activity. They can communicate by question or description but can't look at their partner's handout directly.

Cooking Tip: For lower level students model the activity well and provide the language structures on the board or handout. Although there are many pre-made activities of this type available, try using authentic materials with higher level learners. Flyers, newspaper articles, brochures, maps. Just erase or whiteout the opposite information on each handout.

Serves Up: communication, intermediate & advanced learners, accuracy

Dialogues & Roleplays



Dialogues are what you think of when you think of speaking. Two or more people talking on a certain subject and turn taking. Very formulaic and good food for the language learner. They can be very fun if you get your students rewriting them or acting them out as role plays.

Suggested Level: A2 and above

Ingredients: Pair, partners. Handout of a conversation on a set topic (at the store, traveling etc. ...)

Instructions: Get students to come to the front of the class and act out the dialogue or let students watch a video or listen to a recording of the conversation. Next, provide students in pairs with a [dialogue handout](#). Either the teacher or the students can “blank” certain information in the dialogue and the students can substitute their own information for the conversation. Give students time to practice.

Cooking Tip: To end the activity, have your best students perform their blank dialogues for the rest of the class. The funnier, the better. You can also cut up the dialogues into sentence strips. Get students to put the conversation into the right order. Also, try the very fun “[Disappearing Dialogue](#)” activity.

Serves Up: *turn taking, functional English, getting personal, fluency*

Mingling

3 Activities where students walk around the class interacting are called “mingling” activities. There are many types, most famous of which is the “*Find Someone Who*” activity.

Suggested Level: A2 and above

Ingredients: whole class, question handouts, survey questions

Instructions: Provide each person with a task [handout](#). Individuals walk around the class asking others questions to find out particular information. Students practice speaking set phrases to obtain the information and complete the task.

Chef's Tip: *Find Someone Who* is a great mingling activity but with beginners use handouts which have photos and aren't so much text based. Survey questions are also great to use. Provide students with one post it note each. They write their own yes / no question and then survey the class. Get students to report back their findings to the class.

Serves Up: grammar, getting to know each other, interaction

Storytelling & Retelling



4 Storytelling is hard wired in the language brain. It crosses cultures and is a great way to get students speaking creatively and having fun.

Suggested Level: All levels

Ingredients: small groups, photos,

Instructions: Provide each group with a [set of photos](#) or [flashcards](#). In groups, students turn up a flashcard or photo and make a sentence. The next person turns up a card or photo and adds to the sentence to make a story chain. After, students can do this as a writing activity and write sentences for each picture.

Cooking Tip: You can always get students retelling stories or jokes they know in their own L1. [Guessing the punchline](#) works for stories. Also, for lower levels, get students to tell a story using a sentence pattern, a story chain. *Student 1:* “Yesterday, I went to the store and bought eggs.” *Student 2* adds to the story, “Yesterday, I went to the store and bought eggs and bread.” Continue until students resolve / end the story.

Serves Up: creativity, personalization, controlled practice

Picture Prompts

5 Pictures and videos are great prompts for all language teachers. Make sure to build your own folder library with great pictures! Students can describe photos and pictures and build their speaking skills. The most well known activity of this type is “[Describe and Draw](#)”.

Suggested Level: A2 and above


Ingredients: pairs, 2 contrasting images, set of photos or an interesting silent video.

Instructions: Provide each person with a handout [5] with pictures. Partners take turns describing their picture while the other person draws and asks for clarification. Take turns describing pictures. Finish the activity by comparing the real picture to the one drawn.

Cooking Tip: A materials light version is “backdoor”. Use a silent video instead of photos ([Mr. Bean](#) works great). One student turns their back to the screen. Other students in the group watch and describe what is happening. Pause and change the student who can’t see. End by watching the end of the video together as a class.

Serves Up: fluency, description, information gap

Games

 Speaking activities can be organized into simple games that are fun and promote fluency and accuracy at the same time.

Suggested Level: A2 and above

Ingredients: whole class or groups, images or words on the board

Instructions: Provide each person with a [handout](#) with pictures or words. One group member chooses one item and the others try to guess which it is by asking questions. Or the person can describe and the other group members guess.

Cooking Tip: Get students training their brain to go on English “autopilot” with the game “First World War”. In small groups, students go around in a circle replying with the first word they think of related to the first word. War – peace – sign - stop – go.

Serves Up: fluency, guessing, controlled practice

Conversation



Conversation prompts are a staple activity to get students speaking and writing. The prompts can be tailored to the level and interests of your students and offer them practice in using specific English language structures. Flashcards also work well as prompts and can be used for prompting many speaking activities.

Suggested Level: A2 and above


Ingredients: small group, set of conversation prompt cards

Instructions: Cut up [the prompts](#) and put them in a pile. One person turns up a prompt and must complete the task (tell about ...). The group must then ask an additional question to the student.

Cooking Tip: Prompts can be pictures, statements for a topic you are teaching in class (Ex. “if...”), conversation gambits where students finish off the statement and other kinds of prompts. Always model the activity whole class. Turn up a card and ask a stronger student for a reply. Also find online conversation prompt generators that you can show to the class on a screen or tablet.

Serves Up: fluency, vocabulary, controlled practice, getting personal

Public Speaking

 Students of all levels can practice speaking by giving a public presentation or speech. The activity really motivates and instills confidence in students. There is a level of “memorization” but this helps students work on their accuracy and the non-verbal aspects of language.

Suggested Level: B2 and above

Ingredients: pairs, 2 contrasting images, set of photos or interesting silent video.

Instructions: Provide each person with the speech template. Model by giving your own speech to the class using the template. Next, students choose a topic and then write their own speech. Monitor and help lower level students complete their speech. Finally, students deliver their speech to a small group. Change the groups and give students the opportunity to give their speech again. The more times they practice, the better they'll get at delivering it as a speech (no reading).

Cooking Tip: If you have the time, provide the activity as homework or an assignment. Students can deliver their speeches for other classes or as part of a competition with students voting on a winner.

Serves Up: formal English, structured practice, motivation

Discussion & Debate



Discussions get students thinking critically and connecting personally with the topic being taught. They are very easy to prepare and offer a lot of free speaking opportunity and fluency practice.

Suggested Level: B2 and above

Ingredients: pairs, 2 sets of different questions on a topic

Instructions: Provide each student with a set of discussion questions. Partners take turns asking their questions to their partner. They should also give their own answer to the question. Note: This activity can take some time, so plan accordingly.

Cooking Tip: Rewrite questions in simpler language for lower level students. Or get the students writing their own sets of questions. Begin the activity and model by getting students to ask you some of the questions.

Serves Up: fluency, turn taking, giving opinions

Interviews



Interviews provide structured practice and especially practice at asking and answering basic conversational questions.

Suggested Level: A2 and above

Ingredients: whole class, pairs, set of interview questions.

Instructions: Bring a student to the front of the class (stronger speaker). Provide students with the [handout](#) of interview questions. Students ask the student at the front of the class the questions to complete the interview. Make it into a TV like program to provide atmosphere. Next, students in pairs repeat the interview with a partner. Alter the questions provided according to your class and students.

Cooking Tip: Students can interview a celebrity. Provide role play cards or have students imagine they are a celebrity. Other students interview and try to guess which celebrity they are. Also see the online game “[Akinator](#)’ for an online version.

Serves Up: questions, getting personal, interpersonal communication

Sequencing



It is said that the best way to learn anything is to teach it. This applies equally well to language. When students share their knowledge in class and teach others how to do simple things, they purposefully use their language and achieve higher levels of fluency.

Suggested Level: B1 and above

Ingredients: small groups or pairs, how to video (see “[eHow](#)”)

Instructions: Show students a simple “how to” [video](#) with very clear steps. Provide each student with a [handout](#) with pictures or key words for the activity. Students put the pictures or words in order by making statements using transitions (First, next, then, after that, finally). Recheck with the video or have a student come to the front of the class and explain, “How to ...”.

Cooking Tip: Students will be interested to use their English to explain to classmates how to do other things. Extend the activity by letting students explain how to (play chess, tie a tie, play X video game, cook etc. ...). Get them teaching each other!

Serves Up: transitions, fluency, directions

Free Speaking

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“Free speaking” allows students the most opportunity to practice the English they know in a less structured fashion. It is very much focused on fluency and very task based. Students can plan a party or event. Students can brainstorm on a topic using their English. Or students can simply debate a topic without structured questions (but get them to come to a consensus or conclusion).

Suggested Level: C1 and above

Ingredients: small group, speaking task

Instructions: Provide students with the Top 10 brainstorming [template](#). Appoint one student in the group as a note taker. Students decide in their group on a topic and then brainstorm together to rank the list of “Top 10 ...” You might brainstorm a list of topics before the activity. After, students present the list and their findings to the class

Cooking Tip: Monitor groups well and provide teacher input to get each group started. Allow the use of the L1 – lower level students will need to use it in order to participate. Finally, make the presentations into a game. Students can guess about the Top 10 being presented and see if they are right (according to the group presenting).

Serves Up: fluency, brainstorming, open speaking

Inside - Outside Circles

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This recipe is a mingling technique that should be a large part of any classroom where the communicative approach is central. Students get to work with and know all their classmates using the Inside – Outside circle technique. It’s very egalitarian! It's active. It's learning on one's feet.

Suggested Level: All levels

Ingredients: whole class, any activity which involves speaking or review

Instructions: See the full description in this [handout](#). The class forms two circles – one inside (students facing out) and one outside (students facing in). Facing a partner in the other circle, the students start speaking together based on the activity (questions, taking up homework, prompts, practicing a dialogue etc. ...). On the teacher’s signal, students change partners – the outer circle moves one person clockwise. Continue with the activity but with a new partner.

Cooking Tip: If you don’t have enough room in your classroom, try an Inside – Outside line. One line moves to change partners, the first in line, moving to the back.

Serves Up: lesson delivery, mingling, communication

Online Tools



While the classroom is the focus, we should not forget there are many ways students can practice speaking on the internet. Students can also share their online speaking practice and it’s invaluable for teachers to assess student speaking fluency or accuracy.

Suggested Level: A2 and above

Ingredients: single students, language lab, mobile phones, internet access.

Instructions: Provide students with a task. For example, “Tell the class 3 things about yourself, we probably don’t know”. Students record their responses on their mobile phones or using Google’s video email app. Post on a class page, Google drive or Whatsapp, Instagram page or group. Either private (teacher only) or for the whole class. Also, students can speak to invited guests using Zoom or Skype video conference technology – it will make their English seem purposeful and real!

Cooking Tip: If your students need specific practice with pronunciation, they can practice using the [EnglishCentral](#) app. It provides instant feedback and a safe environment where students can improve the intelligibility of their speaking.

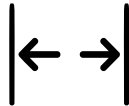
Serves Up: technology, recording, apps, communication



TEACHING SPEAKING

Here are some classic recipes for activating your students' powers of communication and getting them speaking and using their language functionally in class. Online or F2F.

INFO GAPS



Communicate to fill in incomplete information.

ROLE PLAY



Students pretend to be a character in a certain situation.

MINGLING



Move around the class and survey others, get info.

DIALOGUES



Speak with each other using a script or ad-lib.

STORYTELLING



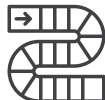
Tell and retell stories or jokes to each other in class.

PICTURE PROMPTS



Use pictures to elicit speech and talk about things.

GAMES



Play games where students have to speak to advance.

DISCUSSION & DEBATE



Students answer questions and provide opinions on a topic.

PUBLIC SPEAKING



Students give a simple, structured speech.

CONVERSATION



Students talk about routines, regular life, news, gossip.

INTERVIEWS



Interview each other or a guest like a real talk show.

INSIDE - OUTSIDE



Two circles, face a partner and relay information.

FREE SPEAKING



Student choice. Plan an event. Hot topic. Issues.

ONLINE TOOLS



Use online tools for skills development, pronunciation.

OTHER



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