

Taboo or not taboo? (That is the fking question!) Teaching suggestions**

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Activity 1

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1. Get students to cover Activity 2 so that they cannot see it.
2. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
3. Let the students brainstorm in pairs or small groups. Or do this as an open class activity.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Activity 2

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1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students do the exercise individually then check in pairs.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.
6. Consolidate pronunciation.

Answers:

1. balls/bollocks
2. balls/bollocks
3. fuck
4. hell
5. piss
6. crap/shit
7. crap/shit
8. cunt
9. prick
10. bugger
11. bastard
12. bloody

Activity 3

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1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students do the exercise individually then check in pairs.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Suggested answers: (variations in voice tone, context, etc. may enable words to be perceived as more or less offensive by individuals)

Moderately offensive: hell

Very offensive: piss, crap, balls, bollocks, bastard, bloody

Extremely offensive: shit, prick, bugger, fuck, cunt

Activity 4

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1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students begin their conversation, in English, in pairs or small groups.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Answers:

1. annoyance/disbelief: Hell! Bugger!
2. surprise: Fuck! Shit!
3. insult someone: Bastard! Prick! Cunt!
4. order to go: Piss off! Bugger off! Fuck off!
5. intensify: Bloody hell! Fucking stupid!
6. mistakes: to fuck up, to balls up, to bugger (up)

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Activity 5

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1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students work in pairs or small groups.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Answers:

1. bloody/fucked
2. shit
3. piss/cunt
4. crap//bollocks/balls
5. bugger

Activity 6

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1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students begin their conversation, in English, in pairs or small groups.
3. Monitor closely.
4. Stop the activity.
5. Elicit feedback.

Activity 7

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If your students don't have access to computers in the classroom, set this for homework.

Answers:

1. Religious, bodily functions (lavatorial), sexual activity and sex organs.
2. flipping
3. the V sign (raising two fingers at someone)
4. Read the Quick Quiz below. You will need to go through the answers with your students because the answers are not available to them at EnglishClub.com. The students read a short text connected with the TP subject then answer gap-fill questions on the text. The first letter of each word of each of the gaps is then taken and rearranged to make a word connected to the TP subject.

Quick Quiz

Read the clues below and write the solutions on a piece of paper. Then take the first letter of each answer and rearrange them to find the **word** connected with this month's talking point subject, 'Taboo Words'.

1. ..WHY. are some words considered to be 'taboo'?
2. People generally do not like to speak openly ..ABOUT.. toilet functions.
3. These words are generally avoided on TV and ..RADIO.. and in the newspapers.
4. 'Oh, ..SUGAR..! We've missed our train.'
5. In Britain it is considered ...EXTREMELY... offensive to raise two fingers at someone.

Answers: SWEAR (S for Sugar [4] W for Why [1], E for Extremely [5], A for About [2] R for Radio [3]).

Activity 8

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This activity can be set as homework to be followed up and consolidated in a future lesson generating more discussion. Did students find that most people agreed or disagreed with the question? What reasons were put forward in each case? Did the students read anything which changed their minds on the topic? (etc.)

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