

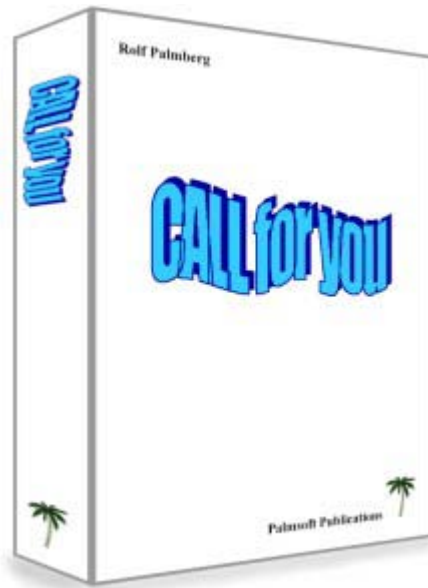
Developing EFL Learners' Vocabulary Awareness

**15 original
lesson plans by
Rolf Palmberg**

- easy to follow**
- step by step instructions**
- with answers**
- teaching notes**



BY THE SAME AUTHOR:



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of **DEVELOPING EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY AWARENESS** is to suggest ways in which foreign language learners' vocabulary awareness can be developed. As the title indicates, the lesson plans presented in this book are aimed primarily at teachers and learners of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and, of course ESL (English as a Second Language). Since, however, more than half of the activities presented in the lesson plans can easily be modified to languages other than English, they can in fact be used by teachers and learners of other languages equally well. A more appropriate book title would therefore be **DEVELOPING (E)FL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY AWARENESS**.

The book comprises fifteen sections that emphasise different aspects of FL (foreign language) vocabulary knowledge. Whereas some of the activities concentrate on the finding and identification of existing words, others focus on learners' learning and recall abilities. There are also activities that aim at the development of learners' critical thinking abilities and their ability to explore and understand multiple-meaning words and riddles. Occasionally explicit reference is given to the various learner types (as described in Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory) that a specific activity caters for.

Five of the lesson plans included in this book require learners to have access to different computer programs; one program for each lesson. Four of the programs, **WORD INTAKE**, **WORDWORK 2**, **THE MISSING WORD**, and **ODD MAN OUT**, are all downloadable free of charge from the author's home page. The fifth program, **SMILEY**, is a Java applet that can be run at a given Internet site.

1.

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT LEARNING FOREIGN WORDS?

Most people have their own favourite way or ways of learning foreign words. Some prefer traditional rote learning, whereas others divide the foreign words into parts or components and concentrate on memorising these instead. Some look for similarities between the foreign words and words in their mother tongue or other languages they may know. Some people find mnemonic devices helpful, at least occasionally, while others have adopted different types of accelerated learning techniques and use them on a more or less permanent basis.

One such technique, introduced by R. C. Atkinson in the 1970's as the "keyword method", requires learners to make a mental picture for the foreign word they want to remember, another picture for the meaning of the word, and then to link the two pictures together. One would therefore expect this method to be particularly popular among visual-spatial learners (to use Gardner's terminology) and the links between the words to be even more effective when created on the basis of the learners' individual memory codes.

In 1983, Howard Gardner, the creator of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory, suggested that all individuals have personal intelligence profiles that consist of combinations of seven different intelligence types. These intelligences were verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Gardner 1983, 1993). In 1997, he added an eighth intelligence type to the list, naturalist intelligence, followed by a ninth type two years later, existentialist intelligence (Gardner 1999). In 1998, Gardner's MI Theory was applied exclusively to EFL teaching by Michael Berman in his book A Multiple Intelligences Road to an ELT Classroom, followed by ELT through Multiple Intelligences three years later (Berman 1998, 2001).

Assuming that learners' predominant intelligence types do in fact have a major influence on the ways in which learners try to assign meaning to foreign vocabulary, one could, as suggested by Ulrica Tornberg, expect predominantly verbal-linguistic learners to create bilingual word cards or sentences that contain the new words, predominantly mathematical-logical learners to compare word stems and derivations and produce systematic word lists, predominantly visual-spatial learners to use both words and images to create mental associations,

predominantly musical-rhythmic learners to create melodies that contain both rhyme and rhythm, predominantly bodily-kinaesthetic learners to associate the new words with body movements and dramatisation, etc.

So what about you? Are you good at learning and remembering foreign words? Have you got any favourite learning techniques that work especially well for you? Do you find that some words are more difficult to memorise and assign meanings to than others? Does the learning task get much more difficult when you are required to learn and remember foreign words under special circumstances, say, for example, when you are not allowed to study the new words for as long as you want or when you do not have a chance to write the words down?



About the program

WORD INTAKE is a computer program designed to test your ability to learn and remember foreign words under quite difficult circumstances. When you start the program, you will see twenty English words relating to geography, together with their FL counterparts. Each pair of words will be visible for five seconds. Next, the English words will be displayed on the computer screen in random order, and your task is to select for each word its FL counterpart from a list of four words, one of which is the correct one. The program stops when you have correctly selected the FL counterpart for each English word, twice. This is to check that you have in fact recognised the words and not just selected them randomly.

When an English word has been selected correctly twice, it does not reappear any more. All FL words, however, will be used as multiple-choice alternatives throughout the program. To put it differently, the more words you have identified correctly, the easier for you to figure out the correct FL word for each remaining English word – provided, of course, that you are a good language learner who can use the information given by the multiple-choice alternatives and remember the words stored in your short-term memory.

Please note that the program is not a test of your knowledge of foreign vocabulary, and you should therefore select a language that you are unfamiliar with (you can choose between Finnish, Malay, and Spanish). The program does not tell you what to do in order to improve your vocabulary learning skills, either. It only gives you an idea of how good you are at learning and remembering foreign words in a very special learning environment: the one created by the program.

Word Intake

Computer program produced and distributed by Palmsoft (2002). Downloadable free of charge at <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/rpalmber/download.htm>.

2. LEARNING WITH A SMILEY

A smiley, a concept so well-known today, is a small face made of standard keyboard characters to express emotional content. The so-called “basic” smiley looks like this:



The first person ever to use smiley glyphs was Scott Fahlman, a principle research scientist in the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. He introduced the basic smiley shown above in 1981 in personal email messages and Internet newsgroups so that people would know whether to take his comments seriously or not. Very soon this idea spread around the world, leading to lots of variations on the theme. Other terms for such type-written pictures of facial expressions and emotions are “emote icons” and “emoticons”.

The word “**smiley**” is also the starting point for the present lesson, the aim of which is to develop learners’ willingness and ability to explore the vocabulary of a foreign language, in this case English.

Step One

Draw the basic smiley shown above on the blackboard and write the following words next to the smiley:

lie mile my yes

Next, invite the learners to guess what the smiley and the four words have in common.

Solution: The words are all created using letters from the word “**smiley**”.

Step Two

Ask the learners to start the Java applet **SMILEY**. Working in pairs, their task is to find the 34 words that can be formed using the letters of the word “smiley”. Every time the learners have suggested a word by first clicking on the letters in the word “**smiley**”, one letter at the time, and then clicked on the “smiley” icon to indicate that the word is complete, they will get immediate feedback. If the suggested word is an existing English word (and it has not been suggested before), it will be displayed on the screen in one of two boxes, and the sentence “Yes, that’s one of the words” will appear in the feedback box. If the word is not an existing English word, the sentence “Sorry, that’s not one of the words” will appear instead.

Step Three

Ask the learners to produce as long sentences as possible and using as many “smiley” words as possible. They may, of course, use “non-smiley” words as well and also inflect the “smiley” words whenever needed.

After five minutes or so, ask them to share and compare their sentences with their classmates.



About the program*

The Java applet **SMILEY** is very simple to operate, yet it is very powerful from a vocabulary awareness point of view. Based on the principle of learning by discovery, the Java applet can be used by all kinds of learners, irrespective of their age or level of proficiency. Elementary learners will find as much pleasure in discovering words as will intermediate and advanced learners alike.

There are two major facilitating aids included in the applet. First, there is a “clues” icon that learners can click on when they feel that they need help. By clicking on “clues”, they will get a clue for one of the (randomly selected) missing words. Here is an example of a typical clue:

“The word has 3 letters. Word definition:
common tree with curving branches.”

Second, there is a built-in dictionary in the applet that enables learners to check the meanings of words found; words that they have either come across by chance or by trying out which letter combinations are in fact English words or which are not. By clicking on any of the accepted words, an English synonym, definition or explanation will appear in the feedback box. (Since the definition words are not clickable, it is a good idea to have bilingual dictionaries available for the learners.)

Smiley

Java applet produced in 2001 by Rolf Palmberg and Olav Palmqvist. It can be run on Olav Palmqvist's home page at <http://loke.syh.fi/~opalmqvi/smiley.html>.

*) **FRIDAY** is another Java applet that is based on the same principle as **SMILEY** but uses the letters of the word “Friday” instead (Palmberg & Palmqvist 1997).

3.

PREDICTING VOCABULARY

The purpose of this lesson plan is to develop FL learners' understanding of vocabulary items relating to specific topics, or, more precisely, their ability to predict which content words will be most likely found in a reading passage on a given topic. In addition to increasing the learners' ability to suggest words that can go together theme wise, the suggested steps of the lesson plan will also increase their speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills.

Step One

Tell the learners that they are going to get a reading passage entitled (for example) "At the zoo". Ask them individually to make a list of sixteen (16) content words that they think will be included in the text. Ask them to make the list in their mother tongue and then use a bilingual dictionary to look up words that they do not know or that they are not sure of. When they are finished, ask them to compare their individual lists in pairs or groups of three.

Step Two

Ask the learners to prepare individual "bingo cards" containing four columns and four rows, i.e. sixteen squares. Next, ask them to write the sixteen words from their individual word lists in the sixteen squares. There will be one word for each square and in no particular order, for example like this:

word # 10	word # 6	word # 12	word # 4
word # 13	word # 16	word # 14	word # 8
word # 5	word # 9	word # 1	word # 7
word # 2	word # 11	word # 15	word # 3

Step Three

Hand out the texts. Ask the learners to read through the texts and cross off all the words from the “bingo cards” that they can find in the text. Next, ask them to count how many complete horizontal or vertical lines they produced by crossing words off. The winner is the one with the largest number of crossed-out lines.

Step Four

Ask the learners to produce as many sentences as possible using their personal four-word lines (horizontal and vertical) irrespectively of whether they were crossed out or not. After five minutes or so, ask them to share and compare their sentences with their classmates.

An alternative: a listening exercise

Ask the learners to listen carefully to a short story from a tape-recorder (or read out by the teacher). Ask them to cross out the words from their “bingo cards” when they hear them, and invite the first learner to complete a horizontal or vertical line to call out “I have a line. It contains the words “**word # 12**”, “**word # 14**”, “**word # 1**” and “**word # 15**”.” [S/he should of course read out proper words, not the numbered words given here as examples.] The winner is the one with the largest number of crossed-out lines.

4.

WORKING WITH WORDS

Language learners' productive vocabularies in a foreign language consist of words that are familiar to the learners and that they can produce at will. Their receptive vocabularies, on the other hand, consist of words that are familiar to them and which they can assign (at least some) correct meaning to; yet they cannot produce the words at will. A clear-cut distinction between learners' productive and receptive vocabularies is, however, sometimes difficult to make in practice.

The lesson plan outlined below suggests ways in which the computer program **WORDWORK 2** can be used to practise FL learners' vocabulary skills both receptively (identification of target vocabulary) and productively (spelling, pronunciation and memory).

Step One

Give the learners a list comprising twenty words in their mother tongue on a given topic, for example classroom objects. Ask them to work in pairs and to find the corresponding English (or any other FL) words using bilingual dictionaries. Or, to save time, give them a list of English words and ask them to combine the words with the corresponding mother tongue words, using dictionaries whenever necessary. Next, go through the word list and make sure that the learners can pronounce the words properly and know what they mean.

Alternatively, write "classroom objects" on the blackboard and ask the learners individually to write down the English words for any typical classroom objects that they see around them (if they are in a classroom) or come to think of. After a couple of minutes, ask them to read out their lists, one learner at the time. Write down all relevant words on the blackboard. When the learners have finished reading out their word lists, make sure that they can pronounce the words properly and know what they mean. Finally, either erase words or add words until the total number of words is twenty.

Step Two

Start the **WORDWORK 2** program and ask the learners to work in pairs. Ask them to select the word list on classroom objects and make any necessary changes (if they do, make sure that they check and recheck that there are no misspellings). Next, delete all words from the blackboard and ask them to select the **IDENTIFY** option and work with the words until they have collected a specified number of points.

Step Three

Ask the learners to select the **REWRITE** option. Apart from the obvious co-operative approach there are various ways in which the task can be made more creative and demanding:

- (1) request one learner to read out each appearing word and the other learner to type it in (without looking at the screen while the word is displayed), or,
- (2) request one learner to define/explain the appearing word in English and the other learner to type it in (again, without looking at the screen while the word is displayed), or,
- (3) request one learner to translate the appearing word into the mother tongue and the other learner to type in its English equivalent (again, without looking at the screen while the word is displayed). Ask the learners to exchange roles every two or three minutes.

Step Four

Next, ask the learners to select the **MEMORISE** option. When they have completed their task, ask them to look at the word list and to organise the words into groups. They must decide among themselves what the groups are and how many they are. Ask them to compare their results with another pair when they have finished.

Step Five

Display the word list on an OHP transparency and ask the learners, in pairs or in groups of three, to arrange the words into mind maps according to criteria made by the teacher or by the learners themselves. When they have finished, ask them to compare the results with their classmates.

Alternatively, ask the learners to rank the words according to how similar they are to their corresponding mother tongue words. Ask them to discuss the possible difference in ranking order from the point of view of whether one looks primarily on the pronunciation or spelling of the English words. Next, ask them to compare the results with their classmates.



About the program

The **WORDWORK 2** program comprises three activities: **IDENTIFY**, **REWRITE**, and **MEMORISE**. While working with any of these options, the learner can at any time quit the program, go to the main menu (to choose another activity) or take a look at the words in the selected (or created) word list. Looking at the word list, however, always costs points.

There are six ready-made English word lists in the program, each comprising twenty (20) words on various topics (animals, classroom objects, food and drink, occupations, parts of the body, and travelling). It is possible to substitute any unwanted words with new words in the list of the teacher's (or learners') choice, or, if necessary, to create an entirely new word list (which must also comprise twenty words). Any new word list can of course be entered in any foreign language allowed by the keyboard (not only English), but please note that the new word list (and any changes made in the ready-made English word lists) cannot be resumed once you quit the program.

IDENTIFY - the learner must distinguish correctly between words that are included in the selected (or created) word list and words that are not. To make the task more difficult, a high proportion of the words in the latter group are existing or nonsense words that are similar to the words in the relevant word list.

REWRITE - the learner must rewrite the words included in the selected (or created) word list. The words appear on the screen in random order, one word at the time. To make the task more difficult, each word is visible only for one second (after a while the words will be displayed for only half a second).

MEMORISE - the learner must memorise the words included in the selected (or created) word list and to type them in, one word at the time.

Wordwork 2

Based on an earlier program version, **Wordwork**, produced and distributed by Palmsoft (1995) and later included in **The Ultimate Palmsoft Assortment** program package produced and distributed by Palmsoft (1997).

The present program version produced by Palmsoft (2000). Downloadable free of charge at <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/rpalmber/download.htm>.

5.

THE MISSING WORD

The lesson plan outlined below suggests ways in which the computer program **THE MISSING WORD** can be used to help FL learners develop their vocabulary recall abilities.

Step One

You can start this lesson in a number of different ways. Here are three alternatives:

- (1) Give the learners a list comprising ten words in their mother tongue on a given topic. Ask them to work in pairs and find the corresponding English words (or any other foreign language allowed by the keyboard), using bilingual dictionaries if necessary.
- (2) Give the learners a list of ten English words and ask them to find the mother tongue equivalents, using bilingual dictionaries if necessary.
- (3) Give the learners a list of ten English words and a list of mother tongue words and ask them to combine the words that go together, using dictionaries if necessary.

Step Two

Go through the English word list and make sure that the learners have come up with the correct meanings and that they can pronounce the words correctly. Next, ask them to pay attention to the spelling of each word while at the same time trying to memorise them.

Step Three

Start **THE MISSING WORD** program and ask the learners to enter the ten target words correctly (ask them to check and recheck that there are no misspellings).

Next, if you want the learners to concentrate on individual work, just ask them to work with the program until they have reached a given level, say, 50 points.

If, on the other hand, you want the learners to work in pairs, the task can be made much more creative and demanding compared to the obvious co-operative approach. You could for example request the learner who first comes up with the missing word

(1) to read it out and the other learner to type it in;

(2) to define or explain the missing word in English and the other learner to type it in; or

(3) to translate the missing word into the mother tongue and the other learner to type in its English equivalent. The first pair to reach a given level, say, 50 points, has won.

Step Four

Ask the learners to form groups of three and then rank the English words according to how similar they are to their corresponding mother tongue words. Alternatively, ask them to arrange the words into mind maps or organise them into appropriate categories according to criteria of their own.

When the groups are finished, ask them to compare the results with their classmates.

Step Five

While working with the program, the learners are forced to link the ten words together in a variety of ways in order to remember them better. If wanted, the teacher could therefore introduce to the learners Atkinson's "keyword method" (referred to in the introductory section of this book). In brief, this method requires the learner to make a mental picture for the foreign word s/he wants to remember, another picture for the meaning of the word, and then to link the two

pictures together. The more absurd the mental link, the stronger the learner's recall ability of the foreign word.

Other types of associations that the learners can be asked to create in order to identify the most effective ones, are the following (as summarised in 1982 by Andrew Cohen in an unpublished paper entitled "Vocabulary"; see Palmberg 1990):

- (1) By linking the word to the sound of a word in the mother tongue, to the sound of a word in the target language (the foreign language being learned), or to the sound of a word in language other than the mother tongue or the target language.
- (2) By attending to the meaning of a part or several parts of the word.
- (3) By noting the structure of part of the word or all of it.
- (4) By placing the word in the topic group in which it belongs.
- (5) By visualising the word in isolation or in a written context.
- (6) By linking the word to the situation in which it appeared.
- (7) By creating a mental image of the word.
- (8) By associating some physical sensation to the word.



About the program

THE MISSING WORD is a vocabulary program that provides FL teachers with a simple tool for drilling newly introduced vocabulary with their learners. The program can also be used to practise other vocabulary skills, such as pronunciation, spelling and word meanings. The program also provides independent FL learners with a tool for exploring strategies to increase their ability to remember new words.

The program allows ten words to be entered for each session (the words cannot be resumed once you quit the program). When a specified key is pressed, the ten words disappear from the screen and nine of them (randomly selected among the words and in random order) reappear. The learner's task is to type in the tenth, missing word. If the suggested word is the missing one (and if it has been entered correctly), the learner gets a point. If the word is not correct, s/he loses a point. The missing word will now be displayed on the screen and remain visible with the other nine words until the specified key is pressed again.

The Missing Word

Computer program produced and distributed by Palmsoft (2002). Downloadable free of charge at <http://www.vasa.abo.fi/users/rpalmber/download.htm>.

6. MALAY OCCUPATIONS

The crucial difference between a learner's productive vocabulary and his or her receptive vocabulary in a foreign language is whether the learner is able to produce the wanted word at will or not. Another distinction can be made between, on the one hand, productive and receptive vocabularies (which both consist of words that are familiar to the learner), and, on the other hand, his or her potential vocabulary. A language learner's potential vocabulary, to be more specific, consists of those words that s/he has never come across before either in speech or in writing, but that s/he, owing to his or her ability to make lexical inferences (for this concept, see Haastrup 1988), can nevertheless understand when s/he first encounters them.

Although generally dealt with in connection with FL learning, the phenomenon of potential vocabulary can also be applied to mother tongue learning. Ida Ehrlich, for example, in a book entitled Instant Vocabulary, exploits the concept of affixes (prefixes and suffixes; see page 41 in this book) to the limit in order to enable the reader "to understand thousands of new words instantly – even if you have never seen them before" (Ehrlich 1968).

The purpose of this lesson plan is to introduce the concept of potential vocabulary to FL learners and to make them aware of the fact that not all "new" FL words are by definition "difficult" when first encountered. In fact, depending on the "distance" perceived by individual learners between the foreign language and their mother tongue, formal similarities in the written forms between FL words and their translational equivalents in the learners' mother tongue may to various extents make words more or less easily recognisable (or guessable) to the learners.

Step One

Display the following word list on an OHP:

1. doktor
2. guru
3. koki
4. montir
5. musisi
6. pelayan
7. pembuat roti
8. petani
9. polisi
10. seldadu
11. seniman
12. tukang pos

Ask the learners to read through the words in the list and try to guess (a) in what language the words are written (they are all written in the same language) and (b) what the words have in common from a topic point of view.

Solution: The language is Malay (or Indonesian) and the words are occupations.

Step Two

Write “**Malay occupations**” on the blackboard and challenge the learners individually to write down, on a piece of paper and in their mother tongue, those occupations that they think they can guess the meaning of. To help them along, tell them to look for similarities between the Malay words and the translational equivalents of the presumed corresponding mother tongue words.

After a couple of minutes, ask the learners to share and compare their lists with their classmates, but do not give them any clues or correct answers.

Step Three

Tell the learners that you are now going to display a new version of the OHP transparency. A set of blue words has been added to the word list, and the learners' task is to match the Malay occupations (**red words**) with their English counterparts (**blue words**). Ask the learners to work individually at first, making any necessary changes and additions to their original list, and then share and compare their revised lists with their classmates.

1. doktor	a. baker
2. guru	b. cook
3. koki	c. doctor
4. montir	d. farmer
5. musisi	e. mechanic
6. pelayan	f. musician
7. pembuat roti	g. painter
8. petani	h. policeman
9. polisi	i. postman
10. seldadu	j. soldier
11. seniman	k. teacher
12. tukang pos	l. waiter

Solution: 1-c. 2-k. 3-b. 4-e. 5-f. 6-l. 7-a. 8-d. 9-h. 10-j. 11-g. 12-i.

Step Four

Ask the learners, in pairs, to identify those occupation words in Malay which, in their opinion, are very similar to the corresponding occupation words in (a) English (their assumed target language) and (b) their mother tongue (assuming that the learners in each pair share the same mother tongue). Moreover, ask them, based on their judgements of formal similarities between individual word pairs, to compare Malay with (a) English and (b) their mother tongue as far as the number of recognisable (or guessable) word pairs are concerned.

Solution: Most English-speaking people (whether they have English as their mother tongue or not) will probably be able to identify at least the Malay words “**doktor**”, “**guru**”, “**koki**”, “**musisi**”, “**polisi**” and “**seldadu**”, depending, of course, on a number of different factors such as their age, their language learning aptitude, their knowledge of other languages than English, and the context in which the Malay words appeared.

Step Five

Ask your learners to work in pairs and explore the concept of potential vocabulary a little bit further. To be more specific, challenge them to browse through a bilingual dictionary and try to find a dozen or so English words that are similar enough to their mother tongue equivalents to make positive identification possible. Make sure that the learners understand that the words they come up with must be unfamiliar to them - otherwise the words are not part of their potential vocabulary but in fact part of their receptive vocabulary.

When the learners are finished, ask them to show their list of newly discovered English words to their classmates to see if they can guess the meanings of the words correctly.

Step Six

Tell your learners that there are also words that are written identically or almost identically in two languages but that nevertheless differ in meaning. Examples of such “false friends” are the Swedish words “**blankett**” and “**fabrik**”, which, despite their formal similarities with the English words “**blanket**” and “**fabric**”, mean something totally different in English (the two Swedish words mean “**form**” and “**factory**” respectively).

Therefore, ask your learners to form new pairs and continue working with the bilingual dictionaries. This time, ask them to find English words that look very much like words in their mother tongue but which are in fact examples of such “false friends”.

When the learners are finished, ask them to discuss their findings with their classmates.

7.

HANDS AND ARMS AND LEGS

This vocabulary lesson is aimed at practising words relating to the human body. It will also increase learners' awareness of riddles, word relationships, multiple-meaning words and translational equivalence.

Step One

Ask the learners if they know why the skeleton didn't go to the party.

Solution: It had no **body** to go with.

Having thus established today's topic, give each learner (or pair of learners) a picture of the human body and ask them to identify the English words for the main parts of the body, either productively (by filling in the words they already know and using dictionaries to find the remaining ones) or receptively (by combining words with the appropriate parts of the body and, again, using dictionaries if necessary):

Relevant vocabulary items include **arm, back, chest, ear, eye, face, foot, hand, head, knee, leg, mouth, neck, nose, shoulder** etc.

Step Two

Hand out the word grid (shown on the following page) to the learners and ask them to find as many English words for body parts as possible. The words should be read either vertically, horizontally or diagonally, and to make the task even more difficult, they should be read in all directions, including from right to left.

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E
B	S	N	K	D	L	F	J	J	V
T	D	K	Q	Q	Z	W	X	K	Y
N	V	O	J	A	G	U	I	H	G

Solution: There are (at least) 15 words in the word grid that denote body parts: **arm, back, chest, ear, eye, face, foot, hand, head, knee, leg, mouth, neck, nose and shoulder**. To make the identification of these words easier, they are shown in red.

There is one word written horizontally from left to right:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E
B	S	N	K	D	L	F	J	J	V
T	D	K	Q	Q	Z	W	X	K	Y
N	V	O	J	A	G	U	I	H	G

There are two words written horizontally from right to left:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E

There are two words written vertically downwards:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z

There are three words written vertically upwards:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E
B	S	N	K	D	L	F	J	J	V
T	D	K	Q	Q	Z	W	X	K	Y
N	V	O	J	A	G	U	I	H	G

There are four words written diagonally downwards to the left:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E
B	S	N	K	D	L	F	J	J	V
T	D	K	Q	Q	Z	W	X	K	Y
N	V	O	J	A	G	U	I	H	G

There are two words written diagonally upwards to the right:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E
B	S	N	K	D	L	F	J	J	V
T	D	K	Q	Q	Z	W	X	K	Y
N	V	O	J	A	G	U	I	H	G

There is one word written diagonally upwards to the left:

Q	R	L	V	I	A	D	E	D	K
J	E	C	A	F	N	Y	U	J	G
G	D	G	D	Y	E	Y	V	U	E
Q	L	W	N	D	C	S	G	T	A
L	U	B	A	C	K	I	O	R	R
H	O	E	H	T	U	O	M	N	Z
P	H	E	G	N	F	C	R	T	E
B	S	N	K	D	L	F	J	J	V

[The word grid was created using an authoring program called Puzzlemaker (at <http://www.puzzlemaker.com>). The program has been produced by Discovery School and it enables teachers to create various types of crosswords and matching exercises. This particular exercise was created using the Word Search option (one Puzzlemaker's many alternatives) and since the program cannot "think", it can be used to create exercises for any language allowed by the keyboard, not only English.]

Step Three

Ask the learners (working in pairs and using dictionaries if necessary) to figure out the answers to the following questions:

1. What similarities are there between a chair and a human being?
2. What is the similarity between a clock, a coin, a house and a mountain?
3. What is the similarity between a needle and a potato?
4. Who has hands but cannot touch?
5. Who has a mouth but cannot drink?

Solutions:

1. Both have legs and a back, and sometimes arms.
2. They all have faces.
3. Both have eyes and yet cannot see.
4. The clock.
5. The bottle or the river.

Step Four

Ask the learners to consult their dictionaries and compose their own Top Ten lists of useful phrases and expressions that include different body words (e.g. “second-hand shop”, “keep an eye on things”, “head of department”, “give someone a hand”). When they have finished, ask them to share and compare their lists with their classmates.

Step Five

Ask the learners to choose five of the body words and look them up in a dictionary. What other meanings do they have? Are the additional or extended meanings the same as in the learners’ mother tongue? If not, what differences are there?

After five minutes or so, ask the learners to share and compare their findings with their classmates.

Step Six

Finish the lesson by asking the learners how many pupils there are in the classroom. Whether or not the learners know that the word pupil does in fact mean two things: (a) somebody who is learning in school, and (b) the opening in the centre of the iris of the eye, they will probably come up with quite a number of incorrect answers before the correct one. Make sure that you know the answer yourself before you ask the question.

Solution: Count the number of people in the classroom, including yourself. Multiply the number by three, then subtract one. The result is the correct answer to your question. Why? Because each person in the classroom has two pupils, and in addition to that each person is a pupil – except for you, the teacher!

8.

EATING DATES ON A DATE

As demonstrated in the previous section of this book, many words have more than one meaning. The various meanings of such multiple-meaning words in one language do not, however, always coincide with the corresponding translational equivalents in other languages. The purpose of the lesson plan presented below is to help EFL learners not only recognise multiple-meaning words in English but also increase their vocabulary awareness in general.

Step One

Display the following word list on an OHP:

date
figure
form
head
mark
pack
pipe
record
service
tramp

Ask the learners individually to write down on a piece of paper the mother tongue meaning of each word. If somebody points out that they can in fact produce several different meanings for a word or some words in the list, tell them to write down the meaning(s) that best fits the word(s).

Step Two

Divide the class into three groups, A, B, and C (the groups can, if necessary, be further divided into subgroups), and ask each group to discuss the mother tongue versions of each word and compare the results.

Step Three

Give each group one of the three texts presented at the end of this section (Text A for Group A; Text B for Group B; and Text C for Group C). Ask the learners to read through and discuss their version of the text so that they understand its content. Invite them to use monolingual English dictionaries if they do not find the context clues helpful enough.

Step Four

Next, ask each group to take a closer look at the ten coloured words in their text (if you have not handed out colour copies to the groups you must ask the learners to find and underline the ten target words themselves) and, within the group, discuss and agree on the best possible mother tongue equivalent for each word. Invite the learners to use bilingual dictionaries only if they find that they fail to come up with a good translation. Next, ask each learner to write down the resulting mother tongue word list on a piece of paper.

Step Five

Regroup the class in such a way that each group consists of (at least) three learners, one from group A, one from group B, and one from group C. Next, ask the learners to share their mother tongue word lists with each other and to discuss the differences in word meanings. (The word lists will in most cases, depending on the learners' mother tongue, differ from one another owing to the fact that each target word has a different meaning in the three texts.) Tell the learners to defend their choice of meaning by reading out portions of the texts, not by showing the complete texts to their peers. Walk around in the class and encourage the learners to communicate only in English.

Step Six

Invite the learners to come up with words in their mother tongue that have multiple meanings. Next, tell them to look these words up in a bilingual dictionary to check which words share the same multiple meanings in English. Or, depending on the learners' level of proficiency, challenge them to find additional English words with multiple meanings.

Step Seven

Ask the learners to work in pairs and provide each pair with a list of multiple-meaning words (e.g. **hand**, **heart**, **land**, **match**, **plan**, **ring**, **rank**, **spot**, **taste**, and **work**). Invite the learners to look up the words in a monolingual dictionary and create sentences that clearly show the differences in meaning for those words. Next, invite them to share their sentences with their classmates, e.g. by reading out two or more sentences where the same multiple-meaning word has been left out, prompting their classmates for the correct word.

Step Eight

Invite the learners to discuss (in class or in groups) what they learned during the lesson about words with multiple meanings. What are the advantages of multiple-meaning words? What are the disadvantages?

Step Nine

For homework, ask the learners to provide their original texts with suitable endings. Tell them to include as many new multiple-meaning words as possible.

TEXT A

Maria looked good with the red scarf round her **head**. She had a good **figure**, and she was good at school, too. Her teacher always gave her a good **mark** for everything she produced. Yesterday Maria had written her name on an online application **form** for lonely hearts, and here she was, standing in the street with Peter, the **date** the computer had found her. Maria wanted to go to church to attend the evening **service** and then go home and listen to her new **record**. Peter wanted to go to the forest to the place where a huge metal **pipe** brought water into town. There they could sit in the dark and listen to the **tramp** of heavy steps from unknown animals. Maria did not like the idea at all. She was afraid of the dark and of the **pack** of wolves that lived in the forest.

TEXT B

Maria and Peter were sitting in the doctor's waiting room. Peter took out a **pack** of cards from his pocket. "I do not want to play", Maria said and opened a newspaper. At the **head** of the page was a picture of a man smoking a **pipe**. "Look," she said, "this man is going to make a **tramp** over the mountains. If he manages to make it in two days he will get a tea **service** of 24 pieces." "That **figure** is not a 4," Peter corrected her. "It's a 7." "You're next, Peter", the doctor said interrupting their conversation. "I can see from my **record** of patients that you're in **form** 7 at school. But what's that dirty **mark** on your shirt?" "It came from the **date** I spat out from my mouth this morning," Peter said. "I'll never eat that sweet brown fruit again."

TEXT C

I will never forget the place we moved into on the **date** of Maria's birth. We paid a high **figure** for the house, and although the town had a good bus **service**, we decided to buy a new car, too. On our first evening in the new house we heard a knock on the door. We saw the **form** of a man outside the door and thought it was the homeless **tramp** we had seen earlier that day. We opened the door and were greeted by a huge man holding a horse. The horse had a white **mark** on its neck and the man had an enormous **pack** on his back. The man told us that he was the **head** of the church, that he was very good at playing the **pipe**, and that he held the **record** for swimming 200 metres.

9. LEADING A DOG'S LIFE

An idiom is a sequence of words whose meaning may not always be clear even if the meanings of all the individual words in the expression are known to the learners. The purpose of this lesson plan is to develop learners' general understanding and knowledge of multiple-meaning words in English and their knowledge of dog idioms in particular.*

Step One

Write the expression

to let sleeping dogs lie

on the blackboard and ask the learners individually to think of a possible meaning (or two) of the expression. When most of the learners have come up with at least one possible meaning, ask them to share their suggestions with the learner(s) sitting next to them. Do not tell them the correct answer yet.

Step Two

Hand each learner a copy of the **Dog Idioms** worksheet shown on the following page and ask them individually to match the ten idioms on the left (all of them contain the word **dog**) with the explanations on the right. Point out to them that there are more explanations than there are idioms - there are, to put it differently, explanations that do not match any of the dog idioms.

You may also have to pre-teach some of the vocabulary items found in the idioms, for example **lame**, **reputation** and **stile**.

*) For a CALL lesson plan involving all kinds of animal idioms, see CALL for you (Palmberg 2003). The book contains instructions for pre-computer, computer and post-computer work as well as instructions for free downloading of a computer program entitled Ghosts & Animals 2.

DOG IDIOMS

1. to let sleeping dogs lie	a. to be troubled all the time
2. to fight like cat and dog	b. to die in shame or misery
3. to lead a cat and dog life	c. to work very hard
4. to go to the dogs	d. not to bring up matters that may cause problems
5. to work like a dog	e. to be the most powerful or important person
6. to lead a dog 's life	f. to pretend to be helping somebody
7. to die like a dog	g. to give somebody a bad reputation
8. to give a dog a bad name (and hang him)	h. to slowly go worse and worse
9. to help a lame dog over a stile	i. to disagree most of the time
10. to be top dog	j. to talk about interesting things
	k. to die very rich
	l. to be very lazy
	m. to be better all the time
	n. to help somebody who is in trouble
	o. to quarrel with someone about most things

Solution: 1-d. 2-i. 3-o. 4-h. 5-c. 6-a. 7-b. 8-g. 9-n. 10-e.

Step Three

Ask the learners, in pairs, to compare their results and, if needed, to check the correct answers with you, the teacher. Next, ask each pair to discuss what the idioms mean and to find the corresponding expressions in their mother tongue (if there are any), using bilingual dictionaries whenever necessary.

Step Four

Divide the learners into groups of four and ask them to do as many as possible of the tasks listed below. These tasks are only examples: you (or your learners) can easily come up with additional ones on the same topic.

- (1) Decide which of the above dog idioms do not exist in your mother tongue. What idioms or expressions, if any, does your mother tongue make use of instead?
- (2) Make a list of those of the above dog idioms that exist in your mother tongue as animal idioms, but containing different animals. What animal(s) does your mother tongue use?
- (3) Discuss to what extent the above dog idioms express positive and negative feelings respectively. What do you think is the reason?
- (4) Rank the dog idioms, starting with the one you like the best and finishing with the one you like the least. Does everyone in the group have the same ranking order?
- (5) Invent some totally new idioms or expressions containing either the word “dog”, or animal names in general. Invite your classmates to guess what (in your opinion) the idioms mean.

Step Five

For homework, ask the learners to write a brief essay where they use, in context, as many of the ten dog idioms as possible.

10.

SPOTTING THE ODD MAN OUT

The lesson plan outlined below suggests ways in which the computer program **ODD MAN OUT** can be used to develop FL learners' vocabulary awareness as far as compound words are concerned and at the same time practise their communication skills.

Step One

Ask the learners how many English compound words they can think of that end in “-man” (it may be a good idea to give a couple of examples). After a minute or so, ask them to share their findings in pairs.

Step Two

Display the following list of “man” words on an OHP:

1. boatman
2. dairyman
3. gunman
4. layman
5. milkman
6. ragman
7. sandman
8. snowman
9. talisman
10. townsman

Challenge the learners to discuss the words and try to guess the meaning of as many of them as possible.

Step Three

Hand out the following list of definitions to the learners and ask them, in new pairs, to match each definition with its correct “man” word (the words are still displayed on the OHP):

1. a figure of a man made of snow by children for amusement
2. a man who uses a weapon to rob or kill people
3. a man who works on or operates a boat
4. a mythical person who makes people sleepy
5. an object believed to bring good luck
6. a person who collects or deals in old, torn clothes
7. a person who delivers milk to people's houses
8. a person who lives in a city
9. a person who operates a farm that produces milk products
10. a person without expert knowledge

Step Four

Ask the learners, in new pairs, to take a closer look at the word “**milkman**”. More specifically, ask them to agree on the meaning relationship between the two parts of the word, i.e. **milk** and **man**, and to come up with the verb or definition that gives the two parts of the word its meaning.

When a learner has suggested that a milkman is “**someone who delivers something**” (in this case milk), tell them to do the same thing with the other words. A snowman, for example, what does he do? He does not deliver snow, does he? And what about a ragman, a boatman, and a gunman? Which is the verb or definition needed to define the correct relationships?

Step Five

To prepare the learners for the computer phases of this lesson, write these words on the blackboard and ask them to discuss and agree on which of the words does not belong in the group:

ragman sandman snowman talisman

Solution: Ragman is the only real person in the group.

Step Six

Ask the learners, in new pairs, to work with the **ODD MAN OUT** program. When the program starts, they have two options. They can either

- (1) familiarise themselves with the 50 “man” words included in the program and check the meaning of any words they are not sure of, or, they can
- (2) go directly to the **ODD MAN OUT** practice module.

Note that if the learners choose the second option they can no longer consult the built-in program dictionary for word meanings.

When in the **ODD MAN OUT** practice module, the learners’ task is to choose which of four “man” words does not belong in the group. Therefore, tell the two learners in each pair that they should first decide on their individual answers and state their reasons, then compare and (if the answers differ) agree with their partner on the “correct” answer.

Remember to point out to the learners

- (a) that in most cases there exists no single **correct** answer,
- (b) that it is always possible to come up with several **good** answers, but
- (c) that the answer offered by the computer is always the **best** answer.

Step Seven

When the learners have finished the previous step, ask them to make individual lists of additional “man” words (other than those included in the **ODD MAN OUT** program) using the Internet, and to provide the words found with good definitions.

[Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary (at <http://www.meriamwebster.com>) is very useful for this purpose as it allows you not only to look for words ending in certain ways but also gives you word definition(s).]

Step Eight

Ask the learners to work in small groups (three to four learners in each group) and to share their findings. Next, ask them, using dictionaries, to categorise their words according to different criteria, for example:

1. Which “man” words can be “woman” words as well?
2. Which “man” words refer to people who deliver things?
3. Which “man” words refer to people who sell things?
4. Which “man” words refer to people who are criminals?
5. Which “man” words are gender neutral, that is, which do in fact refer to “a person”?
6. Which “man” words are occupations?
7. Which “man” words relate to objects and not to human beings at all?
8. Which “man” words are “man” words in the learners’ mother tongue(s) too?

Step Nine

For homework, challenge the learners to see how many different verbs they can think of that describe meaning relationships between the various “man” words they know. Also, ask them to come up with new **ODD MAN OUT** groups of words (similar to the ones practised during Step Six, the computer session) to be presented to their classmates the next lesson.



About the program

ODD MAN OUT is a playful vocabulary awareness program based on a popular game with the same name. The computer version outlined above concentrates on English compound words that end in “-man”, and the learners’ task is to decide for each set of words which word (i.e. which “man”) does not belong in the group.

11.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF AFFIXES

An affix is a letter combination that carries specific meaning. It is added to a word in order to change or modify the original meaning of that word. An affix that is added to the beginning of a word is called a prefix, whereas an affix that is added to the end of a word is called a suffix. Some languages, but not English, also have a third type of affixes, called infixes. An infix is something that you add inside a word.

Playing with words appeals to verbally intelligent learners in general but also to many other types of language learners. The purpose of this lesson plan is to increase EFL learners' vocabulary awareness as far as wordplay involving affixes is concerned.

Step One

Write the following words on the blackboard:

rebuild remarry repay resell rewrite

Ask the learners to work in pairs and figure out what the words mean and what they have in common. Once the learners have agreed on the common denomination of the words, challenge them to come up with other words that share this particular feature.

Solution: The common denomination is the “re-” prefix which means “again”. [Note that “re-” can also mean “back”.]

Step Two

Introduce the concept of affixes to the learners and ask them to make a list of the English prefixes and suffixes that they can think of. Ask them to work individually and, whenever possible, to make a note of what the affixes mean.

Step Three

After a couple of minutes, display the following transparency on an OHP (both boxes should be displayed):

1. -able	a. someone who carries out an action
2. -arian	b. can do, can be
3. -ee	c. someone interested in specific things
4. -er	d. a practiser of
5. -ess	e. without
6. -ish	f. a doctrine or movement
7. -ism	g. someone who receives the action
8. -ist	h. fear of
9. -less	i. female person who carries out an action
10. -phobia	j. resembling, in the manner of

eat**able**, veget**arian**, employ**ee**, buy**er**, act**ress**, child**ish**,
Communi**sm**, motor**ist**, fear**less**, claustroph**obia**

Ask the learners, in pairs, to match the suffixes in the left column with the explanations in the right column of the first box. Tell them that the ten words in the second box are there to help them if they want concrete words to work with.

After a couple of minutes, ask them to discuss and compare their findings with other pairs.

Solution: 1-b. 2-d. 3-g. 4-a. 5-i. 6-j. 7-f. 8-c. 9-e. 10-h.

Step Four

Hand out the worksheet below to the learners, one for each learner:

1. anti-	
2. bi-	
3. co-	
4. equi-	
5. ex-	
6. extra-	
7. inter-	
8. mono-	
9. out-	
10. quasi-	
11. sub-	
12. tele-	

antiperspirant, **bi**lingual, **co**-pilot, **equi**distant, **ex**-wife,
extraterrestrial, **inter**national, **mono**syllable, **out**smart,
quasi-explanation, **sub**marine, **tele**vision

Ask the learners, in new pairs and using dictionaries whenever necessary, to work find suitable explanations for the prefixes listed in the left-hand column of the first box. Tell them to write down an appropriate explanation for each prefix, using the empty right-hand column on the same line as the prefix. Tell them that the twelve words in the second box are there to help them if they want concrete words to work with.

Tell learners who have completed the worksheet to come and check the correct answers (shown on the following page). The answers are displayed on the teacher's desk.

Solution:

1. anti-	against
2. bi-	two, twice
3. co-	together with, jointly
4. equi-	equal, the same
5. ex-	former
6. extra-	outside, beyond
7. inter-	between, from one to another
8. mono-	(having) one
9. out-	to a greater extent
10. quasi-	almost, seemingly
11. sub-	under
12. tele-	linking across distances

Step Five

Ask the learners individually to rank the prefixes according to how much the prefixes appeal to them, or, to put it differently, which two or three prefixes they like the most. Next, ask the learners to compare their ranking lists with their classmates and to give reasons for their favourite prefix(s).

Step Six

Write the following sentence on the blackboard:

The co-payees outnumber the quasi-scientists

Tell the learners that this is one of your favourite sentences. [If you don't like it, you must make up a sentence of your own.] Ask the learners to work in pairs and (a) make a list of all affixes they can find in the sentence and (b) try to rewrite the sentence without using any of the affixes found.

Solution:

(a) The affixes are **co-**, **-ee**, **out-**, **quasi-** and **-ist**.

(b) One possible rendering of the sentence is:

“There are more people who are paid together than there are people who are seemingly interested in science”

Step Seven

Ask the learners, working in pairs and using dictionaries, to produce two or three sentences like the one written on the blackboard. Challenge them to include as many of their favourite affixes as possible and to make the sentences as short as possible.

Invite learners who have completed their sentences to walk around in the classroom and test their classmates' understanding of the sentences.

Step Eight

For homework, ask the learners to read through an English text (either a text pre-selected and handed out by the teacher or a text of their own choice) and see how many different affixes can find.

12. IF A RUNNER RUNS, DOES A SWEATER SWEAT?

It is true that a person who runs is a runner, but is it also true that a person who sweats is a sweater? And if you call someone who writes a writer, can you call someone who draws a drawer? And does the fact that a teacher points to something make him or her a pointer?

English words that end with the suffix “-er” fairly often follow the pattern “to run” - “a runner” (with occasional spelling consequences). As demonstrated in the first paragraph, however, this is not always the case. Sometimes “-er” words have additional meanings, and sometimes they may have entirely different meanings.

The purpose of this lesson plan is to increase EFL learners’ vocabulary awareness as far as the “-er” suffix is concerned. Although the lesson is aimed primarily at intermediate and advanced learners, the teacher can easily modify the level of difficulty by selecting or adding words that suit his or her purposes and/or learners better.

Step One

Write the following sentence on the blackboard:

A person who buys something is a buyer.

Point out the relationship between the verb, to buy, and the “-er” ending found in the word “buyer”. Ask the learners to produce half a dozen similar sentences including other verbs. Next, ask them to share and compare their sentences with their classmates.

Step Two

Hand out the following list of words to the learners:

1. carrier
2. diner
3. drawer
4. duster
5. hanger
6. joker
7. mower
8. pointer
9. poster
10. prayer
11. reader
12. rubber
13. shower
14. sleeper
15. slipper
16. starter
17. sticker
18. sweater
19. thriller
20. toaster

Ask them to look up the words in a bilingual dictionary and decide which words

- (a) refer to people
- (b) refer to animals
- (c) refer to objects
- (d) refer to people and also something else
- (e) have three or more distinct meanings.

When they are finished, ask them to compare their results with their classmates.

Step Three

Write the sentence “**Although he plays records he is not a record player**” on the blackboard and ask the learners to produce similar sentences.

After five minutes or so, ask them to share and discuss their sentences with their classmates.

Step Four

Next, write the sentence “**The man sleeps in a sleeper**” on the blackboard and ask the learners to produce similar sentences.

Again, after five minutes or so, ask them to share and discuss their sentences with their classmates.

Step Five

Invite the learners to produce sentences such as “**A smoker smokes, but what does a holster do?**” and “**A listener can listen, but can an oyster oyst?**”.

When they are finished, ask them to read out their sentences in class.

13.

WORDS WORDS WORDS

The purpose of this lesson plan is to increase FL learners' vocabulary awareness and dictionary skills. It is aimed primarily at intermediate and advanced learners, but the teacher can easily modify the level of difficulty by selecting or adding words that suit his or her learners better. Although the example is in English, the idea can of course be used with other languages as well. Note that the shorter the words selected, the easier the task.

Step One

Ask the learners to write down half a dozen English words from a given topic, for example means of transport. Tell them to concentrate on words that have, preferably, no more than five letters. After a minute or so, ask them to call out words from their lists, one learner and one word at the time.

Step Two

Choose two of the words that were called out, for example “**car**” and “**bike**”. Write the word sequence

car care cake bake bike

on the blackboard and ask the learners, in pairs, to figure out what you do with each word in the list to produce the following word in the list. In other words, what do you do with “**car**” to produce “**care**”; with “**care**” to produce “**cake**”; with “**cake**” to produce “**bake**”; and with “**bake**” to produce “**bike**”? Ask them to come up with as simple and general rules as possible.

After a couple of minutes, ask the learners what rules they have come up with.

Solution: These two rules have been applied:

You may add a letter to the word
You may change a letter in the word

Step Three

Tell the learners that there are two more rules, and then display the complete set of rules on an OHP:

You may add a letter to the word
You may change a letter in the word
You may delete a letter from the word
You may NOT change the order of letters in any word

Choose two other words from the learners' original list and write them on the blackboard. Challenge the learners to see how fast they can produce a similar sequence of words, starting with one of the words on the blackboard and ending with the other one. Invite them to aim at as short a word sequence as possible, and tell them to follow the four rules displayed on the OHP. Encourage them to use monolingual English dictionaries while they are working.

Step Four

Ask those pairs who have finished their word sequences to prepare short stories that contain the words in their word sequences, preferably in the same order. These stories can then be read out in class after everyone has presented their word sequences.

14.

ANAGRAMS AND SPLIT WORDS

An anagram is a reordering of the letters in a word or a phrase to form another word or phrase. The word “**sword**”, for example, is an anagram of the English word “**words**”. An example of a more complex anagram is the rearrangement of the letters in “**Clint Eastwood**” as “**Old West action**”. (The Clint Eastwood anagram was found on the **Anagram Genius** site at www.anagramgenius.com) which also offers a downloadable anagram creator for your amusement.)

The purpose of this lesson plan is to familiarise learners with the concept of anagrams and to increase their awareness of possible [and impossible] letter combinations in English.

Step One

Display the following word list on an OHP:



chair
table
bookcase
sofa
cupboard
cushion
armchair
desk
carpet
wardrobe
curtain
stool
shelf

Ask the learners to read through the word list several times. Make sure that they know what the words mean. Then remove the transparency from the OHP.

Step Two

Hand out the worksheet below to the learners and tell them that the words on the worksheet are the same words as those shown on the OHP transparency. Each word, however, has been split into two parts, and the learners' task is to identify which two parts belong together and then combine the word parts to recreate the original words.

fa	hair	ward	car
elf	st	tain	robe
hion	cur	cus	sh
oard	de	book	so
cupb	ta	armc	ool
ch	air	pet	sk
ble	case		

After a couple of minutes, display the OHP transparency again and ask the learners to check their results.

[The worksheet was created using an authoring program called Word Chop (at <http://school.discovery.com/cgi-bin/wcchop.cgi?T=chop>). The program is one of the alternatives offered by Discovery School on their Worksheet Generator site (at <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/worksheetgenerator/index.html>). Since the program cannot “think”, it can be used to create worksheets for any language allowed by the keyboard, not only English.]

Step Three

Ask the learners to work in pairs and study the word parts listed on the worksheet that was handed out to them a while ago. Ask them to consult their bilingual dictionaries and find out which of the word parts

- (a) are in fact existing English words (and what they mean)
- (b) could be English words (but in fact are not)
- (c) could not be English words (and possible reasons why).

When the learners are finished, ask them to compare their findings with their classmates.

Solution:

(a) These are existing English words: **air, book, car, case, cur, elf, fa, hair, la, pet, robe, so and ward.**

(b) The halved words **cus, hion, ool** and **tain** contain perfectly acceptable letter combinations and could in fact be English words. For some reason, however, they have not been assigned any meaning in English.

(c) The remaining words cannot be English words. Some of them lack vowels or consonants, whereas others contain letter combinations that do not exist in either initial or end position in English words.

Step Four

Display the original OHP transparency and write the words “**bleat**”, “**cook base**” and “**proud cab**” on the blackboard. Tell the learners that they are anagrams of three of the words listed on the transparency. Explain to them what an anagram is, then ask them to find the three words on the transparency of which “**bleat**”, “**cook base**” and “**proud cab**” are anagrams.

Solution: The words **bleat, cook base** and **proud cab** are anagrams of the words **table, bookcase** and **cupboard**.

Step Five

Ask the learners to work in pairs and create anagrams of the words displayed on the transparency. Invite them to consult their dictionaries as much as possible. When they have come up with four or five anagrams, ask them to walk around in the classroom and test their classmates.

15. ACRONYMS AND LEARNER- CREATED CYBERLANGUAGE

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letter (or letters) of a name. The term “acronym” derives from a Greek word that means “first letter name” and according to Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, the date of its earliest recorded use in English is 1943. Well-known English acronyms are BBC (for British Broadcasting Corporation) and MP (Member of Parliament).

The use of acronyms and smileys (see section 2 of this book) is constantly increasing, particularly among chat enthusiasts. The reason is obvious: the use of this type of computer language (also called cyberlanguage) saves typing time, chatting being very demanding since it takes time in real time and typically requires speed at the keyboard from the participants. Cyberlanguage is not, however, restricted to chat sites - it is found in email messages as well and on websites in particular. Nor is it restricted to native speakers - when it comes to English, even very young EFL learners are sometimes more skilful in understanding (and using!) cyberlanguage than their own English teachers are.

The purpose of this vocabulary lesson is to familiarise learners with the concept of acronyms and to increase their understanding of various kinds of letter combinations in English.

Step One

Display the following list of acronyms on an OHP:

AFAIK ASAP FAQ FYI IMO
IYSWIM JAM NRN OTOH TIA

Ask the learners to work in pairs and assign possible meanings to as many of the acronyms as possible.

After a couple of minutes, ask them what they have come up with.

Solution:

AFAIK – As Far As I Know

ASAP - As Soon As Possible

FAQ - Frequently Asked Question

FYI - For Your Information

IMO - In My Opinion

IYSWIM - If You See What I Mean

JAM - Just A Minute

NRN - No Reply Necessary (or Needed)

OTOH - On The Other Hand

TIA - Thanks In Advance

Step Two

Ask the learners, working in pairs and using either (a) advanced English dictionaries, (b) specific texts handed out by the teacher, or (c) specific Internet sites selected by the teacher, to find different kinds of acronyms. A user-friendly acronym site is Acronym Server (at <http://www.ucc.ie/cgi-bin/uncgi/acronym>). It can be used to search for either acronyms or words.

When they have found more than a dozen acronyms, ask them to select ten of them (the best ones) and walk around in the classroom testing their classmates' knowledge of acronyms.

Depending on the learners' age or proficiency level it might be a good idea to restrict their search for acronyms to a specific topic, for example geography, politics or various kinds of institutions.

Step Three

Write the acronym

SOUTTT

on the blackboard and invite the learners to suggest possible meanings of the acronym.

After a few attempts, tell them that it stands for “**Sentences Often Used By The Teacher**”.

Next, tell the learners to form groups of three. Ask each group to create new acronyms on the SOUBTT topic, for example acronyms like **WHYDYH**, which could stand for “**Why Haven’t You Done Your Homework?**”.

When the learners have agreed on a dozen or so new acronyms, ask them to select ten of them (the best ones) and walk around in the classroom putting their classmates’ imagination to the test.

Step Four

Finish the lesson by telling the learners that you once saw the acronym **AHA** on a door in an English town (you may have to write it on the blackboard). Again, invite the learners to think of possible meanings of the acronym. After a few attempts on their part, tell them that it stands for “**Acronym Haters’ Association**”.

[To the best of my knowledge, **AHA** does not exist. But I still think it’s a profound acronym. And it will certainly appeal to verbal-linguistic learners in particular.]

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