

Activities for Developing Learning Strategies

Establishing learning techniques in the ELT classroom

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2b Big goals and small steps

About the activity



Learning strategies	Goal setting, organising learning, planning, motivating
Language focus	Future plans
Summary of the activity	An activity to help students stay motivated and organise implementable actions in order to reach their goals.

Rationale




Sometimes it can be hard to find and keep motivation for a big task, such as learning a foreign language. One way to stay motivated is to have clear goals; these should be goals that excite and are challenging and interesting. Goals that are not necessarily learning a language, but that will involve learning that language – for example, becoming a movie star. The problem with such big goals is that they are scary, we think “how will I ever manage to become...” This activity will explain how, by breaking down those goals into achievable chunks. As well as being a very motivating lesson, this is an excellent way to get to know your students and what drives them.

How to run the activity

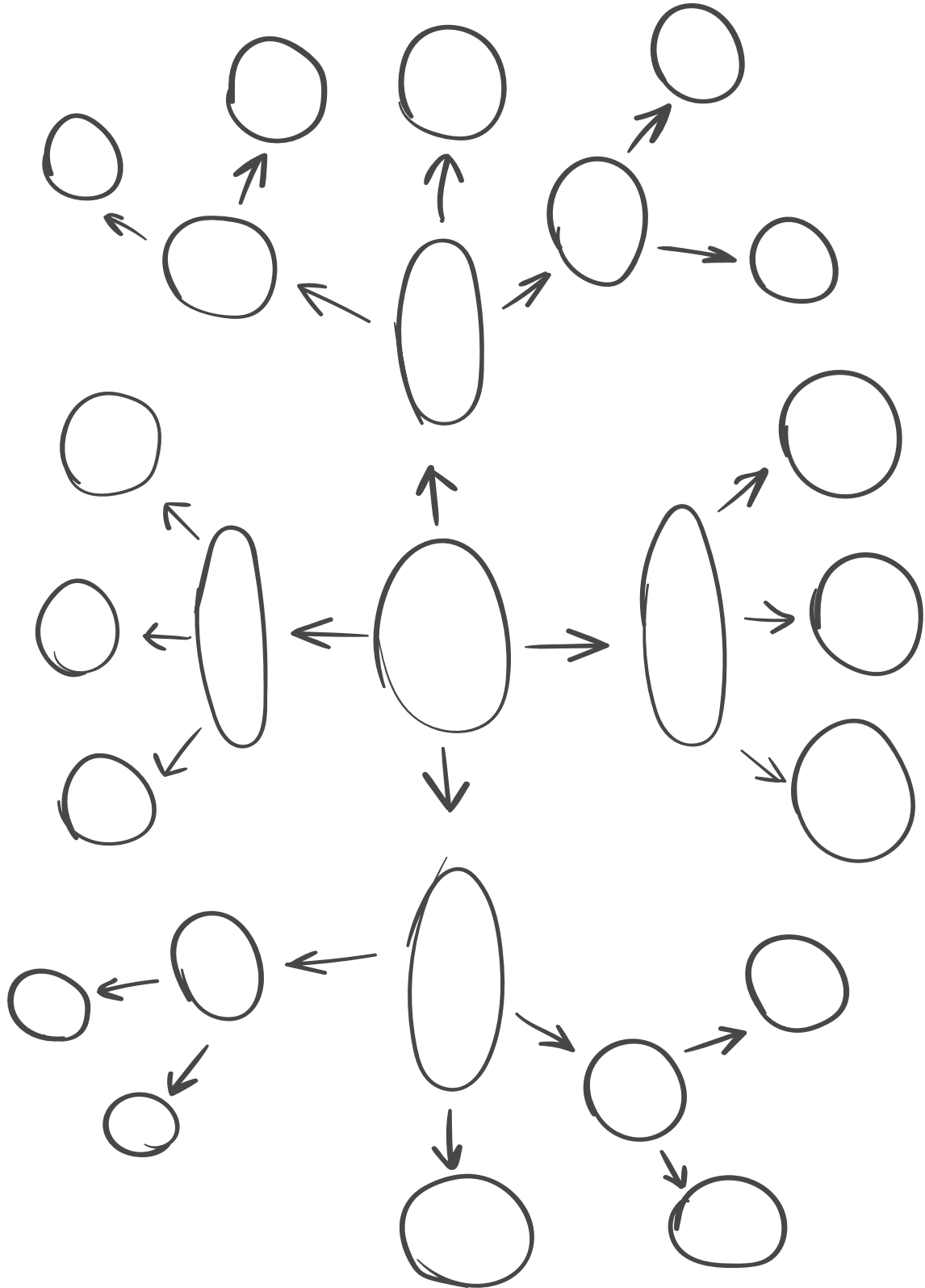
Levels	B1–C1	Learners	Teens/Adults	Time	45 minutes–1 hour
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 Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make photocopies of the mindmap worksheet and/or project it. • Cut out enough <i>Goal and steps</i> slips for each student.
 Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead into the topic by brainstorming some goals, encourage mad, wild, exciting ones, such as astronaut – first person on Mars, or president (of the world?!), better than Beyoncé, etc. 2. Project (or draw on the board) a mindmap and choose a goal (say first person on Mars) – write it in the centre. 3. Ask the students which actions are needed to fulfil that criteria and write them in the closest bubbles – become an astronaut, be the fittest, be an engineer, work for Nasa, etc. 4. Then elicit actions needed to fulfil these steps – such as study astrophysics at university, etc. 5. Move to the bubbles further from the centre, to study astrophysics you must get top marks in science at school, to do this you should read science magazines and watch online videos on the subject, etc. 6. Continue breaking down the objectives until they become easy actions that anyone could do.

2b Big goals and small steps

 <p>Procedure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Give out a copy, or ask students to copy the mindmap into their learning journals and to write their own goal in the centre and complete the bubbles around it. 8. Once they have completed the external bubbles with easily-achievable steps, students can complete the goal cards. 9. Ask the students to then find a partner, show each other their mind maps and ask each other 3 questions about their future goals. 10. Discuss, or ask the students to journal about the reflection questions (see Chapter 1).
<p>Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lexis related to goals: <i>become, achieve, manage</i> • Verbs + preposition: <i>I want to, I plan on</i> • To for purpose: <i>study to become</i> • Functional language for jobs and careers: <i>to work in, to manage, to be CEO...</i>
 <p>Differentiation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can still do this activity with adults; remind them that William Shatner went into space aged 90, Joe Biden first became president when he was 78, Colonel Sanders was 65 and living in poverty when he created KFC! • Remind students that depending on their situation, for some people going to university, passing the year or getting a job can be a huge accomplishment, however this is meant to be a fun activity – aim big! • Fast finishers can write about a typical day in their future life as astronaut/ president etc. in their learning journal.
<p>Extension ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you project the mindmap on the board, students can copy it into their learning journals. • Ask the students to create a similar mindmap of small steps for learning English. • You can display the mindmaps around the classroom to motivate the students when they enter. • Ask fast finishers to create a mindmap on becoming bilingual to put up in class.
 <p>Adaptation for the virtual classroom</p>	<p>Start with some images of goals, astronauts, football players, the Superbowl half-time show, etc. Then screen share an image of the mindmap and ask students to complete it.</p>

2b Big goals and small steps – the mindmap



2b Big goals and small steps – the goal cards

 **MY GOAL IS:**
.....

SMALL STEPS:







 **MY GOAL IS:**
.....

SMALL STEPS:







 **MY GOAL IS:**
.....

SMALL STEPS:







 **MY GOAL IS:**
.....

SMALL STEPS:





