



Variety out of regularity

This section is intended less as a recipe book of activities and more as a way to develop lexical approaches to commonly used exercises and tasks.

For us, interest comes less from using a wide variety of tasks or teaching techniques and more from the language, and the variety of students. Using the same material and asking the same questions can often result in quite different responses from different students. Following those responses can lead to more unexpected language, which may, in turn, lead to new teaching, new questions ... and variety!

Organisation

The chapters that follow are organised according to traditional divisions of language and skills. There's then a final extra chapter on recycling and revision. Each chapter consists of a set of key principles, and each page follows a three-part structure: *Principle*, *Practising the principle* and *Applying the principle*.

Principle

The principles often recap points made in Part A and add some thoughts related to particular aspects of language, or typical exercise types and tasks.

Both the chapters and principles build on each other. We aim to cater for a variety of teachers and you may find some are too basic. We have, therefore, also tried to present principles so that they can be looked at in a different order, allowing you to reference related exercises in Part B in case you want to skip to what is most relevant to you.

Practising the principle

Here, you have a task to help you think more about the principle in question, and to discuss how it may affect your teaching. The reading, listening and writing sections are

accompanied by texts in an appendix. These allow us to give examples in the *Principle* section, while also giving you a new text to practise with.

There is no answer key to this section. There are often many possibilities – and no definitive right answers. We want you to explore what the principles mean to you and to decide whether they suit you and your teaching context.

Applying the principle

This often repeats the task in *Practising the principle*, but encourages you to apply it to your own teaching. In addition, it may provide comments on when to try applying particular principles in class, alongside some teaching tips and techniques.

While we often refer to materials, these do not have to be published materials. As you will see in Part C, we strongly believe that writing materials is great for teacher development.

Although the task itself applies to *one* lesson, we hope you will incorporate some principles as an everyday part of your teaching. It's up to you how this works. You might:

- Take one principle and apply it until you're comfortable with it – or decide it's not for you!
- Try each principle in turn and see what works best for you, before applying the best ones more consistently.
- Only try principles that sound more relevant to your teaching context.
- Randomly try out a principle and work from that to other principles that are referred to. Ultimately, you will find that all the tasks are interrelated.

An exception to the rule

You will find an exception to the three-part approach in the chapter on recycling and revision. Here, there are a small number of activities that we regularly use to revise language.

Asking questions about words 1

Why some questions go further than others

Principle

As we have seen, if students are to be able to use a word fluently, they need to know far more than just the pronunciation, spelling and meaning. Once you have explained and exemplified a word, a key skill is to then ask questions about the vocabulary item being looked at. In essence, you can't really know how much the students are already aware of without asking questions. Questions can:

- test students' awareness of these aspects.
- provide opportunities for you to teach more about an item.
- involve the students more in the learning process.
- create space for student stories, queries, jokes, and so on.

Learning to ask good questions about vocabulary items takes time – and the next activities are dedicated to the development of this skill. Some possible questions about an item are better than others, as they 'go further' in class:

- Open questions* are usually better than closed* ones that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- Open questions also often allow for a degree of surprise, in terms of the ways they can be answered.

Good questions for checking what students know/understand about vocabulary:

- usually include the keyword(s).
- are impersonal and can potentially be answered by all the students in the class.
- aren't about personal experiences (based on the words) the students may have had.
- ask about possibility, and about the most typical usage and co-text.
- explore different aspects of word knowledge.
- generate connected language.
- elicit feedback that allows you to extend learning.

Practising the principle

- Look at five possible questions you could ask about the vocabulary items in **bold** below. Decide:
 - which are more open, and which are more closed.
 - what answers you imagine each question would generally elicit.
 - which questions would elicit the largest amount of connected language.
 - which ones only students with specific experience could answer.

The bus drivers are all **on strike** at the moment, so you'd better get a taxi to the airport.

A If you are *on strike*, are you happy with your job?

B Have you ever been *on strike*?

C Can you think of three different reasons why people might sometimes go *on strike*?

D If you are *on strike*, do you go to work or not?

E How might things end when workers go *on strike*?

We have years of experience in managing and **resolving conflicts**.

A What do you think is involved in the process of *resolving conflicts*?

B Are any of you any good at *resolving conflicts*?

C Can you think of three different situations in which it might be necessary to *resolve a conflict*?

D If you need to *resolve a conflict*, does it mean there's a problem?

E What kind of skills might you have, if you're good at *resolving conflicts*?

Applying the principle

- Look at the next vocabulary exercise you're going to teach. Try to think of one question you could ask about each item in the answers.
- When you teach the lesson, try asking your questions. Record yourself and your students if you can.
- Afterwards, think about which questions worked best, in terms of generating connected language – and why.

Getting more from exercises 1

Same grammar, different co-text

Principle

Many grammar exercises use a fairly wide range of words to illustrate the form of a structure, and don't usually use each of those words more than once. While this may be good, in terms of showing how the form is constructed, it ignores the fact that some words are actually far more common with certain structures than others are.

For instance, an exercise on superlatives may have only one example of *best*, despite it being more commonly used with this structure than other adjectives.

This is problematic because, as we saw in Part A when discussing the work of Nick Ellis:

- basic patterns may well become established in the mind through repeated hearings of the most frequent combinations.
- once these patterns have been established, we are then able to both receptively understand new words we meet in the slots and add new items in them ourselves.

To tackle this issue, at the end of an exercise, once you've checked all the answers, you could take one or two sentences and look at how the co-text around them could be changed. Let's say an exercise includes the sentence below:

I've known Ben for 20 years. We were at school together.

Possible variations include the following:

- I've known Rebecca for 15 years. *We met when she started working here.*
- I've known Karim for twenty-five years. *We were in the same class at university.*
- My friend John has known his girlfriend for six months. *They met on the internet.*

Practising the principle

- Look at the exercise below. It's aimed at Intermediate/B1-level students, and focuses on 'should've + past participle'. The answers are in *italics*.
- Decide which of the examples of the structure are the most common and might be exploited best.
- Think of some extra examples. Make sure your examples keep the same grammar, but add different co-text.

- 1 It rained. *We should've put up* a shelter over the barbecue.
- 2 You *should've seen* him. He looked ridiculous.
- 3 I *should've written* a shopping list. I'm sure there's something else we need.
- 4 You *should've told* me it was your birthday. I would've bought you a present.
- 5 They didn't do anything about him missing school. They *should've given* him a punishment.
- 6 It was really hot in there. They *should've opened* a window.
- 7 It's my own fault. I *should've listened* to you when you warned me about him.
- 8 I never learn! I *should've known* better after what happened last time!

Applying the principle

- Look at a grammar exercise you plan to teach soon.
- Choose two examples of the structure you think are more common and whose co-text could be varied:
 - If there are no good examples, you could change one or add your own.
- In class, write the example(s) on the board and:
 - give an example of a possible change, and show the students the pattern.
 - elicit other ideas/examples from the students.
 - set up a short pairwork practice where the students have to come up with more examples, or have conversations around the examples.

Beyond correction

Putting emergent language to use

Principle

If you intervene in a student's communication and provide the language they need, you are addressing several of the steps involved in learning mentioned in Part A. It can be assumed that the learner you help:

- understands the meaning of the language, because they generated that meaning.
- hears or sees 'correct' language when you give it.
- will probably use it as they continue speaking. (If, of course, they don't just say 'Yeah – that!'.)
- will pronounce it accurately enough if they do use it.

However, when we highlight that language for *other* students during feedback, only the first two steps may take place, and none of the students will have:

- repeated these steps over time by encountering/using the item again in other contexts.

If we think about this 'emergent' language in the same way as the prepared language we teach through materials, we should want to do the same things that we do with vocabulary and grammar exercises. We have already suggested using gap-fills and error correction with sentences on the board, but you could also:

- give additional examples.
- draw attention to chunks or patterns.
- ask questions about vocabulary/grammar (see pages 44 and 62).
- elicit additional comments or responses (page 57).

You also want the students to (re)-use the language.

If you know it will re-appear in a text or language exercise in your book, you might leave it till then.

Otherwise, you could:

- get the students to repeat the task they just did with a new partner or in a shorter time.
- set a new task.

Expanding on the language and inventing a task may be too difficult to do on the spot. However, you can plan to do it at the start of your *next* lesson. If a similar language point comes up with a different set of students after this, you may also be prepared to deal with it on the spot then.

Practising the principle

- Look at the language below that was corrected during feedback on the language in the previous task (page 78). Decide:
 - what questions you might ask about vocabulary here.
 - if there are any patterns you would highlight with additional examples.
 - if there are any responses/additional comments you could elicit.
- Think of ways that the students could practise some of this language (see pages 52 and 67).

Sorry I'm late. There was a problem on the underground...

... The train was stuck in the tunnel for 30 minutes. It was really crowded and I could hardly breathe. I thought I was going to die. (This came from further discussion with a student – and reformulation.)

A: I usually cycle to work.

B: I think you are. You must be very fit.

(montar)

put together IKEA furniture

I did volunteer work once.

quit prison be released from prison

They were going to become fire fighters.

They were going to be sent to fight forest fires.

Have you been to America?

◆ No. I've never really wanted to.

Have you been anywhere outside America?

Applying the principle

- In your next lesson, record all the language that you put on the board during feedback. Take a photo of your boardwork if you can.
- Prepare the sentences that you wrote on the board as a handout or on an IWB. You might want to gap different parts.
- Prepare ways in which you will expand on the language and practise it – as outlined in *Practising the principle*.