

CLASS ACTS



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THE NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO ARE MAKING LEARNING ENGLISH ENJOYABLE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR STUDENTS.

Mark it !!!!!

I know it's unbelievably late, but I've just discovered that most students have a burning desire to have their work looked at, read, commented on and marked with a red pen. One of the many advantages we usually have over many of our non-native English teaching colleagues, is our ability to read at a fast rate AND to know whether or not the written sentence or word is

correct or not. We also, normally, have the advantage of being able to correct any mistake quickly and without need for discourse.

Towards the end of the last academic year I started to mark my students work during the class. I had about 48 students per class, which is, in fact, far too many to be able to circulate through in a 50 minute period. Thus, as my students were involved in dialogue writing, I paired them up and had each pair collaborating to write a dialogue. In that way, I effectively had only 24 pieces of work to mark. I would circulate the room mark one piece of work and ask the student to correct the other piece themselves. I sometimes fell behind and only got to mark 20 or so pieces of work, but it was well worth the effort. Since my students were now getting feedback, both they and I felt that some educational progress was being made. It also allowed me to spend time a little more intimately involved with my students. So that horrible distance that one sometimes has with one's students was removed. On top of all that my students actually began to ask me to mark their work and even waited behind at the end of the lesson for me to mark it.

Issue No

13

June 10th 1998

Great hospitality! Thanks.

March saw me in Niigata. Thank you Angela Ota. I

also managed to see a great sunset on my way back to the airport. April saw me down in Miyazaki. A small but lively group of thespians made my visit extremely interesting on top of which the evening comestibles certainly set me up for my journey home the next day. But who was that guy that I nearly tripped over at the foot of the stairs, when I got up in the middle of the night to pee?

Paul Shimizu

MARATHON MOUTH USERS

Do you need to give tests to your students? Is it a drag? Well give us a call, and we'll send you a set of three test scripts, photocopiable answer sheets, and answers (of course!).



The tests are almost entirely listening comprehension exams, which check the students retention of the vocabulary and grammar used in Marathon Mouth. At this time, you, the teacher, will have to read the scripts to your students, or make tapes, but somewhere down the line, we'll be putting them on tape.

So, if you'd like to try them out, and let us know how to make them better, just let us know you want them.

THIS ISSUE'S CENTREFOLD IS

Marathon Mouth 2

This issue's Centrefold is an idea from our next book, *Marathon Mouth 2* - a multi skills text for pre-intermediate to advanced students.

It had to happen. Just as Star Wars, Indiana Jones and Alien couldn't end with just one, so will Marathon Mouth continue with the November release of Marathon Mouth 2.

The book that takes students further than they've gone before, without destroying the great methodology and classroom management techniques of Marathon Mouth.

We apologize it won't be ready for the fall semester, but look for it at the JALT national in Omiya. Come on by and collect a sample.

THE MOTIVATE'EM CORNER

"Hammer the Pie"



This large class activity is noisy and fun. It can be made quieter if you can't stand the noise by simply using soft hammers instead of the plastic ones which have the whistle. If you don't like hammers, use fly swatters. Use any cards you want to teach. Even a mixture of nouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions or just sets of words. i.e. jobs, foods, animals, feelings etc.

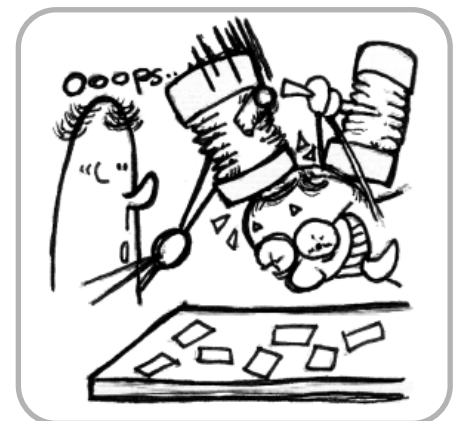
Once again, as with the previous three articles, you will have to split your class up into four teams. Use colours or whatever suits you to name the teams. More than about 30 kids in a class makes this activity a bit difficult because the waiting time could be too long. 3 to 8 students per team is ideal. You could however have 3 or 4 groups. If you do that however you will have a real tough job scoring points. Nevertheless the game is still exciting, so you might prefer to have more groups with fewer members in each team and no scoring. Lets assume we have one group of 4 teams.

Clear a space in the middle of your classroom.

Place a square table in the middle and spread out your cards face up in the centre. Make sure you do not have too many cards. Too many cards makes the game slow and unexciting.

About 7 to 10 cards is ample. Have the 4 teams stand in straight lines one behind the other, perpendicular to the sides of the table. The front person of each team picks up a hammer. Make sure the students hold the hammers high so as not to obscure the other players view of the cards.

Now you are ready to start. Call out a card. Quite simply the first student to hit it with her hammer wins. Award that student a point for her team and call out another card. Do this 4 or 5 times and then shout "Change". The students who are holding the hammers hand them to the next student behind and run to the back of their respective teams. Continue until exhausted.



Activity 1 Use the dialogue below to ask your partner about the missing star signs.



A: What's the sign for April 20th to May 20th?

B: It's

A: How do you spell that?

B:



Can you help me please?

Aries

 March 21st -

confident

()

 April 20th -

patient

Gemini

 May 21st -

intelligent

()

 June 22nd -

sensitive

()

 July 23rd -

generous

Virgo

 August 23rd -

modest

()

 September 23rd -

gentle

Scorpio

 October 24th -

creative

What does it mean?

How do you pronounce this?

Sagittarius

 November 23rd -

outgoing

()

 December 22nd -

reliable

Aquarius

 January 22nd -

friendly

()

 February 19th -

kind

Activity 2 Use the dialogue below, ask your partner about the missing characteristic.



B: Yes, he/she is actually.

A: Is Aries.....?



B: No, he/she isn't.



A: Oh, what's he/she like them?

B: Actually he/she's.....

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------|
| easy going | jealous | stubborn | honest | cunning | bossy |
| independent | understanding | selfish | practical | romantic | moody |

Dictation

Just recently I have been trying a new tack with my students - dictation. Dictating important or even non-important English to one's students has a real focusing effect. It may even be used to elicit some of the useful English that many teachers initially try to teach their students. In fact, after a while I deliberately tried to make it difficult for my students in order to extract phrases like "Please speak more slowly.", "Pardon?",

"How do you spell?", "Could you please explain?", etc.

Dictation is just another of those activities which helps keep students alert and on their toes. But be careful about overusing it, as it is a very tiring and exacting task for many students. Students may also get bored if it is overused.

While you are dictating, move around the class and look over your students' shoulders at how they are doing. It will allow you to give help to students as well as giving you a good insight into some of the language difficulties of your students.

ENGLISH - LIVE!



exercises offer a multi-skills approach to practicing English, that all climaxes with not one, but two, out of classroom interviews. Of course, the intent is to have students interview native speakers of English, but even if they are not available, the follow up written report and oral presentation (in English) will ensure students have a thorough understanding of their interview and the ability to report on their interviews in English.

It's not a new album, it's a new book. The newest addition to our little collection, *English-Live!* is a course book based on interviewing. Written by Christine Lee Chinen (Christine's Easy English Conversation for Nurses, published by Igaku-Shoin), this book comes after many years of using interviewing in the classroom at universities and junior colleges in Japan.

The book has students using interviews to practice and develop their fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Role plays, pair and group work, readings and listening

In addition to the student book, there is a cassette with 80 minutes of listening activities and realistic recorded interviews, and a teacher's edition with glossary of vocabulary used in the book (given in English, Japanese and romaji).

We expect Christine will be presenting on *English-Live!* at the JALT national conference in November, but feel free to contact us for more information if this is the type of material you think your students would benefit from.

Not "This is a pen." but "Use a pen."

I'm sick and tired of students writing in pencil, and using their rubbers or that white opaque stuff every time they feel that they have made a mistake. In all my classes now they are banned substances. I really want to get ideas from my students, not some beautifully formed letters on a neat mistake-free page. Besides which, the poor students usually only get to write one or two sentences, because they are so busy rubbing out or worrying that they have actually made a mistake. Quite often something is rubbed out that wasn't a mistake, and is replaced by something that is a mistake. I try to tell my students that they are more likely to learn from making a mistake AND having that mistake clearly visible. I demonstrate to my students just how I would like them to cross out their mistakes so that they get the idea. In general, one learns by making mistakes, so first teach your students not to be afraid of making mistakes. It is a natural part of the learning process.

POP IN

If you're in the area please feel free to pop in on us. We have back issues of our newsletters, sample texts, tea, coffee, and talk. We have Japanese and English speaking staff.



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Sample Request Form

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