

CLASS ACTS

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Well summer is over, winter is setting in and we're all getting ready for Christmas.

Ah! Christmas in Japan!

Oh yes, that lovely, heavy, rich, dried fruit Christmas Cake that's sold on street corners throughout Japan. Christmas Crackers with the paper hat, some kind of charm, and the ubiquitous joke or riddle, which always helps to create a lively atmosphere at the dining table. The steaming turkey (sorry vegetarians), stuffing, cranberry sauce and other sumptuous goodies to gorge yourself with. Oh yes, let's not forget the gravy, an essential item, not to be undervalued. And lastly the flaming plum pudding with brandy butter sauce. Then having feasted like a pig, settling down round the Yule log with your new checked slippers and tartan socks and watching the Christmas movie in a semi-comatose state.

Now that I have most of you crazily salivating or chomping at the bit, let's come down to Earth. You see I was dreaming about MY trip to England this Christmas and what I would be doing.

Paul Shimizu

COME & SEE US

- **Jan 17 (Sun)**
JALT Chapter, Sendai
- **Jan 24 (Sun)**
JALT Fukuoka Book Fair
- **Jan 31 (Sun)**
JALT Okinawa Book Fair
- **Feb 28 (Sun)**
JALT Chapter, Kobe

Should you require further information on our materials please give us a call. We would be happy to come to your school, college or university if you would like a presentation or workshop.

Making Conversation

— A creative writing text ?

A small note to those teachers who are using or have requested a sample copy of Making Conversation.

In my view Making Conversation is not, repeat not simply a conversation text book. The title rather belies its' true colours. Yes, it does have conversation exercises, but there is a lot of ground work to be done before conversation/drama can take place.

The text was written and designed by a drama teacher with drama in mind. I, not being a drama teacher i.e. not having the necessary skills to create an atmosphere in which drama pervades, fell flat on my face when first using this book. I fell flat on my face because of my lack of drama skills and because the writing component was taking students too long to complete. We had no time for conversation. And since I was focused on conversation, I kind of got upset because conversation was not really happening.

But hey, I was stuck with the text so what was I going to do with it. This is what I did. I thought to myself that perhaps if I changed my focus I might be able to get more out of the text and more out of the students. I changed my main focus to writing, with my secondary focus on reading and dramatic conversation.

I had students work in pairs. I did this for two

reasons. One was to decrease my work load and the other was to get more creativity from each dialogue because students within their pair group had to exchange ideas in order to complete the dialogue. How did this decrease my work load? Easy I took my body with red pen attached into the thick of the classroom, sat down with each pair and checked their writing. Since the two students were writing identical dialogues, I only marked/checked one book. The other student had to make her corrections from the book I had just marked. In a 50 minute lesson I was able to check about 20 books (nearly all the class). During the term, my students became hungry for my marking, and would put their hands up and call me over. I think it was the first time for many of my students to get real, instant feedback. Once the class had completed the dialogues. (This is where a whole variety of approaches can be made.) I simply had students exchange their books with another pair of students and read and practice that dialogue. My students enjoyed this because they were reading other students ideas.

I would welcome comments from other teachers who have found different ways of using this text.



THIS ISSUE'S CENTREFOLD IS

Marathon Mouth PLUS

This issue's Centrefold is an idea from our next book, Marathon Mouth Plus. The topic is a potentially sensitive one. Stereotypes. Stereotypes and generalisations can be dangerous, but at the same time they can be interesting and can even lead to lively discussion. They can also help to straighten out misconceptions we have about other cultures. Discussing this topic will also give

you a chance to teach your students some soft and diplomatic language to go with your stereotypes. Another important aspect that should not be overlooked, is that not all stereotypes are negative. There are also positive and neutral stereotypes. I have tried this centrefold out with a few classes and my students were certainly motivated by it. They also came up with many different and interesting ideas themselves. So if you use it and get some interesting responses from your students, please let us know here at the Press.

The idea came from Nick and Tilly Warren and I simply jazzed it up a little. Thank you Nick and Tilly.

IT CAME DOWN IN BERLIN!



A

STEREOTYPES

1 In the lines provided below, write two stereotypes of your own.

- | | a-1 | a-2 | b-1 | b-2 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <u>Americans like hamburgers.</u> ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. <u>Americans always root for the underdog.</u> ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Americans don't like to fight, but will when they have to.</u> ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>American women are strong and bossy.</u> ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Americans like violence in movies and on TV.</u> ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. <u>Americans believe in democracy and capitalism.</u> ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Read the statements above and mark your opinion in the "a" columns.

- Column a-1:** Write **T** if you think the stereotype is basically **true**.
Write **F** if you think the stereotype is basically **false**.
- Column a-2:** Write **+** if you think the stereotype is **positive**.
Write **0** if you think the stereotype is **neutral**.
Write **-** if you think the stereotype is **negative**.

Can you help me please?

3 Answer your partner's questions.

What does mean?

4 Ask your partner's opinion and write his/her opinions in the "b" columns.

- Column b-1:** Write **T** if your partner thinks the stereotype is basically **true**.
Write **F** if you think the stereotype is basically **false**.
- Column b-2:** Write **+** if you think the stereotype is **positive**.
Write **0** if you think the stereotype is **neutral**.
Write **-** if you think the stereotype is **negative**.

How do you pronounce this?



Do you think that(1~8)?



Yes, I think that is basically true.

No, I think that is basically false.



Do you think the stereotype is positive, negative or neutral?

I think it's positive (negative, neutral).

I think it's positive (negative, neutral)

STEREOTYPES

1 In the lines provided below, write two stereotypes of your own.

- | | a-1 | a-2 | b-1 | b-2 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Japanese eat raw fish at every meal. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Japanese are very good at math and science, but are not creative. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Japanese are shorter than Americans. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Japanese women are quiet and easily bossed by men. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Japanese are very hard workers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Japanese tourists are rich. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Read the statements above and mark your opinion in the "a" columns.

Can you help me please?

Column a-1: Write **T** if you think the stereotype is basically **true**.
Write **F** if you think the stereotype is basically **false**.

Column a-2: Write **+** if you think the stereotype is **positive**.
Write **0** if you think the stereotype is **neutral**.
Write **-** if you think the stereotype is **negative**.

What does mean?

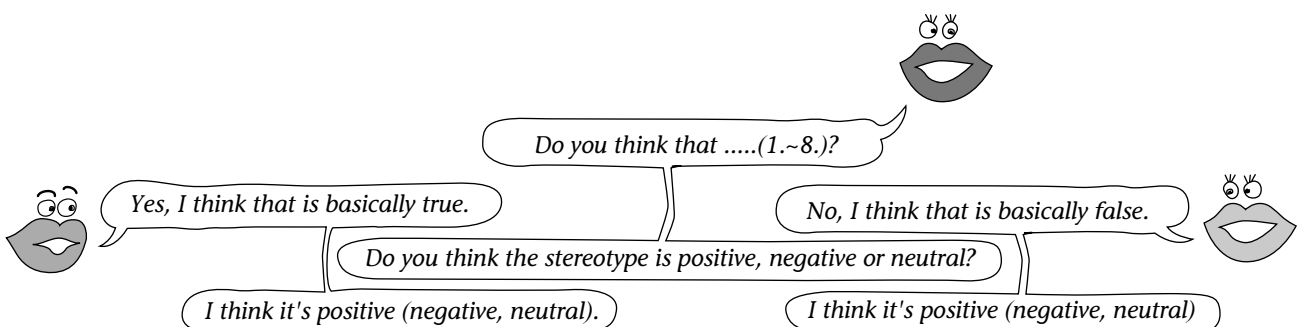
3 Answer your partner's questions.

4 Ask your partner's opinion and write his/her opinions in the "b" columns.

Column b-1: Write **T** if your partner thinks the stereotype is basically **true**.
Write **F** if you think the stereotype is basically **false**.

Column b-2: Write **+** if you think the stereotype is **positive**.
Write **0** if you think the stereotype is **neutral**.
Write **-** if you think the stereotype is **negative**.

How do you pronounce this?



Do you think that(1.-8.)?

Yes, I think that is basically true.

No, I think that is basically false.

Do you think the stereotype is positive, negative or neutral?

I think it's positive (negative, neutral).

I think it's positive (negative, neutral).

THE **MOTIVATE'EM** CORNER

I think it's a teapot



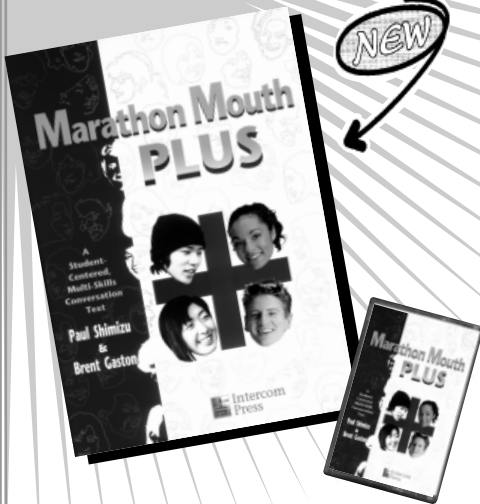
You don't have to confine yourself to the above statement. You could use such expressions as "It might be a/an", "It could be a/an", "I'm sure it's a/an" and so on. But bear in mind that the more statements you have, the greater the tendency to either slow the process, or even halt it by confusing slower students.

The object of the game is for students

to try to win as many cards as they can. First select the nouns you are going to use (I think about 20 cards would be about right. With very young students 10 or even fewer would be fine). You can also use adjectives, verbs or prepositions instead of nouns. In which case you will have to knock off the article from the sentences above. Have your students get into groups of between 4 and 6. Preteach the cards by your favourite method. So now the students know the cards. Shuffle them and put them face down in the centre of the table. Students take turns, picking up the top card, looking at it without showing it to the other students and asking "What's this?" The students either take turns in guessing "I think it's a" with the answer "Yes, here you are." or "Sorry, no." In which case the next student guesses. And so on....

Marathon Mouth PLUS

FEATURES



- 14 units of student-centered, cooperative-learning methodology with listening exercises and extended dialogues
- Interesting, timely topics students want to learn about and discuss, relevant to their daily lives
- Taped listening exercises add listening comprehension dimensions, completed through peer correction, pair and group work activities
- Information gaps, class surveys, interviews, About me!, etc. all of the features of Marathon Mouth, at a more advanced level, plus listening!
- Teacher's Edition with alternative methods to complete exercises depending on student ability, as well as transcripts of listening exercises.



The topic-based text for cooperative learning of English conversation in large classes, from high school to university level.

TALK THE TALK

Well, wasn't Mike McCarthy fantastic at JALT Omiya. The presentation I went to was a buzz. All that banter flying around the room—camaraderie. He even knew the names of many of the participants. I thought I'd stepped out of Japan into a different world. I did in a sense.

But what was the conclusion. At the time, I was caught up in academic language that I'd never heard before. But I started to think about it on the way down to the display rooms and when I got there, Eureka! It suddenly hit me. In my totally simplistic way, I thought he was saying that using conversation textbooks without inserting your own culture's English as well, puts across a sterile version of English, in much the same way that many Japanese teachers of English do.

And, since I have the floor as it were. I would also like to say that British English and American English are not two different languages, as someone put forth at the time. To use the Venn vernacular that was bandied around, they are intersecting sets. I believe that's what makes English perhaps the most exciting language in the world—the part of the sets which don't intersect.

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.



CLASS ACTS Issue No.14 *Sample Request Form*

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