

Generic Teaching Tips to use with *Easy English Times* (or any newspaper)

Every issue of *Easy English Times* comes with a separate page of learning activities and a crossword puzzle. The activities and words are specific to that issue. Here are some suggestions that can be used with **any** issue of a newspaper.

Beginning Students

1. Have students look at the pictures and graphics.

- Tell them to point to specific items.
- Ask questions with “or”. (e.g. “Are the people sitting or standing?”)
- Ask “wh” questions. (e.g. “What are they doing?”)

2. The teacher reads a story sentence by sentence. For each sentence, ask students to **underline key words or phrases**. The teacher reads the story again but does not read the words that the students have underlined. The students read the underlined words (Teacher listens to the students' pronunciation and remembers the words that caused difficulty for practice later.)

After two readings, the teacher can ask yes/no or short-answer questions based on the story. It's best if the teacher has prepared these questions in advance. To make it into a listening activity, ask students to cover up the story they just read.

Intermediate and Advanced Students

1. Ask students to **scan the newspaper** and tell you which stories they would like to read in class. (This can be done in pairs or small groups as well as individually.)

2. Do activity #2 from above (reading, underlining and questioning). Then show students how to form questions from the material. Assign them a story to **make questions** from as a homework or in-class assignment.

3. **A reading and speaking activity:** Do activity #2 from above (reading and underlining). After the students have listened to the story, underlined key words and repeated them, ask students to read the story again to themselves. Then, without looking at the story, ask partners to share with each other as much as they can remember.

4. **A writing activity:** Ask students to choose several new words from one of the stories in the newspaper. They should choose words that they want to remember. Then, for homework or classwork, they need to use each word in an original sentence.

5. Small group activity: **writing questions for classmates**

- Divide class into small groups and ask each group to choose a different story.
- Give each person in each group a small piece of paper on which to write a question. (Each group should have paper of a different color.)
- Students write their questions and trade them with another group's questions. They read the story, write the answers to the questions and hand them back.

6. Small group activity: **summarizing and speaking**

- Select several stories that you want the students to read and summarize. Divide the class into groups. Each person reads a different story and then tells the others in the group what the story was about.

7. **Create a headline**

- Cut out stories without their headlines. Ask students to read the stories and write headlines for them. Compare their headlines with the ones that are in the newspaper.

8. **Write the caption**

- Cut out some of the pictures from the newspaper without any captions.
- Give students the pictures. Ask them to write their own caption for each picture. Compare with the actual captions.

9. **Interview activity**

- Students write these two questions and answer them for themselves (after reading the newspaper). "What story did you like?" "Why did you like it?"
- Students ask their classmates the same questions and write their answers. (e.g.: "Rosa liked the story about sports. She liked it because she likes to play soccer.")

10. **Modified jigsaw reading for newspaper stories**

Choose three or four different stories. (This is done for you in the "More careful reading" section of the Learning Activities page of *Easy English Times*.) If the students are low level, read the stories to them aloud before starting the activity. Review/discuss key vocabulary words.

Step 1 Form "home" groups of four and number off.

Step 2 Hand out the questions. Each person in the group gets a different set of questions. (For example, questions A, B, C, or D.)

Step 3 In "expert" groups, students look up the answers to their set of questions, underline the answers in the newspaper or write them. Then they practice saying the answers to each other. Students should try to remember the answers (and not read them) when they are teaching their "home" group.

Step 4 "Experts" return to "home" groups and teach the answers to the questions which they were assigned. Everyone in the group has a copy of all of the questions. All members of the group write the answers on the "Learning Activities" sheet or underline the answers in their newspapers.

Step 5 Teacher creates and asks a new set of comprehension questions about the material. **DON'T FORGET THIS IMPORTANT STEP!**

11. **Vocabulary Practice**

Before doing the crossword puzzle, create a matching exercise using the words from the puzzle and their definitions. After students do the exercise, cut up the words and definitions. Half of the students have the words, half of the students have the definitions. They walk around trying to find a match.

After doing the crossword puzzle, ask students to choose one of the words from the puzzle that they would like to practice. Write each student's selected word on the board. Ask students to create some new sentences using those words. They can say them for speaking practice or write them.

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