

LANG Primary



Welcome to number two!

Welcome to the second issue of LANG Primary. Judging by the large number of teachers who took the time to complete and fax to us the coupon included in the first issue, our new magazine was received with great interest in the Primary teaching sector in Italy.

In the first issue we also asked readers to indicate their favourite pages. Undoubtedly, the most popular were those dedicated to Easter. This encourages us to increase the number of pages dedicated to photocopiable teaching resources in this and in future issues.

Features in this issue are:

- storytelling with very young children
- ideas and activities on the theme of summer holidays
- getting the most out of class readers
- some thoughts on language assessment/testing
- ideas for using flashcards in the classroom
- more opportunities for both teachers and students to receive free books



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Reading and writing Are you teaching all the language your students need?

Tim Priesack

The *Progetto Lingua 2000* presented a few months ago by the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* sets out the framework for the teaching of languages other than Italian in the Italian Educational system.

The *Progetto* gives detailed information on the many different aspects of teaching and of learning from:

- the number of hours to be allocated for each year of study
- in-service training for teachers of languages
- monitoring of results
- external certification
- a description of the levels of achievement expected at various moments during the learning cycle in the years of compulsory education.

The levels of achievement or linguistic objectives are very important for the Primary teacher as they describe in detail what must be taught in the years of the new *Scuola di Base*.

Those teachers who have attended one of the seminars organised by the teacher training network of LANG will have discussed the objectives for the skills of understanding and speaking at level A1, (the end of the present *scuola elementare*).

The functions for the reading and writing skills described in level A1, using the Council of Europe, *Versione Sperimentale Italiana – Ministero Pubblica Istruzione* are:

Reading

- I can read words and short phrases related to my everyday life
- I can read and understand short instructions
- I can read and understand a short poetry

Writing

- I can identify myself, writing very basic phrases
- I can write words, short notes of salutation, thanks and invitation related to my personal *setting
- I can write short notes to describe the action in a role playing situation

With the *riforma dei cicli*, it is very important for the teacher in the Primary school to be aware of these objectives as most of the course materials on the market today were designed before the presentation of the *Progetto Lingua 2000* and do not necessarily cover all the language exponents needed to complete the stated functions.

* setting is translated from *contesti noti*

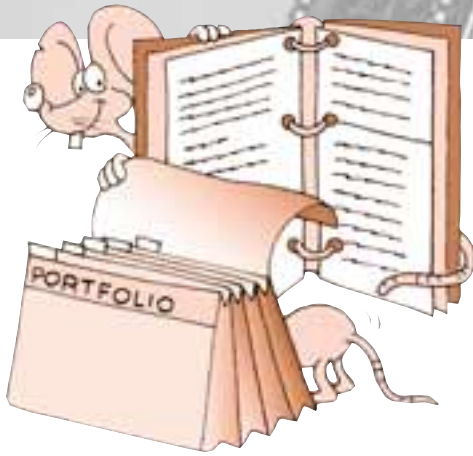
Check the content of your course materials

A useful exercise for the teacher is to list all the language exponents needed by the student to express each of the 'can do' statements. Then the teacher should carefully examine the course materials to ensure that all the exponents are covered. If some language points are not included, the teacher should prepare supplementary materials to introduce the language exponents of functions and remember to re-cycle the extra language at regular intervals.



Check out this site for more information on the European Language Portfolio

<http://culture.coe.fr./lang/index.html>



A Personal Portfolio

Brunel Brown - Frances Foster

What is Portfolio Dossier?

A Portfolio Dossier is a collection of student-generated materials, such as written work, illustrations and recordings. It offers a marvellous visual representation of a pupil's capabilities, accomplishments and progress. It contains representative work-samples selected in a variety of ways. Both the child and the teacher should always be involved with the on-going development of the Portfolio dossier.

What should a Portfolio Dossier contain?

A student Portfolio Dossier should contain many different types of work. Just as artists choose their best work to create their "portfolios", so children should build up their portfolios by selecting the samples of work that make up their "showcase Portfolios". Needless to say, this type of active participation increases motivation and encourages them to work harder.

Here is a list of items which can be included in an English Language Portfolio Dossier.

letters	poems	stories	interviews	workbook pages
diaries	illustrations	postcards	dialogues	cut-out activities
maps	charts	recordings		

The teacher has two fundamental roles in the development of the individual Portfolio Dossier:

- as co-ordinator who guides students in the selection of the work-samples to be included
- as registrar for the record-keeping section of the dossier which should contain the evaluation and assessment samples which are evidence of the progress made.

Here is a list of the items which can be included in the record-keeping section.

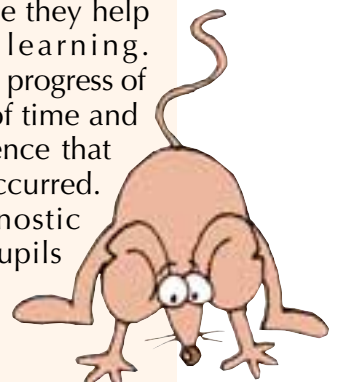
unit tests	practice / mock tests	teacher-made tests
standardised tests	certificates	awards
reports	checklists	teacher observations

How do you prepare a Portfolio Dossier?

It is important that each child has a suitable place to store his or her material. There is no standard container. Each teacher must choose one that meets the individual needs of the pupils. When choosing a container it should be remembered that it must contain all the samples of work gathered throughout the years of language learning. Most teachers use file folders, binders or scrapbooks, but cardboard boxes can also be an alternative.

Why is it important to keep a Portfolio Dossier?

Portfolios are important because they help children reflect on their learning. Furthermore, they document the progress of each child over a long period of time and they provide a variety of evidence that can verify that learning has occurred. Portfolios also provide diagnostic information for teachers of pupils who have changed schools.

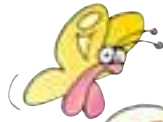


Happy Mother's Day

In many English-speaking countries Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May.

It is on this day that people, especially children, express their love and genuine appreciation to their mothers. As a teacher of English, you can get your pupils to prepare Mother's Day cards in English using these short poems which are suitable for the occasion.

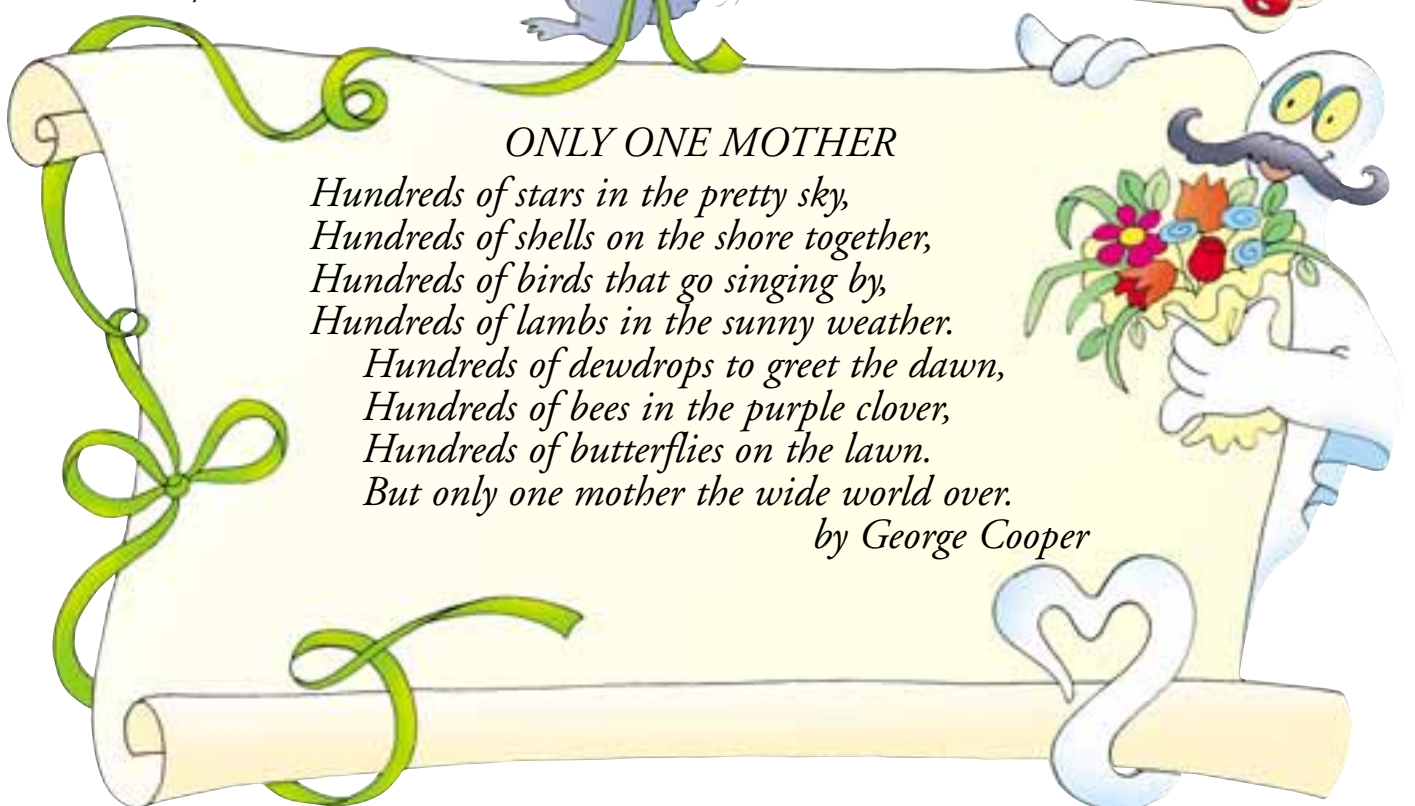
for the 3rd
year classes



for the 4th
year classes



for the 5th year classes



HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!



Independence Day commemorates the day the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress - July 4th, 1776. For

Americans it is an official holiday celebrated all over the country with picnics, parades, contests and shows. The day-long festivities culminate in public fireworks displays. On Independence Day the American flag is flown from flagpoles all over the 50 states. The Fourth of July was not declared a legal holiday until 1941.

Teach your pupils about this popular American festivity which is celebrated in July. Tell them to watch the news on that date and to gather as much information as possible which will be discussed when they return to school in September.



The Importance of Testing

Brunel Brown - Frances Foster



Language assessment is the measurement of what language students have learned, (both structure and function), by comparing their performance with pre established levels. These levels are often referred to as benchmarks. A language test is therefore a means of assessing students' performance. It is through testing that teachers can monitor progress and identify problems that need to be worked on. For language teachers, tests are important because they give a detailed diagnosis of the pupils' command of the language and an insight into their difficulties. They help us locate areas of work which need remedial attention. Assessment also provides a vehicle for instructional planning. We cannot plan for effective instruction until we have measured the starting point and know the objectives of our students.

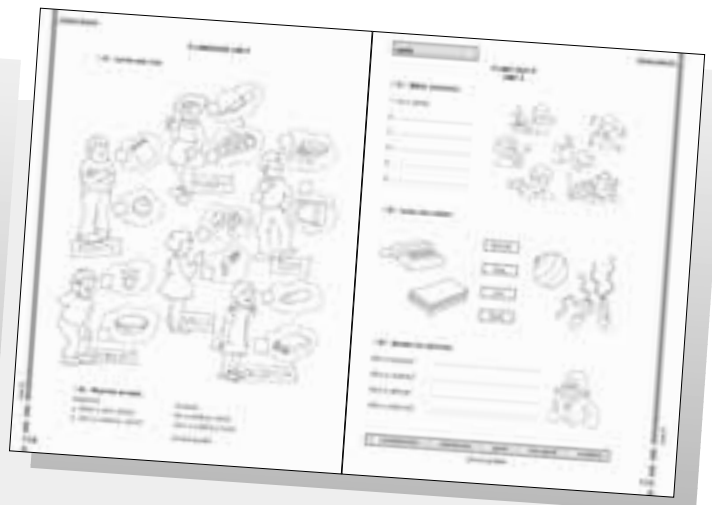
The four most important reasons for testing are:

- to diagnose the specific features of the language with which pupils are having difficulties
- to find out how much our pupils have learned or achieved
- to help us plan effective lessons
- to help us gauge our abilities as teachers

While many children look forward to tests because they get a sense of achievement from them, we must remember that a fear of testing prevails amongst young learners. In order to eliminate this fear it is desirable to follow these basic guidelines:

- announce your tests in advance
- always teach thoroughly the items you will be testing
- make sure instructions are clear and familiar to pupils even if it means translating them into their native language
- make sure that the pupils are familiar with the type of test/exercise that you ask them to complete
- use frequent short tests so that students get used to the pattern of testing

ENLARGE TO USE

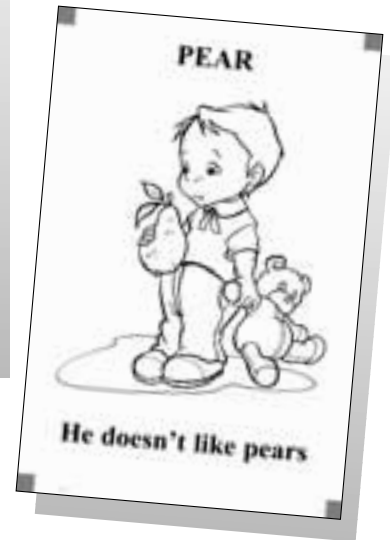
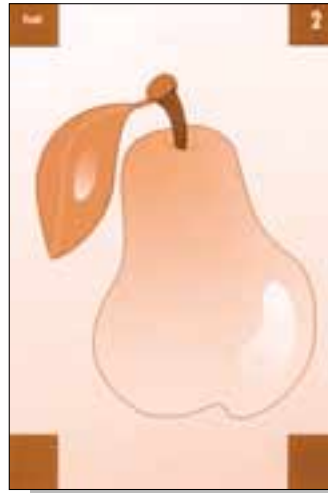


Flashcards: The Ideal Teaching Tool

Brunel Brown and Frances Foster

These flexible, moveable, easy-to-manipulate aids to memory have numerous uses in the classroom. Illustrated cards, as well as text cards, can be used not only to introduce, revise and consolidate vocabulary and structures, but also for activities involving songs, games and storytelling. Illustrated cards provide visual cues to the meaning of words and visually reinforce what has been taught in the classroom.

This ideal teaching tool can be purchased or created by the teacher. Pupils also enjoy creating their own flashcards, using pictures from magazines, drawings made by themselves or clipart downloaded from the Internet.



Here are suggestions for an activity, a game and a song using Lang flashcards.

GAME Match-up Game

Materials:

- one set of illustrated LANG flashcards
- one set of text flashcards prepared by the teacher (words must correspond to the illustrations on the first set of cards)

Procedure:

Place the two piles of flashcards on two separate desks.
Divide the class into two teams.
Ask one pupil at a time to pick up an illustrated flashcard and match it to the corresponding text flashcard.
If the task is carried out successfully the pupil obtains a point for his team.

ACTIVITY A Typical Day

Materials:

- one set of illustrated LANG daily routine flashcards
- one set of time flashcards

Procedure:

Call one pupil to the front of the classroom. Give him or her a few minutes to place the illustrated flashcards in chronological order. Ask him or her to place a time flashcard next to each illustrated flashcard. Call a second child to the front of the classroom and ask him or her to describe the daily routine illustrated and specify the time of each action.

SONG The Colour Song

Materials:

- one set of LANG colour flashcards

Procedure:

Make sure that all the pupils are familiar with the tune to the song "Fra Martino". Choose four flashcards which illustrate four different colours. Teach them the song with the names of the four colours sung to the tune of "Fra Martino". Hold up the colour flashcards as they are mentioned. (Example: Red and yellow, red and yellow, green and blue, green and blue. Red and yellow, red and yellow. Green and blue, green and blue.) Divide the pupils into groups and get them to invent new versions of the song using flashcards.



The picture board and storytelling

Jeanne Griffin

An article in the first issue of LANG Primary described the Picture Board materials which are part of the teacher's materials for use with MINI CLUB, an English language course for 5 - 6 year old children. In this second article the focus is on how to use the Picture Board for storytelling to young learners.



STORY STRUCTURE

The basic structure of any story, whether familiar and many times told or spontaneously created, is a:

Brief introduction

This is used to create the "space" of the story. Here unusual words or concepts, the story's origins and the characters and tone (be it magical, mysterious, or comical) are set. Good storytellers advise starting quietly and building up as the story progresses.

Climax

The story leaps into action where characters and plot are highly contrasted or in conflict.

Closure

In the resolution, the achieved outcome, the meaning or the moral emerge.

For teachers wishing to create Picture Board stories spontaneously it may help to approach stories as follows.



What happened, to whom and where?

The story style most appropriate for the age of the youngest learners are the ones which have physical actions combined with the story.

Stories with predictable, uncomplicated surprises and three repetitive events (eg. 3 Little Pigs, 3 Billy Goats, Goldilocks and the 3 Bears) are also suitable, as well as stories with strong linguistic repetition or rhythm. "Bad" characters should be well-defined, and drastically and definitively (though not necessarily violently) terminated, to give young children a sense of security.

When telling comical stories be aware that humour is coarse and exaggerated at this age. Young children enjoy exaggeration (the character is exceedingly stupid, small, weak, etc.) Between 5 to 6, children are changing from a magical, make-believe attitude to a concrete one, and therefore a variety of both types of story ought to be told to accommodate the cognitive development evolving in this phase.

HOW TO TELL A STORY

The story needs a storyteller and a place to be told. A ritual time of day and a ritual space like sitting in a circle or on a carpet can help create the emotional space. The storyteller “owns” her story, that is to say she must have a strong liking for it. Once she understands why the story appeals to her - for example, its moral, its mood, its meaning or other, - she can breathe life into it. The storyteller’s art is in the modulation of her voice, the speed and rhythm of her words, the pauses, and the direct eye-contact with her listener. There is an economy of language with no superfluous wording or meaning to hold back the story dynamic. The spoken words have melody and the sound of the language is enjoyed.

Storytelling and the Picture Board

An easy way to approach storytelling with the Picture Board is to use it for telling mother tongue stories. As the Picture Board is not used exclusively for telling stories, it should be ritually brought into the “storytelling space”. That is to say at a ritual time of day, or in a ritual space of the classroom. Once the storytelling qualities of the Picture Board are established, the same stories can be told in English. Cut-outs for the story of Goldilocks and the three bears are included in the sets given to teachers and match the story in MINI CLUB. Once the story has been told and re-told and is familiar to the group, new versions can be created while keeping the basic story structure.

For example:

• Change the WHO	VERSION 1 One day the clown (horse, pig, etc) went out for a walk in the woods.)
• Change the WHAT	VERSION 2 When Goldilocks got to the house she found three bowls of bananas (pears, cherries, etc.)
• Change the WHAT HAPPENS TO WHOM	VERSION 3 Then little bear found his toy box and cried out: “Who’s been playing with my ball (doll, car, train, etc.)
• Change the WHERE	VERSION 4 When Goldilocks arrived at the bear’s boat (park, school, etc.)

The storyteller(s) can change. They can be: the teacher, a student, the group, individually or in combination.

New stories can be created by the teacher or with the group.

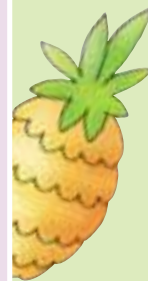
Once the children are familiar with new vocabulary from a unit, they can create a cumulative story. Give children the opportunity, as listeners and narrators, to explore boundaries of high-low fast-slow and loud-soft, pitch and cadence of the voice.

Continue building up the story as a group.

A warm word of encouragement to the storyteller at a loss for closure: be assured that the children themselves will always come up with a unique and appropriate ending. Let children offer suggestions for the contents of a new story or a new version which can then be built up together.

Storytelling is a wonderful closure to a learning session, and to make it special make a ceremony out of putting the Picture Board away when the story is finished, to communicate clearly THE END.

Children quickly associate the ritual with storytelling and will eagerly request their favourites. Welcome their choices, for each time a story is told it is recreated in the listener. Storytelling allows the listener to experience language in its totality, and the reward of listening to a story is the story itself.



Using READERS in the classroom

In this, the first of a series of articles on using readers in the primary classroom, Sue Swift looks at why readers can be a useful resource and suggests some general activities that can be used to exploit them.*

Why use readers as part of your language class? It's not difficult to think of answers - in fact there are so many ways they can be used that the difficulty lies rather in deciding which activities to omit. The **LANG Prime Readers** include not only a story which is fun and motivating for the children to read, but also games and activities for written and spoken practice, and a tape of the text for listening practice. But over and above the activities provided by the readers themselves, there are numerous other ways that the teacher can exploit them to provide both language and skills practice.



■ Consolidating vocabulary

All of the readers in the series have clear lexical objectives - for example, colours and numbers in *Colours in Fairyland*, and prepositions of place in *Bouncy the Menace*. These words occur frequently in the story, and are also practised in the exercises at the end. But you can increase this exposure by adding activities like **True/False Listening** - while at the same time providing useful listening practice. When the children are already well familiar with the story, tell them to listen to you. Tell them the story again, but build in some mistakes, saying for instance:

Jenny looks under the toy box but Bouncy isn't there She looks on the shelf In the wardrobe under the bed and the bedside table ... but Bouncy isn't there.

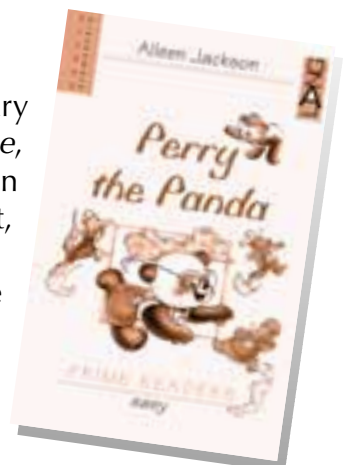
Each time the children hear a mistake, they shout *Stop!* and then tell you the correct version. You can decide whether they should do this activity with their books open or closed, depending on their listening and productive abilities. Either way it's an activity which is both useful and fun.



■ Teaching Vocabulary

The readers often provide scope for expanding the children's vocabulary over and above the words actually found in the text. *Bouncy the Menace*, for example, is about toys. Yet in fact, very few toys are actually named in the story. As an involving warm-up or follow up activity to reading the text, ask the children what their own favourite toys are.

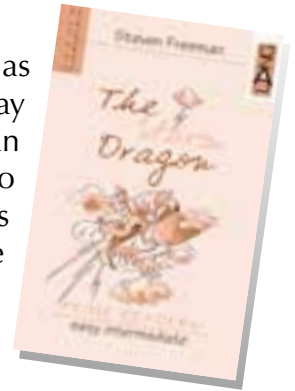
As they tell you in Italian, list the toys in English on the board. Then give them two minutes to see how many of the toys on your list they can find in the illustrations in the book - or possibly how many other toys they can find which aren't on your list.



■ Improving pronunciation and intonation

You can use the tapes which accompany the readers for an activity known as **shadow reading**. Once the children are familiar with and understand the text, play the tape and ask them to read aloud at the same time. It's important that they can actually hear the tape as they do this activity, so that it can provide a guide to rhythm, intonation and pronunciation. If the class is large, split them into groups of four or five, and let each group read aloud for a couple of pages whilst the others just follow the text.

Once the children are familiar with this activity, and if they each have access to a copy of the tape, it's a useful homework or holiday task which they can do independently at home.



■ Developing the children as readers

Although the readers are being used as part of our English course, in using them we are also contributing to the children's general development as readers - in any language. For this reason it is important that their enjoyment of, and involvement with the text goes as deep as possible - probably deeper than their current competence in English would allow. So don't worry about allowing the children to use Italian to discuss or write about the texts. Exploitation of the story *The Storm Dragon*, for instance, might involve:

■ **Pre-reading discussion** to orient the children to the topic of the text : What are you afraid of - dogs, snakes, storms etc? What do you do if you see a dog / if there's a storm, etc? As with the activity described for *Bouncy the Menace*, the first part of this discussion can also provide you with the chance to feed in some useful vocabulary items in English.

■ **While-reading prediction**: As you read the text with the children, stop at various points and ask them to predict what will happen next: What do you think Richard is going to do with the marbles? and the drawing pins? and the glue? After he's booby trapped the house, what will happen next ? When his parents fall into the traps, how will they react?

■ **Post-reading discussion** to form judgements and discuss the implications of the story: Would your parents have reacted like Richard's? Was it a good idea to set the traps for the dragon? Do you think Richard's parents should leave him on his own again?

Some of this discussion can also be done in writing - again usefully for homework or as a holiday task - in the form of a book report. Again, don't worry that it has to be done in Italian. The children are reading the text in English, but in this particular task it is developing the quality of their response as readers that is our objective, rather than only developing their linguistic competence.

These are just a few of the types of task that can be used to exploit the texts in the **LANG Prime Readers** series. In the next article, we'll look in more detail at how these and other activities can be exploited both in class, and at home for the development of independent reading.

**Sue Swift is a freelance teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer. She has been based in Italy for over twenty years, but has also worked in Japan, the Middle East and other parts of Europe.*



Two Months of SUMMER FUN!



THE ENGLISH PROVERB CORNER

*One swallow
does not make
a summer.*

*Una rondine non
fa primavera.*

*He laughs best
who laughs last.
Ride bene
chi ride ultimo.*

**When assigning summer
homework also teach your
pupils the English proverb:**

**PRACTICE
MAKES PERFECT**

Teaching English to young learners is never an easy task especially after the summer holidays, when most children have had no contact with the English language for three months. Pupils cannot be expected to remember everything they learnt the previous year! Most L2 teachers have discovered the importance of summer homework which facilitates both teaching and learning and complements the curriculum introduced during the year.

Lively colourful books, specifically designed for pleasure and education, undoubtedly prepare pupils for the coming year by providing continuous practice in all four skills.

A summer book can provide revision for bright children who want to work autonomously and use what they have learnt at school, yet at the same time, it can also provide further reinforcement for children who need more practice to achieve the basic skills.

Summer books can also be used as springboards which stimulate and foster interest in the language. Most courses offer some sort of revision program in the form of summer books.

These books usually cover the simple vocabulary and basic structures introduced throughout the year. Teachers should be very selective when choosing summer books.

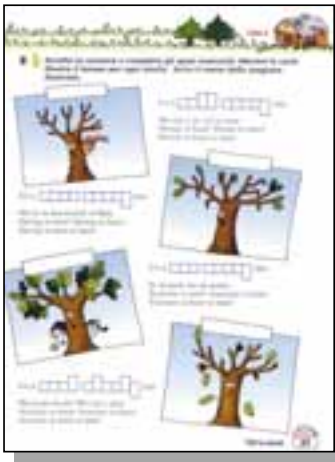
They must remember that their pupils will be working independently and therefore, it is very important that the appropriate level be chosen.

Books which are too difficult, or cover topics which have not been introduced during the school year, can discourage children.

When choosing a summer book, teachers should examine each page carefully and not necessarily assign the entire book for summer homework. Easy-to-follow instructions or instructions in the pupils' native language are also important because they avoid misunderstandings which lead to frustration and disenchantment.

Skills revision should be fun and interesting!
Choose an English summer book
which combines learning and entertainment
so that your pupils can have summer fun!

What to keep in mind when choosing a summer book!



1 Clear Italian instructions or simple instructions in English.

2 Appealing illustrations which motivate interest.

3 Carefully structured activities which do not confuse or frustrate children.

4 A variety of tasks which promote all four language skills.



LISTENING



READING



WRITING

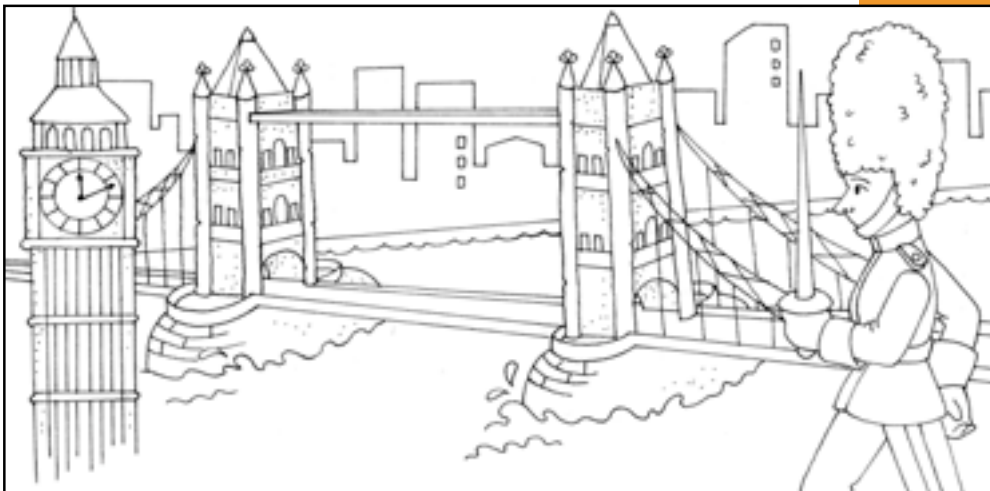



SPEAKING



The English World WORKSHEET

SUMMER is almost here! Teach your pupils to write postcards in English by giving them this sample card which they can complete. Tell them to pretend that they are in London and that they are writing a postcard to someone in Italy. Once the writing has been completed tell them to colour the front of the postcard, cut out the two parts and glue them together.



<p>Dear (1) , I'm in (2) with my (3) The weather is (4)..... It is (5) and (6) Every day I (7) and I (8) with my new friends. I wish you were here! See you soon, (9)</p>	 <p>..... name and surname address town / country</p>
--	--

Possible answers

- 1 friend, Mum, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, aunt, uncle, cousin
- 2 London
- 3 friends / family / grandparents / relatives / schoolmates
- 4 great / wonderful / horrible / terrible
- 5-6 hot / warm / cool / cold and sunny / windy / foggy / rainy / cloudy
- 7-8 verbs
- 9 your name

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE PROJECTS FOR BOOKS

We are giving both teachers and students another opportunity to exchange projects for books.



CLASS PROJECT

The theme of the project for your children to organise as a class or in smaller groups is Wales. Children should be encouraged to find out about the history, the traditions and geography of this very unique country.

Wales - A land of song

Ask your children to collect all the information they can find about Wales. They should present the country and its traditions in English and include drawings, maps and possibly photographs.

A useful address for source material is:

**British Tourist Authority,
Via Nazionale, 203
00184 Roma
Fax 06 4742054**

When the project is complete, please sign it as work produced by your class (include the number of students who have contributed) and send to:

**LANG Primary Student Project,
PBM spa
Corso Trapani 16,
10139 Torino**

LANG Edizioni will send a class set of **Primary Readers** to the classes that present the most interesting projects.

TEACHER PROJECT

Many teachers produce their own material for teaching and consolidation tasks. We would like to encourage you to put together one of the lesson plans you have prepared for your children and send it to us.

Project

Describe a lesson when you are introducing *adverbs of frequency* with the Present Simple tense.

The lesson should be divided into three phases:

- Presentation
- Initial practice exercises
- Consolidation tasks

The completed project should include any visual stimulus you use and should be written in English.

When the project is complete, please sign it as work produced by yourself and send to:

**LANG Primary Teacher Project,
PBM spa
Corso Trapani 16,
10139 Torino**

LANG Edizioni will send a copy of **DAI** (dizionario di apprendimento della lingua inglese) to all teachers who present a project following the instructions.

We will publish extracts from some of the projects in future issues of **LANG Primary**. All the materials submitted become the property of **Paravia Bruno Mondadori Editori** and reproduction rights are reserved.

All projects should be received by 30.11.2000.



...a change is as good as a rest

The next issue of **LANG Primary** will be published in September 2000 when the summer break is over and re-energised children and teachers are facing each other across the classroom.

Scholastic year 2000 - 2001 will be a year when schools and teachers will be busy preparing for the future changes in the educational system.

LANG Edizioni will work side-by-side with teachers, developing innovative language teaching materials to meet the needs of the new *scuola di base*.

To make sure that you get your copy we would prefer to send it direct to your home. So please take a little time to complete and return the form at the bottom of the page.

The September issue of **LANG Primary** will include:

- Children as storytellers
- The English World Worksheets
- Using the Internet in the Primary classroom
- Progetto Lingua 2000 - External certification
- Ideas and activities on the theme of Halloween
- Revision activities
- And many more interesting articles

Contributors to this issue

Brunel Brown
Frances Foster
Jeanne Griffin
Tim Priesack
Sue Swift

Layout and graphics
Kaleidostudio - New Stilequattro

Editors
Immacolata Marsaglia
Tim Priesack

Printed
Grafiche Mek - Milano

name _____ home address _____ favourite pages in this issue _____

_____ city _____ CAP _____

School name and address _____

_____ city _____ CAP _____

Topics you would like to see in future issues _____

Course book used _____

Supplementary materials used _____

I would like a LANG agent to visit me at school Yes No

To ensure the next issue reaches you, complete and post or fax to:
 PBM spa - **LANG Primary** – Corso Trapani 16 – 10139 Torino – Fax 011 757 383

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