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LANG
EDIZIONI

Happy Anniversary!

Welcome to this very special issue of LANG Primary. We are publishing this maxi edition of LANG Primary to mark the 25th edition of our magazine. The fact that this occasion is also the moment we have passed the magic number of 10.000 subscribers to LANG Primary is for us the cherry on the cake!

On page 2 of the first issue of LANG Primary in March 2000 we published a letter to teachers which has become the mission statement for our magazine. We have reprinted this letter on page 2 of this issue as a reminder to ourselves and to our readers that the key to successful English language educational publishing and successful English language teaching/learning is the direct contact and constant feedback between the publisher and the teacher.

Think of this issue as a box of surprises. Open the box by turning the pages. You will find a vast array of topics and materials, all on the theme of teaching the English language in the Primary school.

continued on page 2



IN CASO DI MANCATO RECAPITO INVIARE AL CMP/CPO DI ROSERIO
VIA C. BELGIOIOSO, 165/11 MILANO PER LA RESTITUZIONE AL MITTENTE
PREVIO PAGAMENTO RESI

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continued from page 1

Children come and children go. Teachers come and teachers go! What does remain fairly constant in the Primary classroom is the methodology of teaching.

Yes, of course minor changes can occur, such as more or less emphasis on language functions, dictation or pair work, for example, but basically what actually happens in the classroom does not undergo any major transformations. A discussion of how to organise the children to work in pairs or groups which took place five years ago would be very similar to a discussion taking place today. To underline this fact we are re-publishing a selection of key articles which have appeared in the last 24 issues of the magazine. Where necessary, the articles have been revised by the original authors but very few words have been changed. This will give recent subscribers an opportunity to read a few of the key articles we have published over the last 6 years.

What else can you find in this maxi issue:

- *Two sets of Kids' Corner, the special section in each issue for children in the first year of school. One is from a previous issue and the other is new.*

continued on page 48

Milano, marzo 2000

Gentile Insegnante,

nell'orizzonte della didattica, l'insegnamento della lingua straniera è il settore più dinamico, quello in cui metodi, approcci alla materia e strumenti evolvono più in fretta, e di conseguenza richiedono di confrontarsi quotidianamente su nuove esigenze che necessitano di nuove risposte.

LANG, casa editrice specializzata nel settore della Lingua 2, attraverso al sua struttura composta da insegnanti, autori e ricercatori che formano un vero e proprio laboratorio di didattica, consapevole di questa esigenza, intende offrire ai docenti tutti i servizi e i supporti necessari per realizzare un'azione didattica sempre più efficace e in linea con le reali esigenze della scuola.

Scopo di questa nuova iniziativa che nasce sotto il nome di "LANG Primary" è quello di ampliare la gamma di servizi e supporti a favore degli insegnanti della scuola Elementare, e nello stesso tempo di instaurare un filo diretto con gli utenti dei nostri prodotti editoriali, in modo da rispondere tempestivamente alle esigenze di chi opera nella Scuola.

Ci auguriamo che questo servizio risulti di Sua utilità, e tutti i suggerimenti che Ella ci vorrà far pervenire saranno certamente di stimolo per migliorare il lavoro al Suo fianco.

LANG Edizioni

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Kids' Corner

Patrizia Amerio

*Kids' Corner is
a special section
dedicated to very
young learners.*



Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat Please put a penny in the old man's hat...

The English start their family Christmas celebrations in the second week in December when they start buying real or imitation pine trees that they put in the sitting room or in the garden. Nowadays, trees are decorated with ornaments, lights, spray snowflakes and tinsel, but in Victorian times, people decorated trees with candies and cakes which hung with ribbons.

The Christmas tree is one of the most recognizable images of the season and is the focal point of people's holiday decorations. Young children believe that Santa Claus puts gifts under the tree. This is a German tradition, started as early as 700 A.D. In the 1800s, the tradition of the Christmas Tree moved to England and then to America, through the German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania.

Christmas Eve

Before the children go to bed on Christmas Eve they leave mince pies and a glass of brandy near the fireplace or window for Father Christmas, and a carrot for Rudolph, the famous red-nosed reindeer. Then they put either a special Christmas stocking or one of their father's socks on the end of the bed.

During the night the parents have to fill the stocking with toys, nuts and sweets and put it back on the end of the

bed so that when the children wake up they can see that Father Christmas has been. The tradition of a lump of coal in the stockings of naughty children comes from Italy. All the presents are put under the Christmas tree.

Traditional English Christmas lunch usually includes roast turkey with sage and onion stuffing, ham with cloves, roast potatoes and vegetables, often including Brussels sprouts and gravy. This is followed by Christmas pudding, which is a fruity, hot, dome-shaped pudding, usually flamed with brandy and served with cream or custard.

Many houses have mistletoe hanging over the front door. This began as a Scandinavian tradition linked to the goddess of love, *Frigga*, who is associated with mistletoe. This resulted in the romantic tradition of kissing under the mistletoe.

Here are some easy gift ideas with instructions so that kids can make them on their own. These hand-made gifts are fun and easy to make. Everything children need is included in the instructions.

We wish you all a very
Happy Christmas and
a Healthy New Year!



ACTIVITY 1: Chocolate melting spoons

What you need:

coloured plastic spoons
melted dark, milk or white chocolate
edible coloured or glittery sprinkles
cellophane
ribbon

What you do

1. Dip coloured plastic spoons in melted dark, milk or white chocolate.
2. Top with multicoloured or glittery sprinkles.
3. Wrap in clear or coloured cellophane and tie with ribbon.
4. For a special addition to this yummy gift, make a gift tag.



ACTIVITY 2: Santa Claus puppet



What you do

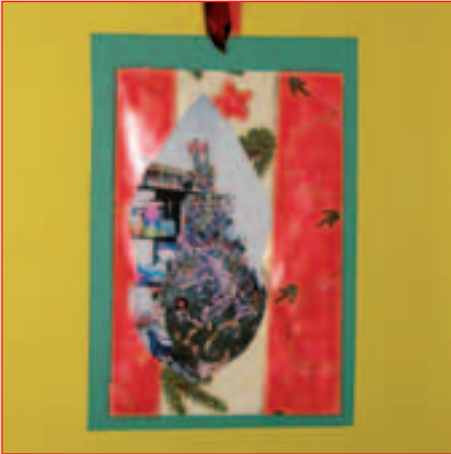
1. Give one template to each child.
2. Cut out Santa Claus.
3. Colour his jacket, belt and buckle, mittens and hat.
4. Put some cotton wool on the hat, beard and moustache.
5. Join the arms with the fasteners and enjoy your puppet!



What you need:

enlarged photocopy of template
scissors
glue
black, red and brown markers
cotton wool for beard and moustache
paper fasteners

ACTIVITY 3: Christmas tree decoration



What you do

1. Cut a nice picture from a card.
2. Glue the picture on the coloured cardboard.
3. Make a hole on the cardboard and pass the ribbon through it.
4. Put your wonderful decoration on your tree.

What you need:

old Christmas cards to make a new ornament
green, red or gold coloured cardboard
ribbon
glue

ACTIVITY 4: Pine cone Christmas tree

What you need:

a pine cone for each child
glitter
glue
sequins
gold coloured cardboard
scissors



What you do

1. Cover the pine cone with glue. Before the glue dries, sprinkle with green glitter.
2. Draw and cut out a star from the gold cardboard.
3. Put the paper star on the top of the pine cone.
4. When the pine cone dries completely, you can glue sequins or tinsel on it.

ACTIVITY 5: Gift box tree ornaments

What you need:

empty small boxes (box from a bar of soap, toothpaste etc.)
scissors
wrapping paper
red string

What you do

1. Wrap your little boxes in shiny wrapping paper.
2. Attach a red string on top of the box and use the box as an ornament for your Christmas tree.

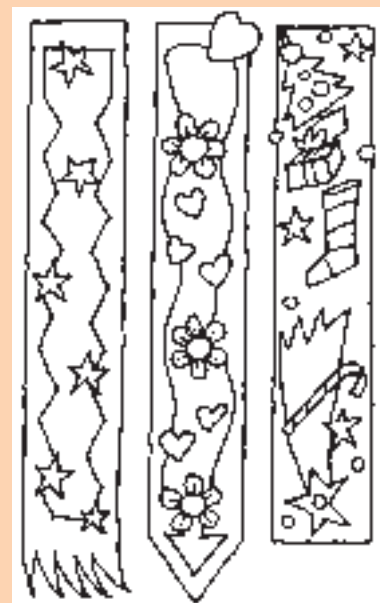


ACTIVITY 6: A Christmas bookmark

Bookmarks can be made out of paper, wallpaper, ribbon, fabric, beads and ribbons. Decorate them with a strip of paper with colourful hand-drawn pictures or, to make it last longer, laminate or cover the bookmark with clear transparent paper. To really personalise the bookmark, glue on goggle eyes and a pom-pom nose.

What you need:

assorted coloured cardboard
assorted buttons
scissors
fabric
beads



What you do

1. Cut bookmark background piece out of coloured cardboard.
2. Cut bottom into fringe, or in a point, or straight across.
3. Cut various shapes and designs such as hearts, flowers, geometric shapes, stars and stockings out of the other coloured cardboard sheets.
4. Arrange shapes on bookmark and glue in place.
5. Decorate with ribbon, buttons or beads.



ACTIVITY 7: Your own calendar

What you need:

twelve photocopies of template
(for the 12 months) for each child
scissors
coloured felt-tip pens
glitter
glue
coloured cardboard

Pre-teach the rhyme:

"Thirty days has September, April, June, and November. All the rest have thirty-one, excepting February alone, and it has twenty-eight days time, but in leap years, February has twenty-nine."

What you do

1. Write the name of a month on each page of the calendar.
2. Consult a calendar so that you know on which day each month starts, and start your numbering on that day. For example, January, 2007 starts on Monday.
3. Complete each month with the right days.
4. Decorate each month with a drawing of something that happens in that particular month (school starts in September, Christmas is in December and so on). Children can use felt-tip pens to decorate their calendar, cut out and glue on shapes from coloured cardboard and stick glitter here and there.
5. Staple the 12 sheets together.

☆ Year 2007 ☆							
Month.....							
DATE	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Connecting People

English through other subjects

Cecilia Perillo

In issue 24 of LANG Primary I discussed the benefits of teaching the English language 'through the subjects' and promised a cross-curricular lesson plan.

We all know how computers have changed our lives and young children are very familiar with words like PC, keyboard, screen, mouse, speakers, printer, scanner, CD-ROM drive, etc, and how important is it to teach children the meaning of the abbreviation www. The Internet is a network that '*connects people*' all over the world. Furthermore, the Internet is transforming world communication and people find themselves doing the shopping, playing games, making friends, chatting, using cyber cafés, doing school projects, booking flights and hotels and planning holidays all on this 'machine'. E-mail, which is short for "electronic mail", has become the fastest way to communicate. In the lesson plan that follows there are some easy teaching ideas.



COMPUTER SCIENCE	ACTIVITIES	LEVEL	MATERIALS
Aim	To extend students' knowledge of computer science.	1 st to 5 th years	
Assumptions	Quite a 'bit' of vocabulary will be known to the students. The teacher may like to explain the meaning of 'bit' in computing: it is the smallest unit of information in the computer's memory.		
	Label the parts of a computer. Tick the right verbs.	4/5	Kids' Club - Across The Curriculum – Curriculum Extension Series, page 13
A touch of history	In the 1940s a computer was a person who did calculations (an accountant, a record keeper). People used pens and pencils. Worksheets were used to record information. In 1976 Queen Elizabeth II was the first head of state to send an e-mail .	The World Wide Web was invented in 1989 by a Londoner, Tim Berners-Lee. The @ symbol was first used by Italian merchants in 16 th century commercial papers and stood for a unit of a measurement called the "amphora".	
Vocabulary	Parts of the computer: write and colour the words – tower, keyboard, monitor, mouse. Special words: read and colour - floppy disk, ink, desk, windows, email, software, keyboard, scanner, internet, desktop, monitor, tower, word art, hardware.	1/2/3 4/5	Lang Primary Resources 1-2/3, page 160 Lang Primary Resources 4/5, page 120

COMPUTER SCIENCE	ACTIVITIES	LEVEL	MATERIALS
Which English?	American spelling: program British spelling: programme	Extend to all levels	Show learners that the difference is in the spelling
Language	Prepositions: on, near, under, between, in – read and choose, e.g. The computer is on the desk. Acronyms/Abbreviations: acronyms are read as words (ROM – RAM) and abbreviations are pronounced letter by letter (PC, IBM, CD, DVD, www). Read and answer: CD is the abbreviation for 'Compact Disk' and CD-ROM is the abbreviation for 'Compact Disk-Read Only Memory'...	1/2/3 Extend to all levels	Lang Primary Resources 1-2/3, page 170 Lang Primary Resources 4/5, page 124
Mathematics	To count from 1- 20. Count the objects. BIT + BIT + BIT + BIT = BYTE, a unit of storage.	1/2/3 4/5	Lang Primary Resources
Let's talk a 'bit' about it!	Have you got a computer? Have you got a keypal? Have you got any favourite web sites? Do you use your computer for research? What is a PC? More Activities for 4/5: Read and Answer: When does Bobby have computer lessons? How many computers are there? Are you good at computer science...?	1/2/3 4/5	Lang Primary Resources 4/5, page 136
Let's read and write a 'bit' about it!	Read and write: read the text and write the parts of the computer. An e-mail is an informal way of communicating and acronyms and abbreviations are used to keep them short. IOW = in other words LOL = lots of love TAFN = that's all for now TNX = thanks 2L8 = too late B4N = bye for now	4/5	Lang Primary Resources 4/5, page 137
Project	Using the keyboard: colour the keyboard. Using the monitor.	4/5	Lang Primary Resources 4/5, pages 114, 121

Try clicking on www.langedizioni.com for educational links and lots of downloadable materials; www.artsfestivals.co.uk; www.thetimes.co.uk



BOOKS *open or closed?*

Tim Priesack

The dilemma the teacher faces when asking the children to listen to a dialogue is whether the children should listen with their books open or closed.

When the teacher plays the recording of a dialogue to a class, should the children have their books open or shut? Understanding a recorded dialogue between two or more people is probably the most common listening exercise for young children who are learning English.

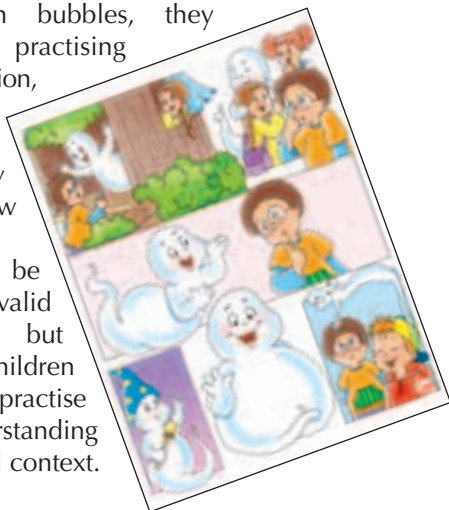
Course books generally include at least one dialogue in each unit. The dialogues include the new language presented in a unit in a meaningful context. Sentences, expressions and vocabulary that the teacher has taught out of context, often asking the children to repeat in chorus or individually, to encourage the pupils to become familiar with the progression of the linked words, are then included in a dialogue. When the recording is played in class the children can hear the language items they have learned in a context where the language is generated naturally.

Dialogues are intended as listening comprehension exercises. The children listen, understand and then answer various questions to prove comprehension – firstly, of the general context of the dialogue – and then when they listen again, to answer more detailed questions related to the content of the dialogue.

Books open

When the children listen with their books open, looking at the illustrations and words printed in speech bubbles, they are effectively practising *reading* comprehension, not *listening* comprehension as they will inevitably try to read and follow the words.

This could be considered a valid language exercise but does not give the children the opportunity to practise listening and understanding language in a natural context.



Books closed

When the children listen with their books closed, the listening skill they are practising is that of using the telephone or listening to the radio. There is a total absence of semiotics in this type of listening exercise. The children cannot see the facial expressions and movements of the hands and body which are present in face-to-face communication and so useful for helping comprehension.

Listening and speaking on the telephone is probably not one of the language skills the children will be expected to use in the following years of their lives. However, when the children listen with their books closed they are practising the listening skill and this is a valid language learning task.

Another option

When we were preparing the new video recordings, which are part of the materials for the teachers who have adopted the Primary English language course KIDS' CLUB, we tried to give a solution to the dilemma of books open/closed when the children listen to a dialogue.

The dialogues are filmed twice on the video.

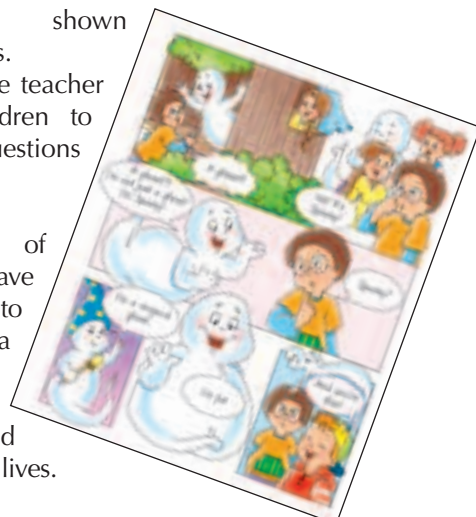
First listening

The dialogues are shown on the video without the words. The children watch and understand, looking at the faces and situation of the dialogue. This first recording moves the dialogue nearer reality as when children participate in dialogue they will be face-to-face with the other speakers. After the first listening/watching the teacher can ask questions to test global understanding of the situation illustrated through the dialogue.

Second listening

The dialogues are shown accompanied by the words. Following this listening the teacher can encourage the children to answer more detailed questions regarding the content.

Using this sequence of recordings the students have the opportunity to experience dialogue in a more natural context, closer to the real situations they may find themselves in, later in their lives.



Intercultural competencies in the primary English classroom - Part 3

Maxine Jones

In the previous two issues of Lang Primary we looked at the development of intercultural competencies in the primary English classroom and the use of games from around the world as a fun way to introduce different aspects of many cultures to the English lesson.

In English and American schools, students learn about celebrations from around the world, as the classes are made up of kids from various cultural backgrounds. Teaching children about different holidays and festivals can help them to understand the differences they will see when they visit other countries. As they are learning English to communicate with people from all around the globe, the English classroom can be a great place to explore the traditions and festivals of many countries. So in this issue, let's look at....



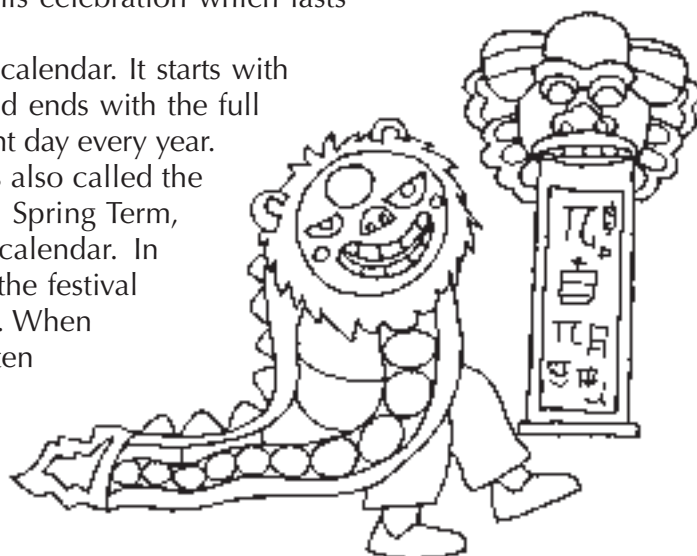
Chinese New Year/Spring Festival

You can choose the information you want to share with your students from the following article, depending on their level and abilities.

The Chinese New Year is the oldest, most important and longest festival in China and in Chinese communities around the world, for example in London and in San Francisco. Chinese families prepare months in advance for this celebration which lasts for two weeks plus one day!

The Chinese New Year is the first day of the lunar calendar. It starts with the second New Moon after the Winter Solstice and ends with the full moon fifteen days later; it therefore falls on a different day every year.

In 2007, the New Year begins on February 18. It is also called the **Spring Festival**, because it is the beginning of the Spring Term, which is the first of the 24 terms on the lunar calendar. In China, the public holiday lasts for three days, but the festival traditionally lasts until the 15th day of the New Year. When Chinese people first arrived in America, they often came without their families, so neighbourhood associations organized parties and parades for everyone, which still continue today and take place at the weekend, when people have time off work.



The years are named after the animals of the Chinese animal zodiac in a 12-year cycle.

2007 is the Year of the Pig, or Boar. You can learn about the Chinese Zodiac, the legend of the zodiac animals and their significance at www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html and find fun games and activities relating to the animals at www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/chinesenewyear, including "Unscramble Chinese Zodiac Animal words" and "Chinese Zodiac Animals Venn Diagram"- great for revising animals, spelling and introducing a cross-curricular activity on science and animals.



Chinese New Year, like the Western New Year, is about turning over a new leaf.

To prepare for the new year, people clean their houses from top to bottom in order to sweep out bad luck. They buy new clothes and get new haircuts, so everything is fresh and new to welcome in the New Year.

The New year is a time for families to get together and they meet at each other's homes for meals, especially the big feasts on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. They celebrate the family and the family's ancestors.

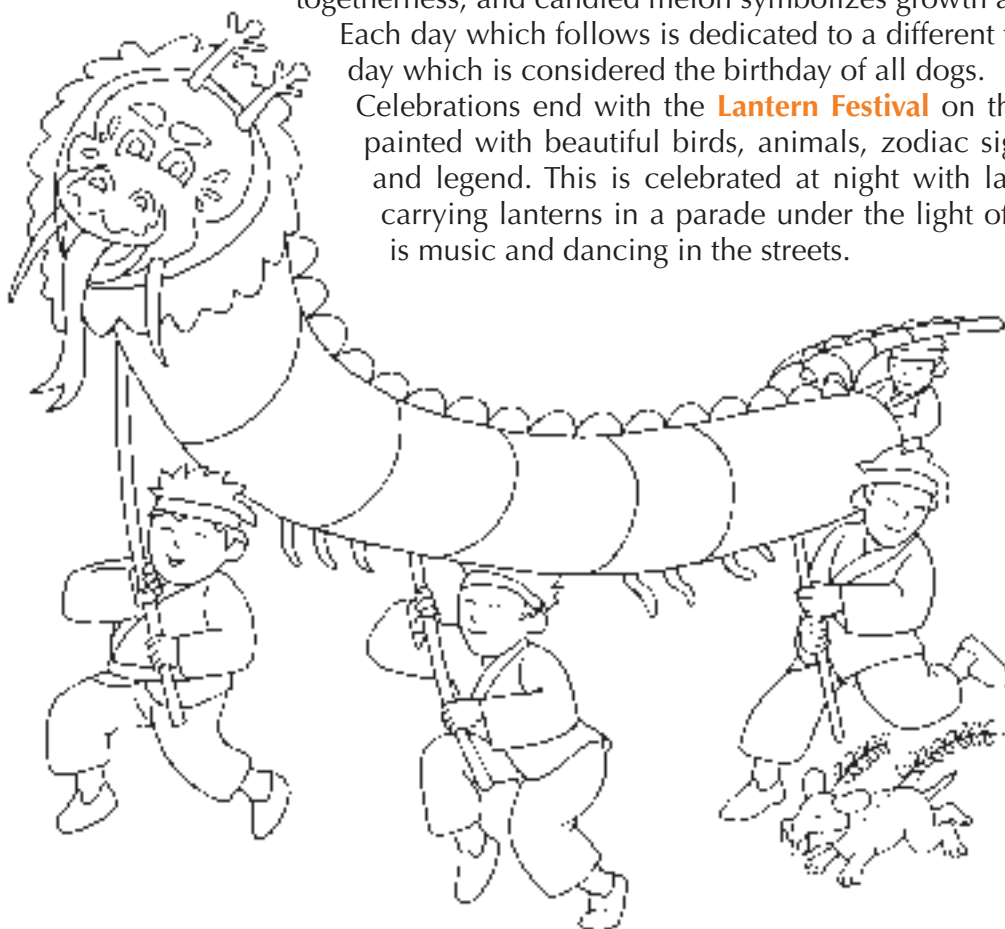
It is a time of re-union, thanksgiving and remembering departed relatives.

At Chinese New year celebrations people wear red clothes. They decorate their homes with poems (*Spring Couplets*) on red paper (scrolls), expressions of good wishes for the family in the coming year and poems praising nature. Adults give children **Red Lai-See Envelopes**, good luck money wrapped in little red envelopes. Red symbolizes fire, which according to legend can drive away bad luck. People eat tangerines and oranges, which symbolize good luck and uncut noodles which symbolize a long life.

Another tradition is a tray full of different kinds of candy and dried fruit, called the **Tray of Togetherness**; each item symbolizes some kind of good luck - for example, coconuts symbolize togetherness, and candied melon symbolizes growth and good health.

Each day which follows is dedicated to a different theme, including the second day which is considered the birthday of all dogs.

Celebrations end with the **Lantern Festival** on the 15th day. The lanterns are painted with beautiful birds, animals, zodiac signs and scenes from history and legend. This is celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade under the light of the full moon, where there is music and dancing in the streets.



The highlight of the Lantern Festival is the **dragon dance**. The dragon is usually made of silk, paper and bamboo. Men hold the dragon above their heads and dance through the streets.

The different celebrations all celebrate the wish for peace and happiness for family members and friends. Just like Christmas in the West.



Make a Chinese paper lantern

WORKSHEET

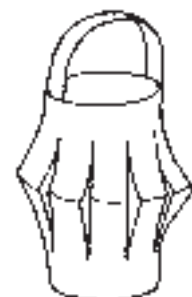
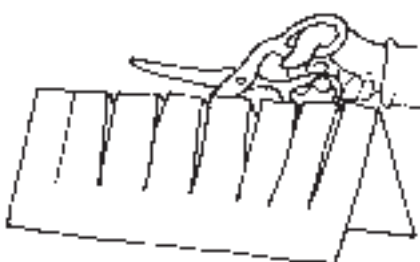
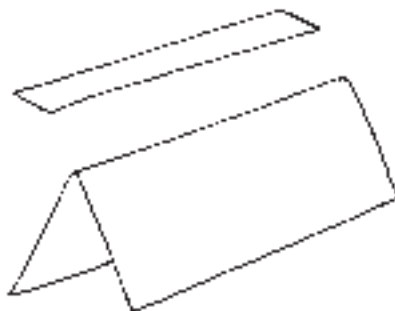
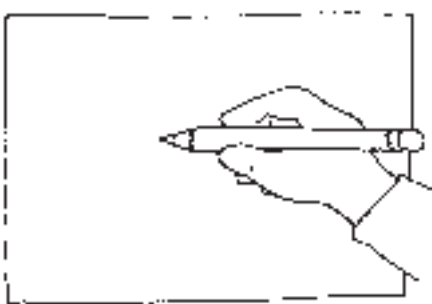
You can decorate your classroom with these pretty paper lanterns for Chinese New Year. You can make the lanterns in different colours and decorate them with drawings.

What you need:

cardboard or thick paper, scissors, stapler, ruler, pencil, colouring crayons, markers and anything you want to use to make the lantern pretty!

What you do:

1. Use a rectangular piece of paper. Draw a picture on the paper or decorate it with glitter or pictures from magazines.
2. Measure with the ruler and cut 2 cms. off the short end of the paper. This will be the handle for the lantern.
3. Fold the paper in half, lengthwise.
4. Draw a line 2 cms from the end of the long edge of the paper opposite the folded edge. Stop cutting at this line.
5. Draw lines 2 cms. apart. Start at the folded edge up to the "stop cutting" line. (Look at the illustrations to help you!)
6. Cut on the marked lines up to the "stop cutting" line. Unfold the paper.
7. Match the long edges together on the lantern. Staple to hold it in place.
8. Staple the handle to the top of the lantern. (Look at the picture of the lanterns to help you).



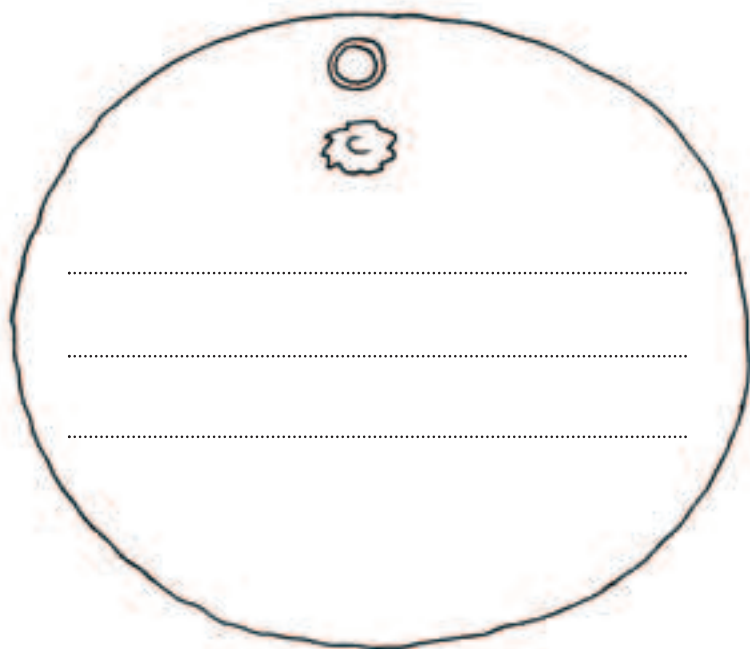
Wishing orange

WORKSHEET

In Hong Kong, people travel to a very old and famous tree at New Year to leave their wishes. They write their wishes on red paper. Then they tie the wish to an orange and throw it up into the tree. If the orange sticks to the tree, the wish will come true!

Draw a big tree on a large sheet of paper. Each student can write a wish for the New Year on the orange and stick it on the tree! This is a good exercise to practise "I'd like", and revise verbs and nouns. e.g. "I'd like a puppy" "I'd like to learn the guitar".

Children can colour in the orange, complete their wish and pass a ribbon through the hole, then tie it and stick the wishing orange onto the tree.



WORKSHEET

What do you remember about Chinese New Year?

Put a tick next to the correct answer. Colour.

1. In Italy, New Year's Day is always on:
 - a. 5th February
 - b. 1st January
 - c. 10th March
2. In 2007, the Chinese New Year starts on:
 - a. 1st January
 - b. 12th March
 - c. 18th February
3. People decorate their homes with poems written on:
 - a. green paper
 - b. white paper
 - c. red paper
4. Red symbolizes:
 - a. the heart
 - b. the sun
 - c. fire
5. People give children money in red:
 - a. boxes
 - b. pencil cases
 - c. envelopes
6. In the Lantern Festival, there is a big:
 - a. cat
 - b. dragon
 - c. dog



Brainstorming:

Tim Priesack

English language dictionaries give very different definitions to the verb “to brainstorm” although the word is used both as a verb and as an adjective (a brainstorming activity) to describe a very important language learning activity used by many teachers immediately before presenting new language.

The basic framework of a brainstorming activity is to divide children into **small groups** and ask them to make lists of words they know either within a **restricted lexical set** or **related to a topic**.

what
why
when
how

What is a “small” group?

It is important that all the children can hear each other: depending on the layout of the desks in a classroom, six children is probably an optimum number. After dividing the children into groups, the teacher should give them the task as well as a time limit for the activity.

What is the function of the exercise?

• **Restricted lexical set**

Before teaching for example colours or family relationships, the teacher needs to find out which colours or family relationships the children already know.

The teacher divides the children into groups and asks them to list all the words they know in the sets.

• **Words related to a topic**

When a teacher decides to teach, for example, the expression *Where do you go for your holidays?* together with the answer *I go to the ...* he/she needs to be sure that the children know/remember the words in English for all the possible places they can go.

Therefore, before teaching the question and answer the teacher can ask the children to brainstorm all the possible places they can go for their holidays.

What advantages do brainstorming activities bring to teaching and learning?

Brainstorming activities encourage the children to:

- listen and understand when other children speak in English;
- write lists of words/expressions in English;
- improve interpersonal relationships as they work within a group;
- teach each other, as individuals contribute new words;
- motivate learning through competition between groups;
- organise themselves to work within a time frame.

When the teacher stops the activity, each child should have produced a list of words/expressions. The teacher can either ask each group to read their list or extend the activity and mix the groups.

Mixing groups

If there are four groups of six children, ask **three** children from **each** group to work with other groups and compare their lists.

In this way the children read their own lists and listen/understand and add any words they have not listed.

The teacher can then ask the groups to read their lists and **discover exactly what language the children already know** before moving into the presentation of the new language item.

Testing primary school students

Heather Bedell



Students should always be tested to find out what they know and can do, and not what they can't do

Working in the primary school means a wide range of ages: more than in any other stage of schooling, the different classes vary in what they can be expected to do. In the first two years of studying English in the primary school, for example, the emphasis tends to be on developing oral skills. This is inevitable as the children are still in the early stages of learning to read and write in their first language, and thus can hardly be expected to do in English what they already find hard in Italian. Testing should therefore concentrate not only on the language points covered, but also on the skills that have been the main focus of the lessons. Students should always be tested to find out what they know and can do, and not what they can't do. This is particularly true with very young learners, where motivation is the key to success and succeeding the key to motivation.

Testing listening

So how can a teacher set about testing oral skills in a large class of young children? Listening comprehension is relatively easy to test: choosing pictures corresponding to what the students hear can test their understanding of vocabulary and simple sentences (so you really are testing listening, and weak readers are not penalised). Pictures can be photocopied from the course book, with children circling what they hear, or listening to simple sentences and deciding if they are true or false. This can be done with a CD and the whole class, or with the teacher reading out the listening test and is easy to administer and mark.

Testing speaking

Testing speaking, however, will inevitably involve the teacher in one-to-one conversations while the other students are doing something else and is more time-consuming. Even at this age it is worth remembering that children should be learning to ask as well as to answer questions, so the oral test should not take the form of a one-sided interrogation with the teacher asking all the questions. If the teacher starts, the children should be used to being prompted to ask

questions too, with simple instructions like: "Ask me". Children will often tend to be monosyllabic in this type of situation, so there should always be a concrete answer about something the children can see or know (again this can be based on pictures or a real situation), e.g. "Where is the dog?" while looking at the text book.

What do we look for, when we test a child in the early stages of speaking a foreign language? As mentioned above, the principle that lies behind testing is to find out what the child can do and say, so obviously we have to concentrate on the language that has been covered in class and the ease and confidence with which the child is able to use it. A system similar to "can do" statements can be used, as illustrated (see chart on following page).

This can obviously make marking quicker and simpler: once the scheme has been designed/adapted for the class to be tested (depending on the ages of the children, their abilities, etc.), it is sufficient to tick the necessary boxes to get a picture of each child's competence.

Testing reading and writing

It is vital to make sure that the children are familiar with the test format before asking them to complete it.

With older children, testing will obviously involve reading and writing too, and here a major problem can be that of marking large numbers of scripts. Clearly, the freer the writing is, the more difficult (and time consuming) it is to evaluate, so a useful principle could be to monitor freer written work in homework and class work to have an idea of how it is progressing, but to concentrate on more objective tasks in testing. The ideal is to prepare answer sheets and have the children write their answers on those, rather than on the question papers (which also saves work and paper, as the question papers can then be re-used in other classes). For my classes I make up simple grids in which the children can put a cross to represent their multiple choice answers, but can also write the missing words, like this:



X	can	use	the language covered in class	fluently
				spontaneously
				with a little prompting
				with some prompting
				with a lot of prompting
				accurately
				accurately enough to be understood
X	can	pronounce	the language covered in class	clearly and naturally
				clearly enough to be understood
X	can	remember	the language covered in class	completely
				mostly
				in part etc.

Multiple choice:

1) My ... name is Mary.

A) sister's B) sisters C) sister D) sisters'

2) I ... play tennis.

A) can to

B) know

C) can

D) know to

	A	B	C	D
1	x			
2			x	

Missing words:

1. My hobbies ... swimming and reading

2. This is my sister. ... name is Mary.

1	are
2	her

Obviously if they have never done this type of answer transfer before the test they will get confused, so it is vital to make sure they are familiar with the test format beforehand. The same grid system works for matching activities, or any other task where the language to be produced is controlled. To further speed up the correction, I always make a master and colour in the boxes with the wrong answers (so I colour boxes 1B, C & D, 2A, B & D above), then photocopy it onto an overhead transparency (see below). This means all I have to do when I'm correcting a multiple choice exercise is put the transparency on the children's answer sheets and count the correct answers, rather than read each one individually.

	A	B	C	D
1		x	x	x
2	x	x		x

Marking exercises like fill in the blanks and multiple choice is straightforward. There is always a right answer, the others are wrong. Marking is more complicated if you decide to allow a bit more freedom of expression. How rigid should you be? Modern testing systems tend to emphasise effective task completion rather than total accuracy, after all many native speakers are unable to write perfect English and still function adequately in the language. By this, I'm not

supporting those who say that grammar and spelling don't count, rather that there is a time and place for insisting on these things, and that there should be appropriate thresholds of tolerance. The primary years are when children are experimenting with language, their own as well as English, and in order to learn successfully they obviously need feedback. Far more than that, however, they need encouragement to carry on testing their hypotheses without fear of making mistakes. Bearing all this in mind, teachers need to concentrate on what counts: getting the message across clearly and appropriately (with perhaps some little suggestions for improving the language as well, but always in a positive key).

As with speaking, "can do" type descriptors can help. Below are some examples teachers might like to experiment with and adapt:

- The communication is clear and complete, with only occasional minor errors in spelling, vocabulary and grammar = 10
- The communication is relatively clear and complete, with some minor errors in spelling, vocabulary and grammar = 8
- The message makes sense with some effort from the reader, with some errors in spelling, vocabulary and grammar = 6
- The message does not make sense/there are so many errors that the message is lost = 4
- Following this type of scheme, 7 could be awarded, for example, if the teacher felt the mistakes were mostly minor, and so on.

Given that testing serves not only to decide what to write on a report, but also and above all to identify what our students can do, and what they need help with, its importance should not be underestimated. At the same time, we are in class to teach, and not just to test and mark, so testing should not take up too much of the precious (but limited) time we have available to do our jobs effectively. I hope that some of the above can save you some time too!

Be *crafty* and *creative* with **ENGLISH!**

Joanna Carter

Using arts and crafts in the language classroom

English teachers today are in the lucky position that when they open a course book, a resource book for teachers or even this magazine, they can find an extensive array of activities involving arts and crafts and making things.

They range from designing masks, puppets and mobiles to making booklets, bookmarks or greeting cards for every occasion.

Apart from the obvious and enormous fun derived from being creative, we should also consider the many other benefits and advantages that art and craft lessons can bring to children learning English.



Non linguistic benefits

Many of these benefits are not directly linguistic but are all the same invaluable. With very young learners art and craft activities can help develop co-ordination and manipulative skills. This type of lesson encourages co-operation and children learn to share and explore together. They have an opportunity to express themselves as individuals and have something to aspire to. Making something, even something very simple, can foster pride in achievement, especially as the final product can be displayed in the classroom or taken home to parents. These important factors help make a positive and enjoyable learning environment that can lead to successful acquisition of English.

Art and craft activities and lessons can also provide a focus on cultural awareness especially if they are linked to festivities and special occasions. Making a card for Mother's Day, a pumpkin mask or mobile bat for Halloween are visual and concrete examples to back up and illustrate cultural learning.

Linguistic benefits

Although we can think of making things as primarily involving the development of motor skills, these activities are also an excellent vehicle for directly developing linguistic skills. Art and craft activities can create opportunities for real and meaningful language practice. They provide an environment where it is not the end product itself, but rather the process involved to obtain it that is not the most important thing. A craft lesson is an ideal way for children to assimilate language, for example listening to instructions given by the teacher. It can also help interaction in English between the students and the teacher or the students with other students. For example they can request things such as glue, scissors, paper, etc. or ask for help.



When doing arts and crafts and making things in the lesson, the phrases, words and language the teacher uses in English can be the real reason for the lesson. Remember children first learn by listening and absorbing.

The following are steps to follow to help the teacher maximise the use of English during a craft lesson and so maximise the students' exposure to it:

- Show the children what they are going to make and talk about it in general first. Elicit vocabulary to describe the object. For example, if it is a face mask, talk about the eyes, nose, mouth, etc. *Are they big or small? What colour are they?* If making something connected with a festival such as a bat for Halloween, elicit other vocabulary about the festival such as witches, pumpkins, cats, etc.

- Think about and prepare the language to use in instructions such as *Draw around like this, Cut it out like this, Stick this here.*
- Think about the kind of things the children might say to you in Italian and plan how to rephrase their comments and questions in English.
- Demonstrate how to make the object to the class first, using the prepared instructions and very simple clear gestures.
- Divide the class into small groups and when they begin making the object themselves, go round repeating the instructions to each group.
- Display what the children have made and give lots of praise in English.

Art and craft lessons also provide the opportunity for the students to interact.

They can ask the teacher for the different materials they need at various stages of the lesson. The teacher can also encourage the children to say where the materials are in the classroom. For example, *What do you need? The glue. Where is it? It's on the shelf.* The children can also describe what they have made in terms of shape, colour and size.

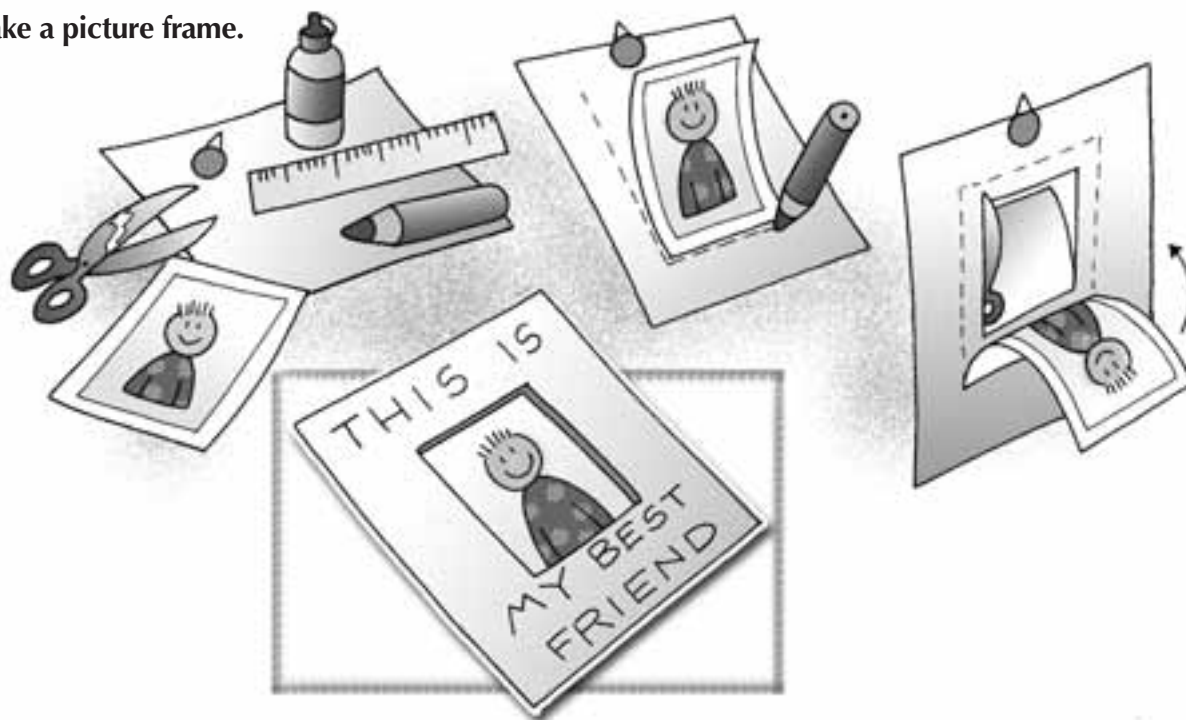
Craft work as a language resource

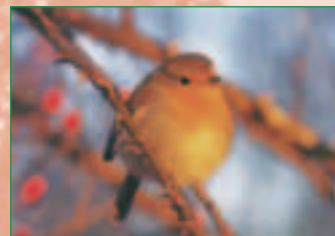
Language practice need not stop with the craft lesson itself. The finished product can be used as a resource for further linguistic development. For example, children can make puppets of the characters in a story and then use the puppets to retell the story. The teacher can do a colour dictation to make flashcards and then these can be used to revise vocabulary at a later date. Children can make illustrated books and folders where lexical sets of vocabulary, adjective words, or even songs and poems can be recorded.



Arts and crafts are fun and rewarding and create a welcome break in the normal routine of lessons. However they also provide one of the few environments in which students can listen to and produce language naturally. The end product is a source of great satisfaction but the language it generates in the process of its making can be even more satisfying.

- **Make a picture frame.**





Robin and the magic water

Rita Petrachi, Borsea (Rovigo)

Download recording from
www.langedizioni.com/rob

There is no *ideal* method for using this listening comprehension exercise.

The teacher can ask the children to describe the pictures before or after the first listening. The teacher can ask the children to colour the pictures either before the first or before the second listening or before or after the children work in groups.

Some suggestions:

- Play a recording of the story or read it to the children.
- **First listening.** Tell the children to listen and to understand the sequence of the story.
- When they have listened to the story, ask them simple questions to check comprehension.
- **Second listening.** Ask the children to listen to the story again and to number the pictures in the correct sequence. Pause when a picture is mentioned to give the children time to choose and number a picture.
- Invent simple sentences to describe each picture based on the children's knowledge of English.
- Play or read the story again, until all the children have numbered the pictures.
- Ask the children to work in groups and compare the sequence of the pictures.
- Get the children to cut the pictures and clip or tie with a ribbon in sequence to create a storybook.
- Occasionally, ask the children to work in pairs and re-tell the story using the storybook.

Picture 1

Robin woke up with a hole in his stomach. 'I'm hungry', he thought, 'it's time for breakfast'.

He got up and cleaned himself ready for the day ahead. Then he jumped onto the edge of his nest and looked out. "What's happened", he called out. All he could see was white.

The whole world was white.

land making it all white." "Oh, that's terrible. That's why I can't find anything to eat!" said Robin. "But how, dear butterfly, can the spell be broken?"

The butterfly looked very sad and said, "If all the witches leave the house, the spell will be broken and the world will return to normal. But that's impossible because the witches never leave the house together."

Picture 2

The trees were white, the bushes were white and the land was no longer green and full of beautiful yellow and red flowers. Everything was white. "Where have all the colours gone?", he asked a beautiful flake of snow as it passed his nest. There was no answer. He flew out up, up into the sky but when he looked down all he could see was white. There were no red or blue berries or tiny insects for him to eat for his breakfast. "Oh, no. I'm very, very hungry", he sang to the cold air, as he looked for something to eat.

Picture 5

Robin thought and thought until he had a plan. He flew to the nest of Ciccino, the bird magician. "Can I have some of your magic sticky water, please?" he asked politely. Ciccino gave him a bottle of the magic water which Robin put carefully in his bag.

Picture 3

He was surprised to see a coloured house through the snow in the distance. As he looked at the house he heard someone crying. The crying came from the snow covered branch of a tree. As he flew towards the branch he saw two antennas sticking out and two black eyes looking at him.

Picture 6

Then Robin flew out of Ciccino's house and into the sky. When he arrived at the witches' house, Robin flew round the house pouring the water in a big circle.

Picture 4

As he landed on the branch the snow fell away and he recognised a very wet butterfly. "Why are you crying?", asked Robin. "I'm very cold. I can't survive much longer", the butterfly replied in tears. She added with a sigh, "Look at that house over there. It's the witches' house. It's called Black Flowers' house. The three witches have cast a spell over the

Picture 7

Then he started crying and shouting as loud as he could and the three witches ran out of the house to see what was causing all the noise.

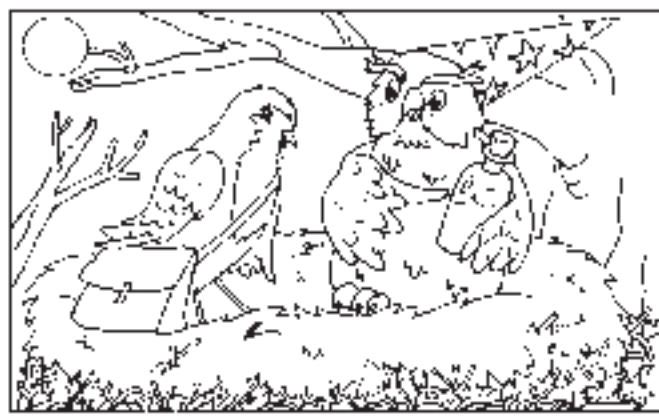
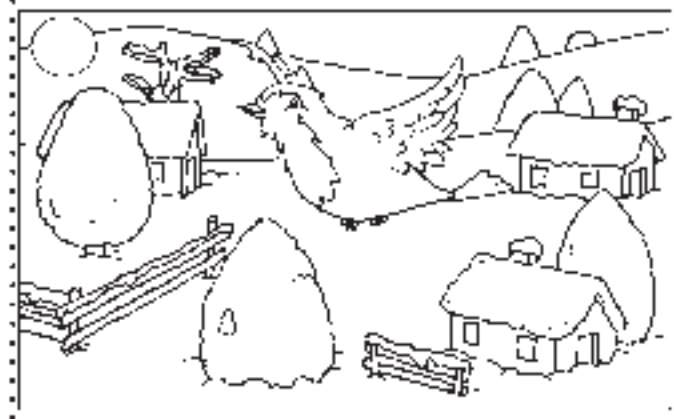
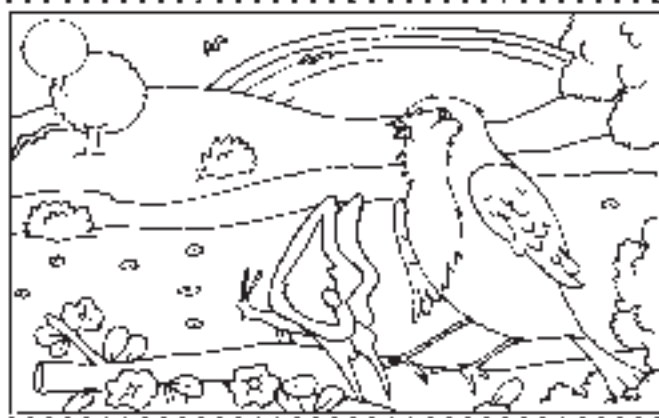
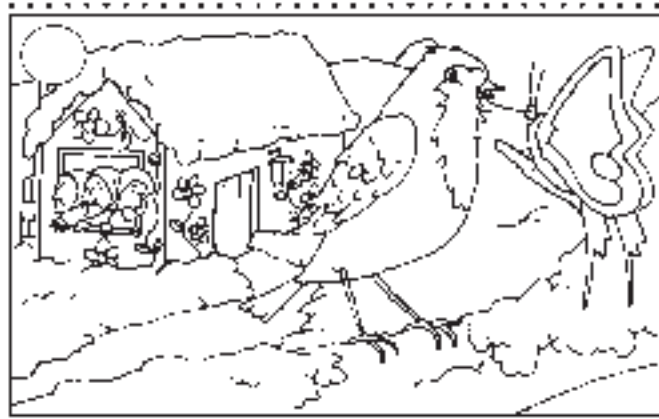
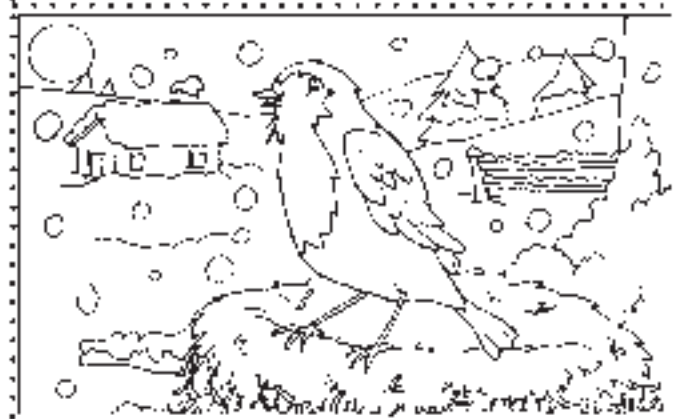
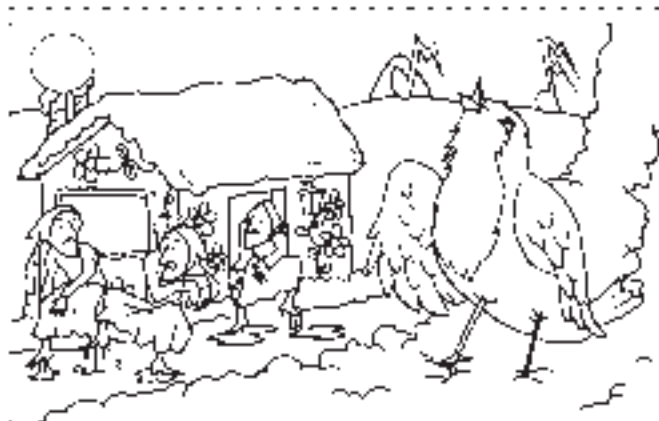
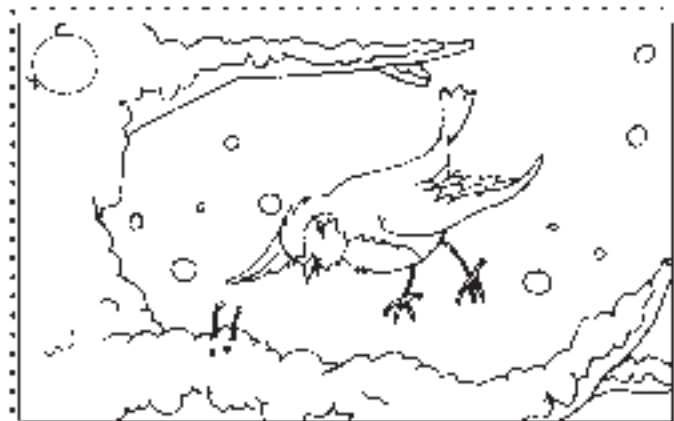
First witch number one, then witch number two and finally witch number three ran out of the house, but as soon as the witches' feet touched the magic water, they were stuck!

Picture 8

They were very angry when their spell was broken. A storm started and soon an enormous rainbow appeared. The land was again full of colour and beautiful flowers.



Robin and the magic water





Simon Says: snakes and ladders

This game is a double-aimed game: children must follow instructions and pay attention to the way their friends give the instructions.

Enlarge and photocopy the snakes and ladders game board and glue it onto cardboard. Give each group of three/four students a game board, a coin and three/four counters. Tell them they must all start from the beginning, using the counters to indicate where they are. To start, the first student flips the coin: heads is one space forward and tails is two. If the student lands on an instruction, the rest of the group shout the instruction. If they shout *Simon says stand up!*, the student has to stand up, but if they don't say *Simon says...* the student musn't stand up or he/she will have to go back a space. If the student lands on the bottom of a ladder, he/she goes to the top of the ladder and continues from there on the next turn, but if he/she lands on a snake's head, the student slides down to the end of the snake. The first one to finish wins.

If the students are non-readers, you can substitute the words with pictures.



AUSTRALIA

The *biggest* island, the *smallest* continent!

Cecilia Perillo

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free,
We've Golden Soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea,
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare,
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.

(National Anthem)



Australia is a country of immigrants and its children represent many cultures who use languages other than English. It is estimated that more than two and a half million people in Australia have the potential to communicate effectively in two languages. The rich cultural diversity offers Australians a challenge to develop new methods of communicating, living, working together and of teaching young children. Early childhood researchers have found that children easily 'switch' from one language to another when communicating across cultures and the acquisition of a second language, provided the home language is maintained, stimulates children's attention to language generally.

The Aborigines, the first Australians, spoke a lot of different Aboriginal languages. Aboriginal people have lived on this continent for at least 40,000 years. Each tribe has its own language like the 'koorie' language which is a distinctive term describing the indigenous peoples of southern New South Wales and Queensland.

"Gnookan danna murra kor-li"- "Give me your hand my friend" and let us bridge the cultural gap together.

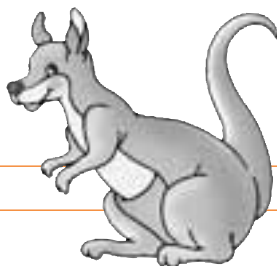
Aboriginal people were often bi, tri or multi-lingual and this facility for languages helped them learn English quickly. Before the European invasion in 1788, which had a devastating effect on Australian languages, there were more than 250 distinct languages spoken across the continent of Australia. These languages were as different from each other as English is from Greek or Chinese. Each language had a large vocabulary and a complicated grammar system.

Aboriginal people have always had and still have a special relationship with the land. To a Koorie, land is not something you own, but something you have a responsibility to take care of.

IDEAS FOR A LESSON PLAN

A cross-curricular lesson plan can help you cover various areas of the same topic.

THE FLAGS	
Australian	It's red, white and blue and you can see a small British Union Jack. Five little stars represent the constellation Southern Cross and the big star represents Australia.
Aboriginal	<u>Black</u> represents the Aboriginal people of Australia, who have lived in the country for more than forty thousand years. <u>Yellow</u> represents the sun and life giving properties of the sun. <u>Red</u> represents the land and the blood that was shed by Aboriginal people in defence of their land.
THE CAPITAL	
Canberra	Designed by the American-born Walter Burley Griffin, it is a city full of parks and gardens. Canberra's galleries, museums, libraries, sporting academy and technical institutions are a proud display of Australian excellence. It is the seat of Australia's federal parliament. <u>Government</u> : democratic, federal-state system recognizing the British monarch as sovereign.




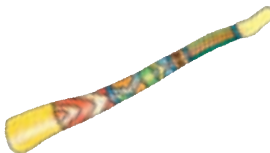


Aboriginal flag



Australian flag

ART	
Flags - Maps	Draw and colour the Australian and Aboriginal flags /draw a map of Australia and of Europe.
HISTORY AND NATIONAL HOLIDAY	
Culture Stop-Captain James Cook - New Come Along 5, page 89 - Australia Day/European Colonisation	Australia Day Celebrates the anniversary of Captain Arthur Phillip unfolding the British flag at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788 and becoming Governor of the Colony.
GEOGRAPHY	
World's <i>smallest</i> and <i>driest</i> continent but sixth- <i>largest</i> country - population concentrated along the eastern and south eastern coasts; the "Freemantle Doctor" (tropical sea breeze) affects the city of Perth on the west coast, one of the most consistent winds in the world.	
Australia's seasons are the opposite of the northern hemisphere. In the Australian winter you can ski in the southern states and dive in the Great Barrier Reef the same day!	
<u>Location:</u> Oceania, continent between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific Ocean. <u>Coastline:</u> 25,760 km <u>Climate:</u> generally arid to semi-arid; temperate in the South and the East; tropical in the North. <u>Seasons:</u> Summer: December, January, February Autumn: March, April, May Winter: June, July, August Spring: September, October, November	<u>Territorial division:</u> 6 states – Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania; 2 Territories – Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory. <u>Major cities:</u> Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra. <u>Dependent areas:</u> Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Christmas Islands, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Coral Sea Islands, Heard Island and McDonald Islands, Norfolk Island, Macquarie Island. <u>Maps:</u> compare a map of Australia with a map of Europe. <u>Terrain:</u> mostly low plateau with deserts; fertile plain in the Southeast. <u>Natural resources:</u> bauxite, coal, iron ore, copper, tin, gold, silver, uranium, nickel, tungsten, mineral sands, lead zinc, diamonds, natural gas, petroleum. <u>Natural hazards:</u> cyclones along the coast, severe droughts, bush fires. <u>Vegetation:</u> the famous "Tea Tree" grows in Australia and Asia. The leaves were used as a substitute for tea, which is how it got its name. The oil from the leaves is used in medicine. Australian aboriginals used tea tree leaves for healing cuts and infections. CLIL - CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING <u>Science:</u> the parts of a plant, New Come Along Supplementary Teaching Resources Levels 4-5, page 81.
MATHEMATICS	
Monetary Unit Population 40,000 years	Australian dollar 20.090.437 (July 2005 est.) How many generations in 40,000 years?
LANGUAGES	
English 79.1% - Chinese 2.1% - Italian 1.9% - Other 11.1% Aussie (short for Australian): word dates back to the pioneering past. Superlatives: biggest/smallest. New Come Along Supplementary Teaching Resources, page 51.	Latin root - Australia: australis, meaning from the south. DEVELOPING SKILLS; LISTENING: listen to the description of Australia. New Come Along 5, page 36/Listen and complete, New Come Along 5 – Culture Stop, page 59. WRITING: write a postcard to a friend. New Come Along 5, page 37.
TRANSPORTATION	
Railways, highways, waterways, pipelines, ports and harbours, merchant marine, airports	Compare with Italy.

ANIMALS	
<p>Name three Australian animals you know.</p> <p>ANIMALS IN AUSTRALIA</p> <p>New Come Along 5, pages 66 and 67. Sing the famous Australian song on page 67.</p>	<p>koala – kangaroo – emu</p> <p>The koala population of Australia has been depleted by bushfires, dogs and roadworks. The Billabong Breeding Centre at Port Macquarie is one of the many institutes helping to prevent their extinction.</p> 
MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS	
<p>Sing the famous Australian song on page 67, New Come Along 5.</p> <p>Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree. Merry, merry king of the bush is he. Laugh Kookaburra! Laugh Kookaburra! How gay your life must be.</p>	<p>Culture Stop. Listen and complete (didgeridoo), New Come Along 5, page 73.</p> 
INTERNET LINKS	
<p>The words of the National Anthem and other Australian songs.</p>	<p>www.australiaday.gov.au/subsection.asp?sblD=30</p>
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS	
<p>Christmas in the bush is a worrying time due to little rain, dry bush and bush fires. It is the home of trees and many plants and animals.</p>	
<p>Under the 'summer skies', extreme heat - traditional food: turkey, ham, salads, pudding - carols by candlelight, celebrated on the beach; -presents: beach balls, surf boards, sun hats, beach towels, beach cricket sets.</p>	<p>Traditions coming from Europe and elsewhere (Cartellate: a traditional sweet from Bari, Italy).</p>
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS DAMPER RECIPE	AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS BISCUITS
<p>Ingredients: 2 cups self raising flour; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 2 teaspoons sugar; 1 tablespoon butter; 1 cup milk or water, enough to make the dough soft.</p> <p>Procedure: Rub the butter into the flour. Knead. Mould into Christmassy shape, a wreath or a star. Bake in a hot oven (or ashes if you are cooking it over a fire). Cook for 20 minutes until brown. Serve with butter and jam, honey or golden syrup.</p>	<p>Ingredients: 1 cup plain flour; 2 tablespoons butter; 1/2 cup brown sugar; 2 tablespoons golden syrup; 1 teaspoon ginger</p> <p>Procedure: Cardboard for trees, bells, angels, candles, Father Christmas, koalas, kangaroos.... Place cut-outs on the dough and cut around them. Put on a greased oven tray and cook at 375° for 20 minutes/until light brown.</p>
PLACES TO SEE	
<p>Sydney's Opera House - Victoria</p> <p>The Great Barrier Reef</p>	<p>One of the wonders of the world for music and theatre.</p> <p>The limestone sentinels of the Twelve Apostles along the Great Ocean Road, which borders the coastline.</p>

CHRISTMAS TREE

This is a useful activity which can be used both as an individual or whole class craft activity.

Working individually, children will be able to create an object and to give it as a present to their friends or family. As a class activity, each child will have to bring in a small present, which can be a candy or a small puppet, and wait until a friend chooses it.

What you need:

some wooden sticks
a jam jar filled with soil
cardboard in different colours
scissors
stapler
ribbon
glue
felt-tip pens
glitter, beads and whatever you want to add
a small gift from each child

What you do:

Use the ribbon to tie the wooden sticks together.

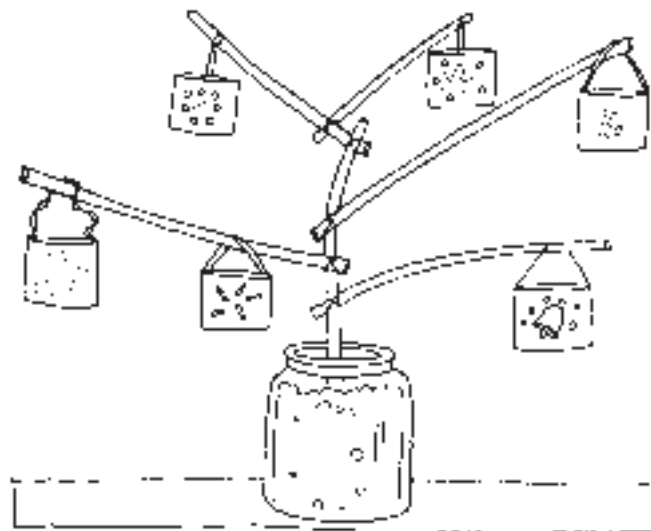
Stick the tree in the jar with soil.

Ask children to cut small rectangles (about 4x5 cm)

from two different coloured pieces of cardboard. Children must staple together the two pieces to make a pocket and can then decorate the pocket with felt-tip pens, beads or by glueing glitter on it. Each child must bring in a small present that will be put inside the cardboard pocket.

Make a small hole in each pocket and hang them all with a long coloured ribbon onto the tree you have made with the wooden sticks.

On the last day of school before Christmas break, ask each child to take a pocket from the tree (not the one they have made!).

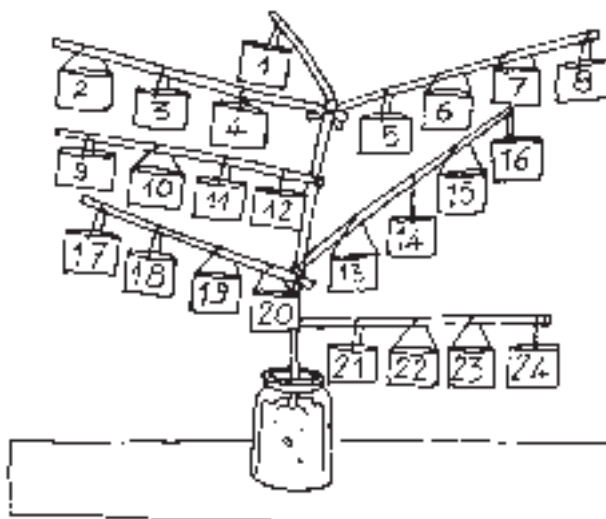


ADVENT TREE

Make an Advent tree. Follow the instructions for the Christmas tree but write the numbers from 1 to 24 on the cardboard pockets. Prepare everything by the end of November and then every morning ask a different child to take a pocket and open it. On some days, more than one pocket should be opened so that the final pocket is opened on the last day of term.

Another possibility is to help the children prepare, on small pieces of paper or cardboard, a Christmas wish and a drawing.

On the first day of December, bring in a small tree made of wooden sticks tied together and then every morning ask a different child to hang his/her wishing card on the tree.






WORKSHEET



A letter for Santa




Look at the pictures and choose the words from the list to complete the letter to Father Christmas.



- bike ● video game ● biscuits ● presents ● jumper ● book ● ball ● teddy bear
- car ● doll ● Christmas cards ● comics ● tree ● dress ● milk ● cake ● baby

Dear Santa Claus,

Next week the Christmas holidays start. I want to tell you about all the  my family would like.

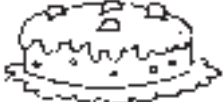

I would like a  and a 


My brother would like a  and a  , but it's too big to bring down the chimney, so how about a toy 

My sister would like a  and  – she loves comics!

My  sister would like a 

My mum would like a new  and my dad would like a new 

Next to the fireplace there is some  for you and some 

..... and  for Rudolph and the other reindeer.

Mum is calling me, I must go and decorate the  and write my

 to my friends.

Thank you very much.

Lots of love and have a nice Christmas!

Tim

Learning *through* Songs

Joanna Carter

Most, if not all children love music and songs. Music forms an intrinsic part of their lives from a very early age. During their nursery years, children sing songs with their parents to help learn their mother tongue and about the world around them. Later they have exposure to music and songs in all aspects of their lives – through family, television, radio and their lessons at school. They enjoy songs because they can identify with them, even when they are in a foreign language.

The Value of Songs

The enjoyment factor is always an extremely important reason to use something in the English language classroom but there are other invaluable motives that make **music, rhythm, rhyme** and **song** an essential part of language learning for young children.

The structure and rhythm of a song makes it much easier to follow, to imitate and to reproduce language. Vocabulary is easier to remember because there are often rhyming words at the ends of lines. There is often a simple story-line which helps put vocabulary in a relevant context. Songs help reinforce language structures because they are full of repetition, so children have the opportunity to hear words and sentences again and again in a meaningful way.

When to Use Songs

There are many moments throughout a lesson when a song can be used as a useful learning tool. When starting a lesson a teacher can ask the pupils to sing a song to show that the subject is changing to English.

Simple songs can be used as a *warm up* at the beginning of a lesson to focus the children's attention.

Alternatively, the teacher can use a song at the end of a session to *round off* the lesson and practise what the children have learnt. A very appropriate moment to use a song is during revision of

vocabulary or even to introduce new words, as a change from using flashcards or other visual stimuli. The popular song *Head, shoulders, knees and toes* is ideal for this as the children have to point to parts of the body.

In subsequent lessons, if the children forget the vocabulary it is often enough to just hum the tune to refresh their memories.

Intonation, punctuation and pronunciation are often accentuated in a song so they can be used to help children internalise the sounds of English.

Songs can be linked to topics that are being covered – there are plenty of English songs about the weather, animals or parts of the body, for example.

Songs are a great way to introduce and illustrate festivals and customs of the English speaking world and can help practise more specialised vocabulary. Lessons about festivals and traditions often involve craft activities.

Why not play an associated song in the background while the children work? It is surprising how much children learn passively and background music has a calming, relaxing effect.



How to Use a Song

One of the most useful types of songs are those that involve actions. The actions illustrate what is happening in the song. The children naturally make an association between the actions and the words they are singing and so vocabulary and grammatical structures become much clearer and more memorable.

This is also a very useful way of capitalising on very traditional songs that may contain slightly more obscure vocabulary. Some songs lend themselves

naturally to using actions, such as 'One finger, one thumb...' (see **Traditional Songs and Rhymes**, LANG Edizioni) but if a song doesn't have actions they can always be invented to match the words. It's important to have some kind of procedure when teaching a song or action song:

- first of all sing or play the song a couple of times and simply let the children listen and absorb the tune;
- play or sing the song again and get the children to hum the tune;
- next, get them to join in with the actions only. At this stage ask them what they think the song means from the actions;
- finally, get them to do the actions and begin to sing the words.

Sometimes children get the rhythm of the song but do not sing complete words (e.g. *he* not *head* or *to* not *toes*). To help them with this, play around with the speed of the song.

Sing it exaggeratedly slow so they have time to completely pronounce the words, then speed it up etc.

This is a lot of fun and the children love it!

It is always better that the teacher and the children begin singing songs together as this helps children build up their confidence and helps create a sense of group identity. Once they are very familiar with a song the teacher can give different parts to small groups. This is a very useful technique in big classes and also helps develop listening skills and team work.

There is ample scope for follow-up activities when a song has been taught during a lesson. Children can be asked to draw pictures to illustrate the song. Older children can even do gap fill exercises where they put in the missing words. Over time, children will probably come across a great many English songs, so why not get them to create their own personal song book to keep a record of them all.



Here is an example of an action song.

Head and Shoulders

Head and shoulders,
knees and toes,
knees and toes.

(touch your head and then your shoulders)
(touch your knees and then your toes)
(touch your knees and then your toes)

Head and shoulders,
knees and toes,
knees and toes.

(touch your head and then your shoulders)
(touch your knees and then your toes)
(touch your knees and then your toes)

Eyes and ears and
mouth and nose.

(touch your eyes and then your ears)

Head and shoulders,
knees and toes.
knees and toes.

(touch your head and then your shoulders)
(touch your knees and then your toes)
(touch your knees and then your toes)



Bambini seduti?

No, thank you

Carmen Argondizzo *

Children initiate the long and difficult process of second language acquisition with the aim of eventually being able to communicate with adults and peers. The need for pragmatic competence, therefore, anticipates and supports the long process of language acquisition and encourages children to create the strategies they will have to employ in order to cope with the sociolinguistic-communicative challenges in everyday life (Argondizzo 1991). To a great extent, language acquisition occurs through social interaction being in itself, as Berko-Gleason (1977) put it, the first step towards the learning of how to make conversation. Certainly, the *dialogic* nature of human life and the human mind (Little 2001) encourages children to express and develop their autonomy in interaction with parents, siblings and others in the environment in which they grow up. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) strongly supported this argument by highlighting the notion that children's higher cognitive functions are internalised from social interaction, and that their learning arises from supported *task performance*.

Classroom activities that primary school teachers daily plan for children attending their classes should draw on both research and practical experience with the aim of offering younger students a systematic approach to classroom teaching. Through enjoyable teaching activities which enhance children's *dialogic nature* and through appropriate *task performance* teachers should aim at capturing the exuberance of the children. Yet, it will be necessary to create

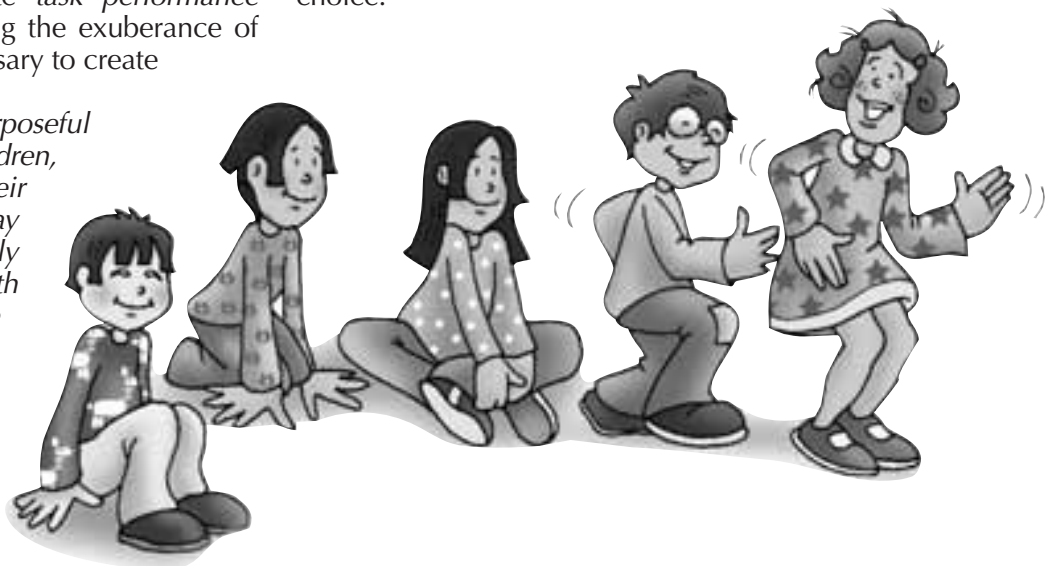
a way of constructing a purposeful learning curriculum for children, one which develops their competence in a systematic way rather than haphazardly presenting them with excitements, however attractive (Candlin 1992: IX).

Thus, on one side, teaching at primary school level should put great emphasis on learning by

doing, and, as many scholars have taught us, on learning with *heart, head and hand*; whereas, on the other side, a staged and planned curriculum will be extremely important for children because their primary school experiences will set the foundations for their later learning. As Candlin reminds us

when the learners enter the mainstream of formal education they will have already established the bases for language learning and not lost that innocence, that enthusiasm, which characterises children and which, so much, formal teaching often dispels.
(ibid.: X)

Generally speaking, language activities should focus on major interrelated areas from which children should never be separated: socialisation (e.g.: the way of naturally interacting with others), play (e.g.: a way for enhancing fantasy, imagination, creativity), content-area language instruction (e.g.: a way for gradually achieving world knowledge), creative thinking (e.g.: the opportunity of focusing on reading and writing purposeful tasks). Activities should be structured so that they can easily be chained into a sequence for particular learning groups and, at each stage, teachers should be offered opportunities for action research to carry out with their own learners in order to explore the effects of a particular activity choice.



Bearing in mind these premises, resourceful activities should be created through a combination of theoretical principles and practice in order to allow primary school teachers to develop themselves as reflective practitioners. Such an activity should have a clear background organisational lay out of the kind shown below:

ACTIVITY 33

1-2-3-4... FREEZE!

Activity type:	counting
Language:	numbers, freeze
Presumed knowledge:	numbers
Time:	20-25 minutes
Classroom setting:	children standing in a line and facing the teacher
Age:	5-11
Level:	beginner and elementary
Aims:	counting, recognising the word freeze, making fun, using formulaic expressions

The different phases in which the activity unfolds should see the children active and meaningfully involved:

Preparation

Il maestro (bambini che guardano il maestro) mostra i bambini di 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-12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Robin and the Christmas tree

Raffaella Tagliapietra, Thiene (Vicenza)

Download recording from
www.langedizioni.com/rob

There is no *ideal* method for using this listening comprehension exercise.

The teacher can ask the children to describe the pictures before or after the first listening. The teacher can ask the children to colour the pictures either before the first or before the second listening or before or after the children work in groups.

Some suggestions:

- Play a recording of the story or read it to the children.
- **First listening.** Tell the children to listen and to understand the sequence of the story.
- When they have listened to the story, ask them simple questions to check comprehension.
- **Second listening.** Ask the children to listen to the story again and to number the pictures in the correct sequence. Pause when a picture is mentioned to give the children time to choose and number a picture.
- Invent simple sentences to describe each picture based on the children's knowledge of English.
- Play or read the story again, until all the children have numbered the pictures.
- Ask the children to work in groups and compare the sequence of the pictures.
- Get the children to cut the pictures and clip or tie with a ribbon in sequence to create a storybook.
- Occasionally, ask the children to work in pairs and re-tell the story using the storybook.



Picture 1

Robin woke up with a hole in his stomach. 'I'm hungry', he thought, 'it's time for breakfast'.

He got up and cleaned himself ready for the day ahead. Then he jumped onto the edge of his nest and looked out. "What's happened", he called out. All he could see was white. The whole world was white.

Picture 2

The trees were white, the bushes were white and the land was no longer green and full of beautiful yellow and red flowers. Everything was white.

"Where have all the colours gone?", he asked a beautiful flake of snow as it passed his nest. There was no answer.

Picture 3

He flew out up, up into the sky but when he looked down all he could see was white. There were no red or blue berries or tiny insects for him to eat for his breakfast. "Oh, no. I'm very, very hungry", he sang to the cold air. There was not a creature to be seen, everything was perfectly still. Tired and hungry Robin thought, 'What will happen to me if I can't find anything to eat?' He flew through the snowflakes. Then he saw a tree below him and on the tree were some strange circles of colour.

Picture 4

"What can the circles be?" he thought, as he flew lower and lower. When he landed on a branch he looked more closely and he realised that the strange circles of colour were, in fact,

biscuits of different shapes. The biscuits were hanging from the branches of the tree.

Picture 5

"Oh, what a magic tree!", he cried and he started eating the biscuits and filling his very empty stomach. As he pecked away he realised that the biscuits were shaped like men. "The children from the school made these biscuits for me. Oh what a lucky robin I am!", he cried.

Picture 6

When his stomach was full he flew round the tree and let a red feather from his breast fall onto the ground to thank the children for saving him.

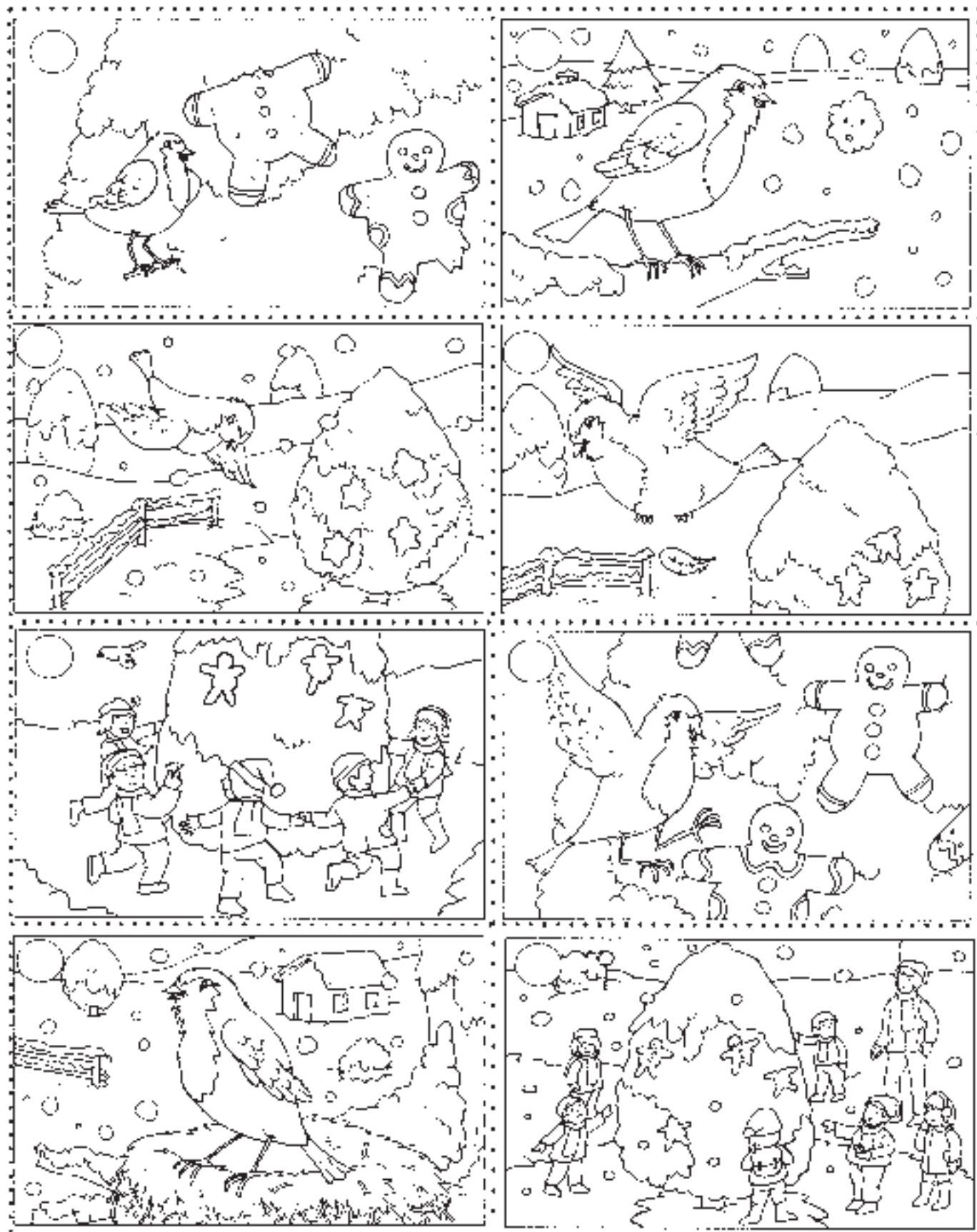
Picture 7

In the afternoon, when the snow was falling softly on the ground, the school bell rang. The children ran out of the school gate but stopped in front of the Christmas tree. "Look at that gingerbread man. He hasn't got a leg", cried one. "And look at that one, he hasn't got a head", shouted another. "Oh, what has happened? Who did this? And why?", the children asked. One child noticed Robin's red feather on the ground. "It was Robin", said the teacher. "The gingerbread men you made in class saved his life".

Picture 8

The children were very happy and clapped their hands and shouted "Happy Christmas" to the air, hoping that Robin would hear them.

Robin and the Christmas tree



Kids' Corner

Joanna Carter

In this edition of KIDS' CORNER, we are offering some fun ideas and activities to revise the lexical areas of weather and clothes. These topics can then in turn be integrated in some fun games and activities that concentrate specifically on the theme of seasons.

What's the weather like?

Activity 1

Objective: to revise or introduce words to describe the weather and seasons.
See pictures of weather.

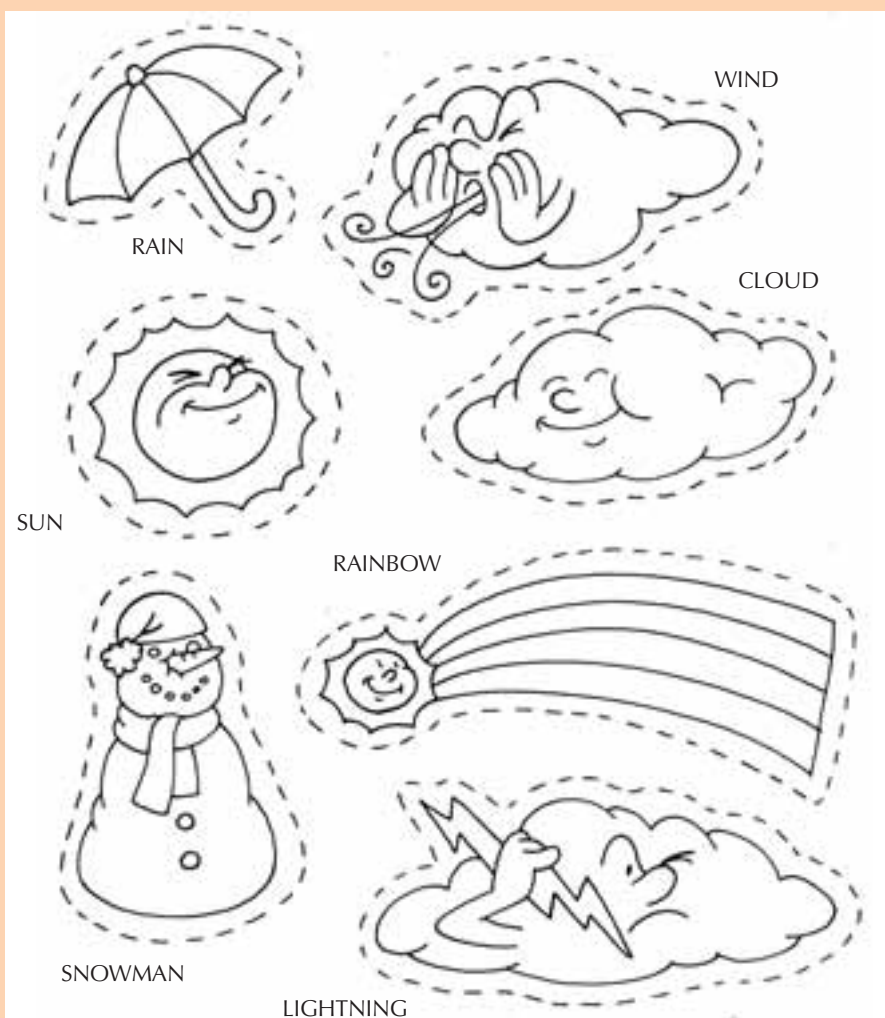
1. Make flashcards of the symbols shown here.

2. Hold up the picture of the snowman and ask the children what it is and what it's made of. Ask them when it is possible to make a snowman and in which season.

3. Now hold up the sun and ask similar questions: *When it's sunny, is it hot or cold? In which season do we see more sun in Italy? In summer or in winter?*

4. Introduce the other flashcards and the words rain, wind, cloud, lightning, rainbow. Stick the symbols on the board and ask the children to point to the correct symbol as you say the word.

5. Now draw two big overlapping circles on the board, one red and one blue. The red one represents summer and the blue one winter. Where they overlap represents both seasons. Ask the children to put the weather symbols with the right season circle. If they think the symbol belongs to both they put it in the overlap.



Kids'Corner
is a special section dedicated
to very young learners.



Activity 2: Teach the children these action rhymes

Put the pictures of the snowman, rain, sun and lightning on the board. Point to the snowman and say 'It's snowing'. Wrap your arms around yourself and shiver. Say 'I'm cold'. Get the children to repeat. Repeat the process with the other pictures. Say the complete rhyme doing the actions. Repeat two or three more times encouraging the children to join in.

It's snowing, it's snowing.

I'm cold, I'm cold!

(move your hands downwards wiggling your fingers)

It's raining, it's raining.

(wrap your arms round your body)

I'm wet, I'm wet!

(tap your fingers on your head)

It's sunny, it's sunny.

(spread out your fingers and make a big arc over your head)

I'm hot, I'm hot!

(wipe your forehead)

It's lightning, it's lightning.

How frightening, how frightening!

(put your hands to your mouth and make a frightened face)

Here's another action rhyme about the weather and a spider.



Incy Wincy spider climbed up
the spout.

(spread your hands out like spiders and make them climb upwards)

Down came the rain and
washed poor Incy out.

(move your hands down, wiggling your fingers to represent rain)

Out came the sun and dried up
all the rain.

(spread out your hands in an arc over your head to represent the sun, then wiggle fingers up to 'dry' the rain)

Incy Wincy spider climbed up
the spout again.

(as first action)

Activity 3

Make copies of the weather symbols for all the children onto white card. Get the children to colour them in and cut them out. Make a small hole in the top of each symbol and attach a piece of cotton. Now hang the symbols on coat hangers or sticks crossed at right angles.



What are we wearing today?

Objective: to revise and practise vocabulary for clothes. These activities can follow on from the ones before.

Activity 4

1. Bring to the classroom or, if possible, ask the children to bring to the classroom different clothes for all seasons, such as hat, scarf, shorts, sandals etc. Try to have as much variety as possible.
2. Hold up the items for the children to see one by one and say or elicit the names. Ask the children if they wear the item in the sun, in the snow, in the rain, in the cold etc.
3. Get the children to form a circle and put all the clothes in the middle. Ask individual children to fetch the item you say. For example, 'Luca, go and find a T-shirt.'



Activity 5

When the children have practised the vocabulary a few times, tell them they are going to play a game where they have to choose the right clothes according to the weather. You say for example, 'Sara, it's snowing'. The child must go and find something suitable for a snowy day. If it's suitable the child puts it on, if not he/she takes it back. You can make this into a competition – the child with most clothes on wins. If you can't get hold of real clothes then use flashcards and peg them with real pegs on a washing line (some string strung across the classroom). The children can collect the clothes pictures.

Activity 6

With the real clothes or flashcards, discuss with the children which are more suitable for winter – coat, scarf, gloves, jumper etc. Next make copies of the figure of a child shown here and give them out to the children. Ask them to imagine it's cold, snowy weather and they are on winter holiday. Tell them to draw themselves and what they are wearing on their figure and then cut it out. When they have finished ask them to name the clothes the figure is wearing and tell you the colours. Put the children's names on the back of the figures and save them for the holiday activities.

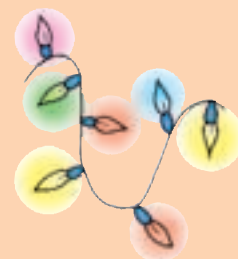
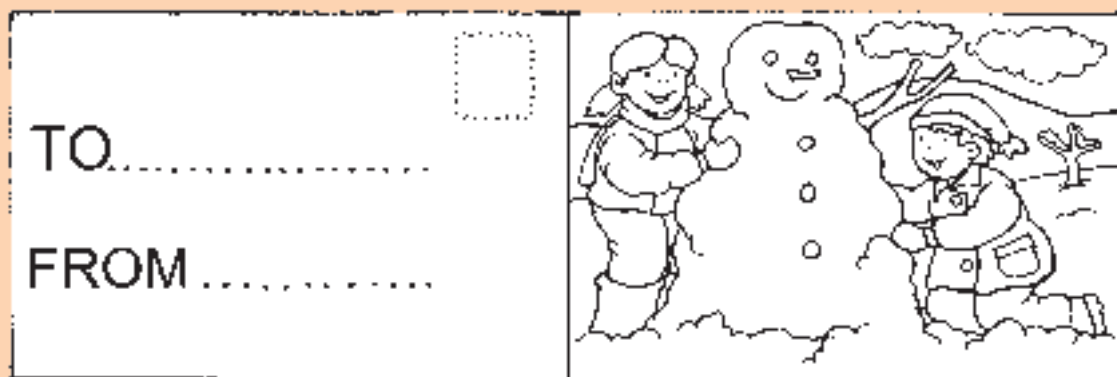
Let's go on holiday!

These activities can follow on from the previous games and ideas. Clothes and weather vocabulary is recycled but also the theme of holidays is explored.

Activity 7

This is a colour dictation which is a great way to practise following instructions and vocabulary recognition. Make an enlarged copy of the picture postcard you can find on the next page. Look at the picture as a class and teach the names of the objects in the picture, e.g. cloud, snowman, snowflakes, hot chocolate, coat, gloves, scarf, boots etc. Say the word and ask the children to repeat. To be sure the children have learnt or recognise the words, say a word and get individuals to point at it in the picture.





Make copies of the postcard for all the children. Tell them they are going to send the postcard, but first they must make it look pretty. Help them to write the name of a friend in class they want to send the postcard to and then write their own name. Fold it over and stick it together. Tell them you are going to tell them the colours to put on the postcard. Give them simple instructions, e.g. 'Where's the scarf? Can you see the scarf? Colour it pink.' Demonstrate the first two instructions yourself. Point to the object and then pick up the correct colour pen. When they have finished they 'send' the postcard.

Activity 8

Each sentence should be accompanied by an action, e.g. for the first phrase, mime walking to the beach.

Let's go playing in the snow!
Clouds are in the sky.
It's very cold.
I put on my hat.
I go in the snow.
Brrrrr! It's cold!
I make a big snowman.
I'm hungry!
I eat a piece of cake.
Mmmmmmm, yum, yum!
Oh no, it's raining!
Let's go home.

This activity involves total physical response from the children. They associate actions and mime with simple phrases to retell a story. Get the children to stand in a circle around you. Tell them they are going to act out a story about a day in the snow. Begin to tell the story slowly and encourage the children to join in with the actions. Then tell the children to join in with the words. Repeat each phrase several times rhythmically until the children can follow. Eventually the children should be able to do all the actions and say the story without your help.



Activity 9

Make a winter snow collage. Put long strips of coloured backing paper on the wall. Put blue on the top, light blue in the middle and white at the bottom, to represent the sky, clouds and snow. Bring into the class old winter holiday brochures. Get the children to think about the sort of things you can see and find in the sky (clouds, birds, snowflakes, sun...) and on earth (trees, bushes, snowmen, children playing, Christmas trees, people skiing...). Divide the class into two groups to work on the two different areas of the collage. Ask them to find pictures from the brochures suitable for their area of the collage that they can cut out and stick on. If they can't find a picture of what they want, then draw the outline of this object on the backing paper. Tell the children to tear small pieces from the magazines in the appropriate colour for the object and fill in the outline. Tell the children they can use the figures of themselves dressed for winter holidays that they made for Activity 6.



Crafty Art

Cecilia Perillo



Making things is a great way of **expressing one's unique self** and young learners just love doing and creating things! Teachers can capitalise on this and help children learn to do things using the English language. Furthermore, teachers must decide when and if such experiences are beneficial and be perceptive to the needs of individual children and flexible enough to take advantage of a natural learning situation or a teachable moment that may develop unexpectedly. A simple scribble is a personal creation and it's the teachers job to provide suitable materials (a scribble animal - children use a crayon to scribble a design on a piece of paper), and encourage the creative learning process and value the product. Teachers may adapt activities to suit their own 'personal touch'.

Through **arts** and **crafts**, children become engaged in something they enjoy doing naturally and as they are involved in completing their projects, the teacher may be walking around, making comments and asking questions in English. It is thus important to provide a variety of experiences and encourage children to proceed at their level of readiness.

Many young children may be using scissors for the first time and as they cut out pictures they will develop **eye-hand coordination** and **fine motor skills**. The purpose of the cut outs is to provide children with **manipulatives** they can use when playing games with a partner and to give them hands-on experience in learning the skill of cutting (Activity 4 – The Number Booklet, page 9, Kids' Club 1 Cut Out Booklet). Experiences that may involve typical art and crafts activities such as cutting and pasting but do not encourage the creativity of children are considered to be **skill developers**.

Children become familiar with attractive materials like powder-paint, coloured paper, Plasticine® and materials of different textures, e.g. wool, silk, etc. Teachers may keep all the different materials in the classroom and teach the children to get them from the cupboard, giving them out, cleaning and putting things away through the English language. If children are making models, e.g. of a window, it may be useful to have a finished model for them to see before they begin their work by demonstrating the entire project first and then having students complete it.

Through pictures, maps, charts, painting, designing and creating children are developing the ability to perceive the visual and retain information and furthermore, **the kinesthetic learners who prefer to learn by doing or by experience will learn better by being involved in a task, drawing or making something**. (The Mixed Ability Class - Julie Tice, Richmond Publishing)

Give Value To The Finished Product

Through praise and encouragement teachers can help young children to **develop self-confidence** and **pride** in their work, fulfilling their **sense of achievement**.

Once the practicality of teaching English through arts and crafts has been established, teachers can adapt any project to suit an English lesson.

PRACTICAL IDEAS

DRAWING AND MODELLING	PAINTING	CUTTING AND STICKING
<p>CRAYONS OIL PASTELS COLOURED CHALK COLOURED PENCILS</p> <p>Children can explore with crayon all over the page; encourage whole-arm movements. Teachers look at the scribbles and talk about the different shapes.</p> <p>MODELLING PLAYDOUGH playdough is a clean and versatile modelling material that is easy to store and use. Playdough is appropriate for make-believe cooking and may stimulate various play scenarios depending on the equipment set out. Equipment could include rolling pins, biscuit cutters, patty pans, a garlic press, jar lids, combs, iceblock sticks, stones and pinecones.</p>	<p>ART ACTIVITY finger painting Cross-curricular: science – mix colours to create new colours.</p> <p>MATERIALS liquid starch, dry tempera powder, large pieces of white paper or finger painting paper.</p> <p>PROCEDURE wetting the paper with a sponge of clear water lets the paint move easily. Place a 1- to 2-inch drop of starch on each piece of paper. Sprinkle on dry tempera powder. When well mixed, let children spread the colour over all of the paper. They are now ready to finger paint. Place yellow and blue paint on the paper, red paint in the middle and encourage children to mix their paints and tell you what new colours they make.</p>	<p>PASTE GLUE STICKY TAPE STAPLES</p> <p>COLLAGES make collages using coloured paper, glue, scissors and crayons. Demonstration: this is the paper; cut the paper; (the teacher cuts the paper); glue the paper (teacher glues); draw pictures. Repeat the directions more than once.</p> <p>COMPUTER SCIENCE colour, cut and glue the words: mouse, big, small. This is one of the many examples you can find in Lang Primary Resources 1-2/3, pages 165, 172.</p> <p>IDEAS FOR YOUR BULLETIN BOARD ask children to bring in magazine pictures, photographs, labels and invite them to stick the materials on the board.</p>



DRAWING AND MODELING	PAINTING	CUTTING AND STICKING
<p>Uncooked Playdough easy to make. Materials: 3 cups plain flour, 1 cup salt, 1 tablespoon oil, a cup of water to mix with colouring added (optional). Procedure: mix the flour and the salt, add the oil and water and knead the mixture to a soft dough.</p> <p>CLAY people have worked clay for thousands of years. You can dig for your own clay or prepare it and store it in a plastic bag. If clay dries out, soak in water, knead and break into big pieces.</p> <p>TOOLS hand to shape the clay, wire to cut the pieces, water to soften and smooth the clay, sponge, iceblock sticks, plastic knives or old pencils for decorating, marking and shaping.</p>	<p>LANGUAGE ARTS The Sad Witch - Cut and glue. Kids' Club 2, page 11.</p> <p>SPONGE PAINTING cut sponges in circular and oval shapes. Show the children how to dip the sponges in tempera and then on paper and talk about the different colours and how they look when they blend together. When the paintings dry children can draw legs, eyes, etc...</p> <p>SNOW SCENES IN A BOTTLE a jar with a lid. Paint the bottom of the jar a bright colour. Models to stick inside: a plastic Christmas tree or people, houses, animals, pebbles, shells. Glue the models to the bottom of the jar. Fill with vinegar and 2 teaspoons coconut. Glue the top of the bottle on and shake the snow bottle!</p>	<p>SPECIAL DAYS CUT-OUT Kids' Club 2, pages 43-45.</p> <p>MAKING A FLOWER give each child a paper square (coloured), ask the children to fold it into two to make a triangle, fold the triangle into two, unfold the triangle and fold the two ends of the long side upwards to make the petals. The children stick the flower on a sheet of paper and draw the stem and leaves.</p> <p>LOADS OF ACTIVITIES Curriculum Extension Series, Kids' Club Teacher's books 1, 2/3, 4/5. The Classroom Diorama: Cut out and make the Classroom Diorama, page 7, Hands on activities, Curriculum Extension Series, Kids' Club Teacher's book 2/3.</p>
<p>USEFUL CLASSROOM LANGUAGE Are you ready? Blackboard, clean, colour, cupboard, cut out, dirty, draw, finish, give me, good, mask, pen, pencil, pick up, put away, quickly, scissors, sheet of paper, stick it, table.</p>	<p>DIFFERENT GROUP ACTIVITIES: DRAWING, COLOURING, CUTTING Children can draw animals and recreate a zoo on a wall poster. Group one may colour, label and cut out animals. Group two may use Plasticine® or playdough to make animals and display them on a surface.</p>	



ARTS AND CRAFTS AND PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness of intonation, stress and timing occurs in rhymes such as 'The Three Little Pigs', in songs and so on. In 'The three Little Pigs' the refrain works very well because the focus placed on particular words and the timing for saying the refrain is very important.

THE WOLF HUFFED,
AND HE PUFFED,
AND HE BLEW
THE HOUSE DOWN.

In the refrain of 'The Three Little Pigs' the individual words *huffed* and *puffed* sound the same except for the initial phonemes /h/ and /p/. Arts and Crafts can be implemented by asking the children to draw and cut out the sounds and the story. The children may go to page 45, Kids' Club 1 and prepare the stand-up puppets for a play. Teachers can concentrate on 'phonological awareness' by showing the children the story on DVD and exploiting extra materials which they can easily find in the Teacher's book on page 29.

As I have previously mentioned teachers can adapt any arts and crafts project/activity to suit an English lesson.

Classroom dominoes

Enlarge, photocopy the template and glue it on cardboard. Cut out the cards. Give each group of 3-4 students a set of cards. Each student is given/dealt four cards and the rest are left in a pile in the middle of the table. The first student puts any card down on the table. The next student puts down a card that corresponds with the card already on the table (picture + word/phrase or vice versa). If the student hasn't got a card that corresponds, then he/she has to pick up a card and misses a turn. The game continues until all the cards from the pile have been used and/or the first student has used all his/her cards. The first to do so, wins.

As the game progresses the cards should form a snake type shape. The cards are only to be added at the extremities and not in the middle of the snake.

	PAINT		DRAW		LOOK
	LISTEN		SIT DOWN		STAND UP
	WASH YOUR HANDS		DRINK SOME WATER		JUMP
	BE QUIET		FOLD		WRITE
	POINT		CLEAN THE BLACK-BOARD		GIVE
	STOP		OPEN THE DOOR		SING
	EAT		REPEAT		CUT
	CLAP YOUR HANDS		CLOSE THE DOOR		GO TO THE TOILET



WORKSHEET

Spot The Difference

Spot the Difference pictures can be used to practise a specific language structure and revise vocabulary groups. This set of pictures is most appropriate for years four and five as in addition to 'There is/isn't' and 'There are/aren't' it also deals with the present continuous. To lead into the activity, use flashcards or mime to elicit the actions found in the pictures. To review furniture, use more flashcards or draw a picture of a living room on the board. Then, put the class into A/B pairs and hand out the pictures. Starting with the girl, elicit all family members in relation to her. Explain to the children that they mustn't look at each other's pictures and that there are **ten** differences between them. Using the language in the box below they must identify the differences and circle them.

Spot the Difference can be extended into a writing activity. Each child swaps pictures with their partner and writes about it.

Useful language:

In my picture there is *a/an*...

In my picture there *isn't a/an*...

In my picture there are...

In my picture there aren't...

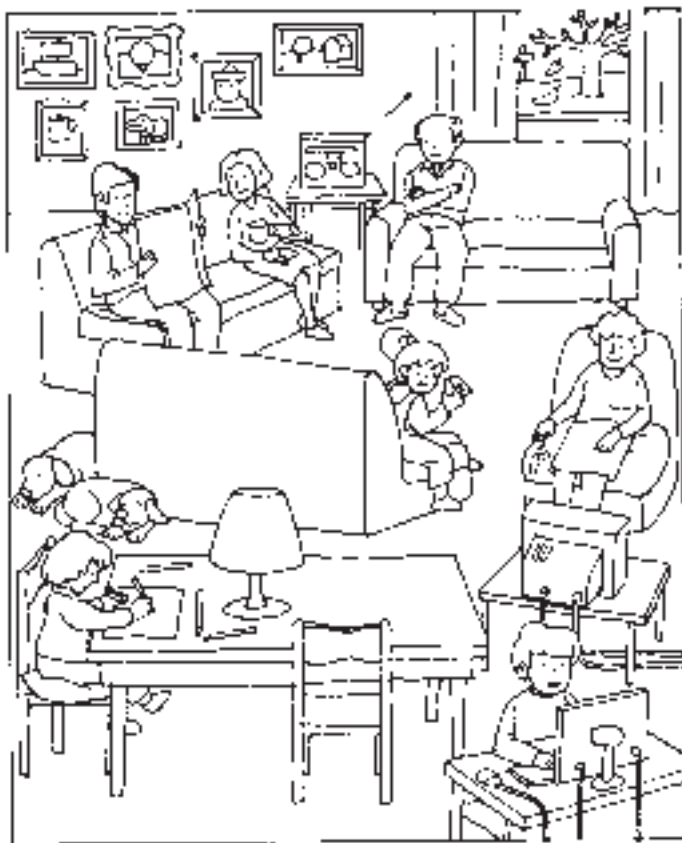
In my picture the *girl is eating*...

In my picture the girl *isn't eating*... , *she's eating*...

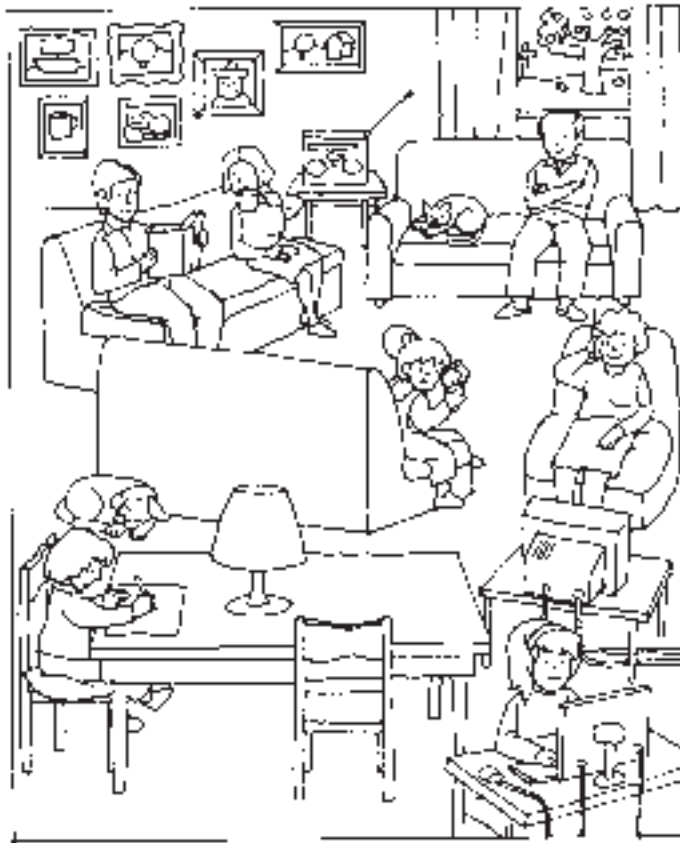
That's *one/another* difference! Circle it!

TEN DIFFERENCES
In picture B: 1. father is reading a book; 2. mother is drinking; 3. cat is on the sofa; 4. grandfather is sitting on the right of the sofa; 5. season; 6. grandmother is speaking on mobile phone; 7. girl on the sofa is eating an ice cream; 8. girl, not boy, is on the computer; 9. no pencils on the table; 10. only one dog is near the sofa

Picture A



Picture B



Management of pair and group-work exercises

Joanna Carter

Imagine this: a well equipped, spacious classroom containing maximum twelve calm, well-behaved children whose favourite subject is English. What a lovely dream! Of course this image is a far cry from reality for the vast majority of teachers who are more likely to be faced with the problem of motivating and involving large numbers of excitable children in less than adequate space with few resources other than the course book. Luckily, we do have some techniques at our disposal to make our lives a little less stressful and big classes of children a little more manageable. One of the most effective but simple techniques is to incorporate a lot more **group work** and **pair work** into the lesson and in so doing take a bit of pressure off the teacher and engage the interest of the entire class.

Why group and pair work can be beneficial to both student and teacher

Further to the above, there are a number of other advantages to using group or pair work in the English classroom which is why many of today's course books incorporate them. Organising activities in this way greatly increases opportunities for language input. Each pupil has much more time to actually practise communication and use their English. Children are usually by nature very sociable so pair and group work exploit this natural tendency. Furthermore, this classroom organisation promotes autonomous learning. Working in groups or pairs means that students are less dependent on the teacher and more involved in their learning. More control over the learning environment can lead to greater motivation and achievement.

However, working in pairs or groups may not necessarily come naturally to children, especially if the English lesson is the only occasion in the school day when this happens. Children do need to be trained to work in groups or pairs and this training may take a little time and persistence. It's important that teachers don't give up in the first lesson if it doesn't seem to be very successful. Some experts believe (for example Berman 1998) that very young learners prefer to work on their own and are reluctant to share. Imposing group or pair work on children who are not yet ready for it could have negative repercussions. Therefore be aware of this when trying it out with children under say the age of seven.

Troubleshooting – problems and solutions

'When I try to set up pair or group work the class seems to just degenerate into chaos'

This may happen if the teacher's instructions are not clear. Obviously verbal instructions given in English are more difficult to understand so we must make them as short and simple as possible and back them up with actual physical demonstrations involving the children. Children have limited attention spans so activities need to be short. More importantly the activities themselves need to be carefully structured with clear learning outcomes so children want to do them because they can see why they are doing them.

'In pairs and groups the children seem to use a lot of Italian and often misbehave'

Some L1 is inevitable with young learners. But to limit it the teacher can try to choose activities that ensure that at least some part of them has to be done in English. For example, a survey done in a group where the children have to report back to the class, or in pair work an information gap fill where the missing information is in English. If the teacher brings in a competition element and reward system to group activities, this could encourage use of L2 and promote better behaviour. For example, the teacher tells each group they are a team and can score points for using English and completing the task quickly and well.

'In groups there is always one student who does all the work'

To avoid stronger students dominating, the teacher can frequently change groupings and pairs and so get a better balance of abilities and gender. When the teacher really knows the class it will be easier to plan the composition of the groups more carefully and see who works well with who.

'The children are not used to doing pair or group work and don't want to move'

The teacher should introduce this way of carrying out activities as early as possible in the school year so the students don't get stuck in their ways and won't be reluctant to work with different classmates.

'In my school the desks are fixed and the school doesn't like the children running around the class'

The children don't necessarily have to move when working in groups or pairs. They can work with the students nearest their desk. To make groupings clear



different coloured markers or flags can be put on the desks. The teacher could also ask to do some activities in the playground or school hall.

Organising and introducing children to group and pair work

Initially children may have no idea what working in pairs and groups means. There are a number of techniques that can be used for forming pairs and groups which can engage children's interest and hopefully help them develop positive associations with working in this way.

Here are some ideas:

Work it together

Get children who are sitting next to each other to work as a pair. Give them simple instructions that they have to carry out together so that they get used to working as a pair. For example 'Face your partner. Say hello. Shake hands. Do a high five. Swap places. Draw a letter A on his/her back'.

Matching Pairs

Choose a lexical set, e.g. fruit, animals, classroom objects. Make two identical pictures of things from that group. E.g. two cats, two dogs, two rabbits etc. Distribute the pictures among the children. Each child then has to find his/her matching pair. They then sit down together as this is who they will work with. To find their partner they can use simple English sentences such as *Have you got a cat? No, I haven't/Yes, I have.*

Fruit Salad

Point to the children and give each one a different one of the following fruit: apple, pear, banana, orange. Tell the children that if you say their fruit they have to stand up. If you say fruit salad, the whole class has to stand up. Practise this as a game for a few minutes to be sure the children know which fruit they are. Then ask them to get together with other children of the same fruit. This is the group they will work with.

Magic Circles

Draw a number of circles on the floor or use plastic hoops or string. Play some music and get the children to walk around the class. When the music stops the children must get in a circle. However each circle must contain six children (change number according to how many children in the class). These are then the groups the children will work in.

Activities for group and pair work

Of course not all activities that we do in the English classroom are suitable for doing in pairs or groups. For example, a game of word bingo where each child has a separate board to complete and the teacher gives the instructions. There must be a reason for the children to cooperate and collaborate and each child must have a specific part to play.

The following activities work well:

Mutual dictations – the teacher gives out different pictures to each child in the class. The children then work in pairs and take it in turns to describe their picture whilst their partner draws what they say. They then compare the original to see how close they are.

Running dictations – the teacher displays around the classroom strips of paper each containing one sentence of a story. The children work in pairs. One child runs to a sentence, reads it, memorises it and returns to their partner, repeats the sentence to their partner who writes it down. When they have collected all the sentences they work together to put them in order to make a story.

Surveys – the children work in groups. Each member of the group has a different question about a related topic. For example the questions are all about likes and dislikes. Group 1 has questions about animals (*Do you like sharks? Do you like dogs?* Etc.), Group 2 has questions about food and Group 3 questions about games. Each child asks the whole class his/her question then reports the answers to his/her group. The group then make a bar chart on a poster to display their answers to the rest of the group.

Some wonderful English language classroom games, such as **Simon Says** and **Pelmanisam** (memory) are simply not feasible when it comes to large classes because children would spend far too much time waiting for their turn, doing nothing and becoming bored and restless. This is where group work and pair work become really useful. It might be an idea to start the activities off with the class as a whole thus giving a physical demonstration to everybody of how to do the activity. For example with **Simon Says** the teacher starts by giving all the instructions and has complete control. The teacher then relinquishes some control by asking a pupil to take over giving instructions. Finally the children move into groups and each group member in turn acts as the instructor. This gives the teacher a perfect opportunity to circulate and monitor everybody's English while the children run the game, get more practice and everybody is engaged, interested and involved in their learning.



Robin and the snowman

Anna Pica, Torrecuso (Benevento)

Download recording from
www.langedizioni.com/rob

There is no *ideal* method for using this listening comprehension exercise.

The teacher can ask the children to describe the pictures before or after the first listening. The teacher can ask the children to colour the pictures either before the first or before the second listening or before or after the children work in groups.

Some suggestions:

- Play a recording of the story or read it to the children.
- **First listening.** Tell the children to listen and to understand the sequence of the story.
- When they have listened to the story, ask them simple questions to check comprehension.
- **Second listening.** Ask the children to listen to the story again and to number the pictures in the correct sequence. Pause when a picture is mentioned to give the children time to choose and number a picture.
- Invent simple sentences to describe each picture based on the children's knowledge of English.
- Play or read the story again, until all the children have numbered the pictures.
- Ask the children to work in groups and compare the sequence of the pictures.
- Get the children to cut the pictures and clip or tie with a ribbon in sequence to create a storybook.
- Occasionally, ask the children to work in pairs and re-tell the story using the storybook.



Picture 1

Robin woke up with a hole in his stomach. 'I'm hungry', he thought, 'it's time for breakfast'.

He got up and cleaned himself ready for the day ahead. Then he jumped onto the edge of his nest and looked out. "What's happened", he called out. All he could see was white.

The whole world was white.

Picture 2

The trees were white, the bushes were white and the land was no longer green and full of beautiful yellow and red flowers. Everything was white.

"Where have all the colours gone?", he asked a beautiful flake of snow as it passed his nest. There was no answer.

Picture 3

He flew out up, up into the sky but when he looked down all he could see was white. There were no red or blue berries or tiny insects for him to eat for his breakfast. "Oh, no. I'm very, very hungry", he sang to the cold air. Then he began to cry desperately. "I'm going to die", he cried.

He heard a voice from below. "Hey you, little robin redbreast, don't be desperate! Please come down here!" Robin looked but he couldn't see anybody. "Little bird, come down here!" the voice continued. Robin looked again very carefully and through the falling snow he saw a snowman shaking a little broom. The snowman was in the middle of a big garden.

Picture 4

Quickly Robin flew down and landed near the snowman. He couldn't believe his eyes, a smiling snowman was waving at him.

"Dear robin redbreast, why are you crying?", asked the snowman.

"All the world is white and I can't find any food", Robin answered sadly.

"My little friend, this whiteness belongs to nature. For me it means life, I can't live without snow", the snowman said. "Oh, I understand, but I'm starving", replied Robin.

"I can give you some food", the snowman said.

"How can that be possible. You're just a snowman", said a very puzzled Robin.

"Look at me, very carefully" said the snowman.

Robin looked and he looked, but all he could see was a snowman with a hat, two eyes, a very long orange nose, a mouth, ten buttons on his belly and a broom.

"I can't see any food", said Robin.

Picture 5

"Everything you can see on me is food", the snowman replied and laughed aloud.

Robin thought the snowman was funny and a little crazy.

"Look again", said the snowman. "My hat is a cake and my eyes are two olives."

Picture 6

"Oh, and look at my long orange nose, it's a carrot!... And my mouth, it's a line of sweetcorn."

Picture 7

"Look at my buttons again. Yes, they're ten berries. And don't forget my broom. It hides many wheat seeds."

"Oh, I see. That's wonderful. There's food for a whole flock of birds!", Robin replied happily.

Picture 8

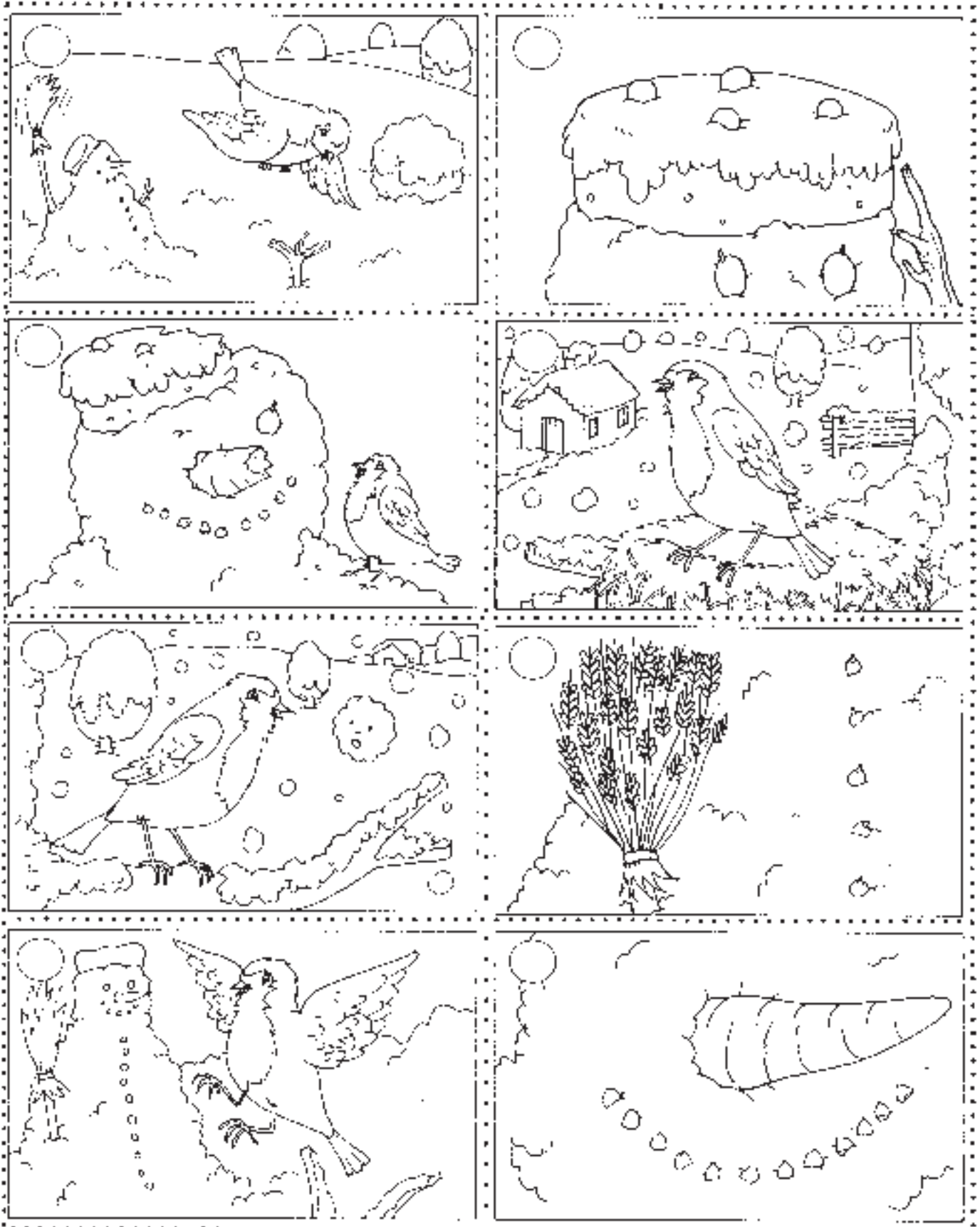
"You don't have to be hungry anymore", said the snowman.

"But what about you?", Robin asked.

"I'll be the happiest snowman in the world if I can help you", the snowman answered.

Robin was very touched by the kindness of the snowman and decided to live with him during the whole of that unforgettable winter.

Robin and the snowman



Christmas Stocking

WORKSHEET

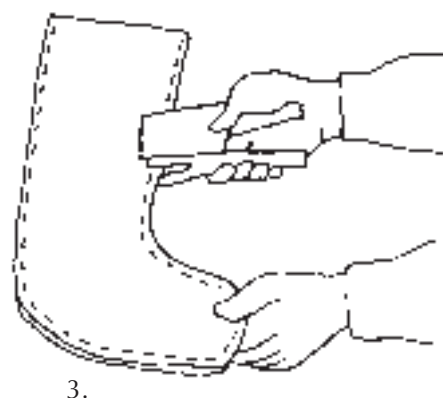
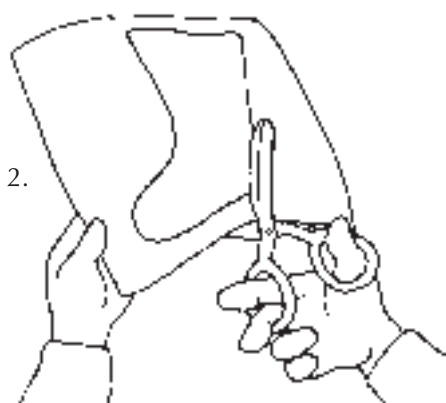


What you need:

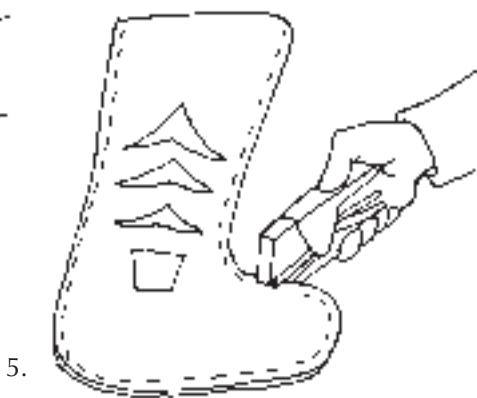
two pieces of felt in contrasting colours (green and red, for example)
pencil - scissors - stapler - cotton wool - glue

What you do:

1. With the pencil, draw two shapes of a stocking on each piece of cloth.
2. Cut the stocking shapes.
3. Staple together the two red stocking shapes to make a real stocking. Leave the top open.



4. On the green stocking – shaped cloth, draw and cut the shapes of a vase and of some Christmas tree branches.
5. Staple the green pieces of cloth on the red ones. Leave the top open.
6. Cut the cotton wool into small balls and glue them on the top of the tree, at the end of its branches and on the top of the stocking. Now you have a beautiful contrasting stocking!



(see photo on page 8)

LANG Primary – Class Project

PROJECTS FOR CLASS AND TEACHER

Of the many projects for the children and the teachers we have promoted over the past five years, some stand out as being particularly successful based on the number of classes and children who participated.

We have noticed a trend related to the theme of projects. When the theme can be linked to another curricular topic or when the theme is close to the children's own world, the more children participate and the more successful the project is.

The Class Project in this issue is a variation on one of such projects. Presented in issue number 15 in 2003, we received

many interesting drawings and texts describing a river from the children's own reality and experience.

Project materials sent to us are no longer stored in a cupboard but are posted to another Primary school that has participated in the same project. This exchange offers children the opportunity to appreciate and read materials prepared by other children of their own age from a different region of Italy. This has proved to be a very popular aspect of project work both with teachers and with the children.

CLASS Project – December 2006 – Issue 25

A very popular project which first appeared in **LANG Primary** issue **13** in **2003** and gives the children the opportunity to learn about a river in their town or region.

The theme for your children to organise as a class project (maximum one project for each class) is

Our favourite river

The class should prepare materials describing their favourite river. The river they choose can be a local river or a river in another country.

The children should illustrate the project with drawings and/or photographs of the route of the river from where it begins to where it ends and should also include notes (in English) on the various villages, towns and cities the river passes near or through.

The materials can be in poster form or on sheets of paper and can include drawings, photographs and written descriptions **in English**.

The teacher should not re-write or type out the children's work as we would like to see what the children can produce on their own.

The cross curricular nature of this project can also involve work during lessons other than English.

LANG Edizioni will send a special LANG cap to the children who contribute to this project. When a teacher takes a class or group of children out of the school it is very useful for recognition purposes that the children wear something to identify them at a glance. Caps are very useful for this. (see photo on back cover)

The materials submitted will be exchanged by post with those of another Primary school.

Send the materials to:

**LANG Primary, Class Project - Issue 25,
PBM, Corso Trapani 16,
10139 Torino**

The materials should arrive in our offices by 16.03.2007.

We may 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.

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Name of school _____

Address _____

City _____ CAP _____

E-mail _____ @ _____

Name of teacher _____

Number of children involved in the project _____

Signed by the teacher _____ Date _____



continued from page 2

- Many new articles such as teaching English through other subjects, crossing cultural divides and information on Australia, together with ideas for activities, discussion and language tasks for the children to work in groups or pairs, to name just a few.
- Many wonderful photocopiable worksheets for use in class, some from previous issues, some new.
- Three illustrated story-worksheets. The stories are about a hungry little robin red-breast and are the winners of our project for teachers presented in the March 2006 issue of LANG Primary. Teachers were asked to continue and finish a story about Robin. A panel of experts chose the three best stories which have been illustrated. Audio recordings of the stories can be found on www.langedizioni.com/rob. A special thanks to all those teachers who contributed stories and congratulations to the three winners.

The next edition of **LANG Primary** will be published in March 2007 and will arrive well before Easter.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

LANG Primary is only distributed through a free subscription service and during seminars and conventions for teachers of English.

LANG Primary is published **three** times a year, in March, October and December. Teachers can register subscriptions either on-line at www.langedizioni.com or by using the coupon below. Future issues of **LANG Primary** will be posted to home addresses.

If you wish to comment on the articles in **LANG Primary**, please do not hesitate to write to us.

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25

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No ☐

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Signed

Date

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