



Primary Times



A long way to go!

There is still a long way to go to the end of the school year and to the start of the restful summer break. Easter leads to a revision phase before the end-of-term tests and evaluations. The teacher will be expected to assign exercises and materials for the children to work on during the summer holidays so that they do not forget everything that they have learned in the L2 class. A long way to go, but there's light at the end of the school year tunnel!

Easter is a little early this year, so teachers are already thinking of the materials they want to use to link this festive season to the English language lesson and to use it as a motivator for English language learning. Some photocopiable worksheets are included in this issue of **Primary Times**, but remember that many more can be downloaded from our website at: www.lang-longman.it/servizi/festivities/easter

This issue of **Primary Times** includes various discussions on the reading skill as well as the writing skill (directly linked to reading). Encouraging the children to become active readers in both L1 and L2 is of enormous benefit towards the developing maturity and intelligence of a child. The act of reading is one of the few instances in life in which it is difficult to establish that a person is doing too much of it! The more the children read, or more correctly, the more the children want to read, the wider their knowledge of life and of the world will be. Further photocopiable worksheets and a very interesting article on approaches to the teaching of pronunciation in the Primary classroom complete this very stimulating issue.

Attached to this issue readers will find a fold-out poster. One side is dedicated to the presentation of our new Ministry course for the Primary school **COME ALONG STARS**, the other to a poster that can be put onto the classroom wall. The poster is dedicated to some of the sounds of the English language, illustrating words and sounds together with the phonetic symbols. This will be a very useful reference throughout the school year.

And a very **HAPPY EASTER TO EVERYONE!**



Index

Reading: a beautiful adventure!	p. 2
Grammar Navigator	p. 4
Worksheet – Easter	p. 5
Approaching Primary pronunciation	p. 6
Worksheet – Rhyming Snap	p. 8
Kids' Corner	p. 9
Making creative writing fun	p. 13
Worksheet – Pronunciation	p. 16
Revision ideas	p. 17
Let's Sing!	p. 19
Reading - the key to life-long learning	p. 20
Summer holiday work	p. 22
Class Project	p. 23



Reading: a beautiful adventure!

Giulia Abbiati

Reading can be one of the most fulfilling activities in life, if a person knows what they are reading! That is why reading activities need to be carefully planned and organised with children, above all in a foreign language. Reading is often considered boring by children, probably because it involves activating the brain much more than watching TV or playing a video game and they do not want to make the effort. Reading in a foreign language can be a real effort for children not only because they might not enjoy reading the text itself, but mostly because they really do not understand the text.

Discussions of the reading skill also include activities in which the children listen to the teacher or to a recording and follow a written text. The teacher should always bear in mind that:

***if the children do not understand, they will not enjoy and become bored.
If they get bored, they will not listen and if they do not listen they will not learn!***

There are many different ways to involve children, although ensuring that they understand is the basis of every activity. This is the reason why a reading activity should have a **pre-reading** phase, a **while-reading** phase and eventual **post-reading** activities.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

There are many different types of pre-reading activities for the teacher to choose from. The simplest way to start is, of course, by teaching the key lexis of the story. This can be done by writing the words on the blackboard and translating them into Italian. This is, as I said, the simplest way, but not necessarily the most efficient.

If the children know the story in L1, they will be familiar with the characters and story-line and this will facilitate the understanding of the story in L2. In this instance, the teacher could begin by asking a couple of pupils to summarise the story in L1. Once the teacher is sure that everybody remembers the key characters and the most important steps of the story, the key lexis can be written on the blackboard. Then the children themselves can try to translate the single words or expressions, such as *I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down* from *The Three Little Pigs*. If they already know the context, they will have fewer problems understanding the meaning of what they are reading/listening to. Understanding encourages satisfaction, which in turn motivates the children to want to complete the activity. Their attention will be focused and their self-esteem will rise, too.

Another possible activity, provided that the key lexis is not too difficult and that it does not involve long expressions, is to ask the children to illustrate the words creating flashcards for the words or the scenes of the story. The flashcards can then be taped onto the blackboard or wall and referred to when children forget vocabulary or when the teacher decides to retell part or all of the story.

If the children do not know the story in their mother tongue, the teacher may decide to tell it in Italian first and then to ask the children to do some of the activities described above. Alternatively, the teacher may decide to teach the keywords without revealing the plot of the story. In the latter case, retention of the language will be a little more difficult and comprehension activities are particularly useful to help memorisation.

WHILE-READING

Whether the teacher reads a story aloud or the children read on their own, the important factor is to keep the children's attention focused. If children already know the vocabulary they will not be tempted to interrupt the teacher



and ask for explanations, making following the plot much easier. However, even if the pupils know all the lexis, all the expressions and all the tongue-twisters that are often found in a traditional story, expecting the children to remain focused for a long time is extremely difficult. For this reason, comprehension activities during the reading phase can alter the pace of the lesson and help concentration.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that children should never feel as though they are under pressure. If you ask them to translate a word, to explain a situation or to try and figure out what happens next, always make sure that they are enjoying the challenge. In this way, reading will become a fun and involving activity for them.

When the children already know the plot of the story in L1, the teacher can ask them to predict future episodes of the story in English. They may need help from the teacher but they will find the activity very rewarding.

If the teacher has planned a reading activity to cover more than just a few lessons, a good exercise for children who know the plot could be to invent alternative scenes or endings. It is not important that readings need to be interrupted more than once in a lesson; the teacher should choose interesting episodes in the story and ask the children to use their imaginations and think of alternative endings for the episode. Ask the children to work in pairs or groups and to write down and illustrate their alternative endings. The teacher will have to teach many more new words but children will hardly be aware of how much they are learning as they will be enjoying the activity.

It is also very useful to stop frequently during a story to check that the main elements of the plot have been understood. Children who do not understand key phrases will be disappointed when they realise that a story has finished – Where were they when all the magic happened? Why is the princess kissing a frog? Where did the prince disappear to? It is often difficult to follow the story-line of a fairy tale if the children do not understand the moment when the bad witch casts a spell on the prince! Pre-reading activities are useful for an overview of a story, but always bear in mind that they are not sufficient – keep checking that the children are concentrating and that they comprehend the plot of the story.

AFTER READING

There are many activities that can be given to summarise what the children have understood and learned, although often the post-reading language tasks are the most boring for the children. For this reason these activities should be stimulating and rewarding.

One of the most popular post-reading activities is numbering illustrations from the story in the correct sequence. The children can be given photocopies of the illustrations of the story (or photocopies of short passages of the text) and then asked to put them into the correct order.

Another activity can be to ask the children to orally summarise an episode of the story. The first child starts by re-telling the beginning of the episode and speaks until the teacher indicates another to continue. In order to encourage the children to listen when they are not speaking, occasionally ask individual children to repeat a sentence or phrase.

Kids today play a lot with their favourite cartoon character cards so why not ask them to create their own cards? Choose the most important characters of the story and get the children to draw their portraits on a small piece of cardboard. On the back of their cards, ask them to write the features of the character, their powers (if they have any), their weapons and so on. Once all the cards are ready, children can work in pairs asking and answering questions about the characters in the story: they will have a lot of fun and they will want more and more stories!

Another way of focusing the children's attention on the story is to put on a short play (or sketches) based on the text of the story. With older children, the kids themselves can be involved in writing the script.

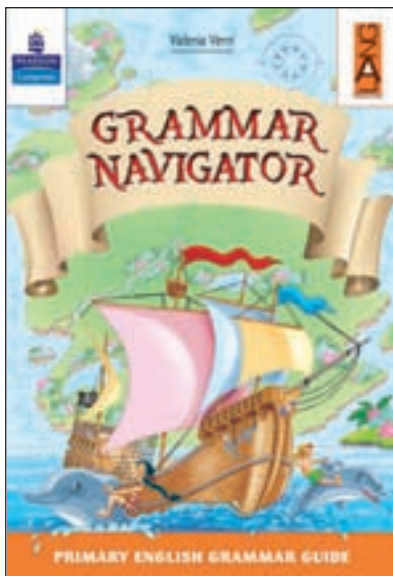
Probably, the best thing to do is to bear in mind that reading is a pleasure and therefore children should never be asked to work on boring activities. On the contrary, they should be encouraged to read and read and read, whatever they want to.

Good books and bad books do not exist, there are only books and every story is a new and fascinating adventure, so help your kids enjoy the magic of reading!



GRAMMAR NAVIGATOR

A voyage of discovery through the world of Primary English grammar



During the Primary school years, lessons in the English language will cover many aspects of the language. In the early years children will learn English in **chunks**, understanding and using utterances without being able to grammatically analyse the individual words. However, in later years children will **need**, **want** and **expect** the teacher to give them some explanation of the framework of the language answering questions about why certain words are in a certain sequence and why occasionally some verbs seem to change. They will be looking for rules to help them memorise the various aspects of the language they are learning. The innovative and unique

Grammar Navigator is a Primary English grammar guide that will help the children compartmentalise the language structures they learn as well as giving them the opportunity to



do extra practice exercises to consolidate their knowledge.

The language items included are those taught in the Primary school as well as an extension into the first year of the Secondary school syllabus. Special care has been taken to ensure that the lexical sets parallel the level of the language/grammar point being presented.

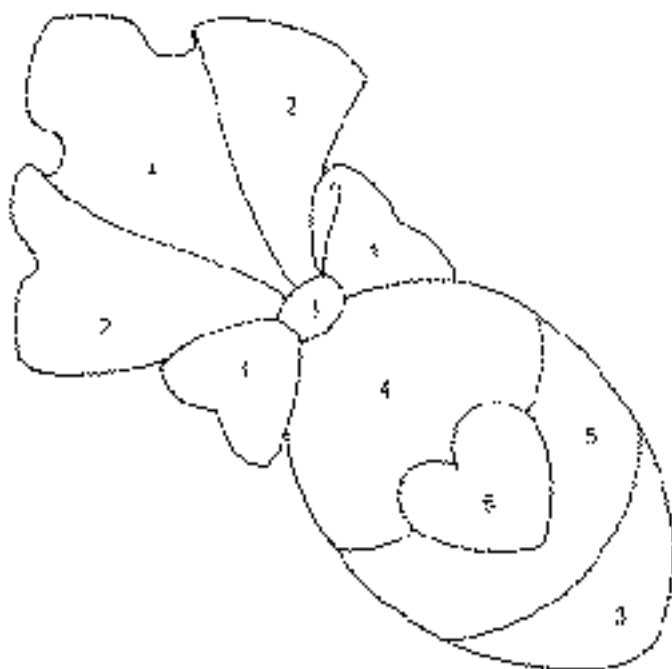


WORKSHEET

EASTER

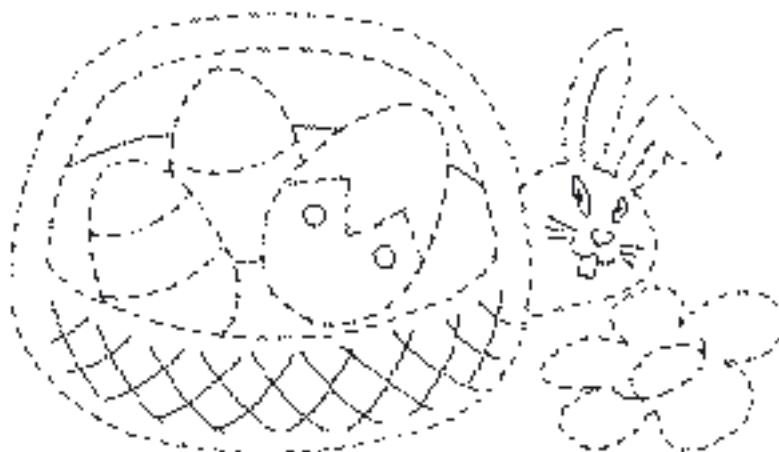
Year 1

1. COLOUR THE EASTER EGG.



- 1 = red
- 2 = yellow
- 3 = blue
- 4 = orange
- 5 = green
- 6 = purple

2. COMPLETE THE PICTURE.



WHO'S IN THE EASTER BASKET? JOIN THE DOTS.

THE EASTER BUNNY



Approaching Primary pronunciation practice

Joanna Carter

In the Primary English language classroom, specific pronunciation practice often takes a back seat in respect to the practice of the other major skills, or may even be neglected completely. There seem to be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, many course books and materials do not give guidelines to the teacher on how to address pronunciation practice in the classroom. Secondly, teachers may feel that isolated pronunciation exercises would be extremely boring and laborious for both the students and themselves. Added to this, English pronunciation is often considered to be difficult, complicated and full of unfathomable rules. Last of all, and possibly most importantly, non-native English teachers may feel uncomfortable working on pronunciation with their young learners because they worry that their own pronunciation is not perfect. With all these problems in the teaching of this language area, it is quite easy to see how teachers can give up and not do it. This is a great pity as it is an essential part of learning a language well.

This article will look at the why, what and how of English pronunciation and try to demystify and simplify it and make it more accessible to the Primary English teacher.

Why is it essential to teach pronunciation?

It is true that very young children are excellent mimics and find it much easier than older learners to reproduce sounds accurately. However, it is also true that if we give specific guidance from an early age students may not make so many mistakes later on in their learning career.

If bad or wrong pronunciation is allowed to become habit, it is extremely difficult to correct.

Without instruction, learners will automatically try to fit the sound of English into already existing sound categories that they have in their own language. In other words, *'they will hear the sounds of English in terms of the sound in their native language'* (Kenworthy). For example, without help they will not hear the difference between words such as *ship* and *sheep*, *chip* and *cheap* because this distinction between sounds does not exist in Italian. There will also be completely new sounds in English that do not exist in the learner's mother tongue. Without assistance, children will again resort to using the phonemes that exist in their own language. However, the sounds the learner produces might cause confusion. For example, a learner hears the word *three*, they try to produce it but the 'th' sound is new so they say *tree* instead, using the nearest equivalent sound in Italian. The problem is that these are two different words in English. Perhaps the most important reason for addressing pronunciation for Italian children is due to graphic – phonemic interference. This basically means they say words as they appear written on the page (as they would in Italian). If we do not help children from an early age and guide them to think about pronunciation as separate from the written word in English, this problem will persist throughout their learning career.

What is good pronunciation?

First of all, good pronunciation is by no means perfect pronunciation or native speaker pronunciation. The ultimate aim of a teacher of English should be that the student will be able to communicate clearly, easily and successfully in the target language. This is not the same as sounding identical to a mother tongue speaker.

Students should obtain what is known as *comfortable intelligibility*.

This basically means that when speaking in English or another L2, the student would not put unnecessary strain on the native listener or non-native learner. In other words a person listens comfortably. It follows that this should be the objective of the teacher's own pronunciation.

Other aspects of good pronunciation are, as well as making the right sounds (or as near as possible the right sounds), putting the right stress or accent on words and in sentences, using appropriate intonation and getting the rhythm right. This last aspect is especially important in English, as it is a very rhythmic language. In fact, it is sometimes called a *stress-timed language* whereas Italian is a *syllable-timed language*. This basically means that when English people speak they emphasise only the important words in a sentence, so parts of words or some syllables are heard more than others. In Italian all syllables have more or less the same importance so they are generally all heard equally. This is why many Italian people say that English people *eat their words* and find them difficult to understand.



How should pronunciation be taught?

Pronunciation is not a separate skill but goes hand in hand with the other skills of speaking, listening and reading. Therefore, there would be little sense in concentrating an entire lesson on pronunciation alone or in doing isolated pronunciation drills. This would also be extremely boring! Pronunciation should be an integrated part of the lesson and should be approached only when appropriate and a little at a time. However, it should be integrated daily into classroom procedures because only constant attention will have a lasting effect on the learners. When planning lessons and, for example, introducing new vocabulary or a new structure, teachers should try to think ahead and anticipate any pronunciation problems that might occur. They should then try to incorporate short, frequent and fun activities that address the problem.

Here are some ideas to get started with:

Practicing new sounds

The 'h' sound in English can be problematic as it does not exist in Italian. When learners have mastered the production of this sound they tend to over use it and pronounce words that begin with vowels with 'h'. To sensitise learners to this problem, the teacher could invent a very simple story that has a high frequency of words beginning with 'h' (such as *horse, happy, ham, hungry, hot, holiday, hill* etc.) and words beginning with vowels (such as *eat, up, over, orange, apple* etc.).

The teacher then tells the story to the class and asks them to put their hand up only when they hear a word beginning with 'h'.

Students can then learn the story and have competitions on who can make the fewest pronunciation mistakes or invent their own stories to repeat to the class. A variation on this theme is to invent short tongue-twisters for the students to learn containing words with the new phoneme. This one comes from **Come Along Stars**, the new Primary course from **LANG-Longman**, to practise the 'th' sound: *The three thin cats are thirsty!*

To practice some of the English vowel sounds, students can play Pronunciation Snap. There is an example of this on the Pronunciation Worksheet - Rhyming Snap on page 8. This is a card game where learners identify monosyllabic pairs of words that rhyme.

Graphic-phonemic problems

One of the simplest ways of overcoming this problem is to introduce new vocabulary with pictures only and repeating them orally. When pronunciation is established, introduce the written word but always actually ask the students if it is written in the same way it is said. Activities using rhyming words are also useful as they may be pronounced with the same sound but written completely differently, for example – *red, head, said*. The Colour Pronunciation worksheet on page 16 practises this aspect. Before doing the worksheet, the teacher should make sure students are confident in pronouncing the colours. Then one colour, for example *green*, can be written on the board and the teacher can choose other words and ask the class if they sound the same as *green* or not, for example *bean* and *seat* do, but *ten* and *heat* do not.

Practicing Intonation

The teacher can take a common and known sentence, such as *It's my birthday today!* and write it on the board. Students can then be sensitised to the fact that this sentence can change meaning slightly depending on how it is said. The teacher can encourage students to say the sentence in a happy, sad, excited or grumpy way to get them thinking about how it is our voice (going up or down, for example) that can change intonation and express our feelings. The teacher can then emphasise different words in the sentence to show how one sentence can change meaning slightly depending on how you say it. For example *It's MY birthday today!* The teacher can then ask the students simple questions and they decide which intonation pattern would give the correct answer. For example *Is it your mother's birthday today? No, it's MY birthday today! Is it your birthday tomorrow? No, it's my birthday TODAY! Is it a holiday today? No, it's my BIRTHday today!*

Sources

Joanne Kenworthy, Teaching English Pronunciation, Longman 1987
Adrian Underhill, Sound Foundations, Macmillan 1998
Adrian Tennant, Pronunciation Matters, articles, onestopenglish.com

Primary Times
keeping the teacher informed



WORKSHEET

Pronunciation - Rhyming Snap

Photocopy and give a copy to each child. Ask the children to cut the cards into squares (possibly colouring them first). Divide the class into pairs. Get the children to mix the cards and place them face down.

To play the game

In turn the children turn over one card at a time to make a face-up pile for each player. When two cards on the face-up piles have the same sound (e.g. chair- pear) the players must race to say 'SNAP!' first. Whoever says 'SNAP!' first takes both piles of face-up cards and puts them under their face-down pile. Play continues until one player wins all the cards. That player wins the game.

STAR 	CAR 	HEAD 	BED 
SHEEP 	SLEEP 	FOX 	BOX 
CLOCK 	SOCK 	PLANE 	TRAIN 
CHAIR 	PEAR 	BOAT 	NOTE 
SHOE 	GLUE 	SKY 	TIE 
CROWN 	CLOWN 	HAT 	BAT 
TEN 	PEN 	SNOW 	BOW 



Kids' Corner

Giulia Abbiati

From the first issue of Primary Times we have included Kids' Corner, a four-page section that, we hope, has been a valid help for the teachers of very young children, both in kindergarten and in the first year of Primary school. Not all the activities we describe have a direct link to the second language linguistic objectives in the Primary school. However, when listening to instructions in English and doing activities in pairs or small groups, children learn many different skills, although activities with a specific linguistic objective can be extremely useful for teachers. Games and crafts are a perfect way of keeping young minds focused on language items, especially at the end of a school day, when children find it difficult to concentrate as they are tired and would like to be anywhere else, playing with their friends or doing other activities. In this issue of Kids' Corner, we have introduced

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



Language Tips on specific language items generated by the various activities, although not all of the activities can be linked to specific revision or teaching points; often craft activities are just that, manipulative activities. When **Language Tips** are included, the teacher can often adapt them to the various class levels, as some of these activities can be used in meaningful ways with older children, too.

Have fun, and have a great Easter!

Activity 1: Alphabet flashcards

Language tip: flashcards can be used to revise the alphabet, vocabulary and/or specific lexical sets.

Vocabulary and lexical sets can be either supplied by the teacher or elicited from the class.

Flashcards can also be used to play memory games (you just need to photocopy them).

What you need:

- A4 sheets of paper cut in half
- pencil
- felt-tip pens or coloured pencils

What you do

1. Choose the lexical sets you want to use, choose the words (one for each letter of the alphabet) and write them on the blackboard. Read them aloud and ask the children to repeat them. Children will not need to copy the words on the flashcards, but they will have to understand and





memorise their meaning in order to illustrate them and to play with the flashcards later.

Depending on the level of the class, the children can also be asked to think of a word beginning with each letter of the alphabet. This is also a very useful exercise to revise spelling.

2. Give each child a piece of paper. Should there be fewer children than words, this activity can be spread over more than one lesson and children can be asked to illustrate more than one word.
3. Ask the children to say their letter and the word that they are going to illustrate before they start drawing. Ask them to translate the words, too. A valid exercise is to ask a second child to translate the word, and then to ask a third child if the translation is correct.
4. Finally, ask the children to draw and colour the words.
5. Use the flashcards for revision exercises, games and whatever your imagination suggests!

Activity 2: Cotton wool Easter lamb

Language tip: this activity can be used to revise the names of parts of the body (face, eyes, mouth, ears). Children tend to memorise this lexical set easily.

What you do

1. Cut out an oval from the black cardboard to make the face of the lamb.
2. Cut out two small, thin ovals from the black cardboard to make the ears.
3. Glue the handful of cotton wool onto the large plastic button in order to make it stand up on your desk.
4. Glue the wiggle eyes onto the piece of oval cardboard that will be the face of the lamb.
5. Cut a short piece of white string and glue it onto the face of the lamb to make the mouth.
6. Now glue the face onto the cotton wool.
7. Glue the ears on top of the cotton wool, one for each side of the head.
8. Tie a knot in the red wool string and glue it under the face of the lamb.

What you need:

- a handful of cotton wool for each child
- 1 large plastic button
- 2 small wiggle eyes
- black cardboard
- white string
- glue
- scissors
- a piece of red wool string



Activity 3: Easter Bingo game

Language tip: this useful game helps teach and revise language sets linked to Easter. Children will become familiar with Easter words without even noticing. You can use Bingo to teach and revise almost anything: colours, numbers, animals, parts of the body, rooms, furniture, food etc. This game can be played anytime that revision is needed and it is a great way to get children to relax, play... and learn!



Some words related to Easter: rabbit, egg, Easter egg, lamb, chocolate, flowers, Easter Bunny, dove, chick, basket...

What you do

1. Ask the children to draw a chart with 6 boxes onto the sheet of paper.
2. Write a list of words on the blackboard. Children needn't write the words, unless they are skilled enough to do it. Read the words and ask the children to repeat them until they have memorised the correct pronunciation.
3. Ask the children to choose and illustrate six words from the blackboard, one for each box in their charts. If the children do not remember, or find it hard to memorise the meaning of the words, you can translate them or illustrate them on the blackboard.
4. Once all the children are ready with their Bingo cards, start calling out the words. Tell the children that, if they have illustrated the word that is called, they have to cross out the drawing with the pencil.
5. The first to finish all the words in his chart should stand up and say *Bingo*! Finally, the child must pronounce all the words correctly in order to win.

What you need:

- 1 piece of paper for each child
- pencil
- felt-tip pens



Activity 4: Spoon Easter Bunny fridge magnet

What you need:

- 2 flat wooden spoons
- pink paint
- a brush
- 1 white pipe cleaner
- scissors
- black and white felt-tip pens
- a small piece of pink wool string
- glue
- a small magnet



What you do

1. Paint the wooden spoons with the pink paint. Let the paint dry.
2. Glue the spoons on top of each other in order to make them look like the rabbit's two ears (see drawing).
3. Cut the white pipe cleaner in half. Fold each half to make a loop and glue them onto the rabbit's ears (the upper part of the wooden spoons).
4. Fold the pink wool string in three, tie a knot in the middle and cut the edges. Now you have the whiskers. Glue them onto the lower part of the bunny.
5. Use the black and the white felt-tip pens to draw the eyes and the mouth of the bunny.
6. Glue the small magnet on the back of the rabbit: your fridge magnet is ready! Wouldn't it be a perfect surprise for an Easter egg?



Activity 5: Easter/Spring domino

Language tip: Domino is a game that can be played without speaking, but you can ask the children to say the words that are illustrated on the dominos before putting them on the table. In this way children are not asked to read but they have the chance to revise pronunciation and to consolidate memorisation.

Suggested words: Easter egg, Easter Bunny, lamb, chocolate, dove, flower, sun, chick...

What you need:

- white paper
- pencil
- coloured pencils
- scissors



What you do

1. Ask the children to draw and colour the dominos onto their sheets of paper: each domino will have two different drawings.
2. Write on the blackboard the words the children will be asked to use. They needn't write the words. Read the words aloud and have the children repeat them.
3. Divide the class into pairs and ask the children, in turn, to place their dominos onto a desk. The first child places a domino and pronounces the words illustrated on both of the drawings. The other child searches his/her set of dominos and looks for a domino with one of the pictures illustrated on the previous domino played.
4. The child places the tops of these two dominos together and pronounces the names of the two pictures at either end of the line of dominos.
5. The other child searches his/her set of dominos and looks for a domino with one of the pictures illustrated at either end of the line and so on until one of the children uses all his/her dominos and is the winner.

Activity 6: Lamb handprint craft

What you need:

- black cardboard
- pencil
- scissors
- cotton wool
- glue
- white pencil

What you do

1. Ask the children to trace their left hand onto the black cardboard.
2. Cut out the shape of the hand.
3. Glue the cotton wool onto the palm of the hand. Be careful not to glue it onto the fingers as they will be the legs and the face of the sheep.
4. With the white pencil, draw the eyes and mouth of the sheep.



Making creative writing fun

Emelie Loeb

Perhaps one of the most difficult tasks that we as teachers must impose on our students is writing. This is not a naturally acquired ability, but something that all students learn in their very first years of school. Not only is it difficult to encourage children to write in their L1, English teachers are then faced with the dreary notion of getting their students to write in their second, or possibly even third or fourth language.

Is the ability to write all that important for children in Italian Primary schools? Some might argue that primary-aged children are not focusing on grammar, and therefore should not even attempt to write extensively in English. However, in order to progress in this task, it is important to begin as early as possible.

Although primary-aged children are not ready to write multiple page complex essays, they are more than ready to begin creative writing activities that hopefully will give them a new love and appreciation for writing, especially when fun subjects are chosen like Easter or other holidays.

EASTER STORYBOARDS AND FLOW CHARTS

This can be used as either a class activity or as an individual activity. First of all, a subject is chosen, in this case Easter. The children write this subject in the middle of their page. Ask the children questions about Easter and tell them to write one or two-word answers around the page. Get them to draw a line out from the central idea to the answer of each question so that they build a simple flow chart.

Some suggested questions:

- When is Easter?
- What do you eat?
- What colours do you think of?
- Who are you with?
- What do you like to do at Easter?
- What animals are related to Easter?

The answers inserted into the flow chart can be used to create a story. Ask the children to create a storyboard based on the flow chart and then tell their Easter stories to the rest of the class.

THE SOUNDS OF SPRING

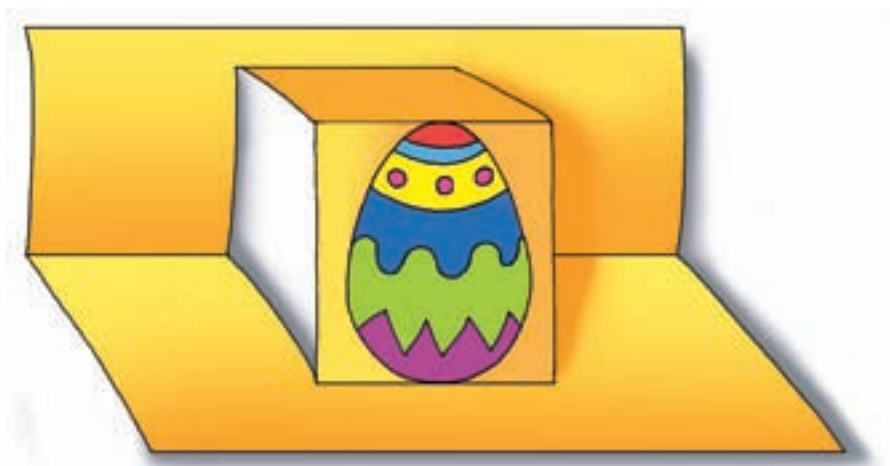
Invite the children to think about and possibly note down the sounds they can hear that are associated with spring - birds, the wind in the trees, perhaps some rain, children playing, people laughing. Get them to work in small groups and invent a story focusing on the sounds. Then play a CD of sounds associated with spring and have the children read their stories while the CD is playing.

EASTER POP-UP CARDS

One simple way to get your students to write is to ask them to make cards for their parents and friends for the upcoming holidays. Primary-aged students love looking at pop-up books, so here is a simple idea for a pop-up card to make. Fold a piece of paper in half and then cut two slits about



4 centimetres apart. Push in the square of paper that you just cut to form a pop-up. The children can then draw an egg, bunny or anything they desire onto the pop-up part of the card. Encourage the children to write messages to their friends or family.



COMIC STRIPS

Comic books and comic strips have been helping generate children's interest in reading for years. Now you can use them to help them write as well. There are many activities that you can create using comic strips as a base. One simple idea is to take a well-known comic strip and white out the text so that the children have to use the pictures to invent a story. You can even use one of the stories or comic strips in your textbook. Another idea is to make your own string of pictures and have the children fill in the text bubbles and storyline. As a final activity, you can have the children create their own comic strip. They can perhaps continue this strip throughout the year so that when the school year is over, they will have finished their very own comic book.

FILL IN THE BLANKS – A DIFFERENT EASTER

Often children have a lot of difficulty formulating sentences on their own. One solution is to give the children the framework of a text and ask them to fill in the missing words. When the children are told that they can use any words they remember, sometimes hilarious stories can be created. For example, this story could be 'Happy Easter'.

My favourite holiday is _____ Easter because I _____ and _____ with my _____ family. I've got _____ brothers and _____ sisters. They are very _____. We eat _____ and _____ and look for _____ eggs.

The children have to choose the type of word to insert, numbers, nouns, adjectives, verbs etc. to fill in the blanks. You might end up with a very yellow family with 100 brothers and sisters celebrating a fat Easter!

FILL IN THE REST

Have the children choose a setting, the characters and the problem at hand. Then give them the first and the last sentence of a possible story. They must fill in the rest of the story and then illustrate their ideas.



DIARY

Encourage the children to keep a diary without using any Italian. If they cannot remember a word, have them draw a picture or add a magazine clipping. The most important part of this diary is communication, not the correct use of grammar.

RESPONSE

Have your children write responses after special events involving English. If an English speaking theatre troupe comes to your school, have the children write a list of new words they learned and then write a short paragraph. If a mother-tongue English speaker visits your classroom, have the children prepare a list of simple questions that they can then turn into a basic article.

POETRY

Poetry gives the impression of being an unachievable goal for younger students, but simple forms such as haikus, which originated in Japan, are perfect as they are short and do not have to rhyme.

The basic structure of a haiku in English includes:

- up to 17 syllables divided into 3 lines
- the second line includes more syllables than line 1 and 3
- a season word is included
- two images are compared.

First show the children a few examples and then explain the subject. You can easily insert this in your lesson plan by writing haikus based on the subject you are currently studying (although traditionally haikus deal with nature). After you have chosen a subject, brainstorm some basic language on the board with the children. When you have a substantial word bank you can then help the children assemble phrases or lists that will work well for a haiku.

An example of an Easter haiku:

*Flowers, bunnies, spring,
chocolate eggs and green grass
Easter is here.*

E-mail address

Did you become a subscriber to Primary Times before you got an email address?
Have you changed your email address recently?
If yes, please send your current email address to emanuela.demarchi@pearson.it so that we can keep you up-to-date with the EFL world in Italy.



WORKSHEET

COLOUR PRONUNCIATION

Colour the boxes the same colour as the word next to them.

☐

yellow

☐

blue

☐

white

☐

brown

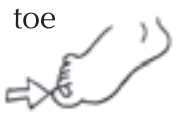









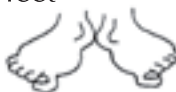












☐

red

☐

green

Look at the pictures and say the word. Find a sound in each word that matches the underlined sound in the colour words above. E.g. toe – yellow. Colour the box next to the picture and word. There are 4 words for each colour.

toe 		pie 		coat 	
eye 		moon 		two 	
head 		fly 		cow 	
house 		feet 		dress 	
three 		bed 		key 	
nine 		leaf 		egg 	
spoon 		clown 		shoe 	
rose 		goat 		mouth 	



Revision ideas

Sarah Gudgeon

As we start to approach the end of the school year, it is important to ensure that all grammar and vocabulary introduced so far is well consolidated. A reinforced base will give children a stronger foundation on which to build and add new layers to as they move on to the next level.

Language revision should, of course, be done periodically throughout the year and not just left to the last minute, and it is for this reason that most courses provide revision sections or mini-tests at regular intervals during the progression of the course materials. By getting the children to complete these sections, the teacher will be able to identify any potential problem areas and then take measures to resolve them.

It is a good idea to set aside a few minutes at the end of every lesson for a quick revision session. That could mean doing a grammar review in class, giving some exercises for homework or offering the children the opportunity to use the language again, first in a controlled speaking activity and then in a freer one as they gain confidence.

Below are some ideas for practising language with the focus on specific skills.

Revision 1 is a set of roleplay cards for speaking practice and can be used with lots of different lexical sets and various structures.

Speaking Skills - Roleplay Cards

Do you like ...?
Yes, I do. / No, I don't.
Yes, I love ...
It's/They're OK.



Do you like ...?



Do you like ...?










Revision 2 shows different ways of practising a grammar point, in this case the present simple, and can be adapted for a different language. In Card 1 the present simple is used and the children have to write in the missing vocabulary; in Card 2 they have to actively use the grammar from Card 1 by writing about themselves; and in Card 3 they have to change the verbs to the third person. Each child has to swap their Card 2 with a classmate and then write about that person.

Writing Skills - Story Cards

Card 1

My name is Lisa. I am  . I live in a  with my  . I have got 3  and 2  .

Card 2

His/Her name is ...


Card 3

My name is ...

Revision 3 and **Revision 4** both use a story to practise a lexical set and some grammar, and focus on **reading and listening skills** respectively. Any story can be used but this one, Hansel and Gretel, focuses on food lexis plus adjectives and is taken from English Roundabout Teacher's Guide 4/5, pages 92 & 93. For reading, divide the class into 3 groups and give each group 2 random parts of the text. Each group has to read out their story and invent miming actions. When each group has performed their part they must then all decide on the correct order of the story. You can also ask some comprehension check questions. For listening, give all the students a copy of the story pictures and ask them to put them in the right order as they listen. You could then read the story again and pause so that children can shout out the next word such as an adjective. Comprehension check questions can also be asked at the end of the activity.

Action Stories

HANSEL AND GRETEL



Hansel and Gretel

Picture 1
Narrator: This is the story of a gentleman who has got two children, a boy and a girl.
Hansel: Hello! My mother's name is Lisa. I live in a small village in the forest.
Gretel: Hello! I live in a small village in the forest.
Narrator: One day the gentleman and his wife were very poor.
Gretel: Why were they poor?
Narrator: Because they had no money.
Hansel: I'll take the children into the forest and leave them there.
Gretel: Why? What's the point?
Hansel: I'm very sad. I have a plan. Look! I've got some pictures in my pocket.
Gretel: What's the plan?
Hansel: I'll show you.
Gretel: I'm not sure.
Hansel: Don't worry. Look at the pictures. Look! I've got some pictures in my pocket.
Gretel: What's the plan?
Hansel: I'll show you.
Gretel: I'm not sure.
Hansel: Don't worry. Look at the pictures. Look! I've got some pictures in my pocket.

Picture 2
Narrator: The following morning, Hansel and Gretel went to the forest. As Hansel walks he drops pieces of bread on the path, one by one. Father and mother leave the little children alone in the forest.
Hansel: Where's father?
Gretel: Where's mother?
Hansel: I'm not sure.
Gretel: I'm not sure.
Hansel: Don't worry. Look at the pictures. Look! I've got some pictures in my pocket.

Picture 3
Narrator: The following morning, Hansel and Gretel went to the forest. As Hansel walks he drops pieces of bread on the path, one by one. Father and mother leave the little children alone in the forest.
Hansel: Where's father?
Gretel: Where's mother?
Hansel: I'm not sure.
Gretel: I'm not sure.
Hansel: Don't worry. Look at the pictures. Look! I've got some pictures in my pocket.

Picture 4
Narrator: Finally the old lady tells Gretel to light the oven.
Gretel: Light the oven? What's the point?
Narrator: The old lady tells Gretel to light the oven.
Gretel: Light the oven? What's the point?
Narrator: The old lady tells Gretel to light the oven.
Gretel: Light the oven? What's the point?
Narrator: The old lady tells Gretel to light the oven.

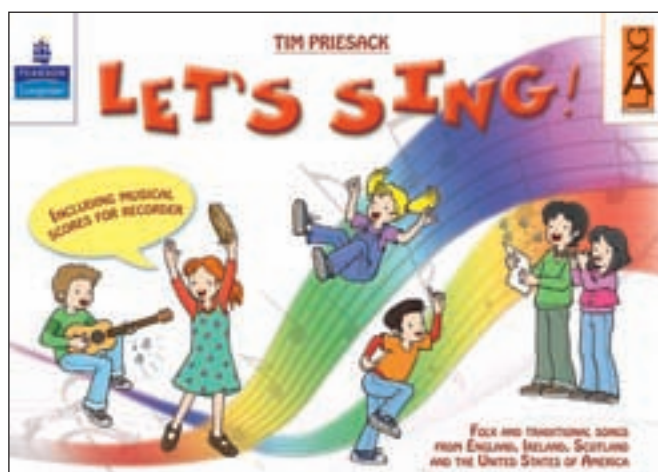


LET'S SING!

A new collection of folk and traditional songs from England, Ireland, Scotland and the United States of America

Using songs in language teaching is like opening a window to the world. Teachers can often use the lyrics of the songs to extend the children's knowledge of history and/or geography as well as encouraging discussion of other cultures.

Many songs lend themselves to being linked to physical movement, whether static body moves while the children sit behind their desks or formation dancing, giving the children the opportunity to move away from their desks. We know that linking words to physical movement helps memorisation of language and we also know that children enjoy these activities!



In **LET'S SING!**, a new collection of folk and traditional songs from England, Ireland, Scotland and the United States of America, the songs are not graded; some are more suitable for children at early levels and others for children in later years. The lyrics of most of the songs have been simplified to make them comprehensible for early learners but often the teacher will have to teach *chunks of language* without giving grammatical explanations. Children generally really like singing so that once a song has been learned, which in the Primary school means that the children remember the tune and understand the concept of the words when they read and sing them, get the children to sing the song again once a month so that they can repeat the enjoyable experience.

Last, but most certainly not least, using songs gives the children the opportunity to sing, to musically shout the language they are learning and to break out of the restraints of having to repeat sentences in quiet tones which do not disturb the general peace of the classroom. The different ways of organising the singing are only limited by the teacher's imagination and can include - all the children singing at the same time to pairs of children singing only certain lines of the lyrics (especially useful if the words are complicated or the tempo very fast).





Reading - the key to life-long learning

Matilde Gagliano

Children can improve their English through reading. Reading stories also favours their literacy development. When children read a text they have to imagine a scene in their minds and try to understand what the writer is saying, what information the writer is trying to pass on to the reader. This is and always will be a valid and irreplaceable method to stimulate their imaginations, as often today's children grow up in a digital, image-based society where videos (films, television) prevail over words (books, magazines) and sadly, kids tend to read less and less. Another big advantage of reading is the fact that it meets the needs of all the various learning styles. Some children are quicker, some need more time; as opposed to speaking and listening activities, when reading the children can proceed as fast or as slow as they like. They can take an hour reading a single page or read the whole book in thirty minutes. Children read at their own speed, time does not matter as they are in total control. If we manage to persuade our students to read widely and regularly they will develop general reading skills, become fluent in reading, be exposed to new language patterns and expand their vocabulary. They will learn how words and expressions are used in different contexts and they will be able to remember and use the words more easily. Extensive reading requires children to read materials that are at their level of understanding. Provided that the level of difficulty of a text is appropriate for them, and that the words they already know are more numerous than words they have not met before, the children can learn the new vocabulary in context. They can guess the meaning from the context and from the pictures. At Primary stage the kids usually learn isolated words and chunks of language. Here they have the opportunity to see how words are used naturally in a communicative message. The emphasis is on general comprehension (e.g. understanding a story as a whole instead of individual sentences) and the fun and enjoyment of reading in a second language.

READING AND CLIL

Apart from being a very enjoyable activity, the ability to read is essential in order to learn all the other curricular subjects taught in school.

Children almost invariably enjoy reading stories and fairy tales. As they grow up they will also become interested in learning more about the various topics they come into contact with. For example, they might want to know more about volcanoes or be fascinated by medieval knights. Here we can exploit their interests providing them with simple illustrated texts concerning topics of their choice. There is a lot of material on the Internet and a number of books have been published for this purpose.

A SCHOOL LIBRARY

Some well equipped schools with their own libraries also include copies of graded readers in English. If this is not the case with your school, you should try your luck with the head teacher or whoever is responsible for financing projects, and ask them to buy an adequate number of books plus CDs of various levels on a wide range of topics. On the market today there are graded readers published by most of the major publishers that are perfect for extensive reading. Graded readers are books which are stories, non-fiction, biographies, etc. simplified linguistically for learners of the English language. They are graded into different levels.

Once you – hopefully! – succeed in doing this, you might want to prepare a register and list all the English books in the library (author, title, publisher) and where you can keep a record of name, surname, class of the child you give the book to and the date of borrowing it. It is important to keep track of who has borrowed each book or you risk ending up with empty bookshelves. Then number, stamp and label each book and explain to your students that the books belong to the school and that they can borrow them, read them at home and then return them to the teacher and get a new title.

This is a terrific experience for the kids and, believe it or not, with a little encouragement they can get very enthusiastic about reading. This is the age when we must start the process of encouraging our young learners to become book-readers and, especially, book-lovers. Most kids do not read books in L1 without encouragement from a teacher, let alone books in English!

Reading as a fun skill prepares them for life. We need to avoid ending up with a generation of adolescents who are brilliant at using computers, DVDs and mobile phones, but whose only spontaneous reading activities consist of reading the title of the YouTube video they want to download or short message texts on their mobile phones and who find reading a boring, time-consuming, old fashioned activity.

Obviously the level of difficulty of a text has to be just right or our young readers will get discouraged. It is also important that we use audio books, books accompanied by audio CDs, to give the children the possibility of reading and listening to the text as correct pronunciation helps understanding. Without a recording, they will probably spend a lot of extra time and effort trying to decipher complex spellings of words they would aurally recognise instantly, thus reducing the amount of pleasure that they should be getting from their reading.

Reading can either be given as part of the programmed school work or suggested as a totally free activity to be done outside



the classroom. In the latter case try and get the parents' collaboration. They can help both in monitoring the student's progression in reading by setting aside a specific time for the child to read, for example inviting their children to read/listen to the stories before going to bed. If we want to make the activity a little more structured we could prepare a worksheet to be completed by the students with a set space where they can write the title/author/publisher of the book, the list of main characters in the story, a list of possible themes and genres to be chosen (adventure, magic, traditional fairy tale, detective story, love story, spy story, thriller, science fiction story, etc.), sentences to be completed (such as 'The story is about _____', 'The events take place in _____' 'I like/don't like this story'), and so on.

Set a reasonable amount of time (one or two weeks) for the children to read a book and return it to the school. After some introductory work in class and reading practice with intensive reading with the teacher's help, we can encourage our students to try extensive reading on their own. It gives them great satisfaction to be able to tackle a whole book in English!

SUMMER WORK

Another option is to encourage the children to read without supervision over the summer period. Very useful for this purpose are **LANG-Longman's Activity Storybooks** – stories the children can listen to and read, together with language activities. Parents often approach the teacher at the end of the school year and ask what language work can be done by their children during the summer break. We could suggest that together with the summer book, they get one or more readers to be read over the long summer holidays.

Reading can be done from years 1 to 5. Naturally, we have to choose the right material for each age group. For example, the type of book suitable for first year children who cannot read well yet, would be made up mainly of pictures which they look at while they are listening to the story. A good way to start would probably be with traditional fairy tales the children already know in their mother tongue and can thus follow more easily in L2. An illustrated glossary at the end of the book will help them understand the vocabulary.

Using, for example, *Little Red Riding Hood*. When the children finish listening to the story, they can do simple language activities to reinforce the acquisition of a few keywords they have listened to in the story such as:



EYES



TEETH



EARS



WOLF



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD



GRANNY

Puss in Boots is another traditional fairy tale, although not widely read in Italy. The kids first read the short sentences printed near the illustrations and follow the basic story. When they feel confident enough they can listen to the whole text following the illustrations. The final reading/listening task is to listen to the text and follow the words printed in the final pages of the book. The various language exercises can be completed gradually as the child works through the story. The more the children read at their own ability level, the more they will enjoy reading. They will become more confident and motivated readers and as we all know, confidence and motivation are two very important factors in successful language learning.

References:

- 'Little Red Riding Hood', Virginia Goldman, Activity Storybook 1, LANG-Longman 2010
- 'Puss in Boots', Virginia Goldman, Activity Storybook 4, LANG-Longman 2010





Summer holiday work

The long summer break from Primary school does nothing to help the memorisation of a second language.

The student's L1 is in constant use, expanding and getting richer through practice while the poor L2 is quietly forgotten due to total lack of use.

For this reason most teachers recommend that during the summer holidays the children have some

contact with the second language, in our case

English, using specially developed
Summer Holiday Practice Books

to read, listen to and write the English language through games, puzzles and stimulating language exercises. Each level is designed to revise the language taught in a specific year and include

glossaries should the children forget individual words. At the beginning of the new school year there will be a noticeable

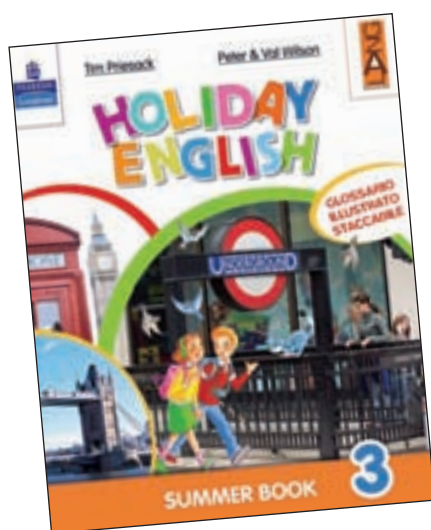
difference between the

memorisation of language between children who

regularly used a summer book and those who

tried to complete all the exercises in the

last few days of the holiday break.





**PROJECTS FOR
CLASS AND TEACHER**

Class project

20 years in the future

The project for this issue is particularly appropriate for classes in the middle years of the Primary school although children in the final years will also find it stimulating. The project gives the teacher the opportunity to introduce and/or consolidate the expressions of physical description, clothing

and colour. Teachers can use this project to introduce expressions of height and weight not always included in Primary courses. Motivation is generated by the fact that the children will be speculating about people they know, both family members and other children in their class.

Class project – March 2010 – Issue 35 20 years in the future

All the children should be given four sheets of A4 paper each. Each child must choose four people, for example a school friend, the teacher and two family members. Get the children to write their names on top of each sheet. Ask the children to try and imagine what each person will look like in 20 years time.

How tall will they be? - What will they look like? (hair, moustaches and beards) - What clothes will they wear?

On one side of the paper ask the children to draw the person whose name is written on the paper imagining them in 20 years time. On the reverse side of the paper the children must write a description of the person. Each description should begin with:

This is ... 20 years in the future. He/she is wearing ...

This will help the children continue the description using the present tense. Sentences such as: *He/she is ... metres tall and he/she weighs ...* can also be included.

Should the reverse side of the paper be unusable, get the children to write their descriptions on a different sheet. All the written language must be in English and physically written by the children. Teachers are asked not to correct or re-write the sentences produced by the children.

Each child who takes part in this project will receive a small gift as a token of our appreciation.

Send the project materials together with the completed project form to:

Primary Times, Class Project – Issue 35
Pearson Italia S.p.A., Corso Trapani 16
10139 Torino

The materials should arrive in our offices by 15.5.2010.

We may publish extracts from some of the projects in future issues of **Primary Times**.

All the materials submitted become the property of Pearson Italia and reproduction rights are reserved.

This form must be completed and attached to the front page of the project materials.

35

Name of school _____

Address _____

City _____ CAP _____

E-mail _____ @ _____

Name of teacher _____

Number of children presenting their illustrations and texts _____

Signed by the teacher _____ Date _____



Pearson Italia S.p.A.
corso Trapani, 16 - 10139 Torino
Fax 011 75021510
per informazioni:
uffici di Milano, Tel. 02 74823477
E-mail: primary@lang-longman.it
<http://www.lang-longman.it>

Contributors to this issue:

Giulia Abbiati
Joanna Carter
Emanuela De Marchi
Matilde Gagliano
Sarah Gudgeon
Emelie Loeb
Ursula Mulligan
Tim Priesack

Editor
Tim Priesack

Assistant editor
Giulia Abbiati

Layout and Graphics
APV Vaccani, Milano

Illustrations
Simonetta Baldini
Federica Orsi



Quality controller
Walter Ardoli

Printed
Tipografia Gravinese (TO)

LIBRI DI TESTO E SUPPORTI DIDATTICI

La Casa Editrice è certificata in conformità alla norma UNI EN ISO 9001:2008 per l'attività di progettazione, realizzazione e commercializzazione di prodotti editoriali scolastici, lessicografici, universitari e di varia.



CISQCERT

LANG-Longman Primary seminar 2010

Our teacher trainers will be travelling to many cities across Italy to present our 2010 seminar.

Sounds Like Fun

Practising and promoting good pronunciation

In many Primary English language classrooms, practising pronunciation is sometimes limited to listening and repeating recordings of native speakers on CDs that accompany the course book. This may be because non-native English teachers worry that their pronunciation is not good enough or that spending time working on pronunciation could be boring and laborious and take time away from practising the other major skills.

However it is essential to seize the moment and promote good pronunciation in young learners as they are naturally excellent mimics, an ability that we lose as we get older.

This workshop aims to introduce practical, simple and effective ways to boost the confidence of both teachers and students and to allow practising pronunciation to become an exciting, fun and integrated part of the lesson.

Seminar locations and dates can be found on www.lang-longman.it or direct from our agents.

The next issue of **Primary Times** will be published at the beginning of the new school year in October 2010.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

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

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

35

New subscription ☐

Change of address ☐

Name

Home address

City

CAP

E-mail

@

Telephone no.

School name and address

City

CAP

Course book used

I would like an agent to visit me at school

Yes ☐

No ☐

Ai sensi della Legge 675/96, con la presente vi autorizzo esplicitamente al trattamento dei miei dati personali unicamente ai fini amministrativi per l'invio di materiali scolastici al mio indirizzo.

Signed

Date