

JETSTREAM

EXTRACT FROM JETSTREAM ELEMENTARY TEACHER'S BOOK (Helbling Languages 2015)

PLAYING MEMORY GAMES

Use it or lose it! That's what fitness instructors say about our muscles. And it's what psychologists say about our memory too. If we want to be good at remembering things then we need to practise as often as possible. The more we practise, the better we get. And as remembering is a very large part of successful language learning then it's crucial that we give our students plenty of opportunities to *exercise* their memory.

Some memory games are already indicated in the lessons, wherever you see this symbol [*memory icon*].

Here are some more – very simple – ideas if you would like to do more. You can do them as whole class activities or, once they are familiar to students, do them in pairs or small groups. They need only take a few minutes, so make them a regular part of your routine if you can.

USING PICTURES

- 1 Ask students to look at a picture in the book for 30 seconds then close their books.
- 2 Ask them questions about the picture. Obviously the questions you ask will be dependent on the picture but here are some possibilities:

Is there a ___? Are there any ___s? How many ___s are there?

Where is X? What is in/on/under/behind ... the ___? What is on the left/right?

What colour is X? What is Y wearing? ...

Variations

- 1 Students write a list of people or objects in the picture.
- 2 Students do a sketch* of the picture. (*We use the word 'sketch' rather than draw because it's somehow less stressful. Some people find the word 'draw' a bit scary!)
- 3 Students test each other in pairs. One has book open, one has book shut.

USING TEXTS

- 1 Students re-read a text they've already worked on in class perhaps a while ago, then close their books.
- 2 Ask them questions on the text or make true/false statements for them to confirm or correct.

Variations

Can they remember ... the title? ... the very first word in the text? ... the last word? ... the first line? ... the last line? ... the most frequent word? ... any words that occur more than once? ...

USING CONVERSATIONS

- 1 Students re-read a conversation or listen to it again then close their books.
- 2 Say a line from the conversation. Students reply with the line that comes next.

Variations

- 1 Read the conversation saying just the first part of each line. Students complete the rest of the line.
- 2 Choose lines from a conversation and ask students who says them.

VOCABULARY

Can students remember ten words from the last lesson?

How many words can they remember beginning with ...?

How many places/countries/adjectives/irregular verbs etc can they remember?

A COUPLE OF OTHER ACTIVITIES

REPEAT MY SENTENCE

This is an exercise in very careful listening as well as remembering. Students work in pairs. A says a sentence (or reads one from a text or conversation). B must repeat it word for word. They swap. They should do this 5/6 times, with the sentences getting a little longer every time.

I, I, I, YOU, YOU, YOU!

Another exercise in careful listening as well as remembering. Students work in pairs. A makes statements about themselves beginning with 'I'. B listens carefully. After 5 or 6 statements, B must repeat as many of A's statements as they can remember, beginning with 'you'. Then they swap over.

This exercise can have a grammatical focus and function as a very personal repetition drill and it lends itself to many different structures. Some possible kinds of statements: *I like + noun. I like + activity. Every day I + present simple. Last year I + past simple. I've never + present perfect. In the future I'd like to ...*

NOTE: According to memory experts, we readily forget 70% of what we learn in 24 hours unless we recycle it before that 24-hour period is up. You can facilitate that as a teacher by doing two things (which you may already be doing!):

- 1) make sure you leave five minutes at the end of a lesson for students to recap what they've learnt in the lesson
- 2) tell students just to take 5-10 minutes to go through the lesson at home that evening ... and tell them why it's important to do that

You have control over the first one but not the second! Because of that, revising the previous lesson at the beginning of the next one is also crucial.

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