

USING CLASSROOM LANGUAGE START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

Our pupils are creatures of habit. At the beginning of every new academic year they may find themselves in unfamiliar classrooms with new classmates and new teachers, but they very quickly settle into behaviour patterns, seating arrangements and learning styles - the habits that will bear a heavy influence on the success or failure of the whole course.

If, when our students are in class, we expect them to listen and speak *in English* as much as possible, then we have to do everything we can to get them into the habit of doing so in the first lessons of the year, before “opposing” habits are formed.

With this in mind, it is vitally important not to put off speaking in English when using classroom language. English teachers who enter a classroom on the first day of term and greet their students in English, give basic instructions in English (reinforced by gesture or pictures if necessary) and write the date on the board in English, set the students a very different precedent to those teachers who do the same in the students’ own language. The students’ expectations are immediately orientated towards the use of the foreign language; they are more likely to accept it as normal within the classroom context and feel less inhibited when trying to speak it themselves.

In addition, groups that get into the habit of listening to instructions and other classroom language in English become much better at decoding messages and inferring meaning from context. They also begin to recognise that English is not simply a subject to be learnt, but that it has genuine communicative value.

We can’t, of course, just expect our students to enthusiastically follow our example. If we want them to take advantage of the day-to-day communicative situations that arise in class to practise their English, then we have to provide them with the linguistic tools to be able to do so. To this end, we have put together the following list of activities that can be done with the photocopiable worksheets on the next pages. Some of the activities work better with small groups, others with large groups; some are more suitable for primary classes, others for secondary; some put emphasis on comprehension, others on production. We hope that one or two of the activities will be suitable for you and your pupils.

Sit on the floor.

Listen to the cassette.

Can we play a game?

Turn on the light.

Look at the board.

Draw a tree.

Open your book.

Clean the board.

Close the door.

Can I go to the toilet.

Write the date.

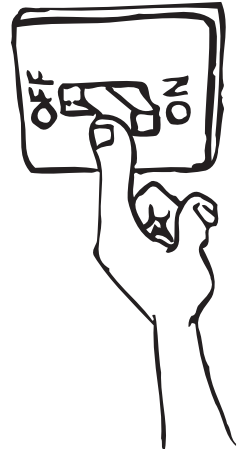
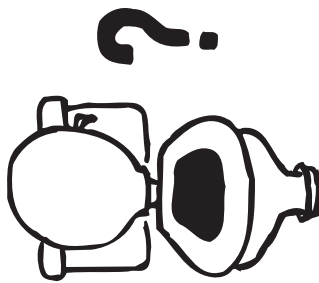
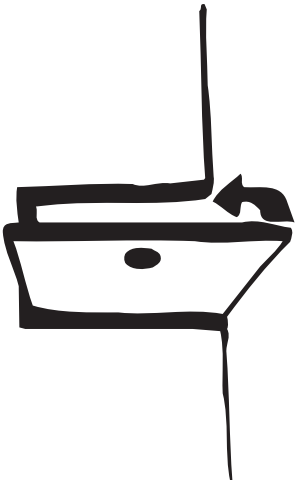
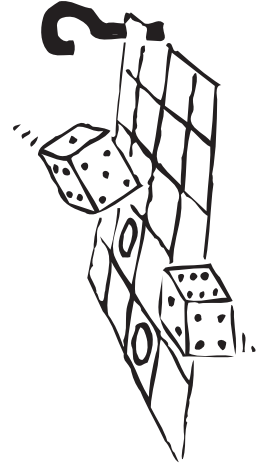
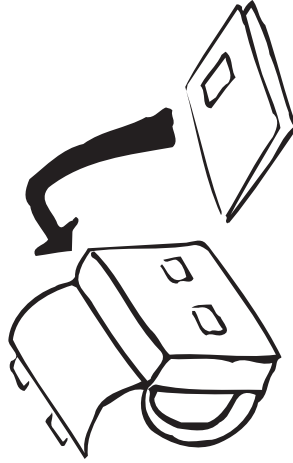
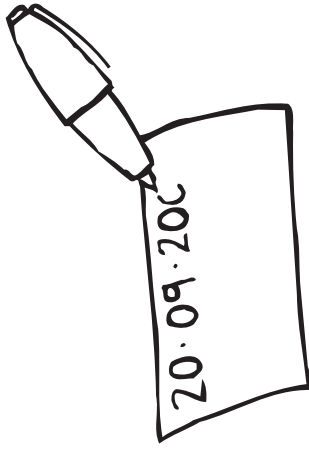
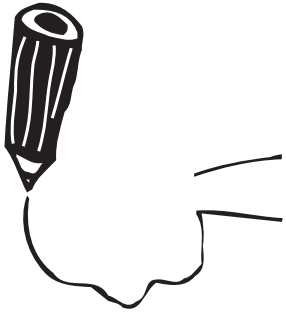
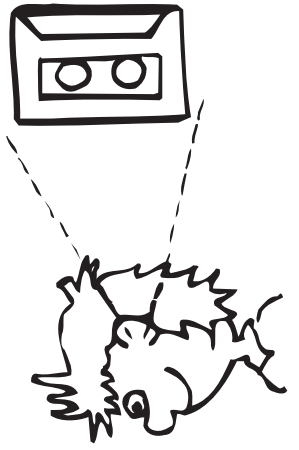
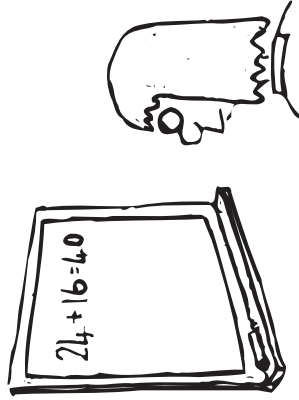
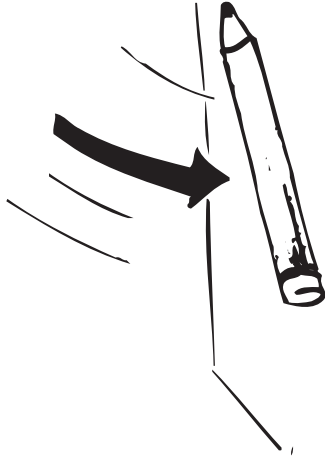
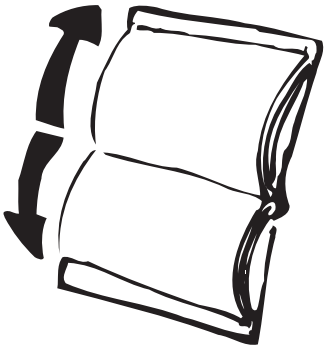
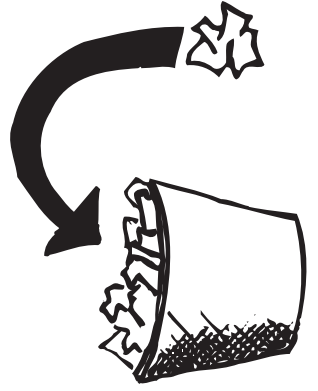
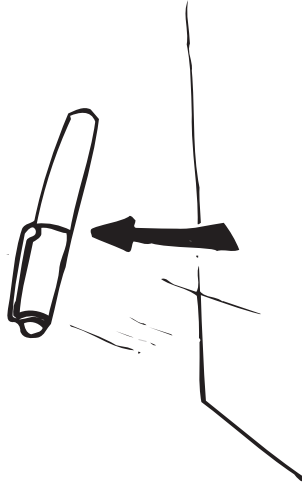
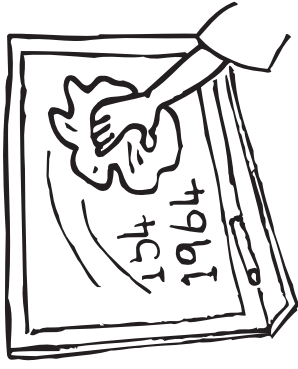
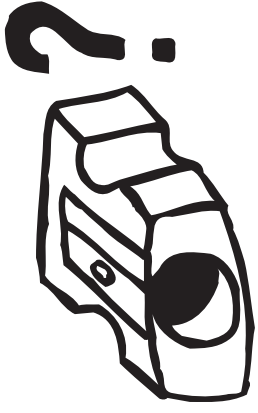
Pick up your pen.

Throw your rubbish in the bin.

Can I borrow your pencil sharpener?

Put your book in your bag.

Put your pencil down.



Sit
on the
floor.

Close
the
door.

Listen
to the
cassette.

Can I go
to the
toilet?

Can we
play
a game?

Write
the
date.

Turn on
the
light.

Pick up
your
pen.

Throw
your rubbish
in the bin.

Can I borrow
your pencil
sharpener?

Look
at the
board.

Draw
a
tree.

Put
your book
in your bag.

Open
your
book.

Clean
the
board.

Put your
pencil
down.

ACTIVITIES USING THE PHOTOCOPIABLE PAGES

MATCHING

The pupils match the pictures to the corresponding sentences.

WHERE'S THE PAIR? (PELMANISM)

Working together in small groups the pupils put all the cards face down. They take it in turns to try and find pairs as follows:

1. Turn over a picture card.
2. Try to remember and say the corresponding sentence.
3. Turn over a sentence card.

If the sentence matches the picture, they keep the two cards. The winner is the pupil with the most pairs at the end of the game. This game is easier to organise if the pictures and sentences are on different colours of paper.

PICTIONARY

The teacher takes a sentence card and draws it on the board; the pupils guess which it is and say it out loud. Once you have modelled this activity, divide the class into two teams and bring a representative from each group to the board. The pupils at the board receive a sentence card each. They have to draw it on the board without using letters or numbers and of course without speaking! The artists continue until their team calls out the classroom language sentence correctly.

Pupils could then play the game in smaller groups and the same format could be used in other classes to keep the faster workers busy while others finish an activity.

MIMING

The teacher takes a sentence card and mimes it; the pupils guess which it is and say it out loud. Once you have modelled this activity, the pupils can play it in groups of 3 or 4.

SUBSTITUTION

The pupils change the nouns in each of the 16 sentences. Eg.

Open the ~~door~~. window
Listen to the ~~cassette~~. teacher
Can I go to the ~~toilet~~? library

Groups then mime their new sentences to the rest of the class.

SENTENCE BINGO!

Bingo is a favourite game of pupils. Instead of playing it with words, why not play it with sentences?

1. The pupils each choose six of the pictures and put them face up in front of them. They put all the other pictures to one side.
2. The teacher picks up sentence cards at random and reads them out; if the pupils have the corresponding pictures, they turn them over.
3. When a pupil has turned over all six picture cards, he/she shouts BINGO!

Confident pupils can take the teacher's role as bingo caller.

MIMED SENTENCE BINGO!

Instead of reading the sentences, why not mime them? The pupils have to guess and, importantly, say the sentence before turning over the corresponding picture card.

NOUGHTS AND CROSSES (THREE IN A LINE):

Noughts and Crosses is a tremendously versatile, fun game. We can use it to work with words or numbers, or in this case sentences.

- Cut out nine of the sentence cards (the instructions, not the questions) and write a different number on the back of each one.
- Draw a noughts and crosses grid on the board and stick the cards in the grid so that the pupils can see the numbers.
- Divide the class into two teams.
- The teams take turns to choose a number. The teacher reads out the sentence on the other side and the team has to carry out the instruction. If they do it correctly they win a O or a X.

1	2	X
4	5	6
0	X	9

Vary the game by writing dates or years on the back of the cards instead of numbers. You could use words with tricky pronunciation or cut the sentences into shapes and use different coloured paper; pupils ask for "the red triangle", etc. Confident pupils could come to the front to read out the sentences.

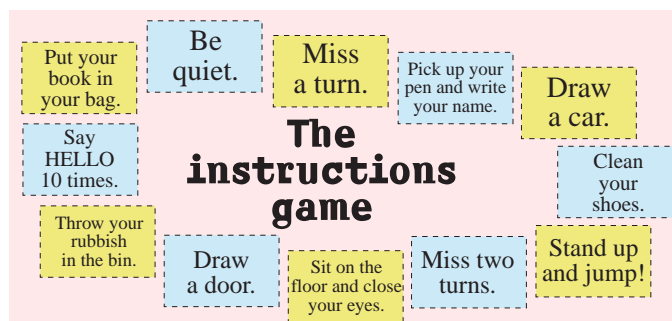
MAKING AND PLAYING AN INSTRUCTIONS BOARD GAME

For this activity you will need:

- 3 sticky white labels (or Post-its) per student.
- 1 piece of A3 paper for every four students.

This is how it's done:

1. Using the sentence cards as models, the students write their own imperative sentences on each of their sticky labels. They can do this individually or in pairs.
2. In groups of four, the students stick all their labels onto a piece of A3 paper, designing the route of a board game. Eg.



3. Players can use a coin to move around the board; heads they move one square, tails they move two.
4. They have to carry out the instruction they land on. If they do it correctly they win points or stay where they are; if they do it incorrectly, they lose points or move back. This is the basic idea. Students, however, should be given time to design their games, making up their own rules and a scoring system.

FOR FAST FINISHERS

Don't throw the cards away. Keep them and hand them out to fast finishers. They can write the sentences on the back of the corresponding pictures and then test one another in turns.

Pupil 1: How do you say *Escucha la cinta* in English?

Pupil 2: Listen to the cassette.

Pupil 1: Correct.

There are many activities that can be played with these cards or with similar cards of your own creation giving practice of other language areas. Why not send us your ideas?