

Token game*tracking involvement in a group discussion*

Level	intermediate/advanced
Main goals	calling on peers, self-monitoring, group cohesion
Language focus	oral fluency practice (<i>should/could have</i> , modals)
Preparation	matches or other tokens (bits of paper, paper clips, etc.)

In this activity students are invited to manage a discussion. The activity makes them think about how and why they take part in group work.

Before starting a group discussion, give each learner the same number of tokens (depending on the size of the group and the time available), e.g. matches. Arrange chairs in a circle, and place a chair, or a hat, or some other suitable object in the middle. Explain that students should put one token into the hat whenever they want to say or ask something. Alternatively, you may put all the tokens in the middle and ask students to pick one when they wish to speak: this saves you some time setting up the activity, and does not limit the number of times someone can contribute to the discussion.

During the activity you may intervene to keep the discussion going but avoid calling on particular students. After the discussion ask students who have all their tokens unused and those who have none left (or those who have picked up several and those who have taken none) how they feel about their participation. You may then ask the whole group to think about the desirable distribution of participation, and the possible ways of achieving it. (Adapted from Brandes and Ginnis, 1992.)

Guessing grammar*finding grammatical patterns in sample sentences*

Level	elementary/intermediate/advanced
Main goals	peer evaluation and monitoring, generalising from examples
Language focus	passive voice or any other area of grammar
Preparation	handouts for each group with sample sentences

This activity is designed to practise the strategy of inductive discovery of rules, and to leave learners for a while without the authority of the teacher.

Ask students to form groups. If you can, make sure that there is an analytic learner (who is good at discerning fine details and language systems) in each group. Give each group a handout with sample sentences

Transferring roles

assignment with a relatively narrow focus on some grammatical pattern or other rule.

Ask students to exchange their solutions to the homework exercise, read each other's work and correct any mistakes they find. If there are students who have not done their homework, either ask them to do it then and there, or ask them to form a pair with someone who has come prepared.

When ready with their corrections, students return the solutions to their author, and then put on a slip of paper any questions they may have about either what they corrected or their own work. Ask students if they have any general questions: they may put these to the class and you can help with eliciting the answers. Then you may collect all their written questions and, as necessary, deal with them individually or in a separate remedy session in the next lesson.

If the main purpose of the homework task was practice, you may not need to look at the students' solutions, since the activity already provided ample feedback for students, and the questions they ask will give you an idea of problem areas.

Variation:

If students are very sensitive to criticism, and especially when it is coming from peers, you may ask them to work in groups, discussing solutions and correcting mistakes together.

Stubborn mistakes

dealing with frequent mistakes in written work

Level	elementary/intermediate/advanced
Main goals	deciding on learning procedures, identifying difficulties
Note	works best as homework
Preparation	photocopies of practice exercises

Some students tend to concentrate only on the mark they receive on their written work and pay little attention to the mistakes you corrected. This activity invites students to learn from their mistakes.

Ask students to read through all the homework they have turned in during the past two to three weeks (or more if they haven't had many written assignments) and make a list of the mistakes that they made more than once. They should group the errors according to type, such as grammar, spelling, or choice of word, and suggest some ways to work on their problems.

In a small class, you may ask students to compare their lists with each

other and discuss possible remedies if they have similar problems. In a large class, this may take too long, or create too much confusion, so instead you may read the lists and group students according to their problems for a discussion in the next lesson. For this, you may also prepare a collection of practice exercises for the different groups to choose from. Some students may have very particular problems which you may need to treat individually.

Student-generated test

groups write a test for the class

Level	elementary/intermediate/advanced
Main goals	deciding on learning procedures, producing learning materials, self-evaluation
Language focus	grammar review, written fluency practice
Note	may help you tackle problems with cheating

This activity encourages students to see a test for what it is: a means of measuring their knowledge or identifying problem areas, and something which is useful for them, too, and not only for the teacher. Preparing a test and discussing difficulties arising with peers may require more time than studying for a teacher-written test, but it may considerably increase students' understanding of the material.

You may start by asking students what items of grammar or vocabulary they found most useful or important over the given period, and decide together what should be included in the test. Then assign each set of items to a pair or group of students and ask them to prepare a test. You may provide a set framework (e.g. multiple choice sentences for which they write choices, or a text for a cloze test), a few patterns to choose from, or give them total freedom concerning form.

Depending on the complexity of the material they have to work on, pairs or groups may finish their work during the lesson, or may do the task for homework. Next, collect the completed test pieces, and make any necessary corrections. You may combine the pieces into one comprehensive test which you give to the whole class and then correct and mark them yourself or together with the whole class. If you don't want to use the test results to evaluate individual performance, you can ask groups to work on the test together.

Variation:

Alternatively, you may make each group responsible for the administration of their bit of the test: in this case students get the test items on separate slips of paper (and only the ones written by some other group),