

CLASS ACTS

THIS ISSUE'S CENTREFOLD IS ROLE PLAY INTERVIEW

This issue's Centrefold is an idea from our forthcoming publication: **Now You're Talking!** - a multi skills text for pre-intermediate to advanced students.

This centrefold has 2 role play cards plus a little information about the person to be interviewed.

This is an exercise in interviewing techniques. The object of the exercise is for students to try to get as much information from their partner's role card as possible.

Students first have to study (at length) their own role card in order to answer their partners questions, as well as to devise questions to ask their partner. Since both role cards have similar structures, the role card they are looking at should give students sufficient clues as to the kind of questions they are going to ask. You may have to guide your students a little into writing/asking non-specific questions. e.g. "What kind of food do you like?" as opposed to, "Do you like pizza?"

Have students first write down the questions they are going to ask in the space below the role card. Then have them ask their partner the questions; one student taking the role of interviewee and the other being the interviewer. The interviewer should be made aware that: a) answers to questions should be written down in the form of short notes, and b) answers to questions are more than likely to prompt questions which have not been written down. This is a crucial point. Students should be made aware that they can only develop their conversational and interview skills if they are able to fully respond to questions and answers. i.e. the interviewee must improvise if he/she doesn't actually have the answer to that question on the role card, and the interviewer should ask follow-up questions.

THE MOTIVATE'EM CORNER

"Put the dentist on the chair"

This game is for teaching nouns and prepositions with a class size of up to about 30/40 young students. The age range could be anywhere between 5 years old to 12 years old.

Once again you will need to split your class into 4 teams; I usually use colours to name my teams. But use animals, flowers, adjectives or anything that suits you and your class.

The game is simply a race to see which team can respond most accurately to your commands.

You will need 4 boxes with lids which can open easily. You may want to also use 4 chairs and/or 4 large cups. Or other objects which suit your own teaching situation/curriculum. Too many objects in the equation may confuse younger students. With very young students, (5-6 year olds) it may be best to stick with just one object; in, on or under which students place the noun card.

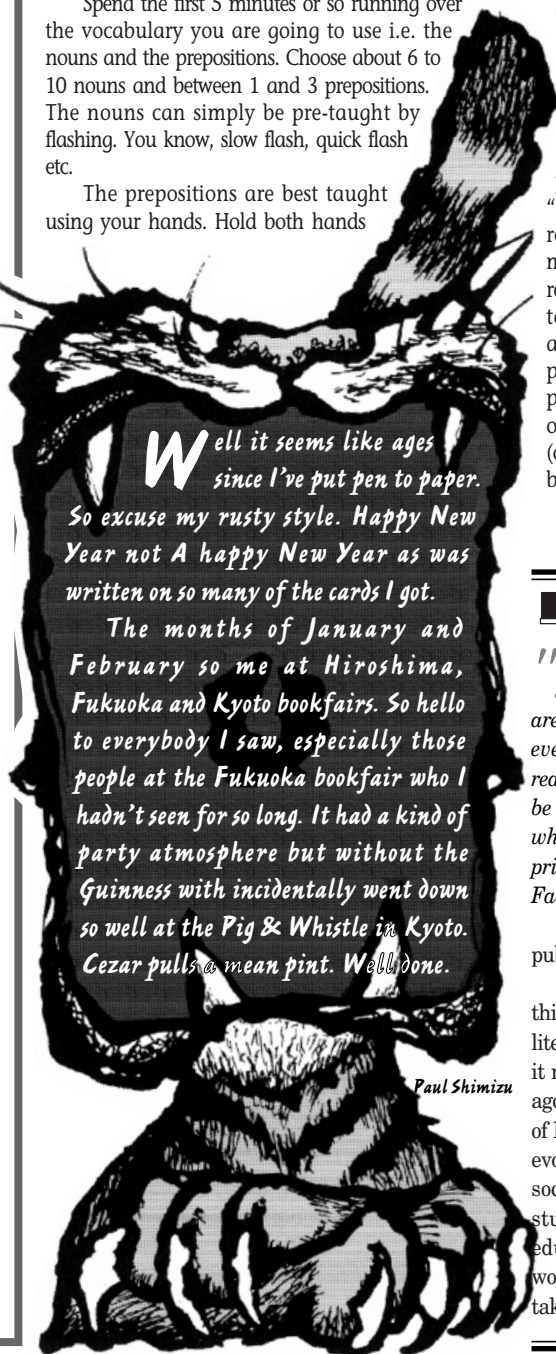
Spend the first 5 minutes or so running over the vocabulary you are going to use i.e. the nouns and the prepositions. Choose about 6 to 10 nouns and between 1 and 3 prepositions. The nouns can simply be pre-taught by flashing. You know, slow flash, quick flash etc.

The prepositions are best taught using your hands. Hold both hands

in front of you. Make them into fists. Have your students mimic both your actions and your words. Go slowly at first and then gradually pick up speed. Place one hand, open and palm down, on the top of your fist and say "on". Now place your index finger in your fist and say "in". Lastly place your hand under your fist and say "under". Now vary your pace getting faster and faster until your students can't keep up. Lastly don't use your hands but have the students use their hands while you simply call out "in, under and on".

Arrange your students in four lines sitting one behind the other, facing the front of the class. Students should be as far away from the front of the class as you can get them, because you are trying to make a race. Place the object/objects, in or on or under which students will place the noun card, as near to the front of the class as possible. Now place the nouns cards on the floor in front of each line of students. Please note each team should have its own set of noun cards and its own object/objects in or on or under which to place the noun card. This way there is little confusion about what is happening.

Now instruct your teams that you are going to call out a sentence to which they must respond. e.g. "Put the pie in the box." Model the situation for the class. Pick up the pie card from one team's set of cards, walk with it to the box at the front of the class, lift the lid and put the pie in. And say the word "in" at the same time. It may be wise to model the activity a few times using all the prepositions. "Put the grasshopper on the chair." ; "Put the letter under the cup." You are now finally ready to start the game. Be prepared for a lot of mistakes. Shout out your command. As students respond, shout out the command once or twice more to try and fix it in their heads. The team who accurately places the correct object in the correct place gets points. You may want to award some points to those teams which either get the object right or the place right. Remember to replace the object (card). The students who just played go and sit at the back of their line. Now you're ready to start again.



*Well it seems like ages
since I've put pen to paper.*

*So excuse my rusty style. Happy New
Year not A happy New Year as was
written on so many of the cards I got.*

*The months of January and
February so me at Hiroshima,
Fukuoka and Kyoto bookfairs. So hello
to everybody I saw, especially those
people at the Fukuoka bookfair who I
hadn't seen for so long. It had a kind of
party atmosphere but without the
Guinness with incidentally went down
so well at the Pig & Whistle in Kyoto.
Cezar pulls a mean pint. Well done.*

Paul Shimizu

HARD TIMES

*"Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys
and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone
are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out
everything else. You can only form the minds of
reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will
ever be of any service to them. This is the principle
on which I bring up my own children, and this is the
principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to
Facts, Sir!"*

The opening paragraph of Hard Times (first published 1854) by Charles Dickens (1812-70).

I can't help thinking that someone somewhere in this country had read that and attempted to take it literally with regards teaching English. In fact I think it must have been read and adopted about 150 years ago. Unfortunately, someone forgot to tell the Board of Education that education is an ever changing, ever evolving process which tries to meet the needs of the society. Nevertheless junior high and high school students now seem to be the ones telling us that education needs to change because it is no longer working for them. I hope someone quickly sits up and takes note.

Editor



- Student A use Role Card A and Student B use Role Card B.
- Read your card. You will become the person in the role card. Then read the basic information about your partner.
- Write 10 questions to ask your partner. (It is good to use "What," "Who," "How," "When," "Where," "Which," "Why," "Please tell me about...")
- Student A ask your questions to Student B. When you finish, change the roles of interviewer and interviewee

and Student B ask the questions to Student A.

- **Interviewee, if you are asked something not on your role card, use your imagination and make something up.**
- **Interviewer, if you don't understand, you can say "Excuse me?" Or "What is the meaning of...?"**
- **If you want to ask for more information, you can say, "Why?" Or "Please tell me about (that) .**
- Stand up and do the interviews again in front of an audience (your group or your class).

Role Card A

- ◆ John Peterson is a 74-year-old artist, who makes his living doing silhouette portraits at tourist spots. He uses a special kind of black paper and surgical scissors to make the silhouettes.
- ◆ John was born in 1924, in Detroit, Michigan in the United States. John graduated high school in 1942, and immediately joined the United States Army. In the army, he was assigned to the army newspaper, Stars and Stripes. While preparing stories for the newspaper, he began to cut silhouettes of the people in the articles.
- ◆ As he became known for his work, he was asked to do silhouettes of military leaders such as Douglas MacArthur and Chester Nimitz.
- ◆ He was named the 60-second artist, as he could cut a silhouette of someone as he was

talking to him, in less than a minute. In his career, he has traveled around the world, and has cut images of Elvis Presley, Queen Elizabeth, Joe Dimaggio, and thousands of others. More recently he has done silhouettes of Tom Cruise, Bill Clinton and Demi Moore.

- ◆ John's wife died in 1968, but his daughter lives in Los Angeles and his son lives in Detroit. He has five grandchildren.
- ◆ Now he lives in Sydney, Australia because he doesn't like cold weather.
- ◆ When he isn't selling silhouettes to tourists, he cooks Indian curry for his friends.



You are going to interview Jed Edge. He is a 45 year old window cleaner. He had an accident while he was at work. He has an unusual hobby. He is married and has a large family. His children are interesting.

1. _____
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6. _____
7. _____
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9. _____
10. _____



Role Play Interview

Now You're Talking!

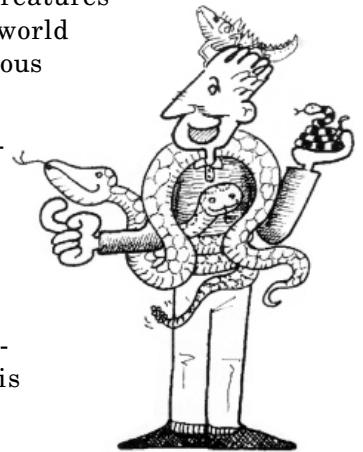
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- Interviewee, if you are asked something not on your role card, use your imagination and make something up.
- Interviewer, if you don't understand, you can say "Excuse me?" Or "What is the meaning of...?"
- If you want to ask for more information, you can say, "Why?" Or "Please tell me about (that) ."
- Stand up and do the interviews again in front of an audience (your group or your class).

Role Card B

- ◆ Jed Edge is 45 years old is. He is a window cleaner but he is also a specialist in poisonous reptiles. He lives in South London with his wife and 5 children.
- ◆ His eldest daughter, Sandra, is 26 and married with two children. Both boys. His other children are Grace 20, Lenny 18, Jody 15 and Tess 11. Grace is a university student in Manchester. She is studying to be a marine biologist. Lenny is studying for his 'A' levels, he wants to be a French Pastry Cook.
- ◆ Jed first became interested in poisonous reptiles when he was recovering from an accident. When he was 25, he was blown off his ladder one windy day while cleaning an office block window. He fell from the fourth floor and broke nearly every bone in his body. He spent 6 months in hospital. He got very bored in hospital.

- ◆ He couldn't read very well at that time so he looked at a lot of picture books. He was always fascinated by animals especially snakes and spiders. So his wife brought him lots of books about animals. It was then that he developed a real interest in reptiles. Because of his interest he learned to read very well. When he got out of hospital he converted his garage into a reptile house. He now has 127 snakes and other creatures and has become a world authority on poisonous reptiles.
- ◆ When he is not cleaning windows, with his family or in his reptile house, he can usually be found down the pub playing darts and drinking bitter with his mates.



You are going to interview John Peterson. He is an unusual, but accomplished artist, who has met many famous people. He lives alone now, far from his hometown.

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8. _____
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10. _____

How to Teach "Emergency English"

Most Japanese students study English for at least 6 years in junior and senior high school; however, they are not usually taught to use English for oral communication. The first thing I teach my conversation students are some basic clarification expressions to be able to take responsibility for their own learning which I call "Emergency English." Having these expressions available to them allows students to communicate in the target language from the very beginning.

Expressions such as those in "Emergency English" appear in many textbooks. The problem for teachers is figuring out how to effectively teach their students the expressions and to actually get students to use them.

After going over the expressions, to practice the expressions, teachers should ask each student a question to demonstrate in what situation the phrases can be used. In the left column is a list of questions the teacher can ask to elicit the "Emergency English" responses which are in the right column.



Questions Teacher Asks Emergency English

- ☞ How old are you?
- 1. If you know the answer, say it.
- ☞ What's your mother's name? (spoken in a soft voice)
- 2. "Please speak more loudly."
- ☞ What time did you go to sleep last night? (spoken quickly)
- 3. "Please speak more slowly."
- ☞ What were you doing last Sunday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon? (a rather long question)
- 4. "Excuse me?," "Pardon me?," "Say that again please."
- ☞ What does your father do? (many students don't know the meaning of "do" in this

usage)

- 5. "I don't understand."
- ☞ What's **my** favorite color?
- 6. "I don't know."
- ☞ What did you eat for dinner last night? (many students don't know how to express names of Japanese food in English.)
- 7. "I know the answer, but can't say it in English."

At which point the teacher should say:

- ☞ How do you say it in Japanese? (The idea is that students communicate to the teacher at which point their gap in understanding occurred.)
- ☞ How old were you when you entered kindergarten?
- 8. "What is the meaning of kindergarten?"
- ☞ Please write *otorhinolaryngology*.
- 9. "How do you spell *otorhinolaryngology*?" ("What is the meaning of *otorhinolaryngology* ?")
- ☞ Please write *nineteen*.
- 10. Did you say *nineteen* or *ninety*?"
- ☞ What club do you belong to?
- 11. "How do you say *ikebana* in English?"

Even though I taught my students these expressions and showed them how to use the expressions, the number of occurrences of usage in any class was rather low, about 0-4 times. However, when I allowed students to ask questions during a listening test about 20 students asked me questions. Allowing students to ask questions **during a test** was extremely effective in getting them to use "Emergency English."

Giving students the language they need to be able to express their lack of understanding and for clarifying what they thought they heard is important in a conversation class. If students have these expressions available to them and are taught how to use them, then communication between teacher and student, between students themselves, and between English learner and native speaker can always take place, even when the English learners' proficiency is low. Moreover, by having these tools, learners will be able to increase their own language skills by themselves.

A different version of this article first

appeared in *The Language Teacher*, (Volume 19 [4], April 1995), published by the Japan Association of Language Teachers.

Christine Lee Chinen

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