Activity 3: Say only 'yes' or 'no'

Objectives

- To develop observational skills;
- To develop the ability to classify;
- To enable children to think, and ask precise and accurate questions.

Material

25-30 objects of various shapes, thickness and materials (e.g. an eraser, scale, comb, folder, key, key rings, etc.) that one can easily find in the school/classroom.

Scope: Young learners of classes 3-5

Procedure

Divide the class into two groups. Name the groups (the names could be A and B).

Put all the objects in the centre of the class (or at a suitable place) so that both the groups can see all the objects.

Now ask any one person from one of the groups, say group 'A', to look at the objects carefully, and select any one object and write its name on a piece of paper without disclosing it to any member of either group. This piece of paper is then handed over to the teacher.

The other group, i.e. group 'B' has to guess the name of the object that has been written on the piece of paper by asking questions to the teacher. There are certain conditions:

1. They can ask a maximum of 10 questions from group A.

2. All questions should be of 'yes/no' type, e.g. 'Is it made of plastic?' Informative questions are not allowed.

3. Similarly, direct questions such as 'Is it a lock?' or 'Is it a rubber?' are also not allowed.

The group may/may not guess the name of the object in ten questions. In case they are not able to guess the name, the other group takes a turn.

Now group B will choose an object from the centre of the room, and group A will try to guess its name.

The teacher may keep count of the number of questions each group has asked. This makes the activity more challenging for the groups as the students try to think carefully in order to ask accurate and the least number of questions. For this they need:

1) to observe carefully each object, including its shape, colour, material, use, etc., in other words the properties of the objects. For example, the student may ask questions such as 'Is it made of plastic? Is it round?' etc.

2) to think about the usage of the object, e.g., is it used for keeping papers? Is it used for writing?' etc.

3) to think about various categories of objects, i.e. stationery, electronic, wooden material, etc.?

This activity may lead to learning outside of what is described here. Conduct the activity in your classroom, and find out what happens.

Rajni Dwivedi on behalf of Vidya Bhavan Resource Centre, Udaipur.

rajni@vidyabhawan.org

Activity 4: Writing Poems

Objectives

- To familiarize the learners with idiomatic expressions (in English) that include colour;
- To enable the learners to write simple poems in English.

Material

A few objects that share the same colour, e.g., leaves, lady finger, broccoli (for green); sunflower, lemon, picture of sun (for yellow).

Scope: Individual activity for middle school learners (Grade VI to VIII) for task 1 - 'My Colour' poem.

Procedure

- The teacher takes a few similarly coloured objects to the class, and asks the students to name the colour of the objects. He/she also asks them to name a few other objects associated with that colour.

- The teacher then asks the students to think of a colour of their choice, and write the names of different objects associated with that colour. He/she encourages the learners to write in the following pattern: 'As (name of colour) as a (name of object)'.
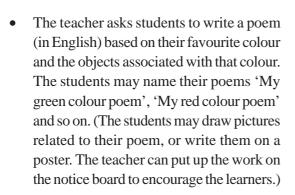
  Examples: As red as a tomato; as red as a letter box; as red as blood etc.

- The teacher narrates a poem based on the above examples to give the learners an idea of how to write a poem using a colour, and the objects associated with it.

Red is the tomato
that I relish eating
in my salad;

Red is the letter box
that helps me reach
my distant relatives;

Red is the blood
that flows freely
in my veins.

- The teacher asks students to write a poem (in English) based on their favourite colour and the objects associated with that colour. The students may name their poems 'My green colour poem', 'My red colour poem' and so on. (The students may draw pictures related to their poem, or write them on a poster. The teacher can put up the work on the notice board to encourage the learners.)

USP: The above-mentioned task encourages learners to write a poem independently. Poem-writing, in this task, is a step-by-step procedure. It takes the learners from controlled writing to guided writing, and then from guided to free writing. The task aims at nurturing the creativity of learners by giving their imagination a free rein.

Activity 5: Rhyme in line

Objectives

- To enable the learners to create a string of similar sounding words (rhyming words) in English;

- To enable the learners to write a poem in English, using rhyme as a poetic device.

Material

A few folded slips of paper (each slip must have a word written on it), shuffled together.

Skill involved: Group writing

Scope: Middle school learners (Grade VI to VIII)

Procedure

- The teacher divides the class into groups of 5-6 learners each.

- The teacher picks up a slip from the bunch of shuffled slips, opens it and reads aloud the word written on it. She then utters 3-4 words that rhyme with the word on the slip. Example:
  o Word: night
  o Rhyming words: bright, white, light, height, might, tight, flight

- The learners of each group are asked to follow the teacher's example. A member from each group picks up a slip, reads out the word to her/his group. The members of the group discuss and write down words that rhyme with the announced word. The teacher helps the learners wherever necessary.

- Once all the learners have completed writing a set of rhyming words, the teacher encourages them to make small sentences using the words at the end of the sentences. The sentences are then clubbed together cohesively to make a small poem. The teacher uses the words in the 'night' example and makes up a poem to help the learners understand the idea better.

Example:

The sun was shining bright

In came the light

I woke up, brushed my teeth white

Then, went on the roof to fly a kite

My kite reached great height

Happily, I went to bed at night.

5. Each group writes a poem/poems using similar sounding words (to the word in their slip) in a cohesive manner to make a poem. The teacher asks the groups to share their poems with the rest of the class either by reading them aloud, or by writing them on a paper for the display board.

USP: In the above mentioned task, learners write poems in a progressive manner in a group. Encouraging writing in a 'step-by-step' manner removes the fear of creative writing from the minds of the learners. Tasks performed in groups enable and motivate even the shy or weaker learners to listen and learn from the quick learners.

Manu Gulati, TGT English in Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Panjabi Bagh, New Delhi

mwadhwa22@yahoo.com

Activity 6: Playing with meaning

Introduction

Reading is the ability to decode and make meaning. There is a difference between making meaning from a word, a sentence, or a group of sentences, popularly called, 'textual meaning'. A text can be oral or written. Irrespective of its form, a text consists of sentences with a thread running through them that binds them. The thread is called *cohesion* and it refers to the relation of meaning that exists within the text. In fact, the technical meaning of the term cohesion is the relation of meanings that exist within the text. It occurs when interpretation of some elements of the text depends on another element. In a classroom, generally, the word meaning as well as the sentence meaning is taught. It is often assumed that textual meaning is a combination of meanings of sentences put together, and so it need not be taught explicitly. An explicit teaching of textual meaning is however necessary for more effective literacy and for enhancing the level of awareness of the language itself (called metalinguistic awareness). The following activity represents a basic level of cohesion.

Objective

The objective of the activity is to explicitly teach textual meaning.

Scope: This game can be used with any class from 5 to 7. The complexity of the passage needs to be increased for higher classes.

Procedure

- A text is given which has several blanks. Students have to fill in the blanks from the list of options given.

- Give the following instructions to students:

- This is a small story with several blanks numbered 1, 2, 3, etc.

- A set of options numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., is also given.