

Classroom Activities

Activity 1 & 2: Shambhavi Singh

Activity 1: Initiating Writing in French as a Foreign Language (FL)

Note to Teacher

Elementary learners of a Foreign Language (FL) find writing in that language a challenging task. The purpose of the activities presented here is to make writing fun and interesting for elementary learners of FL. The activities are constructed so as to act as scaffolds to learning and help students to become independent writers. They are presented along with the English instructions and the English equivalents of the French expressions and words. The activities are contextualized in French as a FL but are applicable to developing writing skills in any FL.

Two activities are presented here: the first focuses on using words and the second on writing descriptive sentences and revising the draft.

Level: Elementary Learners of French as FL

Activity 1: Learning to use Words in Writing

This activity has two stages. In stage 1, students classify the given words that describe persons

under physical and psychological categories and in stage 2 they use these words to complete the given sentences. Both activities emphasize on helping students connect the new learning with their background knowledge.

Learning Objectives

This activity enables students to:

- develop vocabulary to describe the physical and psychological characteristics of people and words related to sports and cultural activities.
- use verbs such as *aimer* (to like), *adorer* (to adore), *détester* (to hate), *admirer* (to admire), *être* (to be), *avoir* (to have) + noun/verb appropriately while talking about the likes and dislikes of people
- write the outline of a description;

Stage 1

Instructions: Read the text and classify words that describe Rita and Peter under two categories: physical and psychological. Also, discuss and list words that describe their likes and dislikes.

Instructions: Lisez le texte suivant et trouvez des mots pour caractériser physiquement/psychologiquement Rita et Peter. Parler aussi de leurs goûts, ce qu'ils aiment et ce qu'ils n'aiment pas.

Bonjour! Je m'appelle Nicolas et j'ai 45 ans. Je suis ingénieur (engineer). Je suis américain (American) mais j'habite (live) en France avec ma femme et mon fils (son). Ma femme s'appelle Rita et elle est professeur de hip-hop. Elle (she) est belle (beautiful), mince (slim), intelligente, sincère et généreuse. Elle a des yeux (eyes) bleus. Elle a des cheveux (hair) longs et noirs (black). Elle adore danser et chanter (sing). Elle aime aussi voyager. Elle n'aime pas (does not like) regarder la télévision.

Mon fils Peter est beau et très mignon (adorable). Il (he) est grand (tall), fort (strongly built) et sportif. Il a des cheveux frisés (curly) et bruns (brown). Il est étudiant (student). Peter aime jouer au foot (football) et adore faire du ski. Il aime regarder les films et admire Brad Pitt et Emma Watson. Il déteste faire du shopping.

Hello! My name is Nicolas and I am forty-five years old. I am an engineer. I am American but I live in France with my wife and son. My wife's name is Rita and she is a hip-hop dance instructor. She is beautiful, slim, intelligent, sincere and generous. She has blue eyes and long black hair. She loves to dance and sing. She also likes travelling. She does not like watching television.

My son Peter is handsome and very charming. He is tall, strongly built and a sports person. He has curly brown hair. He is a student. He likes to play football and loves skiing. He likes to watch movies and admires Brad Pitt and Emma Watson. He hates shopping.

Procedure (pair work)

- Students work in pairs.
- The teacher discusses the instructions with the students with a few examples.
- Each student pair reads the text and writes down words that describe Rita and Peter's physical and psychological characteristics in two separate columns.
- They also write down words that describe their likes and dislikes.
- Then the teacher makes four columns on the board as shown below.

Words that describe Rita		Words that describe Peter		Words that describe likes	Words that describe dislikes
Physical	Psychological	Physical	Psychological		

A volunteer from each pair writes at least two words / or orally presents these words.

When the words have been listed in their relevant columns, the teacher draws the attention of the students to the grammatical forms of the words—the masculine, feminine and plural forms of adjectives.

Stage 2

Instructions: Some verbs and adjectives have been given in the following box. These are followed by an incomplete description of Emma Watson. Complete the description of Emma Watson using the given verbs and adjectives.

<p>Complétez la description d'Emma Watson en utilisant les mots suivants: est née (was born), travailleuse (hard-working), s'appellent (are called), aime (likes) , admire (admires) , est (is) , bruns (brown) , élégante (elegant), belle (beautiful) , mi-longs (shoulder-length) , a (troisfois) (has), adore jouer au (loves to play), mince (slim) , intelligente (intelligent), est (is), déteste (hates), sont (are).</p>
<p>Emma Watson ____ à Paris, en France. Elle ____ vingt-cinq ans. Ses parents _____ Jacqueline Luesby et Chris Watson. Ils__ avocats. Elle__ un frère. Emma a fait ses études en littérature anglaise à l'université Brown. Elle est anglaise. Elle parle un peu français. Elle ____ actrice et mannequin. Elle est très ____ et _____. Elle ____ grande et _____. Elle __ des yeux _____. Elle a des cheveux _____ et bruns. Elle est _____ et _____. Elle _____ danser et chanter. Emma _____ hockey sur glace. Elle _____ le thé et le café. Elle _____ les acteurs Johnny Depp et Julia Roberts.</p>

Procedure (Group Work)

- The teacher asks the students to divide themselves into groups of three.
- He/she discusses the instructions along with a few examples.
- The teacher monitors the group work and offers support to the groups as needed.
- Once all the groups complete the description of Emma Watson, it is discussed in the classroom.

Activity 2: Descriptive Writing Using Simple Sentences

Learning Objectives

To enable students to:

- Write meaningful sentences using the limited repertoire of words they have in a foreign language (FL);
- Revise drafts based on the feedback.

This activity has two stages. In stage 1, students describe a person and in stage 2 they are engaged in revising the drafts of their written descriptions.

Stage 1

Instruction: Describe a person using the information given in the following box.

Décrivez une personne que vous trouvez intéressante. Il/Elle...	
1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • né(e) (born) / a (has) / est (is) / sont (are) / parle (talk) / aime (like) / n'aime pas (does not like) / admire (admire) / adore (adore) / déteste (hates) <p>Note: All these verbs are given in 3rd person singular as the description will be in 3rd person.</p>	3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grand(e) (tall) / petit(e) (short) / mince (slim) / gros(se) (fat) / fort(e) (strongly built) / belle-beau (beautiful-handsome) • les cheveux (hair) • bruns (brown) / noirs (black) / roux (red) • longs (long) / mi-longs (shoulder-length) / courts (short) / frisés (curly) • intelligent(e) / sympathique (kind) / cultivé(e) (knowledgeable) / généreux-généreuse (generous) / sincère (sincere) <p>Note: In French, adjectives agree with the noun in number and gender, therefore both masculine and feminine forms of the adjectives have been given, for example in grand(e) (tall) an extra 'e' is added in the feminine form. Also, hair (les cheveux) is plural in French, so the colour of the hair brown (bruns) is plural.</p>
2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acteur-actrice (male actor - female actor) / chanteur - chanteuse (singer) / journaliste(e) / réalisateur - réalisatrice (film maker) / écrivain(e) (writer) / poète(e) / sportif sportive (sports person) 	4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aller (to go) au cinéma (to the cinema hall) / au théâtre (to the theatre) / à la montagne (to the mountains) / à la mer (to the seaside) • regarder la télévision (to watch television) / écouter de la musique (to listen to music) / lire un roman (to read a novel) / écrire des poèmes (to write poems) • faire (to do/ to play): du sport (sports), -du ski (ski), -du basket (basketball), -la cuisine (cooking)

Note: To offer choices to students, a variety of words have been given in the table above. Learners have been introduced to words that describe a person's taste and interest (Box 1), words related to names of a few professions (Box 2), words that describe a person's physical and psychological characteristics (Box 3) and words related to sports and cultural activities (Box 4).

Procedure (Group work)

The teacher asks the students to divide themselves into groups of three.

He/she discusses the instructions along with a few examples.

The teacher monitors the group work and supports the groups that require help.

Once all the groups complete the description, the word and sentence features of the written descriptions are discussed.

Stage 2

Instruction: Imagine a person of your choice, describe his/her physical and psychological attributes and talk about his/her likes and dislikes.

Présentez une personne de votre choix. Décrivez son caractère physique et psychologique et ce qu'il/elle aime et ce qu'il/elle n'aime pas.

Procedure (Individual work)

- Each student writes a description.
- Students are free to refer to their previous work if they wish to.
- The teacher offers feedback to each student on their use of vocabulary and verbs.
- Students revise their drafts based on feedback.
- Ideally, students should be encouraged to write multiple drafts.

Outcome: This activity can be expected to promote writing, which is one of the most challenging skills to teach in an FL classroom. Guided instructions along with feedback-led multi-drafting is an effective way of developing descriptive writing skills in a FL. Similar activities can also be used to teach descriptions of things and places; the repertoire of students will thus gradually expand.

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Classroom Activities

Learning to Write Independently

Activity 3 & 4 : Richa Goswami

Background: Children often find writing an alien activity. However, if we engage them in challenging tasks, they may begin to enjoy writing.

Objective: Helping children write a story independently

Level: Class 4-5

Time: 30-40 minutes

Activity 3: Writing a Familiar Story

Procedure

- Choose a story that the students are familiar with; for example, the story of the lion and the mouse.
- Ask the students to narrate the story by adding one sentence each to the story.
- In this round of collective storytelling, language should not be a constraint and getting more and more students to participate would be desirable.
- Children should feel free to use any language they wish to.
- You may encourage them to add new details. These could be about the setting of the story or emotions of the characters, etc.
- Repeat the collective round of storytelling, but this time the students should try and add the sentence in English.
- Students who are unable to add a sentence in English should be allowed to use any other language they know. The teacher may help them with its English version.