

## Using resources beyond the textbook



Teacher Education  
through School-based  
Support in India  
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*TESS-India (Teacher Education through School-based Support) aims to improve the classroom practices of elementary and secondary teachers in India through the provision of Open Educational Resources (OERs) to support teachers in developing student-centred, participatory approaches. The TESS-India OERs provide teachers with a companion to the school textbook. They offer activities for teachers to try out in their classrooms with their students, together with case studies showing how other teachers have taught the topic and linked resources to support teachers in developing their lesson plans and subject knowledge.*

*TESS-India OERs have been collaboratively written by Indian and international authors to address Indian curriculum and contexts and are available for online and print use (<http://www.tess-india.edu.in/>). The OERs are available in several versions, appropriate for each participating Indian state and users are invited to adapt and localise the OERs further to meet local needs and contexts.*

*TESS-India is led by The Open University UK and funded by the UK government.*

### **Video resources**

*Some of the activities in this unit are accompanied by the following icon:  This indicates that you will find it helpful to view the TESS-India video resources for the specified pedagogic theme.*

*The TESS-India video resources illustrate key pedagogic techniques in a range of classroom contexts in India. We hope they will inspire you to experiment with similar practices. They are intended to complement and enhance your experience of working through the text-based units, but are not integral to them should you be unable to access them.*

*TESS-India video resources may be viewed online or downloaded from the TESS-India website, <http://www.tess-india.edu.in/>. Alternatively, you may have access to these videos on a CD or memory card.*

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Odisha

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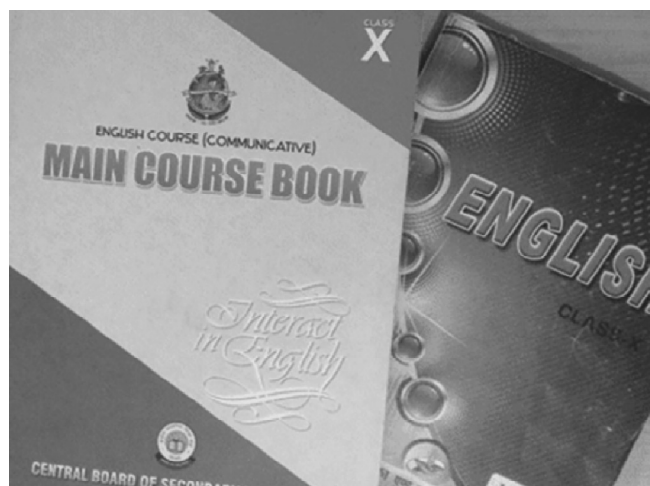
*TESS-India is led by The Open University UK and funded by UK aid from the UK government*

## What this unit is about



My students are not that interested in the lessons that are in the textbook. I have heard that it is a good idea to use other resources beyond the textbook in my lessons, like posters or newspaper articles, but it's difficult for me to find such resources in English. And even if I have these resources, I'm not sure how to use them.

Your secondary English textbooks provide a useful structure and syllabus for your teaching. They present a variety of texts to students, including passages from prose, plays and poetry written by a range of authors from India and beyond. There are many things that students can learn from these textbooks in terms of language use and vocabulary, and they can be a great resource for your teaching. However, the National Focus Group on [the] Teaching of English (NCERT, 2006) states that 'curricular freedom cannot exist in the presence of a single prescribed text' (2006, p. 22). It recommends that resources from radio, print or television news stories be used in classrooms with older learners. Research shows that frequent and relevant use of resources beyond the textbook can promote better learning among students (Westbrook et al., 2013).



**Figure 1** Using resources beyond the textbook can help to create authenticity in learning activities by making learning familiar and meaningful to students.

Resources beyond the textbook enable you to connect students' learning to their own experiences and contemporary events outside your classroom, and create opportunities for you to find out the knowledge that students are bringing to the classroom. Resources from radio, newspaper or television provide topics that are current and are likely to be interesting for students. Carefully planned lessons using these resources can support your students in developing critical thinking skills.

Using resources beyond the textbook also allows students to experience how English is used outside the classroom and to engage with authentic contemporary language. The examples in textbooks are often from literary sources with older styles of language. This is why the Position Paper of India's National Focus Group on [the] Teaching of English (NCERT, 2006, p. 14) states that students also need to be exposed to 'authentic' texts that are not written for learners, but are for

general readers and audiences. This will help them to learn to communicate in the language as it is used outside the classroom environment in India and beyond.

This unit gives you some ideas for using resources beyond the textbook in your English classes. These resources do not need to be expensive or even necessarily all in English. These activities help you to bring creative and contemporary topics and language into your English classroom, and to make learning more meaningful for your students.

## What you can learn in this unit

- The benefits of using resources beyond the textbook.
- How to find resources that you can use in your classroom.
- How to use resources such as pictures, news stories and television series to support language learning.

## 1 Using resources beyond the textbook



Pause for thought

- What resources do you use in your teaching?
- Why do you choose them? How useful are they?

You may not have used many different resources in your classes. There are many reasons why teachers do not use many resources in their classes. A group of teachers said:

- 'Resources in English are expensive and I do not have access to them at my school.'
- 'Other resources do not help students with their exams.'
- 'I don't have time to use other resources because I have to cover the syllabus.'
- 'My students struggle with English in the textbooks. They would not be able to understand other resources in English.'

Do you agree with any of these reasons? Can you add to the list?

You can use resources beyond the textbook to support your students' English language learning. These resources don't need to be expensive, and they can be in other languages, and readily available in your community.

In Activity 1, you will think about the kinds of resources beyond the textbook that you could use in your English classes.



Video: Using local resources

## Activity 1: Using resources in your English classes

Discuss the questions below with a colleague if you can.

1. Look at the resources listed in Table 1 below. Are there other resources that you use or could use that are not in the list? If so, add these to the table.
2. Put a tick in the column 'Available' if you and your students have access to this resource. Put a tick in the column 'Available in English' if you have access to this resource in English. Put a tick in the final column if you have ever used this resource in your classroom.

**Table 1** Which resources are available to use in your classroom?

Resource	Available	Available in English	I have used
Library books			
Comics			
Pictures, photos or drawings			
Newspaper articles			
Magazines			
Sports reports			
Tourist information brochures			
Popular songs			
Radio programmes			
TV programmes			
Mobile phones			
Computers and the internet			

Are there other resources that you have access to but don't use? Keep this list for future reference and perhaps return to the list in a few months to think again about the range of resources you use in the classroom.

## 2 Using pictures in the English classroom

Pictures are a valuable resource in the language classroom. They can be used in any class in a variety of ways. They don't necessarily need to come from English language newspapers, magazines or books.

Some pictures that you could use include:

- drawings created by you or your students
- pictures or illustrations from a book, newspaper, magazine or the internet.
- images found on posters such as film poster or posters about an event
- advertisements
- photos taken with a camera or mobile phone.

Keep the pictures that you collect in a file and build up a collection over time. Ask your students to bring in pictures as well. You can use them in different classes, and share them with other teachers.

You could also paste the pictures onto chart paper and display them in the classroom.

## Activity 2: Using pictures to support English learning

There are many different English learning activities that can be enhanced by the use of pictures.

In Table 2 below, teachers describe how they have used pictures creatively to make motivational learning activities. What specific purpose might be fulfilled by the pictures in each activity? Write your ideas here. The first one has been done for you. See Resource 1 for possible answers to this activity.

**Table 2** Identifying the purpose of using pictures to support English learning.

Teacher activity	Purpose
I draw pictures on the board to explain vocabulary that students don't know.	The picture helps students learn and remember new words and phrases.
I draw a picture related to a traditional story. As I draw, the students have to guess what the story is, and then tell the story.	
I ask students to look at a picture that accompanies a story (in the textbook, newspaper or magazine). I ask them: 'What can you see in the picture?' and then encourage them to use as much English as possible to describe what they can see. Then I ask, 'From this picture can you guess what the text might be about?'	
I cut out pictures from newspapers and magazines. I describe the picture and ask my students to draw it.	
I give a picture to one student in a group, who describes it to the rest of the group. The other students have to draw it without seeing the picture.	
I ask the students to work in groups of four or five. I give each group a different picture and	

ask them to write a paragraph (or a few words) describing their picture. I then display all the pictures at the front of the classroom. I ask one student from each group to read out their paragraph. The other students have to guess which picture the paragraph describes.

Now choose one of the activities from Table 2 and try this with your students.



### Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- How did the lesson go?
- Did you have to prompt or intervene at any point with students?
- What would you change next time you use this activity?

Be sure to make the most of the pictures that are in the textbook. You can find links to resources with more ideas for using pictures for teaching English in Resource 2.

## 3 Using news stories in the English classroom

Newspapers and magazines can be a very useful resource for the classroom, regardless of the language used in them. This is because:

- the content is likely to be more up-to-date and of interest to your students than typical textbook material
- they are readily available and reasonably cheap
- they have varied contents – advertisements, photos and other images, headlines, letters, stories, and articles about many different topics
- they expose students to different kinds of language compared with the textbook and (if they are in English) to ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ English – that is, English not specially written for language learners.



**Figure 2** You can also use news stories to teach English in your classroom.

## Case Study 1: Ms Mamata uses a local news story in her English class

Ms Mamata teaches English to Class X. At a recent training session she learnt more about using resources in the classroom, such as the radio, television and newspapers. In this class, she uses a local news story as a prompt for a class discussion in English.

I teach in a rural school with few facilities, so it's difficult for me to use the radio or TV in the classroom, and it's not always easy to find an English-language newspaper. When I was at the training session, all I could think of was how difficult it was for me to find resources in English, even though I could see that my students would probably benefit if I used them.

But then something happened in our local area that everyone talked about, and the local newspapers contained many stories about it. A leopard from the nearby forests had come into a neighbouring village. The villagers had been upset and scared, and one of them had killed the leopard.

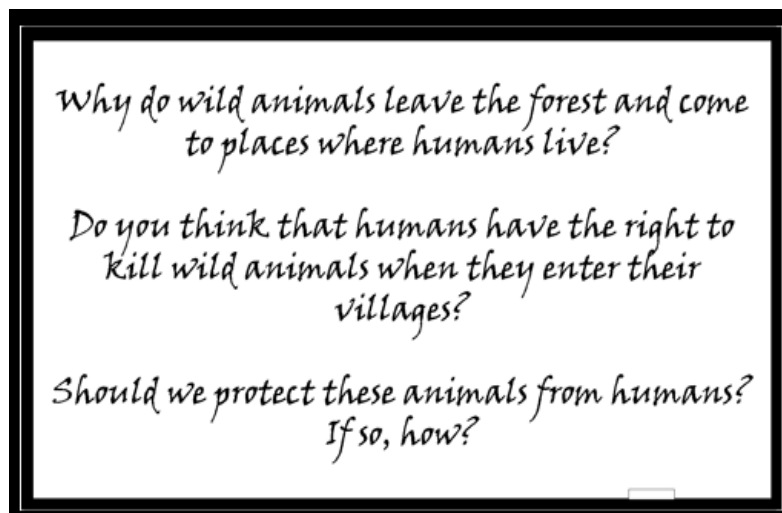
The students were very interested in this story, and I heard them talking about it before class. I thought it would be useful to capture this interest for English lessons. I decided to make use of a newspaper article about this, even though it was in Assamese. I could ask about it in English, and it could provide a stimulus for other English activities.

I found a short article on the event and brought it to class. I told my students that we were going to discuss a current event in the local community. I asked one of my students to read the story aloud to the whole class. Then I asked my students, in English, 'Can you tell me what the article is about?'

I waited but the class was silent. Eventually, Rajesh said in Assamese: 'Madam, it is about how humans and animals have conflicts.'

So I replied, 'Good, that's right. Can anyone help Rajesh say this in English?' I got students to tell me the English words for 'humans', 'animals' and 'conflicts', and eventually someone said, 'It's about humans and animals fighting.'

I then wrote some questions in English on the board that I had prepared before class. These questions were meant to provoke a discussion among my students. There are no right or wrong answers to them.





I made sure that students understood the questions by asking for translations.

I put my students into groups of four and told each group to choose a secretary to make notes of their ideas. I told each group to discuss the questions on the board and decide together on one answer. They would then present their opinion to the class. I gave them ten minutes to do the activity.

As students discussed the questions, I walked around and listened to what they were saying. At first they mostly spoke in their home language, but then they changed to English when they planned what they would say to the class. I provided language support to a few groups as they worked, helping with unknown vocabulary words and reminding them to use the past tense.

After ten minutes, I asked the secretaries to present their group's opinions. I decided to ask each group to give just one of the three answers, as it would take a long time to do each of them, and the students might lose interest.

Students had much more to say in this activity because it was a story that they were interested in, so I'm going to try to find more interesting and topical news stories for them to discuss. I didn't want this activity to take up our whole class time, but next time I might make it longer. They could have written up their ideas in a paragraph after the discussion, for example. Maybe I'll do that next time we discuss a news story.



### Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- How do you think this teacher ensured that all the students participated in the activity?
- What do you think students learnt in this activity?
- How could the teacher assess their learning?

## Activity 3: Using a news story in your classroom

In Case Study 1, the teacher used a local news story as a stimulus for an activity. The story she chose was useful because it was about a contemporary issue that was relevant and meaningful for her students. The questions she asked about the news story encouraged them to think critically about the issue.

See Resource 3 for further ideas about possible news stories and questions before trying the following activity in your classroom:

1. Find a news story that you think your students will find interesting and will have opinions about. This story could be in English, but it could also be in Hindi or another language.
2. Before class, think of questions about the topic of the story, rather than the details of it. These questions should encourage your students to express their opinions. For example, if the story is about a train crash, the questions could be about personal and public responsibilities for safe travel.
3. Take the story into class and ask one of your students to read it aloud.
4. Ask your students some questions about the story to make sure that they have understood

it and are familiar with the key vocabulary.

5. Write your prepared questions about the story on the blackboard.
6. Organise students into groups of four or five, giving them ten minutes to discuss the questions and note down their thoughts in English. Each group selects a secretary to take notes. See Resource 4, 'Using groupwork', for more on this.
7. Walk around the room and support students where necessary, encouraging them to use English where possible.
8. After ten minutes, ask the secretary of each group to give their answer to one of the questions.



### Video: Using groupwork



### Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- Were your students interested in the story that you selected? Did they give different opinions? If not, how can you encourage them to express their opinions in the future?
- The activity in the case study is mostly a speaking activity. Can you think of ideas for extending this to a writing activity?

If your students are not used to thinking critically and expressing their opinions, it may take some time for them to gain the confidence to do this. That is why it's important to do these kinds of activities regularly. To keep their interest, choose stories that you think are relevant to them. Ask them if there is a topic they would like to discuss in class, or ask them to bring in a news story. (See Resource 5 for links to online newspapers and more information about using newspapers in the English classroom.)

You could follow this speaking activity with a writing activity, where students write their opinions about the story in a paragraph or essay, depending on their level. See the units Whole-class writing routines for ideas about providing a model text to support students with their writing and Supporting independent writing in English for helping students to write independently. One possible long-term writing project that they could do is to produce a class (or school) newspaper – see Resource 6 for ideas.

## 4 Using television series in the English classroom

These days a great number of people have televisions in their homes, so television programmes are a resource that many of your students will have access to. Although you may not be able to use one in your classroom, you could use dramas or news stories that your students have watched as the basis for speaking and writing activities in your classroom. There are several English-language movies, television shows, cartoon channels and news channels available in India that your students may be able to watch. Choosing television programmes that your students are interested in and are likely to have watched will increase their motivation to speak and write in their English classes.

## Case Study 2: Mr Chinuja uses a local TV series as a prompt for a writing activity in an English class

*Mr Chinuja's Class X students, who are generally familiar with the series Malgudi Days, use it as a basis for a writing activity. They are very interested in writing about something they are familiar with and enjoy.*

The TV series Malgudi Days (based on the stories written by R.K. Narayan) was being broadcast again, and I knew that most of my students watched it. Since everyone was talking about it, I thought that this would be a good basis for discussion in my English classes. It wasn't possible to show the programme in the classroom, but I realised that most of my students were watching the programme at home anyway – and we could discuss the programme afterwards in the class.

At the end of one lesson I told my students to watch the next episode of Malgudi Days, and made a note on the board of the time and the channel. I suggested that those who didn't have a television might try to watch it at a neighbour's house or somewhere in the local area. By the next lesson most of them had watched the episode, and they were talking about it with excitement. I organised the students into groups of four and asked them to quickly discuss what had happened in the episode, as some of them hadn't been able to watch it.

I asked my students to name some of the characters who live in the fictional village of Malgudi. I wrote the list on the board and asked each group to choose a different character from the village. Once each group had chosen a character, I told them that they were scriptwriters for a television company and that they had to write an episode of the story starring this character. The episode could be based on a previous episode that they had seen, or they could think of their own future episode. I told them that they did not need to write the script of the episode, just the storyline. I read out an example I had written.

Thanappa is the village mailman who knows everyone and knows everyone's business from reading out to the recipients the mail he delivers. He is good friends with Ramanujam and watches his daughter Kamashi grow up. When Kamakshi is old enough, Thanappa helps the family find a suitable husband for her. The man and Kamakshi like each other, and their wedding is arranged for the last day before the man leaves for army. If the wedding isn't held by that date, it won't take place at all. Two days before the wedding, Thanappa is given an urgent letter to deliver to Ramanujam informing him of his brother's serious illness. Thanappa goes to the house, but decides not to deliver the letter because everyone is so happy about the wedding. The wedding goes ahead. Two days later Thanappa delivers the bad news to Ramanujam, with his sincere apologies.

I asked my students if they noticed how I had used the present tense throughout. I first described the main character. Then I explained the story. I told them that I tried to write in simple sentences. They should try to follow that structure.

I then gave my students 12 minutes to write a paragraph or two in English explaining what happened in their character's episode. Once they had written their storylines, I asked each group to read out their story to the whole class. They enjoyed listening to each other's stories.

The students were so excited to be talking about one of their favourite television shows. While I usually find that they don't like writing activities, this time they were very motivated to try to express their ideas. I don't think that they even noticed that they were learning and practising English, because they were so interested in each other's stories!

## Activity 4: Using a popular TV series as a basis for a writing activity in English

Try the next activity in your classroom:

1. Find out what TV series your students like watching, and ask them to watch an episode at home if they can. If there are students without a television, see if there is a way that they can watch the episode elsewhere.
2. In class, put your students into groups of four or five and ask them to briefly discuss what happened in the last episode that they watched. This helps them to remember the programme, and it makes sure that anyone who didn't watch the programme understands what is going on.
3. Tell your students that they are going to decide what happens in the next episode. Each group must write a description of the plot for this episode in English. Give them a time limit.
4. Give them an example of a storyline.
5. Point out that they should first describe their character. Then they should describe the plot. Tell them to use the present tense and to keep their sentences short and simple.
6. When time is up, ask each group to read out their storylines to the rest of the class.
7. In order to give them a purpose for listening, ask students to vote on which storyline they liked best.



### Pause for thought

After trying this activity with your students, think about the following questions:

- What kinds of plot storylines did your students write? Were you surprised by their imagination and creativity?
- Did all your students participate? If not, how could you modify the activity to make it more accessible to everyone?
- Could you do this activity with other kinds of TV or radio programmes?

If your students enjoyed this activity, and they seem very interested in drama, you could involve them in a project to produce a TV script (see Resource 7).

You could do speaking and writing activities based on films that your students may have seen, or about news stories from television, etc. To find more ideas for using television as a resource for English teaching, see Resource 8. You could also do this activity with any radio programme that is popular and available in your local area (see Resource 9 for ideas).

## 5 Summary

Your English textbook is central to your classroom teaching, but using other resources creatively can motivate students to speak and write more in English as they relate to familiar contemporary events happening outside your classroom. Pictures, news stories and television shows can all be used as prompts for meaningful speaking and writing activities in your English classroom. These resources do not need to be expensive or even necessarily all in English, and most of them are probably available in your community.

Other Secondary English teacher development units on this topic are:

- Local resources for teaching English.
- English grammar in action.

## Resources

### Resource 1: Possible answers to Activity 2

**Table R1.1** Possible answers to Activity 2.

Teacher activity	Purpose
I draw pictures on the board to explain vocabulary that students don't know.	The picture helps students learn and remember new words and phrases.
I draw a picture related to a traditional story. As I draw, the students have to guess what the story is, and then tell the story.	The picture provides a prompt for a speaking activity.
I ask students to look at a picture that accompanies a story (in the textbook, newspaper or magazine). I ask them: 'What can you see in the picture?' and then encourage them to use as much English as possible to describe what they can see. Then I ask, 'From this picture can you guess what the text might be about?'	The picture helps students to prepare for a reading activity.
I cut out pictures from newspapers and magazines. I describe the picture and ask my students to draw it.	The picture is used for a listening activity.
I give a picture to one student in a group, who describes it to the rest of the group. The other students have to draw it without seeing the picture.	The picture is used for a listening and speaking activity.
I ask the students to work in groups of four or five. I give each group a different picture and ask them to write a paragraph (or a few words) describing their picture. I then display all the	The picture is used for a writing, speaking and listening activity.

pictures at the front of the classroom. I ask one student from each group to read out their paragraph. The other students have to guess which picture the paragraph describes.	
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## Resource 2: Using pictures in the English classroom

For help with drawing in your classroom:

- ‘A teacher’s guide to blackboard drawing’: <http://www.kau.edu.sa/GetFile.aspx?id=171130&fn=BLACKBOARD%20DRAWING.pdf>
- ‘How to draw animals’: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/tips/how-draw-animals>
- ‘How to draw cats, dogs and birds’: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/tips/how-draw-cats-dogsbirds>

Here are some links to pictures that are useful for English teachers:

- ‘eltpics Flickr photostream’: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics>
- ‘In pictures’: <http://www.theguardian.com/inpictures>
- ‘In pictures’: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in\\_pictures/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in_pictures/)

Flashcards are pictures of words or objects. They are particularly useful for lower-level students:

- Free ESL Flashcards: <http://www.eslflashcards.com/>

## Resource 3: News stories

Here are two other possible types of news story that might encourage your students to think and express opinions about a topic:

- A story about Kudankulam nuclear plant in Tamil Nadu producing electricity again after years of not being used.
- A story about 20,000 Indians applying for a one-way trip to Mars in order to start a new colony.

Here are some suggested questions for students. Notice that they are not only about the contents of the story, but encourage students to think critically and express opinions.

### News story 1

- Can nuclear power be ‘safe and secure’?
- Is nuclear power necessary for the welfare and economic growth of India?
- Nuclear firms say that they will pay huge sums of money in case of an accident. Can money compensate for ill health or loss of life?
- Do you live near a nuclear plant? If so, how do you feel about it? If not, how do you think you might feel?

### News story 2

- Why do you think so many people want to leave India to live on Mars?
- Do you think it would be difficult to live on Mars? Why?
- Would you like to live on Mars?

- Where would you like to live? Why?

Some of these questions are more difficult than others. It is a good idea to include a range of questions for students at different levels. All students should be encouraged to answer questions that make them think. Students could reply to these questions in either spoken or written activities. (See the unit *Supporting speaking in English: pair and groupwork* for guidance on a discussion and the units *Supporting independent writing in English* and *Whole-class writing routines* for ideas about helping students with writing.)

## Resource 4: Using groupwork

Groupwork is a systematic, active, pedagogical strategy that encourages small groups of students to work together for the achievement of a common goal. These small groups promote more active and more effective learning through structured activities.

### The benefits of groupwork

Groupwork can be a very effective way of motivating your students to learn by encouraging them to think, communicate, exchange ideas and thoughts, and make decisions. Your students can both teach and learn from others: a powerful and active form of learning.

Groupwork is more than students sitting in groups; it involves working on and contributing to a shared learning task with a clear objective. You need to be clear about why you are using groupwork for learning and know why this is preferable to lecturing, pair work or to students working on their own. Thus groupwork has to be well-planned and purposeful.

### Planning groupwork

When and how you use groupwork will depend on what learning you want to achieve by the end of the lesson. You can include groupwork at the start, the end or midway through the lesson, but you will need to allow enough time. You will need to think about the task that you want your students to complete and the best way to organise the groups.

As a teacher, you can ensure that groupwork is successful if you plan in advance:

- the goals and expected outcomes of the group activity
- the time allocated to the activity, including any feedback or summary task
- how to split the groups (how many groups, how many students in each group, criteria for groups)
- how to organise the groups (role of different group members, time required, materials, recording and reporting)
- how any assessment will be undertaken and recorded (take care to distinguish individual assessments from group assessments)
- how you will monitor the groups' activities.

### Groupwork tasks

The task that you ask your students to complete depends on what you want them to learn. By taking part in groupwork, they will learn skills such as listening to each other, explaining their ideas and working cooperatively. However, the main aim is for them to learn something about the subject that you are teaching. Some examples of tasks could include the following:

- **Presentations:** Students work in groups to prepare a presentation for the rest of the class. This works best if each group has a different aspect of the topic, so they are motivated to listen to each other rather than listening to the same topic several times. Be very strict about the time that each group has to present and decide on a set of criteria for a good presentation. Write these on the board before the lesson. Students can use the criteria to plan their presentation and assess each other's work. The criteria could include:
  - Was the presentation clear?
  - Was the presentation well-structured?
  - Did I learn something from the presentation?
  - Did the presentation make me think?
- **Problem solving:** Students work in groups to solve a problem or a series of problems. This could include conducting an experiment in science, solving problems in mathematics, analysing a story or poem in English, or analysing evidence in history.
- **Creating an artefact or product:** Students work in groups to develop a story, a piece of drama, a piece of music, a model to explain a concept, a news report on an issue or a poster to summarise information or explain a concept. Giving groups five minutes at the start of a new topic to create a brainstorm or mind map will tell you a great deal about what they already know, and will help you pitch the lesson at an appropriate level.
- **Differentiated tasks:** Groupwork is an opportunity to allow students of different ages or attainment levels to work together on an appropriate task. Higher attainers can benefit from the opportunity to explain the work, whereas lower attainers may find it easier to ask questions in a group than in a class, and will learn from their classmates.
- **Discussion:** Students consider an issue and come to a conclusion. This may require quite a bit of preparation on your part in order to make sure that the students have enough knowledge to consider different options, but organising a discussion or debate can be very rewarding for both you and them.

## Organising groups

Groups of four to eight are ideal but this will depend on the size of your class, the physical environment and furniture, and the attainment and age range of your class. Ideally everyone in a group needs to see each other, talk without shouting and contribute to the group's outcome.

- Decide how and why you will divide students into groups; for example, you may divide groups by friendship, interest or by similar or mixed attainment. Experiment with different ways and review what works best with each class.
- Plan any roles you will give to group members (for example, note taker, spokesperson, time keeper or collector of equipment), and how you will make this clear.

## Managing groupwork

You can set up routines and rules to manage good groupwork. When you use groupwork regularly, students will know what you expect and find it enjoyable. Initially it is a good idea to work with your class to identify the benefits of working together in teams and groups. You should discuss what makes good groupwork behaviour and possibly generate a list of 'rules' that might be displayed; for example, 'Respect for each other', 'Listening', 'Helping each other', 'Trying more than one idea', etc.

It is important to give clear verbal instructions about the groupwork that can also be written on the blackboard for reference. You need to:



- direct your students to the groups they will work in according to your plan, perhaps designating areas in the classroom where they will work or giving instructions about moving any furniture or school bags
- be very clear about the task and write it on the board in short instructions or pictures. Allow your students to ask questions before you start.

During the lesson, move around to observe and check how the groups are doing. Offer advice where needed if they are deviating from the task or getting stuck.

You might want to change the groups during the task. Here are two techniques to try when you are feeling confident about groupwork – they are particularly helpful when managing a large class:

- **‘Expert groups’**: Give each group a different task, such as researching one way of generating electricity or developing a character for a drama. After a suitable time, re-organise the groups so that each new group is made up of one ‘expert’ from all the original groups. Then give them a task that involves collating knowledge from all the experts, such as deciding on what sort of power station to build or preparing a piece of drama.
- **‘Envoys’**: If the task involves creating something or solving a problem, after a while, ask each group to send an envoy to another group. They could compare ideas or solutions to the problem and then report back to their own group. In this way, groups can learn from each other.

At the end of the task, summarise what has been learnt and correct any misunderstandings that you have seen. You may want to hear feedback from each group, or ask just one or two groups who you think have some good ideas. Keep students’ reporting brief and encourage them to offer feedback on work from other groups by identifying what has been done well, what was interesting and what might be developed further.

Even if you want to adopt groupwork in your classroom, you may at times find it difficult to organize because some students:

- are resistant to active learning and do not engage
- are dominant
- do not participate due to poor interpersonal skills or lack of confidence.

To become effective at managing groupwork it is important to reflect on all the above points, in addition to considering how far the learning outcomes were met and how well your students responded (did they all benefit?). Consider and carefully plan any adjustments you might make to the group task, resources, timings or composition of the groups.

Research suggests that learning in groups need not be used all the time to have positive effects on student achievement, so you should not feel obliged to use it in every lesson. You might want to consider using groupwork as a supplemental technique, for example as a break between a topic change or a jump-start for class discussion. It can also be used as an ice-breaker or to introduce experiential learning activities and problem solving exercises into the classroom, or to review topics.

## Resource 5: Using newspapers in the English classroom

Here are some links to English-language Indian online newspapers. They can also be useful for images:

- The Times of India: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>
- The Indian Express: <http://www.indianexpress.com/>
- Hindustan Times: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/>
- NDTV: <http://www.ndtv.com/>
- The BBC also has news about India: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/asia/india/>

Here are links to news stories for learners of English and teachers:

- BBC Learning English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>
- 'Classroom materials': <http://www.theguardian.com/education/series/classroom-materials>

Articles about using newspapers in the English classroom:

- 'Teaching materials: using newspapers in the classroom 1': <http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/teaching-materials/teaching-materialsusing-newspapers-in-the-classroom-1/146510.article>
- 'Using news articles': <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/using-news-articles>

## Resource 6: A project idea – a class newspaper in English

One possible long-term writing project that you could involve students in is the production of a class (or school) newspaper. Make sure to explain – or decide together with your students – the aim of the project and the possible outcome. They can discuss the plan and decide on the various activities and contents of a newspaper by analysing available newspapers. Students allocate work among themselves and decide who:

- takes interviews
- reports events like festivals, accidents, etc.
- writes the draft news items
- edits the news items
- writes the finalised newspaper out by hand or by printing using a computer.

They work to collect data and develop the newspaper within the given time frame. The newspaper should be published with illustrations, pictures, etc. and distributed around the school or local area.

## Resource 7: A project idea – writing a TV script in English

Once your students have written storylines for a TV episode, they could try writing the script (or part of the script) for the episode in English. Students could then perform their scripts in front of the class, or even other classes in the school.

## Resource 8: Using television for English language teaching

The TeachingEnglish website has a resource on talking about television in the classroom: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant/essential-uk/reality-tv>

You might also like to watch television programmes aimed at helping viewers to improve their English on Doordarshan, or Tata Sky (e.g. Active English), etc.

## Resource 9: Radio programmes for English language teaching

All India Radio broadcasts a national programme in English on the fourth Friday of every month at 10 p.m. British Council India has produced a series of 12 radio episodes, each one 15 minutes long, for English teachers in India. They focus on developing learner-centred approaches for primary and secondary school teachers: <http://www.britishcouncil.in/teach/teachingenglish-radio-india>

## Additional resources

- ‘Critical thinking’: <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/aisi/themes/critical-thinking.aspx>
- ‘Creative and critical thinking in language classrooms’: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kabilan-CriticalThinking.html>
- ‘Using the board’: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/using-board>
- ‘Articles on resources’: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/resources>
- ‘EFL lesson plan’: <http://film-english.com/tag/efl-lesson-plan/>
- ‘High school teachers’: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/high-school-teachers/807>
- ‘Kudankulam: India nuclear plant begins operating’: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-24619985>
- BBC News: In pictures: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in\\_pictures/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in_pictures/)
- BBC Learning English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>

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