

melta news

Munich English Language Teachers Association
Linking and developing teachers in the Munich area since 1989

Summer 2025 | no. 114



Activities

to
encourage reflection

Tribute

to
Mario Rinvolucrí

Humanism

in
language teaching

CONTENTS

- 3 Message from the Chair

Bulletin Board

- 4 Upcoming events, Melta podcast update and news

Tribute to Mario Rinvolucrí

- 7 Mario Rinvolucrí – A unique voice in humanistic language teaching
8 Real words – Real people
10 The ever-inspiring Mario Rinvolucrí
11 Personalising those routines!
12 A lucky find
13 A rose is a rose is a rose

Activities for the Classroom

- 14 Melta Five-a-Day
18 Keep them talking
20 One Quarter English – The show goes on
21 From the Melta kitchen
22 *Teekesselchen* – Homonyms!
23 A tin of cards

Pronunciation Predicament

- 24 Pronouncing the letter combination -ove-

In Our Time

- 26 Telling their stories to the world – Showing support and expressing admiration for the children of Gaza
28 From locker room to classroom – Empowering EFL teachers to lead with confidence
30 Easter between the sirens

Special Report Humanistic Language Teaching

- 31 Storytelling and the 4Cs
33 Talking the talk
34 Branching scenarios – Enhancing inclusion and empathy in the language classroom

Reviews

- 36 Real-life language for real-life situations

37 Aunt Agony
38 Rhyming Corner
39 Membership info
39 Impressum



Consider advertising in *Melta News*

Full page: €180

Half-page: €90

2025 Melta Committee

Randy Perry
Chair
chair@melta.de

Michael Hoffmann
Treasurer
treasurer@melta.de

Ruth Stegmann
Secretary
secretary@melta.de

Elie Hazeem
Vice Chair
vicechair@melta.de

Mike Saunders
Member-at-large
okachi@gmail.com

Cathy Pilgram
Member-at-large
membership-secretary@melta.de

Joan Walsh
Member-at-large
joaniwalsh@web.de

Message from the Chair

Mario Rinvolutri, to whom we're paying tribute in this issue of Melta News, used to tell a story about the time he had a passionate beekeeper in his class. This beekeeper was so passionate, in fact, said Mario, that not only was she eager to read books on beekeeping in English and meet with English beekeepers outside of class, she was also able, because of her outgoing personality, to interest him and the entire class in beekeeping. As a result, he decided to exploit this shared interest and turn the class into an ESP course on beekeeping.

The moral of the story isn't, of course, that all English courses should focus on beekeeping or, indeed, on any other subject of particular student interest but that the language classroom can and ought to be an engaging, humanistic environment in which teachers and students come together to learn from one another.

Mario's gone now, but his spirit is still alive – in particular, his notion that our job isn't just to teach other people English; it's to utilize the emotional and intellectual resources that we and they already possess in order to understand one another better and thus realize our full potential as human beings.

I'd like to thank all of you for your support of Melta this summer and especially those who've taken the time to contribute to our recent events and help produce this issue of Melta News. Mario would have been delighted.

I wish everyone a good start to the new school year and hope I'll see you all at another Melta event – online or in-person – real soon.

All the best,

Randy



Randy Perry

Melta News Editing Team

Olga Barlow, Steve Barlow,
Nicki Denise, Dervilla Fastner,
Elie Hazeem, Saskia Kölliker,
Juliana Oosten, Mareike Sedlmeier,
Joan Walsh



WEELCOME

We'd like to welcome our new members!

Alina Galeeva, Susi Graves,
Hanna Kersch, Olha Khmiel-
nova, Kseniia Lavrenova,
Belinda Risteska, Holly Teage
and Chanjuan Wei

UPCOMING EVENTS



MUNICH VOLKSHOCHSCHULE

Conversation Classes – more than just talking

Presenter: Julia Flyng
Volkshochschule Orleansstr. 34
Friday, May 23, 2025, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Using L1 in the Classroom – Still a Taboo?

Presenter: Amanda Momeni
Volkshochschule Einsteinstr. 28 B
Saturday, September 27, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Bringing it on Home: Language is personal

Presenter: Carolyn Morrow
Volkshochschule Einstein 28 B
Saturday, October 18, 2025, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conversation Classes – more than just talking Part 2

Presenter: Julia Flyng
Volkshochschule Orleanstr. 34
Friday, October 31, 2025, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

English Correction in the English Language Classroom

Presenter: Julia Flyng
Volkshochschule Orleanstr. 34
Friday, November 14, 2025, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

How to include AI in lessons

Presenter: Amanda Momeni
Online
Saturday, February 14, 2026, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For further details and registration, please contact Maria Kahofer, Tel. (089) 48006-6259, email: maria.kahofer@mvhs.de.

All Volkshochschule workshops are free of charge for MVHS teachers. Teachers at other VHSs pay €12 and non-VHS teachers €24.



Melta podcast update

There are now two new podcasts on the Melta YouTube channel

In the **first**, Mike Clarkson talks to Anna Wilby, teacher trainer and pedagogical manager, about her teaching and about the use of course books in class. They also discuss how we should use students as a physical resource in our teaching and how Anna's students all end up speaking with a Yorkshire accent.

In the **second** podcast, Elie Hazeem meets with Ilá Coimbra, who hails from Brazil and is currently teaching in Munich. They discuss the issues that non-native English teachers face when applying for jobs and how some organizations can help them in this respect as well as the particular difficulties that Portuguese speakers may have when learning English.

The Melta podcast comes out every four weeks or so and can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/@MeltaPodcast/videos>. It aims to provide interesting and informative interviews, discussions and workshops for Melta members and supporters. Please subscribe if you enjoy it and spread the word. We'd also love it if you left a comment at

<http://www.youtube.com/@MeltaPodcast>

If you have any ideas, suggestions or reviews, please don't hesitate to contact Mike Clarkson (mikec.meltapod@gmail.com) or Elie Hazeem (sigma@gmail.com).

The Melta podcasters:



**Mike
Clarkson**



**Elie
Hazeem**



**Michael
Saunders**

RESEARCH PROJECT:**MULTILINGUALISM**

Has German become a big part of your daily life?
Are you interested in how we juggle more than one language in our mind/brain?

The TU Braunschweig is currently looking for English native speakers and English-German bilinguals to take part in a trilingual project comparing English and French speakers of German living in Germany to German native speakers living in the UK and France. The research aims to show how languages are processed and learned and will eventually feed into improving language teaching and learning.

For further details on the project and how you can take part, please see the flyer below. Questions can also be directed to bildev@tu-braunschweig.de and 0049-151-26158826 (incl. WhatsApp). Your participation would be greatly appreciated!

Vera Heyer, TU Braunschweig



GMF Bayern e.V.
Gesamtverband
Moderne Fremdsprachen Bayern

SAVE THE DATE:**GMF CONFERENCE 2025,**

at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität in Nuremberg on October 10-11, 2025

GMF is an association dedicated to modern language teaching. This year's conference is focused on the topic "Quality assurance in foreign language teaching in times of teacher shortages".

There will be keynote speeches, workshops and plenty of opportunities for exchanging ideas and networking.

Updates on the programme will be published in due time at: <https://gmf-bayern.de>

Can you out-German the Germans?

A linguistic challenge!
Go to: www.bildev.de

Wer kann teilnehmen?
Deutschsprechende (20 – 60 Jahre)
mit Muttersprache
✓ Englisch
✓ Französisch
✓ Englisch und Deutsch
✓ Französisch und Deutsch

Was erwartet mich?

- Online-Fragebogen zu sprachlichem Hintergrund (ca. 30 min)
- Vor-Ort-Termin an einer Universität in Ihrer Nähe mit sprachlichen Aufgaben und Spielen (ca. 2 h)
- Aufwandsentschädigung: 30€

Kontakt
E-Mail: info@bildev.de
Telefon/WhatsApp: 0151 26 15 88 26

Einfach scannen und mitmachen!

<https://link.tu-bs.de/6NpPyE>

38TH ANNUAL IATEFL BESIG CONFERENCE

Location: President Hotel, Kifisias 43, Athens, Greece

Date: November 7-9, 2025

Theme: Business Unusual – Rethinking Business English for a Changing World

Registration at:

<https://www.iatefl.org/event-details/#/?id=674>

(Early bird registration until September 15, 2025)

Hotel reservations: Delegates can book rooms at the President Hotel at a discounted rate by using the code **IATEFL25** on the hotel's website.

Further information at: www.iateflbesig.org



Special Offer!

As your teaching association is an IATEFL Associate, you can benefit from discounted membership of IATEFL too!



As an IATEFL Associate Individual Member you can...

- Keep up to date with all that's new in your profession internationally
- Build your network of colleagues from around the world, sharing your ideas and your challenges
- Attend regular webinars on a wide range of topics
- Search our archive of recorded webinars, articles and publications
- Get discounted prices on a range of publications and resources
- Join one or more of the 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and shape your membership to your specific areas of professional interest (SIGs are not automatically included in Associate Individual Membership, but can be added for £23.50 each).
- Receive e-Bulletins, our bi-monthly Magazine and our annual publication 'Conference Selections'
- Benefit from member prices to attend the annual IATEFL International Conference and Exhibition
- Apply for a range of IATEFL scholarships only available to members
- Submit a proposal to speak at conference, or have your first article published with our support

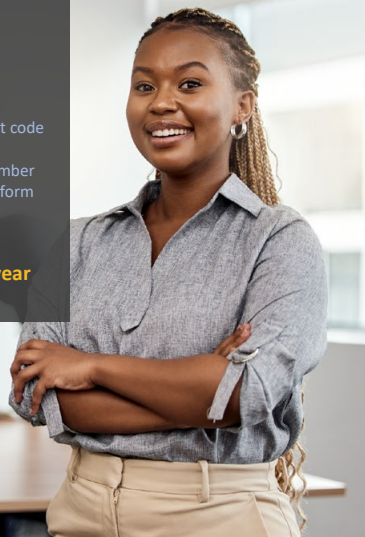
How do I join IATEFL through my teaching association?

1. Contact your teaching association
2. If you're a current member, they'll give you a specific discount code
3. Create a free account on the IATEFL website: www.iatefl.org
4. In your 'dashboard' choose to join IATEFL as an Associate member
5. Put in your discount code, and then complete the rest of the form
6. Make payment of the discounted membership fee

IATEFL Individual membership: £74 per year

IATEFL Associate Individual Membership: £27 per year

Prices shown are for year: 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024



ENGLISH BOOK SALE

The semi-annual English Book Sale is a great opportunity to stock up on inexpensive books for personal reading as well as for teaching and learning English. All the books and DVDs are donated (DONATIONS WELCOME!) We sort them into categories from A (Art) to Z (Zoology) and everything in between: readers, general fiction, children's books, etc.

The venue is on the outskirts of Munich in Haar, well connected to public transportation (S-Bahn and bus), and has ample parking for bicycles and cars.

The proceeds from the book sale go to Tanzania through the registered charity, Haar-Ilembula, and are used to support humanitarian projects such as education, a medical fund and micro loans for women.

After finding your book treasures at the sale, you can enjoy them with a cup of coffee at the café next door. Hope to see you and lots of Melta members in November!

Kirsten Braun

Donations welcome!

Thousands of Books and DVDs from 50c to €5

ENGLISH BOOK SALE

**Fri. Nov 14, 2025 from 2pm – 7pm and
Sat. Nov 15, 2025 from 10am – 3pm**

**Gesellschaftshaus, Ringstr. 36, 85540 Haar
in the grounds of kbo-Isar-Amper-Klinikum
(next to Cafe Jedermann)**

All proceeds are used to benefit our ILEMBULA Partnership,
which supports humanitarian ventures in Tanzania.

Info: ilembula.de/aktion/annual-booksale
 Phone: (089) 463198 – Gerlinde
 Phone: (089) 4620-3264 – Kirsten
 Email: english-book-sale@gmx.de
 Facebook: Munich English Book Sale

Mario Rinvolucrí – A unique voice in humanistic language teaching

Simon Marshall pays tribute to one of the most innovative, inspiring and influential language teachers of our time

On February 19 of this year, one of the great ELT pioneers, Mario Rinvolucrí, died peacefully in a nursing home accompanied by members of his family. With his passing, an elemental force has departed the English language teaching world.

Guiding principles

Many of you will already know Mario's work through his numerous books, articles, workshops and conference presentations. The guiding principles of his work were that students should be at the very epicentre of the learning process and that each one is a vibrant source of material.

Eschewing the need for externally imposed syllabi, Mario was always an arch enemy of mass-produced course books, which he condemned as artificial, bland and ultimately extraneous. Mario was a champion of practical, activity-based humanistic language teaching.

Humanistic language teaching in practice

Along with James Dixey, he founded Pilgrims in 1974, an organisation which was to garner fame for its innovation, creativity and daring. Mario lived and

breathed the organisation and established and transmitted the message of humanism in education around the globe through his writing and classroom practice, inspiring teachers far and wide to break barriers, be bold and transform their classrooms into spaces where learning a language becomes a joy rather than an obligation.

Mario was a champion of practical, activity-based humanistic language teaching

Mario never held opinions lightly and would sometimes be wilfully contrary. However, on no occasion did he expect others to subscribe to his views. On the contrary, he relished the challenge of disagreement, claiming that he often learnt more from his rivals than from his allies.

A talented linguist, Mario spoke fluent Italian, French and Spanish, had a working knowledge of Greek and was keen to develop his command of self-declared "lower intermediate" German, often reminding me proudly of his "German grandmother".

An ongoing inspiration

I'm certain that Mario would prefer to be remembered by his work rather than by excessive eulogy. So, if you want to see how dictation became absorbing rather than demoralising, go to his book of the same name (co-authored with Paul Davis). To enliven your grammar classes, there are whole rafts of engaging activities in *Grammar Games* and *Grammar in Action* (with Christine Frank). Alternatively, the magic of storytelling is brought marvellously to life in *Once Upon a Time* (with John Morgan). My list of his books could go on until a small library begins to appear....

Let me end then, bidding farewell to a beloved and deeply respected colleague and friend, saddened that



our time working together in this dimension is now over but fortified by the knowledge that his influence will continue to vivify and invigorate my own teaching and training.

I sincerely hope that you too will grasp the opportunity of benefitting from Mario Rinvolucrí's inimitable legacy.

End-of-term questionnaires or end-of-course questionnaires I find utterly contemptible, and I accuse all language schools across the world of producing childish questionnaires, and the questionnaires are based on this: "We've done lots for you. We've worked hard for you. We've loved you. Did you like it?" ... Utterly mad. ... So the kind of questionnaire we tried to evolve was a questionnaire where we said: "What did you do?" Them, individually. "What was your most creative moment last week?" ... "What sorts of thoughts did you have which actually surprised you?" ... We stopped treating people as if they were babies.

– Mario Rinvolucrí

MARIO RINVOLUCRÍ LIVE!

Talking about storytelling:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rDu5w4UFmA>.

Talking about humanism in language teaching:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6TpC-DWAoo>

Talking about using L1 in the classroom:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3LuRRRQOE4>

Talking about student feedback:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqBGVikNRNE>

Talking about error correction:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk-a2gUuWTU>



Simon Marshall has worked as an ELT teacher, trainer, and academic manager for more than 40 years for various organisations, including York St. John University, Pilgrims, International House and the British Council. He is particularly interested in the principled application of Humanistic Approaches to language teaching and teacher development. He is also a keen etymologist and reader of philosophy and psychology.

Real words – Real people

Tim Howe reflects on the late Mario Rinvoluceri's people-first teaching style and shares a few fun warm-up activities to create an engaging atmosphere in the classroom

I'll admit it: I've only dipped lightly into the vast pool of teaching wisdom left behind by Mario Rinvoluceri. But the more I reflect on the spirit of his work, the more I realise that much of what I do in the classroom – perhaps unknowingly – follows in his footsteps.

Rinvoluceri saw language teaching as something deeply personal. It wasn't about ticking off grammar points or racing through textbook units. It was about people. About imagination, empathy and creating the kind of classroom where real connection takes the lead.

Tuning in

Something I've come to value – and I think Rinvoluceri would too – is how we begin a lesson. Those first five minutes can set the whole emotional tone. I often use a simple “priming” activity, not necessarily about language at all, but about helping students arrive, get curious and “tune into” their English lesson.

One such activity I'll be adding to my toolbox is a fast-paced card game called Phonics Uno, where students match words by rhyme or first letter – no deep language processing, just rhythm, play and a chance to laugh. It breaks the ice and gets everyone into a switched-on state from the word go. (Thanks to Birgitta Berger for sharing this lovely activity at the recent Melta Show 'n' Tell event.)

Making it real

Here are three more activities I've used recently that carry the same human, creative energy Rinvoluceri championed.

Activity 1: Tips for a first date

If it's trending on WhatsApp, chances are it'll work in class too. This activity fits neatly into the Year 8 topic “Teen Life”.

★ **Level:** A2 – B2

✚ **Aim:** To promote speaking and writing, energise the classroom and have fun

✚ **Material:** Pens and post-its

✚ **Prep:** None



Procedure: Pupils are asked to offer each other advice for that all-important first date:

- What to wear
- What to say
- What to absolutely avoid.

Follow-up: Pupils write their favourite tips on post-its, which make a colourful wall display.

The activity sparks storytelling and lots of laughter. The result is something far more personal than a standard roleplay.

Rinvoluceri saw language teaching as something deeply personal – about people, imagination, empathy, and creating the kind of classroom where real connection takes the lead

Activity 2: My best friend

A writing activity about describing best friends and why these friendships matter

★ **Level:** A2+

✚ **Aim:** To inspire meaningful writing about people who matter to the students

✚ **Material:** Pen and paper or any digital device for writing

✚ **Prep:** No preparation necessary but the teacher may choose to write a short description of a best friend on the board, reviewing adjectives to describe good friends.

Procedure: Pupils are asked to write a description of someone they consider their best friend and reflect on why the friendship matters.

What came out in my classes was writing with real emotional honesty:

- “My best friend is an angel on two legs. I met her in fifth class. I came into the room and there were no places left, only the one. She turned round and was very nervous. I started talking to her: ‘Hi, do you want to be friends?’”
- “I have many best friends. I’m really happy that they exist in my life. They make me better when I’m sad or just when we meet. Sometimes we just watch in our eyes and start to laugh...”

Selecting the “best” responses for inclusion on our school yearbook proved much harder than expected. I wish we could have printed all 26!

If we start with people,
the language will follow

Activity 3: Real questions – Real voices

This is powerful activity exploring real questions and real voices.

★ **Level:** B1+

✚ **Aim:** To focus on meaningful questions, listening and being heard

✚ **Material:** Pen and paper or any digital device for writing

✚ **Prep:** No preparation necessary

Procedure: Begin with a moment of silent reflection by asking students: “What’s something you wish someone would ask you – not about school, but about you?”

Student suggestions included:

- What’s your happiest memory?
- What are you most proud of?
- What’s a dream you’ve never told anyone?

Pupils take turns asking each other these questions. The teacher gives more sentence starters to help students get along:

- I’ve never told anyone this, but...
- This memory always makes me smile...
- If I could share one dream with someone, it would be...

Follow-up: Pupils write a short paragraph entitled “What I Learned about You”. They then choose one question they found meaningful (their own or someone else’s) which they answer themselves.

That’s what I’ve come to take
from Rinvoluceri:
the permission to slow down
and listen more

Emotional learning and relationship-building

What I love about these kinds of activities is that they don’t require elaborate preparation or special materials. They just need time, attention and a willingness to let students be themselves.

And in a school system where teachers are constantly expected to justify their methods, it’s worth noting that



“My best friend is
an angel on two legs.”

I think this is a marvelous aspect of
human beings: that we naturally are so
incredibly creative.

– Mario Rinvoluceri

activities like these align directly with Bavarian curriculum thinking – the so-called *LehrplanPLUS*. They promote not only speaking and writing skills, but also social-emotional learning and relationship-building – core competencies that strengthen both classroom culture and equip students for life beyond school.

In the end, I think that’s what I’ve come to take from Rinvoluceri’s work: not a fixed approach, but a kind of permission – to slow down and listen more. And to trust that if we start with people, the language will follow. I like to think he’d have smiled at that.



Tim Howe moved to Germany as a translator in the late ‘90s. These days he bounces between a private state school and the Department of Tourism faculty at Hochschule München.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tim-howe-4708117/>

The ever-inspiring Mario Rinvolucrí

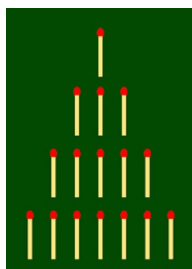
Dana Jelinkova shares a favourite classroom game with a cinematic background

Although I was very sad to hear of Mario's passing, it made me look back and remember some beautiful moments I had had with students in the classroom over the years thanks to his humanistic approach and stimulating activities.

The first activity to spring to mind was **The Marienbad Game**, which Mario developed from a game played in Alain Resnais' rather mysterious and intellectual French film from 1961, *Last Year in Marienbad*.

By the way, Marienbad could be the Czech spa town Mariánské Lázně not far from the Bavarian border, but the film was actually shot in Munich – at Nymphenburg and Amalienburg.

In the film, 16 matches are arranged in four rows (1, 3, 5 and 7) like this:



Taking turns, players are then allowed to remove any number of sticks from any one row at a time. The player who forces his or her opponent to take the last stick wins.

The Marienbad Game: Rinvolucrí style

★ **Level:** All

🧩 **Aim:** Raise awareness of grammar structures and show learners how removing words from a sentence can change meanings

📄 **Materials:** A short poem geared to the learners' level

✂️ **Prep:** None

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into teams.
2. On the board, write a short poem with the same or similar number of words and structure as in the film version of the game. In *Grammar Games*, Mario suggested this one:

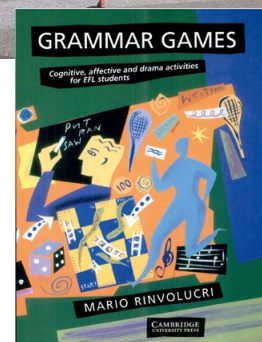
Darling
I love you so much
You must never leave me
If you go, I fear I will kill myself.

3. Have the teams take it in turn to remove one or more words from the poem. The result must be grammatically correct and still make sense.
4. The team that's forced to take the last word loses.
5. Play the game a second time with another poem. Mario suggested this excerpt from a poem by Adrian Mitchell:

When a man's too old or ill to work
We punish him.
Half his income is taken away.
Or all of it vanishes and he gets pocket money.



The result must be grammatically correct and still make sense



Variants: here are three follow-up options that can be used in language teaching more generally:

- Have students try to reduce a more complex text or sentence, not necessarily a poem, as much as possible.
- Give students a simple line – for example, “A woman lived in Munich” – and have them flesh it out by adding words.
- Ask students to write their own poems – for example, an ode to a person or a city beginning, for instance, with “Darling” or “Munich”.

For me, Mario Rinvolucrí represented humanistic teaching at its best, and his activities were an engaging and playful mixture of language, culture and feelings.

What does humanism mean for me? Well, I think it's intensely in the fascination I have for other people...And one way in which I indulged this curiosity and I suppose this kind of love was to write individual letters to my students...The insight which the letters from my students gave me really changed my teaching.

– **Mario Rinvolucrí**



Dana Jelinkova has taught numerous general and business English courses in Prague and Munich.

Personalising those routines!

Joan Walsh recalls an activity she learned from Mario Rinvolucrí at a workshop in Munich

Having discussed students' personal routines and hobbies from time to time in class, this can be the next step.

★ **Level:** A1- A2

✚ **Aim:** Practise simple present with frequency adverbs

🕒 **Time:** 20 minutes+

📄 **Materials:** One slip of paper for each student

✂️ **Prep:** None

Procedure:

1. Ask students to sit in a circle and write their names on a slip of paper.
2. Collect, shuffle and redistribute the slips.
3. Tell students the name on the slip they've received is top secret and can't be revealed.
4. Ask students to write some of the daily routines and / or hobbies of the person whose name is on their slip.
5. Ask each student to read what they've written to the open group.
Example:
This person always goes shopping on Saturdays. She usually has tea for breakfast and never eats muesli. She sometimes goes to pop concerts and likes flying kites.
6. Have the other students try to guess whose name was on the slip.

And that's it: simple, fun and effective.

I think that there's absolutely no choice but that there will be massive use of L1, especially in lower level classes, whether the teacher wants it or not. This will happen in people's minds. ... It's not a question of is it a good thing or a bad thing. It's there.
– **Mario Rinvolucrí**

Another way to tackle that tricky third-person "s"



A lucky find

Juliana Oosten describes two Mario Rinvolucrí games she discovered by chance

Years ago when I was on holiday back in New Zealand, I was browsing in a university bookshop. It was there that I came across Mario Rinvolucrí's *Grammar Games*. As I love playing games privately and in my English lessons, it was the ideal purchase.

Over the years, the two games I've adapted and used the most are **Snap** and **Auction**. Here's how I use them in class.

1. Activity 1: Snap

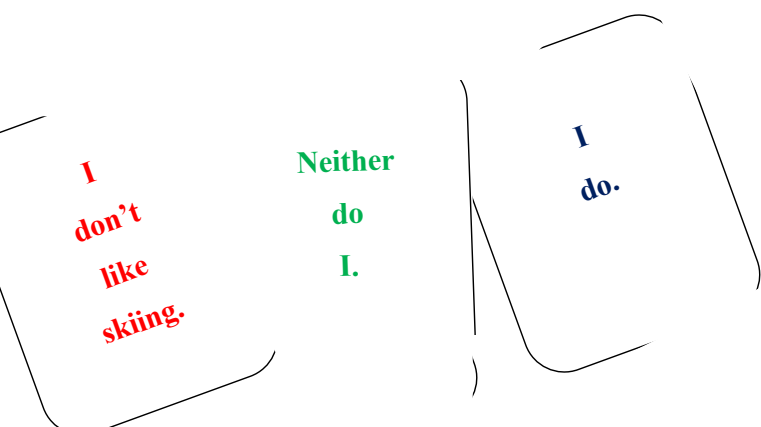
This card game can easily be adapted as a fun activity for teaching and reinforcing positive and negative agreement structures.

★ **Level:** A2+

🧩 **Aim:** Along with having fun, the main purpose of the game is to practice responding to positive and negative agreement statements and develop fluency. Additionally, it aims to help course participants (CPs) differentiate between formal and informal responses.

📄 **Material:** Self-made cards with statements and responses, focussing on positive and negative agreement structures. The cards include as many variations as possible – different tenses, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, etc. Here are some examples of possible statements and responses:

STATEMENTS	RESPONSES (MORE FORMAL / INFORMAL)
I live in Munich.	So do I. / Me too.
I don't come from here.	Neither do I. / Me neither.
I played tennis as a child.	So did I. / Me too.
I didn't play football as a child.	Neither did I. / Me neither.
I'll call Peter tomorrow.	So will I. / Me too.
I won't be at the meeting tomorrow.	Neither will I. / Me neither.
I'm from Munich.	So am I. Me too.
I'm not from Germany.	Neither am I. / Me neither.
I can speak Spanish.	So can I. / Me too.
I can't speak French.	Neither can I. / Me neither.



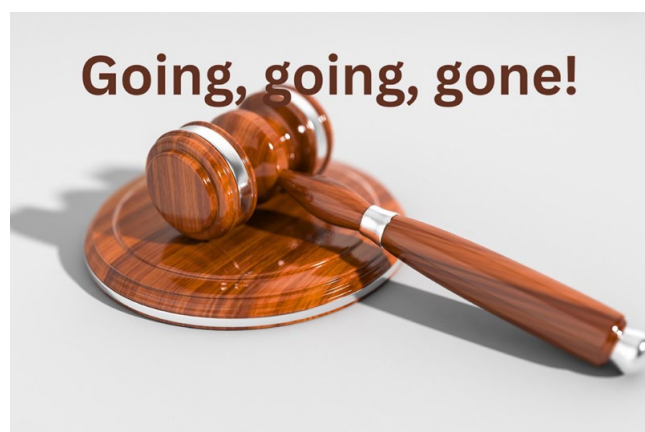
🔧 **Prep:** Before starting the game, write a few statements and responses on the board. For example: "I love apples." → "So do I." / "Me too."

Procedure:

1. Shuffle and deal the cards to the CPs.
2. CPs sort their cards into two piles: **statements** and **responses**.
3. Taking turns, CPs lay two cards – one from the **statement pile**, the other from the **response pile** – **face up in the centre of the table**.
4. If a **response card** correctly corresponds with a **statement card**, the first CP to say "**Snap**" keeps the pair.
5. The CP with the most pairs is the winner.

Note: A full set of **Snap** cards is available for downloading via the "Resources" page on the Melta website at: melta.de/resources.

Years ago in a university bookshop in New Zealand, I came across Mario Rinvolucrí's *Grammar Games* – the ideal purchase for me




Activity 2: Auction

This auction-style game can be played in class as a grammar awareness activity.

★ **Level:** Level A2 +

🧩 **Aim:** To develop CPs' awareness of correct grammar and vocabulary usage in an engaging and fun way

🔧 **Prep:** Prepare a list of sentences with mixed grammar and vocabulary structures – some correct and some incorrect – appropriate to the level of the group.

 **Material:** Fake money – for example, “Monopoly” money. A hammer or mallet if possible. A bidding sheet like this:

NO.	SENTENCES	BIDDING AMOUNT	CORRECT (✓/✗)	CORRECTIONS
1.	Ann doesn't like fish.			
2.	Paul has four childs.			
3.	Joe didn't attend-ed the meeting yesterday.			
4.	I'll join the meet-ing later.			
5.	We have gone to the cinema last week.			

Procedure:

1. Give the CPs individually or in pairs a fixed budget to work with and the bidding sheet.
2. Read out the sentences as naturally as possible and ask, “What am I bid?”
3. CPs place bids **only** on the sentences they believe to be correct.
4. Close the bidding with the usual “Going, going, gone”.
5. The CPs who have bid the most, win the sentence.
6. When all the sentences have been auctioned, provide the solutions.
7. The CPs with the most money left and/or the most correct sentences are the winners.

Thank you, Mario, for your great ideas.

A rose is a rose is a rose

Here's a Rinvoluti-inspired reading activity that can be adapted for learners at every level.

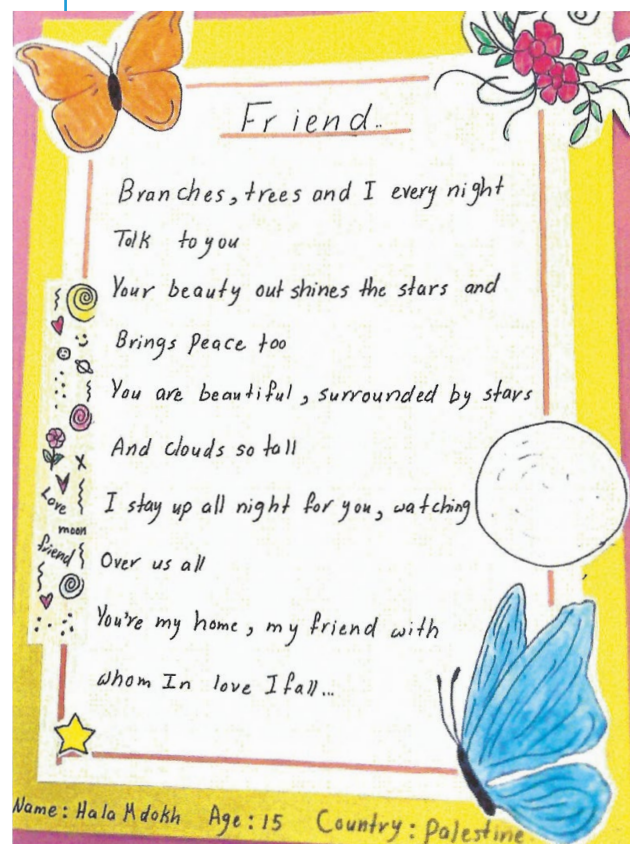
- ★ **Level:** A1+
- 🕒 **Time:** 30 minutes+
- 🎯 **Aims:** To motivate learners to read and understand a target text
- 📄 **Materials:** One copy of the text per learner
- ✍️ **Prep:** Make copies of the text and select from it five to eight vocabulary items for presentation as a “word rose”.

Procedure:

1. Put a copy of the word rose on the whiteboard.
2. Tell learners they're going to read a text in which all the words in the word rose appear at some point.
3. Explain any words that may be unfamiliar.
4. Ask learners in pairs / small groups to write a short text of exactly 60 words – not one word more, not one word less – containing all the words in the rose.
5. Have learners present their texts to the class.
6. Distribute the original text for reading and discussion.

Example: Here's a sample word rose based on the A1-level text on the right:

BEAUTY
 STARS STAY
 WATCH SURROUNDED
 OUTSHINE CLOUDS
 PEACE



Poem and design thanks to Hala Mdokh and The Hands Up Project (www.handsupproject.org)

Melta Five-a-Day

Learning is a dynamic, complex process. One way we as teachers can support our students is to provide opportunities for them to reflect on their learning.

Bethan Stokes shares five activities that do exactly that

1 Reflect with numbers

At the end of a class or during your last lesson on a course, spend five to ten minutes reflecting on what you've done during your time together.

- ★ **Level:** A2+
- 🕒 **Time:** 5-10 minutes
- 🧩 **Aim:** To encourage reflection so that students can see what they've learnt and consider areas where they may still need help
- 📄 **Materials:** Something to write with. Optional: flashcards or a padlet for students to write on
- ✍️ **Prep:** You could prepare your own reflection on something you're learning or on your teaching experience as an example.

Procedure:

1. Tell students they're going to be reflecting on their class/course (you or they decide which).
2. Write the numbers 3, 2, 1 in a vertical list on the (virtual) whiteboard.
3. Ask students to think about and write down:
 - 3 specific words/phrases they've learnt
 - 2 specific language points they've learnt
 - 1 specific language point or word/phrase they still don't quite understand.
4. If students are willing, ask them to share their lists with a partner and/or the class.
5. Collect or make a note of what students still don't quite understand. You could use this as a springboard or a quick filler in a future lesson.

Extension / early finishers: write a sentence using the three words or the two language points they've learnt.

Teachers can support students by providing opportunities for them to reflect on their learning

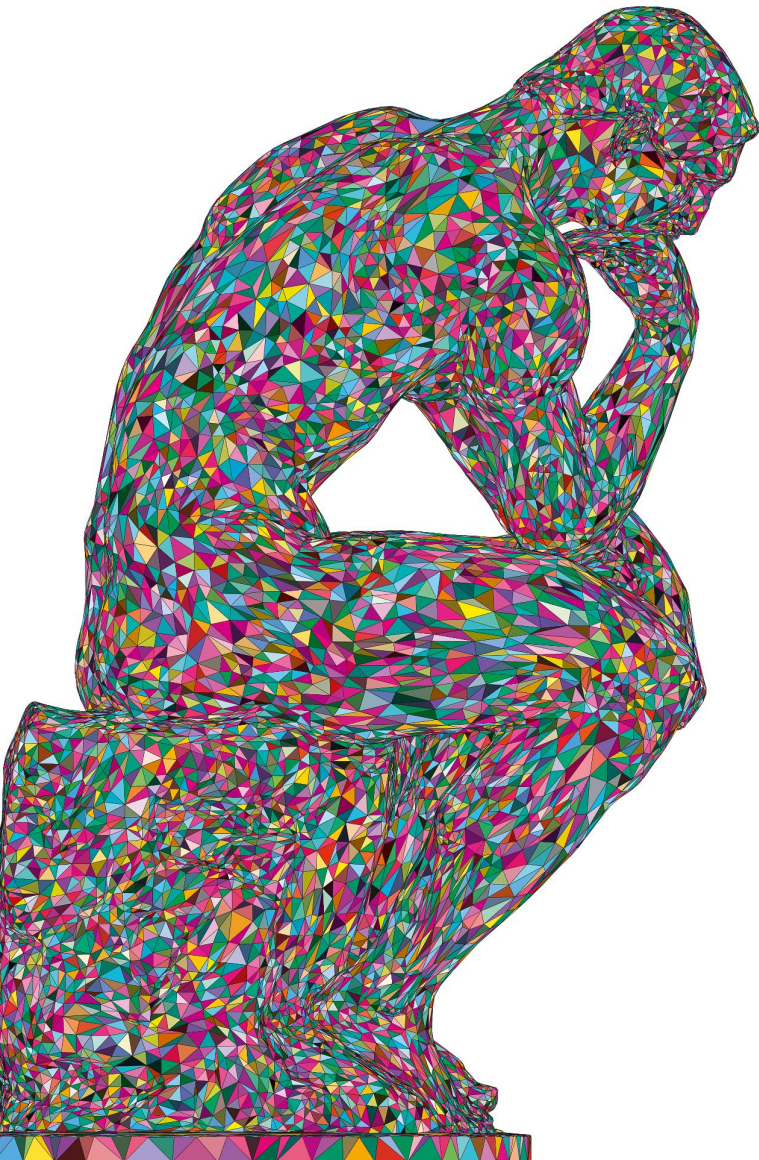
2 ABC, reflect with me!

This activity uses the alphabet to encourage reflection at the end of a course or unit.

- ★ **Level:** B1+
- 🕒 **Time:** 15-20 minutes
- 🧩 **Aim:** To help students remember what they've covered over a period of time
- 📄 **Materials:** Something to write with. Optional: flashcards or a padlet for students to write on
- ✍️ **Prep:** You could prepare your own alphabet reflection as an example.

Procedure:

1. Put students into pairs/groups. Tell one student in each pair/group to write down the alphabet vertically. Remember: They need to leave space to write words after each letter.
2. Challenge students to think of one word for each letter of the alphabet which relates to the lesson/course. This could be a specific word they've learnt, a topic you've covered, an activity you've done etc.
3. Write the alphabet on the (virtual) whiteboard.





4. Ask students to tell you what they've written down for each letter. Depending on class size, you'll have to assess how best to do this. With big classes, you could get each pair/group to tell you one letter as you go round the whole class. With smaller classes, you can ask each pair/group to present their whole alphabet. Alternatively, you can split the alphabet up and ask pairs/groups to present one section – for example, A-J, K-R, S-Z.
5. As a class, discuss the words that come up – for example, the differences, the similarities. If there are any letters students can't find a word for (normally X), try and come up with something as a whole class.
6. To finish, ask each student to choose one "letter" they really want to remember from this activity. Encourage them to make a note of it somewhere and ask them every so often if they can remember which letter they chose.

3 Reflect with colours

This reflection activity uses the "Zones of Regulation" as a way of thinking about learning. What are the "Zones of Regulation?" I hear you ask. "The Zones of Regulation provide an easy way to think and talk about how we feel on the inside and sort emotions into four coloured Zones, all of which are expected in life."*

This activity doesn't delve into the depths of emotional regulation but simply uses the "Zones" as a framework for reflecting on learning and learning situations.

*Quote taken from <https://zonesofregulation.com/> (21.06.25 08:58)

At the end of each lesson,
reflect for a few minutes on what you've
done during your time together

- ★ **Level:** B2+
- 🕒 **Time:** 30-40 minutes
- 🔧 **Aim:** To use Zones of Regulation to reflect on various activities done in the classroom so that students can see how they feel and react to different activities and potentially see how their emotions impact their learning and vice versa
- 📁 **Materials:** A picture of the Zones of Regulation. Optional: blue, green, yellow, red cards (enough for one set for each student or one of each colour to stick up in the room).

- ✏️ **Prep:** Create a list of five to seven activities / tasks you've done over the course with the students – for example, a worksheet, a crossword, a Kahoot, presentations, roleplays... anything! Alternatively, you could do this with students before starting this activity. If you have time, briefly familiarise yourself with the Zones of Regulation here: <https://zonesofregulation.com/how-it-works/>.

Students can visualize how well (or not so well)
they've understood a specific item

Procedure:

1. Tell students the list of activities you've prepared or write it on the (virtual) whiteboard. In pairs/groups, ask students to remember what exactly the activities were, when they did them, why they did them, what they learnt etc. After a few minutes, get feedback from the group for each activity. Through this, everyone should be able to remember all the activities. If some students were absent when the activities were done, ask others who were present to explain what they were.
2. Show the four Zones of Regulation on the (virtual) board. You can take a picture of this simple version here or use the website (link above).

BLUE ZONE Sad Bored Tired Sick	GREEN ZONE Happy Focused Calm Proud
YELLOW ZONE Worried Frustrated Silly Excited	RED ZONE Overjoyed/elated Panicked Angry Terrified

3. Give students five minutes on their own to think about how they felt during each activity according to the "zone" and consider why they felt this way.
4. Put students into new pairs/groups and ask them to share their reflections with their partner/group. You

could also ask them to say which colour they felt before and after the activity – for example, they were yellow before a presentation because they were nervous, then red during it because they were terrified, then perhaps green afterwards when they felt proud they had done it well.

5. Bring the class back together. If possible, give each student a blue, green, yellow and red card to hold up. Say one of the activities. Tell students to lift up how they felt when they did the activity. Encourage them to share why they felt this way with the class. For big classes, you could put one colour in each corner and get students to run to the colour they felt, rather than lifting up coloured cards.
6. To finish, ask students to tell you which zone (colour) they were in while doing this activity. You could even share your own with them.

Students can see
how their emotions impact
their learning and vice versa

4 Learning scale

This quick activity gets students to reflect on how well (or not so well) they're dealing with something specific you're focusing on in your lesson / course.

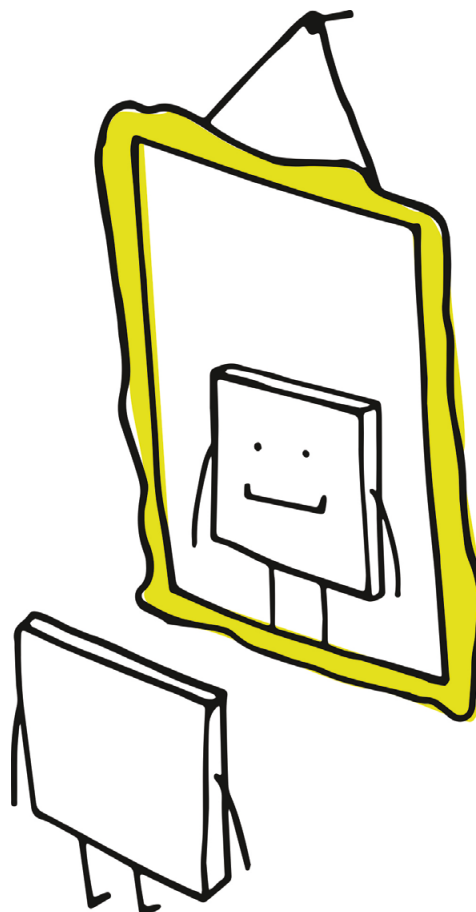
- ★ **Level:** A1+
- 🕒 **Time:** 5-10 minutes
- 🔧 **Aim:** To use a scale of learning / understanding so that students can visualize how well (or not so well) they've understood a specific item
- 📄 **Materials:** Something to write with
- ✍️ **Prep:** Consider what exactly you want students to reflect on – for example, learning vocab from a specific unit, understanding of a grammar point etc.

Procedure:

1. Write a scale on the (virtual) whiteboard. It could look something like this:

No idea Getting there... Got it!

2. Tell students the specific point you'd like them to reflect on.



3. Ask students to copy the scale above. Tell them to put an X on their scale to show how they feel about their understanding of the topic / language point / unit.

Option: Use one scale for the whole class and have students mark it with their initials.

4. Put students into pairs/groups. Tell them to discuss why they think they're where they are. If someone has "Got it", can they potentially explain the point to a student who is "Getting there" or feels they have "No idea"?

Option: Have students put their name and date on the scale and collect them. Hand them out again in a few weeks and repeat this exercise. If you've done a class scale, take a picture of it and save it. Hopefully, by the end of the course, everyone will be more towards the "Got it!" end!

5 Self-study reflection

This quick activity gets students to reflect on how much they're putting into their learning outside the classroom. If possible, do this activity every lesson or week.

- ★ **Level:** A1+
- 🕒 **Time:** 5 minutes
- 🔧 **Aim:** To create a self-study learning diary so that students can hold themselves responsible for their own learning and motivate themselves to do some more self-study
- 📄 **Materials:** Something to write with
- ✍️ **Prep:** Create a self-study reflection table (see example below)

Create a self-study diary

Procedure:

1. Ask students to think about how much time they actually spend studying and learning outside of the lesson each week.
2. Tell them to copy and fill in a table like this one below. The first time you do this, they should just fill in the first four columns.

Date	How much time do I spend on self-study a week?	How much time do I want to spend on self-study a week?	How much time can I spend on self-study a week?	Did I do this?
31.05.25	0 minutes	1 hour	30 minutes	

3. Collect the tables or ask students to email them to you.
4. During the next class, give students their self-study reflection tables back. Ask them to fill out the fourth column (and be honest!). Make sure they remember to write the date. Then ask them to fill in the next row.

Date	How much time do I spend on self-study a week?	How much time do I want to spend on self-study a week?	How much time can I spend on self-study a week?	Did I do this?
31.05.25	0 minutes	1 hour	30 minutes	06.06.25 - no. I completely forgot. Set a reminder on phone every few days to do a 5 minutes of self-study.
06.06.25	0 minutes	30 minutes	15 minutes	



5. Encourage students to share their reflections with their partner and discuss what enabled them to do some self-study or hindered them from doing any.
6. Tell students to think of ways they can help themselves do some learning at home – for example, setting reminders on their phone. They should write this in the “Did I do this?” column.
7. Do this continuously over a course to create a self-study diary. Discuss learning in relation to the self-study diary and see if students can see a link between how much they do at home and how much they’re learning / understanding in / after class (hopefully they can!).

A note from Bethan

Hi everyone,
I’m back! I just want to say thank you to my dear colleague, Jackie Adams, for taking over the column while I’ve been “off” on maternity leave; I’m sure her wonderful ideas have sparked some teaching motivation in many of you. As always, thanks for taking the time to read this issue’s **Five-a-Day**. I hope you found something useful or it gave you an idea for something you could do with your students. Any suggestions, please contact me: bethantefl@gmail.com.



Bethan Stokes is originally from the UK and has lived in Munich since September 2015. She started teaching EFL in Madrid in 2013, completed an MA TESOL at UCL Institute of Education in 2015 and has been teaching English at the University of the German Armed Forces since 2016. She enjoys writing and developing teaching materials and getting students to think about their learning.

Keep them talking

Birgitta Berger shares two low-prep activities that foster learners' ability to speak spontaneously

Everyone agrees that speaking skills are vitally important to learning a language, and every student wants to improve them. You can combine the following activities with a topic your students are working on in a coursebook, but they also work well on their own.

In addition, you can involve your students in collecting topics, vocabulary, and questions. This involvement is always a highly motivating factor since it allows students to include their own interests and ideas.

Another plus – besides the low prep factor – is that both activities can be completed in writing.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into pairs and give each pair a set of slips with options.
2. Taking turns, the learners take a slip of paper and explain to their partner what their choice is, what it applies to and why they opted for it.
3. Provide blank slips and invite students to think up and write down choices of their own. (These can be longer and more complex, such as: *Would you rather be working as a miner in a coal mine or as a butler in a castle?*)
4. Store your slips and those of your learners in a box or envelope to use again. It can become a great collection!

Speaking skills are vitally important, and every student wants to improve them

Activity 1: Choices

This activity is about choosing one of two options and explaining your decision.

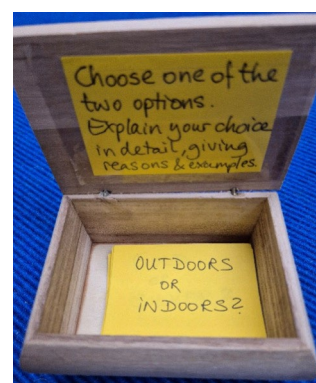
★ **Level:** A2+

🕒 **Time:** As long as you want

🧩 **Aim:** Expand oral fluency

📄 **Materials:** A pencil or pen, small slips of paper

✍️ **Prep:** Write two options on each slip of paper – for example, *hot/cold*, *coffee/tea*, *dogs/cats*, *black/white* etc.



You can also combine the activities with an evaluation

Activity 2: Just a Minute

In this game, learners try to speak for 60 seconds on a single topic without repetition, deviation or hesitation.

★ **Level:** B1+

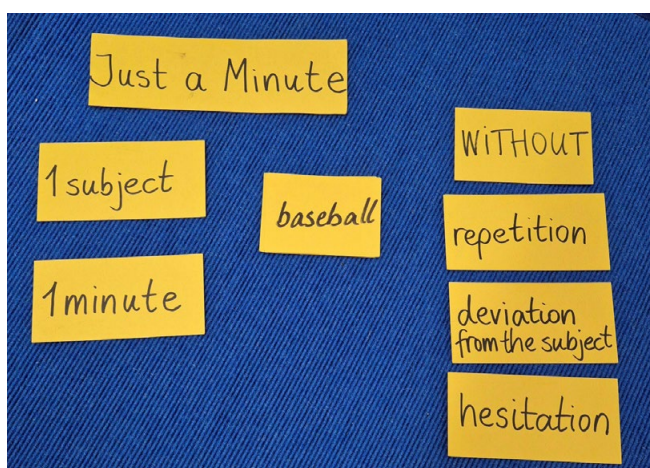
🕒 **Time:** As long as you want

🔧 **Aim:** Expand oral fluency

📁 **Materials:** A collection of topics written on separate cards, a timer, a scorecard

Procedure:

1. The first learner picks a topic card and begins to speak as soon as the timer is set.
2. As soon as he or she hesitates or dries up, all the other learners can raise their hands to continue for the rest of the minute.
3. The timekeeper – you or a learner – awards each speaker a point for every second he or she was able to keep speaking.
4. Another learner picks a topic card, the timer is reset and the game goes on until as many learners as possible have had a chance to speak.



Another plus is that both activities can be completed in writing

Note: This activity is based on BBC radio's longest running panel show (started in 1967 and still going strong). Your advanced learners will probably also enjoy listening to an episode of the show at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006s5dp> (BBC Radio 4 - Just a Minute) or watching this teaser: BBC Radio 4 - Just a Minute, Just a Minute: 50 Years in 28 Minutes, Just a Magic Minute (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05rf7sv>).

Feedback

You can also combine these activities with an evaluation such as:

How enjoyable was this activity / game?



How activating did you find this activity / game?



How much new language did you learn from this activity / game?



These 1 - 10 scales can be given to students for their individual evaluation. To get an overview of a larger group, you can put the questions and scales on the board and ask students to mark their individual responses.

References:

Berger, B.; Dam, L. and Winter, C. (2023): *Autonomes Sprachenlernen – Wie Lernende Verantwortung übernehmen und Lehrkräfte dies effektiv begleiten*. Berlin, Cornelsen.



Birgitta Berger has been teaching at Montessori schools in the Munich area since 2000, working with all age groups from kindergarten to exam preparation in Years 9 and 10. She provides inservice training for Montessori language teachers through the Montessori Bildungsakademie/MoBil and the Akademie Biberkor.



One Quarter English – The show goes on

In this fourth edition of **Jackie Adams’** AI-generated podcast, hosts Mark and Jenna take advanced learners on another 15-minute journey designed to expand their vocabularies and test their listening skills

Accessible via the Melta website at <https://melta.de/one-quarter-english>, this episode of **One-Quarter English** features fictional news headlines, including a government scandal, a controversial wind farm referendum and the discovery of a long-lost work of art.

After discussing the arguments for and against referendums, Mark and Jenna look at vocabulary differences that exist between **American and British English**. Some truly Canadian words like “duotang” also get a mention before the show moves on to the usage of **few, little, fewer and less**.

The episode continues with the **fourth installment of “The Speckled Band”**, before Mark and Jenna find out what **quirky objects** some people have in their bags.

At the end of the webpage, you’ll find the **full audio transcription** along with **exercises** that you can use in your classroom to reinforce learning. Here’s an excerpt from Mark and Jenna’s discussion of the **differences between American and British English**:

Mark: I once ordered chips with a sandwich in London and was surprised to get what we’d call fries.

Jenna: You’re lucky you didn’t get the chips in your sandwich, Mark. Brits love a good chip butty.

Mark: Here’s another common one: elevator. That’s lift for you, right?

Jenna Exactly. If you’re in a building and want to go up a few floors, you take the lift.

Mark: That’s one I’ve learned to adapt to. How about public bathrooms? In the U.S., we usually say restroom.

Jenna: Yes, that’s one of the clearest differences. In the UK, we’d usually say toilet, or informally, loo. Restroom sounds overly polite to us, almost as if you’re avoiding saying what you really mean.

Mark: Right, and bathroom might confuse some people, especially if there’s no bath.

Jenna: Exactly.

Mark: Let’s talk clothing. In the U.S., we say pants for what we wear over our legs. But I’ve heard that can cause some awkwardness in the UK.

Jenna: Oh, yes. In British English, pants means underwear. What you call pants, we call trousers. So if an American says, “I like your pants,” it can raise some eyebrows.

And here’s the practice exercise that goes along with the discussion:

Decide whether each of the following words is **American or British English** and fill in the chart. Then write its equivalent in the other variety of English.



1. Apartment
2. Biscuit
3. Garbage
4. Truck
5. Movie
6. Nappy
7. Chemist
8. Line
9. Shopping trolley
10. Vacation

American English	British English
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

If you’re looking for something to spice up your lessons for advanced learners, One-Quarter English could be the answer

The entire audio podcast, a full transcription and an accompanying student worksheet (with solutions) are available via the Melta website at: <https://melta.de/one-quarter-english>



Jackie Adams is originally from Canada and has lived in Munich since 2005. She teaches English at the University of the German Armed Forces in Munich.

From the Melta kitchen

Betsy Hollweck shares an activity with a culinary outcome to sweeten your students' coffee breaks

Just Peachy Muffins

Level: A1+

Aim: Enhance student engagement

Ingredients:

200 g peaches, diced but unpeeled
(Set the peaches aside until the end. If you have time, freeze the peaches in a single layer until needed. This helps keep the integrity of the fruit.)

270 g flour

½ tsp salt

2 ¼ tsp baking powder

200 g brown sugar

1 tsp cinnamon

¼ tsp allspice

¼ tsp nutmeg

(In a bowl, whisk the dry ingredients together.)

1 egg

75 g neutral-tasting vegetable oil

140 g milk

1 tsp vanilla (or Amaretto or dark rum)

Procedure:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Line a 12-cup muffin form with liners.
3. Mix the wet ingredients together in a large measuring cup.
4. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients; fold gently until no streaks of flour remain.
5. Gently (optimally with a rubber spatula) fold in the peaches.
6. Scrape the mixture back into the measuring cup (this makes it easier to pour); divide the mixture evenly amongst the muffin cups.
7. Bake: 24-26 minutes, until golden brown, and the muffin springs back when gently touched in the middle, and a toothpick removes clean.
8. Remove the muffins from the form and cool on a rack.
9. Serve to class.



Betsy Hollweck has been teaching English in and around Munich since 2018.



Teekesselchen – Homonyms!

Joan Walsh adapts a popular German children's game to get your class participants exercising their thinking skills in a different way

- ★ **Level:** B1+ and upwards
- 🕒 **Time:** 10 minutes+
- 🧩 **Aim:** To recycle or retrieve vocabulary items
- 📄 **Materials:** None
- ✍️ **Prep:** Prepare a list of English homonyms with their definitions.

Procedure:

1. Read two definitions from your list to the class, substituting *Teekesselchen* ("little teapot") for the corresponding homonym.

Examples:

- a. A *Teekesselchen* is a place where you can deposit your money and also a place at the side of a river.

Noticing homonyms is a good way to reinforce vocabulary

An excellent energizer at any point in a lesson

- b. A *Teekesselchen* comes from the sun and it's also the opposite of "heavy".
 - c. A *Teekesselchen* grows in the garden and you also need it to bake bread.
 - d. Two players have a *Teekesselchen* when they have the same score. Men also wear this *Teekesselchen* to work.
2. In pairs or small groups, class participants try to guess the correct homonym.

Option: Ask your participants to come up with some more *Teekesselchen* in class or for homework. They're sure to think of a few.

I learnt this activity from two enthusiastic German mothers in one of my classes and have found it's an excellent energizer at any point in a lesson.

Answers to examples above: bank, light, flower / flour, tie



Joan Walsh is from Ireland and works as an English trainer in companies. She enjoys attending workshops and seminars to stay abreast of the most up-to-date trends in language teaching and technology. On holidays, she likes to travel and learn about everything connected with people, culture and language.

A tin of cards

Jo Westcombe suggests another pen-and-paper activity for the classroom

- ★ **Level:** A1 to C2
- 🕒 **Time:** As long as you want
- 🧩 **Aim:** To create a filler or regular element of your class, tailor-made for each group
- 📁 **Materials:** Index cards such as *Brunnen Karteikarten* A8. (These come in packs of one colour or a mix of colours.). Containers. (I like the metal tins for sweets. Rapunzel from the organic supermarket has a variety, allowing colour-coding for each class.)
- ✍️ **Prep:** After each lesson, you and/or your students write items that came up in the lesson – for example, content words, key collocations and typical mistakes – on the cards, even if only one or two. Put the cards in the tin you've dedicated to this class. (In later lessons, you can go back and add words to cards if you think words or phrases belong together. I don't tend to try and stick to one colour of card for each group or topic, but you could!)

Procedure:

1. In lessons, hand out several cards at random to pairs or groups of three students.
2. Students then:
 - a. put the cards face up on the table and make sure they know what the words mean / which course topic the words belong to, etc. They help each other and ask you for help if need be.
 - b. put the cards in any other groupings that you or they decide.
 - c. put the cards face down on the table and take it in turns to pick one up and explain it à la Taboo to the others in their group.
 - d. take it in turns to hold up one card to each ear to play e.g. a reindeer / Easter bunny. Other students help them to guess what's on the cards.
 - e. decide on the most important cards from their set and find another group to test them on.



Jo Westcombe was a modern languages teacher in England before moving to Munich at the end of the last century. She did her DELTA at International House, Hastings. She was the Language Editor for *Spotlight* magazine for several years, teaches one-to-one and groups in-company and is a *Lektorin* at the University of Eichstätt. Dog-walking, gardening, singing and yoga all help.



3. For a-d, get students to pass some or all their cards (for example, clockwise) to another group after a few minutes, with you delivering the cards across the classroom if necessary.

Hint: Don't aim for all the students to see all the cards each lesson (unless you have nothing else planned).

Variations: If you need a mingle, hand out single cards to individual students to go vocabulary shopping (swapping) with. Alternatively, students find someone who has a card that connects somehow to their own card, and then justify this pairing to the wider group.

Why?

The cards are an antidote to screens, keyboards and translation apps. Students get to practise at least listening, speaking and reading, and have something to touch and move around. Using the cards regularly builds good vocabulary learning habits (for example, context, co-text, repetition) and can act as warmers, separators and fillers in your lessons.

Yes, I do have lots of tins lying around. (The ones still with sweets in sound different when rattled.) If the tin thing doesn't work for you, search online for "...with an Altoid tin" for other things to do with them!



Pronouncing the letter combination -ove-

Juliana Oosten shares another of her activities for helping learners sort out the conundrums of spoken English

You probably know how to pronounce “love”, “move” and “stove”.

But what about the following words? Put them into the right box and use them in context, too.

- clove
- dove
- prove
- rove
- grove
- grovel
- rover
- hover
- oven
- cove
- cover
- trove
- shove
- drove
- shovel
- wove
- above
- Jove
- improve
- clover
- glove
- approve

Love	Move	Stove



Juliana Oosten is originally from New Zealand and has been living in Munich since 1986. After doing a TEFL course in London, she began teaching English in a small language school and later focussed on general, business and technical English in companies. Juliana now mainly teaches online.

Business Impact

A business English course as flexible as you and your students require.

Business Impact is a unique modular business English course, available in 6 books on two levels and/or individual digital modules. It's specifically aimed at business professionals and suitable for all business English courses, in particular in-company courses. The 3 modules of each book have a clear focus on one of the core areas of business English. The course offers maximum flexibility in content and structure, to suit students' needs and time available.

Better English for better business:

- 3 modules per book focusing on core areas like personal encounters, day-to-day business and business results
- Unique structure catering for 60-minute and/or 90-minute lessons
- Focus on speaking & communicating
- Result: mastering real business situations

2 flexible course levels:

- 3 books that progress from intermediate to upper-intermediate (B1 – B2)
- 3 books that progress from upper-intermediate to advanced (B2 – C1)

Digital editions:

- Students' material as hybrid or digital editions with easy access to all digital assets
- Extra online practice for students
- Digital Teaching Plus: Online teacher support materials



Find further information here:
[www.klett-sprachen.de/
business-impact](http://www.klett-sprachen.de/business-impact)



Telling their stories to the world –

Showing support and expressing admiration for the children of Gaza

David Heathfield and Haneen Jadallah invite you and your students to make a child from Gaza's tale your own



The project

From November 2023 to January 2024, we posted a link online every day to a video recording of a child from Gaza telling a story to the camera. We shared 65 recordings altogether. Nearly all were from the archive of the World Storytelling Café posted on YouTube and Facebook between 2020 and 2022. Children in Gaza have continued to send us a surprising number of newly recorded stories in the midst of the suffering they're enduring.

Starting in 2024, people around the world, many of them teachers of English who love oral storytelling, have followed and retold the children's tales, expressing admiration and support for the children and their teachers who continue to learn and teach in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

One of the most important things for Palestinian children is to know that people around the world are talking about them and telling their stories

The resulting project, Tell a Child in Gaza's Tale, isn't only an educational storytelling initiative; it's a profoundly human act and an urgent documentation of the stories made, told and retold by Palestinian children since 2020. It's a peaceful yet powerful way of awakening the world to the creativity of Palestinian children and their teachers,

stories first shared from their homes on Zoom during the pandemic and then returned to the world through Facebook and other channels, ensuring the tales remain alive.

As we tell and retell these stories, it's essential that we move away from framing the people of Gaza solely as victims. Instead, we must recognize them as creative-resilient people living under oppression who possess love for life and an incredible amount of creativity to offer the world. Our responsibility includes the ongoing listening to and retelling of the survivors' stories.



Tala's story

Tala from Gaza is a wonderful young international storyteller. She shared a recording of herself telling the following heart-warming tale at the World Storytelling Café on June 1, 2021:

The Sick Girl and Her Friends

Once upon a time there was a little girl who became very sick. She had to spend all day in bed unable to move because other children were not allowed to come near her. She spent all day feeling sad and blue. While lying in bed, she looked out of the window, and as the day passed, she saw a strange shape outside: it was an enormous duck with a carrot in its hand! The duck squeezed through the window. "Good afternoon", he said to the girl, and left again. The girl was very happy and she thought that she was imagining things. Well, when the little girl became better and went back to school, she told her friend about the strange duck that she had seen. While she was speaking, the girl noticed something strange in her friend's bag. She asked to see what was inside the bag. It was a duck costume with a big carrot: the girl's friend had dressed up in the costume to try and cheer her up! Well, from that day on the little girl did her best to make sure nobody felt sad or alone.

Now over to you

One of the most important things for Palestinian children is to know that people around the world are talking about them and telling their stories. Here are three ways you and your learners can show your admiration and support.

Activity 1: Anticipate the story

★ Level: A2+

🕒 Time: 30 minutes

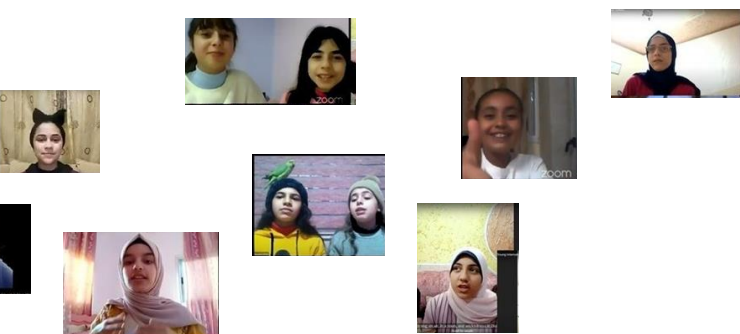
🧩 Aim: Improve listening comprehension

📄 Materials: Pens or pencils, large pieces of paper, video recordings of "The Sick Girl and Her Friends" at <https://youtu.be/wDrN-vPAXt8?si=cZoK8VDPH3g9doyj> (narrated by Tala) and https://youtu.be/Lt3QX_Z4G-Fk?si=sS8iJBqEUqnFuFu1 (narrated by Vera Cabrera Duarte)

🔧 Note: The recording of Tala is unclear at times due to the internet connection.

Procedure:

1. Ask learners to draw a large duck with a carrot in its hand – yes, in its HAND!
2. Tell them that the story is about a girl who's too ill to go to school and that it includes the duck they've drawn.
3. Ask learners to formulate questions about what happens in the story.



4. Answer five of their questions.
5. Ask the learners in pairs / groups to tell the story they expect to hear based on your answers.
6. Tell the story yourself and/or play one or both of the video recordings.
7. Ask learners to compare your version / the video versions with their own ideas and to talk about what the story means to them.

Activity 2: Follow-up

- ★ Level: A2+
- 🕒 Time: 30 – 40 minutes
- 🔗 Aim: Foster listening and oral storytelling skills
- 📁 Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Tell learners a true story about a time someone cheered you up when you needed it.
2. Ask them to think of a time someone cheered them up when they needed it.
3. Divide the class into small groups, mixing learners who can't think of a story with others who can.
4. Ask the learners to tell their stories to the other learners in their groups.
5. Ask the listeners to retell the stories they've heard several times to the other learners in their groups and/or to learners from the other groups.

Option: Invite learners to discuss what they can do to show their concern for the children of Palestine.

Activity 3: Retell the story

- ★ Level: A2+
- 🕒 Time: 30 – 40 minutes
- 🔗 Aim: Communicate with children in Gaza
- 📁 Materials: Video camera, materials for making puppets, pictures and/or masks

Procedure:

1. Ask the class to retell “The Sick Girl and Her Friends” to a camera in person or using puppets, through pictures, with masks, etc.
2. Make an mp4 video recording of the result and send it to us at davidheathfield@hotmail.co.uk, so we can forward it to children in Gaza.

Join the project

For us, as educators in Palestine and around the world, it's a moral responsibility to preserve, share and continue using stories like Tala's. They stand as living proof of the deeply humanistic educational system that once flourished in Gaza, a system that has been utterly destroyed since 2023.

We'll always remember one young storyteller, Deema (now 17), who, after surviving and leaving Gaza, watched



Haneen Khaled Jadallah is an English language teacher, teacher trainer and remote theatre specialist. A PhD student at the University of Warwick, she's passionate about connecting young people in Palestine with their peers worldwide through intercultural linkups and online theatre as exemplified in her current British Council project *Voices Across Worlds*.

David Heathfield is a world storyteller, teacher trainer and writer from Exeter, UK. The author of two books – *Storytelling with our Students* and *Spontaneous Speaking* (both DELTA) and numerous articles and book chapters, he provides creative and engaging storytelling for teachers (CrEST) courses for participants worldwide via Zoom.

Jackie Ross (a Scottish storyteller) retell “The White Elephant”, a story she herself had told at the age of 13 on Zoom for the World Storytelling Café in 2020. With tears in her eyes, she said: *“I thought I had been abandoned by the world and that everyone had forgotten me/us. But now I know that people still care.”*

We welcome all your comments and suggestions and invite you and everyone you know to choose a child's tale, retell it and share it around the world in order to return the hospitality shown from their homes in Gaza by wonderful young storytellers. Here are the tales told by young Palestinians: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BKu-7JPXmONEB6y5cbeGIUW6zWi3SmRAP/view>

We'll add your storytelling videos to our ever-growing YouTube playlist “Tell a Child in Gaza's Tale” at: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLj-mcWeMmSZw63V5abQ4f-w3JIITI_S_kS&si=du47VczUOOkf3dQo

Please feel free to get in touch at davidheathfield@hotmail.co.uk if you'd like some help choosing which tale to tell.

“We Palestinians teach life to those who do not know what life is worth.” – Ali Wihaidi in: *Gaza diaries: The questions we ask in Gaza*, available online via <https://www.mecaforpeace.org/gaza-diaries-the-questions-we-ask-in-gaza/>

“[Refugees have] survived to tell the tales and warn us all not to let it go on, not to let it happen again.” – Marina Warner in *Sanctuary: Ways of Telling, Ways of Dwelling* (William Collins, 2025)

Find out more

Further information about Tell a Child of Gaza's Tale is available online in our contribution to the February 2025 issue of “Humanistic Language Teaching” at <https://www.hltmag.co.uk/feb24/tell-a-child-in-gazas-tale>.

From locker room to classroom – Empowering EFL teachers to lead with confidence

Lyudmyla Hndropovka reports on lessons learned at a TESOL Ukraine online professional development course with Mark Powell

From January 9 to April 10, 2025, a remarkable professional development journey unfolded for Ukrainian EFL teachers in the *TESOL-Ukraine* online course, **Positive Influence at Work**. What began as a one-off webinar session with world-renowned expert Mark Powell evolved into a dynamic 12-week program whose impact continues beyond its official conclusion.

New strategies

Mark Powell, an expert with extensive experience as a teacher, trainer, director of studies, publisher and author in the field of business English, generously offered our “beautiful community” of dedicated EFL/ESP school teachers and university instructors (his words!) the opportunity to explore new strategies for fostering meaningful classroom communication and leading with authenticity.

The course was especially timely, providing invaluable support during a period marked by war-related disruptions

The course was especially timely, providing invaluable support during a period marked by war-related disruptions. As participants, we gained an incredibly dynamic and engaging experience that inspired us and helped us stay resilient in the face of the immense challenges posed by teaching when uncertainty and emotional strain impact both instructors and learners.

Reflection and self-examination

As part of our course feedback, Mark proposed a creative reflective activity called the **Changing Room**. This metaphorical exercise drew on the idea expressed by Will Storr, author of

The Science of Storytelling, who said, “Every story you’ll ever hear amounts to ‘something changed.’ Change is endlessly fascinating to brains.”

Inspired by this idea of change being central to every story, Mark invited course participants to reflect on what had changed for us after completing the course. Alternatively, we could consider whether the course confirmed and reinforced ideas and opinions we already held. The metaphor of the “changing room”, which Mark Powell ironically described as “that drafty little cubicle in a clothes store with a flimsy (usually too short) curtain, a couple of wall hooks, an uncomfortable bench, and a full-length mirror for reflection”, was designed to encourage thoughtful self-examination.

A locker room talk

The idea of the “changing room” resonated with many participants but also suggested a related metaphor: “the locker room” as a place where sports players change clothes and store equipment. This metaphor suited the course’s dynamics perfectly: in this scenario, Mark Powell assumed the role of a coach guiding his team – us, the participants – through preparation, motivation and strategy, much like athletes readying for a game.

Mark’s role as the coach of Positive Influence at Work was multifaceted and included:

- **MOTIVATING AND INSPIRING:** *igniting confidence and inner drive to make a positive impact in the*

Coaches do more than just motivate – they provide a game plan

workplace. Like a great coach who fires up the team before a big game, Mark helped EFL professionals discover their inner drive and confidence to positively influence their workplaces. He encouraged participants to believe in their ability to lead and make a difference.

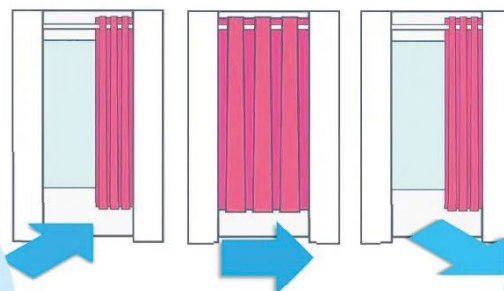
- **TEACHING STRATEGY AND TACTICS:** *providing practical tools and frameworks to build trust, communicate effectively, and manage workplace dynamics*. Coaches do more than just motivate – they provide a game plan. Mark equipped course participants with tools, frameworks and techniques to build trust, communicate persuasively





Changing Room

Did you come on the course looking for anything, in particular (ideas, materials, activities, inspiration), or were you just browsing, hoping to find something suitable, practical, different or fun? After all, it gets boring wearing the same old thing!



Did you 'try on anything' in the classroom? No doubt, some things didn't fit you or suit your style, but were there some that (maybe with a few adjustments) would work well with your students? Thinking back, were there any activities, insights, tips or techniques that really appealed to you during our time together? Reflect on those. Perhaps they'll spark some ideas of your own and our own ideas are always the best! Overall, how was the experience? Are you glad you shopped here? Would you come back? ☺

What are you leaving the store with? Shopping bags full of stuff? Just one or two special things you really liked? Did you get what you came for? Were there any lucky finds? Hopefully, you're not leaving empty-handed! Was there anything you couldn't find in stock? I'll order it!

and navigate workplace dynamics effectively.

- **FOSTERING TEAM SPIRIT:** *encouraging collaboration and a supportive work culture among teachers.* A winning team depends not only on individual talent but also on collaboration. Mark encouraged us, as language teachers, to build strong relationships, foster cooperation and create a positive work culture – just as a coach unites players to work for a common goal.
- **PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK:** *helping participants identify areas for growth and refine their leadership skills.* Great coaches celebrate wins but also help players learn from their mistakes. Mark offered valuable insights and practical advice, ensuring participants could identify areas for growth and refine their influence strategies.

Great coaches celebrate wins but also help players learn from their mistakes

- **PREPARING FOR THE GAME:** *equipping educators with the mindset and skills to apply their learning in real-world professional contexts.* Ultimately, the course was like locker room talk before stepping onto the field of real-world workplace interactions. Mark ensured every

participant was equipped with the mindset and skills needed to excel when leaving the “locker room” and entering the “playing field” of work.

Ultimately, the course was like locker room talk before stepping onto the field of real-world workplace interactions

A renewed sense of purpose in a time of uncertainty

This innovative course, led by the incredible Mark Powell and supported by the ever-inspiring *TESOL-Ukraine* community, offered far more than just professional training – it nurtured a renewed sense of purpose in a time marked by the uncertainties of war. As participants in this thought-provoking and intellectually enriching professional development experience, we've now returned to our classrooms – whether online or face-to-face – equipped with valuable insights and a refreshed confidence that the influence we carry, both in our classrooms and beyond, will continue to be profoundly positive.

Further information

You can learn more about the course, view some of its materials and enjoy its participants' reflections via the following link: <https://sites.google.com/view/positive-influence-at-work>



Lyudmyla Hnapovska

I hold a PhD in Philology and am Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistic Didactics, Sumy State University, Ukraine. A lifelong language lover with decades of teaching behind me – and no plans to slow down just yet! I specialize in ESP, creative writing and alternative assessment. Nearing retirement, but still chasing fresh ideas, meaningful projects and inspiring conversations with fellow educators around the globe.

Easter between the sirens

Oksana Tryhub reports on an educational project for traumatized children in a war-ravaged region

The background

I work mainly with children from small villages around Kyiv. Many come from families that have been displaced, are living in poverty or are part of large or military households. The children live in a state of constant apprehension. Long air-raid alarms often force schools to switch to online learning. Local shelters are dark and uninviting. Although teachers do everything they can, they're overwhelmed.

But children remain children: curious, open-hearted, full of wonder. They long for connection, discovery, play and meaning. That's why we decided to go ahead with our Easter festival this year. With missile strikes hitting cities around Ukraine, organizing any public gathering is a challenge. But we took the risk.

The event

The festival began with a concert where children could show their talents. More than 120 kids from eight villages prepared short performances. It was a big moment for them: they performed on a real stage with proper sound and lightning.

The second part of the event brought us back to Ukrainian traditions: our spring songs – *haivky* and *vesnianky* – and folk games. For a moment, the children were just kids again, laughing, jumping, singing, playing.

The only fear I had that day was the possibility of an air-raid alarm. Thankfully, none interrupted us. (Only



With missile strikes hitting cities around Ukraine, organizing any public gathering is a challenge. But we took the risk

a few days later, there was a terrible attack on the Kyiv region that took many lives.) The weather surprised us too. It was warm and sunny, adding even more brightness to the occasion.

The community

We welcomed guests from nearby villages and even from abroad. Local craftswomen hosted an exhibition, and children enjoyed hands-on workshops where they made their own Easter egg baskets. Everyone shared a meal of *kulich* (a traditional Ukrainian porridge), Easter bread and sweets.

The festival brought many people together. Local residents came to help clean the site, and local officials provided support in every way they could. Some people brought homemade

treats, while others helped organize games and activities.

The area was alive with voices, smiles and the kind of energy that only comes when people gather for something meaningful. For one day, at least, we felt joy instead of fear, unity instead of loneliness and hope instead of despair.

More than a holiday

It was hard to tell how many people were there overall — but definitely more than 160. The event was much more than just a holiday. For many children, who live with fear, sadness and stress every day, it was a breath of fresh air. They've already seen and felt too much for their age. But it was healing for us adults, too. Everyone felt a sense of normalcy again. The children were smiling, laughing and simply being kids. We could see the happiness in their eyes and hear it in their voices. Moments like these may seem small, but they truly help heal the emotional wounds that war leaves behind.



Oksana Tryhub is a senior lecturer in the English Department at Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Kyiv University, specializing in courses in general English, English for professional purposes and practical grammar with over 20 years of experience. She's also founder and director of Zolotoust, a cultural and spiritual development center offering free courses for children in rural areas, and coordinator for the Sunday School Network in the Fastiv district near Kyiv.



Storytelling and the 4Cs

Simona Stambazzi shows how stories and storytelling activities can be a powerful way to enhance learners' critical thinking, collaboration, communication skills and creativity

The importance of storytelling in language teaching

For thousands of years, humans have passed down knowledge from generation to generation through oral storytelling – our brains have evolved and adapted to learn through stories.

Stories and storytelling-based activities are thus a brilliant way to teach concepts and ideas in an effective and memorable way. At the same time – in the world of language teaching – they help expose our students to real language in a clear context.

Telling stories and working on them also help create a relaxed atmosphere in our lessons – which encourages sharing and learning – while giving our students the chance to work on fun, varied and interesting topics that will make them more engaged in their learning.

We tend to link the use of stories in teaching with children, but stories are for everyone to learn from and play with. In particular, in this article I would like to focus on how we can use stories in our lessons with teenagers and young adults, working on the stories in a way that

We tend to link the use of stories in teaching with children, but stories are for everyone to learn from and play with


will make them think and reflect, while at the same time having fun.

The 4Cs

In the world of education, there has been much talk in recent years about the 4Cs of 21st-century skills:

1. Critical thinking
2. Collaboration
3. Communication
4. Creativity

These are considered skills that we, as teachers and educators, should include in our lessons for our students to practise with, as this skillset will help them succeed in



Storytelling-based activities expose students to real language in a clear context

school and in the workplace. Sometimes, though, it can be daunting for us to find a way to do this with the pressure of following a curriculum and preparing our students for exams – and at the same time, without putting too much on our students' plate.

Our challenge therefore comes from finding a way to practice these skills that is effective, meaningful and engaging. In my experience, stories and storytelling-related activities (such as drama and creative writing) are a perfect starting point to do just this.

Some simple ideas to get you started

The modern world.

Sometimes when working with traditional stories we come across scenes, ideas, words and concepts that would not be socially acceptable in the modern world, such as the treatment of women, strangers or people of other ethnicities.

Story-based creative writing is a great way to prepare students for language tests

Working specifically on adapting these stories for a modern audience is the perfect gateway for a discussion or debate on these themes, to get our students to think critically and work creatively to find solutions to address these problems.

What if?

We can also ask our students, for example:

- What if the main character in the story was a girl instead of a boy?
- What if the ending was different?
- What if the story was set in a different place and time?
- What if Cinderella had lost an earring instead of a shoe?
- What if Jack and his mum had eaten the magic beans instead of throwing them in the garden?

By asking these kinds of questions to our students, we get their imaginations to start working and create new worlds of possibilities. They are free to imagine: there is no right or wrong answer to these questions!

Dialogues

Creating dialogues for the stories we're working on is a great way to get our students to practise speaking in a creative way and putting themselves in the characters' shoes. We could ask them, for example, to:

What if Cinderella had lost an earring instead of a shoe?

- Role play a specific situation in the story, imagining what the characters said in that scene.
- Imagine a dialogue that is not included in the story, sometimes breaking the barrier between the story and the real world (for example, two characters meet and chat about what happened in the story, a journalist interviews a character, a character tries to convince a sceptical friend that the events in the story really happened).
- Hold a discussion with different characters in the stories, each with their different life experiences.

Writing creatively

Stories are a wonderful starting point for creative writing. They give us contexts, ideas and motivation to write our pieces. Furthermore, if you're preparing your students for language tests, such as the Cambridge exams, they could be a great way to practise in a playful way. Some ideas could be to get your students to write:

- A news article: for example, "Wolf eats old lady and child" (Little Red Riding Hood)
- A diary entry: for example, "My experience at the prince's ball" (Cinderella)
- A collective piece, creating a prequel or sequel to the story: for example, "Why did the wolf come to hate pigs?" (The Three Little Pigs) or "What happened to Jack and his mum?" (Jack and the Beanstalk).

These are just some simple ideas to get you started. Don't be afraid to be creative and experiment, devising your own activities and playing with stories. There are no set rules!



Simona Stambazzi is a language teacher, storyteller, podcaster and workshop leader. She fell in love with stories at a very young age and she's been playing with her imagination ever since – creating stories, writing, telling, reading, and now... sharing her passion and connecting it to the world of language teaching. You can find her online as "Simona's Stories".

Talking the talk

Oksana Matsnieva reports on strategies for fostering in-person, people-focused communication



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

From January to April 2025, I was among 50 fortunate Ukrainian EFL teachers to take part in a ten-week online course “Positive Influence at Work” run by renowned business English expert Mark Powell. Organized by TESOL Ukraine and Sumy State University in eastern Ukraine, the course was designed to equip EFL / ESP professionals with the tools and strategies they need to have a meaningful impact in their classrooms.

My numerous takeaways from the course included the insight that small talk is one of the key elements of networking, not only in business.

Small talk is one of the key elements of networking

The eight Es

Mark argued that small talk is part of conversations that are people-focused rather than topic-focused. What’s more, the purpose of people-focused conversation is not to *communicate* but to *connect*. And the No. 1 way to connect is not just to *listen* but also to *listen emphatically*, an activity that can be facilitated, in turn, by eight small-talk skills or what Mark called the “eight Es”:

1. Echo (“Paris, uh huh.” “With your family? Right.”)
2. Encourage (“Really?” “Oh, yeah?” “Oh, I see.”)
3. Enthuse (“Wow!” “No!” “That’s so amazing!”)
4. Explain (“You mean...” “Oh, so you...”)
5. Enquire (“So, did you...” “Isn’t that supposed to be...”)
6. Elaborate (“I hear that’s very...” “I believe they...”)
7. Empathize (“Oh, I know what you mean. How awful!”)
8. Endorse (“Yeah, that’s true.” “Mm, I know.” “Oh, absolutely.” “Certainly is.”).

Activity: The conversation agility game

But Mark didn’t just tell us about emphatic listening, he also shared a classroom activity for practicing it.

★ **Level:** A2+

🕒 **Time:** 15 minutes+

🎯 **Aim:** Improve language students’ conversational skills

📄 **Materials:** A list of 12 individual conversational topics such as: *work, weather, (world) news, the course they’re doing, (business) travel, free time, economy, holidays, movies, family, accommodation, plans for the weekend*

✍️ **Prep:** Explain the eight Es and provide students with the above list of conversational topics as well as a few gambits for opening conversations such as: *Have you*

The purpose of people-focused conversations is not to communicate but to connect

seen the news? Do you do a lot of traveling with your job? Is it hot enough for you? Apparently...

Procedure:

1. Students choose four of the 12 conversational topics you’ve provided but don’t reveal their choices to one another.
2. Working in pairs, they take turns starting conversations on the topics they’ve chosen.
3. If the topic chosen by speaker No. 1 is the same as one of speaker No. 2’s chosen topics, No. 1 scores a point, and No. 2 must respond at length and keep the conversation going for as long as possible.
4. If the topic chosen is not one of speaker No. 2’s topics, No. 2 answers only briefly and starts a new conversation on one of his or her chosen topics.
5. The first student to score three points is the winner.

Variant: For conversation starters, also provide students with sets of preference cards with questions like this: *Are you a dog-person or a cat-person? Are you a coffee person or a tea person? Are you a restaurant person or a take-away person? Are you a still-water person or a sparkling-water person? Are you a Zoom person or a Google Meet person? Are you a YouTube person or a TikTok person? Are you a success person or a happiness person? Are you a half-empty-glass person or a half-full-glass person?*

Thank you, Mark, for reminding us of the importance of people-focused communication and for sharing your ideas for developing language students’ emphatic listening and small-talk skills.



Oksana Matsnieva is Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Philology and Educational Technologies at the National University of Chernihiv, Ukraine.

Branching scenarios – Enhancing inclusion and empathy in the language classroom

Canan Aktuğ explains a set of low-tech task-based activities that she and her colleagues have created to foster key social skills as well as language learning

How can we help learners not only practice English but also develop empathy, reflect on diverse perspectives and become better communicators in a globalized world? We've found that branching scenarios – that is, interactive simulations that present learners with decision-based narrative pathways – can be part of the answer.

Drawing on classroom experience and teacher training contexts, these digital and low-tech activities empower students to put themselves in other people's shoes and build the socio-emotional skills crucial for 21st-century learning.

Why branching scenarios?

Branching scenarios simulate real-life situations in a safe learning space where students explore the outcomes of their choices. Rather than relying solely on linear texts or scripted dialogues, branching tasks immerse learners in authentic, emotionally resonant interactions.

Students might mediate a misunderstanding between culturally diverse classmates, choose inclusive language as a team leader or comfort a peer excluded from a group – all in English. Through this approach, students go beyond grammar and vocabulary to practice empathy, self-regulation and decision-making.

From passive to purposeful – Learners as decision-makers

One of the key benefits of branching scenarios is that they allow learners to become active agents in their own learning. In one scenario, a new student (the player) has to find a seat on her first day of school and interact with classmates and teachers. For every situation, the player is given options as decision pathways.

Depending on the chosen response – ranging from ignoring the situation to addressing it constructively – the learner experiences different consequences. These decisions aren't about right or wrong but about navigating grey areas and making space for reflection. Such emotionally charged yet linguistically appropriate interactions help learners connect meaning to language and language to behavior.

A learning experience that...

is interactive
challenging
engaging and motivating
requires decision-making
and presents consequences

Just like real-life

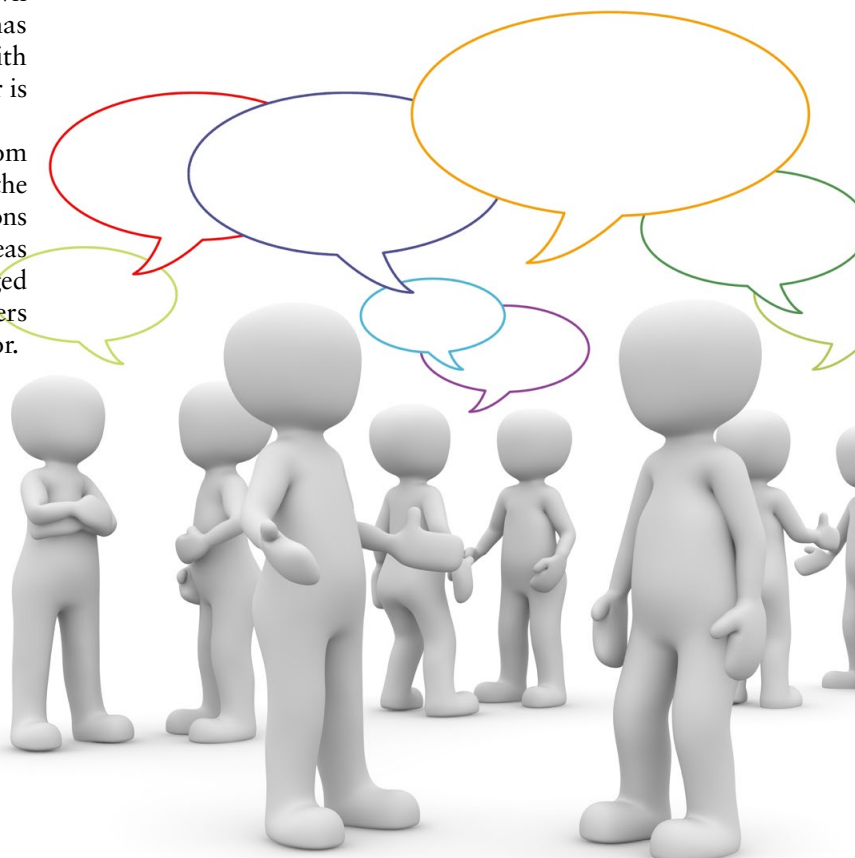
Designing with purpose

Effective branching scenario design requires clarity, intentionality and empathy. Here's a simple four-stage framework to guide scenario development:

1. Start with a real-world issue that resonates emotionally – bullying, inclusion, group conflict or cultural misunderstandings.
2. Introduce multiple, sometimes conflicting goals – for example, keeping peace in a group versus standing up for someone.
3. Blend useful and distracting information, mirroring the ambiguity of real communication.
4. Ensure the consequences matter – each path leads somewhere and prompts reflection.

Rather than punishing learners for “wrong” answers, branching scenarios encourage exploration. Growth matters more than perfection. Even missteps serve as learning opportunities, especially when followed by classroom discussion or journaling.

Branching scenarios can sound complicated (branching!), but many young people are already familiar with the technology





Branching scenarios differ from conventional stories in allowing multiple narrative possibilities

Tools and formats

Branching scenarios can be created using simple tools like Google Forms or PowerPoint (with hyperlink navigation), while more advanced tools like Twine, H5P and Articulate allow for richer interactive storytelling. Importantly, the power lies not in the platform, but in the pedagogy.

From inclusion to reflection

An important feature of building scenarios is their power to foster critical reflection. After completing the activities, learners can be invited to reflect on the paths they chose, consider alternative outcomes and discuss the emotional impact of different responses. Scenarios can be replayed and different paths explored – thus providing learners with a chance to experience multiple perspectives and consequences. They can also be used in class to stimulate discussion. Students can answer reflection questions individually or in groups, write responses to a situation or develop alternative routes and endings.

One of the key benefits of branching scenarios is that they allow learners to become active agents in their own learning

Whether created by the teacher, a student or even with the help of AI tools like ChatGPT, scenario writing encourages deeper thinking about inclusive classroom practices, gender-neutral language and life in general.

Final thoughts

In an era in which global citizenship, intercultural awareness and emotional intelligence are increasingly vital, ELT needs tools that go beyond the textbook. Branching

Branching scenarios can

1. Include inclusive language choices & gender balance
2. Foster conflict resolution and empathy development
3. Encourage reflection
4. Promote diversity and respect for difference

In an era in which global citizenship, intercultural awareness and emotional intelligence are increasingly vital, ELT needs tools that go beyond the textbook

scenarios offer a simple, yet powerful way to combine language learning with life learning. They bring energy to the classroom, open doors to diverse perspectives and remind learners – and teachers – that every interaction is a chance to include, understand and connect.

For further information about branching scenarios and how to design them, please don't hesitate to contact Canan Aktuğ at: canan@ukla.com.tr

Some examples

of branching scenarios are available here:

Dollaya, D. (n.d.). (March 23, 2025) *How to Design Effective Branching Scenario Learning with Examples*. https://medium.com/@dollaya_dollaya/how-to-design-effective-branching-scenario-learning-with-examples-51431bb08b36



Canan Aktuğ is a passionate educator from Bursa, Türkiye, with nearly two decades of teaching, teacher training, and academic management experience. She never stops talking about learner motivation and connection. When she's not mentoring EFL students and teachers, Canan loves traveling, watching sci-fi movies, and rocking out to classic rock tunes.

Real-life language for real-life situations

Larysa Andreiko has only good things to say about Delta's Business Impact series

One of the ongoing challenges for business English teachers is finding up-to-date, engaging materials that really work for their learners. This is where Delta Publishing's *Business Impact* series (levels B1 to C1) comes in, offering a fresh, practical perspective.

Each book is divided into standalone units that can be used in any order

Modular design

What sets this series apart is its flexible, modular structure. Each book is divided into standalone units that can be used in any order, depending on your learners' needs.

The modules cover three key areas of business English:

- Personal encounters: helping students develop social skills like small talk and relationship-building
- Day-to-day business: focusing on everyday tasks such as running meetings and writing agendas
- Business results: tackling the language needed to report on achievements and interpret facts and figures.

One feature I particularly like is the Energizer – a short, humorous video clip linked to each module. It lightens the mood, adds a bit of fun and sparks discussion. There's also a ready-to-use



worksheet for teachers who want to dig deeper.

AI integration

Another interesting addition is how the series integrates AI tools into the learning process. In one activity, for example, students rewrite a message to make it more polite. Then they use AI to suggest improvements and compare their version with AI's. They reflect on the differences, discuss them in class and think critically about how AI can support their writing.

Each module wraps up with a Review and an AOB section to help learners reflect on what they've covered.

The series integrates AI tools into the learning process



ered. There's also a short assessment test to consolidate learning.

Another highlight is a PLUS section which includes longer reading texts and the Business English Live segment with realistic dialogues as well as a bank of phrases and practice activities.

Authenticity

To round things off, every module offers two longer, magazine-style articles on current, thought-provoking topics, along with related classroom activities. A few examples are: "Turn off to tune in", "Networking and the rule of three" and "Online or in-person". If I had to sum up this series in one word, it would be authenticity – real-life language for real-life business situations.



Larysa Andreiko is an English language educator currently teaching at Montessori Fachoberschule and the University of Applied Sciences in Munich. She was previously an Associate Professor in the Foreign Languages Department of Sumy State University in eastern Ukraine. She's taught for the British Council in Kyiv and worked as an online educational consultant in the U.S. education system.



Aunt Agony

Your Aunt Agony advises you on those tricky teaching situations. Should you have a question or feedback for Aunt Agony, please send it to info@melta.de.

Dear Aunt Agony

I've found myself in rather an unusual situation for the past few weeks.

One of my course participants loves baking and has started bringing along cakes, biscuits and pastries to every lesson. At the beginning, it was much appreciated by everyone. However, now it has somehow become too much. Having one's mouth full and trying to make conversation can be rather difficult.

I don't want to hurt their feelings, but I feel the issue needs to be tackled.

Any suggestions would be very welcome.

Overfed in Otterfing

Dear Overfed

This is, of course, a lovely gesture on the part of your passionate baker. How about suggesting coffee/tea and cake just once a month? It then remains a special occasion and also suits those better who are possibly trying to lose weight. If there's no kitchen where you teach, course participants could take it in turns to bring the beverages.

I'm assuming that you've already integrated the language of baking, ingredients, utensils and appliances into your lessons. There's a wealth of possibilities here.

Good luck!

Dear Aunt Agony

I have a conversation class which has been going for a long time.

There are two male participants in it who love to talk. One of them has been in the course for many terms, complete with all his fossilisations. The other one is a new participant who joined this term.

The irritating issue is this: from the point of view of the language, they simply talk a lot of gobble-dygook! I try to encourage them to speak more thoughtfully and pay more attention to their English, but they just keep on going, full speed ahead more loudly and rapidly. It gets very frustrating since we do like to see progress, don't we?

What would you advise?

Exasperated in Erding

Dear Exasperated

I understand how difficult it can be when participants love to talk. On the other hand, it's better than having a reticent group, isn't it?

Concerning your query, perhaps you could make a note of some of their linguistic weaknesses while they're speaking – for example, grammar issues that constantly crop up – and do some remedial work on these points from time to time.

You could also regularly ask the other participants what they think of the two men's opinions to ensure a more balanced discussion. I feel it's very important that the two don't dominate the class, and so you really must jump in and interrupt to get the others' points of view. You could maybe use a timer sometimes and have, for example, a two-minute slot per person in certain discussion activities.

I hope this helps!



Rhyming Corner

Public transport

You don't always need a car
To get you from A to B
Other means will take you far
And new vistas you will see

Oh no, you may possibly say
Not that wretched local train
Which I took on that fated day
When my journey was in vain

Now my dear, don't generalize
Public transport is just fine
It is fair and it is wise
And you can take it rain or shine

Underground, tram and bus
Subway, streetcar and coach
All are there waiting for us
A sound and sensible approach

No way! The trains are always late
Or they do not come at all
Freezing on platforms I truly hate
And crowded carriages I appal

But think of the environment
The noise, smog and traffic jams
Reduce the carbon footprint
By taking trains and trams

The "Deutschland Ticket" hits the spot
You can travel most anywhere
At fifty-eight euros it's not a lot
Fuel costs do not compare

Ok, ok; you've made your case
By train or tram I'll journey
By car is clearly out of place
I'll simply leave home early

Juliana Oosten



melta

JOIN ONLINE
<https://melta.de/register/>

Munich English Language Teachers Association e.V.
c/o Randy Perry, Oberaudorferstr. 1, 81549 München

Established in 1989, Melta is an association of English teachers in southern Germany and Central and Eastern Europe. It is affiliated with the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) and has especially close ties to the other English teachers' associations in Germany.

Melta provides a forum for:

- Information and experience exchange
- Training and teaching development
- Social contact and support

Melta membership benefits include:

- Presentations by leading EFL/ESL guest speakers
- Practical workshops
- The newsletter Melta News three times a year
- Social events

On the Melta website at <https://melta.de>, you'll find:

- A program of upcoming events
- Job offers
- Profiles of Melta members
- Teaching resources
- Melta membership application forms

The annual subscription is €35 (€15 for full-time students, €100 for institutional membership), which includes the Melta newsletter and free entrance to Melta events.

For more information about Melta,
please contact Randy Perry (Chair) at chair@melta.de

Impressum

Melta News is the newsletter of
Munich English Language Teachers Association e.V.
c/o R. Perry, Oberaudorferstr. 1,
81549 München, Germany

Graphic design

Polarstern Media
www.polarsternmedia.de

Layout

Saskia Kölliker Grafik
www.koelliker-grafik.de

Publishing dates and editorial deadlines

Melta News is published three times a year,
in spring, summer and autumn. The editorial
deadlines are February 28, June 30 and
October 31 respectively.

Circulation

1,000 (approx.)

Advertising

For rates, see on page three. For more
information on advertising, please contact
Joan Walsh, Melta Advertising Coordinator,
(0 89) 98 51 02, joaniwalsh@web.de

Copyright and reprinting

Original articles appearing in *Melta News*
are copyright their authors. Express consent is
required for reprinting.
Please contact chair@melta.de if you would like
to reprint an article.

**The views expressed in *Melta News* are not
necessarily those of MELTA e.V.**

Publishing date of this issue

September 2025

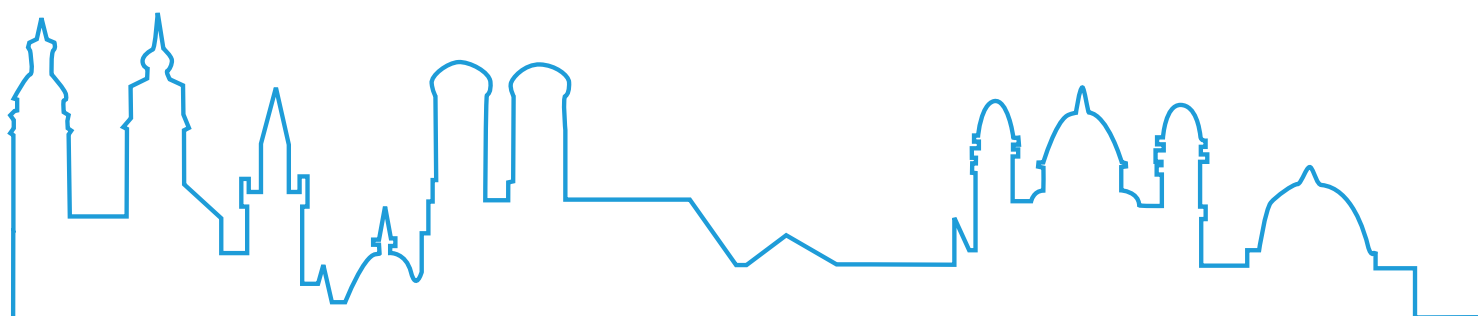
Copyright

Melta News © 2025 MELTA e.V. and the authors.
Every effort has been made
to contact copyright owners. We apologise for
any omissions and will rectify them if details
are supplied.

For further information about Melta, contact

Randy Perry, Chair
chair@melta.de

Visit Melta at www.melta.de

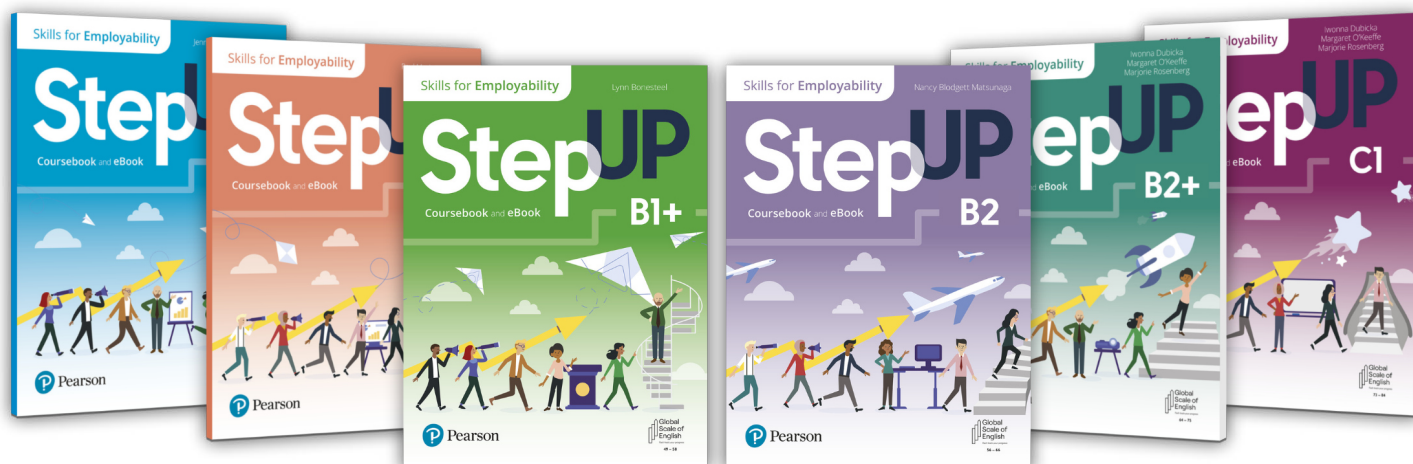


Step Up

Developing English skills for a better workforce and improved employability prospects.

For adults to improve their employability skills to get their first job, secure a promotion, find a different job, re-enter the workforce after an absence, or change fields.

- Short and flexible English course that offers 6 levels ranging from GSE 34 to 84 (CEFR A2-C1)
- Focus on developing employability skills with a digital-first approach
- Suitable for adult professionals aiming to succeed in a dynamic and global job market



We are Team English!

Team English is your entry port for all queries about Pearson Languages.

To ensure we deliver the best quality, we have decided to support you as one unified Team English in the DACH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) under one email address – please reach out to TeamEnglish@pearson.com with your questions, comments and concerns.

Let's stay
in touch!

Subscribe to our
newsletter!



Learn more at pearson.de/englisch