

Traffic lights

Read what a teacher says about this activity

'You can use Traffic lights with primary learners to monitor or assess how well they understand. It's also a good activity for introducing self-assessment.'

Stage 1: Preparation	<p>Make a set of traffic lights. Use old cardboard boxes or food packaging to cut out three squares. Colour one red, one yellow and one green.</p> <p>Show the three cards to your learners. Tell them to make a set at home, and bring them to the next lesson. You could also make them in class, if this is possible.</p> <p>When you plan your next lesson, decide when you will introduce the cards, e.g. to check understanding after the presentation of new language. You can use them several times at different stages during the lesson.</p>
Stage 2: Introduction	<p>Say: 'We're going to play a true/false game. I will say a sentence. If you think it's true, you should stand up. If you think it's false, you should sit down.'</p> <p>Variations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jump! If there is space, or if you can go outside: Ask learners to stand in a long line facing you, and jump to the right (true) or the left (false). 2. Right hand, left hand! If space is limited in your classroom: Ask learners to raise their right hand (true) or left hand (false).
Stage 3: Check instructions	<p>At the start of the lesson, check all learners remembered to bring their cards. If they didn't, tell them to share with a partner.</p> <p>Ask: 'Where do we see these three colours?' (On traffic lights)</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'What does red mean?' (= Stop) • 'What does yellow mean?' (= Get ready) • 'What does green mean?' (= Go) <p>Say: 'During the lesson today, I'm going to check your understanding. If you understand, put your green card on your desk. If you partly understand, put your yellow card on your desk. If you don't understand at all, put your red card on your desk.'</p> <p>Check that learners remember. Ask: 'What colour means "I understand"?' (= Green). Ask them to demonstrate (= Learners hold up green cards). Repeat with yellow and red. Then ask: 'Where do you put your card?' (= On the desk).</p> <p>Note: Learners put the cards on the desk because they may feel bad holding up a red card. However, if your class is large and it's difficult to move around, ask learners to hold cards up but close their eyes. Teach the lesson and check understanding when it is appropriate.</p>

Stage 4: Self-assessment	<p>At the end of an exercise or task, use the cards for self-assessment.</p> <p>Ask: 'How well did you do the exercise/task?' (Green = very well, yellow = well, red = not very well.) Learners put the cards on their desks.</p> <p>Or ask the learners to draw traffic lights in their books. Say: 'Colour one light to show how well you did.' Walk around and note which learners need support.</p>
Stage 5: End of lesson	<p>At the end of the lesson, say: 'It's the end of the lesson. How do you feel?'</p> <p>Tell the learners to draw traffic lights in their books. Ask: 'Are you ready to go to the next lesson? Colour one light.' (Green = ready to go, yellow = I need to review, red = I'm not ready.)</p> <p>Think how to support learners who colour yellow and red.</p> <p>Variation:</p> <p>Say: 'Colour one light to show how well you did today.'</p> <p>Say: 'Colour one light to show how much you liked the lesson today.'</p>

If possible, keep the learners' cards in the classroom so they don't lose or forget them. Learners may only choose 'green' when they first use their cards. However, as they become more familiar with the system, they may become more honest.

Author: British Council