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Teaching English Africa webinar

Warmers, Fillers and Coolers

Alemayehu Getachew

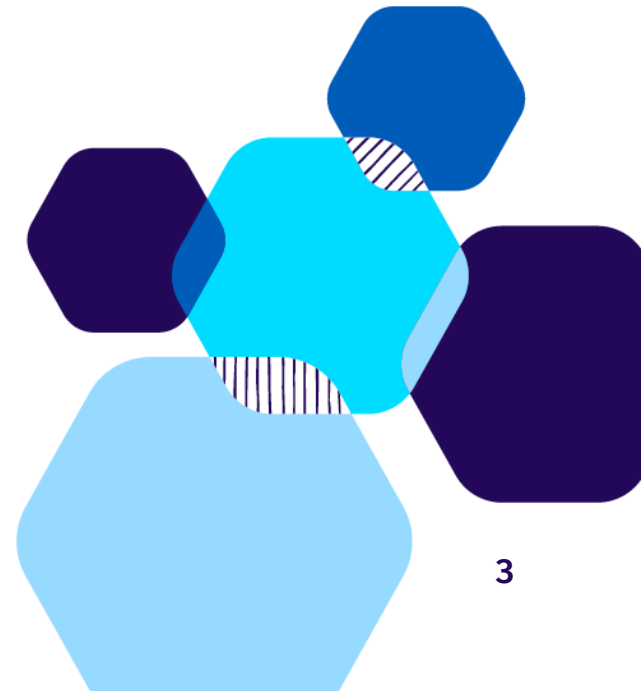16 September 2023

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About the speaker

Alemayehu is a full time English teacher and has been in the teaching profession for almost a decade. He has wide range of teaching English from KG to college levels. Currently, He is teaching English to secondary grades learners.

Alemayehu is passionate about professional development practices including taking on job trainings, MOOCS and involving in professional platforms and networks. He is an active board member of Ethiopian English Language Professionals' Association (EELPA). He also participated and presented in many English language conferences and workshops.

Objectives

- Explain what warmers, fillers and coolers are and why they should be used in language Classrooms

- Discuss features of warmers, fillers and coolers

- Look at different samples of Warmers, Fillers and Coolers which can be used with beginners and advanced learners
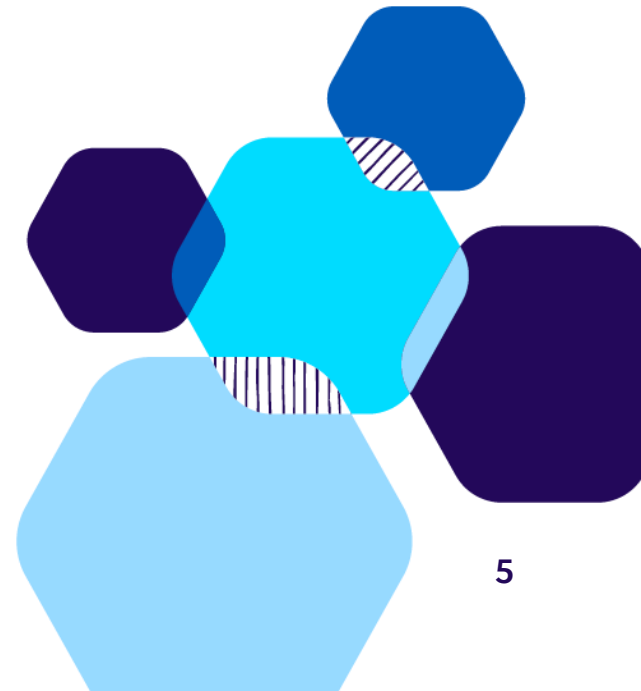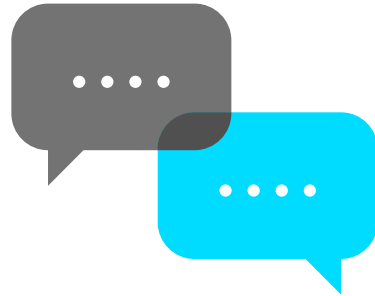
- Reflect on the session

Overview

- An effective language classroom should be a thoughtfully designed and planned learning platform with varieties of resources and engaging and interacting activities which in turn develop learners' language skills

- There are certain ways to achieve this. One effective way is using simple, short, engaging, and interacting activities that consider learners' age and language level and other backgrounds. Warmers, fillers and coolers are categorized under these activities.

What are Warmers, Fillers, Coolers?

Write what you know about these three types of activity in the chat

Warmers, Fillers, Coolers?

Warmers, fillers and coolers are short 5–10-minute activities used to engage learners in the beginning of a lesson, to fill time during a lesson or to end a lesson on a positive note

They encourage students to talk and have fun and require little preparation to use

They create engaging and interesting classroom activities

Basic features

They are short
(ideally 5-10
minutes only)

They are fun and
engaging

They are simple to
explain

Basic features cont.

They support classroom routines which in turn allows learners to learn vocabulary items and grammatical structures

Some activities can work as either warmers, fillers or coolers or for all

Some activities are more suited to either beginners, intermediate or advanced level learners. There are also some activities that work with all language level learners.
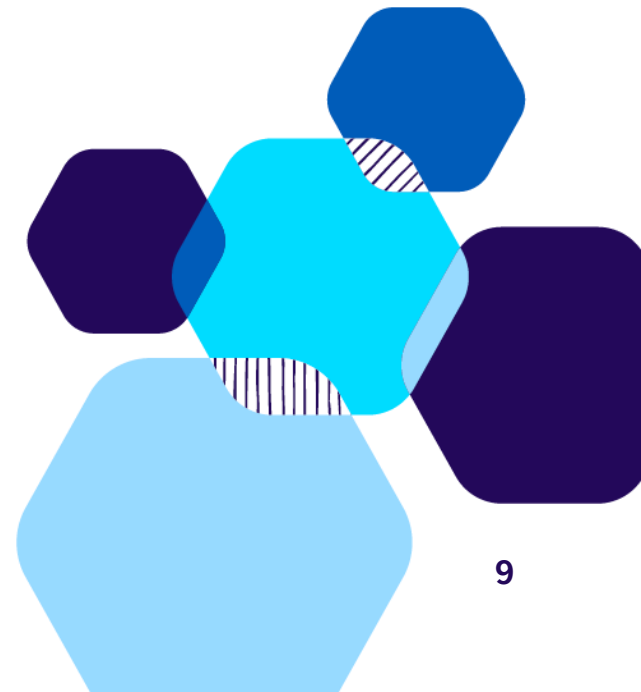
Match the activities with their definitions and write your answers in the chat

1. Warmers   2. Fillers   3. Coolers

A.   These activities are used at the end of lessons. They help consolidate/round-off a lesson, leave students happy and upbeat, feeling as if they have both learned and had a good time. They could be adapted to revise certain grammatical structures or vocabulary items at the end of a lesson

B.   Quick and easy language games to plug a time gap between other activities. They are also used to change the pace of the lesson in the middle of the lesson

C.   They are just what they sound like. The are used in the beginning of a lesson as an Ice Breaker activity. They are used to introduce the topic, vocabulary items or themes of the lesson

Warmers, fillers, and coolers – With beginner learners

Easy activities

Use simple instructions and terms

If beginners are young learners, use more game like activities

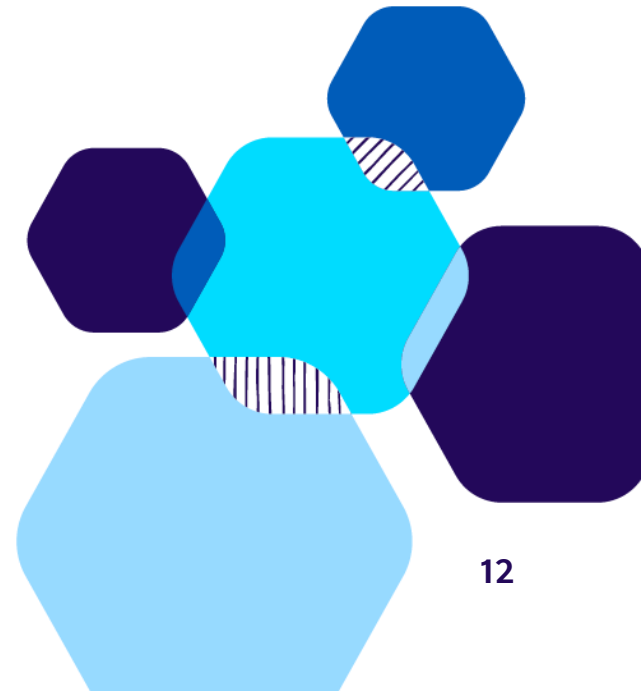# Warmers, fillers, and coolers – With advanced classes

More complex activities

Varieties of activities as advanced level learners get tired of the same activity repeated.

Activities focus on developing learners critical thinking and logical reasoning.

Think about and share a Warmer, Filler or Cooler that you use in your classroom. Provide the following details in the chat

- Activity

- Level

- Age

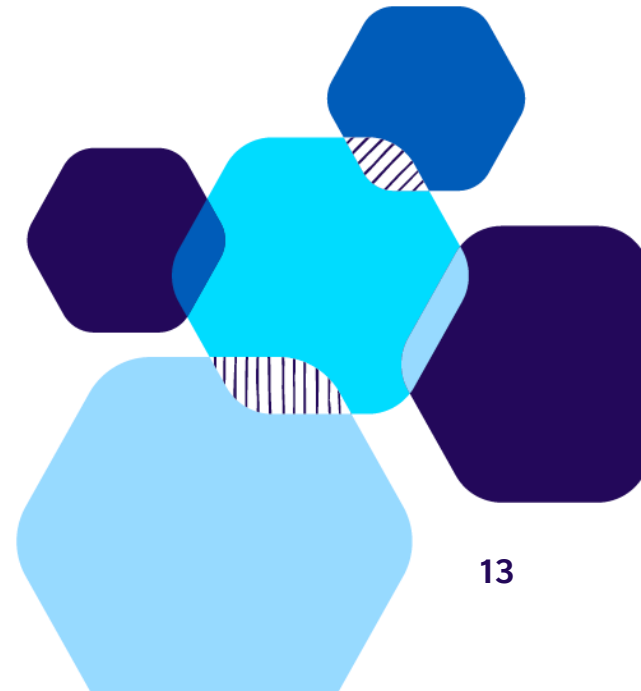- Objective

- Target Language

- Length

- Resources

Word/Sentence chain

Read and identify whether this activity works as warmer, filler or cooler?
Write your responses on the chat

- Have students sit or stand in a circle. Then have the first student say a word or a sentence such as "I like…" Then, have the second student repeat this sentence, and add their own part to it. Repeat until everyone in the circle has recited the chain and added their part.

- You can steer it towards a certain topic by adding the first sentence in the chain yourself, or by having key vocabulary or target language written on the whiteboard which students get extra praise for using.

This can be good as a warmer, filler or cooler to get your learners engaged to the sessions
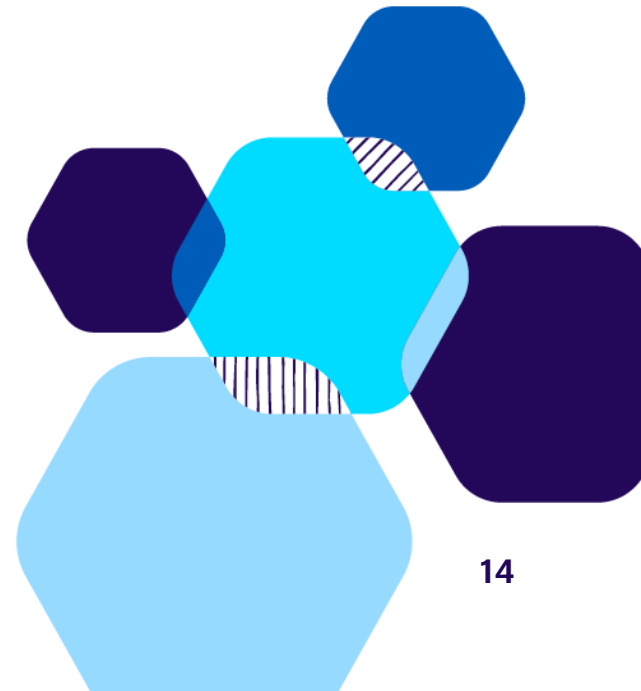
Pictionary

Read and identify whether this activity works as warmer, filler or cooler? Write your responses on the chat

- This activity is a combination of vocabulary items and pictures.

- Put students in two teams. Give one person in each team a word on a card and have them try to draw it while the rest of the team guess the word (in English).

- This can be great for making sure students really understand the meaning of the word.

This can be good as a Cooler to check learners' understanding of vocabulary items in the lesson and to make the end of the lesson cheerful
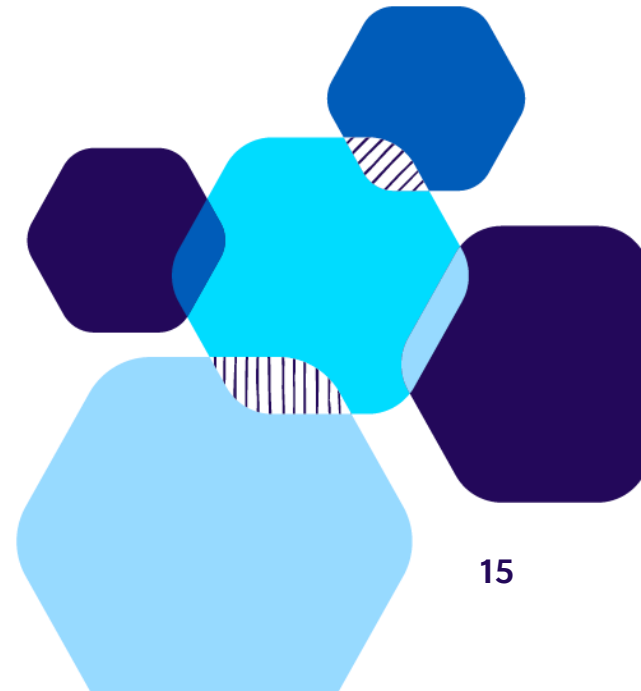
Alphabet words

Read and identify whether this activity works as warmer, filler or cooler? Write your responses on the chat

- Sit students in a circle and run through the alphabet from A to Z, with each student thinking of a word that starts with their given letter. This will be difficult once they get to Q or X!

This can be good as a warmer to get your students thinking in English but might be a little too distracting as a filler.
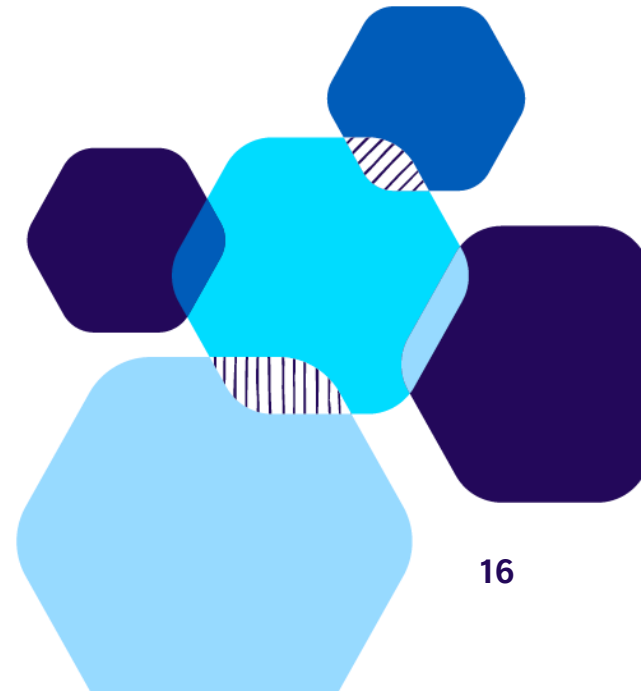
Simon Says

Read and identify whether this activity works as warmer, filler or cooler?
Write your responses on the chat

- This is quick and easy and gets your student moving. Give them simple commands to follow, with points if they don't do an action when you don't say 'Simon Says' before the command.

- As your students get more confident, you could even get them to take turns being 'Simon'.

This activity works great as a warmer, filler or cooler, as you can potentially have students act out commands related to the vocabulary they've been learning.
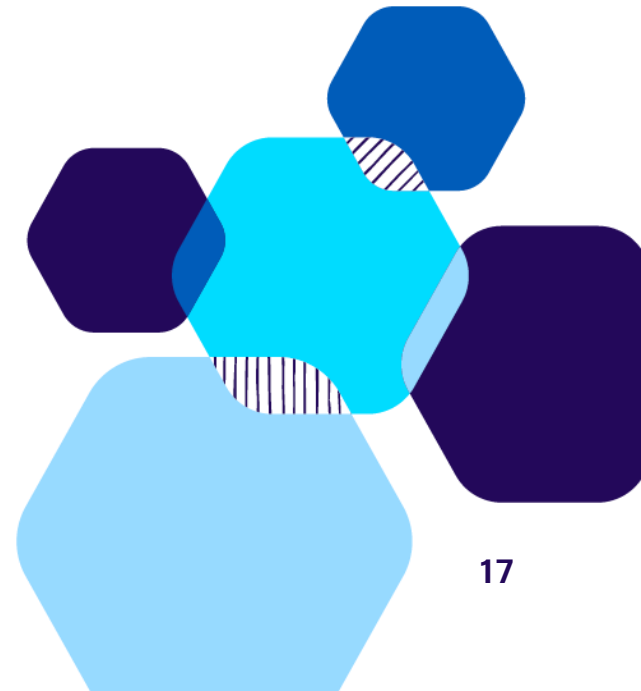
Two truths, one lie

**Read and identify whether this activity works as warmer, filler or cooler?
Write your responses on the chat**

- If your students already have a reasonable amount of English, have them write down two truths and one lie about themselves. Then have your students mingle and say their sentences so others can guess which statement is the lie. Once students understand the point of the game, they'll love trying to trick each other.

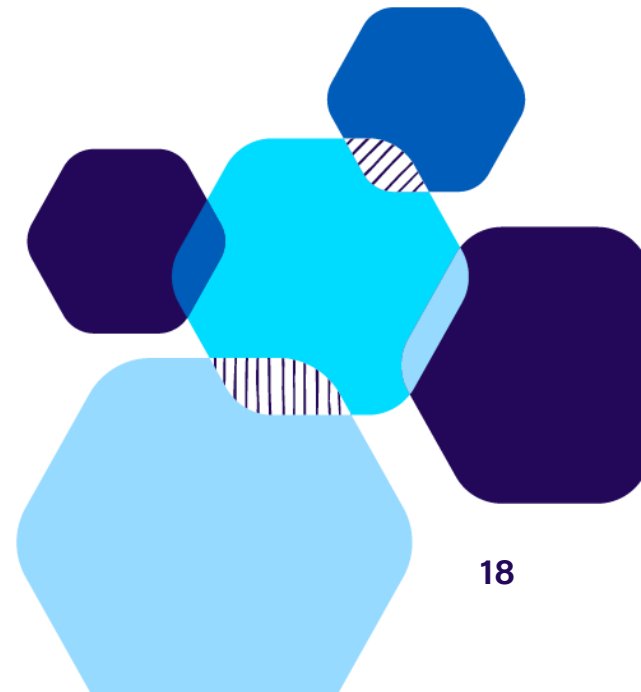**This could be used as warmer, filler or cooler**

Group Quiz

**Read and identify whether this activity works as warmer, filler or cooler?
Write your responses on the chat**

- Engaging and somehow competitive activity

- Form groups/pairs

- Each group should prepare five questions to be done by other group members

- The answers should be marked by a third group. So pay attention while circulating the papers

This activity can be used as a cooler to check learners understanding of the lesson before they leave the class.
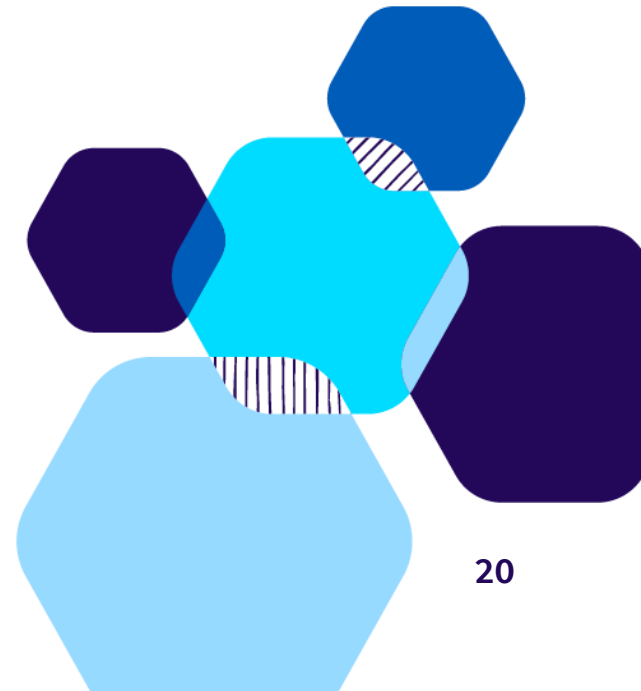
More Activities to Try out in Our Classrooms

In the following slides, I have included further activities for you to try out in your classrooms. I hope you will find them useful. You will be able to download these slides off the Africa ET website to explore these activities in more detail.

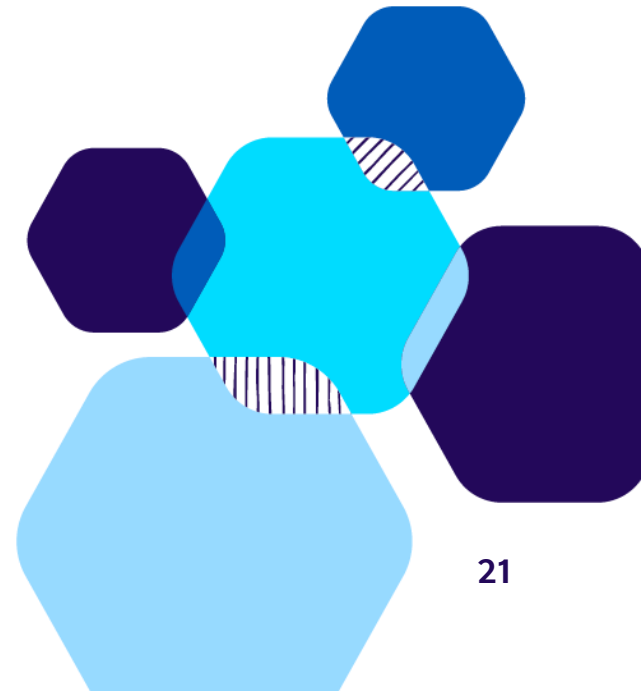# More Activities to Try out in Our Classrooms

Throw and catch

- This is a simple game which younger classes often love to play. Have your students stand in a circle and take turns throwing a ball to each other, with each throw being accompanied by a question.

- Make sure you put some rules in place for polite and safe behaviors, such as not throwing balls at other people's faces!

More Activities to Try out in Our Classrooms

Find someone who.

Give students a chart with five categories such as 'Has brown eyes' or 'Likes grapes'. Then have your students mingle and use complete question forms to ask about the categories. The first student to get 'yes' for all five categories wins.

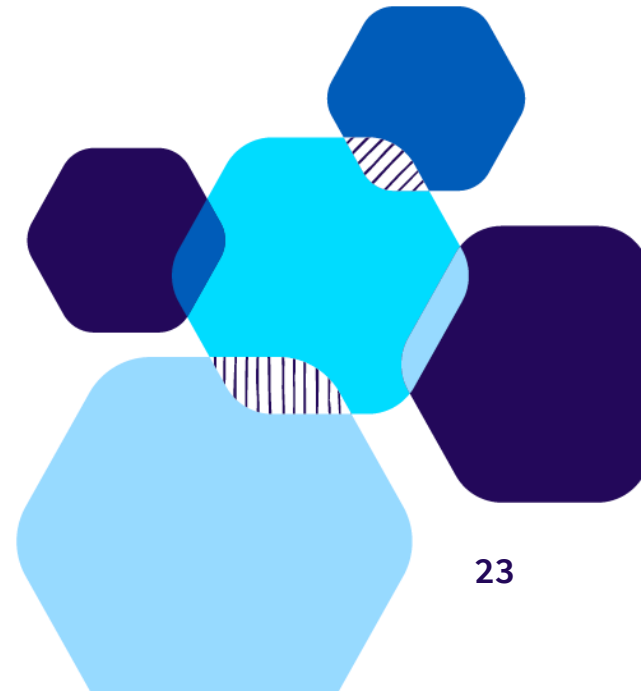# More Activities to Try out in Our Classrooms

Error mingle

Find some common mistakes made by your class and write these onto cards as sentences with mistakes. Then, put your students into pairs and hand them several cards each. Next, have the students read their cards to each other and try to notice the error. To gain a point they'll have to say the sentence correctly. This is great for making your students aware of issues with their own grammar.

More Activities to Try out in Our Classrooms

Think Pair Share

This is one of the most basic and easiest ways to warm-up your class. Give your students a topic, such as what they did over the weekend, and let them talk about it for two minutes. Make sure you confirm that they understand the language they need to use and report afterward what either themselves or their partners did in the correct forms.

This activity is also used to introduce lesson topics by providing learners brainstorming questions for group discussions which helps both the learners and the teacher to arouse learners interest and gauge learners prior knowledge and experience on the topic.
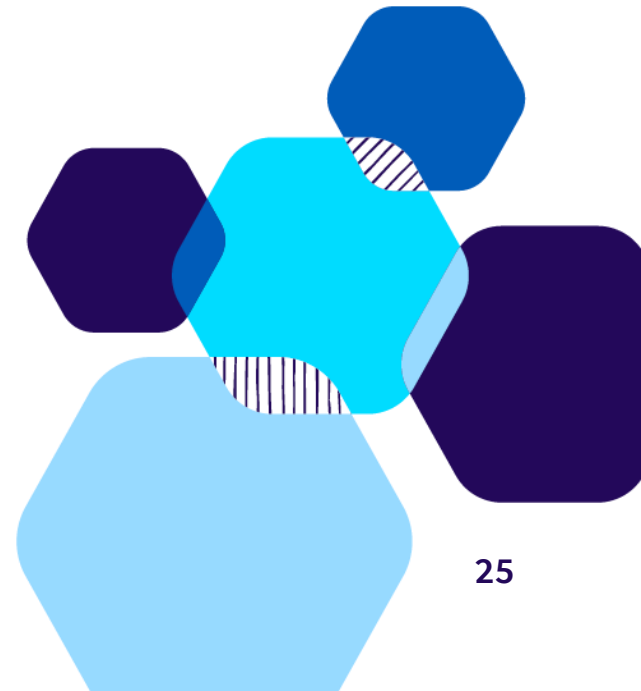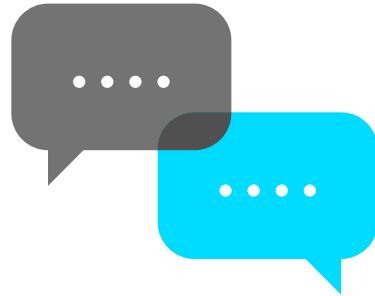
More Activities to Try out in Our Classrooms

Define a Word

- Prepare flashcards with words/phrases related to the target language learned

- Divide the class into groups/rows

- Each member of the group should go in the front of the class and pick one flashcard. Then the student must define the word to the rest of the group members and they should guess what the word is

- To encourage longer talk, have a rule that forces the students to use not less that 5 words to describe the word on the flashcard

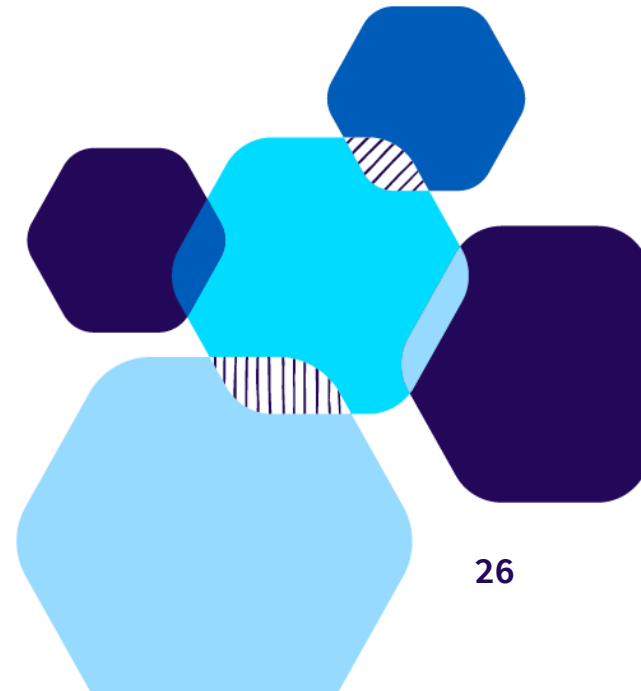- Praise the winning group/row with marks or any other incentives

Final task

Now I'd like to hear from you about any ideas you have, please put your ideas in the chat, or put up your hand to speak.

Final thoughts

- Warmers, fillers, and coolers get your class ready to use English

- Use up spare time when your students move through the material too quickly

- Give your students a few moments of fun at the end of your lesson

- By learning about these types of activities, and using them in your lessons, you will increase your students' enjoyment of the lesson and give yourself another vital tool to keep your classes running smoothly

Thank you

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