

Building Sentences // Year 7-9

Barrier Games

These are ideal for encouraging students to express themselves clearly and to practise repair strategies when they have not communicated their message effectively i.e. repeating or rephrasing an instruction. Students work in pairs back-to-back or with a screen in between them. One student draws a picture or collection of shapes. They must explain how to draw this to their partner. At the end compare pictures to see how successful they were.

Variations:

Give the students identical pictures. Each student draws 5 crosses on their picture. They have to explain exactly where the cross is e.g. "Draw a cross on the right eye of the boy wearing a baseball cap."

One student makes a simple Lego model and explains to their partner how to replicate it.

Silly Sentences

The student listens to or reads a sentence with grammatical errors. They have to say the sentence correctly.

You can adapt this game to whichever grammatical error the student is making – see if they can recognise their own errors in other people's sentences.

Describe the scene

Collect a range of pictures from newspapers. Ask the students to describe each picture using a range of connectives.

e.g. "*the car crashed into the wall because the road was icy*", "*although the car crashed into the wall, no one was injured*", "*after the car crashed into the wall, the lamppost fell over*"

Talk about the role of the connective in the sentence, e.g. 'and' joins two ideas together, 'before' and 'after' tell you when something happened.

Last word loses

While (out) shopping (yesterday) with (my) mother, we (suddenly) noticed (that) our (little) John (had) disappeared, (then) later the police (were) called, (and) they (had) found him!

Write the above sentence on the board, and put the students into small groups. In turn, each says one word from the sentence round the group until the sentence is finished. The aim of the game is to avoid being the one to say the last word (*him*), the person who does is out of the next round. All words must be used except words in brackets, which are optional, so students can use strategy to try to avoid being left with the last word. After three rounds, one player will emerge the winner.

Discuss how the words in brackets change the meaning of the sentence, for example: active-passive (Did the police phone or did someone phone them?) / adding *that* makes it more formal / adding *out* and *little* makes it more colloquial, but adding *my* makes it less / adding *suddenly* makes it more dramatic. Once students are familiar with the aim of the game, they can make up their own group sentences one word at a time.