

THE RESOURCEFUL TEACHER Series

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# ENGLISH THROUGH DRAMA

Creative activities for inclusive ELT classes



# 1.16

## Captain's Coming!

<b>Focus</b>	Developing concentration. Matching meaning with movement. Listening and responding in mime. Vocabulary: Any lexical set you choose, to summarise a narrative Here: <i>captain, huddle up, shots, stones, banners, broadcast, chant.</i>
<b>Level</b>	All
<b>Age</b>	10 and above
<b>Time</b>	5-7 minutes
<b>Preparation</b>	Learn the instructions and have some ideas ready for the responses in case the students cannot think of them. Make flash cards or a PPT showing the different kinds of items in the instructions, if necessary.

### in class

- 1 Teach, or revise, the vocabulary in the instructions, using the flash cards or the slides.
- 2 Ask the students what they think the situation or the story is. They should come up with something like this:

#### The Narrative

*There is a serious problem in town and the Captain's side is protesting. They have a slogan which they have practised (we don't know what it is yet) and banners which they have brought with them. There are crowds in the streets when the Captain arrives and his team stands still and salutes him with respect. The Captain calls them together in groups and they huddle up to listen to his instructions. Suddenly, there is shouting in the distance and everybody covers their heads in fear and drops down low. Then they get angry and start to pick up stones and throw them wildly at the other side. As the other side stops in fear the Captain's side picks up their banners and marches forward holding them high in the air. The Captain calls them to stop and asks them to start the chant.*

- 3 Ask them to think of a slogan for the final response e.g. We are the champions!/ We want life!
- 4 Ask the students how they might show each item by an action or gesture with their bodies. Make an agreement for each one and sketch the action on the board with the flash card and word(s), e.g.:

'*Captain's coming!*': students stop and salute

'*Huddle up!*': students get together in a huddle and listen in

'*Shouts!*': students duck down, hands over heads

'*Stones!*': Pick up and throw stones

'*Banners!*': March forward in rows with arms up

'*Broadcast!*': Stop and listen intently

'*Chant!*': Stand still and chant slogan

# 2.5

## Create a Class Radio Play

<b>Focus</b>	Experimenting with the possibilities of the voice to create sound effects. Concentrating on sounds.
<b>Level</b>	Lower intermediate to Advanced
<b>Age</b>	12 and above
<b>Time</b>	10-15 mins for preparation + 15 mins for rehearsal and production
<b>Preparation</b>	Think of situations which have lots of sound in them and personal objects that students will have near them in the classroom. Have some ideas for students who cannot think of them themselves.

### in class

- 1 Take a number of objects from your bag or pockets and a number of things from the desk and show how they make sounds by shaking them, hitting them against the floor, etc.
- 2 Tell the students they are going to make up a Class Radio Play with sounds only (no words) using only the objects they have with them and any sound effects/exclamations they can add with their voices.
- 3 Tell them they can choose any plot they wish but it can only be expressed through sounds.
- 4 Ask the students to get into groups of five or six to plan their 'plays' and go around monitoring and helping.
- 5 Ask the students to rehearse and ask if any group would like to present. Label the groups with numbers so they know who goes first, who goes second, etc.
- 6 Remind the students that they should freeze in their positions before starting and wait for the start signal.
- 7 Ask the audience to turn around or close their eyes so they can only listen.



# 3.2

## Be my Mirror!

<b>Focus</b>	Developing observation skills. Following a sequence of mime. Working together.
<b>Level</b>	All
<b>Age</b>	Any
<b>Time</b>	5 minutes + 10-15 minutes for performances
<b>Preparation</b>	You should try out the exercise beforehand in front of a real mirror or better still with a friend or member of the family.

### in class

- 1 Ask the students to find a space in twos, facing each other and to decide which one of them is X and which is Y.
- 2 Explain that, in the first round, X is the real person and Y is a full length mirror reflecting the image. In the second round Y is the real person and X is the mirror. Make sure to maintain silence.
- 3 (Demonstrate with a student if you think it will be difficult.) Tell them that student X is to begin slowly making a pattern in the air using only one arm. Student Y must try to mirror the pattern exactly.
- 4 Call '*change!*' at which point Y takes the lead.
- 5 Call '*change!*' and X repeats the exercise but with his/her leg while Y reflects the movement. Then they swap.
- 6 Continue with different parts of the body: e.g. shoulder, fingers, foot, parts of the face like nose, mouth, eyes, etc.
- 7 Ask for volunteers to show their work while the rest of the class acts as audience.

### Note

There will probably be a lot of laughter so try to make it clear that this is about control and concentration so they should try to be serious and maintain silence.

### Variations

#### *Daily life*

Tell the pairs to decide on a sequence of movements which depict a daily life event e.g.

- getting up in the morning
- getting washed and dressed
- eating a meal
- driving a car (they will need to sit facing each other for this)
- preparing to take the dog for a walk
- rehearsing a song

# 3.2

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## Be my Mirror!

### ***Repetitions***

Student X makes a short sequence of movements and stops. Student Y immediately repeats the sequence as the mirror. Then they swap. This allows for the movements to have more pace and variety and calls for the use of memory. It also implies finer observation.

### ***With sound***

As above, but the leader introduces exclamations/speech and/or sound with the movements, varying their tone and volume. There need be no logical sequence between one set of movements/words and the next.

### ***At the Hairdresser's***

In groups of four, with one student seated as the client and the other student standing up behind the chair, playing the hair dresser. The mirror reflects this arrangement. Ask them to perform a slow motion mime.

Ask for volunteers to show their work while the rest of the class acts as audience.

# 4.4

## 'Invisible' letters

<b>Focus</b>	Using the imagination. Developing creative and critical thinking. Developing actions which lead to fluency.
<b>Level</b>	Lower intermediate to Advanced
<b>Age</b>	Any (but the song will only appeal to young learners)
<b>Time</b>	10-20 mins
<b>Preparation</b>	Prepare a blank letter inside a blank envelope. Bring a Postman's cap and bag if possible. You can find the Postman Pat song on YouTube.

### in class

- 1 Ask the students to get into a closed circle seated on chairs.
  - 2 Teach the song 'Postman Pat'.
  - 3 Appoint a 'Postman Pat'. Give them the letter. They run around the inside of the circle while the class sings. They 'post' the letter in another student's lap.
  - 4 The student opens the letter and imagines the content. The student 'reads' the letter expressing with their body, face and voice what the content is.
  - 5 Ask the class for the contents and students suggest e.g. They have just won the lottery/passed or failed an exam/learned that their grandma is ill...
  - 6 Ask more questions probing for details e.g. *How much? What do you think she will buy? What exam was it? Will she try again?* etc.
- Repeat with other students asking them to think of totally different content.

### Note

If you think the song will be rejected by older students just omit it.