



Activities for Previewing Vocabulary

From Karin's ESL PartyLand: <http://www.eslpartyland.com/>

Find Your Partner

Prepare two sets of cards, one with the word and part of speech, the other with the definition. Students mill about the room until they think they've found their partner. You check. Partners now return to their seats, where they must write two original sentences using their vocabulary word. They then write these sentences on the board. With the class, you go through the sentences on the board, eliciting meaning from context.

Variation: To form groups of three for the activity above, simply include a third set of cards. In this set, write a sentence which clearly uses the word in context; however, leave a blank space for the vocabulary word or phrase.

Pictures

Bring in pictures from magazines (*If the students have textbooks, you can use the pictures in them. Another idea is to take them for a walk around the village and point out different objects and repeat the word). For example, if the topic for today is clothing, why not bring in some magazine pictures of people dressed for different occasions. If you're talking about extreme weather, almost any nature shots will do. You can tape these pictures to the board, post them in four corners around the room, give one to each small group or pair... the possibilities are endless. The whole idea here is to get the students talking about the pictures. Once they start talking, they generate vocabulary and have a real need for the vocabulary that's missing. For a little more structure, write all the vocabulary words, and some key words for vocabulary review, on a sheet of paper. Partners must visit four corners, all of which are home to a separate picture, using all their words as they go. For example, they may have to take turns dictating/writing sentences which use the words to describe one of the pictures. These sentences can later be read to the whole class, with the rest of the class trying to guess the picture being described.

Word Search in Text

Another thing you could do is to throw the article in front of them and give them a definition of the word or phrase that you want to focus on, before they have a chance to read the text. (Choose the words or expressions ahead of time to ensure that the context is sufficient to determine meaning.) For example, you could say something like, "There's an expression in paragraph 2 that means you don't have any money," (He *was broke*, otherwise, he would have taken a taxi the night before.), or "Find a word that means danger in paragraph 6." (The *perils* of drug addiction are none too few.)