

# Activities for Conversation-Based ESOL Classes

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This paper introduces twelve language learning activities that I have used in my classes over the years, selected for their ability to engage students in interactions with one another in English in the classroom. Some I created myself and others I developed from existing exercises. All are tried and true and can add an interesting element to conversation based ESOL classes.

この小論では、長年に渡って授業で使用し、特に学生同士が互いに英語で会話のできる能力を養成するために作った英語教育教材から12を選んで、提示する。すべての教材はすでに授業で使用し、実証済みで、ESOL 授業に効果的な会話に興味ある要素を加えることができる。

## 1. Introduction.

In this paper I will present a selection of language learning activities that I have designed or adapted for use in my English language classes at a Japanese university of art and design over the years with consistently encouraging results. An important objective of my English language classes has been to give students an opportunity to speak with one another and the instructor in English during class in a friendly, positive environment, and to help students improve their individual communication skills in English regardless of their proficiency at the time they begin the course. The activities I have chosen to present here are ones that have proven their worth in achieving that end while being particularly enjoyable for students and instructor alike.

The activities are arranged in three categories. Those in the first category are based on a vocabulary building game from a conversation textbook I have used in classes in the past. Four activities I designed based on the idea of that game are presented in Section Two. In Section Three there are four activities for class presentations of varying lengths and difficulty. And in Section Four there are four activities that I wrote for use with specific feature-length films and their bilingual annotated screenplays.

In presenting each activity, I begin by explaining the activity. This is followed by the worksheets that students are given to prepare for and carry out the exercise. Although I usually have students write their responses directly on their worksheets, I have removed the lines for student responses from the sample worksheets here to save space. Also, on some worksheets there is a

section in brackets marked “NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR” that gives some information for the instructor on carrying out the activity. I have added that information for the readers of this paper. It is not, of course, included in the worksheet given to the students.

## **2. Variations on the vocabulary learning game “Blackout.”**

The following four sets of worksheets are based on an activity called “Blackout” in the English conversation textbook *Talk a Lot Book One* (Martin 2003), a textbook with a number of interesting language-learning activities in each lesson. “Blackout” is introduced there as a vocabulary review tool at the end of Unit 3, “Talking about Family.” The exercise in the textbook begins with a list of fourteen words for different relatives, such as grandmother, sister-in-law, parents, etc., and instructions for playing the game. Beneath that is a picture of a grid with three squares across and three squares down. Each square is large enough to fit a few words. Students are instructed to select nine words from the list of fourteen relatives and write them on their grids at random. Working in groups of three or four, they then take turns defining the words on their grid in English. For example, for the word cousin a hint could be, “This is your aunt’s child.” When one of the other students guesses the word correctly, anyone who has written that word on their own grid can cross it out. The first person to cross out all the words on their grid has a “blackout” and is the winner.

The instructions I have written for this activity are somewhat detailed. As with other activities, I explain the instructions on the worksheet to the students before they begin, and then I ask the students to read through them together in their groups to make sure that everyone understands. This is a good reading comprehension exercise and an important part of the activity.

Students responded so well to the original blackout game that I began adapting it to use in other lessons and at higher levels. I have also applied it to uses beyond a vocabulary building exercise. I usually have students play until each student’s grid is blacked out so they can get as much speaking practice as possible. This game engages the students in a way that guarantees sharp focus and animated language exchanges and interaction and is well-suited to conversation classes.

### **2.1 Blackout for talking about geographic locations.**

I designed this variation of the blackout game for an upper elementary level class to supplement an exercise in our textbook, *Getting into English* (Cronin and Gray 2010). In the exercise in the book there is a map with some cities marked on it and students are asked to explain the location of various cities on the map using expressions such as “north of,” “east of,” etc. My aim was to give the students more practice in describing locations of cities and

other places on a map, as many clearly needed more work with that. Each student was given a game instruction worksheet and a grid. (See 2.1 Worksheet below.) I also printed out two simple A4 size maps of Japan from the Internet. One map showed the prefectures of Japan, with names written in English, and the other was of the regions of Japan, also labeled in English. On the map with the region names I printed the same list of regions and their prefectures that I wrote on the game instruction sheet. I printed the maps out in color, laminated them, and gave one set of maps to each group to refer to as they played. I collected the maps after class to use in other classes.

## 2.1 Worksheet

### Blackout Game Instructions: Regions and Prefectures of Japan

**Get Ready:** Look at the three sets of regions below. In your groups, decide which set of regions to use for your first game - Set 1, Set 2, or Set 3. Then write the names of nine of the prefectures in the set your group has chosen on your grid.

**SET 1:** Hokkaido, Kansai and Chugoku Regions (Choose from 13 prefectures.)

**SET 2:** Tohoku, Kanto, and Shikoku Regions (Choose from 17 prefectures.)

**SET 3:** Chubu and Kyushu Regions (Choose from 17 prefectures.)

**Regions and their prefectures:** Below is a list of the prefectures and regions of Japan.

Hokkaido: Hokkaido

Tohoku: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima

Kanto: Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa

Chubu: Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Aichi

Kansai: Mie, Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara, Wakayama

Chugoku: Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi

Shikoku: Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Kochi

Kyushu: Fukuoka, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Saga, Oita, Okinawa

**Play:** 1) Before you begin, make sure that everyone has completed their grids from the set of prefectures your group has chosen. 2) Place your group's copies of the two maps of Japan where everyone can see them so that you can refer to them as you play. 3) Choose a prefecture on your grid. Give at least five hints to the people in your group. When giving hints, you can look up information about the prefecture on your smart phone if necessary. 4) The person on your left will say the name of the prefecture you are describing. 5) If the answer is correct say, "That's right." If the answer is in-

correct say, "I'm sorry, that's not it." Then repeat your hints and give more until someone answers correctly. 6) Anyone who has that prefecture on their grid can cross it out. 7) Take turns. Continue until someone gets a "blackout," which is when all of the words on someone's grid are crossed off. That student is the winner. You can continue playing until everyone in the group has a blackout. 8) If you have extra time draw a new blackout grid on the back of your paper, choose a different set of prefectures from the list of three sets, and play again.

NOTE: Making the hints is an important part of this task, so make sure that the person in your group giving the hints tells you at least five hints BEFORE you say the name of the prefecture, even if you know it after the first hint.

### Pattern for hints:

- 1) This prefecture is in (northern, southern, eastern or western) Japan. ALSO: northeastern; northwestern; southeastern; Southwestern
- 2) It's north of (OR south of) \_\_\_\_\_ and east of (OR west of) \_\_\_\_\_.  
ALSO: northeast of; southeast of; northwest of; southwest of
- 3) It borders on \_\_\_\_\_ (and \_\_\_\_\_) Prefecture(s).
- 4) It's in the \_\_\_\_\_ region.
- 5) Make a fifth hint. Here are some suggestions:  
It's known for \_\_\_\_\_.  
It's near \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ is a well-known city in this prefecture.  
It's about an hour and a half (OR \_\_\_\_ minutes) from Kyoto Station by train.

### 2.2 Blackout for movie titles.

I wrote this exercise to supplement a unit on movies in the textbook *Topic Talk* (Martin 2006) when I was using that textbook in my class. Many of my students have shown a keen interest in Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki's movie, and all the students in this class were familiar with the eleven titles in Part I of Worksheet I below which is why I chose that theme for the game presented here. The week before we played the game, and before passing out any worksheets, I gave each group of students a list of the eleven titles of Miyazaki movies in Japanese and had them translate them into what they thought would be good English titles. After the students in each group had compared their ideas for titles with the other groups, I passed out Worksheet I. (See 2.2 Worksheet I below.) They checked their ideas with the official titles, then did the exercise in Part I of Worksheet I. They enjoyed working out and sharing their own ideas for titles, and the exer-

cise helped familiarize them with the English titles they would be using in the game. The following week I passed out Worksheet II, which is the blackout game instructions. (See 2.2 Worksheet II below.) Students played in groups of three.

### **2.2 Worksheet I**

#### **Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli**

**I. Below is a list of eleven Miyazaki movies with their English titles and release dates. Work with a partner. Take turns asking about the release date and English title of each movie. Mix up the order of the movies. Use the conversation pattern below.**

Conversation pattern:

*A: What is the English title of (say the Japanese title here).*

*B: It's (English title).*

*A: When was it released?*

*B: It was released in (year).*

*The Castle of Cagliostro (1979)*

*Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind (1984)*

*Laputa: Castle in the Sky (1985)*

*My Neighbor Totoro (1988)*

*Kiki's Delivery Service (1989)*

*Porco Rosso (1992)*

*Princess Mononoke (1997)*

*Spirited Away (2001)*

*Howl's Moving Castle (2004)*

*Ponyo (2008)*

*The Wind Rises (2013)*

**II. You can find an interesting article about Hayao Miyazaki's movies titled "Hayao Miyazaki's Films Ranked from Worst to Best" on the website for IndieWire, an online publication, by typing in [Indiewire.com](http://Indiewire.com) and the title of the article. Read the article and answer these questions. You will discuss your answers in your groups in the next class.**

- 1) What did you find interesting about the article from IndieWire?
- 2) Do you agree with the author's comments? Explain.
- 3) What titles did you recognize in the list of works Miyazaki was involved with, besides the eleven Miyazaki movie titles above?

### **2.2 Worksheet II**

#### **Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli: Blackout Game Instructions**

Choose titles from the list below. Write the titles randomly on your blackout grid. Choose a title on your grid and give four or five hints to help your group members guess the movie you are

describing. No one should try to guess the title until the person whose turn it is has given all their hints. This will give everyone more language practice. When someone in your group guesses the title correctly, you can cross the title off on your grid. Any other student with that title on their grid will also be able to cross it off. Take turns. Continue crossing off titles until someone gets a “blackout,” which is when all nine words on your grid are crossed off. The first person to get a blackout is the winner. If you have time, continue playing until everyone in your group has a blackout. The person giving hints can look at this worksheet and the “Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli” worksheet to make hints. However, to make the game more challenging the students who are guessing the titles should not look at any worksheets.

*Howl’s Moving Castle*

*Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*

*Kiki’s Delivery Service*

*Laputa: Castle in the Sky*

*Spirited Away*

*Porco Rosso*

*The Castle of Cagliostro*

*Ponyo*

*The Wind Rises*

*Princess Mononoke*

*My Neighbor Totoro*

**Below are some ideas for giving hints.**

This movie is about \_\_\_\_\_.

This movie takes place in \_\_\_\_\_ (time period and area).

This movie was based on a book.

This movie was released in \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

This movie was released the year before (OR after) \_\_\_\_\_ (title of another movie title from the list).

The main characters in this movie are \_\_\_\_\_.

DON’T FORGET! 1) Making the hints is an important part of this task, so make sure that the person in your group giving the hints tells you at least five hints BEFORE you try to guess the title of the movie, even if you know it after the first hint. 2) Only the person whose turn it is to give hints can look at the worksheets. The other students in your group should not.

### **2.3 Blackout for countries around the world.**

This is a good game to supplement a lesson where students are learning vocabulary for countries, nationalities, and the languages spoken in countries around the world. It can also be used to review world geography in English. I allow the students giving hints to look up information about the countries on their smart phones as they play.

## 2.3 Worksheet

### Blackout Game Instructions: Countries around the World

**I. How to play:** Choose any nine countries from the list in Part II below. Write them randomly in the nine squares on your grid. Choose a country on your grid and give at least three hints to help your partners guess what country it is. When someone guesses the country, cross the word off on your grid. Your partners will also cross that country off if it is on their grid. Take turns. Continue until someone gets a “blackout.” (A blackout is when all of the words are crossed off.) You can continue playing until everyone in the group has a blackout.

Ideas for hints:

This country borders on \_\_\_\_\_.

This country is north of (south of, east of, west of, northeast of, southwest of, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_.

This country is famous for (OR is known for) \_\_\_\_\_.

People in this country speak \_\_\_\_\_.

The capital of this country is \_\_\_\_\_.

This country is in the northern (southern) hemisphere.

\_\_\_\_\_ (the name of a well-known person) is from this country.

**II. List of Countries** [NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: I write the names of fifteen countries here. I choose them according to what we have been studying in class and the interests of the students.]

NOTE: Making the hints is an important part of this task, so make sure that the person in your group giving the hints tells you at least five hints BEFORE you say the name of the country, even if you know it after the first hint.

### 2.4 Blackout for learning words for family relations.

As explained at the beginning of Section 2, the original blackout exercise was designed to help students learn the vocabulary for various relatives. Many of the fourteen words in the original exercise were elementary level vocabulary words. The words in the original game are brother-in-law; sister-in-law; mother-in-law; niece; nephew; uncle; aunt; cousin; parents; father; mother; grandmother; and grandfather. When presenting this exercise to the class, I first make sure that students understand those fourteen words. In some cases, I have them play a quick game of Blackout using that list. Next, I pass out the worksheet “Family Relations and Marital Status: Vocabulary Words.” (See 2.4 Worksheet I below.) I go over this worksheet carefully with the class. Students are then asked to study the worksheet at home in preparation for the game. The following week I pass out the grids and the next worksheet, “Family

Relations and Marital Status: Blackout Game Instructions.” (See 2.4 Worksheet II below.) Students are told not to look at either of the worksheets while playing the game.

### **2.4 Worksheet I**

#### **Family Relations and Marital Status: Vocabulary Words**

1. relatives: people you are related to, such as aunts, uncles, cousins
2. siblings: your brothers and sisters
3. spouse: a person’s husband or wife
4. widow: a woman whose husband has passed away
5. widower: a man whose wife has passed away
6. great grandfather: your grandfather’s father
7. stepson: your spouse’s son, related to you by marriage only and not by blood
8. stepmother: you father’s wife, related to you by marriage only, and not by blood
9. half-brother: a brother who you share only one parent with
10. In-laws are related to you through your own marriage or through the marriage of your siblings or children. So, for example, your brother’s wife would be your sister-in-law.
11. Sometimes you are asked to check a box indicating your marital status on a form. Often you will be asked to check one of these: single; married; separated (this means living apart and considering divorce); divorced; widowed (this means your spouse has passed away).

### **2.4 Worksheet II**

#### **Family Relations and Marital Status: Blackout Game Instructions**

Choose any nine words from the list below. Write them randomly on your blackout grid. Next take turns giving at least three hints to help your partners guess what relationship word you have chosen. When someone guesses your word correctly you can cross the word off on your grid. Your partners will also cross that word off if it is on their grid. Take turns. Keep giving hints and crossing out words until someone gets a “blackout,” which is when all the words on the grid are crossed off. You can continue playing until everyone in the group has a blackout. Do not look at the worksheets while you play the game.

mother-in-law	father-in-law
brother-in-law	sister-in-law
son-in-law	daughter-in-law
in-laws	spouse
stepson	stepmother
half-brother	half-sister
great-grandfather	great-great-grandmother
relatives	separated
divorced	widowed

a widow

a widower

### **3. Presentation-based activities.**

The following activities are meant to be carried out over a period of weeks or months throughout one semester. The first is based on very light material and is not difficult for the class to prepare or do. It can usually be completed in two weeks. The second activity works well with groups of any level. The third requires more preparation and class time and is best suited to students at pre-intermediate or intermediate levels and above. The fourth I have only used in smaller, upper level classes.

I have found that the key to ensuring that presentations move ahead on schedule lies in setting out a clear timeline for the students and ensuring that it is followed. In the case of the second and third activities here it is important that students have the material they would like to present approved by the instructor according to the timeline and that they adhere to the due dates for submitting their work for editing and for the final check. This results in well-prepared presentations that are a good learning experience for the presenter and interesting and educational for the class.

#### **3.1 Understanding and telling knock-knock jokes.**

I originally wrote this activity to help explain what a knock-knock joke is when one came up in a movie we were studying in class. The joke was part of a humorous scene from the movie *Catch Me If You Can* in which a rude knock-knock joke is told by a man who is being chided for being too serious. This exercise lends itself well to English conversation classes of all levels and can be used in language and culture classes to introduce students to this type of joke. It can also be used with less advanced students to accustom them to giving short, simple presentations to their peers in English. After passing out the worksheet to the class, the instructor explains the construction and rhythm of a knock-knock joke and reads through the jokes on the worksheet with the class. Next, students read through the worksheet in groups, taking turns reading the parts of A and B in each joke. When using this exercise for presentations, students are directed to a few carefully selected online sites of jokes meant for children where they can look for a knock-knock joke they would like to present in small groups in class the following week. Groups of four work well for these presentations. Students team up with the person on their left to tell their jokes to the group. Following this group practice the pairs from each group take turns standing up and presenting their jokes to the class. If the class is large, each group can select one or two jokes to present to everyone. After each presentation, one of the students in the group presenting should write the joke on

the board then have the class read it, with one half reading A's part and the other half reading B's part. Students might also be directed to the scene in the movie *Catch Me If You Can* that was the basis for this worksheet, but they should be forewarned that it is a sarcastic variation of the joke and uses inappropriate language.

### 3.1 Worksheet

#### Knock-Knock Jokes

Here "knock" refers to the sound or action of hitting a door with your fist. You knock on a door when there is no doorbell. If there is a doorbell you usually ring the doorbell instead of knocking.

In the English language, when someone says their first name, or when someone talks about a person and only says the person's first name, such as John, if you aren't sure who that person is you say, "John who?" When you say, "John who?" you are asking about John's last name. The reply will be the person's full name, for example, "John Sharp." Knock-knock jokes are jokes based on this type of language exchange. They follow the pattern below.

A: Knock knock.  
B: Who's there?  
A: XXX  
B: XXX who?  
A: XXX \_\_\_\_\_.

These jokes are usually silly and are meant for children. Knock-knock jokes often involve changing the pronunciation of a word slightly so that it sounds like a different word or phrase. Here are some knock-knock jokes that are popular among young children.

Knock knock.	Knock knock.
Who's there?	Who's there?
Mary.	Police.
Mary who?	Police who?
Merry Christmas!	Please let me in. It's cold out here!
("Mary" is a girl's name.	("Police" sounds a little like "please.")
"Merry" means "happy.")	

Knock knock.	Knock knock.
Who's there?	Who's there?
Boo.	Nobel.
Boo who?	Nobel who?
Don't cry. It's only a knock knock joke!	No bell! That's why I knocked!
("Boo hoo" is the sound of someone crying.)	("Nobel" is a person's name. "No bell" means "There's no doorbell.")

Knock knock.	Knock knock.
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Who's there?	Who's there?
Lettuce.	Atch.
Lettuce who?	Atch who?
Let us in! It's cold outside.	Bless you!
("Lettuce" sounds like "let us.")	("Achoo" is the sound of a sneeze.
	After someone sneezes you say,
	"Bless you.")

### 3.2 Collage activities.

These collage activities are particularly popular with my students. I have used the version "Collage: About You" in conversation classes with students of various levels. (See 3.2 Worksheet I below.) Students make a collage about themselves and write an explanation of each item in the collage. For the grammar component of this exercise, students are asked to take care to use the correct tenses in their explanations. I make a collage of my own as an example, which I present after reading the instructions for the assignment together as a class. This helps students understand how to carry out the task. They submit their written work to me the week before their presentation date to be corrected. In smaller classes each student presents their collage to the entire class. For larger classes, they give their presentations in groups of four to six. Students are always very interested in seeing each other's work, and readily come up with questions or comments about their classmates' collages. I wrote the second version of this exercise, titled "Collage: The World of Art," specifically for students of art and design. (See 3.2 Worksheet II below.)

#### **3.2 Worksheet I** **Collage: About You**

**About Collages:** A collage is a form of art in which various materials such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric are arranged and stuck to a backing. The term "collage" comes from the French word for "gluing." The origin of the collage is attributed to both Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. Each artist used the method at the turn of the 20th century. However, before that, Italian portrait painters had pasted small pieces of chain, gilded paper, and sometimes real stones and jewels onto their canvases.

**Making your collage:** Make a collage that represents you. You can use A4 or A3 paper. Thick paper is best. You can include anything that you feel represents you in your collage. For example, you can include pictures or cut-outs relating to your studies, your hobbies and interests, your friends and family, your art, your political and social concerns, your future hopes and ambitions, your likes and dislikes, and so on. Try to include something about the past, the present and the future. Also, please include a photo of yourself somewhere in your collage.

The items you choose can be anything that you can glue to your paper. You can use photos; flyers; material printed from the Internet; clippings from newspapers and magazines; your own drawings; stickers; product labels; tickets; and so on. Use your imagination and have fun! You can also decorate your collage with paint, glitter, yarn, cloth, etc.

On a separate piece of paper write a few sentences in English about at least five of the items in your collage explaining what each item tells us about you. Each of you will present your collage to the other students. After you have explained your collage, ask the students for questions or comments.

### **3.2 Worksheet II**

#### **Collage: The World of Art**

**About collages:** A collage is a form of art in which various materials such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric are arranged and stuck to a backing. The term “collage” comes from the French word for “gluing.” The origin of the collage is attributed to both Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. Each artist used the method at the turn of the 20th century. However, before that, Italian portrait painters had pasted small pieces of chain, gilded paper, and sometimes real stones and jewels onto their canvases.

**Making your collage:** Make a collage to discuss in your groups that tells us about your interests in the art world. The items you use can be anything that you can glue to your paper. They might include artworks you admire; flyers from exhibitions you have been to; names or pictures of museums or galleries that you like; headlines from articles about art in the news; works that you have made; art classes you are taking; and so on. Anything that relates to the world of art and your interest in that topic is good. Use your imagination and have fun!

On a separate piece of paper write a few sentences in English explaining the significance of each item you have included in your collage. Each of you will present your collage to the other students. After you have explained your collage, ask the students for questions or comments.

### **3.3 Presenting a video clip to the class.**

This project is a popular one with students. I am always impressed by the interest and attention they show in their classmates' video clips and the presentations that follow. There are three worksheets for this exercise: the Presentation Guidelines Worksheet; the Presenter's Worksheet; and the Presentation Response Sheet. The students in the audience complete one response sheet for each presentation so the instructor will need to prepare these to pass out before each presentation. I also give stu-

dents short quizzes every few weeks over the words from the previous presenters' vocabulary lists. Presenters are pleased to see their words on the quizzes, and by reviewing the vocabulary students recall each other's presentations as well.

### **3.3 Worksheet I**

#### **Video Clip Presentation Guidelines**

**I. Preparing your presentation:** Introduce a video clip that has impressed you to the class. For example, you can use something you found on You Tube, a scene from a movie, or a commercial or news broadcast that has inspired you. First choose what you would like to present. The clip you show in class should be around five minutes long, or ten at the very most. Next, arrange a time to show me your selection to be approved. You can either send a link to me by e-mail or you can show it to me after class. Once your selection has been approved, fill in the Presenter's Worksheet with the information listed in 1-6 below. Submit the completed Presenter's Worksheet to me at least two weeks before your presentation so that I can check it and give you feedback. I will return it to you the following week. Please make the necessary corrections and submit your presentation to me once more one week before your presentation date. In the list of items 1-6 you can see exactly what you need to prepare for this assignment.

1. Write the title of the video clip you are presenting, the date of your presentation, and the subject or genre of your selection.
2. Write an English summary of the clip you will be presenting. This should be at least five sentences long.
3. Explain why you chose this to present to the class.
4. Make a list of some of your favorite lines, expressions, or sentences from the material you are presenting.
5. Make a list of five to ten useful vocabulary words, phrases or expressions from the video clip you selected. If your selection does not include any challenging vocabulary or phrases, you can write words or phrases related to your topic that you would like the class to learn or choose vocabulary words from your own summary. Include a definition for each of the words or phrases you have selected. The definitions can be written in English or Japanese or both.
6. Write at least five questions about the material you are presenting for the other students to answer.

**II. Presenting the video clip:** 1) Give each of your classmates a copy of the front page of your Presenter's Worksheet-that is, your answers to items 1-6. The students will use this to fill in the top section of their presentation response worksheets. 2) Read 1-5 on your Presenter's Worksheet aloud to the class, then show your video clip. You can show parts of the clip several times if you need to explain details. 3) Read your list of fa-

favorite lines in 6 with the class and make sure everyone understands them. 4) Write the vocabulary words you have chosen for the class on the blackboard along with their definitions. The students will write these in the space provided on the back of their response sheet. 5) Dictate your questions one by one to the class. After dictating each question, choose someone to answer it. Continue until all of your questions have been dictated and answered. For subjective questions asking about an opinion or specific impression, you can ask more than one student the same question. 6) Finally, ask the students if they have any questions or comments regarding your presentation.

### **3.3 Worksheet II**

#### **Video Clip: Presenter's Worksheet**

[NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: 1-6 below are printed on the front of the presenter's worksheet, and the worksheets include lines for the student to write on. I provide four or five lines each for numbers 4-6. Numbers 7 and 8 are printed on the back of the Presenter's Worksheet. The presenter or instructor can make copies of the front of the Presenter's Worksheet to pass out to the class before the presentation begins depending on the language level of the students. I do not give students a copy of the presenter's answers to numbers 7 and 8, which is why they are on the back of the worksheet. Students should follow the presenter's instructions and write the vocabulary words and the dictated questions on their "Presentation Response Sheet." They should be encouraged to raise their hands and ask the presenter to repeat anytime there is something they do not understand or, if the questions are being dictated, when there is something they could not catch.]

1. Title of selection:
2. Date of presentation:
3. Subject or genre of selection:
4. Summary of the material you will be presenting:
5. Your reason for selecting this to present to the class:
6. Some of your favorite lines or sentences in the video clip you are presenting:
7. Five to ten useful vocabulary words, phrases or expressions from the material you selected. (See Part I, 5 on your Presentation Guidelines printout for details):
8. Five or more questions about the material you are presenting for the other students, along with your answers:

### **3.3 Worksheet III**

#### **Video Clip: Presentation Response Sheet**

- 1) Presentation title:
- 2) Presenter's name:
- 3) Date of presentation:

- 4) Subject or genre of presentation:
- 5) Your comments:
- 6) Vocabulary words and definitions:
- 7) Presenter's questions: [NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: The presenter will dictate their questions to the class. Students write the questions and their answers to them here. Students listening to the presentation can write their answers and comments at home to turn in the following week.]

NOTE: You can use expressions such as the following to comment on a presentation: It was interesting to me that... OR I hadn't realized that... OR I really enjoyed... OR I was surprised to learn that... OR This reminded me of...

### **3.4 Presenting a newspaper article to the class.**

I first developed this activity for an advanced class of students in a current events class. I have since used it in other advanced language courses. In the advanced classes I generally have ten students or fewer, so we have one presentation a week. In the case of the current events class that I first wrote this for, in the first few weeks of class we studied current events using newspaper articles that I had prepared. During that time, I went over the news presentation worksheets in detail to make sure that students knew how to prepare their own presentations and how to complete their presentation response sheets following each presentation. Because we had a full period available for each student's presentation, I would let the presenters take as much time as they needed to conduct class discussions following their presentations. I also had other materials ready for the class for the times when a presentation and the following discussion was completed before the end of the class period.

This style of presentation requires a significant amount of the instructor's time in correcting drafts for each presenter, but it is a good learning experience for the students. Writing the summaries in their own words is the most challenging part of the assignment for most students. Also, students usually need help in correcting the questions they write for the other students. I allow students to type their drafts, but I ask that the final copy to be passed out in class be handwritten.

### **3.4 *Worksheet I*** **News Report: Presentation Guidelines**

#### **I. Preparing the assignment**

- 1) Choose a newspaper article to present to the class. The article should be from an English-language news source and should be the equivalent of roughly two pages if typed on A4-sized paper, or somewhere between 800 to 1500 words. Be

sure to have your article approved by me before you begin work on your presentation.

- 2) I will make copies of your article to pass out to the class the week before your presentation, so be sure that you to give me a printed copy of the article at least two weeks before your presentation date. Your classmates will prepare for your presentation by reading your article ahead of time.
- 3) On your Presenter's Worksheet you will write:
  - a) the publication where you found the article, including the web address for the article if you found it online, and the date of the article.
  - b) a short summary of the article, written in your own words.
  - c) why you chose the article you will be presenting.
  - d) a list of at least five new words or expressions you found in the article, with definitions in English.
  - e) six or more questions to ask your classmates about to the article-these can include questions for discussion.
  - f) your own answers to your questions, written on Page 3 of the Presenter's Worksheet.
- 4) Submit a copy of your article and Presenter's Worksheet to me to check at least two weeks before your presentation date. I will check it and return it to you before the next class, or we can go over it together after class. Make any necessary corrections.
- 5) The week before your presentation give me the final copy of your Presenter's Worksheet. I will make copies of Pages 1 and 2 to pass out to the class after your presentation is over.

There are many online newspapers. I usually read The New York Times and The Japan Times.

## II. Presenting the article

- 1) Summarize the article for the class. Remember, use your own words.
- 2) Explain why you chose the article.
- 3) Read the article to the class. After each paragraph, pause and ask the students if there is anything they don't understand.
- 4) Read the definitions of the words and expressions in your word list and ask the students to find the word you are defining in the article.
- 6) Ask the class the six questions that you prepared and call on students to answer them.
- 7) Ask each student what they found interesting about the article.

At the end of class I will give each student a copy of Pages 1 and 2 of your Presenter's Worksheet and a "News Report Response Sheet" to complete at home.

### 3.4 *Worksheet II*

#### News Report: Presenter's Worksheet

Review Part I of the News Report Presentation Guidelines carefully then complete all three pages of this worksheet and return it to me to check at least two weeks before your presentation date. Add paper if you need more space. Before you give your presentation be sure to review Part II of the News Report Presentation Guidelines. [Note to instructor: I write 1-5 on the first page of the Presenter's Worksheet, and 6 on the second page. I write 7 on the third page. I do not pass out the third page to the other students, since they should write their own answers to the questions.]

1. Write your name and the date of your presentation.
2. Write the title of your article, the date it was written, and the name of the publication where you found it. If you found it on the Internet also write the web address and any other information needed to access the article.
3. Write a short summary of your article, in your own words, and your reasons for selecting it.
4. Write several lines from the article that impressed you.
5. Write at least five new or interesting vocabulary words, phrases or expressions you found in the article, along with definitions or explanations in English. For example, if the expression "beyond the pale" is in your article you could write "beyond the pale: This is an idiom meaning bizarre, beyond normal limits, or unacceptable."
6. Make at least six questions to ask your classmates about the article.
7. Write your answers to your questions for 6 on Page 3 of this Presenter's Worksheet. Do not write the answers on the Pages 1 or 2.

### 3.4 *Worksheet III*

#### News Report: Response Sheet

- I. Read your copy of the presenter's article the week before the presentation date. After reading the article underline or highlight (a) at least three expressions or sentences in the article that you found interesting and (b) at least five vocabulary words or phrases in the article that you would like to learn. Use one color to underline the items in (a) and another color to underline the items in (b).
- II. After your classmate's presentation complete this Response Sheet. Refer to your copy of the Presenter's Worksheet as needed. [NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: For the Response Sheet I usually provide one line each on the worksheet for 1 and 2 and five or six lines each for 3 and 4. I print 1-4 on the front of the worksheet and 5 on the back, then fill the rest of the page with

lines for the questions and answers.]

1. Write the title of the article presented and the date of the presentation.
2. Write the name of the student presenting the article.
3. Write your reaction to the article. What was interesting or surprising to you?
4. Write the vocabulary words and phrases that you underlined in the article and their definitions in English or Japanese. (See Part I (b) above.)
5. Look at the Presenter's Worksheet for this article. Answer the questions in 6 on the lines below.

**III. Staple this completed worksheet, your copy of the presenter's newspaper article, and your copy of the Presenter's Worksheet together. I will collect them at the beginning of the next class.**

#### **4. Activities to accompany scenes from a feature-length film and its bilingual annotated screenplay.**

The activities presented in this section are selections from materials I created for my movie-based classes. Those classes were designed around a feature-length film and its annotated screenplay. The screenplays I assigned for those classes are paperback books sold in Japanese bookstores and online. In addition to the actors' lines, they include stage directions and annotations, which are written in both English and Japanese. Many of the books I used were from Screenplay Publishing Company, which offers a wide selection of movie titles, ranging from classic to contemporary films. An in-depth explanation and analysis of my method of using a film and this style of screenplay for a language class in lieu of a traditional textbook, as well as an analysis of some of the different styles of exercises I have written for use in such classes, can be found in the two-part paper titled "Movies in English-Language Teaching: Building an EFL Course around a Feature-Length Film" (Miyake 1999, 2002). A complete collection of the exercises I have published for use with specific feature-length films and their bilingual annotated screenplays is offered in the series, "Building an EFL Course around a Feature-Length Film" (Miyake 2010, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). Exercises presented here originally appeared in that series.

The four exercises that follow are ones that always captured the students' interest and stimulated them to think and converse in English. Any of these exercises can easily be revised to fit a different film or video clip, and most can be adapted for use in a conversation class without video.

#### 4.1 *Catch Me If You Can*: Vocabulary building.

The following worksheet was written to use with the movie *Catch Me If You Can*, but it will work equally well with other movies. For this exercise students first read descriptions in their screenplay book of the characters' actions in a pre-selected section of the film. After watching the scene several times, they use the verbs in the word list to write simple sentences describing what the characters are doing in a particular scene. Students are told that the verbs can be used in any tense, and any accurate description is acceptable. When writing their sentences, they are asked not to look at their books. However, they are encouraged to use their dictionaries and other resources if they wish. The instructor should check the sentences before the students dictate them to one another in groups. If the class is not too large this activity can be completed in one class. If the class is large and time is limited the sentences can be submitted to the instructor at the end of class and returned the following week for the dictation exercise. To carry out the exercise students dictate their sentences to one another in groups of four. This activity is useful as a writing exercise, as an exercise in dictation and pronunciation, and as a way to familiarize students with the verbs in the list, which they will hear and write repeatedly in various forms as they carry out the dictation exercise in their groups. After the dictation exercise is completed, students should read the corresponding pages in the screenplay book aloud in their groups. This gives them the opportunity to review the vocabulary they have been studying. This activity corresponds to pages 64–79 in the DHL Complete Subtitle Series book, *Catch Me If You Can* (DHC Corporation 2003).

#### 4.1 *Worksheet* Vocabulary Building

Look at pages 64–79 in your *Catch Me If You Can* screenplay book. Make sentences to describe scenes in this section of the movie using the verbs in the list and the names of the characters involved. You can use the verb in any tense you choose. Raise your hand when you finish and I will check your sentences for errors. You will be dictating your sentences to your partners, so it is best to have your grammar and spelling checked before you begin. When everyone's sentences have been checked you will work in groups of four and take turns dictating your sentences to the other members of your group. When the dictation is completed read pages 64–79 of the screenplay aloud together in your groups. Try to visualize the actions of the characters as you read.

Ex. 1: gesture

*Frank Sr. gestures to Frank Jr. to stand up, but Frank Jr. is shy and remains seated. OR Frank Sr. gestures to his son. He wants him to stand up.*

Ex. 2: crawl

*Frank Jr. crawled out of the infirmary and along the prison floor in his attempt to escape.*

*OR Frank Jr. crawled along the prison floor. OR Frank Jr. was crawling along the floor.*

1. peel off
2. applaud
3. shake hands
4. smoke a cigarette
5. stand up
6. embrace
7. giggle
8. hang
9. cram (NOTE: 塾 is called a “cram school” in English because you cram facts into your head there.)
10. spill

#### **4.2 *Die Hard*: Explaining plot keywords.**

This worksheet is for use with the movie and screenplay book *Die Hard* (Screenplay Corporation 1993). This is an exercise I often use at the end of a movie-based class. In any movie-based class, I introduce students to the IMDb (Internet Movie Database) website during the first week of class. On this website there is extensive information for countless movies and TV shows, including a section titled “Plot Keywords” for each movie listed. The words I use in this style of exercise are chosen from the “Plot Keywords” section of the movie we are watching. Because the listings can be extensive, I usually choose what I feel are the ten or twenty most useful words either in terms of vocabulary or in terms of the language students will use to explain how the word is relevant to the movie, or both. Students are encouraged to look through their screenplay book for words and expressions useful in writing their answers. This style of exercise can also be used at the end of a short story, novel or graded reader that the class has been reading.

#### **4.2 Worksheet**

#### **Explaining Plot Keywords**

These are some of the plot keywords listed on the IMDb (Internet Movie Database) website for the movie *Die Hard*. You can find the complete list by going to <imdb.com> on the Internet and inputting the title of the movie. In your groups, take turns explaining how each word relates to the movie. Help each other when needed. After you have completed the task with your group members, choose at least ten of the words in the list and write an explanation of how each word relates to the movie.

*EX: 1980's: This movie is set in the 1980's.*

California

helicopter

talking to oneself

limousine	1980's	robbery
Christmas party	vault	elevator shaft
hostage	hip hop music	skyscraper
bare feet	rescue	machine gun
broken glass	negotiator	chauffeur

### 4.3 *Back to the Future*: Pinpointing dialogue exchanges.

I first wrote this exercise to use with the movie *Back to the Future* and the *Back to the Future* screenplay book (Screenplay Corporation 1994). This is a good short writing exercise. Students can find vocabulary and expressions for describing the situation in the stage instructions in the screenplay. After the students have completed the worksheet, which I usually assign as homework, they ask and answer each of the questions in their groups. Especially in lower level classes, I ask that after each student reads their answer aloud to the group, they read it again slowly and have everyone in the group repeat after them. This repetition helps improve listening and pronunciation skills while reinforcing new vocabulary.

#### 4.3 *Worksheet*

##### Actors' Lines: Who said this to whom and where?

The words an actor says in a play or a movie are called the actor's lines. Below are some lines from Unit 1 and 2 in your screenplay book. First, write who says these lines to whom, and in what situation or where. You can look in your screenplay book for help. The names to choose from in Unit One are George, Lorraine, Marty, Jennifer, Linda, Dave, Mr. Strickland, Doc, Biff, Clock Woman and Campaigner. The names to choose from in Unit Two are Doc, Einstein and Marty. Next, in groups of three or four look at your completed worksheets. Take turns reading the actor's line, followed by your answer. Each student in the group should read their answer for each of the 12 lines on the worksheet. After reading your answer to the group, read it one more time, slowly, and have the students in the group repeat after you.

*EX: "Your Uncle Joey didn't make parole again. I think it would be nice if you all dropped him a line."* [Note: "to drop someone a line" means to write a letter to someone.] Answer: *Lorraine says this to her children as she puts out the cake she made for Uncle Joey. OR Lorraine says this to her children at home.*

1. "Your Uncle Joey didn't make parole again. I think it would be nice if you all dropped him a line."
2. "Look! Your shoe's untied. ... Don't be so gullible."
3. "That's disgusting!"
4. "I'll be at my grandma's. Here, let me give you the number."
5. "You know, you left your equipment on all week."

6. "Hey, not too early. I sleep in Saturdays."
7. "I've made a major breakthrough and I'll need your assistance."
8. "Re-elect Mayor Goldie Wilson. Progress is his middle name."
9. "I still don't understand what dad was doing in the middle of the street."
10. "Come on mom, make it fast. I'll miss my bus."
11. "At least he's letting you borrow the car tomorrow night."
12. "You're a slacker. You remind me of your father when he went here."

#### 4.4 *About a Boy*: Commands and pantomime.

This worksheet was designed for use with the screenplay book *About a Boy* (Screenplay Corporation 2003) and the movie. Page numbers in parentheses indicate where each phrase appears in the book. This activity can be adapted to any movie. Using it along with the selected film's bilingual screenplay will reduce preparation time for the students, assuming they are Japanese speakers, since they will not need to look up the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions. The instructor should point out to the students that they will be giving commands in Part I of the exercise, whereas in Part II they will be using the present progressive tense to describe what their partner is doing at that moment. I always review the grammar structures that will be used before they begin. This exercise was inspired by two exercises in Chapter 4 of the textbook *Talk a Lot Book One* (Martin 2003).

#### 4.4 *Worksheet* Commands and Pantomime

**Part I:** In pairs, take turns reading the sentences below to each other. One of you has 1-16 and the other has 17-32. Fold your paper in half so that you can only see the sentences you will be reading. When it is your turn, read one of the sentences on your list to your partner. Your partner will act out the sentence that you have just read. Choose at random from the list. Do not show your lines to your partner. If you are not sure of the meaning of the command you are giving, you can refer to the page number next to the command. If your partner does not understand a command, demonstrate the action, then give that command once more at the end of the game to test your partner again. When you finish A and B should switch roles and play again.

#### Partner A

1. Pretend to throw something away. (p. 10)
2. Stare at the clock. (p. 12)
3. Hit your desk with your hand. (p. 14)
4. Pretend to tighten a necktie. (p. 16)
5. Pretend to sip a drink. (p. 22)

6. Pretend to feed fish in an aquarium. (p. 24)
7. Pretend to reach for something above your head. (p. 26)
8. Pretend to daydream. (p. 26)
9. Gasp. (p. 32)
10. Hand your book to your partner. (p. 38)
11. Pretend to play pool. (p. 56)
12. Pretend to hang up a phone. (p. 60)
13. Pretend to ring a doorbell. (p. 66)
14. Pretend to shake hands with someone. (p. 70)
15. Cross your fingers. (p. 86)
16. Pretend to apologize to your boss for being late. (p. 90)

### **Partner B**

17. Pretend to push a stroller. (p. 40)
18. Pretend to spread a blanket on the grass. (p. 42)
19. Pretend to tear a piece of bread off of a loaf. (p. 42)
20. Give your partner a high five. (p. 44)
21. Wave to someone. (p. 46)
22. Pretend to choke on something. (p. 46)
23. Pretend to buy something from a vending machine. (p. 48)
24. Pretend to straighten up a room. (p. 50)
25. Pretend to read something and frown. (p. 50)
26. Motion for someone to come over to you. (p. 52)
27. Pretend to answer a phone.
28. Give your partner a thumbs up. (p. 64)
29. Pretend to answer the door. (p. 66)
30. Pretend to tie a shoelace. (p. 82)
31. Pretend to take a customer's order at a restaurant. (p. 86)
32. Pretend to unwrap a present. (p. 94)

**Part II:** Now look at all of the lines in 1–32. Take turns choosing something to act out. Look at your partner and say, “What am I doing?” So, for example, if you act out pushing a stroller, you will ask, “What am I doing?” and your partner will reply, “You’re pushing a stroller.” The person answering the question should not look at the worksheet. Remember to use the present progressive tense in this exercise. For 16 you can set the scene by saying, “I’m talking to my boss.”

## **5. Conclusion.**

As noted in the introduction in Section 1, the activities introduced in this paper can be used as they are presented here or adapted to meet the needs and goals of a wide variety of language courses. They have all withstood the test of time and offer an interesting addition to communication based ESOL classes.

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