New Ways in Teaching Reading, revised

Richard R. Day, Editor

New Ways in TESOL Series

Innovative Classroom Techniques
Jack C. Richards, Series Editor
TESOL International Association
Part IV

Young Readers
Reading Around the Room
Contributed by Aubery Olsen Bronson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Increase phonological awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help students isolate initial sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>5–10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>15–20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Labels for objects in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pointer sticks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When reading with young children, teachers often use pointer sticks to call attention to each word as it is read. Young learners enjoy using pointer sticks to find and read labels around the classroom. For beginners, finding labels on familiar objects helps them to improve their phonological awareness and notice the letters for initial sounds.

PROCEDURE

1. Write or print out labels and attach them to objects in the classroom.

2. Demonstrate appropriate use of pointer sticks for pointing to the labels and reading the words.

3. Allow the students to read around the room by pointing to the different labels and reading the words aloud.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. If you want the students to focus on a particular sound or sounds, you can mark the pointer sticks with different letters and send the students on a treasure hunt searching for words that begin with that letter. When students are holding D pointer sticks, they should find and read the labels for door, desk, drawer, and so forth. When students are holding M pointer sticks, they should point to and read the labels for mirror, marker, map, and so forth.

2. You might want to begin with words that are easy to recognize because of the item they represent. As students progress, you can add labels to the
classroom that are more challenging. As you add each new set of labels, use a different color of paper. This will allow you to give instructions such as, *Now, use your pointer stick to read all of the yellow labels in the classroom.*

3. Another option is to put the students in pairs and give them a checklist of labels to find. As they find each item, they can make a checkmark in the corresponding box.
Sorting by Sound
Contributed by Aubrey Olsen Bronson

Level  Beginning
Aims  Increase phonological awareness
Help students isolate initial sounds
Class Time  15 minutes
Preparation Time  30 minutes
Resources  4–8 sets of three small boxes with letter labels
4–8 sets of picture cards that correspond to the letters on the small boxes

Sorting is an important skill for young learners to master. This activity combines sorting items and identifying first sounds in the items’ names. It allows students to physically manipulate objects and group them according to their initial sounds.

PROCEDURE
1. Divide the students into small groups. Each group should have a set of small boxes and a stack of picture cards.

2. Instruct the students to divide the cards equally among the members of the group. They should take turns naming aloud the item on one card and placing the card into the correct box until all the cards are in boxes.

3. Once all of the picture cards have been sorted by sound, students should empty the boxes one at a time. They should repeat the names of the objects aloud to make sure that all of the pictures were placed correctly.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS
1. If students need preliminary instruction, use a set of large boxes and real objects to do a class demonstration. Call a few of the students to the front of the class one by one. Each student will choose an object and hold it up for the class to see. Repeat the name of the item and determine the letter that represents the initial sound. Emphasize the initial sound and have the student place the object in the box with the correct letter for that sound.
2. You may choose to make all of the sets of boxes and picture cards the same, or you might want to make different sets to add variety to the activity. For example, you could label the boxes in one set with letters B, P, and S. The cards for this set would have pictures of items, such as a ball, a bed, a book; a pencil, a pig, a piano; and a snake, a sock, the sun. In another set, the cards would include pictures of a flower, a frog, a foot; a nose, a net, a necklace; and a turtle, a tooth and a truck. The boxes for that set would be labeled with letters F, N, and T. This variety would allow you to have the students rotate from one station to another as they practice sorting by different initial sounds.
BabyMouse Talks to Felicia Furrypaws

Contributed by Sally Brown

Levels | High Beginning +

Aims

- Facilitate reading comprehension using the visual elements of graphic novels
- Learn about character traits
- Communicate through written dialogue

Class Time | 20–25 minutes
Preparation Time | 5 minutes

Resources

- BabyMouse Queen of the World! by Jennifer and Matthew Holm
- Copies of the dialogue boxes
- Chart paper and markers

Graphic novels offer unique support for English learners. The visual nature of this genre provides detailed images that contribute to the understanding of characters, setting, and events. This activity helps students get to know characters while practicing communication skills through written dialogue.

PROCEDURe

1. Engage students in an expressive class read-aloud of BabyMouse Queen of the World! Encourage students to interact with the text through comments.

2. Introduce BabyMouse and Felicia Furrypaws as the main characters in the text by pausing at appropriate places and leading a discussion about the characters. The discussion might include concepts about the characters’ behaviour, attitude, and interactions with others. Students should be able to see the text, because they will gain important clues about the story’s events and characters from the visual elements.

3. Model the dialogue box activity for the students on large chart paper. (See Appendix below.) Assume the role of BabyMouse and choose a student for the role of Felicia Furrypaws. You and the student write back and forth to one another in the speech bubbles as you assume your roles. For example, BabyMouse says, How are you today? Felicia Furrypaws replies, I am not having a good day.
4. Then, assign partners for the dialogue box activity. One student assumes the role of BabyMouse and the other partner becomes Felicia Furrypaws. Students work in their partner teams to complete the dialogue. Additional dialogue sheets may be given to groups who need more space to continue their written conversation.

5. The lesson may end by having a group share or role-play their story in front of the class.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

This lesson can be modified for different levels of English proficiency by changing the text and the characters who talk to one another. The level of dialogue will vary depending on the students’ proficiency. See References list below for a variety of graphic novels at different reading levels.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Professional Readings


Graphic Novels for Students

*Kindergarten–First Grade*


Second–Third Grade


**APPENDIX: Dialogue Boxes**
The Food Label Store
Contributed by Richard R. Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Beginning; ESL primarily, but can be adapted for EFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Involve students in the development of their own reading skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help students see a connection between reading in school and reading in the outside world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>No set time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>20–30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>One or more cardboard boxes, depending on how large the store is to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glue or staples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A series of questions about food labels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students may be more motivated to learn if they become involved in their own learning and if they can generalize what they are learning in class to activities outside the classroom. Shopping for food is a relevant activity for nearly any student.

PROCEDURE

1. Tell the students to bring to class food labels of any description (e.g., labels from cans, meats, bottles, jars; fronts of boxes of cereals, mixes, soap, milk containers; wrappers from loaves of bread, rolls).

2. Place the students in whatever size group you think works best (anywhere from three to six students works well) and give each group a cardboard store.

3. Have them glue their labels to their store.

4. When the groups have finished creating their stores, ask a series of questions that the students can answer by reading the labels from their stores. Sample questions include: What food is the most expensive? The cheapest? Which product is the heaviest? The lightest? Which food do you like best? Why? The least? Why? What two foods go together (e.g., salt and pepper; bread and butter; peanut butter and jelly)? How many brands are there of the same product?
5. You might also have the students do a variety of tasks. For example, ask them to find as many brand names as they can as quickly as possible. Another task is to have them add up the total cost of all of the products in the store. Or ask them to put all of the products in various categories (e.g., meats, dairy products).

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Have the students work with stores that other groups created.
2. Distribute the questions and have the students write their answers.
3. Ask the questions orally and have the students write their answers.
4. Have the students make up a menu for a particular meal.
5. This activity can deal with products other than food. For example, you could have students bring in ads for clothes or small appliances. It can be adapted to an EFL situation if students have access outside the classroom to products with English labels. Or you could collect labels and bring them to class for the students to use in making the stores.
6. If there is limited space and storing the boxes is difficult, use poster boards instead of cardboard boxes.
Cooperative Vocabulary Building and Early Writing With ELL and Monolingual Students

Contributed by Zohreh Eslami and Marianne Snow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Expand knowledge of high-frequency home vocabulary and positional vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help students develop their phonemic awareness through phonetic spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthen verbal communication and cooperation among ELL and monolingual students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Time</th>
<th>45–60 minutes (15–20 minutes per group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Small unit blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simple picture of a house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper and colored pencils, crayons, or markers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This activity introduces house-related vocabulary and positional words to ELL students, and it encourages all students to practice phonetic spelling. As ELL students learn to read, having a wider English vocabulary will help them better understand and connect to texts. Because houses and home life are common topics for children’s books, this type of vocabulary is especially useful. Also, this activity encourages students to begin writing using phonetic spelling and to read what they have written. Encouraging them to practice and share their writing (even at this early stage) helps develop confidence in this form of communication.

PROCEDURE

1. Divide students into teams of three or four. Make sure ELL and monolingual students are represented in each group.

2. Bring the first team to a table equipped with a box of small unit blocks.

3. Explain to the students that they need to build a house and that they need to work together to do so.
4. Discuss what working together looks and sounds like (e.g., talking to each other, watching each other, taking turns).

5. Before they begin building, tell students that they need to take turns sharing ideas about building a house. Ask them the following questions and let each student present their thoughts:
   - What are the parts of a house?
   - Which parts of the house are important? Why?
   - Which part of the house do you think you should build first? Next? Last?

6. As students name parts of the house, have them point to the parts they name on the picture.

7. Once they agree on the order of building, let them begin to construct.

8. While they build, ask them the following questions:
   - Which part of the house are you building?
   - Where will you put that block?
   - Why are you putting that block there?
   - How many blocks do you think you should use?
   - How might you make a window or a door?

9. Encourage students to talk to each other while they build.

10. When they finish, give students paper and writing utensils. Ask each to draw the house and then label the important parts phonetically.

11. When everyone has finished drawing and labeling, let students present their pictures and read the labels they have written.
Rime Reading
Contributed by Alison Garza

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>High Beginning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Increase reading fluency and vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>15 minutes, Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5–10 minutes, Days 2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Computer and printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chart paper and markers, highlighters, or crayons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Folder with prongs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This activity not only introduces the students to different word families, but it increases reading fluency and vocabulary as the text is read and reread. Shyer students and those with limited language skills gain confidence as they read a familiar text, first as a group and then independently. The completed folder also serves as a great resource for rhyming words.

**PROCEDURE**

**Day 1:** Begin by introducing a new rime, or word family, such as *at*.

- Have students practice pronouncing the rime.
- Write *at* on the chart paper and have students call out words that have the rime *at*. Write four to five words on the chart (e.g., cat, mat, sat, fat, hat). Have students choral-read the words several times.
- Using the chart paper, write a short sentence for each chosen word and again the class choral-reads each sentence.
- After class, type up the short sentences with the student-generated words, then print out one copy for each student and place it in their individual folders. (This process takes about 15 minutes, once a week.)

**Day 2:** Have students get out their folders and read each sentence aloud to you. After the sentences have been read several times, students highlight (or underline in crayon) the rime. For example, *My cat is black and white.*
Days 3–5: students spend 5 minutes at the beginning of class, choral reading or partner reading the sentences. Each week another rime page is added.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Once there are at least four to five completed pages, call on students to choose a rime page and let them read the entire page while the others follow along.

2. Choose one student to come in front of the class and give him or her a small drum, maraca, or another small musical instrument. While the rest of the class choral-reads each page, the student in front of the room beats the drum or shakes the maraca each time a word from the word family is spoken.

3. More advanced students can create their own short sentences.

APPENDIX

Sample word list for at: cat, mat, sat, fat, hat

My cat is black and white. Sit on the small mat. I sat on the blue rug. That dog is short and fat. His hat is very big.
Roll the Dice

Contributed by Josh Katz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>High Beginning (can be adjusted up or down)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Encourage reading by allowing students to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create words and read them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>10–15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Dice (one die per student pair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dictionary (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This activity allows students to roll dice two times to create readable consonant-vowel-consonant words. It is enjoyable, boosts student confidence and curiosity, and helps students discover new words.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Give the chart to students (see Appendix below), or reproduce it on the wall. This will tell them the letters corresponding with the number they get on roll 1 and roll 2.

2. Students will pair up (we will use SA and SB to represent them). SA rolls the die two times and writes the letter each time on the chart.

3. SA hands the die to SB and looks his word up in the dictionary.

4. While SA looks the word up, SB rolls two times to make a word. SB passes the die and uses the dictionary.

5. Repeat five times (so each student has six words). Students show each other their six words, make new pairs, and read each other’s words.

**CAVEATS AND OPTIONS**

The activity can easily be shortened or altered for different situations.

1. Students can do the dice and dictionary part alone (with one die per student).

2. The teacher can hold the dictionary, and the students can come up when
they finish all six words to ask for the definitions. This will keep the words mysterious.

3. The activity can be done with diphthongs, silent letters (such as \(i_e\)), or CC (consonant-consonant) pairs.

4. The teacher or students can make their own dice with letters on them (e.g., the “roll 1” letters can be blue; “roll 2,” green; and “roll 3,” red).

**APPENDIX**

This is a chart that you can give to your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll</th>
<th>1st letter</th>
<th>2nd letter</th>
<th>3rd letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can make many common, for-all-ages words from this combination: BAD, BAG, BAN, BAT, CAB, CAN, CAP, CAT, DAB, DAD, DAN, MAD, MAN, MAP, MAT, PAD, PAN, PAT, SAD, SAG, SAP, SAT. You can produce a dictionary in a spreadsheet that lists all of these words and their L1 meaning(s).

For a U vowel, the first letters can be B, C, G, H, N, R; the third letters can be B, D, G, M, N, T (makes about 25 words).
Who Can Finish the Story?
Contributed by Nagisa Kikuchi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Practice reading out loud in an enjoyable manner and motivate learners to read in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>15–30 minutes, depending on the size of the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>10–15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Short picture book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blank sheet of paper and pen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading out loud in class is challenging for learners, especially for young learners who lack confidence and are shy. Those learners tend to refrain from speaking out loud because of a high level of anxiety. This activity allows learners to practice reading in a fun, game-like manner, which can serve to lower anxiety levels and motivate them to read out loud in class.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Select a story that is interesting and well within your students’ reading abilities.
2. Divide the story into six equal parts.
3. Make copies of the story and distribute in class.
4. Read each part out loud as your students follow along; instruct them to repeat after you as you are reading. Make sure that everyone understands the story.
5. Place students in pairs and tell them to write their names and the numbers 1 through 6 next to their names on a sheet of paper. For example: Emily 1 2 3 4 5 6 Tom 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Provide a die to one of the students in each pair.
7. The student who receives the die throws it and reads out loud the part of the story that matches the number that he or she rolled. After reading that part, the student circles that number on the sheet next to his or her name. For
example, if Emily goes first, rolls 3 with the die, and reads part 3, she circles number 3 next to her name, as illustrated: Emily 1 2 3 4 5 6 Tom 1 2 3 4 5 6

8. The students take turns and each student tries to circle all six numbers. If they get the same number, they have to read the same part of the story again, in which case no new numbers will be circled. The one who is able to circle all six numbers next to his or her name is the winner.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. If the students are not advanced or not ready for reading by themselves, you should provide sufficient time to practice reading out loud until they can take on the challenge by themselves.

2. When you divide the story into six parts, try to balance the amount of reading for each part.

3. You may need to repeat Step 4 above to ensure that students understand the story and to help them read aloud by themselves.

4. During the activity, observe and support the learners.

5. After the activity, you could provide feedback, helping with any weak points and mistakes.
Say It, Write It, Read It
Contributed by Jean Kirschenmann

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Build reading texts for emerging readers from language that they already know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>15–30 minutes, depending on children’s attention span. The process can be stopped at any time and continued later in the lesson or in a subsequent lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>About 30 minutes for the first lesson, less for subsequent lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Large sheets of newsprint, white- or blackboard, or computer with projector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In many environments, children are first exposed to English through pleasurable listen-and-do activities like finger plays, action songs, Total Physical Response routines, and dramatic storytelling. Then, when they reach middle school, they are suddenly expected to cope with challenging, text-heavy reading passages in their English language textbooks. This activity describes one way to build a bridge from no reading to some reading, so that textbook reading becomes less intimidating. It rests on the notion that students can read what they can already say, and, in this respect, relies heavily on the principles of the Language Experience Approach (LEA).

LEA is a process by which teachers transcribe what students say and then use the resulting text as reading material for the students. It is a widely used strategy in the teaching of first-language reading to young children and in adult literacy programs. It works well for beginning readers in second- or foreign-language classes, no matter what their age. The activity described here is written with children in mind. Adaptations for other language learners are suggested in Caveats and Options below.

PROCEDURE

1. Before class, choose a song, chant, warm-up routine, or story that your students already know well and enjoy. As an example, let us consider a popular morning song with these lyrics:
Good morning. Good morning.
Good morning, how are you?
Good morning. Good morning.
I’m fine, thank you.

2. Decide how and where you will transcribe the song. You will need a large sheet of newsprint, white- or blackboard space, or a computer with projector. Ideally, the completed text would remain on display in the classroom where students can see it for 2 to 3 days.

3. Sing the song together once or twice to review.

4. Tell the children that now that they know the song so well, they can read it, too, but that you need their help to write it first.

5. Ask them to sing it again for you s-l-o-w-l-y so that you can write it. As they sing, you transcribe their words, pointing them out as you do.

6. Because writing takes a bit of time, the children may have time to repeat the lines two to three times as you write.

7. Tell students to copy the song into their notebooks or journals. If they are tired at this point, they can copy it later. This is the advantage of using newsprint, so the story can hang in the classroom for 2 to 3 days.

8. There are many ways to extend the use of the story in this or subsequent lessons. For example:
   • Ask for volunteers to come up and point to all the instances of good or morning.
   • Ask volunteers to locate the phrases How are you, I’m fine, and thank you.
   • Ask volunteers to spell morning, fine, and thank.
   • Write and read related expressions or sentences that students already know, such as these: a good story, feel good, good and bad, in the morning, tomorrow morning, every morning.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. This activity is meant for children who are already reading and writing (at least to some extent) in their first language. That is, they already understand what reading is.

2. If possible, have students keep their stories in a notebook where their writing can be organized, dated, and reread frequently.
3. LEA is ideally suited for older learners who do not read or write much English but may be familiar with it through music, movies, travel, workplace encounters, and so forth. They can dictate song lyrics, memorized dialogues from familiar folktales or stories, and so forth. The principles of the lesson remain the same: If they can say it, the teacher can write it, and then they can read it.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING


Character Collages

Contributed by Katie Leite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Any</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Help younger students learn to analyze characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Any short story or novel that the students have read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scissors, tape or glue, and poster-size paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After reading and demonstrating basic comprehension, students may need to do a more thorough analysis of the text and characters for important or longer stories. By using visuals from magazines and a quote from the text to support descriptive adjectives, even younger learners are capable of advanced character analysis through this activity.

PROCEDURE

1. Put students in groups of three to four, and assign each group one main character from the story.

2. Instruct students to make collages representing their characters by doing the following:
   • Cut out and attach six to eight pictures from magazines that represent the character.
   • Write three adjectives to describe the character.
   • Write one quote that the character said, or someone said about the character.

3. Have the group share their posters with the class by having each student in the group explain two of the pictures chosen. If groups were assigned different characters, the rest of the class can try to guess who the character collage represents.
CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. For shorter children’s books, or books with few developed characters, all groups may be assigned the same character.

2. To reduce assignment time, assign characters at the end of the previous class and have students each bring in their two magazine pictures from home.

3. When working with older students or adults, encourage less obvious pictures. For example, a picture of a watch might represent a character that has too much free time.
Being able to describe characters is an important part of story comprehension. Character description involves more than just listing adjectives to describe a character. In this activity, students will use higher-order thinking skills as they categorize words and phrases associated with a character from the story.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Draw a circle with four quadrants on the board. In three of the quadrants, write phrases that are in some way related to the main character. In the fourth quadrant, write an unrelated phrase. For example, three actions that the main character did and one action done by another character; three adjectives to describe the main character and one adjective that does not describe the character; three places that the character visited in the story and one place not mentioned; or three names of the character’s friends and one name of an adult.

2. As a class, ask students to try to identify which of the four phrases is different. Cross off the phrase that doesn’t belong (see Appendix below).

3. As a class, come up with a title for the circle based on what the three remaining phrases have in common.

4. Draw three to four more circles on the board, or give them to students on a worksheet and have them work in pairs to identify and cross off the one phrase that does not belong.
CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Draw a face inside the circle to help students make the connection that all of your circles are describing the same character in a different way.

2. To make this activity easier, the teacher can provide circle titles based on what the three words or phrases have in common.

3. For very young learners, sing or chant the Sesame Street song “One of These Things (Is Not Like the Others)” as you do the class examples. (Many versions are available on youtube if you prefer to play the audio.) Here are the song lyrics:

One of these things is not like the others
One of these things just doesn’t belong
Can you tell which thing is not like the others
By the time I finish my song?

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

More information on character faces, an adaptation of concept circles, can be found in Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum by Richard T. Vacca and Jo Anne L. Vacca.

APPENDIX: Sample Character Face

Used with the novel, Because of Winn-Dixie, by Kate DiCamillo, with a class of high beginning students; this is one of the sample character faces for the dog.

Winn-Dixie (the dog) Adjectives
Orally Summarizing

Contributed by Katie Leite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>High Beginning +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Help students identify main ideas from a text and productively use target vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>10–15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Any story or chapter from a book that has pictures (children’s picture books and graded readers work well) Photocopier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After students finish reading a story, they should be able to summarize the main events to demonstrate comprehension. In this activity, visual cues and a discussion phase provide scaffolding for students, enabling them to create richer summaries that incorporate more target vocabulary and exclude unimportant details.

PROCEDURE

1. Photocopy six to eight pictures from the story that represent the main events.

2. Arrange the pictures in chronological order and under each picture write two to three target vocabulary words. If large enough, the pictures can be put on a poster board and displayed at the front of the room; for smaller pictures, put them on a handout for each group of students.

3. Put students in pairs and give half of the class pairs (A groups) the first three to four pictures, and the other half of the class pairs (B groups), the second three to four pictures. Tell students to discuss what is occurring in the pictures and try to use the vocabulary words in their discussion.

4. Reshuffle the students into new pairs made up of one A student and one B student. The A student should orally summarize the first half of the story, and the B student should listen and write down each vocabulary word as he or she hears it being used during the summary. The students should switch roles for the second half of the story, and the B student should orally summarize, while the A student listens and writes.
Caveats and Options

The activity can be shortened or altered for different situations.

1. To guide younger students through the initial discussion part of the activity, you might include *wh*- questions above pictures. After one to two exposures, they should be able to discuss the pictures without the questions.

2. To decrease the level of difficulty, provide each student with an alphabetical list of all the vocabulary words, and as they listen, they can put a check next to the words instead of writing them down.

3. If you provide the pictures on a handout, as a possible extension, have students write one to two sentences under each picture for homework.

4. This activity can easily be used with short stories that have no pictures if you take an extra 10 to 15 minutes of prep time to get images off the Internet.
Make Your Own Character

Contributed by Michael Misner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Young learners who can read simple texts and write a few sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>To help students understand how characters relate with one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>15–30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>15–30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>An appropriate storybook and a sample make-your-own-character poster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students love certain characters because they identify with, or would like to be similar to, the characters. However, students are not always able to express this. This activity makes explicit the personality traits of different characters in the stories and how they would interact if their personalities and abilities were fused into one body.

PROCEDURE

1. Read a storybook to the class.

2. Show the students a good quality make-your-own-character poster for the book that you just read. (See Appendix below for an example.)

3. Ask the students what happened to the characters in the poster.

4. Read the example story from the poster about what the characters did together. (The story can show how combined personalities and powers can be beneficial or detrimental. That is, these stories can be serious, or seriously silly.)

5. Ask the students to name their favorite characters from the story and write or draw their responses on the board.

6. Ask the students why they like those characters, and write the personality characteristics (or powers) next to the characters’ names or faces.

7. Put students in pairs and have them tell their partners what they like or dislike about the characters (Student A: I like X because he eats a lot. Student B: I like X because he changes into a butterfly.)
8. Draw a line between characters X and Y and ask what would happen if they were one person/animal/monster and write the students’ answers on the board between the characters. (Together, they would be cute, kind, and funny, so many people want to take pictures of them, as mentioned in the sample poster in the Appendix below.)

9. When you have some examples on the board and think that the students understand the activity, have the students write a story from the combination of characters from the board.

10. Have the students share their ideas with partners, and switch partners.

11. Have the students get new partners a total of three times.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Give students poster paper and tell them to make a poster about a previously read storybook or graded reader for the next class.

2. Students can take two or even three characters from different stories and put them together.

3. Students can also put themselves together with the character from their story.

4. Keep the writing short, because the point of the activity is for students to become more aware of how characters interact with each other in story lines, while having fun making up their own stories.

5. Repetition of any productive skill activity improves students’ organization, fluency, and lexical and syntactic complexity.
APPENDIX: Make-Your-Own-Character Poster

The Very Hungry Caterpillar:  
*eats all day everyday, wants to become a butterfly*

Brown Bear, Brown Bear:  
*lives in a zoo, sees many people and animals.*

Together he is **Brown Beartterfly**

Brown Beartterfly wanted to see more people. So, he flew out of the zoo and around the town. He saw many people in cars, busses, trains, and airplanes. He was happy to see so many new people. They smiled, waved, and took many pictures of the Brown Beartterfly.

After flying for a long time, he was very hungry. So he went to a restaurant and ate through a chicken, a hamburger, a piece of pizza, a piece of cake, and a lot of nuts. When Brown Beartterfly could not eat anymore, he tried to fly home, but he was too heavy for his butterfly wings.

So, he stayed at the restaurant and became famous. New people from all over the world came to meet and take pictures with the Brown Beartterfly. They also bought a lot of food for him to eat too.