

Call for Contributors: *New Ways in Teaching Young Learners*

Deadline: 30 June 2025

TESOL Press is seeking further contributions to a new addition to the popular [New Ways series](#): *New Ways in Teaching Young Learners*. This volume will be a collection of fresh and innovative activities, encompassing any proficiency level or teaching context, contributed by teachers with experience teaching multilingual learners of English of primary and elementary school age:

- Early years (pre-K–2)
- Young learner (Grades 3–6, through age 12)

We are looking for creative and novel ideas designed to advance emerging English and cultivate cultural and linguistic identities while creating meaningful opportunities for learning. Approach should be asset-based. Activities can fall into any of these categories:

- Literacy
 - Phonics
 - Word Study
 - Reading Fluency and Comprehension
- Writing
- Listening and Speaking
- Vocabulary
- Embedded Grammar
- Content Integration
 - STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
 - Arts
 - Social Studies
- Collaborative Learning and Assessment
 - Partner and Small Group Activities
- Teaching With Games and Songs
- Storytelling
- Project-Based Learning
- Classroom Culture
 - Routines
 - Social-Emotional Learning
 - Cultural Responsiveness

Format

The New Ways series offers at-a-glance, simple activities. Submissions must use the [New Ways in Teaching Young Learners Template](#) (.docx) and adhere to APA, 7th Edition (see an [Example Activity](#)). The submission of accompanying images is encouraged. Additionally:

- Activities should be 400–800 words.
- All submissions should be in either Microsoft Word or Google Docs.

- Any image resources in the activity must be submitted as separate jpg or png files, one image per file, and each image should be at least 300 dpi.
- All images should be copyright free or have written permission prior to submission from the copyright holder for publication (applicable fees are the contributor's responsibility). If you need a permissions request sample letter, please reach out and we can supply you with one.
- Copyright-free images from online sources must include a link and/or information from where they can be accessed online.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA)

TESOL values and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of English language teaching and is committed to upholding antiracist and antidiscrimination policies and practices within the association.

AI Statement

New Ways is a publication by teachers for teachers. By submitting your activity, you confirm that it is your original work and your voice. You may use AI tools (e.g., for grammar suggestions, brainstorming, or refining phrasing), but the core ideas, structure, procedure, and content should be your own. If AI help is used, it should be a supportive role only, and you must include a statement explaining what tool was used and for what purpose.

Copyright for Accepted Submissions

TESOL Press asks all contributors of accepted submissions to assign their copyright to the association. The author(s) will be asked to sign an agreement after their submission is accepted. Please do not submit work that has been previously published, is currently under consideration elsewhere, or already under contract, and do not submit work for which you wish to retain copyright.

Review Process

Submissions should be meticulously reviewed and checked for clarity and accuracy by the contributor before submitting. All submissions that adhere to the submission guidelines will be carefully vetted and given a final review. There will be no automatic acceptances. Send submissions to coeditors Katie Miller and Holly Sawyer at NewWaysYoungLearners@gmail.com.

All potential contributors should fill out the [TESOL Contributor Information Form](#) prior to submission.

New Ways in Teaching Young Learners
Sample Activity

Contributor's full name: Katie Miller and Holly Sawyer

Contributor's current email: NewWaysYoungLearners@gmail.com

Title: Potato Chip Mail Activity

Contributor's name for print: Katie Miller and Holly Sawyer

Level: *any*

Ages suitable for activity: *elementary, early secondary*

Aims:

- Engineer a solution to a problem
- Work together to brainstorm ideas, build designs, and test their effectiveness
- Understand the conventions of addressing an envelope to mail a letter or package
- Use prepositions of location

Class Time: 45 minutes in one class session, 20-45 minutes follow-up in next class

Preparation Time: 20 minutes to gather materials

Resources needed: 3 ½" x 5 ½" mailing envelopes, plastic drinking straws, paper, index cards, scissors, tape, glue, potato chips (the kind that come stacked in a tube works best for uniformity of shape, e.g. Pringles or Kracks)

Introduction

This activity has students collaborate to engineer a solution to send a potato chip in the mail without breaking. Students in STEM classes can cultivate their creativity in how they approach a problem, as well as become comfortable with testing, failing, and improving, since making errors is an essential part of STEM processes as well as language acquisition. By engaging with a fun challenge, elementary students can nurture a growth mindset, a comfort with failing, and develop language for explaining their design choices.

Procedure

1. Have students form pairs or groups of three, or assign students to a partner or group of three.
2. Ask students if they ever send or receive packages in the mail, and if they know how to address an envelope.
3. Ask students if they ever got something in the mail that was damaged from handling.

4. Explain that in their groups, they will design a solution to the problem of mailing a potato chip. Their goal is to have the chip “travel” and come back intact, not broken.
5. Show an example of how to address an envelope—where and how to write the address, the return address, and any important local information or abbreviations such as state or province.
6. Introduce the materials: envelopes, plastic straws, index cards, glue, tape, and “practice” chips.
7. Allow groups to examine the materials and brainstorm a way to build a structure to hold the chip inside the envelope and protect it. They can use any of the materials in their design, but the design must fit inside the envelope and be sealed. It is okay if their chips break while they are experimenting with their design.
8. Teach or review prepositions of location so students can discuss how they will put the various materials together, e.g. “The index card goes in the envelope first” or “The potato chip sits between the straw pieces.”
9. Students can draw or sketch design ideas on paper before they start building. Groups can share with the whole class how they will build their design and get feedback from peers.
10. Once students have a final design, they should address the envelope to a friend or teacher in another class. They should then insert their structure and chip and seal the envelope.
11. Collect all the envelopes in a box and take them for a walk around the school after class or deliver them to another teacher. It’s okay if you “accidentally” drop the box a couple of times.
12. The next class, return the envelopes to the students to see if their chip survived intact.
13. Have students think about what they would change or do differently in their design for a better result.

Caveats and Options

1. If you have a colleague at another building, you can send the envelopes via interoffice mail and have them return them to you so they go on a “round trip.”
2. You can film a video of yourself accidentally dropping the box, or it falling down the stairs, to simulate what happens with real life package handling. Students will laugh and cringe to watch this video before you return their envelopes.
3. Students can try as many designs as they want in the time frame, and you can give them extra time above 45 minutes.
4. Students can present their final designs and results to the class, or write about their design and potential changes using prepositions of location.
5. Students may want to see an example, or find one on the internet, before they start building. You can allow them to research designs on the internet at your discretion, but it is not necessary. You can emphasize that this is an exercise in creative problem solving, and there is no *one* correct way to solve the problem (if at all).

References and Further Reading

HowStuffWorks. (2007, March 9). *How the U.S. Postal Service works* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYFtalTNzKk>

Appendix: Example Images of Envelope and Building Designs



Author Bios

Katie Miller, a National Board Certified teacher, has taught K–12 and adult learners for 18 years in Maryland, USA; she was Maryland TESOL president and an English Language Fellow in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Holly Sawyer, a National Board Certified Teacher out of Chesapeake, Virginia, USA has 16 years experience teaching English language development.