

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
1	<i>Spot the sound</i>	Phonetics/ Phonology	Recognise new sounds	Elementary/primary school Lower secondary school Upper secondary school
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher introduces a new sound and gets the class to listen to it repeatedly. The sound may be produced by the teacher, or a recorded version can be provided (see the links...) 2. The teacher pronounces a series of words. The students have to recognise the words containing the sound just introduced.. 				

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
2	<i>Noises and sounds</i>	Phonetics/ Phonology	Memorise and reproduce new sounds	Elementary/primary school Lower secondary school Upper secondary school
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher introduces a sound, gets the children to listen to it repeatedly and explains the articulation movements involved. 2. The teacher asks the pupils to try to reproduce the sound. 3. To foster memorisation of the sound, the teacher asks the students to associate it with a noise, an animal noise, an onomatopaeic sound, etc... 1. The teacher offers the class feedback on the “noise” which mostly closely resembles the sound introduced. 				

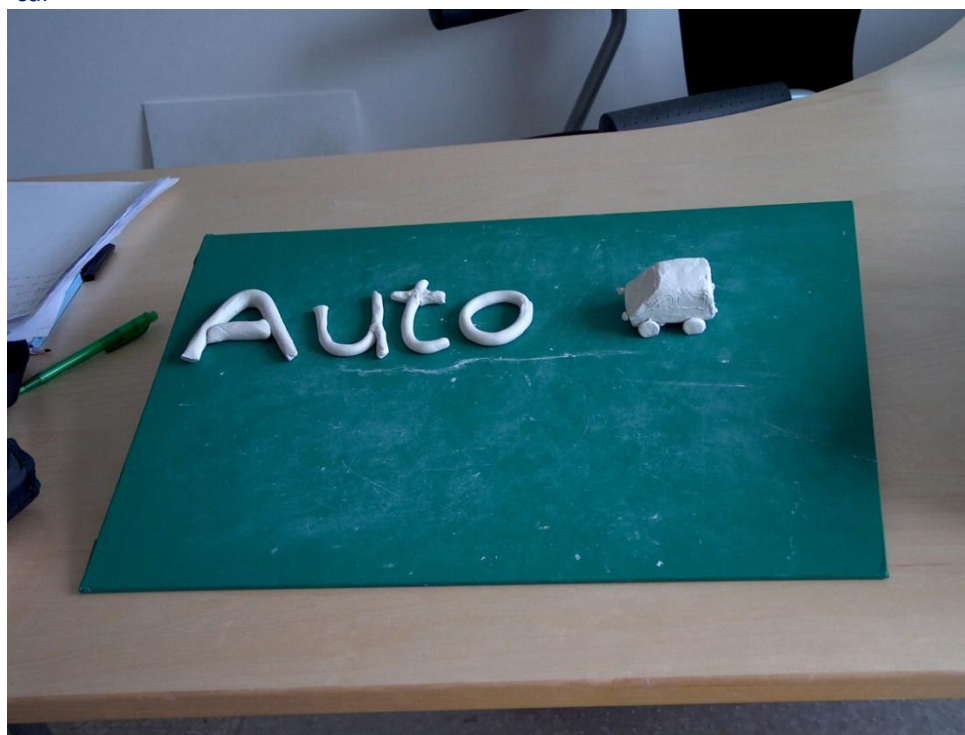
N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
3	<i>Rainbow writing</i>	Spelling and Vocabulary	Learn/improve spelling in the foreign language Broaden lexicon	Elementary/primary school
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child is given a laminated ‘tram-lines’ sheet and is reminded of the spelling rule/pattern or the tricky word and any memory anchor linked to the target word. 2. The teacher/teaching assistant says the target word that they want the pupil to write (eg ‘rain’) and show them the written word. The teacher and pupil say the letter names and the word out loud (eg r-a-i-n, rain) . 3. The child repeats the letter names and the word out loud (eg r-a-i-n, rain) while writing it on the tram-line. 4. The teacher/TA corrects the spelling as necessary and reinforces the correct spelling with any relevant rules or memory tricks. 5. The child says the word out loud and writes it again. (S)he then writes on top of the word four times, using four different-coloured pens. 6. The teacher/TA asks the child to write and say the word again with their eyes closed or to ‘see’ the word in their ‘mind’s eye’ and spell it out. <p>It is important that the pupil uses cursive script to reinforce motor memory. Also, this activity works better if carried out in small groups and in the presence of a TA.</p>				

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
4	<i>Form letters and words</i>	Spelling and vocabulary	Learn/improve spelling in the foreign language Broaden lexicon	Elementary/primary

This activity uses a multi-sensory approach and focuses on the memorisation of vocabulary and improving spelling accuracy. This technique will be particularly useful in the case of students with dyslexia.

1. The teacher asks the children to form, with a material like plasticine, the object corresponding to the word he/she wants to teach.
2. He/she then asks them to form, still with plasticine, the single letters which make up the word.
3. He/she asks the child to close their eyes and touch the single letters formed, first from left to right, then from right to left, and again from left to right (it is important that the teacher ensures the last time the child touches the letters he does so in the correct direction). This process will help the child to form a mental representation of the written word corresponding to the object.
4. The teacher asks the child to try the *spelling* of the word without looking at the letters.

Below is a possible representation of the word 'Auto', the Italian word for 'car'



N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
5	<i>Perceive sounds physically</i>	Phonetics/ phonology	Reproduce new sounds correctly	Elementary/primary school Lower secondary school Upper secondary school

This exercise is useful for helping the student “physically perceive” (Daloiso, 2011) the new language’s sounds, so as to notice if his/her pronunciation is correct or not. The following example relates to Italian-speaking students learning English

1. The teacher introduces a sound, for example the aspirate “h” in English. He/she lets students listen to the sound repeatedly and explains the articulatory movements involved.
2. The teacher asks the pupils to try to reproduce the sound.
3. The teacher asks the students to place their hand in front of the mouth and try to pronounce a series of words like “home”, “hope”, “hot”, etc.... He/she will explain that, if the pronunciation of the aspirated consonant is correct, the student will perceive the blow of air from the mouth on the palm of the hand. The same thing can be done using a sheet of paper placed in front of the mouth. If the pronunciation of the aspirated consonant is correct, the blow of air will make the paper move forward.
4. Still using a sheet of paper, the teacher may introduce the aspirated occlusive consonants at the start of an English word. In words like “pan” or “pot”, the “p” sound is at the beginning of a word and is followed by a vowel. In cases like this, the “p” sound is always followed by an aspiration. The same does not happen in Italian.

So, to highlight the difference in pronunciation of these sounds with regard to the same consonants at the start of Italian words, the teacher can ask students to pronounce in succession words such as “pan” and “pane”, or “top” and “topo”. If the pronunciation of the English words is correct, the sheet of paper will move forward when “pan” and “top” are pronounced.

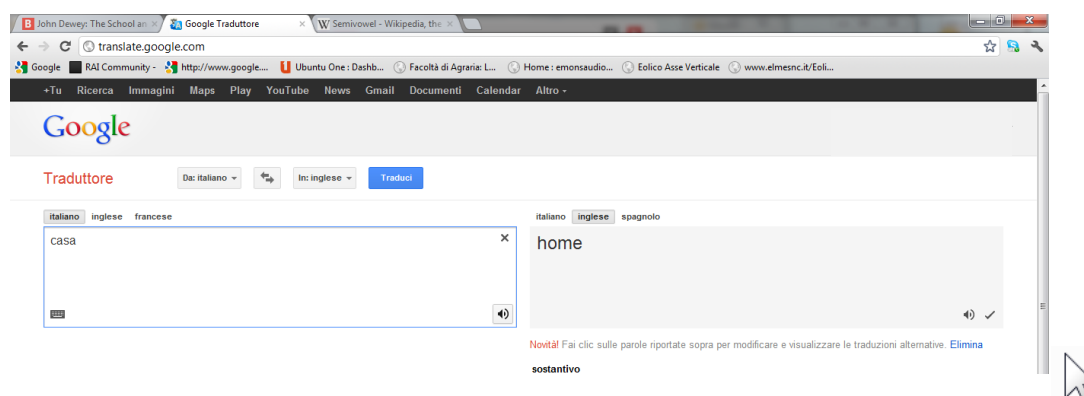
N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
6	<i>Graphic dictation</i>	Vocabulary Phonetics/ phonology	Exercise oral comprehension. Memorise lexicon	Elementary/primary

1. The teacher pronounces a word and the pupils must draw it.
2. The same word may be further specified, for example with adjectives: 1) Dog; 2) White dog; 3) White dog with a black tail.
3. The teacher may help comprehension by miming if necessary.

This activity can have different variants: for example, for practising prepositions of place, the teacher can describe a whole picture and the students have to draw it. Alternatively, the students could work in pairs. One person in each pair has a picture and they have to describe it to their partner.

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
9	<i>Listen and repeat</i>	Phonetics/ phonology	Train pronunciation	Elementary/primary school

In order to practise pronunciation the teacher may use vocal synthesis software like for example the multi-lingual vocal synthesis associated with Google Translate. To hear the pronunciation of the desired word all you do is click with the mouse on the lower right icon as indicated in figure 5.1 There are however various online dictionaries with associated vocal synthesis.



It is a good idea to remember that Google Translate, like other similar software, can be a great tool to use for the goal just described, though it must be used with caution as a translator of complex sentences, despite the improvements added to the latest versions. Meanwhile it can be used simply but effectively as a translator of single words.

Certain continuous or non-continuous voice recognition software may also be useful. “Dragon naturally speaking” is an example of the former although it is not available free of charge. Google Crome is an example of the latter.

These tools may be very useful for improving pronunciation, as demonstrated in the experiment carried out by Sugata Mitra in India starting from 1999: Prof. Mitra, professor in Educational Technology at the School of Education, Communication and Language Science of the University of Newcastle (UK), elaborated the “Hall in the wall” project. One of the goals of this project was to improve the English pronunciation of Indian children. Playing on their natural curiosity, he placed public computers (kiosks) over various parts of India. These computers could be used to practise the language and were equipped with software for continuous voice recognition. Children were able to “dictate” brief phrases to the computer and check how accurate their pronunciation was. Noticeable improvements were registered within just a few months. For further details please refer to the following link.(
<http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/>) .

The software used by S. Mitra is “Dragon Naturally speaking”, which is available in various languages but is not free.

There is however less sophisticated but free software that can be used for the same goal. It may be necessary to match vocal synthesis software (the google translator may perform satisfactorily for this goal) to a voice recognition (speech-to-text) software like

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
7	Cooperative Learning - Jigsaw	Oral and written comprehension	Improving oral and written comprehension, enrich vocabulary	Lower secondary school Upper secondary school

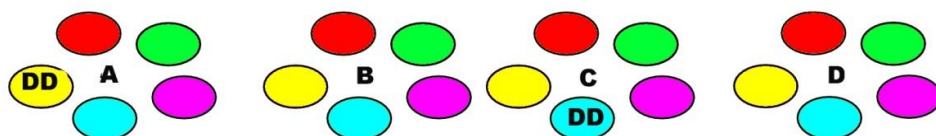
For this activity allow at least two hours.

Imagining a class of 20 students, the teacher will divide the class into heterogeneous groups, each containing 5 people. The teacher will identify a leader for each group. The students will be organised into a circle within each group. The groups will be as far as possible from each other.

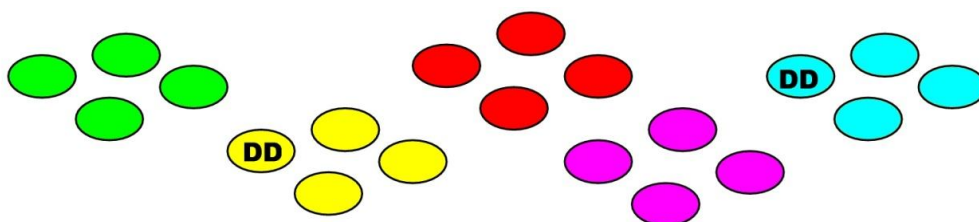
The teacher will propose a written comprehension activity based on everyday habits, preferences and tastes of a successful singer popular with young people.

1. The teacher will divide the text into 5 parts, each regarding one of the following topics: 1. What the singer does on week days; 2. What he/she does in his free time; 3. What he/she does at the weekend; 4. What he/she likes to eat/drink/wear; 5. What his tastes are in music/cinema/...

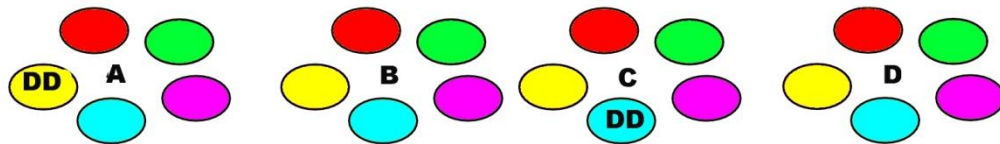
Each person in a group will receive a different part of the text from the teacher and will have time to read it... The teacher will ensure that the students concentrate on their own part of the text and will not look at other parts.



2. All the students who had the same part of the text will form a group and will discuss the topic among themselves. They will get ready to present it to the other members of their original group.



3. Each student will then return to his own *jigsaw* group and present the topic of their own text part to the partners. The teacher will encourage the latter to formulate questions and ask for explanations, and will try to intervene only when necessary, to facilitate interaction.



4. Finally, the teacher will hand all the students a photocopy with a multiple-choice exercise based on the whole text and each student must complete it individually.

If the class includes students with dyslexia, the teacher may find appropriate (depending on the student's need) to exempt them from reading the text, as in phase 2 they will learn the information in their part of the text from their partners. From that moment on they will participate in the activity as described above.

In this case co-operation will become particularly significant, and if the teacher has adequately worked with the class to create a good inclusive and welcoming atmosphere, the activity will certainly proceed smoothly.

If you prefer not to use the text, the same type of activity may be done by watching a film, a cartoon or video. In this case it will be necessary for the class to have at its disposal a computer for each *jigsaw* group.

Let's imagine using a 90' video divided into 5 sequences. The first 4 will be 20 minutes each, the last (the final part of the film) will be 10'.

In phase 1 of the activity, groups A, B, C, D will watch film sequences 1, 2, 3, 4 respectively. In phase 2, each expert group component will tell the others about the part of the video it was able to see. In phase 3, each student will return to its own *jigsaw* group knowing what happens in the video up to minute 80. At this point the teacher asks the students to imagine the end (the activity could be particularly fun if done, for example, with a thriller movie).

Each *jigsaw* group elaborates its own hypothesis and then everybody watches the last part of the film.

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
8	<i>Words in your mind</i>	Spelling Vocabulary Semantics	Improving the skill of creating mental representation of an abstract concept Learn/improve spelling in the foreign language Broaden vocabulary	Elementary/ primary school

The “Form letters and words” exercise is a multi-sensory activity and can be used for working with words/abstract concepts. This exercise will be particularly useful for those dyslexic children who have difficulties with text comprehension and find it hard to create mental representations of words and concepts. Some of them, being visual thinkers, may struggle with abstract words where the meaning is not immediately linked to an image; others, with even greater difficulties in mental representation, may have problems with both abstract and concrete words.

1. The teacher asks the children to form, with a material like plasticine, an abstract concept (change, intelligence, consequence, via, while, now, before, after...) .
2. He/she then asks them to form, still with plasticine, the individual letters (from which the word is composed) corresponding to the concept.
3. He/she asks the child to close their eyes and touch the single letters formed, first from left to right, then from right to left, and again from left to right (it is important that the teacher ensures the last time the child touches the letters he/she does so in the correct direction). This process will help the child to form a mental representation of the written word corresponding to the object.
4. The teacher asks the child to try the *spelling* of the word without looking at the letters.

Below is a possible representation of the word ‘cambiamento’ (‘cambiamento’ in Italian means ‘change’):



N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
9	<i>Back to the board game</i>	Vocabulary	Broaden lexicon by revising newly learnt words	Any

The teacher asks for 2 volunteers to stand with their backs to the board.
 The class is divided into 2. Half the class works with Volunteer A and half with Volunteer B.
 The teacher writes a newly learnt word on the board. The volunteers are not allowed to look at the word.
 The class shouts out clues and the volunteers try to guess the word.
 The volunteer who correctly guesses the word first scores a point for their team.

NB You need to know your students quite well and should avoid selecting a student with severe word retrieval difficulties as one of the volunteers (unless they really want to volunteer and will not be upset if they cannot guess the word on the board).
 You can do this at all levels. Some nouns and adjectives may be relatively easy to define but it gets interesting when you put up words such as ‘carefully’, ‘thoughtlessness’ or ‘doubt’. It also encourages the class to think about the different parts of speech when they are providing clues.

N°	Activity	Area	Goal	Age range
11	<i>Sentence Auction</i>	Grammar Oral comprehension	Encouraging students to recognise errors in their own writing and to learn from each other.	Any

1. Collect some examples of mistakes made by students in recent writing activities. (Be sensitive – don’t select ones that easily identifiable and/or might make someone feel awkward). Also include a number of sentences with no error.
2. Divide the class into teams of 4 or 5 students.
3. Ask them to go through the sentences and decide which they think are correct and which contain an error. Move round the class ensuring that everyone is trying to participate.
4. Tell the students that they have €100 to spend and that the winning team will be the team that buys the most correct sentences.
5. Play the role of the auctioneer – if you have a hammer, all the better! Introduce each sentence and encourage the students to buy it. If more than one team wants to buy it, then they have to bid. The team that offers more money will receive the sentence.
6. Follow this procedure for all the sentences and keep a note of which sentences were bought by which team. Ensure that teams do not spend more than €100!
7. Go through the sentences in turn, generating discussion about possible errors and providing clarification where necessary.
8. Congratulate the winning team.

Examples of sentences used with a group of Polish students:

- A wedding in Poland is very important celebration.
- Before leaving home, the young couple is receiving a blessing from their parents.
- On the first day, the ceremony takes place in the bride’s house.
- The young couple is getting married in the church or in the registry office.

N°	Attività	Area	Scopo	Fascia d'età
12	Cuisenaire rods.	Vocabulary Grammar Oral production	Broaden vocabulary and develop oral production.	Elementary/ primary school

Cuisenaire's rods can be used in different kinds of activities related to language learning. Cuisenaire's rods are ten sticks of different colours (white, red, light green, pink, yellow, dark green, black, brown, blue and orange) and length (the orange stick is ten times longer than the white one). In L2/FL teaching you can, for example, use rods to introduce colours.

The teacher shows a rod saying its colour, lowers it and raises it up again. A student is then asked to repeat the colour he heard and so on with the other colours. Students who say the colour correctly gets the rod as a point marker. The sentence may be made more complex with the construction article-adjective-noun ("a red rod"). When students have become familiar with the linguistic structure, this can be expanded to a full sentence ("It's a red rod"). Then the teacher can practice the plural ("These are blue rods"), integrating numbers, if students already know them ("They are two light-green rods"). The teacher needs to decide the degree of difficulty of sentences and evaluates their correctness - when a student makes a grammatical or pronunciation mistake, the teacher can call another student or say the correct phrase, then ask for it to be repeated.

The rods can be used to create objects (a clock to practice the time) or situations (a house to describe the parts of the house or the daily routines).

The rods can also be used to practice the comparatives and the superlatives of adjectives ("The white rod is shorter than the red rod"; "The orange rod is the longest rod"). You can also use the demonstrative pronouns ("This is a white rod"). This technique may be used to visually represent the syntax of a sentence, by associating to each rod a certain grammar element. Rods can then be moved or switched to help the student say sentences in a correct way.

In this kinds of activities the teacher should try and talk very little and let the students work as independently as possible, intervening only when really necessary.

(Activity suggested by Daniela Polidoro, language teacher who participated in the Swiss pilot course.)

Useful links:

- <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/cuisenaire-rods-language-classroom>
- <http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/teaching-materials/using-cuisenaire-rods-with-young-learners/155710.article>
- <http://john.mullen.pagesperso-orange.fr/cuisenaire.htm>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOpZzsFfDtg>