

**1,000 Ideas & Activities  
For Language Teachers**

The following six pages contain a small sample (19) of the 1,000 ideas and activities contained in this book - simple ideas, activities with suggested exponents for student use, interactive activities, fully reproducible classroom handouts and more.

A further *981 similar activities* are in my book.

Thank you,

Sean Banville

# RANKING NEWS QUESTIONNAIRE

Rank the four choices in each of the questions and discuss them with your partner(s). You may like to add a fifth choice.

1. What is the most serious news story today?
  - a. The war on terror
  - b. Global warming
  - c. Nuclear proliferation
  - d. The price of oil
  - e. Other
2. Who is the most dangerous person on Earth?
  - a. Osama bin Laden
  - b. Kim Jong Il
  - c. George W. Bush
  - d. Vladimir Putin
  - e. Other
3. What was the biggest story of the past five years?
  - a. World Trade Centre attack
  - b. The capture of Saddam Hussein
  - c. Breaking the genetic code
  - d. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza
  - e. Other
4. Who is the most interesting newsmaker?
  - a. Michael Jackson
  - b. Kofi Annan.
  - c. Nelson Mandela
  - d. Tony Blair
  - e. Other
5. Which continent has the most interesting news?
  - a. Africa
  - b. Asia
  - c. Europe
  - d. South America
  - e. Other
6. Which of these stories will happen first?
  - a. The nation of Palestine created
  - b. North Korea ends nuclear weapons program
  - c. Fair trade for Africa
  - d. Ozone hole closes
  - e. Other
7. Which country will be most important in 2050?
  - a. The U.S.A.
  - b. China
  - c. India
  - d. Japan
  - e. Other
8. Which of these possible future headlines is most worrying?
  - a. Giant panda becomes extinct
  - b. Sea levels rise another 30 cm
  - c. Syria becomes 100<sup>th</sup> nuclear weapons nation
  - d. World population to double within 20 years
  - e. Other

**HOMETOWN NEWS:** Students talk about the recent news in their hometowns. Example questions:

Use the questions below to talk with your partner(s) about news of your hometown.

- What kind of news is normal for your town?
- What's the biggest news ever to come from your town?
- What are the local newspapers like?
- Does your hometown have its own TV news channel?
- How often do you receive / look at news of your town?
- Have you ever seen pictures of your area on national or international television?
- What news stories have hit the headlines recently in your hometown?
- Have you ever been in the local newspapers or on TV?
- Is there any big news coming up in your hometown?
- Who has made the biggest headlines in your hometown?

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**BETTER STUDYING:** In pairs / groups, think of ways you can make better use of your time to study current events in English more.

SITUATION	HOW TO UTILISE TIME TO STUDY ENGLISH MORE
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Going to work / school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Watching TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Walking around town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Surfing the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Bedtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

After you have finished, change partners and tell each other about your ideas. Give each other advice on how to make your ideas better.

Return to your original partner and incorporate the advice you received into making your ideas better.

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# NEWS FUNCTIONS 1

Why do you read, watch or listen to the news?

Write a value of 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) in the middle column for each of the reasons in the left column.

<b>REASON</b>	<b>VALUE</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
<b>To feel intelligent</b>		
<b>To stay informed</b>		
<b>Because I'm a world citizen</b>		
<b>News is fascinating</b>		
<b>I love discussing current events</b>		
<b>To kill time</b>		
<b>To find out new things</b>		
<b>The news is living history</b>		
<b>It keeps my brain active</b>		
<b>It's just a habit</b>		

In pairs / groups, share and compare your values. Ask each other to explain in full, with examples, exactly why you chose your scores.

Change partners and report what you heard from your first partners. Are there any similarities between different students' answers?

**SENTENCE STARTERS:** The teacher creates a sentence starter (or several) that could initiate a wide variety of responses. Students complete their sentences, then walk around the class talking about them.

- British food is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The best cuisine in the world is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The most delicious dessert is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Egg and bacon ice cream sounds \_\_\_\_\_.
- Microwave dinners are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Vegetarian fare is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The best drink to accompany a meal is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Dining out is \_\_\_\_\_.
- McDonalds hamburgers are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Life without restaurants would be \_\_\_\_\_.

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**TWO-MINUTE DEBATES:** Stand students in two rows facing each other. The teacher assigns sides of the debates (Instructions: "This side thinks.... And this side believes that..."). The teacher allows two minutes before moving one student to the other end of their line and moving the other students up so everyone faces a new partner. The teacher then introduces the next debate.

- a. PlayStation 3 is best. vs. Xbox is best.
- b. Gaming is anti-social. vs. Gaming means you have lots of friends.
- c. Gaming sharpens your mind. vs. Gaming makes you less intelligent.
- d. Gaming will be an Olympic sport one day. vs. Gaming will always be just a game.
- e. Fantasy games are dangerous. vs. Fantasy games are harmless fun.
- f. People should play real sports, not video games. vs. Gaming activates the brain.
- g. Top graphic designers are real artists, just like Picasso. vs. How ridiculous!
- h. Gaming will become a social disease. vs. People said the same about television.
- i. Interactive gaming is best. vs. Playing alone is best.

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**SHOPKEEPERS:** The teacher takes the characters from the article (and perhaps adds one or two) and changes their professions to shopkeepers. Students must talk about what kind of stores they have, what they sell, how the prices are, the quality of the merchandise, etc. They then change partners and compare their ideas.

**IMAGE CONJURING:** Put a list of keywords related to the article on cards, face down on the table. In pairs / groups, students turn over one card and read it to their partners, who have to write down the first thing that comes into their mind. Students then look at the things that were written and talk about the relationships or meanings of the associations.

**GOOGLE SEARCH:** Give students various phrases taken from the article. They have to do a "Google search" and ask other students for information related to the search phrase. The other students are search engines.

**THE PEOPLE / THINGS IN MY LIFE:** Students write down the people they know or the things with which they are familiar that are similar to those in the text (smokers, 80-year-olds, televisions, etc). Students talk about and compare the character or attributes of each person or thing.

**MY HISTORY:** Students talk about the history of the subject of the article as it relates to their lives. If the article is about the dentist, students talk about the entire history of their dental visits; if the story is about chocolate, their affiliation with chocolate, etc.

**BOTH SIDES:** If there are two people or groups of people that are central to the news story, students pretend to play them. They are sitting next to each other at the bus stop. They must talk together about the news item and the part they each play in it. Endangered gorillas might want to have a discussion with poachers or children might want to confront their smoking parents.

**PERCENT STATEMENTS:** In pairs / groups, students give a percentage to each of these statements to show how far they agree with them. (E.g. "I 80 per cent agree with the first one"; "I only 10 per cent agree with the last one." etc.)

- I would totally, totally love to be married for 80 years.
- Eighty different partners in 80 years would be nice.
- I would get sick to death of being with the same person for 80 years.
- Marriage sounds like / is too much hard work. Staying free and single is the way to go.
- I want a congratulatory card from the British Queen.
- After 80 years of marriage, there's nothing new to discover. How boring.
- Staying married for 80 years means a match made in heaven.
- Love is the most important thing in the world.

**MYSTERY HEADLINES:** In pairs / groups, students choose a predetermined mystery headline and develop the story to tell to news reporters. Once they have decided on their story, change partners and take turns being reporters and mystery explainers. Example headlines might include:

- The talking bus stop
- Ten thousand pairs of jeans go missing in Russian town
- Lions and zebras become good friends in Kenya
- It's raining pens and pencils in Chile
- The pregnant Mickey Mouse
- The remote control baby
- Marriage proposals increase 300% in Brazilian city
- The world's computers' space bars suddenly break

**EXPONENTS TO MOVE FROM ARTICLE TO CONVERSATION:** Providing suitable exponents can enable learners to more confidently talk about a text they have in front of them. It is quite natural for anyone armed with a newspaper, magazine or book to want to tell a nearby companion about something they have read. This is a skill learners transfer automatically from their L1s. Students use these exponents to introduce phrases from the article

- According to this \_\_\_\_\_  
(E.g. "According to this, the price of oil has hit \$75 a barrel.")
- It says here \_\_\_\_\_
- This article says \_\_\_\_\_
- You'll never believe this \_\_\_\_\_
- I can't believe what I've just read \_\_\_\_\_
- Guess what?

**THE ANIMALS' VIEWPOINT:** Students answer the questions from the point of view of animals. After the discussion, students talk about how they answered differently as animals than how they would have answered as themselves.

**JOINT STATEMENT:** Students must form groups of four. Two pairs of students (A & B and C & D) must agree on the answers to the questions. They then change partners (A & C and B & D) and answer using their previously agreed upon answers. Change partners again to partner the student they haven't yet spoken to (A & D and B & C). In this final partnering, students must clarify each other's answers to their questions – "So your answer to question 1 was ...".

**LONG TIME NO SEE ROLE PLAY:** Students A pretend they are long-time friends of the main character in the article (Students B). The scenario is that the two friends, who have not met for many years, suddenly bump into each other. They must catch up with all their latest news. They must talk about the past, what it's like to be president / an actor etc, plus the issue in the news item.

**TEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ME:** Students make up ten things the world didn't know about the character from the text. Change partners and share and compare the things they wrote down. How plausible are they?