Do you sometimes feel that you use course books as a crutch rather than a point of departure for learning? If that's the case, you may need to include more lessons based around authentic material in your teaching programme. This lesson looks at the pros and cons of this kind of material and outlines a procedure of how to exploit authentic materials for classroom use.

Task 1 – Jan's mixed feedback

Jan used an authentic newspaper article with her learners. Some students said they really enjoyed reading some "real English". However, others said they found the text too hard and indicated they would like to stick to the course book in future.

Can you help Jan? What should she do? Jot down your ideas and suggestions on a note pad, then look at the answer key below.

Task 1 Feedback

Sticking to the course book is the easy option. Trying to use authentic material again is going to be more challenging as many students will be resistant to it. It is possible that the task that Jan used with the article was too challenging and she may need to consider making the task more straightforward for weaker students. It might also pay to let students know why she is using authentic material. In other words, she might need to "sell" it to some degree to the students in the class who felt challenged by the text she used.

Key Skill

Using authentic material with learners can add variety to a teaching programme. However, if students are not used to working with material of this nature, it needs to be introduced gradually and carefully. The next task will give you ideas on how you can "sell" authentic material to your students.

Task 2 – The pros and cons

Numbers 1 to 4 below are features of authentic material. Letters a to h are pros and cons that match the features. For each feature there is one pro and one con. Match the pros and cons to the features.

Features	Pros	Cons
1. Authentic texts often contain cultural information.		
2. Authentic texts are often quite long.		
3. Authentic texts can be very topical.		
4. Authentic texts can be used regularly in the classroom.		

Pros & cons

a. It can be difficult to fit them into the timeframe of a 90 or 120 minute lesson.

b. It can make the teaching programme appear 'bitsy' and students don't get a feeling they are working through a coherent syllabus.

c. Students are often very interested in this kind of information and they find it very motivating.

d. This means the material can date very quickly.

e. This kind of background information can sometimes be more difficult to understand than the language.

f. It can make a good break from the course book.

g. This means students can get good extensive reading or listening practice.

h. This can make your classroom material very relevant to students.

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key Skill

There are arguments against using authentic material, certainly if you use too much of it. However, teachers can often anticipate problems and deal with these when they plan authentic materials. For example, difficult cultural information can be dealt with when leading in to an authentic text and longer texts can be edited to accommodate lesson time. One issue not indicated in task 2 is that of copyright. This differs from country to country and from one institution to another. However, it is important to ensure you have copyright clearance on a piece of material before you use it.

Task 3 – Authentic texts and their uses

Numbers 1 to 8 describe different kinds of authentic text. Letters a to h describe aims that relate to these texts. Match the aims to the texts.

Authentic texts	Aims
1. A TV guide for one day's viewing.	
2. An e-mail message between friends.	
3. A radio weather forecast.	
4. A series of magazine advertisements.	
5. An editorial from a newspaper.	
6. A recording of someone speaking about a childhood memory.	
7. A reality TV show.	
8. A timetable for a package holiday.	

Aims

a. To provide practice in inferring meaning from a discursive text.

b. To provide practice in listening for narrative gist.

c. To clarify and practise the first conditional used for making promises.

d. To highlight the way in which body language and gesture supports oral communication.

e. To clarify some key features of informal written communication.

f. To provide less controlled oral practice of the present simple used to talk about future itineraries.

g. To provide practice in scan reading.

h. To provide practice in scan listening.

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key Skill

Authentic texts can be used to practise a variety of reading and listening skills. In these kinds of lessons, it is a good idea to include a stage in the lesson that gets learners to reflect on the skills they have practised and think about how they can transfer these skills when reading and listening to texts outside the classroom. It is also a good idea to remember that authentic texts can provide good examples of language in real contexts.

Task 4 – An approach to planning lessons with authentic material

Letters a to g below describe a series of steps that can be followed when planning a lesson based around authentic materials. Place these steps in a logical order.

Planning Steps	Order
a. decide how you will focus on the language.	
b. create reading/listening tasks for receptive skills practice and to ensure comprehension of the task.	
c. edit the text, if necessary – this might mean cutting out some difficult vocabulary or deciding to use only part of the text.	
d. read the text carefully and decide if it is about the right language level for your learners.	
e. think of a follow-on speaking activity you could do after reading the text.	
f. read the text and decide if it will be of interest to your students.	
g. look for useful vocabulary and/or grammar that you can highlight in this text.	

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

⮌ Thinking about your teaching …

Over a period of a term, try using different kinds of authentic material. Each time you use it ask your students to evaluate the material in terms of level of difficulty and interest. Keep a record of their comments and at the end of the term, see if you can determine any patterns in their feedback.

Note your conclusions in your *Teaching Log*.

⮌ Taking it to the classroom …

A lot of authentic material produced by teachers is based around magazine or newspaper articles. Try creating a lesson based around something very different. And remember that authentic material can include listening material.

⮌ Want to find out more … ?

On pages 67 to 69 of *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* by Tricia Hedge (Oxford University Press 2000) there is extra reading on authentic materials.

⮌ Related TaskBook lessons...

You may be interested in the following lessons in the ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook series, relating to the use of authentic material:

- **Unit 3 a) Listening 1**: **Listening sub-skills and a typical lesson** *(looks at different listening sub-skills and how to practise them)*
- **Unit 3 b) Listening 2**: **Learner-friendly listening lessons** *(looks at how to make listening lessons more manageable for your learners)*
- **Unit 3 c) Reading 1: Knowing about strategies and sub-skills** *(provides an introduction to different reading sub-skills and strategies)*
- **Unit 3 d) Reading 2**: **Setting tasks for reading texts** *(looks at creating tasks to help learners develop and practice different reading sub-skills)*
- **Unit 5 c) Using Songs:** *Songs are a rich source of authentic material and this lesson looks at how songs can be integrated into your lessons.*

Answer Key

Task 2 – Feedback

1) c and e
2) g and a
3) h and d
4) f and b

Task 3 – Feedback

1) g
2) e
3) h
4) c
5) a
6) b
7) d
8) f

Task 4 – Feedback

1) f
2) d
3) g
4) c
5) b
6) a
7) e

Do you create weekly or monthly plans for your classes? This lesson looks at some of the reasons why this can be useful for you and your students and gives you an idea of what to look for when you plan over longer stretches of time.

Task 1 – A questionnaire

Look at the different ways of planning on a day-to-day basis and decide which approach is closest to your own.

1. I arrive at school and spend a long time working out what I'm going to teach each day – nothing seems quite right.

2. I just do whatever is next in the course book.

3. I don't really bother planning at all – I just go into the classroom and see what happens.

4. I use the same lessons from the last time I taught the level I am teaching now.

5. I grab an authentic text - usually something in the newspaper - and use that.

6. Nothing here reflects the way I plan.

Then check the answer key below.

Task 1 Feedback

1. If you chose this approach, you could save yourself a lot of time and trouble on a day-to-day basis by working out an overview for each class and decide, in a general sense, what you plan to cover each day.

2. This can get a bit boring and predictable. It also raises the question of whether everything in the course book is suitable for your students.

3. While you could argue that you are very responsive to your students, are you sure that you are providing them with balance and variety?

Task 1 Feedback (cont'd)

4. This makes your planning easier to manage on a daily basis, but is every group of students the same? Don't some things need to change with a new group?

5. This probably means that your teaching programme contains a lot of topical material, but you perhaps run the risk of overemphasising reading skills.

6. Perhaps you have a more varied approach to planning, which is a good thing. However, do you plan on a day-to-day basis? Could you benefit from creating an overview of what you want to cover over a longer stretch of time.

Key Skill

The skill of planning an overview of lessons (sometimes known as "a scheme of work") that you will teach over a longer stretch of time (e.g. a week on an intensive course, or a month on a part-time course) is often known as timetabling. If you can train yourself to timetable, your day to day planning is very likely to become easier.

Task 2 – Why should I bother timetabling?

Numbers 1 to 8 are a series of verbs associated with timetabling. Letters a to h are ideas. Match the ideas to the verbs to create a list of reasons that outline the value of timetabling.

Verbs	Ideas
1. motivates …	
2. allows you to achieve a …	
3. makes you think about …	
4. encourages …	
5. provides …	
6. looks …	
7. ensures …	
8. saves …	

Ideas

a. ... continuity for students if you are away for a day or two

b. … a sense of direction for students

c. … professional to students and colleagues

d. … students if they know where they're going on a weekly or monthly basis

e. … a critical evaluation of the course book as you use it

f. … lesson planning time on a day-to-day basis

g. … having a variety of materials and topics

h. … balance of language input in relation to language skills practice

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key Skill

While there are many administrative reasons for timetabling which benefit teachers and their colleagues, the main benefactors are the students. Giving more thought to the overall shape of their programme is likely to result in better learning opportunities and, as a result, increased student motivation.

Task 3 – What you should keep in mind?

Numbers 1 to 8 are points you should keep in mind when you are creating a timetable. Letters a to h are questions that go together with these points. Match the questions to the points.

Points to keep in mind	Questions
1. students' learning pace	
2. the length of the lesson	
3. the time of day of your lessons	
4. the course book	
5. materials that can supplement the course book	
6. sequencing of activities	
7. balance of materials	
8. topics	

Questions

a. What kinds of activities should you do first in the lesson if students are likely to be tired?

b. Do the lessons have the same theme running through them?

c. Is there a logical progression from one activity to the next?

d. How much material can your students cope with?

e. Have you got enough or too much language input in relation to skills work?

f. What are achievable aims in the allocated time?

g. Is there something you can substitute or add to increase student motivation?

h. If students have paid for it (or it is included in the fees), can you reject it out of hand?

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

Key Skill

Task 3 could be summarised in one phrase: as you timetable, keep the students in mind. You need to think about them in their learning context and think about how you can exploit the teaching materials you have available to you so that you motivate your students to lean as much as possible.

Task 4 – Evaluating a timetable

Below is an example three-day timetable for a pre intermediate level class. They are studying on an intensive part-time course in the evening from 6.00pm until 8.00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The page numbers refer to the course book students are using. There are some problems with this timetable.

Look at it carefully and write your evaluation on a note pad. Say what the problems are and what changes you might make. Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Reading MP3 Revolution p. 61	**Grammar** 'will' for spontaneous decisions (deciding about food) p. 64	**Vocabulary / Speaking** Talking about your favourite food p. 65
Speaking Restaurant role play p. 63	**Functional Language / Pronunciation** Requests: e.g. 'Could / Can I have …?' p.63	**Listening** People describe different food p. 65

⮐ Thinking about your teaching …

You can sometimes timetable together with one or two other colleagues. Your students are likely to be different, but often they are similar enough to make this feasible. It is a good way of brainstorming and sharing ideas. Try setting this up and see what benefits and insights you gain from working collaboratively.

Note your conclusions in your *Teaching Log*.

⮐ Taking it to the classroom …

Not all teachers give their students a copy of their weekly or monthly timetables. However, students usually appreciate it if you do. At the end of each week or month, you can ask them to evaluate the timetable. You can talk about what you have and haven't done (it's not always possible to do everything!) and ask them for feedback on what they would like more or less of the following week or month.

⮐ Want to find out more … ?

On pages 109 - 145 of *Learning Teaching (2nd edition)* by Jim Scrivener (Macmillan 2005), there is further reading on planning lessons and courses.

Pages 375 to 378 of *The Practice of English Language Teaching (4th edition)* by Jeremy Harmer (Pearson 2007) contains extra reading on timetabling (here referred to as "planning a sequence of lessons").

Answer Key 🔑

Task 2 – Feedback

1) d
2) h
3) g
4) e
5) b
6) c
7) a
8) f

Task 3 – Feedback

1) d
2) f
3) a
4) h
5) g
6) c
7) e
8) b

Task 4 – Feedback

Across the 3 days, there is a good range of language input and skills practice. At first glance, the timetable seems quite varied. However, closer inspection reveals the following issues:

- The teacher seems very stuck in the course book, and, with one exception (Wednesday) seems to follow the page order of the book.

- On Monday, the reading and the speaking seem to have no thematic connection with each other. Perhaps the reading comes from one unit and the speaking from the next unit. It would be a good idea to think of a speaking activity that relates to the reading; for example, students could create and conduct a questionnaire on MP3 use.

- On Wednesday, there is a lot of language input: grammar, functional language, pronunciation. Most of this language seems to be related to Mondays' speaking activity. One approach would be to do the speaking activity on Wednesday and in the second hour , the teacher could focus on either 'will' or the functional language, depending on what students found most difficult when doing the role play.

- If, for example, the teacher does the restaurant speaking and the 'will' grammar input on Wednesday, they could then focus on the functional language on Friday and find another speaking activity that gave practice of this language in another context.

- If the teacher decides to keep Friday as a speaking and listening lesson, it might be a good idea to think about doing the listening in the first hour. Students will be quite tired by 7.00pm on Friday evening and listening requires a lot of concentration and effort.

Have you ever tried using a song with your students? Would you like to use songs more often, but are unsure about the different activities you can do with them? This lesson looks at how songs can be a welcome addition to your teaching programme. It outlines what language and skills practice they can provide and suggests some activities that work well for most songs.

Task 1 – A questionnaire

Which description best describes the frequency with which you use songs with your students? Choose the one(s) that are closest to what you do, then look at the answer key below.

1. Never.

2. Once every three or four months.

3. Once a month.

4. Once a week.

5. Only at the end of the week.

6. Two or three times a week.

7. Every day.

Task 1 Feedback

There is no right or wrong answer to the frequency with which you should use songs in the classroom. It depends on how often you see students and it depends on their interests and their needs. Overuse can make students feel jaded about them, while never using songs can mean that you are not offering variety in your teaching programme and not appealing to students who are very motivated by popular music and popular culture.

Key Skill

Judicious use of songs with a group of learners can greatly enhance motivation and offer learning opportunities not always found in course books. However, it is interesting to note that some course books now include songs as part of their syllabus. This is perhaps a sign that students expect lessons based around songs at some stage in their course.

Task 2 – What are the issues?

Numbers 1 to 5 outline some supporting ideas for using songs. Letters a to e outline contrary ideas that balance the supporting ideas. Match the contrary ideas to the supporting ideas.

Supporting ideas	Contrary ideas
1. Most students find popular songs very motivating, but...	
2. Songs generally lighten the mood of a class, but...	
3. Music appeals to the senses and is always perceived as enjoyable, but...	
4. Songs are a great source of popular culture, but...	
5. Songs provide many examples of colloquial language that many students are keen to learn, but...	

Contrary Ideas

a. … some students might think it will lead to singing and for them, this is less enjoyable.

b. … in some contexts this might be seen as invasive or inappropriate.

c. … this can depend very much on musical taste and more mature learners might not be so keen to learn from songs.

d. … this idiomatic language is often difficult to understand.

e. … some students may perceive them as being superficial and not concerned with real learning.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🗝️

Key Skill

On balance, the advantages probably outweigh the disadvantages. However, it is a good idea to be aware of different issues that surround the use of songs and not assume that all students will love working on a song. Also don't assume that students will have your taste in music. What you perceive as "boring folk music" they might find not only melodious, but also easy to understand, and vice versa!

Task 3 – What are the aims?

Numbers 1 to 9 outline very broad language and skill aims for using songs. Letters a to i provide more detail for these aims. Match the detail to the aims.

Aims	Detail
1. To practise listening …	
2. To practise listening …	
3. To practise reading …	
4. To practise reading …	
5. To practise speaking …	
6. To practise writing …	
7. To clarify or highlight vocabulary …	
8. To clarify or highlight grammar …	
9. To clarify or highlight pronunciation ...	

Detail

a. … by scanning for specific words in the lyrics of the song.

b. … by focusing on idiomatic language in the song.

c. … by focusing on example structures in the song.

d. … for a gist understanding of the song.

e. … by creating new lyrics for the melody of the song.

f. … for a more detailed understanding of the song.

g. … by discussing the content of the song.

h. … by matching together words from the song that rhyme.

i. … for an implied message in the lyrics of the song.

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key Skill

In effect, a song is just another text and can be used in exactly the same way as you would any other text. However, there are some specific activities that go well with songs. Task 4 looks at some examples.

Task 4 – Example activities

Numbers 1 to 16 are example activities that can be used with most songs. Sort them into the following categories that match the stages of a lesson: first listening, subsequent listening(s) and post listening.

First listening	Subsequent listening(s)	Post listening

Activities

1. Students listen and order the lines of the song that have been mixed up.

2. Students listen and decide what kind of song it is – romantic? song with a message?

3. Students listen and select the best of 3 possible titles for the song.

4. Students listen and complete a copy of the lyrics with gaps.

5. Students find and underline examples of a particular grammar point in a song.

6. Students study two or three unfamiliar idioms from a song and try to work out what they mean.

7. Students listen and decide which one of three pictures best represents the song.

8. Students listen and answer True/ False or multi-choice questions.

9. Students rewrite the lyrics of a song, trying to fit their words to the melody.

10. Students listen and select the best of 3 one-sentence summaries of the song.

11. Students listen to confirm their predictions about the content of a song based on having looked at 5 key vocabulary items from the lyrics.

12. Students listen and answer comprehension questions about the song.

13. Students do a role play based on characters or a situation from the song.

14. Students sing the song together as the CD plays.

15. Students listen in order to identify and correct a wrong word in each line of the song.

16. Students are given a list of words from the song. They match together the words that rhyme, then listen and complete a gap-fill of the lyrics using those words.

⮑ Thinking about your teaching …

A line from a song will often get stuck in your memory. It is possible to compare it with a set lexical phrase. How much do you think learning these sets phrases (sung or spoken) help with language learning?

Note your thoughts in your *Teaching Log*.

⮑ Taking it to the classroom …

Try out one of the activities in task 4 that is new to you.

⮑ Want to find out more … ?

The following book is an excellent source of ideas for using songs: *Music & Song* by Tim Murphey (Oxford University Press 1992).

⮑ Related TaskBook lessons…

You may be interested in the following lessons in the ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook series, relating to the use of songs:

- **Unit 3 a) Listening 1: Listening sub-skills and a typical lesson** *(looks at the different listening sub-skills that students need to practise).*
- **Unit 3 b) Listening 2: Learner-friendly listening lessons** *(looks at strategies for making listening lessons more manageable for your students).*
- **Unit 5 a) Using authentic materials:** *Looks at the pros and cons of using authentic materials and outlines a procedure of how to exploit them in the classroom.*

Answer Key

Task 2 – Feedback

1) c
2) e
3) a
4) b
5) d

Task 3 – Feedback

1) d
2) f
3) a
4) i
5) g
6) e
7) b
8) c
9) h

Task 4 – Feedback

First listening: 2, 3, 7, 10, 11

Subsequent listenings: 1, 4, 8, 12, 15, 16

Post listening: 5, 6, 9, 13, 14

Do you sometimes shy away from using computers with your learners? Are you not sure what to do with them? This lesson gives an introductory overview of materials and activities that are central to using computers with English language students.

Task 1 – Melissa and the computer suite.

Melissa: I took my students into the computer suite the other day for the first time. I suggested that they do some writing, but all they ended up doing was logging on to their e-mail and sending messages to friends. And they weren't in English. I think it's probably better just to keep them in the classroom.

Do you agree with Melissa?
Jot down your answers on a note pad, then check the answer key below.

Task 1 Feedback

The situation that Melissa describes is typical. During class time, students will often use computers for personal activities rather than learning activities. However, part of the problem is perhaps that Melissa didn't provide her students with a specific aim or learning outcome, which means they weren't motivated to do any kind of learning activity. If students want to use e-mail, she could perhaps suggest that students e-mail each other in English. However, she would need to set this up carefully in the classroom before going to the

Key skill

There is no doubt that computers are a useful learning tool in the English language classroom. However, as with any learning tool, teachers need to think carefully about how to use computers effectively so that students get benefit from them. Classroom activities using computers need to have a specific focus.

Task 2 – What does it take?

Below is a list of resources that it is useful to have available to students for the purposes of computer assisted language learning. Sort them into two groups: IT resources and learning resources.

List of resources

1. computer work stations
2. headphones
3. CD-Rom dictionaries
4. microphones
5. language learning software
6. a word processing programme
7. an e-mail programme
8. a printer
9. fast access band width
10. a projector
11. DVDs
12. internet web sites

IT resources	Learning resources

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key skill

Different institutions will have different resources. Many schools have a computer suite, while others might have one or two stand alone computers in each classroom. Providing internet access is a good idea, but, if you only want the computers used for learning activities, it might pay to block some sites, for example, sites that allow students to access personal e-mail.

Task 3 – Evaluating computer learning materials

Numbers 1 to 8 below are a series of questions that teachers need to ask themselves when they are thinking about preparing lesson using computer-based materials (e.g. language learning software, web-based tasks). Letters a to h are example answers to the questions.

Questions

1. Is the material-learner interface appealing?

2. Can I do a whole class demonstration of the material?

3. Will students find this material motivating?

4. Is the language level of this material appropriate for my students?

5. Are my learning objectives clear in using this material?

6. Is this material good for individual study?

7. Does the material include some kind of guided discovery activity?

8. Do students get feedback on their work?

Example answers

a. Yes, this material will help students revise the simple past.

b. Yes, the design of the material makes it feel like a game where they score points.

c. Yes, there are language problems for students to think about and solve.

d. Yes, the programme is colourful, clear and easy to navigate.

e. Yes, there are probably only three or four words they won't know in the material.

f. Yes, I can use the projector to show everyone the screen and show them how to use the material.

g. Yes, they can click on the 'answers' icon which tells them what is correct and makes a useful suggestion if they get an answer wrong.

h. Yes, there's even a practical on-line help facility if students have a problem navigating the material.

Key skill

There are many different answers to these questions. The core issue here is that teachers need to ensure that students engage with materials with the same degree of motivation that we hope they engage with paper-based learning materials. Clearly, if a teacher is using computer for word processing or for some kind of internet research many of the questions in task 3 won't apply.

Task 4 – Some teaching ideas for the Internet

Letters a to d describe 4 teaching ideas that use the internet. Numbers 1 to 12 are specific tasks that go together with these teaching ideas. Match the tasks to the ideas.

Teaching ideas
a. Students are directed to the web site of a newspaper (for example, The Guardian)
b. Students work on a project of planning a holiday in an English speaking country. They are given a budget and have to find out how they can get around, where they will stay and what they will do.
c. Students are directed to the students' pages of an English language teaching publisher's web site.
d. Students create their own web page to put on a school intranet.

Tasks

1. Students scan and skim read different sites looking for the information they need.

2. Students do an on-line exercise that focuses on some up-to-date idioms.

3. Students get fluency speaking practice discussing the results of their research.

4. Students get gist and detailed reading practice of a variety of texts.

5. Students write short articles and news items.

6. Students can download language practice worksheets in PDF format.

7. Students can listen to podcasts on recent events.

8. Students get speaking practice discussing the content of the page.

9. Students get writing practice by adding a comment to a blog.

10. Students get writing practice by writing e-mail messages to request detailed information on things such as prices.

11. Students get speaking practice recording audio files to be uploaded.

12. Students can find language puzzles and quizzes that they can download.

Teaching ideas	Tasks
a. newspaper	
b. holiday project	
c. publisher web site	
d. creating a class web page	

Check your ideas in the answer key.

⮑ Thinking about your teaching …

Conduct a survey and review of English language teaching web sites. Try to focus on materials that are available for students or to use with students, rather than those with teaching tips. Decide how motivating these materials are and how effective they would be in terms of student learning. Does the material make students think or do they mindlessly click on icons?

Note your findings in your *Teaching log*.

⮑ Taking it to the classroom …

When you go into a computer suite, students often need to interact in different ways (alone, pairs, small groups). Just as you would with a normal lesson, make sure you plan these different interactions and think carefully about the physical space you have to work in. See the *Related Taskbook lessons* below

⮑ Want to find out more … ?

On pages 187 - 199 of *Learning Teaching (2nd edition)* by Jim Scrivener (Macmillan 2005), there is further reading on using computers and the Internet with English language learners.

On pages 354 - 357 of *The Practice of English Language Teaching (4th edition)* by Jeremy Harmer (Pearson 2007), there is further reading on using computers with English language learners.

⮑ Related TaskBook lessons...

You may be interested in the following lessons in the ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook series, relating to this topic:

- **Unit 1 b) Student Interaction patterns and teacher roles:** Describes different ways of arranging students in your learning space and what roles a teacher plays within different arrangements.
- **Unit 5 a) Using authentic materials:** Looks at the pros and cons of using authentic materials and outlines a procedure of how to exploit them in the classroom.

Answer Key 🔑

Task 2 feedback

IT resources	Learning resources
1. computer work stations	**3.** CD-Rom dictionaries
2. headphones	**5.** language learning software
4. microphones	**6.** a word processing programme
8. a printer	**7.** an e-mail programme
9. fast access band width	**11.** DVDs
10. a projector	**12.** internet web sites

Task 3 feedback

1. d   2. f   3. b   4. e   5. a   6. h   7. c   8. g

Task 4 feedback

Teaching ideas	Tasks
a. newspaper	**4.** Students get gist and detailed reading practice of a variety of texts.
	7. Students can listen to podcasts on recent events.
	9. Students get writing practice by adding a comment to a blog.
b. holiday project	**1.** Students scan and skim read different sites looking for the information they need.
	3. Students get fluency speaking practice discussing the results of their research.
	10. Students get writing practice by writing e-mail messages to request detailed information on things such as prices.
c. publisher website	**2.** Students do an on-line exercise that focuses on some up-to-date idioms.
	6. Students can download language practice worksheets in PDF format.
	12. Students can find language puzzles and quizzes that they can download.
d. creating a class web page	**5.** Students write short articles and news items.
	8. Students get speaking practice discussing the content of the page.
	11. Students get speaking practice recording audio files to be uploaded.

Are you keen to use DVD or video in your lessons? This lesson highlights some of the benefits of supplementing your teaching programme with this type of material. It also lets you know what you have to think about in order to get started, and then gives some ideas for activities.

Task 1 – Rose's DVD lesson

Rose: Everyone told me that using DVD was a fun way of learning. I showed my intermediate class a film last Friday. I thought it'd be a nice end-of-week activity. However, afterwards the students said they'd rather use the course book, so I am not sure if using DVD is a good idea after all.

What do you think?
Jot down your answers on a note pad, then check the answer key below.

Task 1 Feedback

It seems as though Rose merely let students watch a whole film. This use of DVD is quite passive and a whole film could be difficult for intermediate learners to understand. If the students are studying in an English speaking country, they could go and watch a film at a cinema. If they are not, they could probably have hired their own English-language DVD and watched it at home. As a result, the students may not have found this a motivating classroom experience.

Key Skill

Teachers can sometimes approach the use of DVDs or videos as having a kind of "babysitting" function. In other words, it is something that requires minimum preparation that easily kills 90 minutes of classroom time. This tends to put the students in a very passive role. The successful use of DVDs or videos requires much more active participation from both the teacher and students.

Task 2 – Why use DVDs or videos?

Numbers 1 to 6 provide one word reasons for using this kind of material with students. Letters a to f give more detailed explanations of these reasons. Match the explanations to the reasons.

Reasons	Explanations
1. variety	
2. culture	
3. motivation	
4. speaking	
5. language	
6. visuals	

Explanations

a. Watching TV programmes or films can motivate students to discuss what they see and therefore generate a lot of oral language.

b. We now live in a world of sophisticated images and students expectations are that this world can also be found inside the classroom.

c. Using DVDs and videos makes a change from the course book and is an opportunity to include some authentic material in the teaching programme.

d. Excerpts from TV programmes or films can provide an authentic and rich context for grammar and vocabulary. Some commercially produced ELT videos are created to target specific language structures.

e. DVDs and videos have an association with the word 'entertainment' which means that students are often keen to work hard in lessons based around this kind of material.

f. Excerpts from films and TV programmes can bring the real world into the classroom and can illustrate background information associated with language and English-speaking life.

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key Skill

Used well, DVDs and videos can be highly motivating and useful learning tools in the classroom. The visual support provided in this kind of material can help learners understand spoken language more easily than listening to dialogues on CDs or tapes.

Task 3 – Getting started

Before you begin using DVDs or video, there are some important questions you should ask yourself. Sort questions 1 to 8 below into one of the two categories: equipment or materials.

Questions

1. Will I be infringing on any kind of broadcast copyright by showing this material in the classroom?

2. Am I able to freeze the frame to focus on one image?

3. Does the DVD or video player work and can I operate the machine efficiently?

4. Is this topic or genre motivating for the students I am teaching?

5. Is there a trouble shooting guide to help me get out of any problems?

6. Is the level and the speed of the language manageable for my learners?

7. Is there a counter on the DVD or video player cue the segment I want to use?

8. Is the excerpt about the right length when I take into account the activities I want to do and the time I have available?

Equipment	Materials

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

Key Skill

It is surprising how little DVD or video material you need for a lesson. It is possible to plan an hour long lesson around a 1 minute excerpt from a film or TV programme. The key to using this kind of material as actively as possible is exploiting what you use as fully as possible. DVD and video have far more potential than "listening-with-pictures". They are often a very useful source of language and can be used as a stimulus for developing speaking skills.

Task 4 – Some teaching ideas

Numbers 1 to 4 below describe some DVD or video materials that you can use. Letters a to d describe key techniques for working with video, while number i. to iv. are suggested activities. Match the techniques and activities to the materials.

Material	Technique	Activity
1. An excerpt from a TV discussion or debate programme.		
2. A short excerpt from a crime story that includes dramatic music.		
3. The same day's TV news broadcast on different channels.		
4. An excerpt from a film.		

Techniques	Activities
a. Divide the class into 2 groups for split viewing and listening.	**i.** Students get practise at listening for gist and following the main narrative of a story.
b. Viewing with no sound.	**ii.** Students listen and view trying to infer any bias in what they see, then report this to another student.
c. Extensive viewing and listening.	**iii.** Students describe the screen they imagine to each other then compare their ideas with the excerpt.
d. Listening first with the images covered, then again with the images revealed.	**iv.** The teacher asks students to focus on body language and gesture and what this tells them about the people they see.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

➲ Thinking about your teaching …

Find a film or TV programme in a language that you are not familiar with, or have very limited understanding of. Cover or turn off any on-screen subtitles and see what you can infer about the people, the situation and the story of an excerpt from this material. How much could you understand? How successful were you at extracting some kind of meaning?

Note your findings in your *Teaching log.*

➲ Taking it to the classroom …

Try one of the techniques from task 4 that is new to you.

➲ Want to find out more … ?

The following book is full of good ideas on using DVD or video material: *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom* by Jane Sherman (Cambridge University Press 2003).

➲ Related TaskBook lessons...

You may be interested in the following lessons in the ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook series, relating to this topic:

• **Unit 3 a) Listening 1**: **Listening sub-skills and a typical lesson** (*looks at different listening sub-skills and how to practise them*).
• **Unit 3 b) Listening 2**: **Learner-friendly listening lessons** (*looks at how to make listening lessons more manageable for your learners*).
• **Unit 5 a) Using authentic materials:** (*looks at the pros and cons of using authentic materials and outlines a procedure of how to exploit them in the classroom*).

| **Answer Key** | 🗝 |

Task 2 – Feedback

1. **c**
2. **f**
3. **e**
4. **a**
5. **d**
6. **b**

Task 3 – Feedback

Equipment: 2, 3, 5 and 7
Materials: 1, 4, 6 and 8

Task 4 – Feedback

]

material	technique	activity
1. An excerpt from a TV discussion or debate programme.	**b.** Viewing with no sound.	**iv.** The teacher asks students to focus on body language and gesture and what this tells them about the people they see.
2. A short excerpt from a crime story that includes dramatic music.	**d.** Listening first with the images covered, then again with the images revealed.	**iii.** Students describe the screen they imagine to each other then compare their ideas with the excerpt.
3. The same day's TV news broadcast on different channels.	**a.** Divide the class into 2 groups for split viewing and listening.	**ii.** Students listen and view trying to infer any bias in what they see, then report this to another student.
4. An excerpt from a film.	**c.** Extensive viewing and listening.	**i.** Students get practise at listening for gist and following the main narrative of a story.

Do you think you need to include more fun activities in your lessons? Or do you think you use too many? This lesson outlines the aims of using games in English language learning and examines the strengths and weaknesses of these kinds of activities.

Task 1 – Andrew's unhappy student

Andrew is a popular teacher in his school. He has a great repertoire of games and his lessons are always a lot of fun. He was quite surprised when a couple of his students asked to move out of his class. They said they didn't feel like they were making progress.

Why do you think this is the case?
Jot down your answers on a note pad, then check the answer key below.

Task 1 Feedback

It seems that Andrew uses games a lot. They can often have a beneficial effect on lessons in terms of upping the enjoyment factor. However, if games are used too often, they can make the lesson appear like a collection of practice activities without clear aims.

Key Skill

Language games offer students interesting and motivating ways of practising grammar and vocabulary. It is important for teachers to use these games judiciously and have a clear idea of their aims for using these kinds of activities.

Task 2 – When and why to use language games

Numbers 1 to 5 in the box below are planning decisions. Letters a to e are activity types and numbers i to v are aims. Match the planning decisions with the correct game and aim using the grid below.

Planning decisions *The game is placed at…*	Activity types *The game is used as…*	Aim *The game aims to…*
1. … the beginning of a new course.		
2. … the beginning of a lesson.		
3. … the beginning of a lesson.		
4. … a midway point in the lesson.		
5. … the end of a lesson.		

Activity types

a. a language practice activity.

b. revision of previously taught language.

c. a winding down, "cooler" activity.

d. "getting to know you" activity.

e. as a warm up activity.

Aims

i. provide motivation for the next lesson.

ii. foster a good class dynamic.

iii. add variety to the lesson.

iv. consolidate prior learning.

v. motivate students for the lesson.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

Key Skill

Sometimes aims for using language games are linguistic, but at other times they are more motivational. It is a good idea to stagger the use of these games over a period of time. It would probably not be a good idea to do the following in one lesson: begin with a game to warm students up, then do another game as a revision activity, then do a third game as a language practice activity, then finish with a fourth cooling down game. In order for games to appear special to learners, they need to be used occasionally rather than all the time.

Task 3 – Student perceptions and what you can do

Numbers 1 to 6 below describe negative perceptions that students can have of language games. Letters a to f are actions teachers can take to help change the perceptions. Match the actions to the negative perceptions.

Negative student perceptions	Actions
1. Students can feel foolish or ridiculous as a result of playing the game.	
2. Students can feel that the game is too competitive and creates a bad atmosphere in the classroom.	
3. Students can feel lost because the rules of the game seem more complicated than the language it aims to practise.	
4. Students might feel that the teacher's reliance on games means he or she is unprepared or lazy.	
5. Students might get bored midway through a game because it goes on for too long.	
6. Students feel that they don't learn anything from playing language games.	

Teacher actions

a. Make sure you set up the game clearly by giving clear instructions and perhaps doing an example with a strong student.

b. If you give feedback on the language that students used while playing the game, they are more likely to see games as being of value.

c. If this is the case, it is probably better to abandon the game all together.

d. Make sure that you monitor learners carefully during the game and manage the activity efficiently so that it keeps moving forward.

e. In this case, it pays to clearly outline the linguistic aims of the game so that students can see it is of value.

f. Look for games that are played in groups and involve students co-operating with each other.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

Key Skill

The kinds of games you can play and the frequency with which you can play them will differ from one group of students to another. Some groups respond to them well, while others are less motivated by them. It is always a good idea to briefly outline what linguistic benefit students get from the game, for example, skills practice or practice of some target language.

Task 4 – Planning a game

A popular ELT game is "backs to the board". The teacher divides the class into two or more teams. One team member sits with his or her back to the white board. The teacher writes up a word. The rest of the team (who can see the word) give definitions. The first student with his or her back to the board who says the correct word wins a point. Each team member takes a turn at sitting with their back to the board. The team with the most points wins.

Question 1-4 below can help teachers to analyse games. Fill in the missing words in the answers to the questions. Use one word from the box for each gap.

meaning	organiser	make	vocabulary	two
time	provider	same	communication	teams
students	monitor	sure	taught	competitive
winning	cannot		different	

Analysing a game
1. *What are the aims?*   To revise _____ that students have been recently _____ ;   to practise _____ strategies of conveying _____.
2. *What makes this game motivating?*   Having _____ _____ provides a _____   element that students enjoy.
3. *What is important about the management of the game?*   It is important that the _____ _____ with their backs   to the board _____ see the word.   The teacher also needs to _____ _____ that the word is   revealed at the _____ _____ to all teams.

4. *What roles does the teacher take during the game?*

She is the _____ of vocabulary. She is the _____ of

both teams and she is the _____ who observes both teams closely

to make sure she spots the _____ team.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

⮑ Thinking about your teaching …

Have you ever used the questions like the ones in task 4 to analyse a game? Try doing this with some games that you already play or with some new language games. Does this help you to manage the game in the classroom more effectively?

Note your observations in your Teaching log.

⮑ Taking it to the classroom …

When you use a game, make a point of getting feedback on it from students. Ask them if they enjoyed it and see if they have any suggestions for improving the game. You can also get feedback from students about how often they would like to play language games.

⮑ Want to find out more … ?

The following book has many ideas for games: *Games for Language Learning* (3rd edition) by Andrew Wright, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby (Cambridge University Press 2006).

On pages 223 & 224 of *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th edition) by Jeremy Harmer (Pearson 2007), there are some examples of grammar games and on pages 349 and 350 there is some discussion of communication games, with examples on pages 353-4, 355 and 356.

| **Answer Key** | 🔑 |

Task 2 – Feedback

Planning *The game is placed at …*	**Activity** *The games is used as …*	**Aim** *The games aims to …*
1. … the beginning of a new course.	**d.** … "getting to know you" activity.	**ii.** … foster a good class dynamic.
2. … the beginning of a lesson.	**e.** … as a warm up activity.	**v.** … motivate students for the lesson.
3. … the beginning of a lesson.	**b.** … revision of previously taught language.	**iv.** … consolidate prior learning.
4. … a midway point in the lesson.	**a.** … a language practice activity.	**iii.** … add variety to the lesson.
5. … the end of a lesson.	**c.** … a winding down, "cooler" activity.	**i.** … provide motivation for the next lesson.

Task 3 – Feedback

1. c   **2. f.**   **3. a**   **4. e**   **5. d**   **6. b.**

Task 4 – Feedback

Analysing a game
1. *What are the aims?* To revise **vocabulary** that students have been recently **taught**; to practise **communication** strategies of conveying **meaning**.
2. *What makes this game motivating?* Having **different** **teams** provides a **competitive** element that students enjoy.
3. *What is important about the management of the game?* It is important that the **two** **students** with their backs to the board **cannot** see the word. The teacher also needs to **make** **sure** that the word is revealed at the **same** **time** to all teams.
4. *What roles does the teacher take during the game?* She is the **provider** of vocabulary. She is the **organiser** of both teams and she is the **monitor** who observes both teams closely to make sure she spots the **winning** team.

Do you sometimes feel that the speaking tasks you do with learners are not as interesting as they could be? This might mean you need to introduce an element of drama into these activities. This lesson lets you know what extra qualities drama can provide for students while outlining some key ingredients and ideas for using drama successfully in the classroom.

Task 1 – Bad memories

Harry and Lee are talking in the staffroom.

Harry: I need some new ideas for speaking.
Lee: What about using some drama activities?
Harry: Drama? You mean like putting on plays?
Lee: No.
Harry: And lying on the floor imagining that you're a rock or something?
Lee: It doesn't have to be like that.
Harry: I had to do all that at high school – I hated it.

Do you agree with Harry? Why (not)?
Jot down your thoughts on a note pad, then check the answer key below.

Task 1 Feedback
A lot of teachers have very negative associations with the word 'drama' and Harry's attitude is quite typical. However, drama can encompass a wide range of activities beginning with role play, which even a teacher like Harry won't find too threatening!

Key Skill
Two core concepts lie at the heart of successful drama activities: character and conflict. It is useful to apply these concepts to many speaking activities. Students need to know who they are when they do a speaking activity – they need a sense of *character*; and they need to have a reason to speak to one or more students and *conflict* will provide this.

Task 2 – What does drama offer?

Numbers 1 to 6 below are all opportunities that drama provides students with. Letters a to f gives a reason why drama does this. Match the reason to the opportunities.

Opportunities	Reasons
1. Motivation and confidence	
2. Appropriate language use	
3. Meaningful pronunciation practice.	
4. Speaking fluency practice.	
5. Receptive skills practice.	
6. Writing practice.	

Reasons

a. Drama activities connect language to emotions and feelings. These are often expressed by means of stress and intonation.

b. A majority of drama activities involve oral interaction of some kind so they ensure that practice in this skill is very much to the fore.

c. Sometimes students will script a scene before they perform it and focus a little more on the accuracy of the communication.

d. Drama is an opportunity for shy students to hide behind the mask of another character. They often enjoy this and feel more comfortable speaking than they do when asked to personalise language.

e. If students are playing different characters, there is a chance the characters will have different social status. Students will need to choose the right language items to reflect their character's status.

f. Reading or listening texts can provide a stimulus for ideas and act as a good jumping off point for drama activities.

Check your ideas in the answer key.

Key Skill

In summary, it is possible to say that drama activities are very focused on meaningful oral communication. They can be process orientated and involve role plays and games that are threaded through a teaching programme. Alternatively, they can be more product orientated which means work on the activities can lead to some kind of performance in front of peers or other students in your institution.

Task 3 – What does it take?

Letters 1 to 8 outline some of the ingredients that go into making an effective drama-based session for students. Letters a to h provide more detail on these ingredients. Match the details to the ingredients, then sort them into two categories: ingredients that are essential or ingredients that will probably be required.

Ingredients	
1. Some kind of visual stimulus	**2.** Student willingness to take part
3. Some silent times during the session	**4.** Group trust
5. An appropriate space	**6.** Some non-verbal interaction
7. A change in the teacher's role	**8.** Physical touching

Detail

a. Drama often involves what is not said and looks, reactions and gestures are important.

b. This may be awkward or uncomfortable for people from some cultures.

c. You might need to move all the chairs and tables in your classroom to the side of the room.

d. This can help generate ideas as can music.

e. He or she should be more of a "facilitator/participant" and less of a "knower".

f. Drama activities are not things that can be forced on students.

g. Individuals can find some of these activities a bit threatening, so it helps to provide a secure environment.

h. Students need time to prepare their ideas as well as their language.

Essential ingredients and detail	Ingredients probably required and detail

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

Key Skill

A common theme amongst the essential requirements for successful drama activities is that care is taken with interpersonal relationships and roles. Students need to be active and involved in the activities, but respectful and supportive of each other. The teacher has a core role in setting the tone and making the learning environment a constructive one. However, it is also worth noting that this should be the case with any lesson.

Task 4 – A selection of activities

Numbers 1 to 8 are brief descriptions of some typical drama activities (this is an extremely limited selection – refer to the "Find out more" section to get more ideas). Letters a to h are broad aims that can be matched to the activity ideas.

Descriptions	Aims
1. One student is blindfolded and another student guides the blindfolded student through a simple obstacle course of upturned chairs and tables. The leading student may or may not take the blindfolded student's hand.	
2. Students read a newspaper article that tells some kind of story (e.g. a bank robbery, a wedding ceremony that goes wrong). Students re-enact the story each assuming the role of one of the characters. The re-enactment should be improvised.	
3. Students choose a photograph of a person and build up a character for that person thinking of a background and something that the character wants. The teacher describes a place and students assume the role of their character to improvise a scene with one or two other students.	
4. Students watch a scene from a TV drama or soap opera that they are not familiar with. The sound is turned off. Students work on writing the dialogue for the scene, then they can act it out before listening to the original version.	
5. Two students stand opposite each other. One is nominated as the "leader" He or she begins moving. The other student follows the leader's movement. Both students should ensure they maintain eye contact.	
6. Students work in small groups. One student mimes a story (her own or one provided by the teacher) and the other students in the group tell the story. The student who mimes only accepts a correct version of her story.	
7. Students are given a script of a scene – either from a play or something the teacher has written. They rehearse the scene for presentation. If time allows, they could try and memorise the lines of the scene.	
8. Students improvise some kind or role play "in tune" with different pieces of music. Their interaction should alter in reaction to the rhythm and melody of each piece of music.	

Aims

a. To provide practice in developing a character and his/her motivation in a scene.

b. To develop spatial and physical awareness in students.

c. To provide opportunities to work on pronunciation, in particular stress and intonation, and link it clearly to meaning.

d. To develop awareness of dramatic light, shade and texture.

e. To build trust between students for other drama activities.

f. To provide practice in multi-character dramatic story telling.

g. To develop awareness of gesture, expression and body language as a means of communication.

h. To provide practice in creating dramatic structure through language.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 🔑

⮑ Thinking about your teaching …

Think over different speaking activities you have done over the past few months. Did some of them involve some element of drama, for example, a role play of some kind? Think about some of the ideas you have explored in this lesson and work out if there is any way you could have increased the sense of drama in these activities.

Note your observations in your *Teaching log*.

⮑ Taking it to the classroom …

Try out one of the activities in task 4 that is new to you.

⮑ Want to find out more … ?

The following book is an excellent source of ideas for drama activities: *Drama Techniques: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers (3rd edition)* by Alan Maley and Alan Duff (Cambridge University Press 2005).

⮑ Related TaskBook lessons...

You may be interested in the following lessons in the ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook series, relating to this topic:

- **Unit 3 e) Speaking 1: Fluency:** *Discusses how different kinds of speaking activities can help get your students talking.*
- **Unit 3 f) Speaking 2: Strategies:** *Discusses useful skills and strategies associated with successful oral communication.*

Answer Key	🔑

Task 2 – Feedback

1. **d**
2. **e**
3. **a**
4. **b**
5. **f**
6. **c**

Task 3 – Feedback

essential ingredients and *detail*	ingredients probably required and *detail*
2. Student willingness to take part *f. Drama activities are not things that can be forced on students.*	**1.** Some kind of visual stimulus *d. This can help generate ideas as can music.*
4. Group trust *g. Individuals can find some of these activities a bit threatening, so it helps to provide a secure environment.*	**3.** Some silent times during the session *h. Students need time to prepare their ideas as well as their language.*
5. An appropriate space *c. You might need to move all the chairs and tables in your classroom to the side of the room.*	**6.** Some non-verbal interaction *a. Drama often involves what is not said and looks, reactions and gestures are important.*
7. A change in the teacher's role *e. He or she should be more of a "facilitator/participant" and less of a "knower".*	**8.** Physical touching *b. This may be awkward or uncomfortable for people from some cultures.*

Task 4 – Feedback

1. **e**
2. **f**
3. **a**
4. **h**
5. **b**
6. **g**

7. c
8. d