

METHODOLOGY COURS

Presso l'istituto Comprensivo di Fumane – Scuola Media

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## Games and Activities for both V Elementare and I Media

(time to have fun in the classroom)

First remember that things which seem to be irrelevant help to keep children's attention.

For example:

### a) Alphabet & Numbers

This game associates the alphabet and numbers' learning:

a. Associate a letter to each number to find the word:

20 – 9 – 18 – 5 – 4  
....T.....I....R....E...D...

## VOCABULARY GAMES

b) During a lesson pupils find always new or even difficult words. Remember to sign these words on the blackboard.

For example: according to family names

**Twin = Gemello**

**Great-grandma = Bisnonna**

**Great-uncle = Prozio**

**Nephew = Nipote**

**Niece = Nipotina**

You have a list of difficult words. Prepare a comprehensible definition for each word. Ask the pupils to guess which word corresponds to the definition you will say.

At the beginning of the next lesson you can rewrite the list of words on the board, without the translation and try to play again to see if they remember the words.

### c) Note in crosses (how many trebles can you get?)

This is a vocabulary game to control if the pupils remember new words.

Write on the blackboard a table like the following:

A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	J	I
K	L	M	N	P
Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z

Divide the class in three groups and assign each group a symbol (for ex. ★, ✚, ▲) to sign the scores they get. Prepare a list of words they already know, one for each letter of the alphabet, and of course an easy definition for each word. You can leave five letters without definition, considering them as a bonus letter. Each team gets 1 score each treble it gets.

## ENGLISH SPEECH

Remember that English is above all a spoken language. It means that children must try to speak English during the lesson; every time they speak Italian, the teacher writes on the board a letter of the their names starting from the first. When all the name is written on the board, the child has to say something in English.

P.S. If they need to speak Italian, they can ask the teacher for permission.

### d) Describing objects (oral activity)

This is a good activity to keep their attention.

You can use flash cards, showing them or giving a description. Pupils must say the name of what is drawn on the card. Another way could be asking one of them (instead of the teacher) to describe what is drawn on the card. The rest of the class should try to guess what it is.

For example:



**A: It is the king of the forest. What is it?**

**B: It is a lion.**

### e) Give children instructions

The aim is again to maintain motivation and attention.

You can use already known vocabulary, or new one.

For example:

#### Words:

board pencil ....(classroom objects)

yellow red ..... (colours)

teacher friend ....(people)

Maria's desk Edo's desk ....

finger foot ear ....(body parts)

#### Or phrase:

A chair with a pen ....

Tom with a finger ....

#### Verbs:

JUMP HIT WALK SPEAK RUN

#### Instructions:

TOUCH + object/part of body

TOUCH + colour

TOUCH + person

TOUCH + person's belongings

TOUCH + sth/someone with a part of the body

TOUCH + sth/someone with an object

PRETEND + you are an animal/person

PRETEND + you are doing sth

This game runs like “Simon says”, but instead of saying “Simon says” you can say only “Please”, that is why we can call this game Please-game.

Example: Touch Mary’s desk with your pen, PLEASE

(Pupils should do what the teacher has asked)

Touch Mary’s desk with your pen.

(Pupils don’t have to do what the teacher has asked; those who do it are out)

When you propose communication games to the class you must first give the following rules:

1. Everybody must stand up
2. You can not argue with the teacher
3. If the child makes mistakes, he is eliminated (so he must sit down)
4. If an eliminated child wants to play again after two turns he must ask “Can I play?”

f)The most common game with words is **CROSS WORD**.

You can use a table like the following:

R	G	A	M	B	I	A	S	S	I	E
A	S	N	N	O	S	D	U	H	A	E
H	A	E	U	S	F	H	T	B	N	Y
U	S	M	G	R	E	H	U	A	M	A
M	E	M	S	N	A	G	D	D	N	N
B	V	S	E	M	E	D	N	A	S	O
E	E	A	E	B	E	E	O	A	G	Z
R	R	S	T	R	T	T	N	D	G	A
I	N	J	N	R	A	N	Y	A	M	M
A	D	O	E	W	I	E	E	N	W	A
D	E	R	T	L	R	B	N	R	E	S
M	B	D	H	T	I	T	B	A	A	S
E	W	A	T	N	A	N	M	L	D	D
R	E	N	D	N	A	W	N	A	E	Y
S	I	R	A	P	O	D	A	E	R	A
E	S	E	I	N	E	I	V	N	T	W
Y	S	A	T	N	A	R	G	I	A	D
M	O	Z	O	N	D	A	N	U	B	E
A	L	Y	A	R	R	U	M	E	S	M

AMAZON  
 DANUBE  
 GANGES  
 SEINE  
 HUDSON  
 HUMBER  
 NILE  
 MEDWAY  
 MERSEY  
 MURRAY  
 PO  
 SERVERN  
 TEES  
 THAMES  
 TYNE

Here the children must find the given words and circle them.  
 Then you can ask the students to locate the rivers on a map.

**g) 5 by 5 QUIZ**

With this game you will ask the pupils to think and then tell terms they already know:

For example: (pupils of Primary School may like words about football, you can help them)

- tell me 5 words about football: ball, match, team, corner, goal

- tell me 5 words beginning with K pronounced: key, kind, kiss ... (and not knee, know)

## A common approach to grammar

*(time to be serious)*

### h) Multiple choice

“What do you think about the Great Brother?” (reading)

After reading a text, you can give a series of multiple choice questions to check the children’s grammar skills. Associate points to each answer, according to their grade of accuracy. At the end the pupil with the highest scores wins.

#### Example:

Does Tom buy a computer?

- a. No.
- b. No, he doesn’t.
- c. No, he wants to buy a CD.

Points: a = 1, b = 2, c = 3. All the answers are grammatically correct, but letter c is a complete answer, because it gives more information.

Who has written this letter?

- a. Steve
- b. His friend Steve
- c. His friend Steve has.

Points: a = 1, b = 2, c = 3. All the answers are grammatically correct, but letter c is a more English answer.

Has he got a new car?

- a. No.
- b. No, he hasn’t.
- c. No, he hasn’t got.

Points: a = 1, b = 3, c = 0. Answer c is not correct.

Does he save money for his holidays?

- a. No
- b. No, he doesn’t
- c. No, he doesn’t save

Points: a = 1, b = 3, c = 0. Answer c is not correct.

### i) Notes and crosses with verbs.

Divide the class in 4-5 teams, with maximum 4-5 students each. Assign a symbol to each team.

In the table below, the verbs are in the columns (three columns each verb) and the pronouns are in the horizontal lines (I, you, he...)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Verb to be: 1. affirmative form; 2. negative form; 3. interrogative form

Verb to have: 4. affirmative form; 5. negative form; 6. interrogative form

The children should try to get trebles, but only horizontal or oblique one. Each team has to throw the dice and, depending on the number they get, they associate it to another number to choose the cell.

Example: throwing the dice: 1  
Associated to 4=I have

j) **The diary game** (to learn dates and days)

Give the children a sheet like this below:

Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	Saturday
Sunday	

“Do you want do go to the cinema?”  
 “On.....”  
 “At .....”

“Yes, great! When?”  
 “O.K. What time?” / “I’m sorry, I’m busy”  
 “See you on ..... at.....”

Rules:

1. The children have to go around the class, asking someone else to have a meeting.
2. They have to ask for seven activities: for ex. Go for a pizza, go shopping, play football, watch a DVD, listen music, go to the cinema, have a picnic....
3. They have to use a dialogue as given in the sheet
4. They can only have one appointment per day
5. They can only have two appointments per friend
6. The teacher can play too, but obviously he should also go around to listen to what the children are saying
7. They have to write in the boxes of the sheet in note form the appointment (hour, name of the friend, what they are going to do)

The aim is to complete the week in the given time.

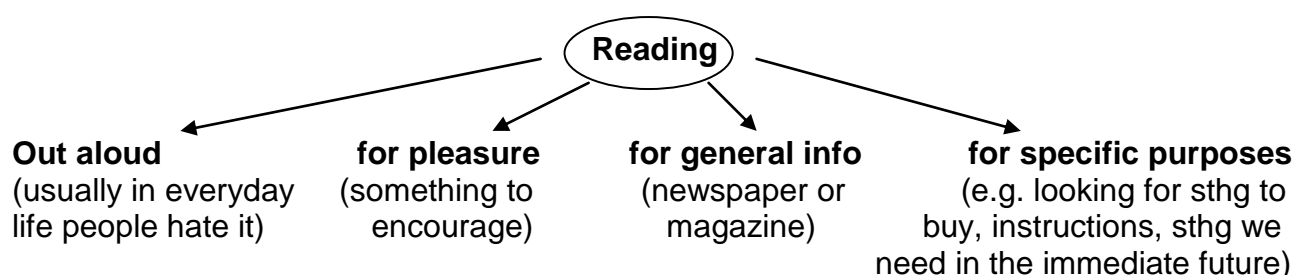
k) **QUESTIONS** (interrogative form)

Ask some questions to the class, ask the children to remember them and write the questions on the board. Then rewrite each question in a mixed up order, and ask the children to rewrite them correctly. They will think about English if you leave some missed words.

Another way to run it, is giving the class a list of answers containing a mistake (above all about to be and to have) and ask the children to correct the sentences.

## Reading and writing Exercises

According to reading, the first thing that comes to mind is reading out aloud.  
Reading has different aims:



Reading aloud is very important for pronunciation and intonation. If I do it occasionally it becomes something special for children. A game to play with them could be asking them to repeat a sentence five times until he/she says it correctly.

English for specific purpose is very useful, because it concerns something they need.

### l) **A story.**

Give the children a little story as following:

A close encounter

Its twelve o'clock at night. Peter and Alex are camping in a field near their house. The boys think it's scary, because there aren't any lights and it's very quiet. The weather is warm. They see a light in the sky! Is it a plane? No. Is it a spaceship? A UFO? What is it? Is it real? They wait and watch. The light comes down and stops in the field. It's very close. A door opens. There's an alien! It walks to Peter and Alex. Does it want to speak to them? The alien is in front of them...

- Underline the key words and write them on the board:  
Night – in the field – scary – no lights – a light in the sky – A UFO? – a door opens – alien – alien in front of them.
- Try to start the story again using the words on the board.
- Finish the story (children imagination)

At this level it is important not to correct them, otherwise they will probably stop to speak. You may correct the mistakes, only if the comprehension isn't possible.

### m) **Writing**

Give the children five words with a definition, and ask them to memorize them. Erase slowly the definitions. Ask them to write in their workbook a definition, the one they want. Then ask the children to write it on the board, giving the word. It isn't important whether the definition is complete, but it should be comprehensible and grammatically acceptable.

### n) **Correcting mistakes**

A good writing exercise is to ask children to correct wrong sentences.

It could be useful to let children correct their written sentences after a while, to make them reflect on words and grammar.

### o) **Descriptions**

Give the children a picture of a person taken from a magazine.

Ask them to give this image an identity: name, age, job, family, come from, spare time.

Ask them to write a description of the person depending on the level.

To help them you can make a description together as a model, but don't leave the description on the board, because they tend to copy it. Or for very low level you can write it on the board, but underline the words they must change.

Give them a list of hints, to help them making the composition:

- Name
- Age
- Home
- Likes
- Physical appearance
- Job
- Where he/she comes from
- Clothes
- Spare time activities
- Family
- Married or single
- Personality
- Pets

## **Oral Activities**

*(remember English is a spoken language)*

N.B. Language was born before the grammar book! Grammar is simply an attend of a spoken language.

### **p) Free conversation**

Interview the class on information about their family and living. But remember:

- It is good to be informed about everything around their world (cartoons, fashion activities, games...)
- Pay attentions on he answers they give, you must show interest on them.
- Don't always make the same question and develop the conversation, in order not to be boring.
- To keep their attention make it as a game: one student is asked some questions by the teacher, the rest of the class have to remember more information as possible. The more information they remember the more points they get.
- Ask someone else about the mate information, and make mistakes deliberately: children like to correct you.
- Be positive to any response, if they are silent try to force them to speak. Only if they cannot understand, ask a mate to help him/her.

### **q) Pretend to be in an English school.**

For 10 minutes they can only speak in English. You can use a few assistants to write on the board the names of the students who speak Italian without asking for permission.

### **r) Words and questions**

Take eight categories: e.g. Animals, Colours, Part of the body, Family, School, Food, Fruit, Sports.

Ask anyone to write a list of 5 (or more) words for one category.

Then ask if the following questions are possible with each category:

Are you...?

Have you got...?

Do you like....?

What colour....?

How many....?

What's your favourite....?

At last the children will form a lots of easy question with few words they already know.

### **s) Spy game**

Create cards with identity information: name, age, brothers/sisters, country, job.

Some cards will have a spelling mistake on the last information. All the children will get a card, which mustn't be showed to the others. Only few of them will be the detectives (5 for a 25people-class). The detectives must interview all the children to find the one with the spelling mistake (the spy). They have to interview about the information of the cards, and to ask the spelling of the last information ( the job). The detective must agree about the identity of the spy, if they find him/her, they will win, otherwise the spy will.

**t) Holidays**

Give the children a picture of places about holidays. They have to choose a place to go for each day of the week. Ask them their week-planning and then ask the others if they remember where and when their friends are going. You can assign points for each right answer.

Then read a tapescript about a week-planning of a family and ask them to sign where the family is going from Monday to Sunday and at last to guess where they are going today. At the end if they have chosen the same activity in the same day, they get a point.

**u) Play a play**

Give the children a small text with a dialogue (find a text with real expressions such as: Wow, great!, let's go!, uhm...all right!...). It could be funnier with some missing words to find. Then read the text aloud, assign a character of the situation to each child and ask them to memorize a part for a role-play.

## Exam preparation (useful or not!?)

*Projects- what, when and why?*

There are three examination boards which are recognised in Italy: Cambridge University, Trinity School and City & Guilds.

There are many reasons for taking English exams; first of all they help teachers to focus on specific structures and language and they encourage children to learn.

In the fourth and fifth grade of the Primary school children are very pleased after the exam because they usually find it easy so they feel a sense of achievement.

In the third grade of the secondary school the students begin to understand the importance of an exam, also as a preparation for future exams which can become "credito scolastico": getting a certificate is important in life when a person is looking for a job.

**City & Guilds:** they have two levels, basic and advanced, with two separate tests written and oral and one can take one or the other, or both. The written test lasts one hour and forty minutes the oral from five to ten minutes. Their basic level is more suited for students of scuola media because the test is quite difficult as it doesn't have pictures to suggest the missing words and there is quite a lot to write.

**Trinity exams** are for adults, they are only oral and they last five/seven minutes. There are twelve grades. The examiners are not trained to examine children, they are not there to help, they simply register if one is able to answer or not, so they are usually not suited for the primary school pupils.

**Cambridge University:** they have exams for children from the age of nine/ten to the age of thirteen. These exams have a written part which lasts forty minutes and an oral part which lasts five/six minutes.

There are three levels:

**Starters** for nine/ten years old pupils; it is quite a simple test as children are not required to understand everything, they should only react.

**Movers** for eleven years old students.

**Flyers** for thirteen years old students, the level of this test is A2.

With these exams students always receive a certificate, the "mark" is shown by shields (from one to five).

Students in the third year of scuola media can also take Ket (A2), the difference is that it is an exam for adults and you get a certificate only if you pass it.

The following exams are for adults and they are PET (B1), First Certificate (B2), Advanced Exam (C1) and Proficiency (C2).

## Class project

Class projects are important to keep the level of English as high as possible and to motivate students.

Prof. R. Seager explains us a project he realized in the fifth grade of primary school. His students did not show much interest in learning English in the first months of school so he decided to make a newspaper in English to motivate them.

The explanation of the project and how to realize it was done in Italian. Then the children were divided into groups. Each group chose a subject and wrote an article first in Italian and then, with the help of the teacher, the pupils translated it into Italian.

The teacher, mostly on his own, had then to correct and simplify the articles and make the pages. After a few proof readings of the rough copy the final edition was printed and distributed. The teacher had to do a lot of work but after the realisation of the newspaper the students showed much more interest in the lessons and they were eager to learn. Moreover the articles can be very useful to the teacher as they are ready-made texts to work with the students.