

London Tests of English for Children – Tasks Five & Six

Task Six and, except at FirstWords level, Task Five test candidates' ability to convey meaning in writing.

This can involve putting words in gaps in a text or writing or completing short sentences. At Breakthrough level, children write a story based on a sequence of pictures. The following activities focus on the skills that are tested in this part of the test.

Work out the sentence

Make up a sentence involving language your students need to learn. For example *My mother listens to the radio every morning* to revise *listen to* and the present simple, or *Today is hotter than yesterday* for comparatives. Do not tell your students the sentence, but write it on the board, using spaces to represent letters, like this:

The children guess words or letters they think are in the sentences. Every time they make a correct guess, fill in the space or spaces. For example, if the initial guesses for the first example sentence above are *E*, *N* and *the*, your board would look like this:

__ _ _ _ _ e _ _ _ _ _ e n _ _ _ _ t h e _ _ _ _ _ e _ e _ _ _ _ n _ n

Continue until the children have guessed the whole sentence.

If you want to include a competitive element, put the children into two or three teams. They take turns to make their guesses. For every letter they guess correctly they receive one point, but if they make an incorrect guess they lose the point instead. For a word, award one point for each of the letters that were not guessed already.

Creating a story

With your class, choose a story (a fairy tale, for example) or a sequence of events (such as a recent school trip) which they all know well. Together, make a list of the characters, objects and places involved in the story and write them on the board, in whatever order they appear in the story.

Elicit relevant verbs and write them up alongside. After this, start writing up the story with help from the children. For students at Quickmarch and Breakthrough levels the verbs can be put into appropriate past tenses. When they are ready, get them to continue writing the story themselves in pairs or in small groups, giving help to whoever needs it.

Imaginative story-telling

Take about half a dozen objects (or pictures of objects) into class and put them where everyone can see them.

Get the students to say what the objects are, and to suggest verbs that describe what the objects might do, or what people might do with the objects, e.g. 'an apple', 'eat', 'bite'. Tell the children that you are going to narrate a story which involves all but one of the objects. The children need to listen carefully and then at the end say which object you did not mention.

When you have told your story, and checked that everyone noticed which object you did not mention, put the children into pairs. Each pair must construct a story of their own, mentioning all but one of the objects. You can provide the story's beginning, e.g. *On Sunday afternoon I went shopping with my father, and on the way ...* When the children are ready, get them to listen to each other telling their stories, and to spot which objects are left out.

Children's gap-fill

Ask your students each to choose a sentence they like from something which they have read, perhaps for homework, and give it to you written on a piece of paper. Write all the sentences you collect, omitting one word from each, in batches of five or six. Write the missing words in a box at the bottom, like this:

- 1) Tyrannosaurus Rex _____ a very fierce dinosaur.
- 2) It is time for _____ show.
- 3) He'll tell _____ perhaps if you're willing to pay.
- 4) The tractor ran _____ the pond.
- 5) But I _____ know how to be a prince' said Mickey.

you don't was the into

You now have a gap-fill exercise which you can photocopy and use in class. Get the children to work in pairs or small groups to

- talk about what kinds of stories or texts they think the sentences might have come from
- choose the words to fit the gaps.