

ETpedia™

1,000 ideas for English
language teachers

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X O

John Hughes

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**ENGLISH
TEACHING**
professional

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10 reasons for using this resource

1. Everything in one place

English language teachers can find supplementary resources, teaching ideas, activities and tips in a multitude of places. The shelves of the staff room may be full of published resource books and there may be folders of materials created by colleagues. Internet search engines give access to thousands of websites offering instant lesson plans and ideas. The sheer amount of available material can be overwhelming, and finding a tip, an idea, an activity or a text that will help you with your next lesson can be very time-consuming. The aim of this resource is to bring a collection of resources together in one place for faster reference.

2. Clearly organised

This resource contains 100 units covering everything from ways to start a lesson, activities for teaching a particular topic, suggestions on lesson planning and tips on teaching different language points. Each unit always has 10 points. Why 10? Well, having 10 activities for practising the language of food will help most of us prepare a lesson on the topic. Knowing 10 ways to motivate your students should improve your chances of keeping your students' interest and attention. Or walking into your first ever business English lesson having read a list of 10 tips could make all the difference to your preparation.

3. New teachers

If you are starting out in English language teaching, then this resource will provide you with a range of practical activities to support you on your way. In particular, the section on preparation and planning will give you the tools to get you started as you prepare for your first class.

4. Experienced teachers

If you have been teaching for a while, then this resource may both remind you of techniques and activities that you haven't used for a while and also give you fresh ideas for increasing your repertoire.

5. Supplementing your coursebook

If you are using a coursebook or a set of materials prescribed by your institution, then this resource will provide support for these materials by offering ways to lead into, expand or adapt them to suit your learners' needs and interests.

6. Studying for an ELT qualification

Perhaps you are planning to take the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), or studying for another teaching qualification, such as a CELTA or a Cert TESOL course. This resource covers many of the topics and areas you will look at in the input sessions of your course as well as giving you ideas for your teaching practice. Candidates taking a higher level qualification such as a DELTA or a Diploma in TESOL will find the lists of 10 especially useful as aides-mémoire when preparing for written examinations as well as sources of activities for their lessons.

7. Teacher trainers

If you are a teacher trainer, senior teacher or director of studies who delivers staff training on a range of topics, then use the checklists of ideas that this resource offers as a means to preparing your session.

8. Materials writers

The resource includes lists of exercise types for skills such as reading and listening, and grammar and vocabulary, so anyone developing their own materials for the classroom and keen to ensure a variety of exercise types will find it a useful reference.

9. Additional materials and quotes

As well as the resources offered in this resource, you will also find additional photocopiable worksheets in the Appendix. These worksheets relate to units in the resource and offer instant classroom activities. Where worksheets are offered, it is indicated in the text with this symbol ►►.

Throughout the resource you will also find quotes from the real ELT teachers at different stages of their careers. They provide expert tips in addition to those already listed for that unit.

10. More time

My work brings me into contact with teachers of English all over the world. Each teaching context offers different challenges, but there seems to be one challenge in particular that is common to all teachers: lack of time. Most teachers report that they need more time to plan, more time to search for resources, more time to reflect and develop and more time to focus on classroom teaching and their students. I hope that by offering a collection of accessible, easy-to-use tips, suggestions, activities and ideas all in one place, this resource will give you more time to spend on the aspects of your teaching life that you feel would benefit from it.

"It's the book I wish I'd had when I first started teaching."

John Hughes, author of ETpedia

10 ways to use this resource

This resource has been written for people who teach English as a second or foreign language. It can be read and used in different ways according to your level of experience, need or interest.

1. Cover to cover

You could start at the beginning and read to the end. If you are finding out about teaching English for the first time, then the resource will work as an introductory text to the subject.

2. Read a section

The contents page will direct you to different sections. In each section you will find units containing 10 ideas, tips, activities, questions or thoughts on a particular aspect of teaching. Some of the sections might not be immediately relevant to your context so you can leave these for later (when you might need them) and some sections will help you with immediate interests, concerns or questions.

3. Teacher's block

Just as writers sometimes have days when they can't write (a condition commonly referred to as 'writer's block'), there are days when teachers search desperately for ideas to help them come up with a lesson but can't think of anything. We can call this 'teacher's block', and I hope this resource will offer you some help with it. Open the resource at any page and see if the 10 ideas on that page spread give you a new idea.

4. Plan a lesson

Perhaps you are preparing a detailed lesson plan for a training course or you feel that you want to hone your planning skills. In which case, start by taking a look at Unit 5: 10 points to consider in your lesson planning.

5. Write in the book

Maybe you've tried one of the activities in the resource or found an idea you liked. Make notes in the margin about why it worked or how you adapted it, so you can refer to it again later.

6. Help colleagues

If you work with other teachers, then you've probably experienced a situation where a colleague is desperately searching for something to help improve their lesson. Perhaps you can help them out by suggesting they manage a class of energetic teenagers using some of the ideas in Unit 84. Or if they'd like to use a song in a lesson, show them the activities in Unit 42.

7. Last-minute lessons

Most teachers have experienced the day when a colleague is off sick and they been asked to teach their colleague's class at very short notice. You probably won't have much time to prepare, but you'll find enough ideas in the section 'Activities for topics' (see page 49) to help you teach a complete and useful lesson.

8. More practice

Many students require extra practice on specific areas of English. For example, they might ask you for more conversation in your lesson or perhaps you have noticed that a class needs more time to work on accuracy in their writing.

9. Develop yourself

If you're at the stage of your teaching career where you feel you are ready for more of a challenge, you'll find some ideas in the section on Further development (see page 223).

10. Write your own 10

Teaching is always evolving, developing, and changing. More ideas can be added so why not create your own 10 tips or pointers and share them with your colleagues. There is space to add your own 10 tips at the back of the resource (see page 271).

"My number one tip for any teacher is to use your imagination and make it fun."

Clie, Colombia

John Hughes...


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- ▶ is a well-known presenter at international teachers' conferences and associations.
- ▶ runs workshops and delivers teacher training on behalf of schools, universities and publishers.
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- ▶ has authored and co-authored coursebooks for teenagers, adults, business people and university students.
- ▶ is a part-time teacher trainer on courses at Oxford University.
- ▶ also delivers training online via webinars and in virtual learning environments.
- ▶ has written features and articles for many journals and magazines, including *English Teaching Professional* and *Modern English Teacher*.
- ▶ still teaches overseas students in Oxford.
- ▶ is a regular ELT blogger with posts on many blogs including his own at www.elteachertrainer.com.

Thanks and acknowledgements

The 1,000 tips, ideas, ways, questions and resources in this publication are based on the things I have learnt in my many years as a teacher, teacher trainer and author of classroom materials. The whole collection is a combination of new and original ideas, together with classic ideas and activities that get passed down from one generation of English language teachers to another. My thanks, therefore, go to all the students, teachers, trainers and colleagues who have, either directly or indirectly, helped in the creation of *ETpedia*. In particular, thanks to Kerry Boettcher, Helena Gomm, Catherine Ansell-Jones and everyone at Pavilion Publishing and Media.

10 ways to use a board game

A board game adds a little bit of competitive spirit to a class and can be designed to help students practise virtually any part of the English language you choose. The board game shown below is for intermediate students to practise the language for attending a party. The students work in pairs or small groups. They all need a counter (a coin, for example) and place it on the **START** square. They roll a die and move round the board accordingly. As they land on each square, they must follow the instructions and talk to one of the other players.

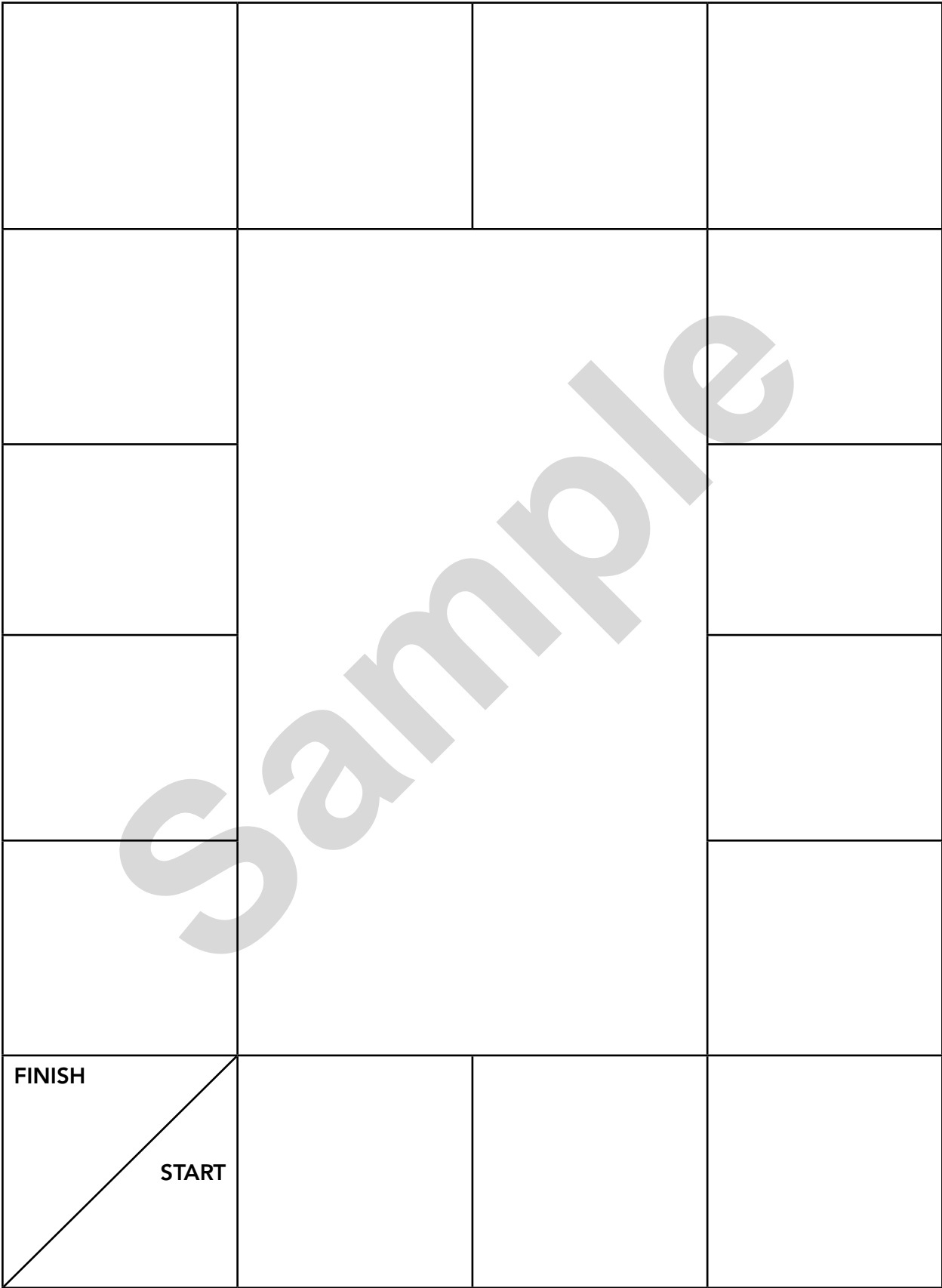
You fall asleep on the sofa. Miss a go.	Tell someone about something in the news.	Ask someone about their hobbies and free time.	You forgot to bring the host a present. Miss a go.
Ask the person on your right if you can have another drink.	You are invited to my BIRTHDAY party at 3pm on Saturday 25th April 		Offer someone a piece of cake.
Ask someone a question.			Ask the person on your left a question.
Ask a player directions to the nearest bus stop.			Ask someone what kind of music they like.
Say what a good party it was and say goodbye to everyone.			Introduce the person on your left to the person on your right.
FINISH	Offer the person on your left a drink.	Ask the person on your right a question.	You spill your drink. Miss a go.
START			

▶▶ Unit 57: Blank board game and party board game

The board game above is a way of encouraging students to use phrases that the teacher has taught. However, you can adapt a board game for any language area. By using the blank photocopyable version in the Appendix, you can create your own version of the game.

Here are 10 ideas for using the blank board game.

Blank board game



Unit 57

You may photocopy this page.

1. Mini role plays

On the example board, the squares have short one-sentence tasks that make the students communicate in an imaginary situation, such as offering a drink. This idea can be adapted to include many different types of role play situations such as 'Make a phone call and leave a message' or 'Complain about a product you bought'.

2. Word revision

Write 16 items of recently-taught vocabulary on the board. When a student lands on a word, they have to make a new sentence with it or give a definition.

3. Question forms

Write a word or fact in each square. When a student lands on it, they must make a question that will get the answer on the square. For example, if the word on the square was 'LONDON', the students might ask: 'What is the capital of England?'

4. Describing pictures

Put a picture in each square and get the students to describe it when they land on it.

5. Grammar review

Write the name of recently-taught grammar items on the squares; the students have to produce a sentence with them. So if the square says 'The present perfect tense', they have to say a sentence like 'I've lived in Beijing'.

6. Word stress

Write word stress bubbles on each square; the students have to say a word with the same stress pattern. (See also Unit 78)

7. Hot topics

Write a different topic on each square. The students have to talk on a topic for one minute when they land on it. If they fail to speak about it for a minute, they miss their next go. If you have worked on some of the topics from pages 50–69, then use this as an opportunity to revise those topics by writing them on the board game.

8. Phonemes

Write a phoneme on each square. The students have to say a word which has this phoneme in it. (See also Unit 79)

9. Starting phrases

Write different functional phrases on the square, such as *How are you today? Can I ask you for some help with something? Are you free to go out next week?* When a player lands on a square, they start a conversation with a player of their choice, beginning with that phrase.

10. Student-designed board games

Once your students become familiar with the game format, you can put them in groups and ask them to devise a board game which will practise any recently-taught language points. They create the board game and swap it with another group and then try playing the other group's game.

10 classroom observation tasks

Sometimes schools organise peer observation between teachers as part of their approach to staff development. But you don't have to wait to be asked. You could just informally arrange with a colleague to go in and observe a lesson. You could observe the whole lesson and note down any global observations but, in general, it's better to observe with a specific purpose in mind. For example, you could observe different types of classroom layout or interaction, how a teacher uses the board, or how much time a teacher spends on different parts of a lesson. Here are 10 observation tasks you could try out.

1. Sentence prompts

Write these five sentence beginnings on a piece of paper. Observe the lesson and try to complete them in your own words in order to summarise your response to it:

- ▶ *One thing I really liked about this lesson was ...*
- ▶ *One thing that surprised me was ...*
- ▶ *One thing that interested me was ...*
- ▶ *One technique or activity I observed and intend to use in my teaching is ...*
- ▶ *One question I'd like to ask the teacher afterwards is ...*

Afterwards, ask the teacher your question in the final point and use it as opportunity to discuss the lesson if you have time.

2. Errors

Observe students' errors in the class and note how different teachers deal with them in a table with three columns, like this:

What was happening in the lesson?	What was the error?	How was it corrected? (If it wasn't corrected, why do you think the teacher chose not to?)

In column one, you make a note of the time and stage in the lesson. In column two, write if the error was spoken or written and what it was. In column three, describe if and how the teacher corrected it.

3. Classroom layout

At each stage of a lesson, draw a diagram of how the classroom is laid out and the interaction between the students. For example, this shows the students doing pairwork in different parts of the class.

```
S S  S S
  S S
  T  S S
S S  S S
```

See more examples in Unit 6. It's a useful task to get ideas on how to plan classroom layout at different stages and to monitor how much interaction patterns can change during a lesson.

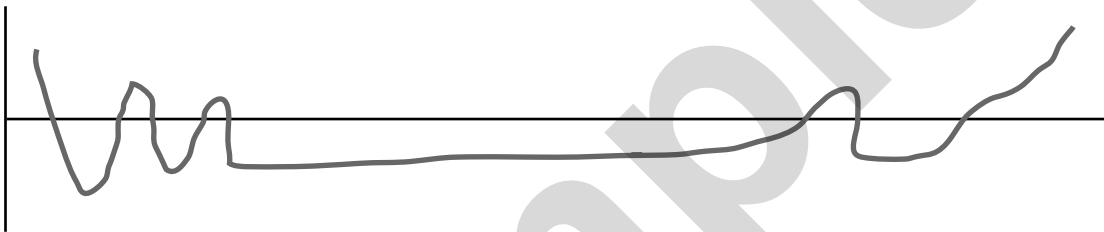
4. Writing the teacher's words

Writing down what a teacher says word for word is a useful observation task if you are interested in the language of teaching. It's especially useful if you want to analyse how a teacher gives instructions. You can also do this on your own by recording your voice during a lesson and listening to your words. You can reflect on any unnecessary or confusing instructional language which you could avoid next time.

5. Talking time

Use this chart to monitor when the teacher is talking and when the students are talking. The middle line with the arrow represents the length of the lesson. The blue line goes above this middle line when the teacher is talking and below it when the students are talking. The blue line below is an example of a lesson where the teacher speaks at the beginning and end of the lesson but allows lots of student discussion during the class.

Teacher talking



Student(s) talking

This is a useful tool to examine how much speaking time the students have during the class. Depending on the lesson, you would normally hope that more time is given to the students talking in English than the teacher.

6. Pace

The pace and timing of a lesson is important for the motivation of the students. Spending too long on anything can create boredom, going too quickly can leave the students confused and hurried. Use the same chart as in 5 above for talking time. Write 'Fast' above the line and 'Slow' below the line. Chart the pace of the lesson by drawing the blue line up and down. You can also make notes along the line on what was happening at each stage and whether the pace seemed appropriate.

7. A single student

Because we often teach large classes of students, we sometimes forget that each class is made up of individuals. Observing a lesson allows us to focus on the behaviour of one student and reflect on their needs. Observe and describe on paper how the student behaves during each stage of the lesson. For example, is the student listening when the teacher is talking, is he/she enjoying a task or concentrating during an exercise?

8. Fluency and accuracy

Draw a scale on a page like this:

Fluency ←————→ Accuracy

During the lesson, tick on the scale when the main focus of the lesson was developing the students' fluency and when it was on accuracy (or somewhere in between). At the end, the position of all the ticks gives you a clear snapshot of how much of the lesson seemed focused on one or the other.

9. The board

Every five or 10 minutes of the lesson, draw a quick sketch of what is on the board. (If the board is blank, draw a blank square. This builds up a comprehensive story board of how a teacher (or the students) can use the board in a lesson.

10. Roles of a teacher

As you observe a lesson, write the stage or time in the lesson and note the role of the teacher at this stage. For example, would you describe the teacher as a manager, a facilitator or a resource? See Unit 15 for a list of 10 roles of a teacher.

Sample

"Observing teachers is a great way to get ideas and share ideas."

Vasso Mavrothalassiti, Greece