

Topic: Homes and Furniture

By Sue Clarke



On the LearnEnglish Kids website you will find a whole range of activities for teaching the topic 'Homes and Furniture'. These range from simple vocabulary games useful to introduce the topic through to activities for developing reading and writing skills at different levels with many suggestions for writing tasks to exploit the topic. You can find the materials here:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-homes.htm>

Introducing and presenting vocabulary

The topic materials on the website begin with several useful games which concentrate on the lexical sets needed for this topic. You could begin with one of the very simple games such as the pelmanism matching game which practises basic furniture items. Go to

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-pelmanism-furniture.htm>. Another

useful starting point is the Paint It game where children colour different items in a bedroom scene. This activity is suitable for Very Young Learners. You could ask children to draw and label a picture of their own bedroom and colour it. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-paint-bedroom.htm>. Then move on to the labelling game which practises items in a bedroom. Some lexis in this game may need to be taught e.g.

blanket, alarm clock, pillow. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-labelling-bedroom.htm>

You can also find a useful categorising game where children match items of furniture to different rooms. This kind of exercise is very useful for ordering and organising vocabulary and provides excellent reinforcement. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-multimatch-furniture.htm>.



If you wish to concentrate on the spelling of individual lexical items (furniture) you could try the Balloon burst game, a very enjoyable activity for younger learners. Go to

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-balloon-furniture.htm>. To practise

the names of rooms try the squash the monkey hangman game at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-hangman-rooms.htm>. Children read the clues and guess the letters.

There is also a downloadable worksheet on Furniture containing a picture matching exercise, a visual of a bedroom with sentence completion and a wordsearch. Again this is useful when you are beginning the topic. You can find it at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-furniture.pdf>



Developing Literacy skills

This topic has two stories which are useful for developing reading skills at different levels. For lower levels you could use the Haunted House story, a flash-animated story poem. Go to

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-haunted-house.htm>

Warm up for the topic of haunted houses by drawing a spooky house on the board. Divide it up into rooms and ask the children to imagine what 'spooks' or animals there are in the house. Ask children to come out to the board and draw them in the different rooms. Play the story at least twice and ask the children to remember what animal is in which room. You could draw them into your board drawing to do class feedback and check comprehension of the story.

Children will enjoy inventing their own haunted house full of spooks and animals. You could ask them to design posters with labels on or a simple picture with a written description. Preparation for this could be done in pairs and provide lots of fun. Have a class competition to make the spookiest house.



<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish.htm>

As a follow on from the story you could use the Haunted House interactive game which uses visuals from the flash story. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-haunted-house.htm> At level 1 of the game children listen to and read 'I spy ..' clues. You could play I spy in the classroom either as a warmer or as a follow up to this level. Level 2 provides good listening and reading practice as children find the animals and ingredients for the magic spell. You could extend this part of the game by asking children to write a list of the ingredients needed for the spell, then move on to the 'Magic spell' worksheet which gives another example of a spell, before asking students to make up their own.



The second story on the website is also about magic. The 'Magic Room' is a longer story but written in fairly simple language and provides a good opportunity for learners to tackle a longer-length story. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-magic-room-1.htm>. Warm up for reading the story by asking children to imagine a 'Harry Potter' style room.

What does the furniture do? How do things move around? What colour are they?

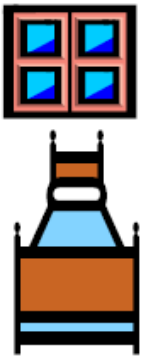
The visual on page 3 of the story would also be a good starting point. Ask children to describe what they see in the pictures and the position of the furniture.

After the children have read the story check comprehension with a few questions and ask the children to retell the main events from the story. You could act out the main events. Have Poppy stand on a chair instead of the ceiling! As follow-up work ask pairs of students or individuals to design their own magic room. For very young learners a cut and stick activity would work well.

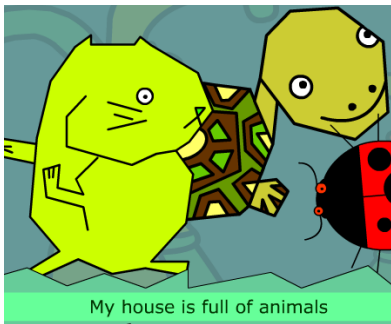
Other materials which focus on reading skills can also be found on the website. The worksheet 'My Ideal Room' is useful for very young learners who have already learnt furniture vocabulary. Children read the descriptions and draw items in the right place – they will usually need a bit of help with perspective! Make sure you pre-teach 'on the left/right' and practise prepositions before you start. This activity provides a good model for a creative piece of work on 'My Bedroom' or 'My Ideal Room'. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-ideal-room.pdf>

At a higher level you could use the worksheet 'Houses of the world', a reading and matching activity which introduces a wider range of vocabulary such as stilt house, ranch, cabin, igloo, houseboat. You can find it at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-houses.pdf>

This could provide a stimulus for cross-curricular work in geography, or a class project on houses round the world. Use the internet to find more information and pictures of different types of houses.



Practising Listening Skills



Use the Animal House song for listening practice and reinforcement of the topic. There are very nice flash visuals to accompany the song. Although it is quite a long song the meaning is made very clear through the visuals. Ask the children to join in with the refrain 'I'm living in a zoo' as it is probably too difficult to sing the whole song. As a good 'while-listening' task make a list of the rooms on the board before you start and ask the children to listen for which animal is in which room. You could use the worksheet as follow-up, especially the second exercise completing the rooms and adding animals. You could extend this into a poster for display

work, or ask students to design their own animal house.

Extension Ideas

This topic lends itself to project work. There are many opportunities for display work – for example ask the class to make a large house with the rooms and furniture. Divide your class into groups to work on the designs for the different rooms.

With very young learners you may wish to develop this idea into Arts and Crafts. You could make a 'Doll's House' type structure from cardboard boxes. Make furniture from matchboxes or use toy furniture. Variations on these are 'My Ideal House' or 'Design a Palace'.

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