

Topic: school

By Sue Clarke

On the LearnEnglish Kids website you will find lots of materials for teaching and revising the topic of school. This topic covers the essential vocabulary of school equipment, rooms and places in school, school subjects and classroom instructions. There are many games to practise vocabulary, activities for skills work and some more grammar-focussed materials. As this is an essential topic in most school curricula many of the activities are suitable for very young learners, but some such as the story are more stretching. You can find the materials for the topic at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-school.htm>

Introducing and recycling vocabulary

School is a topic which needs constant recycling and extension, particularly at the beginning of a new school year when we need to give our students the language necessary to function in the classroom. You will find the flashcards of school items very useful to introduce the vocabulary of classroom equipment. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-flashcards.htm> Use the flashcards to play lots of games to reinforce vocabulary, for example 'guess the flashcard', 'what's missing?'; or hold up a flashcard and have a spelling race.

On the website you can find some simple games for practising the lexical sets associated with school. At the simplest level you could start with the labelling game. Children label the items in a school classroom (furniture etc). There are many ways to extend this activity. With very young learners you could make labels for the classroom and stick them up. You could ask children to draw a classroom scene and label the items. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-labelling-school.htm>



Another very simple game to practise the classroom equipment is the pelmanism game. This practises the vocabulary children will need immediately to ask for things e.g. pen, pencil, eraser etc

Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-pelmanism-school.htm>

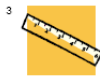
You could warm-up or extend this game by playing pelmanism games with the school flashcards (mentioned above) or making mini-cards for children to play in pairs or groups.



enp = pen



cpniel =



lemu =



bnoeotok =



dobar =



reasre =

These lexical items can also be practised using the 'Pens and Pencils' worksheet which contains a simple matching exercise. You can find it at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-school-words.pdf>

Other simple vocabulary games include a wordsearch on school subjects <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-wordsearch-school.htm> and a hangman game (squash the monkey) to recycle

general school vocabulary <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-hangman-school.htm>. These two games are good to practise spellings.

Teaching classroom instructions

Classroom instructions in English are essential to understand even for very young learners. With this age group you will find the song 'Quiet, please!' very useful as reinforcement. Teach your students the basic instructions such as stand up, sit down, turn to page.. using an action game as a warm-up. It is a good idea to let the children listen to the song first and then repeat it with them joining in the actions. You could have one child acting as the teacher! You could follow-up with pair work on Have you got...(a ruler/a pencil)? etc and practising requests with Can I have..?

Encourage your students to ask for things in English in the classroom. Make speech bubbles for Can I have..? and Have you got..? and put them on the classroom wall. Point to them when you want children to ask you for something in English. You can find the song at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-quiet-please.htm>



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

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

Skills work

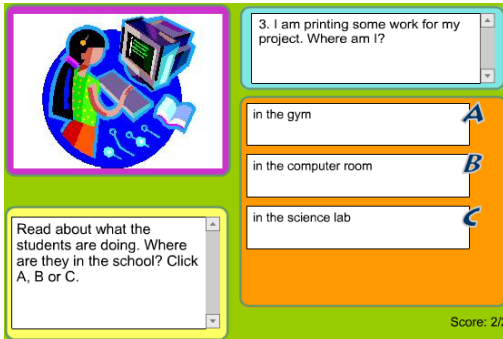


There is a range of materials which offer opportunities for skills work. If your students are already developing their reading skills you could use the story Superhero High <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-superhero-high.htm> about a school for superheroes. Warm up by brainstorming with the class which subjects they think a superhero would need to study e.g. flying, walking up walls. Help the children with vocabulary and let them use their imagination! Then play the story. Ask them to make a list of the subjects at the school. This would be a good story to act out with a class. Make large 'SHS' posters to fix on to students as their 'uniform'. A few props would help to liven things up e.g. a fun pair of glasses as the X ray specs, a piece of material to use as a cape. As follow-up work you could use the downloadable worksheet. This contains a sequencing reading activity and leads in to a short writing task – designing a timetable for superheroes.

Another worksheet which contains reading and writing skills but at a more basic level is the 'School Uniforms' worksheet. Children read about a school uniform then draw it, then design their own and write about it. This is usually a very popular activity in class. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-uniform.pdf>.

For speaking practice have a look at the worksheet on School subjects. This is a simple worksheet containing vocabulary matching, introducing 'good at/bad at', and leading on to a simple questionnaire which you could use for pair work, mingles or develop into a class survey. You can find it at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-subjects.pdf>.

Focus on grammar



Although activities are not usually written to focus specifically on grammar, some materials lend themselves to a grammar focus. For example, the multiple choice reading game Where am I? Is designed to practise the vocabulary of places in school (gym, hall, computer room etc), but the quiz format also provides very useful practice of the present continuous. Warm up for this game by doing a quick plan of a school on the board. Ask children to draw an item in each room and label it. Have a paper cut out figure to fix on with blutack. Move this around and practise where am I? Then play the game with the students. A mime game would be a good follow up. Prepare some small cards with the names of places in school and give them out. Give students a minute to think of their mime action and then play the game. Extend with cards for actions – what's he/she doing? <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-multiple-choice-school.htm>

Another useful grammar activity is the worksheet on school rules. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-school-rules.pdf>. Practise modals (should, must and may) talking about the rules of your school with the students. Then ask the students to do the reading task matching sentence halves to find the rules. This leads on to writing their own rules for an ideal school. This would be a good exercise to do in pairs or groups first.

Just for Fun and Motivation

Finally as a treat you could play the interactive game 'Take that, teacher!' This game practises school subjects and involves throwing aeroplanes at the teacher. Be careful the students don't make real ones! <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-school.htm>

