

Topic: Weather

By Sue Clarke

The weather is a fun and enjoyable topic for children. On the LearnEnglish Kids website you can find many materials to practise this topic. For very young learners activities include songs, vocabulary games and read and draw activities. For learners with more English you will find a flash-animated story 'Ali and the Magic Carpet', listening activities and lots of quiz games. You can find the materials at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-weather.htm>.

Introducing vocabulary

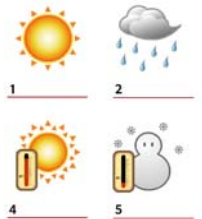
Use the flashcards to teach new vocabulary or practise with the class. Play a few flashcard games with them – guess the flashcard/what's the weather like; match the words and symbols etc. You could draw a large outline map of your own country on the board and stick the flashcards on. Use this for more oral practice. You could introduce the points of the compass too as these will be useful in some of the reading activities.

Practising weather lexis



There are simple vocabulary games to practise all the basic weather words on the website. You could start off with the simple weather phrases and symbol matching game. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-matching-weather.htm>. Or you could practise using the fun Weather Maze game. Children must listen and click the right symbol to find their way across the maze, with the added incentive of collecting points on the way. This provides lots of repetition in a motivating way. You can find it at http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/games/Weather_Maze/.

Basic weather vocabulary can also be practised using the downloadable worksheets. At the most simple level (one word) use the Weather symbols worksheet (suitable for VYLs) and then move on to weather phrases on the Weather words worksheet. This also introduces seasonal weather in the UK and you could use it to talk about different weather/seasons in your own country. You can find the worksheets at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-weather-symbols.pdf> and <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-weather-words.pdf>.



Presenting the topic with songs

Songs are a very good way of introducing a new topic, particularly with Very Young Learners. On the website you can find two songs suitable for this level. Firstly, the Incy Wincy Spider song, a traditional children's song at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-incy-wincy.htm>. Prepare for the song by practising or teaching words like up, down, climb with a quick action



game. You could take one of the visuals from the worksheet and enlarge it. Teach the word 'spout' with the picture and ask the children what they think is happening to the spider. While they listen to the song they can do actions for 'up/down' and mime sun coming out (open arms wide) and rain falling (wiggle their fingers). This is an easy song for children to sing. Use the worksheet for follow-up work. Children match key vocabulary and pictures and re-order the pictures from the song. You can also find a suggestion for making a spider mobile if you would like to do an arts and crafts lesson.



The second song for VYLs is 'I can sing a rainbow' – another traditional English song for children. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-rainbow.htm>. This concentrates on colours but includes basic weather words. This is another easy song to sing along to, with the children's voices. Use the worksheet with the colour-in rainbow as a follow-up, or try the Paint It Game. These activities could be extended by asking children to draw and write about their own rainbow scene.

More Advanced Listening

If you would like to practise listening skills with the class use the game 'What's the weather like?' <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-weather.htm>. Introduce the game by talking about the 'weatherman/presenter' and 'weather forecast'. Ask children to predict the weather for tomorrow. Then ask them to predict the weather for a few other countries. Use the text off button on the game to concentrate on listening skills, and repeat with the text on if children need help. Ask one or two children to play the matching game. Then if you wish to do a whole-class activity use the world map from the story 'One moment around the world'. Instead of completing the time students could draw the weather symbols on the map. You can find it at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-time-activity.pdf>. Once children have finished the listening activity you could ask them to prepare their own weather forecasts and present them to the class. Children usually find this more fun if they pretend to be a TV presenter known to them.



Developing Reading Skills

There is a range of materials to develop reading skills through the weather topic. At sentence level you could use the gap-filling game Winter Weather. This game introduces further weather vocabulary items e.g. hail, frost, snowflakes. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-gapfill-winter-weather.htm>

To practise weather forecasts (or as extension work for the listening activity above) you could use the Weather Map worksheet. Students read the weather forecast for the UK and mark symbols on a map. They can move on to drawing their own weather map with symbols for their own country and writing about it. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-weather-map.pdf>.

If your learners are slightly older or more advanced you might like to try a quiz. The Extreme Weather quiz contains 10 multiple choice quiz questions about world temperatures etc. This is a good activity to do in teams to encourage a competitive element. Give the students time to prepare their answers and then feedback the answers to the whole class, letting them add up their points. You could also do this with the interactive quiz Extreme Weather, which has even more amazing facts about extreme places in the world. You can find these at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-weather-extreme.pdf> <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-quiz-weather.htm>.



The story Ali and the Magic Carpet is also a nice reading task. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-ali.htm>. This flash-animated story is more interactive. Ask students to come out and click each frame to animate the animals. Warm up for the story by writing a few key words on the board e.g. desert, jungle, forest and ask students to predict the weather in each habitat. Ask them to guess what animals Ali will meet. Play the story a couple of times. There are useful sequencing and re-ordering activities both on the worksheet and as an interactive game. Use these to check understanding of the story. As follow-up work you could ask

children to invent their own story flying to five different places on the magic carpet. Ask them what the weather is like and who they meet in each place. Younger children could do this as a story or storyboard, while older learners can write their own story.

More Weather Fun!

Make a weather clock to use like a barometer. Use a circle of card and make hands like a clock. Divide the clock face into 'slices' and add a weather visual for each section. Use this for oral practice in class. Hang it on the classroom wall and change the hands each day, asking the class 'what's the weather like today?'

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