



# Assessing learning

Teaching**English**

Author: Mary Gorman

British Council advisers: Kirsteen Donaghy and Zoë Tysoe



## How to use this resource

### Teachers

Work through the module at your own pace. Do the self-assessment activity on the page after the Introduction to check your skills in this professional practice. The self-assessment activity will help you to decide which elements of practice you want to improve. Each area has four sections:

- A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?** This section looks at real teachers' situations and a part of the practice they're finding difficult. Think of the advice you would give the teachers in the case studies. This section helps you to think about what you already do, and gives you some ideas to try in your own classes.
- B Think: What do you know?** This section gives an explanation of the area of practice. It might have new terminology. It is a good idea to have an ELT glossary, such as the [Teaching knowledge database](#) on the TeachingEnglish website, open for you to look up any words you don't know. This section also has a short task for you to check your understanding of the area of practice described.
- C Try: How does it work?** This section asks you to try something out in a class or over a number of lessons. The tasks will help you to think more about the area of practice in Section B and also to understand how the area applies to your teaching context. Some of the tasks need resources, but many can be done without any special preparation. It is a good idea to read several in-classroom tasks and then plan which task to do, with which groups of learners, and when.
- D Work together: What will help your teaching?** These sections have ideas for how you and your colleagues can do the activities together and support each other's professional development. If you are working on your own, then choose some of these activities and think about the questions. It's a good idea to keep a journal of your thoughts.

If you can, make a regular time to meet in a teachers' club or activity group, and together discuss your self-reflections. Write a plan for the year, deciding which sections to look at each time you meet. Make sure you consider the time you need for the in-classroom task, as you will need to do some things before the meeting, and so that you have ideas to talk about with your teacher activity group.

### Teacher educators

If you're a teacher educator working with teachers, there are many ways you can use this resource. Get an idea of the teachers' strengths and weaknesses using the self-reflection page. You can also use other needs analyses you've done with your teachers, such as observations of classes and informal chats about their professional development.

Next, create a professional development plan for your teachers, choosing three to five of the most useful elements over a school year. Ask the teachers for their input into the plan as well, so they feel in control of their professional development.

If the teachers you are working with are in a group, you can use many of the *Work together* ideas. If you're working with individual teachers, you might like to work through sections yourself first, with your own classes if you have them, or perhaps by team-teaching parts of your teachers' classes, so that you can discuss and compare ideas.

## Assessing learning: Introduction




What are the main reasons you assess your learners? You may need to check on their level of achievement (sometimes called *summative assessment*) and report this to learners, parents and school leaders, or perhaps you want to find out what your learners understand and can do in order to plan or adapt the learning programme (*formative assessment*). Assessment works side by side with teaching and learning. Teachers use a wide range of formal and informal techniques to help them identify their learners' strengths and weaknesses and plan the most appropriate next steps based on the learners' needs. Testing is one type of assessment, but assessing learning can take many forms such as observation, quizzes, homework assignments, portfolios of work and self-assessment. Effective assessment programmes provide learners with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate what they can do.

From our research and work with teachers, the six elements of this professional practice that most teachers ask for help with are:

- 1 Analysing my learners' errors and providing constructive feedback**  
Making errors is a natural part of learning a language, so learners need constant and sensitive feedback on the language they use. This involves identifying the types of errors they make, prioritising the most important ones, and providing constructive feedback, i.e. helpful comments and suggestions for improvement, as well as positive feedback on what they already do well.
- 2 Using assessment to monitor my learners' understanding and inform subsequent teaching**  
As well as end-of-unit/course tests and exams that measure learner achievement, you also need a variety of informal assessment options to monitor what learners have learnt and what they still need help with. These formative assessments are about improving teaching and learning using techniques such as observation, self-assessment, questioning and quizzes. These tools tell you and the learners what to revise, what to do next and what changes to make to the syllabus before they reach the important final assessment.
- 3 Applying the principles and practice of assessment to design tasks for measuring my learners' progress**  
When you study a language, you are essentially learning a practical skill, much like learning to drive or play the guitar. Effective assessment of that skill should therefore find out how well learners can use language in communicative ways to share ideas and get things done. This element helps you to design effective assessment tasks that require learners to actively communicate in meaningful and relevant situations, and provide you with useful information about their progress.
- 4 Defining appropriate assessment criteria and/or applying assessment criteria consistently**  
To define assessment criteria, you need to identify and describe the specific things learners will have to do to complete a task successfully. These criteria are especially helpful for assessing performance-based skills such as speaking and writing. They also help learners by providing more specific feedback on their strengths and weaknesses than a simple grade would, and by highlighting the most important parts of a task to focus on before they begin.
- 5 Engaging my learners in self- and peer assessment and developing their self- and peer assessment skills**  
When learners self- or peer assess, they compare their work, or a classmate's, with an exemplar (a good example) or success criteria (a list of things that learners should include or do in a task to be successful). The focus is strongly on learning and improving, not on being right or wrong. When they are set up well, self- and peer assessment activities can have a positive effect on lifelong learning.
- 6 Preparing my learners for formal assessment**  
Preparing learners for formal assessment, which includes end-of-year tests and national exams, is important because the results of these tests and exams can make a big difference to a learner's future. Preparing for an important test or exam involves taking care of your health, revising, practising test questions, understanding the marking system, learning strategies for answering different types of questions, and preparing for the exam day (the place, time, materials needed, etc.).

## Assessing learning: Self-reflection

The table lists the elements that are included in this chapter. Think about what you already know and what you're good at. Self-assess by colouring in the stars. You can colour in more stars as you progress. The page numbers show where you can find out more about the element and work through some related professional development tasks.

Element	Rating	Pages
1. Analysing my learners' errors and providing constructive feedback		4–7
2. Using assessment to monitor my learners' understanding and inform subsequent teaching		8–11
3. Applying the principles and practice of assessment to design tasks for measuring my learners' progress		12–15
4. Defining appropriate assessment criteria and/or applying assessment criteria consistently		16–19
5. Engaging my learners in self- and peer assessment and developing their self- and peer assessment skills		20–23
6. Preparing my learners for formal assessment		24–27

### Further reading

Hedge, T (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 11.

Ioannou-Georgiou, S and Pavlou, P (2003) *Assessing Young Learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McKay, P (2006) *Assessing Young Language Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Willis, D and Willis, J (2007) *Doing Task-based Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

British Council (n.d.) Exams. Available online at: <http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams>

British Council (n.d.) Resources for assessing learning. Available online at: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development/continuing-professional-development/assessing-learning>



### Introduction

Making errors is a natural part of learning a language and learners need constant and sensitive feedback on the language they use – what they are doing well and the errors they make. You want to prevent errors becoming fossilised (habits that are hard to break).

To help learners produce language accurately, you first need to find out the types of errors they make and decide which of these are the most important to comment on and correct. You might prioritise the most common errors, the ones that make the meaning unclear or those that learners have studied recently. Providing constructive feedback means making comments and suggestions that will help learners to improve. Constructive feedback is considerate of the learners' feelings and balances error correction with positive feedback on what they are already doing well.

### Aims

#### In this section you will:

- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different ways of correcting errors in writing
- read about different techniques for giving feedback on writing and think about when you might use each of them
- try out using selective error correction with your learners (selecting only one or two types of errors to focus on)
- present the advantages of selective error correction in a role play.

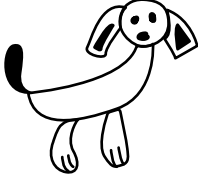


# 1A


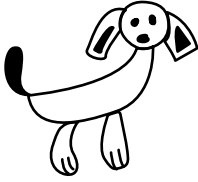
## Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

Rahul and Priya are doing a teacher training course. They were asked to correct writing (an advertisement for a pet) and give feedback.

Rahul

<p>Her name is Flame. She's one year old. She likes to play a ball. She likes to sleep. Flame needs a new home. She's a dog. Please call 81690152 at midnight. She's funny and happy.</p>	 <p>Flame sounds like a lot of fun. You have a lot of detail. Well done. Remember capital letters for names and at the beginning of sentences.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Priya

<p>Her name is Flame. She's one year old. She likes to play a ball. She like to sleep. Flame need a new home. She's a dog. Please call 81690152 at midnight. She's funny and happy.</p> <p>Good work!</p> 	 <p>c = capital letter gr = grammar sp = spelling</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	Rahul	Priya
Strengths		
Weaknesses		

### Reflection

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher's marking?
- What advice would you give Rahul and Priya?
- Neither Rahul nor Priya corrected the error on line 3 (*play a ball*). Why do you think that is?
- If you were the teacher of this learner, which type of error would you choose to focus on in class? Why?
- How do you usually correct writing? Do you do anything the same as Rahul and Priya?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 28.

# 1B Think: What do you know?

Before giving feedback on learners' writing, you need to make decisions about what errors to correct, how many to correct and how to indicate the errors. Your choices often depend on the age and level of the learners.

## Activity

Match the teachers' thoughts (1–5) below with appropriate types of feedback (A–G). More than one type of feedback can help each teacher.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
My learners have a low level of English.

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Some of my learners don't look at the corrections when I give their writing back.

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to encourage the learners with their writing.

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
My learners keep making the same mistakes.

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
My learners look confused and sad when I give their writing back covered in corrections.

- A. Give constructive feedback, i.e. helpful suggestions for improving the writing. Let the learners know what they are doing well, too. Don't provide too much feedback – choose the two or three most important points.
- B. Give selective feedback, i.e. mark only certain errors you want the learners to focus on, e.g. errors they studied before, ones that cause the biggest problem or those that occur most frequently.
- C. Use error correction codes (see Priya's example) to ask learners to think about their errors. Over time, this helps them to proofread their own work and avoid making the errors.
- D. Comment on the content of the writing, as we would do naturally in real life, to show the learners that they have been able to communicate their ideas successfully.
- E. Use direct correction (see Rahul's example) when learners don't know very much English and therefore can't self-correct.
- F. Ask learners to rewrite the text using your corrections or make changes using error correction codes.
- G. Look through six pieces of writing from a range of different ability levels in the class. Find the most common error/problem. Do a ten-minute mini-lesson with the class. Give back their writing and ask learners to check and correct any errors with that language point. They can resubmit their corrected writing if you want.

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 28.

## Reflection

- Which of the feedback techniques have you used before? What do you like/not like about using them? Are there any new techniques you would like to try?
- In what ways do you give learners positive feedback about their writing?
- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of asking learners to rewrite a text after you correct it?



# 1C Try: How does it work?

**Resources:** A piece of writing your class has done

**Time:** One week

## Rationale

In this activity, you will give feedback on only one type of error (selective feedback); you can add to this over a term/year so that learners eventually get feedback on a wide range of errors. With selective feedback, learners will be able to stop making some errors before you start giving them feedback on other ones. It will train your learners to proofread and self-correct, and you won't be discouraging and confusing them with pages covered in corrections.

## Instructions

Do some writing with one of your classes. Choose six learners' papers (from a range of abilities) and make a copy of them. Mark errors in the six copies and count the number of each type of error. You could use the common types of errors below to help you.

- Choose one of the types of errors to focus on. This should be something the learners will be able to self-correct.
- Choose a code for this error, e.g. 'C' for capital letter. There are some suggested codes in the *Answers and commentary* section. Mark each learner's paper for only that one error by putting your code in the margin next to any line where errors occur. Do not correct any other errors.
- Next class, do a ten-minute mini-lesson to revise the language point you chose to correct.
- Give learners their papers back, and explain the code you used and why you didn't correct all the errors. Learners make the corrections (using a different colour to help make it memorable).
- Collect the papers again to check the corrections.

### Common types of errors

#### Punctuation

- Capital letters
- Full stops
- Commas
- Apostrophes

#### Grammar

- Verb forms
- Tenses
- Subject-verb agreement
- Pronouns
- Plural nouns
- Modal verbs

- Articles/determiners
- Prepositions

#### Other

- Sentence construction
- Word order
- Spelling

## Reflection

- How do you feel about giving selective feedback? Were there any problems? What would you do differently if you did it again?
- Next time you correct writing, you could focus on this error again and give feedback on another type of error. What type of error would you choose next? Why?

# 1D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Share your experiences of using selective feedback and any other tips you have for giving feedback on writing.
- 2 Brainstorm the advantages of using selective feedback. Role play talking to your principal or a parent and explain why you haven't corrected all the errors in your learners' writing.
- 3 Discuss how you can find out the errors your learners make when they are speaking. How can you give feedback on their spoken errors?



### Introduction

Are you ever guilty of racing through the curriculum with the final assessment in mind? Might you risk losing the learners along the way? How can you find out what they are having difficulty with before that important final exam? As well as end-of-unit/course tests and exams that measure learner progress and achievement, you also need a variety of informal assessment options to monitor what learners have learnt and what they still need help with. These formative assessments (often called *assessment for learning*) are about improving teaching and learning while the course is in progress. You and the learners are involved in working out what to review, what changes to make to the syllabus and what to do next. Some of the techniques you can use include observation and note taking, self-assessment, questioning, learner diaries and quizzes, as well as diagnostic testing to find out what learners know before you start a lesson or topic.

### Aims

**In this section you will:**

- describe the advantages of using assessment for learning and different ways to do it
- consider when you would use some different assessment for learning activities
- try out a technique to find out if learners understand your lesson
- think about best practice for monitoring and questioning learners, and try out a quiz that you could use to informally check their understanding.

## 2A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

Leila's school uses end-of-topic tests and an end-of-year exam. She has recently been reading about assessment for learning, but she is worried about having too many tests and how that could decrease motivation. She posted on a social media group for English language teachers.



Leila

Why is informal assessment useful/important? How do you do it?

2 Like



3 Reply



Vincent

I'm big on finding out what learners know before I start a lesson/unit. I hate wasting time with stuff they already know. What do they need most? Sometimes I use a little quiz. For vocabulary, I might get them to do a group brainstorming exercise.

1 Like



2 Reply



Nurah

I think it's good to use both tests and informal assessment. Assessment for learning lets me assess different things, e.g. speaking, problem solving or attitudes. I can observe learners without them knowing so they are more relaxed... I suppose I use monitoring the most.

2 Like



1 Reply



Johana

I'm a big believer in questioning techniques. I can find out what learners know and understand, clear up misunderstandings and help them to explain their reasons (higher order thinking skills). From the learners' answers, I know what we need to focus on next.

1 Like



1 Reply

### Reflection

- How else could Vincent find out what his learners know before a lesson/unit?
- Nurah writes about monitoring her learners while they are doing activities in class. What do you think she does while she is monitoring?
- Johana writes about questioning techniques. What can she do to make sure her questioning is effective?
- What other assessment for learning techniques and activities do you know?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 29.

## 2B Think: What do you know?

While a lot of informal assessment involves you observing the learners discreetly (without them knowing) as they do normal classroom activities, it's a good idea to have a variety of activities you can use. As well as providing you with important information, assessment for learning activities can be fun, add variety to your lesson and train your learners to be more autonomous by understanding their own learning needs.

### Activity

Read the informal assessment activities below and decide whether you would use them:

- A. before a lesson/unit (to assess existing knowledge and skill)
- B. after a lesson (to check understanding/progress)
- C. both of the above.

#### 1. Muddy waters

Give each learner a small piece of paper. Ask them to write down one question about something they're unsure of or want help with. Learners do not need to put their names on the paper if they don't want to. Ask learners to put the questions in a box/envelope when they leave. Use the questions to help you decide what to do in the following lessons.

#### 2. Magic ink

Mark errors in learners' writing, but do not correct them. Give the papers back to the learners and ask them to correct their errors in a different coloured pen (their magic pens). Do not let them erase the errors and rewrite. When the corrections can be seen, you will know if learners need more help. Learners are also more likely to remember corrections if they stay visible on the page.

#### 3. ABCD

Prepare a multiple choice quiz with four options (A–D) for each question. Decide how you will present the questions, e.g. read them aloud or write them on the board. Put learners into small groups and give each group an A, B, C and D card (or they can make their own). Present your questions one by one. Allow some discussion time and then ask groups to hold up the letter card for the answer they choose.

#### 4. KWL charts

Learners rule up a table with three columns: K, W and L. In the first column, they write down everything they KNOW about the topic. In the second column, they write down what they WANT to know about the topic. At the end of the lesson/unit, they write down what they LEARNED in the third column and ask questions about anything they still want to know.

With lower levels, it is a good idea to use L1/the language of instruction for Muddy waters and KWL charts. Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 30.

### Reflection

- Which of the techniques have you used before? Which ones would you like to try?
- Look through your coursebook. Which lessons do you have coming up that would be suitable for a quiz or making a KWL chart?
- Some learners may not be able to say what they want to learn (KWL charts) or feel comfortable asking the teacher questions (Muddy waters). How could you support them so that these activities are useful?

## 2C Try: How does it work?

**Resources:** A set of three small cards for each learner

**Time:** One lesson

### Rationale

It's important to assess learners' understanding at different points throughout your lessons. Within a group, different learners will develop understanding at different rates. Knowing which learners have understood and which are having problems can help you to decide when you need to go over things again or to explain things differently. Unfortunately, learners who don't understand probably won't admit it if you ask them 'Do you understand?' However, they might quietly show you a 😊 card.

### Instructions

Select a lesson where you're introducing new language or a new topic.

- Give each learner three pieces of paper, one with a smiley face, one with an 'I'm OK' face and one with a sad face. (You could ask learners to make these themselves at the start of the lesson.) Have one paper for yourself, with all three faces.
- Explain to the learners that you will check their understanding at different points during the lesson by asking them to hold up one of the three cards.
- During the lesson, regularly pause and hold up your own paper with all three faces, indicating that learners should each select one of theirs to show you what they understand at that point in the lesson. When learners show a sad face, go back over the point using a different way to explain/check (e.g. concept check questions, doing an example on the board or drawing a picture). Repeat to see if more smiley faces appear.
- Ask your learners for feedback on the face card technique. *Did the face cards help you to understand more in this lesson? What? Were you honest about which face you held up? If not, why not?* Put learners in pairs and ask them to discuss these questions, or write answers anonymously.



### Reflection

- Were learners willing to tell you when they did and didn't understand?
- Were learners mainly holding up the same faces, or were there many differences? Did anything surprise you about the cards they held up?
- How did the face cards help (or not help) your lesson? Would you use them again? Why/why not?
- What other things could you ask the learners about using the face cards?

## 2D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Take turns to share two interesting things that came out of your research in 2C.
- 2 Work in two groups. Research or create two other assessment for learning activities/techniques like those in 2B and 2C for finding out how your learners are doing. Come back together as a group and share your ideas. This website might help you to find other techniques: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/assessment-learning-activities-0>
- 3 Work in two groups again. Prepare a short four-question teachers' quiz with multiple choice answers. Keep it secret from the other group. Try out the informal assessment technique 'ABCD' from 2B. What rules do you need for this activity? How would you give points?



### Introduction

When you study a language, you are essentially learning a practical skill, much like learning to drive or play the guitar. Effective assessment of that skill should therefore look to see how well it can be performed. How well can learners use language in communicative ways to share their ideas and get things done? According to Willis and Willis (2007), a task is an activity that engages the learners' interest, is concerned with successful communication of meaning, has an outcome (a product or a result) and is similar to real-world activities. Many of the activities you use in class meet Willis and Willis' criteria for a task (e.g. writing an email, or listening to directions and following a map) and can be used for assessment purposes. In this section, you will use a framework (a series of questions) to help you evaluate, design and adapt tasks so that they can be used to effectively collect information about what your learners can and can't do.

### Aims

#### In this section you will:

- consider the strengths and weaknesses of two different assessment tasks
- use a framework to help you design effective assessment tasks
- design and use an assessment task for a group of learners
- work with your colleagues to compare how you mark/assess work, and then design another assessment task.



# 3A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Nan is designing an assessment task for her Year 4 learners for *have got* and *be* (present simple). She can't decide whether to use Task A or Task B.

**A.**

**Create a book about tigers. Write sentences and remember to include pictures.**

**B.**

**Complete the gaps with *have got* or *are*.**

1. Zebras \_\_\_\_\_ black and white stripes.
2. Rhinos \_\_\_\_\_ thick skin.
3. Cheetahs \_\_\_\_\_ very fast.
4. Elephants \_\_\_\_\_ very heavy.
5. Leopards \_\_\_\_\_ black spots.
6. Tigers \_\_\_\_\_ orange and white fur with black stripes.
7. Rhinos \_\_\_\_\_ giant horns.
8. Lions \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous.
9. Tigers \_\_\_\_\_ long tails.
10. Giraffes \_\_\_\_\_ very tall.

## Reflection

- Which of these tasks do you prefer for assessment purposes? Why?
- Think of three strengths and three weaknesses for each assessment task. Complete a table with your ideas.

Task	Strengths	Weaknesses
A.	Learning is happening at the same time as assessment.	
B.		Learners can easily guess the answers.

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 30.



## 3C Try: How does it work?

**Resources:** The framework for evaluating assessment tasks from 3B

**Time:** Over one week

### Rationale

A framework for selecting and designing assessment tasks helps you to make appropriate choices and adapt tasks so that they achieve the objectives of your assessment. It makes sure the tasks you choose are relevant, appropriate and engaging for your learners. A framework also helps you to identify potential problems and anything that might disadvantage your learners.

### Instructions

- Decide what you want to assess. It could be a skill (e.g. listening for detail in a description, making a presentation or writing the ending of a story) or a language point (grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation).
- Choose a task to use for the assessment from your coursebook or a website such as <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/> or <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/> Make sure the learners will be actively involved in understanding and communicating ideas (for example, to assess past tense they could write the ending of a story).
- Evaluate the task using the framework from 3B and make any changes you need.
- Prepare your marking schedule. Section 4 has useful ideas for assessing tasks.
- Do the assessment.
- Observe the learners as they do the task. Are they engaged and relaxed? Are the instructions clear enough? Do any learners need extra support?
- Make copies of two learners' papers that are not marked to use in 3D below. Assess the learners' work and write feedback for them.

### Reflection

- In what ways did the framework help/not help you to design the assessment task? How would you change the framework now you have used it?
- How effective was your assessment task? Did you find out useful information about what the learners can and can't do? What was surprising/interesting?
- What would you change about this assessment task if you used it again? Why?

## 3D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1** Work with a partner. Share your assessment task and your evaluation using the framework. Describe any changes you made to the task because of the framework. Can your partner suggest any other improvements?
- 2** Discuss how you would adapt the framework to make it more suitable for selecting assessment tasks for learners at your school. What questions would you add/delete/change?
- 3** Work in small groups. Choose another assessment task from your coursebook. Evaluate it using the framework. If you give it any negative scores, discuss how you could adapt the task to make it more effective.



### Introduction

When you define assessment criteria, you identify and describe the specific things learners will have to do to complete a task successfully. These criteria can be especially helpful for assessing performance-based tasks such as speaking, writing and project work, which consist of many interdependent parts/skills that often happen at the same time. When you evaluate the quality of each part (criteria) separately, the assessment is likely to be more objective (i.e. not influenced by your personal feelings and opinions) and more consistent. Assessment criteria also help learners by providing more specific feedback on their strengths and weaknesses than a simple grade would. They provide an important link between assessment and learning by highlighting the most important parts of a task or project for learners to focus on before they begin. The same criteria can also be used as a checklist for self- or peer assessment before a piece of work is submitted.

### Aims

**In this section you will:**

- evaluate two different examples of criterion-based assessment
- consider how criteria can be used to assess speaking
- try doing a criterion-based assessment of a speaking or writing task
- cross-mark your colleague's speaking/writing assessment to check that the criteria are used consistently and fairly.

# 4A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Sara is deciding how to assess menus her learners wrote as part of a food topic. She has tried two techniques – a checklist (Tool 1) and criteria with a rating scale (Tool 2). Assess the menu below using the two different tools.

## Tool 1: Checklist

Tick the things that are true and that are mostly correct.

Menu	
Task achievement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Looks like a menu	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organised into different courses (starter, main, etc.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Includes restaurant name	
<input type="checkbox"/> Includes food items and prices	
<input type="checkbox"/> Attractive design	
Language	
<input type="checkbox"/> Spelling	
<input type="checkbox"/> Word order (adjective before noun)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Correct use of countable and uncountable nouns	

## The Shining Star

### MENNU

Starter £5  
chicken noodles  
vegetable sup

Main £15  
vegaterrien piza  
steak and chips  
chicken roast

Desert £8  
sundae chokolat  
cheesecake strawberry

## Tool 2: Criteria with a rating scale

Menu	1	2	3
Task achievement			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks like a menu</li> <li>Organised into different courses (starter, main, etc.)</li> <li>Includes restaurant name</li> <li>Includes food items and prices</li> <li>Attractive design</li> </ul>			
Language			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spelling</li> <li>Word order (adjective before noun)</li> <li>Correct use of countable and uncountable nouns</li> </ul>			

1 = needs improvement; 2 = successful; 3 = outstanding

Tick one overall score for task achievement and one for language.

## Reflection

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each tool? Complete a table with your ideas.
- Which of the assessment tools do you prefer? Why?
- If Sara and her colleagues use Tool 2, they might have different opinions about whether the scores should be 1, 2 or 3. How could two teachers make sure their scoring would be consistent?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 33.

## 4B Think: What do you know?

Speaking is a complex skill made up of many different sub-skills, e.g. fluency, pronunciation, grammar and interacting with another speaker, all happening at the same time. One way to assess speaking is to score each of these parts (criteria) separately. A rubric, as shown below, is a set of descriptions for each criterion at different levels.

Criteria	Task completion	Fluency	Language	Pronunciation
3 Outstanding	Your presentation was logically organised. Ideas were relevant and well developed. You spoke confidently and made effective eye contact.	You were able to take long turns and pause at appropriate places. Any hesitation and repetition were natural.	You used a wide range of grammar/ vocabulary structures with very few errors.	You were easily understood. You used stress and intonation effectively and varied your voice to engage the listeners.
2 Successful	Your presentation had a clear beginning, middle and end. Most ideas were relevant and developed satisfactorily. You generally spoke confidently and made some eye contact.	You were able to take some long turns. You generally paused at appropriate places. There was some minor hesitation and repetition.	You used a good range of grammar/ vocabulary structures. There were some errors but they were rarely confusing.	You were understood without much effort. You generally varied your voice and used stress and intonation well for this level.
1 Needs improvement	<i>You attempted to make a presentation...</i>			

The descriptors for fluency, language and pronunciation in this rubric could be used for other types of speaking tasks too. The 'task completion' criterion, however, would need to be adapted for specific tasks.

### Activity

- Imagine your learners are doing a role play between a customer and a server in a restaurant. What would you write in the 'task completion' criterion for an outstanding performance?
- Complete the 'needs improvement' descriptions using your own ideas. What would a presentation that needs improving look and sound like?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 35.

### Reflection

- What do you like about this rubric? What would you change to make it more appropriate for your classes?
- How does a rubric help the teacher? What about the learners?
- What are the biggest problems your learners have when making a presentation?



## 4C Try: How does it work?

**Resources:** Materials for a speaking or writing task

**Time:** One lesson

### Rationale

Assessing speaking and writing can be subjective, i.e. the grades you give can be affected by your feelings and opinions, and these may be different from another teacher's. Breaking the task down into criteria helps to make your grading fairer and gives learners more specific feedback on their strengths and weaknesses.

### Instructions

Choose a writing or speaking task to assess with one of your classes.

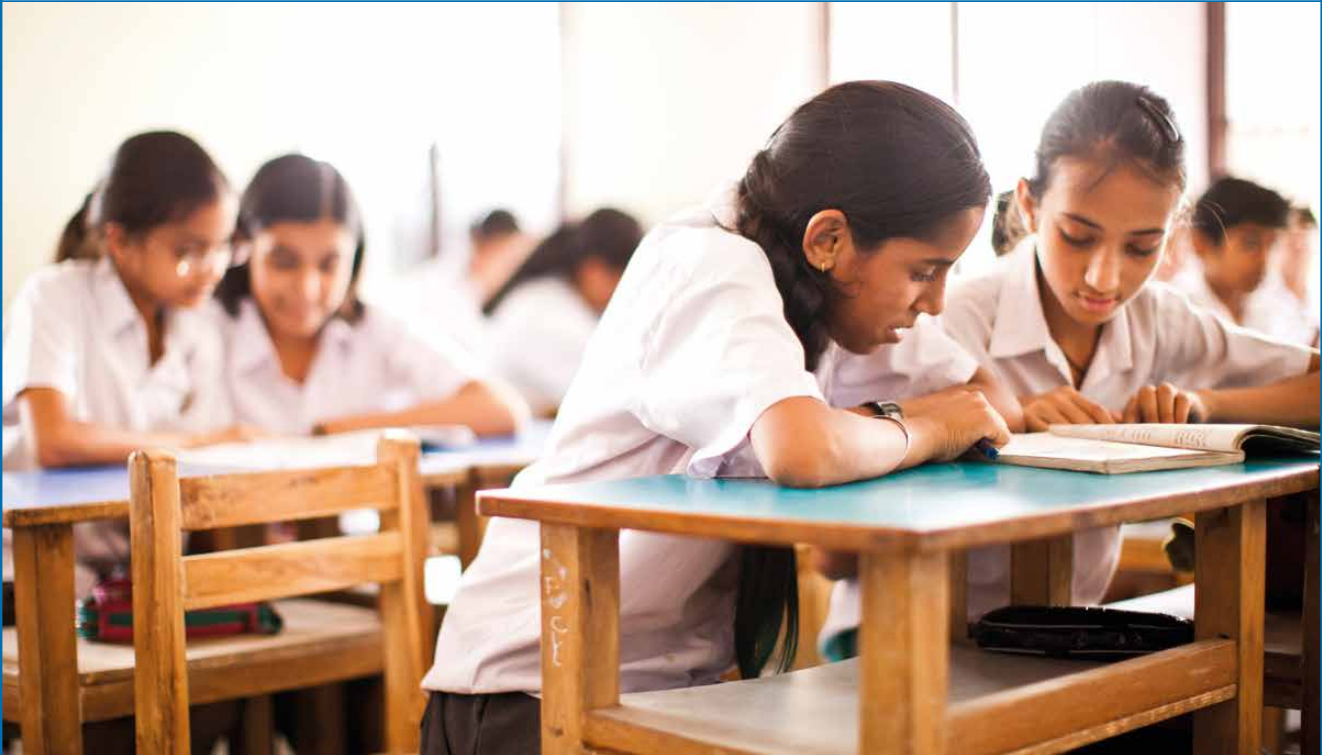
- Choose an assessment tool to try out – a checklist, criteria with a rating scale or a rubric. You could use and adapt any of the examples from 4A and 4B.
- Make sure the learners are prepared for the task. Have they practised a similar task? Do they know the vocabulary and grammar they need?
- Discuss the assessment criteria with the learners before they do the task. Do this in a shared language if it makes it easier for them.
- Do the task and assessment. It may not be appropriate to try to assess all your learners' speaking on the same day. For a role play, the whole class could speak in pairs, but you might listen to and assess only two pairs (four learners). Next time you could assess a different group.
- If possible, audio record some of the learners speaking, or make copies of the writing before you mark it, to share with your colleagues in 4D.
- Return the assessment and comments to the learners. Ask them for feedback. What did they like/not like about being assessed in this way?

### Reflection

- How easy/difficult was it to use the assessment criteria? What changes would you make to the criteria if you used them again?
- How did the learners respond to being assessed in this way? What was surprising/interesting about their feedback?
- How can you use the information you got from this assessment (for example, when you meet parents)?

## 4D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Work with a partner. Compare your speaking/writing tasks and your criteria. Get feedback on your criteria.
- 2 Do some cross-marking. Give your partner audio recordings of three speakers you assessed or three unmarked pieces of writing. Grade each other's speaking/writing using the criteria/rubric. Compare your grades. Discuss any differences. Do you need to change the criteria/rubric?
- 3 Work in different groups of two or three teachers. Choose a different speaking or writing task. Write criteria for it. Share and discuss your criteria with the other groups.



### Introduction

When learners self- or peer assess, they compare their work, or a classmate's, with an exemplar (a good example) or against success criteria (a list of things they should include or do for a task to be successful). They then have the opportunity to find appropriate information and help, and make improvements to their work. The focus is strongly on learning and improving, not on being right or wrong.

With self- and peer assessment training and practice, learners develop a deeper understanding of what good work looks like and how to achieve it. They are more actively involved in and responsible for their own learning, which can have a positive effect on motivation and give them the skills they need for lifelong learning.

### Aims

#### In this section you will:

- advise a teacher who is having problems with peer assessment
- read about strategies for introducing self- and peer assessment successfully
- develop success criteria for a writing task and use them with your learners for peer assessment
- identify the advantages and disadvantages of self- and peer assessment, and develop success criteria for another writing/speaking task.

Lily is attending a teacher training seminar on assessment. She has completed a self-assessment. Complete the self-assessment form for yourself.

Using self- and peer assessment	Not true	Partly true	True
1. I have used self-assessment successfully with my learners.	✓		
2. I have used peer assessment successfully with my learners.		✓	
3. I make self- and peer assessment a regular part of my lessons.	✓		
4. I give learners exemplars and success criteria when I ask them to do self- or peer assessment.	✓		
5. Self- and peer assessment are not appropriate for learners in my school.		✓	
6. I would like to know more about self- and peer assessment.			✓
Comments: <i>I have tried peer assessment with writing, but the learners only make meaningless comments that do not help their classmates to improve. They think the teacher should do the assessment and don't believe they can offer any useful advice.</i>			

## Reflection

- Now you have completed a self-assessment for this topic, what would you like to learn about in this element? Why?
- What advice would you give to Lily so that her learners will be able to give feedback that is more helpful to their classmates?
- How can Lily show her learners that self- and peer assessment are important? What are some of the advantages of self- and peer assessment that Lily can tell her learners?
- Are self- and peer assessment used very often in your school? Why/why not? Have you used them yourself as a learner? How did you feel about them?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 35.

## 5B Think: What do you know?

While self- and peer assessment offer many benefits for learners, it takes time, support and training for learners to develop these skills.

### Activity

Read about some of the problems that teachers on Lily's training course had when using self- and peer assessment.

<p><b>A.</b> Learners don't give helpful feedback to each other, and they don't trust their classmates' opinions. They write comments such as <i>Try harder. Good work.</i> These comments don't help people to improve.</p>	<p><b>B.</b> Some learners do not assess themselves accurately. They mark themselves better than they are, or they are too hard on themselves.</p>
<p><b>C.</b> My learners think it's my job to assess them. They think I'm being lazy.</p>	<p><b>D.</b> My learners are shy and don't want to let other learners see their writing, especially if they haven't finished.</p>

Now look at the advice for teachers below. Decide which problem(s) they could help with.

1. Make sure your learners understand the benefits of using self- and peer assessment. **A, C**
2. Introduce self- and peer assessment gradually. Learners can take a long time to develop these skills, especially if they are not used in other subjects. Be patient.
3. Always demonstrate to the whole class how to do the assessment. Create a piece of work yourself and get the class to assess it with you using the success criteria.
4. Use exemplars and success criteria to show learners what good work looks like.
5. Warn learners that their work will be peer assessed and give them a deadline for finishing.
6. Have rules and go over them every time. For example: *Be kind. Be specific. Give reasons for your opinions. Write your feedback as questions – it's easier to hear negative feedback that way.*
7. Let learners do peer assessment in groups before they try it individually.
8. Use sentence starters to help learners write comments for each other, e.g. *I think you could add/change...; What's a better word for...?; Did you remember to...?*
9. Think carefully about partners for peer assessment and change them regularly.
10. Ask learners to circle any differences between their self-assessment and your assessment. Can they understand why they are different?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 36.

### Reflection

- Tick the tips above that you would like to try. Put a question mark next to any you don't understand.
- Which three tips do you think are the most important? Why? What other advice can you give?
- What other problems have you had, or do you think you'll have, with self- and peer assessment?

## 5C Try: How does it work?

**Resources:** Materials for a writing lesson

**Time:** One day

### Rationale

Success criteria make it possible for learners to self- and peer assess because they break a task down into smaller parts that can be evaluated more easily. Learners have specific things to look for and check in their classmate's work.

### Instructions

There is an example of success criteria to help you in the *Answers and commentary* section for writing the ending of a story. The beginning and middle of the story are given to the learners, who need to write the ending. You could use and adapt the following procedure for any writing lesson.

1. Before the lesson, think about what the learners need to do to be successful with the task. The criteria usually come from the things you have taught.
2. Before the learners write, ask them for ideas for the success criteria. How will they know they have done a good job? Add some of their ideas to your criteria.
3. While learners are working (or before the next lesson), write an ending to the story yourself that includes some of the ideas and errors the learners have made.
4. At the end of the lesson, or in the next lesson, display a copy of your story and the success criteria. Give learners a time limit to assess your writing with the criteria. You complete the criteria sheet, too. Compare their assessment to yours.
5. Put learners into pairs to assess each other's stories using the success criteria. Give them time to make changes after they get peer feedback.
6. Take in the learners' writing and peer feedback.

### Reflection

- Assess the learners' writing using the same success criteria. Compare your assessment with the learners' feedback. How successfully were they able to give peer feedback?
- How did your learners react to giving and receiving peer feedback? What problems were there? What will you do differently next time to support them? Remember that it will take time and practice for the learners to get used to being responsible for assessment.

## 5D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Work with a partner. Share some of the peer assessments from your class that were realistic and helpful and some that were not. Discuss what you could do to help learners assess their own and others' work more effectively.
- 2 Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of self- and peer assessment. What can you do to overcome some of the disadvantages?
- 3 Choose another writing/speaking activity. Write success criteria for it.



## Introduction

Preparing learners for formal assessment, which includes end-of-year tests and national exams, is important because the results of these tests and exams can make a big difference to your learners' futures. The results can decide whether learners continue with your subject, their opportunities for higher education and the careers they eventually enter. Exam results can also affect learners' feelings of confidence and self-worth.

Preparing for formal assessment involves taking care of your health, revising, learning strategies for answering different types of questions, practising test questions/tasks and understanding the marking system. It can be a good idea to provide your learners with strategy training and exam practice; however, it is also important to balance these activities with regular teaching and learning so that their level of English develops as well as their ability to perform in exam conditions.

## Aims

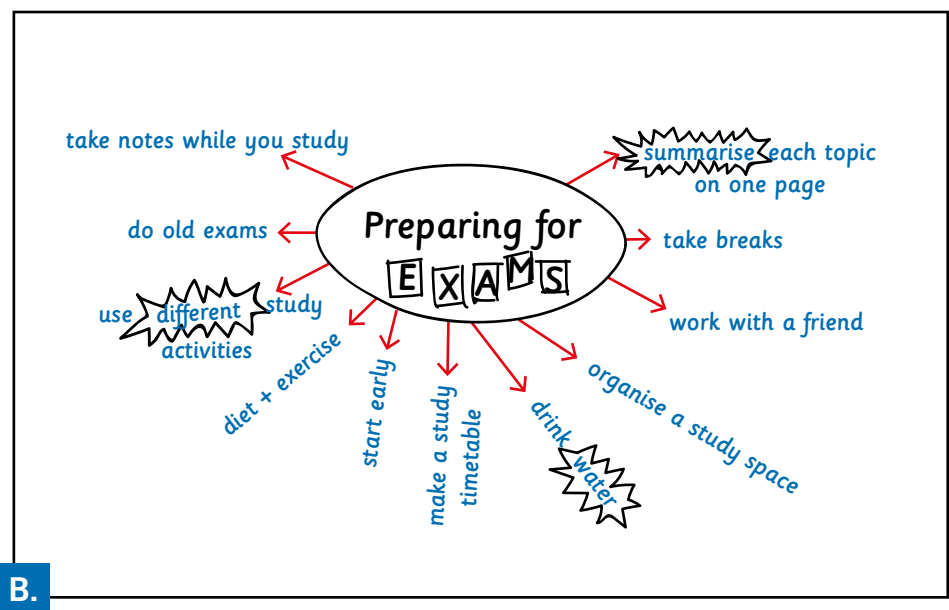
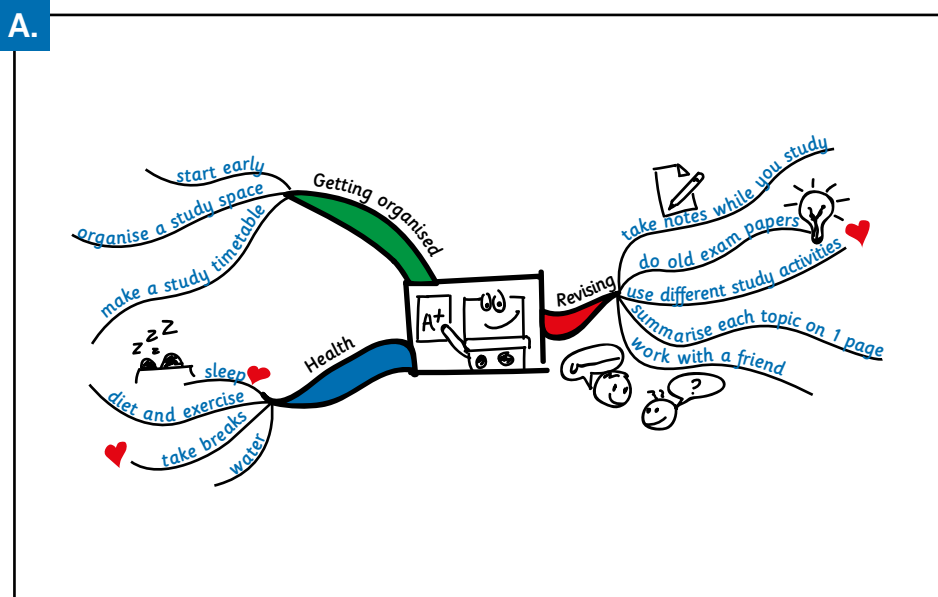
**In this section you will:**

- consider the strengths and weaknesses of different ways to take study notes
- read about strategies for answering different types of exam questions
- demonstrate strategies for answering a specific type of exam question with a group of learners
- collaborate with colleagues to prepare strategies for answering other question types used in your exam(s), and to make a list of engaging revision activities.



## 6A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Shafiq is trying out different ways his learners can write notes when they are revising for exams. Which diagram do you prefer? Why?



### Reflection

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each diagram?
- Write a list of tips for making effective study notes.
- What other advice would you give to your learners to help them prepare for exams?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 36.

## 6B Think: What do you know?

While practising for exams is important, you can help learners by giving them strategies for answering different types of questions as well.

### Activity

Answer questions 1–3 for this text about video games.

People who play video games excessively may be suffering from video game addiction. Sufferers spend long periods online. Other symptoms include being restless and irritable when unable to play, and lying to family and friends about how much time is spent playing games.

#### 1. Multiple choice

Choose the best title for the paragraph.

- a) Dangers of video games
- b) Computer games hurt families
- c) How to know if you are addicted to video games

#### 2. True or false?

- a) Video game addicts are relaxed when they stop playing games.
- b) Addicts are not honest about the number of hours they spend gaming.

#### 3. Vocabulary questions

Match the words from the text with the definitions.

Excessively	Getting annoyed easily
Restless	More than is usual or normal
Irritable	Unable to sit still or relax

Now read some strategies for different question types. Which type of questions do they describe – multiple choice, true/false or vocabulary?

#### A. STRATEGIES FOR \_\_\_\_\_

- Find and underline the words in the text (if you have one).
- Read the sentences before and after the words in the text to look for clues about the meaning.
- Start with the words you know.
- Is the word a verb, noun, etc.? Does that fit with the definition you chose?
- Does the word have a prefix or suffix that helps you guess e.g. *restless* meaning to rest less.
- Is the word similar to a word in your language?

#### B. STRATEGIES FOR \_\_\_\_\_

- Read the question carefully.
- Think of the answer from what you already know.
- Find the place in the text and underline where the answer is. Never just use your own knowledge.
- For an answer to be true, all parts of the sentence must be true. If any part is false, then the answer is false.
- Take care with negatives (*no, not, never*).
- Look out for adverbs of frequency (*always, sometimes, often, etc.*). Absolute adverbs of frequency (*always/never*) usually mean the answer is false.
- If you don't know, guess. There's a 50 per cent chance you will be correct.

### Reflection

- Tick the strategies you already teach your learners. Asterisk (\*) any you would like to try.
- What strategies would/do you give learners for answering multiple choice questions?
- What other exam strategies do you teach your learners?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 37.

## 6C Try: How does it work?

**Resources:** Past test/exam papers  
**Time:** One lesson and preparation time

### Rationale

When learners take an exam, they can 'freeze up' and stop thinking clearly if there are too many words or questions they don't know. By demonstrating the strategies you use to work out answers, learners will have more confidence to work things out when they are unsure in the exam.

### Instructions

Before the lesson

- Look at a past exam paper. Choose one question type, perhaps one from 6B.
- Answer all the questions of that type yourself (Questions A), without looking at the answer key. Take note of any strategies and clues that help you to work out the answers. Add these to the list of strategies in 6B. You will demonstrate answering these questions in the lesson.
- Find a set of the same type of questions in another exam paper (Questions B). Answer these questions yourself, taking notes as you did for Questions A. Learners will practise with these questions.
- Prepare a copy of the strategies you will use (e.g. on the board or on a handout). Make copies of Questions A and B for the learners.

During the lesson

- Project (if possible) or write Questions A on the board and give copies of them to everyone.
- Demonstrate to the class how you go about answering the questions using the strategies. Talk aloud about what you are thinking and ask questions as you find clues to help you answer.
- Give learners Questions B to answer by themselves using the strategies. Watch the learners work and take note of who uses effective strategies for doing feedback later. When they finish, let learners discuss their answers and reasons with a partner.
- Do feedback with the class. Ask questions about how learners found the answers and what strategies they used.
- Ask the learners for feedback about the strategies they found the most useful.

### Reflection

- Which strategies did you find the most useful? Were they the same as your learners?
- What was interesting/surprising about the feedback from the learners?
- Which types of questions cause the most difficulty for learners in your exam(s)? What strategies can they use to help them?

## 6D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Discuss the most successful strategies in 6C and any problems you had. How could you solve the problems?
- 2 Work in groups of two or three. Each pair/group takes a different question type from ones used in your exams. Make a list of strategies for answering those questions. You could search online for ideas too. Share your strategies.
- 3 Discuss and share ideas for making revision and exam practice activities engaging and useful.

## Answers and commentary

### 1. Analysing my learners' errors and providing constructive feedback

#### 1A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

	Rahul	Priya
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing the corrections (direct correction) is a good idea with low-level learners who may not be able to correct their own errors.</li> <li>• Using a different colour (green) to tick things that are strengths (good vocabulary in this writing).</li> <li>• Commenting on the content of the writing (the ideas), e.g. <i>Flame sounds like a lot of fun</i>. Despite some errors, the learner has been able to communicate useful information.</li> <li>• Giving a positive comment to encourage the learner, e.g. <i>You have a lot of detail</i>.</li> <li>• Selecting one type of error for the learner to work on (capital letters).</li> <li>• Not correcting errors that are beyond the level of the learner, e.g. <i>she likes to play (with) a ball</i>. However, children talk about play frequently, so it would be useful for them to be accurate with this collocation (<i>to play with something</i>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The errors and code are clearly marked.</li> <li>• Using error codes (<i>sp, gr, etc.</i>) should make the learner think about their errors. This will help them to check their own writing in the future. They will get a sense of achievement when they can correct an error.</li> <li>• Praise and encouragement for the learner (comment and sticker).</li> <li>• Not asking the learner to correct every error, which might overwhelm them (make them feel it is too difficult and affect their confidence). Priya has chosen capital letters, third person (-s) and spelling errors, probably because her learners are familiar with these already.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learner doesn't need to think about anything, so they may not notice the corrections at all. However, the corrections will be helpful if Rahul asks the learner to rewrite the advertisement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no comment about the content of the writing. The learner has put in a lot of effort to write the advertisement, so it would be motivating if the teacher acknowledged what the learner wrote, not just the errors.</li> </ul>

#### 1B Think: What do you know?

Answers: 1–B, E; 2–A, B, C, D, F; 3–A, B, D; 4–B, F, G; 5–A, B, D, G.



3. To use questions effectively, Johana could:
- plan the questions she will ask to make sure they are interesting and will encourage discussion
  - ask open questions – ones that encourage longer answers using a learner’s own ideas and feelings, e.g. *What can you do to improve your speaking?* is better than *Do you need to practise your speaking to improve?*
  - allow more wait time for learners to think of answers before asking anyone to answer
  - let learners discuss or write down answers first
  - ask learners to think about other options and avoid right/wrong answers, e.g. *Is there any other way we can...?*
  - encourage learners to use higher order thinking skills and not just recall information, e.g. not *Is rice countable or uncountable* (closed, recall question)? but instead *Why do you think rice is an uncountable noun?*
  - clarify any misunderstandings
  - use the umpire technique; when a learner answers a question, ask another learner for their opinion, e.g. *Brian, do you agree with Wang’s answer?*
  - use the discussion to help her plan what to do in the next lesson.
4. Self- and peer assessment activities are good ways to find out what learners are confident about and where they need help. They can also tell you about topics and activities learners enjoy or find difficult. Reflection tasks (where learners reflect on how well they have achieved the lesson aims/ learning outcomes) also provide informal assessment information, e.g. if you ask learners to tell a partner one thing they learnt and one question they still have. Learner diaries are another option: see <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learner-diaries>. You can read about more informal assessment techniques in 2B and 2C.

## 2B Think: What do you know?

Answers: 1–B; 2–B; 3–C; 4–C.

## 3. Applying the principles and practice of assessment to design tasks for measuring my learners’ progress

### 3A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

#### Task A: Strengths

- Learning is happening at the same time as assessment.
- Learners are assessed on their ability to produce language to communicate ideas.
- Making a book is an authentic and real-life task for children.
- The task provides more information about what the learners can/can’t do (e.g. spelling, vocabulary and punctuation).
- The learners can feel proud of the final product and it can be used to show progress to parents.
- Learners can work at their own level. Stronger learners get the chance to demonstrate what they are capable of because the task is more open-ended.
- The topic and task are engaging for the learners’ age.

#### Task A: Weaknesses

- Takes longer.
- Marking takes longer than a test where answers are either right or wrong.
- Requires criterion-based assessment (see Section 4). The teacher may require training.

#### Task B: Strengths

- The task can be completed quickly.
- It is easy to mark.
- The topic is age-appropriate and engaging for children.



### Task B: Weaknesses

- The assessment does not show how well the learners are able to produce language themselves and use English to communicate.
- Because there are only two options, learners could easily guess the correct answer.
- While the topic is engaging, the task is not motivating. It does not reflect what children do in real life.

### 3B Think: What do you know?

1. Suitable for 7+ years. *Can you drive a car?* and *Can you cook dinner?* may not be age-appropriate and should be changed for something more appropriate to the learners' age and interests.
2. Grammar – *can* for ability, question forms. Speaking – asking follow-up questions to keep a conversation going.
3. It is natural to ask people about their abilities. However, the task can become unnatural if you don't ask follow-up questions to show an interest in the speaker's answer.
4. The learners will need space to move around and ask different classmates. It will not be possible to assess everyone during this activity. You could choose some learners to focus on, and assess other learners the next time you do speaking.
5. Some questions may be irrelevant. For example, your learners may all speak Mandarin. Skiing may not be relevant depending on where you live.
6. Your own answer. A familiar activity allows learners to focus on the language they need, not what they need to do.
7. Learners write names and short notes. Learners may need support with asking follow-up questions. You could provide a range of questions on the board for them to use and drill these, e.g. *How often do you...? What's your favourite...? When did you start...-ing?*
8. Instructions are in English with examples provided. However, learners probably need a demonstration of what to do. Checking instructions with a shared language would help.
9. Your own answer.
10. No. It would help learners to have a picture of each activity. You could add two characters with speech bubbles asking and answering one of the questions to demonstrate the activity.
11. Perhaps 30 minutes. Five minutes setting up, 20 minutes speaking, and five minutes for feedback.
12. Probably with a rubric (criteria with a description of different levels) – see an example below.

Criteria	Task completion	Fluency	Language	Pronunciation
3. Outstanding	You asked and answered questions easily and confidently, including asking appropriate follow-up questions. You listened carefully to answers so you could respond naturally.	You were able to ask and answer questions naturally. Any hesitation and repetition were natural.	You used a wide range of question forms and grammar/vocabulary structures for this level with very few errors.	You were easily understood. You used stress and intonation effectively.

(Continued on the next page)

Criteria	Task completion	Fluency	Language	Pronunciation
2. Successful	You asked and answered questions with some confidence. You asked some appropriate follow-up questions.	You asked <i>Can you ...?</i> questions fluently. There was some hesitation and repetition when you asked your own follow-up questions.	You used a good range of question forms and grammar/ vocabulary structures for this level. There were some errors, particularly in follow-up questions, but they were rarely confusing.	You were understood without much effort. You generally varied your voice and used stress and intonation well for this level.
1. Needs improvement	You attempted to ask and answer questions. You rarely asked follow-up questions and/ or the follow-up questions you asked tended to be copied.	You asked <i>Can you...?</i> questions with some fluency. There were frequent hesitations and repetitions in your answers and follow-up questions (or there were no follow-up questions).	You used some of the question forms and grammar/ vocabulary structures expected at this level, but frequent errors were obvious and sometimes confusing.	It required effort to understand you. Some important words and phrases were difficult to understand/ couldn't be understood.

You can find out more about assessing speaking tasks in Section 4.

## 4. Defining appropriate assessment criteria and/or applying assessment criteria consistently

### 4A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

#### Tool 1: Checklist

Menu
Task achievement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Looks like a menu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organised into different courses (starter, main, etc.)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Includes restaurant name
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Includes food items and prices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attractive design
Language
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spelling
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Word order (adjective before noun)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correct use of countable and uncountable nouns

#### Tool 2: Criteria with a rating scale

Menu	1	2	3
Task achievement			
• Looks like a menu			✓
• Organised into different courses (starter, main, etc.)			✓
• Includes restaurant name			✓
• Includes food items and prices			✓
• Attractive design		✓	
Language			
• Spelling	✓		
• Word order (adjective before noun)	✓		
• Correct use of countable and uncountable nouns		✓	

1 = needs improvement; 2 = successful; 3 = outstanding

	Tool 1: Checklist	Tool 2: Criteria and rating scale
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners get specific feedback on things they have done well and what they need to improve.</li> <li>The checklist helps learners to check their own work before it's assessed.</li> <li>There are specific things to check for, which makes the assessment fairer and more objective than if a teacher gave a grade (A–F) from their overall feelings about the quality of the work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners get specific feedback on things they have done well and what they need to improve.</li> <li>The criteria help learners to check their own work before it's assessed.</li> <li>There are specific things to check for, which makes the assessment fairer and more objective than if a teacher gave a grade (A–F) from their overall feelings about the quality of the work.</li> <li>There is a scoring system.</li> </ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no final grade or score.</li> <li>Some of the criteria are probably more important/difficult than others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scoring system (1–3) is subjective. Different teachers might score the same work differently.</li> </ul>

How could two teachers make sure their scoring would be the same?

- The teachers could ‘cross-mark’ some of the learners’ work, i.e.:
  - make copies of two strong/average/weak pieces of work (six in total)
  - both assess the same work individually without any discussion
  - compare the grades and discuss any differences in scoring
  - agree on the final grade
  - change the criteria/rubric if necessary.
- The teachers could prepare a rubric (descriptions for each of the criteria at each level) like the ones below.

#### Suggested rubric for writing a menu

Criteria	Task completion	Language
3 Outstanding	It looks like a menu and is attractively designed. It is clear and easy to read. You have included all the necessary information and the food items are organised under appropriate headings.	The spelling and grammar are accurate, or mostly accurate (with only 1–2 small errors). The message is still clear and the errors do not confuse the reader.
2 Successful	It looks like a menu and is easy to read. You have used some design elements (e.g. titles, pictures, space and colour) effectively to make it attractive. You included all the necessary information, though one thing may be missing. You have tried to organise the food items in some way.	There are a few errors (3–4) in spelling and grammar but the message is mostly clear.
1 Needs improvement	It does not look like a menu and/or it is difficult to read. There may be no organisation of the information. Some important information is missing. The design would not attract customers to the restaurant.	There are a number of errors in spelling and grammar and these are confusing and/or look unprofessional.

**4B Think: What do you know?**

Criteria	Task completion	Fluency	Language use	Pronunciation
1 Needs improvement	You attempted a presentation, but it was too short and you read from your notes without giving attention to the audience. Some ideas were relevant but they were not complete. Off-topic ideas were confusing.	You tried to take some long turns but most of your sentences were too short for this level. There were frequent hesitations and repetitions.	You used some of the grammar/ vocabulary structures expected at this level, but frequent errors were obvious and sometimes confusing.	It required effort to understand you. Some important words and phrases were difficult to understand/ couldn't be understood.

**Customer and server role play**

Task completion – outstanding

You were able to order what you wanted confidently. You spoke clearly and politely. You asked appropriate questions about the menu and answered any questions the server asked you confidently and easily. You spoke without using any notes.

**5. Engaging my learners in self- and peer assessment and developing their self- and peer assessment skills**

**5A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?**

**To help her learners give feedback that is useful, Lily could:**

- work on building a positive and supportive classroom culture before she introduces peer assessment; it's important that learners trust her and each other, and that they care for and respect their classmates
- ask learners to always add *so that...* to their comments, e.g. *Could you start your presentation with a question so that the audience are interested and thinking about the topic?*
- give learners specific things to look for and comment on (success criteria); it's usually best to discuss these with the learners and try to elicit from them what success would look like for the activity.

**Possible success criteria for interviewing a classmate about their free-time activities**

Did your partner...

- speak clearly
- speak confidently
- make eye contact
- ask follow-up questions to get more information
- show interest in your answers (*Wow. Really! That's interesting.*)
- use correct questions forms?

★★★★ = very well
★★★ = well
★★ = okay
★ = not yet

### Advantages of using self- and peer assessment

- Learners develop a deeper understanding of the subject and the skills they need.
- Learners can improve their performance in exams because they start to think like an examiner and understand what successful work looks like.
- Learners develop independence and autonomy.
- Some learners prefer to receive feedback from their classmates.
- Learners get more feedback than if only the teacher assesses them.
- Teachers can get information about learners' feelings, attitudes, needs, wants and problems.

### 5B Think: What do you know?

**Suggested answers:** 1–A, C; 2–A, B, C, D; 3–A, B; 4–A, B; 5–D; 6–A; 7–A; 8–A; 9–A, D; 10–B.

### 5C Try: How does it work?

This is an example of success criteria for writing the ending of a story. The beginning and middle of the story are given to the learners, who need to write the ending.

**4 = excellent 3 = good 2 = OK 1 = needs work**

Success criteria (for example)	1	2	3	4
The ending is realistic and interesting.				
There's a solution to a problem the characters had in the story.				
The ending describes how the characters are feeling.				
There are interesting adjectives.				
Capital letters and full stops are correct.				
Spelling is correct.				
Past tense is used correctly.				
<i>Add learners' ideas</i>				

## 6. Preparing my learners for formal assessment

### 6A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

#### Diagram A: Strengths

- Colour and images make it attractive and memorable
- Ideas are organised logically by sub-headings (*getting organised, health, revising*)

#### Diagram A: Weaknesses

- The branches (wavy lines) make the text harder to read
- Learners who think they can't draw may not like this style

#### Diagram B: Strengths

- Colourful
- Key words (*summarise, different, water*) stand out
- Easy to read

### **Diagram B: Weaknesses**

- The points are not organised with sub-headings (more difficult to remember)

### **Tips for making effective study notes**

- Use colour – it helps you to remember.
- Use images – they help you to remember.
- Fit your summary of a topic onto one page.
- Use key words only.
- Organise ideas with sub-headings.
- Find your own style – if it helps you remember, do it!

### **6B Think: What do you know?**

**Answers:** 1c; 2b; 3 Excessively = More than is usual or normal; Restless = Unable to sit still or relax; Irritable = Getting annoyed easily

A. Vocabulary questions; B. True or false questions.

Strategies for multiple choice questions

- Read the question and think of the answer before you look at the options.
- Read the options carefully and cross out any that you know are wrong.
- Find the place in the text and underline key words that tell you the answer.
- Choose the best answer (many answers can seem correct).
- Answer the questions you know first.
- If you need to guess, the answer with the most information is more likely to be the correct one.



Photography: © Mat Wright  
Illustrations: ETi asset bank

© **British Council 2019/J105**

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.