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Warming-up Activities for Primary School Pupils

“I don’t want to!”

The teacher gives instructions to the pupils and they respond by saying ‘I don’t want to!’. However, when the instruction refers to a dog, e.g. “Feed the dog!” or “Play with the dog!”, the children must agree and say “Yes, I will!”. The activity can be done by showing the picture of a dog as well. It is a great concentration activity, based on the very fact that children enjoy disagreeing. It is important to keep the rhythm of the activity.

Possible instructions can be:

Sit on your chairs! – I don’t want to!

Open your exercise books! – I don’t want to!

Do your homework! – I don’t want to!

Put away your mobile phones! – I don’t want to!

Tidy the class! – I don’t want to!

Feed the dog! – Yes, I will!

Walk the dog! – Yes, I will!

Broken Sentences

Children work in pairs. Each pair gets a set of slips of paper with a sentence half. They have to match them.

They’re drawing	a) orange juice.
She’s reading	b) television.
He’s drinking	c) a tree.
They’re playing	d) a picture.
I’m riding	e) music.
She’s wearing	f) a comic.
I’m doing	g) table tennis.
He’s driving	h) an exercise.
We’re eating	i) a dress.
You’re climbing	j) chocolate.
You’re listening to	k) a bike.
We’re watching	l) a car.

Key: 1d, 2f, 3a, 4g, 5k, 6i, 7h, 8l, 9j, 10c, 11e, 12b

Sorting

The teacher writes words on colourful cards and sticks them on the left side of the blackboard. Each word is on a separate card. Then the teacher writes four categories side by side on the right side of the board. The children come to the board and have to rearrange the words, stick them under the right category, the one they belong to.

Possible categories: 1. Classroom, 2. The Body, 3. Colours, 4. Adjectives.

Words: head, blue, ears, small, orange, leg, beautiful, ugly, nose, red, brown, black, long, book, CD player, grey, hair, scissors, yellow, arm, orange, mouth, sad, ruler, blackboard, pink, eyes, thin, tall, angry, chalk, notebook, knee.

Other variations can be done as well by choosing different categories and words. The activity is a physical warm-up and is suitable for revising vocabulary.

Envelopes and Letters

The students work in groups of three or four. Each group gets a numbered envelope with a set of letters, each letter written on a separate card. The letters come from one word or expression and are mixed up. The task is to rearrange the letters in order to make words.

Each letter can be used only once. The groups are asked to write down the words. Each envelope contains a different set of letters. The groups are given a time limit of about 1 minute. As soon as it is over, they have to pass their envelope to the other group and they receive a new one, too.

Possible sets of letters:

- POLICESTATION
- WASHINGMACHINE
- RAILWAYSTATION
- POSTOFFICE
- TICKETOFFICE

Sentence Scramble

Children work in pairs or groups of three. Each pair/group receives a numbered envelope containing word cards. Children work with their partners and arrange the cards from the envelope on their desk to make a sentence. Each group receives a different set of words.

Possible sentences:

If it rains tomorrow, I will stay at home.

I went to play football with my friends yesterday afternoon.

Look at those clouds, it is going to rain.

We were having dinner when the taxi arrived.

I usually go to school by bus at 7 o’clock.

Listening Grid

Children get the following grid (prepared and printed in advance):

name	get up	have breakfast	go to school	have lunch	go home	have dinner	go to bed
Vanessa	7.30						
Jack							

They listen to a text read by the teacher about the daily routines of two children, Vanessa and Jack. They have to complete the times in the grid individually, then they compare and check their answers.

Daily routines:

Vanessa gets up at half past seven. She has a shower and cleans her teeth and then she has breakfast at 8 o’clock. Vanessa goes to school with her father at half past eight. She has lunch at half past twelve and she goes home on the bus at quarter to four. After school Vanessa does her homework and watches TV. She has dinner at seven o’clock with her mother and father. She goes to bed at half past nine.

Jack gets up at seven o’clock. He goes to the bathroom, has a wash and has breakfast at half past seven. He goes to school with his friends at eight o’clock. He has lunch in the school canteen at twelve o’clock and he goes home at quarter past two. He does his homework and plays tennis with his brother. He has dinner with his family at six o’clock. He goes to bed at half past eight.

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