

Task-based Language Teaching to Promote Oral Communication

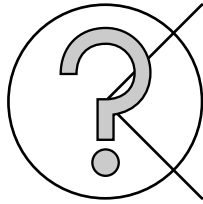
Dr. Linh Phung

Founder, Eduling International (eduling.org)

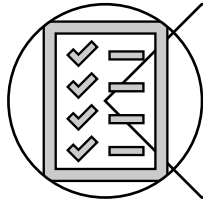
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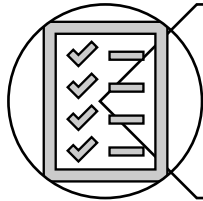
Agenda



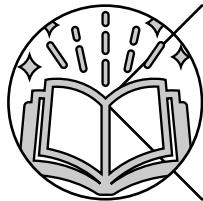
The importance of authentic language use



Criteria of a task



Task types



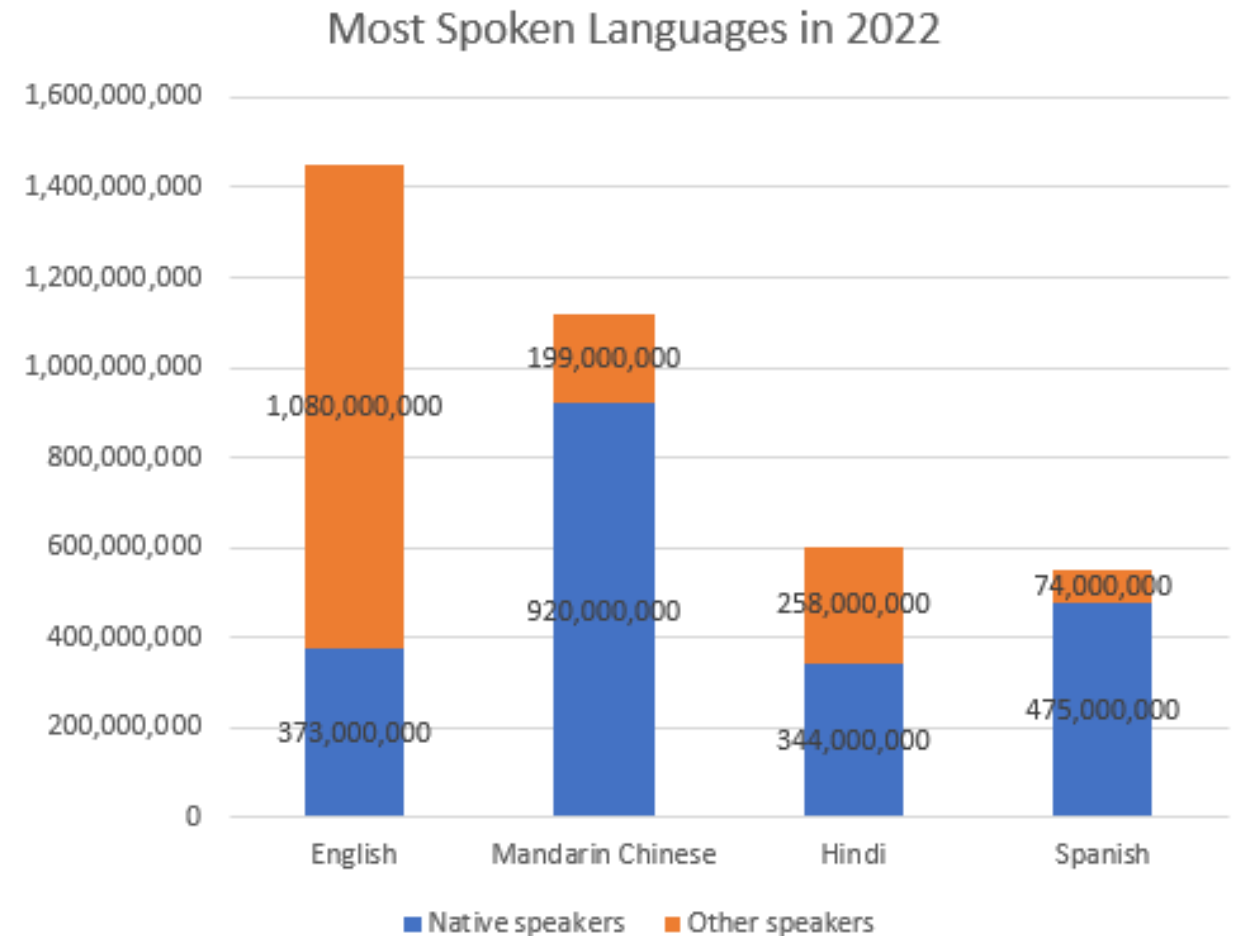
Task implementation considerations

The importance of authentic language use

- 1.5 billion English speakers
- Goal of many learners: communicate internationally

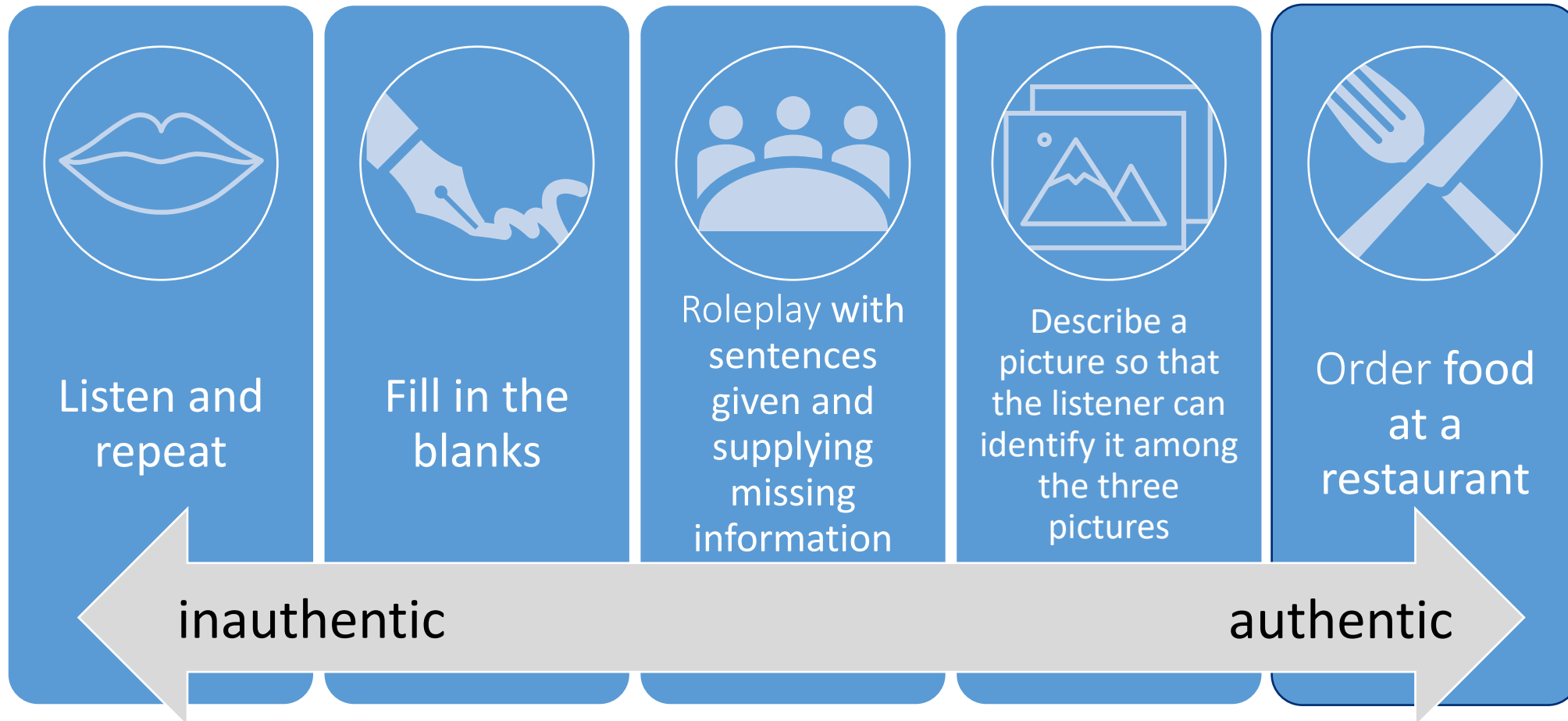
However ...

- Speaking is difficult to master
 - Lack of opportunities to practice
 - Unwillingness to communicate
 - Controlled practice with minimal responses



Data from Eberhard, D., Simons G., & Fennig, C. (eds). (2022).

Authentic language use: English as a tool

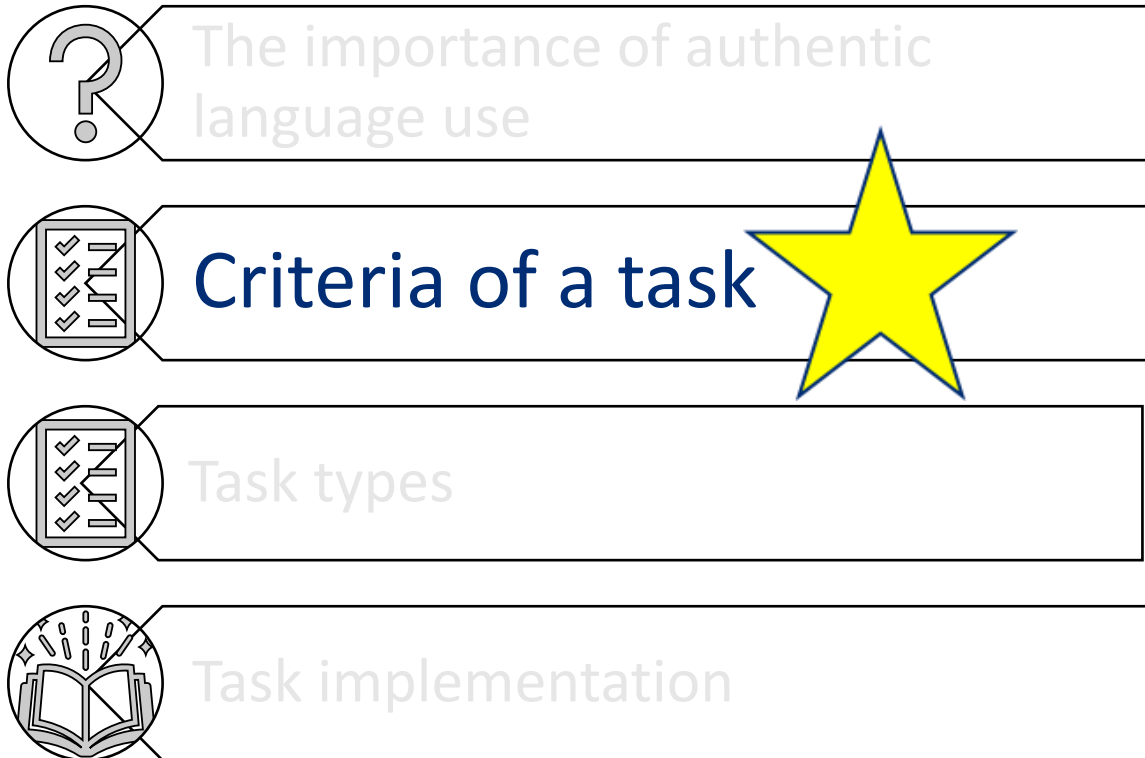


Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

TBLT is an approach to language teaching that “aims to develop learners’ communicative competence by engaging them in meaning-focused communication through the performance of tasks” (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 135; Ellis, 2022)



What is a task?



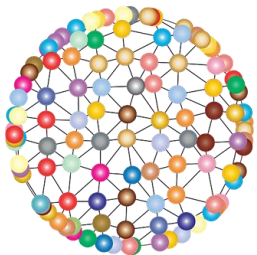
A task is an activity in which a person engages to **attain an objective**, and which requires the **comprehension and/or production of meaningful messages** (Van den Branden, 2006)

Examples of real-life communicative tasks: ordering food in a restaurant, scheduling a meeting with a colleague, finding a solution to a work problem

Question for you

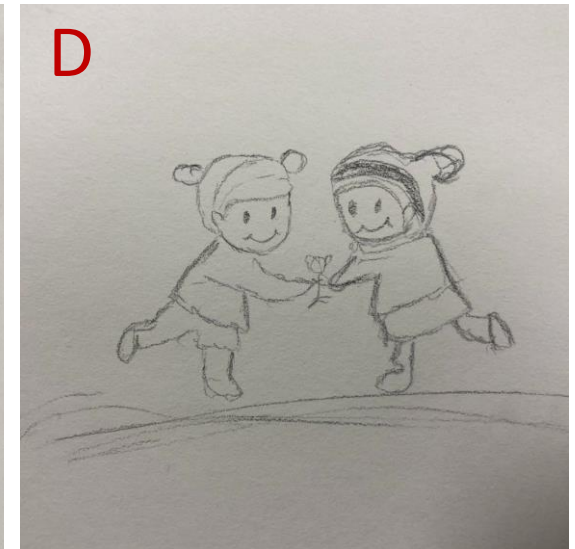
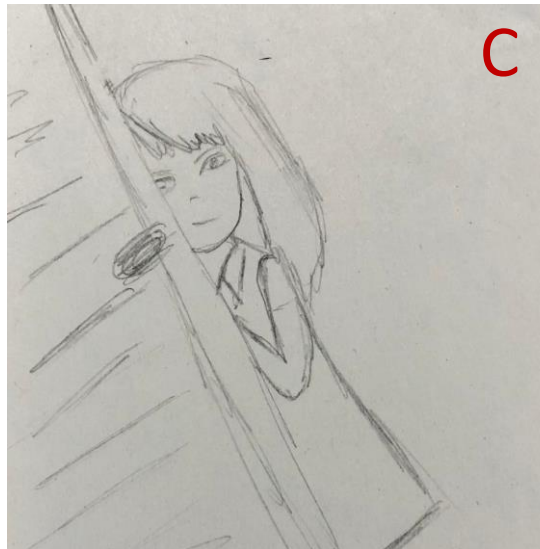
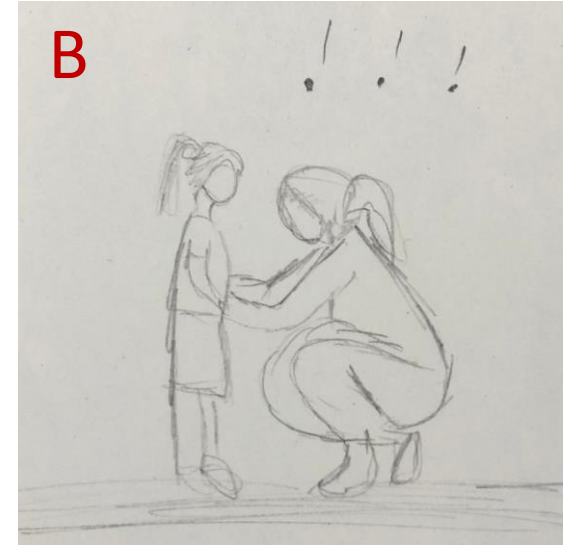
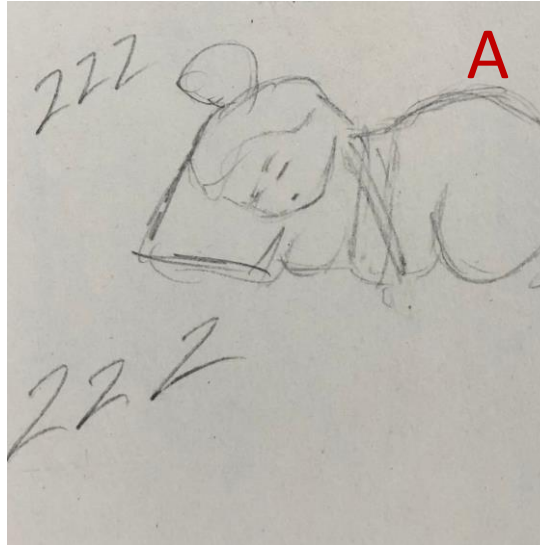


What are other examples of real-life communicative tasks?

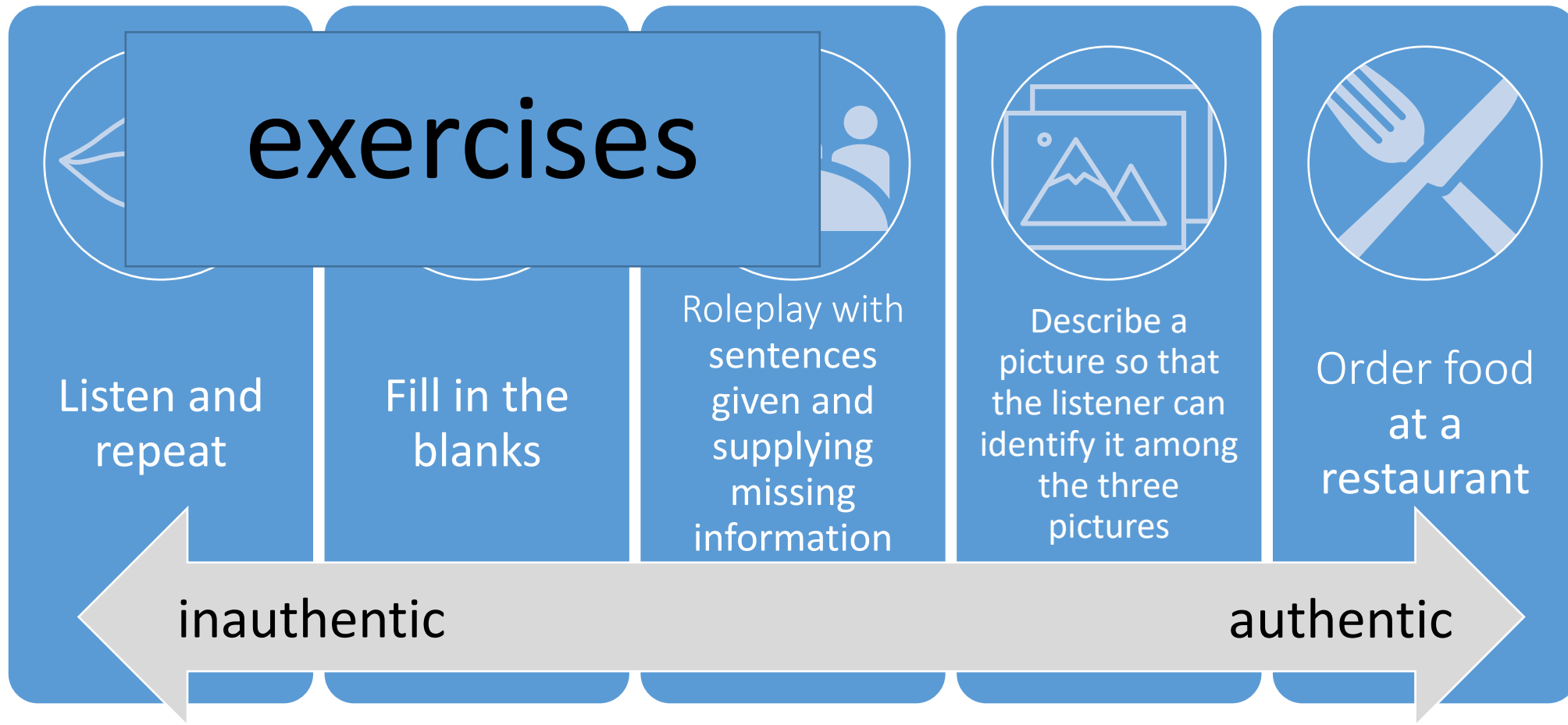


Criteria of a task (Ellis, 2003)

1. Learners' primary focus is on meaning
2. Learners use their own resources
3. There's a communicative gap
4. There's a non-linguistic outcome



What's not a task?



A task or not a task?

- Having students debate who the best footballer is in groups
- Having students answer “Would You Rather” questions in pairs:
Would you rather have five brothers or five sisters? Would you rather live in the sky or in the ocean?
- Having students tell a story about being scared to a partner

Is this a task?

Mia is ordering food from a server in a cafeteria. One of you is Mia. One of you is the server.

What Mia wants	What the server has
A hamburger	Ham sandwiches
French fries	French fries
A large coffee	Medium coffee
Brownie	Brownie

Based on the information you have, make a conversation like this.

Mia: Could I have _____ please?

The server: Here you are/ I'm sorry, I don't have it, but I have a _____.

This is considered a task

Student A

You are ordering food from a server. This is what you'd like to have. Make a conversation with the server to order your food. Put a tick next to the items that the server doesn't have.

What to order

- A hamburger
- French fries
- A large coffee
- Brownie

Student B

You are a server taking an order from a customer. This is what you have available. Make a conversation with the customer. Take notes of the items the customer ordered but you don't have.

What's available

- Ham sandwiches
- French fries
- Medium coffee
- Brownie

How does this activity meet the four criteria of a task?

1. Primary focus on meaning
2. Communicative gap
3. Own resources
4. Non-linguistic outcome

Spot the Difference: One-Way



Instructions

I (the presenter) have a picture that you don't see.

You have this picture.

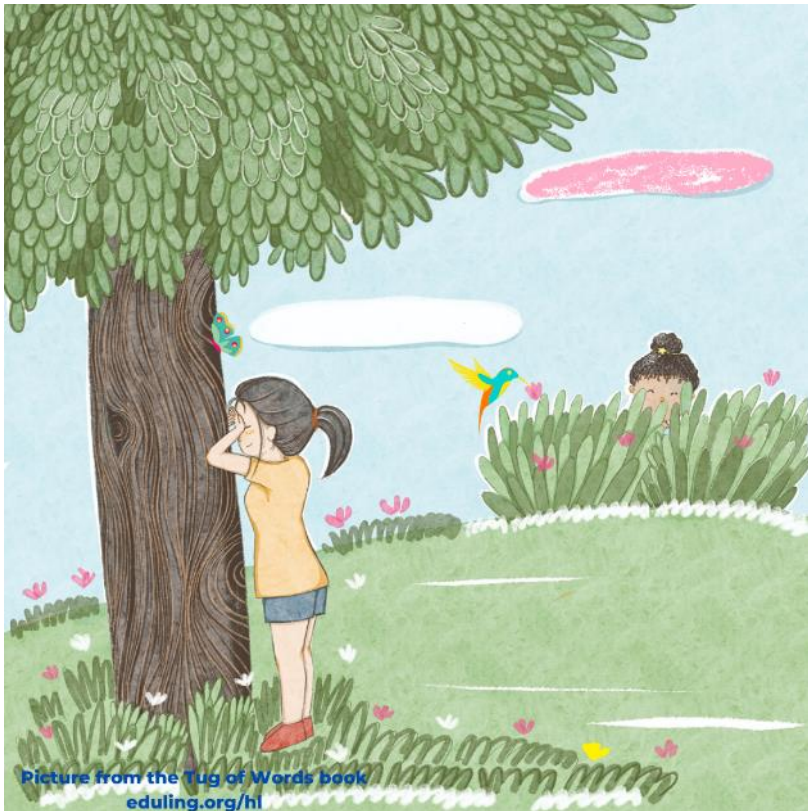
There are some differences between the two pictures.

Listen to me describing my picture and identify three differences.

Spot the Difference: Two-Way

Student A

You have a picture, and your partner has a picture. There are five differences between them. Talk with your partner to mark five differences.



Student B

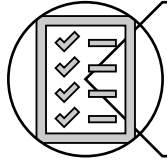
You have a picture, and your partner has a picture. There are five differences between them. Talk with your partner to mark five differences.



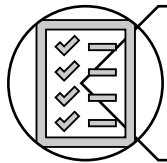
Task types



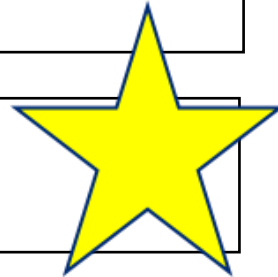
The importance of authentic language use



Criteria of a task



Task types



Task implementation

- Types of communicative gap
- Discourse types

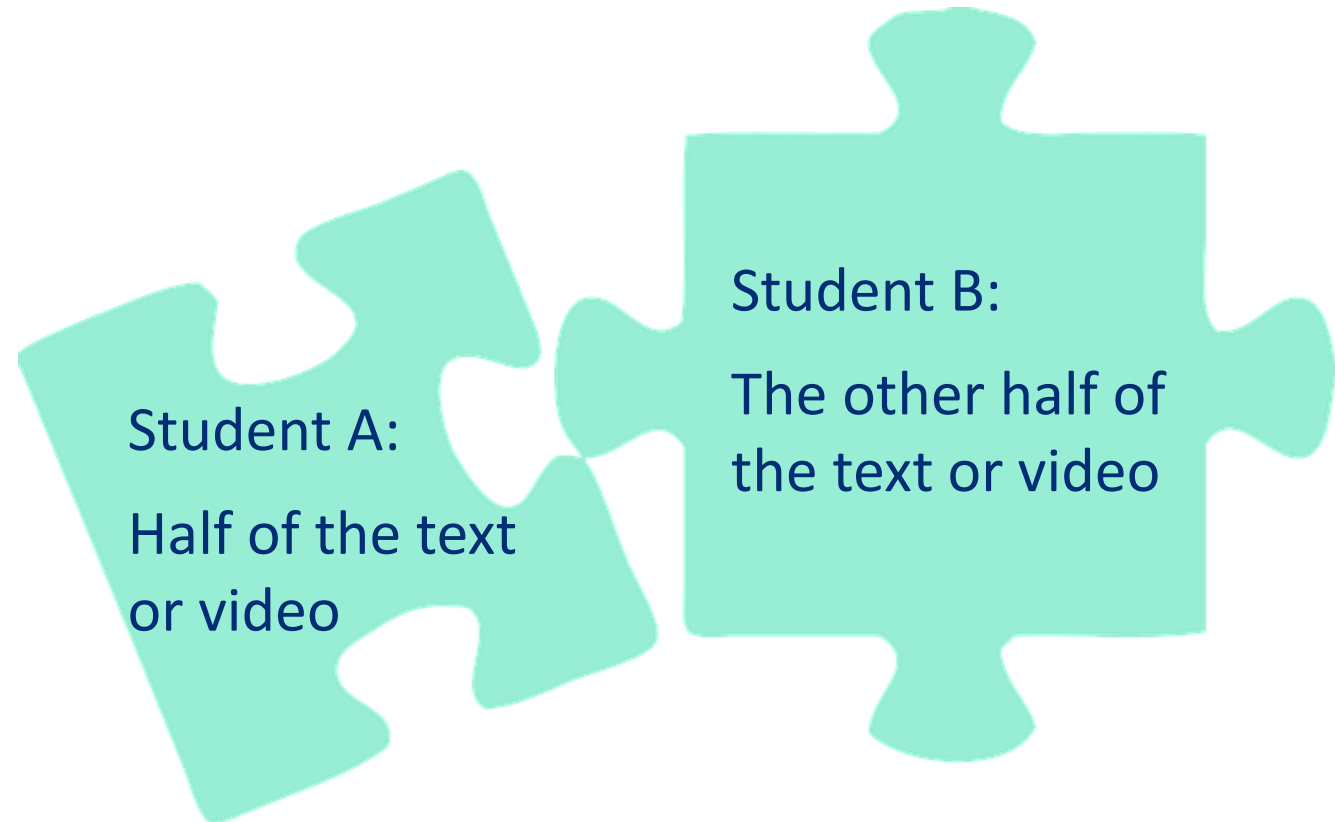
Communicative Gap

- Information gap
- Opinion gap
- Decision making
- Language focus:
Text reconstruction/ Dictogloss



Jigsaw Reading and Jigsaw Viewing

- Choose a text with sections to divide among students or a video. (I usually choose short videos)
- Ask some students to read/watch half of the text/video and the others to read/watch the other half
- Ask students to take notes or give them a graphic organizer for notes
- Ask them to work in pairs to describe their half of the text/video to their partner



More detailed description:

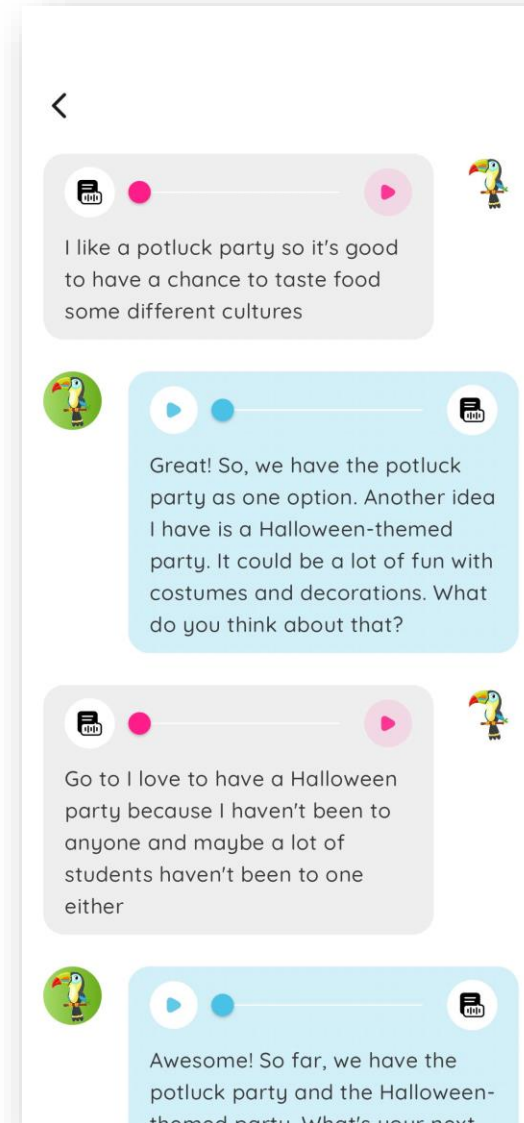
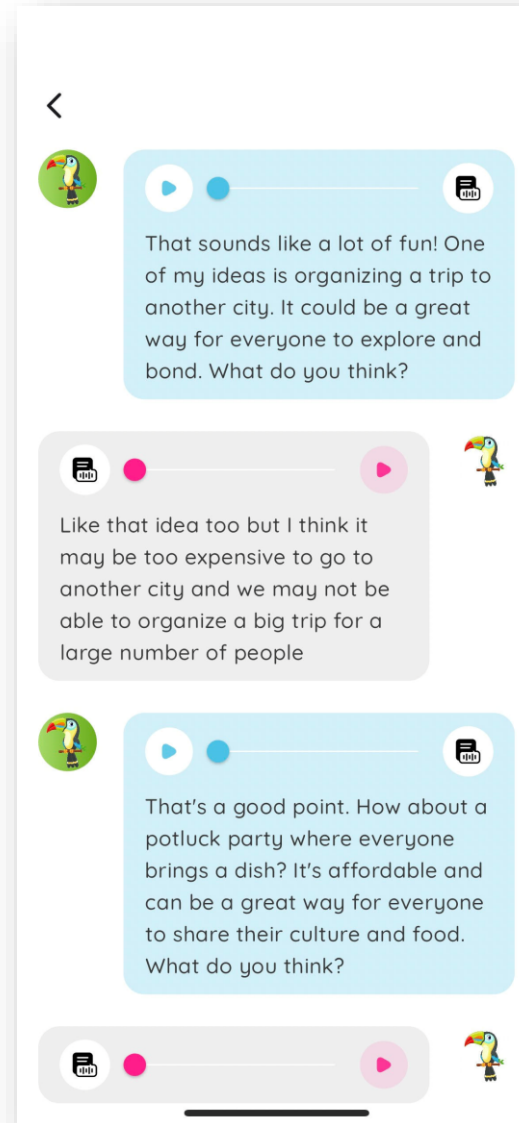
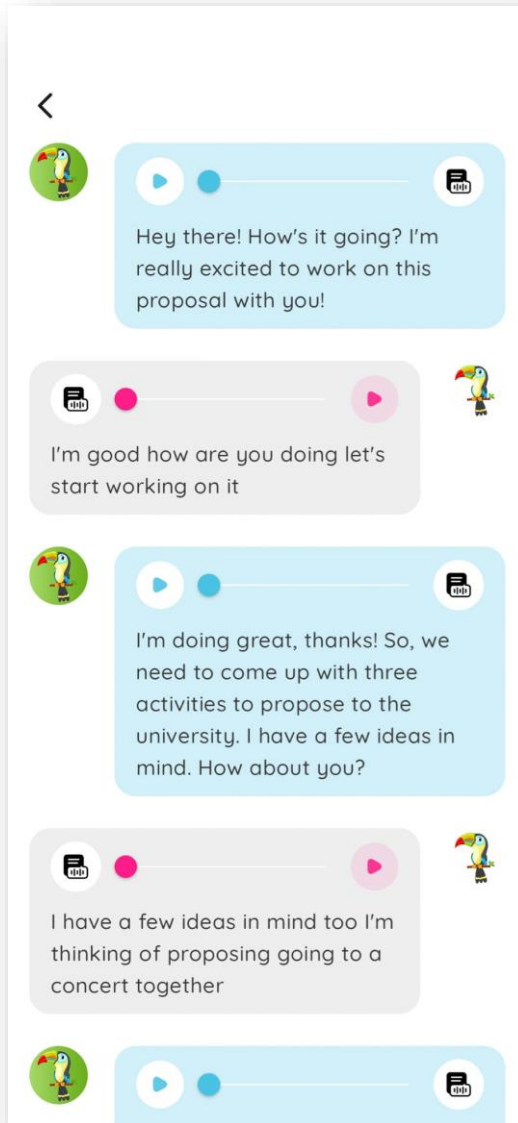
<https://www.eduling.org/post/four-activities-2>

Decision making

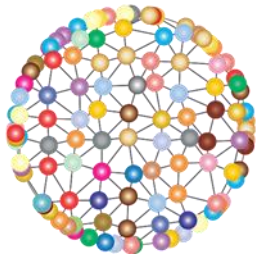
You're proposing three activities to the Student Activities Office at your university. Work in a group of three to decide on three activities to propose. Follow the steps below:

1. Spend two minutes to think of three activities on your own
2. Share your activities with your group. If your activities are the same, think of something new so that together you have 9 activities to consider.
3. Discuss and decide on three activities.

Decision making with AI from the Eduling Speak app



Question for you



What types of decisions can you ask students to make in a classroom task?

Dictogloss

Step 1: Choose a short text (100 words) with interesting content

Step 2: Read the text at a normal speed for students to take notes

Step 3: Read the text at a slower speed for students to take more notes

Step 4: Let students share their notes in pairs

Step 5: Read the text again at a normal speed

Step 6: Have students reconstruct the text in pairs with as many details as they can

Step 7: Give them the original text so they can compare and make corrections

Step 8: Collect their work and give more feedback

Let's try one together

Please get your note paper and pen ready!

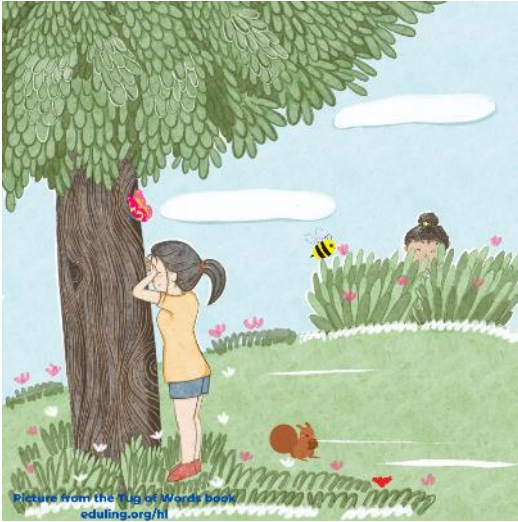
- What do you think about the experience?
- How easy or difficult was it to take notes?
- What does it draw students' attention to?



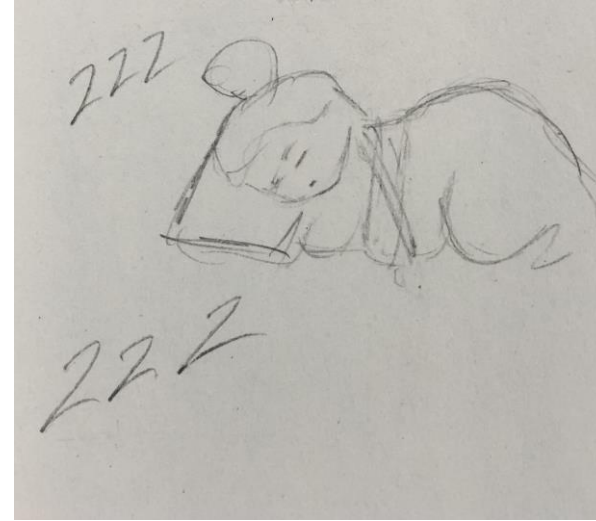
Original text

Ameera has been studying English at Universe University for a few months. She lives with her husband and her 4-year-old son. She has a college degree in psychology and wants to improve her English so she can study for a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology in America. In her English class, people know her for working hard, having strong opinions, and being funny. When she talks in class, she makes people laugh with her funny stories and creative ideas. One day, she told a story about her dream home on a cliff by the ocean, where giraffes eat leaves from trees inside the house. She ended by saying "This is my dream home. Don't ask me why," and everyone laughed out loud for minutes.

Discourse Types



Description:
Describing
objects, people,
sceneries



Narration:
Telling a story



Instruction: How
to make Chung
cake, directions,
how to solve a
math problem

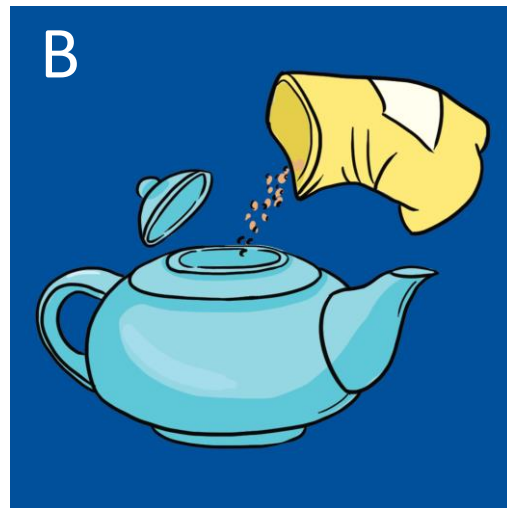
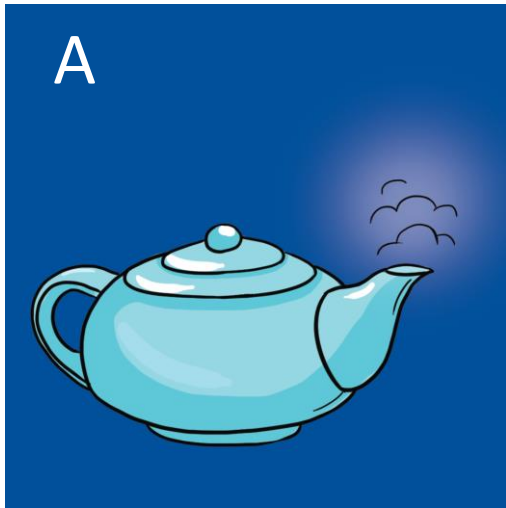


Argumentation:
Stating an
opinion and
supporting it

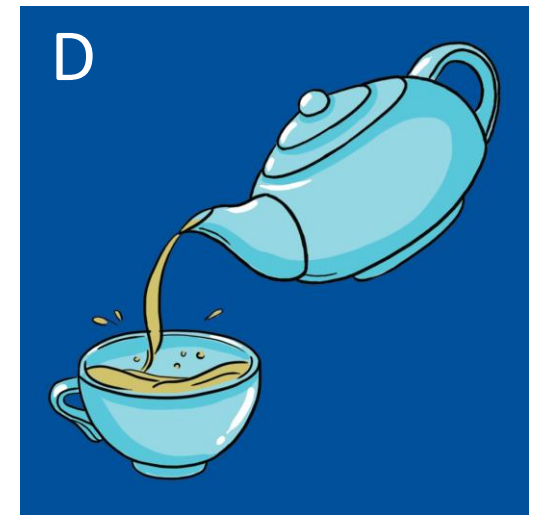
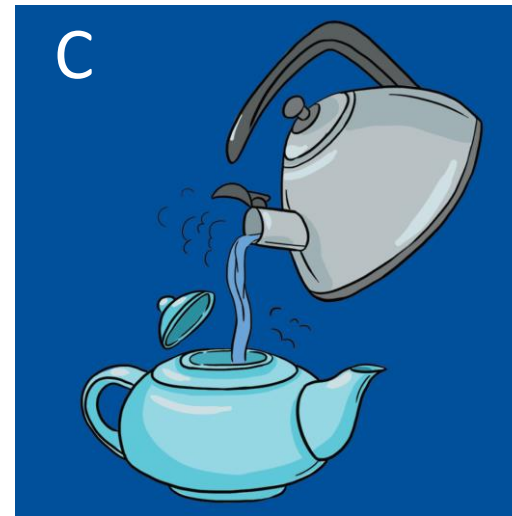
Example: Picture Sequencing

Directions: These pictures illustrate how to make tea. Each of you has two pictures. Describe your pictures so you can put them into a sequence. Don't show your pictures to your partner.

Student A

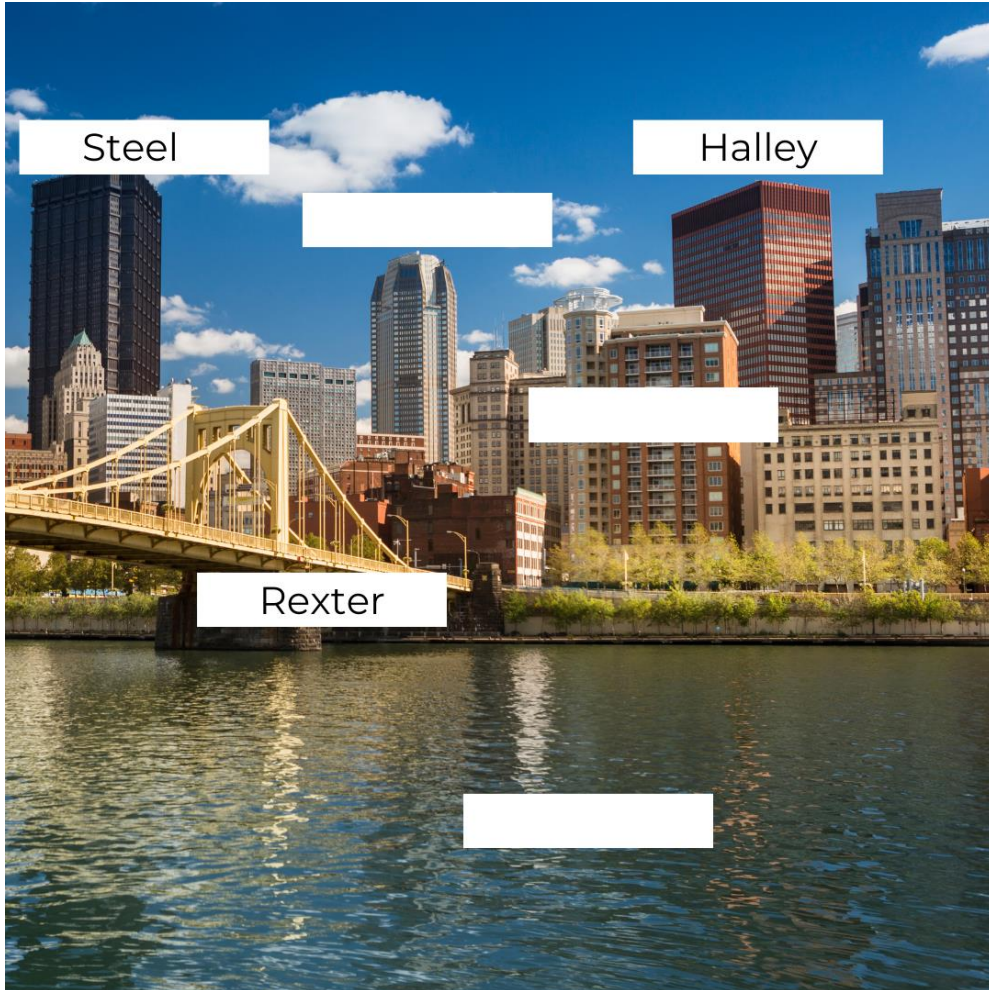


Student B

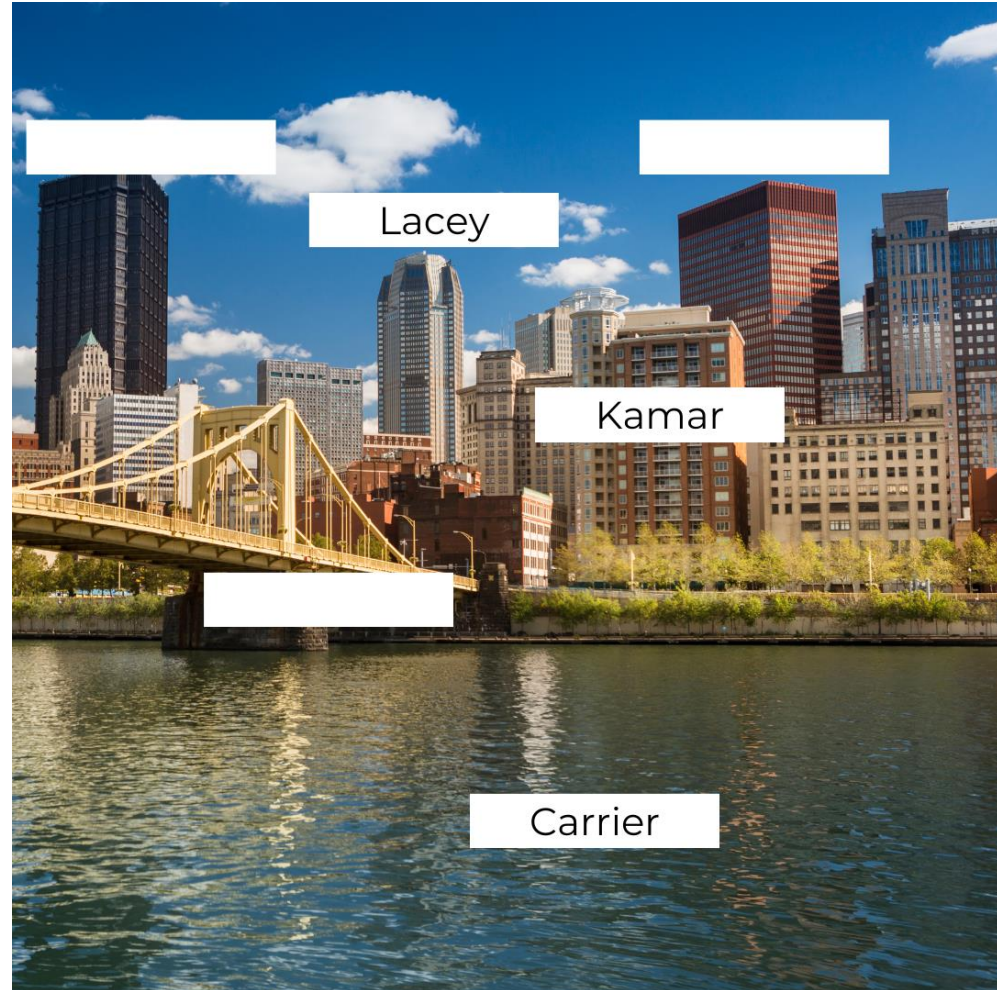


Let's try this!

Example: Picture Description



Student A

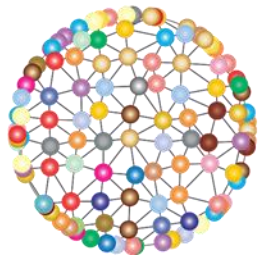


Student B

Question for you



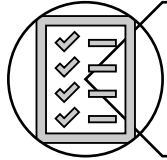
What tasks have you used in your classroom?



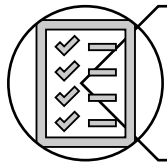
Task implementation considerations



The importance of authentic language use



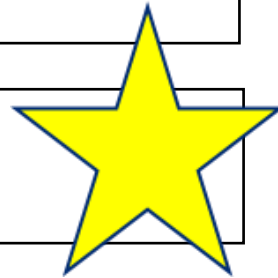
Criteria of a task



Task types



Task implementation considerations



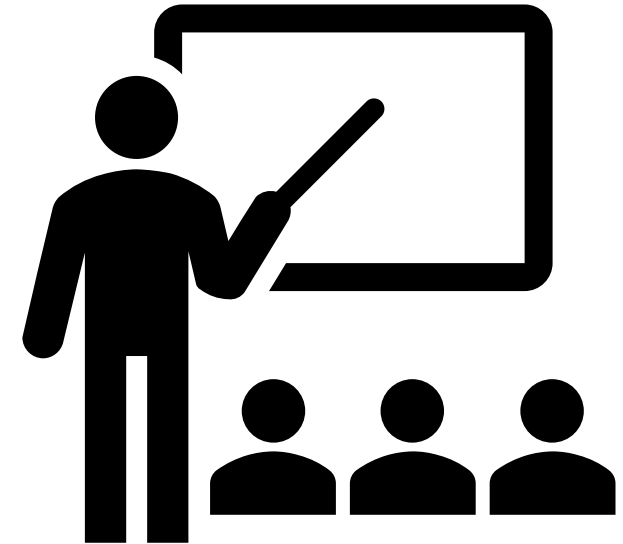
- Pre-task stage
- Pairing/grouping of participants
- Planning
- Task repetition
- Post-task requirement and review

Task implementation considerations

Pre-task stage

- Give instructions
- Study the task materials
- Review key vocabulary

Ex: *psychology, improve, Master's degree, Counseling Psychology, creative, cliff*



Task implementation considerations

Pairing/ Grouping

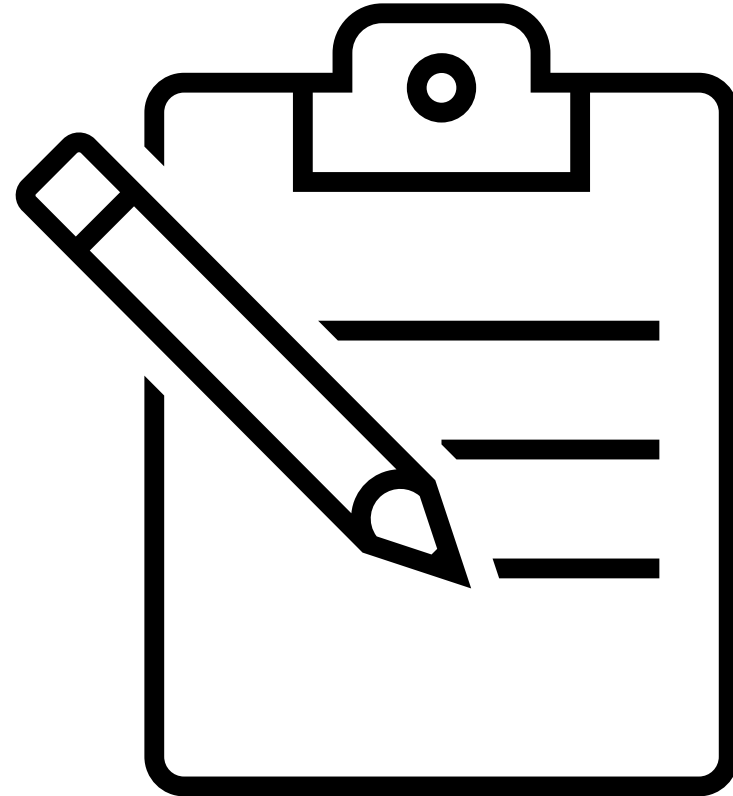
- Speaker/ listener roles
- Proficiency level
- Backgrounds



Task implementation considerations

Planning time

- With or without planning
- Planning → more fluent/
complex language use



Task implementation considerations

Task repetition

- Repeat the task with a different partner or with a different amount of time
- Helpful for fluency, coherence, and perhaps accuracy

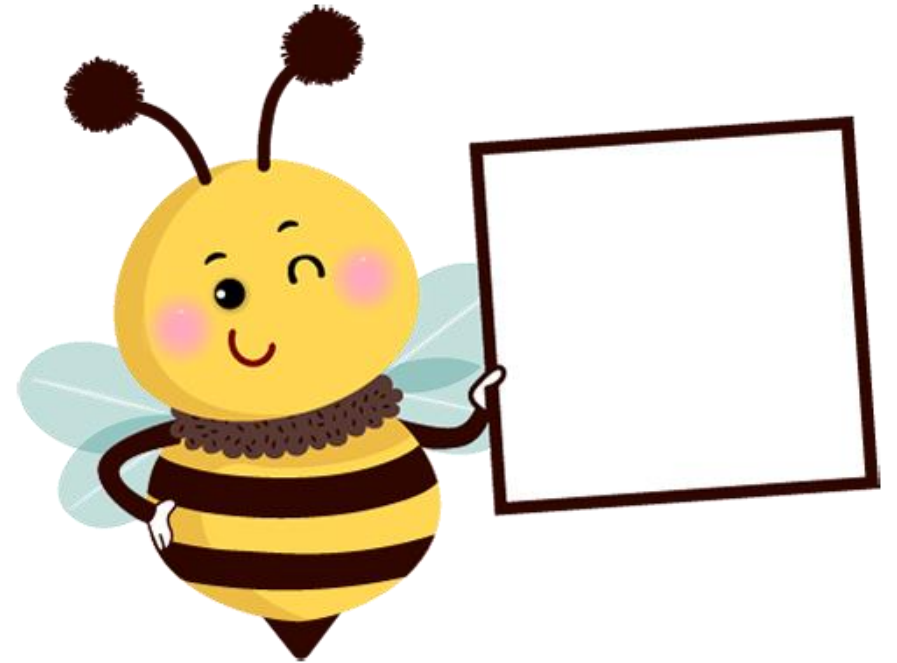


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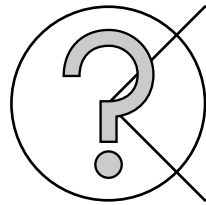
Task implementation considerations

Post-task requirement and review

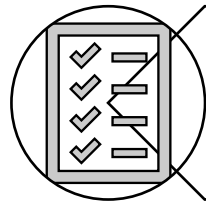
- Present the decision to the class
- Submit their work
- Review language
- Reflect on task performance



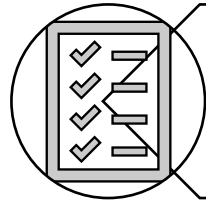
In this session, we've covered ...



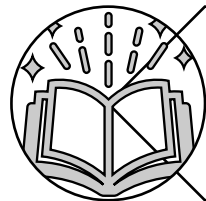
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Task types



Task implementation considerations



Final Comment: Benefits of Tasks

- Encourage authentic language use
- Address language needs as they arise in communication
- Teach language in context → Better transfer to real-life contexts
- Facilitate language development through tasks that involve all skills



Let's Reflect

Now that you've learned about many considerations in developing tasks, what's something you'd like to try in your next class?

What would you like to learn more about?

Share your ideas in the chat.



Connect with me and try my app and books

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www.eduling.org/speak



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