



## DIFFERENTIATION, SOCIAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

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### Annotation

This article describes how to implement useful social activities in teaching foreign languages, especially English language. Here is given types of activities and how to use them in teaching young learners. While writing these statements we should note that in nonnative speakers and pupils need to help to develop their overview with different activities.

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Social studies instruction should challenge students to think about the events that have made our world the way it is: the lessons should be so engaging and interactive that no child could ever find it boring. Therefore everybody is proud of you for even bothering to read this page, because a lot of teachers don't even try to step out of their comfort zones. Chances are, students hate social studies either because it's boring to their or the kids just don't know anything about foreign language and teachers are uncomfortable teaching it. The good news is that teachers can tell the kids this! "I like to explain to my class that everyone has a subject that is harder for them than others, and mine is science. I tell them that we'll be learning together and that when they ask questions I don't know the answer to, we'll write them down and later go online or ask the science specialist to help us. No one is good at everything!" Be honest with your kids. Choosing social studies read-aloud with lots of interesting tidbits about a subject you don't know much about makes you learn together. ABC books are great for this. For example, I know next to nothing about the INVERSION, especially since it's not in our curriculum. However, the pupils in my class always love to read about not knowing things, and I want to encourage them to learn about things they love, so I got a book called "ROUND UP". Each unit of

the alphabet stands for one grammatical theme, and we learn together about important rules and things in the sentence during our daily read-aloud time.

Afterward, we have a general idea of what life were like during the war—with no research on my part, no testing, and no worksheets. Just learning for the sake of learning. What a concept. You can find many more easy ways to integrate social studies concepts into your reading instruction on the Social Studies in Literacy Routines page. Donald Graves writes, “The objects eventually lead to people, and it is through the eyes of these people that the culture is understood”. This could be done gradually, with students exploring one new artifact each day and slowly making connections between the items to draw inferences about the culture. This approach makes customs concrete and can be adapted to fit your teaching style and strengths: students could pretend to be native and, you could dress up like a detective and make a big show of pulling the artifact out of a special container, students could catalog the items in journals or do group discoveries.

Children are curious about the world around them and love to discover why things are the way they are. Teachers encourage you to base your social studies instruction on current events and student interests as much as possible. Many teachers included, have more freedom to teach what and how we want in social studies than in any other subject. Teachers have state standards that students need to master, but they don’t have to use the textbook provided. In fact, my sisters don’t even keep the texts in their desks because we only reference them a few times a year.

Even if you’re not a language enthusiast, there’s probably a time period or culture that has always fascinated you. Incorporate that interest through read-aloud and mini units. Your excitement will be contagious and the children will begin looking at foreign language as a unique, individual passion, much like reading, we all have certain genres and authors that we enjoy. Teach with your strengths, and try new things. When you change the way you teach it, you change the way they learn it. Kids know when you enjoy talking about your topic.(10;627)

Look at your state standards. Chances are elementary school children no longer have to memorize dates or identify random grammar rules like we did when we were growing up. Now, students need to understand systems and cultures. This is your license to make instruction hands-on and engaging! The goal is to have kids discover foreign language, not have it taught to them. This



is easier than it sounds. Here are some great activities I learned, mostly from Social Studies Alive workshop, which you can use over and over with almost any foreign language and grammar rules in any grade level.

Before introducing a grammar rules present the situation to students hypothetically. Have them close their eyes and imagine... or use photos and other artifacts to tell about the political climate or cultural environment of the time. What shapes history are the things that people were willing to fight for and change, so getting students to care about what their ancestors did is critical. Have students think or write independently about how they would have responded to a theme, and after they have gathered their thoughts, have them discuss in groups Try to overthrow the government? Make do with the situation and work within the system? Someone will eventually suggest finding a new place to live, and that's when you can say, let's find out what some people really did 500 years ago. Put students in groups and give them three choices based on the discussion, and try to get the entire group to decide on one choice. Be sure to discuss how to respectfully agree or disagree. Groups could make a chart listing the reasons for their choice. While this may seem advanced for the elementary grades, remember that students don't have to give realistic responses or think out all possible consequences: just getting them to think about their choices and those of people long ago is enough to get them engaged and thinking critically in a way that is developmentally appropriate.(11;590)

The main aim of such an approach to teaching a foreign language is to change the emphasis from various types of exercises to the active mental activity of students, which requires proficiency in certain linguistic means for its design. Hutchinson carried out a project on 'Animals in Danger' for secondary school students, in which they use knowledge from Science and Geography to research threatened species, write an article, and make a poster.

Only the project method might solve this didactic task and turn foreign language lessons into a discussion, research club. Create a word wall for the unit you are studying, and have students suggest words to add. This can be done traditionally on a wall, or in other ways, such as a file folder word bank. These file folders can be kept up for reference during your unit, then put in the writing center for students to continue to incorporate the vocabulary in their writing.

Since art go foreign countries, there is artwork for almost every time period and culture your students will study. Show children paintings and sculptures from



your chosen country and have kids make inferences about the culture. Even young children can draw conclusions about the popular styles of dress and therefore climate and geography, hobbies and interests, and cultural values of people just by looking at artwork. Art is a reflection of the time period and culture it is created in, so any introduction to art is an introduction to history. Check with your art teacher to find additional resources, videos, prints, activities, etc.

Students love to re-enact different countries, so get them actively involved! One powerful example is a slave ship experiential exercise. Show students a diagram of the inside of a slave ship and discuss. Volunteers must then stand extremely close to one another. Yarn can be lightly wrapped around their wrists and ankles to represent the way slaves were chained to one another. Once students are in position, they must remain still and silent for 30-60 seconds. After going back to their seats, elicit their feelings, questions, and ideas about the Middle Passage. The follow-up discussion is critical in allowing students to process and make connections. An activity such as this can be disturbing but will help students understand the reality of slave transport and how abominable the slave trade really was. Another idea is to have pairs of students share a desk for a period of time, and give privileges and treats only to the 'owner' of the desk.

Have students create postcards from the culture or time period they are studying. The postcard should be written as if the child actually lived at that time and is explaining daily life to a faraway friend. The postcard could mention recent activities, chores, weather, etc. You can provide students with a photocopied postcard outline and picture or have students create their own. The idea of a postcard is a bit difficult for young children, but with some concept development and modeling beforehand, it can be a great synthesis activity and provides a unique opportunity for writing practice.

This is a great culminating activity. Have students collect or create 'artifacts' to represent a time period or historical person. Children must put a set number of items in a paper bag and pull them out one at a time, in a predetermined order, for the class to predict what event is being represented. For example, in an American History unit, a child could make a paper bag for Thomas Jefferson, and pull out a student-made replica of the Declaration of Independence, a picture of the plantation Jefferson lived on, and a drawing of Jefferson. The rest of the class can write their guesses down after each item is pulled out, and

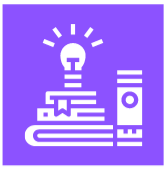


discuss their answers at the end before the child reveals who the paper bag items represent.

Choose items from a specific time period or culture have students explore the artifacts and discover the time period through them. The possibilities are endless! It is crucial that children are allowed to socially interact with other people who can vocalize and respond to questions. For language acquisition to develop successfully, children must be in an environment that allows them to communicate socially in that language. Children who have learnt sound, meaning and grammatical system of language that can produce clear sentence may still not have the ability to use language effectively in various social circumstances.

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