

1.Topic-Building writing through appropriate Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

2.Sub-Topics- Effective Writing and importance of Vocabulary and Grammar

3.Outcomes-

a.use different ways to enhance your students’ vocabulary and punctuation skills,

b.use authentic texts such as news reports to familiarize your students with conventions of grammar and uses of punctuation, and

c.develop your students’ confidence in communicating through writing.

4.Introduction

One of the interesting things about the English language is that there is often little correspondence between the spoken and the written form. This means that many words in English — for example, write women, sight and white —are pronounced differently from how they are spelt. Sometimes the meaning that is conveyed depends on the spelling or the arrangements of the words. Words like write, right and rite, or sight, cite and site have different meanings, but are pronounced the same. Similarly, the same sound may be spelt in different ways — for example, the sound “sh(u)n” in mission and addition . Or the same sequence of letters may be pronounced differently in different words — for example, the sequence *ough*, which has a different pronunciation in rough (“ruff”), though (“thoa”), through (“throo”) and thought (“thot”). These characteristics of English are a challenge to many students in secondary school. The resources and activities in this module should help you use interesting activities to develop students’ effective writing skills.

5. Thoughts to ponder over

a.What strategies do you use to help your students understand the meanings of unfamiliar words?

b.How effective do you think it is to ask your students to refer to a dictionary every time they encounter a new word? If you have encouraged students to do this, has it helped them improve their vocabulary?

6.Terminology

a.Semantic Markers-Words and phrases that help signal the progression of ideas in a text. Semantic markers can perform various functions, such as showing the chronology of events (firstly, then, eventually, in the end), a cause and effect relationship (since, because, so, consequently), summing up (in short, to sum up), rephrasing (in other words) and so on. These expressions help a reader to navigate easily through a text.

b. Context-The context of a word can be either physical or linguistic. The physical context refers to the real-world situation in which the word is used, as in “horrible weather” (i.e., bad weather — when it’s raining heavily). The linguistic context refers to the words or sentences surrounding the word that help to make its meaning clear, as in “I don’t know what’s happening to me... I seem to be making mistakes all the time! It’s horrible! I think I need to take a break” (horrible here referring to some unhappy circumstances).

7. Activities

Activity 1: Expanding your students’ vocabulary: Adjectives of quality

Having a wide range of vocabulary is very important when you’re writing in English. An excellent way to improve your vocabulary is to read as much as possible. If you read books, newspapers or magazines in English, you will learn many new words and common English idioms. Remember to write down the new words and expressions you read and their meanings so you can learn them. After you have written something in English, you should always read it again, either straight away or the next day. When you do this, you will probably see a few mistakes that you didn’t notice when you were writing it. Remember to check the spelling, grammar and vocabulary – have you used a particular word many times? Can you think of another way to say it?

However, most English adjectives have **collocation restrictions**. For instance, the adjective *meticulous* will collocate with the nouns *planning*, *embroidery* or *work*, but is unlikely to be used with the noun *vocabulary*, as in the phrase *meticulous vocabulary*. This activity is meant to help you develop the students’ skills in creative composition with exercises on using adjectives of quality. As a pre-task, show the students a picture of any object (an umbrella/a car/some scenery, etc.) and ask them randomly to use an adjective to describe it. For example, they might say *red/spotted/large/frilled/ladies’/silk umbrella*. Remind them that such adjectives are called adjectives of quality as they tell us more of the distinctive characteristics of the object (umbrella).

Pick up any adjective from the ones supplied (e.g., *red*) and ask the students to replace it with synonyms. Encourage them to use words that are creative and interesting (*scarlet/crimson/fiery red/tomato red*, etc.). Discuss with them the special meanings that arise with each new synonym, and how one can use language creatively by using adjectives of quality appropriately.

Now divide the class into groups of five or six and distribute the passage given below (Resource 1). Instruct the groups to replace the adjectives in the passage with appropriate and interesting synonyms. Allow them to use a dictionary or thesaurus to be creative. After they finish, ask them to present the passages with the new adjectives. Discuss how each new version makes the passage more interesting.

As a homework assignment, ask the students to write a similar composition using the words they have just learned. This will help them improve their active vocabulary

Resource 1-

The Incas: A unique civilisation

The Incas of Peru were one of the most civilized races that lived on earth. They were a small ethnic group who came to rule an empire of more than 12 million people. They established their powerful empire in Cuzco in Peru and built their kingdom using splendid architectural designs. The Incas were also skilled craftsmen who created beautiful jewellery and textiles. They were able administrators who ruled with a mixture of force and kindness. They were also tolerant rulers, and allowed people of different races to practise their religions and cultures peacefully.

Things changed, however, when the Spanish conquerors arrived in 1532.

With an army of fewer than 400 men, the cunning Spanish defeated the Inca army of 40,000 soldiers. Then the vicious conquerors began looting and plundering the riches of the Inca culture. Most of the amazing architecture and intricate buildings the Incas had carefully built were torn down and replaced by Spanish-style palaces and fortresses.

Luckily for the world, one astonishing discovery was made in 1911 of a splendid piece of Inca architecture. It was of Machu Picchu, the temple of the sun god. This magnificent Inca memorial stands at the top of a mountain near the Urubamba river in Peru. The Incas did not survive, but their temple remains a glorious tribute to their civilization: a timeless memorial of the greatness of a people we can only read about in history books.

Activity 2: Using punctuation for effective writing

As a preparation for this lesson, put this well-known sentence on the board:

A bear eats shoots and leaves.

Now show your students, with a little humour, how the meaning of these words changes when we punctuate the words differently (and add extra text):

A bear eats shoots and leaves. (Describes what a bear eats.)

The hunter sees *a bear, eats, shoots and leaves.* (Narrates, a little dramatically, the actions of a hunter: four steps taken chronologically.)

Stopping for a while, *a bear eats shoots, and leaves.* (Narrates the chronology of the two things a bear does.)

A hunter sees *a bear, eats shoots, and leaves*. (Narrates the chronology of the three actions of the hunter.)

Call their attention to how punctuation marks such as commas and semi-colons can change the meaning in sentences and longer passages. You can highlight the fact that being able to use punctuation skilfully is a part of effective writing.

If you wish to give them more practice, use different extracts from passages that illustrate the use of other punctuation marks such as the colon, dash, exclamations and so on.

8.Assessment

As a homework task, you can ask your students to write and bring to the class a short story (not more than three paragraphs) on a popular folk tale similar to **The Tortoise Story(given in the web)**, or have them make up their own story, with at least two characters and dialogue between them.

9.Feedback: Do you think these exercises were helpful?

10.Web Resources

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv_tDwBp1Bc

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