



## HOW TO READ THE ACTIVITIES

Each activity is organised so you can see immediately when you can use it in your lesson.

**The category in red describes the goal of the activity**

**The lesson stage in purple describes when to use the activity**

**Step by Step** summarizes the activity in a few steps

The **Details** part explains how the activity works

**Variations** shows some ideas you can implement the activities in a couple of different ways

**"Why is this CLIL?"** clarifies the background of the activity

*Instruction* states how you can explain the assignment to your students

Have fun reading the guide and be sure to let me know what you think. More activities, articles and inspiration can be found at [www.clilmagazine.com](http://www.clilmagazine.com).

## ACTIVITY 1: WHAT DID WE DO

### Activate Prior Knowledge

Lesson stage: Warming-up

Many teachers start the lesson by saying what they will do this lesson. A lot might also refer to a previous lesson and do a small recap. Another way to start a lesson, and in my opinion an even better option, is a recap provided by students. CLIL is all about student-orientated learning and this activity will allow for that aspect of CLIL.

### Step by step

1. Students get a minute to think about what we did the previous lesson and write down a couple of keywords they think of.
2. Students name their answers and the teacher writes them on the board. Students explain their answers in full sentences, even when they only name a word.
3. The teacher checks if the answers he wanted are on the blackboard and adds to it if needed.

### Details

- The teacher should make sure the students think about the keywords for themselves to allow for every student to give input.
- When making the students explain their answer, the teacher can ask for synonyms as well. If students can't come up with any, other students can help out. To make sure the words are remembered the students can be asked to repeat the answers provided by other students.

### Variation

- The teacher can ask students what new words they learned last lesson.
- The teacher can combine this exercise with a question or problem, stating what you want to know first and see if the students can come up with it. The previous lesson can also be summarized followed by a challenging question or a question that will be answered at the end of this lesson.

### Why is this CLIL?

Activating prior knowledge is an important learning skill and is also a vital part of CLIL didactics. It allows students to not just learn the bits and pieces they have to know, but can create essential links to other subjects or topics.

Next to activating prior knowledge, which is a subject based goal, students are also actively engaged in working with language and thinking about structures and synonyms, which is a relevant language skill.

### Instruction

*I am going to give you a minute to think about what we did in the previous lesson. I want you to write down as many things you can still remember from last lesson. I will ask some of you what they wrote down. You have to be able to explain your answer, so just a word is not enough.*

## ACTIVITY 2: STAND-UP GAME

### Knowledge check

Lesson stage: Any

This activity can be used to quickly see if students understand what you have explained. It's best used in situations where the questions of the teachers can only have one correct and short answer. This activity shouldn't last much longer than 10 minutes and is therefore a great way to finish a lesson. If the activity goes on too long you can introduce a 'last question' and have multiple winners. To motivate the students even more, you can promise a price for the winner. To make sure the students who sit down are not bored you can ask them to also write down the answers.

### Step by step

1. Students stand up and have pen and paper ready
2. The teacher asks a question and the students write down their answer
3. The teacher says the correct answer. Students who have the answer wrong sit down.

### Details

- To make the assignment a little easier, the teacher might want to write down his question on the blackboard. This only works when the question is rather short.
- To allow for more interactivity the teacher can ask students for the correct answer.

### Variation

- The teacher can also read out words from a text you are working on or have been working on and ask the students to write down the word the way they think it is spelled. The teacher then spells the word to check and determine who can stay standing.

### Why is this CLIL?

Despite the lack of collaboration in this activity, it is still CLIL because the students have to listen very carefully to the questions of the teacher. Also, actively moving by standing up and sitting down makes sure the students are more engaged and appeals to the students who have trouble sitting all lesson. Finally, all students have to participate because it's immediately clear when a student doesn't stand up, so all students are engaged.

### Instruction

*I want you all to stand up and have pen and paper ready. I will read out a couple of questions and I want you to write down the answer on your paper. After each answer I will tell you the correct answer. If you have a correct answer, you can stay standing. Let's see who will be the winner!*

## ACTIVITY 3: COPYING THE TEACHER

Introducing something new

Lesson stage: Instruction

When you give instructions you expect all students to pay attention, listen carefully and make perfect notes. If you check notebooks afterwards, you might be disappointed. To train students to both listen and make notes, you can use this activity.

### Step by step

1. The teacher reads a piece of text and students copy what the teacher says on paper
2. The teacher reads the text again and students complete whatever they have missed the first time
3. Students work in groups to complete their text
4. Each group reads their text and the teacher gives points for important parts of the text
5. The teacher checks for understanding by asking students about what they just read

### Details

- The teacher should use a text that is not too difficult for students, as they can only listen and have no other visual help.
- The text should be read somewhat slower than the normal speaking speed. It should however not be boring, so the teacher should monitor his talking speed and length of the text. A maximum of 5 lines of text is a good reference.

### Variation

- Instead of having the students work on a blank page the teacher can have them fill in a gapped text of which the complete version is read out loud.
- When discussing the important terms, the way the words are written can be stressed and students can be asked to correct the words they might have written wrong.
- The teacher can read a text of a new part of the book, after which the students can open their books and check their text.

### Why is this CLIL?

The two important parts of this assignment are the listening part and the collaboration part. Some students will want to try to copy everything you say, while others will use key terms. Realising there are different ways of making notes is an important skill as they will have to do this a lot during their career. Even more important is the fact that they have to come up with a general text that describes the text that was read in a most detailed way, forcing them to use words they might not use themselves. Asking the students to talk about the content of the text in their own words will allow them to put the new words in context.

### Instruction

*I am going to read a text twice and want you all to make notes while I read the text. After I read it twice, you can briefly discuss your notes in your group. I will then ask a couple of groups to try and repeat the text the way I read it.*

## ACTIVITY 4: WORD TO SENTENCE

### Working with texts

#### Lesson stage: Instruction

This activity is a rather new one for me, compared to all the others in this guide. Yet I did want to publish it, because I think it's a brilliant way of working with both language and subject objectives.

#### Step by step

1. The teacher provides two words that have something to do with each other
2. Students make a sentence with the two words and write down the sentence in their notebook.

#### Details

- The teacher can use two words from the text that was discussed before the activity, using the text book used as a source.
- Students should write down their sentence to make sure they think about spelling as well. The teacher can focus on this by copying some sentences on the blackboard, giving praise for exceptionally original sentences.
- Asking the students afterwards what they learned with this activity will make them realise they learned both language and subject.

#### Variation

- The teacher can provide four or more words and ask groups for different combinations with one word as a focus. This will help the students to link the word to even more context even if it is not immediately provided.
- The teacher can combine a known word and a new word, giving the additional task to look for the definition of the new word and use it in a sentence.
- After having done this activity once, the teacher can ask students to come up with words, making the activity even more student-orientated.

#### Why is this CLIL?

Students will have to go from words to sentences to texts while they learn English and this is an important part of their development from BICS to CALP.

When discussing the sentences you might find some students are linking the wrong content. This should be recognised and corrected early on in the learning process, because changing this later on will require a lot more effort.

As with all CLIL activities, both subject and language aspects are combined in this activity. Asking the students afterwards what they learned is optional in this activity, but can help students to realise how much they already know and have learned, especially at the end of a school year. This is a great confidence boost.

#### Instruction

*I am going to write down two words on the blackboard. I want you to think about a sentence that combines these words. Make sure that the meaning of the word can be recognised in the context. "Circles are nice" is not a good sentence.*

## ACTIVITY 5: ALPHABET

Knowledge check (Language)

Lesson stage: Warming-up

This activity can be used after completing a chapter, lesson or semester, with the added instruction that the only words that are allowed are the ones used in this particular period.

### Step by step

1. Students write down the alphabet from a to z in a long column. (Two columns is fine, as long as there's some room for words behind each letter)
2. Students write as many different English words for different letters in a certain amount of time, for example 4 minutes, which is just enough for the concentration to stay high.
3. When the time is up, the teacher asks how many students have found more than 10 words, 15 words etc.
4. The student with most words behind most letters wins and writes down all the words found on the blackboard.
5. Other students can complete the list to create an overview of the vocab learned.

### Details

- To discuss the words, the teacher can have the winner write down his or her words on the blackboard, later completing it by letting other students write down their words as well.
- The teacher can let the students come to the blackboard at the same time, because one student at a time made the activity last too long.
- While the students write down the words, the teacher can look at the most important ones to mention later on. After all the students sit down again, the teacher can pick a couple of words and ask the students who wrote down those words to explain the definition of the word (or give examples).
- To finish the activity, the teacher can count the amount of words and emphasize to the students how many words they found. This can be particularly useful at the end of a semester or year to make the students aware of their learning process.

### Variations

- The teacher can ask the students to find as many words as possible in 3 minutes, after which they are allowed to work together with another student for another 2 minutes to complete each others' list.
- With the words now listed on the blackboard, a wordlist or PIF can be created with the most important (or all) words.
- During the individual brainstorm session, the teacher might allow the textbooks or use posters to facilitate the use of as many different words as possible. All students should be able to use the same books, in a competition like this each student should have the same references.
- During the discussion part of the activity, the teacher can encourage students to come up with more than just one synonym. Students should be allowed to help each, creating a secure learning environment.

**Why is this CLIL?**

First and foremost, the students are engaging in a language exercise, focussing on their knowledge of the vocabulary of the specific subject. They not only have to think of the words, they have to explain them as well, motivating them to come up with synonyms and relevant associations.

If you use the variation where students have to discuss with each other, the collaboration part of CLIL is also met. Like with all collaboration, students learn best when working together.

All three elements of the use of English are use: Speaking, Listening and Writing. That's also the reason why it's very important that the students write down the words first.

When the students work on their own for a couple of minutes, they are not allowed to work together. This will allow for each individual to come up with their own words.

Other than the reasons mentioned above, this activity is first and foremost a lot of fun! Because of the competing element in the activity, the students are likely to come up with many different words and be impressed by themselves.

**Instruction:**

*Write down all the letters of the alphabet in your notebook. Make sure you have enough room for words behind the letters. Try to think of as many words that you can think of that start with a different letter. You can only use words you learned since the beginning of chapter. After everyone is finished we will check who has most words.*

## BONUS ACTIVITY: WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

### Reflecting

#### Lesson stage: Reflection

#### Step by step

1. The students write down what went well and what they could have done better this lesson.
2. The teacher asks a few students what they wrote down and checks if others agree.
3. The teacher ends with a positive remark about something that happened in class.

#### Details

- Students are only allowed to say what they themselves could have done better to prevent them from accusing others.
- The positive note at the end of the lesson makes sure that the students feel appreciated despite the fact they might have done something they were not supposed to.

#### Variation

- The teacher might also ask what could have been better in the lesson to improve the didactic approach.
- During the discussion, the teacher can ask specific questions like 'Who thinks he/she did better than last lesson?' This way students have to reflect on even more than just one lesson.
- Another way to do this activity is by labelling positive things as 'tops' and improvements as 'tips'.
- Making the students write down their remarks and hand them in anonymously allows for more students to give input. Also, you might be surprised what students can think of when they are allowed to do this!

#### Why is this CLIL?

Meta cognition (being able to look at oneself and reflect on actions) is a part of CLIL. It allows students to learn from their mistakes and develop themselves. Quite often there is no time in lesson to do this which is a missed opportunity for development.

#### Instruction

*Please write down in your notebook "What went well?" and "What could I have done better?". You get a couple of minutes to answer both of these questions on your own. I expect at least one answer for each question.*

## CONCLUSION

Because there are a lot of CLIL teachers worldwide, many of which have come up creative and original lesson ideas, I would like to know if you have any ideas of your own. If you do, please let me know and I can publish it so other people can enjoy your idea as well!

I sincerely hope these activities have inspired your lessons. If you have any questions related to these activities or CLIL Magazine, or want to provide any kind of feedback, please contact me through [www.clilmagazine.com](http://www.clilmagazine.com) and let me know. I look forward to your response!

All the best

Patrick de Boer

*Note: I have accumulated many activities over time, of which quite a few were mentioned by other people.*

*I would therefore not claim any rights for the individual activities.*