

**Word Focus
Activity**

Multi-Purpose Texts

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Talk a Lot

How to Use

Multi-Purpose Texts – Instructions

The Multi-Purpose Texts are the closest thing you will find to a traditional EFL coursebook-type of activity in the Talk a Lot materials. These handouts are deliberately designed to be multi-purpose (hence the name!) and can therefore be used in lots of different ways, according to the needs of your students and your teaching situation. For Talk a Lot lessons it would be great to use the handouts to improve students' speaking and listening skills, but the handouts can also have value as tools for consolidating material learned during lessons, and for practising students' reading and writing skills (e.g. as homework activities).

Some suggestions for using the handouts:

1. Practise Speaking and Listening Skills

- A reading race between pairs of SS, using the whole text, or part of it. See p.7.2 for a reading race lesson plan.
- Students listen as the teacher reads a version of the text with twenty differences. Students have to spot the differences.
- **Gap-fill Version** –the teacher reads the text, whilst the students listen and write the missing word (or suggest any word that makes sense).
- **Comprehension Questions** – students listen and make notes as the teacher reads the text. They shouldn't write every word, but only the important information, e.g. names, places, dates, etc. Students then compare their notes with a partner or the whole group. The teacher reads the text again and students check their notes and refine them, before comparing them again with their partner or group at the end. Next, the teacher either asks the questions verbally, or gives students the handout with the questions. The teacher checks feedback with the whole group at the end of the activity. With lower level groups it may be necessary to do the reading and note-taking stage a third time. Note: you don't have to use all thirty questions – it depends how much time you want to spend on the activity! Adaptations: i) students (or the teacher) could write their own comprehension questions based on the text and use them for this activity. ii) The teacher could use the comprehension questions to do a traditional quiz – like a TV game show – with two or more teams, each having a buzzer (or bell, or gong, etc.), and buzzing in if they know the answer – without referring to the original text.
- **True, False, or Unknown?** – for this activity the students should be already familiar with the text. All the students stand in the middle of the room (preferably an empty room, or with all the tables and chairs pushed to the sides, so that students can run about). Everybody agrees that one corner of the room means "True", one corner means "False", and a third corner means "Unknown". The teacher shouts out each statement from the handout. The students have to show their answers by running to the correct corner – either True, False, or Unknown. The teacher gives the answer, and any students who get it wrong have to sit out at the side of the room, while the rest continue until either one player is left – the winner! – or the questions have all

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been used up. Adaptation: students (or the teacher) could write their own True, False, or Unknown? statements based on the text before doing this activity.

- Students imagine the scene and act it out (role play) – including what happens before and after, and any scenes that are talked about in the text.
- Students take turns to read the text out loud; the teacher checks pronunciation.
- Students learn the text by heart, with the teacher reading the beginning of each sentence to prompt the students.
- The teacher dictates part or all of the text, whilst the students write it down. The students check what they have written in pairs, then with the text, or they listen again.
- Discussion: talk about the scene. Have the students ever experienced anything like this? What do they think of the characters' actions, feelings, responses, etc.?

2. Practise Reading and Writing Skills

- Students translate the text into their first language(s).
- **Gap-fill Version** – students read and write the missing word (from a few different options or any word that makes sense).
- **Multiple Choice – Use of English** – this is a classic homework activity, but could also be done orally in class.
- **Comprehension Questions** – students write the answers in full sentences for homework.
- **True, False, or Unknown?** – students write the answers (T, F, or U) and justify them with reasons from the original text.
- Students underline different parts of a sentence in the original text, e.g. verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.
- Students identify verb forms, etc.
- Students write the story in their own words (in English).
- Creative writing: students write “What happens next...”
- One student reads the text to their partner, who writes it down word for word.

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Reading Race – Lesson Plan

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| <u>Activity Type:</u> | Noisy, busy, active, yet focused |
| <u>Level:</u> | Elementary - Pre-Intermediate, depending on the level and length of the text that you use |
| <u>Skills:</u> | Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening |
| <u>Class Size:</u> | Whole group lesson, e.g. ten students in a group |
| <u>Time:</u> | 50 minutes |
| <u>Aim:</u> | To practise all of the skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening; to energise a lethargic class; to encourage pair work |
| <u>Materials:</u> | Board and pen; several copies of the text (including one for you) |

Procedure:

1. Find a short text that's suitable for the level of your group. I used the printable version of a fun story from BBC News, which I found online.
2. Introduce the topic and pre-teach new vocab; try to elicit each new word. For example, in this story I had to pre-teach "London Marathon", "autographs" and "exertions", as well as a few more.
3. Put two (or more) copies of the text on the wall in different locations in the classroom. Explain the task to the class. Students have to work in pairs and their aim is to make an accurate copy of the text. One student goes to it, reads part of it, remembers it, then comes back to tell their partner what they have read, while their partner has to write it down. So, one partner is reading and speaking, and the other is listening and writing. Students should swap roles from time to time during the activity. You could set a time limit, or let the activity flow naturally. The important rules are:
 - a) students must not touch or move the text
 - b) students must not shout at each other across the class
 - c) the person who reads the text cannot write the story, and vice versa
4. When a pair has written the complete story they should read through their copy and check it for grammatical and spelling mistakes. If necessary, one person can go back and check the text on the wall and tell their partner how to make corrections.
5. Next, each pair has to write ten comprehension questions about the text for a different pair to answer. The question types should be:
 - a) x4 wh- questions (e.g. what, who, where, when, etc.)
 - b) x4 yes/no questions (e.g. "Is...?", or "Does...?" etc)

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Reading Race – Lesson Plan

c) x2 true/false questions

6. Each pair swaps their questions with another pair and the students write answers to the questions. The teacher leads group feedback at the end.

7. The students swap their version of the story with another team and the teacher reads the story as it was printed on the handout. The students have to check the text in front of them for mistakes. They give one point for each deviation from the original text, e.g. a missing word or the wrong kind of article. The pair with the lowest number of points at the end is the winning team!

8. Let the students see the original text so that they can compare it with their work.

9. Optional extension activity: the students have to write down a summary of the lesson: what they did, what they learned, and how they felt about it.

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