Creating active homework tasks

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First some basic principles (1)

1. Students working at a distance is very different from students coming to your class
   • Seeing what they are doing or what they have done becomes much more difficult
   • It is easier for students who wish to spend more time on other teachers’ assignments to pretend that they have done the assignment, to borrow someone else’s work or find a suitable response on the Internet
Some basic principles (2)

2. Therefore it is very important that you
   • have a way of confirming that they have done the work, and
   • an efficient way of providing feedback or a grade on their work

This presentation will suggest ways to accomplish these principles in your distance teaching.
Methods to ensure uniqueness

Make the feedback assignment unique for each individual student, for example

• Write about how you, a relative or friend has experienced something similar to what happened in the reading
• Write a short letter to one of the characters giving your own advice
• Keep a log of what you have read on the Internet
• Keep a list of new vocabulary that you have found
Methods to ensure uniqueness

• Record one paragraph from the story and submit it via WeChat. Count the number of strokes in the first 汉字 of your name and select that paragraph (and the next one, too, so that you have more than 100 words). – Or perhaps use the last digit of their student number.

• Compare two versions of the same story and report what differences you find in the vocabulary that is used.

• Make a list of sentences or phrases that were difficult for you to understand.
What to assign

• No matter where the material is from, students should work on material that is close to their own reading level. Material that is too difficult will not be effective since they will not be able to comprehend it.

• Easy material will lend itself to an “extensive reading” approach where they can read a large volume with little dictionary use to promote their reading fluency and to get a better grasp of how the words and grammar that they already “know” are actually used in ‘real English’.
What to assign

Material that is slightly above their level will challenge them but will allow them to learn new vocabulary and grammar.

If the students can choose what to read among the many selections offered, that will encourage them to do more reading because they will find it more enjoyable.
Vocabulary exercises

Learn the meaning, pronunciation and spelling of hundreds of new words in our Vocabulary section.

Choose your level
Step 1 - Take our free online English level test

Find out your English level

Take our free online English test!

Click **START** to begin the test and answer each of the 25 questions carefully. After each question indicate how sure you are of your answer (Certain, Fairly sure, Not sure).

When you finish the test, you will be told your approximate English level. You can then search for suitable content on LearnEnglish Teens by level. You can also search for content by topic.

START

This test is designed for personal use to give you an approximate indication of your English level. Contact your local British Council office if you would like to take a formal test of English.
Reading practice

Do you like reading in English? Reading is a great way to improve your vocabulary and learn new things. We have lots of interesting texts for you to read. Read, play games, print activities and post comments too!

Level Filter

Level 1

Helping others
Read about ways to help others then do the exercises to help you practise your reading in English.
Level Filter

Level 1

Helping others
Read about ways to help others then do the exercises to help you practise your reading in English.

Level 2

Say no to bullying
Read about how to say no to bullying then do the exercises to help you practise your reading in English.

Level 3

Football World Cup
Read about the football World Cup then do the exercises to help you practise your reading in English.
Say no to bullying
Match the word to the picture.

photos  say sorry  teacher  feel bad
school  children  laughing  worried

8 items remaining
**FACT FILE: Say no to bullying**

Bullying can happen to me or you or anyone. Millions of children around the world are bullied every year, but there are things that we can all do to help.

### What is bullying?
Bullying is when someone makes you feel bad or hurts you again and again. Bullying can happen at school, out of school or online. Bullying includes:
- calling people mean names
- laughing at people
- telling lies about people
- taking someone’s things without permission
- not letting someone play in a group
- hitting people.

### What is cyberbullying?
Cyberbullying happens online and includes:
- sending mean messages
- sharing photos without permission
- not letting someone be part of an online group.

### What can you do?
If someone is mean to you, tell an adult that you know and like. For example, talk to a parent or a teacher. You can block a person who sends mean messages online. Ask an adult to help you. Don’t reply.
Talk to your parents or teacher or an adult that you know well if you see bullying or if you are worried about a friend.

Say sorry if you are mean to someone. You can write a message or talk to the person. Think about how to be kind in the future.
We can all help to say no to bullying.
Talk to your parents or teacher or an adult that you know well if you see bullying or if you are worried about a friend.

Say sorry if you are mean to someone. You can write a message or talk to the person. Think about how to be kind in the future. We can all help to say no to bullying.

4. What do you think?

What was the most important fact about bullying? What can schools do to stop bullying? What’s the best way to say sorry?

www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishkids

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What can you do with this reading?

• Have them read the article WITHOUT using a dictionary, asking them to time their reading.

• They record their time, then check unknown words and read and time it a second time.

• Next, they make a list of any unknown words on a form that you provide, perhaps as an Excel file.

• They can respond to the questions in #4 with their own ideas: “What was the most important fact about bullying?” and “What can schools do to stop bullying?”
Welcome to LearnEnglish Teens

Covid-19 learning support: LearnEnglish Teens wants to support students who can't go to school at the moment. You can find tips and advice for learning at home on our new support page.

LearnEnglish Teens is brought to you by the British Council, the world's English teaching experts. If you want to learn English while having fun, this free website is just for you. LearnEnglish Teens can help improve your English with reading, writing and listening practice, tips for exams, grammar and vocabulary exercises, games and videos. You can also interact with other teenagers from all around the world. If you want to learn English in your own country, find an English course near you.
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Elementary A2 reading

Are you an elementary (CEFR level A2) learner of English? Practise and improve your reading skills with these texts and exercises.

7 tips for a tidy desk
Read the tips for keeping your desk tidy and then do the exercises to practise and improve your reading skills.

A restaurant menu
Look at the menu and do the exercises to practise and improve your reading skills.

A train timetable
Look at the train ticket and timetable and do the exercises to practise and improve your reading skills.
Seven tips for a tidy desk

1. Only keep things you really need on and near your desk.
Use a tray for any papers you have to read. Have a jar for pens and pencils and have a bin near your desk.

2. Don’t keep any drinks on your desk.
Go to the kitchen when you want to have a drink or, if you prefer, keep a drink on a small table near your desk.

3. Reduce the amount of paper that you use.
Try to keep as much information as possible in folders on your computer. Before printing a document, ask yourself, ‘do I really need to read this on paper?’

4. Scan your notes.
If you have a lot of paper (magazine articles, notes, worksheets, etc.), use a scanner and keep a digital version as a PDF on your computer.
What to do?

• Give them as screenshot just the first 4 of the rules.
• Ask them to think of 3 more rules and report them to you via your course website (if you have one) or perhaps by WeChat.
• Later you can show them the three additional rules on the website, and perhaps a collection of the ideas from the students in your class.
Welcome to LearnEnglish Teens

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LearnEnglish Teens is brought to you by the British Council, the world’s English teaching experts. If you want to learn English while having fun, this free website is just for you. LearnEnglish Teens can help improve your English with reading, writing and listening practice, tips for exams, grammar and vocabulary exercises, games and videos. You can also interact with other teenagers from all around the world. If you want to learn English in your own country, find an English course near you.
Graded reading

Read stories and articles for your level of English.

**Elementary**

- **A walk in the forest – level 1**
  On her usual walk in the forest, Grace meets an unusual boy.

- **Amazing adventurers – level 1**
  From climbing Everest to skiing to the South Pole, read about some amazing adventurers!
On her usual walk in the forest, Grace meets an unusual boy.

Tuesday

Going through the forest is my favourite part of the walk. My dog Benji loves it too. I’m Grace. I live on a farm with my parents and I take Benji for a walk most days after school. While Benji’s playing, I stop to take a photo of a butterfly. I’m thinking about posting it on Facebook, but then I hear Benji barking. He’s jumping and running around a boy. The poor boy looks worried. ‘Benji, stop! Come here!’ I call and throw him his ball. I’m about to say sorry to the boy, but he’s gone.

Wednesday

It’s cold today, so Benji and I are walking fast. As we go through the forest, it starts raining so I run. Suddenly, I fall and I’m on my back. OUCH! That hurt!

Then there’s someone there and a voice asks ‘Are you all right?’ I look up and see the boy from yesterday.

‘I’m OK! I saw the boy helping me up.’
Welcome to LearnEnglish

Learn English online using our high-quality resources to quickly improve your English. This website is created for adult learners of English by the British Council, the world's English teaching experts.

Start by taking our free English test to help you find your level. Then find lessons and resources to improve your English skills. Get more practice to improve your general English with our extended listening and reading materials. At any time, use the grammar and vocabulary sections to help and support your learning.

Find out more about our range of online classes and courses to improve your English.

Covid-19 learning support: LearnEnglish wants to support those of you who are learning at home at the moment. You can find tips and advice for learning at home on our new support page.
Choose your level to practise your reading

**Beginner A1**
Reading practice to help you understand simple information, words and sentences about known topics. Texts include posters, messages, forms and timetables.

**Pre-intermediate A2**
Reading practice to help you understand simple texts and find specific information in everyday material. Texts include emails, invitations, personal messages, tips, notices and signs.

**Intermediate B1**
Reading practice to help you understand texts with everyday or job-related language. Texts include articles, travel guides, emails, adverts and reviews.

**Upper intermediate B2**
Reading practice to help you understand texts with a wide vocabulary where you may need to consider the writer’s opinion. Texts include articles, reports, messages, short stories and reviews.

**Advanced C1**
Reading practice to help you understand long, complex texts about a wide variety of topics, some of which may be unfamiliar. Texts include specialised articles, biographies and summaries.

**Writing**
- Beginner A1
- Pre-intermediate A2
- Intermediate B1
- Upper intermediate B2
- Advanced C1
- Writing for a purpose

**Speaking**
- Beginner A1
- Pre-intermediate A2
- Intermediate B1
- Upper intermediate B2

**Are you looking for an online English course?**

**HELP**
- Covid-19 learning support
- Getting started
- English level test
- House rules
- Frequently asked questions
- Sign up for newsletter
Intermediate B1
Are you an intermediate (CEFR level B1) learner of English? This section offers reading practice to help you understand texts with everyday or job-related language. Texts include articles, travel guides, emails, adverts and reviews.
Each lesson has a preparation task, a reading text and two tasks to check your understanding and to practise a variety of reading skills. Make a start today.

A conference programme
Read the programme for a management conference to practise and improve your reading skills.

A flyer for a gym
Read a flyer promoting a new gym to practise and improve your reading skills.

A travel guide
Read a travel guide about Bangkok to practise and improve your reading skills.

An email request for help
Read an email asking for help from another department to practise and improve your reading skills.

Digital habits across generations
Read an article about how people at different ages use computers and smartphones to practise and improve your reading skills.

Encyclopedia entry
Read an encyclopedia entry on the Taj Mahal to practise and improve your reading skills.

How to spot fake news
Read some tips for spotting fake news to practise and improve your reading skills.

Innovation in business
Read a blogpost about being innovative in business to practise and improve your reading skills.

Planning an event
Read a dialogue where three people negotiate who does what to achieve a task.

Robot teachers
Read an article about robot teachers to practise and improve your reading skills.

Social media influencers
Read a blogpost about the impact of social media influencers in the business world to practise and improve your reading skills.

The legend of fairies
Read a text about the legend of fairies to practise and improve your reading skills.
How to spot fake news

Read some tips for spotting fake news to practise and improve your reading skills.

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.
How to spot fake news

Read some tips for spotting fake news to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading
Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task
Complete the sentences with words from the box.

| bombarded | fooled | unrelated | source |
| fake      | subtle | phenomenon| sure   |

1. A ________________ is something that is designed to look real but isn't.
2. If you ______________ someone with messages or information, you give them so much that it is difficult to deal with at all.
3. A ________________ is a rare or important fact or event.
4. If something is ________________, it is not obvious and it is difficult to notice.
5. If you are ______________, you are tricked into believing something that is not true.
6. If you are ______________ about something, you are confident that it is true or correct.
7. If something is ______________ to something else, the two things have nothing to do with each other.
8. A ________________ is a thing, person or place that provides information.

Reading text: How to spot fake news
Every time you're online, you are bombarded by pictures, articles, links and videos trying to tell their story. Unfortunately, not all of these stories are true. Sometimes they want you to click on another story or advertisement at their own site, other times they want to upset people for political reasons. These days it's so easy to share information. These stories circulate quickly, and the result is ... fake news.

There is a range of fake news: from crazy stories which people easily recognise to more subtle types of misinformation. Experts in media studies and online psychology have been examining the fake news phenomenon. Read these tips, and don't get fooled!
Stories

Do you enjoy reading stories?

In this section, read our entertaining short stories specially written for intermediate (CEFR level B1) or upper intermediate (CEFR level B2) learners.

You will improve your reading fluency and comprehension and develop your language skills.

Each story has interactive exercises to help you understand and use the language you have learned.

Choose a story

A serious case

My friend is afraid of spiders. This isn't very unusual; a lot of people are afraid of spiders. But my friend isn't just afraid of spiders, she is totally, completely and utterly terrified of them...
A serious case

Do you need more help with your English? Take an online English course or class.

My friend is afraid of spiders. This isn't very unusual; a lot of people are afraid of spiders. But my friend isn't just afraid of spiders, she is totally, completely and utterly terrified of them ...

Do the preparation task first. Then read the story and do the exercises.
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# Sample Student Record Sheet

| A | B          | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L |
|---|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Student's name** | Current words |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2 | Jim        | 3000 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3 | Wei Ling   | 1275 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4 | Hiroshi    | 0   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5 | Muhammad   | 0   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | Hyunh      | 0   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7 | Lakshmi    | 0   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

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Summary

We have just shown you British Council sites, but there are others which have an abundance of material that is at the correct level for your students. They can use the British Council online test to discover that for themselves.

You must have a clear strategy for ascertaining that they have actually done their assignments, but in a way that does not cause you too much extra work.

The students keep a record of what they have done that you can view, as needed.
References

British Council Site
  • Kids: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/
  • Teens: https://learnenglishitunes.britishcouncil.org
  • Adults: https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org

Voice of America (VOA)
  • https://learningenglish.voanews.com/

ESLFAST.COM
  • https://www.eslfast.com

Magic Keys
  • http://www.magickeys.com/books/

Manythings – A variety of activities for language practice
  http://www.manythings.org/

PERC - Publink Extensive Reading Club
  http://www.publinkchina.com/perc
Now, let’s take some questions from the Q and A.

You can also use the chat box to leave your comments and questions!