

# Adaptable Speaking Activities for Pairs and Groups

In this webinar, we'll explore pair and group speaking activities that will help your students talk comfortably and more fluently about different topics.

Activities that will be demonstrated include:

- picture activities, including a gallery walk and talk, and picture stations
- An interviewing activity, which prompts students to ask partners questions, and then evolves into a group task in which pairs share what they learned about each other



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## Adaptable Speaking Activities for Pairs and Groups



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# What will we do today?


- **Discuss** benefits of active speaking practice
- **Explore** how to manage effective pair and group work
- **Examine** three speaking activities that can be easily adapted for a variety of contexts
  - Gallery walk and talk
  - Tell me about yourself
  - Picture stations



# Pair Work and Group Work



- What is active speaking practice?
- Why actively practice speaking?
- What is effective pair and group work?
- Managing pair and group work



What percentage of your class time  
is spent with students **actively  
practicing** speaking?

# Why actively practice speaking?



- Improves flexibility
- Strengthens skills
- Increases endurance

(Adapted from <https://elttguide.com/6-principles-for-teaching-speaking-in-efl-classes/>)

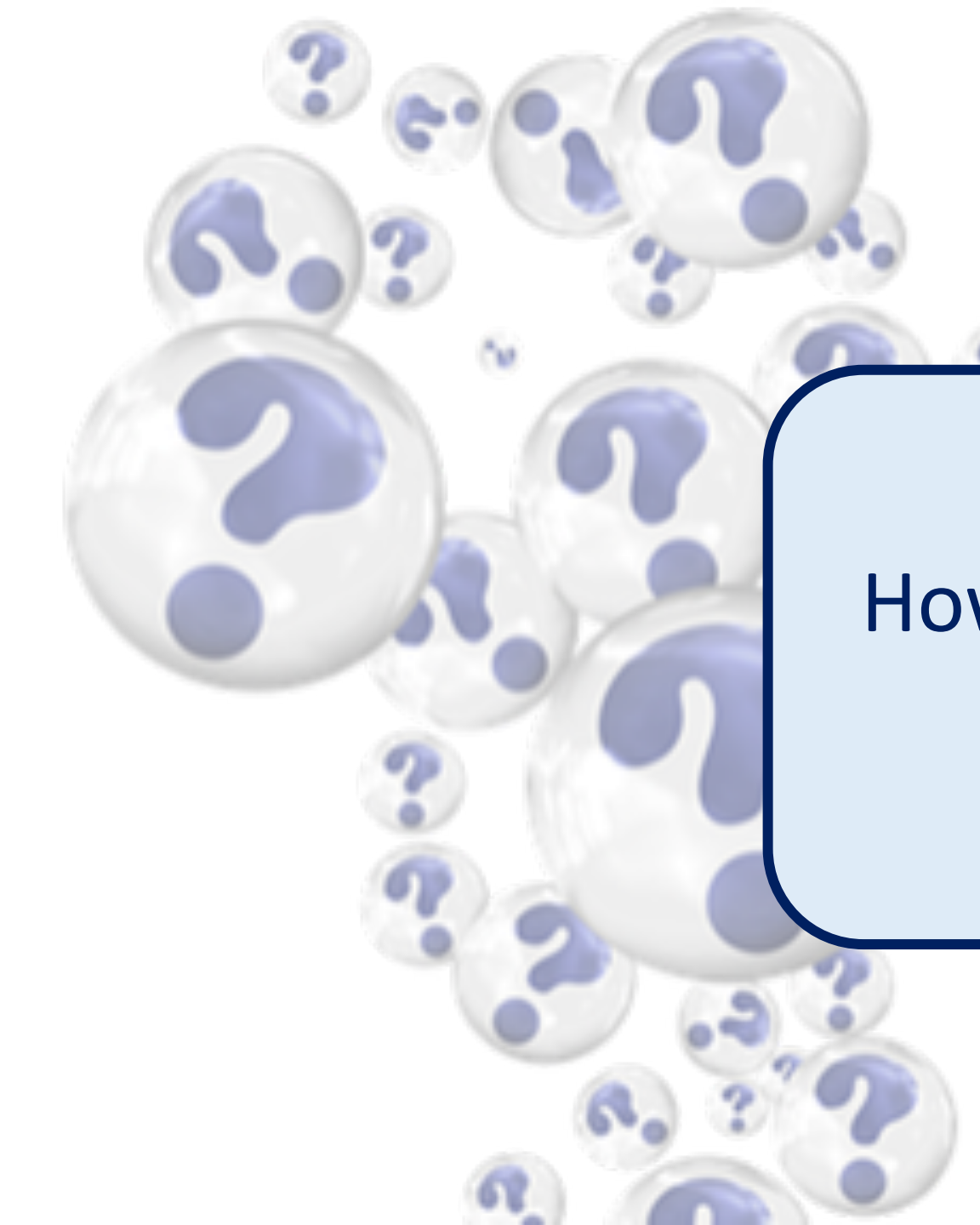


# How can English teachers promote active speaking practice?

- Provide ample **opportunities** for speaking
- Introduce **relevant** topics
- Use a **mixture** of controlled and less-structured speaking activities
- Create a **community** of learners where all students communicate







How do you use **pair and group work** in your classes?

# Effective Pair Work and Group Work

Scenario: A teacher wanted his A1 (Beginner) students to create a poster about prepositions of place. These were the instructions:

1. Get into groups of 4 or 5, or maybe 6.
2. Draw pictures on your poster paper showing these prepositions: on, behind, in front of, beside, under. Don't use any other prepositions.
3. Label each picture with the name of each preposition and write it in a sentence.
4. Then you'll present your poster to the class.
5. Is everything clear? Ok. Good. You may start now.



**Was this a successful group project?**

**Why? Why not?**

# Before They Start

**Brainstorm** the kind of language they may need to complete this activity before starting.



Options:

1. The teacher can elicit from the class and write on the board.
2. In groups of four or more, students brainstorm. Then they present 1-2 of their ideas to the class.

# Effective Pair Work and Group Work


- Get students' attention.
- Give short, simple instructions.
- Show instead of tell.
- Concept check for understanding.
- Monitor groups as they work.



# Managing Pair Work and Group Work

- **Assign student roles**
  - manager/leader
  - note taker/writer
  - reporter
  - time keeper
  - language checker
  - artist
- **Worried about noise?** Use visual signals to encourage students to speak at appropriate level
  - *Green = Good*
  - *Yellow = Warning! It's a little too noisy.*
  - *Red = Stop! It's too noisy!*





**What are some strategies you  
use to manage pair work and  
group work?**



# Practical Activity: Gallery Walk and Talk



**SWBAT** describe a picture of their choosing to a partner and identify the picture that is described to them.

- **Skills:** speaking; listening; identifying; describing
- **Level:** any age; any level
- **Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Example:** Look at the picture. What would students need to be able to say to describe it?

- **colors**
- **clothing**
- **hair**

**Choose a picture to describe. Describe with minimal detail.**



**Your listener has to guess which picture you are talking about.**

# Teacher Prepares Sets of Pictures


- Choose **3-4** themes; select **10-12** pictures per theme
- Choose age appropriate pictures of people and/or objects
- Choose similar pictures so it's not immediately obvious which one is being described

## Sample themes

- landscapes
- individual people
- groups of people
- sports







**Where can you get pictures  
for this and other picture-  
based activities?**

# Ideas for Finding Pictures



- Calendars
- Magazines
- Sales ads
- Postcards
- Tourism brochures

# Gallery Walk and Talk: Teacher Pre-planning

- **How will you preview vocabulary?**
  - Brainstorm
  - Word bank
  - Word game
- **How much scaffolding will the students need?**
  - There is a \_\_\_\_\_ in my picture.
  - I see \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The woman has \_\_\_\_\_.



# Gallery Walk and Talk: Instructions

**Step 1:** Students walk and individually select a picture to describe (3-5 minutes)

- They do not tell which picture they chose.

**Step 2:** Students talk in pairs

- Teacher monitors

**Step 3:** Share with class





# Turn-Taking Options

## Option 1

There is a man in my picture.

There is a woman in my picture.



## Option 2

There is a man in my picture. He has on a blue shirt. He is slightly bald.

There are two bald men. What else can you tell me about him?



# Gallery Walk and Talk in Large classes



- **Split the pairs**

- One person in each pair does the gallery walk and returns to their partner and describes their picture.
- Then the partners do it.

- **Phased walk**

- Half of the pairs do the gallery walk and return to their desk and describe their picture to their partner.
- While they are speaking the other half of the pairs do their walk.

- **Picture tables**

- No space to hang pictures? Set up a table and spread the pictures out on it.

# Practical Activity: Tell Me About Yourself

- What are we going to do today, Teacher?
- **Practice writing, speaking, and question asking and answering**
  - You will **ask** your partner six questions and write down the answers.
  - You will also **answer** six questions about yourself.



Intermediate high school students

# Tell Me about Yourself: Language focus

**Topic:** Future plans

**Communication focus:** talking about plans

**Grammar:** review future simple, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> conditionals; ask questions with Wh- question words

**Vocabulary:** education/careers

## Teacher set up

- Brainstorm vocabulary with students
- Brainstorm sentence starters, such as I'd like to, I'd prefer, etc.
- Model a Q/A using Wh- questions and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> conditionals



**Q:** What do you plan to do  
after you graduate?

**A:**

**Q:** What will you study if you  
go to college?

**A:**

**Q:** If you could choose any  
career, what would you  
choose?

**A:**



Question 3:

If you could choose any  
career, what would you  
choose?

Answer:

Let's hear  
from you,  
participants!





**Q:** Why would you choose this career?

**A:**

**Q:** If you decide to pursue this career, how will you prepare for it?

**A:**

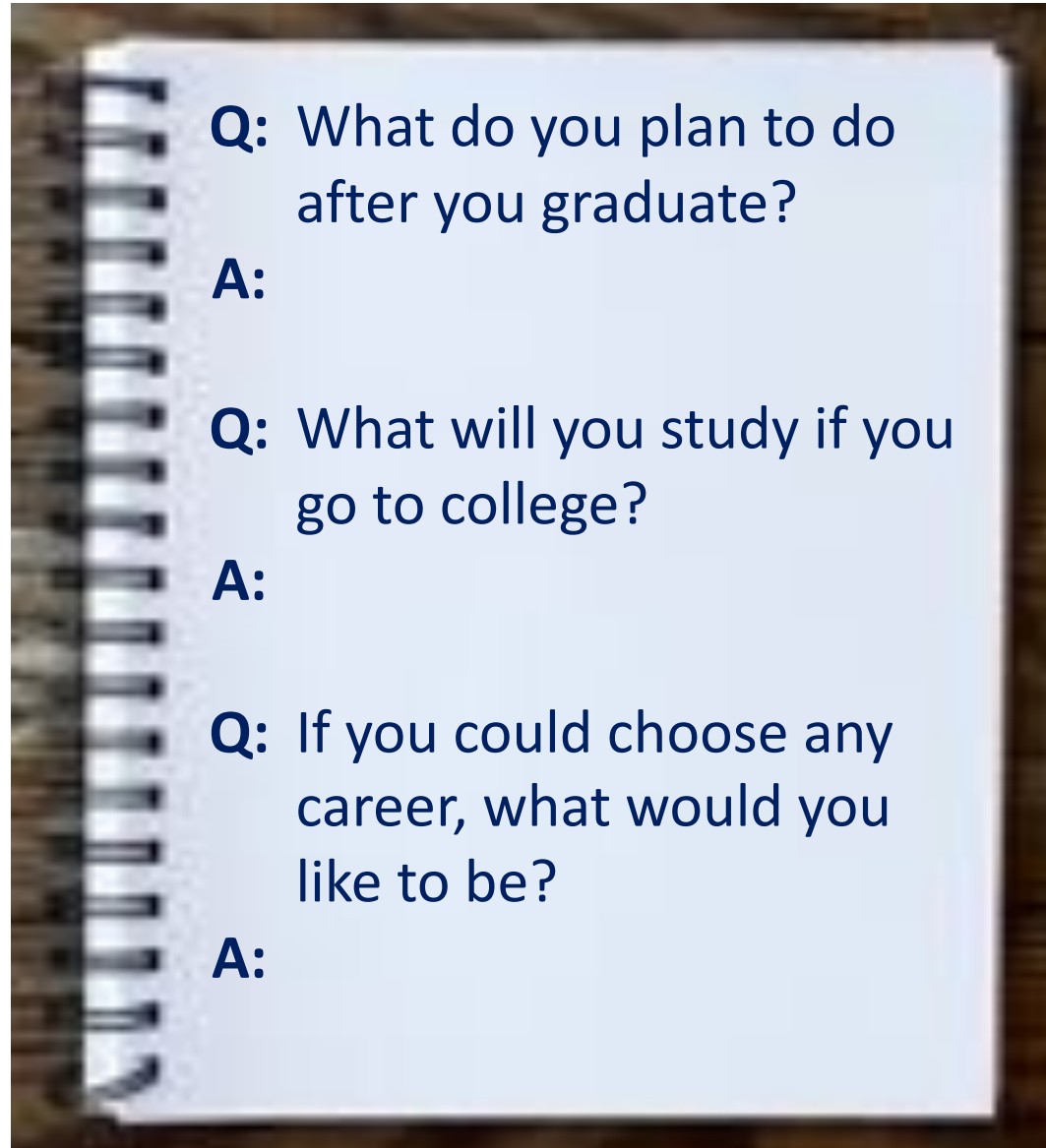
**Q:** What will be the best part of having this career?

**A:**





# Tell Me about Yourself: Part One



**Q:** What do you plan to do after you graduate?

**A:**

**Q:** What will you study if you go to college?

**A:**

**Q:** If you could choose any career, what would you like to be?

**A:**

## **Step 1:** Individually

- Students write three questions to ask a partner.
- Leave space after each question to write the answer.

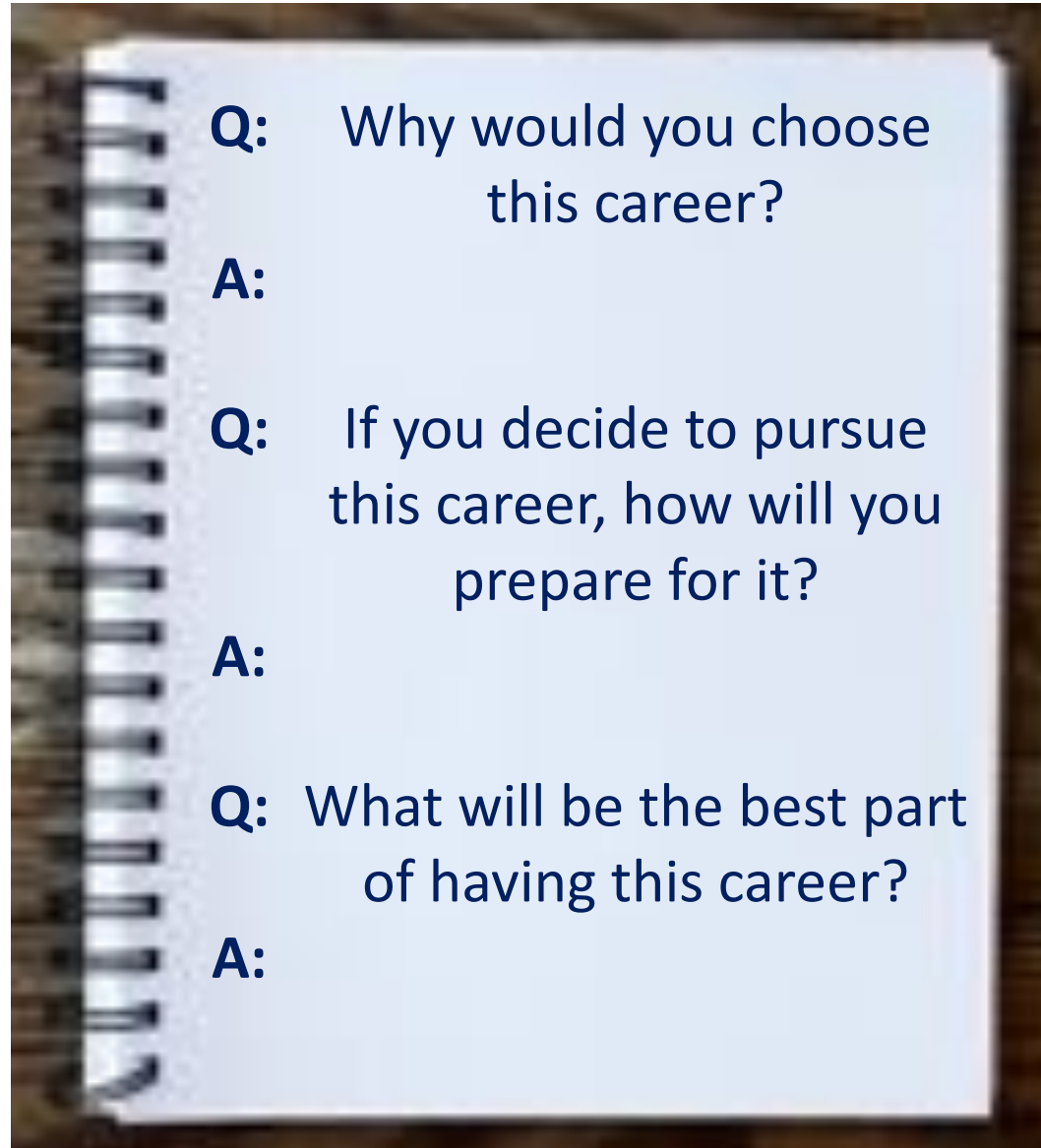
## **Step 2:** In Pairs

- Partners ask one another their questions.

## **Step 3:** Individually

Write the answers in the spaces.

# Tell Me about Yourself: Part Two



## Step 1: Individually

- Choose one answer.
- Think of three questions about that answer.
- Write these three questions on the other side of the paper.
- Leave space after each question to write the answer.

## Step 2: In pairs

- Ask their partner the questions.

## Step 3: Individually

- Write the answers.

# Tell Me about Yourself: Part Three



## **Step 1:** Two pairs of students

- Each person tells something they learned about their partner.
- Each person should ask at least one person in the other pair a question.

## **Step 2:** Class share

- Ask a few people which question they were asked that they liked the best and why.

# Practical Activity: Picture Stations



What do you need?

- Sets of 10-12 pictures
- Question cards
- Tables/desks for stations
- Groups of 4-5 students

# Picture Stations

<b>Goal:</b>	SWBAT will be able to describe and reflect on pictures in various categories.
<b>Language Objective(s):</b>	reading; speaking; describing; reflecting
<b>Age/Level:</b>	6+ years old (old enough to read) Beginner and above
<b>Time:</b>	15-20 minutes



# Choose a picture.





**Step 1:** Answer the following question first:

**Why did you choose this picture?**

**Step 2:** Choose **three** of the following questions to answer:

1. **What are three words that describe this picture?**
2. **What are these people doing?**
3. **When and where do they live? How do you know?**
4. **What are these people thinking about? How do you know?**
5. **What advice do you want to give them? Why?**





# Picture Stations: Set-up

- Several sets of 10-12 age-appropriate pictures depending on how many students there are
- Four students to a group is ideal
- Space for the students to spread out their set of pictures
- A set of question cards for each set of pictures



# Picture Stations: Instructions

**Step 1:** Look at the pictures and choose one.

**Step 2:** Each person talks about the picture they chose by answering several questions about it.

- Everyone should answer: **Why did you choose this picture?**
- Each person should choose three (or more) other questions to answer about their picture.

**Step 3:** Teacher calls time and students move to the next station (no more than 3 moves).

**Step 4:** At the end, the teacher will ask a few students to share their favorite picture and/or favorite questions.

# Picture Stations: Options

1. Everyone in the group can take turns answering the same questions.
2. Everyone takes turns drawing their own card, and answering their own questions.



# Picture Stations for Large Classrooms



## Pass the folder, please.

- Put each set of pictures into a separate folder.
- After students finish the first set, they put the pictures and question cards back in the folder.
- Rather than students moving, they pass their folder to the next group.



**How could you assess these pair  
and group work activities?**

# What About Pair and Group Work Assessment?



## Speaking

- Informal based on monitoring by teacher
  - Range of vocabulary and grammar used
  - Fluency when describing picture
  - Pronunciation

## Writing

- Formal based on language focus
  - Range and accuracy of vocabulary used
  - Range and accuracy of grammar used
  - Sentence structure and complexity of questions and/or answers

# Summing up: Today's Activities



- **Tell Me about Yourself** (pairs; groups of 4)
  - 10+ years/upper beginner or higher
- **Gallery Walk and Talk** (pairs)
  - any age/any proficiency level
- **Picture Stations** (groups of 3-5)
  - any age/beginner and higher





# References

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# Reflection Questions

1. How do you create student pairs or groups for speaking activities?
2. What challenges might you expect when conducting pair- or group-based speaking activities? How might you overcome these challenges?
3. How might you adapt the activities shared to be successful in your classroom?



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