



## Making the most of the American English Mobile App

How to make use of the app in class, on the go, and in group settings

Download: <http://m.binu.com/ae>

[American English Mobile App resource page](#)

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These are just a few ideas to get you thinking! Share your thoughts on how to use the American English app with the [Office of English Language Programs](#).

- Create a book club for e-books read with the AE app and the [Worldreader Mobile library](#)
  - Participants can track and share their progress using a wall chart with columns that list the title, author, a brief review by the reader, favorite character, “Recommend: Yes/No,” etc.
  - More advanced learners can develop written or mixed media e-book or song reviews that can be shared in a public space in the classroom or an American Space
- Start a song club or music interpretation group. These concepts could be adapted for classroom activities, too
  - Participants focus on one song per week/meeting, go over meaning, discuss aspects of American culture reflected in the song, review vocab, relate song content to their own lives, create/revise lyrics, and/or practice singing. The activities could even lead up to short pair work performances or a group musical performance, if there is interest and if it is culturally appropriate. A group facilitator would likely be needed.
- Create a class/learner group book club or “music fan” Facebook page using social media features in the AE app
  - Participants can post reactions or complete activities related to content such as music, audiobooks, or e-books via the AE app
- Hold an in-person or virtual “Trace Word Soup” contest
  - Explain how the game works, set a time limit, develop a way to certify scores (e.g., participants bring their score page to “judges” who record them; participants send in screen shots–device dependent), offer a small reward to the winners (certificate, candy/treat, homework pass, post winner’s name/photo on local Facebook site w/ permission)
  - Have groups take turns and share phones if all participants don’t have one available
  - Be sure to demonstrate the “Word List” features that are available after scoring each game, such as the integrated Wordnik dictionary and Google translate!

**NOTE: Trace Word Soup will not work on Android tablets; the graphics are optimized for smaller mobile phone screens. To access Trace Word Soup and Phrases in Space, another language game, Android users can download the free [Trace Games app](#) from the Google Play store.**

- Create small competitions and pair activities using the app’s “Quizzes” section
  - Quiz race: select a few items from the “Quizzes” section that are appropriate for your learners. Have students work on their own, in pairs, or small groups to see who can get all of the items completed correctly in the least amount of time. You can also use a “lifeline” option: if stumped, each group can ask the facilitator/teacher for one hint during the race
  
- Only have a few phones with data access? Set up learning stations
  - Choose a few app resources or activities and set up stations with a phone in different sections of the room; after explaining the objective of each station, have learners rotate through the stations at timed intervals
  
- Use audiobook and e-book activities with classes or discussion groups
  - **React activities:** Teachers/facilitators can play a chapter or section of an audiobook in class using a set of external speakers plugged into a mobile phone. Afterwards, teachers can ask students/participants to work in pairs or small groups to complete “react” activities. The same activities could be done in an e-book club with students reading/listening to a chapter at a time outside of class. These activities could be done on a daily/weekly basis to progress through the book, as a reward for good behavior at the end of the day, etc
    1. Which character would you like to meet/talk to and why? What advice would you give to character X (who is facing a choice/problem)?
    2. Use a written chart to map the “who, what, when, and where” for the section’s plot
  - **Listening for Vocabulary**
    1. Select the target language you’d like students to listen for (a set of vocabulary— emotions, places, actions, etc. or a specific grammar point— adjectives, past tense irregular verbs, conditionals, etc.)
    2. Select an audiobook segment that contains the target language
    3. Brainstorm a few examples of your target language and review meaning/use/form with the students before listening (meaning/use/form discussion can also happen after the listening segment)
    4. Let students know they will hear the target language while listening to the audiobook section
    5. Ask students to make a list of the target language they hear while listening. You can play the segment more than once.
    6. Have students compare their list with a partner
    7. Create a combined list on the board of what student’s heard
    8. Extension: Listen once more, asking students to try to listen for each item listed on the board and raise their hand when they hear it
  - **Summarize & Sequence**
    1. Select an audio book segment, preferably one with lots of action
    2. Have students listen and quickly write down what happens in the story (note: students can just write down the main ideas/events/actions and do not need to write in complete sentences). You can play the segment more than once.
    3. Have students rewrite what happens in complete sentences
    4. In pairs, have students compare their stories
    5. In pairs, have students select 4-6 of the most important parts of the story and write the selected sentences on strips of paper
    6. Have each pair scramble their strips of paper and trade with another pair

7. Each pair should try to sequence the other pair's set of sentences (based on their memory of the story or by listening again)
- **Character Comparison**
    1. Select an audiobook/e-book segment, preferably one that has details about two or more characters
    2. Brainstorm different ways to describe characters (physical descriptions, personality traits, feelings & emotions, habits, likes & dislikes, etc.)
    3. Draw a Venn diagram (a set of overlapping circles) on the board and have students copy the diagram into their notebooks. (There should be as many circles as there are characters you are asking students to compare.) It is useful to start with 2 characters when first doing this exercise.
    4. Explain to students that each circle represents a character and the character traits will go inside the character's circle. The parts of the circle that overlap will contain the traits that two characters share. The parts of the circle that don't overlap will contain the traits that are specific only to one character.
    5. Let students know they will listen/read to a segment about two (or more) characters and should compare the characters using the Venn diagram. You can play the segment more than once.
    6. In pairs, have students discuss their character comparisons.
    7. To review, fill in the Venn diagram on the board as a class
    8. Extension activities:
      - i. Have students write another short story using the characters they have just compared
      - ii. Have students create a Venn diagram comparing two people they know
  - **Predictions**
    1. Select an audiobook segment (preferably one in which you can stop the audio during a suspenseful part)
    2. Have students listen to the segment. You can play the segment more than once.
    3. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the story. Give students a time limit. (Encourage creativity!)
    4. Either have students write the story and share with the class, have students write the story in dialogue format and perform for the class, or have students draw and present a scene from their original ending.
  - **"Reading relay"**: one student/participant reads a few sentences of a book/story/chapter/few paragraphs of an e-book and orally summarizes the part to a partner or small group; the next student reads the next part, summarizes it; and so on through the rest of the assigned part. When finished summarizing the assigned part, the teams raise their hand and the facilitator writes the order of finishing on the board. When most of the class has finished, the first group shares their summary with the group; the following groups add in missed/incorrect details.
  - **Readers' Theater**: also called "Story Theater" – use with e-book texts
    - See this [English Teaching Forum](#) article for more information and ideas
  - **Learner-generated quizzes**: ask learners to develop quiz questions based on e-book, audiobook, or music content on the app. Pairs can workshop the quiz items to check for comprehensibility and errors. The group can then take a paper version of quiz or someone can [publish the quizzes in the quiz app available from biNu](#) and then learners can the quiz using phones, in class or on the go.

- Ideas for using music in the classroom or language learning groups:
  - **Musical Emotions**
    1. Post various signs with emotions (images or words) on the walls around the room.  
Examples: Happy, Sad, Energized, Nostalgic, Tired, Bored
    2. Select a few songs in the app's "Music" section that may evoke some of these various emotions
    3. Play one minute of the first song and then STOP the song
    4. Once you STOP the song, have students run to the emotion (on the wall) that they feel. Ask a few students to share why the song makes them feel this way
    5. Continue until you have played all of the songs you have selected
      - Alternative: have students write an emotion that they feel on a piece of paper. When you STOP the song, have students hold up the piece of paper and ask a few students to share why the song makes them feel this way
  - **Find the Mistakes**
    1. Select a song that you will play in class.
    2. Write the lyrics (or just the chorus) on the board or large piece of paper. Purposely write some of the lyrics incorrectly. You may want to change words that sound similar (like billion to million) or you may want to change grammar points that you are currently studying (change irregular past tense verbs to present tense)
    3. Have students copy the lyrics into their notebooks (with the mistakes)
    4. Have students listen to the song. You can play the song more than once
    5. In pairs, have students correct the mistakes while listening
    6. To review, ask student volunteers to correct the lyrics written on the board and add any additional corrections if necessary
  - **Unscramble the sentences**
    1. Select a song that uses a certain grammar point multiple times (for example: conditionals, imperatives)
    2. Select multiple sentences from the song that use this grammar structure
    3. Write the sentences on the board putting the words in random order
    4. Before students listen to the song, see if they can unscramble the sentences
    5. Ask students if they notice anything similar about each of the sentences (highlighting the grammar point)
    6. Play the song for students so they can check to see if they have successfully unscrambled the sentences. You can play the song more than once
- Vocabulary building activities
  - Users can keep a written vocabulary list/flashcard set of words they look up in the app's Wordnik dictionary as they read e-books or take quizzes on the AE biNu app; students can practice/share new words with others using word webs, charts, social media, etc. These words could be incorporated into future classroom activities and quizzes. Students and teacher can make their own vocabulary quizzes using the biNu [quiz builder](#)
  - Assign learners an idiom to look up on their own time/ at home using the *In the Loop* e-book or the mobile dictionary features. The next time the group meets, learners could present their idiom. Alternatively, the teacher could list the assigned idioms on the board, learners would act out, describe, etc. their idioms and the rest of the group would try to guess the correct idiom from the list

- Activities for Teachers
  - Set up a discussion group or round table for teachers or trainee teachers interested in mobile resources. The facilitator can demonstrate app features and share a few activity ideas. The group can then brainstorm other ideas for using the app in their context. Don't forget to share these great teacher-generated ideas with the [Office of English Language Programs](#) for further distribution
  - Teachers or trainee teachers could choose their favorite resource from the App, design an activity or lesson plan using the resource, and then share with other interested teachers or present ideas at a local conference
  
- Children's classes: use *Sing Out Loud – Children's Songs* for active learning;
  - *Love the Hokey Pokey, Bingo, Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes?* Using a set of external speakers with a phone, let young learners burn off energy while using the language: learners can sing along, act out the lyrics, etc.
  
- Create culture and current event activities with "VOA Learning English" content on the AE app; include foreign policy and current events topics to promote meaningful discussion/thought that relates to language learners' lives.
  - Choose a VOA Learning English news story that is relevant and interesting to your learners or related to your curriculum
  - Decide what activities go best with the story and meet your learners' needs/level. Activities like discussion groups, debates, giving speeches based on the topic, vocabulary study, and are some of the many options
  - The facilitator may wish to create activities related to the content the story itself, learner reactions to it, or aspects of the language presented in it
  
- On the go! Remind learners and teachers that they can explore resources or play "Trace Word Soup" anytime, anywhere: as they commute on public transportation, wait for a bus, etc. They can also choose to connect with other learners and teachers using the social media features in the app.

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