**COMMUNICATIVE SPEAKING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**Nume autor: prof. Alina IANEŢ**

**Unitatea de învăţământ: Colegiul Naţional Nicolae Titulescu-Pucioasa**

**Disciplina: Limba engleză**

**Scopul materialului propus:**

* **Didactic ( de utilizat la clasă cu elevii)**
* **De documentare pentru cadre didactice**

**Nivel de învăţământ: Liceal**

**Clasa: a-IX-a/ a-X-a**

Communicative activities develop the students’ fluency in the target language. The teacher must find motivating activities and topics so that the students would get involved in real-life communicative situations.

I have decided to offer you some examples of Communicative speaking and writing activities. I have used these activities in order to train students *to produce correct oral and written messages*.

* **Communicative speaking activities**

Communicative speaking activities consist in *role plays, discussions and debates.* These communicative tasks put students in real-life situations and increase the communicative interaction. They could be:

* **Role-play activities**

In order to help students speak with confidence, I encourage them to produce oral messages in different situations.

\****For example***, after teaching Unit 14 “Getting there” from the FCE Gold Plus Cousebook, my 10th graders were involved in a motivating **role-play activity**.

**The aim of the activity**: to interact by practising vocabulary related to ***holidays and travel***; **Level**: upper- intermediate;

*Procedure:* The students receive role-play cards. Half of the class are travel agents and the other half are simple people who want to spend their summer holidays in a certain destination and have some claims regarding the conditions. They have to role-play a scene in a travel agency, where Student A is the customer and Student B is the travel agent.

**Student A** receives the following information:

|  |
| --- |
| **Student A -** You want:-a double room  - to go to a hotel in Mamaia for 7 days;  (you can spend up to 500 euros on the hotel)  - your hotel to be near the beach;  - a swimming pool for your two little daughters;  - skilled staff to take care of your daughters at the hotel;  - a clean room with a beautiful sea view;  - the restaurant to serve good food; |

**Student B** (the travel agent) receives the following role-play card with information he/she has to explain to student A (the customer).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student B**  **Pay attention to the information below, so that you can answer the questions asked by the customer:** | | | | |
| HOTELS | Phoenicia | Pescăruş | Perla | Venus |
| The cost of a double  room per day | 80 € | 57€ | 48€ | 32€ |
| Sea view | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) |
| Distance from the sea | 32m | 100m | 55m | 40 m |
| Food at the restaurant | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) |
| Swimming pool for children | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) |
| Skilled staff to take care of the children | [Description: http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) | [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html) |
| Note: the smile ratings indicate the folowing: [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html)= exellent; [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.pnghttp://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html)=very good; [http://www.clker.com/cliparts/b/1/f/0/11949864471536214792base.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4231.html)=satisfactory and [Description: http://www.clker.com/cliparts/2/d/6/1/1194986450373692781smiley002.svg.thumb.png](http://www.clker.com/clipart-4234.html)=unsatisfactory; | | | | |

They have about 5 minutes to read the information on the role-play cards. The students who are customers must choose their hotels according to the qualities they prefer.

**Follow-up discussions:** After the activity, both students and teacher discuss about what went well. The teacher points out some mistakes the students made (without telling their names) and asks the whole class to find solutions. In order to make the students compare what happened, the teacher can ask the following questions: *Did all Students A choose the Phoenicia Hotel? ; Why?; Why not?; What seemed difficult to you?;*

* **Debates**

**\*Example: Identifying the crime and suggesting suitable punishment**

**Aim:** to read for specific information and practise nouns related to crimes and punishments;/ **Level:** intermediate and upper- intermediate

This activity was done by my 9th graders. It was performed at the end of the reading sequence *“Tell Me the Crime They Committed”* where the main focus was *reading for specific information and practising nouns related to* ***crimes and punishments.***

*Procedure:* The students are asked to work in groups of four and imagine that they are lawyers who have to study a difficult case. Each student has to identify the crime committed, suggest a suitable punishment *(community service, a fine, (put on) probation, (release on) bail, suspended prison sentence, life imprisonment or capital punishment*) and justify their decision.

*Stacey, aged 22, was caught selling marijuana at a disco. At her flat the police found about 50 grams of the drug. (Value / around 250 Euros)*

(Web. 27 Apr.2015 <<https://nsalmeronbiling.wikispaces.com/file/view/4%C2%BAESO%20UNIT7%20CRIME.pdf/547713574/4%C2%BAESO%20UNIT7%20CRIME.pdf>>.)

The students receive the following role-cards:

|  |
| --- |
| **Student A:** Identify the crime committed and suggest that she should pay a very large fine. Think of reasons why this is the best punishment. |
| **Student B:** Identify the crime committed and suggest that she should do community service in an old people’s home for 3 months. Think of reasons why this is the best punishment. |
| **Student C:** Identify the crime committed and suggest that she should receive a suspended prison sentence. Think of reasons why this is the best punishment. |
| **Student D:** You haven’t decided on a certain punishment. Listen to the others’ ideas and agree with the punishment you consider the most suitable for this case. |

**Comments:** The students were very interested in the activity. They shared some information about the issue and offered different arguments for their choices. The final stage of this problem-solving activity involved the students’ reaching an agreement.

* **Discussions**

**\*Example: Analysing a study conducted in Taiwan**

**Aim:** to bring for and against arguments and justify choices; / **Level:** upper-intermediate

**Stage 1**: First the teacher engages the students with the topic by asking them *Do you like shopping?/ Which are the things you like buying or would like to buy?/ Have you ever bought useless things?* After answering the questions, the teacher tells them that according to a study conducted in Taiwan, shopping can help people to live longer and presents the following fragment taken from the website *www.afactaday.co.uk.*

"... *compared to other types of leisure-time physical activity like formal exercise, which usually requires motivation and sometimes professional instruction, shopping activity is easier to undertake and maintain. ... Shopping captures several dimensions of personal well-being, health and security as well as contributing to the community’s cohesiveness and economy and may represent or actually confer increased longevity*."

(Web. 6 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.afactaday.co.uk/search?q=shopping>>.)

**Stage 2:** Then, the students work in groups.

**Group 1** are in favour: shopping helps people to live longer.

**Group 2** are against: shopping doesn’t help people to live longer. It is a waste of time and money.

**Group 3** are in favour of spending money in moderation; going shopping too often is only one way of spending our free time.

**Stage 3:** Students are activated. After preparing their arguments, the groups present them to the whole class. Then, they answer the questions that their colleagues ask.

The third group is the one that offers solutions.

* **Communicative writing activities**

Communicative writing activities also help students to do problem-solving tasks in which they have to find suitable ideas and present them according to both the reader’ needs and the writer’s goals. Besides nouns, *lots of grammar structures and varied vocabulary can be assessed* by using communicative writing activities. Obviously, the message should be adequate to a certain situation. Teachers’ general aim is to have students focus on the discourse dimension, not paying so much attention to accuracy because they know that when their students become fluent and confident writers, they will certainly begin to produce accurate messages.

* **Dialogue writing**

**\*Example: Acting out your own scenario**

**Aims**:-to contextualize idioms in dialogues; /**Level**: intermediate and upper-intermediate

The teacher gets the students into pairs and asks them to write and act out a dialogue using the following idioms: ***to twist someone round your little finger, he wouldn’t hurt a fly, to beat about the bush, to turn over a new leaf, to pay the earth for something.*** The students know their meanings as they previously did exercises which contained idioms with nouns. At the end of the activity the students act out their own scenarios/dialogues and the best ones are praised both by the teacher and their colleagues. Then, the teacher makes some comments on what went well and explains some of the mistakes the students made without telling their names.

In the examples below, the students contextualized the idioms appropriately in their dialogues**:**

**Students’ work:**

**Pair 2:**

**Idiom: To turn over a new leaf**

**Maria**: *Oh, My Goodness! George is drinking pear juice! What happened to him? I can’t even recognize him.*

**Bogdan**: *No, I don’t think so. He’s fine. Actually, he’s healthier than he’s ever been.*

**Maria:** *He seems to be in good physical shape. What happened to him?*

**Bogdan:** *Well, he’s changed his habits regarding food and exercise. He eats healthy food and does a lot of sport. More than that, he gave up drinking alcohol!*

**Maria:** *That’s really good news!*

**Bogdan:** *Well, he hasn’t drunk alcohol for six months.*

**Maria:** *Excellent! It means that he’s really turned over a new leaf.*

**Students’ work:**

**Pair 4:**

**Idiom: To pay the earth for something**

**Adelina:** *What was that noise in the kitchen?*

**David:** *Nothing! I’m ok?*

**Adelina:** *Did you drop something?*

**David:** *I made a mistake. I am so sorry!*

**Adelina:** *What did you drop! Tell me!*

**David**: *It was only a vase! I really don’t know how it slipped out of my hands.*

**Adelina:** *Don’t tell me! It’s my china vase! Do you know how much it cost me last year? I bought it from Portugal.*

**David:** *I’m really sorry! I’ll buy you another one, I promise!*

**Adelina:** *Are you joking?!? You can’t afford to buy such a vase! I paid the earth for it!*

* **Decision making activity**

**Aim:** to review singular and plural nouns**; / Level:** intermediate;

The teacher asks the students to work individually and decide what things to take with them if they were on a crashed aircraft, keeping in mind that the plane crashed in the desert and they have to backpack useful things that help them to cross the desert to the nearest village or town; after about5 minutes, each student reports to the whole class.

* **Paragraph/Essay writing**

**Aim:** - to review articles, countable and uncountable nouns, noun-verb agreement, and determiners. / **Level:** intermediate and upper-intermediate;

Activity: “**Being a journalist”**- Students are asked to work in groups and write an interesting newsflash, using the following nouns: *information, money, luggage, men, tooth, wolf, advice, coffee, traffic* and beginning as shown: *“Good evening ladies and gentlemen! We interrupt your usual program in order to bring you some important news. We have got some information that a U.F.O. landed outside the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest.* “(*~ 10 lines*)

After about 20 minutes, the students read their newsflashes and the most interesting ones are praised both by the teacher and their colleagues. According to the analytical criteria for ***narrative paragraph writing*** (*Task achievement, Language accuracy, Register and vocabulary, Organization, Cohesion and layout, Overall effect),* the teacher makes comments on what went well and explains some of the mistakes the students made without telling their names.

**Bibliography:**

Harmer, Jeremy. *How to teach English*. London: Pearson Education Limited, 2007.

**Web bibliography**

<http://www.afactaday.co.uk/search?q=shopping> (Web. accessed on 6th Mar. 2015)

<https://nsalmeronbiling.wikispaces.com/file/view/4%C2%BAESO%20UNIT7%20CRIME.pdf/547713574/4%C2%BAESO%20UNIT7%20CRIME.pdf> (Web. accessed on 27th Apr. 2015)