

ESL Developmental Continuum P–10

Teaching strategy – Pair dictation

Focuses on

Speaking Listening Reading Writing

Most useful for students at stages

A1 A2 BL B1 B2 B3 SL S1 S2 S3 S4

Purpose of this activity

For the speaker, it encourages better pronunciation. For the hearer, it is good for listening practice as it really forces students to pay attention to what they are hearing.

The activity can include grammar points that are in focus at a given time – e.g. third person -s, subject verb agreement, prepositions, etc.

How this helps ESL students in particular

- It is conducted in a non-threatening environment – pairs, not in front of the whole class.
- It includes a focus on form and on forms.
- Careful pairing can aid literacy development.
- Dictation activities allow speaking practice, even in large classes.
- Students receive immediate feedback as to how they have gone in the activity.

Procedure

In this activity, students work in pairs to complete a list or a text.

Telephone numbers

Partner A could have a list of telephone numbers, and partner B a different list, for example, like this:

1. 318 4722	A	1. _____	B	1. 387 7860	A	1. _____	B
2. 2057933		2. _____		2. 979 9782		2. _____	
3. 0425 110 590		3. _____		3. 0417 597 326		3. _____	
4. 07 206 5874		4. _____		4. 02 306 8764		4. _____	

Partner A reads out his or her numbers, and Partner B completes the blanks in his or her list.

Sentences

Another variation on the activity has each partner being given a list of sentences to read out to their partner. For example:

Student A's sheet	Student B's sheet
1. My father likes cooking	1. _____
2. I am taller than my brother	2. _____
3. Do you have a red pencil?	3. _____
4. _____	4. She sings when she is happy.
5. _____	5. Can I borrow your ruler?
6. _____	6. I want a piece of pizza.

This activity can be adapted for use at a wide variety of levels of English and of literacy. If some students are developing literacy, one partner could have a picture and the other have to write the word.

For higher level students, try selecting a text and blanking out every second sentence on one student's text, and alternate sentences on the partner's text.

Again, for higher level students, have one partner dictate a story and the other sequence a series of pictures into the correct order.

Acknowledgments/reference

Croydon, A. (1999). *Beyond the basic language skills: Research and problem solving at any level*. Tacoma Community House Training Project, Winter 1999. Available as a pdf from [Literacy Now, Literacy Network of Washington](http://www.literacynow.info/pdf/Winter_1999_Newsletter.pdf) (http://www.literacynow.info/pdf/Winter_1999_Newsletter.pdf)

Wilson, M. (2005). *Dictation*, Miyagi October Meeting 2005. Available as a pdf from [Cambridge English](http://www.c-english.com/files/0510dictation.pdf) (http://www.c-english.com/files/0510dictation.pdf)