

Distance Teaching

How to engage students with lesson content from the first minute



ENGAGE

Warm-up, retrieval practice, prior knowledge activation

- getting students interested in the lesson content from the very first minute
- doing retrieval practice
- creating a more personalised learning experience for students

In order to get students interested in the lesson from the very first minute, you can use a proverb or a saying.

- You can find a proverb to go with practically every topic – health, food, lifestyle, cultures and traditions, daily routine, education, etc. For example:

Weather – It is raining cats and dogs.

Health – An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Cultures and countries – When in Rome do as the Romans do.

- You can use proverbs to teach grammar – imperatives, comparatives, conditionals, etc. You can also teach about the customs and traditions of English-speaking countries with the help of proverbs.
- Proverbs are short, fun and easy to memorise. You can often find funny illustrations to go with proverbs. Choose a proverb that supports your learning material. Demonstrate the illustration to the proverb on your shared screen or on the Zoom whiteboard.
- Discuss the proverb with students, try to find equivalents in their native language, and ask students to think about situations when the proverb can be used.

- For homework you can tell students to write a story where the proverb can be used at the end by one of the main characters.
- You can differentiate tasks with proverbs and make them different levels of difficulty to create a more personalised learning experience.

Using images to engage students

Another idea for a warm-up activity is to show students a zoomed-in fragment of an image connected with the theme of the lesson and let them guess what it is. You can find a lot of images like this on the British Council LearnEnglish Teens website or you can make one yourself with your smartphone.

Using songs as warm-up activities

You can also play a song or a music video at the beginning of the lesson as a warm-up activity. It can either be connected with the topic of the lesson or just be fun and engaging.

Alternatively...

If you are looking for a low-tech alternative of a warm-up activity, find an object connected to the theme of the lesson, put it in a bag and ask students to guess what it is. You may instruct them to ask you yes-no questions. For example, you can choose a book that you are reading now while studying the topic "Literature", put some stationery in a bag while studying the theme "School and classroom objects", choose a tennis ball for the theme "Sport", etc.