



# Teaching activities: Six ways to review and reflect on learning

Regular review helps learners consolidate what they know, build confidence and identify what they need to work on next.

Review is especially useful at the start of a new term or after a break, when learners may need to reactivate language and skills they haven't used for a while. It's also a good opportunity to help learners reflect on strengths, challenges, motivation and learning strategies.

The six activities below help learners review previous learning, reflect on how they learn and set goals for the next stage of their learning. All activities take between ten and 30 minutes. You can adjust timing to suit your learners' needs.

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## Looking back: three review activities

### The dice game (10–20 minutes)

#### Description

You can use this game to practise or review any language structures and vocabulary your learners have studied.

#### Materials

Two dice (different colours if possible)

#### Procedure

1. Assign a language structure to each number on one dice, e.g. 1=present perfect; 2=comparatives; 3=passive; 4=second conditional.
2. Assign a topic to each number on the other dice, e.g. 1=food; 2=money; 3=sport; 4=transport. Write these on the board.
3. Demonstrate the activity by throwing both dice. Show the numbers, e.g. 4 (second conditional) and 3 (sport) and create a sentence: If I were taller, I would play basketball.
4. Learners take turns to throw the dice for the class. In pairs, learners make sentences on mini whiteboards and hold them up. Alternatively, learners can play in small groups with a pair of dice for each group.

#### Variations

- One dice has topics, the other has linking words, such as although, but, because.
- Each sentence has to connect to the sentence before.
- With each roll, learners make a question to ask their partner.
- Learners make sentences about themselves and their partner has to guess if they are true or false.



## Learner-made quiz (10–30 minutes)

### Description

Creating questions helps learners review what they know as much as answering questions. In this activity they do both.

### Materials

None

### Procedure

1. Demonstrate creating a quiz question on the board. Pick a language area that you want learners to review, for example, past simple. Elicit a few sentences in the past simple and write them on the board.
2. Show how each can be made into a quiz question by making a gap-fill; giving multiple-choice options; or adding a mistake which learners need to find.

|                                         |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| I visited my grandparents last weekend. | → <i>I</i> _____ ( <b>visit</b> ) my grandparents last weekend. |
| Did you see Tom yesterday?              | → Did you _____ Tom yesterday? <b>see/saw/seen</b>              |
| She didn't enjoy the film.              | → She didn't enjoyed the film.                                  |

**TIP:** It's a good idea if learners start with the correct answer and work backwards to make a quiz question. This way ensures they end up with the right answer.

3. Put learners into pairs to write one or two questions. Assign each pair a language area or a page of their coursebook to write questions about.
4. Monitor and provide lots of help. Learners can use the question types in their coursebook to help them.
5. Collect the questions and write them on the board for the whole class to answer. Each pair can write their answer on a mini whiteboard and hold it up. Alternatively, if learners have access to devices they can write them directly onto a shared document categorised by language area. As learners gain more confidence creating quizzes, they can ask their questions directly to the whole class.



## Vocabulary networks (10–20 minutes)

### Description

This activity helps learners make visual connections between sets of words and phrases.

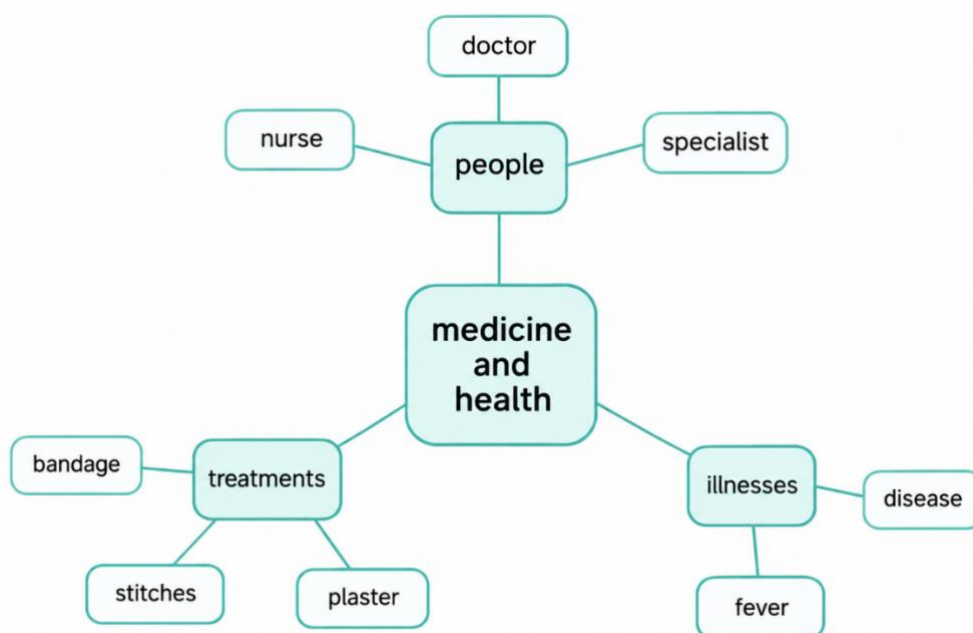
### Materials

One large piece of paper per topic

Coloured pens/pencils (optional)

### Procedure

1. Make a network with the whole class. Choose a topic and add subgroups around it. Elicit words and phrases for each group and write them on the board. For example:



2. Put learners into small groups and give each group a large sheet of paper, coloured pens and a vocabulary topic. Each group starts their network.
3. After a few minutes, move each piece of paper to a different group so that group can add to that topic.
4. Repeat until each group has had a chance to add to each topic.

**TIP:** Learners can turn the networks into posters for display in the classroom.

**Extra challenge:** Ask learners to add words to make common collocations, e.g. *Have/get/catch a fever, put on a bandage, get stitches.*

**Extra support:** Learners can use their textbooks for help and inspiration while still getting practice in categorising and organising.



## Looking ahead: three reflection activities

### Map of strengths (10–20 minutes)

#### Description

This activity asks learners to focus on their strengths and positive characteristics. Recognising their skills and positive attributes can help develop confidence and a growth mindset.

#### Materials

Coloured paper or card (optional)

Coloured pencils (optional)

#### Procedure

1. Demonstrate the activity by writing your name in the middle of the board. Write some of your strengths and positive characteristics around it. For example, *I am always on time. I try to help my learners. When I make a mistake, I don't get worried. I try again.* You can also ask for suggestions from your learners.
2. Learners create their own map of their strengths and skills. They can do the activity in their notebook or you can give them some coloured paper or card and coloured pencils.
3. Learners can stick their map into their books so they can refer back to it whenever they need a reminder of their strengths.

**Extra support:** Elicit a list of positive learner skills and characteristics and write them on the board. Learners can use them and adapt them into their own map.



## My hurdles (10–15 minutes)

### Description

This activity helps learners to think about challenges in their learning. Looking ahead can help learners feel prepared and therefore reduce stress and anxiety. Use it at the beginning of a new topic or coursebook unit.

### Materials

A picture of a runner jumping over a hurdle

### Procedure

1. Show the picture and elicit or give the word 'hurdle'. Ask learners: 'Does the hurdle make running easier or more difficult?' (more difficult). Explain that sometimes there are hurdles or challenges in our learning but knowing where they are can help you to prepare.
2. Ask learners to look through the pages of the new unit or materials and discuss the content.
  - What tasks and activities are they looking forward to?
  - What do they think they'll find challenging?
3. Ask them to identify their 'hurdles' in learning – what challenges can they see?
4. Demonstrate drawing a hurdle. Elicit a challenge and label the hurdle with that challenge.
  1. Learners draw their hurdles and label each one with a challenge.
  2. As you work through the topic, ask learners to look back at their hurdles and see which ones they have 'got over'. Ask them to draw themselves jumping over the hurdle.

*This activity is adapted from the Cambridge Life Competencies activity cards for teenage learners.*



## My motivation (10–20 minutes)

### Description

Thinking about why they're learning English helps learners develop self-awareness and motivation. Knowing your learners' reasons can also help you to make future lessons relevant to their needs.

### Materials

None

### Procedure

1. On the board write: *I'm learning English because ...* Elicit a couple of examples from the group, such as *I want to travel abroad. It will help me when I go to university. I like listening to music in English.*
2. Put learners in small groups to talk about their reasons for learning English.
3. Monitor the discussion and be ready to probe learners further about their reasons.
4. Elicit ideas from the groups and write them on the board. As you do, ask follow-up questions to encourage learners to think more deeply about their motivations.
5. If learners mention external pressures, such as parents wanting them to learn English or having to take exams, acknowledge these reasons but encourage learners to identify a personal benefit behind them. For example, *I need to pass an exam* could become: *Passing the exam will help me achieve my future goals* or *Studying for the exam will help me become more confident in English.*
6. Finish the activity by asking learners to choose their three most important motivations. They write these reasons into the front of their notebook. They can then refer back to them as a reminder of why learning English is important to them.

**Extra support:** With lower levels you could give learners a list of reasons and they talk about which ones apply to them. Alternatively, the discussion can be in L1 with learners reporting their ideas back in English.

## Useful links

Read more about the importance of reflection and other aspects of [Learning to Learn](#).

Find more ideas and activities for [Integrating Learning and Assessment](#).