



Speaking Activities for the Secondary School Classroom

ASK ME

Use this activity to practice/review question formation with a variety of grammatical structures. Have each student write three questions with the target structure on a piece of paper. Then put students into pairs and have them take turns interviewing each other. Swap pairs or have students swap their questions and repeat. At the end of the activity, have students say what they learned about their partner(s).

CONVINCE ME

This activity helps students practice persuasive speech. Pre-teach ways to convince others via persuasion (i.e. If...then..., pity, flattery, bullying). Then break the class into two teams; students compete to be more persuasive than the opposing team to win points.

CROSSFIRE

This activity helps students improve listening comprehension, fluency, and accuracy. Have two students come up to the front of the class and ask a question based on what students need to practice/review. The students want to be the first to point to their opponent and say the correct answer. If she is faster and the answer is correct, her opponent is out. If she is wrong, her opponent has a chance to fire back with the correct answer. If they are both wrong, they are eliminated. After a few rounds, students can also be the ones to ask the questions.

DESERT ISLAND

This activity helps students improve their fluency and practice/review the language function of giving reasons. Have students imagine that they will have to spend 10 years on a desert island. They can choose five English songs, two books, and one luxury item (which cannot be a means of communication). After individually preparing their lists, students work in small groups to explain their choices and why each item is important for them.

EXCLAMATIONS

This activity helps students use the present perfect and brainstorm reasons based around exclamations. Give one exclamation at a time and see how many reasons for it students can generate in pairs or small groups. For example, if the exclamation is "Ouch!" students might say, "Someone has just hit his finger." Other exclamations include: *Sorry! What? Never mind. You're joking! No, thanks. Really? Wow! That's really bad luck. Well done! Help! Cheers! Oh my God! Of course. Uh-oh! So?* This activity could also lead into the writing and performance of short dialogues.

GOOD DAY

Students shake hands with another student and introduce themselves, and they can only let go when they have each grabbed another student's hand—and the introductions continue. *Variation:* Students say their partners name rather than their own.



MAKE ME SAY YES

Use this activity to practice/review question formation with a variety of grammatical structures. Model the activity by having students ask you questions based on the target structure. For each time you answer in the affirmative, students score a point. For each time you answer in the negative, you score a point. Then have students continue in pairs, having them first brainstorm questions if they need extra support.

ONE WORD AT A TIME

Use this activity to drill a variety of grammatical structures. Have students stand in a circle. Demonstrate that students are going to create sentences one word at a time around the circle according to the structure you set (affirmative, negative, interrogative of any structure). Once a sentence is complete, the next student can start a new sentence. Encourage students to keep a good pace as they go around the circle.

OUTBURST

Divide students into two teams, and assign each team a secret topic based on vocabulary you've been practicing. The teams have five minutes to create a list of ten words related to the topic. Then announce the topics. Teams take it in turn to guess the words on the other team's list, earning a point for each correctly guessed word; in addition, teams can earn points for words that are not guessed but which fit the topic.

STORY ORCHESTRA

This activity helps students practice the past simple and improve their fluency. The whole of the group sits or stands in front of one person, who is the conductor. The conductor imagines that she is conducting an orchestra. The group tells a story, with the conductor pointing at different people in any order, one by one. The conductor decides how long each person continues to tell the story before moving on to somebody new. Of course, she may change at the end of a sentence, or at any time. The group should try to keep the narration going as smoothly as possible. After a preliminary example, have students break into groups to continue the activity with a new story. Groups can then share a summary of their story with the class.

TWENTY-SECOND TOPICS

This activity helps students improve fluency. Put students into pairs/small groups and give them a list of topics, with at least one topic per student. Students take turns choosing a topic and talking about it for twenty seconds. Topics could be ones that they have been studying or could be random topics (see below) that you think students could talk about without little or no preparation.

<i>My room</i>	<i>The future</i>
<i>London</i>	<i>School</i>
<i>Money</i>	<i>New York City</i>
<i>Fashion</i>	<i>Next summer</i>
<i>Astrology</i>	<i>Pets</i>
<i>Fitness</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>