

PRESENTING GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES THROUGH A READING PASSAGE

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Grammatical structures can be presented orally to a class through the use of (a) a flannelboard/magnetboard and figurines, (b) individual pictures or picture series, (c) real or simulated situations, (d) dialogues, etc. A useful alternative to the oral presentation of grammatical structures is the presentation through a reading passage.

Suitable passages for this purpose can be found in textbooks. Alternatively, passages can be devised by teachers themselves. The latter is preferable to ensure that the class is being presented with reading material at the correct proficiency level. The passages should be short and should contain vocabulary familiar to the class. The context chosen should also be within the personal experience of pupils. Finally, the meaning conveyed by the new structures should be evident in the general sense of the passage.

By using a reading passage for the presentation of grammatical structures, pupils are given an opportunity to encounter these new items in a context rather than in isolated sentences. In order to demonstrate the advantages of this method, I shall present two passages on Unit 18 of the Lower Secondary English Syllabus for Malaysian Schools. Unit 18 reads as follows:

Further Expansions of the Noun Phrase

- (a) too much + uncountable nouns; too many + countable nouns
- (b) Comparative adjectives
- (c) (not) enough
- (d) some, any, no + more + nouns
- (e) Questions with How much more . . . ? and How many more . . . ?

I have devised two passages on the same theme employing the use of Unit 18. The first passage is suitable for a weak Form One class; the second for an average Form One class. I have deliberately written on the same theme to illustrate that different classes can handle the same themes provided the level of the language is adjusted to suit each class. Both passages encompass all items of Unit 18. However, some Units in the LSES may not lend themselves to this so that a teacher can only utilize some of the items within a Unit. The remaining items could be presented in another reading passage or, for variety, through oral presentation.

PASSAGE I (For a weak Form I)

Getting Ready for Teachers' Day

Next Wednesday will be Teachers' Day. Bobby's class is going to have a class party for their teachers. They do not have *enough* money to have a big party. Each student has to pay one dollar but *some* students have *no* money. They can bring *any* type of food.

Mutu and Salimah must find out *how many* teachers are coming for their party. They must also find out *how much* food will be needed. There must not be *too much* food. There should be *enough* drinks too.

Chin Seng and Leela have to get the classroom ready. They must know *how many* chairs and desks they need. There should not be *too many* desks. The classroom is not big enough. There must be *enough* space for playing games.

The teacher could read the above passage or have pupils read it silently. Oral work should follow. The oral work is planned to involve pupils in listening to the new grammatical items, in saying sentences which

contain the new items and in reading the new items. The initial phase of the oral **work** should be simple; Yes/No questions can be asked or True/False answers called for. Here are three sets of examples:

1. *Answer the following with Yes or No:*

1. They had *enough* money for the party.
2. Some students had *no* money.
3. Salimah had to find out *how many* teachers were coming.
4. There should be *many* chairs.
5. There must be *enough* space for playing games.

Note that the new structures occur in 1. to 5. The pupils listen to these new structures being read out. Their choice of answer will depend on their understanding of the structure in the sentence.

2. *Answer the following questions in complete sentences:*

1. Did Bobby's class have enough money for the party?
2. Why couldn't some pupils give money?
3. What had Mutu and Salimah to find out?
4. How much food should there be?
5. What did they need for playing games?

Note that these questions have been devised to elicit the use of the new items. This is more meaningful than getting pupils to say isolated sentences containing the items. These questions could also be set for written work once they have been worked orally.

3. *Make correct sentences from the table below:*

The pupils	need	enough	food.
		any	chairs.
	do not need	some	desks.
		too many	drinks.
		too much	money.

Note that this table can be used in drill work.

Below are two sets of questions for **written work**:

4. *Fill in the blanks with the following words or phrases:*

too much enough some
too many how much

1. food do they have?
2. They do not need chairs in the room.
3. Have they money for the party?
4. They must not have food and drinks.
5. pupils cannot pay one dollar for the party.

Note that these are application questions as the pupils are expected to use the new items in question forms as well. Although a blankfilling exercise has been chosen, other techniques are just as applicable: matching halves of sentences, completing sentences, rearranging sentences to form a story, etc.

5. *Answer the following questions:*

1. Why did the pupils have to pay one dollar each?
2. What must Mutu and Salimah find out?
3. What must Chin Seng and Leela do?
4. Why shouldn't there be too many desks and chairs?
5. Why do they require a lot of space?

Note that these questions demand reading comprehension skill, for example, inference.

Below is a development and expansion of this first passage to make it appropriate for a better class.

PASSAGE II (For an average Form I)

Preparing for Teachers' Day

Next Wednesday, 16th May, will be Teachers' Day. Bobby's class is going to have a class party for their teachers. Every teacher who is teaching their class will be invited. They need to collect *some* money to buy the food. Each pupil has to pay one dollar but *some* pupils may not have the money. However, they can bring along *any* type of food. Bobby is afraid that there will not be *enough* money for the party.

Mutu and Salimah must find out *how many* teachers are coming to the party. The teachers have *many* class parties to attend. Mutu and Salimah must also find out *how much* food they will require. They do not want to order *too many* types of food. They must make sure that there are *enough* drinks too. However, there must not be *too much* food as it would be a waste.

Chin Seng and Devi have to arrange the class for the party. They must decide *how many* chairs and desks they need. There should not be *too much* furniture as the classroom is not very big. There must be *enough* space for playing games.

Oral Work

1. *Say whether the following statements are true or false:*

1. The class must collect some money.
2. The poor pupils can bring along any type of food.
3. All the teachers can attend the party.
4. Mutu and Salimah wanted to buy a lot of food.
5. Some games would be played at the party.

Note that although the new structures do not appear in every one of the above statements, the pupils' choice of an answer will depend on their understanding of the new structures. The teacher can ask the class the reasons for their choice of answer and, in this way, elicit the use of the new structures.

2. Fill in the blanks with the following words or phrases:

some too many enough
too much how much

1. money had to be collected for the party.
2. They did not want food for the party.
3. They did not want types of food.
4. chairs and desks did they require?
5. They had to have space for playing games.

3. Make a true sentence about yourself with one of the following words:

some enough many much any

Note that Form One pupils are expected to be able to compose simple sentences.

Written Work

4. Rearrange the following words and phrases to make correct sentences:

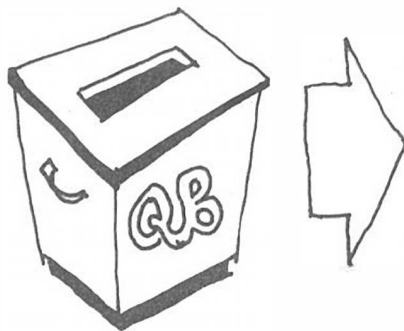
1. Mutu/how/find/must/food/out/much/require/they
2. furniture/should/too/not/there/be/much/in/room/the
3. they/space/games/for/needed/enough/playing
4. some/may/money/pupils/not/able/pay/the/to/be
5. many/decide/must/chairs/they/how/need/they

5. Answer the following questions:

1. What is Bobby's class planning?
2. Why do they need money?
3. What must Mutu and Salimah do?
4. Where will the party be held?
5. Who are the pupils going to invite?

From the two passages and questions given above, it is obvious that the teacher has to be very thorough in his preparation. In both the oral and written sections, the questions have to be so framed that they elicit use of the new structures. If devised carefully the method of presenting grammatical structures through a reading passage is a valuable alternative to presenting structures orally as the approach allows pupils to listen to the structures, say the structures, read the structures and write the structures in one lesson.

If you have any queries or problems on the teaching of English write to:



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