

# Activities for Intermediate Speakers

This activity pack is a guide for coaching intermediate-level speakers in upper-elementary grades and higher. You can easily modify these for younger students by omitting the more mature content and incorporating songs, chants, and lots of movement into the lessons. As their attention spans are short, you'll want to change up activities often. Don't introduce too much vocabulary in one lesson for little ones.

Many of these topics will need to be taught over the course of several days or weeks. These activities are intended to give you a model of how to introduce content and engage your students. For material, you can easily create a lot of items, such as number cards or memory cards, by drawing them on paper and cutting them into squares. Also, ask the host family what games and books they have that you can incorporate into your lessons.

## Suggested Topics:

- ▶ Getting to Know Each Other (first lesson)
- ▶ Hobbies and Interests
- ▶ Emotions
- ▶ Personality Traits
- ▶ Description (Five senses)
- ▶ Expressing Opinions
- ▶ Comparatives
- ▶ Superlatives
- ▶ Idioms
- ▶ Advice
- ▶ Making Appointments & Reservations
- ▶ Food Description
- ▶ At a Restaurant
- ▶ Making Complaints & Expressing Apologies
- ▶ Hotel
- ▶ Airport & Train Station
- ▶ On Vacation
- ▶ Making Plans with Friends/Asking Someone on a Date
- ▶ Cooking
- ▶ Shopping
- ▶ My Home
- ▶ Holidays - Halloween
- ▶ Holidays - Thanksgiving
- ▶ Holidays - Valentine's Day
- ▶ Holidays - New Year's Eve
- ▶ Movies

## Getting to Know Each Other

### Activity 1 Go Fish

Play a card game with children, which involves speaking (such as Go Fish). The purpose is to get them speaking while playing a game so that they can warm up to you.

### Activity 2 About Me

Make a poster/collage of random facts about yourself and elicit kids to guess what each fact means (Ex: list your best friend's name & ask children to guess who this person is in relation to you). Or show pictures of you with family and friends.

### Activity 3 Things You Like

Gather a bunch of old magazines and give each kid a poster board, scissors, and a glue stick. Instruct them to cut out pictures of things they like and that represent them as a person. Ask them to share when they're finished.

### Activity 4 Memory

Play memory with cards that have a variety of terms. This is another way to gauge students' vocabulary.



## Hobbies & Interests

### Activity 1 Question of the Day

What is your favorite sport?

*\* You may want to start each session with a “Question of the Day” - this is one way to form a habit of speaking in English immediately. Questions can be related to whatever theme you’re introducing.*

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Show pictures of people engaging in hobbies/interests and elicit children to guess the activity.
2. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term with a visual.

### Activity 3 What Are You Into?

1. Ask kids what they are “into.” Give an example to convey meaning.
2. Create a worksheet with a list of different hobbies and the target language: “Are you into...?” / “I’m into...” Instruct students to ask each other if they are into each of the hobbies/interests. (If you only have one student, practice with him/her)

### Activity 4 Hobbies in Action

Participate in your students’ hobbies. For example, if their hobby is drawing, draw with them, asking questions in English.



## Personality Traits

### Activity 1 Question of the Day

Describe your best friend

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Show a video clip or a film or cartoon (if you know of any that the kids like, show one of those) and elicit students to describe the characters' personalities.
2. Create a vocabulary sheet or flashcards with key terms and visuals and go over with kids, asking them to repeat after you.

### Activity 3 Family Tree Personality

1. Draw a family tree and write out a complete sentence next to one family member describing his/her personality. Say the sentence as you point to it.
2. Pass out paper and markers and instruct students to create their own family trees and to record personality traits and, if they can, examples of how that person behaves (Ex: "My sister is kind; she always shares her books with me.")
3. Ask children to share their drawings and see if they agree on the traits they assigned to their family members.

### Activity 4 Charades

Create cards/paper slips with different personality traits. You and the children will take turns acting out the trait on the card/slip.



## Description: The Five Senses

### Activity 1 Question of the Day

What is the sound you like most? Why?

### Activity 2 Hot Seat

1. Place a chair with its back to the wall.
2. One student will sit in the chair facing the room, with his/her back to the wall
3. Tape or hold up a vocabulary term behind the seated student. The other students must try to get the seated student to guess the term by giving him/her clues in English (no miming). Set a timer to add pressure and excitement. If it seems as if the student can't guess the term, show a new one. Keep playing until each student has had a few turns in the "hot seat."

### Activity 3 The Five Senses

1. Place an object in a bag and ask students to feel the object and describe what they feel. For sense of smell, let them sniff a scented object in the bag. For hearing, have them close their eyes as you roll/bounce an object, etc.
2. Create a vocabulary sheet with terms related to each of the senses. Use visuals as you go over each term.

### Activity 4 Take it Outside

If it's a nice day and the host parents agree, take the kids for a walk around the neighborhood and talk about all the things they see, hear, and touch. Get a snack and ask kids to describe the taste.

### Activity 5 Tell Me All About It

1. Have five objects/items in advance that you will "show" to students.
2. One at a time, the kids will come up and either touch, taste, see, listen, or smell an item. S/he must then go back to his/her sibling and describe what they observed. Instruct students not to just guess the object, but to use as much description as possible about what they saw/heard/smelled/tasted/touched. If you only have one student, ask them to describe it to you in English.



## Expressing Opinions

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show pictures of objects (clothes, food, etc.) and celebrities and ask students if they like/dislike/love/hate the item or person.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Go over terms and expressions related to expressing opinions with visuals.
2. Show another set of visuals and elicit students to use the vocabulary.

### Activity 3 Four Corners

1. Place “like”/”dislike”/”love”/”hate” labels in each corner of the room (one label per corner)
2. Show a visual of an item/topic and instruct students to go to the corner that matches their opinions. Ask students to explain their opinions (“I like/don’t like \_\_\_\_ because...”)

### Activity 4 Discuss TV Show or Film

Watch a TV show or film that kids like, pausing to ask their opinion about various things (i.e., a character’s clothes, actions).



## Comparatives

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show pictures of similar objects and elicit students to make comparisons.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Go over terms and expressions related to making comparisons with visuals.
2. Show another set of visuals and elicit students to use the vocabulary.

### Activity 3 Practicing Comparatives

1. Show a term with the question “What is the comparative?” and 3-4 different answer choices. Circle or point to the correct answer and use it in a sentence.
2. Create a worksheet and instruct them to select the comparatives and create two sentences comparing two items.
3. Ask students to share their answers

### Activity 4 Compare

1. Give each student a set of pictures (of people, food, activities, etc.), a poster board, and tape.
2. Instruct students to compare the items and create comparatives—taping the pictures to their board and writing complete sentences.



## Superlatives

### Activity 1 Reviewing Comparatives

Start the lesson by reviewing comparatives. Place two pictures of similar items at opposite sides of a room and instruct students to stand by the item they like better. Then they should compare the items, using key vocabulary from the previous lesson.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview: Superlatives

1. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term with a visual.
2. Show another set of visuals and a term (such as “tall”) and elicit students to tell you the correct superlative.

### Activity 3 Practicing Superlatives

Show terms (Ex: “tall”) with the question “What is the superlative?” and different answer choices (taller, very tall, tallest, etc.). Circle or point to the correct answer and use it in a sentence.

### Activity 4 Compare

1. Give the kids a set of pictures (of people, food, activities, etc.), a poster board, and tape.
2. Instruct students to compare the items and create superlatives—taping the pictures to their board and writing complete sentences.



## Idioms

### Activity 1 Swat It!

Review vocabulary from previous lessons by taping a variety of terms to a wall or writing them on a large chalkboard. Hand kids flyswatters and instruct them to race to the wall/board and swat the correct term based on the picture you show (they can just tap the term if you don't have fly swatters).

### Activity 2 English Idioms

1. Ask students if they know what an “idiom” is and then introduce a few and elicit students to guess their meaning.
2. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term with a visual.

### Activity 3 Identify the Idioms

1. Give students a worksheet with pictures illustrating idioms. They must identify each idiom.
2. Go over the worksheet together.

### Activity 4 Idiom Pictionary

Create cards/slips of paper with idioms and place them in a hat. One at a time, a student will pick a card or slip and they must draw the idiom; the rest of the students must try to guess the idiom.

## Advice

### Activity 1 Idiom Review

Review English idioms by showing a visual illustrating one and ask kids to identify the idiom.

### Activity 2 Giving Advice

1. Tell students the topic and ask if they know what “advice” means.
2. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term with a visual.

### Activity 3 What Advice Would You Give?

Show a variety of problems (include some of the idioms students already learned) and elicit students to tell you the problem and what advice they’d give. Do the first one to model.

### Activity 4 Problem Cards

Create “problem cards” (a card/slip of paper with a problem - i.e., “I can’t fall asleep.”) Have kids select one card at a time and discuss what advice they would give to someone with that particular problem.

## Making Appointments and Reservations

### Activity 1 Swat It!

Review vocabulary from previous lessons by taping a variety of terms to a wall or writing them on a large chalkboard. Give kids flyswatters and instruct them to race to the wall/board and swat the correct term based on the picture you show (if you don't have fly swatters, kids can just tap the correct term with their hand).

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

Show short YouTube videos of people making appointments and reservations (Google "ESL videos to make a reservation" and a ton will pop up!) Go over key expressions and terms.

### Activity 3 Role-Play

Role-play customer and hotel staff/restaurant hostess, getting kids to practice using key expressions and terms. Switch roles. To make it fun, set-up the room like a hotel or restaurant (if possible).



## Food Description

### Activity 1 Introduction

Give kids a piece of candy or food and ask if they like/dislike it. Ask why they either like or dislike it and to tell you what it tastes like.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

Show visuals of key food terms as you introduce them to the kids. Ask them to repeat after you.

### Activity 3 Raid the Kitchen

Take the lesson into the kitchen, pulling out food items from the host family's refrigerator and pantry and eliciting students to tell you the taste and texture.

### Activity 4 Famous Dishes

1. Instruct students to list as many dishes, as they can think of, that are popular in their home country and in the US (or another country). They should also describe the flavor and texture.
2. Ask students to share what they came up with.



## At a Restaurant

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show various restaurant-related visuals and elicit students to identify each item/person (good way to gauge what students already know).

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Tell students the topic (if they haven't already guessed), pass out a vocabulary sheet and go over each term with a visual.
2. Show a video clip/cartoon of a restaurant dialogue between a customer and a waiter. Pause periodically to ensure kids comprehend.

### Activity 3 Make a Menu & Dialogue

If you have more than one kid, have them work together to create a menu and then a short restaurant role-play/dialogue. Instruct them to perform their skit (one should be a waiter/waitress and the other should be a customer), perhaps for their parents. If you only have one student, create and perform the role-play together.

### Activity 4 Real-World Practice

If possible, take the kids to a restaurant or cafe so they can practice the new vocabulary (even though it might be just to you because the wait staff may not speak English).



## Making Complaints at a Restaurant & Expressing Apologies

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show funny pictures of customers complaining at a restaurant and ask students to guess today's topic.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Tell students the topic; pass out a vocabulary sheet, and go over each term/expression with a visual.
2. Show a video clip of a customer making a complaint at a restaurant and ask kids comprehension questions.

### Activity 3 I Have a Complaint! (Role-play)

1. Instruct students to work together to create two role-plays of a customer complaining to a waiter/waitress and the latter expressing apologies. Students will have different roles in the second skit.
2. When finished, have students perform the role-plays. If you only have one student, create and perform the skit together.



## Hotel

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show pictures of hotels (or show a clip from Fawlty Towers) and elicit students to guess today's topic.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Tell students the topic; pass out a vocabulary sheet, and go over each term with a visual.
2. Pass out a sample dialogue of a hotel guest making a reservation and ask for two volunteers to read it aloud.
3. Show a similar dialogue with missing terms/expressions and elicit students to fill in the gaps.

### Activity 3 Making a Reservation

1. If you have two or more students, assign one or two to be hotel workers and the other student(s) to be guests. Give the hotel workers a booking sheet with a list of room types and vacancies. Give the hotel guest(s) a list of requirements for their reservation (Ex: only suite rooms). Pair up a hotel worker and a guest and instruct the latter to make a reservation. If the hotel has a vacancy for the type of room the guest wants, the hotel worker must "book" the room (write guest's name down) and the guest must record their reservation. Rotate students so a new guest and hotel are paired.
  2. Switch roles so that guests are now hotel workers
- \* If you have an uneven number of students or just one, work with one of them.

### Activity 4 Swat It!

Review vocabulary by taping a variety of terms to a wall or writing them on a large chalkboard. Hand two students flyswatters and instruct them to race to the wall/board and swat the correct term based on the picture you show.

## Airport & Train Station

### Activity 1 Introduction

1. Show a picture of an airport and train station and elicit students to tell you today's topic. Or find a video clip from a film such as Airplane or the airport scene in Home Alone (you can find clips on YouTube)
2. Ask kids if they've ever flown on a plane or taken a train and how they liked the experience.

### Activity 2 At the Airport/Train Station

1. Create a vocabulary sheet or flashcards with pictures, and go over each term.
  2. Show a video clip or cartoon of a dialogue between a passenger and transport worker
  3. Show another dialogue (on paper) with missing terms/expressions and ask students to fill in the gaps.
- \* Or if there is a train station nearby, and the host parents agree, take the students to the station for this part of the lesson.

### Activity 3 Listen Closely

1. Play audio of a conversation between a passenger and a ticket agent. Play or read it twice and then ask students questions (Ex: "Where is the passenger's destination?") to gauge comprehension.
2. Create a "monitor" with flight information (departure city, arrival city, time, gate # etc.) and ask kids questions, such as "What time does the flight to Madrid arrive?" You can read the information aloud without showing them the information or you can say it and show the information so they also have a visual.

### Activity 4 Role Play

Take turns playing a passenger and ticket agent at an airport and train station. Let kids see vocabulary/key expressions if they need help. Switch roles.



## Vacation

### Activity 1 Hot Seat

Play hot seat with vacation vocabulary and any other vocabulary you've taught in previous sessions.

### Activity 2 On Vacation

Show pictures of you on vacation or random photos of people on vacation and ask kids to tell you where they are (Ex: "beach") and what they're doing. Ask kids about vacations they've taken.

### Activity 3 Fill in the Gap

1. Give students a fill-in-the-gap worksheet of two friends talking about their vacations.
2. Go over it together.

### Activity 4 Where Did They Go? What Did They Do?

1. Give each student a picture of someone on vacation. Instruct students to come up with a short paragraph providing as much detail as possible about the person's vacation.
2. Ask each student about the vacation.

### Activity 5 Plan a Trip!

Ask kids to name a country they'd like to visit (give them some suggestions and show pictures if they're not sure). Then have them plan a trip, researching places they'd like to visit, where they will stay, what they will pack, etc. This is a good way to get students practicing the future tense (Ex: "I will...")

## Making Plans with Friends/Asking Someone on a Date

### Activity 1 Introduction

Write on a board or show a variety of expressions/American slang used to ask friends to hangout/ask someone on a date. Elicit kids to tell you the meanings. Or show a clip from a film or TV show with characters the same age or close in age to your kids. (Example: scene from Pretty Little Liars or Mean Girls if they're in high school).

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Introduction & Practice

1. Create a vocabulary sheet, and go over each term with a visual.
2. Watch another film/TV clips focused on making plans/asking someone out and ask kids comprehension questions about the scene.

### Activity 3 Fill in the Gap

1. Give each student a fill-in-the-gap worksheet of two friends making plans. Go over the first blank together and then let the kids work individually.
2. Go over the sheet together.

### Activity 4 Make Plans

1. Give kids a slip of paper with an activity/destination (Ex: beach or movies). Instruct students to create a dialogue in which they make plans to do that activity/go to that place. They should include as many details as possible, such as time and meeting place.
2. Have kids perform their role-play (if you only have one kid, then perform it with them).



## Cooking

### Activity 1 Question of the Day

What is your favorite food? Why?

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Pass out a recipe with key vocabulary terms underlined or in bold and the lesson's key terms on the back.
2. Go over each term with a visual (have the lesson in the kitchen so you can use physical props).

### Activity 3 Put It In Order

Give kids the same recipe from the last activity, but this time, cut each step into strips and instruct them to put the strips in the correct order.

### Activity 4 Baking

If the host parents agree, bake cookies with students (or some other dish). Follow along with a recipe, calling out each step and giving each student a turn to complete one of the instructions.

### Activity 5 Make a Recipe

While the cookies are baking, instruct students to think of a recipe they know and like and to write it down. If they don't know any, they can make one up (purpose is to get them using the vocabulary).

### Activity 6 Watch a Cooking Show

Watch a cooking show (in English) and ask students questions related to what's being shown (example: ask them to identify the cooking instrument being used).



## Shopping

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show a picture of people shopping and elicit students to tell you today's topic.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term with a visual.
2. Show pictures of different places to shop, items for sale, and prices and ask students to tell you the type of shopping place, the item, and the cost. Then ask if it's a "bargain." (If possible, show shops in their neighborhood)

### Activity 3 Shopping Fill in the Gap

1. Give students a shopping dialogue between a merchant and a customer with terms/expressions missing. Go over the first gap together and then have students work individually.
2. When complete, ask students to share their answers.

### Activity 4 Going Shopping (Role Play)

1. Assign one kid to be a shopkeeper and one to be a customer. Give the shopkeeper an envelope of paper cutouts of different items (goods to be sold). Instruct the shopkeeper to create a store name, make a label, and come up with prices for their items.
2. Give the customer fake U.S. currency. Instruct them to count their money and keep track of how much they spend and what they buy.
3. Instruct customer to try and bargain with the shopkeeper. The object is for the customer to get the most items for the least amount of money and for shopkeeper to make as much money as possible.
4. Ask kids to discuss what they bought, how much they spent, and how much the shopkeeper earned (this is a good time for kids to practice the past tense: "I bought..." / "I sold...")

### Activity 5 Shopping

If possible, go to a local shop with students and use key vocabulary and phrases. Ask them prices of various items, whether or not they think it's a bargain, etc.

## Halloween

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video (or just play song) and ask students if they've heard it before. Elicit the holiday the song is associated with.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term/expression with a visual.
2. Show more pictures of the vocabulary and elicit students to identify the correct terms.
3. Ask students, "What are you going to be for Halloween?" (If they don't celebrate Halloween, just ask them to pretend they do and to come up with a costume).

### Activity 3 Trick-or-Treat Dares

Have students pick a slip of paper with a dare/action. Give students a piece of candy (if parents allow) after s/he completes the action.

### Activity 4 Swat It!

Review vocabulary by taping a variety of terms to a wall or spread out over a table. Hand kids flyswatters and instruct them to race to the wall/table and swat the correct term based on the picture you show (they can just tap with their hands if you don't have flyswatters).

### Activity 5 Halloween Film/TV Show

If kids are old enough and parents allow, watch a Halloween film (make sure it's not too scary and doesn't have explicit content). Pause at various points to talk about what's going on. If kids are young, show a Halloween cartoon (you can find a ton on YouTube).



## Thanksgiving

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show pictures or a video clip of Thanksgiving.. Elicit students to tell you what's going on and to name the American holiday.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Create vocabulary sheet and go over each term/expression with a visual.
2. Show more pictures of the vocabulary and elicit students to identify the correct terms.

### Activity 3 Thankful Thoughts

Instruct students to write down (or think about) things they are thankful for and then ask them to share.

### Activity 4 Plan Your Own Thanksgiving Celebration

Instruct kids to design their own Thanksgiving celebration. They should discuss whom they will invite, what food they'll eat, and what they will do.

### Activity 5 Race to the Board

Set a chalkboard against a wall or on a table. Instruct students to stand across the room from the board. When you show a visual, students must race to the board and write the correct term (for the picture). First one to correctly do so wins a point.



## Valentine's Day

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show Valentine's Day images; elicit students to tell you the holiday. Ask students to describe "love."

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Pass out a vocabulary sheet and go over each term/expression with a visual.
2. Show more visuals of the terms and elicit students to tell you the correct terms.

### Activity 3 Cupid Gap Fill

1. Pass out the lyrics to Amy Winehouse's "Cupid," with missing words. Tell students you will play the song and they need to listen carefully and fill in the missing words. Play the song twice.
2. Go over together.

### Activity 4 Valentine's Day Card

Pass out paper and markers and instruct students to create a Valentine's Day card for a friend, family member, or boyfriend/girlfriend using key terms and expressions.

### Activity 5 Romance Film

Show a romantic movie suitable for students' age-level. Pause at intervals to discuss the film and to reinforce vocabulary.



## New Year's Eve

### Activity 1 Introduction

Show video clip or picture of ball dropping in Times Square and ask students if they can identify the celebration.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Overview

1. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term/expression with a visual.
2. Show more visuals of the terms and elicit students to tell you the correct terms.

### Activity 3 Resolutions

1. Pass out sample resolutions and then a worksheet. Instruct kids to write at least two resolutions for each category on the worksheet.
2. Discuss the resolutions the kids came up with.

### Activity 4 New Year's Eve-Themed Film or TV Show

Watch a New Year's Eve-themed film (example: Someone Like You) or TV show episode centered on New Year's (Example: Friends - "The One with All the Resolutions") and pause at various points to discuss what's going on.



## Movies

### Activity 1 Warm-Up

Show posters of popular movies (try to pick ones you think your kids will know) or pictures of movie theaters and get kids talking about topic.

### Activity 2 Vocabulary Introduction

1. Create a vocabulary sheet and go over each term/expression with a visual (vocabulary could include: film, theater, actor, actress, plot, genre, etc.).
2. Show more visuals and elicit kids to tell you the correct terms.
3. Play a film clip and then ask kids what genre of film it is. Then play just the audio of another film clip and ask them to guess the genre. Then show the same clip without sound and ask students if they think it's a different genre than what they guessed previously.

### Activity 3 Movie Plots

Asks kids to tell you about their favorite movies. Ask them questions such as where they saw it, who are the actors in the film, the genre, etc.

### Activity 4 What's It About?

1. Assign one kid to be the "listener" and the other kid to be the "watcher." Send the "watcher" to a different room and instruct the "listener" to turn their backs to the screen so they can only hear the audio of the film clip you play. Tell "listener" to jot down any notes/ideas they have about the film (what genre it is, setting etc.). Then send them out of the room and have the "watcher" come in and watch the same clip, but with no sound.
2. Discuss what genre they think the movie is, the setting, and plot.
3. If you only tutor one kid, they can take turns just listening to a clip and then watching a different clip (so they focus on different senses)