

1983

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New Lives

Preparation

The following activities – not all of them games in the narrow sense of the word – are focused on the use of a certain type of material. You will need a number of photographs showing individual people of different ages and appearance. The photographs must be clear and of such a size that details are visible. Each photo should only show one person. Photographs of this kind can easily be cut out of magazines like *Stern* or *Zeit-Magazin* or taken from your own collection of snapshots. Pictures of ordinary men and women are preferable to those of fashion models. The people in the photographs should not be known to your pupils. However, an interesting follow-up activity is possible if you choose photographs of people well known to yourself (see Step 3).

If you plan to use these photographs with other classes and with different exercises they should be stuck onto pieces of stiff paper and covered with a transparent plastic film for protection.

Step 1 (description)

The pupils work in pairs. Each pair is given a photograph. If there are sufficient pictures, i.e. more than the number of pairs, pupils may choose a photograph to work on.

The pupils' task consists of writing a factual description of the person in their photograph, which should include the person's name, age, marital status, job, hobbies, personal characteristics, likes, and dislikes. Even beginners will be able to write a few sentences in their descriptions. More advanced learners can be asked to add further pieces of information on their person, e.g. his/her greatest wish/fear.

The descriptions need not be highly imaginative but should remain probable and make use of any visual clues contained in the photographs. Even so the partners of each pair will need a few minutes to discuss their person and agree on his/her characteristics and vital statistics.

Following this first step of writing the descriptions several ways of continuing the activity are possible.

Step 2 (guessing game)

All photos are handed back to the teacher who numbers them and displays them on the blackboard, while the pupils keep their descriptions. One description after the other is read out and the person it refers to is guessed by the rest of the class. Pupils have to give reasons for their guesses, e.g. "Number 3 must be Miss Apple, because she is the only woman of that age" or "Number 11 could be Mr Nose. He looks very friendly."

Alternative Step 2 (role play: TV Talk Show)

The pupils have to be divided into two groups for the role play. For the first group between eight and twelve pupils acting the roles of the people in the photographs they described during Step 1 volunteer to be potential guests at a TV Talk Show. Since only three people can be invited to the talk show in the end, a selection panel has to be set up. The second group of pupils act as members of this panel. The selection committee discuss which criteria to apply for selection and prepare a set of questions and tasks which will help them decide. The applicants reread the descriptions of their roles and add any information they feel might be needed.

During the actual role play applicants will be interviewed and asked to perform certain tasks by the selection panel. A time limit should be set for this phase. Finally, the members of the selection panel decide which three people to invite either by taking a vote or by discussing the merits of individual candidates. The TV Talk Show could be acted out in one of the following lessons.

Step 3 (discussion)

Following either the guessing game or the role play a discussion about the dangers of judging people by their appearance alone may be advisable. This could be prepared quite effectively if the teacher uses photographs of people he/she knows. In that case the pupils' imaginary description can be compared with each person's real characteristics, likes and dislikes etc.