

## **AUTHENTIC WRITTEN MATERIALS**

### **I. THEORETICAL PART**

#### **1. Introduction**

In the last two decades, the communicative approach has clearly substituted more traditional methods in the teaching of English, namely the so-called Grammar-Translation method. The advocates of this approach favour the use of real English in real situations and expect the learners of any L2 to be able to use the target language in real contexts. This emphasis on the *real* factor influences the choice of material to be used in the classroom or in coursebooks. Some of the latter focus on the importance of learning the principal functions that the speaker will be faced with when using his/her second language. In such a short period as ten years, if we are to compare it with the centuries of language teaching in Europe, writers have altered the whole structuring of their coursebooks to reflect this new approach.

#### **2. Types of written materials**

##### **2.1. Authentic material**

Formerly, ‘**authentic texts**’ were defined as those which were designed for native speakers: they were ‘real’ texts designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language in question (Harmer, 1991: 185-88).

However, nowadays a new definition has been provided. It is not merely based on **who** designs the material and **to whom** is addressed, but on whether the language used sounds authentic in part or in its entirety, and on whether students are likely to hear or read it in real situations. For these reasons we should not define authentic material on the basis that it has been designed for native speakers.

Consequently, anything a native speaker of English would hear or read or use can be described as authentic: theatre programmes, newspapers, magazines... Because authentic materials are not designed for the EFL student they are not graded for level, although some are obviously more difficult to understand than others. Thus, the teacher should select the material carefully, with the needs and interests of the students in mind, and also decide what the students are to do with the material. So the same piece of authentic material can be used at different levels; an easier task can be set for lower level students and a more difficult task set for higher level students.

##### **2.2. Non-authentic material**

A non-authentic text in language teaching terms is one that has been written especially for language students. Such texts sometimes concentrate on the language we wish to teach.

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There are a number of clues which can show us that the language used in this type of material is artificial:

- ▶ Both speakers use perfectly formed sentences all the time. Yet, conversation between people is just not like that!
- ▶ The language is extremely unvaried.
- ▶ Their aim is to isolate bits of language so that students can concentrate on it.

Such material should not be used, however, to help students become better listeners or readers. The obviously artificial nature of the language makes it very unlike anything that they are likely to encounter in real life. Whilst some may claim that it is useful for teaching structures, it cannot be used to teach reading or listening skills.

### **2.3. Simulated authentic material**

According to Harmer (1991:185-88), in addition to the two previous types of written materials, we should consider a third type, called '**simulated authentic material**'. This material is specially prepared for students of English; however, it attempts to reproduce the authentic written or spoken English.

The authors of this material roughly-tune the language and content to suit their students' needs, but they do not sacrifice the feel of the language. Their simulated authenticity will be helpful to students who are practising reading. What is being suggested, therefore, is that material designed to foster the acquisition of receptive skills must at least simulate authenticity. The need for language control at lower levels must not be used as an excuse for extreme artificiality.

## **3. Arguments for using authentic written material**

In modern methodology, it seems to be a must to use authentic material in the English language lesson. It is important to realize that we, as teachers, must make our own selection from coursebooks although writers and publishers would argue that the material they include in their books is the best for learners of English as it has been prepared and designed by specialists. Thus, apart from following a coursebook, teachers should feel like introducing certain novelties, since they know not only their students and their level of proficiency, but also their needs, their weaknesses and strong points. As a result, they are perfectly able of selecting the most appropriate material to be used in class.

Presently, the use of magazines and newspapers in English lessons is widely acknowledged, since they provide stimulating texts full of cultural information to students who have a wide range of interests. According to Doff (1988: 170), once the appropriate text has been selected, students usually get interested in reading, listening and watching, since they regard English texts and programmes not merely as a tool to learn a language, but also as a source of information.

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Using authentic material in the classroom, even when not done in an authentic situation, and provided it is appropriately exploited, is significant for many reasons, amongst which are:

- Students are exposed to real discourse. Authentic written materials provide examples of language as it is really used.
- Authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value.
- Textbooks often do not include incidental or improper English.
- They can produce a sense of achievement, because students get real satisfaction from having made some sense out of real life language. They are more interesting and motivating and they give students confidence when they understand them.
- The same piece of material can be used under different circumstances if the task is different.
- Language change is reflected in the materials so that students and teachers can keep aware of such changes.
- Reading texts are ideal to teach/practise mini-skills such as scanning, e.g. students are given a news article and asked to look for specific information (amounts, percentages, etc.).
- Books, articles, newspapers, and so on contain a wide variety of text types, language styles not easily found in conventional teaching materials.
- They can encourage reading for pleasure because they are likely to contain topics of interest to learners, especially if students are given the chance to have a say about the topics or kinds of authentic materials to be used in class.
- Students who read and listen a lot seem to acquire English better than those who do not, as long as the input is comprehensible.
- Clearly, the most obvious reason for giving students reading and listening material is to encourage them to be better readers and listeners. It is clear that the more reading and listening we give them the better they will become at reading and listening in English.

#### **4. Arguments against using authentic written material**

Nonetheless, we may also consider some arguments against the use of authentic material in English teaching such as:

- They may be too culturally biased, so unnecessarily difficult to understand outside the language community.
- The vocabulary might not be relevant to the student's immediate needs.

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- Too many structures are mixed so lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts. Hence, it can be frustrating when used with less proficient learners.
- Special preparation is necessary , which can be time consuming.
- The material can become outdated easily, e.g. news.
- Courses are now communicative, and use authentic and simulated material; therefore, it is not necessary to look for further material.
- Photocopies are a nuisance, because students may lose them or collect them in their folders and never look back at them.
- Photocopy copyright material is an offence and one can be prosecuted.

### **5. Adaptation of authentic material (reasons and techniques)**

Valdeón (1995: 234) suggests that “once we have tried to establish a new classification of the material used in the teaching of English, or any other languages for the matter”, we should “focus on authentic material and the various processes that it can undergo to be adapted to suit the needs of our students”. That adaptation of given material responds to the need of individualizing it to focus on one or various aspects of the language. However, some authors, focusing their attention on the communicative trend, have rejected any alteration to the authentic material, without considering that the priorities of teachers and students may vary and change. As a consequence, there are some relevant **reasons** why we might decide to adapt some material before using it in the classroom:

- Grammar points included in the material are not clear enough or do not correspond to the level of our class.
- The text includes a number of examples of structures which have been studied in class, but we might find it helpful to supply the original text with further examples.
- We might decide to avoid certain grammatical points altogether if we are more interested in the material as a starting point for a debate or to introduce new vocabulary.
- Too much emphasis on the communicative aspect of the material, not allowing the students to understand the message. We might start by presenting some grammatical structures.
- The vocabulary included is too complex or there are too many unknown words.
- The text might be appealing, but it could be too easy. We need to use supplementary material to introduce new language points.
- The text is too difficult. So, we might delete certain parts, although we must make sure that the main ideas remain and the students can follow it easily.

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- Some texts are too formal, and the students are not likely to read them or use them.
- If the material is to be used as part of an exam, we should adapt it to suit the level the students have reached when they sit the exam, not the level we had expected them to reach.
- The text might offend our students.

Once we have mentioned the main reasons for the adaptation of authentic written material, we will deal with the different **ways** whereby we can adapt this material to suit the needs of our students: **adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying** and **reordering**.

- **Adding**: Whenever we want our students to practise certain grammatical structures, items of vocabulary or minimal pairs that are not found in their L1, and the authentic material we want to use does not provide enough examples, we can supply the text with further examples of any of these linguistic exponents.

- **Deleting**: Textbooks are prepared for an international public with various needs. We must not feel guilty if we have to omit two or three exercises in one unit, if we feel that they are not relevant, or even the whole unit, if our students will not learn anything from it.

- **Modifying**: There are two main techniques to modify a text: rewrite it and restructure it. Furthermore, we can also adapt a text for our students to read aloud or for us to dictate it to the students, if we want them to practise certain features.

- **Simplifying**: This technique is also useful, but can lead to a distortion of natural speech or written English if we are not especially careful when we simplify grammar or certain features of speech. In many cases it would be worthwhile keeping those grammatical points which will certainly require further practice rather than simplifying them. Simplification can be mainly applied to texts rather than audiovisual material and affects the sentence structure, the lexical content and the grammatical structures. But as we mentioned before everyone of these processes must be carried out very carefully so that we do not turn authentic material into artificial language.

- **Reordering**

## **6. Conclusion**

To sum up, we could state that both extremes are obviously not useful for our purposes. What we need, therefore, are texts which students can understand the general meaning of, whether they are truly authentic or not. But texts -whether authentic or not- must be realistic models of written or spoken English. If teachers can find genuinely authentic material which their students can cope with, that will be advantageous; if not, they should be using material which simulates authentic English. According to Ur (1996: 150), “the use of ‘authentic’ texts with less proficient learners is often frustrating and counter-productive”. As a result, from this statement we can infer that the use of simplified texts is usually more effective at

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earlier stages of learning. Therefore, we should always make the text appropriate to the level of the learners.

Ultimately we should encourage our students to be able to deal with authentic reading material that any native speaker would find in real life. However, this is not always possible; as a consequence, what we should do is make some attempts to select tasks that approximate to those we might do in real life.

Finally, we will present the main points that can be inferred from our presentation on the use of authentic written material:

1. Authentic material should be used in the teaching of English so that our students get used to real English.
  2. Teachers must be extremely careful when selecting this material since students might feel disappointed if the text is too difficult to understand. We must bear in mind that students will expect to understand as much as possible, no matter how strongly we insist on the fact that this is not necessary.
  3. Therefore, we might need to adapt this material to suit the needs of our students, which can be of various types, as indicated before.
  4. Adapting material does not mean to falsify its contents or structure. It means to use it to the advantage of our students and to focus on certain features of the language.
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## **II. PRACTICAL PART**

In this second section of our presentation, we will deal with the practical orientation of the theory explained above. To get this purpose, we will use authentic written material, namely newspapers, magazines, leaflets, maps, timetables, and adverts. Each activity will be divided into three different parts: a **warm-up** task to activate the students' schemata about the vocabulary and structures that will be used, the **activity itself**, using the authentic material, and a final **follow-up** activity, aimed at encouraging students to use what they have learnt, in a different situation. With the whole set of activities, we will try to cover the four different macro-skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

### **1. Activities for beginners**

#### **1.1. Map of Scotland to teach spatial positions**

##### **1.1.1. Warm-up (Speaking).**

First of all, the teacher will write some items of vocabulary related to Scotland on the blackboard, such as:

- Kilt.
- Nessie.
- William Wallace.
- Whisky.
- Braveheart.

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- Loch Ness.
- Bagpipe.
- Bloody Mary.
- Edinburgh.
- Glasgow.
- Robert Burns.
- Sean Connery.
- Inverness.
- Celts.

Then, the teacher will ask the students whether these words are familiar to them, and if so, what they all have in common. Later, the teacher will ask students if they can think of other words related to the same topic.

A second activity to cover the warm-up part could involve providing each student with the picture of a compass, so that they can complete it by writing down the different spatial positions.

#### **1.1.2. The task (Speaking)**

After having stuck the map of Scotland, either on the blackboard or the wall, students will be asked to stand up and come closer to have a look at it. Then, the teacher will provide an example for the students to follow it later. He will specify the spatial position in the map of a particular city, using the model below, but without saying the name, which will have to be guessed by the students:

- e.g. - This city is in the south-east of Scotland.
- It is between Rosyth and Dalkeith.
  - It is to the north of Penicuik.
  - It is on the left of Dunbar and on the right of Linlithgow.
  - It is next to an airport.
  - It has a very important castle, where a Hollywood film was shot.

What city is it? Edinburgh.

Next, the teacher will ask the students to repeat the same type of structure. He/she will give each student the name of a city, and each one will have to stand in front of the class, and describe the position for the city he has been assigned. The members of the group will have to guess which city it is. The student who guesses the right city first, will get one point, and at the end of the activity, the student who has the highest score will get a sweet.

#### **1.1.3. Follow-up (Writing)**

A possible follow-up for this activity would be repeating the same kind of pattern, but this time, using a map of the native country of the student (e.g. Spain). The students will work in pairs, and each one will chose a city and write down its spatial position, so that the other student can find out which city he is referring to.

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### **1.2. The weather forecast to teach vocabulary related to climate/weather**

#### **1.2.1. Warm-up (Writing)**

In order to make the students remember the vocabulary they have learnt related to weather, the teacher may present them with several pictures, which they must match with the names of different meteorological phenomena.

#### **1.2.2. Task (Writing/speaking)**

The teacher will hand the students out a real map with the weather forecast for the UK, where the main cities and the temperature are also indicated. The activity will consist in answering the questions determined by the teacher, such as the ones below:

- What's the weather like in London today?
- It's cloudy, and it is snowing.
- In how many cities is it sunny?
- It is sunny in four cities.
- Where are these cities situated?
- They are around the centre and the west of the UK.
- What is the temperature in Newcastle? Is it cold or is it hot?
- It is very cold. The temperature is 3° C.

◆ This activity could also be adapted for intermediate students. We will then use two different maps, and students, working in pairs, will ask the partner questions to find differences between the two weather outlooks.

#### **1.2.3. Follow-up (writing/speaking)**

Finally, the teacher will give the students a weather forecast map of their home country, and they will be asked to answer questions about the weather, not only in the whole country, but also in their home town, such as:

1. What is/was the weather like today/yesterday?
2. What will the weather be like tomorrow?
3. Is it cold today?, Is it hot?
4. What was the weather like in Madrid?
5. What do you think will the weather be like in other parts of the world, like Poland?

### **1.3. Train times to teach the time in English**

#### **1.3.1. Warm-up (Writing)**

Firstly, the teacher will hand the students out a photocopy with some clocks, for them to tell the time in each one. Moreover, there will be a second exercise in which the student has to calculate how long it will take different people to travel from one place to another. It is important to state that the activity will be mainly focused on the expression of time.

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If we applied this activity to intermediate students, we could use a mind map related to travelling by rail, for them to brainstorm vocabulary about ‘verbs to do with trains’, ‘kinds of tickets’, ‘people’ and ‘places’.

### **1.3.2. Task (Writing/Reading)**

The teacher will provide different situations in which a particular person has to go from one specific train station to another one; so, the student will have to be able, by looking at real train timetables, to tell both the departure and arrival times, and if possible, the duration of the journey. In the following two examples, we have omitted the times, as well as the duration, so that students will need to have a look at the real timetables and find out which train suits better each person’s circumstances.

◆ Ann lives near Birmingham Snow Hill, and she wants to go to Warwick for a job interview at 10.40. So, she phones the British Rail Talking Service to inquire about train times.

- A. Good morning, could you please tell me the times of trains from Birmingham Snow Hill to Warwick?  
B. Morning, afternoon, evening? When do you want to arrive there?  
A. About 10.45  
B. About..... Right. Let’s have a look. There’s a train that leaves at..... (09.52), and there is also another one at..... (10.12), but with the second one, you will be a bit late, because it arrives at..... (10.46).  
A. And what time does the first train arrive?  
B. At.....(10.25)  
A. Thanks a lot.  
B. Bye!

◆ Lidia lives near Wembley Stadium, and works as a teacher next to Princes Risborough. She finishes her classes at .....(13.00), so she needs to take the train at .....(13.27) to get home at .....(14.10), just in time to start watching “Neighbours” in BBC1, which starts at.....(14.15). Therefore, her journey will take.....(43) minutes.

### **1.3.3. Follow-up (Writing and speaking)**

A possible follow-up for real beginners could be trying to put the lines of a real conversation, like the previous one, in the correct order: (1,5,6,3,10,2,9,4,7,8,11)

- \_\_\_ A Hello, I’d like a ticket to Newcastle, please.  
\_\_\_ A. I want to come back this evening, so a day return.  
\_\_\_ B. How do you want to pay?  
\_\_\_ A. Return, please.  
\_\_\_ B. Here is your change and your ticket.  
\_\_\_ B. Single or return  
\_\_\_ A. Twenty, forty, sixty pounds.  
\_\_\_ B. Day return, or period return?

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- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Cash, please.  
\_\_\_\_\_ B. Forty-eight pounds fifty, please.  
\_\_\_\_\_ A. Thank you.

This follow-up could also be adapted for intermediate or upper intermediate learners, by using a role-play which students, working in pairs, have to simulate a real conversation in the ticket office of a train station; thus, they will have to use spontaneously structures similar to the ones provided above.

## **2. Intermediate students**

### **2.1. Map of the campus of Northumbria university to teach directions**

#### **2.1.1. Warm-up (Writing/Speaking)**

The student will be asked to fill in the blanks in a dialogue, which will be accompanied by the image of a street map, so that he/she can focus his attention on a few examples of the linguistic exponents (prepositions and verbs) expressing directions and spatial positions in English. (See photocopy)

Another way of introducing this activity could be by asking the students some questions, such as:

- Have you ever been to a foreign country? If so, which country?
- Have you ever got lost?
- How did you feel?
- Did the passers-by help you when you asked them?
- Did you eventually manage to find what you were looking for?
- Was it a good experience?

#### **2.1.2. Task (Listening)**

In the first place, after some warm-up activities, we will hand each student out one map of the campus of Northumbria University (Newcastle city centre). The activity will consist in going from one place of the campus to another, as if they were there. They will have to “walk” through the campus of Northumbria, which is at the same time, Newcastle city centre. We will start at a specific point and, then, the teacher will give the students indications which will lead them somewhere in the campus. The itineraries we will read aloud for our students to follow are presented below:

“ We are in Stephenson Building, in Stoddart Street. Go straight up Stoddart Street towards Portland Road. Go on walking, and take the second street turning on the left. Go along Sandyford Road till you can see the residence Claude Gibb Hall opposite the Civic Centre. Then you go straight ahead between both buildings. Following St. Mary’s Place, when you see the City Hall, turn left, and you will find the residence in the left corner. Which university residence is it?” **Clapham House.**

“Now, you are in Leazes Arcade, in Leazes Park Road. Walk towards Albion House, and go down Strawberry Place. Turn left, and when you are opposite Eldon Square, turn right. Go along the street, and take the first turning on the right. Once you

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reach Charlotte House, cross the street. Go straight ahead till the end of the street, and then you will see clearly what we are looking for on the opposite side of the road”.

### **Central Station**

“Now, you are in Glenamara House. Go over the foot bridge, and go along Northumberland Road till the end of it. Next, turn left, go down Northumberland Street and cross New Bridge Street. Go straight ahead down the street, and take the third street turning round the roundabout. Now, take the first turning on the right, and go down the street. Turn right, and then left, and you will see the wet place that we are looking for”.

### **Gateshead Millennium Bridge.**

This activity is also suitable for beginners, with a simpler map.

#### **2.1.3. Follow-up (Speaking)**

As a follow-up activity, students could work in pairs in order to repeat the same kind of task, but this time, they will be the ones choosing the directions, and thus, the itineraries. The partner will have to follow the directions and find out which place he is referring to.

## **2.2. Film reviews to teach English**

### **2.2.1. Warm-up (Speaking)**

The teacher will start by writing several names of films on the blackboard, and the students will have to say what all these titles have in common. For example:

- Telma and Louise.
- The Da Vinci Code.
- The true story of Little Red Riding Hood.
- Sleepy Hollow.
- Pearl Harbor.
- Dirty Dancing.
- Ghost.
- The Ring.

Later, the teacher will make some questions about their experience choosing or watching films. For instance:

- Have you ever been to the cinema?
- What kind of films do you like?
- How do you choose a film?
- Do you usually read film reviews to choose a film?
- Have you ever watched a film in English in a Spanish cinema?
- Have you ever cried watching a film?
- Have you ever been disappointed by a film?
- When was the last time you went to the cinema, and what film was it?

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### **2.2.2. Task (Reading)**

The task will consist in matching the different film reviews with each image. For this activity, the teacher will hand the students out two different photocopies, one containing the images and the other one containing the texts, so that students will read the reviews and make their own decisions about which image each text can be linked with. (See photocopies).

ANSWERS

A4, B3, C1, D2, E5

### **2.2.3. Follow-up (Writing)**

Now, the teacher will encourage students to rent a DVD, and watch it in English. Once they have watched the film, they will have to write a review about it, explaining the plot, and, if possible, mentioning the cast and the main characters. The students may also include their own opinion about the film, saying whether they liked it or not, and why.

## **2.3. An item of news**

### **2.3.1. Warm-up (Speaking)**

The teacher will introduce this task by asking students what they think about cheating in exams, and plagiarism in their coursework. Obviously enough, the students will pretend that they do not know what the teacher is talking about, but he/she will try to get some information from his/her pupils, by asking them some questions, such as:

- Have you ever cheated in an exam?
- How did you feel about it? Were you confident, or anxious?
- Which technique did you use? Have you ever used crib sheets (written information such as answers to questions, often used dishonestly by students in tests)?
- Have you ever been caught red-handed by the teacher?
- What was the teacher's reaction to it? Did he punish you? Did you have to resit the exam?
- How do you feel about people who cheat?

### **2.3.2. Task (Reading)**

The teacher will present students with a real newspaper article, for them to read it on their own, and decide whether a few sentences are true or false, according to the information provided in the text. Students will be asked to read the sentences first, to see if they have any vocabulary problems, and to focus their attention on the information they will have to find in the text. After having read the text and performed the task, the teacher will proceed to correct the exercise. It will not be enough to say whether a sentence is true or false, as they will also be urged to explain why the sentence is false or true, and if it is false, they will be asked to re-write it to make it true.

ANSWERS

- 1.- False (QCA stands for Qualifications and Curriculum Authority).
- 2.- True (line 6 in the first column).
- 3.- False (in MORE than dozen subjects; lines 12 and 13 in the first column).
- 4.- False (between 20 and 60 per cent; line 23 in the first column).
- 5.- True (lines 28, 29, first column).
- 6.- True (lines 36-38, first column).
- 7.- False (lines 8-11, second column).
- 8.- False (They SHOULD question them: lines 16-21)
- 9.- True (lines 21-30).
- 10- False (lines 4-10, fourth column).

**2.3.3. Follow-up (Listening)**

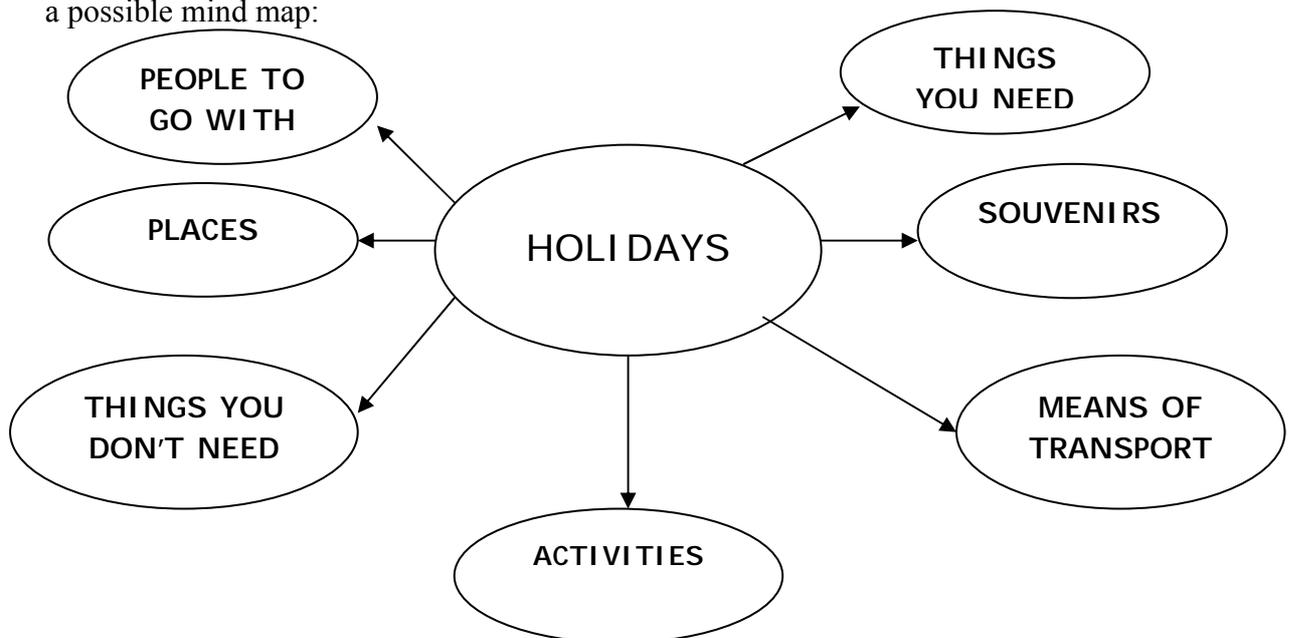
Lastly, the teacher could make up different situations in which several people will explain their own experiences of cheating. The students will be asked to fill in a grid, with some missing information connected with the topic. A possible example of a grid could be the one found in the photocopy.

**3. Advanced students**

**3.1. Tourist leaflets of the UK**

**3.1.1. Warm-up (Speaking)**

The teacher will draw a mind map on the blackboard, whose main idea would be the word “holidays”. This central concept will be subdivided into other semantic fields. Learners will then brainstorm all the related words they can think of. This is a model of a possible mind map:



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### **3.1.1. Task (Reading and Speaking)**

Tourist leaflets about different places in the UK will be stuck on the walls around the class. The students will be divided into groups of three or four friends who would like to go together on holidays. So, they will stand up and walk around the class, having a look at all the leaflets; each student expressing his/her own opinion about the pros and cons of each place. By the end of the activity, the students should have reached an agreement, and each group will have to explain to the rest of the class where they would like to go and why.

### **3.1.2. Follow-up (Writing)**

To conclude the task, the teacher will ask students to write a composition about the following topic: “The worst holidays in my life”. In this composition, they should write either about a real experience or an invented one, and should also include the context in which this horrible situation took place.

## **3.2. “Home sweet home”**

### **3.2.1. Warm-up (Speaking)**

Students will sit down in pairs, and the teacher will give them some topics related to houses, which they should talk about. Some possible topics could be the following:

- Have you ever moved to a different city?, or would you like to?; and if so, say why.
- Why did you move?
- How was/is your old/new house?
- What were your first impressions when you saw the new house?
- Did/would you miss your old environment?
- Did/would you get use to the new situation smoothly?
- Did you have any problems with the new house?

### **3.2.2. Task (Reading/Speaking)**

Working with the same partner as in the warm-up activity, students will have to read six real descriptions of properties taken from a newspaper, and decide which one suits best each family’s needs. (See photocopy)

## ANSWERS

David and Sarah Covell- 6

Joseph Roddies- 3

James and Nicky Mcgeown- 1

Ashley and Brook Brown and Michael and April Addams- 5

Leopold and Molly Bloom- 4

Peter and Vicky Routledge- 2

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### **3.2.3. Follow-up (Speaking)**

A role play activity will give students an opportunity to work with a partner using language in a freer more creative way. One of the students should look at the notes for the Housebuyer and the other should turn to the notes for the Estate Agent.

Before we begin, students should read the notes for their role very carefully, and mark any points that they need to keep in mind. If they are not sure about something, they should discuss it with the teacher or another student with the same role.

When the students start, they should base their conversation on the notes, but without being afraid to use their imagination! (See photocopies).

### **3.3. Spot the difference**

#### **3.3.1. Warm-up (Speaking)**

This task has been based on a newspaper article in which we can find two very similar photographs of the same person. The warm-up of this activity could consist in asking the students to describe and compare both photographs, trying to guess what the item of news will be about.

#### **3.3.2. Task (Reading)**

The teacher will give each pupil a copy of the whole article, along with some comprehension questions. The student will be required first of all to read the questions carefully, to see if he/she has any doubts, and then, he/she will have to read through the complete text in order to find the answers. Questions such as the following could be used:

1. What is the article about?
2. What is so special about the centre?
3. What is the chairman of the Parent-Teacher Association's overall opinion of the present situation?
4. Does he expect any problems from his new state?
5. Will his new state affect his professional role?
6. To what extent do you think his case could help other people in the same situation?
7. How would he react if someone called him "Mrs"?
8. Was the operation a complete success? Justify your answer.
9. How did the school (pupils, colleagues and parents) react to the new situation?
10. How did the parents get to know what had happened?

#### **3.3.3. Follow-up (Writing)**

To conclude the task, the teacher will ask students to write a composition about the following topic: "How would you feel if one of your teachers underwent a sex change operation in the summer?" In order to write the compositions, students will be encouraged to use the vocabulary already learnt in class about how to express feelings, emotions and opinions.

### **3.4. Adverts**

#### **3.4.1. Warm-up (Speaking)**

The teacher will ask students some questions about what they think some of the defining features of adverts could be (humorous, exaggerated, colourful, self-mockery, attractive, appealing...):

- What do you think the function of adverts could be?
- Do they have any special features?
- Do adverts mirror the society of a particular country? Do they show any stereotypes?
- Why do adverts always show perfect prototypes of what we would all like to become and we are not?
- Do you think colours have anything to do with regards to the atmosphere created by the advert?

#### **3.4.2. Task (Speaking/listening/reading)**

The teacher will have previously prepared a big cardboard with only the images of eight adverts, taken out from a real magazine. Slogans will be presented apart in different cards. The whole class will be divided into two groups, one of them having a look at four images, which will have to be described to the other group, who will have only the eight slogans. So the second group must listen carefully to the descriptions made by the classmates, and match each of the four descriptions with one of the eight slogans. The activity will be repeated in the same way, but this time changing the role of each group. Finally, the two groups will get together again, and will say their results aloud; the group who gets the highest number of correct answers (four) will get a prize.

After the main activity, the students, in the same two groups, will have to discuss what could be the product each advert is trying to sell. Then, they will say their ideas aloud, creating a kind of debate, for they have to give reasons for their answers.

#### **3.4.3. Follow-up (Writing)**

To conclude the task, the teacher will ask students to write a discussion about the pros and cons of buying a product by only taking into account the advert. In order to write the compositions, students will have to follow the typical model of how to write a discussion, as previously explained in class (opening, points in favour, points against and conclusion).

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