

Activity 17: Hidden words

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Age: 8–12  **20–25 minutes** **Large classes?** Yes **Mixed level?** Yes

Materials: Pen and board

Organisation: Pair work, group work

Aim: To develop reading skills and pronunciation and to revise vocabulary.

Description: This activity is designed to challenge children's ability to read sentences and find the names of animals hiding in the sentences. They can use their imagination to write their own sentences and practise the pronunciation of different sounds.

Preparation: You need to write the sentences on the board before the lesson starts (which you can cover up with a big piece of paper if you like) or present them in a different way such as on a PowerPoint slide or on flashcards.

Procedure

1. Ask the children to name all the animals that they know in English. Write the names on the board.
2. Write the sentence '*Close the door at once!*' on the board. Ask the children to read it and to find an animal hidden in the words. If they cannot find the animal, tell them it is 'rat' and ask them to search again. When they have found it, underline the word rat on the board: '*Close the door at once!*'
3. Explain to the children that they are going to read more sentences with animals hidden in them. In pairs, they have to find the animals in the sentences.
Example sentences:
 1. He arrived in America today. (cat)
 2. Eric owes me 10 cents. (cow)
 3. That will be a real help. (bear)
 4. She came late every day. (camel)
 5. We made errors in each exercise. (deer)
 6. If I shout, he'll hear me. (fish)
 7. She dresses naked dolls. (snake)
 8. At last, I, Gerald, had won. (tiger)
 9. He called Nikko a lazy boy. (koala)
 10. In April I only called once (lion)
4. Children work in pairs or groups to identify the animals hidden in the sentences. The team to finish first is the winner.

5. Those children who finish quickly can start to write their own sentences with hidden animals in them that they can then share when everyone has finished.

Notes

Do not worry if the sentences contain unknown vocabulary. It is good for the children to be exposed to language they do not know and learn that it is not always necessary to understand everything to achieve the goal. If children want a translation of the sentences, try waiting until after they have found the animal names to do this so that they do not get distracted from the main activity.

You may prefer to avoid 'hiding' words using capital letters in the sentence if you think it might confuse the children.

You might want to provide children with lower English levels with a list of the animals they have to find.

Alternatives

- You can use this activity to revise any set of vocabulary, such as colours, clothes, furniture, parts of the body and so on.
- You can extend the activity by asking the children to draw the animals and label them.
- If the children's level of English is sufficient, you can extend the activity by asking them to tell an animal story, either invented or based on their experience. They can then write the story and illustrate it themselves.
- Children like puzzles. You can use the website <http://puzzle-maker.com/WS/index.htm> to make free crossword puzzles and word searches based on your own vocabulary lists and definitions (thank you to teachers at the JALT Conference for this suggestion).

No resources?

You only need a blackboard and chalk for this activity.

