

**Activity-Based Learning in a Secondary EFL Classroom:
A Teacher-Researcher's Observation of Classroom Atmosphere,
Student Participation, and Engagement Through Purposeful
Activities**

Miss. Sirinnapa Abkrathok

A Classroom-Based Research Article

2025

Abstract

This classroom-based study investigates how activity-based learning (ABL) influences the emotional atmosphere, student participation, and engagement in a secondary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Thailand. Drawing on the teacher-researcher's direct observation and informal conversations with students, the study documents the implementation of three original ABL activities in a Grade 7–8 class of more than 40 students: a movie-guessing listening task, a collaborative story-completion activity, and a detective mystery task using cue cards. Rather than measuring knowledge gain through pre-test and post-test comparisons, this study adopts a qualitative teacher-as-researcher stance to examine the lived quality of the classroom experience—specifically how ABL activities shifted the emotional tone of the room, prompted students who rarely participate to become visibly engaged, and supported listening and speaking skill development in an authentic, low-anxiety context. Findings drawn from structured observation notes and informal student feedback indicate that all three activities produced noticeable improvements in classroom atmosphere, willingness to participate, and student affect. The detective cue-card activity in particular generated the highest levels of spontaneous communication and collaborative language use. These findings suggest that thoughtfully designed, contextually relevant ABL activities can meaningfully transform the EFL classroom environment even within a single session, and that teacher observation remains a valid and valuable mode of evidence in classroom research.

Keywords: activity-based learning, EFL classroom, classroom atmosphere, student participation, teacher-as-researcher, secondary education, Thailand

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to secondary school students in Thailand presents a persistent and familiar challenge: how to create an environment in which students feel motivated, safe, and genuinely willing to use the language. Many EFL classrooms, particularly at the secondary level, are characterized by student passivity, reluctance to speak, and a climate of evaluative anxiety in which fear of making mistakes outweighs the desire to communicate (Horwitz et al., 1986; Krashen, 1982). This problem is not primarily a curriculum problem or a materials problem — it is a classroom atmosphere problem.

This study began from a simple but urgent practical question: Can carefully designed classroom activities change the emotional atmosphere of an EFL lesson in ways that increase participation and engagement? To explore this question, the researcher — who is also the class teacher — designed and implemented three activity-based learning (ABL) tasks in a Grade 7–8 EFL class of more than 40 students at a secondary school in Thailand. The activities were intentionally designed to be playful, collaborative, and communicatively authentic, prioritizing meaningful interaction over formal accuracy. The three activities were: (1) Guess the Movie by Listening to the Voice, a listening-focused recognition task; (2) Finish the Story from the Person Before You, a collaborative oral storytelling chain; and (3) Be a Detective: Find the Clues and the Murderer Using Cue Cards, a structured communicative mystery task.

Rather than evaluating these activities through a pre-test/post-test design — an approach that would reduce the richness of the classroom experience to a single numerical score — this study adopts a teacher-as-researcher approach (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), drawing on systematic classroom observation and informal student feedback to understand what happened, why it happened, and what it meant for the students in the room. This methodological choice

reflects a conviction that the most important dimensions of classroom learning — joy, risk-taking, connection, and confidence — are best captured through careful observation and honest reflection, not through standardized measurement alone.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to document and analyze the effects of three ABL activities on the classroom atmosphere, participation patterns, and student engagement in one secondary EFL classroom in Thailand. The study is not intended to produce generalizable causal claims; rather, it aims to contribute a detailed, honest, and practically grounded account of what ABL can look like — and what it can do — in a real classroom with real constraints.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. How did each ABL activity influence the emotional atmosphere and energy of the classroom?
2. Which students participated more actively during ABL activities compared to conventional lessons, and in what ways?
3. What do students' informal responses reveal about their experience of the ABL activities?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Activity-Based Learning in the EFL Context

Activity-based learning refers to instructional approaches in which students engage actively with language and content through purposeful, often collaborative tasks, rather than passively receiving information (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). In EFL settings, ABL aligns closely with communicative language teaching (CLT), which positions meaningful interaction and authentic communication as the primary vehicles for language acquisition (Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CLT and ABL share a common theoretical foundation in the view that language is best learned through use, not through memorization of rules or forms.

In secondary EFL classrooms in Asia, ABL has attracted particular interest as a response to the prevalence of teacher-centered, grammar-translation methods that have long dominated formal English instruction (Hu, 2002). Researchers have documented that students in ABL-oriented EFL classrooms demonstrate greater willingness to communicate, higher levels of task engagement, and more positive attitudes toward English learning than peers in conventional classrooms (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Yashima, 2002). However, much of this research has focused on university-level learners; studies of ABL in secondary EFL classrooms in Thailand remain relatively scarce.

2.2 Classroom Atmosphere and the Affective Filter

Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis proposes that emotional variables — including anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence — function as a metaphorical filter that either facilitates or blocks language acquisition. When the affective filter is high (i.e., when students are anxious, bored, or disengaged), even comprehensible input fails to be processed effectively. When

the filter is low — when students feel safe, interested, and motivated — acquisition proceeds more readily.

This theoretical framework has direct implications for classroom design. If the goal of an EFL teacher is to lower the affective filter, then the emotional climate of the classroom is not a peripheral concern but a central instructional variable. Activities that create enjoyment, reduce evaluative threat, and position students as competent participants — rather than as performers awaiting judgment — are, from this perspective, not merely entertaining but pedagogically essential. ABL activities, particularly those with game-like or collaborative structures, have been shown to lower anxiety and increase positive affect in EFL learners (Arnold, 1999; Oxford, 1999).

2.3 Participation and Engagement in Large EFL Classes

Large class sizes present a well-documented challenge for EFL instruction (Hayes, 1997). In classes of 40 or more students, individual speaking opportunities are necessarily limited, and the social dynamics of the large group can amplify reticence — students are often reluctant to speak in front of a large audience of peers. Research suggests that structured pair and group activities are among the most effective strategies for increasing participation in large EFL classes, as they multiply speaking opportunities while reducing the social stakes of individual performance (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Engagement in large EFL classes is also shaped by the perceived relevance and enjoyment of tasks. Ainley et al. (2002) found that initial interest — the immediate, in-the-moment curiosity sparked by a novel or surprising stimulus — is a powerful predictor of sustained engagement, even in students who describe themselves as generally uninterested in English. This suggests that activities designed to provoke curiosity and surprise, rather than simply to practice language forms, may be particularly effective for engagement in large, heterogeneous secondary classes.

2.4 The Teacher as Researcher

The teacher-as-researcher tradition, established by Stenhouse (1975) and developed extensively by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), positions the classroom teacher as a uniquely situated knowledge-producer whose systematic observations, reflections, and interpretations constitute a legitimate and valuable form of educational research. Unlike external researchers who enter classrooms as observers, teacher-researchers have access to the accumulated relational and contextual knowledge that makes interpretation of classroom events possible — they know their students, their histories, and the baseline from which any change can be observed.

This tradition is particularly relevant for the present study, in which the researcher's observations are grounded in an ongoing relationship with the students and a detailed knowledge of the class's typical behavioral and emotional patterns. Changes in atmosphere, participation, and engagement that might be invisible to an external observer are perceptible to the teacher-researcher precisely because of this relational proximity. This methodological positioning is not a limitation of the study; it is one of its primary strengths.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative teacher-as-researcher design, in which the classroom teacher systematically observes, documents, and reflects on the effects of three ABL activities in a single EFL class. This design is consistent with the traditions of classroom-based action research (Burns, 2010) and practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). It is appropriate for the present study because the research questions concern the quality and texture of classroom experience — dimensions that resist quantification and are best captured through careful observational description and interpretive analysis.

The study does not employ a control group or a pre-test/post-test comparison. This is an intentional methodological choice, not a limitation to be apologized for. The study's goal is not to demonstrate that ABL produces higher test scores than conventional instruction; it is to document, with as much fidelity and nuance as possible, what happens in a classroom when these particular activities are implemented. This goal is better served by rich descriptive observation than by numerical comparison.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in a secondary school in Thailand. The participating class consisted of more than 40 students in Grades 7 and 8, ranging in age from approximately 12 to 14 years. The class met for regular EFL lessons taught by the researcher. Students came from varied English proficiency backgrounds, as is typical of mixed-ability secondary classes in Thailand. The school context is characterized by large class sizes, a curriculum that emphasizes reading and grammar, and limited prior exposure to communicative or activity-based teaching approaches.

Participation in the study involved students engaging in their normal classroom activities; no additional tasks or assessments were required beyond what would typically occur in the course of English instruction. Informal conversations with students about their activity experiences were conducted naturally within the flow of lessons. The teacher-researcher maintained observational field notes throughout each session.

3.3 The ABL Activities

Three ABL activities were designed and implemented by the teacher-researcher, each in a single class session. The activities were intentionally varied in structure and skill focus to provide a range of engagement experiences. All three activities were designed to be accessible regardless of English proficiency level, to involve the whole class, and to prioritize communication and enjoyment over formal accuracy.

Activity 1: Guess the Movie by Listening to the Voice

In this activity, students listened to short audio clips of well-known movie characters or scenes and attempted to identify the movie title. The activity was structured as a whole-class guessing game, with students raising hands or calling out answers. The primary language skill targeted was listening comprehension, specifically the ability to recognize and interpret spoken English in an authentic, culturally familiar context. The activity was designed to activate prior knowledge and to create a low-stakes, game-like atmosphere in which all students — including lower-proficiency learners — could participate based on cultural familiarity rather than grammatical knowledge alone.

Activity 2: Finish the Story from the Person Before You

In this collaborative oral storytelling activity, the teacher began a short story in English and then called on a student to add the next sentence or two. That student then passed the story to a

classmate, who continued it, and so on around the room. No student knew in advance when they would be called upon, which created a state of attentive anticipation throughout the activity. The activity targeted spoken production and listening comprehension simultaneously, and required students to process what their classmates had said in order to produce a coherent continuation. The open-ended, unpredictable nature of the collaborative narrative also generated spontaneous laughter and surprise, contributing to a playful classroom atmosphere.

Activity 3: Be a Detective — Find the Clues and the Murderer Using Cue Cards

This activity was the most structurally complex of the three. Students were each given cue cards containing partial clues related to a fictional mystery scenario. To solve the mystery and identify the fictional murderer, students needed to circulate around the classroom, share their clues with classmates in English, and collectively piece together the evidence. The activity required sustained peer-to-peer communication, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative reasoning — all conducted in English. The mystery format created an intrinsic communicative motivation: students needed to talk to others not because the teacher told them to, but because they needed the information their classmates held.

3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through two primary means. First, the teacher-researcher maintained detailed observational field notes during and immediately after each activity session, recording observations of student behavior, participation patterns, emotional responses, noise and energy levels, spontaneous language use, and any notable incidents or turning points in the flow of the lesson. Field note prompts were organized around three dimensions: classroom atmosphere (the overall emotional tone and energy of the room), participation (who was engaging, in what ways,

and how this compared to typical lesson behavior), and student affect (observable emotional responses such as laughter, frustration, enthusiasm, or disengagement).

Second, informal conversations with students were conducted at the close of each activity session. The teacher-researcher asked open, conversational questions such as 'Which part did you enjoy most?', 'Was anything difficult or confusing?', and 'Would you want to do this kind of activity again?' These conversations were not recorded or transcribed; rather, the teacher-researcher noted key themes and representative student comments in the field notes immediately following the session. While informal, these conversations provided a direct window into students' immediate experience of each activity.

3.5 Data Analysis

Field notes and informal conversation records were analyzed using a process of iterative reflective analysis (Schön, 1983). The teacher-researcher read through all observational data repeatedly, identifying recurring patterns, contrasts between activities, and moments of particularly high or low engagement. Analytical categories were developed inductively from the data rather than imposed in advance, consistent with the exploratory nature of the study. Three primary analytical themes emerged from this process — classroom atmosphere, participation breadth, and student affect — and these are used to organize the findings. Representative observational descriptions are quoted directly from the field notes to anchor interpretive claims in specific, observable evidence.

4. Findings

4.1 Overview of Observed Changes Across Activities

Table 1 provides a summary of the teacher-researcher's observational ratings across the three activities on four dimensions: classroom atmosphere, participation breadth, spontaneous English use, and student affect. Ratings are qualitative and relative (Low / Moderate / High / Very High), based on comparison with typical lesson observations, and are intended to provide an accessible overview of the comparative findings before detailed description.

Table 1

Teacher-Researcher Observational Summary Across Three ABL Activities

Dimension	Activity 1 Guess the Movie	Activity 2 Finish the Story	Activity 3 Detective Cue Cards
Classroom Atmosphere	High	High	Very High
Participation Breadth	Moderate–High	High	Very High
Spontaneous English Use	Moderate	Moderate–High	Very High
Positive Student Affect	High	High	Very High
Teacher Facilitation Ease	High	Moderate	Moderate

Note. Ratings are qualitative, based on teacher-researcher field notes and comparison with typical lesson observations. They are not derived from a standardized instrument.

4.2 Activity 1: Guess the Movie by Listening to the Voice

The movie-guessing activity produced an immediate and visible transformation in classroom energy. From the moment the first audio clip played, students sat forward in their chairs, looked up from their desks, and began whispering guesses to their classmates. The researcher's field notes record: 'The room went from quiet and slightly drowsy to alert and buzzing within about thirty seconds of the first clip. Students who normally sit passively were mouthing answers and looking excited.'

Participation during this activity was broad but not fully equal. Students with stronger cultural familiarity with the movie clips — particularly those featuring popular animated films or action franchises — participated most confidently, often calling out answers before others had processed the clip. Students with lower English proficiency nonetheless participated actively in the guessing process, demonstrating that the activity was accessible across proficiency levels because recognition of a movie did not require productive language skill. The key design feature that enabled this inclusivity was the use of familiar popular culture as the content vehicle.

Informal student feedback after the activity was uniformly positive. Students described the activity as 'fun,' 'exciting,' and 'different from normal class.' Several students asked whether they could do a similar activity with Thai movies or songs, suggesting that the activity had sparked a desire for more, and that students were already thinking about how to extend the format. The teacher-researcher noted that this spontaneous generativity — students proposing variations on an activity — is a reliable informal indicator of genuine engagement.

4.3 Activity 2: Finish the Story from the Person Before You

The collaborative storytelling activity produced a qualitatively different kind of engagement from the movie-guessing task: more effortful, more socially connected, and marked by a visible sense of shared creative investment. Because students did not know when they would be called upon, a state of sustained attentiveness spread through the room that the researcher had rarely observed during conventional lessons. Field notes record: 'Every student was listening to whoever was speaking — genuinely listening, not just waiting for their own turn — because they needed to know where the story was going in order to continue it.'

This activity produced the most visible instances of student-to-student laughter and surprise of any of the three tasks, as unexpected story turns — dragons appearing in shopping malls,

teachers turning into robots — generated spontaneous whole-class reactions. These moments of shared humor appeared to function as social adhesive, creating a sense of collective experience and lowering the social stakes of individual performance. Several students who had contributed short, hesitant sentences early in the chain became more elaborate in their contributions as the activity progressed, suggesting a within-session confidence-building effect.

The activity also produced the most observable instances of frustration among any of the three tasks, primarily among students who were called on and felt unable to produce a continuation in English. The teacher-researcher responded to these moments by offering sentence starters or accepting partially Thai contributions for students who were significantly struggling. Informal feedback after the activity reflected this bifurcation: most students described it as enjoyable and engaging, while a smaller number described feeling 'nervous' or 'not ready.' This finding is discussed further in the Discussion section.

4.4 Activity 3: Be a Detective — Find the Clues and the Murderer Using Cue Cards

The detective cue-card activity produced the most striking transformation of classroom atmosphere and the highest levels of spontaneous English use of any of the three activities. When students received their cue cards and the instructions were explained, the room transitioned within minutes from a conventional seated arrangement into an animated, mobile social space in which students moved freely, sought out classmates, and exchanged information with a purposefulness that the teacher-researcher had not previously observed in this class. Field notes record: 'I had never heard this many students speaking English at the same time in this room. Not performing English for the teacher — just using it to get something done.'

The intrinsic communicative motivation built into the activity design — the fact that students genuinely needed to share their clues with others to solve the mystery — appeared to

override the social inhibitions that typically suppress speaking in large EFL classes. Students who rarely initiated conversation in English were observed approaching classmates and reading their cue cards aloud, asking clarifying questions, and debating possible suspects. The mystery format created what the researcher's field notes describe as 'a room full of little negotiations,' in which language use was driven by genuine informational need rather than teacher instruction.

Informal student feedback after the detective activity was the most enthusiastic of the three sessions. Students described it as 'like a game but also like real English,' and several commented that they had not noticed how much time had passed during the activity — a subjective experience that psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) would recognize as a marker of flow, the state of deep, effortless absorption in a challenging and rewarding task. Multiple students asked when they could do the activity again, and one student commented, 'I actually had to think in English, not translate.' This remark, noted verbatim in the field notes, captures precisely the communicative quality the activity was designed to produce.

4.5 Cross-Activity Patterns

Across all three activities, several consistent patterns emerged from the observational data. First, the emotional atmosphere of the classroom shifted measurably and immediately upon the introduction of each activity — from the characteristic baseline of quiet compliance and partial disengagement to a state of heightened alertness, social connection, and positive affect. This shift was observable in students' body language (sitting forward, turning toward classmates, making eye contact), vocal behavior (increase in volume and spontaneous vocalization), and facial expressions (smiling, laughing, looks of concentration).

Second, all three activities produced broader participation than is typical of conventional EFL lessons in this class, in which the same small group of confident students tends to dominate

teacher-fronted exchanges. The game-like and collaborative structures of the ABL activities created multiple simultaneous channels for participation, distributing engagement more widely across the class. This was most pronounced in the detective activity, where every student was simultaneously engaged in peer communication, and least pronounced in the movie-guessing activity, where some students remained in observer mode during guessing sequences.

Third, students' informal responses across all three activities consistently reflected a sense that the activities felt meaningfully different from conventional English lessons — not just more enjoyable, but more purposeful and more 'real.' This perception of authenticity appears to be a critical dimension of the activities' effectiveness, and is taken up in the Discussion.

5. Discussion

5.1 ABL as Atmosphere Transformation

The most consistent and striking finding of this study is the speed and magnitude of the atmospheric shift that each ABL activity produced. In all three cases, a classroom that was operating in its default mode of quiet, teacher-directed compliance became — within minutes of an activity beginning — a space of heightened energy, social interaction, and positive affect. This finding aligns with the theoretical prediction of Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis: when the emotional conditions of the classroom change, so too does the quality of students' engagement with the language.

What is particularly notable is that this transformation did not require a long period of adaptation or habituation. Students did not need several sessions of ABL to begin engaging differently; the shift happened within a single session, suggesting that the activities were immediately and intuitively appealing to this particular group of learners. This may reflect the specific design choices made in these activities — the use of popular culture, collaborative narrative, and mystery formats that are intrinsically interesting to adolescents — or it may reflect a more general readiness among students who have experienced predominantly passive instruction to embrace active, social learning when it is offered.

5.2 Participation Breadth and the Large Class Challenge

A central practical concern of this study was whether ABL activities could meaningfully expand participation in a class of more than 40 students. The observational findings suggest that they can, but that the degree of participation expansion depends significantly on activity design. The detective cue-card activity, with its built-in requirement for every student to engage in peer communication, produced the broadest participation — effectively all students were actively using

English simultaneously. The movie-guessing activity, while highly engaging, remained somewhat more passive for students who were not the first to recognize a clip.

This contrast offers a practical design principle for teachers working with large EFL classes: activities that create information gaps — situations in which each student holds a piece of information that others need — are particularly effective for ensuring universal participation, because they build communicative necessity directly into the task structure. The detective activity exemplifies this principle, and its success in this study supports a growing body of research on information-gap tasks in EFL instruction (Pica et al., 1993).

5.3 The Role of Authentic Communicative Purpose

One of the most recurring themes in students' informal feedback was the perception that the activities felt purposeful and real. This perception of authentic communicative purpose — the sense that language use in the activities was not merely a classroom exercise but a genuine communicative act — appears to be a critical mediating variable between activity design and engagement quality. The detective activity, in which students needed information from each other to accomplish a shared goal, embodied this principle most fully, and it was also the activity that produced the highest levels of spontaneous English use and student affect.

This finding resonates with task-based language teaching (TBLT) research, which consistently identifies meaning-focused, outcome-oriented tasks as the most effective vehicles for communicative language use (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). The present study adds an observational, classroom-level dimension to this literature, documenting not just what students produce in such tasks but how they feel and behave while producing it.

5.4 Limitations and Honest Reflections

This study has several important limitations that should be acknowledged transparently. The study involves a single class observed by its own teacher, which means the findings cannot be generalized to other classes, schools, or contexts. The absence of a standardized data collection instrument means that the observational data, while rich, cannot be compared directly with findings from other studies. The teacher-researcher role, while offering unique relational insight, also introduces the possibility of confirmation bias — a tendency to notice and record observations that align with prior expectations.

Additionally, the study examined each activity only once, in a single session. It is possible that the novelty of the activities contributed significantly to their effectiveness, and that engagement levels would diminish if the same activities were repeated over multiple sessions. Future iterations of this research should explore whether the atmospheric and participatory effects observed here are sustained, deepened, or modified with repeated exposure to ABL.

These limitations do not invalidate the study's findings; they contextualize them. Classroom-based research by its nature prioritizes fidelity to a specific context over generalizability, and the depth of understanding it produces about that context is its primary contribution. The honest acknowledgment of limitations is itself a mark of research quality.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to ask a simple but important question: Can activity-based learning change the emotional atmosphere of a secondary EFL classroom in ways that increase student participation and engagement? Based on systematic observation of three ABL activities implemented in a Grade 7–8 class of more than 40 students in Thailand, the answer is a clear and encouraging yes — at least in this context, with these students, and with these particular activities.

The findings suggest that well-designed ABL activities can transform the EFL classroom from a space of passive compliance into a space of active, social, and meaningful language use, and that this transformation can happen quickly — within a single session — when activities are designed to be intrinsically interesting, collaborative, and communicatively authentic. The detective cue-card activity was particularly effective in this regard, producing the highest levels of spontaneous English use and the most universally positive student affect of the three activities studied.

Beyond the specific findings, this study makes a methodological argument: that teacher observation and informal student feedback, conducted rigorously and reflectively, constitute a valid and valuable form of evidence in classroom research. Not every important question about learning can or should be answered by a pre-test and post-test. Some of the most important questions — about atmosphere, motivation, confidence, and joy — require a researcher who is present in the room, who knows the students, and who is willing to look carefully and report honestly. This study is offered in that spirit.

For EFL teachers in Thailand and beyond who are considering incorporating more activity-based approaches into their classrooms, this study offers both encouragement and a practical starting point. The three activities described here are low-cost, low-risk, and highly adaptable to

different proficiency levels and class sizes. They require no special equipment, no additional assessment infrastructure, and no fundamental change to the curriculum — only a willingness to give students something real and interesting to do with English, and to watch what happens when you do.

References

- Ainley, M., Hidi, S., & Berndorff, D. (2002). Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate their relationship. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(3), 545–561.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.94.3.545>
- Arnold, J. (Ed.). (1999). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bonwell, C. C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. Teachers College Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper & Row.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, D. (1997). Helping teachers to cope with large classes. *ELT Journal*, 51(2), 106–116.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/51.2.106>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>

-
- Hu, G. (2002). Potential cultural resistance to pedagogical imports: The case of communicative language teaching in China. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 15(2), 93–105.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310208666636>
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Liu, M., & Jackson, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(1), 71–86.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687.x>
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.
- Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative tasks and the language curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), 279–295. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587464>
- Oxford, R. L. (1999). Anxiety and the language learner: New insights. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 58–67). Cambridge University Press.
- Pica, T., Kanagy, R., & Falodun, J. (1993). Choosing and using communication tasks for second language instruction. In G. Crookes & S. Gass (Eds.), *Tasks and language learning: Integrating theory and practice* (pp. 9–34). Multilingual Matters.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. Heinemann.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Longman.

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00136>

Appendix

Appendix A

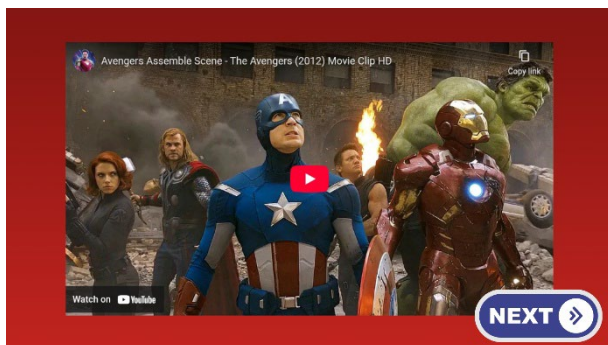
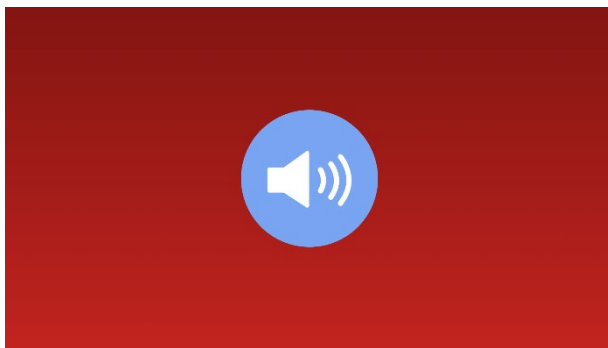
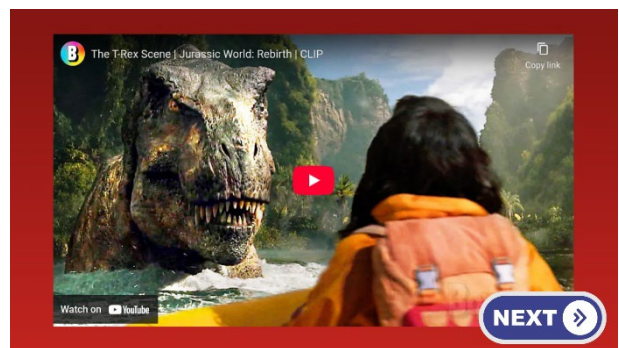
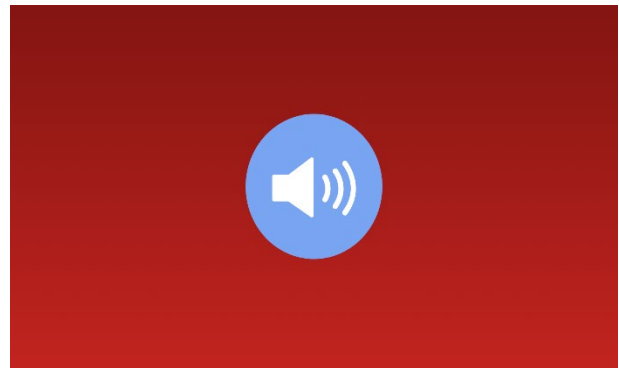
Activity 1: Guess the Movie by Listening to the audio (explanation)

This activity is designed to develop students' listening comprehension, critical thinking, and inference skills through focused auditory analysis. Students are asked to identify films based solely on short audio clips extracted from selected movie scenes. The visual component of the scenes is intentionally removed so that students rely entirely on dialogue, sound effects, background music, tone, and contextual clues.

During the activity, students listen carefully to each audio clip and work individually or in small groups to infer the title of the movie. They are encouraged to analyze elements such as character voices, accents, emotional tone, soundtrack style, and thematic cues. After listening, students share their guesses and provide justification for their answers, explaining which auditory clues led them to their conclusions.

This activity promotes active listening, attention to detail, collaborative discussion, and analytical reasoning. It also enhances students' ability to interpret meaning from auditory input without visual support, strengthening their overall language comprehension and engagement.

Activity 1: Guess the Movie by Listening to the audio (slide show)



Please scan this QR code to view the real slideshow

Appendix B

Activity 2: Finish the Story from the Person Before You (explanation)

This activity is designed to enhance students' creativity, spontaneous thinking, listening skills, and collaborative communication. In this task, students collaboratively construct a story, with each participant building on the contribution made by the previous speaker.

The activity begins with the teacher providing an opening sentence to establish the setting or context. Students then take turns adding one or more sentences to continue the narrative. Each student must listen carefully to the preceding contribution in order to maintain coherence, logical flow, and consistency in the storyline. The story develops progressively as each participant integrates new ideas, characters, or plot developments.

This activity encourages active listening, imagination, and adaptability, as students must respond in real time to unexpected narrative directions. It also promotes confidence in verbal expression and supports the development of sequencing, vocabulary usage, and storytelling skills. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of the task fosters teamwork and respectful engagement among participants.

Appendix C

Activity 3: Be a Detective — Find the Clues and the Murderer Using Cue Cards (explanation)

This activity is designed to develop students' critical thinking, problem-solving, analytical reasoning, and collaborative communication skills through an interactive investigative task. Students assume the role of detectives and work systematically to analyze clues in order to identify the perpetrator of a fictional crime.

At the beginning of the activity, students are provided with cue cards containing specific pieces of information, such as character profiles, alibis, motives, timelines, and physical evidence. Each student or group receives different clues, requiring participants to communicate, compare findings, and evaluate the relevance of the information presented. Through discussion and logical deduction, students work collaboratively to eliminate suspects and determine the most plausible conclusion.

This activity promotes careful reading, inferencing, and evidence-based reasoning. It encourages students to justify their conclusions using supporting details from the cue cards, thereby strengthening argumentation skills and logical coherence. Additionally, the role-based and scenario-driven structure of the task enhances engagement, creativity, and active participation in the learning process.

Activity 3: Be a Detective — Find the Clues and the Murderer Using Cue Cards (cue cards)

Station 1: Neighbor's Statement

- 01** The neighbor said she had heard a loud argument in the house before the lights went out.
- 02** When she looked outside, she saw a man running toward a black car.
- 03** She immediately called the police.



Integrated Grammar Teaching of Past Perfect & Past Simple through a Murder Investigation.

Station 2: Victim's Diary (Found in the Bedroom)

- 01** The victim wrote that he had met an old friend for lunch earlier that day.
- 02** He also noted that he had argued with his business partner before he went home.
- 03** He went to bed around 10 p.m. and locked the front door.



Integrated Grammar Teaching of Past Perfect & Past Simple through a Murder Investigation.

Station 3: Witness Report (From a Jogger)

- 01 A jogger said he had been standing near the mansion gate when he noticed a suspicious man.
- 02 The man had hidden something under his coat before he entered the garden.
- 03 The jogger continued running and later saw flashing police lights near the house.



Integrated Grammar Teaching of Past Perfect & Past Simple through a Murder Investigation.

Station 4: Police Report

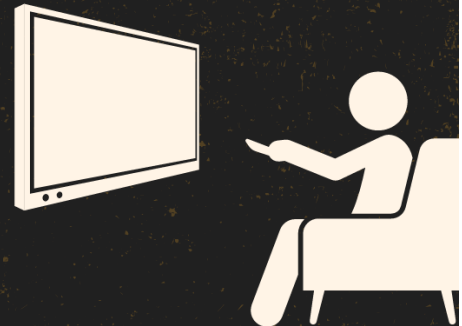
- 01 When the police arrived, they found the back window open. They discovered that the glass had been broken before the intruder entered.
- 02 Inside the living room, the victim was lying on the floor.
- 03 The police collected fingerprints from the window and a glass of wine.



Integrated Grammar Teaching of Past Perfect & Past Simple through a Murder Investigation.

Station 5: Suspect Interview (Business Partner)

- 01 The partner admitted that he had argued with the victim in the afternoon.
- 02 He claimed he had gone home by 8 p.m. and watched TV all evening.
- 03 However, the police later discovered that he had not answered his phone when they called at 9 p.m.



Integrated Grammar Teaching of Past Perfect & Past Simple through a Murder Investigation.

Station 6: Forensic Report

- 01 The medical examiner reported that the victim had eaten dinner two hours before he died. He had drunk a glass of wine that contained poison.
- 02 The poison had been mixed carefully so that the victim would not notice.
- 03 The examiner confirmed that the victim died around 10:30 p.m.



Integrated Grammar Teaching of Past Perfect & Past Simple through a Murder Investigation.

Activity 3: Be a Detective — Find the Clues and the Murderer Using Cue Cards (worksheet)

Murder Investigation – Critical Thinking Worksheet

Part A: Guessing meaning in context

Instruction: Matching the definition with its word

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. a person running for exercise | b. the professional who studies bodies and evidence |
| c. a dangerous substance that can cause death | d. acting strangely and hiding something |
| e. a fight where people shouted at each other | |

- ___ 1. The neighbor said she had heard a loud argument in the house before the lights went out.
- ___ 2. A jogger said he had been standing near the mansion gate when he noticed a suspicious man
- ___ 3. The jogger continued running and later saw flashing police lights near the house.
- ___ 4. The examiner confirmed that the victim died around 10:30 p.m.
- ___ 5. The poison had been mixed carefully so that the victim would not notice.

Part B: Timeline Reconstruction (Grammar + Logic)

Instruction: Reconstruct the sequence of events. Use both Past Perfect and Past Simple.

Write at least 5 sentences that explain what had happened before the murder and what happened after.

What had happened before	What happened after
0.The victim had argued with his business partner	before he went home.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Names of Members

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |

Part C: Evidence Analysis

Instruction: Answer the following questions in complete sentences:

1. What had the victim done before he died?

2. What had the suspect said about his whereabouts?

3. What had the neighbor reported before the police arrived?

4. What had the jogger seen before the police lights appeared?

5. What had the forensic examiner discovered about the cause of death?

Part D: Critical Thinking – Who is Guilty?

Instruction: Work with your group to discuss these questions:

1. Which pieces of evidence connect most strongly to the suspect?

2. Are there any contradictions between the suspect's statement and the evidence?

3. Could someone else have committed the crime? Why or why not?

4. If you were the detective, what evidence would you investigate further?
