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HOW TO MAKE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LESSONS MORE INTERESTING

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Annotation: *This article discusses practical ways of making elementary English lessons more interesting for young and beginner learners. The article focuses on motivation, visual support, games, songs, movement, storytelling and simple speaking practice. It shows that an interesting lesson is not only entertaining, but also purposeful, well-organized and useful for language development. The ideas presented in the article may help teachers create a friendly classroom atmosphere and encourage learners to participate more actively.*

Keywords: *elementary English, young learners, interesting lessons, motivation, games, songs, visual aids, speaking practice, classroom activities.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English at elementary level requires patience, creativity and careful planning. Learners at this stage usually know only a small number of words and simple sentence patterns. They may also feel shy when they are asked to speak in English. For this reason, the teacher should make the lesson understandable, active and emotionally comfortable.

Many beginner learners lose interest when the lesson is based only on grammar explanation, translation or long written exercises. Elementary students need short tasks, clear examples, repetition and visible results. If they can understand the meaning, repeat the language and use it in a small real situation, they begin to feel successful. This feeling of success is one of the strongest sources of motivation.

The aim of this article is to describe simple techniques that can make elementary English lessons more interesting without losing the learning aim. Games, pictures, songs and pair work should not be used only for fun. They should help learners remember vocabulary, practise grammar and communicate in a simple way.

MAIN BODY

The first step in making a lesson interesting is to create a positive beginning. A short greeting, a simple question, a picture or a familiar song can prepare learners for English. At elementary level, children need to feel that the classroom is a safe place where trying is more important than being perfect. Researchers in young learner education emphasize that children learn a foreign language more successfully when activities are connected with their

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attention, imagination and personal experience. Therefore, the teacher should begin the lesson with something clear, friendly and easy to join.¹

Another important technique is using familiar topics. Words about family, food, school objects, colours, animals, toys and daily routines are close to learners’ real life. When students recognize the topic, they understand new language more easily. For example, teaching fruit with pictures, real objects and the question “Do you like apples?” is more effective than giving only translation. In this way, vocabulary becomes part of communication, not only a list of words.

Visual aids are especially useful in elementary English classes. Pictures, flashcards, real objects, drawings and simple slides help learners understand meaning quickly. They also make the lesson more active because students can point, match, guess, describe and compare. For example, when teaching prepositions, a teacher can use a pencil and a box to show in, on and under. Such visual support reduces confusion and gives learners confidence. Modern methodology for young learners also stresses that clear context and concrete examples are very important for children’s language development.²

Games can make lessons lively, but every game should have a language purpose. Memory games, bingo, word chains, guessing games, board races and role plays can help learners repeat new words and sentence patterns many times without becoming bored. However, a game should not be used only to fill time. The teacher should know exactly what learners will practise during the game. If the topic is classroom objects, the game should make students say or recognize words such as pen, book, ruler and bag. A good game gives both enjoyment and useful repetition.

Songs and chants are also effective because they make English sound natural and memorable. Short songs can help students practise pronunciation, rhythm and intonation. They are especially helpful for greetings, numbers, days of the week, colours and classroom routines. The teacher may ask learners to listen, clap, repeat key words, fill in missing words or put pictures in order. Repetition in songs helps learners remember phrases without feeling that they are memorizing mechanically.

Movement is another simple way to keep learners interested. Elementary students often become tired when they sit and listen for a long time. Activities such as “Simon says”, “stand up if...”, “touch something blue” or “mime the action” connect words with physical response. When a learner hears jump and jumps, the word becomes easier to remember. Movement also helps the teacher manage energy in the classroom and makes the lesson more natural for young learners.

Pair work and group work can make students more active, but the task must be simple. At elementary level, learners need models before they can speak independently. The teacher should write useful phrases on the board and demonstrate the dialogue first. For instance, students can practise: “What is your favourite colour?” – “My favourite colour is blue.”

¹Cameron L. Teaching Languages to Young Learners. - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. - P. 19-21.

²Pinter A. Teaching Young Language Learners. 2nd ed. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. - P. 42-45.

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After two or three examples, they can ask their partners. Clear instructions and demonstration are very important because even an interesting task may fail if students do not understand what to do.³

Storytelling is another useful technique. A short story with pictures gives vocabulary and grammar a meaningful context. The story does not have to be difficult. It may be about a cat looking for milk, a boy going to school or a girl buying fruit. Learners can predict the next picture, repeat key sentences, answer yes/no questions or act out the story. Stories help learners see how words work together, and they make the lesson warmer and more human.

A lesson becomes more interesting when its rhythm changes. If the whole lesson is only explanation, learners become tired. A balanced lesson may include a warm-up, presentation, controlled practice, pair work, a short game and reflection. This variety helps different learners and gives several chances to meet the same language. In English language teaching, repeated practice in different forms is considered an important condition for developing accuracy and confidence.⁴

Speaking practice should be included even when learners know very little English. At first, students can give one-word answers, then short phrases, and later simple sentences. Picture description, mini-dialogues and classroom surveys are suitable for this stage. The teacher should not expect perfect speech. It is better to give sentence frames, useful words and enough time to practise. Young learners need encouragement because confidence is one of the main conditions for active participation.⁵

Technology can also support interesting lessons, but it should be used with a clear task. A short video, audio recording or online quiz may attract attention, yet it becomes educational only when learners do something with it. For example, after watching a short video about animals, students can name the animals, choose their favourite one or describe colours. Technology should help interaction, not replace it.

Finally, the teacher’s own attitude is very important. A calm voice, positive correction and praise can make students feel comfortable. If the teacher corrects every mistake sharply, learners may stop speaking. It is better to correct gently, repeat the correct form naturally and praise effort. Communicative teaching principles show that learners need opportunities to use language for a purpose, not only to listen passively. Therefore, an interesting lesson is one where students are not only observers, but real participants.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, elementary English lessons become more interesting when the teacher combines enjoyment with clear learning aims. Pictures, games, songs, movement, stories, pair work and short speaking tasks can make English easier and more memorable. These

³Scrivener J. Learning Teaching: The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching. 3rd ed. - Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2011. - P. 76-78.

⁴Harmer J. The Practice of English Language Teaching. 5th ed. - Harlow: Pearson Education, 2015. - P. 94-97.

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techniques help learners understand meaning, repeat language naturally and use English in simple communication.

At the same time, interesting lessons should be well planned. The teacher should choose activities according to the topic, level and age of learners. A lesson is successful when students feel safe, participate actively and leave the classroom with a small but real achievement. For elementary learners, this positive experience is the beginning of long-term interest in English.

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