

Flashcards

Objectives

Developing effective classroom flashcards and techniques for their use.



Vocabulary

eliciting drills

brainstorming prompts



Pedagogical Implications

Flashcards are a common resource for both language teachers and students. Their use can add an interactive element to classes, helping the teacher to involve learners in language presentations, elicit existing student knowledge and aid brainstorming activities.

Flashcards are useful as sets of prompts for drilling pronunciation and can also be useful for the memorization of language, providing visual contexts to vocabulary, as well as the chance for repeat practice of language.

Classroom Integration

Flashcards may be either digital or card-based and are used for the presentation and practice of specific aspects of language, whether it is vocabulary, grammar, expressions and phrases, or even phonics. Flashcards typically come in the form of cards with pictures, written words or symbols. Flashcards can come in a variety of sizes, larger or digital flashcards are often used for language presentations by the teacher and as prompts for eliciting and drills, while smaller sets of flashcards may be used for pair or group work involving less controlled productive practice of specific language. Flashcards typically come in language sets, whether it be 'word families', grammar structures or as prompts for repeat practice of particular language functions.

Task 1: Defining 'Flashcards'

What are flashcards? What kind of information do they include? What do they look like? Discuss with a partner.

Flashcards for Presentations

Task 2: Flashcards in Action

Watch the beginning part of a lesson with a group of children by teacher trainer, Raymond Kerr. How does he and his use of flashcards address learner needs? Next to each characteristic of young learners make notes on how Raymond's use of his flashcards meets those needs or characteristics.

Characteristic of Young Learner	How teacher uses flashcards to meet the YL characteristic
learns through doing things and through movement.	
likes using their imagination.	
learns fast, forgets fast.	
likes bright colours, animation characters etc.	



Task 3: Presentation Flashcards - the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Identify the problems with this presentation flashcard. Think in terms of the following issues:

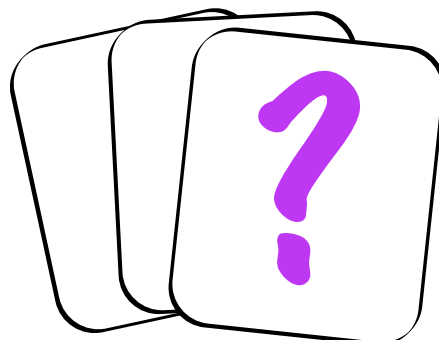


- interactivity
- part of speech
- drilling pronunciation
- reinforcing error

Task 4: Picture Presentation Flashcards - They Can't Teach Everything

Picture flashcards work best with particular kinds of language presentation. Look at the language examples below. Which kinds of language do you think flashcards would be good for presenting and which kind of language would flashcards not be useful for presenting? Explain why or why not.

- Action verbs (e.g. 'to play', 'to walk', 'to run', 'to eat')
- Abstract verbs (e.g. 'to imagine', 'to doubt', 'to be')
- 3rd Conditional tense (e.g. 'If I had studied harder, I'd have done better in the test')
- Adjectives of feeling (e.g. 'jealous', 'happy', 'angry', 'shy')
- Concrete nouns (e.g. 'a house', 'a tree', 'a handbag')
- Present continuous tense (e.g. 'He is playing basketball', 'She is watering the plants')
- Presenting uncountable nouns (e.g. 'luggage', 'homework', 'furniture', 'rice') and the concept of uncountability.
- Functional language (e.g. requests 'Could I have a glass of milk')



Task 5: Concept Checking - Your Turn

Imagine you have presented the word 'a jungle' with this flashcard to your students.

You now need students to demonstrate that they understand what this concept or word exactly. How can you do this?

Answer: Concept-check Questions:

Do jungles grow in cold or hot countries? (Hot)

Do jungles grow in your country? (No)

In which country can you find a jungle? (Yes)

Do parrots live in jungles? (Yes)

Do wolves live in jungles? (No)

Do monkeys live in jungles (Yes)

The words in (brackets) indicate students responses to the teacher's concept-check questions.

The students thus demonstrate to the teacher their understanding of the word through their answers (in a way that a simple explanation from the teacher wouldn't achieve).

Design: Concept-check questions need to allow students to give short, simple answers. The best concept check questions include 'either/or' questions ('Do jungles grow in cold or hot countries?'), 'yes/no questions' or 'wh' questions which allow for one word or short sentence responses.

Imagine you have teaching vocabulary using flashcards. Write sufficient concept-check questions for the words the teacher gives you in the boxes below.

1

2

Task 6:

Make notes on each type of drilling technique using flashcards that your teacher demonstrates here:

TPR

Circle Drills

Substitution Drills

Memorization

Flashcards for Language Practice.

Task 7: Flashcards for Group Activities

Look at the two sets of flashcards you are given and try to think of two memorization activities you could do with set 1, and two speaking and grammar activities you could do with set 2. Write down ideas in the spaces below.



Memorization: Set 1

Speaking/Grammar: Set 2

Task 8:

Look at the examples of flashcards on this page and decide what kind of language practice they might be used for.

2



Focus _____

1



Focus _____

3



Focus _____

4



Focus _____

Task 9:

Look at each website with free online resources and make notes on each site. When you have finished, share your notes with a partner.

Website	Description of Website (type of flashcards, general quality, types of levels and ages suitable for, etc.)
 mes-english.com/flashcards.php	
 insidestoryflashcards.com/	
 teachchildrenesl.com/flashcards.htm	
 thehandmadehome.net/freebies/	
 learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/category/interactive-types/flashcards	