

Food and Babies

We promised more information gap activities on line. They are quick to download, and prepare for the classroom. They are an ideal way to introduce material with difficult reading tasks, but with content which we really want to teach. The trickiest bit of this activity is sorting the initial pairs and groups. Although this is a four text jigsaw you can if it is more convenient turn it into a three text jigsaw by giving everybody one of the texts - probably text D is best in this case. How you organise it depends on how many there are in your class on that day. If you go to

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/fourtextsjigsaw.pdf>

you will find a series of card activities which we are developing to help you.

You or your students may also like to find a few pictures to enliven the text sheets.

The webaddress for this activity is:

<<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/foodandbabies.pdf>>

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COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

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Supporting a cooperative network of teaching professionals throughout the European Union to develop and disseminate accessible teaching materials in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project publishes a catalogue of activities plus lists in selected subject areas, and a newsletter available by post or internet: "PAPERCLIP".

*These activities were influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in mixed classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening and other formative assessment.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in mother tongue and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/foodandbabies.pdf>

Food and Babies

Collaborative Reading Materials with an information gap.

There are four different texts with a common question sheet. The principle here is that readers will be unable to complete the questions by simply using the information in their version, but will have to collaborate with other readers, asking questions and eliciting information, possibly arguing and negotiating. There is also an opportunity to draw on their own previous knowledge.

We have outlined the following procedure, but you can reorganise things in a variety of ways. You can possibly arrange to pair slower readers with faster ones etc. You could start with threes rather than pairs etc.

The class can work first in pairs or threes and groups have copies of the same text. The important thing is that all the texts are equally spread. E.g. Five groups have Sheet A, five Sheet B etc. . Pairs can read the text silently first, and then to each other, and then work together to answer as many questions as they can.

The pairs then split up and move into groups of four where each participant has either Sheet A, Sheet B etc. If you print each text on a different colour you will find organising things easier. They can then go on to complete the questions by interrogating each other.

If you are thinking about producing your own information gaps, and I hope you do, you may find it easier if you try this method. Find a suitable whole single text containing the information you wish to teach. Formulate a series of questions for the text. Produce three or four texts where the factual and inferential information is shared between them. Some overlapping of information is fine. You can of course, where appropriate, include visual material, graphs, maps etc

Food and Babies Text A

Three hundred years ago Ireland belonged to England. It was a colony until 1920. Most of the people who owned the land did not farm it. They rented it out and lived in Dublin or in London. Most of the best crops went to England. The people who worked on the land were paid very little. They rented a little piece of land where they grew potatoes and greens. They often kept a pig. They were often hungry.

Three hundred years ago people who could not find work in the country moved to the city. They often became servants for richer people and were paid very little. Cities like Dublin in Ireland and London grew very quickly. Many servants became mothers. They could not afford to keep their babies. They used to leave them on doorsteps or in churches. These babies were called foundlings. Most large cities in Europe set up hospitals for foundlings. There was one in Dublin and one in London. In Dublin they fed the babies on goats milk mixed with bread. 98% of the babies died. In London they paid mothers to breastfeed them. 30% of these babies survived.

Food and Babies Text C

Kenya, Uganda and the Gambia were once colonies. However, we still treat them as colonies. For example, supermarkets sell fresh peas and beans all the year round. These come by air from these countries. The people who grow these vegetables get very little money. They are often hungry. Many of their babies die.

People who are angry about this have set up fair trade organisations. They pay more money directly to the food growers. You can usually find fair trade products in the supermarkets. They usually cost a little more.

If you are angry about something, you can do lots of different things. You can complain a lot. You can rant and rave. You can write letters to newspapers. You can join up with other angry people with similar kinds of anger, and form a pressure group. You can become a journalist or a politician. You can become a TV or film producer. You can even put your views on the internet. Anyone in the world, who has a computer and can read your language can immediately pick up your views.

Three hundred years ago you had less choice. Jonathan Swift was angry because there were lots of starving children in Ireland. He wrote a small book. He wrote quietly and in a clever way. His little book was called "The Modest Proposal". He wrote about food and babies.

Food and Babies - Question sheet with space for answers.

1. What do you know about Jonathan Swift?	2. What is a foundling?	3. How long was Ireland a colony of England?	4. Name two things you can do if you are angry about something
5. Why did people move from city to country three hundred years ago?	6. Name three countries that used to be colonies of England.	7. Why did more foundlings die in Dublin than in London?	8. What is the best way to get your views across nowadays.
9. What is fair trade?	10. Why were there so many starving babies in Ireland?	11. Why do so many babies still die in most African countries?	12. Why are people still angry about the same things as three hundred years ago?