

ESL Newspaper Activities



Introduction:

These activities were developed to meet the needs of the ESL students enrolled in grades six through 12, post-secondary and adult continuing education. The students can carry out these activities alone, with a partner, in small groups, or with an entire class. Students use The Press-Enterprise as a tool to practice, reinforce, and expand their skills.

In all, there are 75 activities designed to enable beginning, intermediate and advanced ESL students meet their goals in the following language areas:

Grammar = G
Writing = W
Vocabulary = V
Decoding = D
Life Skills = L

Activities numbered 1-25 are most suitable for the beginning level student.
Activities numbered 26-50 are most suitable for the intermediate level student.
Activities numbered 51-75 are most suitable for the advanced level student.

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Alphabet

1. Find all the letters of the alphabet in the newspaper.
2. Cut out all the capital letters first. Paste them in alphabetical order.
3. Cut out all the lower case letters and paste them next to the capitals.

For Example:

| | |
|-----|-----|
| A a | C c |
| B b | D d |

Alphabetical Order

Names of people are very interesting.

1. Look through three (3) pages of the newspaper. See how many names of men and women you can find.
2. On a sheet of paper, make two columns as shown below. List the names in the correct column:

Names of Men

Names of Women

3. Can you put them in alphabetical order?

Days of the Week

1. Look at the first page of the newspaper. How many times can you find the days of the week?
2. Circle and count every time you see a day of the week.

Months

Do you know the months of the year?

1. Look through the newspaper and see if you can find at least three (3) months of the year.
2. Cut them out and paste them on a sheet of paper.

Colors

1. Look through the newspaper and find ten (10) things that are described by color words.
2. Cut out the color words and the things they describe.
3. Paste these words on a sheet of paper.

Numbers

Can you recognize number words?

Some examples are: one (1), seven (7), twenty (20)

1. Look through ten (10) pages of the newspaper. Circle all the number words you can find.
2. Make a list of the words you have found.

Number Have Many Uses

1. Spend ten (10) minutes looking for examples of as many uses of numbers as you can find in the newspaper.
2. See if you can find and circle numbers that tell:
 - a. weather
 - b. prices
 - c. dates
 - d. movie schedules
 - e. addresses
 - f. telephone numbers
 - g. page numbers
 - h. Can you think of others?

Basic Vocabulary

Do you like to hunt for things?

1. See if you can find a picture in the newspaper of each of the following:
 - a. a pet
 - b. an old man
 - c. a young woman
 - d. a baby
 - e. a person wearing glasses
 - f. a green vegetable
2. Cut the pictures out of the newspaper and paste them in your notebook.

Vowels

There are five (5) vowels in English: a, e, i, o, u.

1. Look for each one in words that appear in your newspaper.
2. On a sheet of paper, make a column for each vowel as shown below. Cut the words out and paste them in the correct category.
a e i o u
3. If the word has two (2) or more vowels, choose one of the vowels and place the word under that letter.

Comparison

Look through the articles and advertisements in the newspaper. Can you find pictures that show what these words mean?

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| small | big | thin |
| smaller | bigger | thinner |
| smallest | biggest | thinnest |

Foods

1. Look through the Sunday newspaper and cut out pictures of five (5) items you can buy in each store:

Supermarket

Drug Store

Discount Store

2. Make a list of these items below the correct stores. If you do not know the names of the items, ask your teacher or classmate.

My Favorite Foods

1. Look in the food section of the newspaper. Cut out pictures of your favorite foods.

2. Tell the class about them.

My favorite foods are _____.

I like the taste of _____.

_____ tastes delicious.

This is Me

1. Make a collection of all the things that describe you. Look in the newspaper and cut out pictures or words for your favorite foods, sports, movies, places, people, words that describe you, and things you would like to have.
2. Paste them all together in your own way on a poster board. Then make a list of these words on the back of the poster board.

Likes and Dislikes

All people have their own ideas of what they like or dislike.

1. Look in the newspaper and cut out a picture or a word of something you: like, dislike, want to buy.
2. Write a complete sentence telling about each picture.

Questions

English has several interrogative (question) words. Some of these are:

why, when, what, which, how.

Here are some examples of questions using these words:

Why is he at school?

When are you going?

What is your name?

1. Look on the editorial page of the newspaper and circle all the question words that you can find.

Let's travel

There are many ways to travel.

1. Look through the newspaper for different kinds of transportation.
2. Cut out these words or pictures and paste them on a poster board.
3. Classify them on a sheet of paper according to the following categories:

By Air

By Land

By Sea

Capital Letters

The first letter of some words is capitalized in English — the first word of a sentence, the name of a specific place or person, proper adjectives, days of the week, months, and abbreviations.

Here are some examples of words that begin with capital letters:

Geroge, Mexican, Tuesday, April, USA

1. Circle twenty (20) words that begin with a capital letter in the newspaper.
2. List them in your notebook.
3. Can you tell why each began with a capital letter?

Punctuation — Question/ Exclamation Marks

Punctuation is different in English than in Spanish. In English, these marks are placed only once, after the sentence or question. In Spanish, however, an inverted question mark or exclamation point is placed at the beginning and at the end of the sentence or question.

1. Find one (1) example of each punctuation mark in the sentences in the newspaper.
2. Write one (1) sentence as an example for each of the following punctuation marks:
Question mark (?) Exclamation point (!) Period (.)

Apostrophe - Possession

To express possession in English we use an apostrophe. For example:

Bob's house

Mary's car

1. See how many times in ten minutes you can find an apostrophe after a person's name or after a noun to show possession or ownership.
2. Circle these with your pen or pencil.

Verb Hunt

Where are all of the verbs? Can you find them hiding in the headlines?

Remember — verbs are action words.

1. Look through the newspaper and circle all of the verbs you can find in the headlines of the first section.
2. Write a new sentence for two (2) of these verbs.

Action Verbs

Verbs are words that show action. People can do the action.

1. Look through the newspaper for pictures of people doing things.
2. What are they doing? Write these action words (verbs) down on your paper.

For example:

- a. playing basketball or football
- b. swimming
- c. cheering at a sports event

Prepositions

There are many prepositions in English. Review a list of prepositions in your English book.

1. Now go to the newspaper and circle at least ten (10) different prepositions.
2. Write down the sentences you have found for five (5) of these prepositions.

Subject Pronouns

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. Pronouns are found everywhere, even in the comics.

1. Turn to the comics and circle all of the pronouns you can find.
2. Write a sentence for each of the following pronouns: I, you, he, she, we, they

Rhyming Words

Rhyming words sound the same.

1. How many pairs of rhyming words can you find on one (1) page of the newspaper?
2. Make a list of rhyming words.

For example:

additiontradition
talk.....walk
motortractor
federalcentral
president.....continent

Antonyms

1. How many pairs of words that are opposite in meaning can you find in the newspaper?
2. Spend ten (10) minutes looking for these pairs. List them on your own paper.

Examples:

up/down

black/white

in/out

Cities

How many U.S. cities can you find named in the newspaper?

1. Circle as many cities as you can find in ten (10) minutes.
2. Choose ten (10) cities. Write them in alphabetical order.

States

Do you know the names of the fifty (50) United States?

1. See how many states you can find in the newspaper from start to finish.
2. Write these in your notebook.
3. How many more can you name?

Nouns

The word “the” is usually followed by a noun. A noun is a word that is a person, a place, or a thing.

1. Look in one story of the newspaper and circle the word “the” every time you see it.
2. Take ten (10) minutes to make a list of all the words that come after “the” and place them into the correct category:

Person

The president

Place

The Mayor’s office

Thing

The money

A/An

*Do you know when to use the word “a” and when to use the word “an”?
See if you can figure it out.*

1. Count how many times “a” or “an” appears in one (1) article of the newspaper.
2. Make two (2) lists of words. One (1) list should be words that follow “a,” the other words that follow “an.”

Example:

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| <u>A</u> | <u>An</u> |
| a big store | an event |
| a day | an orange |

3. Can you explain the rule for when to use “a” and when to use “an”?

Apostrophes-Contractions

The apostrophe is used to make contractions in English. A contraction is a word made from two (2) words. The second word drops one (1) or more letters and then is joined by an apostrophe to the first word.

1. Look through the newspaper and list all the contraction words you can find on three (3) pages.

Examples:

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| I can't go. | You're tired. | He shouldn't run. | She didn't see me. |
| We're here. | They're not home. | He won't win. | She'll be ready soon. |
| I'm proud. | Don't speak. | He'll return tomorrow. | |
| Wouldn't you like to visit Mexico? | | | |

2. Can you tell what two (2) words were joined together?

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are used often in English.

1. Look through the newspaper and see how many different abbreviations you can find.
2. List them on your own paper.

Examples:

Mr. Mrs.
St. Rd.
Jan. Mon.

3. What is the complete word for each abbreviation you found?

Compound Words

Compound words are made up of more than one (1) word. They are words that are made from two (2) different words.

1. See how many compound words you can find by looking at the first five (5) pages of the newspaper.

Examples:

[cow] [boy] cowboy
[mail] [man] mailman
[play] [ground] playground
[mail] [box] mailbox

[air] [plane] airplane
[land] [lord] landlord
[walk] [way] walkway
[type] [writer] typewriter

2. Write the words you find on your paper.

Locational Prepositions

A preposition connects a noun to another part of the sentence. Prepositions usually come before the noun. Locational prepositions tell where something is.

For example: under a tree, in the house, near Phoenix, on her head

Look through five (5) pages of the newspaper and circle all the prepositions that tell the location of a person, place or thing.

More Action Verbs

People are always doing things.

1. Find pictures of people in the newspaper who are doing things.
2. Can you tell what they are doing?
3. What are some things that you like to do? Make a list of five (5) things that you enjoy doing.

Meats to Eat

1. Pretend you have to buy some meat for your dinner. Look at the ads in the food section of the newspaper. Write down the prices of the meat you want to buy. Find the same kind of meat in an ad from a different store.
2. Answer the following questions:
Which store sells meat for a lower price?
Which store sells meat for a higher price?

Examples of meats: hamburger (ground beef), steak, bacon, lamb, pork chops.

Let's Go Shopping

1. Pretend you have \$10.00 to shop for food. Look in the food section of the newspaper.
2. Make a list of the foods you would buy, their prices, and where you would buy them.

| <u>Food</u> | <u>Price</u> | <u>Name of Store</u> |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------|
|-------------|--------------|----------------------|
3. Do not spend more than \$10.00. Answer these questions.
How much change would you have left?
What would you do with the change?

Let's Eat Out

Do you like to eat at a restaurant?

1. Find an ad in the newspaper for a restaurant where you would like to eat.
2. Answer these questions using complete sentences.
 - a. What is the name of the restaurant?
 - b. Where is it located?
 - c. What type of food do they serve?
 - d. How much would it cost to eat there for each person?
 - e. Who would you like to invite to eat with you?

My Favorite Sport

Do you have a favorite sport?

1. Find the sports section of the newspaper and cut out a story about your favorite sport, team, or player.
2. See if you can find five (5) new words to learn from the story.
3. List them and then try to find out from a friend, your teacher, or the dictionary what they mean.

Football Time

If you were a football player, which special words would you have to know?

1. Look at the sports section of the newspaper to find a story about football.
2. Find and list as many special football words as you can.

Let's Travel Far Away

Traveling to far away places is fun.

1. Look through the newspaper and see if you can find three (3) countries in the world you would like to visit.
2. Write down the names of these countries.
3. Can you answer these questions? Answer in complete sentences.
 - a. What language do they speak?
 - b. What is the climate like?
 - c. How do the people dress?
 - d. What continent is this country in?

A Car for You

There are many different kinds of cars.

1. Look in the newspaper at the ads for cars for sale.
2. See how many different kinds of cars are for sale and make a list.
3. Which one would you like to have?

Furniture Fun

Pretend that you are going to buy new furniture for a room in your house or apartment.

1. Choose which room you want to furnish and cut out pictures of the furniture you need from the newspaper.
2. Tape the pictures on a sheet of paper and write the names beneath them.
3. Do you know the names of all the pieces of furniture? If not, ask your friends or teacher.

Buying a Present

1. Pretend you have to buy a present for a family member. Look in the newspaper and cut out a picture or ad of something a family member would like.
2. Answer these questions in complete sentences.
 - a. Who is the present for?
 - b. What is it?
 - c. How much does it cost?
 - d. Where can you buy it?

What Do Babies Need?

1. Babies are so cute. Look in the newspaper and make a list of all the items parents need to take care of their babies.
2. How much does each item cost?

Activity 45

L

Let's Watch T.V.

1. Look at the T.V. timetable in the newspaper.
2. Make a schedule of the programs you would like to watch after you get home from school. Write the following columns on a sheet of paper to make your schedule.

Program

Time

Channel

Activity 46

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Going to the Movies

Look in the entertainment section of the newspaper. Newspapers tell you things you want to know about movies. Which movies would you like to see?

1. Make a list of three (3) movies you would like to see. Put your favorite one first.
2. On a sheet of paper, write as much information under these lists as you can.

Movie

Actors

Theater

Address

Times

Silent “E”

Many words in English end with the letter “e.” This letter at the end of a word has no sound, but the vowel before it becomes the long vowel.

1. Look on the first page of your newspaper. See how many words you can find that end with the silent “e.” Circle these in your newspaper.
2. Make a list on your own paper.
Examples: make, vine, lone, mute, these

Consonant Clusters

Many words in English end with consonant clusters. Here are some examples of consonant clusters.

sk risk
st. most
rd. card

lt. belt
ch much
sh cash

1. See how many words ending with these consonant clusters you can find on one (1) page of the newspaper. Circle them.
2. Any others? Circle others if you recognize them.

Blends

Many English words begin with blends. Blends are two (2) consonants together at the beginning of a word.

1. See how many words you can cut out from one (1) page of the newspaper that begin with the following blends:

bl black

dr drink

cl clear

st. stop

sl slow

br break

tr try

gr grow

2. Any others? Cut out others if you recognize them.

More Blends

1. *How many words can you find in the newspaper that begin with the letters sh, th, and ch?*

sh shine

th then

ch chair

- 2 Make a list of the words you find.

Plural Nouns

The plural form occurs only on the noun in English. Regular plurals are formed by adding “s” or “es” to the noun.

1. Look in the newspaper for examples of plural nouns. Place each noun in the proper category.

Example:

“S”
effort - efforts
book - books

“ES”
tax - taxes
glass - glasses

2. Look in your bilingual dictionary to translate new words and to make sure they are nouns.

Present Progressive Tense

Present progressive tense is used to describe one (1) action in the present. It is also used to talk about future action. The verb is formed as follows: be + verb + ing

Examples:

I am reading my book.

She is working at Kmart.

We are studying together tomorrow.

1. Circle as many examples of the present progressive tense as you can find in your newspaper in ten (10) minutes. How many did you find?
2. Write five (5) examples in your notebook.

Future Tense

What will you do tomorrow?

1. Cut five (5) pictures from the newspaper that show action. Pretend you will do these actions tomorrow.
2. Glue each picture to a piece of paper. Write a sentence next to each picture telling what you will do tomorrow.

For example: I will play football tomorrow.

Past Tense

When something already happened, we use the past tense to talk about it. Many past tense verbs end in “ed.”

Examples: worked, stayed, looked

1. Make a list of all the past tense “ed” verbs you can find on one (1) page of the newspaper.
2. Look up the meaning of a verbs you don’t know in your bilingual dictionary.
3. Choose three (3) verbs in the past tense and make up one (1) sentence for each one.

Negative Sentences

To make a negative sentence we often place the word “don’t” or “doesn’t” in front of another verb.

For example: I don’t know. He doesn’t like it.

1. Skim five (5) pages of the newspaper. Circle all the examples of negative sentences using “don’t” and “doesn’t.”
2. How many could you find?

Past Participles

Some examples of past participles are: Started, worked, given, and done. You can recognize them because they follow the helping verb “have” or “has.”

Examples: He has worked there. We have done a lot.

1. Find a minimum of five (5) sentences in the newspaper that have past participles in them.
2. Write these examples in your notebook.

Object Pronouns

Object pronouns follow verbs and tell us to whom something was said or given. The object pronouns in English are: me, him, her, it, us, you, them.

Here are some examples of object pronouns in sentences.

John gave me the money.

Sandra taught us to swim.

1. Circle all the object pronouns you can find on one (1) page of the newspaper.
2. Copy five (5) complete sentences into your notebook.
3. Now write three (3) sentences of your own using object pronouns.

Reflexive Pronouns

When an object pronoun and the subject are the same, the reflexive pronoun is formed by adding “self.” Here are the reflexive pronouns: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

Here is an example of a sentence with a reflexive pronoun.

George cut himself with the knife.

1. The reflexive pronoun is used less in English than in Spanish. Can you find any examples of these reflexive pronouns in your newspaper?
2. Write down all the examples you can find after skimming the first section of the newspaper.

Prefixes

Prefixes are placed in front of root words to form a new word.

Examples: anti- antibiotic
 con- container
 sub- submarine
 super- supermarket

1. See if you can find other examples of words that have these prefixes in the first ten (10) pages of the newspaper. Circle the words you find.
2. Be sure to look up their meanings in your bilingual dictionary.

Homophones

Homophones are words that are pronounced alike but spelled differently and have different meanings.

Examples: eight/ate blew/blue
 bare/bear flour/flower

1. Look through five (5) pages of the newspaper. Try to find words that sound like other words you have heard. List at least eight (8) pairs.
2. Look in your dictionary, or ask your friends or teacher to help you spell the homophone for each word you think has one.

More Prefixes

The prefixes “un,” “dis,” and “in” precede adjectives, participles, and verbs, and usually mean not or the opposite of.

Examples: unhappy unafraid
 disobey dislike
 incorrect

1. Circle ten (10) examples from the newspaper of words beginning with the prefixes “un,” “dis,” or “in.”
2. Can you find other words in the newspaper which can be used to form a new word if you added one of these prefixes? List three (3) examples.

Suffixes

Nouns may be formed by adding the suffix “ness” to certain adjectives. The suffix “ness” means having particular qualities.

Examples: sickness neatness
 thankfulness happiness

1. Can you find five (5) examples of nouns in the newspaper that end in “ness”? Write them in your notebook.
2. Choose three (3) other nouns to which you can add “ness” to make a word. Look these up in the bilingual dictionary to see if you are correct.

More Suffixes

Adjectives may be formed by adding the suffixes “ful” or “less” to certain nouns and certain verbs. The suffix “ful” means having or giving certain qualities. The suffix “less” means being without certain qualities. Some words can occur with either suffix. Some words can occur with only one (1).

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Examples:</i> | <u>Words that take either</u> | <u>Words that take only one</u> |
| | helpful - helpless | heartless |
| | careful - careless | boastful |
| | thankful - thankless | countless |
| | | beautiful |

1. Look through one (1) section of the newspaper and circle all the adjectives that end in “ful” or “less.”
2. Copy ten (10) of these words into your notebook.
3. Choose five (5) words and make up a sentence for each one.

Suffixes Again!

Many adverbs are formed by adding the suffix “ly” to adjectives.

Examples: rapidly, happily, carefully, busily

1. Find ten (10) examples of “ly” adverbs on three (3) pages of the newspaper and circle them.
2. Copy the sentence in which each example appears. Look up any unknown words in your bilingual dictionary.

Brand Names

What is a brand name? It is a company name that is printed on all its products.

Some examples of brand names are: Kleenex, Sony, IBM.

Can you find some brands of these products advertised in the newspaper? Write them.

| <i>Examples: Products</i> | <i>Brand Names</i> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| televisions | Sony |
| computers | _____ |
| shoes | _____ |
| refrigerators | _____ |
| radios | _____ |

Store Names

Look at the ads in the newspaper.

1. Write the names of five (5) stores not too far from where you live.
2. Tell what kind of store each one is. Arrange your list as follows:

| <i>Kind of Store</i> | <i>Name</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| department store | Sears |
| hardware store | ACE Hardware |

Cartoon Fun

1. Do you like comics? Look in the comics section of the newspaper and cut out your favorite funny (cartoon, comic).
2. Cross out the words in print and make up your own story about what you think the cartoon characters are saying to each other.

Headlines in the News

Look at the headlines of several news articles. Write one (1) headline for each type of article:

1. a disaster
2. an international event
3. a local interest story
4. a sports story

Names in the News

1. Make a list of five (5) famous men and five (5) famous women whose names are in the news.
2. Next to each name tell why this person is in the news.

A Job for You

1. Look in the employment section of the classified ads.
2. Write a short letter of application for a job you would really like to have. You can fantasize about your qualifications!

News Around the World

1. List as many countries as you can that appear in the news. Work on this task for ten (10) minutes.
2. Name the language or languages spoken in each country.
3. What are the inhabitants of each country called?

Countries and Continents

1. On a sheet of paper, place as many countries named in the news under the names of the continents they are in:

Africa

North America

South America

Europe

Asia

2. What are the inhabitants of each continent called?

Bargain Hunting

People like to save money.

1. Look in the advertisements of the newspaper. See if you can find items that are on sale or free.
2. On a sheet of paper, make a list of these items, the price, and the stores where they are sold. Then tell the class where to get them.

| Item | Price | Store |
|------|-------|-------|
|------|-------|-------|