

Bethany Cagnol's Activity Checklist¹

- Activities will always have a different effect on your teaching, syllabus, and most importantly, the students each time you administer it.
- Try to ensure that the activity will have a beneficial effect by including meaningful skills / abilities / knowledge.
- Activities should be as similar as possible to the real world communicative use of language.
- Activities should be practicable – does it require special equipment or special conditions?
- Activities need to be believable (even the ones that are not based on true facts).
- Activities need to stir your emotions and your students' emotions.
- Always pilot an activity: your students will identify ambiguities where the designer only saw one possible interpretation. Always try the activity out on colleagues (e.g. swap shops).
- Try to foresee and be open to all possible outcomes (piloting tends to reveal this).
- Define the criteria for marking if you must include this. Will you be marking the students on their participation? Fluency? Grammar (not recommended for “free-speak” activities). Be very clear about this at the beginning.
- Instructions should be clear, precise, and simple (especially if you want to share it with other teachers). If instructions have to be complex, or long, it is better to give them in the students' native language.
- Since language is used in context for a purpose, avoid decontextualized exercises.
- If culture is an element, be aware of cultural taboos or silly stereotype activities.
- Speaking activities should be seen in a humanistic light with activities written and administered so as to minimize anxiety on the part of the student.

¹ List is an adaption of Peter Strutt's (1999) Test Writing Checklist.

Recommended reading (*) and References

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Cagnol (2008)

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Business Purpose Activities from Scratch: Better than the same ol' thing
IATEFL BESIG 2008

MAYMONT ROLE PLAY – AN AMERICAN SCANDEL – Cagnol (2008)

Successfully piloted on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Comfortable” pre-intermediates > advanced classes• Multi-level classes• Doctors, lawyers, actors, scientists, university students, managers, linguists, politicians.	Number of students: 6 - 100 Great for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ice breaker• If you need something to mark participation• End of the year fun
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On February 18th, a mother and her boy visited the Maymont wildlife center in Richmond Virginia. Around 3pm, they were sharing an apple in front of the 2-acre bear habitat. Shortly after, the boy was witnessed climbing into the bear sanctuary to get closer. He climbed over the wooden 4-foot barrier and approached the second barrier, a 10-foot chain-link fence. The boy put his hand through the fence and he was bitten by the bear. The boy was taken to St. Mary’s Hospital where Doctors treated his wound with stitches.

Later, the Virginia Department of Health, the VA Dpt of Agriculture, the Dpt of Game, all met to discuss the fate of the two bears. The officials decided to euthanize the bears since there is no rabies test that can be administered to live animals. There was public outcry after the bears were put down.

Many people are outraged because the two bears were like “the children of the community.” The press has covered the story day and night for the past several weeks.

You are the boy’s mother. When you were visiting Maymont that day, you turned your head for a few seconds. Before you knew it, your child was inside the bear sanctuary. The bear was not acting in an aggressive way. You jumped into the sanctuary and grabbed your boy. You saw that he was bleeding so you took him to the hospital right away. At the hospital, you don’t remember anyone mention “rabies.”

You have just learned that the bears have been killed. You didn’t know the park was going to kill them. Suddenly everyone is angry at you! The public, the officials, the press! But it wasn’t your fault! It was an accident! You are not an unfit mother! You may threaten to sue the park and the department of health!

You are the spokesperson the Department of Health. You were part of the team that decide to euthanize the bears. You see that people are demanding justice. Your phone has been ringing off the hook. You feel that there was nothing they could do. In a situation of security such as this, you had no choice but to put down the bears. You had to go with what was best for the general public.

You are very angry at the mother for her negligence, but you feel that it is now the park’s responsibility to pay for security around the bear sanctuary. A 4-foot wooden fence and a chain-link fence just isn’t enough! Suggest ways to improve the security of the bear sanctuary, but also be ready to convince the park director to pay for it. You also don’t like the mayor because he recently cut funding for the park.

You are the Director of the Maymont Wildlife Center in Richmond Virginia. You have decided to organize this meeting with the boy’s mother and other officials to discuss the incident. You have heard a rumor that the boy’s mother may threaten to sue the park, so you would like to avoid this at all costs.

You have to **keep the peace** during this meeting. Defend the park’s actions. Your job is to keep the meeting polite and professional. You have to keep your own anger at the mother at a minimum. After all, you slightly feel she is the major reason why your biggest attractions at the Wild Life Center are now dead.

You are a journalist from the Richmond Times Dispatch. You are investigating the incident and you also heard a rumor that the center faces a lawsuit. At the moment, the lawsuit is only a rumor, but you are there to get the real story. Your boss at the Newspaper has asked you to try to create tension in the meeting to see if in the end, a lawsuit occurs. Now, that’s news. Ask questions to those present to **get the real story**. You should be suspicious of everyone.

You are the mayor of Richmond. You are infuriated at the boy’s mother. These bears were a symbol of the community. You place the blame on the boy’s mother for this incident. The public is outraged and they have been sending you thousands of letters to do something. You felt it was your duty to call for an investigation into the incident and into whether the mother was negligent. You are the representative of the community, after all. However, you recently lowered taxes, which resulted in a cut in funding for the park. You may have to defend your actions. You have to find a way to please the public – besides, you have to put on a good face for your next election.

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Specific Purposes English Activities from Scratch: better than the same ol' thing

IATEFL BESIG 2008

Bethany Cagnol

Charity: Altruism or Business Promotion? – Bethany Cagnol (2006) – bethany@cagnol.com

Two to six hours

Target Audience: B1-C2 general or business English students

Reading: Financial donations = Business Promotion

Grammar: Present perfect

Role-Play: Disaster preparedness

Task: Designing a disaster relief - financial / marketing plan

-Brainstorming for ideas

-Expressing opinions

-Presenting an action plan

-Writing a professional letter

1) Using the article: underline

-Companies and types of companies that donated money

-Companies and types of companies that have donated goods and/or services.

-Reasons for companies to make charitable contributions.

2) Optional Grammar Work: Present Perfect

We often use the present perfect to announce *recent* news.

-Many companies *have donated* money to the victims of Hurricane Katrina

-Wal-mart *has recently* expanded its interests outside the Gulf Coast region.

The present perfect is used a lot in the article. This is because Hurricane Katrina and the aid being given by companies were *recent* events at the time it was written. Underline all the 20 examples of the present perfect in the article. The first two have been done for you.

3) Optional Reporting and Grammar Practice:

-Now, answer question 1 using the *present perfect*.

4) Optional phrases:

Use the following Key Phrases and the present perfect to perform the following role-play below.

Key Phrases

What have you done so far?

Have you...?

Have you thought about...

Agreeing

You're absolutely right.

Yes, I completely agree.

Suggesting

Maybe we should...

Why don't we....

Needs

We're going to need...

It's imperative that we...

It's fundamental that we...

Business Altruism Task

-Three days ago, a major natural disaster hit your region. Choose one or more of the following:

-Earthquake

-Tornado

-Volcanic Eruption

- Mudslide

-Other?

-Tsunami

-Hurricane

-Flooding

-Forest Fire

-As a group, describe the extent of the damage, death count, and a financial estimate of the destruction the region suffered.

-In groups or as individuals, you are to represent a company of your choice that has decided to help with disaster relief.

-Decide how much money and which of the company's goods will be donated.

-Decide how the goods will be used for disaster relief

-Decide if you will offer help purely out of altruism, or to promote the company, or both.

-Present your disaster relief plan to the group.

Optional writing task:

Write a letter to the director of the Business Roundtable summarizing your plan of action. Be sure you mention whether or not you decide to use the donation to boost the company's image. This information will help the BR team know if the donation should be announced as anonymous, or not.

Optional Discussion:

Do you agree with Patricia Lewis who said that, "Donations' are an investment in a company's future. How a business conducts itself today will leave an inefaceable mark on that business's reputation." Or do you find this way of thinking "insensitive or opportunistic"?