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Roll Call as Warm-Up

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# Introducing Authentic Audiences Into the Writing Classroom

Ray Wallace, University of Tennessee

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In ESL writing classes, we attempt to help our students come to understand more about their own composing processes; we aid them in their struggle to write informatively by guiding them through the writing process: from invention to final written product. We instruct our students in how to use various inventions heuristics to develop ideas on the topics they have chosen to write on. We demonstrate the uses of numerous rhetorical strategies. We discuss revision techniques to clarify written messages. Finally, we show our students how editing will enhance communicative effectiveness.

Yet, with all this guidance, still one of the most difficult aspects of the composing process for ESL students to acquire is the whole complex idea of audience. Many students write clean, but "antiseptic," prose containing no message that a realistic audience could be informed, persuaded, or entertained by. Too often students view their writing instructor as the only audience that will actually read their messages, and, since this instructor grades these written attempts, he/she is more of an evaluator than a realistic reader. What is missing in many of these students' communication attempts is this authentic audience; a reader, or community of readers, who can realistically benefit in some way from the message the writer has tried to communicate.

To instill more audience-awareness in my students, I have designed four writing

assignments that place these students in communicative situations where they must write to authentic audiences.

## Pen Pal Letters

The most obvious teaching approach to use in instilling a more concrete sense of audience in ESL students is to allow them to write to a peer reader. In the past I have worked with other ESL instructors to develop pen pal lists.

Each student selects one name from the list of available ESL pen pals; the student is required to pick someone he/she has never met before, and, preferably, someone from a different culture. The writer writes two one-page letters a week to this pen pal.

In the first letter, the writers are asked to discuss what they learned in a class (other than the writing course) that week. In this letter the students practice explaining complex academic terms to an uninformed audience. The writers learn that they must explain key concepts clearly before the audience will understand the subject matter contained in the letter. In the other letter, the writers are asked to write a more personal message. This letter allows the writers to communicate to the same audiences but for a different purpose; this time to entertain or inform.

In both types of letters, the reader plays an active role. Not only must this

audience verify that the writer is communicating the purpose set up in the rhetorical situation, but the reader must also respond with questions about those sections of the first written attempt that are insufficiently detailed to be considered informative. These questions must be written in letter form back to the initial writer. In this way, the reader and writer begin to understand that the effective communication act requires two active participants.

### Letters to the Editor

Another assignment to help ESL students understand the importance of audience constraints is to have them write letters to an editor in response to an article they have recently read.

To begin this assignment, I ask my students to keep a response journal; a notebook with one-page responses to articles they have read in English language periodicals (usually current events magazines and newspapers). I ask the students to give the full bibliographic information, to briefly outline the author's views, and, in more detail, to discuss their responses to the author's views.

After two weeks, I collect these journals and search for the entry that demonstrates the most negative reaction to another writer's opinion. I then ask the ESL students to write a letter to the editor of the publication which printed the offending article. In these letters the students must explain why they found the original article offensive, incorrect, or one-sided in its discussion of the event.

I then pass these letters to "intermediate editors" in a native writing class (usually

Advanced Composition). Since I teach writing classes for both native and non-native speakers of English, I usually assign my own advanced native writing classes to take part in this exchange of writing. (When I do not have both types of classes, one of my colleagues who teaches writing to native speakers is always glad to "lend" me students.) These native students then respond to the letter after reading the offending article. These "editors" comment on places where the ESL student has misread or misunderstood the language used in the initial article, and defend the original author's piece by pointing to unclear, illogical, or badly organized writing on the part of the offended reader (the ESL writer). The native students' written comments are then returned with the letters to the ESL students for revision. Only when a thorough revision of this letter to the editor is completed and approved by the "intermediate editor" is it allowed to be sent to the actual editor.

### Written Evaluations

Yet another way of getting these students to understand that there are real audiences out there that want to hear ESL students' opinions on matters that both can benefit from, is to have the students write evaluations of their tutorial staff and the materials used to teach them English.

First, I ask the ESL students to write a mid-term evaluation of their academic tutors. These support staff, located in the Writing Center, the Reading Center, the Study Skills Center, or the Language Lab, help my students individually with their various linguistic problems. I ask the students to discuss how they feel about

what they have been doing during their visits to the instructional center, state what they like about their tutoring sessions, and, more importantly, what they do not like in these one-on-one tutoring sessions.

These evaluations are then sent to the directors of the tutoring centers involved. After the directors have read through the evaluations (this type of feedback is usually well-received), the tutors then read the evaluations and respond in writing to the ESL students. Often these mid-term evaluations are helpful in further explaining the reasons why a certain tutoring strategy is used, in reminding the tutors that they are dealing with students from other cultures, and in reinforcing motivation for both tutor and tutee. The ESL evaluator is sent a letter explaining, in greater detail, the rationale for the strategies used to tutor him/her. The process is repeated towards the end of the academic term.

Students are asked to write one other type of evaluation letter—to the author of their composition text. Here the students write about what they like and dislike about the textbook they are using in their writing course. In particular, the students are encouraged to ask questions about the importance or relevance of any section of the book. Then these letters are turned over to my advanced TESOL Methodology course, and the students in this course (future ESOL teachers role-playing the part of the textbook author) are asked to write a letter back to the ESL students, answering all their questions and asking new questions concerning the student's composing processes. The ESL students then gain a clearer picture of the goals of their textbook, and are forced to think how

to communicate information about how they write to an interested audience.

### Cross-Cultural Written Discussions

In this assignment, I ask my ESL students to write an essay about one aspect of American culture that they dislike, and explain how it differs from their own culture. This is a topic my ESL students have little trouble writing on, but most of the finished papers are overly emotional and poorly thought out. These papers are then given to a class of American freshmen. In turn, these students write a response paper to my ESL students, explaining why this aspect of American culture is the way it is. Most American freshmen become defensive when their culture is "attacked" and this defensiveness will appear in their written responses to the ESL writers. The American writers will point out weaknesses in the non-native writing style, as well as point out inconsistencies and generalizations in the argument.

I return the original papers with the American responses to the ESL students and ask for a revision. In this revised paper, the ESL student must compare and contrast both customs; this time the audience is another ESL student, who knows neither custom. In this assignment the ESL student gains valuable experience communicating information to two different audiences.

### Conclusion

These four assignments are designed to convince my intermediate to advanced level students that there are authentic audiences that want to read their opinions

on issues. Of course, the assignments can be modified for other ESL levels.

I have found all four assignments successful. After completing these tasks, my students now begin many of their later assignments by deciding who can best benefit from the knowledge they wish to communicate on a particular issue, and many of these students realize that this audience-choice will have a

considerable effect on the content of their message.

#### About the Author

*Ray Wallace received his D.A. degree from Illinois State University. He has taught native/non-native writing courses in Illinois, Hawaii, and Tennessee. He is currently an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.*

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## Conference Announcements

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The twenty-third annual convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) will be held at the San Antonio Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas March 6-11, 1989. Proposals for papers, demonstrations, workshops, and colloquia are due July 1, 1988. Contact: Richard Orem, Convention Chair, TESOL '89, TESOL Central Office, 1118 22nd Street, NW Suite 205, Washington, D. C. 20037.

The fourth Caribbean Regional TESOL Conference will be held June 17-19, 1988 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Participating organizations include the Dominican Association of Teachers of English (DATE), Puerto Rico TESOL, Venezuela TESOL, National Association of Teachers of English—Haiti (NATE), and Asociación Colombiana de Profesores de Inglés (ASOCOPI). Contact: Martín Román, Instituto Cultural Dominicano-Americano, Av. Abraham Lincoln No. 21, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) will sponsor the fourteenth JALT International Conference on Language Teaching/Learning at the International Conference Center, Kobe on October 8-10, 1988. Proposals for papers, demonstrations, workshops, or colloquia relevant to the teaching/learning of foreign languages are warmly welcomed. The deadline for proposal consideration is June 1, 1987. Contact: JALT Central Office, c/o Kyoto English Center, Sumitomo Seimei Bldg. 8F, Shijo Karasuma Nishi-iru, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600. Tel: 81-75-221-2376; Fax: 81-75-231-3767.

ATESOL, the Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, in association with ACTA, the Australian Council of TESOL Associations, announces its 6th summer school to be held in Sydney, Australia, January 16-20, 1989. The theme is Language and Social Justice. Proposals for lectures and workshops are invited. The deadline is October 1, 1988. Contact: 6th ATESOL Summer School Programming Committee, GPO Box 2200, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia. Fax: (062) 57 3258.

# Affective English

Ruth Wajnryb, University of New South Wales

This lesson is designed as an ice-breaker at the start of a course or as a lesson to be given in the early days of a new course. With the usual adjustments and accommodations, it can be used with all levels from upper elementary onwards. It works equally well with EFL and ESL learners.

The lesson relies heavily on the emotive power of visual resources. The focus is on language learning in general and English in particular. ("English" can be adjusted in the case of another target language). The purpose is to have students "open up" about their feelings on what it's like learning English (and related matters). Sometimes it is only by being compelled to consider and talk about these issues that students discover what they really feel! As well, they usually find out that many of their own responses (which they may have thought were weird and worrisome) are indeed usual, quite normal and shared by their fellow students.

## Preparation

The teacher will require a large collection of magazine cut-outs—at least 50 pictures. Half of these should be chosen because you yourself see a connection with language learning. The others should be chosen at random. Include quite a few that are open-ended and suggestive.

## Procedure

1. Brainstorm "English"—write it on the board and then "collect" onto the board in random fashion all the words that the class associates with "English".

2. Lay the visuals out leisurely and expansively on the floor and allow students to watch the process.

3. Relax the students. Have them close their eyes. Ask them to think about being in the English language classroom, learning English. How does it feel? What emotions can they put a label to? Allow for "quiet time."

Then at your signal, they are to come out and have a close look at the pictures laid out on the floor. They should leisurely choose one that somehow "speaks" to them about what it's like learning English. (Some examples may serve here: one student of mine chose a picture of a farmer gazing at his crop because he said he saw "English" as the harvest at the end of his efforts; another chose a picture of a person peeping out from behind a window because he said he felt his weak English made him an observer of life rather than a participant; another said she chose a picture of a child's drawing because she felt learning a language was infantile).

After they have selected their picture, they should share their choice and their thoughts with another student, and then another, etc., (never having groups bigger than three; small groups reduce the potential for threat and allow for intimacy).

4. Conduct an informal feed-back session. Possibly as a result of the feed-back, have them sit in like-minded groups (or set up another seating criterion).

5. Hand out the task sheet (see Fig 1) to the students seated in groups. (As an

alternative to one long single sheet, it could be cut up into single statements and stapled together into booklets). Before filling it in with their own personal responses, they should "group read" it - i.e. checking comprehension with their fellow students.

6. After completing the statements, students should "mix and mingle", sharing their responses with people they themselves choose.

The teacher's role is to facilitate the activity and help out with any language items that are needed. Sometimes certain responses from learners elicit the teacher's spontaneous reaction (see Figure 2 for some samples of "affective English").

Note: This lesson owes a lot to Mario Rinvoluceri for inspiration and approach.

## LEARNING ENGLISH

### TASK SHEET

1. Learning English is like \_\_\_\_\_
2. When I learn English I feel \_\_\_\_\_
3. The thing that most bothers me about learning English is \_\_\_\_\_
4. When I'm with native speakers of English I \_\_\_\_\_
5. My English lets me down whenever I \_\_\_\_\_
6. The thing I most like about English is \_\_\_\_\_
7. The thing I most dislike about English is \_\_\_\_\_
8. If I could, the thing I'd change about English is \_\_\_\_\_
9. I wish native speakers of English would \_\_\_\_\_
10. In English I wish I could \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 1. Task Sheet

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Learning English is like...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—start a new life</li> <li>—how to learn the music</li> <li>—climbing mountains—very interesting journey, need hard work though</li> <li>—like a child</li> <li>—like jumping to the side of the world</li> <li>—like being born again</li> <li>—like scratching on rock</li> </ul> <p>4. When I'm with native speakers of English I...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—feel very uncomfortable because is like when somebody shut the door to me</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—feel difficult and worry</li> <li>—feel confused in using what I know about English language</li> <li>—feel that I am afraid from understanding many words</li> <li>—always make incorrect English structure</li> </ul> <p>9. I wish native speakers would...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—have experience like us</li> <li>—be more patient</li> <li>—talk to me because I have no contact with people</li> <li>—be easy to me</li> <li>—understand us</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Figure 2. "Affective English"—Some Samples



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# British and American English in the Classroom in Cairo and in Kuwait

Nancy Salama, American University in Cairo

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Teachers of ESL/EFL abroad are very quickly faced with the fact that there are two major varieties of English being used worldwide. In any particular location there is usually a strong preference for either British English or for American English.

The community consensus as to which variety is better is often solidified and perpetuated in Ministry of Education policies implemented through choice of textbooks and set exams. This dichotomy of preference does not reflect the real world of usage. Both varieties are used internationally and both varieties should be respected.

ESL/EFL teachers can contribute to this objective by noting British and American English differences objectively in the classroom so often that students become aware of them and accept them with equanimity. This procedure should eliminate students' emotional attachments to one variety or the other for quite unscientific reasons. In the course of daily teaching, good ESL/EFL teachers should show that they not only tolerate the differences, but indeed, enjoy knowing them and talking about them.

Before teachers can attain this level of performance, they must learn where in the broad common core of English they occur, master the details of the specific differences, and then not be afraid to deal with them as they are relevant day-by-day. Only if teachers can do this can they meet

international English language students' needs adequately.

## Tolerate and Enjoy the Differences

Generally, students of English want to know both varieties—British and American. Their curiosity can be satisfied and increased by alert, informed English language teachers. An attitude of tolerance instead of intolerance, interest instead of indifference, and excitement instead of complacency can result from enlightened guidance into the not so mysterious world of American and British English differences.

Although the British and Americans do share "one common language," the variations are obvious enough to create communication complications even for native English speakers who mix in the international realm. The more aware people are of the differences, the more they like to talk about them and generally enjoy them. So why not share this pleasure with English language students?

I feel that it is almost deceitful not to tell students about the differences as specific relevant cases arise in the classroom. If, however, a teacher does not know the differences, knows only a few of the differences, or simply does not care about the differences, no relevant examples will arise in the classroom. Ignorance will obviate any such opportunity.

### Learn the Differences

The best way to learn the major recurring differences between British and American English would probably be to live for an extended period in the United States and in England and to study in each country so as to absorb the standard form of each variety from an environment of educated native speakers. The second-best way might be to surround oneself with a bevy of native Americans and native Englishmen/women who are language conscious and who enjoy sharing linguistic observations.

Unfortunately, the first and best way is expensive and time-consuming. The second-best way is not always possible and is also time-consuming. Also, the results of these two ways will be uneven and quite unreliable unless the learner approaches his/her quest very systematically and devotes almost full time to it.

Fortunately, British and American English language usage differences have been the focus of scholars from the beginning of the rebellion of the Colonies, so teachers can avail themselves of sundry commentaries and several studies on the topic. Such commentaries and studies are not always systematic, easily accessible, or comprehensive, but they help.

Of course, every English language teacher should have a good American dictionary and a good British dictionary to refer to constantly. However, dictionary searches can be time-consuming and very frustrating. Not all terms can be found. Also, even when a usage label (Am. or Br.) is given, the researcher invariably

comes up with many other related questions which cannot be answered in the typical restrictive dictionary format.

Thwarted in our desire to learn the many differences in the best way, by living and studying for a long time in both the United States and in England, one of my British colleagues, Mary Ghali, and I concentrated our efforts on existing studies, research into native speaker usage, and exploitation of American and British friends.

The results are presented in *American and British English Preferences: Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, Prepositions, and Vocabulary*, which employs a consistent two-column format, with blanks to show which items do not commonly occur in the other variety, with different related items grouped together, and with +'s to indicate preferences whenever detectable. Our hope is that we have produced an attainable, comprehensive reference so that busy English language teachers can and will look up terms or constructions which they and their students wonder about as they proceed through their textbooks and through their daily school work.

The worst way to deal with British and American English differences is to guess about the facts. If you do not know, do not guess. Try to find out what the facts are. "Look it up"—just as you expect your students to look things up. The rewards will more than justify the effort, both for you, the teacher, and for your students.

### Mention and Deal with the Differences

Armed with a rather extensive knowledge of the differences after more

than ten years of focusing on this phenomenon, I found that occasions to mention differences popped up in almost every class I taught and almost every day. To test myself to be sure that I was not creating the situations, I wrote down every incident when I told my students about a British-American difference in my classes from spring through fall, 1982. The spring semester I was at the English Language Institute of the American University in Cairo and the fall semester I was at the English Language Centre of Kuwait University. I suspect that English teachers around the world might come up with very similar lists if they were to keep a record.

The following items are listed in about the same order they occurred in the classroom to try to convey the actual sequence over time within ordinary teaching situations, rather than according to linguistic or skill classifications, which

are much neater than actual occurrences. As an American, I noticed the differences readily because of the British English background of the students, and the differences were even more striking when using British textbooks.

The differences are often much more complex than any American-British two-column equivalent list can reveal. We learned this fact very well as we investigated specific differences to enter into our book. Because of the complexity of the comparisons, we thought it desirable to draw conclusions as to what to teach, based on our analyses. We labeled these conclusions "Advice to the Teacher" (ATT) and included them throughout the Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation sections. We did this to help teachers to decide "what to do" quickly. Often the advice is to "Note both. Accept either." but not always.

### Actual Examples of British and American English Differences Which Arose in the Classroom in Cairo and in Kuwait

Note: These lists are in no way definitive or comprehensive. They merely show some differences which I actually dealt with as I was teaching two different student populations in similar settings in two different countries. Their value is to stimulate beginning and experienced teachers to be alert to differences and to enlighten their students as to British and American English differences.

#### Group I

Where: The American University in Cairo, The English Language Institute

When: Spring, 1982

Description: U.S.A. bound, adult university graduates, British English background, American textbooks.

#### American

1. Do you have a pencil?  
Have you got a pencil?
2. flat tire, -----

#### British

1. -----  
Have you [got] a pencil?
2. flat, tyre, puncture

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3. + <u>shot</u> , injection  | 3. injection, <u>jab</u> (coll.)  |
| 4. soccer<br>football   | 4. soccer, <u>football</u> , <u>Association Football</u><br><u>American football</u>                            |
| 5. student / <u>student</u> /   | 5. student / <u>styudent</u> /  |
| 6. + the older, the elder   | 6. + the elder, the older   |
| 7. <u>Sports</u> are good for us.   | 7. <u>Sport</u> is good for us.   |
| 8. to erase, clean (the blackboard)<br>to erase [pencil]<br>[pencil] eraser   | 8. to erase, clean, <u>rub</u> [words] <u>out</u><br>to erase, <u>rub out</u><br>[India] <u>rubber</u> , eraser |
| 9. <u>Did</u> you <u>use</u> to smoke?<br>-----   | 9. <u>Did</u> you <u>use</u> to smoke?<br><u>Used</u> you <u>to</u> smoke?                                      |
| 10. billion   | 10. milliard, a thousand million  |
| 11. <u>Let's not</u> do it<br>-----<br><u>Let's don't</u> do it. (non-standard)   | 11. + <u>Let's not</u> do it.<br><u>Don't let's</u> do it.<br>-----   |
| 12. caboose   | 12. brake-van   |
| 13. to + <u>pass</u> /overtake  | 13. to overtake   |
| 14. <u>phonograph</u> , + record player   | 14. + record player, <u>pick-up</u> , <u>gramophone</u>   |
| 15. The <u>group is</u> helping.  | 15. The <u>group are</u>  |
| 16. streetcar, trolley  | 16. tram  |
| 17. time is up / -----  | 17. time is up/ <u>over</u>   |
| 18. assignment (work, <u>school</u> , <u>univ.</u> )<br>homework (school or univ.)<br><br>to <u>assign</u> /give homework | 18. assignment (work)<br>homework (school)<br>work (university)<br>to --- / give [ <u>a</u> ] homework          |
| 19. Handwriting:<br><u>ℓ</u> (I)  | 19. Handwriting<br><u>I</u> , <u>ℓ</u> , <u>g</u>   |
| 20. on April 10   | 20. on April <u>the</u> 10th  |
| 21. on TV   | 21. on <u>the</u> TV  |
| 22. to put a clock <u>ahead</u>   | 22. to put a clock <u>forward/on</u>  |
| 23. Hello, ---, ---   | 23. Hello, <u>Hullo</u> , <u>Hallo</u>  |
| 24. in/--- a village  | 24. in/ <u>at</u> a village   |

Key to symbols: ( ) = explanation, [ ] = optional, + = preferred, ----- = doesn't occur,  
underlined = point of difference

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>25. <u>draft</u>, conscription,<br/>-----<br/>draftee<br/>to draft</p> <p>26. + <u>faucet</u>, tap, <u>spigot</u></p> <p>27. exclamation <u>point</u></p> <p>28. at home, <u>home</u></p> <p>29. <u>a tube</u> of lipstick</p> <p>30. to make a decision</p> | <p>25. -----, conscription<br/>national service<br/>cónscript, n.<br/>to conscript, v.</p> <p>26. tap</p> <p>27. exclamation <u>mark</u></p> <p>28. at home, -----</p> <p>29. <u>a</u> lipstick</p> <p>30. to make/<u>take</u> a decision</p> |
|---|---|

**Group II**

Where: Kuwait University English Language Centre, Faculty of Commerce Unit

When: Fall, 1982

Description: Adult university undergraduates, British English background,  
British textbooks

**American**

1. The School of Commerce
2. science, engineering
3. 7:15 a.m., -----
4. spring, fall
5. to erase (pencil)  
dust rag/cloth (for dust only)  
[blackboard] eraser
6. tonight, -----
7. distributor, dealer
8. parentheses ( )  
brackets [ ]
9. Hello, -----, -----
10. the United States, n.  
-----
11. period
12. "January \_\_\_ first"
13. on television/TV, ----  
to watch TV

**British**

1. The Faculty of Commerce
2. Science, Engineering
3. 7:15 a.m., 7.15 a.m.
4. Spring, Fall
5. to erase, rub out  
duster  
[blackboard] rubber, duster  
(if a piece of cloth)
6. tonight, to-night
7. dealer, distributor. stockist
8. [round] brackets, parentheses ( )  
square brackets [ ]
9. Hello, Hullo, Hallo
10. the United States, n.  
---- United States, n.
11. full stop
12. "January the first"
13. on television/TV, on the TV  
to watch [the] TV

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 14. December 15, 1982  | 14. December 15, 1982  |
| 15. November 10, 1980  | 15. November 10 <sup>th</sup> [ , ] 1980   |
| 16. <u>Do you have</u> time to stay today?<br>Have you <u>got</u> time to stay today?                                      | 16. -----<br><u>Have you [got]</u> time to stay today?   |
| 17. He <u>doesn't have</u> a pencil, <u>does</u> he?<br>He <u>hasn't got</u> a pencil,<br><u>has</u> he? / <u>does</u> he? | 17. -----<br>He <u>hasn't [got]</u> a pencil,<br><u>has</u> he? / -----  |
| 18. on vacation  | 18. on holiday   |
| 19. You're welcome.  | 19. Don't mention it.  |
| 20. He's <u>vomiting</u> .   | 20. He's <u>being sick</u> .   |
| 21. Mrs., Mr.  | 21. Mrs., Mr.  |
| 22. Address Punctuation:<br>Hotel Atlas<br>3 Via Rasella<br>Rome<br>Italy  | 22. Address Punctuation:<br>Hotel Atlas,<br>3, Via Rasella,<br>Rome,<br>Italy.   |
| 23. +I <u>didn't have</u> time to do it.<br>I <u>had no</u> time to do it.<br>-----<br>-----                               | 23. + I <u>didn't have</u> time to do it.<br>I <u>had no</u> time to do it.<br>I <u>hadn't</u> time to do it.<br>I <u>hadn't got</u> time to do it. (rare) |
| 24. Could you please help me?<br><u>Surely</u> .   | 24. Could you please help me?<br><u>Of course. With pleasure.</u>  |
| 25. instruction<br>tuition [fees]  | 25. instruction, <u>tuition</u><br>tuition fees  |
| 26. apartment<br>apartment building/house  | 26. flat<br>block of flats   |
| 27. Handwriting:<br><i>l, I, J, f</i>  | 27. Handwriting:<br><i>I, I, 9; G; J, j; f</i>   |
| 28. spelling lists:<br>1. international<br>2. suitable<br>3. England   | 28. spelling lists:<br>1. <u>I</u> nternational<br>2. <u>S</u> uitable<br>3. <u>E</u> ngland<br><br>or<br>1. INTERNATIONAL<br>2. SUITABLE<br>3. ENGLAND    |

29. high/secondary school  
(ages 14-18)

30. marking system:  
check (✓)  
correct (no mark)  
wrong (✓)

29. secondary [modern]/grammar/  
comprehensive school  
(different types of schools,  
ages 11-16 or 18)

30. marking system:  
tick (✓)  
correct (✓)  
wrong (X)

### Conclusion

There is no intrinsic value in the items presented in the above lists and many are not as complete as they could be. The lists only prove that over time and in different settings British and American English differences will occur frequently if the teacher is aware of them and competent to explain the facts to the students. My two lists of thirty items suggest that a difference would arise at least once every other day in a twelve-week term. The fact that vocabulary items dominated the list for Group I was a result of the oral-aural objectives, whereas the writing objectives for Group II gave rise to more spelling and punctuation differences. Notice that some of the very same points arose in both groups. "Have" differences are so complex that we had to devote thirty pages to that verb alone in our book. No doubt other teachers have dealt with some of these same differences in their classrooms. If not, one must wonder, "Why not?"

My American English background contrasted with the British English background of the students in both groups may account for my sensitivity to the differences (plus, of course, my deep interest in this phenomenon). But I am suggesting that all English language teachers can and should increase their

knowledge of the exact differences and that they should share that knowledge with their students. My experience has only been in the Middle East where there is a strong heritage of British influence. It is possible that in traditionally American influenced areas, such as Latin America, the differences would be less relevant. But then too, it would seem to me that the fact that these differences exist in the dominant core of "international English" would lead teachers and students to want to know about them.

Teachers functioning in systems where a local Ministry of Education dictates whether to follow British or American usage may consider my suggestion to teach both varieties wishful thinking. Maybe. But with the mobile populations of the 1980's, the shrinking of the world through rapid transportation, and the abundance of multi-national companies using international English, any system claiming to teach students English should develop an attitude of respect for both major varieties as part of the students' general education. Such an attitude can result from repeated objective attention to differences as they arise spontaneously and are related to the English lesson in hand. Modern students' needs are greater than for just one prestigious variety of English.

Some students may ask "Which is better, British or American English?" Others may even insist that one is better. But with a teacher showing constant respect for both varieties and objectively dealing with differences day-after-day, student attitudes should evolve toward tolerance, enlightened interest, and even exciting discovery. Some linguists like to accuse teachers of "overemphasizing" the differences even when they merely "mention" them. This is unfair and unjustified in view of the many differences which do exist and which are relevant to almost any classroom situation. I am not asking teachers to play up the differences; neither should they play them down. They should just "play it right," by dealing with differences accurately whenever they are relevant.

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## Roll Call Warm-up

(Continued from page 20)

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learn, intended profession, favorite food, or person you admire most.

### Favorable Results

When I started taking attendance this way students responded favorably. We could make the activity as long or as short as we wanted. Sometimes spontaneous conversation would occur, as when two students realized that they shared the same favorite author. I would often comment on their preferences, joking, for example, that Salifou, who liked to eat, ought to get together with Mariama, who liked to cook.

Soon students were coming to me with suggestions of categories for roll call. Sometimes, in oral presentations, students would refer to information that had surfaced during these sessions. And always, students would ask me to state my response for the category of the day, so there was a two-way exchange between teacher and students.

In addition we got to know one another better and had a good time in doing so, without losing a lot of class time.

(Thanks to John Fanselow, who inspired this article and has written about variations like this in *Breaking Rules*, Longman, 1987.)

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## Roll Call as Warm-Up

Susan Rosenfeld,  
American Cultural Center, Niamey, Niger

Teacher-trainers almost always urge new teachers to begin each class with a warm-up activity, to get the students in an English 'mind-set.' Indeed, several teacher resource books offer lists of topics suitable for warm-up conversations and suggestions of activities that only take 3-5 minutes.

At the same time, school administrators often require teachers to take attendance each class period. Usually this is a passive, boring activity, which does nothing to increase the students' knowledge of English or of each other (they can all see that Moussa Ibrahima is sitting in class).

Here follows a suggestion to combine attendance taking and warm-ups, or, more

accurately, to use attendance-taking as a warm-up.

### Procedure

When the teacher calls the roll, what do the students usually say? Here? Present? Yes? Why limit their response to these few words? Why not choose a category each day and let the students respond with information about themselves in that category?

To start the teacher might say, "Today, when I call your name, do not say 'here; do not say 'present.' Instead, tell me your favorite color." Another day the subject might be favorite author, place you'd most like to visit, language you'd most like to

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