



FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR ESL

Listen, Understand, Speak, Read, Write and Create Language

NFB ESL videos lend themselves easily to activity-oriented teaching and learning. Whole language and cooperative classroom strategies are incorporated so that the language utilization activities are purposeful, meaningful, and fun. Students won't even notice that they are learning vocabulary lists, answering comprehension questions, writing grammatically correct sentences, and reading aloud!

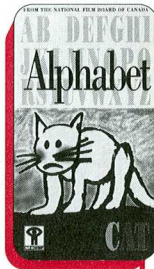
"The activities allow the children to demonstrate their understanding and... develop language acquisition."

— Marina Salhany Walter, ESL Teacher

K-3 Beginner Series Alphabet

What are these things on the screen?

- ① *Name them.* Shout out the object's name while watching the video for the second time.
- ② *List them.* Create a large class-generated list of all of the images in the video.
- ③ *Categorize.* Subdivide the list into categories of animals, foods and things.
- ④ *Name other things* that also belong in these groups.
- ⑤ *Discuss* why these things belong together in a group.
- ⑥ *Cut* the list up to create word "cards." Put four "cards" together where three belong together but one does not. The students have to say which one does not belong and why.
- ⑦ *Draw them.* The students name and draw their own version of one of the images from the video.



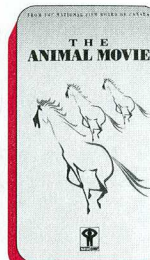
Call 1-800-267-7710 for Sales Information

I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly



- 1 Count the number of things that the old lady really swallowed.
- 2 Name the things that the old lady swallowed.
- 3 How many of these things could she or anyone else really swallow?
- 4 When we swallow, where does it go?
- 5 What sounds can we make when we swallow?
- 6 What's the difference between a gulp and a sip?
- 7 Make a list of how many different kinds of drinks and/or foods we can swallow.
- 8 Bring some of them into class and have a tasting party.
- 9 Students have to name the food item and provide one word to describe its taste.

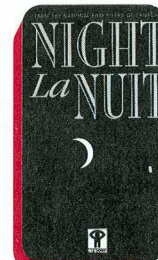
The Animal Movie



- 1 Have students name the animals in the video and provide a word to describe how these animals move.
- 2 Once these words are on a list, cut up the list and play a serious matching game (*match the animal with its movement*), and a silly one (*what would a snake look like if it tried to hop*).
- 3 Play a type of charades where a student has to move like an animal while the other students try to guess what animal is being imitated.
- 4 Have two or three students declare which type of animal's locomotion they will imitate, e.g., snake or rabbit.
- 5 The other students must decide which type of locomotion is faster — slither or hop.
- 6 Students then try it out in a little race to see which animal can reach its destination the fastest.

Night

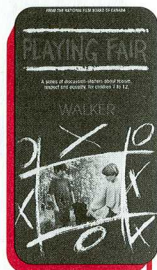
There are many sounds to hear and things to see in this video.



- 1 Divide the class in half.
- 2 One group must listen for the sounds while the other group must watch for the things.
- 3 As they watch the video, students must write the name of the things they see or the types of sounds they hear.
- 4 They may have to watch the video twice in order to list enough items.
- 5 Pair up the students so that each "thing" person is with a "sound" person.
- 6 Give them five minutes to match the items on their lists.
- 7 Reconvene the class and generate a class list of the matches.
- 8 At this point, students from other pairs can try to match words for each other.
- 9 When the class list is finished, watch the video one more time, check off the matches as they are seen and heard on the video. (*You may have to stop and start the video during this activity.*)
- 10 As a noisy finale, point to a "thing" on the list and allow the class to make the noise.

Playing Fair: Walker

Teachers should preview this video before using it in class in order to determine if they are comfortable with its content. The video has a stopping point for discussion relating to the action, plot, and emotions experienced by the characters. This on-screen stopping point is indicated by a black screen.



- 1 Before viewing this video, have students try to define, provide examples of, or express emotions around the following terms: *multiculturalism, racism, prejudice, aboriginal, hurt feelings, fears, friendship, bullying.*
- 2 At the on-screen stopping point, discuss what is happening to the characters in relation to the terms discussed before the viewing.
- 3 As a post-viewing activity, ask the class to generate five questions they would ask if they were interviewing the following people for the local television station:
 - the two boys (*being interviewed separately*), as to how their friendship began;
 - the teenagers, if they were caught by the police and charged with harassment.
- 4 Ask students to volunteer to be the interviewer and interviewees.
- 5 Have them role-play the interview session with a fake microphone.
- 6 If you have access to a video camera, you can have students videotape the interviews and then play them back to the class.

A Sense of Touch



- 1 Before watching the video, have the class generate a list of words describing the feel of things, i.e., soft, hard, wet, dry, fluffy, cold, hot, squishy, sharp, round, square.
- 2 After watching the video, ask students to link an item from the video with one of the descriptive words they generated before the screening.
- 3 Have an opaque bag ready.
- 4 Send one student out of the classroom for a few moments.
- 5 Ask the other students to choose an object to put in the bag.
- 6 When the student returns to the classroom, she/he must put their hand in the bag, describe what they feel using at least four words, and try to guess the object.
- 7 The teacher should have a collection of things, not usually found in a classroom, hidden from class view.
- 8 Put one item in the secret bag.
- 9 One student puts his/her hand in the bag and describes what they feel to the class.
- 10 The rest of the students try to guess what is in the bag from the descriptive language they hear.

The Boy and the Snow Goose

This animated video does not have a verbal soundtrack. Instead, the students must “read” the story using the visual images and the sound effects.



- 1 Have strips of paper — one per student — approximately 15 cm wide by 1 meter long ready for use.
- 2 After viewing the video, ask each student to tell you one thing that happened in the story.
- 3 Write each sentence on a strip of paper and tape it to the board.
- 4 As the students generate the sentences, keep moving the strips around to maintain the chronology of the narrative.
- 5 Number the strips to keep their order and give each student one of the sentences to practice saying aloud.
- 6 In a quiet section of the classroom, take a large table and cover it to the floor with heavy blankets. Under the table put a small chair, a tape recorder on the chair, and a light source.
- 7 Two students at a time enter this mini recording studio: the narrator, who reads their assigned sentence; and the “sound person,” who turns the tape recorder on and off and cues the narrator to begin speaking after a three-second pause.
- 8 The students record their sentences in chronological order, thereby creating their own audiotrack for the video.
- 9 Play back their audiotapes as they watch the video.
- 10 Students will hear themselves telling the story that they are watching on the screen.

Grades 4-6 Intermediate Series

George and Rosemary

- 1 As a homework assignment the night before, have students ask their parents, grandparents, older siblings, aunts or uncles where they met each other's partner.
- 2 The next day, survey the class as to where these first meetings occurred and list them according to the categories that emerge, e.g., *school, work, party, introduced by a friend or family member, house of worship*.
- 3 Screen the video and then discuss why it was difficult for George and Rosemary to actually meet and speak to each other.
- 4 Have on hand a large sheet of brown paper, glue, scissors, and an assortment of magazines.
- 5 Tell students to look through the magazines for pictures that show men and women together.
- 6 Create a class collage that indicates the media's view of where and how it is appropriate for men and women to be together.
- 7 Have the students interpret their collage in a short paragraph and add these around the outer edges of the collage.

