

Nadaný žák ve 21. století

Contemporary English



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Course description: Contemporary English is a professional development course for English language teachers offered at Bell Teacher Campus in Cambridge.

The activities provided here have been inspired by or adapted from activities and materials obtained and practised during the course. They aim at students whose level of English is B1+ and higher but some of them could be modified to suit lower level students as well.

TEACHING TIPS and ANSWER KEY:

1. **PERFECT YOUR PERFECT ENGLISH** (Fun with homophones and homographs):

Language level: advanced students of English (min. B2)

Exercise 1 focuses on some tricky homographs and stress shift (verbs/adjectives vs nouns): at the beginning the teacher should explain or remind students of the position of main stress in some verbs/adjectives vs in nouns: eg. *to record vs a record; to protest vs a protest*

Exercise 2: Dictate the first three sentences; students should identify the homophones *holy – wholly – holey*; dictate the last sentence; the homophones here are *vein and vain*

Exercise 3: 1. *heel – heal – he'll*; 2. *seas – seize – sees*; 3. *threw – through*; 4. *site – sight*; 5. *plane – plain*; 6. *fought – fort* (**BrE** pronunciation only!!); 7. *rode – road*; 8. *steal – steel*; 9. *right – write*; 10. *hear – here*; 11. *wore – war*; 12. *wait – weight*

Exercise 4: *raise rays; Finnish finish; dual duel; guest guessed; tied tide; whirled world; whole hole*

2. **CALL MY BLUFF** (Present-day English compounds)

Language level: intermediate (min. B1)

This is a well-known *one-true-two-false* competitive activity. It practises fluency and cohesion using some examples of recent language. Hand out one word/phrase and its definition to each student/pair of students and instruct them to think of and write 2 additional (false) definitions of their word. Encourage them to use good language in order to trick their classmates. The students then take turns reading out their definitions and the others guess the true meaning. They get 1 point for each definition they guessed correctly + as many points for their own word as the number of students/pairs they managed to trick.

3. SOCIAL STEREOTYPES (Very British problems)

Language level: upper-intermediate (min. B1+)

A selection of seven texts from a humorous series (column) that appears in the Saturday edition of the Daily Telegraph and which explores stereotypical upper class people in Britain. Each text comes with a picture.

Hand out one article to each student/pair of students and ask them to read it and prepare a short summary of its content. They might also choose a few words from the text which they find interesting (or did not know before) and teach them to the classmates. Allow plenty of time for this (might be set as HW for next class). Before presenting the article, the student/teacher shows the accompanying picture to the class and the other students guess the topic and make predictions what the text is about.

Additional follow-up activity: Discuss if we have similar experience or face the same „problem“ in our country.

4. SMOKE and MIRRORS (21st century binomials)

Language level: upper-intermediate (min. B1+)

This activity focuses on contemporary binomials (i.e. fixed phrase consisting of two words separated by a conjunction that always appear in the same order); most of them have a figurative meaning and are often based on alliteration or rhyming. Students try to match pairs of words and use them in the gapped sentences. Explain the meaning if necessary.




Answer key: 1. *part and parcel*; 2. *wine and dine*; 3. *give and take*; 4. *smoke and mirrors*; 5. *fast and dirty*; 6. *sink or swim*; 7. *down and out*; 8. *thick and thin*; 9. *bitter and twisted*; 10. *wheeling and dealing*; 11. *cloak and dagger*; 12. *done and dusted*

Additional follow-up activity: Each student chooses/is assigned a binomial and uses it in another sentence to make it true for them.

5. RIGHT or WRONG? (Trends in contemporary English grammar)




Language level: upper-intermediate (min. B1+)

The sentences are examples of various areas of grammatical change in contemporary English and they include verb forms and tense usage, clause structure, pronouns, quantifiers and comparison. The answer key indicates whether these changes are nowadays seen as:

-  correct or even desirable in the given context; or
-  acceptable **depending on** the medium and context, style, register, (i.e. spoken or written English, formal vs informal, British vs American English, etc.); or
-  sub-standard/ incorrect.

Additional notes are provided for clarification of the point.

Answer key:

1.  Less men think like that nowadays. (*less instead of fewer with countable nouns*)
2.  All cats don't like being picked up. (*confusing/unclear in BrE; in AmE it is common to begin a negative sentence with a positive quantifier; BrE would say: not all cats like being picked up.*)
3.  A: There's someone at the door. B: Tell them I can't see them today. (*unisex they/them/their with indefinite singular reference*)

4. 😊 He took my wife and I out to dinner. (I instead of me as object of the verb; in some contexts object pronoun replacing subject pronoun is correct and even desirable – compare: Who's that? → It's me.// She's much better than him at maths. – for this see sentence 19)
5. 😊 (Teacher, during an activity): "I'm hearing a lot of mistakes with the articles." (I'm hearing instead of I can hear: verbs of the senses and feelings used in continuous forms; other examples: I've been loving you so long, What we are seeing here is outrageous.)
6. 😞 She asked me what was my name. (interrogative word order in reported questions; should say: ... what my name was)
7. 😊 I waited till she finished. (instead of ... till she had finished: optional Past Perfect when the time reference and the sequence of events is clear)
8. 😞 If I'd have known it was on, I'd have gone to see it. (should say: If I'd known about it ...; substandard English)
9. 😞 How do you dare to talk to me like that? (should say: How dare you talk ...?; the verb dare has two different meanings: as a semi-modal verb – see here, and a normal/main verb as in Do you dare to ask him? = Are you brave enough ...?)
10. 😊 He's the man that stole the car. (Note: that instead of who is **more informal, should not be used in formal writing**)
11. 😊 Our mission is to boldly go where no man has gone before. (instead of: ... to go boldly ... i.e. split infinitive: used to be considered a mistake – not true any more)
12. 😊 That's something we must look into. (absence of relative pron. + preposition at the end of a sentence instead of That is something into which we must look, which would sound very formal)
13. 😊 Do you have a car? (interchangeable with Have you got ...?; Influence of AmE where Do you have is commonly used in the meaning of possession/ownership; compare: Do you have a shower every day?)
14. 😞 He don't know the score. (using do/don't instead of does/doesn't in 3rd person singular is sub-standard)
15. 😊 His room was more neat and tidy than I'd ever seen it. (neat and tidy is a binomial, i.e. fixed phrase, so the repeated use of -er would sound strange and using more instead is better; generally speaking, there is a current trend in English to use more and most rather than -er and -est in comparatives and superlatives with short adjectives – that is considered **informal and not quite correct**)
16. 😞 I was sat in the garden when it started to rain. (should say I was sitting ...: using the past participle instead of -ing to describe position is sub-standard)
17. 😊 Of the two cities, Paris is the nicest. (nicest instead of nicer: using a superlative in comparison of **TWO** things)
18. 😊 The three of us just looked at each other. (interchangeable use of each other and one another; compare with Jack and Jill love one another.)
19. 😊 I wish I could swim as well as him. (see notes in sentence 2)
20. 😊 They acted like they owned the place. (like as a conjunction used instead of as/as if)