

[論 文]

Classroom English for More Effective Learning

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Abstract

The importance of English has increasingly been advocated, and yet a large number of Japanese have still difficulty in commanding the language. In an attempt to drastically reform English education in our country, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology formulated a Strategic Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities in 2003. Training junior and high school teachers over five years is one of the concrete measures.

To this end, some college instructors were asked to carry out on-the-job training at a local level. I had been asked to give lectures, together with other instructors, to the English teachers in Oita prefecture. My presentation in 2007, the last year of the Strategic Plan, was on classroom English, English used in ordinary English classes, to enhance students' communicative competence. The bare facts are that the majority of English classes in Japan, irrespective of education levels, are being conducted in Japanese. The ideal situation, however, will be a case where English is actively and overwhelmingly used in class.

After exemplifying part of classroom English, referring to a college textbook two of my colleagues and I published, I urged the attendees to act out their ordinary English class using English to the fullest. The participants were divided into ten groups and after some consultation, each group was to demonstrate their would-be English class where their students are also engaged in using the target language in response to the teachers. Although I gave two presentations to both junior high school teachers and high school teachers, this article is largely based on the presentation given to the high school teachers.

At our school, it is mandatory for our students to take one foreign language out of seven languages: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and Korean. Students generally jump on the bandwagon and take English.

As you know, the number of students in Japan is on the decrease these days, and the English ability of students varies a great deal. Frankly speaking, in our general English classes, a majority of our students are not well-motivated to study English, which makes it difficult to conduct English classes. But it seems a good many students like to watch foreign movies. Then why not use movies in class? Hoping that films can attract students' attention and stimulate them to improve their English ability, I've been using movies in general English classes.

The title of this seminar is ***Classroom English for More Communicative Learning***. So, in relation to this, please let me briefly tell you about my general English class where I am using movies and English to the best of my ability.

First, I will touch on the book called *Discover the World of Movies* two of my colleagues and I wrote last year. As I go along, I would like to shed some light on English expressions exchanged between my students and myself, hoping that such efforts will enhance students' communicative competence. And I hope that what I introduce will be of some help in your English class.

After my presentation, I'd like you to show us how you conduct your ordinary English classes using English. Since there are a sizable number of teachers today, let me divide you into 10 groups. And let us observe each one of our groups conducting an active English class. I will give you the details of our group activity later.

Well, let me go back and tell you about the movie book.

Discover the World of Movies

The book *Discover the World of Movies* is intended to appeal to a majority of college students.

Table of Contents

Please look the Table of Contents on your handout. As you can see, there are a variety of movies listed here. They are animations, musicals, thrillers, historical movies, comedies, and so on. Some are old, some are new and some are known to be masterpieces. The choice is to find common ground with students.

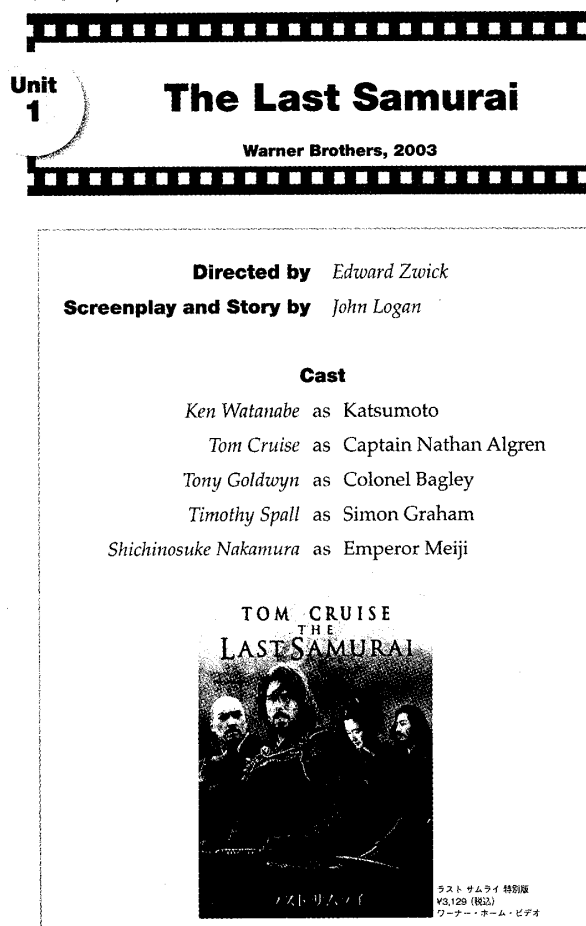
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Tests

Unit 1 *The Last Samurai* (The Title of the Unit)

Please look at the next page saying Unit 1 *The Last Samurai*. When dealing with motion pictures, we need to pay special attention to copyrights. Look at the picture, for example. At the very bottom of the picture, can you see the credit 「ラストサムライ特別版、¥ 3,129、ワーナー・ホーム・ビデオ」。The publisher was asked to put this much information in when they obtained the permission to use the picture as a filler.



1 General Questions *Answer the following questions.*

1. Do you like *samurai* movies? Why?
2. Who do you feel is the greatest *samurai* in Japanese history?
3. Have you seen *samurai* armor?
4. Have you heard of Ken Watanabe?
5. Do you think Tom Cruise is a great actor?

Well, let's turn to the next page. Please look at the first exercise: **General Questions**. There are five questions in all. These questions are a set of warm-up exercises roughly related to the movie *the Last Samurai*.

Well, in dealing with this section, the kind of classroom English I am using is as follows:

OK, are you ready? Let me ask the following questions. Miss Tanaka, Do you like Samurai movies?

If the student said, "Yes", you can ask him or her further questions like

Why do you like samurai movies? May I ask what kinds of samurai movies do you like? and so on.

When the first person is finished, you can say,

Ok, good. Next please. Well, let me ask the next question, then.

Yamada-kun, Who do you feel is the greatest samurai in Japanese history?

In the course of asking questions, some students may make mistakes. Then, you could encourage students by saying like

Don't worry about making mistakes. Nobody is perfect. You can improve your English through making lots of mistakes.

CD ▶ 1-1 **2 Dialog** Listen to the dialog and fill in the blanks.

Fred and Lena have just seen The Last Samurai together. They are sitting on a lawn talking about it.

1 L: Tom Cruise was great! ① _____?

F: He was good in the movie, but I liked Ken Watanabe even better.

L: What scene ② _____?

F: The scene where the *samurai* under Katsumoto, played by Watanabe, fought
5 bravely against the army.

L: I've heard that this was Watanabe's first movie in English.

F: Yeah. And he was simply wonderful!

L: How did he get such a big part?

F: Well, I read that the director of *The Last Samurai*, Ed Zwick, had almost given up
10 in frustration ③ _____ find the right man to
play Katsumoto.

L: What finally happened?

F: But then someone introduced Zwick to Watanabe. The moment he talked to
Watanabe, he knew he had found his man.

15 L: ④ _____, but I still prefer Tom Cruise.
Besides being the most handsome man on earth, I admire all the hard work he
did in getting ready for his role.

F: I guess he had to practice riding his horse through explosions, while swords
passed within inches of his face.

The next exercise is termed **Dialog**. It would be ideal if we could use part of the movie scenario, but it is extremely difficult to clear copyrights legally. Instead, we authors made a dialog, which will enable students to understand the movie.

It acts like a "prelude". Students are to listen to the CD and fill in the blanks.

When all the General Questions are answered by the students, you could say,

*Well, so much for the General Questions. Let' move on to the next section,
2 Dialo.Listen to your CD and fill in all the blanks. I will give you five minutes
for this exercise. I suggest you listen to the entire dialog first and that you grasp
the main idea. After that, why don't you write down the words you have heard.
Then, lastly, listen to the entire dialog again and check all the answers.*

I usually ask my students to write the answers on the board saying something like,

Well, I am afraid the time is up. I'd like you to write your answers on the board.

*Don't worry even if you couldn't catch some words. Nobody is perfect. Some
words may be hard to listen to. Just do your best.*

In this exercise, students often have trouble in catching function words like articles, pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions. It is because function words such as a, an, the, it, at, and, for, that are often pronounced weakly.

Let's look at the very first blank of the **Dialog**. The words to be filled in are what do you think. Say, students missed the word *it*. Then, you could give hits like

*There are four words in the blank. The third word is a second person pronoun,
and the third word begins with the th and ends with k. It consists of five letters.*

Thus, in an exercise of this sort, you could still give hints in English if you want to keep using English.

Some students come late

Some students come late for school. In my case, I make it a rule to ask latecomers questions in English. They have to answer my questions in English before they can sit down. When they cannot explain why they are late, I help them complete the sentences they want to make.

Some students go to bed very late at night. And naturally, they can't wake up in the morning. I tell them not to *burn the midnight oil*, but to *go to bed with the chickens*, so that they can wake up early in the morning. Taking advantage of the situation, I once in a while introduce new expressions such as *burn the midnight oil* and *go to bed with the chickens* while talking to students.

In this dialog exercise, it is often the case that students make grammatical mistakes. Their writing the answers on the board is very helpful in finding students' grammatical knowledge, too. Although the **3rd person singular s** is taught at an early stage of English education in Japan, a number of college students are not familiar with this grammatical feature yet. This is when I call everybody's attention and explain what the **3rd person singular s** is.

Let me explain what the 3rd person singular s is about. Look at the following sentence on the board:

1 I eat dinner at seven.

2 You eat dinner at seven.

3 He eats dinner at seven.

In Sentence 1, the subject is I, the speaker, and it is called the 1st person.

In Sentence 2, the subject is you, the listener, and it is called the 2nd person.

In Sentence 3, the subject is He. He is a person who is not a speaker or listener.

He may be around you or may be somewhere else. That doesn't matter. Well, look at the verb eat of each sentence carefully. In Sentence 1 and 2, there is no s attached to the verb, but in Sentence 3, there is s at the end of the verb. This s is called 3rd person singular s. As you know, the plural forms of I, you, and he are we, you and they, respectively. Look at the following sentences:

4 We eat dinner at seven.

5 You eat dinner at seven.

6 They eat dinner at seven.

Look at the verb eat from 4 through 6. In these cases, there is no s at the end of the verb eat. Compare Sentence 3 and Sentence 6 carefully. Do you see the difference? The difference between 3 and 6 is that the subject is singular in the former but the subject is plural in the latter. In English, when the subject is singular and the tense is present in the 3rd person, s is attached to the verb stem. This rule does not apply in other cases. For example, if the subject is plural or in the past tense, s is not attached to the verb stem.

I try to explain grammatical points in English, but it so happens that the explanatory sentences will be more complex and more difficult for students to understand. If that happens, I write difficult words on the board and explain what I have said in Japanese so that students will fully understand. They are often not familiar with English grammatical jargon.

When I finish explaining the meaning of each sentence in the **Dialog** exercise, I say something like,


OK, everyone. Please listen to the dialog two more times. First, listen to the whole dialog, paying attention to the meaning. Second, close your textbook, concentrate your attention and try to understand the meaning of every sentence.

3 Useful Words

Fill in each blank with one of the words below. Change the form of a verb or noun, if necessary.

1. Troops are called to _____ the rebel movement.
2. Katsumoto knows he has no chance of winning, but he decided to _____ against government troops.
3. Katsumoto's warriors are _____ in a battle.
4. Algren is given _____ when he gets a new job in Japan.
5. Some of the Emperor's advisors are planning to _____ Katsumoto.
6. It is _____ before the rebels are defeated.
7. _____ was fought from 1861 to 1865.
8. Katsumoto organizes a _____ against the Meiji government.

CD▶1-2



<p>the Civil War 南北戦争</p> <p>put down ~を鎮める</p> <p>plot ~をたくらむ</p> <p>just a matter of time 時間の問題にすぎない</p> <p>make a last stand 最後の抵抗をする</p> <p>massacre ~を大虐殺する</p>	<p>a new lease on life 幸せな余命</p> <p>rebellion 反乱</p> <p>assassinate ~を暗殺する</p>
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This section is another kind of warm-up exercise. The main section of each unit is under the heading **Summary** on the next page. The purpose of this exercise is to familiarize students with the new words that appear in the **Summary**. When students understand the meaning of the words, their listening comprehension is undoubtedly enhanced.

Although the footnotes at the bottom of the page such as *the Civil War* and *a new lease on life* are recorded onto the CD, I don't use the CD in this case. I ask my students something like,

Look at the footnotes at the bottom of Page 11. I will pronounce the words and repeat after me. Please speak up. Try to enunciate clearly. Pay special attention to the sounds like [f], [θ], [r], and [l]. OK, ready? the Civil war...

After students repeat after me twice, I go like,

*Starting from the front row, read the sentences one by one, filling in the blank. Since these exercise sentences are closely related to the **Summary** of the movie on the*

next page, I urge my students to understand the meaning of each sentence clearly. Therefore, I say like,

Make sure you understand the sentences well because they are closely connected with the Summary on the next page. Understanding these sentences will make it easy to understand the movie, too.

As far as this exercise is concerned, if I explain one sentence by one sentence, that will narrow down the choice of words and make it easy for students to answer questions later. Therefore, I say,

I will just call on you and will be quiet until the last person gives me the answer. Otherwise, the last students I ask can answer the questions more easily.

It would be best not to use Japanese throughout the class, but I must prioritize students' understanding over their listening practice. When the last student answers the last question, I account for the choice of words and the meaning of each sentence in Japanese.

CD▶1-3  **4 Summary** *Read and/or listen to the summary.*

1 Although Captain Nathan Algren is a highly decorated soldier and a Civil War hero, he is a troubled man. When he fought against the Native Americans after **the Civil War**, Algren was ordered to kill women and children. He drowns his past in drink and hates his life. Suddenly, he is given a **new lease on life** when he is offered a job
5 in Japan.

Algren is given the job of training Emperor Meiji's modern army to **put down a rebellion**. Katsumoto, the rebel leader, is a samurai warrior, who opposes rapid modernization and believes in the traditional values of honor, courage and dedication. Algren knows his troops are not yet ready to fight, but they are forced into battle. The
10 government soldiers panic and run as they are overwhelmed by the samurai. Algren is wounded but fights bravely before being captured. Katsumoto takes him back as a prisoner to a rebel village deep in the mountains.

Algren slowly learns to respect the ways of the samurai and their dedication to traditional values and perfection. He has found something to give meaning to his
15 life. One day, the Emperor invites Katsumoto and his men to come to a government meeting in Tokyo and guarantees their safety. Some of the Emperor's advisors, though, are **plotting to assassinate** Katsumoto.

Algren learns of the plan and helps Katsumoto to escape back to his village. The rebel leader knows that it is **just a matter of time** before government troops track him
20 down. He is determined to **make a last stand**, although he knows he has no hope of winning.

The samurai fight bravely, but they cannot win against cannon and machine guns, and they are **massacred**. Katsumoto dies, but Algren survives and presents the rebel leader's sword to the Emperor. Emperor Meiji is impressed by the bravery of
25 Katsumoto and vows not to forget ancient traditions when building a modern Japan.

Please look at the **Summary** on Page 12 of your handout. This section is the core of the unit. We'd like our students to understand the movie ultimately, so the summary of the movie *the Last Samurai* is provided here. Notice that all the sentences and questions are printed so that students can study at home. I take it for granted that all the students have done their work at home. But just in case, I say,

Before I start asking the questions, please read the passage silently.

After students read the passage, I let them listen to the CD saying,

*OK, class, please listen to the CD once. After that, let's do all the **Comprehension Questions**.*

In my class, I call on students in order, so they are ready to answer. But once in a while, a student or two are absent. That's a big impediment for the other students. Some students start asking their neighbors in a flurry. The majority of students seem to be doing the only area they are going to be asked. When I see such a sight, I jokingly say,

"A friend in need is a friend in deed." Respect your friend.

When all the questions are done in the Summary, I ask my students to see if they have any questions. As I explained before, my class is a jumble mixture of all kinds of students: some are good at English, but others are not. Some are from college preparatory high schools and others are from commercial high schools. Some are from public high schools and others are from private ones, and so on.

Having a wide variety of students, I feel that answering students' questions is the most practical, most efficient way to conduct class. If I ask all the students to translate the sentences into Japanese, it takes lots of time. My translating all the passage into Japanese also takes up lots of time. So, I usually ask my students to see if they have any questions, saying like,

Well, do you have any questions? Anything is all right. Don't be shy.

At the beginning of the term, students are shy and hesitant in asking questions, but gradually they get used to it. But unfortunately, only a limited number of students ask questions. They are the same faces. I wish I could reshuffle my students.

My students often ask me the questions like,

「48 ページの、上から五行目の意味がわかりません。」

When they ask questions like this, of course, I answer the question to the best of my ability, but at the same time, I tell them to ask me questions in English. I explain the above Japanese questions in English like,

I don't understand the meaning of Line 5 from the top of Page 48.

Once students know how to ask questions in English, they can do that from the next time. I always encourage students to ask questions because in order to have questions, they have to study. And when they clear up what they don't understand, they can proceed. It's a good circle.

At times, my students ask me how to pronounce certain words. Again, when they ask me questions like this, I tell them to ask me questions in English from the next time onward. Once in a while, my students ask me many questions. It depends on the difficulty of the unit, but when there are a lot of questions, I can't proceed as I have planned.

Usually, after the **Summary** is finished, I show the climax of the movie. In the case of Unit 1 **the Last Samurai**, I show the most impressive, climax scene for ten minutes or so. By the time my students watch the movie, they have grasped the gist of the movie, so they seem to understand what is going on.

When my students are active in asking questions and so forth, there is not enough time left. Time flies. Sometimes, I can't finish all the exercises in the textbook within one class. Since **6 Review** and **7 Behind the Scenes** are kind of subsidiary, I leave them untouched.

CD ▶ 1-4  **5 Comprehension Questions** Choose the best answers.

1. Why was Captain Algren troubled while fighting Native Americans?
 - a. Because he had to kill women and children.
 - b. Because he lost his wife and children.
 - c. Because he was offered a job in Japan.
 - d. Because he was forced to fight in the Civil War.

2. What is Captain Algren's new job in Japan?
 - a. To develop friendly relations between the Emperor and the leader of a rebel army.
 - b. To kill the Emperor.
 - c. To train the Emperor's army to fight against rebels.
 - d. To train a rebel army to fight against government troops.

3. Why does Katsumoto organize a rebellion against Emperor Meiji?
 - a. Because Meiji doesn't offer him a job in his government.
 - b. Because Meiji's troops once captured him.
 - c. Because Meiji doesn't modernize the country fast enough.
 - d. Because Meiji tries to modernize the country too fast.

4. What happens after Algren is captured?
 - a. He fights against Katsumoto's warriors.
 - b. He comes to respect the samurai.
 - c. He tries to kill Katsumoto.
 - d. He kills himself in front of Katsumoto.

5. How does Algren help Katsumoto?
 - a. He helps Katsumoto build a castle.
 - b. He helps Katsumoto escape from government troops.
 - c. He helps Katsumoto recover from an injury.
 - d. He captures the Emperor.

6. How does the battle end?
 - a. Katsumoto wins and vows to kill the Emperor.
 - b. Katsumoto wins but respects the courage of the government troops.
 - c. The government forces win, and the Emperor hates the samurai.
 - d. The government forces win, but the Emperor respects Katsumoto's courage.

Let's move on to the next section **Comprehension Questions**. As you can see, there are six questions in all. Students are supposed to do all of these questions beforehand. They are obliged to listen to the CD at home prior to reading the text to improve their listening ability. Since both the summary of the movie and the questions are written out, if students read the text first, it would not be a listening exercise any more.

Upon doing this exercise, I say to my students,

When you are called on, please read the question and give me the best choice among the four possible answers. And read the sentence, too.

I keep calling on till the last person, but once in a while, students answer questions in a feeble voice. When I hear such students, I half-jokingly imitate their voice, and I murmur just like the students. This mimicking attracts attention from the rest of the students. The other students strain their ears to catch what is going on.

When all the **Comprehension Questions** are answered, I show the climax of a movie: In this case, the climax of *the Last Samurai*. By now, all the students have a good understanding of the movie. I say to my students,

Try to catch as many words as possible. Sometimes, you may hear English lines, but there may be no subtitles. Or, English lines may be very different from the Japanese subtitles. Try to concentrate your attention when you watch the video. Since you now know what the movie is about, avoid looking at the subtitles.

Because of time limitations, I cannot show my students the whole movie. Since I show part of the climax, some of them give "disappointed" exclamatory remarks like "Aah! and Ohh!". They want to see till the end of the movie.

6

Review Match the words with their meanings.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. rebellion | a. to kill an important person |
| ___ 2. plot | b. a chance to improve one's conditions |
| ___ 3. put down | c. to kill a large number of people |
| ___ 4. assassinate | d. an organized fight against authority |
| ___ 5. make a last stand | e. to crush |
| ___ 6. massacre | f. to plan |
| | g. to put up a final fight |
| | h. to love from the bottom of one's heart |

Well, please turn to Page 14 and look at the **Review** exercise. This exercise is to consolidate some of the new words introduced in each unit. Some simple English explanations are given on the right. All students have to do is to match the words on the left side with their meanings on the right.

In a way, this exercise is redundant except that the explanation of words is accounted for in English rather than in Japanese. When I spend a lot of time in doing other exercises, I run out of time now and then. Then, I say like,

I should have asked you to do these exercises, but because of time limitations, let me give you the answers. OK, the answer for Number 1 is d ...

CD ▶ 1-5

7

Behind the Scenes Read the following passage.

1 Wasn't the scenery of the Japanese countryside beautiful in *The Last Samurai*?
 Katsumoto's hilltop village was so typically Japanese and **authentic**, wasn't it?
 Would you be surprised to learn that some of the film's location shooting was done
 on a cattle and sheep farm in New Plymouth, New Zealand? Wait a minute! New
 5 Zealand? Yes, that's right.

Local New Zealand craftsmen created that samurai village; they made its
 traditional houses, the **blacksmith** shop and those **rice terraces**, **animal pens**,
 and everything else from scratch. How about the final battle scene among the
 "Japanese" hills? Yes, you guessed it, also New Zealand.

authentic = genuine 本物の
rice terraces 棚田

blacksmith 鍛冶屋
animal pen 動物を入れる檻



The last section is called **Behind the Scenes**. It is an "inside story" connected with the movie dealt with in the unit. It is to arouse the curiosity of students.

Since this is not directly relevant to the theme of the unit, I say to my students,

Well, this section is not so much related to the unit, so don't bother to spend lots of time. But if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.


Test 1 The Last Samurai

CD ▶
2-26

1 Comprehension

Listen to the hints and fill in each blank with the best word. (1 x 10 = 10)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

 *words*

Algren	assassinate	bravery
captured	Japanese	Katsumoto
Ken Watanabe	machine guns	New Zealand
rebellion	respect	sword
Tom Cruise	wounded	Zwick

CD ▶
2-27

2 Dictation-Cloze

Listen and fill in each blank with a word. (5 x 2 = 10)

1. Besides being the most _____ man _____, I _____ all the hard _____ Tom Cruise did.

2. Local _____ the *samurai* _____; they made its _____ houses and those rice terraces from _____.

Class _____	1	2-1	2-2	Total
Student No. _____				
Name _____	10	5	5	20

Please look at the last page of your handout. This is a review listening test. As you can see, in **1 Comprehension**, students are to fill in the blanks listening to the hints given by CD. Let's take an example. The answer for 1 is Ken Watanabe. The CD gives a hit like "This person is a famous Japanese actor. He played the role of Katsumoto in *the Last Samurai*."

In **Dictation-Cloze**, students are to fill in the blanks while listening to the CD. There are five blanks for each sentence. Ideally, students should be able to write down every word, but such an exercise would be a bit difficult. That is why this exercise is in the form of partial dictation.



Well, I briefly mentioned how I have been conducting my class in English. I think you could do things similar to this in your own class to create an English atmosphere and enhance students' communicative competence. Then, how about using classroom English to the fullest?

Please look at your handouts excerpted from *Pro-vision English Course 1*. I advise you to show us what you usually do in your English class, using English. Use these handouts as your textbook.

Please look at the other handout under the heading of **High School Worksheet**. It gives you a rough idea of what to do from now. The handout says:

- The number of attendants today is 69.
- The aim of this activity is to reproduce an ordinary English class conducted only in English and to enhance students' communicative competence. Students are requested to speak English, too.
- The textbook is *Pro-vision*. You'll only need to use Lesson 1. pp. 7~ 10, though.
- There are ten groups each of which consists of seven people. Each group has one teacher, one ALT, if necessary, and several students.
- Each group has 50 minutes for preparation, and a ten-minute break.
- After the break, each group has 6 minutes to demonstrate its class activity.

The last part of the handout states what each group is supposed to do.

Well, then, let me divide all the participants here into ten groups. After that, please decide the representative in your group. And all the representatives get together and play the "stone-scissors-paper" game, or *janken*, to decide the order of demonstration. Group 1 is to demonstrate first, and Group 2 second and so forth.

When all the groups are determined, please decide who will be the teacher, who will be the ALT, who will be the students and what not. The ALT can be a Japanese-American because of your looks. The ALT could have an Oita accent because his or her parents

are probably from Oita.

You may have good students and mediocre students, industrious students and lazy students, active students and quiet students. I'd like you to reproduce your English class here.

Well, anyway, you can discuss many things within your groups. The bottom line is that you conduct your class in English and demonstrate what your class looks like.

Well, shall we begin, then?

(When the time was up, each group, consisting of several high school teachers, came up to the front and demonstrated their English class, using classroom English. Some teachers were quite dramatists and seemed to be full of guts. They would certainly attract students' attention in class. Witnessing a variety of classes conducted by the attendees, I thought it would be worthwhile for college teachers to contact and observe classes at high schools. In fact, deepening the mutual relationship has recently been advocated.

When the last group acted out their English class, I gave over-all comments.)

Consolidation

It was quite interesting to observe actual English classes in high schools. Some teachers are very enthusiastic about teaching. And some students, acted by your colleagues, are very interesting, active and humorous. Those students will be successful not only in society after graduation from school, but also in industries like Yoshimoto Kogyo. I am sure your students at school will love your way of teaching English if your class is conducted in this fashion. I am also sure that the more you try to use English in your class, the better English learners your students will be.

You might be interested in knowing what the average college student has difficulty in concerning English. That may give you some clues in teaching English at an earlier stage. Let me point out some of the drawbacks college students have:

(1) Japanese Accentuation

One of the characteristics of the English average college students utter is that they carry over the Japanese sound system into English. They are not aware of the phonological fact that Japanese is a pitch language whereas English is a stress language. Students are prone to say *beesubooru* flatly in stead of saying *baseball*, putting the primary accent on the first syllable. They apply the same rule to whatever word they utter. *Hambaagaa* instead of *humberger*, *hericoputaa* instead of *helicopter*, and so on. The list is endless.

The tendency to use the Japanese pitch when speaking English is not restricted to

words, but also to phrases or sentences. The outcome, therefore, is often incomprehensible or hard to understand for native speakers of English. I think that at an early stage, the characteristics of English accentuation should be "rubbed" into the ears of Japanese students. This is because the tendency not to place any stress accent when speaking English becomes "fossilized". Students often lose confidence in speaking English when they can't get across their intention owing to their poor accentuation. Therefore, it is advisable that you could set your students in the right direction.

(2) Pronunciation

Let me take up another problem Japanese college students have trouble with. That is, they do not bear in mind the fact that there are some speech sounds which only exist in Japanese and others which are only present in English. The former includes [ϕ], [ç], [ɾ], and [N]. The latter are [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [l], [r]. For these reasons, students often use the Japanese sounds instead of the English sounds:

English words	Japanese Pronunciation
often	→ [ooϕuN]
hit	→ [çitto]
last	→ [ɾaasto]
sun	→ [saN]

These are just a few examples in which students replace the English sounds by the Japanese ones which sound closest to their ears. However, they are phonetically poles apart from the English sounds.

It should also be pointed out that students almost always insert vowels when they are not necessary. When they do this, they cannot communicate with native speakers of English. The above examples show this phenomenon. In the case of the word *strike*, for example, students try to insert vowels between consonants as in [sutoraiku]. It would be very helpful if you can correct their basic pronunciation mistakes.

(3) Function Words and Content Words

As I pointed out earlier, Japanese students are likely to pronounce words flatly or with uniform stress because the Japanese language is a pitch language. Students should also notice that all the English words are classified into function words and content words and that the former are weakly pronounced whereas the latter are strongly pronounced.

To be more specific, parts of speech such as pronouns, articles, prepositions, conjunctions, relatives and auxiliary verbs are called function words because they play an important role in constructing sentences and yet they do not generally carry an


important meaning. For this reason, they are weakly pronounced.

On the other hand, parts of speech like verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and interrogative pronouns are termed content words because they convey an important meaning. These words are pronounced strongly and clearly to get the message across. Native speakers of English unconsciously distinguish these two types of English when speaking the language. That, as a result, brings forth a rhythm specific to English. It would be very beneficial for students to have this linguistic fundamentals instructed at an earlier stage.

Well, I am afraid the time is up. It would be nice if what I said will be of some help. Thank you for bearing with me today.


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LESSON
1



Imagine the World of *Imagine*

平和な世界の実現...この難題にすぐ答えを出せる人はいません。1971年、元ビートルズの John Lennon は平和への願いを込めて *Imagine* という歌を作りました。その願いは実現されず、彼は 1980 年に亡くなりました。時は流れ、ひとりの高校生が *Imagine* に出会いました。彼女は自分の想像する「平和な世界」について John Lennon に手紙で語ります。



READ and THINK Imagine the World of *Imagine*

I

Dear John,

You left us before I was born, but now I would like to write to you.

I went to Hiroshima last summer. Before I went there, I was not so interested in war or the history of Hiroshima. When I visited Hiroshima, I learned a lot about its history. That experience changed me.


In Hiroshima at 8:15 a.m., August 6, 1945, many people were having breakfast as usual. Then there was a flash of light in the blue sky. The atomic bomb took

QUESTIONS

1. Who is this letter for?

2. Where did the writer go last summer?

Imagine



John Lennon

Imagine there's no heaven
it's easy if you try
no hell below us
above us only sky
above us only sky
imagine all the people
living for today ...

Imagine there's no countries
it isn't hard to do
nothing to kill or die for
and no religion too
imagine all the people
living life in peace ...

You may say I'm a dreamer
but I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
and the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
no need for greed or hunger
a brotherhood of man
imagine all the people
sharing all the world ...

You may say I'm a dreamer
but I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
and the world will live as one

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you left us: you died as usual ex. As usual, she was ten minutes late. take ~ away from ... ex. My brother took my pen away from me.

John John Lennon 「ジョン・レノン」(1940-80) 1960年代に活躍したロックバンド、ビートルズ (The Beatles) のメンバーの一人。

imagine [ɪˈmædʒɪn] John [dʒɒn] born [bɔːrn] experience [ɪksˈpɪəriəns] flash [flæʃ]
atomic [əˈtɒmɪk] bomb [bɒm]

LESSON 1 7

READ and THINK

QUESTIONS

everything away from the people of Hiroshima. People lost their friends and family in an instant. So many lives suddenly came to an end. Hopes and possibilities died. This was the war.

2

Why do people sometimes hate each other because of differences of nationality, race, or religion? I am listening to your song now. In your song, there are no countries or religions. I am now imagining such a world. This is that world:

3. What do the people start doing when they gather in the square?

One morning a woman hands me a note. "Come to the square," it says. I give it to people around me and they pass it on to all the others. They gather in the square and start holding hands. A young man holds his girlfriend's hand with his left hand, and his mother's hand with his right. An old man holds his granddaughter's hand with one hand and an old woman's hand with the other. This small circle of people gradually turns into one big circle. The people

in an instant *ex.* The light went out in an instant. come to an end *ex.* The war came to an end at last. pass ~ on to ... *ex.* Can you pass the message on to Bob? one ~ the other *ex.* She carried her baby under one arm and the bag under the other. turn into ~ *ex.* The water turned into ice.

instant [ɪnstənt] possibility [pɒsəbɪlɪti] hate [hæt] difference [dɪfərəns] nationality [næʃənəlɪti] religion [rɪlɪdʒən] note [nəʊt] square [skwɜːr] girlfriend [gɜːlfrɪend] granddaughter [grændɔːtər] circle [sɜːkəl] gradually [grædʒuəlɪ]

8 LESSON 1

Imagine the World of Imagine

there are just human beings, with no nationalities or religions. And the blue sky spreads above them.

QUESTIONS


4. What spreads above the people?

The same blue sky spreads above me. I feel like shouting: "No more war — for any reason!" Unfortunately, my message may not reach the whole world. But, John, your message does through your song. I want more people to listen to it and imagine your peaceful world. Then, we can share the same world of *Imagine*.

5. What does the writer believe in?

I believe that your world will become a reality someday. I believe in the power of your song. So I will continue to sing it.

Sincerely,
Tashiro Aika



feel like ~ ing *ex.* I don't feel like going out today. believe in ~ *ex.* Do you believe in life after death?

being [biːɪŋ] unfortunately [ʌnfɔːrtʃənətli] message [mesɪdʒ] peaceful [piːsfəl] share [ʃeə] reality [rɪəlɪti] someday [sɒmdeɪ] power [paʊər] sincerely [sɪnsərəli]

9 LESSON 1

READ and THINK

QUESTIONS

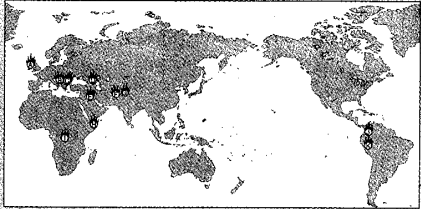
6. What do we hear every day?

3

Against John's wishes, there are still wars in the world. Every day we hear news stories about war and death and they make us sad. We still have no answers to stop wars. It may be difficult to stop them through our actions, but it is not difficult to imagine a world with no wars. If more people dream about the world as one, as John hoped, such a world will not be just a dream but a reality. Till then, imagine.

Wars in the World

Do you know the history of these wars in the world?



① エアランド紛争 ② ユーゴ紛争 ③ コソボ紛争 ④ チェチェン紛争
⑤ イラク紛争 ⑥ アフガニスタン紛争 ⑦ カリフォルニア紛争 ⑧ ソマリア内戦
⑨ コンゴ内戦 ⑩ ロンビア反政府運動 ⑪ ベルギー反政府運動

against one's wishes *ex.* Against our wishes, the team lost the game. not ~ but ... *ex.* I enjoy playing not tennis but table tennis.

action [ækʃən]

10 LESSON 1

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