

Topic task: My favourite topics

Level: ISE Foundation

Focus: Topic task

Aims: To choose a topic

Objectives: To think of lots of ideas for (brainstorm) the topic discussion and to practise talking about it

Topic: Candidate's choice except Holidays, Shopping, School and work, Hobbies and sports, Food, and Weekend and seasonal activities (these are the subject areas for the Conversation task and there shouldn't be any overlap)

Language functions: Giving personal information about present and past circumstances/activities, expressing ability and inability, describing future plans, and expressing likes and dislikes

Lexis: Dependent on learner choice

Materials needed: Pictures from magazines

Timing: 50 minutes

Preparation

1. Find pictures in magazines or on the internet on various topics (see ideas below) and cut or print them out. The pictures may help students discover their interests, expand their ideas and choose an interesting and meaningful topic.
2. Put the pictures for each topic in separate envelopes.
3. Anticipate the vocabulary that you might need to teach according to the pictures you select.
4. Some ideas for pictures of topics you could look for:
 - ▶ DVDs/people at the cinema (Films)
 - ▶ Computers/smartphones (How I use the internet)
 - ▶ Bands, singers and musical instruments (My favourite band/music style)
 - ▶ Paintings, furniture and objects (My favourite painting/artist)
 - ▶ Authors and books (A book I loved/hated)

In class

1. Put your students in groups of four (or up to eight students if you have a large class).
2. Tell your students that today they are going to talk about their favourite topics. Tell the class what your favourite topics are. Use one of the pictures that you cut out and the questions from the student worksheet to demonstrate the activity with a student. Ask the student to ask you questions about your picture and remind them of the language functions and grammar points they need to use. For example, complete short answers: 'Yes, I can/No, I can't' and using auxiliary verbs to ask questions: 'Where do you usually go to do this?'
3. Ask them to choose one picture and to distribute the student worksheets. Students make notes individually about their picture and they can then start asking questions about each other's pictures.
4. Walk around monitoring students' answers and make notes of any errors on the board to look at later.
5. Ask the students to think about their top three favourite topics and to write them down on a piece of paper individually. Try to encourage students to think of different topics. After the students have written their topics, ask them to draw a picture for each topic, make notes and write three things about each topic on the same piece of paper (in note form so they learn to speak from notes and not memorised sentences).
6. Ask the students to talk about their topics in pairs. Each student must ask at least two questions about their partner's topic (they can use the questions on the handout). Walk around listening and making notes on the board of any more errors.

Preparation activities for ISE Foundation Speaking & Listening

7. At the end, give students feedback on how well they asked and answered questions and ask them to identify and correct the errors you have written up on the board. Select the most significant errors for them to identify.

Extension activity

Students could brainstorm five topics instead of three and help other students with their ideas.

Further support activity

Students who are finding the activity more challenging could brainstorm two extra topics and write sentences about them.

Homework

1. Ask the students to look for their own pictures to illustrate their selected topic. They can draw, cut pictures from a magazine or take their own photos and print them. They can write sentences about their new pictures and use them to talk about the topics in the following lesson.
2. Alternatively, students could record themselves talking about their topic for one minute (eg on their mobile phones), and listen to each other's recordings the following lesson.



Student worksheet: My favourite topics

Topic 1

What is it?

Can you describe it?

Why do you like it?

Where do you usually see/do this?

Can you see/do it alone?

When/where was the last time you saw/did this?

When/where are you going to see/do this again?

Topic 2

What is it?

Can you describe it?

Why do you like it?

Where do you usually see/do this?

Can you see/do it alone?

When/where was the last time you saw/did this?

When/where are you going to see/do this again?

Topic 3

What is it?

Can you describe it?

Why do you like it?

Where do you usually see/do this?

Can you see/do it alone?

When/where was the last time you saw/did this?

When/where are you going to see/do this again?