

Language Experience Approach: Class Trip

What is the Language Experience Approach (LEA)?

This approach exploits a shared experience / common knowledge / the opinions among a group of ESOL Literacy (pre-entry) students. Typically, after an experience such as a class trip, the occasion is discussed in the next class before a text is worked on collaboratively. This involves the teacher working with the learners to build a text, which is written up on the board. In addition to a class trip, other shared contexts could include a class discussion, a survey among the group or something about the learners' city / college / class. The value of the LEA is that the learners' own words are used for the text. Not only is the context clear but also, when it comes to literacy work, it is the students' own language which is used to focus on phonics, reading aloud and writing tasks, making this far more meaningful and impactful. Personalised language learning is so powerful and there are few approaches in ESOL which tick as many boxes in this regard as this one!

Instructions

- a. **Class trip:** Go on a class trip, for instance, a local museum, art gallery, a picnic etc. Encourage the learners to take lots of photos as these will be invaluable in the next class.



- b. **Vocabulary and speaking:** Ask, “How was the trip?” Then set up a mingle where the students show each other the photos they took. They speak about everything they can see in the pictures.



- c. **Collaborative text:** Predict what this might include, for example,

We went to the park yesterday. We went inside the big glass house. You can see many plants, flowers and trees from so many countries. We saw fish and sugar cane. We saw chocolate and bananas. We had a picnic. It was a great trip!

Clarify any relevant vocabulary in a whole-class discussion about the trip and work with the group to build the text, which you board.

- d. **Reading aloud:** After writing the text on the board, read it aloud. Help the students with phonics and silent letters. Read it aloud as a group. After the learners copy down the text into their notebooks, they can read it aloud in pairs.
- e. **Further reading and writing:** The group can practise by copying the text onto pieces of card and reordering these into sentences. They can practise look-say-cover-write-check on interesting words in the text and/or the whole text. Stronger students can extend the text with one more sentence.

Language Experience Approach teaching one-to-one

The steps above will work when teaching one-to-one. The text can be completely personalised for the learner. As above, predict the text for your learner. Even if you're not close with the prediction it always helps you with grading the language for this level when you build the text together. As the trip can be faster with one learner, why not go to a café / local library to work on the text straight after the trip?