

Our Favorite Speaking & Writing Activities

Ask your tutor to prepare everything you need before each lesson, where appropriate, and also do your own preparation where necessary. Before the activity, it's a good idea to review any useful vocabulary and phrases relevant to the topic at hand with your tutor.

Anything with a “**W**” can also be writing activities.

Reading aloud

You are given a paragraph and asked to read it out loud for the tutor, who corrects you appropriately.

Describing a photo - **W**

You look at a photograph and describe it with details. **Generator Mix** and **Random Word Generator** will provide thousands of random images for you at a click. Describe the images in as much detail as you can or make up a story around them.

Interesting Questions & Topics - **W**

Select a question or series of questions to discuss. Try **this** site for more interesting questions than you'll ever get through in one lifetime. **These** writing prompts will also come in handy. Feel free to recycle the same topic or spend more than one session on the same one if it really sparks your interest.

Negotiation

Negotiation is a part of life and a useful skill for everyone, not just in business. Get your tutor to prepare some roles for you both and negotiate something. Examples include: Landlord & tenant, police officer & witness/defendant, political leaders, employers & employee, business owner & customer, husband & wife, parents & children, etc.

Proposing a solution - W

Your tutor gives you an interesting problem and you have to suggest a solution. It could be as simple as “I need to lose weight”, or as complex as “I’m losing the will to live”!

Expressing an opinion - W

You are asked to state your opinion about an issue. The more interesting and controversial the issue, the better.

Comparing and contrasting two readings or recordings - W

You are asked to read or listen to two different pieces. Then you have to compare and contrast these items using appropriate language.

Paraphrasing what you’ve heard - W

You repeat what you have heard or read using your own words. Find a news article (any language is fine), an episode of a tv show, a TED talk, etc., and sum it up in your own words. Let your tutor know beforehand and ask her to clarify certain points and ask probing questions.

Story telling - W

Take turns with your tutor telling stories about something that happened to you recently, earlier in the past, current events, a movie you saw, or anything else you might share with a friend over a coffee. When your tutor tells a story, listen intently and ask pertinent questions.

Show & Tell

Find an object in your house and tell its story, or make one up!

The Audition

Your tutor prepares a short reading for you to read out in different ways, just like they are a director and you are an actor auditioning for a role. This is great for practicing intonation, stress patterns, and rhythm. For example, they can say “say it like you really dislike this person”, “say it as if you just had some fantastic news”, or “stress this particular part of the sentence”.

Lateral Thinking Puzzles - W

You can find a ton of these puzzles on the internet easily. Lateral thinking puzzles make you think outside the box and engage your creativity, and you can use any language functions you like to solve them.

On the Phone

Practice vital telephone language by role playing a conversation on the phone.

The Elevator Pitch - W

Your tutor give you 60 seconds to convince her of something. It could be anything from buying your new product to marrying you.

The Balloon Debate - W

Your tutor gives you a list of items that are with you on a hot air balloon. The balloon is falling to the ground and you have to remove a certain number of items along with an explanation why. Variations of this include which things to take on a desert island, or who to fire at a company.

Job Interview - W

Your tutor first prepares a list of questions typical of a job interview, or helps you prepare them in Chinese. Then, you are interviewed for a certain job position.