

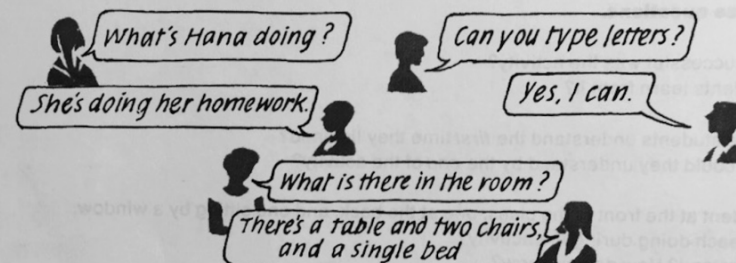
Communicative activities

Unit 18

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1 Introduction

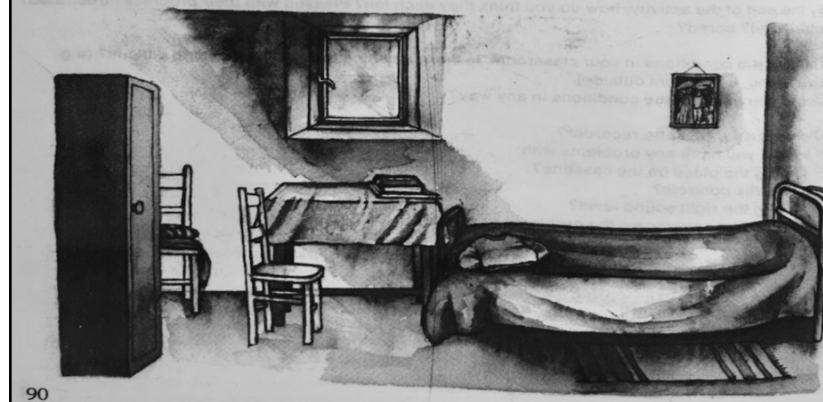
A. Imagine you hear these conversations in real life. What might the situation be? Why is the person asking these questions?



Features of real communication

- In all the conversations, the two people are genuinely exchanging information.
→ The person has a '*communicative need*.'
- Although this is not the only reason why people communicate in real life, it is one of the main reasons; very often we talk in order to tell people things they do not know, or to find things out from other people.

B. Imagine students in a class are asking and answering questions about this picture. What might they say? Why are they asking these questions?



Possible questions

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • What kind of room is it? | Ans: a bedroom |
| • Is there a cupboard in the room? | Ans: Yes, there is. |
| • How many chairs are there? | Ans: Two. |
| • Where's the desk? | Ans: By the window. |

Compare A and B

- In part B, the students are asking and answering questions, but they are not genuinely exchanging information.
- The students are using similar language to the people in the 'real life' conversation, but the purpose of the questions is quite different – it is simply to practise language.

Creating a 'communicative need'

- The activity would become more interesting if we could create a **reason** for asking questions.
- We can do this by hiding the information, either from all the students or from some students, so that there is something they need to find out.
 - This is sometimes called an '**information gap**' – one person has information which another does not have, so there is a need to communicate.

Three kinds of information gap activities

1. Guessing games
2. Information gap exercises for pairwork
3. Activities in which students exchange personal information

Guessing games

A. Guess the picture

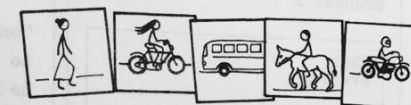
The teacher has a set of flashcards with simple pictures (e.g. clothes, food, places, actions). He or she chooses one card, but does *not* show it to the class. They must guess what it is by asking questions, e.g.:

T: Guess how I went to X.

Ss: Did you go by car?

Did you go by bus?

Did you walk?



B. Guess the sentence

The teacher writes a sentence on a piece of paper or card. He or she does not show the sentence, but writes the basic structure on the board, e.g.:

I went (somewhere) to (do something).

Students must guess the exact sentence by asking questions, e.g.:

Did you go to the park?

Did you go to school?

Did you go to the stadium?

Did you play football?

etc.

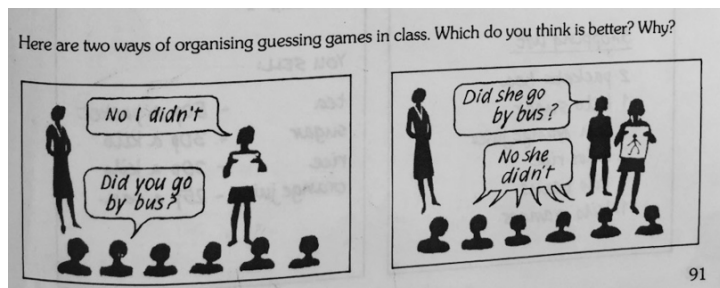
I went to the market to buy vegetables.
I went to school to /
I went to the stadium to watch a football match.

C. Mime

The teacher calls a student to the front and secretly gives her a sentence written on a piece of paper, which describes a simple activity. The student mimes the activity. The other students try to guess the situation.

You are opening a can of / You are mending a plug.
You are mending a puncture. You are changing a light bulb.

Organising guessing games



Other guessing games

- Famous people:
 - One student pretends to be a famous person who is known to the others. They try to guess who the person is.
 - Are you alive or dead?
 - Are you Japanese?
 - Are you a teacher?
 - etc.
- What and where?:
 - The teacher sends two students out of the room. The other students hide an object. The two students come back and guess what the object is and where it is hidden.
 - Is it made of wood?
 - Is it a pencil?
 - Is it on this side of the room?
 - Is it high or low?

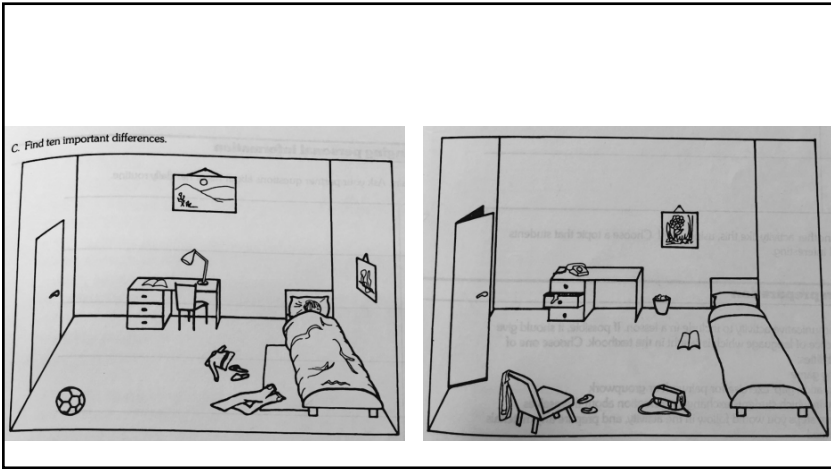
Information gap exercises

A.

STUDENT X		STUDENT Y
This evening		Tonight Kim is going to stay at home, because he wants to write a letter to a friend. Tomorrow morning he has classes as usual at college; but he has the afternoon free, so he's going to help his father repair the roof on their house. In the evening he's been invited out to a party.
Tomorrow morning		
Tomorrow afternoon		
Tomorrow evening		

B.

STUDENT X	STUDENT Y
<u>Shopping list</u> 2 packets tea 1 kilo sugar 1 Can orange juice 2 kilos rice 1 kilo beans 1 kilo oranges	YOU SELL: tea - 50p a packet sugar - 30p a kilo rice - 20p a kilo orange juice - 25p a can



Advantages and problems

Advantages	Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They provide intensive and interesting language practice.• Although the exercises are quite controlled and use simple language, the students are really exchanging information and using language communicatively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They can easily be done in a small class.• In a large class, there are the following problems:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Preparation:</i> for a class of 40, the teacher would have to make 20 copies of each half of the exercise.• <i>Organisation:</i> the teacher would have to distribute 40 pieces of paper, make sure students in each pair get different parts of the exercise.