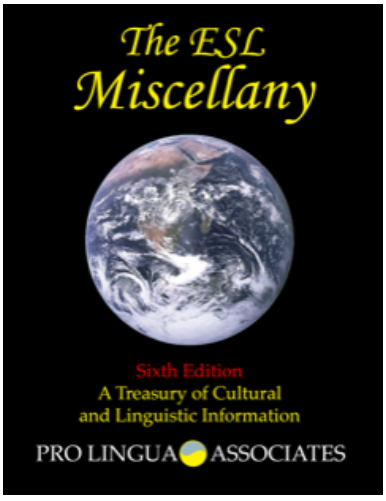
Newton Free Library

English Language Learning and Literacy Newsletter

August 2021

Welcome to my first monthly newsletter! Some of you have asked whether the ELL newsletter would be returning; as you can see, the answer is yes! In these newsletters you'll find updates about the ELL and Literacy program, suggested texts and resources for you and your students, tech tips, and more. I plan to send this newsletter out once a month and make past editions available on the ELL website.

Check It Out!



Where can you find lists of proverbs, phrasal verbs (throw out, into, and so on), and animal sounds (an owl hoots, a snake his etc.)? How about the lyrics to classic nursery rhymes, idioms re to the body (cold feet, pull one's leg, etc.) and differences betw American and British English? All of these and much more are *ESL Miscellany: A Treasury of Cultural and Linguistic Informati* a great book for ELL teachers or tutors to find new and interest conversation/lesson ideas. Advanced students may find it help well. We have a few copies of the two most recent editions her Newton, and older editions are available elsewhere in the Minu network. You can read more about it on the publisher website.

This month I'm also recommending an online resource, VOA Learning English, which is part of the US government's Voice o

America broadcasting service. It contains many news articles g
toward English learners, which they can read and listen to
simultaneously; the language is modified, and the articles are r
slowly and clearly. There is a great video series aimed at begir
called Let's Learn English. There are also many ongoing series
intermediate to advanced learners, such as Everyday Gramma
English in a Minute (focused on idioms), and American Stories
(adaptations of classic short stories).

Tech Tip

It's important for English learners to both **see** and **hear** new words. How can you accomplish this while tutoring or teaching on Zoom or other online platforms? Writing them in the chat is one option, but I would suggest using a **virtual whiteboard**. This can be as simple as a blank Word document that you show by sharing your screen, but there are some online tools that make for a richer experience, such as Google Docs and Padlet. (Zoom has a built-in whiteboard, which is better than nothing, but it's not my preferred option.) For example, in a Google Doc, you can easily find and insert an image of a word you're trying to explain. You can also share the document with your student, who can write on it and save it for further reference.

For a demonstration of this and more tips, I am planning the first in a series of tech-related workshops for ELL volunteers. This one will focus on using Zoom and similar platforms more effectively while tutoring or teaching online. There will be three sessions to accommodate different schedules: Tuesday, August 24, from 10:00 to 11:30 AM; Wednesday, August 25, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM; and Thursday, August 26, from 2:00 to 3:30 PM. Click on one of these links to sign up, and feel free to put specific requests or questions on the registration form. If you can't make it but would like to schedule a time to talk one-on-one, just let me know!

Program News

I have enjoyed learning about the ELL program and meeting many of you over the past several weeks! If we haven't had a chance to exchange emails or talk in person or by phone, please reach out when you have a chance. Here are some updates about the program:

- Assessments of new students will resume this month.
- There will be an introductory workshop for new tutors in September.
- More classes will start in September, mostly online but with a couple planning to meet in person.
- The Newton Free Library is working on a new website. The ELL page will include a list of recommended online resources.

Aspects of the program that I am hoping to continue (with some updates) from Susan's tenure are: Talk Time, the tutor blog; Express Yourself, the online publication

for student writing; tutor workshops led by ELL experts; and One Book, One Program. Of course, all of these things will take time!

Reminders and Announcements

- If you filled out the survey that I sent last month, thank you! If you didn't, please take a moment to fill out this shorter one, even if you're not actively tutoring anyone. The purpose is to provide me with accurate information for my new database, especially regarding students and tutors who stopped due to the pandemic. I have added all the information that I have received, but I know there are tutors out there whom I haven't heard from yet.
- If you're interested in being matched with a student soon, please let me know about your current availability and your preferences for online vs. in-person tutoring.
- The ELL and Literacy study room on the third floor is available once again. To book a time, just get in contact with me.
- A former ELL student, Lingqiang, would like to help people learn Chinese, one-on-one or in a small group. Please let me know if you are interested.

If you have any feedback on this newsletter or the program, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me! You can email NewtonELL@minlib.net, call 617-796-1364, or stop by my office on the third floor of the library.

Until next time,
Andrew

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