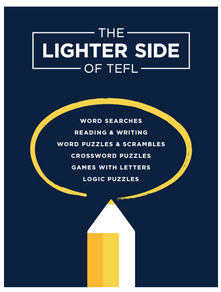
English Language Learning and Literacy Newsletter

June/July 2022

The Lighter Side of TEFL



What are two words with the same pronunciation but different spellings that mean "a reasonable ticket price"? What are two rhyming words that mean "an irritated employer"? Can you find the animal hiding in the sentence "Your comb is on the table"? How far do you have to count before using the letter A when spelling a number? (Answers are at the end of this newsletter.)

These activities are from "The Lighter Side," a recurring feature in *English Teaching Forum*, which is a journal published by the U.S. State Department. (Print editions are distributed by embassies and consulates around the world.) The activities have been compiled into the two volumes of *The Lighter Side of TEFL* ("TEFL" stands for "Teaching English as a Foreign Language"). Click on these links for Volume 1 and Volume 2. You can find PDF versions of *English Teaching Forum*, as well as many other resources, on the State Department's American English site.

These activities could be a fun addition to your lessons, perhaps at the beginning or end, and would be best for intermediate to advanced learners. Take a look and see if there's something that would be appropriate for your student!

Language Virtual

You may have seen the recent *Boston Globe* article about Language Virtual, an ELL program started by Anna Lin, a rising senior at Brookline High School. The program connects teenage tutors with young people learning English around the world for online lessons. Anna and some of her tutors are planning to share their experiences at an online event hosted by our ELL program. I'm sure they will have some interesting insights about English teaching, and I expect that this will be a valuable exchange of ideas!

The event will take place on Wednesday, July 27, at 7:00 PM. You can sign up here.

Ventures

One of my favorite textbook series is *Ventures*. It's a well-designed, multi-skill series, with each unit offering practice in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. There are six levels, and at each level there is an accompanying workbook for additional practice. For new tutors who are interested in using a textbook to help guide their lessons, I think it's a great choice.

Ventures is also very 21st century; the audio files are played through QR codes, so all you have to do is point a smartphone or tablet camera at the codes to start listening – no CD player required! There are also grammar videos that one can access through QR codes. In addition, there are online activities tied to each unit (but useful even without the book) on the Ventures Arcade website.

Program News

- There will be an information session for prospective volunteers on Thursday, June 30, at 6:30 PM on Zoom. The next training workshops for new tutors will take place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, starting July 7. Please spread the word to anyone you know who might be interested!
- We have a number of exciting ELL classes this summer. You can read about them here. If you would like to lead a similar class in the fall, please let me know.
- The ELL program is now on VolunteerMatch, Idealist, and similar websites. I am also trying to recruit new tutors through newsletters from local organizations, connections with nearby colleges, an updated brochure, and other methods. If you have more ideas about ways to reach potential volunteers, please send them my way!

Answers

The homophones are "fair fare." The rhyming words are "cross boss." The animal is a bison (com**b is on**). The first number with the letter A is one thousand.

Until next time,
Andrew

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