

# EWB NEWSLETTER

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## English Without Borders

*Community. Capacity. Connectivity.*

### IN THIS ISSUE

## About us: Welcome to English Without Borders Network

English Without Borders is a project supported by the Embassy of the United States of America and implemented by the NGO Durakhshi Marifat. The goal of EWB is to improve English language instruction and proficiency in Tajikistan. The network will achieve this goal by creating a community of Tajikistan's English teachers and learners, providing resources and programs for professional development, and facilitating connections both within Tajikistan and with the greater English-speaking world. The EWB project seeks to unite teachers and students of the English language at all levels across Tajikistan, supporting them through peer-to-peer networking, the development of pedagogical materials, online and in-person training sessions, and a train-the-trainers program to reach all corners of the country. Our mission is to build and develop a network of English Language Teachers and Students across Tajikistan to collaborate and make positive impacts on their communities. To align this expertise more precisely we will strive to advance community, capacity, and connectivity.

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# Message from U.S. Ambassador John Mark Pommersheim



Dear friends,

I welcome you to the English Without Borders Network, a project sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan. English has become the global language of opportunity, connection, and friendship. More than 1.5 billion people from almost every country of the world speak English, and English-language knowledge opens up a wide range of employment opportunities, provides a foundation for study at the world's best universities, and makes accessible vast informational resources on every imaginable topic. The English language often helps to bridge cultural divisions and foster communication among friends and partners who may share goals and values, but not a common language. In this spirit, we hope to deepen the friendship between the people of the United States of America and Tajikistan.

English Without Borders is a network of English language teachers and students, designed to improve English-language instruction and proficiency through training, collaboration, and educational resources. The network is built around the three pillars of Community, Capacity, and Connectivity. Our primary goal is to build a community of Tajikistan's English language teachers and students, giving them opportunities to collaborate and learn from each other. The network will develop high-quality resources for teaching and learning English, offer workshops and training seminars, and develop members into teacher-trainers who can then improve the capacity of their colleagues across all regions of the country. Finally, it provides a platform that members can use to connect with each other and the rest of the English-speaking world, transcending Tajikistan's formidable geographic barriers to become unified with the international community.

I hope you will find useful resources and exciting opportunities through your membership in English Without Borders. The United States looks forward to continuing our collaboration with Tajikistan and also to supporting President Rahmon's goal of improving English language abilities by 2030. I invite you to reach out to the staff of English Without Borders or the network's representative in your region with questions or creative ideas for the future of the network. I encourage you to take advantage of this great resource, which will help you open a new world of opportunities, knowledge, and connections. As the Tajiki saying goes, "Забон донӣ, ҷаҳон донӣ" (Know a language, and you know the world).

Sincerely,

John Mark Pommersheim  
Ambassador of the United States to Tajikistan

# Support Near You: Regional Representatives



**Representative in Gorno-Badakhshan  
Autonomous Oblast**

**Zeboniso Murodova** began her career in education as a high school English teacher in 2004 in Sarband (now Levakant). She graduated from the State University of Qurghonteppa (now Bokhtar) by name Nosiri Khushrav in 2004. She has 17 years of teaching experience in education. Besides teaching English language, Zeboniso was engaged in conducting extracurricular activities, and she led an English club at her school. Zeboniso was a presenter in many educational conferences and workshops at the local, regional, state, and international levels. She wrote a number of publications in local, regional, and republican journals. Zeboniso was a participant in the two of the U.S. State Department programs. She is the recipient of a number of Alumni grants.



**Representative in Khatlon Region**

**Munavar Zaripova** has 42 years of teaching experience in secondary school. Currently, she is working as a senior English teacher at the Institute of Economy and Trade of TSUC. She graduated from Leninabad Pedagogical Institute, the faculty of foreign languages in 1977. Upon completion of the TEA program,

Munavar was very eager to apply the knowledge, skills, and experience she gained from the program into practice and bring new changes in teaching methodology. Being a US Small grant holder, she conducted a myriad of professional training and workshops on using innovative teaching methods for university and secondary school English teachers of the Sughd region. Thanks to the JFDP program in 2013, she was able to study American history at Lander University, South Carolina. Her research article on the theme “Teaching American History in Tajikistan before and after Independence” was published in the book of Clemson University S.C. Her participation in ETM (English Teaching Mentor) program in 2017 enabled her to meet with other English teachers from different parts of Tajikistan and share her knowledge in Alumni Conferences and training. Munavar received an honor award “Excellence in Teaching” for her long commitment to teaching.



**Representative in Sughd Region**

**Gulnoro Zulobieva** began her career in education as a volunteer at Study-Summer-Leisure camp, while being a student. She taught human Society, managing family budgets, leading and supporting group activities, and prepared handcraft lessons to encourage student’s creativity. She has experience of teaching the English Language first at secondary school and then at Tajik State Pedagogical Institute. Gulnoro graduated from Khorog State University with distinction and holds a “Diploma of Specialist”-qualification of English Language Teacher and Linguist. During the past five years she has been working at the University of Central Asia (UCA), School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Dushanbe as an English Language Instructor. She has been teaching the students of the Academic Achievement Program (AAP) and Conversational English for various levels. She was enrolled in Postgraduate Preparatory Program (PGPP) from March to October 2016. She has earned certificates on Module one in Teacher Testing Knowledge (TKT) and CATs online. She has dedicated herself to become a life-long educator and learner and strives to install a similar desire in all the students with whom she works.



**Representative in  
District of Republican Subordination**





## Teachers' Tales: From challenges to opportunities

"I believe I was born with the desire to become a teacher" sometimes people are lucky enough to choose the profession they are destined to do and enjoy it to an extent that it motivates others to go through the same path.

Donista Solijonova – a US Global UGRAD (2005) alumni, was nominated the Best English Instructor of the Year (2020) by the School of Professional and continuous Education (SPCE). This recognition is the result of 14 years of experience and hard work in the areas of professional and personal development. "I always tried to develop a new method, apply a new activity, and gain more knowledge. I understood that when you are teaching you are learning and growing both personally and professionally", mentioned Donista in one of her previous interviews.

Over the last 14 years of teaching English, Donista contributed to the development of the English language proficiency of over 3500 students. Through her inspirational teaching, support, and guidance, many of her students are now English teachers, translators, and professional workers at various international and governmental institutions.

Donista is a great role model for all other English instructors because she is really passionate and committed to teaching. She regularly updates her knowledge, and she is open to new ideas and methods of teaching English. Donista defines her success in her students' achievements and here how she describes it: "My success is hundreds of my students studying and earning their degrees abroad, and many others doing a career in teaching whom I have supported and guided since the start of their teaching journey. My success is the smile on my students' faces and their desire to continue studying and developing. Their achievements are my happiness, their success is our mutual luck, and their positive thoughts and ideas are my motivation and inspiration".

"I believe I was born with the desire to become a teacher"

Donista Solijonova



# U.S. English Language Fellows' Experience in Tajikistan

Linda worked as an English Language Fellow with the U.S. State Department from August 2018 to June 2019. She worked at the Tajik State Pedagogical University (TSPU) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Linda came to Tajikistan with many years of experience as a teacher-trainer. During her time at TSPU, Linda worked with English language instructors to introduce new, communicative style methods, and ideas for improving English language teaching at the university. She visited many classrooms where she taught mini-lessons or co-taught using interactive materials and methods. Students enjoyed asking questions about life in the United States and teaching their visiting instructor about life in Tajikistan.

Linda also developed and conducted three-day English Language Teaching workshops for teachers from all over Tajikistan and Afghanistan. She was later able to travel to various parts of Tajikistan to observe her participants, and encourage them to continue learning new teaching methodologies. She also assisted teachers in developing presentations, and she traveled to Kazakhstan with a group of teachers to attend and present at a teaching conference.

In addition to training teachers, Linda worked with students at TSPU. She started a reading club where students met once a week to discuss readings, and learn new vocabulary. She also worked with students who were studying for the Olympiad English Language Competition, and she enjoyed spending time with the volunteers at the American Space.



*Linda Marie Chu,  
M.A. TESOL, Eastern Michigan University*

Linda very much enjoyed her time in Tajikistan. She was able to travel to many parts of the country, but especially enjoyed the scenery hiking in the Fann mountains, and her trip to the Pamir mountains. She hopes to return one day to visit her friends and to taste her favorite Tajik dish, qurotob.

Currently, Linda is a member of the TESOL Career Path Development Professional Learning Network Leadership Team

## ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN TAJIKISTAN

The English Language Fellow Program fosters mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries by sending talented, highly qualified U.S. educators in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) on ten-month fellowships to overseas academic institutions in all regions of the world. The Program promotes English language learning and enhances English teaching capacity abroad. Through U.S. embassy projects, Fellows share their expertise, hone their skills, gain international experience, and learn about other cultures.



# Student's Essay: Reconnected in a Disconnected World

by *Marhabo Akmalzoda*

*Grade 11, School #35 Kushoniyon District.*

When I was 15 years old, I had a golden opportunity to improve my English language for free through the English Access Microscholarship Program in my School #35. I remember the first day when I entered the classroom. I did not think that I would learn English in such an interactive way, full of interesting activities, and I would develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility through doing volunteering work. Nevertheless, in the beginning, I had some challenges to speak English in public. I had no confidence and courage to speak in front of others. My teacher helped me to overcome this challenge and supported me to become an active student. Our teacher brought her former FLEX students to class who shared their success stories that inspired, motivated, and gave me a hope that I would overcome my fear.

I studied hard and I gained more confidence and courage to speak in front of everyone. Everything went well, but life significantly changed in April when Covid 19 came to our country and our Access lessons were canceled. Our public school got closed too. I did not have to get up early to go to school. I didn't go to my Access lesson where I felt very happy. I became passive, and I missed meeting with friends and classmates. I lost my hope and motivation. All of our family members were at home, and we were very sad because people died of this virus. We couldn't visit our relatives. During the lockdown, most of my Access friends experienced the sadness that came from feeling lonely. Then one day I was informed that my Access lessons would take place via the cellphone. I was happy that I could reach out to my peers and my teacher. I was happy that I could hear her voice, even for ten minutes. In the beginning, I felt anxious during the phone lessons then I got used to this new experience and new way of learning. I became connected with my classmates and teacher. Access students supported each other and we built a sense of togetherness through cell phone lessons. For me, phone lessons are better than a separation of friends. I am reconnected in a disconnected world.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Did you start using EWB resources? Is there anything you would like to share with your peers, colleague, and EWB readers? Have you used materials from this newsletter or resources from our website? Or, do you have anything that you would like us to share in this newsletter? We want to hear from you!

Please check the below guidelines for your submissions:

- Articles should be approximately 200- 350 words
- Please also include a title for your article
- To submit, e-mail your article to [info@ewb.tj](mailto:info@ewb.tj) and [pr@ewb.tj](mailto:pr@ewb.tj). Include "EWB newsletter submission" in the subject line of your submission e-mail.
- Include your first name, last name, and a contact e-mail address in the body of your message.
- We will work with you via e-mail to edit and proof your submission prior to publication.
- Articles should be sent as an attachment in Word format only.
- Related pictures are highly encouraged to be submitted along with your article.
  - Attach images to the same e-mail as your article submission in .png or .jpg format.
  - Images should be high quality
  - Include a short (1 sentence) caption of each image.



## Teaching Tools: Warm-up ideas

### Fitting In Writing about a Topic Related to the Lesson

Give the students any topic and suggest that they **write down as many true facts as they know about this topic**. For example, they can write down the facts about dogs.

### Fitting In

Show your students a bowl, a flower pot, a basket, or any similar item, and suggest that they name the items that would fit into this bowl/pot/basket.

### Odd One Out

Name or write down a range of concepts or items and tell your students to **find one concept or item that does not fit in**. The odd concepts and items should be somewhat related to other concepts and items in the range, but still, have some slight differences, so they should be not that easy to guess. For example, “table, chair, bed, fridge, sink” – the bed is odd because in most cases you cannot find a bed in the kitchen. However, some students could also name a fridge or sink, and it makes this task a bit complicated. You can also encourage the students to make up their own range of concepts or items with odd ones.

### Idioms

In this vocabulary warm-up exercise, you should give the students one word and suggest that they think of **idioms that contain this word**. For example, “blue” – “out of the blue”, “feel blue”, etc. They can also make up the sentences with those idioms.

### Questions

Write down different questions on pieces of paper, put them in a basket, and turn on some music. Ask the students to sit in a circle and hand this basket over to each other until you stop the music. The person who is holding the basket at that moment should take a piece of paper out of the basket and answer the question.

### What can you tell about cookies?

Give out cookies or other sweets to everyone, and tell the class to describe the sweets – their color, shape, etc. – and **analyze their quality**, such as taste, crispiness, etc. They can also tell a story about those sweets.

### Categories

The leader thinks of a category, such as “fruit”. In a circle, everyone should **name a fruit within a limited time period** – the leader usually counts to five. If someone takes too long to give an answer or gives an incorrect answer, then that person is out and a new category begins. In the end, only one person remains.

### Word chain

The students toss a ball to each other and name the words that start with the last letter of the previous word, forming the chain. For example, “ball” – “lamp” – “pie”, and so on.

### Empty Comics

Find a comic strip and wipe out the words from the bubbles. The students should guess what the comic characters are saying.

*We hope that this list of ESL warm-up activities will help you plan more effective lessons for your students and keep them engaged throughout the entire lesson. If you're looking for more games and activities, check out our next newsletter edition.*

# Icebreaker Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

*Two Truths and a Lie is a great icebreaker activity in which students use interviewing, presentation, listening, and critical reasoning skills to determine if what a classmate is saying is true. Students work in pairs, interviewing each other about personal details, and then present three “facts” to the class about their partners. The catch is that one of the facts is untrue, and it is the other students’ job to determine which statement is false. Note that due to cultural or religious background, some students may not be comfortable with lying. In that case, consider omitting it entirely or adapting it*

## Preparation

None

## Procedure

1. Model the activity by telling the class three “facts” about yourself, letting students know that only two of these facts are true. Ask the students to vote on or guess which of the statements is untrue.
2. Explain to students that they will do the same thing, but they will present three “facts” about their partner; however, only two of these facts will be true. Their job is to try to fool the class with the false fact. Let them know how long they will have to present.
3. Group students into pairs and give them six minutes (total) to interview each other. Ring the bell or let them know when three minutes have elapsed so they can trade roles of interviewer/interviewee.
4. Give students a specific amount of time to present the three “facts” about their partners. Usually, 30–45 seconds per person is sufficient. After each presentation, let the class vote by a show of hands on which of the three facts was not true.

## Variations

1. If you are working on a certain verb tense/mode, require that the students use only that one to present facts about their partner.
2. If you have students who are beginners, consider skipping the interview portion and have them present about themselves instead. Additionally, you can have beginners write the statements first, coaching them with grammar and pronunciation before they present them to the class.
3. If there is cultural sensitivity to a game that involves lying, consider omitting this activity entirely, or possibly changing the name to Exaggeration Game, where students need to exaggerate one fact about their partners (rather than lie).
4. This activity can be used after a holiday or break to have students give two truths and a lie about what they did during their time away

## Example (Student Presentation)

*Student (Heber):* This is my classmate, Adriana. Adriana has run five kilometers without stopping. She has never eaten sushi. Adriana has cooked dinner for more than 15 people.

*Teacher:* Thank you, Heber. Now let’s vote on which statement your classmates believe to be false. Okay everybody, what was the first statement?

*Class:* Adriana has run five kilometers without stopping.

*Teacher:* That is correct. If you don’t believe that is true, raise your hand.

## When to Use it

- As an icebreaker for students to get to know one another
- As a warm-up after a holiday

## Level



## Skills



## Practice



## Materials

None

## Preparation Time

None

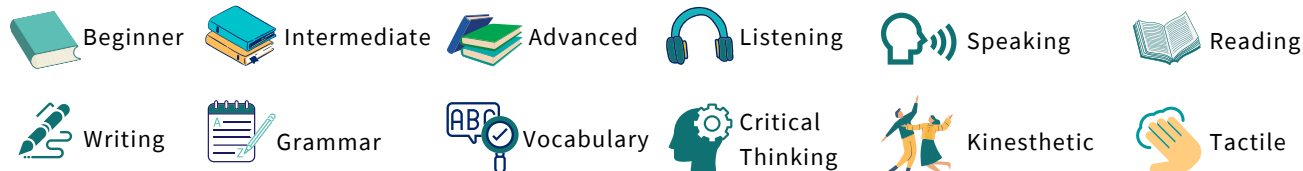
## Activity Time

2 minutes per student plus 10 minutes for introduction and interviewing

## Contributor

Melanie Brooks, M.A. Linguistics, has worked as a Fellow, Senior Fellow, and Specialist in various regions. Specializing in online instruction, she currently heads up global training for a Swiss-based investment firm.

This game was delivered from The Monster Book of Language Teaching Activities. page 67.





# News and Opportunities

## Call for Proposals: English Master Workshops

The English Without Borders Network (EWB) welcomes proposals to conduct professional development workshops for diverse groups of English Language Teaching professionals on the following themes:

- Innovative Teaching in English
- Enhancing Teaching skills
- Leadership in Teaching English
- Capacity building of teachers: using technology and digital tools
- Student-centered or competency-based learning
- Interactive teaching in elementary schools
- Teaching English in vulnerable communities
- Activities related to improving teaching English at all levels

### Submission Requirements

The (a) Training Proposal Narrative Template and the (b) Training Budget Summary Template make up the complete training proposal package.

### Who's Eligible?

- English language teachers (at least 50% FTE) who are currently working in a primary school, secondary school, university, or private educational institution in Tajikistan.
- Applicants must have a minimum of three (3) years of teaching experience. English language teachers from remote areas of Tajikistan are encouraged to apply.

### Get Involved

What question do you have about English? Send us an email at [info@ewb.tj](mailto:info@ewb.tj) and see the answer to your question on our website: [www.ewb.tj](http://www.ewb.tj) under the **Ask a Teacher** section.

## English Teacher of the Year Award

We are pleased to announce the English Teacher of the Year 2021 Award and are accepting applications/nominations from all teachers across Tajikistan.

### Purpose

The EWB Network recognizes the hard work and dedication required to be an outstanding teacher. The English Teacher of the Year Award will be an annual event held by the EWB Network and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan which recognizes and honors exceptional English language teachers at all levels.

### Who's Eligible?

- Any English language teacher who:
- is a current teacher (at least 50% FTE) of English Language at a primary school, secondary school, university, or private educational institution in Tajikistan
  - has a minimum of three years of teaching experience

*To learn more about these opportunities, please visit our website and become a member of EWB.*

### Become a volunteer

If you are interested in doing volunteering work, join EWB team and make your contribution to the betterment of teaching and learning of English language in Tajikistan. To learn more about this opportunity, please visit our social media pages.

## American English LIVE: Teacher Development Series 10

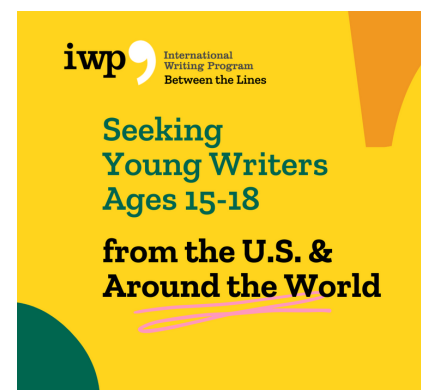
Every other Wednesday at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Eastern Time from Washington, D.C.  
January 27 - April 7, 2021



### Presentation Dates and Titles:

March 24, 2021 - 8 am and 1 pm ET  
Presentation: Differentiating Instruction (Online!) for Equity in Learning  
Presenter: Chloe Bellows

April 7, 2021 - 8 am and 1 pm ET  
Presentation: Effective Assessment Practices for Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning in an Online Environment  
Presenter: Kendra Staley



2021 Between the Lines: Peace and the Writing Experience for young writers

The U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan announces an open competition for 2021 Between the Lines: Peace and the Writing Experience for young writers. Applications must be written in English and submitted electronically no later than March 15th, 2021.

For more information, please visit U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan website.

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