

## SCAFFOLDING PART TWO: SUPPORTING LANGUAGE PRODUCTION

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Sometimes the only opportunity our students have to use the language they are learning is when they are in the language classroom. Therefore, it is important to provide many interactive practice activities during class time. However, beginner-level students often require structured practice to help them build their language confidence. With this need in mind, this week’s Teacher’s Corner will present scaffolding techniques that are useful for giving beginner-level students the structured practice they need to produce English in meaningful ways.

### SENTENCE STARTERS AND FRAMES

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Sentence starters and frames provide structure for producing oral and written language. The structures can be very simple (with one or two words missing) or more open-ended. In the chart below are some examples of sentence starters and frames and the types of responses learners may give.

Topic/Vocabulary	Sentence Starter/Frame	Example Learner Response
Breakfast foods	Today I had _____ for breakfast.	Today I had <u>eggs and toast</u> for breakfast.
After-school activities	After school, I like to _____.	After school, I like to <u>play with my friends</u> .
Personal characteristics	My name is _____. I am ___ years old. I have _____ hair and _____ eyes.	My name is <u>Sarah</u> . I am <u>14</u> years old. I have <u>brown</u> hair and <u>green</u> eyes.
Ordering a meal	I would like the _____, with _____ to drink, please.	I would like the <u>soup</u> , with <u>water</u> to drink, please.

Starters and frames can be used when posing questions for learners to answer. You can write the frame on the board and model a response before asking students to form their own responses. When using frames for writing, as students become more proficient, you can include additional sentence frames to help students add more details.

### WORD BANKS AND WORD WALLS

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Word banks and word walls are excellent tools to use in conjunction with sentence frames because they help students to connect vocabulary with language structures. As you teach a specific topic and related

sentence starters and frames, create a word list, or a “word bank,” on the board or a poster. Include illustrations or pictures if possible. As students are asked to produce language using the sentence frames, they can refer to the word bank to help them recall the necessary vocabulary. Below are examples of word banks for the topics of the sentence frames discussed above.

Topic/Vocabulary	Sentence Starter/Frame	Example Word Bank
Breakfast foods	Today I had _____ for breakfast.	Eggs, toast, rice, cereal, fruit, coffee, milk, juice
After school activities	After school, I like to _____.	Play, sleep, eat, read, watch TV, do homework
Personal characteristics	My name is _____. I am ____ years old. I have _____ hair and _____ eyes.	Number and color words
Ordering a meal	I would like the _____, with _____ to drink, please.	Restaurant foods: soup, hamburger, stew, pizza, sandwich, pie, rice Drinks: water, soda, juice, coffee, milk, tea

After a topic or lesson is completed, vocabulary can be displayed on posters on a “Word Wall,” organized by topic. Alternatively, each vocabulary word can be written on an individual card (or strip of paper) and then placed on the wall. (These vocabulary cards can be organized alphabetically, by topic, or by another method). Students can also use a notebook as a personal vocabulary journal and record the words by topic to use later during writing or speaking tasks.

### THINK-PAIR-SHARE ACTIVITIES

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Think-pair-share may be a familiar classroom strategy, but it is especially useful with beginners. This strategy can also be used in conjunction with the other scaffolds discussed in the Teacher’s Corner for this week and last week.

#### **Basic Think-Pair-Share:**

1. Think: The teacher poses a question and instructs students to think about their ideas or responses. (A timer can be set if desired, or students can just be asked to think quietly for a minute.)
2. Pair: The teacher pairs students (this can be done through pre-arranged assigned seats or randomly) and gives pairs a set amount of time to discuss their ideas or responses.

3. Share: Students stop talking and return their attention to the teacher and whole class. One at a time, pairs are given a chance to briefly share with the whole class what they discussed.

This strategy is excellent to use with beginners for several reasons. First, the built-in “think time” helps beginning students gather their thoughts and ideas before they have to articulate them. Second, the “pair” portion allows beginners to process ideas and check their understanding with a peer before the final “share” with the group. The sharing portion also allows multiple students to be responsible for the information or idea being presented, which takes some of the pressure off of beginners.

The basic procedure for think-pair-share can also be adapted to include writing or to increase the number of students interacting in the group. Two variations are discussed below.

**Think-Pair-Write-Share:**

This modification adds a writing step to the basic procedure. During the “pair” portion, students can work together to write out their response. Sentence frames and word banks can be helpful during this step if students need extra support. The teacher can move around to make sure students understand the task or to assist as needed. Writing out responses also allows for students to learn with and from their peers. Then, pairs can share their written response with the class.

**Think-Pair-Share with Another Pair:**

For this variation, follow the basic think-pair-share procedure, but instead of sharing with the whole class, student pairs will share with another pair. When pairs are ready to share their ideas or responses, they join with another pair to form a small group. The pairs present their responses to each other and share ideas, and the teacher can move around the room to monitor students and to be sure everyone understands the task.