

Classroom Activities

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This section presents three stand-alone language learning activities related to the theme of gardening. Each activity is designed for students at the proficiency level indicated.

Word Garden

Level: Upper Beginner

Time required: 40 minutes

Goals: To familiarize students with simple sentence structures; to practice the simple present

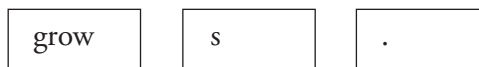
Materials: word cards

Background: This activity can be used to practice grammar and/or vocabulary. The focus is on the simple present tense, in the context of gardening. The activity gives students practice adding “s” to the end of verbs in the third person singular, and it familiarizes them with gardening vocabulary.

Preparation:

1. Create word cards. Each card should have no more than one word; some cards will have only word endings. Punctuation should also be on a

separate card. Here are examples for the word *grow* (*grow + s*) and a period:



Use the six sentences below to make cards. (It is possible to have more or fewer than six sentences if you like.)

- The gardener plants the seed.*
- The gardener waters the seed.*
- The sun shines on the soil.*
- The seed grows roots in the soil.*
- The plant sprouts out of the soil.*
- The plant becomes a beautiful flower.*

The set of cards for the sentences appears in the Word Garden Card Set below.

Word Garden Card Set

The	gardener	plant	s	the	seed	.		
The	gardener	water	s	the	seed	.		
The	sun	shine	s	on	the	soil	.	
The	seed	grow	s	roots	in	the	soil	.
The	plant	sprout	s	out	of	the	soil	.
The	plant	become	s	a	beautiful	flower	.	

Classroom Activities

2. Cut out the cards. Be sure to keep the words that make up each sentence together in a set.

Procedures:

1. Demonstrate the activity by writing a sample sentence on the board with the words written out of order. The sentence should be in the present simple tense and have an “s” card, as in *The moon shines at night*.

night	shine	.	The	s	moon	at
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As a class, have students put the words in the correct order to form a sentence.

2. Arrange your class into small groups. There should be as many groups as there are sentences (in this case, six). If you have a very large class, you can double (or triple) the number of groups and make two (or three) copies of each sentence; more than one group can work on the same sentence. If you have a small class, have students work in pairs or give groups more than one sentence.

3. Give each group the set of cards for one sentence. Tell students to work together to put the words in the correct order to form a sentence. Once the students believe that they have organized the sentence correctly, have one member of each group write the sentence down on a piece of paper or in a notebook.

4. Rotate each set of word cards so each group gets a different sentence. Follow the same procedure as in Step 3. Continue to rotate the sentences until each group has arranged all six sentences.

5. Ask each group to read one of its sentences, and as a class decide if the sentences are correct. Once someone reads a sentence, write it on the board. Allow students to make corrections to the sentences on the board and to the sentences they have written down.

6. Tell students to work in their groups again, this time to arrange the sentences in the correct order in terms of what happens when a flower grows. What happens first? Second? Third? And so on.

7. To check answers, have students read out their sentences. On the board, write the number 1 beside the first sentence, the number 2 beside the second sentence, and so on. Or you could ask stu-

dents to come to the board to write the sentences, one by one, in order.

Note: At times, students may disagree as to which sentence goes before another. This is fine. In some cases, there is more than one correct answer. For example, “The sun shines on the soil” can come before or after “The gardener waters the seed.” However, “The plant sprouts out of the soil” cannot come before “The gardener plants the seed.”

Students might also form a sentence with a plural subject, as in *The gardeners plant the seed*. This could also be correct. However, in some cases, a plural subject would not make sense; forming the sentence *The suns shine on the soil* would not be correct because there is only one sun!

Variations

1. In the first sentence, use *seeds* instead of *seed*. That way, students will have a chance to work with singular subjects in three of the sentences and plural subjects in the other three; the last three sentences would then be as follows:

The seeds grow roots in the soil.

The plants sprout out of the soil.

The plants become beautiful flowers.

2. In groups, have students write sentences of their own and make word cards. Then have groups exchange their word cards and try to put them in the correct order.

3. Use this activity with any level, for any grammar point, and with any context. For intermediate-level students, the sentences could relate to the steps in the process for doing a particular task.

Extensions

1. Have each group write the words it has from the end of Step 4 on larger pieces of paper (one word per paper, large enough for the rest of the class to see) and stand up, holding the word cards in order so that the sentence is correct. Next, as a class, have the students move around so that all groups are standing with their sentences in the correct overall order.

2. Have students draw a picture for each stage of growth of the flower. They can write the appropriate sentence under each picture.

Gardening Grammar Game

Level: Intermediate

Time required: 30 minutes (This can vary depending on how much time you want to allot for grammar review.)

Goals: To use a board game to review grammar

Materials: copies of the board game, game pieces, copies of cards

Optional materials: prizes for the winners

Preparation:

This game should be used to review the present perfect tense. (The game can be adapted to review another grammar point, vocabulary, or spelling, however.)

Students should already have learned the present perfect (*have/has* + past participle), the placement and use of *yet* and *already*, and the placement and use of *ever* and *never*.

Procedures:

1. Create the game cards:
 - a) Select your grammar point (subject-verb agreement, word order in questions, etc.).
 - b) Create a minimum of 30 examples of sentences using this grammar point. In some sentences, the grammar should be correct; in others, it should be incorrect.
 - c) Write one of the sentences on each card, and indicate whether the grammar is correct or incorrect. If it is incorrect, you might want to write the correct sentence at the bottom of the card.
 - d) On the back of the cards, write a point value of 1, 2, or 3. This can be done at random, or you can base the point value on the difficulty of the sentence. (Rather than assigning point values, you can have students flip a coin to determine how many points they receive, with one side of the coin worth one point and the other side worth two points.)

Options for creating game cards: You can make one set of cards, photocopy, and distrib-

ute. If your students are able, groups of students can create cards for other groups to use in the game.

2. Create the game board: You can make photocopies of the game board at the end of this activity and distribute it, or you can draw the game board on the chalkboard and have students copy it. (You can also create your own game boards to meet different objectives.)

3. Create game pieces: Game pieces can be anything small enough to fit on one square of the game board and different enough so that each student knows his or her own game piece. Possibilities include little pieces of paper with students' names, stones, beans or paper clips of different colors, and different coins.

4. Start the game: Have students form groups of 3 or 4 (making sure you have a game board and enough game cards and game pieces for each group).

Game Rules

1. Students should be sitting or standing around the game board. All students place their game pieces on the *START* square.
2. Decide which student goes first. (The order can be determined by the alphabetical order of names, reverse alphabetical order of names, youngest to oldest, oldest to youngest, etc.) The student to the left of the player who is going to take the first turn draws a card, making sure the other players cannot see it, and reads the sentence on the card to the first player.
3. The first player has to decide whether the sentence is correct or incorrect. If the sentence is grammatically correct, the player simply says "Correct." If the sentence is incorrect, the player says "Incorrect"—and must also say the correct sentence. If the player is right, he or she moves the number of spaces indicated on the back of the card. If the player is incorrect, he or she will not move any spaces. The player who has read the card will place it at the bottom of the pile of cards in case it needs to be reused later in the game.

Classroom Activities

4. Continue clockwise, having the student to the left read the card to the player taking a turn.
5. Several squares on the game board give special instructions; remind players to follow these instructions if they land on those squares.
6. The first player to reach the *FINISH* square is the winner.
7. (Optional) Give prizes to the winners.

Sample Game Cards

The tulips haven't bloomed already.
Incorrect.

Correct answer: The tulips haven't bloomed yet.

The potatoes haven't sprouted yet.
Correct.

Present Perfect Game Card Sentences

1. The tulips haven't bloomed already. (Incorrect. Correct answer: The tulips haven't bloomed yet.)
2. The potatoes haven't sprouted yet. (Correct.)
3. He hasn't never used pesticides. (Incorrect. Correct answers: He hasn't ever used pesticides. He has never used pesticides.)
4. I have smell the roses. (Incorrect. Correct answer: I have smelled the roses.)
5. Gardening has been a popular hobby for a long time. (Correct.)
6. Have you ever grew herbs? (Incorrect. Correct answer: Have you ever grown herbs?)
7. The insects have not damaged our plants this year. (Correct.)
8. I haven't saw many bees this year. (Incorrect. Correct answer: I haven't seen many bees this year.)
9. We have has little rain this year. (Incorrect. Correct answer: We have had little rain this year.)
10. My father has planted the seeds yet. (Incorrect. Correct answers: My father has planted the seeds. My father has planted the seeds already. My father hasn't planted the seeds yet.)
11. My neighbors have planted corn this year. (Correct.)
12. Our family has always grew our own vegetables. (Incorrect. Correct answer: Our family has always grown our own vegetables.)
13. We hasn't planted anything in our garden for many years. (Incorrect. Correct answer: We haven't planted anything in our garden for many years.)
14. Have you ever receive roses? (Incorrect. Correct answer: Have you ever received roses?)
15. We haven't found any weeds yet. (Correct.)
16. Have you yet eaten tomatoes from the garden? (Incorrect. Correct answers: Have you eaten tomatoes from the garden yet? Have you already eaten tomatoes from the garden? Have you eaten tomatoes from the garden already?)
17. Carrots have always been my favorite vegetable. (Correct.)
18. Has she water the plants? (Incorrect. Correct answer: Has she watered the plants?)
19. Have you yet planted your garden? (Incorrect. Correct answers: Have you planted your garden yet? Have you already planted your garden? Have you planted your garden already?)
20. Have you buy seeds yet? (Incorrect. Correct answer: Have you bought seeds yet?)
21. I have ever seen an apple tree. (Incorrect. Correct answers: I have never seen an apple tree. I haven't ever seen an apple tree. I have seen an apple tree.)
22. Where has the sun go? (Incorrect. Correct answer: Where has the sun gone?)
23. Butterflies have always liked our garden. (Correct.)
24. Has your brother shoveled the dirt? (Correct.)
25. Has she cutted the grass? (Incorrect. Correct answer: Has she cut the grass?)
26. April has always been the best time to plant vegetables in my country. (Correct.)
27. The gardener has trim the bushes. (Incorrect. Correct answer: The gardener has trimmed the bushes.)
28. The apples haven't gotten ripe yet. (Correct.)
29. The birds have ate all of our seeds. (Incorrect. Correct answer: The birds have eaten all of our seeds.)
30. The gardener has improved the soil. (Correct.)

Gardening Grammar Game Board

<p>20 Rain has made your plants grow. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	21	22	23	<p>24 FINISH</p>
19	18	17	16	<p>15 Your flowers have bloomed. Move ahead 3 spaces.</p>
<p>10 You have watered your garden. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	11	12	13	14
9	8	7	6	<p>5 Your tomatoes have grown. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
START	1	2	3	4

Growing Gardening Metaphors

Level: Upper Intermediate/Advanced

Time required: 60 minutes

Goals: To introduce (or review) the concept of metaphors and how to use them in writing; to review gardening vocabulary; to use gardening vocabulary in metaphors to describe people

Materials: chalk and chalkboard or markers and large paper

Optional materials: copies of the Metaphor Chart; paper for students' metaphors; magazines, markers, or crayons; dedicated wall to hang students' work

Procedures:

1. Introduce students to the concept of metaphors. Write an example on the board:

Teachers are gardeners. They cannot make a flower bloom, but they can help it grow.

Ask students, "Are teachers really gardeners?" (Students might point out that some teachers are also gardeners in their free time, but when teachers are teaching, they are not really gardeners.) Then ask students, "In what ways are teachers similar to gardeners?" (Possible answers include "Teachers help students grow. Gardeners help flowers and other plants grow," and "Teachers provide the necessary tools and support to help a student

grow but cannot make them learn or be successful. Gardeners provide the necessary elements to help flowers grow but they cannot guarantee that the flowers will bloom.")

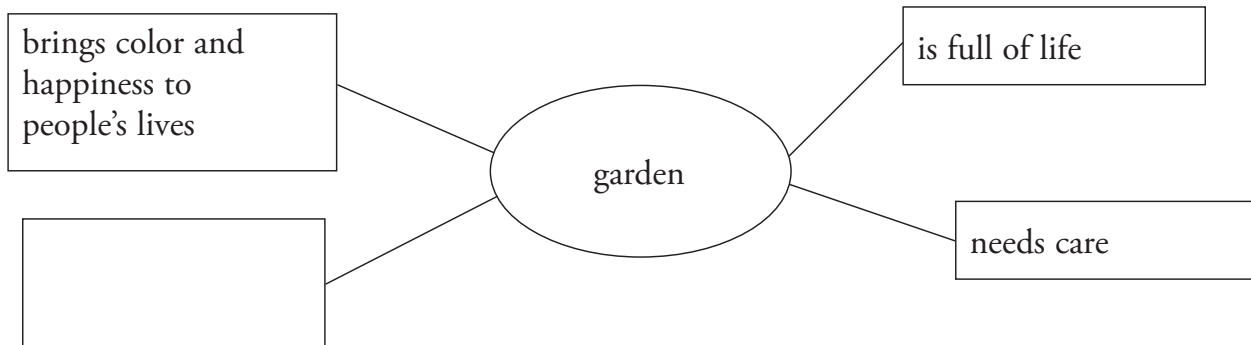
Ask students if they know what a statement that makes a comparison like "Teachers are gardeners" is called. Tell students that this is an example of a metaphor. Explain that a metaphor is a tool used in literature to compare two things that are usually considered to be unrelated, and that we can use metaphors to make our writing more interesting, to suggest relationships, and to help readers look at things in new ways.

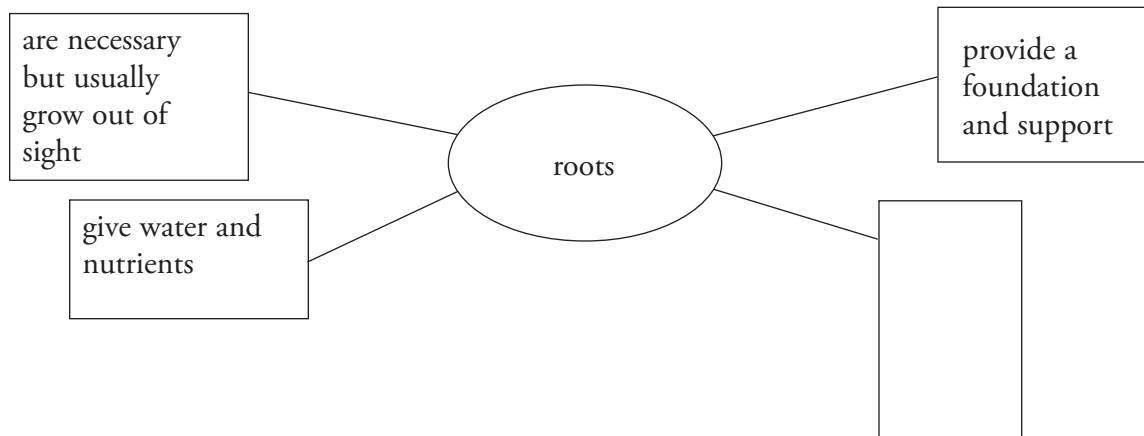
Ask students if they know of—or can think of—any other examples of metaphors.

2. Prepare students to describe garden vocabulary. As a class, brainstorm words related to gardens. Examples include *roots, flowers, soil, branches, insects, bees, rain, water, sunlight, weeds, gardener, vegetables, leaves, fertilizer.*

Again as a class, brainstorm ways to describe two of the words on the list. Use a graphic organizer to help students see relationships (two examples have been started in Gardening Graphic Organizers). In pairs, have students select a third word from the list and create their own graphic organizer to describe the word.

Gardening Graphic Organizers





Ask students if any of the descriptions remind them of someone they know. To trigger ideas, you might want to share examples such as these:

My sister is a garden of tulips. She brings color and happiness to my life.

Parents are the roots of a tree. They determine the strength of the family.

3. Prepare students to generate ideas for metaphors of their own. Write the Metaphor Chart on the board or make worksheets for students. In groups or pairs, have students complete the chart to help them feel more comfortable with metaphors. (Remember that there really aren't right or wrong

answers. But to check for further understanding, you can ask students to describe why they think the garden word and the person are similar. This is an opportunity for students to be creative with words and use their imaginations.)

The two blank rows at the bottom of the chart are for students to choose their own people to describe. They can choose a group of people or a specific person they know.

Go over students' ideas as a class. Hearing each other's descriptions may spark new ideas. Be positive and encouraging, as all answers will be different!

Metaphor Chart

People	Description	Related "garden word"
students	young, growing, need nurture	seeds
teachers	give guidance, shape lives	gardeners
parents	support their children	
families		
babies		

Classroom Activities

4. Now it's time for students to write their own metaphors. Have each student choose a person. It can be someone the student knows (e.g., a best friend or a grandparent), a well-known person (e.g., an entertainer or an athlete), or a group of people (e.g., artists or older siblings). Students might want to choose a person or group of people they described in the Metaphor Chart.
5. Tell students they will be writing an extended metaphor about the person or people they have chosen. Have them brainstorm a garden word that reminds them of the person they chose. Then have them write out the characteristics of the person/people (as they did in the Metaphor Chart) as well as a description of the garden word (as they did in the Gardening Graphic Organizer). Students are then ready to write an extended metaphor—a comparison with a detailed description—about the person or people they have selected.

Here is an example:

Teachers are gardeners. They cannot make a flower bloom, but they can help it grow. Gardeners can't control the weather, but they can prepare their plants for what may come. Good gardeners know that every seed will have different needs; each needs its own amount of soil, sunlight, and water. Gardeners must know that they don't see results immediately. Gardening takes a lot of patience, but gardeners' rewards comes when they see their flowers bloom.

Extensions

1. In pairs, have students review each other's work. Encourage students to write positive comments about things they like about their partner's work. Let students know they can make suggestions on spelling, grammar, and punctuation as well as on ideas.
2. Once students have finished peer reviewing, have students make revisions based on their partners' suggestions.
3. Have students create final drafts. Students can also add a collage of drawings, pictures from a magazine, or anything else they can use to decorate their extended metaphor.

4. Use a wall of the classroom as a place to hang students' work.

Variations

1. If possible, take students to a garden to do this activity—especially the steps where they brainstorm and describe garden-related terms.
2. Students could create metaphors with a theme other than gardening (e.g., animals). Or they could use garden-related metaphors to describe things instead of people (such as comparing a garden to a school). Or they could compare specific plants (e.g., a pine tree, a rose, a vine) to people or to other things.

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