





















## Instructional Techniques to Promote Language Learning





	<b>SPEAKING</b> 	<b>LISTENING</b> 	<b>WRITING</b> 	<b>READING</b> 
<b>Jigsaw</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>A <b>cooperative technique</b> that encourages learners to become experts in one aspect of a particular topic and then teach it to their base group. The various components come together to form a complete understanding of a topic and allow reading to be divided into manageable chunks and accommodated to varying language levels.</p>				
<b>Kinesthetic sentence/word/letter strips</b>	✓ (not the focus but often used)	✓ (not the focus but often used)	✓	✓
<p>A <b>literacy technique</b> that encourages learners to physically organize letters to form a word, words to form a sentence, sentences to form a chronological/ logical paragraph.</p>				
<b>Inside/outside Circles</b>	✓	✓		✓
<p>A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to practice oral interaction (and/or review concepts) in a structured context. Learners in the inside circle receive a prompt or question on a card and address it to person facing them on the outside. When signal is given, outside circle rotates one to left. Half way through process, roles of inside and outside switch.</p>				
<b>Speed meeting</b>	✓	✓		✓
<p>A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to practice oral interaction in a structured context. Learners are standing in two lines (or sitting on opposite sides of a row of desks) and each person is given a prompt or question. Each pair starts the conversation with the row on the left and then switches after 1-2 minutes to the row on the right. When the signal is given, the row on the right moves one place/ chair to the right and a new conversation begins.</p>				

	<b>SPEAKING</b> 	<b>LISTENING</b> 	<b>WRITING</b> 	<b>READING</b> 
<b>Information Gap</b>	✓	✓		
<p>A <b>communication and cooperative technique</b> that encourages learners to work cooperatively to solve gaps in knowledge by sharing information. Each pair or triad has information about a particular topic that the other members of the group do not have. They pool their information to complete the task by asking and answering questions (e.g., bus schedules, maps, Q&amp;A's).</p>				
<b>Graphic Organizers</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>An <b>organizational literacy technique</b> that encourages learners to organize information from a reading (listening) text or as a preparation tool for a writing (speaking) text. Graphic organizers can be simple graphics such as T-charts, more complex graphics such as storyboards, or more visual such as shapes and images related to topic (e.g., a flower with 5 petals for an information text about plant growth). Can also be oriented to the language level and age of language learners.</p>				
<b>Advance Organizers</b>		✓	✓	✓
<p>An <b>organizational literacy technique</b> to provide preview and preparatory information to prepare learners for a reading (or listening) task. Examples include guiding questions, key words/ information to look for and certain graphic organizers.</p>				
<b>Meet and Mingle</b>	✓	✓		✓
<p>A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to interact with one another using question or conversation prompts. As the learners enter the classroom, they randomly choose a color-coded prompt from a basket. When given the signal, learners choose a person to speak to who has a different color prompt. They group together and chat about the two topics for a specific time frame. When given the signal, they switch conversation partners.</p>				





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<b>Round Robin</b>	✓	✓	✓	
A <b>communication/cooperative technique</b> that encourages learners to brainstorm what they know about a particular topic. Learners collaboratively expand upon what the previous person has said (or written). This technique can be used to activate prior knowledge, review learning, summarize understanding, or collaboratively construct a story or factual text.				
<b>20 Questions</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to pose questions in order to guess the item that another learner represents (person/animal, place, thing). Ask yes and no questions to guess the item before reaching the 20-question limit.				
<b>Back-to-back</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to discuss a topic, enact a role play, or describe an item or a process without looking at each other. This technique encourages learners to interact without using/relying on non-verbal language (simulates telephone).				
<b>Hot Seat</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to use question forms and practice new vocabulary. The person on the hot seat stands or sits with their back to the board. The teacher or another student writes a word (preferably one that relates to the topic of the day, or is a word the class has been studying) on the board and classmates must give the person on the hot seat clues to correctly guess the word. This can be played full class, or in teams.				
<b>Talk Show</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to ask and respond to questions of a personal nature. The people on stage can be themselves or can enact famous people (e.g., singers, actors, politicians, athletes).				





	SPEAKING 	LISTENING 	WRITING 	READING 
<b>Who am I?</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to guess the identity of a famous (e.g., singer) or well-known person (e.g., a teacher in their school). The name can be affixed to the person's forehead or on a person's back (a place where it can be seen by others but not the individual). Learners ask yes/no questions to one another until they guess their identity.				
<b>Role Play</b>	✓	✓		✓
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to practice spoken interaction in authentic real-life simulations. Learners are in pairs or triads and are given roles to play in order to enact the simulations.				
<b>Draw what you hear</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to actively listen in order to follow directions. Learners are in pairs and each take a role in describing how to draw a simple object while the other listens and follows the drawing instructions. Learners can create their own drawings or use pre-drawn images distributed by the teacher to each student.				
<b>Carousel</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
This <b>cooperative communication and literacy technique</b> encourages learners to circulate the room and respond orally and in writing to varied yet interrelated prompts or questions. Each stop in the carousel requires small groups learners (triads) to read, view or listen to some sort of visual, audio and/or textual prompt and then respond to it first orally and then to note some key words or ideas on the chart paper provided. As the groups move around the various stops, they can add to or agree/disagree with words and ideas already recorded. <i>(Note: carousel and graffiti techniques can be easily combined)</i>				

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<b>Graffiti</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>This <b>cooperative literacy technique</b> encourages small groups of learners (3-5) to brainstorm or respond to prompts by creatively representing ideas or responses in words, images, and/or symbols on large chart paper. This initial graffiti brainstorming can be a springboard for further discussion or writing projects. This technique can be used with or without speaking depending on the goals of the activity. <i>(Note: carousel and graffiti techniques can be easily combined)</i></p>				
<b>Sounds around the classroom</b>			✓	✓
<p>This (early) <b>literacy technique</b> encourages learners to focus on a beginning (or ending) sound by collecting examples of words in their environment containing this sound.</p>				
<b>Bingo</b>		✓		✓ (if words)
<p>This <b>literacy technique</b> develops listening skills through pictures, words or numbers. The learner receives a bingo card and listens to a verbal prompt and then matches it with the appropriate square on the card. Game continues until learners get a row or an x or whatever is determined as the goal.</p>				
<b>Human Bingo</b>	✓	✓		✓ (if words)
<p>This <b>communication technique</b> encourages learners to circulate the room to find peers who match the descriptor or image in a particular square. Learners formulate a question based on image or prompt in the square and if peer answers affirmatively, they sign the square. Game continues until learners get a row or an x or whatever is determined as the goal.</p>				

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<b>Treasure Hunts</b>	✓	✓		✓
<p>This <b>communication technique</b> encourages learners to circulate the room to meet/find peers who match certain descriptors (e.g., someone who loves to swim) or categories (e.g., people who like broccoli). Similar to human bingo, learners formulate questions based on treasure hunt prompts and respond to questions accordingly. Game continues until learners have found a peer(s) for each descriptor or category.</p>				
<b>Surveys</b>	✓	✓	✓ (if using words)	
<p>This <b>communication technique</b> encourages learners to speak to their peers in order to collect data on certain topics. These topics can range from very simple (favorite snack food) to very complex (opinions on a controversial topic). Data is collected orally and represented graphically for group discussion.</p>				
<b>Questionnaires</b>			✓	✓
<p>This <b>literacy technique</b> encourages learners to respond to a series of questions or information gap prompts (i.e., fill in the blank). Questionnaires can contain very simple personal information questions or prompts or can contain more complex opinion-based questions. Questionnaires can be used as assessment tools or as springboards for pair or group discussions.</p>				
<b>Three-step Interviews</b>	✓	✓		✓
<p>This <b>cooperative communication technique</b> encourages learners to interact in a structured manner. Using provided or co-constructed prompts, pair groups take turns interviewing one another and then share the information gleaned with another pair or the full group. These prompts usually elicit a personal response to biographical information-type or opinion-type questions.</p>				



	<b>SPEAKING</b> 	<b>LISTENING</b> 	<b>WRITING</b> 	<b>READING</b> 
<b>Think-pair-share</b>	✓	✓	✓ (if written cues are used)	✓
This simple <b>cooperative technique</b> encourages learners to respond to a question/prompt by first taking time to reflect individually (jot down written cues), offer their thoughts with a partner, and then share something learned with larger group. To extend, partners can meet with a second set of partners to form a “Square” for the sharing.				
<b>Matching</b>		✓		✓
This <b>literacy technique</b> encourages learners to match textual (words or sentences), visual (images or graphics) or audio cues to related text or images. Examples of matching items: choosing an image that corresponds with a spoken word or phrase; matching a word to a definition; matching a series of pictures to a short narrative.				
<b>Line-ups</b>	✓ (if talking allowed)	✓ (if talking allowed)		✓ (if written text is used)
Verbal or nonverbal <b>communication (or literacy) technique</b> that encourages learners to physically create a sequence or order. Learners can order themselves chronologically by birth month or age, alphabetically by first letters of their name or the street they live on. Learners can also be given words to physically organize into a sentence, letters into a word, sentences into a narrative, or instructions into a logical sequence.				
<b>Perfect partners (physical matching)</b>	✓	✓	✓ (if words are used)	
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to find their match (definition to word; word to picture; synonyms, category matches (both vegetables), celebrity matches (both prime ministers of countries)).				

	<b>SPEAKING</b> 	<b>LISTENING</b> 	<b>WRITING</b> 	<b>READING</b> 
<b>Get your partner to say (extension taboo word)</b>	✓	✓		
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to describe a word or series of words without using the words themselves. To increase difficulty, taboo words (or words you cannot say) would be identified.				
<b>Categories</b>	✓	✓	✓ (words on category cards)	✓ (if you write the words down)
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to list/ say (brainstorm) all the words they know in a particular category within a certain time limit (e.g., words beginning with A; green objects; transportation; objects bigger than a house, science terms, emotions, etc.- or any combination thereof (e.g., animals beginning with the letter T)).				
A variation (called Stop) that may work better for some classes is to write the categories on the board (rather than using the cards) and then a team will yell, "Stop!" when they have a word under each category. Then, all other teams must stop.				
Another variation is that a team can only get a point for original words.				
<b>Corners</b>	✓	✓	✓ (if written prompts are used)	✓ (if written summary used)
A <b>communication technique</b> that encourages learners to express opinions both non-verbally (physically) and verbally. A scenario is given and learners go to the corner that most accurately represents their point of view (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). In their corners, learners discuss (and summarize in writing) rationales. Scenarios can be simple (Pizza is the best food in the world) or complex (Social media is the source of all negative interpersonal interactions).				
<b>It says, I say, and So</b>	✓	✓		✓



This is a **communication and literacy technique** that requires students to retell [It says (what is there)], reword [I say (reword)], and find meaning [And so (what did you learn from it)].

**“On the fence”**



A **communication technique** that encourages learners to express opinions both non-verbally (physically) and verbally. A scenario is given and learners need to express their opinion by standing on the left (for) or right (against) side of the line or on the line itself (“on the fence”). After learners choose their “side”, they discuss with the group around them. Scenarios can be simple (Cats as pets) or complex (Cell phone use in school).

**Four Voices**



A **literacy technique** wherein the teacher sets up a shared reading experience for students at different levels. The teacher will manipulate a text (poem, passage, etc.) by keeping some regular, bold some, italicize some, etc. The students read it aloud in a group, each person only focusing on the font that has been assigned to them. Use text enhancements on computer, or by using four differently coloured highlighters. This is a great way to complete rigorous content with language learners.

**SPEAKING**



**LISTENING**



**WRITING**



**READING**



**Talking Circle**



A **communication technique** that encourages turn-taking and the respectful sharing of ideas. Students sit in a circle and pass a talking stick from one person to the next as each learner responds to a question or prompt. Learners also have the right to pass when their turn comes up and others may not speak while the person is holding the talking stick. Learners who passed their turn can request the talking stick when they are ready to share.

**Word Sort**



This is a **literacy technique** wherein students look at related words and concepts (provided by the teacher or found in a text) and sort them into different categories. A word web or chart might be useful. Students can discuss their reasons for the different categories. A variation of this is called “word cycle,” which is when students show relationships between and among words and diagram these relationships in meaningful ways.

### Play with Intonation



A **communication technique** that encourages proper use of intonation to convey meaning. The teacher writes a list of emotions that have already been introduced (such as enthusiastic, hopeful, frustrated, surprised, cautious, reluctant, etc.) on the board. Then, write a list of common sentences on the board that can convey different meanings, depending on tone (I didn't go, I just want to say one last thing, That's hard to believe, I can't help it, I don't understand, etc.). After modelling for the class, have students work in groups to practice delivering the lines with a specific emotion. Afterwards, other groups can try to guess the emotions being portrayed.

### 5-4-3-2-1



This is a **brain break technique** to encourage movement and numeracy recognition. Students stand up and the teacher (or other leader) will have them do five different movements in descending order: Do five jumping jacks, spin around four times, hop on one foot three times, walk all the way around the classroom two times, give your neighbour one high five. Pause between each task to give students time to do it.

### Buzz Bottles



This is a **brain break technique** that encourages movement, listening, and numeracy practice. Students stand in a row or circle and start counting from 1. Every word that is a multiple of 3 must be replaced by “buzz” and every word that is a multiple of 5 must be replaced by “bottles.” Students who forget must sit down. The last student standing wins. Students could also play in teams. For example: 1, 2, buzz, 4, bottles, six, seven, eight, buzz, bottles, eleven, buzz, etc. This game requires some prerequisites of understanding in order to be accessible to everyone. It can also be adapted (only do buzz and not bottles, etc.).

### Would You Rather



This is a **communication technique** that encourages interaction and movement. The teacher (or another student) asks a ‘would you rather’ question and then students show their choice by moving to one end of the room or the other. Students will discuss and then a few students

can share with the whole class. For example: Burger King or McDonald's, Basketball or Soccer, Pen or Pencil, Read aloud or Silently, Cold Weather or Warm Weather, Homework or No Homework, School 4 days a week or 5 days a week, have bright blue teeth or have bright blue hair, be able to fly or be able to turn invisible, have one eye or have two noses, have a very strict teacher but learn a lot or have a very nice teacher but not learn much, etc.

<b>Minimum</b>	✓	✓		
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This is a **cooperative and communication** technique that encourages vocabulary development. Start at "Level 5." Write one 5-letter word on the board ("chair"). Teams take turns to call out words that begin with the last letter of the previous word ("rabbit"). Ask for a word from each team. Word must meet the "minimum" (start with the right letter) and NOT end with "y." Students can use plurals but cannot repeat words. After five words, start a new word ("board") and go one "level" up (must start with the last letter of the previous word, and be exactly 6 letters long: "dreams"). When a team gets stumped, start a countdown from 10. If you get to zero, they are out for this level.

<b>What's Missing?</b>	✓	✓	✓	
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This is a **cooperative and communication technique that encourages vocabulary development**. The teacher writes a theme in the middle of a bubble web on the board and then draws one line out from it and writes an example word (i.e., the theme might be winter and the first example word might be snow). Students will call out words to populate the web. When complete, students will stand and up turn around while the teacher erases one word and calls out, "What's Missing?". The first team to say the word gets a point.

<b>This is...</b>	✓	✓	✓ (if they write their descriptions down)	
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This is a **cooperative and communicative technique**. In this game, students make up a fictional character and give details like name, age, country, likes, dislikes, what she's wearing. Students can use sentence starters in order to create these descriptions. Then play True or False and students will answer based on the descriptions they have created (e.g., She lives in Vietnam).

<b>Answer My Questions</b>	✓	✓		
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This is a **cooperative and communication technique**. In this game, with different categories. Ask, "What Am I?" and mime an animal or job. Ask, "What am I eating?" and give verbal cues and gestures. Ask, "Where Am I?" and give description of surroundings. Ask, "Who Am I?" and give description of celebrities, superheroes, world figures, etc.). This is a great way to practice what has been taught in class. After modelled a few times by the teacher, students can play in groups, or students can take turns being the class leader.

<b>Find it Fast</b>		✓		
<p>This is a <b>brain break technique</b> that encourages vocabulary practice. In this game, a teacher calls out a colour or other trait (something round, something made of wood) and students must find an object in a room that fits the trait and get to it quickly.</p>				
<b>3 Strikes</b>	✓	✓	✓	
<p>This is a <b>communication technique</b> that encourages vocabulary practice. In this game, the teacher chooses 8 words and writes them on the board, and on 8 pieces of paper. Flip a coin or play Rock, Paper, Scissors to see which team will go first. The teacher will pull a word from the pile and students will guess the word. The teacher can provide two clues. The team gets three guesses; if they get it, they get 2 points. If not, the other team gets 1 point. Then, it is the other team's turn. Keep shuffling the papers.</p>				
<b>Phonics Slam</b>	✓	✓		
<p>This is a <b>brain break technique</b> that encourages sound/phonics <b>practice</b>. Write the ABCs, upper and lower case letters, across the board. Aa Bb Cc Dd ..... Zz. Pick two volunteers, one from each team, and when they're ready, produce a phonetic sound. The students have to race to 'slam' the letters associated with the sound AND say a word that begins or ends with it. The winner receives a point. Two new volunteers come up.</p>				
<b>Line up!</b>		✓		
<p>This is a <b>brain break technique</b> to encourage interaction, basic literacy and cooperation. <b>In this game</b> in which the teacher asks students to line up using specific criteria such as age (use day and month, not just year), height, alphabetically by middle name, hair length, etc. This can be adapted for different interactive purposes, but please note the background knowledge required for this game to be accessible to all.</p>				
<b>Think Aloud</b>		✓		

This is a **literacy technique designed to model certain tasks or strategies** used by the teacher when they are reading out loud or doing another task. The teacher will share thoughts, strategies and decisions as they “think out loud.” This makes thinking visible for students.

**Speak Body Language**



A **cooperative and communication technique** that is tied to cultural understanding of showing emotions. The teacher writes a list of gestures that reflect emotions on the board and demonstrates what each one looks like. Next, students in small groups will take turns performing the gestures. Then, as a class, discuss what emotions each pose communicates. You can extend the activity by having two students face each other and take turns gesturing and responding. You can extend again by asking students to create short plays to perform for the class in which they properly use Canadian cultural gestures.

**Stressed Words**



A **communication and literacy technique** that follows a teacher mini-lesson on stress at the word or sentence level. Students are given linguistically appropriate scripts. They will mark the stress in their scripts, take roles and practice reading. As they work through the scripts, you can add intonation, linking, and other pronunciation awareness activities.

**Gallery Walk**



A **cooperative and communication technique** designed to encourage interaction and consensus-building. The teacher places chart paper around the room, containing different questions or prompts. Groups of students move around the classroom to read what is on the chart paper, discuss it, and add to it. Time limits are essential. After all groups have visited all posters, the teacher will debrief with the class.

**A-B Partner Teach**



A **cooperative and communicative technique** designed to facilitate review of concepts and comprehension. The teacher prompts students beforehand that they will be responsible periodically throughout the lesson to reteach a portion of the content to a partner. Designate ahead of time who will be Partner A and Partner B.