

# **DICTATION**

**Miyagi October Meeting  
2005**

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## **Dictation**

Dictation probably brings back memories of frantically scribbling while the teacher drones on in the background. This kind of dictation is probably not appropriate for our students in this EFL situation.

However, dictation activities allow students to practice their listening and writing skills in a very controlled setting.

Fortunately, there is a wide range of activities that are extremely appropriate for your classes, all based upon dictation. A few of them are included in this handout.

Dictation activities have various benefits that make them suited to use with Japanese junior high school learners and easy to implement for ALTs. It is a low-stress activity for students, and allows teachers to check where students are in terms of their listening and writing skills.

It is also a skill that improves with practice, and can be targeted very specifically at students' knowledge and/or ability (unlike more general listening, for example). By making sure that all students can succeed at dictation tasks, teachers can boost student confidence and motivation.

Dictation has the following characteristics:

**Good for large groups**

Dictation activities are easy to do, even in large classes with little space. Students work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

**Good for all levels**

Because each student works individually, dictation activities allow them to work at their own pace

**Students get immediate feedback**

It is very easy and straightforward to check dictation and provide the answer immediately after finishing. This short delay between making a mistake and having it corrected means that students are more likely to

**Students can self-correct**

If teachers provide the correct answers, students can correct their own work easily. This saves teachers time, speeds up the lesson, and encourages students to think critically about their output and become more active learners.

**Highlights weaknesses with the language**

If learners have specific weaknesses or persistent mistakes, dictation activities make it easy for both teachers and students to identify them and take steps to eliminate them.

**Good for practicing target language**

Because it is very easy for teachers to control the content of dictation, it makes it easy to practice specific grammar points or language.

**Great listening comprehension practice**

Having to write down what they hear really forces students to pay attention when listening. This kind of “intensive” listening practice is a good complement to most listening, where students are trying to “skim” for specific pieces of information.

**Practice translating words to sounds**

Dictation is a great way to check, practice, and reinforce phonetic awareness. Having students try to write unfamiliar phonetically regular words will help them identify rules and will reinforce any other phonics practice they have been doing.

## Floople

What's a floople?

Clue #1:

your 1st guess:

Clue #2:

your 2nd guess:

Clue #3:

your 3rd guess:

Clue #4:

your 4th guess:

Clue #5:

your 5th guess:

## Dictation Confirmation

Students are given a piece of paper, essentially the answer sheet, they cover the answers and after each dictation by the teacher they check how close they were.

COVER THIS SIDE WITH PAPER

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Did you call her?

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Did he call them?

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Where did she eat?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Kyo wa atsui hi ni naru daro

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Kare wa tokidoki watashi no tokoro e asobi ni kuru

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Mizu wa kooru to koori ni naru

## Which one do you like better?

A questionnaire where you dictate the choices with a 'which do you like better' question and the students choose.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Variations:

- Prediction exercise where students try and guess your preferences.
- In pairs they ask and predict each other's responses.
- Trivia questions, 'Which is a country in Africa, Senegal or Greece?'

## Pair dictation

A and B dictate their sentences to one another.

Student A's sheet

1. My father cooked dinner.
2. I can run faster than my brother.
3. Do you have a blue dress?
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Student B's sheet

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. She smiles when she is happy.
5. Can I take a message?
6. I want a hamburger and a cola.

## Mad Libs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

## Monday Morning Blues

It was Monday morning and I woke up to see that my  had become . My good friend  picked me up in his/her  and took me to the hospital.

The doctor told me that I had a very bad case of  fever and my chances of living were  %.

Hearing this I became very

## Super List

Read a list of words at a high speed and the students write down as many words as they can. They then pair up and try and see if they can get all the words you read.

## What's the Connection?

Dictate words and get students to guess the category/connection

1.

*Connection:*

2.

*Connection:*

## Word Associations

You say a word. Students write it down and another word that could go with it.

e.g. teacher: "Big..." student 'Big Ben', 'Big city', 'Big Mac'

1.

2.

3.

4.

## ABC Drawing Comparison

On a sheet of paper, the students draw three scenes that utilize comparatives and superlatives based on the teacher's dictations.

C

B

A

## Battleship Bingo

Read a horizontal number first, then a vertical number. Students circle the appropriate letter. When they can make a word they yell 'Bingo'. You should specify the minimum number of letters needed per word. The students can use the letters in any order they choose.

1	C	H	A	N	O	M	P	X	S	I	B
2	F	D	U	D	N	T	Y	E	D	A	P
3	V	B	R	Z	E	I	M	I	O	B	Z
4	A	W	F	G	O	P	R	N	R	X	O
5	P	M	N	H	G	I	U	W	B	Y	U
6	Q	N	C	N	M	A	S	T	G	T	E
7	I	M	O	J	F	R	I	C	M	I	E
8	P	I	F	W	A	V	B	O	Z	W	R
9	G	R	E	K	K	A	Z	R	P	A	Q

## Categories

You read a list of words and the students write them in the appropriate category.

Big                  Small

### More Categories:

#### *The Senses*

hear, see, smell, taste, touch

Dictate words, e.g. 'pizza', 'golf', 'cat', 'coffee', and the students write it in whatever sense category they like.

#### *Body Parts*

listen to verbs and put them in right body part category, ie 'kiss = mouth', 'kick = leg'

#### *Good sentence/Bad sentence*

Read sentences that the students have been learning. The students must decide if you have read the sentence grammatically correct or not.

## Circle 2

Write a lot of words on the board.

A student comes up to the board and circles 2 words then makes a sentence which all the students must write down.

Continue until all words have been chosen.

## Word by Word

You are going to make a sentence as a class. A group writes down a word then tells the class. Second group discusses, then adds to that word (must make sense in a sentence). If the words are OK they get points, if not, they miss a turn. Continue until every group has had a chance to add a word.

## Memory Dictation

In teams, one representative from each team comes to you (in the hall) and you dictate a sentence to them. They return to their teams and tell them the sentence which the secretary writes down. Continue until everyone has had a chance to listen to a dictation. Check for accuracy.

## Story

You can do this as a *cloze activity* (fill in the blank) or a *dictogloss* (students have blank paper and write down as much info as they can) as you read the story.

Then in groups they try to recreate the story from start to finish or answer questions.

If you have any questions or comments, please drop me a line:

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All feedback welcome.