



Super Starters Wordfind!



Teacher's Guide and Reference

Introduction and Overview

This super-size word-find incorporates almost the entire corpus of vocabulary listed for the Starters level of the Cambridge Young Learner English Tests. These tests are designed to test overall communicative proficiency in English for young learners (aged 7 – 12 and studying English at primary/elementary level), and the Starters level represents the lowest level, for students from age 7 who have completed up to 100 hours instruction in English. For more information about the Cambridge YLE tests (including downloadable handbook and sample test papers), please refer to http://www.cambridge-efl.org/exam/young/bg_yle.htm. This word-find is therefore an appropriate (and hopefully very useful!) learning tool for students aged 7-12 at a beginner stage who are starting to learn a wider range of vocabulary that they can recognize (in terms of meaning), read and write with confidence. There are more than 300 words featured in the grid, divided into general thematic categories. Please note that it is not suggested for a minute that young beginner learners should be attempting to find all these words in one sitting! This supplement has a design that allows it to be applied several times over an extended period in ways that allow the teacher and students to focus on certain groupings of words that relate to their general study at any particular stage. There are various young learner language learning principles incorporated into this activity, which will be briefly outlined below.

Some Language Learning Principles Featured

Discovery Learning – Children generally enjoy discovering new knowledge on their own, and appear to be more motivated to learn and apply language skills when they are presented with activities that allow them to apply this kind of learning. A word-find activity is an effective means of facilitating a “puzzle” like vocabulary learning experience for the students.

Language Input and Peripheral Learning – One of the apparent strengths of children in terms of their capacity to absorb large amounts of language quickly is firmly rooted in various principles of SLA (Second Language Acquisition), among them the roles of comprehensible language input and non-stressful “exposure” to language. In terms of vocabulary building, there needs to be a clear context accompanying the words, but in “finding” particular words that they have already learned to use orally, it is also beneficial for them to be exposed to a range of new words placed carefully, as it were, around the “periphery” of what they happen to be concentrating on. This word-find allows students to target groupings of words with the guidance of the teacher, but it also facilitates opportunities for the students to simply “notice” lots of other English words – some of which they may know and some of which they may learn later.

Mixed Ability Classes and Open-ended Learning – In essence, all classes are “mixed ability” to some degree, but in the case of Young Learners, many classes also feature “mixed development” in terms of affective and cognitive factors. A headache for many teachers is the challenge represented in creating a classroom supplement or learning activity that does not leave half of the class bored because they are more talented than their classmates and finished the activity much quicker – or, at the opposite extreme, half the class frustrated and stressed because the activity has been geared to the ability of the quicker students and they simply can't keep up or cope. A word-find activity that contains a seemingly limitless scope of vocabulary allows a class to focus on certain groupings of words, and when quicker students finish they are free to explore further and see how many other words they know and can find – creating time for the slower students to access the key vocabulary identified by the teacher at the start of the lesson. Keeping all students in the classroom busy also allows the teacher to give more discreet one-on-one assistance to those learners that require it.

Peer Models and Group Work Activities – One prominent principle of SLA is that children tend to learn more and with more confidence when they are utilizing peers (as opposed to adults/teachers/parents) as models. The scope of this word-find allows it to be tackled in groups of three to four students. Children then can be shown effective team-work and workload sharing strategies, for example – each member of the group focusing on certain groupings of words and then alerting other team members when they have located them. Students can also watch and see how classmates actually go about the process of finding the words, giving them models/examples to follow.

Review and Recycling of Vocabulary – All students benefit from regular review and recycling/reapplication of language they have learned and/or been exposed to. Utilizing a word-find that contains all the vocabulary inside the one open grid allows students to constantly look again at words they found before, encouraging confidence and a feeling of progress and familiarity with a wide range of English words

How to Use the Super Starters Word-Find Activity

Begin by printing out the actual word-find sheet and accompanying worksheet. For learners aged 7-9, it would be a good idea to enlarge these sheets onto A3 or B4 sized paper, so that the letters on the word-find are larger and there is more space to draw pictures and write words on the accompanying worksheet.

The teacher then selects 10 words he/she would like the students to find for the lesson. The students should already have been exposed to these words as part of their regular study and/or informal communication in the classroom. The teacher may like to focus on words within a particular theme (e.g. animals, household words, etc.) or select various words from a couple or several thematic groupings. The teacher should write these words in the 10 spaces featured on the worksheet under the heading "TODAY'S WORDS!" This is the target vocabulary to be found during this particular lesson. Students and teacher discuss the 10 words featured, going over any problems with pronunciation or meaning. When students appear to know the 10 words, they are invited to sketch or draw what they are and/or mean in the picture box next to the word. Upon completing this, students (either individually or in small groups) go about hunting down the words in the actual word-find.

When students have found the 10 featured words, they may be invited to assist classmates or go on to find "bonus words". The teacher may have listed all or some of these words for them, but there should also be an opportunity for students to find and identify words independently. To stay within the targeted range of the lesson, it may be worthwhile to have students circle/color the first 10 words in a particular color, whereas bonus words feature an alternative color.

This sequence/process may be adapted to the needs of teacher and particular classrooms, but note that in the process described above students go through a certain pattern. They (1) discuss a targeted range of words, and (2) illustrate them according to how they interpret them (allowing teachers to check whether they actually understand the word and discouraging to some degree a dependence on translating directly into L1), then (3) set out to track down the words on a separate sheet of paper, finishing up with (4) opportunities for review, recycling and open-ended learning. Note that at first, this activity is likely to be very demanding on students who are very young and/or at a very low beginning stage. It is recommended that simpler word-finds featuring far fewer words and larger letters be employed as build-up activities to the Super Starters Word-find. Also note that the word-find's main worth is in its adaptability for specific sets of vocabulary and suitability to regular reapplication over an extended period of time. The "search and find" aspect of the activity is likely to motivate students in its own right, but teachers may like to incorporate positive reinforcement and/or reward systems to make the activity more exciting and worthwhile for the students.

The full listing of featured words is presented on the next page under appropriate thematic headings. On the actual word-find, these vocabulary items may be found horizontally, vertically or diagonally, both forwards and backwards – though for the most part the bulk of the words run forwards from left to right or top to bottom. In setting up the target words on the worksheet, teachers may write the words on the board, handwrite them onto the worksheet prior to copying and distributing, or actually type them into the worksheet by clicking in the word caption beside the picture boxes prior to printing out the worksheet.

Applied once or twice a month (or as part of a structured homework program) over a period of 6-12 months, students are likely to develop both skill and familiarity in applying themselves to the activity. They are also very likely to build up a great stock of sight words that allows them to read with more confidence, and the sort of ongoing exposure to words and spelling that facilitates more confidence in writing and spelling.

Thematic Listing of Vocabulary Items Featured in this Word-Find

Animals (Singular): bird | cat | chicken | cow | crocodile | dog | duck | elephant | fish | frog | giraffe | goat | hippo | horse | lizard | monkey | mouse | sheep | snake | spider | tiger

Animals (Plural): birds | cats | chickens | cows | crocodiles | dogs | ducks | elephants | fish | frogs | giraffes | goats | hippos | horses | lizards | monkeys | mice | sheep | snakes | spiders | tigers

Body and Face: arm | body | ear | eye | face | foot | feet | hair | hand | head | leg | mouth | nose

Clothing: clothes | dress | glasses | handbag | hat | jacket | jeans | shirt | shoe | skirt | sock | trousers | T-shirt

Family and Self: baby | birthday | boy | brother | child | children | dad | family | father | friend | girl | grandfather | grandmother | man | men | he | her | him | his | I | me | my | mother | mum | name | old | she | sister | their | them | they | us | we | woman | women | you | young | your

Food and Drink: apple | banana | bean | bread | breakfast | burger | cake | carrot | chicken | coconut | egg | fish | food | French fries | ice cream | juice | lemon | lemonade | lime | lunch | mango | meat | milk | orange | pea | pineapple | potato | rice | sausage | supper | tomato | water | watermelon

Home and Household: armchair | bath | bathroom | bed | bedroom | bookcase | box | camera | chair | clock | cupboard | dining room | doll | door | flower | garden | hall | house | kitchen | lamp | living room | mat | mirror | phone | radio | room | sofa | table | television | TV | toy | tree | watch | window

Classroom, Learning and Tests: alphabet | answer | board | book | class | classroom | color | colour | correct | cross | desk | English | eraser | example | floor | lesson | letter | line | no | number | page | part | pen | pencil | picture | question | right | ruler | school | sentence | teacher | test | tick | wall | word | yes

Sport, Recreation and Hobbies: badminton | ball | baseball | basketball | beach | fishing | game | guitar | hobby | hockey | kite | painting | photo | piano | picture | soccer | song | story | swim | table tennis | tennis

Transportation: bike | boat | bus | car | helicopter | motorbike | plane | train

Colors: black | blue | brown | green | gray | pink | purple | red | white | yellow

Location Words: at | in | on | here | there | under | behind | in front | between | next to

Basic Adjectives: beautiful | big | clean | dirty | double | favorite | good | happy | new | sad | small | ugly

Miscellaneous Nouns: bag | computer | day | monster | night | robot | sea | street | sun

Basic Verbs (Irregular): can | can't | catch | do | don't | draw | drink | eat | find | fly | give | go | have | know | learn | put | read | ride | run | say | sing | sit | sleep | spell | stand | swim | throw | write

Basic Verbs (Regular): ask | close | enjoy | jump | kick | like | live | look | love | open | paint | phone | play | point | show | start | stop | talk | try | walk | want | wear