

# Discover the Differences: Teacher’s Guide and Worksheets

## Overview:

“Discover the Differences” is an interactive activity designed to facilitate communication between students in a quest to find hidden information. To make the activity as “genuine” and motivating as possible, the source of the interaction is based on colorful illustrations, each of which has two slightly different versions. It is up to the students to communicate with each other using what language skills they have access to in order to specify how exactly the scene card they have differs from another student’s. The activity also seeks to encourage students to “stretch” their interlanguage, so as to be more precise and convey meaning and detail more accurately and efficiently. “Discover the Differences” can be applied in a cycle that first sees students identify and specify differences between the cards through conversation. They can then attempt to report in writing the differences they notice based on oral information gathered. The activity can then be reapplied in a strictly oral sense again, and hopefully students will have learned new strategies and language forms to convey their information. Throughout these stages, the teacher can listen and read the students’ findings, getting good feedback and some broader framework of what the students can do with the second language and how.

As a learner-centered approach, the emphasis is on collaboration and cooperation between students themselves. From a functional perspective, the students are likely to get valuable practice with using Yes/No and Information questions, all the while pursuing a very interactive and communicative goal.

There are two levels to “Discover the Differences”. The first [Basic] level features simple pictures with five distinct differences orientated around weather, colors, food, clothing, people, animals, size, number, and location. The second [Advanced] level features more detailed scenes with 8-10 differences and more complicated special arrangements. Whereas the first set is rather imaginative, the second set is more ‘true to life’ in terms of depicting common everyday scenes. The second set also provides ideas for assumption making and/or predictions. Up to 12 students (6 pairs) are able to apply the basic cards at once, and up to 10 students (5 pairs) can apply the advanced cards. Of course, with larger classes, the teacher could allocate one-on-two or ‘pairs of pairs’ group arrangements.

## Preparing the Scene Cards for Use in the Classroom:

Upon printing out the various “Discover the Differences” scene cards from the Member’s Area of the English Raven website, teachers will notice that there are clearly marked “A” (blue type) and “B” (red type) versions for each. It is a good idea to laminate the cards to ensure they have a long life and can be re-applied frequently in classrooms. In setting up the cards, it is important to consider how the teacher wishes to apply them. In classrooms with tables, it is a good idea to connect the A and B versions back to back with rings or tape at the top to create a sort of ‘tent-card’. Students can then sit on either side of the table with the cards placed upright between them (similar to a “Battleships” game set-up!). Alternatively (and especially in classrooms with smaller-sized individual desks), pairs of students (each with an A or B version of the scene card) can be set up so that they are sitting some distance from each other.

## Some Suggestions on How to Apply the Activity:

Having decided on grouping arrangements, the teacher can hand out sets of A/B versions to each pair or group. First let them discuss what is or might be different about the two pictures using whatever language they currently have access to, and then report to the class. They can then pass their cards on to the next pair of students and receive another set from the students preceding them. In this way, 5-6 sets of cards

can be recycled through the classroom, the objective at this stage to just find out and state what is different. Following six rounds of examining, discussing and oral reporting, the teacher may like to give the class some targeted practice with Yes/No and Information questions, emphasizing the application of the auxiliaries “be” and “do” for the former and explaining the function of what, where, who, when, how many for the latter. The teacher should also review any vocabulary the students had particular difficulties with.

The second round of application could involve oral Q&A combined with written reporting (see the answer sheet templates provided on pages 3 and 4). This will give teachers a more solid idea of students’ listening skills and how their interlanguage is matching up to the task. The written report of details and information may also help students to identify appropriate questions to ask and how to indicate contrast by applying “but” between their own information and the information (difference) they have discovered from their partner. For example: “In my picture, the woman is wearing a coat, but in my friend’s picture, the woman is holding a coat.” Appropriate questions for this information/difference might include “Is the woman wearing a coat?”, “What is the woman wearing?”, “What is she holding?”, “Where is the woman’s coat?” etc. Teachers can choose to scaffold the activity in a variety of ways to make it more accessible to the students. On the written report, teachers may have already filled in the information needed to express what can be seen from the card - this information is then conveyed to the other student who can’t see that scene card (and vice-versa). Alternatively, teachers may provide appropriate questions to ask which will give the students models and allow them to access the required information more rapidly. If there is sufficient class-time and the students are more proactive, it is also (a very healthy!) option to consider letting the students record the information however they can on their own, followed up with class-brainstorming on how to make the statements and questions more accurate, finishing with explicit corrections and explanations from the teacher.

For very young and/or illiterate learners using this activity, it is also an option for the students to illustrate or depict what is different about the pictures (for example, by depicting a man with a hat next to a man without a hat).

A third round of application could return to the oral format, by which stage students should hopefully have more language options to play with and some ideas on how to convey and find out information more accurately and efficiently. In this respect, the second round (discussion/checking accompanied by written recording of information) is a very important stage in facilitating new language awareness and use.

Some sort of points/scoring and/or Positive Reinforcement system might also help to motivate the students to apply themselves to the activity to the best of their ability.

Of course, there are several other options for application and teachers will no doubt come up with their own approach best suited to particular classes and levels of learners. However the cards are applied, they are likely to arouse young learners’ curiosity and motivate them to communicate.

### **Reporting Answer Sheets:**

The following pages contain answer sheet templates for both the Basic and Advanced levels of “Discover the Differences”. The Basic level requires identification of 5 differences. The Advanced level has enough answer spaces to find between 8 and 10 differences for each scene card set. It is up to teachers to allocate ‘titles’ for each type of scene card (for example, *Desert Island*, *Happy Hippo Ride*, *Beach Resort*, *Tricky Train Station*, etc), and in scaffolding the material (i.e., providing parts of the required information), and determining how much success the students have achieved, the teacher will need to balance the communicative and reporting competence against current course objectives and the language experience of the students themselves.

# DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCES!

SCENE TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ A/B STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 1

In my picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BUT**

in my friend's picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 2

In my picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BUT**

in my friend's picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 3

In my picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BUT**

in my friend's picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 4

In my picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BUT**

in my friend's picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 5

In my picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BUT**

in my friend's picture...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 6

In my picture...

---



---



---

**BUT**

however,  
whereas

in my friend's picture...

---



---



---

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 7

In my picture...

---



---



---

**BUT**

however,  
whereas

in my friend's picture...

---



---



---

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 8

In my picture...

---



---



---

**BUT**

however,  
whereas

in my friend's picture...

---



---



---

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 9

In my picture...

---



---



---

**BUT**

however,  
whereas

in my friend's picture...

---



---



---

DIFFERENCE NUMBER 10

In my picture...

---



---



---

**BUT**

however,  
whereas

in my friend's picture...

---



---



---