

Build-A-Tower

Category: Team-building

Time: 30+ minutes

Requirements:

1. 10+ participants
2. Timer
3. Measuring Tape (not necessary, but can be helpful)
4. Recycled paper cut into short strips
5. Tape
 - Alternative = sticky notes

Description: This activity can be used to practice a specific language target. It can be used to review grammar, vocabulary, sentence building, etc. Participants will be placed in groups to work together to build a tower. Students are allowed to be creative. However, there are certain criterias to be met if students want to win.*Details will be provided in the **Pre-Activity** section.

For this activity example, we will practice the following grammar:

- 'used to' to describe a past habit or situation
- 'be used to' to describe something that is normal
- 'get used to' to describe being in the process of becoming normal

Objectives: Participants will be able to review grammar 'used to', 'be used to', and 'get used to' by working together to...

1. Build a tower using strips of paper and tape
2. Strategically and creatively meet the criterias of the activity
3. Review and practice used to, be used to, and get used to

Pre-Activity

1. There are various ways to shape this activity. One way is to set up the setting of the activity by telling participants that they are architects and you are the mayor of a city. The goal is for participants to come up with a tower and propose a design that would be beneficial to the city.
2. Divide participants into groups of three or four (five may be too much). It is okay if the groups are uneven in numbers. Groups should gather together and be allocated to different parts of the room.

3. You should have a table at the front with the materials prepared. Give each group about three strips of paper and a small piece of tape to start with. Instruct participants to not touch the materials until activity starts. Participants will come up to you during the activity and get more later. *This will be described in detail in the steps.
4. Explain the criteria for the tower. Each criteria adds up to a total point in which participants will be judged on by you, the teacher. The criteria should be displayed so that all participants can see it and refer to during the activity. Points can be changed at your discretion.
 - a. Height (0-10 points)
 - i. Reasoning for why height is important is because the city lacks space, wants to increase reputation, etc...
 - b. Purpose (0-15points)
 - i. This means that each group will have to explain the background/purpose of their tower. It can answer questions such as:
 - What is the purpose of this tower?
 - Why would I want to choose this design?
 - What are the benefits of having this tower?
 - c. Stability (0-15 points)

Activity Rules

1. If participants want more strips of paper and tape, they must choose one member from their group to go to the front and line up to be prompted for a task by the teacher.
*Prompts will be given below
2. Only one member at a time can be sent. When a member returns, another can be sent. Groups must rotate members to be sent.
3. After a participant finishes a task by the teacher, they may choose a total of two materials. For example, participants can choose to: get one strip of paper and one small piece of tape, get two strips of paper, or two pieces of tape.
4. After the timer goes off (15-20 minutes), all participants go back to their groups. Groups get 1-2 minutes to do finishing touches on their tower and finalize what their purpose of the tower is in which they will get 30 seconds to share.

Activity Steps

Step 1: Allow groups 1-2 minutes to brainstorm their ideas. Refer to the criteria and encourage students to start thinking of their purpose. Remind them that they will have only about 30

seconds to present their idea to you. At this time, participants may touch the materials they have at their table (3 strips of paper and a small piece of tape)

Step 2: Start the activity by counting down or by using a bell. Remind participants to not run and that they must be in line in front of your desk in which you will be sitting and prompting.

Step 3: Prompt a task to a student (remember, students should be in line for this).

Prompts

Used To	Be Used To	Get Used To
<p>Answering Tasks: Question participants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is something that you used to do, but don't do now? 2. Did you use to live in another country? 3. Did you use to not like something, but like now? 4. Did you use to... 	<p>Answering Tasks: Question participants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is something that you are used to? 2. What is something that you are not used to? 3. What kind of weather are you used to? 4. Are you used to...? 	<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is something you have gotten used to recently? 2. Have you gotten used to the food here in Japan? 3. Have you gotten used to the weather here in Japan? 4. What is something that you are not getting used to?
<p>Sentence Building Tasks: ask participants to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a statement using 'used to' 2. Make a question using 'used to' 	<p>Sentence Building Tasks: ask participants to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a statement using 'be used to' 2. Make a question using 'be used to' 	<p>Sentence Building Tasks: ask participants to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a statement using 'get used to' 2. Make a question using 'get used to'

Step 4: After the participant finishes the task, they may choose a total of two materials. Please refer to Rule 3 above. Ask the next participant in line a different prompt.

*Reminder to have the timer going and check it accordingly

*Make sure groups are rotating members

Step 5: After the timer goes off, send all participants to their groups. Give groups 1-2 minutes to finalize their tower and ideas.

Step 6: After 1-2 minutes, all groups must stop touching their towers. Instruct all participants to stand up and make a semi-circle 2-3 feet away from their towers. *Groups should be able to see each other's towers

Step 7: Start the judging process. Quickly draw up a table with each group's name as column with the criterias being the rows. Example:

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Height	7	6	9
Purpose			
Stability			

Step 8: First, judge the height of each tower one by one (in any order). A measuring tape can be used here; however, judging the height with your eyes is also just fine. For added entertainment (and to practice language in class), ask opposing groups how many points they think the current group you are judging should receive. Consider the ideas of your participants, but you make the final call. After the first group has been scored, finish the other groups.

Step 9: Groups must designate a person to introduce their tower. Other group members may chime in if wanted. Each group only gets about 30 seconds to explain their tower's purpose. A timer for this is not necessarily needed, but it can be used. Score all groups accordingly. Ask questions and encourage opposing groups to ask questions, too.

Step 9: To test stability, there are a few ways to go about it. You can use an actual fan and set it a few feet away from a tower. Or you can ask a participant, from an opposing group, to step 3 feet back from the tower and fan a book a total of 3 times towards the tower. A tower falling or showing weak stability will help you score this criteria.

Step 10: tally up the scores and congratulate not only the winning group, but each group for doing an excellent job.

Post-Activity: Discussion Questions

1. How did you experience the activity?
2. What language skills does this activity promote?
3. What could be some improvements for this activity?
4. How might you adjust this activity for your classes?

5. Why might Japanese ELs respond well to this activity?

Rationale

The prompts are a perfect opportunity to offer immediate correction/feedback if students make a grammar mistake. It is also a perfect opportunity to isolate specific issues that you know a certain student has. For example, if X is having trouble with the simple present, I can give X a simple present task to practice. From experience, this activity is a student favorite. I have done this activity with all levels, from beginning to advance. Students enjoy working in teams.