

Peer Dictation (Nancy Ferguson, REEP)

Peer Dictation is a partner activity in which one student reads an assigned passage aloud while the other student writes it down. There are many different ways to structure this type of activity, but peer dictation activities can be adapted to all levels, and require the students to practice all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In a multi-level class, it is best to place students in like-ability pairs because the emphasis of peer dictation is on accuracy, not fluency.

Don't forget to remind your students that they *must not* look at their partner's paper!

A Few Versions of Peer Dictation...

1) Straight Sentence Dictation

- Preliminary Tip – Make sure that the students have reviewed the relevant vocabulary and grammar structures sufficiently before attempting this activity. If the sentences are not meaningful to the students, especially at the lower levels, this will be very difficult.
- Student A is given a list of sentences specific to the current unit. Student B is given a sheet of blank spaces for each of Student A's sentences. Student A reads the sentences to Student B, who writes the information down in the blank spaces. Partners switch roles. Afterward, partners correct each others' new sentences.
- This can be adapted to all levels by using very simple dictations focusing on the correct spelling of names, telephone numbers and simple sentences to more complex sentences to entire paragraphs.

<p><u>Student A – Read to Your Partner</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Max is a mechanic.2. He fixes cars.3. He works from Tuesday to Friday.4. He works from 7:30am to 6:00pm. <p><u>Listen and Write</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. _____.6. _____.7. _____-_____.8. _____.	<p><u>Student B – Listen and Write</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. _____.2. _____.3. _____.4. _____. <p><u>Read to Your Partner</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Alice is a waitress.6. She takes orders and serves food.7. She works part-time.8. She doesn't like her job.
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2) The Messenger and the Scribe

- Short texts are taped to the wall/board in the classroom. These texts can range from very simple sentences to multi-paragraph readings, depending on the level.
- Divide the class into pairs, and designate one member of each pair the “scribe”, and the other member of the pair the “messenger.”
- The messenger will walk to the wall/board and read the first bit of text. The messenger will return to his/her partner, and dictate that portion of the text to the scribe *from memory*, who will record it on a piece of paper. The messenger may help with spelling, etc, but he/she cannot take the pen or pencil from the scribe.
- The messenger will continue to go to the board memorizing pieces of the text to dictate back to the scribe from memory until the scribe has rewritten the entire text.
- Once the activity is over, students can compare their story to the text from the board to check for mistakes.

Variations: For lower level classes, the texts taped to the wall can be simple sentences. Number the sentences, and have the messenger move around the room until he/she dictates all of the sentences to the scribe. For upper levels, a short story can be taped to the wall. For class management issues, it helps to tape the same article up in many different places and assign one location to each pair.

3) Different Forms of the Same Paragraph (Cloze Activity)

- Student A and Student B are each given a paragraph with different words, partial or whole sentences missing. Together, their hand-outs create one complete paragraph. If Version A is the hand-out containing the first words of the paragraph, instruct students with Version A to start. Student A will read while Student B fills in the missing information from his/her hand-out. As soon as Student A reaches a point of missing information, Student B will continue dictating his/her portion of the sentence or paragraph while Student A writes down the missing words. This process will go on until each student has the same completed paragraph. Once the activity is over, Partners A and B engage in peer correction and discuss the paragraph as a whole.

<p>Student A – Rosa’s Problem</p> <p>Two months ago, three young men _____ _____. The men stay up late, _____ and have lots of parties. _____ _____, and Rosa and her children can’t sleep because their _____ _____. She is afraid to knock and complain _____ _____ and are not very polite. _____ _____, but he didn’t do anything. _____ _____.</p> <p><i>(Problem Solving, pg. 41)</i></p>	<p>Student B – Rosa’s Problem</p> <p>_____, _____ _____ moved next door to Rosa and her children. _____, play loud music _____. The walls of the building are thin, _____ _____ neighbors make so much noise. _____ _____ to them because they drink a lot _____. Rosa called the landlord, _____ _____. Rosa is very unhappy.</p> <p><i>(Problem Solving, pg. 41)</i></p>
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4) Different Paragraphs of a Story (Cloze Activity)

- Student A and Student B are each given a different hand-out. Version A has a complete first paragraph, and an incomplete second paragraph. Version B has an incomplete first paragraph, but a second paragraph. Student A reads the first paragraph aloud to Student B, who fills in the missing information from the first paragraph. Student B then reads the second paragraph aloud to Student A, who fills in the missing information from the second paragraph. By the end, each student should have a complete story. Now, students can compare sheets to check for any mistakes and discuss the story as a whole.

<p>Student A</p> <p><i>Read the paragraph to your partner.</i></p> <p>I was born in Montreal, Canada, but I grew up in Alexandria, Virginia. I lived in Canada until I was four years old, and then my family moved to the U.S. I have one older brother and one younger sister, so I am the middle child. In general, my siblings and I got along when we were young, but we definitely had our problems from time to time.</p> <p><i>Listen to your partner and write the missing words.</i></p> <p>I _____ many good _____ from my _____. When I _____ years old, my father _____ me how to _____ a bicycle. When I _____ years old, I _____ playing the _____. _____ many other _____ in my neighborhood, so we _____ together _____ almost every day. My _____ was _____ with us. We _____ complete our _____ before we _____ play.</p>	<p>Student B</p> <p><i>Listen to your partner and write the missing words.</i></p> <p>I was _____ in Montreal, _____, but I _____ up in _____, Virginia. I _____ in Canada until I was _____ years old, and then my family _____ to the U.S. I have one _____ and one _____ _____, so I am the _____. In general, my _____ and I _____ along when we _____ young, but we definitely _____ our _____ from time to _____.</p> <p><i>Read the paragraph to your partner.</i></p> <p>I have many good memories from my childhood. When I was 5 years old, my father taught me how to ride a bicycle. When I was 7 years old, I started playing the piano. There were many other children in my neighborhood, so we played together outside almost every day. My mother was strict with us. We had to complete our homework before we could play.</p>
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