

ETpedia

Teenagers

500 ideas for teaching
English to teenagers

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10
Years of
ETpedia

2024 marks the 10-year anniversary of the launch of *ETpedia*! In that time, 6500 practical tips and ideas have been shared across 12 different titles. Each title in the ETpedia series is divided into units containing 10 bite-sized tips and ideas to give you real practical help with planning and preparing for your lessons. To celebrate the 10-year anniversary, we are sharing 10 collections of ideas across 2024!

Here, you can explore 10 practical ideas from *ETpedia Teenagers*, which provides 500 ideas for teaching English to teenagers, with practical activities and insights to help you understand, motivate and support your teenage students. Enjoy 10 ideas from across the book below!

10 Ideas

Unit 7: **10** things to avoid when working with teenagers

2. Being influenced by the opinions of others

Our colleagues can be full of advice when they find out that we are about to start teaching a certain group of teenagers. They might say *Watch out for [Student A] – she’s/he’s a handful!* or *They’re really smart, so work them hard*. Although such advice is well intended, it can lead to us having pre-conceived ideas about students we have not even met. It is best to be sceptical about such advice and to concentrate on treating each new class on its own merits. In any case, it is quite common for teenage groups to behave quite differently with different teachers.

Unit 12: **10** tips for motivating teenagers

9. 'Welcome students' questions

Teenage students can be nervous about admitting that they do not understand something in class, and as a result are often reluctant to put their hands up to ask questions, leading to demotivation. Pause regularly to see if students have any questions, and thank them emphatically when they do. Make a point of saying *Thanks for the question* or *That's a great question*. This, in turn, gives other students the confidence to speak up.

Unit 22: **10** ways to end lessons

1. Watch a clip

Teenagers are often keen to share interesting or amusing online video clips with their teacher and with the rest of the class. The end of the lesson is the ideal time to do this, as long as you feel that students have earned this treat. Take steps to make sure that the content of clips is appropriate for the classroom, perhaps by checking them before playing them to the whole class.

Unit 24: **10** ways to exploit out-of-class listening opportunities

4. Listen to song lyrics

When hearing a song for the first time, students try to make a note of the song's refrain or chorus. This will be repeated throughout the song, so students will have several chances to hear it. Get them to write down exactly what they think the words of the chorus are, and ask them to check by looking for the lyrics online afterwards. As a follow-up, ask students to write down song lyrics by watching clips on YouTube out of class. They can check their transcriptions afterwards by searching for the lyrics online or by watching a subtitled version of the song on YouTube.

Unit 27: **10** ways to motivate teenage students to read

9. Challenge students to spot mistakes

When doing a whole-class extensive reading project, do regular chapter checks to make sure that all the students are keeping up with the reading. After each chapter, ask one or two students in the group to write a short summary. Tell them to include at least one factual inaccuracy or mistake in their summary of the chapter. Share the summary with the whole class, and ask everyone to find the factual mistakes. This activity allows you to see which students have really read the chapter.

Unit 32: **10** tips for evaluation and giving teenagers feedback on skills

3. Notice learning strategies in use

Highlight occasions when students use learning strategies successfully. If a student successfully uses an introductory set phrase when speaking, say, *Nice fluency strategy, there! Did everyone notice it?* Or if a student remembers to illustrate an opinion in an essay with an example, point out the effectiveness of this strategy in your comments. When learning strategies are real and in actual use, teenagers notice them and remember them. If strategies are just theoretical pieces of advice, they are less likely to be remembered.

Unit 33: **10** language games that teenagers enjoy

9. Alibi

Select two students to play the part of people suspected of committing a crime together. Tell the rest of the class what the crime was, and then inform the two suspects that they are going to be questioned individually by a group of detectives (the rest of the class) about where they were and what they were doing at a certain time the previous day. The only way the suspects can prove their innocence is if their stories match. Give the suspects five minutes or so to agree on their alibi or story. They can leave the room to do this. Then ask them to come in to be questioned, one at a time. The detectives take turns to ask questions and look for inconsistencies in the two stories that prove that the suspects are lying, and therefore guilty of the crime.

This is a classic game, and although it has been around for ages, teenagers often request it. The structure of the game also makes it ideal for practising both simple and continuous past tense forms.

Unit 34: **10** grammar activities that teenagers won't hate

6. Create flowcharts to support rules of language usage

Get students to interpret grammar rules by turning them into flowcharts. Many coursebooks highlight the rules of language usage in special 'grammar boxes', but teenagers rarely pay them much attention. Making a flowchart is an effective way to help students engage with the rules, and also helps them to check their own understanding of them. A further advantage of a completed flowchart is that it can be tested (and sometimes improved) by other students in the group. See the end of this sample for an example of how a grammar box in a coursebook can be turned into a flowchart.

Unit 43: **10** activities using music

7. Stories from song titles

Write four words on the board, for example *love, black, fire* and *little*.

Get students into pairs or threes and ask them to brainstorm as many song titles as they can that feature any (or all) of these words. Set a time limit for this. Review students' answers and write them on the board. Then invite students come up with a short sketch or story containing as many of the song titles as they can.

Unit 46: **10** ideas for using selfies, street art and internet memes

8. Get students to explain memes

Tell students that you are interested in getting up-to-date knowledge about the latest internet memes (stock images with added captions that go viral on social media). As an optional out-of-class task, students pick one meme each to explain to the teacher. Each volunteer chooses a meme and creates a presentation containing two or three examples of that meme. Each well-known meme has its own theme, so, for example the *Success Kid* meme is used to celebrate the small, sweet, personal victories in life, while the *Unhelpful High School Teacher* meme is used by students worldwide to showcase examples of exasperating teacher behaviour and double standards. Ask students to research the history of their chosen meme (there are dozens of them), including any information about the people who feature in the standard image used. They should aim to explain the usage of the meme as it applies to real-life situations.

"My students enjoy trying to translate song lyrics."

Magdalena Dygała, teacher and blogger, Poland

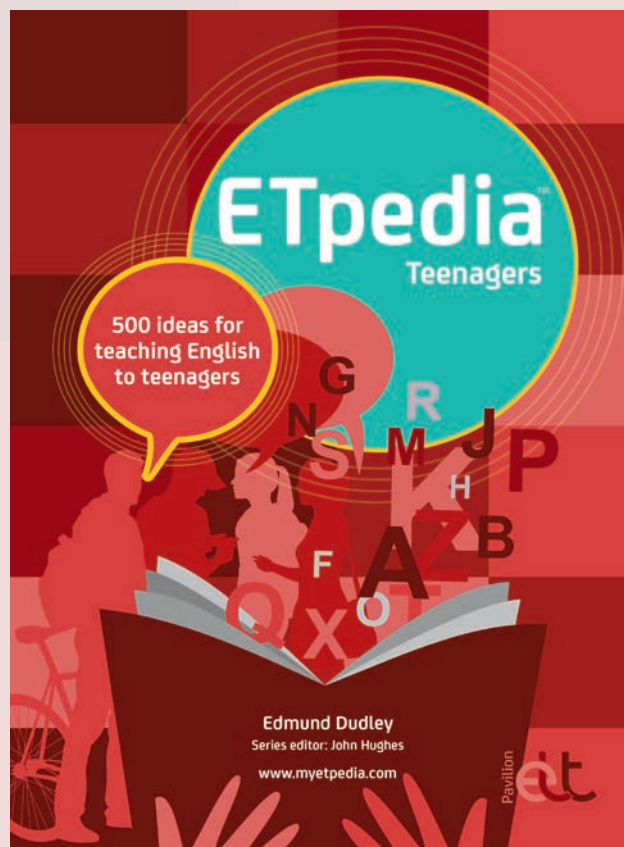
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Unit 34.6: Sample flowchart with grammar reference and exercise

Grammar reference: *too* and *enough*

1. We use *too* and *enough* to talk about how too much of something or too little of something prevented something from happening:

too + adjective + infinitive: *I was **too slow to win** the race.*

not + adjective + *enough* + infinitive: *I **wasn't fast enough to win** the race.*

2. Note the word order with *enough*:

enough + noun: *We **didn't have enough money** to eat out.*

adjective + *enough*: *The restaurants **weren't cheap enough** to eat out.*

Practice exercise:

Complete the sentences with **too** or **enough**.

1. The hat is _____ expensive to buy.
2. These shoes aren't big _____ to wear.
3. We haven't got _____ time to see the movie.
4. It isn't warm _____ to eat ice cream.
5. The box is _____ heavy to lift.

Flowchart

