

## LAYING YOUR CARDS ON THE TABLE

By Robert Young (ELTAS)

Using cards is an excellent way to brighten up your lessons and retain the interest of your students. In my opinion, it is a very effective ways to teach vocabulary and also many aspects of grammar to students of all levels of language ability. It also stimulates interaction between students and helps to break the ice. My students are always interested when I pull a new set of cards out of my bag. You can divide the class into teams and each team takes it in turns to do a different card exercise. You can even have the teams competing against each other which raises spirits even higher. Encourage discussion during the exercise and ask the students to think of other solutions. In every lesson you should elect a student to act as secretary who writes down any new words alongside the German translation and an explanation of the meaning of the word. Every month you can then create a new card game using the list of new words which have been learnt. After all exercises have been completed, each student receives the solutions as a handout. Each week you can use two new card games plus the most difficult game from the previous week as revision. For the card exercise, you need different coloured cards which should be cut to the desired size. It is better to use a marker to write the cards. First of all, type the exercise as a Word document, and then write the cards. There are different many categories of card exercises including:

1. **Matching English and German words or phrases.**
2. **Matching related words.**
3. **Matching word pairs.**
4. **Matching synonyms.**
5. **Matching opposites.**
6. **Matching British and American words.**
7. **Dividing words into different categories.**

Below are five examples of card exercises followed by some ideas so you can create your own card exercises. For each exercise you should do the following:

1. Shuffle the cards well.
2. Divide the students into groups of no more than 4 people evenly distributed according to age, gender and ability.
3. Let the students lay the cards neatly on the table and try to match them.
4. Help the students with words which they do not know or have a dictionary available.
5. One student should make a note of any words which were previously unknown by the group.

When the exercise is finished you can do the following:

- Have the students speak the words out loud and check the pronunciation.
- Have a student choose a word and explain it in his own words. The others have to guess which word he has chosen.
- Get the students to take it in turns to ask their neighbour a question using a word or phrase in the exercise.
- Ask each student a question using words from the exercise.
- Write some of the words on the board with the letters jumbled.
- Write a difficult word on the board and have the students create a mind map around this word.
- Play a game with matching cards by sharing the different coloured cards equally amongst the students. Each student takes it in turns to call out a word and one of the other students has to look for a matching card in his hand. If he calls out a wrong card he loses his card. If he calls out a correct card then he wins both cards. The person with the most matched cards in the end is the winner.

### **Business word pairs**

- |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1. bank        | overdraft |
| 2. business    | trip      |
| 3. credit      | limit     |
| 4. current     | account   |
| 5. curriculum  | vitae     |
| 6. fiscal      | year      |
| 7. human       | resources |
| 8. job         | vacancy   |
| 9. joint       | venture   |
| 10. market     | research  |
| 11. maternity  | leave     |
| 12. mobile     | phone     |
| 13. public     | relations |
| 14. short      | list      |
| 15. small      | change    |
| 16. standing   | order     |
| 17. suggestion | scheme    |
| 18. tax        | haven     |
| 19. training   | course    |
| 20. venture    | capital   |

### **Business word opposites**

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1. boom          | recession   |
| 2. careful       | negligent   |
| 3. cheap         | dear        |
| 4. conscientious | lazy        |
| 5. credit        | debit       |
| 6. establish     | fold up     |
| 7. export        | import      |
| 8. help          | hindrance   |
| 9. huge          | tiny        |
| 10. income       | expenditure |
| 11. individual   | corporate   |
| 12. present      | absent      |
| 13. private      | public      |
| 14. profit       | loss        |
| 15. safe         | dangerous   |
| 16. sales        | purchasing  |
| 17. smart        | scruffy     |
| 18. soar         | tumble      |
| 19. temporary    | permanent   |
| 20. variable     | constant    |

### Negative adjectives

<u>un</u>	<u>in</u>	<u>im</u>	<u>il</u>	<u>ir</u>	
<hr/>					
	<u>dis</u>				
likely	accessible	possible	logical		responsible
	pleased				
clear	direct	probable	legal	rational	organised
abridged	advisable	perfect	legitimate	reversible	satisfied
certain	appropriate	practical	legible	relevant	loyal

Here you need 6 cards with the negation prefixes written on them. There are, of course, many other adjectives which you could use.

### Business verbs and associated nouns

*(The German translation is only for the handout)*

1) Achieve	a target	Ein Ziel erreichen.
2) Beg	to differ	Ich erlaube mir, anderer Meinung sein.
3) Break	even	Ohne Gewinn oder Verlust abschliessen.
4) Call	the shots	Das Sagen haben.
5) Carry	the can	Verantwortlich sein.
6) Chair	a meeting	Eine Besprechung leiten.
7) Clinch	a deal	Ein Geschäft abschliessen.
8) Corner	the market	Einen Markt beherrschen.
9) Draw	a conclusion	Einen Schluss ziehen.
10) Face	the music	Die Konsequenzen tragen.
11) Foot	the bill	Die Rechnung bezahlen.
12) Learn	the ropes	Sich einarbeiten.
13) Pull	one's weight	Seinen Teil leisten.
14) Tackle	a problem	Ein Problem anpacken.
15) Throw	a party	Eine Party schmeissen.

### Idioms

1. Jetzt geht mir ein Licht auf.	- That rings a bell.
2. Jetzt sind Sie dran.	- The ball's in your court.
3. Kinderleicht.	- A piece of cake
4. Kurz zusammengefasst.	- In a nutshell
5. Massnahmen ergreifen.	- To take steps
6. Nichts für ungut!	- No offence!
7. Ohne Hand und Fuss.	- Without rhyme or reason
8. Um den heissen Brei herum reden!	- Don't beat about the bush!
9. Retten, was zu retten ist.	- To make the best of a bad job
10. Seien wir ehrlich.	- Let's face it.
11. Sich den Kopf zerbrechen.	- To rack one's brains
12. Sich einmischen.	- To butt in
13. Sich fehl am Platze fühlen.	- To be out of one's element.
14. Stinksauer.	- Hopping mad.
15. Um es ganz offen zu sagen.	- To put it bluntly.
16. Verschleiss.	- Wear and tear.
17. Vom Regen in die Traufe. fire.	- Out of the frying pan and into the
18. Von mir aus.	- For all I care.
19. Was Sie nicht sagen!	- You don't say!
20. Die Suppe auslöffeln.	- Face the music.

Other ideas include :-

1. Irregular and regular verbs.
2. State and dynamic verbs.
3. Do / make words. (e.g. Do homework, make a suggestion)
4. Proverbs.
5. Countable and uncountable nouns.
6. Prepositions at, in, on.
7. Phrasal verbs.
8. Verb/adjective -> noun suffixes (-ity, -ion, -ing, -ment, -ness, -ance, or none e.g. call)
9. Verbs + infinitive and verbs + gerund (-ing).
10. Verbs which are associated with a specific preposition (e.g. rely on).
11. Technical vocabulary e.g. car parts, computer words, machine processes etc.

So if your lessons feel like “a house of cards” and you are heading for a “cardiac arrest” then “try your hand” at “laying the cards on the table” and this “safe card” “card trick” will rescue you and become a good “visiting card” for you as an “ace” teacher and before long you’ll be applying for a “gold credit card”. ☺

© 2005

Robert Young

*Robert Young, BSc(Hons), is a lecturer in English at the Hochschule für Technik in Stuttgart and also works as an English trainer at many well-known companies in the Stuttgart area. He is also the webmaster for ELTAS.*