

Random Element How To

What is Random Element:

The purpose of random element is to allow the thinker to generate solutions to problems by using an entirely random element to shift the direction of thinking. For example if the problem is "What to eat tonight?" the solution could be generated using a random element by looking around the room you are in. Perhaps the first thing you see is a dog. Your brain thinks "doggie bag", you get a doggie bag from your favorite restaurant, so the solution: go to your favorite restaurant. Using the random element you can connect back to your problem to find a solution.

How to Plan with Idea Box for ESL/EFL learners:

To use Random Element in the EFL classroom, as the teacher it can't be quite so random. Instead, random element can be used to drive conversation by having students select words from a specific lexis at random. These words can be completed generated by the students during brainstorming or introduced completely by the teacher.

What level is this appropriate for:

Random Element can be used even with beginners. If the students are true or very basic (A1) beginners it helps to provide the lexis that will be randomly selected. If the learners have more language experience, it is possible for the learners to generate the lexis from prior knowledge.

When to use Idea Box in the lesson plan:

If using either Present-Practice-Produce, Encounter-Clarify-Remember-Internalize-Fluency, Present-Practice-Use, or Encounter-Internalize-Fluency frameworks for planning for lesson, or if using a Task based learning (TBL) approach, use the random element after the presentation of new language and structure and before learners practice (Remember). The point of Random Element in the lesson will be for Ss to use the language in the practice stage. Random element is perfectly suited for slot substitution drilling that is more creative and, because of the random nature, allows for more interesting dialogues. This language may also reoccur during production, allowing for some great redundancy to build internalization and fluency.

In Engage, Study, Activate, I would recommend this during the Study phase when learners are working to practice and internalize the language.

Following Random Element

After using Random Element move to your pair/group practice and from there you should be well staged to head to fluency.

A basic step by step for using Random Element: This can be modified to match your lesson plan.

1. Ask Ss what they know about the topic. Present the language structure and key vocabulary that learners will use for today.
2. Pass out Random Elements worksheets.
USED AS BRAINSTORMING: If you will have Ss brainstorm to complete worksheets model completing one of the random boxes from the worksheet with language related to the topic. Allow time for Ss to brainstorm. Each group will produce different worksheets.

WITHOUT BRAINSTORMING LANGUAGE IS PRESENTED: If there is no need to brainstorm because the worksheet has all the language, present the language in the previous stage and review and clarify language before continue with Ss.
3. Show the dialogue that Ss will choose words randomly to complete, or the topic Ss will use to discuss.
4. Model choosing the item at random by dropping a coin or eraser or spinning a pen or pencil. (see worksheet for details).
5. Model for Ss:
T: (toss coin) What do you want for lunch?
S: (toss coin) I want a hot dog.
6. Have Ss take turns as time permits. When completed move on to the production activity for the lesson.