

Idea Box

What is Idea Box:

The purpose of Idea Box is to allow the thinker to generate multiple ideas that are connected to specific themes and to continue to build on these until enough ideas have been generated to be actionable.

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

To use Idea Box in the EFL classroom, as the teacher you must assume that learners will be able to brainstorm words related to a specific category. This can be done in one of two ways. The teacher can teach new words for the categories and then have Ss add words previously learned, or the teacher can assume Ss have learned words previously and focus on teaching either grammatical structure or specific phrases for a lesson.

What level is this appropriate for:

Idea Box can be used even with beginners. The more language study Ss have completed, the more they will have to add with idea box. For very young learners, they can brainstorm and draw pictures to represent the words they know. Creativity is for all ages.

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 Idea box after the presentation of new language and structure and before learners practice (Remember) . The point of Idea Box in the lesson will be for Ss to generate additional language to be used in the practice stage. Following the brainstorming, Ss can then use language from the idea box in practice activities. 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 Engage phase as a way to engage Ss in language they have previously learned and capture attention and excitement. Then during the study phase the structure/new language can be introduced. All of this should be able to move easily towards Activate and use of language.

Following Idea Box

After using Idea Box 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 Idea Box: This can be modified to match your lesson plan.

1. Ask Ss what they know about the topic. Make a list on the board of some of the things they know. Write the words for the first column of the idea box on the board and organize words into the column.
2. Pass out IdeaBox worksheets. Model for Ss:
T: Now let's write (Information that Ss know)
CCQ: Which column will you write in? What will you write?
3. Review the column with Ss. Allow Ss to work in groups to list places they go. Circulate and assist as necessary.
4. Direct Ss attention the board. Write the words "(Next Column)" on the board.
5. Elicit examples from Ss. Write on board to model for Ss. CCQ: What will you write? Which column on the worksheet will you use?
6. Repeat same procedure for who to go with. Allow Ss to be creative. Continue or additional columns.
7. From here, move to practice activity where language from the Idea Box will be used.