

Alien trouble by Balint Gyimesi

Age:	Teenagers / Adults
Level:	Intermediate – Upper-intermediate
Time:	60 minutes
Objectives:	To cooperate to improve communicative competence and practise vocabulary
Key skills:	Speaking
Materials:	One copy of the warm-up questions per group of four; one set of role-play cards per group of four; one copy of the follow-up sheet per student; one copy of the reward sheet and an envelope (optional) per member of the winning group; one copy of the 'Wow! I'm really good!' sheet per student (optional)

Preparation

Cut up the role-play cards.

Put each reward picture in an envelope (optional).

Tip 1: If you have a plastic alien figure, you might want to bring it to class. Such tools of the trade are excellent to make your class memorable for your students.

Procedure

1. Assign students to small groups, preferably to groups of four.

Tip 2: When assigning students to groups, make sure that you pay attention to group members' proficiency levels as you want to have balanced groups in terms of language skills. In other words, don't put all the best-performing students in one group. Doing so gives more space for language development.

As the point of this lesson plan is to make students speak as much as they can, conducting excessive speech repair is not suggested. However, you should monitor and chime in if you think it's necessary.

Tip 3: You want to maintain a low anxiety level in your class, which means that you should provide a relaxed environment for producing meaningful language. This cannot be done if you keep interrupting them.

2. Warm up – 10 minutes

Give the warm-up questions to groups and have students discuss them. The idea is for them to have fun imagining what the alien is like and what it does. Students should exchange information by asking each other questions. For example: *What does your alien do in its free time?*

Tip 4: Warm-ups serve to prepare students' minds for acquiring the language. As a warm-up is not the focus of the class, you should manage time efficiently and keep it brief. That doesn't mean rushing things, though!

3. Focus activity / role-play – 35-40 minutes

Explain to your students that, due to some problems with its spaceship, an alien had to land on Earth right next to where the students live. Give a different role-play card to each student in each group of four. Tell them to act out a conversation between the characters.

Tip 5: At this point, you might draw your students' attention to certain grammar structures you want them to consolidate. For example, such role-play activities are great for practising various verb tenses. Don't waste valuable time with explicit grammar instruction, though, as this class is not about that.

Monitor and make sure that students maintain the conversation. Act as a facilitator by providing some ideas, if necessary. Let them come up with their own ideas or background to the role-play as well; this way, cognitive skills are improved too.

Tip 6: A lesson plan might give you instructions on how you should conduct the lesson, but plans usually assume an ideal language-learning setting. If you see that certain parts of this plan don't fit the available time, just leave them out; although you should try to maintain the integrity of the lesson. The magic word is flexibility!

Ask groups to jot down ten key words that are related to the topic. Instead of this, you might ask each student to jot down three or four words.

4. Follow up

Hand out a copy of the follow-up activity to each student. Just let them read the joke – after a long,

exhausting conversation, they deserve to have a chance to ease their minds. Allow them two minutes to talk about it, if they want. You might also want to check that everybody understands it.

Tell them to brainstorm words related to aliens and write them into the table. They are allowed to use words from the role-play activity. You may want to offer the following example words to get them started.

adjective – harmless

noun – spacecraft

verb – invade

When they have finished, have groups exchange vocabulary.

Tip 7: You should try to make students acquire new vocabulary in a spiral way. This means that they are exposed to the same set of vocabulary again and again.

5. Assessment

Give one reward sheet (in an envelope if you have them) to each member of the best-performing group.

Tip 8: You might want to have students assess their performance on their own. Use the 'Wow! I'm really good' sheet for doing so.

Homework task

Ask your students to write a hundred-word journal entry about what happened in the town when the alien showed up. Of course, each group should write about their version.



- Look! I can change colour! What else do you think I can do?
- I have lots of friends. What do you think we usually talk about?
- What do you think I do in my free time?

Alien

- has a problem with its spacecraft's hyperdrive
- friendly attitude
- very hungry and thirsty
- needs some tools
- curious about humans
- thinks Earth is different to its home planet
- if scared, changes colour (from green to pink)
- greets the earthlings

Friendly person

- finds the alien in the forest
- promises to help
- tries to find food
- is a member of a UFO fan club
- asks questions about the alien's planet and the spacecraft
- 'Wow! You speak English?'
- 'Peace bro!'
- 'I knew the government was lying!'

**Scared person**

- 'Come on, people! It's too dangerous!'
- 'We should call the police or the army.'
- 'Maybe it's an invasion.'
- 'What about our children?'
- 'It should be kept in a cage.'
- 'It can't stay in the town.'
- 'We need protection.'
- 'We should warn everybody that it's here.'

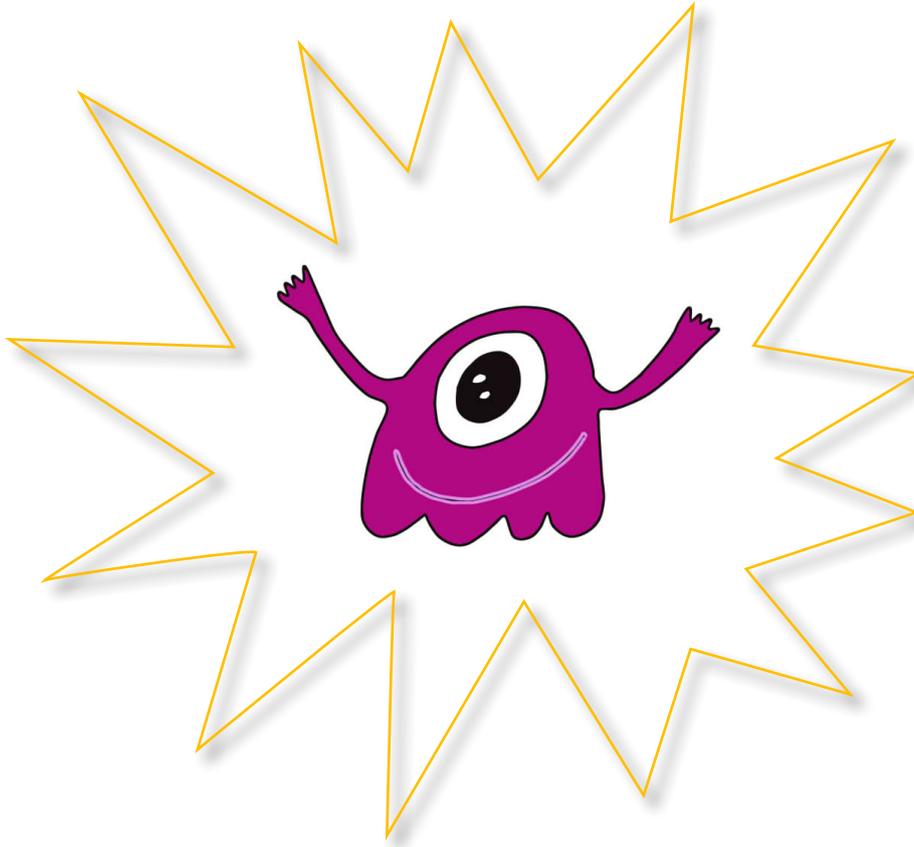
Evil person

- 'Let's sell it!'
- 'Let's make a video and sell the footage.'
- 'Let's learn its secrets.'
- 'It can stay in town as a tourist attraction.'
- 'Let's negotiate with a film studio.'
- 'It's harmless.'
- 'We need to exploit alien technology.'

The shipwrecked alien tries to get help from the locals after its spaceship crashes. It arrives in a small town and knocks at the door of the first house. A small child and his father open the door.

Alien: Take me to your leader!

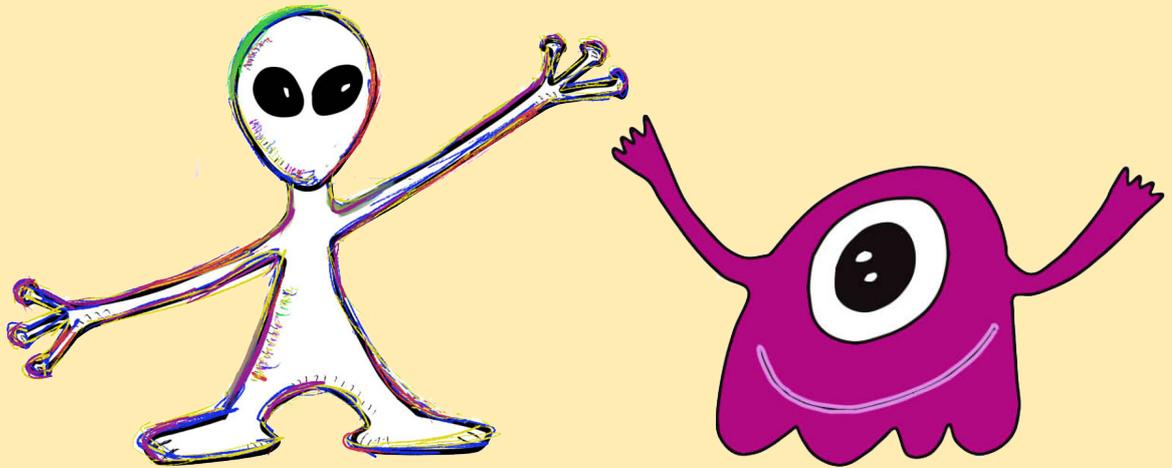
Dad: Honey! Someone is here to see you!



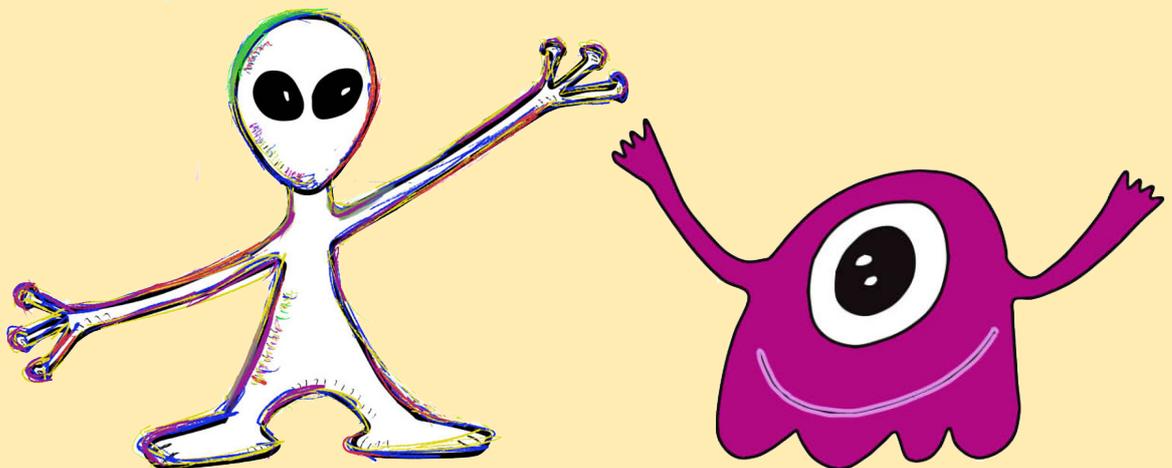
Brainstorm words that are related to us strange creatures.

adjectives	nouns	verbs

CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU ARE NOW AN OFFICIAL
EXPERT IN ALIENOLOGY.
WELL DONE.



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Assess your performance



I said ...

1. ... a few English sentences.
2. ... more than 20 English sentences.
3. ... more than 30 English sentences.

1. I had problems with grammar.
2. I had problems with vocabulary.
3. Excuse me?

1. I made lots of mistakes.
2. I didn't make many mistakes.
3. What's a mistake?

I performed best when I did the ...

1. ... first activity.
2. ... second activity.
3. ... third activity.