

# STUFF AND THINGS – Teacher’s notes

A functional language lesson on communication strategies by Lindsay Clandfield

- Level:** Elementary +
- Aim:** Students practise using all-purpose words like “stuff” and “things” to ask for things they don’t know the word for in English.
- Rationale:** This class focuses on communication strategies. Fluent speakers of a foreign language often develop such strategies to help describe objects more quickly.
- Preparation** Make some overhead transparencies with different pictures of everyday things on them that students could describe. There is a list of things you can use below:

a vacuum cleaner	a sponge	a cigarette lighter	adhesive tape	salt
a computer mouse	a compact disc	ketchup		

To find pictures of these things, you can try any of the following image banks on the internet:

- [www.clipart.com/en](http://www.clipart.com/en)
- [www.freeimages.co.uk](http://www.freeimages.co.uk)
- <http://www.office.microsoft.com/clipart>

Simply right-click on an image you want to use and click on copy. Then paste it into a word document and enlarge it.

## Lesson plan

### Stage 1

1. Tell students that you are going to describe some words and you want them to write down on a piece of paper what you are describing. Read out each of the following descriptions:

It’s a kind of hot drink. You drink this stuff, usually in the morning. I usually have mine with milk and sugar. (COFFEE)
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It's the thing that wakes me up every morning. This thing makes a noise like BUZZZZ and then I reach over and I turn it off. I don't like this thing. (ALARM CLOCK)

It's very useful stuff. You use it to put things together. You can use it to put two pieces of paper together, or to put wood or plastic together. If you want to use it with wood or plastic, you need stronger stuff, but don't get it on your fingers. (GLUE)

Ask the students to compare their answers in pairs. They can use a dictionary if they like.

### Stage 2

1. Elicit the answers to the first exercise. Ask students if they can try and remember what words you used to describe them.
2. Once a few have volunteered answers, give out the worksheet and tell them to complete the texts with the words.
3. Next, go through the language focus at the bottom of the worksheet. They can also try and write a similar description for the extra picture dice.

### Stage 3 (optional, if you have the pictures and can project them)

1. Ask the students to work in pairs. Tell them to sit so that student A is facing the board and student B is facing away from the board. Explain the following roles to the students:

**Student A** You are in a big department store in New York (the kind of department store that sells everything). You want to buy certain things, but you can't remember the word in English. Explain to B what you want to buy. You start by saying *Excuse me, I'm looking for...*

**Student B** You work in the department store. Listen to what A asks for. When you think you know what it is, say *Oh, you mean ...*and then the word in English.

2. Now project the first picture on the board (the vacuum cleaner). Tell students to do the role play. Then ask them to swap roles and repeat, but this time with a different picture. Continue until you've used all the pictures.

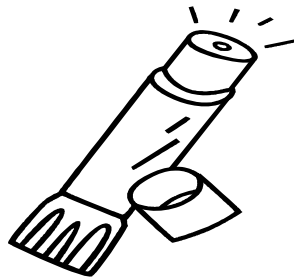
#### **Stage 4**

1. Ask students to work in pairs. Explain to students they should put on the desk objects from their handbags, school bags, pockets etc. (for example, a mobile phone, a pen, an eraser, liquid paper, a diary, lipstick, chewing gum etc.)
2. Explain to the students that they are in a similar situation to stage 3, but now they are in a small corner shop. One student is the shopkeeper and the other wants one of the objects on the table (but can't remember the English word for it). Read them the roles from Stage 3 again so that they know what to do.
3. Let students repeat the activity in pairs. Circulate and help where needed.

# STUFF AND THINGS – Worksheet

## Exercise 1

Read the descriptions and match them to the pictures. There is one extra picture.



It's \_\_\_\_ hot drink. You drink this \_\_\_\_, usually in the morning. I usually have mine with milk and sugar.

It's the \_\_\_\_\_ that wakes me up every morning. This \_\_\_\_\_ makes a noise like BUZZZZ and then I reach over and I turn it off. I don't like this \_\_\_\_\_.

It's very useful \_\_\_\_\_, you use it to put \_\_\_\_\_ together. You can use it to put two pieces of paper together, or to put wood or plastic together. If you want to use it with wood or plastic, you need stronger \_\_\_\_\_, but don't get it on your fingers.

## Exercise 2

Complete the descriptions with the words in the box. Some of the words are repeated.

<b>STUFF</b>	<b>A KIND OF</b>	<b>THING</b>
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## Exercise 3

Match the words in exercise 2 to their uses below:

1. Use this word to replace an uncountable noun (for material) or about a plural countable noun (for a variety of items).
2. Use this word to replace an object (singular countable noun).
3. Use this to describe a type of person or thing.

## Exercise 4

Now make a similar description for the fourth picture.