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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Teaching of English (1655) • Level: B.Ed

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 2 (Units 5–9)

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 50

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

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Question 1: Reading Aloud and Silent Reading Compared (20 Marks)

Compare reading aloud and silent reading in terms of their role in developing pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and learner confidence.

Introduction

Reading is not one single activity but a family of activities, and two of its most common classroom forms are reading aloud, in which the learner voices the printed text, and silent reading, in which the learner reads with the eyes and mind alone. Both have an honoured place in the elementary English classroom, yet they do different work. Teachers sometimes treat them as rivals and choose one permanently; in reality they develop different aspects of the reader, and the wise teacher uses each for what it does best. This answer compares the two forms under the four heads named in the question: pronunciation, fluency, comprehension and

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learner confidence. It then summarises the comparison in a table and draws a practical conclusion for the elementary teacher, keeping in view the young learner, for whom oral reading is the natural doorway into literacy, but for whom silent reading is the final goal of all reading instruction.

Role in Developing Pronunciation

Reading aloud is the principal classroom tool for connecting print with sound and therefore for developing pronunciation. When a child reads aloud, he must convert letters into sounds, blend them, stress words correctly and observe the rise and fall of the voice at questions and full stops. The teacher hears exactly where the child stands: which sounds he confuses, which words he misreads, whether he pauses at the right places. Immediate, gentle correction at this moment prevents wrong pronunciation from becoming a habit. Choral reading aloud adds a further benefit: the whole class practises rhythm, stress and intonation together, carried along by the stronger voices, which is especially valuable in a foreign language whose music differs from the mother tongue.

Silent reading, by contrast, contributes almost nothing directly to pronunciation, because no sound is produced and no one can hear or correct it. A child may silently pronounce a word wrongly in his head for years, and the error appears only later in his speech. Indirectly, however, wide silent reading enriches the vocabulary whose correct spoken forms the learner meets elsewhere, and older learners can use dictionaries with phonetic transcription. For pronunciation, the verdict is clear: reading aloud develops and reveals it; silent reading neither

develops nor tests it, and at the elementary stage pronunciation must be built mainly through the ear and the voice.

Role in Developing Fluency

Fluency means reading smoothly, at a reasonable speed, with correct phrasing and expression, and here the two forms develop different sides of the same ability. Reading aloud builds oral fluency: accuracy of word recognition, automatic decoding and expressive phrasing. A child who has read a passage aloud several times, first with the teacher's model and then in chorus and individually, begins to recognise words instantly instead of spelling them out, groups words into meaningful phrases, and reads with the expression of natural speech. This oral fluency is the visible foundation of all later reading skill, and repeated reading aloud of short, easy texts is one of the most reliable ways to build it.

Silent reading builds reading fluency in the sense of speed and stamina. Because the eyes move faster than the voice, silent reading allows much greater volume: the child can finish whole stories instead of paragraphs. Volume of reading is the strongest single support of fluency, vocabulary and general proficiency, and it can only be achieved silently. A mature reader is a silent reader; nobody reads a newspaper, a notice or an examination paper aloud. The elementary teacher's task is therefore developmental: use reading aloud to establish accurate, expressive decoding in the early classes, and gradually increase silent reading so that speed, volume and independence grow in classes four and five.

Role in Developing Comprehension

Comprehension, understanding the meaning of the text, is the true purpose of reading, and silent reading serves it best. When reading silently, the child's whole attention is free for meaning: he can slow down at a difficult sentence, read a line again, skip a known part, picture the scene and connect the text with his own experience. Research and classroom experience agree that comprehension questions are answered better after silent reading than after oral reading, particularly as texts grow longer. Reading aloud divides attention between performance and meaning; the young reader concentrates on pronouncing correctly, pleasing the teacher and avoiding mistakes, and may finish a page, when questioned, with very little idea of what it said.

This does not make reading aloud useless for comprehension. In the early stages, hearing the text, from the teacher's expressive model reading or from one's own voice, actually helps understanding, because spoken language with its stress and pauses explains the punctuation and grouping of words. Teacher read-alouds of stories build listening comprehension, vocabulary and love of books before children can decode independently. The balance is one of stage and purpose: aloud for learning how print works and for sharing texts, silent for extracting and enjoying meaning in quantity.

Role in Developing Learner Confidence

The effects of the two forms on confidence are opposite in direction and must be managed carefully. Reading aloud in front of the class is a public performance. For the successful reader it is a source of pride and motivation: applause, praise and the discovery that one can read

English before an audience build strong confidence. For the weak or shy reader, however, the same situation can be a monthly humiliation; stumbling, correction and laughter of classmates teach him that reading is dangerous, and he begins to avoid English altogether. The teacher must therefore protect confidence during oral reading: use choral and pair reading before individual performance, choose texts at the child's level, correct privately or through modelling rather than interruption, and never use reading aloud as a punishment or a surprise test.

Silent reading is psychologically safe. No audience hears the errors, the child proceeds at his own speed, chooses books of his own level and interest, and experiences private success: a finished story is proof of competence that belongs to him alone. Sustained silent reading programmes, in which the whole class reads self-chosen books for ten or fifteen minutes, are famous for changing children's attitudes, turning reluctant readers into willing ones. Confidence built silently then feeds back into oral work, because the child who has understood many stories has more English and more courage to display it.

Table 1: Reading Aloud and Silent Reading Compared

Aspect	Reading aloud	Silent reading
Pronunciation	Directly develops and reveals it; teacher can correct	No direct effect; errors remain hidden
Fluency	Builds accuracy, phrasing and expression	Builds speed, volume and stamina
Comprehension	Attention divided; useful for early decoding and shared stories	Full attention on meaning; best for understanding longer texts
Confidence	Pride for the able; risk of shame for the weak if unmanaged	Safe, private success; builds willing, independent readers
Teacher's evidence	Immediate diagnosis of each	Judged through questions, tasks

	reader	and observation
Best stage	Early classes and introduction of new texts	Increasing share in later elementary classes

The comparison shows that the two forms are complements, not competitors. Reading aloud is diagnostic, social and formative; silent reading is private, voluminous and is the final form of mature reading. A balanced elementary programme needs both, in proportions that change as the child grows: more aloud in classes one to three, more silent in classes four and five, with the teacher's own reading aloud of good stories continuing throughout as a model and a pleasure.

Conclusion

To conclude, reading aloud develops pronunciation directly, builds accurate and expressive oral fluency, supports early comprehension through the voice, and can raise or damage confidence according to the teacher's handling. Silent reading leaves pronunciation untouched, but builds speed and volume, serves comprehension best, and gives every learner safe, private success. The elementary teacher should therefore plan both deliberately: model reading and guided oral reading to establish the mechanics and music of English print, protected by choral and pair formats; and daily silent reading of suitable, interesting material to grow understanding, vocabulary and independence. Used together in this way, the two forms carry the child from sounding out words to the true goal of reading: understanding and enjoying written English on his own.

Question 2: Listening Comprehension Activities: Importance and Suitable Activities (20 Marks)

Discuss the importance of listening comprehension activities in improving students' understanding of spoken English and classroom interaction. Suggest suitable listening activities for elementary learners.

Introduction

Listening is the first language skill every human being acquires and the one most used in daily life, yet in many elementary English classrooms it is the most neglected. Children are asked to read, copy and memorise, but they are seldom systematically trained to understand spoken English. The result appears when a visitor, an audio recording or even their own teacher speaks natural English: pupils who can read a lesson cannot understand it when it is spoken. Listening comprehension activities, in which learners listen to English for a purpose and respond by doing, choosing, drawing, answering or acting, repair this neglect. This answer discusses the importance of such activities for understanding spoken English and for classroom interaction, and then suggests a range of listening activities suitable for elementary learners, with brief notes on how each works.

Importance for Understanding Spoken English

Spoken English differs greatly from written English, and only listening practice can bridge the gap. In speech, words run together, weak forms replace full forms, sounds are dropped or changed, and sentences arrive at a speed the listener cannot control. A child who knows a word

only in print may fail to recognise it in speech. Listening activities train the ear to segment the stream of sound into words, to catch key words even when others are missed, and to use context, tone and situation to guess meaning, which is precisely the skill real-life listening demands. Regular listening also fixes pronunciation from the receiving side: children who hear correct stress and intonation daily begin to speak with them, because no one can reliably produce sounds he cannot hear.

Listening is equally the gateway to all other learning in English. Vocabulary and structures first understood through the ear are later spoken, read and written with far greater ease; this is the natural order of language growth. Stories heard develop imagination, prediction and memory. Moreover, listening comprehension underlies success in later education, where lectures, instructions, examinations and media are substantially oral. A school that trains listening is therefore not adding a luxury; it is laying the foundation on which the other three skills are built, and it is preparing learners for a world in which English is heard as much as it is read.

Importance for Classroom Interaction

Listening activities transform classroom interaction itself. A language classroom runs on spoken exchanges: instructions, questions, explanations and pair work all fail if learners cannot understand what is said to them. When pupils are trained listeners, the teacher can conduct the lesson in English instead of translating every instruction, so English time in the lesson multiplies and the classroom becomes a genuine English environment. Children learn to follow routines, respond to questions accurately and take part in dialogues because they actually understand their partners.

Interaction also has an affective side. Listening tasks are low-threat: the child responds by pointing, drawing or acting rather than by producing difficult speech, so weak and shy learners succeed and gain confidence. Pair and group listening activities teach the social core of listening: attending to another person, waiting for one's turn, checking understanding and responding relevantly. These habits improve not only English lessons but the whole life of the classroom, reducing misunderstanding, repetition and disorder, because a class that listens is a class that can be taught.

Suitable Listening Activities for Elementary Learners

The following activities are graded roughly from simple to more demanding; all need little or no equipment beyond the teacher's voice, though recordings, where available, add variety of voices. The teacher should always set a purpose before listening, allow more than one hearing, and accept responses in action or drawing before demanding spoken or written answers from young learners.

A Menu of Listening Activities

- Listen and do (Total Physical Response): the teacher gives commands, 'Stand up, touch your nose, open the door,' and children respond with actions. Understanding is visible instantly, no speech is forced, and classroom English is learned for life.
- Listen and point / show: children point to flashcards, objects or pictures named by the teacher, or hold up the correct picture or word card. Ideal for vocabulary checking in classes one to three.

- Listen and draw / colour: the teacher describes a picture step by step, 'Draw a big house. Colour the door red,' and children draw and colour. Finished pictures show comprehension exactly and children love the activity.
- Listen and number / sequence: children arrange picture cards in the order of a short story or set of instructions heard. Develops memory, sequence and story understanding.
- Listen and complete: children fill a simple table, form or picture with information heard, such as names, numbers, days or prices in a short dialogue. Suitable for classes four and five.
- Story listening with tasks: the teacher tells or reads a story with gestures and pictures; children listen first for enjoyment, then again to answer, predict the ending, mime the actions or arrange story pictures. Builds sustained listening and love of English.
- Songs, rhymes and chants: children listen, join in, and perform actions; rhythm fixes pronunciation and memory, and missing-word versions, where children supply the word they hear omitted, sharpen attention.
- Listening games: 'Simon Says,' bingo with words or numbers, odd-one-out by sound, and barrier games in which a child follows a partner's spoken instructions. Games supply the repetition listening needs, wrapped in pleasure.
- Short recorded dialogues and announcements, where a phone, speaker or radio is available: children listen for who is speaking, where, and one or two pieces of information. This prepares them for voices other than their teacher's.

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Making Listening Activities Effective

A few conditions decide whether these activities succeed. The listening text must be slightly easy rather than difficult, because the skill being trained is understanding, not endurance. The teacher's speech should be clear, natural and at moderate speed, supported by gestures, pictures and the blackboard. Tasks should move from non-verbal responses to short verbal and then written ones as confidence grows. Listening should occur daily in small doses, including the listening hidden inside ordinary classroom management, rather than in rare, long, frightening sessions. Finally, wrong responses should be treated as information for the teacher about what needs re-teaching, never as faults to be punished, so that children listen with attention but without fear.

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Conclusion

To conclude, listening comprehension activities are indispensable because spoken English can be understood only by practising listening: they train the ear to decode connected speech, supply the input from which speaking, reading and writing grow, and make genuine English-medium classroom interaction possible. Activities such as listen-and-do, listen-and-draw, sequencing, story listening, songs and listening games suit elementary learners because they respond through action and play before speech and writing are demanded. A teacher who gives listening its daily, planned place will find that her pupils understand more, fear English less and interact more, and that every other skill in the course becomes easier to teach.

Question 3: Storytelling: Speaking Confidence, Imagination and Creative Writing (20 Marks)

Explain how storytelling activities can help improve learners' speaking confidence, imagination, and creative writing abilities in English classrooms.

Introduction

Storytelling is among the oldest teaching methods in the world and remains one of the most powerful in the English classroom. Long before children read textbooks, they listen to stories at home; the wise teacher builds on this natural love instead of fighting it. In an elementary English classroom, storytelling includes the teacher telling or reading stories aloud, learners listening and responding, retelling stories in their own words, acting them out, changing their endings and finally inventing and writing stories of their own. Used regularly in this full cycle, storytelling is not entertainment added to the lesson; it is a complete language programme in miniature, carrying vocabulary, structures, pronunciation and values inside a form children beg to repeat. This answer explains how storytelling activities improve three outcomes in particular: learners' speaking confidence, their imagination, and their creative writing abilities.

How Storytelling Improves Speaking Confidence

Confidence in speaking grows from successful speaking experiences repeated many times, and stories manufacture such experiences with unusual efficiency. First, listening to stories gives children a large stock of ready-made English: phrases, dialogues and sentence patterns absorbed without memorisation effort. When a child later retells the story, these chunks are

available on his tongue, so he speaks more fluently than his grammatical knowledge alone would allow, and fluency experienced is confidence created. Second, retelling is a protected form of speaking. The child is not required to invent content and language at the same time; the story supplies the content, the sequence and much of the wording, so his whole attention can go to speaking clearly and expressively. Picture sequences, story maps and puppets protect him further by giving his eyes and the audience's eyes something to rest on besides himself.

Storytelling also lowers the fear that silences elementary learners. The classroom atmosphere during stories is warm and playful; children chant refrains together, predict aloud, answer the storyteller's questions in chorus and mime actions, so every child speaks in every story session without being singled out. Role play and dramatisation extend this: speaking as a character, the shy child hides behind the mask of the fox or the shopkeeper and discovers that his English voice works. Because stories are repeated and beloved, children volunteer to retell them, perform them in assembly and tell them at home, each success adding to a store of confidence that transfers to ordinary classroom speaking, where the same child now answers questions and joins discussions with far less hesitation.

How Storytelling Develops Imagination

Imagination is the mind's ability to form pictures of things not present and to invent what does not yet exist, and stories are its natural food. When a child listens to a story, the words must be converted into mental images: he sees the forest, hears the river and fears the giant, although nothing is before his eyes. This act of visualisation, practised daily, strengthens the inner eye far more than passive watching of ready-made pictures on a screen, where imagining is done for

the viewer. Well-told stories with pauses and questions, 'What do you think is behind the door?', oblige children to predict, invent and justify possibilities, exercising imagination as reasoning, not only as fantasy.

Classroom storytelling activities are designed to move children from receiving imagination to producing it. Changing the ending of a known story, telling the same story from another character's viewpoint, inventing what happened before the story began or after it ended, combining characters from two stories, and building a class story sentence by sentence around a circle all require children to create new scenes, motives and events. Stories from other cultures and times widen the imaginative world further, showing children lives, landscapes and problems beyond their own village or town. An imagination so trained does not serve English alone; it supports composition in every subject, problem-solving, art and the general creativity on which later life depends, and it keeps alive in school the imaginative power that young children naturally possess and dull teaching often destroys.

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How Storytelling Improves Creative Writing

Creative writing fails in many classrooms because children are ordered to produce original writing before they have absorbed any models of how stories work. Storytelling reverses the order correctly: input before output. From heard stories children unconsciously learn the architecture of narrative: an opening that introduces characters and setting, a problem that creates interest, a sequence of events joined by words such as first, then, suddenly and finally, a climax and a satisfying ending. They absorb dialogue, description and the rhythms of written English, which differ from speech. When writing is finally asked for, the child is not facing a

blank page empty-handed; he is imitating, adapting and extending patterns he knows and loves.

The classroom bridge from telling to writing is built in stages. Children first sequence picture cards and write captions; then write a retelling with the help of a story map or sentence starters; then change one element, the character, the place or the ending, and write the new version; then compose group stories which the teacher scribes and the class improves together; and finally write individual stories, illustrate them and read them to the class or display them in a class storybook. Each stage keeps support high and fear low, while authorship steadily becomes more personal. Story writing also gives children a genuine reason to care about spelling, punctuation and handwriting, because a real audience will read their work. Teachers consistently find that classes rich in storytelling produce longer, better-organised and more original compositions than classes drilled only in paragraphs and essays, because the story-fed child has both something to say and a shape in which to say it.

Conditions for Success and the Teacher's Role

These benefits depend on how storytelling is done. Stories must be chosen for the children's age, language level and interests, slightly easy in language but rich in content, with repetition, dialogue and action that invite joining in. The teacher should tell, not merely read, as often as possible, using voice, face, gesture and props, and should repeat favourite stories many times, because repetition is where language is absorbed. Activities before, during and after the story, prediction, questioning, acting, sequencing, drawing and writing, convert listening into full language work. Above all, the teacher must protect the pleasure of the story: if every story

ends in a test and a list of difficult words, children will learn to endure stories instead of loving them, and the confidence, imagination and writing power described above will not appear.

Conclusion

To conclude, storytelling improves speaking confidence by supplying ready language, protected retelling practice and a playful atmosphere in which every child speaks successfully; it develops imagination by demanding visualisation, prediction and invention, and by widening the child's world; and it builds creative writing by providing models of narrative structure and language, followed by carefully staged movement from retelling to original composition. Few methods serve three aims at once so economically and so joyfully. The elementary English teacher who makes storytelling a daily habit, rather than a Friday treat, will find her learners speaking with growing courage, imagining with growing richness and writing with growing originality, which is to say, learning English in the deepest sense.

Question 4: Controlled Writing and Free Writing: Difference and Suitability for Elementary Learners (20 Marks)

Differentiate between controlled writing and free writing activities. Which approach is more suitable for elementary learners and why?

Introduction

Writing is the last of the four language skills to be taught and, for young learners of a foreign language, the most difficult, because the writer must manage handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and ideas all at once, without a listener to help. Teachers organise this difficulty

through two broad kinds of activity. In controlled writing, the learner's language is guided and limited by the teacher or the material: he copies, fills gaps, completes sentences, transforms given structures or writes within a model, so that errors are largely prevented and one teaching point is practised at a time. In free writing, the learner chooses his own content and language and writes to express meaning, a diary entry, a story, a letter or a description, with the teacher responding mainly to what is said rather than to how it is said. This answer differentiates the two approaches under several clear heads, presents the comparison in a table, and then argues, with reasons, which approach is more suitable for elementary learners, and in what proportion the two should be combined.

Controlled Writing Activities

Controlled writing grows out of the oral work already mastered and leads the learner from copying towards composition in small, safe steps. Its common forms include copying sentences and short paragraphs to establish handwriting and spelling; gap-filling in which one word or structure is supplied; substitution exercises where one element of a model sentence is changed; sentence combining and transformation, for example joining two short sentences or changing statements into questions; guided composition in which questions, pictures or a word bank provide the content and order; and parallel writing, where learners write their own text closely following a model's pattern. The teacher's control may be total, as in copying, or partial, as in guided paragraphs.

The strengths of controlled writing are accuracy, confidence and manageability. Because the task is narrow, the elementary child can succeed; correct forms are practised until they become

habits; spelling and punctuation are systematically built; and the teacher can diagnose and correct precisely, since the whole class is attempting the same target. Its weaknesses appear when it is used alone: learners may write correctly without ever learning to express their own meanings, motivation suffers from endless mechanical exercises, and ability in controlled tasks does not automatically transfer to real writing, just as drills do not automatically become conversation.

Free Writing Activities

Free writing begins from the learner's own meanings. Its forms include writing about oneself, family, pets and experiences; stories and poems; letters, invitations and messages; descriptions of pictures in the child's own way; diaries and reading responses; and project writing for display. The teacher sets the occasion and audience, helps with brainstorming and a first draft, and responds to content with interest, correcting selectively and mainly at the editing stage, so that the child's willingness to write is not crushed under red ink.

Its strengths are the mirror image of controlled writing. Free writing develops fluency, originality and the writer's voice; it reveals what learners can actually do with English; it motivates because the work is personally owned and often displayed or shared; and it integrates vocabulary and structures learned elsewhere into genuine use. Its risks at the elementary stage are equally real: children with small vocabulary and fragile spelling may produce error-filled work they cannot monitor, may fossilise mistakes, may write chiefly in translation from the mother tongue, or may simply freeze before the demand to invent content and language together. Assessment is also harder and slower for the teacher of a large class.

Table 1: Controlled Writing and Free Writing Compared

Aspect	Controlled writing	Free writing
Who decides content	Teacher / material	Learner
Language freedom	Limited to taught items and models	Any language the learner commands
Main aim	Accuracy of form: spelling, grammar, punctuation	Fluency and expression of meaning
Typical tasks	Copying, gap-fill, substitution, guided paragraphs	Stories, letters, diaries, descriptions
Errors	Largely prevented; corrected at once	Expected; responded to selectively, after drafting
Learner feeling	Safe, but can become mechanical	Proud and motivated, but can feel risky
Teacher's load	Easy to set and mark in large classes	Time-consuming to read and respond
Skill built	Correct habits and confidence in basics	Real communication and authorship

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The table makes the essential point that the two approaches are not good and bad versions of one thing; they train different halves of the writer. Accuracy without expression produces a correct copyist who cannot write a letter; expression without accuracy produces an enthusiastic writer whose English remains broken. Skilled teaching sequences them: control first to build the tools, freedom increasingly to use the tools, with guided writing as the bridge between them.

Which Approach Is More Suitable for Elementary Learners, and Why?

For elementary learners as a whole, controlled writing, moving gradually through guided writing towards short free writing, is the more suitable main approach, and the reasons are developmental. First, young learners of English in Pakistan command very little language: a few

hundred words and a handful of structures. Free writing demands precisely what they do not yet have, so unrestricted tasks produce either copied models, mother-tongue translation or discouragement. Controlled tasks are set exactly at their level, guaranteeing the experience of writing correct English successfully, and success at this age is the engine of all further learning.

Second, the mechanics of writing are still being formed. Handwriting, spelling patterns, capital letters and full stops must become automatic before attention can be spared for ideas, and only controlled, repetitive practice automates them. Third, habits formed early persist: correct sentence patterns practised under guidance in classes three to five become the foundation on which freer writing in middle school can safely stand, whereas errors practised freely and uncorrected for years become extremely hard to remove. Fourth, the practical conditions of our elementary classrooms, large numbers and limited teacher time, make controlled and guided work feasible daily, while classes still receive feedback; genuinely responsive marking of free writing for sixty children is beyond most teachers' capacity, and unresponded free writing quickly loses its value.

This verdict must not be exaggerated into a ban on freedom. Even class two children can write one free sentence about a drawing, and by classes four and five short free writing, a paragraph about my family, a story ending, a letter to a friend, should appear regularly, supported by word banks, sentence starters and models, and judged leniently. The suitable pattern is therefore a staircase: heavy control in the early classes, guided writing as the centre in the middle classes, and a growing share of supported free writing by the end of the elementary stage. What is unsuitable is either extreme: all control, which starves expression, or all freedom, which abandons beginners to errors and frustration.

Conclusion

To conclude, controlled writing limits the learner's choices in order to build accuracy, mechanical automaticity and confidence, while free writing releases the learner's choices in order to build fluency, originality and real communication. For elementary learners, whose English resources are small and whose basic writing habits are still forming, controlled writing leading through guided writing to gradually increasing free writing is the more suitable approach. It respects the child's present capacity while preparing his future independence. The teacher's art lies in the balance and the timing: enough control that every child writes correctly and confidently today, and enough freedom that he discovers, before leaving the elementary school, that English writing can carry his own thoughts to a real reader.

Question 5: An Integrated Listening and Speaking Activity Through Collaborative Interaction (20 Marks)

Design a classroom activity that integrates listening and speaking skills through collaborative student interaction. Explain the procedure and expected learning outcomes.

Introduction

In real life, listening and speaking are not separate skills but two halves of one act: conversation. We listen in order to respond, and we speak to a listener whose reply we must then understand. Classroom teaching, however, often separates them, drilling listening in silence and speaking in recitation, and learners then discover that they cannot manage the simplest real exchange. Integrated activities repair this split by designing tasks in which learners

must listen carefully to partners and speak meaningfully to them in order to complete a shared job. This answer designs one such activity in full detail for an elementary class: an information-gap activity called 'Find Your Partner's Picture', suitable for classes four and five, in which pairs hold similar but different pictures and must reach a common goal purely by listening and speaking in English. The answer gives the aims, materials and preparation, the step-by-step procedure, the teacher's role and follow-up, and the expected learning outcomes, together with notes on adaptation for large classes and weaker learners.

The Activity: Aims, Level and Materials

The activity is designed for a class of about forty learners in class four or five, in a period of about forty minutes, and it can be run in larger classes because all learners work simultaneously in pairs. Its language aims are to practise listening for specific information, asking and answering questions, and using the vocabulary of a familiar topic, such as a market scene, a classroom, a park or animals on a farm, together with structures already taught: there is / there are, present continuous (a boy is running), prepositions of place (on, under, next to, behind) and question forms with what, where, how many and is there. Its skill aims are genuinely integrated: no learner can succeed by speaking without listening or listening without speaking, because the information needed is divided between the partners.

Materials are deliberately simple and cheap. The teacher prepares pairs of picture sheets, A and B, showing the same scene with six to eight small differences: for example, in picture A three birds sit on the tree and a cat sleeps under it, while in picture B two birds sit on the tree and the cat chases a mouse. Pictures may be taken from the textbook, drawn by the teacher on

duplicated sheets, or assembled from old magazines; one set of pairs can serve the whole class if all pairs receive the same two pictures, though several different sets are better because pairs cannot copy neighbouring answers. Each learner also needs a pencil, and the board is used for the demonstration and for useful language written up in advance: sentence frames such as 'In my picture there is...', 'How many ... are there?', 'Where is the ...?', 'Is there a ...?' and 'In my picture, yes / no, ...'.

Procedure: Step by Step

Step one, preparation and modelling (about eight minutes). The teacher revises the topic vocabulary quickly with flashcards or the real scene picture, writes the sentence frames on the board, and then demonstrates the activity with a confident learner before the whole class. Holding picture A while the volunteer holds picture B, and keeping the pictures hidden from each other, the teacher asks, 'In my picture there are three birds on the tree. How many birds are there in your picture?' The class hears the answer, understands that differences exist, and sees that the task is to find all the differences by talking, without showing the pictures. Rules are stated clearly: English only, do not show your picture, listen carefully and write each difference in the table or notebook provided.

Step two, pair work (about fifteen minutes). Learners sit facing each other, in ordinary pair seating, each holding his picture upright or shielded by a book. Partner A begins by describing one part of his picture; partner B listens, compares mentally with his own picture, asks questions to check ('Is the cat under the tree?'), and together they decide whether that part is the same or different and record the difference in simple English or, for weaker learners, by

marking a list. Roles alternate naturally as they move around the scene, and the pair continues until they believe they have found all the differences. The teacher circulates continuously: listening, noting good language and common errors for later, supplying a forgotten word when a pair is truly stuck, and keeping time, but not correcting during the activity, so that communication is not interrupted.

Step three, checking and reporting (about eight minutes). Pairs join another pair or report to the class; only now may pictures be shown and compared directly. Each pair reports two or three differences in full sentences ('In picture A there are three birds, but in picture B there are two birds'), the class confirms or challenges, and the teacher writes the correct list on the board. Delayed correction follows: the teacher boards a few errors heard during circulation, without naming learners, and the class corrects them together. Step four, follow-up (about nine minutes, or homework). Each learner writes a short paragraph describing his own picture, or listing the differences found, converting the spoken work into writing, and the teacher collects this as evidence of individual learning. Winners, pairs who found all differences accurately, are praised, and the activity closes by asking learners what was difficult: hearing numbers, place words, or forming questions, which gives the teacher the next lesson's agenda.

Table 1: Procedure at a Glance

Stage	Time	What happens	Skills in use
Modelling	8 min	Teacher demonstrates with a volunteer; frames on board; rules explained	Listening to instructions; choral speaking
Pair task	15 min	Partners describe, question, compare and	Integrated listening and speaking;

		record differences; pictures hidden	negotiation
Reporting	8 min	Pictures revealed; pairs report differences; delayed correction	Speaking to class; listening to others; accuracy focus
Follow-up writing	9 min	Individual paragraph on own picture / differences	Writing built on oral work; assessment evidence

Two design features deserve emphasis. First, the information gap is the engine of the activity: because each partner genuinely lacks information the other holds, questions are real questions and listening is real listening, not display for the teacher. Second, the ban on showing the pictures is what forces language to do all the work; the moment a picture is shown early, the need to listen and speak collapses, so the teacher must enforce this single rule cheerfully but firmly.

The Teacher's Role and Adaptation

The teacher's role changes across the activity: organiser and model before it, monitor and helper during it, and assessor and language teacher after it. In large classes the activity is actually an advantage, because it gives every child fifteen minutes of speaking and listening in a lesson where whole-class methods would give each child seconds. Weaker learners are supported by the sentence frames on the board, by pairing with a slightly stronger partner, and by permission to record differences in words and figures before forming sentences. Stronger learners are extended by requiring fuller descriptions, by giving them pictures with more differences, or by making them reporters for their group. Mixed topics allow the same format

to be recycled through the year, picture pairs for the home, the school, the zoo and the seasons, each time carrying new vocabulary in a familiar and trusted routine.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the activity and its follow-up, learners should be able to demonstrate the following outcomes. In listening, they will have understood a partner's descriptions and questions about a familiar scene, identified specific details such as numbers, objects and positions, and checked understanding by asking for repetition or confirmation, which are the core behaviours of real listening. In speaking, they will have produced descriptions with there is / there are and prepositions of place, formed and answered questions on the topic, and sustained an exchange of several turns in English with a partner, with intelligible pronunciation and growing fluency.

Beyond the two named skills, the activity yields important supporting outcomes. Vocabulary of the topic is revised in use rather than in lists, and is better retained because it was needed for a purpose. Collaborative outcomes include turn-taking, helping a partner, dividing a task and reaching agreement, while affective outcomes include confidence, since every learner speaks successfully to a friendly audience of one, and motivation, since the task feels like a game with a discoverable answer. The written follow-up provides measurable evidence: the teacher can count correct differences recorded, observe question forms used, and assess the final paragraphs, so the activity serves formative assessment as well as practice. Learners who repeatedly experience such integrated tasks come to understand English as a means of doing things with other people, which is the central insight of communicative language teaching.

Conclusion

To conclude, 'Find Your Partner's Picture' integrates listening and speaking through genuine collaborative interaction: an information gap makes partners describe, question, listen and check until a shared task is completed, with the teacher modelling first, monitoring during pair work, and correcting and consolidating afterwards. Its expected outcomes cover accurate listening for detail, fluent and structured speaking, topic vocabulary in use, cooperative behaviour, confidence and assessable written evidence, all achieved with nothing more costly than pairs of pictures. Activities of this kind deserve a regular place in the elementary English timetable, because they teach the truth that the separated skills of the textbook finally exist for: understanding others and making oneself understood.

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