

# 1.19

## When the music stops ...

**Focus** To provide a change of tempo and a lifting of spirits to get the students moving around and mixing with different partners.

**Level** Any

**Time** 3 or 4 minutes

**Preparation** Find an upbeat song or piece of music. (For future occasions, invite the students to choose the music.)

### in class

- 1 Get everyone up and out of their seats.
- 2 Tell them you're going to play some music. They should move around the classroom (walking or dancing or doing something in-between). Explain that when the music stops, you will ask them to turn to the person nearest to them and ask them a question beginning with the question word or phrase you will shout out: *What? Why? Where? Where are? How? Which? Who? How long? How many? How much? What is? Why on earth? How long exactly?*, etc.
- 3 The students report back to the class on any interesting questions and answers.

### Comments

You can use this activity to practise specific questions you have been working on, or just focus on its energising aspect and give the students a list of interesting words to work with.

Instead of a question word, you could try giving them either an auxiliary verb or a modal to use in their question, or perhaps an adverb.

### Variation 1

Supply a lexical set before you start: occupations, leisure activities, countries, animals, etc. As soon as the music stops, the students have to strike a pose or do a mime of an item in that set, and they must guess each other's.

### Variation 2

Divide the group into As and Bs. The As freeze when the music stops and the Bs must try to make them laugh or get them to move in some way.

### Variation 3

Just have the students get up and dance for a moment.



# 2.12

## Guided phone breaks



This is a chance for the students to have you blessing to check their phones! These breaks may or may not be connected to the language or the topic of the lesson itself, but they enable the students to have some down time, away from you and away from the other students. It's a time to recharge their batteries and return – refreshed – to the lesson.

**Focus** To give the students an opportunity to switch off completely from the classroom for a short time in order to complete a task online.

**Level** Any, unless stated otherwise.

**Time** 5 minutes

**Preparation** None

### in class

Choose to let the students choose – an activity from those listed. Give them the choice of working individually or with a partner. At the end of the activity, invite them to report back briefly, if appropriate.

### Find something out

Set the students the task of finding the answer to a question – either related to something that has come up in class or else a completely random question. It could be a very quick search or a more complex one.

For example:

*What's the capital of Kazakhstan?* – which would require a very simple quick search.

*What do elephants have in common with humans, dolphins and apes?* – which might involve a more complicated search.

1 The students suggest answers and share their ideas *before* searching.

2 Say *Go!* Who can find the correct answer first? Was anyone right?

# 2.12

## Guided phone breaks

### 2 Watch/listen to a short video clip

Before the lesson, find a suitable clip on YouTube. It doesn't have to have words because your students will be able to talk about it.

Give the students the link in the lesson. They watch and report back.

#### Variation

Give the students a question before hand that they must look or listen for the answer to.

### 3 Complete song lyrics

At [www.lyricstraining.com](http://www.lyricstraining.com), students can choose their own song and fill in the words at one of four levels: Beginner (10% of the words have to be filled in), Intermediate (25%), Advanced (50%) and Expert (100%). There is no need to create an account, but that makes it possible for the student to track their progress over time.

### 4 Practise sounds

The students type 'teaching english phonemic chart' in order to have access to the British Council's animated chart at the Teaching English website. They can download this. Whenever they want (or you think it would be useful) to work on a particular sound, they can click on the sound and hear it over and over in isolation and practise saying it themselves.

### 5 Play a memory game

This gives the students a chance to switch off – and improve their memory skills at the same time. There are plenty of websites, like [www.memoz.com/memory-game-online-free/for-adults](http://www.memoz.com/memory-game-online-free/for-adults)) and [www.lomosity.com](http://www.lomosity.com)) offering free memory games for children and adults – and even for seniors like me. Many of the games are designed to work on the 'pelmanism' principle: a series of cards are face down and the players must discover and remember where matching pairs are. The students can play by themselves or else against a partner.

### Listen and say it

The students write a list in their own language of five or six words they would like to know in English.

- 2 They go to Google Translate (or another translation site), select their language and type their words into the left-hand box.
- 3 They select 'English' on the right-hand box then click the 'loudspeaker' icon, listen to the pronunciation and say it themselves out loud. (If they're working with a partner, they can listen to each other to see how well what they say matches the Google version.)
- 4 They ask each other about their new words: *Do you know what X means?*

# 2.12

## Guided phone breaks

**Note:** Remembering that Google Translate is not always 100% accurate, you may need to double-check their translations.

### 7 How good is Google?

#### *Intermediate/advanced*

The students will need the Google Translate (similar) app on their phone for this activity ([translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)).

- 1 The students go for a short walk around the building and look for two or three signs on the wall. In the app, they click the 'camera' icon to see how the sign is translated into English.
- 2 They report back on any especially interesting mis-translations that they discovered. What should the correct version be?

This is also a great homework activity.

### 8 Getting up to date

#### *Intermediate/advanced*

The students go to the Channel 4 news videos page on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Channel4News/videos](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Channel4News/videos)) and choose a news item that catches their attention (and is quite short). They listen to the first couple of minutes of the item and report back to the class.

#### **Variation for lower level**

When the students see the video, they click the CC icon to turn on the subtitles, so they can read the text while they listen to the first couple of minutes of the item.

#### **Extension**

When they have listened once, they can click the Settings icon (the little gear) to auto-translate, and choose their language. (Remember that Automatic is not always perfect.)

They can then go back to English again, with or without the subtitles and see how well they can now follow the story.

# 3.4

## Some soothing stressbusters

**Focus** To help students switch off for a moment and come back re-energised.

**Level** Any

**Time** 2-3 minutes for each activity

**Preparation** Select an activity from the list and prepare what you need in the way of music or pictures.

### A note about music

Music is magic. It can alter your mood; it can help you think; it can enhance your memory and your creativity; it can even influence your heartbeat and help to control your emotions and it can certainly raise or lower your energy levels.

But not everyone may find the choice of music relaxing, as I have discovered. Allow the students to listen to their own music through headphones if they prefer that.



### in class

1 Give instructions.

2 Where appropriate, ask the students for their reactions.

### 1 Listen to music and doodle

Play some relaxing music and ask the students to doodle for a few moments.

They should do this first with their normal writing hand, then with their other hand.



### Variation

Do a double doodle, using both hands!

### Extension

The students compare their doodles and – in a very light-hearted way – attempt to interpret them.



# 3.4

## Some soothing stressbusters

### 2 Listen to music and write

Play a piece of music and ask the students to write down words as they listen. Their choice of words could be left completely open: any words that come to mind. Alternatively, you could give them a framework, such as adjectives, animals, colours, emotions, places, etc.

#### Variation 1

The students draw (or sketch) what they imagine when they hear the music. After listening, they can compare their thoughts or drawings with a partner.

#### Variation 2

The students listen with their hands in their hands that they can manipulate, e.g. worry beads, a koosh ball, kumogata, even a pen.



### 3 Stare at a mandala

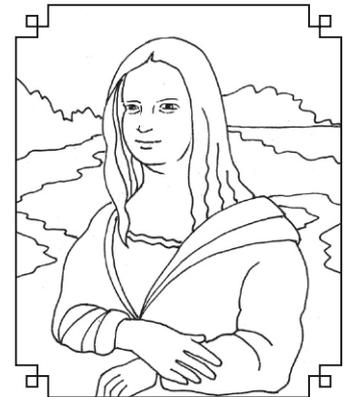
A mandala for you to use the first time you do this can be found in the Resource bank on page 152, but students often prefer to choose their own. See Extension 1 below. This is a wonderful way of quietening your inner dialogue and getting into a deeply relaxed and creative state. It can be done with or without music.

Get the students to stare at the centre of the mandala and focus on their breath. Tell them that counting as they breathe will help them turn off their internal voice and concentrate. Remind them to keep their eyes fixed on the centre. The lines and shapes of the mandala will move around, but they should just continue to stare for a minute or two.



#### Extension 1

Putting 'mandalas to colour' into their search engine will give the students access to an amazing range of free mandalas. Suggest they find one/some to download and colour, and bring with them to class. (And if they're keen on colouring, they might also search for 'colouring famous paintings'.)



#### Extension 2

Staring at a 3D picture has a similar kind of effect. Perhaps the students could bring a favourite one to class.

# 3.4

## Some soothing stressbusters

### 4 Look and remember

Ask all the students to look at the same picture for 30 seconds, then cover it. Next, ask them to recreate it in their heads and then sketch it on paper. Tell them to compare their sketch with a partner.

**Notes:** Any picture will do – from the cover of a book or elsewhere, even a famous painting – but it should not be too complicated.

The word *sketch* is used deliberately here, as many people – myself included – find the word *draw* a trifle daunting.

### 5 Being present

First, get the students to listen to the sounds around them, closing their eyes and making a mental list of all the sounds they can hear inside and outside the room, such as coughing, squeaking chairs, breathing, voices in the distance, etc.) Then ask them to open their eyes and share their observations with a partner.

Next, get them to describe what they see. Tell them to look around and name at least five things ... beginning with 't', made of plastic, which are blue, which could be dangerous, etc.

### 6 Hum a tune

Some researchers have suggested that humming can help to banish negative thoughts – at least for the duration of the humming!

Ask the students to think of a song that makes them feel good, and to hum it quietly to themselves for a few moments. Then ask them to hum it to a partner. Can the partner guess what the song is?