

Sniff: teachers' notes and tips - elementary

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Mime smelling a flower: hold the 'flower', close your eyes and take a deep breath and say 'mmmm'!!! Or, better still, take in a real flower.
- b Elicit from the students the word *flower* and write it on the board.
- c Now elicit other things from the students that smell nice and board these too, then do things that smell bad. Write *Smells* at the top of the board.

Tip: read the text yourself first

All classes are different. Which of the words in the reading would your class have problems with? Identify these and include them in the brainstorming above.

- d Looking at all the words get students to shout out which are the:
 - i nicest smells, and
 - ii the really bad smells.

Tip: never rush these pre-reading stages

For students to enjoy the reading it's important that time is taken over these stages so make sure your lesson plan gives plenty of time. This part should be fun – and give them the word *fast* if that's what they want!

2 Reading tasks

- a Tell students the reading is about smells, and about a woman called Joanna. They should read the text quickly – what's her problem? (She can't smell).

Tip: make it a listening activity too

If you can tape another teacher reading the text (with feeling) then students can read and listen at the same time; they'll all finish together and won't halt at unfamiliar words.

- b Students read the text again more slowly and underline all the *smell* words – which ones are also on the board? Do an example first.
- c Students are now ready for the comprehension questions. Ask them to work individually first, and then compare their answers with a partner before going through open class.

Tip: make students respond to a text

Avoid asking questions that can be answered just by using the words in the text. Instead ask questions where there is not a simple, obvious answer. Encourage students to examine the text and to be involved actively. This may include reinterpreting literal information or considering what is implied but not explicitly stated. Adult elementary students are only elementary in the English language; they will enjoy mature, challenging tasks!

3 **Post-reading tasks**

- a Can the students remember what Sarah said about her grandfather? Give the words *cigars* to help if necessary.
- b Write the full sentence on the board: *When I smell cigars I think of grandfather.*
- c Then write *When I smell _____ I think of _____*. Ask students to write some sentences of their own. Give an example first: *When I smell lipstick I think of my mother. When I smell suntan oil I think of the sea.*

Tip: integrate pronunciation into each class

Both *When I smell* and *I think of* have sounds which are linked in spoken speech. *Of* is unstressed. Drill students before doing the speaking activity.

- d When most students have a few sentences ask them to remember one of their sentences. They must be able to repeat it without looking.
- e Ask students to stand up and tell each other their sentence.

Tip: link the reading to a speaking activity

Students should not have their sentence with them. Make sure for this activity there is a reason for listening to the other students: does anyone else have the same smell and/or memory? Participate yourself and listen out for any amusing sentences that can be shared with the whole class.

- f The final task is for students to write a poem. For this they need their *When I smell...* sentences.
- g Give the students your sentences as an example, and then show how you have changed them to make a poem. This is an example:
Lipstick is my mother, suntan oil is the sea, cut grass is the beginning of summer and boiled eggs are picnics.

Tip: use the OHP

An overhead projector is ideal here. Have the transparency with your sentences and poem on all ready – there's no time wasted writing on the board and focuses students better.

- h The students write their poems and then display them for everyone else to read and admire. They can illustrate them too.

Tip: link the reading to a writing task

The poem is a simple but creative task that will appeal to the more imaginative students, but all students if gently encouraged will be able to write something. Also allow students to be as creative as they like, if they want to use a different format that's fine. You might want to suggest a theme e.g. a season, holidays or a festival.