

Teaching ideas for the English for Uni passives materials

Here are some ideas for teaching with the materials. The materials and lesson plans assume that your students are at an intermediate level or above and already have some knowledge of the grammatical features highlighted on the website. There are of course many ways in which you could adapt the materials for use in class, with different permutations of individual work, pair work and group work, and the ideas below are just suggestions to prompt your own creativity. If you would like to share your teaching ideas for the materials please contact me and we can put your ideas up on the English for Uni blog. My email address is julia.miller@adelaide.edu.au.

I do not know how long your classes are, so the ideas below can be adapted in any way you like. You might want to spend longer on some features than others, or you might want to use a flipped/inverted classroom approach and give the students some things to do before class and use the class time to discuss particularly difficult areas.

The website materials and exercises can be downloaded as pdf files, or as Word files if you want to adapt them yourself.

If you want to use the website exercises in class, I've found that it works well to put a QR code up on a screen for the students to scan so they can go directly to an exercise. To generate a QR code, copy the URL for the exercise and then paste it into a QR code generator, such as this one:

<http://www.qrstuff.com/> You can use this in a very basic way, with all the custom suggestions, and produce a black and white code to copy using either a screen shot or the snipping tool. Then paste this code into a PowerPoint slide and project it on a screen or wall. It takes less than a minute to do this and the students enjoy using the code.

You could also give students a copy of the video transcript and ask them to act out the story. They could even change the story to include different verbs, and make a video of their final product.

Suggestion 1

Focus: Active, passive and middle voice

1. Play the start of the video story using excerpt/chapter 2, *The Passives Story*, as a warm-up for the class. (N.B. If you are using the complete video, rather than the video chapters, start at 1:15 after the passives song.) Stop part way through the story, at the point where Professor Grahamarian says "Dear dear. I think we should get Ms Parrot to come and help". (This is at 2:34 in the chapter 2 video, or 3:49 in the complete video.)
2. Ask the students what grammatical feature they think the video story is focussing on. Lead the discussion round to the passive voice. Recap the basic elements of the active and passive voice, using the materials on the website.
3. Ask the students to look for passive voice examples in the rest of the story, then play the story through to the end and stop at the teaching section.
4. Get students to talk to each other about the passive forms they have noticed and have a whole class discussion.

5. Now play the passives song, either from the start of the complete video or using excerpt/chapter 1. Focus on the ergative verbs, and ask if they notice anything special about them. Can they be made passive? Can they be made active? (e.g. *The door opened. The door was opened. She opened the door.*) Use this to lead into a discussion on ergatives and the middle voice. Do they know any other verbs that work this way? (e.g. *close, increase, decrease*)
6. Give the students exercise 1, either in printed format or as something to work through online via a mobile phone or tablet. If the class is large, or you don't have much time, you could ask different people to work on different paragraphs. The students will get instant feedback on their answers if they use the website. After they have finished the exercise, prompt discussion and explain anything they have not understood. If you have the resources, you could also give them a copy of the ergative verbs list from the website. Alternatively, students could work in pairs or groups and one person could keep the ergative verbs list open on their phone/tablet while another submits the answers to the exercise. They could also share paper copies of the ergative verbs list and the exercise.
7. Play the passives song again to finish the class.
8. Students can review what they have learned in class by watching the video again, or by watching just video excerpt/chapter 3 or the complete video from 4:56 to 6:36. They can also do exercise 2 for homework.

Suggestion 2

Focus: When to use the passive voice

1. Use the passives song to remind students of the differences between active, passive or middle voice.
2. Prompt discussion on when to use the active, passive or middle voice. Add your own examples. e.g. Is it good to say "I am being looked at by James/Hong/Maria . . ." ? Why or why not?
3. Play excerpt/chapter 5 of the video (*When to use the Passive*), or start the complete video from 6:36.
4. Discuss this with the students and use the materials from the *When to use the Passive and Active instead of Passive* sections on the website.
5. Ask the students to do exercise 3, either on the website or as a handout. Discuss the answers.

Suggestion 3

Focus: The agent and participles

1. Ask the students what an agent is (this could include references to secret agent characters such as James Bond). Do we need to say who the agent is every time we use a passive?

2. Play video excerpt/chapter 5 (*The Agent*) or play the complete video from 8:01 to 9:25.
3. Discuss the idea of an agent using the explanation on the website in the section *By – saying who did something*.
4. Ask what the difference is between *by* and *with*. Discuss, then refer to this section on the website.
5. Lead in to a discussion on the correct participle to use in a passive. Play a few seconds from video excerpt/chapter 7, showing Professor Grahamarian talking to Prince Wolfgang (0:16 – 0:18 in chapter 7, or 9:41 – 9:43 in the complete video). Ask the class to describe each character and if necessary give them the two words 'bored' and 'boring' and ask the students which word best describes each character. Play the brief explanation in the video and the next section of the video, which includes Harumi Kaga, Bobby Dylan and Kareena Kapadia.
6. Get the students to act out 'bored'/'boring' and 'interested'/'interesting' in pairs.