

# Activities for Skills

*Saeed Nouri – Ebrahim Tahasoni, Second TESOL Workshop*

## Speaking

### Questionnaires:

**Before:** Brainstorm on things people miss from home (present "I `do miss...". Present a bit of reported speech (e.g. My mom says she misses her bed every time she's on a trip/A friend of mine used to say he missed his dog on vacations).

**During:** Put the ss in pairs. Hand out the following questionnaire and ask the ss to grade the items from 1 (don't miss) to 5 (miss the most). Ask them to add three items to the end of the list.

Item	1	2	3	4	5
Bed					
Home					
Food					
Friends					
Family					
Work/School					
TV shows					
Pet(s)					
Hobbies					
Daily routine					
.....					
.....					
.....					

Then swap partners so that every student sits with a new partner from another pair and ask them to report on what their former partner misses/doesn't miss.

## Listening

**Before (phoneme):** Write the phrase /twɪdlɪŋ ðə nɒb/ (twiddling the knob) on the board. Ask ss to guess the words based on the pronunciation. Then have them listen to the first passage on tape, find the phrase and guess the meaning based on the context.

### During:

**Stage 1:** Ss will listen to the whole programme once and answer the following questions which are asked orally by the T: Could this be an interview? If so, for which media? What's the interview about? If this was a radio or TV programme, what would be a suitable title?

**Stage 2:** T hands out specific exercises for each passage. **Andrew:** T/F questions (e.g. Listening to the BBC World Service on trips makes Andrew less anxious); **Helen and Gabriele:** Multiple-choice questions (e.g. What does Helen miss the most? A) her cap B)the cabs C)her pets D)her photos); **Paul:** Sentence completion; **Sylvia:** Information questions (Wh-); Chris: Flowchart.

## Reading

**Before:** Form groups of 3-4. Each group will prepare a list of items/concepts they may miss if they were on a trip. Then ask each group to create a few classifications based on the associations between the items in their list and categorise the items accordingly. E.g:

**List:** Pet, pen, bed, weather, local food, parent, best friend

**Possible Categories:** belongings, things from one's hometown, and people. Alternatively: my stuff, my city, and folks and friends.

**During:** Assign one or two passages to groups of 3 (2 passages each) or 5 (1 passage each -except the case for Helen and Gabriel which are rather short and could be given as one). Give each group a summary correction task –they will skim their assigned passages and then scan for details from the summary to find the mistakes in the task. After this, new groups are created each with members from the previous groups (one from each). These will get involved in an information gap situation where the others haven't read about their character and so, they can report the things different characters miss. Finally, discuss how close the characters' choices are to the ss' choices.

## Writing

**Before (matching):** Put the ss in pairs and ask them to make as many sentences as possible using the table below. Ask them to add 3 more ideas to the end and make sentences (e.g. my local restaurant):

When I'm	away from home, on holiday, on a trip,	I miss	my parents. my pet. my bedroom. ..... ..... .....
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The same is done about their partner:

When ..... is	away from home, on holiday, on a trip,	he she	misses	his her	home. bed. friends. ..... ..... .....
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After this, students will read the passages to see if they have anything in common with the characters.

**During (writing a letter):** In pairs, tell the students to imagine they are on holiday in another country with their partner (from the pair) and each member is going to write a letter to their parents saying what they and their partner miss the most from home. **First:** ss discuss what they would be missing (e.g. people or thing from home/hometown/country) and make lists. For instance, Gavin and Esteban are partners:

Gavin's List	
I would be missing...	Esteban would be missing...
my mum and dad playing baseball with Tom in the yard shopping from the mall	his pet snake playing with his set of throwing knives bullfights on Sundays

**Then:** each student writes a letter (in the class) to their parents with one paragraph discussing the things the miss and another describing what their partner misses. They should use reported speech in the second paragraph. Eg.:

*Dear Mom and Dad,  
It's great here in Mumbai, although I miss you both very much. I also miss playing baseball with Tom in the yard -we had so much fun chasing each other with the bats! I can't wait to get back home and see you all, and maybe go shopping again at the mall!  
Esteban is also a bit homesick 'cause he had to leave his snake at home! Weird idea for a pet I reckon, but he seems to love the animal so much he says he would like to go back home a bit sooner than planned! He says he misses playing with his set of throwing knives and watching bullfights on Sundays, too.*