

Pair & Group Work Strategies



A Practical Toolkit of Ideas Ready to Integrate into Your Lesson Plans.

1. Think-Pair-Share

Principle: Encourages individual reflection, peer discussion, and whole class sharing.

How it works: Ask a question (e.g., “What’s the difference between passé composé and imparfait?”). Students think silently, discuss with a partner, then share insights with the class.

2. Rally Robin

Principle: Builds fluency and confidence through rapid, turn-taking responses.

How it works:

1. **Pair Up Students:** Each pair shares one sheet or works side by side.
2. **Pose a Prompt:** For example, “List as many French adjectives as you can” or “Say verbs in the passé composé.”
3. **Turn-Taking:** Student A says one item, Student B responds with another, and they continue alternating.
4. **Time It (Optional):** Use a 1–2-minute timer to add pace and energy.
5. **Share Out:** Pairs can share their top items or most surprising answers with the class.

3. Roundtable Writing

Principle: Promotes collaborative writing and idea generation.

How it works: In small groups, students pass a paper around, each adding a sentence to a story, dialogue, or description. Ideal for creative writing or grammar practice.

4. Peer Interviews

Principle: Develops speaking and listening skills through authentic interaction.

How it works: Provide question prompts (e.g., “What’s your favourite French dish?”). Students interview each other, then report findings to the class in the target language.

5. Roleplay Dialogues

Principle: Enhances spontaneous speech and contextual vocabulary use.

How it works: Assign roles (e.g., waiter/customer, tourist/local). Students act out scenarios using target structures and vocabulary.

6. Partner Dictation

Principle: Combines listening, speaking, and writing in a cooperative format.

How it works: One student reads a sentence aloud; the other writes it down. Then they switch roles. Use phonics-rich sentences for pronunciation focus.

7. Sentence Relay

Principle: Encourages teamwork and sentence construction under time pressure.

How it works: In teams, students race to build grammatically correct sentences from word cards or prompts. Each member adds one word at a time.

8. Jigsaw Reading

Principle: Promotes interdependence and comprehension.

How it works: Divide a text into sections or several sections. Each student reads one part, then teaches it to their group. Works well with cultural topics or biographies.

9. Peer Editing Circles

Principle: Builds metalinguistic awareness and collaborative revision skills.

How it works: Students exchange written work in small groups, offering feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and clarity using checklists or sentence stems.

10. Collaborative Storytelling

Principle: Fosters creativity and narrative structure in the target language.

How it works: Students co-create a story orally or in writing, using prompts or images. Each adds a sentence, building on the previous one.

11. Chain Translation

Principle: Reinforces translation skills and peer correction.

How it works: One student translates a sentence, the next refines it, and so on. Compare final version with original to discuss choices and accuracy.

12. Gap-Fill Pair Challenge

Principle: Encourages peer scaffolding and grammar focus.

How it works: Provide a gap-fill text. One student completes it, the other checks and explains choices. Then swap roles with a new text.

13. Pronunciation Coaching Pairs

Principle: Builds phonemic awareness and peer support.

How it works: One student reads aloud; the other listens for target sounds (e.g., nasal vowels, silent letters) and gives feedback. Use tongue twisters or sound-rich texts.

14. Grammar Detective Teams

Principle: Turns grammar spotting into a collaborative puzzle.

How it works: Give students a text with deliberate errors. In teams, they identify and correct mistakes, justifying their choices.

15. Vocabulary Sorting Races

Principle: Reinforces semantic fields and word categorisation.

How it works: Provide mixed vocabulary cards. In pairs or teams, students race to sort them into categories (e.g., food, emotions, verbs).

16. Sentence Auction

Principle: Combines grammar analysis with strategic thinking.

How it works: Present a mix of correct and incorrect sentences. Students “bid” on those they believe are correct. Discuss grammar points after the auction.

17. Word Association Chains

Principle: Builds lexical networks and fluency.

How it works: One student says a word (e.g., “chien”), the next adds a related word (“chat”), and so on. Great for warm-ups or vocabulary review.

18. Collaborative Cloze Tasks

Principle: Enhances contextual guessing and grammar awareness.

How it works: Provide a cloze passage. Students work in pairs to fill gaps, discussing grammar and vocabulary choices.

19. Picture Description Pairs

Principle: Develops descriptive language and oral fluency.

How it works: One student describes a picture in detail; the other listens and draws or selects the correct image. Use culturally rich or humorous visuals.

20. “Find Someone Who...” Bingo

Principle: Encourages movement, interaction, and question formation.

How it works: Create a bingo grid with prompts (e.g., “Find someone who has visited France”). Students mingle, asking questions in the target language to complete their grid

21. Whole class Surveys

Principle: Encourages movement, interaction, and question formation.

How it works: Create a short survey with questions in the Target Language (e.g., What is your favourite colour?) Students mingle, asking questions in the target language to as many people in the time allocated.