

TEACH-THIS.COM: A USEFUL TOOL FOR TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the website TeachThis (www.teach-this.com) as a teaching tool to help motivate students by providing entertaining and educational activities for the classroom. The article gives a general description about the website and discusses the pros and cons of its use in the classroom. Please note that the author of this article is not affiliated with TeachThis and receives no benefits from this review.

INTRODUCTION

Like most teachers, I strive to make my lessons fun and engaging while still being instructional and functional. Showing students how the skills that they are learning in the classroom can be applied outside of the classroom in the real world is fundamental in our field. This also serves as a motivational tool for our students, who obviously want to put their hard work to good use.

Finding useful tools to bridge this gap, however, can be daunting. Fortunately, there are several products, services, and websites out there to help teachers with this problem. I would like to review one of these websites, *TeachThis* (www.teach-this.com). Please note that I am not affiliated with nor receive any benefits for this review from *TeachThis*.

OVERVIEW

TeachThis contains a plethora of lessons, games, and activities centered around grammar and vocabulary. The website contains several categories, which they label “Grammar”, “Parts of Speech”, “Functional Language”, “General English”, “Games”, and “Ideas”. Each one of these categories is subdivided into smaller target language structures, such as “Future Tenses” and “Giving Advice”. Once you choose a category and target structure, you are shown a variety of different activities and games that you can use to elicit the target structure. Each activity includes information about the appropriate English level and approximate completion time. You can preview each activity and even adapt the activity to fit your individual class as each activity comes in an editable PDF format.

Advantages

This website has several advantages for teachers. First, the sheer amount of activities is incredibly useful. Almost any ESL teacher of any subject area and any level would be able to find something useful on this site. Additionally, the adaptability of each individual activity makes this website an even more versatile tool for instructors. This adaptability is particularly useful for instructors of American English, who may need to adapt terms like “go on holiday” or “pub” to better match the vernacular the students are likely to be exposed to in the United States. Finally, the website itself is very user-friendly; it is exceedingly easy to navigate the website and find exactly what you are looking for.

Drawbacks

While *TeachThis* overall is a very helpful tool for English language instructors, it is not without its drawbacks. The most obvious drawback is the fact that, while many activities are available for free on the website, several are only available with a paid membership. This can be a limiting factor for many instructors. However, membership packages are relatively inexpensive. According to the *TeachThis* website, there are varieties of membership packages available: 3 months (\$18), 6 months (\$26), one year (\$39), and two years (\$69) (“Exclusive Membership Plans”, 2019). The membership is nice because it exposes teachers to even more activities, but it is not required in order to use the site. In addition to this, there are also a couple of minor drawbacks. As mentioned before, some activities do require some adapting to make them accessible to certain students. For example, when using exercises that revolve around famous celebrities, teachers may have to adapt the celebrities they are using to fit their audience, depending on the students’ ages and home countries. On the same note, as mentioned before, teachers may have to look carefully at the language that is being used in many of the exercises to make sure it matches the language to which the students are likely to be exposed. These two drawbacks can easily be fixed by the adaptability of the sources on the website.

CONCLUSION

TeachThis is a website that I have utilized for years in my ESL classrooms. I have used and adapted exercises from nearly every category available with students from a variety of different English levels. The activities themselves are nearly always a hit with students. For example, one of my favorite activities to use with my students that is both entertaining and educational is the “Advice Needed” activity, a card game where students take turns giving each

other advice, practicing their modals and creative thinking. Another hit is a small talk lesson that I give in my more advanced classes using the “Small Talk Questions” and “Small Talk Techniques” worksheets. Making small talk can be a difficult but useful language function in a second language, and is also rather difficult to teach, but these *TeachThis* resources on this subject make it both easy and fun to teach and learn. My students laugh and enjoy themselves while simultaneously earnestly practicing their English abilities. For these reasons, I highly recommend *TeachThis* as a helpful tool to make classrooms fun and keep students engaged as they learn.

THE AUTHOR

Sara Daniels was born and raised in Michigan but has been teaching at the University of Iowa for about five years. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Global and International Studies from Western Michigan University where she also participated in a year-long study abroad program in Japan. She earned her Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and TESOL from Southern Illinois University.

REFERENCES

Exclusive Membership Plans (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.teach-this.com/membership>