

TODAY YOU WILL...

- > UNDERSTAND WHICH VERBS USE "ÊTRE" IN THE PERFECT TENSE
- > ANALYSE PATTERNS FOR FORMING THE PERFECT TENSE WITH "ÊTRE"
- > CREATE SENTENCES USING THE PERFECT TENSE WITH "ÊTRE"

STARTER ACTIVITY

As students enter the room, they are each given a piece of paper with the 17 Être verbs (Dr & Mrs Vandertramp) with their English translations. (Dr & Mrs Vandertramp is an acronym for the 17 verb forms that use Être in the past tense. Other versions include the Maison d'Être or Mr Tramp's Red Van). At least two copies of each verb will be necessary for a class of 30 students. During this quiz-quiz trade activity, every student reads out his word plus the translation to another member of the class, and then listens to his partner's card. Afterwards they swap cards. Encourage students to talk to as many people in the class as possible and to swap as many cards they can. Explain that there are 17 different cards in the room. Use a countdown timer on the board of five minutes to instil urgency in your students. Monitor actively, whilst listening to pronunciation and correcting when necessary by stopping the group briefly.

This starter activity enables you to introduce key vocabulary whilst checking for pronunciation at the same time. Constant repetition of the vocabulary means that students retain it much more successfully. The general buzz of the classroom hides any inhibitions that more shy students may have and everyone will be participating.

Now see how much students have retained whilst using the power of community learning. Give the students a checklist with all of the Être verbs but without their English translations. Divide the class in half and tell the students that every member of their group must have a completely correct version of the answers in order for their group to win. The element of competition will encourage students to motivate their peers to complete their task. Everyone has something to offer and they will all feel happy to feedback at the end of the activity.

WORD PLAY

**THE MORE ENJOYABLE YOU
MAKE IT, THE MORE LIKELY YOUR
LEARNERS ARE TO REMEMBER
A LESSON ON GRAMMAR,
INSISTS CLAIRE PARKER...**

Teaching grammar in an interesting and effective way is one of the trickiest tasks for MFL teachers. How can we encourage our students to be enthusiastic about our subject and at the same time be excited about learning grammar patterns that will allow them to be masters of their own craft – to be creative and independent writers? Our students need to feel secure as learners in our classroom, but also bold enough to try out new things: it is this 'wobble' moment that will help to move them forward. They must be happy to challenge their own thinking and be prepared to make mistakes and learn from them.

A buzz in the classroom, key questioning, effective group work, the element of challenge and carefully planned activities are all ingredients for a successful lesson that can be used again and again with any number of topics. The cultural element of a pop song also adds relevance to our MFL lesson for our language learners – and overall, the experience of Year 8 learners proves that the teaching of grammar can be fun.



HOME LEARNING

To reinforce learning, students could create their own cartoons to demonstrate the Perfect Tense using Être, perhaps using online software such as Toondoo. They could also work in groups to produce a mini movie where they act out the "Dr & Mrs Vandertramp" verbs.

To test the students, the list of verbs could also be reinforced using Vocab Express, the online vocabulary learning application for secondary schools and colleges, using the new teacher input function. Vocab Express integrates text, images and audio, which is an excellent way of improving students' reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The real-time scoreboards allow teachers to introduce some competition as students are able to compare their results with each other.



INFORMATION CORNER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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TRY THIS

AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TREASURE HUNT, TRY HUMAN SENTENCES TO REINFORCE THE LEARNING. GIVE EACH GROUP A SET OF A4 CARDS WITH A PART OF THE VERB, PRONOUNS, AUXILIARIES, PAST PARTICIPLES AND AGREEMENTS. CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS TO CREATE ACCURATE FORMS OF THE VERBS HOLDING UP THEIR CARDS WHILST COMPETING WITH THEIR PEERS. AWARD POINTS FOR ACCURATE TRANSLATIONS. SHOW STUDENTS THE "MAISON D'ÊTRE" IDEA TO REINFORCE THE MEANINGS OF THE DIFFERENT VERBS AND EXPLAIN ABOUT THE COMPOUND VERBS THAT HAVE BEEN ADDED TO CREATE THE DR & MRS VANDERTRAMP LIST.

STRETCH THEM FURTHER

More able students could work together in small groups or individually to write a guide for new learners of the past perfect using Être, for example "Être verbs for Dummies". They could include an explanation with some tasks to complete and create an answer booklet to go with it. Alternatively they could prepare and deliver a mini lesson and be encouraged to teach a small group of learners from another class.

up a short phrase or word. The winning group is not the one that works the fastest, but rather, the most accurately, to discover the mystery word or phrase.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Once students are confident that they recognise the 17 Être verbs, they need to be able to understand how the past participles with their agreements work. A short video such as "Passé Composé – Être" by Emily Zeimentz with the charming song by Kaolin, "Partons Vite" makes a change from the Vandertramp rap. It may have a few errors but these can be turned to our advantage, showing students some common mistakes. Ask students to watch the video whilst having their Être checklist in front of them. They should then note down the past participle forms of each of the verbs on the list. At the same time, some of the students will have spotted that the participles change. Give the students time to work with a partner to consider how and why the participles change before feeding back to the whole class. Encourage them to consolidate their findings with a set of rules.

Now it is time for some hinge questioning before you move on. Hinge questions are a powerful

SUMMARY

To consolidate the learning, give students a choice of sentences to translate using the perfect tense. Introduce an element of choice for the students in the form of colour coded tasks with a varying level of difficulty. Display these on the walls in the classroom and allow students to choose their tasks. These could be represented by the colour of ski slopes, from green being the easiest, to black, the most challenging, and perhaps requiring further research outside the classroom. Green sentences could be simple sentences with verbs using Être to translate with no agreements, a blue task could add the agreements, a red task could mix Être verbs with Avoir verbs and a black task could introduce the challenge of reflexive verbs.

tool and a simple and effective way to identify the progress of each and every student in the class. Provide each student with a mini whiteboard and show them four examples of a conjugated Être verb with agreements. Only one of the four answers should be correct and each student should indicate with the use of their mini whiteboard which of the four answers they believe to be correct. You could also use laminated cards numbered one to four as alternatives to mini whiteboards. The teacher can see instantly who is ready to move on

and who may need further explanation of the relevant grammar rules.

Moving on from here, a series of verbs that need translating could be hidden around the room. Students love a treasure hunt and in groups they must find the verbs, translate them into French and then bring the correct answers to the teacher. If it is correct the teacher then rewards them with a letter. The students should then complete each of the treasure hunt questions correctly in order to find a series of letters that make