

## Jalan Terasek

This activity combines ‘strip story’ techniques with a little problem solving to help develop critical thinking.

Before the activity begins, make sure that the students know the necessary vocabulary for the story. Certainly, they need to learn single, married, divorced, bachelor, widow, and widower. In fact, they need to know all the words in the sentence strips and all the words in the answers. It is also quite useful if you tell them that Agatha Christie wrote detective stories.

As preparation, you need to have cut out one set of strip sentences for each group of roughly 20 students.

Since there are 20 strip sentences, divide the class into groups of 20 students. Since classes seldom have exactly 20 or exactly 40 students, divide your class into groups of slightly less than 20 and give some of the stronger students two strip sentences instead of one.

For example, if you have 37 students, divide them into one group of 18 and another of 19, and give two of the students in the first group and one of the students in the second an extra sentence.

For each group, you will need one set of 20 strip sentences. To begin, give one of the 20 sentences to each student in the group. Of course, one or two students may get two sentences, as we discussed earlier.

Tell the students not to let anyone else see their sentence. Then, have the students memorize their own sentence. You might test one or two of them to see if they have done this.

Now, have the students put their sentence strips face down on a desk.

Next, give one copy of the Student Worksheet with the blank chart to each group and tell them to figure out who lives where, who drinks what, and so on.

While the groups are working on solving this problem, draw a large blank copy of the chart part of the Student Worksheet on the board.

About mid way through the task, stop the class and let the students look at their own sentence again to make sure that they remembered it accurately. Then, let them continue with their problem solving.

After the students have tentatively solved the problem, the class as a whole should go through the process of figuring out the answer.

Ultimately, of course, the actual answer is not as important as developing some understanding about how to figure out the answer. If the answer itself was particularly valuable we would simply give it to them to memorize — it is clearly learning the process that is valuable.

As a general technique for solving this type of problem — like many problems, it is best to start by figuring out exactly what we know. Start by putting what we know on the chart.

For example, among the things that we know for sure is that “Mr. Joseph lives at No. 14”. The students should work from what they know, rather than just guess.

As they tell you things to fill in the chart on the board, they should be able to tell you how they know. When we do this type of exercise, we are constantly saying to them, “Okay, but how do you know?”

Sometimes the answer is very simple. For example, they know that Mr. Joseph lives at No. 14 because one of the sentences says so. Similarly, they know that the person living next door to Mr. Joseph is divorced because one of the sentences says the person next door to Mr. Joseph is divorced.

By the way, if you plan to use this in your own classroom, you might make an extra copy and work it xxx would for yourself before class. This will give you a better understanding of what is happening during the activity.

Several variations on this activity exist. You might allow them to bring their sentence strips with them to their groups; this produces a much easier task. If you do this, the students should still be required to read their sentences to the other members of the class, rather than just xxx showing them.

You might also make copies of the whole worksheet with the blank chart and the strip sentences for either every student or for every pair of students. This changes it from a speaking and listening exercise into more of a reading exercise — a different focus still quite valuable.

Of course, the main purpose of this activity is language practice. Even if they never figure out the exact answer, they will get lots of and lots of language practice trying.

This particular exercise has several general language benefits. Among them, it forces the students to listen carefully to the each sentence a number of times and it forces them to listen to each other.

As a result, it also forces students to pronounce their own lines clearly; and, it forces students to pay careful attention to the details of language.

## Student Worksheet

Dear Student,

Your mission today is to be a detective. You have to figure out who lives in each house, whether each person is married or not, what each person reads, what each person drinks, and what kind of pet each person has.

This is an oral activity and you'll be working with other students in a group.

You'll be given a strip of paper with a sentence written on it. Each of the other students in your group will also be given a strip of paper.

Each slip of paper has a different sentence written on it.

**Memorize** what is written on your piece of paper. **Do not show** your piece of paper to anyone else!

After you have memorized it, put your slip of paper face down on your desk. Now, **talk** with the other members of your group. By sharing the information on your slip, figure out who lives in each house, what each person drinks, and what kind of pet each person has, and so on.

If you're not sure whether you've memorized your sentence correctly, or if you have trouble remembering it, you can go back to your desk to check your strip. But **do not show** it to anyone else.

Start by putting what you know on the chart. For example, one of the sentences tells you where Mr. Joseph lives. You might begin by putting that on the chart, and so on.

This activity is an adaptation of an idea found in Friederike Klippel's (1984) *Keep Talking: Communicative fluency activities for language teaching*.

### Jalan Terasek Enam

	6	8	10	12	14
name?	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
married?	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
reading?	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
drink?	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
pet?	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —

## The Clues

The parrot owner living next door to the bachelor likes to read romances.

Encik Abdul lives between Miss Lim and Mrs. Nunes.

The married woman drinks coffee.

Mr. Joseph lives at No. 14.

The owner at No. 6 has a goldfish.

The parrot and the dog owner do not live next to each other.

The woman who likes Milo does not own a pet.

Mrs. Nunes likes to read books by Agatha Christie.

No. 12 is the only house without a pet.

Puan Hazita is married.

The bachelor likes adventure stories.

Mr. Joseph is a widower; his neighbour is divorced.

The pet at No. 8 is a parrot.

Four of the houses on Jalan Terasek Enam have pets : a dog, a parrot, a cat, and a goldfish.

Miss Lim owns a parrot.

The teh tarik drinker owns a cat.

The married woman reads the newspaper.

Mr. Joseph cannot read so he only watches TV.

The widower and the single woman both like tea.

The parrot owner drinks tea.

The answer:

### Jalan Terasek Enam

	6	8	10	12	14
name?	Hazita	Lim	Abdul	Nunes	Joseph
married?	married	single	bachelor	divorced	widower
reading?	newspaper	romances	adventure stories	Agatha Christie	TV
drink?	coffee	tea	teh tarik	Milo	tea
pet?	goldfish	parrot	cat	(none)	dog