

## TEACHING ENGLISH WITH CROSSWORD PUZZLES

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**Abstract:** this paper focuses on the application of crossword puzzles in the teaching of vocabulary in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms. There are different types of crossword puzzles, taking the form of mystery tasks, new vocabulary, retelling of a situation, problem solving, judgement decisions, etc. The process of designing crossword puzzles is a thoughtful endeavor that does not require much computing skills as numerous templates are provided. The article recommended a variety of websites for crossword and concluded that the use of crossword puzzles helps students to expand vocabulary and deepen learning English vocabulary.

**Keywords:** crossword puzzle, technology, teaching method, vocabulary development, game.

## ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА С ПОМОЩЬЮ КРОССВОРДОВ

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**Аннотация:** данная статья посвящается вопросам применения кроссвордов в обучении лексике английского языка. Существуют различные типы кроссвордов, которые включают в себя загадки, новую лексику, пересказ ситуации, решения проблемы и т. д. Процесс проектирования кроссвордов - это усилия, которые не требуют больших навыков, и для этого существуют многочисленные шаблоны. В данной статье рекомендуются различные вебсайты для составления кроссвордов, и делается вывод, что использование кроссвордов помогает учащимся расширить словарный запас и углубить усвоения английской лексики.

**Ключевые слова:** кроссворд, технология, метод обучения, развитие словарного запаса, игры.

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### Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a difficult process requiring great effort, time and commitment on the part of man, so very often the initial interest and desire to study it can disappear, giving way to the need, if any, especially among students. Therefore a teacher must constantly look for ways and various means to save this interest to support. The use of gaming technology in the classroom is very important in the learning process foreign languages. Today, we would like to consider one of variants of the game in the classroom – crossword. Observation of training process showed that students at the initial stage of learning liked to perform tasks in electronic form. So we introduced in educational process of electronic crosswords containing the elements of entertainment and excitement. So we solved several important following tasks:

- The development of interest in the subject, increasing knowledge, improving skills and abilities;
- The task of organizing the free time of students for their overall development, so as crosswords can be transferred and during extracurricular activities.

We set ourselves the following methodological objectives: promote the study of language based on those passed, broadening the horizons of students, the development of memory, intelligence and independence. Crosswords can be used at different stages of the lesson to ensure students' knowledge, repetition of the material. Crossword puzzles in a foreign language are an excellent means of training mental abilities. After all, when the student answers to the question it encourages his brain to work remembering the correct word. And in order to guess the correct word, he needs to understand what was going on, and the job, but it requires from a good vocabulary.

**The actuality of this problem** is the difficulties of teaching and learning English vocabulary. Learning a foreign language is not easy to do. While we are learning language, it means that we are learning to listen, speak, read, and write. To learn such those skills, we also need to learn its component including grammar, vocabulary,

pronunciation, and spelling. As we know spelling system in English is not consistent, so it has to be taught since whenever we come across a word we have not written before, we usually make a guess unless the spelling confirms regular phonic rules. Even though a guess is admittedly helped by all sorts of linguistic clues, it may be wrong.

The first “word-cross” in the United States was published in the New York World in 1913, although similar puzzles have been around in different forms since Egyptian times. In 19<sup>th</sup> century England, they were aimed mostly at a juvenile audience, and did not become a craze for adults until Simon and Schuster printed the first book of them in the US in the 1920’s, when they then took on the familiar name “crosswords.” The puzzle’s popularity continued to build throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Today, most daily newspapers include a crossword puzzle as well as many magazines. In fact, magazine racks usually include a number of magazines and books containing only crossword puzzles [1].

First of all, crossword solving involves several useful skills including vocabulary, reasoning, spelling, and word attack skills. To solve any crossword puzzle, a person must be able to identify and understand the terms being used. This often involves acquiring new vocabulary or terminology. It can also involve making differentiations between similar words or phrases. Correctly deciphering a crossword also requires exact spelling, which for students may mean practicing dictionary skills. Other important skills required for completing these puzzles include making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing conclusions. Another benefit of using crossword puzzles in the classroom is that they are associated with recreation, and can be less intimidating for students as review tools. Students who might normally balk at practice tests, flashcards, or review sessions with the teacher find puzzle solving to be much less threatening and more like game play. Puzzle solving is a much more active type of learning, and will engage students with the material more than passive types of review techniques do. Crossword puzzles also have the advantage of appealing to different learning styles.

Visual learners often have strong puzzle-solving skills, and feel great satisfaction when they complete one. Auditory learners enjoy step-by-step reasoning, so they also benefit from the sequential steps of completing a crossword. Even kinesthetic learners enjoy the multi-task strategies required to solve a crossword. Finally, crossword puzzles have the benefit of being customizable to study content. Puzzle creation software and websites are abundant, and easy to use, so teachers can create curriculum-specific crosswords with little trouble. Whether you are studying Abraham Lincoln, geometry terms, or the water cycle, a crossword puzzle with subject-specific vocabulary can be created with ease and in a short amount of time. Crossword puzzles have endured as a favorite national pastime because they are appealing to all ages, they can be completed in a rather brief period of time, and solving them provides a sense of accomplishment. For all these reasons, crosswords make a terrific educational tool, and teachers and homeschoolers will probably continue to use them for many years to come [1].

The use of crossword at the lesson has the following objectives:

- *Motivation.* The task of any teacher is to create interest and desire for the study of language. Most of them at the beginning stage of learning there is a high motivation for learning language because they are interested in everything new and unknown. They eagerly begin to study, want to learn to read, write and speak. Their interest largely depends on the success in the study and interest, therefore, special attention should be paid to play activities in the classroom, which will evoke positive emotions and engage the student. One of the versions of the game at the lesson is a crossword puzzle. The solution of the colorful, illustrated crossword puzzles will not leave indifferent student, and will interest him. Crossword puzzles will help to diversify the lesson more effective and attractive for the student. In addition, in the case of successful solving, the student develops self-esteem and a desire to continue.

- *Organization of the lesson.* Although the students are able to perceive and assimilate a huge amount of material, do not expect the student’s full concentration during the whole lesson, because after a while, his attention is scattered, and the material ceases to absorb, if not to captivate a child of any interesting tasks. A crossword puzzle can help to create the necessary atmosphere, focused and aimed at the learning process.

Crossword puzzles are especially helpful with vocabulary retention for any subject. Therefore, crossword puzzles can also be useful with ELL/ESL students as they try to retain new words in a different language. Providing definitions in the crossword puzzle format challenges students to explore past experiences, recall recently learned information, and manipulate vocabularies to find the right word. The process of filling in a crossword puzzle encourages independence, creativity, and active engagement [2].

Crossword puzzles in the classroom can be used as:

1. *Check.* Crosswords can be a great way to test the studied material, whether grammar (grammar crossword puzzles) or vocabulary (thematic crosswords), which helps to evaluate the knowledge of the student and the assimilated material to them.

2. *Award.* One of the most popular ways of organizing a lesson is its division into two parts. The first part is the basis of the lesson is aimed at studying a new topic, followed by a game aimed at the consolidation of the

new material, which is usually called "reward" for the work in the first part of the lesson. Solving a crossword puzzle is one of the best "awards."

3. Homework. Teachers still continue to argue on the subject of whether to give the homework. There is one most important condition for such a domestic task must be interesting to the student. Compiling a crossword for many children, can be one of these tasks: creative and fun, where they can express themselves. The end of the study surrounds the topic, which was given a lot of new concepts – the most appropriate time for such work. And of course we should not forget the promotion, announcing the author of the best crossword and offer to solve the crossword puzzle on speed.

• Training. Lessons with crossword puzzles are useful because they can be used to reinforce learning, to greatly expand the vocabulary, develop spelling skills. Furthermore, the crossword puzzles in the classroom is the updating and consolidation of knowledge, drawing attention to the material, intellectual exercises in an entertaining way, they train visual memory and activate mental activity of the student.

When designing a crossword puzzle we recommend paying attention to these important stages:

- What will be the purpose of the project-crossword puzzle (to test knowledge on the subject at students of the other group classes: final/intermediate; to create an app for the textbook, for use as didactic material, etc.);
- How to organize the work on the creation of the crossword puzzle (individually, in pairs, in groups, joint);
- If required, define the functional role of the students: "grammarian", "linguist", "translator", "editor", "designer", "correction", etc.
- What is the duration of work on the project;
- What is the plan of action for compiling a crossword puzzle;
- What tools will be needed (textbook, dictionary, the linguistic dictionary, encyclopedia, Internet resources, etc.);

- What criteria should be considered when evaluating project-a crossword puzzle, etc.

Planning for the compilation of a crossword puzzle the teacher must pay attention to the following:

- To determine the purpose of compilation of the crossword puzzle.
- To see and examine the grammatical material on the topic in the textbook.
- To select the type of crossword puzzle.
- To consider the components of the crossword puzzle.
- To study additional material on the topic.
- Consider the judging criteria.
- Make a list of words separated by directions.
- To write a text of crossword puzzle.
- To check the spelling of text, the line numbering.
- Analyze the crossword under the assessment criteria.
- To make the finished crossword.
- Consider the protection of the project of a crossword puzzle.

We recommend these websites where both teachers and students can make more sophisticated online crossword puzzles that would be useful for language development [3]:

- ITESLJ <http://iteslj.org> Lots of interactive crosswords for ESL students at six levels, starting from easy. Created by Charles Kelly of The Internet TESL Journal.
- ESOL Courses Blog <http://www.esolcourses.com> Lots and lots of interactive crosswords - Theme based. Great for elementary level students.
- Puzzle Maker <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com> Free crossword puzzle maker and other puzzles.
- ManyThings.org <http://www.manythings.org/cs/> Lots of online crosswords on verbs, opposites and Voice of America Special English words. Requires JavaScript.
- Vocabulary.co.il [http://vocabulary.co.il/games2/crosswords/index.php\\_53](http://vocabulary.co.il/games2/crosswords/index.php_53) online crossword puzzles for Pre-Intermediate (plus) learners on a range of topics. Some require javascript to play.
- ESL Flow <http://www.eslflow.com> Printable crosswords in PDF.
- BBC World Service Learning English <http://www.bbc.co.uk> Online crossword puzzles. Most are quite challenging, and suitable for Intermediate learners upwards. New crosswords are added fortnightly.
- ESL Galaxy.com <http://www.esl-galaxy.com> Dozens of theme-based crosswords in pdf format - ready to print.
- PrintActivities.com <http://www.printactivities.com> Hundreds of printable puzzles: "These printable crossword puzzles are small and easy enough for kids and beginner level crossword puzzle enthusiasts."
- ABC Teach <http://abcteach.com> Lots and lots of colourful PDF crosswords for kids. Great for ESL students.
- ESL Civics.com <http://www.elcivics.com> Crossword puzzles with a largely American theme. There's a puzzle for every U.S. state. Others on holidays and American life. All in pdf format.
- ESL Activities.com <http://www.eslactivities.com> Online Crossword maker.

- Puzzle Choice.com <http://www.puzzlechoice.com> "Printable crossword puzzles and solutions. Choose from different crossword styles: Alpha-Cross, Cross-Wise, Mystery-Word, Word-Fit."
- Crossword Helper <http://casr.adelaide.edu.au> Enter the known letters of an unknown word and use a full stop / period for each unknown letter to find the word you need. This is also great for non-crossword lexical dilemmas.
- WESLI English Online Crosswords <http://www.english.wesli.com> Requires JavaScript and can take a while to load, but this site has a good selection of crosswords, with puzzles for Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced learners.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has also highlighted the benefits of crossword puzzles as a method of vocabulary instruction. Despite the fact that crossword puzzles require a lot of time to prepare, the benefits accrued from the method are profound. The finding in this study implies that teachers of languages should utilize crossword puzzles in their language classrooms for maximum fun and effective acquisition of vocabulary. This will create a good learning atmosphere for learners and this in turn will help in the improvement of learners' performance in English [4].

### ***Список литературы на английском языке / References in English***

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