

## Ideas for Using ALTs in the Classroom

The goal of this document is to provide support for English teachers interested in using an ALT in their classroom or for those who already have an ALT and want new ideas on how to make the most of this educational resource.

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## What skills do ALTs bring to the classroom that the teacher (probably) does not have?

- Deep knowledge of what sounds natural
  - useful in speaking and writing support
- Source of natural English for students
  - useful in listening and speaking support
- Another educator in the classroom to support you
  - general support on anything
  - Support for struggling students: research shows Teaching Assistants are very effective when working with individual students or small groups of students who are struggling

## The Key to Team Teaching is Good Communication!

- What kind of relationship do you have with your ALT?
- What do you know about your ALT?
  - In most Western countries, many coworkers become friends, so try to get to know your ALT (interests, hobbies, hometown) → it will make them feel more comfortable and improve your communication
- Do you trust your ALT to lead a class by themselves?
- Do you ALT tell you what your goal for your lesson is?
- Do you and your ALT have discussions about what was successful and what wasn't in your lessons?
- Do you and your ALT have effective ways to exchange constructive criticism?
- Having trust and clear communication is essential! Do not assume your ALT knows the goal for your class everyday.

## Lesson Ideas

- Ask ALT to plan their own lessons. (Here are some ideas created by real ALTs!)
  - vocabulary lesson: favorite animal/color personality test
    - Activity: students to think of their favorite color and animal and 3 adjectives why each is their favorite
      - After students finish you reveal that
        - favorite color = how you see yourself
        - favorite animal = how others see you
      - Ask students to share with others
    - This can be a speaking or writing activity; independent or in groups/pairs
      - my recommendation: pair work
        - talk through answer with partner
        - then write answers in full sentences or bullet points
        - ask partner for support/suggestions as needed
      - give students an example before they begin (ALT and teacher can put their responses in a powerpoint/read aloud/write on board)
  - fluency activities

- singing in English → ask ALT to pick a fun, class-appropriate English-Language song
  - students read lyrics independently or in group/pair → do their best to understand → select words/grammar they don't understand → have students ask/call on students to ask
  - sing song as a class → teacher/ALT really has to perform to encourage all students to sing (Karaoke time)
  - repeat this song every week, until students know all the words
- reading comprehension
  - ALT finds story/poem and creates vocab list and post-reading questions for students
    - maybe ask students to write their own poem or story afterwards
    - <https://poets.org/poems-kids>
      - This website has a lot of varying levels!
  - ALT creates reading comprehension games/pair work activities for regularly assigned readings
    - pre-reading: tea party  
<http://rbcomprehensionstrategies.weebly.com/tea-party.html>
    - during reading: say something (each student takes a turn reading a sentence out loud and then saying an opinion, prediction, etc they have about the sentence/text so far)
      - the activity can take a long time if the passage is longer, can change to once a paragraph
      - have ALT make an opinion sentence starter list or find one online
    - post-reading: story retelling activity → somebody wanted, but, then, so (find worksheets online)
    - Other Ideas (even more online)

<u>Pre-Reading</u>	<u>During-Reading</u>	<u>Post-Reading</u>
Anticipation Guide Author/Creator Discussion	Opinion-Proofchart Graphic Organizers	Exit Slips Question the Author
Semantic Mapping	Summarize Sections	Finding related news
Expectation Outline	Margin Notes / Annotating	Character analysis
Wordsplash	Making inferences	Creative writing

- warm up lessons/ice breaks OR lesson closer (lessons to start/end class in a fun way that get students thinking about English)
  - these should take less than 5 minutes
  - can be independent or group/pair → students tend to have more fun with group/pair
    - tailor energy level to class
      - high energy class (too loud, don't pay attention): quiet, individual or pair activity
      - low energy class (very shy, don't speak, can't tell if they understand): high energy activity, whole class, competition

- ex: tell your partner one fun and one boring thing you did this weekend
- ex: ALT and JTE create two truths and a lie, students discuss with partner, and vote on lie
- ex: Simon Says (winner gets a sticker)

## Learning Materials

- Creating teaching materials
  - speaking outlines (some examples below)
    - other ideas: have ALT create the structure of a conversation/ways to start sentences that students can follow
      - ex: what do you think about ...? I think....
      - can be worksheets or classroom posters
  - essay outlines
    - ALT can create an outline students can follow for writing argumentative essays
    - ALT can create a wordlist of useful phrases students can use in their essay writing
  - critical thinking questions/activities for reading comprehension support
    - critical thinking is stressed a lot more in other countries (especially the USA), so ALT may be more equipped to create these kinds of activities
    - Encourage students to answer why and give evidence

### Student Talk

I don't understand.	Sorry, I couldn't hear you.
Pardon me?	How's it going?
Can you repeat that?	Long time, no see!
Sorry, I am not sure.	Excuse me.
See you next class.	What's up?
Just joking.	Please speak more slowly.
WHO?	WHAT?
WHEN?	WHERE?
HOW?	

### Teacher Talk

Let's start	Speak up.
Are you ready?	Repeat after me.
Don't be shy.	Does anyone know the answer?
Did you understand?	Work in pairs.
Like this.	Go back to your seats.
Any volunteers?	Move your chairs in groups of 4.

<p><b>Topic card – responding to questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. My opinion is...</li> <li>2. I really like...</li> <li>3. I dislike...</li> <li>4. I believe that...</li> </ol> <p>How about you?</p> <p>What do you think?</p> <p>Do you agree?</p>
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<p><b>Speaking card help</b></p> <p>Ask questions using....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why? (reason)</li> <li>- Where? (location)</li> <li>- Who? (people)</li> <li>- What? (consequences)</li> </ul>
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## ALT Support During Lessons

- Differentiated Instruction

- Different activities can be given to students, depending on their ability level
- The ALT can offer in classroom support to specific students or groups
  - ex: ALT reads aloud to a group of students who struggle with reading/focusing, while more advanced students read in their own groups
  - ex: ALT can work one-on-one or with small groups of students who are too shy to do entire class activities
- Think Pair Share (and other group activities)
  - ALT can be a stand in for a student if there are an odd number of students
  - ALT can join a pair/group of students who are struggling/have a hard time focusing
- Speaking Tests/Practice
  - ALT can grade/evaluate students' speaking ability
    - ex: Eiken Practice
    - ex: Interview Tests

## ALT Classroom Support

- ALT may be able to relate to students in ways you can't (might be younger, doesn't grade most of their tests, less scary) → provide more emotional or social support to students who are struggling
  - ALT may also be learning Japanese
    - have Japanese-learning ALT try to complete some class activities in Japanese/ask them questions in Japanese that they struggle with
    - students may feel more comfortable making mistakes around the ALT because the ALT is also learning and struggling.
    - make sure to discuss this with your ALT before doing it!
- Include ALT in lessons. ALT shouldn't be sitting quietly in the back of the classroom.
  - ask ALT questions during the lesson
  - have ALT give examples during the lesson
  - have ALT read things, call on students, hand out worksheets, help observe students

Ask Your ALT for Ideas!