

36. Hot seating

Use the *Introduction* and one or more of the *Activities* and *Variations* as appropriate, followed by *Drawing things together*. Please read them all before making your choice. Activities marked with * are particularly suitable for younger pupils.

Teacher's notes

- This activity is excellent for reviewing what has been learned. It can best be used either at the end of a lesson or as an introductory activity to create a bridge from one lesson to another.
- Choose pupils who are confident and eloquent as the first few to sit in the hot seat, so they model good practice.
- Don't force pupils into the role play. There will be plenty of volunteers as they gain confidence with the technique.

Introduction

Place a chair in a prominent position before the class and sit on the chair. Explain that the chair is known as the hot seat. Invite pupils to ask you, the teacher, a series of questions about your life. Answer the questions honestly, helping pupils to frame open rather than closed questions.

Invite two or three pupils to sit in the hot seat and be similarly interviewed.

* Activity 1: Prepare for the hot seat

Ask pupils to imagine that a character they have learned about in a recent lesson is in the hot seat. Together devise a series of questions that it would be interesting to ask that character.

Explain that pupils are now going to imagine that they are that character. When it's their turn to sit in the hot seat they must answer, in role, whatever questions are put to them by the class.

Pupils take turns in the hot seat, each answering three or four of the previously prepared questions in as much detail as possible.

It may be appropriate to change to another character at some point, as pupils gain confidence.

This will prevent irritating repetition of the same questions.

Activity 2: Spontaneous hot seat

Repeat Activity 1, this time using spontaneous rather than prepared questions from pupils. This may require a deeper level of in role improvisation from the pupil/character in the hot seat and also allows the line of questioning to develop out of the character's responses.

Help pupils to identify the two types of question that they are asking:

- a) Factual review – testing accurate recall of learning
- b) Expansive – requiring the pupil to respond in role to questions that lie outside the parameters of the learning

Encourage them to move from type a) questions to type b) questions.

Variations: Small group work

Once pupils have gained confidence in the use of the hot seating technique it can be used spontaneously at many points in the learning process. No more than two or three pupils need to be involved at a time.

The technique can also be used by small groups of students concurrently in order to create a simple character analysis. In this case, ask one pupil in each group to record in note form the responses given by the pupil in their hot seat.

Drawing things together

The material gained by means of this technique, particularly the expansive variety, can be used in many ways. It can be formalised into a TV interview format (see other Ideas in this series: TV news item, Idea 18, TV station, Idea 35, and Interviews, to come next at Idea 37) or written up as a diary entry, an obituary or some other form of character description.