

WARMERS
FILLERS &
COOLERS



THE
TEFL
INSTITUTE

“

“A TEACHER IS A COMPASS
THAT ACTIVATES THE MAGNETS
OF CURIOSITY, KNOWLEDGE,
AND WISDOM IN THE PUPILS”

EVER GARRISON

IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A COLLECTION OF SHORT ACTIVITIES TO HELP STRUCTURE YOUR LESSONS OR PROVIDE A CHANGE OF PACE IN THE MIDDLE OF A LESSON. YOU CAN PLAN TO USE WARMER AND COOLER ACTIVITIES LIKE BOOK ENDS AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF YOUR LESSON.

Warmers, fillers and coolers are short 5-10 minute activities used to engage learners, fill time during a lesson or to end a lesson on a positive note. They can either be related to the aim or theme of the lesson or act as short, stand alone activities.

- Warmer:** to engage learners at the beginning of a lesson.
- Filler:** to change the pace of the lesson in the middle of the lesson.
- Cooler:** to consolidate/round-off a lesson, leave students on a high.

It is also useful to have a number of activities up your sleeve to use as fillers if you feel your lesson is running shorter than expected or you feel students would benefit from a change of pace within the lesson.

EFFECTIVE WARMERS, FILLER & COOLERS

Effective warmers, fillers and coolers have

5 basic features:

- They are short (ideally 5-10 minutes only).
- They are fun and engaging.
- They are simple to explain.
- They require little preparation.

This guide provides you with some example warmer, filler and cooler activities. Activities are categorized for ease of reference according to warmer, filler and cooler activities. However, activities can always be adapted and used at different points of the lesson. Such variations are suggested.

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**Throw yourself into teaching**

Give it your all, and have fun (your students are much more nervous than you are! Remember what it was like when you learned a language?). Encourage and motivate your learners. Make your classroom a positive and enjoyable experience.

**Have an aim**

The most important thing is that your lesson needs an aim.

**Be organised**

Familiarise yourself with any new content you're going to teach. Make a running sheet. Have your materials ready to go. Make sure the equipment works. Take a spare whiteboard marker.

**Get students talking – to each other**

This isn't just about making a lesson lively and fun (although that's a big plus). Learning English is a skill, like learning to swim or cook.

Your students need to practise English, not just learn about English. And the best way to make sure students get lots of practice is if they talk to each other, in pairs and groups, or mingling as a whole class. Don't let all the practice opportunities be through the teacher or one strong student only.

**Start a lesson with a warmer**

A warmer is a simple activity, preferably something active and fun, where students talk to each other. As you know, it's easy to feel awkward and shy with a big group of people. A warmer removes that anxiety. It helps students feel relaxed and confident enough to speak for the rest of the lesson. In a warmer, students should be interacting in small groups or mingling – definitely not talking one at a time to the whole class. That's the opposite of a warmer!

**Use variety**

As you know, there's nothing worse than a boring class. But making a class

interesting isn't about playing games all the time, and avoiding anything 'heavy'. Rather, it's about variety. Vary the skills your students are practising (listening, speaking, reading, writing) as well as the pace and physical activity (sitting, standing, mingling, running). Keep the expression 'light and shade' in mind – follow a quiet and serious activity with something fun and high-energy.

**Instruct clearly**

We've said it's important to have students practising in a variety of activities. The one risk that creates – unlike in a traditional class, where students just have to sit and listen – is that they won't know what to do. This is especially so since English is their second language. The result will be chaos! Instruct simply and clearly, and support your instructions with an example or demonstration.