

Making a Word Search Puzzle

About this activity

Aim:	to help students work with vocabulary
Level:	all - the activity can be applied to all levels.
Language:	any - the activity can be applied to any language
Skills/Language	Vocabulary
Materials:	Handout: Word Search Puzzle blank grid (below)



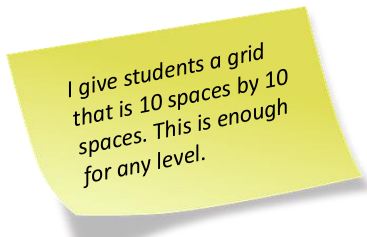
Solving a word search puzzle is a common activity in EFL classes. However, it is very easy for students to find the words when they are listed next to the puzzle. To make the puzzles useful as a learning tool, I make them a little more challenging.

Don't include the words next to the puzzle. Students can use their coursebook to find the words.

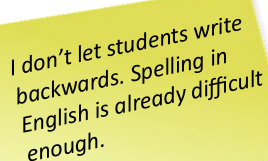
Activity:

Making the word search puzzle

1. Give students a blank grid for them to make their own puzzles.
2. Ask them to go to the page in their coursebook with the vocabulary they will use, in this case, parts of the body.



I give students a grid that is 10 spaces by 10 spaces. This is enough for any level.



I don't let students write backwards. Spelling in English is already difficult enough.

3. Ask students to write the words in the grid. They can write the words from top to bottom or from left to right.
4. Walk around the room to help any students.
5. When students have completed all the words in their puzzle, ask them to write letters at random to fill in the empty spaces.
6. Make sure they write their name on their puzzle.

Solving the word search puzzle

7.

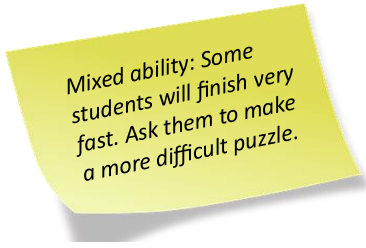
When a student has finished making their puzzle, announce to the class that (Ana) is finished.

8.

When another student is finished (Maria), have the two students exchange papers. Maria is solving Ana's puzzle and Ana is solving Maria's.

9.

Continue exchanging puzzles until all the students are solving another student's puzzle.



Mixed ability: Some students will finish very fast. Ask them to make a more difficult puzzle.

Notice:

- All students are using the same words, but each puzzle is different.
- Students are learning the vocabulary when they are making the puzzle and again when they are solving it.
- Mixed ability: Every student can make a puzzle, even the weakest student, because they simply copy from the list in their coursebook. The challenge is finding the words.
- Exchange the puzzles in the same lesson so students can see that their puzzles are for each other, not for the teacher. This way, students are more careful with spelling and handwriting.
- When students understand the activity, collect their puzzles. You can hand them out again later in the week as revision.
- In this activity, students do all the work! Just have some blank grids ready for them. You can find a blank grid on the next page.

