新北市英語教育資源中心
New Taipei City English Education Resource Center

ELTA Online Training

**Presented by the New Taipei City
English Education Resource Center.**
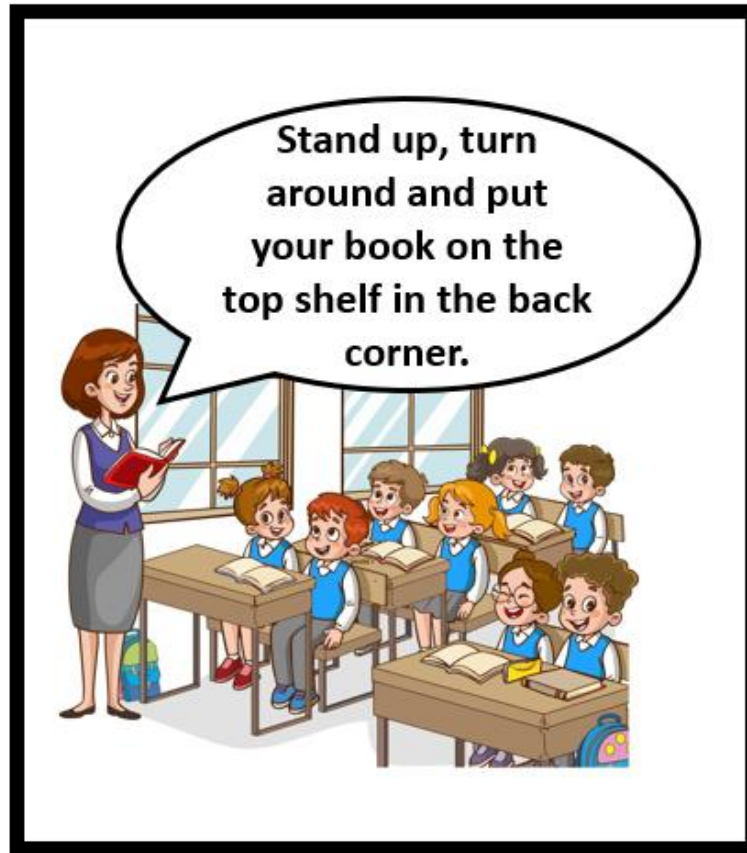
17 April 2025

Topic:

ICQs

Instruction Checking Questions

ICQs in the Classroom

Ensuring students' understanding through effective instruction checking.

https://youtu.be/7vZ9bGW5WoI

Instructions that are not checked for understanding can not only create the wrong outcome, but...

waste class time.

cause students to feel lost or frustrated.

cause students to start or do a task incorrectly.

cause students to lose confidence.

To avoid these problems, teachers use the Instruction Checking Question (ICQ) method to check for understanding.

Simply put, ICQs are...

short, clear questions teachers can ask to confirm that students understand a given instruction before starting a task.

Example:

Instruction
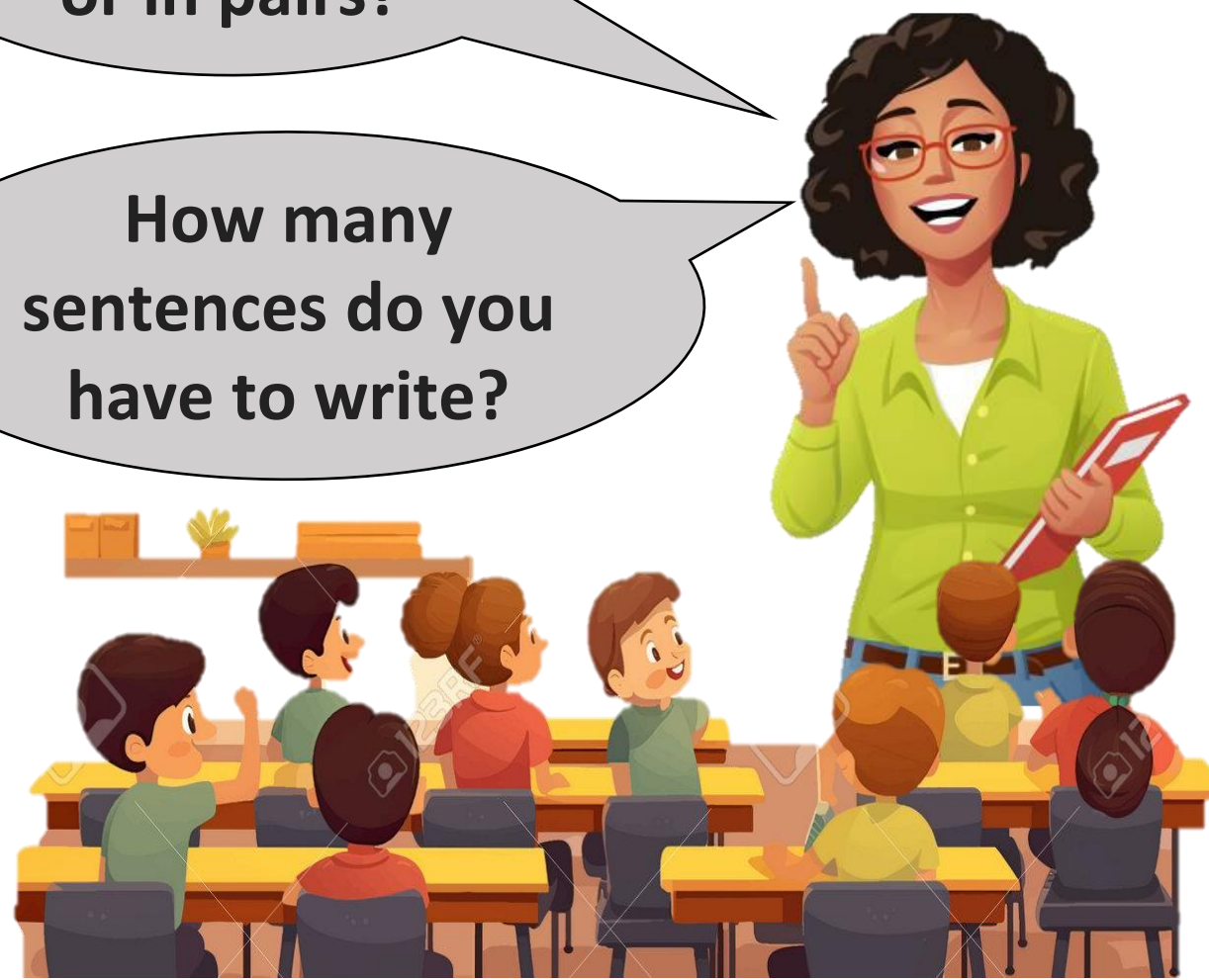
Work in pairs and write three sentences.

ICQs

Are you working alone or in pairs?

How many sentences do you have to write?

This method is important because it...

prevents confusion	saves time	supports comprehension	promotes talk time
Ensures that all students know what to do.	Avoids unnecessary clarifications later.	Helps students process instructions in the classroom.	Increases opportunities for language output.
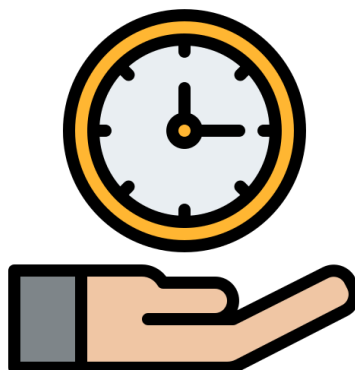
How to Create Effective ICQs

1	Short	not long explanations

- ICQs should be quick and to the point.
- Avoid complex sentences or lengthy explanations.

Example:

Instead of: "Can you tell me where you are supposed to place the blue crayon?"

Say: **"Where does the blue crayon go?"**

2 Simple use easy vocabulary

○ Stick to vocabulary your students already understand.

○ Avoid jargon or unfamiliar words.

Example:

Instead of: "Are you to execute the task of placing your book on the top or bottom shelf?"

Say: **"Do you put your book on the top or bottom shelf?"**

3 **Closed-ended** avoid open-ended questions

- Use questions with clear, concise answers (yes/no, one-word responses).
- Avoid open-ended questions that require detailed explanations.

Example:

Instead of: "What are you supposed to be doing right now?"

Say: **"How many people is a pair?"** or **"Do you write 2 or 3 sentences?"**

| **4** | **Focus on the key points.** | e.g., group work, number of items, time limits |

○ Target the essential elements of the instruction.

Check for understanding of:

- Actions: **"Do you write or draw?" "I draw."**
- Location: **"Do you write in the box?" "No, on the line."**
- Quantity: **"How many do you take?" "I take two."**
- Time: **"How much time do you have?" "I have five minutes."**
- Group work: **"Do you work alone?" "No, in groups."**
- Items: **"Do you need your book or pencil?" "My book."**
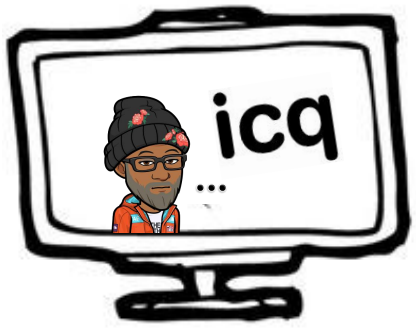
Let's look at some examples.

I will show 4 examples of ICQs.
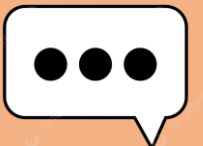
Example 1 Example 2 Example 3 Example 4

Watch the 4 examples with the following tasks in mind:

Identify what ICQs you can use for each instruction.

1. Write down 3 ICQs for each instruction.
2. Explain why these ICQs would be effective in assisting students to understand the instructions.

Chatbox

Demo 1: Identify Shapes Task

. Instruction: **"Point to the big blue star."**

- **ICQs:**
  - "What size?" (Big)
  - "What color?" (Blue)
  - "What shape?" (Star)

- **Effectiveness:**
  Checks understanding of size, color, and shape, the students need to point to.

Demo 2: Positioning Task

Instruction: **"Draw a short line next to the dog."**

- **ICQs:**
  - "What kind of line?" (Short)
  - "Where do you draw the line?" (Next to the dog)
  - "Do you draw it under the dog?" (No)

- **Effectiveness:**
  Verifies understanding of the length, location, and the target object.

Demo 3: Counting Task

3. Instruction: **"Clap your hands four times, slowly."**

- **ICQs:**
    - "How many times?" (Four)
    - "How do you clap?" (Slowly)
    - "Do you clap fast?" (No)

- **Effectiveness:**
  Confirms both the numerical quantity and the manner of performing the action.
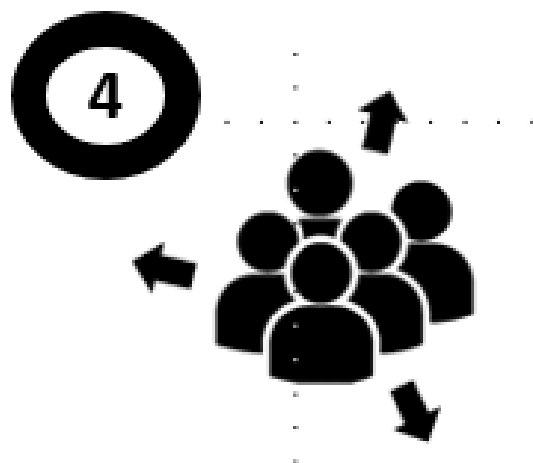
Demo 4: Identify Colors Task

4. Instruction: **"Put the red crayon inside the green cup."**
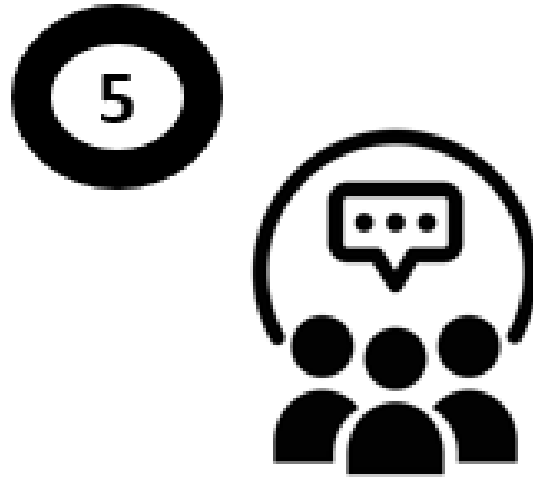
- **ICQs:**
  - "What color crayon?" (Red)

  - "Where does the crayon go?" (Inside the cup)

  - "What color cup?" (Green)

- **Effectiveness:**
  Checks understanding of color, preposition of place, and the target container.

Breakout Room Assignments.

Group Discussions in Breakout Rooms.

Breakout Room Tasks
(15 minutes)

Instructions for all Breakout Groups follows next:

Here's what you need to do in your groups.

1. Analyze the classroom instruction given in your task.

2. Create three effective ICQs for that instruction.

3. Discuss & report why these ICQs are effective.

4. Prepare to share your ICQs and reasoning in the main room.

Each group will report about 1 example.

Group 1 will report on Example 1

Group 2 will report on Example 2

Group 3 will report on Example 3

Group 4 will report on Example 4

Group 5 will report on Example 5

Group 6 will report on Example 6

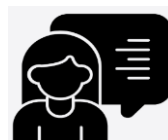**Try to complete as many examples as possible.**

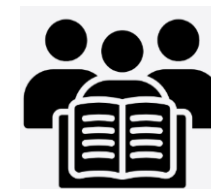# 15 minutes

---

1 Appoint a Co-ordinator.

2 Appoint a Reporter.

3 Start your Task.

Breakout Room 1: Greetings Task

Pair Work Activity

Instruction:

"Say 'good morning' to the student next to you."

Task:

1. Create three ICQs to check understanding.

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss and report why these ICQs are effective.

_____

_____

Breakout Room 2: Body Parts Task

Group Discussion Task

Instruction:

"Touch your left ear and raise your right hand."

Task:

1. Create three ICQs to check understanding.

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss and report why these ICQs are effective.

_____

_____

Breakout Room 3: Identify Shapes Task

Group Discussion Task

Instruction:

"Color the triangle green and the circle yellow."

Task:

1. Create three ICQs to check understanding.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Discuss and report why these ICQs are effective.

   _____

   _____

Breakout Room 4: Role-Play Task

Group Discussion Task

Instruction:

"Jump up and down two times, quietly."

Task:

1. Create three ICQs to check understanding.

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss and report why these ICQs are effective.

_____

_____

Breakout Room 5: Writing Task

Group Discussion Task

Instruction:

"Write the number five on the top of the page."

Task:

1. Create three ICQs to check understanding.

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss and report why these ICQs are effective.

_____
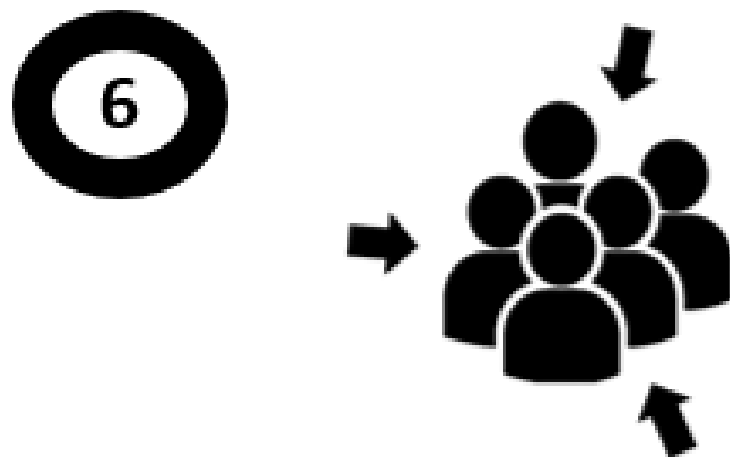
_____

Breakout Room 6: Ordering Activity

Group Discussion Task

Instruction:

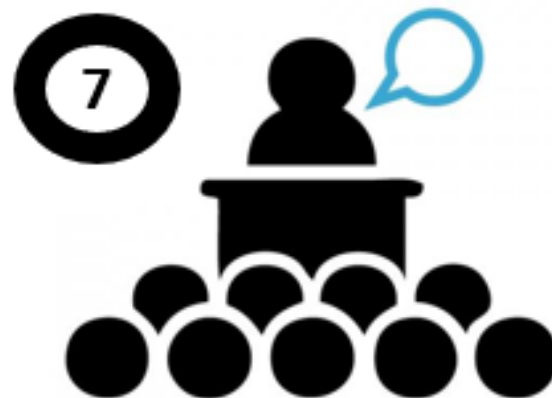**"Listen, circle the vocabulary word, and write 'a' or 'an'."**

Task:

1. Create three ICQs to check understanding.

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss and report why these ICQs are effective.

_____

_____

6

Return to the Main Room.

Groups report their findings
in the Main Room.

| Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 | Group 6 |

Question and Answer Session.

This is how the ICQs can be presented with the explanations.

1. Instruction: **"Say 'good morning' to the student next to you."**

- ICQs:

  - "What words do you say?" ('Good morning')
  - "Who do you say it to?" (The student next to me)
  - "Do you say good afternoon?" (No)

- Effectiveness: Confirms the correct phrase and the intended recipient.

2. Instruction**: "Touch your left ear and raise your right hand."**

- ICQs:
  - "Which ear?" (Left)
  - "What hand?" (Right)
  - "Do you touch your right ear?" (No)

- Effectiveness: Checks understanding of laterality (left/right) and body part identification.

3. Instruction: **"Color the triangle green and the circle yellow."**

- ICQs:
  - "What color is the triangle?" (Green)
  - "What color is the circle?" (Yellow)
  - "What two shapes?" (Triangle and circle)

- Effectiveness: Ensures students understand a two-part coloring instruction with different shapes and colors.

4. Instruction: **"Jump up and down two times, quietly."**

- ICQs:
  - "How many times do you jump?" (Two)
  - "How do you jump?" (Quietly)
  - "Do you jump loudly?" (No)

- Effectiveness: Checks understanding of quantity and the manner of performing the action.

5. Instruction: **"Write the number five on the top of the page."**

- ICQs:
  - "What number do you write?" (Five)
  - "Where do you write it?" (On the top)
  - "Do you write it on the bottom?" (No)

- Effectiveness: Confirms recognition of the specific numeral and its placement on the page.

6. Instruction**: " Listen, circle the vocabulary word, and write 'a' or 'an'."**

- ICQs:
  - "What must you do first?" (Listen)
  - "Must you circle the vocabulary word?" (Yes)
  - "What must you write?" (a or an)

- Effectiveness: Each question directly targets a crucial action or element of the multi-step instruction.