

A–Z of teaching young learners: Previewing

What and why?

Most young children are easily distracted. This means that in the course of a lesson they can easily lose track of where they are and forget what they are doing. This can lead to problems not only for themselves, but also for other children if they start to disturb the class. Similarly, unless they are told clearly what they are going to do, it is often difficult for them to see the point or understand how they should be working. One way of trying to ensure that all the children are following the lesson is to start by previewing what they are going to do.

Practical ideas

- One way of previewing is to tell the children what they will be doing in the lesson. For example, **Today, Jess and Nick are in the balloon, but they have an accident!** You can also tell them what they will learn. For example, **Today, you can learn how to talk about what you can do.**
- Telling them works with some children, but for many others it can go in one ear and out the other! For all children, what is more important is doing something. You can get the children to preview, for example, by asking them to look for things in the coming pages, by looking for particular exercises (e.g., an exercise with a cassette / CD symbol, an exercise where they will work in pairs, etc.).
- You can put your plan for the coming lessons on a poster and stick it on the wall. Some children can draw suitable pictures beside activities on the poster – for example singing a song, making a bookmark, doing an exercise in the Activity Book. When starting a lesson, you can point to the things they will be doing that lesson.
- You can preview at the beginning of a week, at the beginning of a lesson, and – if there are many steps involved (e.g., in a 'Story' section) – before the children start an activity.