



How to teach with Primary i-Dictionary

Introduction

This teaching guide offers a range of simple but exciting tips on how to use *Primary i-Dictionary* software in the classroom, either with an interactive whiteboard or just a computer and projector. The tips build a bridge between new technologies and traditional teaching, focusing on student participation and including follow-up, printable activities.

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Young learners and new technologies

The most recent educational research shows that children can use computers from the age of three onwards, and often start playing with electronic and computerised toys from an earlier age. They live in a world where television, animations, digital images and audio are normal in their home life; however, once they enter the classroom, they move into a different world, mostly free of new technologies, where the gap between their formal learning experiences and the real world is growing each year.

This situation presents both a challenge and a wonderful opportunity for teachers of young learners. The challenge of introducing new technologies into the classroom may at first, and quite understandably, seem almost frightening, particularly for teachers who don't consider themselves to belong to the computer generation. The good news, though, is that using new technologies is not as difficult as many teachers imagine it to be, and the rewards certainly justify the effort.

The benefits of using learning technologies with children are now well documented: the most obvious advantage is the wide variety of materials that are available through technology, and the many types and sources of stimulation. A single word, for example, can be represented and revisited in many different ways, and typically with a strong visual focus.

In addition to this, and of equal importance, is the opportunity for children to interact with technology – through playing with or manipulating computer programs, young learners can become really involved and engaged in learning a language long before they develop the language skills that are necessary for active communication. This allows children of all abilities and all levels of confidence to become active learners from the moment they first meet a new language.

This teaching guide has two very simple objectives: it aims to present a software program that provides all the opportunities that new technologies can bring to the language classroom, whilst also showing the teacher, through some basic tips, how to realise all these exciting opportunities.

Did you know ... ?

- ★ There are over 350 illustrations with audio files, 15 animated stories, 15 animated songs and 15 games in *Primary i-Dictionary*.
- ★ Each topic section has five printable PDFs that provide a clear link between the software and traditional classroom activities, offering hours of instructional materials.
- ★ There is a student's version of *Primary i-Dictionary*, so your students can work on the vocabulary at home, either alone or with their parents.
- ★ *Primary i-Dictionary* can be used with any Young Learners course.
- ★ The *Primary i-Dictionary* vocabulary topics are taken from the Cambridge ESOL Young Learners Starters exam.
- ★ *Primary i-Dictionary* offers both British and American English.

Teaching tips

Tip 1: Discovering the CD-ROM

The first and most important tip is for the teacher to complete the Discovering the CD-ROM task on page 5.

- Install the *Primary i-Dictionary* software and then take ten minutes to find the answers to the questions asked in the orientation task. This will help you understand what is in the software and all that you can do with it.

Tip 2: Words

The *Primary i-Dictionary* vocabulary list is divided into 15 topic areas. When you have decided on the topic you want to teach, the first place to start exploring is the vocabulary in the *Words* section.

- Click on a word in the right column to see the picture. Ask the students to tell you what picture is shown on the screen. If they don't know, click on the audio icon to hear the word, and ask them to repeat the word. If they do know, ask them to spell the word out; you can check by clicking on the spell button.
- Click through the word list to teach new words.
- As a homework assignment, ask students to learn a new word from the topic group. Ask the student to come and present the word in the next lesson.

Tip 3: Words and picture cards

After you have presented the words, use the picture card PDFs on the CD-ROM to provide follow-up classroom work.

- Print out and make copies of the topic picture cards and distribute them to the students. Ask the students to label the cards. They can also colour them in.
- As an alternative to labelling the cards, you can make copies of the topic word card PDFs. Distribute the word cards and ask the students to cut them out and match them to the picture cards.
- Finish off with a game of picture card snap. Organise the students into pairs and ask them to play picture card snap: the students mix up the picture cards from the previous activity and each student takes it in turn to lay down a card; when two cards of the same picture are laid down, the first student to shout 'snap' has an opportunity to name the picture and win that pile of cards. The game continues until one student has all the cards.
- As an extension to the picture card snap game, ask the students to mix the word cards into the pile so that they can also match and snap word and picture combinations.

Tip 4: Stories and picture cards

Every topic has an animated story that uses the vocabulary from its topic area, and the picture cards can be used together with the story to involve the students and to support their understanding of the story. The activities below work particularly well with the *Food and Drink* story: *Who is the Best?*

- Print out the picture card PDFs and distribute copies to the students. Ask the students to watch or listen to the story and to tick the picture cards that are referenced in the story.
- Ask the students to cut out the pictures that feature in the story, and then tell them to listen to or watch the story again. This time the students have to place the pictures in the sequence that they appear in the story. Ask the students to call out the sequence.
- Divide the students into groups and assign each group a character or picture from the story. Play the story again and tell the students to listen particularly to the dialogue surrounding their picture or character. When the story is finished ask the groups to work together to tell their part of the story.
- As a follow-up activity, the groups could choose a picture from the picture cards that wasn't involved in the story. Ask them to think what that picture might say if it was included in the story.

Tip 5: Stories and transcripts

For every story there are two PDFs: one with the full transcript, and one with the transcript modified for a gap-fill exercise. These can be used in follow-up classroom activities that explore the story language in more detail.

- Print out the full transcript and gap-fill transcript for the stories and make one copy of each for every two students in the class. Cut the transcripts in two and organise the students in pairs. Give one of the pair the first half of the gap-fill and the second half of the full transcript. Do the reverse for the other student. The students then listen to the story again; as many times as is necessary to fill in their half of the transcript. When they have finished, they read out their half of the gap-fill to their partner, who checks it against the full transcript. The roles are then reversed.
- Now allocate each student a role from the story. Keep it small and manageable. Ask the student to study the transcript and to practise playing that role. When the students become confident, ask them to try to reproduce their part of the story without looking at the transcript; their partners can prompt them when necessary. Finally, ask the students to perform their part of the story.
- If the students enjoy this, you could organise a class production of the story for other students or the teachers and parents.

Tip 6: Songs and gap-fill

Every topic section has its own animated song, and in the PDF section there is a transcript of the song, modified for a gap-fill.

- First play the song and ask the students to sing along. The lyrics are displayed on the screen underneath the song animation.
- As with the story, the songs recycle the topic vocabulary, so it would be possible to use the same activity with the word cards as described in Tip 4, identifying and then sequencing the picture cards in the order that they feature in the song.
- Print out and make copies of the song gap-fill PDFs and distribute to each student. Play the song again and ask the students to fill in the gaps.
- As a homework activity, ask the students to take the transcript home and learn the words.

Tip 7: Songs and karaoke

Every song can be played in two modes: normal mode with the words plus music, or karaoke mode, where only the music plays, but the song lyrics below the animation are highlighted in time with the music.

- Ask the students to sing the song again, first in normal mode.
- When the students are comfortable with the song, switch to karaoke mode.
- If the students manage to learn a few songs and really enjoy them, you could consider organising a small concert for the school or parents.

Tip 8: Games

Each topic area has its own game. The game offers a great opportunity to have some fun and it's a nice way to finish off the topic area.

- Click on the game and explain to the students what they have to do.
- Ask the students to come to the front and actively engage with the game. If you don't have an interactive whiteboard, this will work just as well with a mouse, when used with a computer and projector.

Discovering the CD-ROM task

- 1 How many topic areas are there in *Primary i-Dictionary*?
- 2 What is the first word at the top of the word list in the *Transport* topic area?
- 3 In the *Food and Drink* story, who is the best?
- 4 How many PDFs are there for every topic?
- 5 What colour are the chickens in the *Animals* topic song?
- 6 What colour is the karaoke button on the song player?
- 7 What icon is used for the games in the topic sections?

Answers

1) 15; 2) bike; 3) the small bean; 4) five; 5) yellow 6) red; 7) a dice