



Customizing Second Step for English-Language Learners

Tips for customizing Grade 2 and Grade 3 Brain Builders for ELL

Many of the design features of Second Step lessons—such as the repeated format, visual components (photographs and videos), Brain Builders, skill practice, realistic scenarios, and new vocabulary—make Second Step an effective tool for teaching English-language learners (ELL). Practicing problem-solving activities is especially useful for ELL students.

It's more important that a student understands a new word or concept than that the student pronounces it correctly. The correct pronunciation will follow with repeated use.

Customizing Brain Builders

Kindergarten and Grade 1 Brain Builders are appropriate for both native English speakers and English-language learners. As students advance to Grades 2 and 3, many of the Brain Builders incorporate more language and may require adaptations for ELL. The following are tips for customizing Grade 2 and Grade 3 Brain Builders for ELL.

As you teach Second Step, keep these general tips for working with ELL students in mind:

- **Be clear:** Speak clearly with an even pace. Repeat, rephrase, and use gestures to help communicate new vocabulary and concepts.
- **Give wait time:** Pause after asking questions to allow students to think.
- **Use visual aids:** Use familiar, clear symbols and pictures to help explain concepts.
- **Pre-teach vocabulary words:** Use words that students already know to explain new words and concepts before teaching a lesson.
- **Tap into previous knowledge:** Link new concepts with familiar ones.
- **Model:** Use words along with actions to model each step of a new skill.



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For lessons that call for visual aids, use supplies you have on hand. For example, "Feelings Cards" are photos from the Early Learning Second Step kit of children showing strong emotions. If you don't have Feelings Cards, use any pictures of children expressing strong feelings, such as those from storybooks.

Grade 2

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Lesson 1: Menu Memory

Modified Oral Language Game

Pair English-language learners for success and have them focus on remembering one menu item.

Lesson 2: Sentence Switcheroo

Modified Oral Language Game

- Read three words out loud, such as *focus*, *attention*, and *listen*.
- Read the words again. When you leave out one word, students should sit. When you leave out no words, students should stay standing.

With Visual Aids

- Show three or more images. You could use flashcards.
- Show the images again. When you leave out one image, students should sit. When you leave out no images, students should stay standing.

Lesson 3: Listening Concentration

Modified Oral Language Game

Shorten the word lists to three words.

With Visual Aids

- Show students the series of images twice.
- Have students hold up one finger when they've seen an image twice. Have them stand and point to their eyes when they've seen three matches.

Lesson 5: Feelings Factory

With Visual Aids

Show a Feelings Card and name the feeling.

Lesson 6: Feelings Factory—Same or Different

With Visual Aids

Show a Feelings Card.

Lesson 8: Human Bar Graphs

With Visual Aids

- Display a sample bar graph with matching movements for *always*, *sometimes*, and *never*.
- Show activity flashcards.

Lesson 9: Mum's the Word

Modified Oral Language Game

Use only one word, and count to twenty.

With Visual Aids

Show a card with an image and a word when students need to say it.

Lesson 10: If-Then Toss

Role-Play Version

- Role-play the scenario with students.
- Role-play an "if" statement, then have student pairs role-play the "then" statement.

Lesson 11: Frozen Feelings Factory

With Visual Aids

- Show a Feelings Card and name the feeling.
- Show the frozen card.

Lesson 12: Feelings Football

With Visual Aids

- Before playing, go over the class feelings list. Have students think of five feelings to say during the game.
- As students name feelings during the game, hold up the matching Feelings Card.



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Lesson 14: Freeze Frame

With Visual Aids

- Before playing, review the class feelings list. Have students think of feelings to say during the game. Also, review students' stop signals and post a few examples in a place visible to students.
- As students name feelings during the game, hold up the matching Feelings Card.

Lesson 17: Sentence Switcheroo with Problem Statements

Modified Oral Language Game

- Read three blaming words/phrases out loud, such as *always, never, and because of you*.
- Read them again. When you leave out one word/phrase, students should sit. When you leave out no words/phrases, students should stay standing.

With Visual Aids

- Before playing, write blaming words/phrases on the board and go over them. You could also make vocabulary cards for the Second Step keywords listed in the lessons.
- Point to blaming words/phrases as you say them.

Lesson 18: Partner Paper Pass

With Visual Aids

Give a verbal direction, then model it for students before they do it with their partners.

Grade 3

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Lesson 1: Triple T with a Twist

Modified Oral Language Game

Pair English-language learners for success and have them focus on remembering one thing their partners said.

Lesson 2: Who's Talking?

Modified Oral Language Game

Model the directions after giving each one.

Lesson 4: Sentence Switcheroo

Modified Oral Language Game

- Read three words out loud, such as *focus, attention, and listen*.
- Read them again. When you leave out two words, students should sit down. When you leave out one word, students should reach up. When you leave out no words, students should stay standing.

Lesson 5: Feelings Factory

With Visual Aids

Show a Feelings Card and name the feeling.

Lesson 6: Feelings Factory: Same or Different

With Visual Aids

Show a Feelings Card.

Lesson 7: Switch It Up!

With Visual Aids

- Before playing, go over the class feelings list. Make sure it's visible during the game.
- Display Feelings Cards.
- Show activity flashcards.

Lesson 8: Common Ground

With Visual Aids

- Model the actions for showing same and different preferences.
- Show activity flashcards.

Lesson 9: Back to Front

Modified Oral Language Game

- Pair English-language learners for success, and have them focus on remembering one thing their partner said.
- Simplify Talk Topics: name three colors, animals, months, sports, etc.

Lesson 10: Chat Chain

Modified Oral Language Game

Pair English-language learners with students who can support and encourage their developing conversation skills



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Lesson 11: Frozen Feelings Factory

With Visual Aids

- Show a Feelings Card and name the feeling.
- Show the frozen card.

Lesson 12: Rhyme Race

Modified Oral Language Game

- Pair English-language learners with students who can support and encourage their developing English-language skills.
- Have partners work together to think of three rhymes for a word. Have them memorize the words. Call on a few pairs at random to report their rhymes.

With Visual Aids

- Show three or more images. You could use flashcards.
- Show the images again. When you leave out one, students should sit. When you leave out two, students should reach up. When you leave out none, students should stay standing.

Lesson 13 & 14: Freeze Frame

With Visual Aids

- Before playing, review the class feelings list. Have students think of feelings to say during the game. Also review students' stop signals and post a few examples somewhere visible to students.
- As students name feelings during the game, hold up the matching Feelings Card.

Lesson 15: Moving Pictures

Modified Oral Language Game

Pair English-language learners with students who can support and encourage their developing English language skills.

With Visual Aids

Show students images of the anger expressions before they create their movement sequence.

Lesson 16: Jump to Conclusions

Modified Oral Language Game

- Pair English-language learners with students who can support and encourage their developing English-language skills.
- Allow English-language learners more time to think of possible answers. If they think of an answer in their native language, help them use the dictionary to find the equivalent in English.

Lesson 17: Sentence Switcheroo with Problem Statements

Modified Oral Language Game

- Read three blaming words/phrases out loud, such as *always*, *never*, and *because of you*.
- Read the words again. When you leave out one word/phrase, students should sit. When you leave out no words/phrases, students should stay standing.

With Visual Aids

- Before playing, write blaming words/phrases on the board and review them. You could also make vocabulary cards for the Second Step keywords listed in the lessons.
- Point to blaming words/phrases as you say them.

Lesson 18: Partner Paper Pass

With Visual Aids

Give a verbal direction, then model it for students before they do it with their partners.

Lesson 19: Double Opposites

Modified Oral Language Game

- Teach students one action to use to show they're ready to answer.
- Have a student point to the antonym card (see below).

With Visual Aids

Review, then display antonyms cards with images.

