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ELT Newsletter

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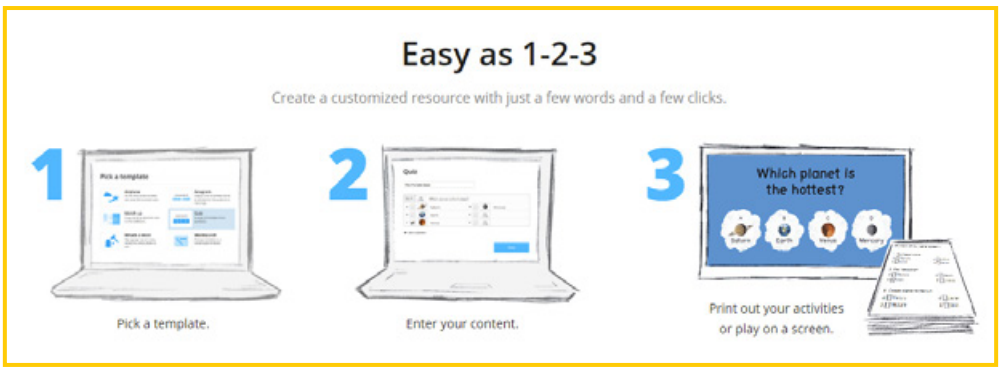
USING WORDWALL TO CREATE TEACHING RESOURCES

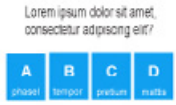
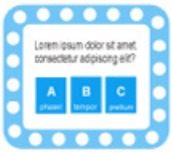
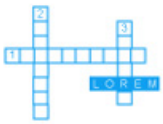
by Nguyen Thi Thuy Trang

Wordwall is a web-based tool that offers English language teachers multiple ways to extend and consolidate vocabulary with fun practice. This user-friendly tool is easy to use for both teachers and students. Every user can sign up to a basic account and then start creating activities quickly with only three simple steps.



Teachers can use Wordwall to create both interactive and printable activities with a wide range of available templates (six templates are free for a basic account). Interactive activities can be presented in different themes and each theme changes the look and feel with different graphics, fonts, and sounds. These activities can be played on a computer, tablet, phone or interactive whiteboard.

Some activities are suggested for teachers to create their teaching resources with templates as follows:

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Match up	Students will drag and drop each keyword next to its definition.	**Quiz** 	A series of multiple choice questions. Students will tap the correct answer to proceed.
Random wheel	Teacher/Students will pin the wheel to see which item comes up next.	**Gameshow quiz** 	A multiple choice quiz with time pressure, lifelines and a bonus round.
Matching pairs	Students will tap a pair of tiles at a time to reveal if they are a match.	**Unjumble**	Students will drag and drop words to rearrange each sentence into its correct order.
Crossword 	Students will use the clues to solve the crossword. They need to tap on a word and type in the answer.	**Group sort**	Students will drag and drop each item into its correct group.
Open the box	Students will tap each box in turn to open them up and reveal the item inside	**Find the match**	Students will tap the matching answer to eliminate it and repeat until all answers are gone.

The above templates are designed to be teacher-led with a timer that the teachers can adjust to suit their classes.

Once an activity is created, it is shareable in different ways: (1) teachers can give their students a URL to access it; (2) they can embed it in an online learning platform; or (3) they can give their students a code to access it via the Wordwall website. Then, teachers can easily customize the activity to suit their class and their teaching style. Teachers can even switch the activity to a different template with a single click. This saves teachers a lot of time and is great for differentiation and reinforcement. For example, they can turn a Quiz activity into a Wordsearch without re-entering the contents. In addition, teachers can also find many available ready-to-use activities in the Community search result, play and build upon them.

Wordwall takes English language learning into the digital world. It is really easy for teachers to use and create their own teaching resources. Students will find their learning activities more fun and exciting with the use of Wordwall.

References:

https://wordwall.net/

https://thedigitalteacher.com/reviews/wordwall#description

THE STUDENTS' EYESIGHT: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING-BASED APPLICATIONS ON ELT IN PANDEMIC ERA[1]

Summarized by Dau Thi Thanh Luy

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in dramatic change in education worldwide, one of which the online learning through digital platforms is rapidly used to replace face-to-face learning activities. In response to the high demand, many online learning applications are providing free access to their services. In this study, the author investigated how students utilized the learning-based applications in their English language learning, what obstacles they faced, and what application is the most effective for the online learning. The most commonly used applications under investigation are Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp. There were 30 students of English in a private university of Makassar, Indonesia participating in the study. Questionnaires were delivered to these randomly chosen students through Google form and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis.

The findings revealed that virtual learning and teaching through Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp could assist to adapt to the pandemic era and improve students' digital literacy as well. Particularly, these applications were evaluated positively by the students because of their friendly use and compatibility with both laptops and smart phones. Moreover, they were easily accessible to most of the students and made the students enthusiastic. Despite the disparities in the percentage of students' responses, most of them agreed that the effectiveness of these learning-based applications was highly recognized as they helped students comprehend the materials and teacher's assignment instructions easily, improve their ICT skills (Information and Communication Technology). Consequently, they would become more engaged in teaching and learning procedures. Among the digital applications WhatsApp was evaluated to be the most effective and highly recommended as it was popular with students in Indonesia and allowed them to easily share teaching and learning materials including text, file, link, photo, audio, and video within interaction through WhatsApp group. More importantly, WhatsApp worked better than the others even when the signal was weak. In terms of the obstacles, students also reported to face several barriers when utilizing the learning-base applications such as limited quota (Zoom, Google Meet), unstable signal strength (Zoom, Google Meet) and complicated use that sometimes made the students distracted (Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet).

In conclusion, it is suggested from the findings that the use of applications in English language teaching and learning should serve as a media reference for online learning, and the teacher will take his own responsibilities to choose the appropriate applications compatible with the learning subject, instructional materials for teaching and learning activities and responsive to students' needs and conditions.

[1] Mannong, A. B. M. (2020). The students' eyesight: The effectiveness of learning-based applications on ELT in pandemic era. ETERNAL, Vol 6 (2). From http://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/Eternal/article/view/18268

FIVE FUN ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH FROM HOME [2]

Summarized by Nguyen Thi Anh Thu

Teaching online has become more and more popular but it can be a challenge for teachers to engage and motivate students, and manage class time to reach their educational goals. Therefore, it is important to choose appropriate tools and techniques to make online classes enjoyable for both teachers and students. Following are user-friendly and fun online platforms that can help English learners master their language skills.

1. Kahoot!

Kahoot! is a great platform for distance learning and self-study. It provides useful tools for teachers to create their own quizzes based on grammar or vocabulary. More specifically, teachers can host games live on their computers or challenge students to complete them at the available time. Teachers can also search for pre-made games designed by other education professionals. By entering a pin number on their personal devices, learners can access to a virtual game room where they will be able to compete against their classmates for points and their featured scores can be found on the teacher's leaderboard. Kahoot! is also featured with funky background music, which younger students will definitely have more fun.

2. Lyrics Training

Lyrics Training is particularly helpful for teachers to teach new vocabulary or improve their students' listening skills in an enjoyable and immersive way. Lyrics Training can be used as a distance learning tool by sharing their screens live from home, or sending students a link to practice as homework. By taking music videos from YouTube, Lyrics Training allows to create gap-fill activities while students concentrate on the lyrics. This requires students to listen carefully, as well as read and write quickly in time with the music. Moreover, the level of difficulty for the gap-fill activities and ways to conduct can be selected – either by writing down the vocabulary or selecting multiple-choice answers.

Lyrics Training is free and teachers can upload their own favorite lyrics to create custom exercises and create special karaoke activities for younger learners.

3. Quizlet

Quizlet is a simple tool for memorizing vocabulary, featuring more than 140 million sets of flashcards for teachers to choose from. It also enables teachers to customize, create their own, or share flashcards with their class via link or on Google Classroom.

Flashcards are used to explore definitions, look at examples of how they can be used in a sentence, and drill pronunciation and intonation as a group. With each set of flashcards, there are 9 different study modes giving teachers the choice to test students on writing, spelling, or memory, etc.

Besides, Quizlet is a great revision tool, allowing students to create their own flashcard sets from home and share them with their classmates. It also offers games such as a simple matching or gravity game for students to play individually.

4. Storybird

Storybird is a lovely way to boost young students' reading and writing skills, offering a community for storytelling where students and teachers can write their own books online and share them with other readers.

[2] From https://www.english.com/blog/teaching-english-from-home-try-these-5-fun-online-platforms/

It offers a collection of artwork for users to base their stories around. These can be simple picture books or longer stories, making the platform great for young learners and adults.

The platform works well as a distance learning tool because it doesn't require any audio capabilities. Learners can read, re-share and comment other people's work. There's even an option to collaborate on stories.

5. GoNoodle

GoNoodle promotes mindfulness and movement videos for all school subjects, and it is a fantastic tool to use with kids and teens. It helps them be their bravest, silliest and smartest selves with cool music videos, educational rap songs, and brightly dressed presenters.

Teachers can live stream the videos over their shared device and get the whole class up to dance or they can incorporate it into their online lesson as a reward or study break. If the computer doesn't have the capabilities to screen share, teachers can send students the link for homework.

Not only these useful online platforms but also enormous teaching resources can English teachers find from the internet, which makes the teaching and learning a bit easier than ever.

EXPLORING TEACHING ENGLISH USING ICT IN VIETNAM: THE LENS OF ACTIVITY THEORY [3]

Summarized by Mai Thị Minh Tho

The widespread use of ICT application in teaching and learning English has posed the question to the authors of this study of whether the Vietnamese teachers and learners have completely gained the advantages of using ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

A qualitative study was conducted, aiming to learn the activities and behaviors of teachers in teaching English using ICT. The authors applied Activity Theory framework for data analysis and discussion to have more profound information in the light of using ICT in language instructions. Moreover, classroom observation and focus group interview were also utilized for data collection. Particularly, 20 teachers of English from 4 primary schools in the middle areas and highland of Vietnam participated in this study.

The findings showed that ICT in teaching English was used at different frequency levels, and it was still limited in creating useful activities or exercises for students, and bringing language environment to students. Moreover, in terms of the level of ICT use, based on Substitution – Augmentation – Modification – Redefinition (SAMR) model by Puentedura (2013), 90% of the teachers in this research were at augmentation level whereas 35% of them were at modification stage. In other words, most of the teachers used ICT to design digital presentations, i.e. PowerPoint slides while only some teachers employed it for important task design such as designing tests for their students.

Moreover, the teachers revealed that they had some difficulties in using ICT due to (1) their lack of self-confidence, (2) the limited ICT availability at schools, and (3) the lack of ICT support. According to the authors, there should be more consideration and involvement from school level, and further stakeholders as policy makers to use ICT more effectively in teaching English in Vietnam.

Reference:

Puentedura, R. R. (2013). SARM: Moving from Enhancement to Transformation.

[3] Pham, T. T. N., E., Keong, T. C. & Wah, L. K. (2018). Exploring teaching English using ICT in Vietnam. International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences, 1(3), pp.15-29. From https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335569026_Exploring_Teaching_English_Using_ICT_In_Vietnam_The_Lens_of_Activity_Theory

SEVEN ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR NEW ONLINE DISTANCE TEACHERS [4]

Summarized by Nguyen Thi Bich Hao

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, studying and working online are now becoming popular and necessary than ever. To help students keep up with the schedule, teachers need to know how to use online tools and use them with strategies for practical and exciting lessons.

According to Jackson Best – the article author, the seven online teaching strategies mentioned below are worth for thorough consideration:

1. Choosing online teaching platform wisely

It is advised that platforms for online teaching should be accessible, equitable, and monitorable. Also, these online platforms need to ensure that the sustainable and communicative purposes are achievable. In other words, the sites should be easy for students and their parents to use. It should also include printable activities if the internet is unstable or lacks device access. A live chat or discussion board is available to support students' oral interaction. Functions for teachers to update the information, activities, or progress are provided, and more importantly, the platform needs to be a long-term solution.

Following are suggested online tools:

- **Learning Management Systems (LMS):** Blackboard or Moodle is convenient for all of learning content.
- **Cloud-based software:** Google Classrooms or Microsoft OneNote is excellent for communicative and collaborative activities.
- **Curriculum-aligned online programs:** Mathletics or Readiwriter Spelling is the online program that allows giving students homework, exercises, or individual practice because of its automated reporting.

Importantly, using a combination of those online teaching tools is encouraged as long as the students know how to use them.

[4] From https://www.3plearning.com/blog/7-essential-online-teaching-strategies-teachers-new-distance-learning/

2. Creating Parent-Teacher partnership

Not only teachers and students but also parents play an important role in the online teaching process with the roles as assistants, motivators, monitors, or aides. To do that, teachers should firstly involve parents in the teaching period by letting them know what to expect. The point here is to keep the expectations realistic. Then, it is necessary to send them a parent support package including an overview of the teaching content, strategies for support learning at home, and a manual for the online teaching tool. During the course, the learners' progress should be maintained and updated to their parents so that they feel confident that their child's learning is on track and their contribution is useful.

3. Multiple-mode delivering

A mix of text, sound, and imagery always attracts learners' interest in the lesson. Therefore, diversifying online lessons is more engaging than creating a packet of worksheets. Teachers can consider live classes via Zoom or Skype, giving video lectures, engaging students in activities with gamified tools, or starting a class blog.

4. Online teaching as routine

Like other traditional face-to-face classes, teachers should make the online teaching as a regular and predictable part of the students' day by creating a specific place for learning resources (the unit plan, activities, assignment, links, videos, printable handouts, etc.).

5. Interaction between learners

In order to preclude the online teaching from being isolated, it is suggested to give students the opportunity to communicate more often. Discussion boards and forums are practical to set up a not-in-a-class-topic board for learners to post whatever they are thinking. Live chat is another method, but make sure there is a guideline to ensure to hear every learner's voice. Zoom or Skype may contribute to learners' interaction by just a few clicks, and learners can also use them to talk with their peers in their own time. A weekly show and tell timetable with a video or a photo relating to students' lives always keeps them connected to each other. In addition, peer review activities that involve students in sharing their work online and comment on their peer play an essential part as students can feel supported and close to each other.

6. A strong relationship with learners

In online teaching, it is hard for learners as they feel separated from the teacher. Therefore, teachers are responsible for keeping the bond alive and robust to ensure a successful course. A daily welcome video with a clear plan can keep the students from being lost during the lesson. Recording comments will make teachers' feedback more personable and meaningful because teachers' voice will help to get closer to their students. Also, make sure to check the absentees for better support. Sharing individual experiences, for example introducing your pets, your hobbies, or even the most difficult subject when you were a student, can create something in common with the students and make the lesson with their teacher easier. Keeping your tone personable by using GIFs and emojis can help students to know more about your sense of voice and personality.

7. Be kind to yourself

Online teaching brings both opportunities and challenges. For that reason, teachers need strategies for themselves to support their wellbeing. Creating a comfortable place to work at home is a suggestion; others might include setting time for contacting parents or students as "office hours" or scheduling a loved pastime at the end of a teaching day, for instance.

E-LEARNING AND ENGLISH TEACHING [5]

Summarized by Vo Thi Hong Tram

In this study the author aimed to explore the benefits and the application of e-learning in English teaching, and analyze appropriate pedagogical strategies in order to enhance students' English learning as a second language.

First of all, e-learning in English teaching is beneficial to find enormous teaching resources through useful tools as Google or Baidu. A great number of text information, pictures and audio data can be found on the internet, and easily accessible to students. These learning resources can also be stored in students' cell phones for anywhere and anytime study. Another advantage of e-learning is that it can create the needs of discovering things, make learning more interesting and acquire better performance due to high degree of concentration. Moreover, e-learning is supposed to be suitable for students' different ability and help them expand their individual aptitude.

Regarding to the corresponding changes of pedagogical strategies in English teaching, e-learning helps to turn from teacher-centered strategies to student-centered with the emphasis on linguistic sensitivity, listening comprehension and ability of expression so as to enable students to master English. More importantly, e-learning pedagogical strategy refers to whether students practice constantly, but it does not depend to grammar and invalid exercises. Therefore, pedagogical strategies have to be changed, in which student-centered should be placed more emphasis to develop direct interest and foster sense of language.

After discussing and analyzing the prominents aspects of e-learning in English teaching in such specific context as China, the author concludes that the use of e-learning is of major importance as it changes pedagogical strategies and improve the quality of English language teaching and learning.

[5] Cai, H. (2012). E-learning and English teaching. IERI Procedia 2, pp.841-846. From https://bit.ly/3rErgoH

THE 12th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TESOL

The 12th Annual International Conference on TESOL will be collaboratively organized by SEAMEO Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC) in Vietnam and Curtin University in Australia. The event provides an excellent venue for academics, researchers, students and professionals in the field of English language education to share and discuss research findings, experiences, and practical and theoretical issues related to the teaching of English to learners of different backgrounds, levels, interests and motives.

KEY THEME: ***English Language Teaching in the New Era: Empowering Teachers and Students***

SUB-THEMES:

- Innovative approaches and methods in English Language Teaching
- Curriculum and Materials Design and Development
- Emerging technologies and applications for English Language Teaching
- Language Testing and Assessment
- Teacher Professional Development

Time: Thursday & Friday, August 05–06, 2021

Venue: SEAMEO RETRAC, 35 Le Thanh Ton Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Contact: tesol-conference@vnseameo.org

WEBINAR SERIES ON TEACHING METHODOLOGY FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

The SEAMEO Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC) in collaboration with Regional English Language Office (RELO) is hosting a webinar series on teaching methodology for English teachers at school levels from April to August. These webinars aim to help these teachers advance professional knowledge and skills of teaching English focusing on grammar, vocabulary, four language skills integration, innovative technologies in ELT, critical thinking and material development.

KEY THEME: ***Reflecting on Teaching by Thinking, Practicing, and Doing***

WEBINAR TOPICS:

NO.	DATE (8:30AM-10:30AM)	TOPICS
Webinar 1	Tuesday, 13/04/2021	Shine a Light on Four Skills Integration
Webinar 2	Tuesday, 20/04/2021	Makeover your Grammar and Vocabulary Lessons
Webinar 3	Tuesday, 18/05/2021	Think Critically about Critical Thinking
Webinar 4	Tuesday, 22/06/2021	Trusted Technology Tips for Top-notch Teaching
Webinar 5	Tuesday, 20/07/2021	Use Your Superpowers to Develop New Materials
Webinar 6	Tuesday, 24/08/2021	Cooking as a Metaphor for Preparing Mixed Level Classes

ONLINE TRAINING COURSE ON DISCOVER EVIDENCE-BASED SKILLS FOR TEACHING PHONICS TO YOUNG CHILDREN

This online course, developed by Queensland University of Technology, aims to teach the relationship between letters and sounds through play-based pedagogies, and it is an important part of children learning to speak, read and write. Phonics helps children listen to, identify and use different sounds that distinguish words from each other in the English language.

The course will begin with an introduction to phonics, explaining what exactly it is, and why it's so important. Next, participants will learn the best ways to teach phonics to children in the early years, including which resources to use.

The course will cover the following topics:

- What is code-related literacy?
- What is phonics?
- Why is phonics important in early childhood settings?
- What are some evidence-based strategies for teaching phonics?

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Describe code-related literacy, including phonics, phonemic awareness and phonological awareness
- Explain why teaching and learning code-related literacy is important
- Identify an appropriate strategy for teaching code-related literacy in early childhood settings

For further details, please go to the website:
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/teaching-phonics

WEBINAR ON OUR FUN NEW GAME IN MINECRAFT: HELPING YOUNG LEARNERS BUILD THEIR LANGUAGE SKILLS BY CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT ENGLISH

This webinar is provided by Cambridge Assessment English and presented by a Cambridge English professional who gives invaluable information and effective teaching methods to improve student engagement and help English teachers develop their career.

Participants have opportunities to learn the new games-based learning experience built in Minecraft - one of the world's most popular video games. This exciting new game for A1 level learners is a unique way to support young learners to practice their English skills. The expert will share how he has integrated about the approach to learning alongside the principles of games design in order to immerse experience for language learners. With a focus on real-life communication and vocabulary skills, our new Minecraft game empowers your learners to explore, learn and build their skills while having fun.

Dates:

- Tuesday, 27 April 2021 at 09.00 (UK time)
- Thursday, 29 April 2021 at 16.00 (UK time)

For further details, please go to the website: ***https://bit.ly/3dU9fhg***

FRIENDS FOREVER

A mouse and a frog were friends. Every morning the frog would hop out of his pond and go to visit his friend who lived in a hole in the side of a tree. He would return home at noon.

The mouse delighted in his friend's company unaware that the friend was slowly turning into an enemy. The reason? The frog felt slighted because though he visited the mouse every day, the mouse on his part had never made an attempt to visit him.

One day he felt he had been humiliated enough. When it was time for him to take leave of the mouse, he tied one end of a string around his own leg, tied the other end to the mouse's tail, and hopped away, dragging the hapless mouse behind him.

The frog dived deep into the pond. The mouse tried to free himself but couldn't, and soon drowned. His bloated body floated to the top.

A hawk saw the mouse floating on the pond's surface. He swooped down, and grabbing the mouse in his talons, flew to the branch of a nearby tree. The frog, of course, was hauled out of the water too. He desperately tried to free himself, but couldn't and the hawk soon put an end to his struggles.

In Africa they have a saying: 'Don't dig too deep a pit for your enemy, you may fall into it yourself'.

Source: http://www.english-for-students.com/Friends-Forever.html

THE SECRET OF WORK

Once upon a time there lived a king in southern India named Sri Rana Charya. He was very curious to know about his village.

One day he called out a group of courtiers and said, "Go, and find how the people of my village are and bring the person who knows about the secret of work. But one condition, any person you meet, he should not know that I sent you."

The courtiers didn't understand the king and they walked away. The courtiers thought about

what to do the whole night, each of them got a plan and they said to each other. But all the members liked the plan of Raghu (a clever person among the other courtiers) and they all agreed to it.

The very next day they all dressed as Tribals and they arranged a bullock cart with them and they went around.

First they saw a woodcutter who was cutting down trees they went to him and said "Do you like this job sir?"

The woodcutter replied "No, I do it because this work comes from our ancestors so I was forced by my parents to do this job".

The courtiers said goodbye to the woodcutter and walked away.

While traveling further, the courtiers saw an angry washer man and they decided to talk to him.

One of them asked "Hello sir! We come from East India and we are new to this place, we've come to visit our friend Ram who lives here somewhere nearby could you please tell his address".

The washer man said "Are you mad? Can't you see what I am doing? I am doing an idiotic job."

The courtiers asked him "Sir, Do you like this job?"

The washer man continued angrily "No, when I was small I did not show much interest in studies and I never listened to my parents so, I became a washer man, as I should look after my family and earn a living. To feed them I do this job".

The courtiers apologized for disturbing and went away.

Then they made up their minds to leave the job and send a message to the king that no one in the village knows about the secret of work.

But suddenly, they saw a small hut with 5 candles and 3 lamps and a man studying a science book and one of them said that it is a school. They went inside and asked the lecturer the same question.

The lecturer replied "I love this job and it gives me satisfaction and happiness teaching so many uneducated children".

Hearing this the courtiers took the lecturer to the king and the king appreciated him for knowing the secret of work and soon he became the best teacher in the village and was given an award and soon a big school was built.

Moral: Any work you do it does not matter, but you have to have some interest in that. If you want to achieve greater heights, believe in yourself. And then you can know that

"Work is worship."

Source: http://www.english-for-students.com/Secret-of-Work.html

ANNIVERSARY DAY

Chloe and Kevin's anniversary is coming up. Kevin wants to plan a night out at an Italian restaurant in town. He calls a restaurant to make a reservation but they have no tables available. He calls another restaurant, but they have no availability either.

Kevin thinks and paces around the house. He knows that Chloe loves Italian food more than anything else. He knows that nothing makes her happier. But the only two Italian places in town are too busy.

Kevin has an idea. What if he cooks Chloe a homemade Italian meal? Kevin pictures it: he puts down a fancy tablecloth, lights some candles, and plays romantic Italian music. Chloe loves when Kevin makes an effort.

There's only one thing. Kevin isn't a good cook.

In fact, Kevin is a terrible cook. When he tries to make breakfast he burns the eggs, when he tries to make lunch he screws up the salad, when he tries to make dinner even the neighbors smell how bad it is.

Kevin has another idea: if he calls up one of the restaurants before Chloe gets home and orders take-out, he can serve that food instead of his bad cooking!

The day arrives. Chloe is still at work while Kevin orders the food, picks it up, and brings it back home.

As he lays down the place settings, lights the candles and puts the music on, Chloe walks in.

"Happy Anniversary!" Kevin tells Chloe. He shows off their romantic dinner setting, smiling.

Chloe looks confused. "Our anniversary is tomorrow, Kevin."

Kevin pauses, looks at the calendar and realizes she's right. He looks back at her.

"I guess it's always good to practice!" he says.

Source: https://www.really-learn-english.com/english-short-stories-level-05-story-02.html

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