

# Online Brainstorming & Mind Mapping: Engaging EAL Activities

The webinar was recorded.

Friday, July 26: <http://myenglishonline.wiziq.com/online-class/1329227-online-brainstorming-mind-mapping-engaging-eal-activities>

Saturday, July 27: <http://myenglishonline.wiziq.com/online-class/1329228-online-brainstorming-mind-mapping-engaging-eal-activities>

## Objectives:

- discuss brainstorming and mind mapping for e-tutoring sessions;
- explore Popplet, one of web 2.0 tools for brainstorming & mind mapping;
- discuss possible EAL activities and how to incorporate them into the teaching process.

## Why do people use Brainstorming & Mind Mapping?

Brainstorming is an informal approach for generating new ideas and promoting creative thinking. Its main goal is to direct people to new ways of thinking and break from the usual way of reasoning.

A mind map is a graphical tool used to represent words and ideas, and to arrange them around a central key element. In other words, it is a visualization of what happens in our minds. It helps people to: analyze, visualize, comprehend, structure, and classify ideas. The process of creating a mind map can help students gain an overview perspective on complex concepts. Mind maps can be invaluable tool for visual thinkers and visual learners.

Brainstorming and mind mapping encourage critical thinking skills and the breaking down of problems into manageable elements.

## Our participants' ideas on using Brainstorming & Mind Mapping:

- *to collect ideas*
- *to explore ideas*
- *expanding of ideas*
- *to find new and different ways*
- *to activate prior knowledge*
- *to organize ideas*
- *for planning*
- *for practicing vocabulary*
- *to see the whole picture of a project*
- *to get ideas together as a team*
- *to have some fun!*
- *to find useful lexis on a topic*
- *to review material*



## Online Brainstorming & Mind Mapping Tools

- Popplet ([www.popplet.com](http://www.popplet.com))
- Stormboard ([www.stormboard.com](http://www.stormboard.com))
- Bubbl.us ([www.bubbl.us](http://www.bubbl.us))
- Spiderscribe ([www.spiderscribe.net](http://www.spiderscribe.net))
- Solvr ([www.a.freshbrain.com/solvr/](http://www.a.freshbrain.com/solvr/)).

### Popplet

Popplet is a free, online, easy to use, mind mapping tool. It lets you create a visual mind maps with ease, combining text, images, links and videos.

An introduction video clip about Popplet:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DU5q7ms4LfI&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DU5q7ms4LfI&feature=player_embedded)

A single unit of a Popplet project is called a popple. Each popple can contain text, a drawing or sketch, and a picture or video. Altering the size of a popple is only a matter of pinching the edges of the box together or spreading them apart. To connect thought boxes just tap the small circle that is next to each box.

### For more information please visit the following links:

- ✓ Video Tutorial: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8N6lbC\\_VCk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8N6lbC_VCk)
- ✓ How-to Tutorial with Screenshots: <http://www.cvisd.org/cms/lib/TX01001642/Centricity/Domain/23/PDF/popplet.pdf>
- ✓ Popplet Blog: <http://blog.popplet.com/>
- ✓ Popplet for text deconstruction: <http://brigidwheel.blogspot.ca/2012/12/popplet-for-text-deconstruction.html>
- ✓ Some creative ideas for using Popplet in the classroom <http://missnoor28.blogspot.ca/2011/12/some-creative-ideas-for-using-popplet.html>
- ✓ Playing with Popplet <http://playingwithedtech.wordpress.com/2012/02/26/playing-with-popplet/>



## Ideas of EAL activities suggested at two sessions of the webinar

Ways of using Popplet for EAL teaching/learning are endless! Everything depends on your learner's needs, CLB level and ... your imagination! Our participants brainstormed dozens of great ideas of how to use Popplet in EAL classes. Thank you! These are some of the suggestions on how to use Popplet to practice different language skills.

| Activity  | CLB level | Warm-up/icebreaker | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing | Vocabulary | Other                  |
|---|-----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|------------|------------------------|
| Name 5 things (5 countries you'd like to visit, 5 things you are afraid of, 5 favourite dishes) | 2-8       | ✓                  |           | ✓        |         |         | ✓          |                        |
| Collaborative storytelling  | 5-8       | ✓                  |           |          |         | ✓       |            |                        |
| Suggest safe small talk topics. Role play   | 4-8       |                    |           | ✓        |         |         | ✓          | Communication strategy |
| Hamburger paragraph writing   | 5-8       |                    |           |          |         | ✓       |            |                        |
| Brainstorm synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms   | 4-8       |                    |           |          |         |         | ✓          |                        |
| Match pictures with text paragraphs   | 2-6       |                    |           |          | ✓       |         |            |                        |
| Dictation   | 4-8       |                    | ✓         |          |         | ✓       | ✓          |                        |
| Describe a picture (answer questions what? Who? When? Where? Why?)                              | 2-8       | ✓                  |           | ✓        |         | ✓       | ✓          |                        |
| Watch a video and make notes in popples (while-listening activity)                              | 5-8       |                    | ✓         |          |         | ✓       |            | Note taking skill      |



## Popplet & EAL

Brainstorming and mind mapping are very useful activities that can be easily introduced into language classes. In addition, these activities are fun; students enjoy them, that is why they are well worth trying out in your own classes.

We can use brainstorming and mind mapping techniques:

- as a warm-up/icebreaking activity;
- as introduction to the topic (for activating learners' prior knowledge);
- to enrich learners' vocabulary;
- to scaffold reading/listening comprehension;
- to enhance speaking skills, introduce new communication strategies;
- for planning learners' writing activities and assignments.

**Thank you for your participation!**  
**See you online!**

**Margarita Berezyanskaya**

*e-Tutor Coordinator*

*English Online Inc.*

[www.myenglishonline.ca](http://www.myenglishonline.ca)

*E-mail: mberezyanskaya@myenglishonline.ca*

*Skype: margarita\_myenglishonline*

