

PICTURE EXERCISES FOR ORAL DRILL OF STRUCTURE PATTERNS

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Pictures have been used for purposes of instruction for several centuries. The first illustrated English herbal, an Anglo-Saxon translation of a Latin work, appeared between 1000 and 1050. It was one of a long succession of books containing drawings of plants described in the texts.¹ In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, manuscript copies of the Bestiaire of Philippe de Thaon exhibited crude sketches of the animals described.² In 1480 or 1481, the first edition of Caxton's Mirroure of the World, a popular encyclopedia, appeared with numerous woodcuts. Caxton refers to the figures to clarify what he means by a round earth, the equator, the influence of the stars, eclipses, etc.³

In 1658, John Amos Comenius prepared a picture textbook of history called Orbis Sensualium Pictus. This book contained numerous pictures each of which was to be used as the subject of a lesson. Items in the pictures were numbered, and the reading texts referred to the objects in the pictures by number. Thus, the meaning of each new word was readily apparent to the student.⁴

In the matter of language learning, pictures have been employed extensively in building vocabulary. An example of a visualized vocabulary can be found as early as the fifteenth century in England. In this Latin-English vocabulary, the

¹Described in John Lelamour Translation of Macer's Herbal, ed. by Alianore Whytlaw-Gray (Photostat copy of unpublished dissertation, University of Leeds), p. 3.

²Le Bestiaire de Philippe de Thaün, ed. by Emmanuel Walberg (Paris: H. Welter, 1900), pp. viii, ix.

³Caxton's Mirroure of the World, ed. by Oliver H. Prior (London: Early English Text Society, Extra Series 110).

⁴John Amos Comenius, Orbis Pictus, tr. by Charles Hoole (London: S. Lea-croft, 1777, 12th ed.).

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drawings appear around the margins of the pages and are labeled in Latin.⁵ No one will deny the practicability of pictures in helping connect new and unfamiliar terms with the ideas or concepts symbolized by these terms. Pictures help make concrete what might otherwise remain verbal abstraction for the student.

Still pictures, slides, and movies have all been used in language teaching as stimulators for conversation, discussion, and story-building and to introduce new material to the student. Much of the abundant literature now appearing in books and periodicals about audio-visual materials in language teaching deals with such uses. Several of the recent articles treating these uses are listed in the bibliography appended to this presentation.

Pictures make at least three important contributions to language teaching. Foremost among these contributions is that already cited. Pictures help us avoid verbalism in our teaching; they give reality to what we are explaining. Second, pictures help the teacher suggest contexts which are outside the classroom setting. Some contexts are very difficult to recreate in words alone, and, if the teacher does manage to recreate them, it is only with the loss of valuable time. The third advantage follows closely. Pictures help the teacher change contexts rapidly and easily. This is a most important advantage in language teaching in which we wish to give the student a variety of opportunities to use a given language pattern. A simple change of pictures provides the student with a new challenge to employ what he is learning.

We need meaningful contexts to make our language teaching and practice effective. The student's ability to choose and produce a pattern in any new situation depends upon the amount of generalizing he has been able to do about that pattern. If he has used the pattern only in formalized exercises and classroom situations, he may have difficulty in choosing and applying it in new and different situations. Our teaching and

⁵A Volume of Vocabularies, ed. by Thomas Wright (Privately printed, 1857), pp. 244-279.

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practice, to be really effective, must provide the student with numerous speech situations each of which makes him feel the need for the same given pattern. He must, in short, be made to search for the pattern.

All of us have probably found that for system and economy of presentation it is best to isolate patterns and work with items which pattern alike. The fact that we are centering the attention upon a particular pattern must not mean that we allow the pattern to become a floating piece of information which is not tied to the student's experience. Even at the very earliest levels of learning, the teacher must endeavor to engender the habits of language in the manner in which he expects the student to use them. Naturally, we wish our students to use their language habits in communication. Therefore, the practice of those habits should be, as far as possible, in situations of natural communication. The repeating of isolated patterns, however much it may do for the student's fluency in producing the patterns once they are started, can be thought of only as a first step. The student must be stimulated again and again to produce the structures and forms when faced repeatedly with new situations that elicit the patterns and forms as natural responses. Further, the whole utterance must be his and must come as his response to the stimulus.

Pictures can help us make our teaching realistic. They can help us present new and varied contexts which challenge the student to apply a given pattern, thus bringing it to its proper level of habituation. They assist the student in the process of fusing the patterns with the concepts symbolized by those patterns and of fusing the terms with the ideas back of the terms. They can force the use of specific vocabulary items in conjunction with given structural patterns. Pictures can help the teacher provide a sufficient number and variety of contexts and situations to build up generalized conceptions about the patterns taught and practiced. And, finally, they can be a means of stimulating response without the constant intervention of the teacher.

This last advantage is of great importance. While part of everyone's use of speech is in questions and answers, another part is in situations where the speaker simply wants to relate

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what he has seen, heard, or been told. It is difficult to provide practice in the second phase and still keep production controlled. Picture exercises can be used to stimulate this kind of practice, if the pictures are of the right kind. Pictures which call for a great deal of interpretation and inference-drawing can cause more trouble than they are worth, for picture reading, as Edgar Dale points out, is a complex process.⁶ Even when the picture is a representation of a familiar milieu, the reader may have difficulty interpreting it. How much more difficult a task it is for the person who is not familiar with the represented milieu. The teacher may find himself having to lead the student through the reading of certain kinds of pictures, which brings the teacher and the learner right back to the usual question-and-answer procedure.

For some time, the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan has been using a type of picture exercise which not only realizes many of the benefits to be gained from the use of pictures, but also avoids some of the difficulties in using them. For these exercises, we choose pictures which depict only one simple object or action. The student is called upon to identify the object or the very obvious action in each picture. The sequence or order of the pictures tells the story or stimulates the practice without the constant help of the teacher and without placing a burden of interpretation and inference-drawing upon the student.

Our picture materials used for this purpose fall into four classifications. First, we have picture charts measuring two by three feet which are used in the classroom. Smaller charts which may or may not be duplicates of the classroom charts are provided for student use in the Laboratory. Another group of small charts is used for testing purposes in the Laboratory. And, finally, small reproductions of the classroom charts are bound into booklets for home practice.⁷

⁶Edgar Dale, Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching (New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1949), pp. 232, 233.

⁷Some uses of these picture exercises have been described in an earlier publication. Maxine Buell, Oral Drill of Acceptable Usage (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Photographic Services, 1950), pp. 22-38.

Application has been filed for patent papers covering particular aspects of the exercises.

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The Classroom Charts

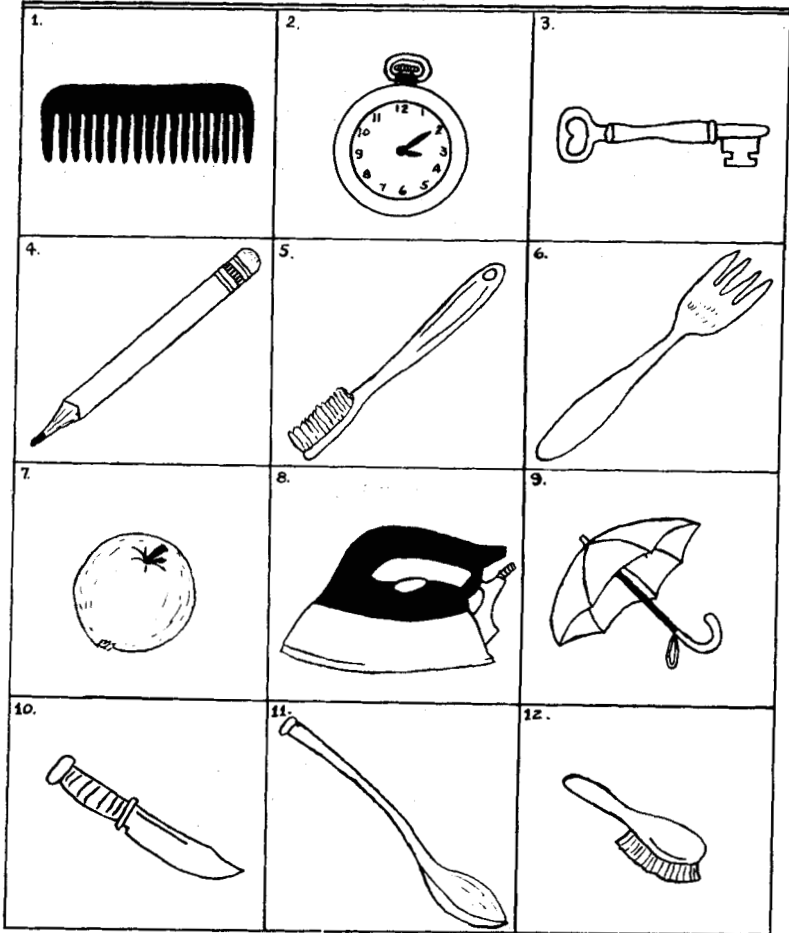
The large classroom charts are of three kinds. First, there is a type giving pictures of different objects. (See picture A) Here, the student is forced to identify only one object at a time. The teacher gives a practice sentence which uses the object shown in the first picture on the chart. The student repeats the example sentence until he can say it easily. As he proceeds to the next picture, he must insert the name of the new object in the appropriate place in the same pattern sentence. This simple use of pictures helps avoid one of the great dangers of the substitution exercise: the student does not simply repeat after the teacher, but is made responsible for identifying the objects on the chart and placing the corresponding terms in their appropriate place in the practice sentence or sentences.

Let us say for example that we wish to practice the question form "Does he have a _____?" The teacher might set up the following situation: "My brother received a present yesterday. He has something new now. There is a picture of it here. Ask me questions about what my brother has." The students then begin to ask, "Does he have a comb? Does he have a watch? Does he have a key? etc." Individual questioning can be preceded by unison practice for intonation and correct word order. The exercise can be turned into a game with one student choosing an object and the others trying to guess it.

It is true that the same kind of practice can be provided by using objects in the room. However, there is an advantage to using charts, if one does not have a suitable collection of objects to bring to the classroom. Through careful selection of the items pictured on the charts, the teacher can conduct systematic reviews of vocabulary areas.

Although this kind of drill seems simple, it may be just what is needed to afford that little extra challenge which keeps students on their toes. One advantage is that identification of the object becomes all-important and the student's attention is thus drawn from the point of the practice. Diverting the attention in this way can be most helpful when one is dealing with problems of reduction and intonation. We all know the occasional

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PICTURE "A"

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difficulty of maintaining natural intonation when the student is aware of the purpose of the practice. When, for example, we wish to have the student connect the use of his with he and her with she, we sometimes find him wanting to say, "He has his book" and "She has her book." While this is a possible pattern of intonation for the utterance, we might wish to drill "He has his book." Putting the attention on the object in question invariably draws the emphasis to that point in the utterance. This exercise can be made a little more complicated by naming the possessor, they, we, Mary, etc., while pointing at the objects to be possessed.

This chart can be used for other kinds of exercises. Some examples are:

- (a) You comb your hair with a comb.
You tell time with a watch.
You unlock a door with a key.
- (b) 1st student:
How do you write your homework?
2nd student:
With a pencil.
1st student:
How do you clean your teeth?
2nd student:
With a toothbrush.
- (c) They went to the drugstore for a comb. (or, ... to buy a comb.)
They went to the jewelry store for a watch.
They went to the hardware store for a key.
- (d) 1st student:
Why did they go to the drugstore?
2nd student:
They went for a toothbrush.
- (e) Teacher:
Lose.
Student:
He lost his comb.

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Teacher:

Find.

Student:

He found a watch.

Teacher:

Forget.

Student:

He forgot his key.

The second type of classroom chart is illustrated in pictures B and C. The emphasis here is again upon a single pattern for a complete exercise. That is, once a pattern is set up by the teacher, it continues until the student has gone completely through the chart. The difference here is that the student is asked to identify two things and place them appropriately in the utterance. For example, with chart B, we might practice the following kinds of sentences:

- (a) He went to the bank by bus.
He went to the dentist's by taxi.
He went to Chicago by plane.

- (b) Did he go to the bank by bus?

or, with only one object to identify:

- (c) 1st student:
How did he go to the bank?

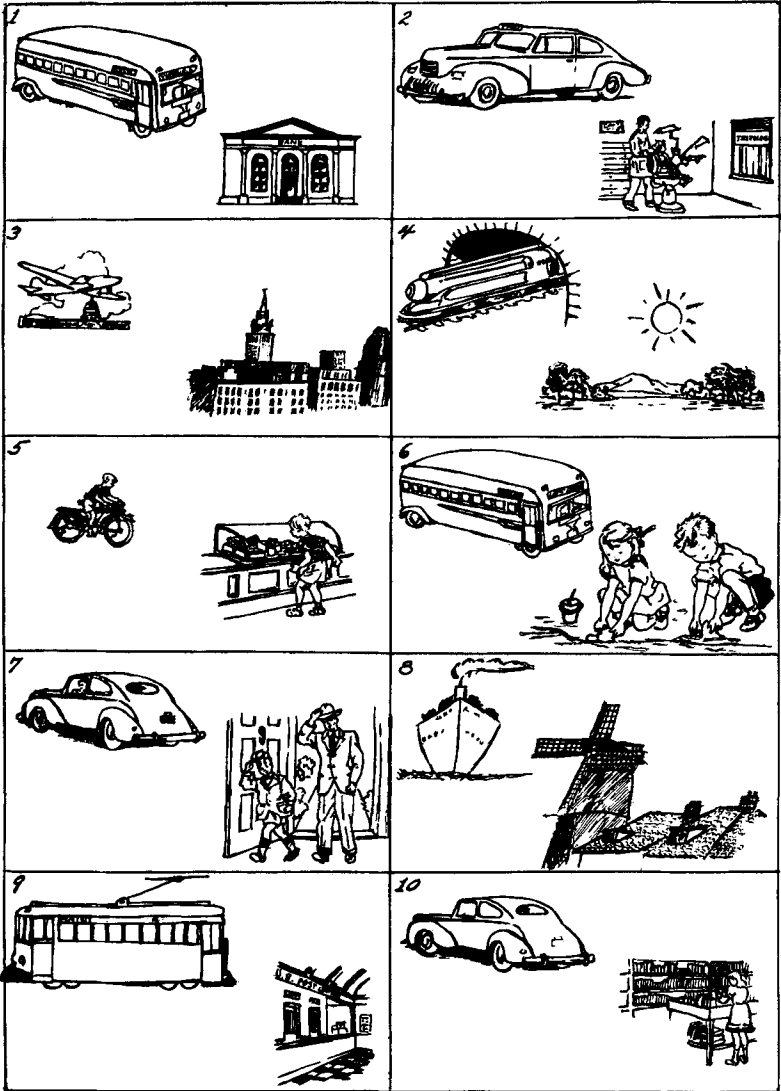
2nd student:
He went by bus.

- (d) 1st student:
Where did they go by bus?

2nd student:
He went to the bank.

Examples (c) and (d) are good starting practices, since the student is asked to identify only one thing at a time. It may be that a problem will arise in the use of the or to the in naming the destinations. Some may have trouble remembering "He went home" or "He went downtown" as opposed to "He went to the bank" or "He went to Chicago." In such a case, it is altogether worth while to begin with the simpler practice sentences.

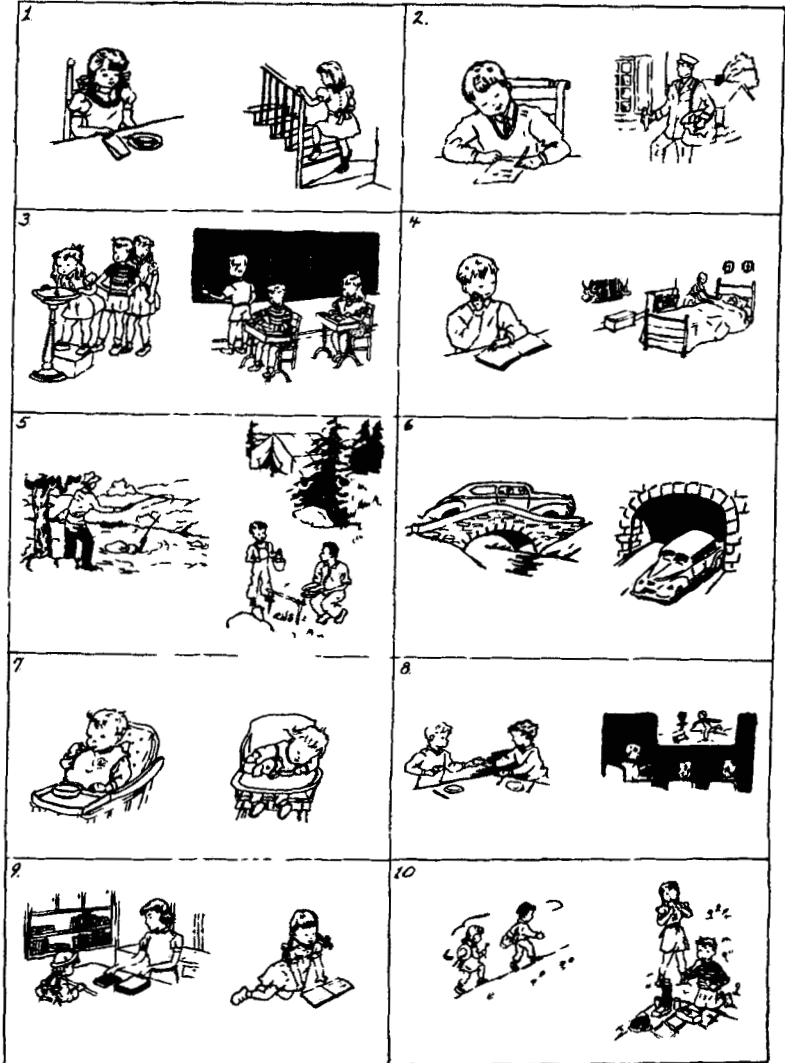
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Max Hammer

PICTURE "B"

PICTURE EXERCISES



Hazel Hammer
1949

PICTURE "C"

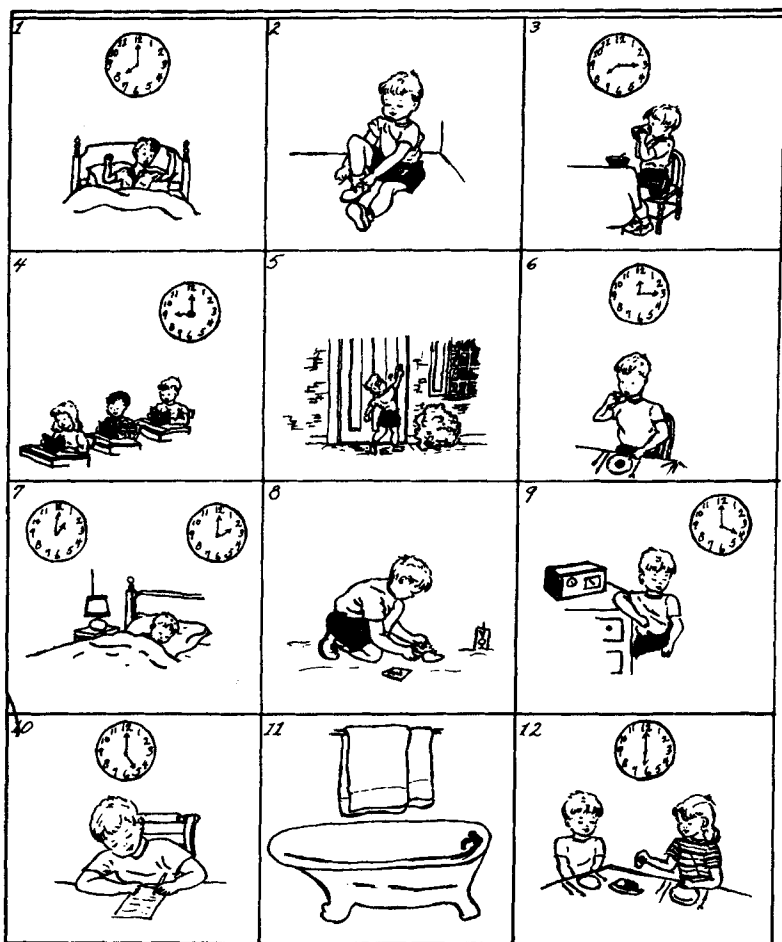
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Picture C shows a somewhat more complicated kind of picture exercise for drilling single patterns. Here the student is asked to identify two actions and the actors and apply verb forms or function words which will show the time relationship between the two actions. The students are not asked to determine the patterns from simply looking at the chart; the teacher sets the pattern which can then be continued by the individual or the group. The following are only a few of the exercises possible with this chart:

- (a) She went upstairs after she'd eaten.
The postman came after Joe'd written the letter.
- (b) She'd eaten before she went upstairs.
He'd written the letter before the postman came.
- (c) 1st student:
When did she go upstairs?
2nd student:
After she'd eaten.
- (d) 1st student:
What did she do before she went upstairs?
2nd student:
She ate.
- (e) 1st student:
Had she eaten before she went upstairs?
2nd student:
Yes, she had.

The third type of classroom chart tells a story which unfolds much as does the plot of a comic strip. As indicated in picture D, the story can be quite simple with only a suggestion of the actions given. The student is asked to tell the story using whatever verb forms are suggested to him by the situation set up by the teacher. While this chart was designed for the practice of irregular past forms of verbs, it works just as well for the practice of should, must, have to, the going to future, and the use of always, usually, everyday, etc., with the present forms of verbs. The chart can be used even for very elementary classes, if the teacher gives each step to be re-

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PICTURE "D"

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peated by the students. After they learn to tell each story on their own, they can be asked to tell what John is going to do tomorrow or what he did yesterday. Early mastery of these story charts facilitates the execution of more complicated exercises as the course proceeds.

As students become familiar with the basic structures in these stories, they enjoy building up the stories. They may begin by making more than one statement about each picture. For example, a typical story might begin:

John woke up at 8:00. He got out of bed. He found his clothes and began to dress. He put on his trousers, his sweater, etc. He left the bedroom and went to the dining room. He sat down at the table. He ate toast and eggs. He drank milk and fruit juice, etc.

This is a beneficial kind of practice, if the student relates his story naturally as his response to the sequence of pictures. Gradually suggestions for extra details can be made by the teacher after the basic story has become familiar.

These sequential charts are valuable in other types of drill. They can, for example, be used in drilling the use of before, after, and until in time clauses and phrases. Again it is possible to stimulate the drill without constant questioning on the part of the teacher. A few questions will serve to set the pattern, and then the students can begin constructing the story:

John dressed before he ate breakfast. He ate breakfast before he went to school. He came home before he ate lunch. He ate lunch before he took a nap, etc.

or:

He dressed after getting up. He ate breakfast after dressing. He went to school after eating breakfast. He remained at school until noon. He came home after school. He ate lunch before taking a nap, etc.

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Story charts are helpful in getting across the idea of yet, already, still, and any more. The teacher can begin by saying, "These were Paul's activities yesterday. You went to visit him at 3:00. Had he eaten lunch when you arrived? Had he eaten lunch yet?" After a few questions involving the choice of already or yet, the teacher has only to point back and forth to the pictures he wishes the student to refer to. In like manner, the teacher can introduce "He was still working at 3:00" or "He wasn't sleeping any more." The hour of the supposed visit can be changed or the whole situation transferred to the present. In changing to the present, one must be careful to set up a plausible situation.

The following is an example:

This is a proposed schedule that Paul made of his activities for today. He plans to do all of the things indicated here in the order that they are indicated. It is now 2:30. (The teacher can look at his watch to indicate that he is referring to the very time that the class is in session.) What is John doing now? Has he eaten lunch yet? Has he written any letters yet?

The story charts have proved especially useful in working with whether and if in clauses. A student begins to tell the story: "John wakes up at 8:00. He gets up immediately..." Then the teacher may ask, "Suppose he's still sleepy?" The student continues, "He gets up whether he's sleepy or not." The others soon get the idea and like to ask similar questions during the narrative. This is an unusually good exercise for practicing whether and if in the future: "He's going to get up whether he's sleepy or not. He's going to dress whether he goes to school or not. He's going to eat breakfast if he's hungry, etc."

Perhaps it sounds as if an endless number of classroom charts would be necessary. Actually, we have found that about ten charts are sufficient for our two-month course. Ideas for using the charts come constantly as one works with them. While it is frequently possible to provide a full hour of drill using only one chart, pictures, like any other teaching device,

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lose their effectiveness if they are used too extensively. When picture exercises are distributed wisely throughout the practice sessions, they continue to be strong sources of motivation. It might also seem that these charts would not be practicable for large classes. If the charts consist of bold drawings in black and white, they are perfectly all right for classes of twenty or thirty. It isn't necessary for the students to see every detail of a picture. Once a chart has been used, the students remember the suggested ideas without difficulty.

For larger classes, a single picture eight inches by ten inches or larger can be mounted on cardboard. The teacher uses these large pictures as flash cards. By representing vocabulary areas such as the bank, the post office, the barber shop, and the drugstore, the teacher can lead the students through a variety of sequences. When doing exercises that require the use of the complete sequence at once, the separate cards can be arranged along the chalk tray of the board or thumbtacked to a bulletin board.

Our classroom charts were drawn with black ink on regular sheets of typewriting paper. The small charts were then enlarged by a Photostat process. We mounted the enlargements on heavy poster board and bound them with masking tape. Sheets of Cellophane can be used to protect the surfaces, but Cellophane usually causes a glare. We use a plastic spray to protect the surfaces of our charts, and this makes them washable. While coloring is not necessary, we have found that colored charts command much more attention. In some patterns colors are necessary: "The brown shoes are older than the blue shoes" or "I have a green coat and she has a brown one."

It is of course possible to make serviceable charts by using large clear illustrations from magazines and children's books. While the writer has seen no drawback to using pictures of children in adult classes, it might be explained that pictures C, D, and E were taken from a book of exercises being prepared especially for children. Since the vocabulary areas involved must be appropriate for adults, pictures from children's books are not always suitable.

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Laboratory Materials

The charts used in our Laboratory classes are of the same three types as those used in the regular classes, except that they are smaller. Photostat copies of larger charts have been mounted in manila folders. One or more small plastic records are in the folders along with a sheet of instructions. These folders are to be used in the Laboratory or at home with a record player. The records give brief instructions about the use of the pictures and the use of the records. With reference to the first picture on a chart, the record gives the student a few examples followed by pauses in which the student repeats after the recorded voice. When the student has repeated the pattern sentence or sentences enough times to establish the word order and intonation, he is given instructions to continue the exercise. The voice on the record announces the number of the picture. There is a pause during which the student gives the modified pattern suggested by the picture. The correct version is then given on the record followed by a pause in which the student can repeat. The next number is announced and the process continues. Students may follow definite record assignments given them by their teachers or may choose for practice charts which have been especially troublesome in class.

Testing Materials

The testing materials almost always tell a story. The framework of the story and the vocabulary elicited are simple and familiar enough not to cause any trouble for the student. Somewhere in the sequence of the pictures are one or more items to be tested. The tests are based upon the fact that certain arrangements of pictures, once they have been practiced by the student, will almost always suggest the patterns that the student first associated with them. If, for example, the student has practiced a complete page of pictures depicting types of transportation and a choice of destinations, he will usually recognize the relationship when it appears in a sequence of arrangements. Experience has indicated that although he may have practiced a dozen or more patterns with a

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given arrangement of pictures, a student is not confused in his application of a basic structure in the test sequence. It is not a case of memorization; it is a case of association. Familiar groupings suggest familiar patterns.

The test chart shown in picture E was evolved to determine the student's application of patterns taught and practiced in three lessons of our course. The pictures were arranged to suggest the following possibilities from the three lessons:

The children went downtown by bus.

They went to a store to buy books. (or, ... for books.)

Mark selected a green one.

Jane selected a red one.

Mark's book was more expensive than Jane's.

They went to the zoo to see the animals.

The bear (or elephant) was larger than the tiger.

They went home by street car.

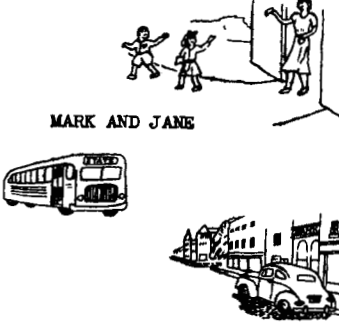
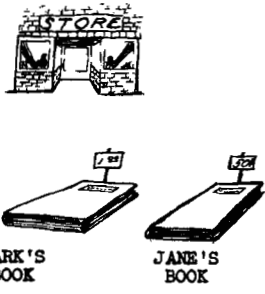
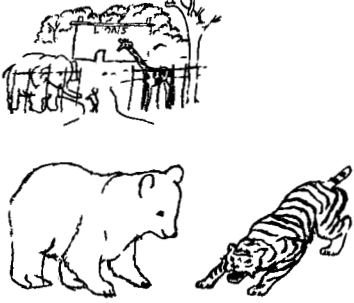



This chart was used to test forty-two people two weeks after the three lessons had been taught. Without any prompting, all the students saw the possibility of comparing the price of the books and the size of the animals. Thirty-eight of those tested used by with the means of transportation. At least two examples of to or in order to occurred in each student's story. The substitute word one appeared at least once in each of twenty-eight stories. This is a small indication of how production can be controlled for testing purposes.

Some test charts test only one item several times. Others examine a week's work. The framework of the test stories presents a constant review of earlier items and permits systematic check-ups. The student tells his stories on records which are given to his grammar teacher or his pattern practice teacher. By checking these records, the teacher soon learns what items need further attention.

Home Practice Materials

The English Language Institute is now preparing booklets of picture exercises for students to use at home. The home practice sheets present no new situations or new vocabulary. The student is given several opportunities to practice an

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<p>1</p>  <p>MARK AND JANE</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>MARK'S BOOK</p> <p>JANE'S BOOK</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 
<p>5</p> 	<p>6</p> 

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PICTURE "E"

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assigned exercise both in class and in the Laboratory before attempting it alone. Mimeographed sheets of instructions accompany the practice sheets. The home practice materials were reproduced by the Ozalid process which is considerably less expensive than the Photostat process.

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