

# To the Teacher

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Welcome to *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES*! The picture sequences that follow are designed primarily for beginning ESL students—children and adults—from kindergarten through university, in low-level or literacy classes. However, students with some literacy and familiarity with basic English sentence structure and the present, past, and future tenses can also benefit from this material.

The main purpose of *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* is to offer students opportunities to engage in language acquisition activities. The pictures provide the stimuli for listening and speaking, while texts created by either the teacher or students provide material for reading and writing. Complete original texts for forty of the sixty-six picture sequences in *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* can be found in *LIVE ACTION ENGLISH* by Elizabeth Romijn and Contee Seely (Hayward, Calif.: Alemany Press, 1979, 1989).

*ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* and *LIVE ACTION ENGLISH* are based on the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to language acquisition proposed by James J. Asher.\* According to Asher, a target language can best be acquired through listening, modeling, and demonstration. With *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES*, students first listen to English as it is modeled by the teacher, then demonstrate their understanding by responding with appropriate actions.

For example, with the picture sequence *Making Tea* (p. 15), students listen as the teacher begins, "You want some tea," then models the text and the actions, "Go to the kitchen," "Get the teapot," "Fill the pot with water," etc. After modeling the complete text and actions, the teacher asks the class (or an individual student) to demonstrate understanding by actively responding. If the students' actions don't correspond to the text, further modeling is necessary.

Beginning ESL students first introduced to English through TPR activities are ready for *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* as a natural extension of their language acquisition. The pictures aid students whose listening and speaking proficiencies exceed their reading ability. At the same time, the pictures provide visual contexts for "reading" exercises following the TPR lessons.

In the *Introduction* that follows, you will find some suggestions for using *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES*. How you use the picture sequences will depend on the size of your class, the level of your students, and your imagination. We encourage you to experiment and to create your own activities to accompany the pictures. And, if you come up with any new ideas for using the pictures, let us hear from you!

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\*James J. Asher, *Learning Another Language Through Actions* (Los Gatos, Calif.: Sky Oaks Productions, 1977).

# Introduction

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The picture sequences in *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* are divided into seven units: *AM-PM*, *Health and Safety*, *At Home*, *Going Out*, *Holidays and Leisure*, *At School*, and *Weather*. The units and the sequences within the units may be presented in any order, although some teachers may prefer to present an entire unit to match a particular curriculum. The picture sequences are presented without text on reproducible tear-out pages to allow maximum flexibility in lesson planning.

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## UNIT ORGANIZATION

## MODEL LESSONS, EXERCISE SHEETS

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Each unit is introduced by a model lesson with a duplicatable exercise sheet. The purpose of the model lesson is to give you an idea of the kind of activity that can follow a particular picture sequence presentation. Additional activity suggestions accompany each model lesson. Other suggestions for extension activities appear later on in this introduction (pp. viii-x).

Each model lesson contains the text for that lesson and verb lists for the remaining picture sequences in the unit. The verb lists are intended to help you create your own texts. (You may also wish to consult *LIVE ACTION ENGLISH* by Elizabeth Romijn and Contee Seely [Hayward, Calif.: Alemany Press, 1979, 1989], for the original texts on which most of the picture sequences are based.)

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## PROCEDURE

## THE TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE APPROACH

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However you choose to use *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES*, we recommend that you begin with a Total Physical Response (TPR) lesson to familiarize students with both the context and vocabulary of each picture sequence.

The following procedure lists the steps in a TPR presentation leading to the introduction of a picture sequence. The same steps may be used with all of the sequences.

1. **Preparation.** Select a picture sequence and gather together all the props you'll need. You probably won't have enough props for everyone in the class, but you should have enough to demonstrate the actions. You might also want to choose a student helper to assist you in the demonstration.
2. **Creating the text.** Look at the pictures and decide what vocabulary (verbs and nouns) you'll need to prepare your text. (The model lesson texts and the verb lists will help you.)

3. **Presenting the vocabulary.** Isolate any new or difficult vocabulary in your text and introduce it through a mini-TPR lesson. For example, in the picture sequence *A Dental Appointment* (p. 27) you might introduce and model *waiting, press, hurt, examine, clench*, and other verbs. Use TPR and/or pictures (drawings, photos) to introduce nouns (*toothache, examining room, filling*) as well.
4. **Presenting the text.** With or without your student helper, present the text and model the actions while students listen and watch. You may want to repeat some of the actions to ensure comprehension.
5. **Repetition.** Ask the entire class to demonstrate the actions as you present the text. Look for full class participation—listening and doing, *without speaking*. The object here is for students to grasp the language by physically responding to the text. Repeat some of the text out of sequence to check comprehension and/or combine some of the commands in unexpected ways for variety. The number of repetitions will depend on the level of your class. Beginning students may want to repeat your words as they perform the actions. Such repetition is all right as long as it doesn't interfere with actual comprehension.
6. **Presenting the pictures.** Using your copy of a picture sequence, “read” through a complete sequence first while students listen. Then, ask students to repeat after you in a second “reading.” Allow time for students to go over the sequence and to ask questions. Give students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding by having them point to specific items in a picture or to a particular picture in the sequence. Distribute student copies of the picture sequence. If students can write, have them fill in the text in the spaces provided. Or make writing a separate follow-up activity in which you provide a printed text for students to copy.
7. **Practice.** Once students are able to respond to the pictures, ask them as a group to direct you, using the pictures as their guide. Then, ask for volunteers for the rest of the class to direct. Encourage the use of new text commands and combinations.

When you feel that students are ready to work more independently, group them in pairs or in threes and fours according to ability. Give each pair or group a picture page and ask each pair or group member to direct the action of the other(s). Circulate and check for individual and common problems that might serve as the basis for follow-up lessons. Be on the lookout also for good student pairs to demonstrate in front of the rest of the class.

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#### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES    VARIETY AND FLEXIBILITY

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The following suggested activities can be used with any of the picture sequences and with beginning, intermediate, or advanced students. For our purposes, a “beginner” is a preliterate, new learner of Eng-

lish. An “intermediate” student has some literacy and familiarity with the simple present, continuous, and past tenses. An “advanced” student is literate, familiar with the future and present perfect tenses, and possesses sufficient vocabulary and experience to allow for in-class discussion.

#### Verb Forms and Tenses

Once students are familiar with the pictures and vocabulary through the TPR exercises, try having them describe the pictures in sequence using the statement form and the present continuous tense. (**Example:** “He’s washing his hands,” “He’s drying them on a towel,” etc.) Next time through, try a new tense (past or future). Ask lower level students questions such as “What’s he doing?” and require an answer in the same tense: “He’s *V + ing*.” Have more advanced students ask other questions in a chain drill. (*Student 1 to Student 2:* “What’s he doing?” *Student 2:* “He’s getting the teapot.”) Or isolate (or cut apart) the pictures and ask students what happened *before* and *after* each picture. Such an exercise focuses on predictive skills as well as tenses and usually calls forth imaginative responses.

#### Questions

Asking Yes/No and Why questions about any of the pictures can aid comprehension and question-answer formation. Have students, working in pairs or small groups, ask or write appropriate questions about individual pictures or an entire sequence. Questions can focus on vocabulary (**Example:** “What’s he holding?”) or speculation (**Example:** “Why does he look sad?”). Or create a game in which teams compete to correctly answer five or more questions you have written about a picture.

#### Describe a Picture

Select one picture in a sequence and focus on a single aspect of the scene for vocabulary development. For example, if there is a person in the picture, have students identify parts of the body, articles of clothing, and facial expression. Or select several pictures from different sequences, then describe (or have a student describe) one of the pictures and ask the rest of the class to identify it.

#### Tell a Story

Again using one picture, ask students to tell a story about it. If your students can write, make this a written exercise. Have students read aloud or dictate their stories while you write them down or put them on the board (as in the Language Experience Approach to reading). Tell students to title their stories and name their characters.

#### Cutting and Pasting

All of the sequences can be cut up, rearranged, and pasted on paper to create new sequences for picture stories. Cut up and mix the pictures of one sequence, then ask students to rearrange and number the

pictures in correct order. If different pictures are used together, have students create new texts and write them under each picture. Your younger students can color the pictures.

There are many other ways in which *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* can be used, either in sequence or individually, with the entire class or with pairs and small groups. You will find additional activity suggestions and sample duplicatable exercise sheets at the beginning of each unit.

## How to Make Transparencies

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In working with *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES*, you may want to use an overhead projector (OHP) and transparencies. (If your program doesn't have an OHP, start working on ways to squeeze one into the budget. You'll never regret it.) Projection onto a screen works best; however, if you don't have a screen, any flat light-colored wall surface will do.

One advantage of using an OHP is that the entire class can focus on the same material at the same time. Once the material is on a transparency, it can be written on, cut apart, rearranged, isolated for discussion, and many other things. Confusion, often experienced by beginning students, about what to do with a worksheet is eliminated. You can control the pace and accuracy of your students' work and reinforce learning with minimal distraction.

Making a transparency is actually quite simple. Most photocopy machines can make transparencies from originals such as the picture sequences in this book. Check the operating instructions for your particular photocopier. Usually, all you need is a sharp original to copy from and a clear plastic transparency (available from your supplier). First, load the transparency in the paper tray; then, photocopy the original onto it as you would onto a regular sheet of paper. If you don't have access to a photocopier, you can have a transparency made for about a dollar at most commercial fast photocopy outlets. (You will also probably want to buy a supply of transparency pens, available in permanent and washable ink in many colors.)

Transparencies have numerous uses. You can use them to create new stories from other graphic sources. Just cut out the parts you want, put them into some of the *ACTION ENGLISH PICTURES* sequences you have used, add characters, objects, or activities, and you have a new picture sequence. Have students, individually or in groups, write a story or text for the new sequence on a transparency. Then, project the text and ask the student(s) to read the story aloud while the rest of the class follows along. Or have students create dialogs to accompany pictures you have cut from a sequence. With one picture to guide you, help your students write short dialogs with a bus driver, a post office clerk, a receptionist in a medical office, or with any of the other characters featured.

The material you create can be used again and again. With transparencies, you won't ever have to turn your back to your students!