

Introduction and rationale

Take 10 for English enables young learners of English to develop their language skills whilst having fun and keeping fit.

The resources are suitable for young learners of English wherever they may be: in mainstream elementary schools abroad or in language schools that teach English as a foreign language (EFL). The resources are also suitable for learners in English-speaking countries who have English as an additional language (EAL).

Take 10 for English joins the family of **Take 10 Languages** resources being used in thousands of schools in the UK and beyond to help young learners improve their skills in French, Spanish and German by combining their foreign language learning with daily physical activity and having a lot of fun.

Through a variety of fun physical activities including action songs, skipping rhymes and dance, children listen to native speakers, follow instructions and join in with the actions and the words. The activities are designed as short, 10-minute challenges that can be dropped in to any part of the school day, not just used in formal language lessons. The Take 10 Languages resources were developed by expert teachers in the South West of England in response to two major educational priorities in the UK:

- **The introduction of foreign languages in the primary school curriculum;**
- **The need to increase levels of activity and fitness in young people.**

These priorities are reflected all over the world as the value is recognised of learning English from an early age as well as the need to combat worrying levels of inactivity and obesity that threaten our children's health as well as their ability to perform well at school.

As they use the Take 10 for English resources, children will not only improve their English, keep fit and have lots of fun, they will also learn a lot about the traditional culture of Britain and the daily life of its children.

Take 10 for English is NOT a language course. Rather it provides a number of fun activities that teachers can dip into according to their needs and the needs of their children. The activities are NOT sequential. Teachers should simply choose which ones to use and when to use them according to the topics in their main taught syllabus.

Why combine language learning with daily physical activity?

It is well known that daily physical activity (DPA) improves a child's ability to learn by oxygenating the brain. There is much research to show that active children perform better at school and also have a more positive attitude to learning.

The activities in TAKE 10 for English require children to make a **physical (kinaesthetic) response** to a **linguistic prompt** (a set of spoken instructions to follow, a song or a rhyme). This energises connections between the left half of the brain, largely responsible for language development, and the right half, largely responsible for spatial manipulation. As the two halves connect, thousands of electrical signals are fired between the two halves of the brain, stimulating the **whole brain** to perform better and helping children to learn more effectively.



Linguistic prompt + **physical response** = FITTER FOR LEARNING

How does Take 10 improve learners' language skills?

The Take 10 resources are designed mainly to improve children's **listening** and **speaking** skills in a foreign language. The activities will also improve learners' ability to **memorise** spoken language.

LISTENING

Listening is perhaps the most important language skill. It is certainly the first skill we develop when we learn our own first language (L1). We need also to give priority to listening in the early stages of learning a foreign language (L2).

There are two main reasons for listening:

- We listen to **how** people speak, so that we can copy them and learn to **speak** ourselves;
- We listen to **what** people say in order to understand their **meaning**.

When learning our first language we focus initially on how people speak. From the moment of our birth our brain is bombarded with sounds. It understands no words, but is very sensitive to the intonation and individual sounds of the main language that surrounds it. So much so that after only six weeks of life our brain has already been configured to what will be our first language.

As an infant it is a long time before we understand what words mean. Our first clues to meaning still relate to **how** rather than what is being said. We soon learn to recognise a kind voice from an angry voice, our mother's voice from that of a stranger. We need to use our **eyes** to help us to understand what is being said; initially reading messages from the facial expressions and gestures of the people speaking to us. These are known as paralinguistic clues.

When we begin to learn a foreign language, we need to learn to use paralinguistic clues to help us understand what is being said. We need to “listen with our eyes”. As those who have tried it will know, it is much easier to hold a face-to-face conversation with someone in a foreign language than to speak to them on the phone. Good language teachers therefore provide many visual clues, such as pictures, mime, gesture and facial expression to help their students to understand spoken language. Students then interpret these to infer the meaning of words.

Take 10 for English makes extensive use of **video** resources. These allow learners to listen to authentic English being spoken or sung and also to **work out meaning** from what they **see** as well as what they **hear**. For example, they can watch English children perform a dance, hear the instructions called aloud and even see these as subtitles on the screen. As they learn the dance themselves and become familiar with the language of the instructions, they will become less reliant on their eyes and more reliant on understanding the spoken language: they become better listeners.

SPEAKING

In order to become a good speaker of a language, it is important first to be a good listener. The more often we hear new language modelled accurately by someone else, the better we become ourselves at speaking it well.

When we learn our first language, most of us do not attempt to speak words for at least 12 months. Our first words are usually inaccurate. The only people who understand them are our parents and those closest to us. It takes years to develop accurate intonation, pronunciation and fluency. We often learn to say things we don't necessarily understand; for example we learn to perform

traditional rhymes and songs. The words of these are often quite obscure, even complete nonsense! The Take 10 resources enable learners to follow some of these processes as they develop their foreign language skills. There are many opportunities for learners to **listen**, **watch** and **copy** the **language** they hear.

Important principles of the Take 10 strategy are that learners should:

- have sufficient opportunities to match what they hear with what they see;
- only join in when they feel ready to do so;
- not need to understand all the language they hear and speak/sing.

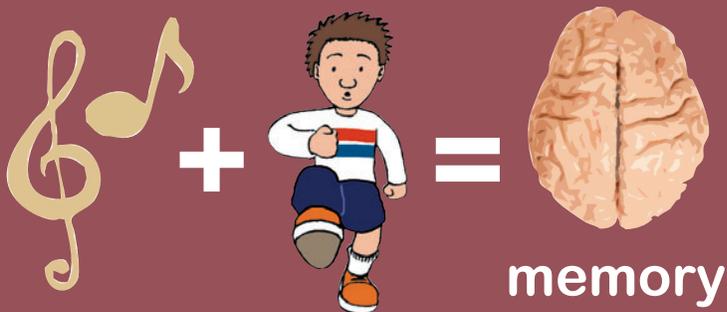
If this model is followed, then Take 10 for English will help young learners to be better speakers of English by developing accurate **pronunciation**, **intonation** and **fluency**.

MEMORISATION

Memorisation is an important skill for foreign language learners. We need to remember what individual words sound like and what they mean. We need then to learn to commit longer chunks of language to memory, to speak in phrases and sentences. These are skills we develop in our first language long before we learn anything about spelling or grammar.

We all learn in different ways and we each develop different strategies to help us to remember what we have learnt. These strategies are known as **mnemonics**. When learning our first language, many of us will have used powerful mnemonics such as **rhymes**, **rhythm** and **song** to commit language to memory. They are equally effective mnemonics when learning a foreign language.

The Take 10 resources make extensive use of rhyme, rhythm and song to help learners to remember language accurately. They also make use of another powerful mnemonic: **movement**. Learning a coordinated series of actions also supports memory function. When **actions** are linked to **words** we can further improve what our brain is able to remember.



Why is physical activity important?

Many studies have shown that children who lead active lifestyles and are physically fit perform better in their academic learning and have a better attitude to school. This has led many primary schools in the UK to adopt programmes of **daily physical activity (DPA)**. As well as sport lessons children are encouraged to take part in other physical activities both in other lessons and in periods of recreation.

DPA can involve high energy activities such as skipping, running and chasing games, aerobic routines and dance or less energetic activities such as hand-clapping routines (like “A Sailor went to Sea”), activities for small spaces (like “Sitting Sports”) and coordination exercises (like “Write in the Air”).

Physical exercise helps to **keep the brain healthy** by increasing its supply of **oxygen**. Learning a coordinated series of movements produces proteins called neurotrophins. These stimulate the growth of nerve cells and promote a greater number of connections between neurons in the brain.

Why is fun important?

Fun and enjoyment are an important part of the success of the Take 10 resources. A Chinese proverb claims that students who laugh and smile in a lesson better remember what they have learned. When children are having fun, their anxiety is reduced and they are more willing to take risks. This improves the potential for them to learn successfully.

Intercultural understanding

As well as developing children's English language skills, Take 10 for English aims to help them learn about some aspects of the traditional British culture and the everyday lives of children in the United Kingdom.

The UK is a multi-cultural, multi-faith and multi-lingual nation. Whilst English is the official language, spoken by 95% of the population, there are other native languages, including Welsh, Scots, Irish and Cornish and many more immigrant languages. In some London schools there can be more than 50 different languages spoken by the pupils.

To represent the full range of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of the UK is not possible within the scope of Take 10 for English. Instead we have tried to show some aspects of culture that would be familiar to most young people growing up in Britain. These include traditional songs, rhymes and playground games. We have filmed the activities in a variety of schools across the country; large and small, urban and rural. We have also used different places in the schools; classrooms, playgrounds, sports halls, music rooms. We hope that this will provide additional interest for learners who have never been to the UK and may wish to reflect on the similarities and the differences between Britain and the countries with which they are more familiar.

This is also the aim of the **Photo Gallery** section at the end of the book. We hope that teachers will be able to use these pictures to stimulate extra interest and curiosity in the UK and the people who live there and speak English.

Making the most of Take 10 for English

The TAKE 10 for English resource pack contains the following components:

Booklet

Notes for Teachers

16 Action Songs with illustrated lyrics

14 Fun Physical Activities with instructions and texts

Notes to support the Photo Gallery disk

Action Songs DVD

Video clips of the 16 Action Songs each demonstrated twice by:

- professional dancers
- groups of children

Optional subtitles for each video clip

Action Songs CD

Audio recordings of the 16 action songs in two formats:

- full sung version
- karaoke version

Audio recordings of the music for the 2 traditional dances

Fun Physical Activities and Dance DVD

Video clips of the 14 physical activities comprising:

- 6 instruction activities
- 3 skipping rhymes
- 1 clapping rhyme
- 1 choosing rhyme
- 1 playground game
- 2 traditional dances

Optional subtitles for each video clip

Photo Gallery CD

Collections of photos in 13 themed folders and two formats:

- for display as a digital slideshow
- in PDF format for printing and use as flashcards

Each photo has two versions:

- without text
- with key vocabulary

Using the Action Songs

The action songs are a very popular part of the Take 10 Languages materials. They are easy for the teacher to use and allow the children to listen and respond to authentic British voices in a stress-free context. As well as providing opportunities to listen to English and to get some physical exercise, the songs also enable the children to explore aspects of British culture.

All except one of the action songs are traditional and most are well known to young people growing up in Britain. They have been carefully chosen to present a range of musical styles and different vocabulary sets. The choreography for the songs also varies between high energy and lower energy routines. Songs have been chosen to represent different parts of the British Isles.

Each song is presented in **four formats**:

- a video clip demonstration by professional dancers;
- a video clip demonstration by a group of children;
- an audio recording, full sung version;
- an audio recording, karaoke version.

The song lyrics are produced in this booklet. These are supported by brief contextual notes and illustrations.

The multiple formats for the action songs enable them to be used in a variety of ways to suit the needs of the learners. We would encourage the songs to be used flexibly, but suggest the following possible learning sequence when presenting, practising and performing a song:

1. Begin by watching and listening to the **video clip** of the song without subtitles.
2. Show the video clip again and encourage the pupils just to **join in with the physical actions**. Do not try to copy the whole song at once. Use the pause facility to break the song into smaller chunks. At this stage the children are mainly listening with their **eyes**.
3. Practise watching, listening and copying the physical actions as many times as you like. The children are already beginning to learn the language of the song. The more often they hear it and perform the actions, the more confident they will feel to **begin to join in** by singing along. They are now using their **ears** more than their eyes to listen.
4. Encourage the children to **join in, singing** parts or all of the song when they feel confident to do so. You may like to use the **subtitles** on the video to help the children learn the words.
5. As the children become more confident with the actions and with the words, encourage them not to look at the screen. This will help them begin to commit both the words and the movements to **memory**.
6. Begin to use the **audio recording** of the song, removing the visual support of the movements and the subtitles. You may decide not to use the physical movements at all while you concentrate on learning and singing along to the CD.

7. Once the children are able to sing along to the voices on the audio CD, you may want to challenge them further to see if they can use the **karaoke** version and sing on their own.
8. The ultimate challenge might be to see if the children **can sing alone** using the **karaoke** track **AND perform the movements from memory**. If they are able to do this, they will be demonstrating the maximum benefits of using the Take 10 action songs:
 - using English that is accurately pronounced and fluent;
 - keeping fit with physical exercise and;
 - providing their brains with oxygen and stimulation.

Using the Fun Physical Activities & Dance

The Fun Physical Activities & Dance section contains a wide variety of different activities. In order to use them effectively, teachers should follow the same principles as detailed above with the Action Songs by:

- First watching the activities on the video clips, using a combination of **eyes** and **ears** to understand both how the activity works and to become familiar with the language they will be expected to understand (if following instructions as in “Circle Chase”) or use for themselves (if reciting a rhyme as in “A Sailor Went to Sea”).

- Use the video clips as many times as is needed to memorise the language needed. Use the subtitles as you think suits the children. Remember that some children are visual learners and really find it helpful to see the subtitles. Others are more auditory learners and may not need them.
- When the class is ready, try the chosen activity without the support of the video.

Using the Photo Gallery

The Photo Gallery provides themed collections of photographs featuring aspects of everyday life in the United Kingdom. They are intended to provide a stimulus for children to discuss similarities and differences between what they see on the pictures and what they know about where they live themselves.

Teachers can choose whether to show the photos as a digital slide show or to print them from the PDF files and show them as flashcards. These can also be used for classroom displays or as a stimulus for writing. Two versions are provided of each picture, one with key vocabulary and one without.