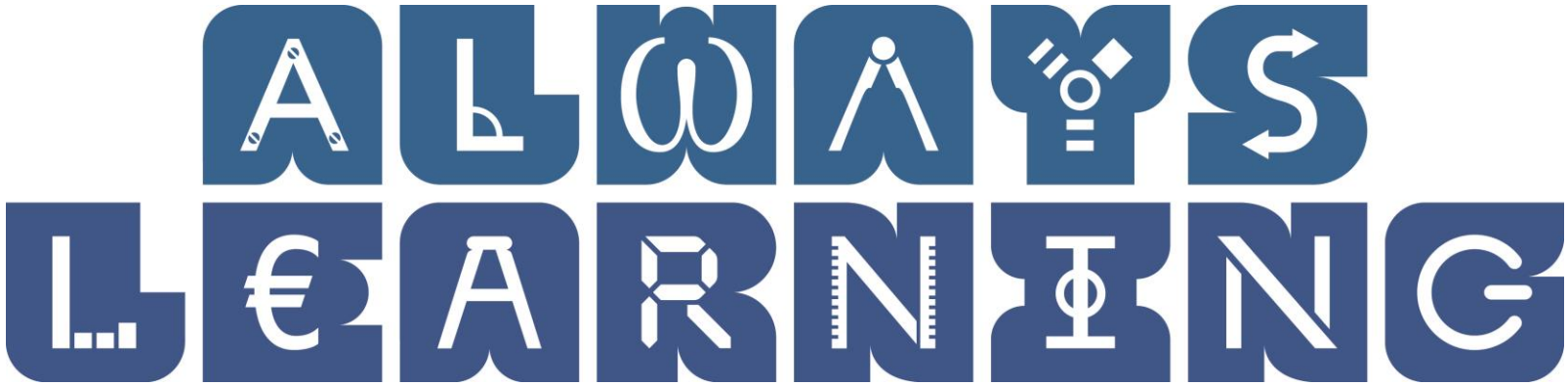

ALWAYS
LEARNING

Be Surprised!

Coping with the unexpected

Rob Dean

Wallpaper77.com

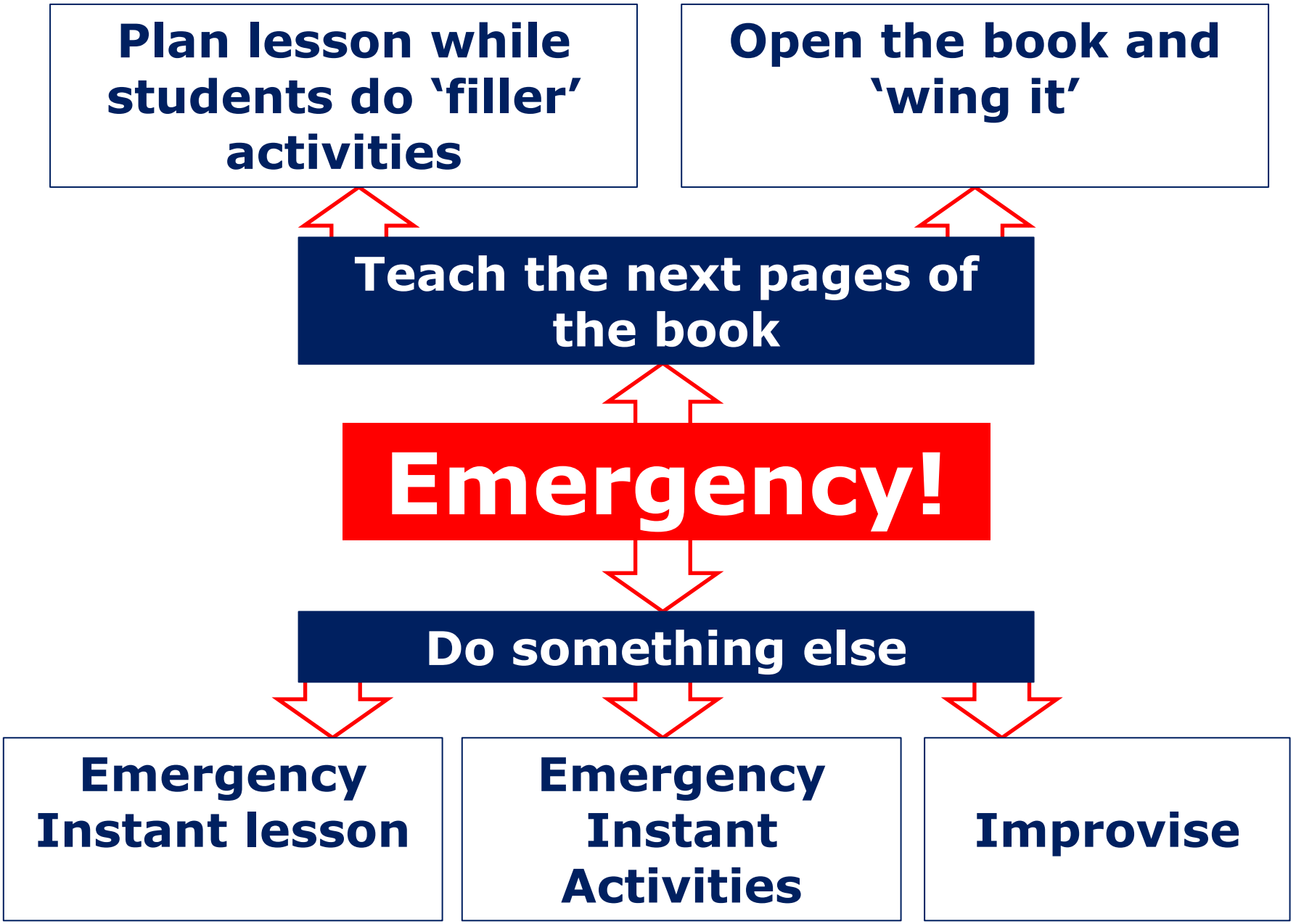
Be surprised!
Coping with the unexpected…

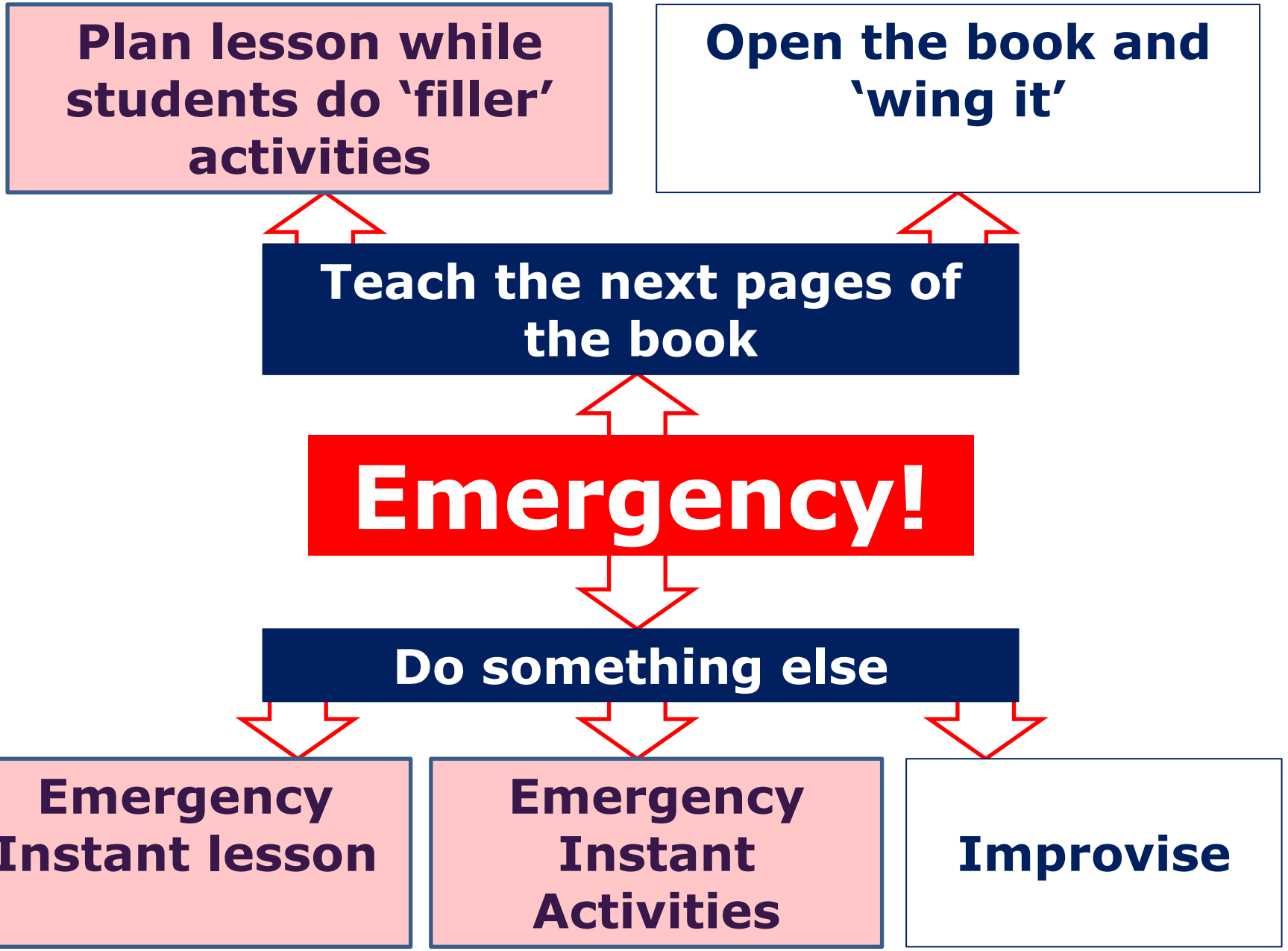
How many times do you walk into your classroom and find that things don't go exactly as you had anticipated? Maybe you have forgotten to plan the lesson (yes, it does happen…), the technology you have planned to use doesn't work, you end up with two students instead of twenty, your tandem teacher has already taught the lesson you had planned to do or you have to step in for a colleague at the last minute with absolutely no time to prepare anything… This session will demonstrate a number of ways in which thinking on your feet can lead to memorable, fun and effective outcomes for what at first might seem like nightmare scenarios.

Agenda

The background bit:
General principles for coping

The practical bit:
Some easy to use lesson and activity ideas designed for emergencies


Plan lesson while students do 'filler' activities
Open the book and 'wing it'
Teach the next pages of the book
Emergency!
Do something else
Emergency Instant lesson
Emergency Instant Activities
Improvise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Student-Centred Filler Activities

1

Running dictation

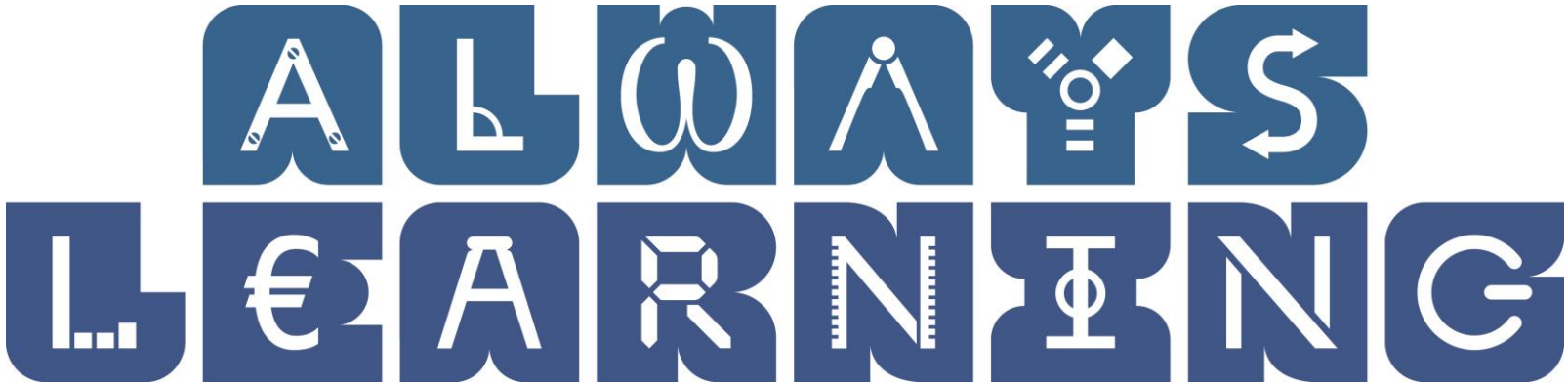
Use:

Integrated skills and language practice

Variations:

Works with any recently used coursebook text

Vary the roles – swap runners part way through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Total Recall

Use:

Vocab revision
Practice of relative clauses / defining

Variations:

Mime / draw instead of describe

Prepare definitions individually or in pairs

Student A

Student B

Coursebook Picture Quiz

Use:

Question form practice

Variations:

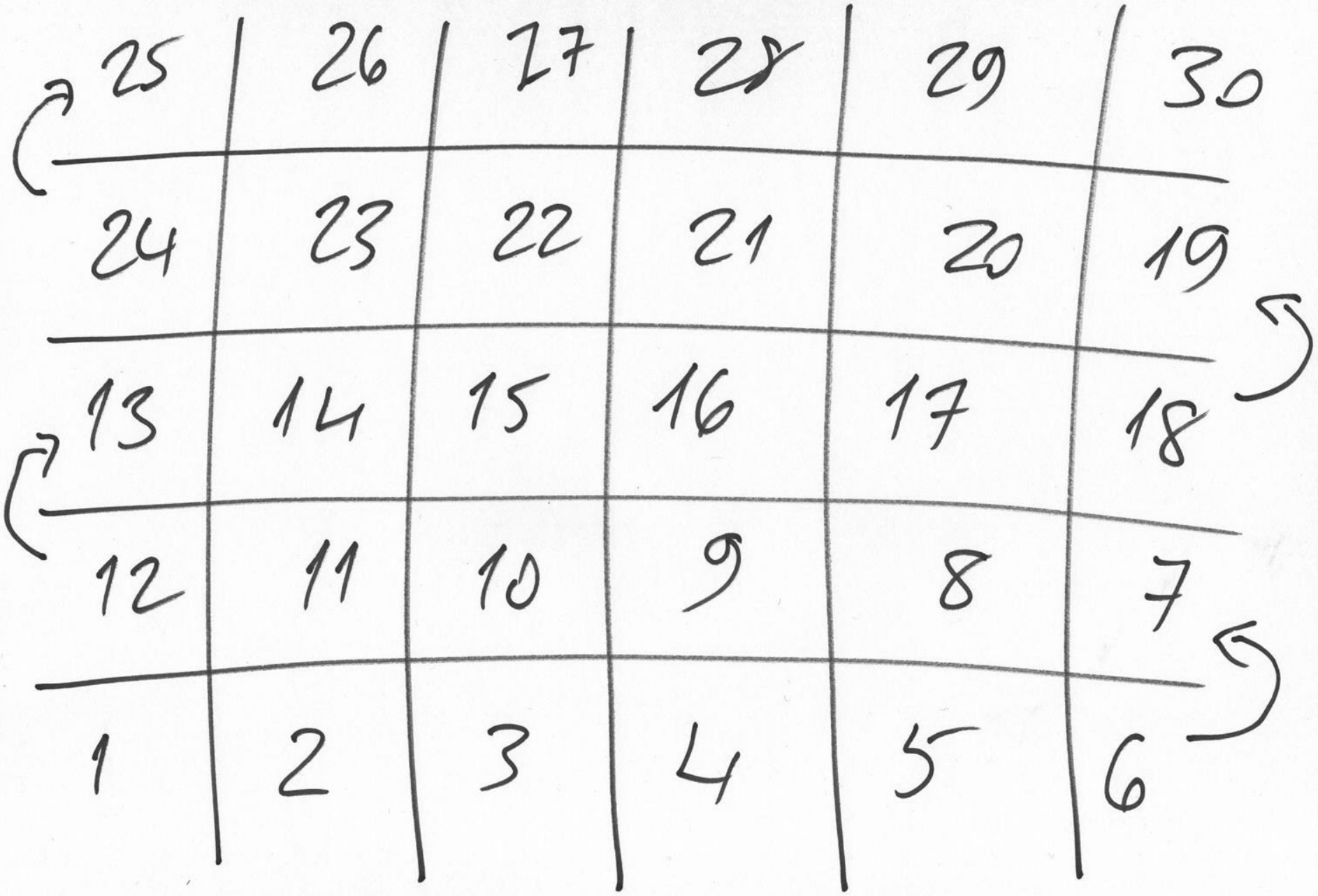
Use pictures from other sources: e.g. magazines

Oral or written answers

Individual or group / pairwork

IRREGULAR VERBS

Infinitive	2nd form (Past Simple)	3rd (Past Participle)
be	was/were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burn	burned/burnt	burned/burnt
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
dig	dug	dug
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed/dreamt	dreamed/dreamt
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
...	...	...
...	...	...
...	...	...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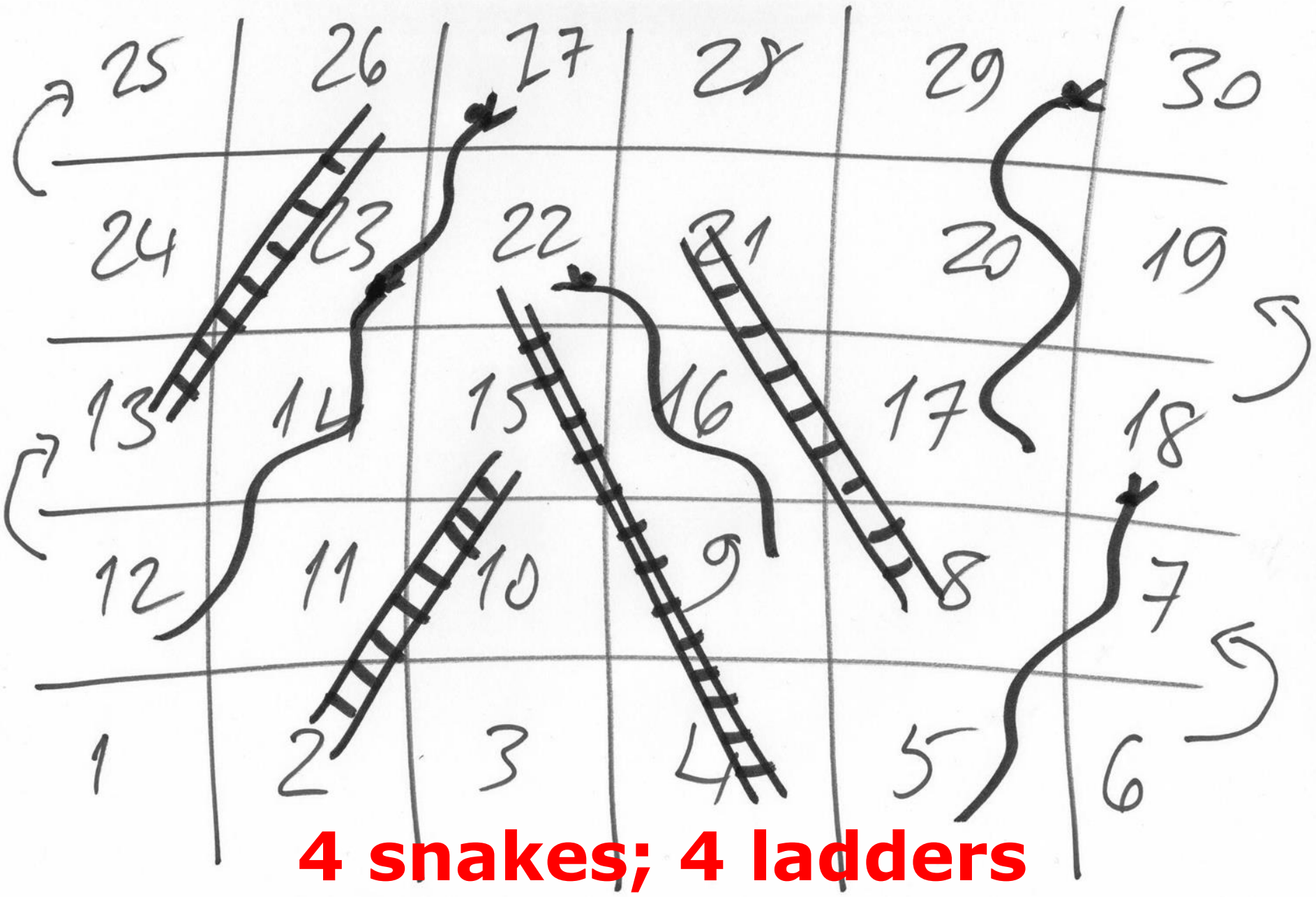
24 23 22 21 20 19
13 14 15 16 17 18
12 11 10 9 8 7
1 2 3 4 5 6



4 snakes; 4 ladders

DIY Board Games

Use:

Revision / Practice of any language or general knowledge

Variations:

Students write general knowledge questions for each other or use wordlist / irregular verb table etc from back of book

Competitors play individually or as pairs

Emergency Instant Activities (20 mins+)

2

Three true statements

I've been to Russia 17 times

I've lived in 6 different countries

I've been bitten by a snake

Use:

Revision / Practice of any language – tenses, etc

Variations:

Post activity memory quiz: "Who…?"

Not find someone who…

Dictogloss

Dictogloss is a technique that is used to practise grammatical structures, in which students form small groups and summarize a target language text. First, the teacher reads the text to the students several times at normal speed while they take notes. Students then work in small groups to reconstruct the text using the correct grammatical structures. Dictogloss activities have several advantages. They integrate the four language skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. They also give students opportunities to talk about both content and the language itself..

Dictogloss

Use:

Integrated skills / language practice

Variations:

Works well with recently used coursebook texts

A Biography

- What's the person's name?
- When and where were they born?
- What did they study at university?
- What was their first job?
- What three adjectives best describe their personality?
- What was their greatest achievement in life?
- How, when and where did they die?

Circle Writing

Use:

Integrated skills / language practice

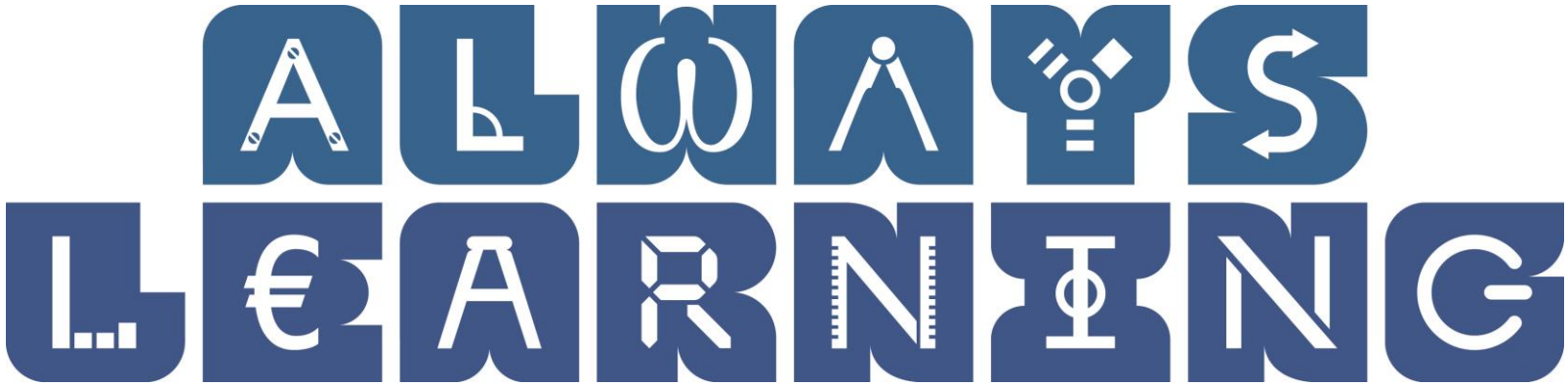
Variations:

Elicit elements of content from the students

Use for different kinds of writing: e.g. stories, descriptions, etc

Emergency Instant Activities (5-10 minute fillers)

3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Reduce a sentence

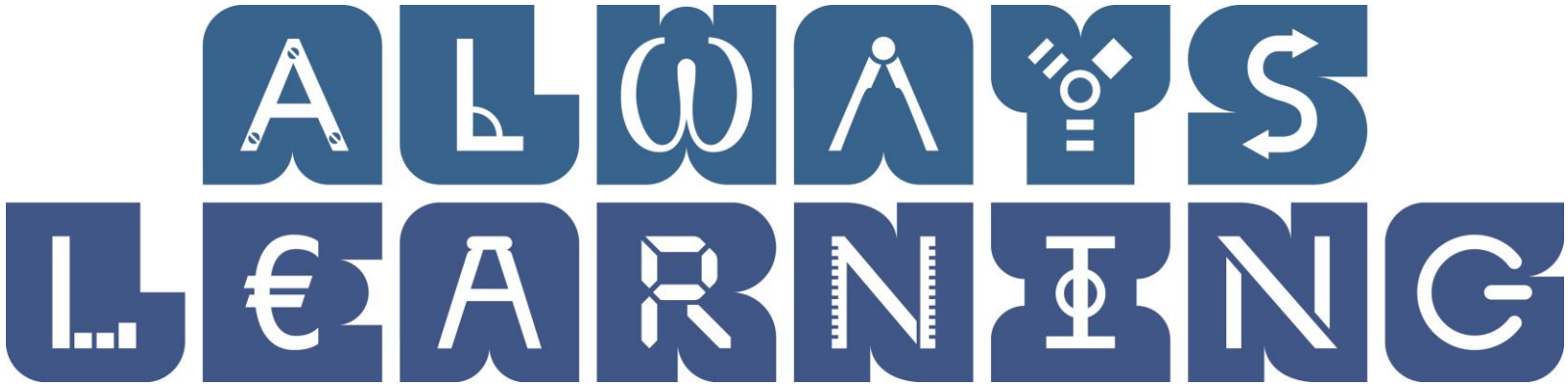
Use:

Practice of sentence structure / syntax

Variations:

Students prepare examples for each other

Jane went out early and walked sleepily down the street to buy some milk and bread when she saw her old friend driving very fast in a beautiful new red car.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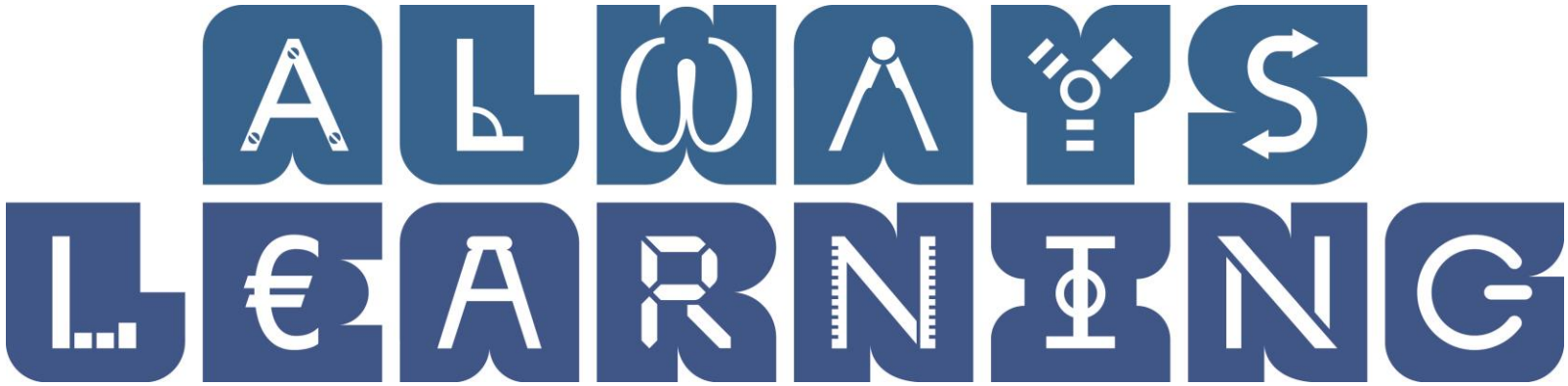
Use:

Spelling / vocab revision

Variations:

Students prepare examples for each other

Shark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Use:

Any language / general knowledge

Variations:

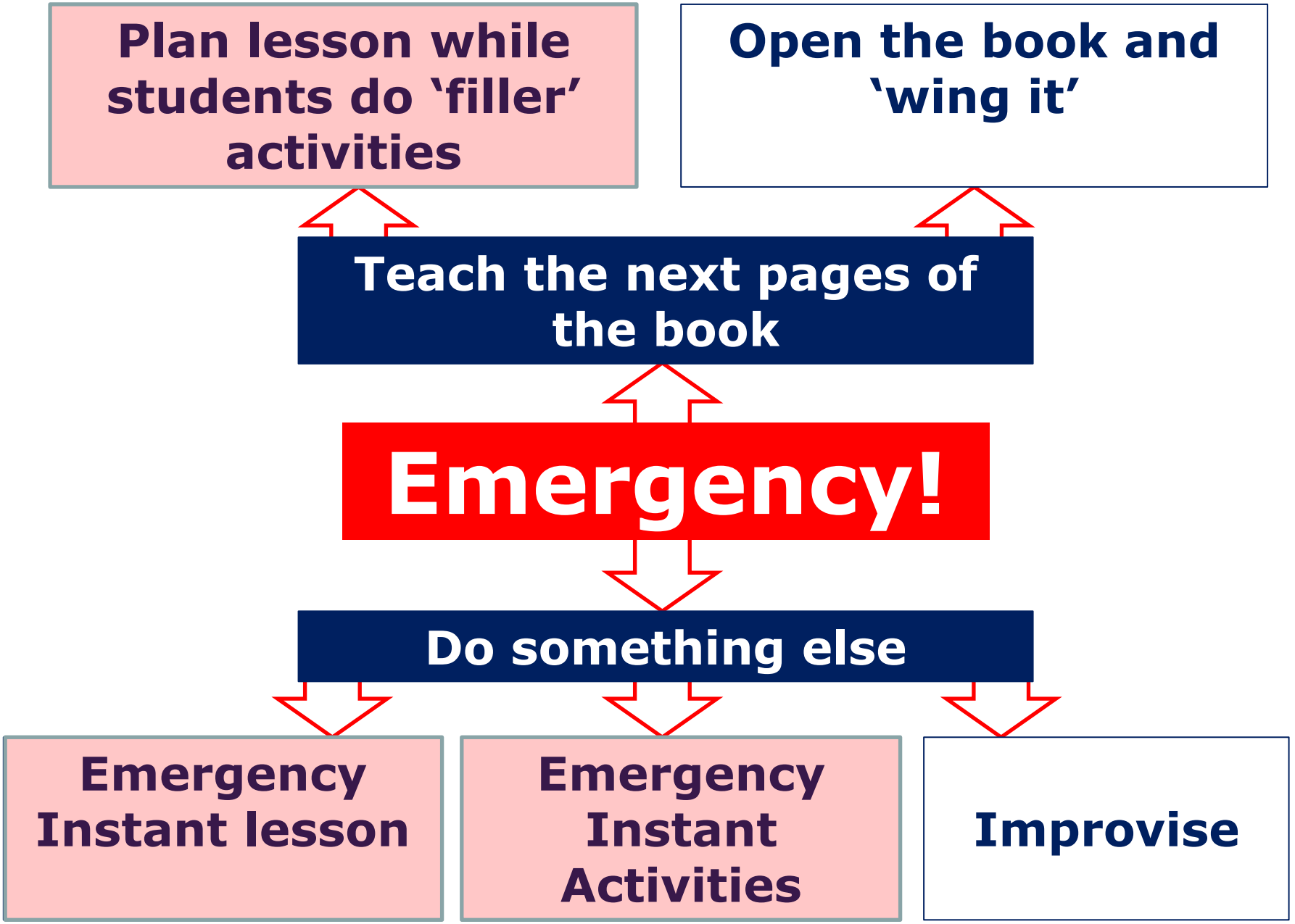
Students prepare questions for each other – e.g. based on content of last lesson

Football

Coming in part 2:

- **Emergency Instant lessons**
- **Reacting on the spot to student output**

4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- **Emergency Instant lessons**

4

3 B O R I N G Questions

1) What's your least favourite musician and why?

2) What would you do if you won 100 Francs?

3) What item of modern technology could you easily live without?

Profiles

Use:

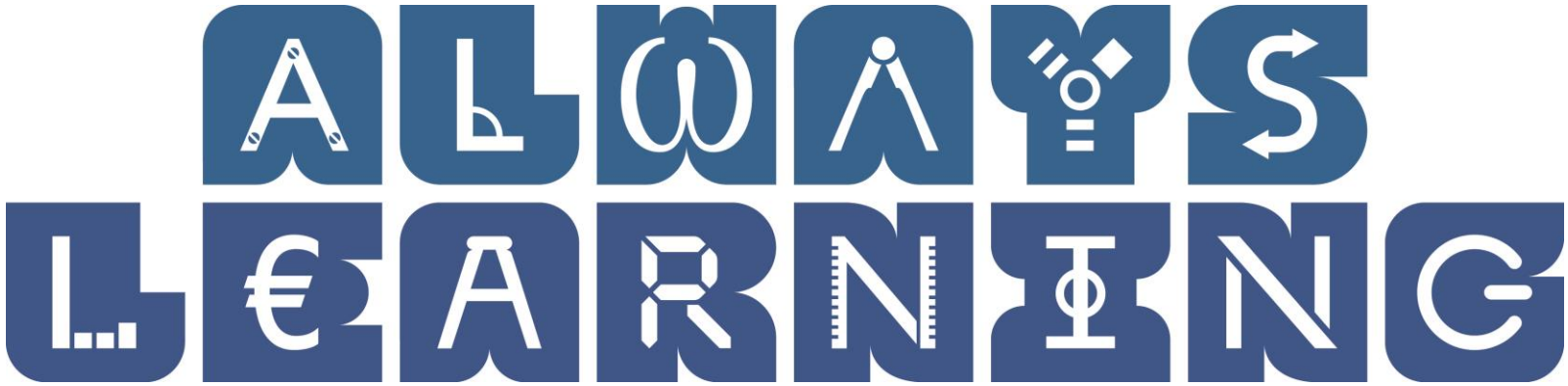
Integrated language and skills practice

Variations:

Finished profiles can be read aloud – students guess who each one relates to

Teacher can collect in finished profiles and assess strengths and weaknesses

CENTRUM REZYDENT
CAIPIRINHA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Use:

Integrated language and skills practice – describing people, language of argument / discussion

Variations:

Some stages of activity can be expressed orally or in writing (e.g. write letter of complaint before meeting to discuss)

Houses

Pictures around the room

Use:

Question form practice

Variations:

Get students to bring in pictures of their own

Students write description of picture and post around the room – students read and match to photo

- **A bit of improvisation – reacting to student output**

5

Reacting to student output and correcting errors

Accuracy focussed activities

On the spot – elicit correction / reformulate

Fluency focussed activities

Delayed – after the activity (unless communication breaks down)

Language Feedback - Planning a Tour

Well done!!!

- The city is mindblowing.
- To see it all, it would take a few days.
- Maybe you've heard of Bern

Praising / encouraging

Differential feedback

????

- You should to go there in summer
- There is fine place
- If you will go to the top of the hill, you will see a great view
- There is much snow in winter.

challenging

Grammar Gamble

1. Each group has 200 Francs.
2. Read the sentence on the board.
3. Is it grammatically correct or not? If you are sure either way, you should place a large bet (max 150 Francs)
4. If you are less certain, place a smaller bet.
5. If you bet correctly that the sentence is right, you win.
6. If you bet correctly that it was wrong, you win BUT only if you can correct the sentence.
7. If your bet was wrong or you cannot correct the sentence, you lose what you bet.

Coping with the unexpected can sometimes result in a lesson that's far better than a lesson that you spent several hours preparing.

Coping with the unexpected can sometimes bring about surprising results.

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Thank You

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