

How does your language intelligence work?

Time: 40-50 minutes

Purpose: to get students to share the way they experience the joys of their language intelligence.

Preparation: copy one of the three texts below and a text you write, describing your own language intelligence.

Lesson outline:

1. Give out the copied texts and ask the students to read them.
2. Pair the students. Ask person A in each pair to describe the aspects of their language intelligence they most enjoy, while B takes notes. They then do the exercise the other way round.
3. Each person writes up their notes into a coherent text.
4. They give their text to their partner who checks it for accuracy and adds any other things that come to mind.
5. Have the texts put up round the walls of the room so everybody can read them.

Language Intelligence Text 1

My sister bought me a dictionary when I was seven and I used to spend hours reading it.

I find it important to pick apt words (eg to avoid repetition).

Language has a spiritual quality; I can feel I am *speaking*, not just producing words.

I appreciate language in itself, its numinous qualities.

I love bending language, using unusual combinations for effect.

With literature I really like to read things slowly and write things down in little notebooks.

I am interested in correlations between different languages.

I have the desire and the need to *express* myself fully.

Language Intelligence Text 2

I keep hearing words I love.

I love collecting sounds and working on why they mean the way they do.

Taste and sound is to be explored in foreign languages- each language has got its unique bits.

Language is the meeting of humanity- each word is how one human meets another.

With a foreign language you step into a whole new area.

Language represents a truth- you pick up nuances which are just right.

Language Intelligence Text 3

Language is for talking to myself and to others in my head.

I feel a sense of release speaking other languages- they are like escape routes.

I wish I had learnt more text by heart- as a child I knew plenty Old Testament text and would parody it. I love to be under the influence of a text.

There is more than a casual relation between sound and meaning- onomatopoeia is more widespread than we think.

Writing is a poor second to spoken language. Maybe people put so much effort into doing it well precisely because it is so thin as a message-carrier, compared to speaking, with voice, pitch, coloration, intonation, resonance etc.

Words are like gardens- you can walk around in them.

I love ambiguity and homophony- its amazing when *you* can be a female sheep or a tree (*yew*).

Speaking the same language with different phonologies is thrilling (accents).

Grammar can have exciting structures, especially in less familiar languages.

I find translating impossible: how can you abstract denotation, connotation and collocational synaptic links from a word in one language and hope to find an equivalent form in the target language? A word is not just a signifier- it is a thing in itself. I am very grateful, though, that other people can translate.