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# Arthur Laing

## Teaching Young Learners

Secondary Language Lessons

# Review of language learning at different ages

## Primary

- “When children learn their first chunks of language, these often combine both grammatical patterns and lexis. Younger children in particular are not interested in thinking about language systems or manipulating the language so as to separate lexical items and structures. They take a more holistic interest in the meaning and function of language - in order to play a game, sing a song, or act out a story.”

Pinter (2017) p. 98

## Secondary

- ‘Adults and older learners are more analytical and give attention to detail, which helps with language learning.’

Pinter (2017), p. 37

- ‘For older learners it is possible to introduce explicit activities which focus on separating vocabulary and grammar. The right time to do this will be when children show an active interest in grammar forms, such as by asking the teacher why the verb ‘drink’ changes to ‘drank’, but ‘think’ doesn’t change to ‘thank’ in the story or song.

Pinter (2017) p. 103



# Guided discovery - demo lesson






- Look at the following short demo lesson designed for lower secondary learners, aged between 12 and 14
- This is a grammar lesson, and the target language is defining relative clauses with 'which' and 'where'
- There will be questions to help you reflect after each stage of the demo lesson



# Warmer:









1. Work in pairs. Look at the 10 pictures, and say which country the picture shows (1 point per picture)
2. Put the picture in order from furthest North to furthest South (5 bonus points)

The first one has been done for you

1	2	3	North Pole 4	5
				
6	7	8	9	10
				



# Answer Key:

4. North Pole	8. Canada (Banff National Park)	3. USA (New York City)	2. USA (San Francisco)	1. Mexico (Mexico City)
				
7. Mexico (Yucatan)	3. Panama (Panama Canal)	5. Ecuador (Galapagos Islands)	9. Brazil (Rio)	6. Chile (Patagonia)
				

# Managing the warmer and giving feedback

- The teacher conducts this activity as a race
- The pair who finishes fastest and most accurately wins the most points
- The teacher will need to bring enthusiasm and excitement to the activity

# Reflection: Warmer

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What is the purpose of a warmer?

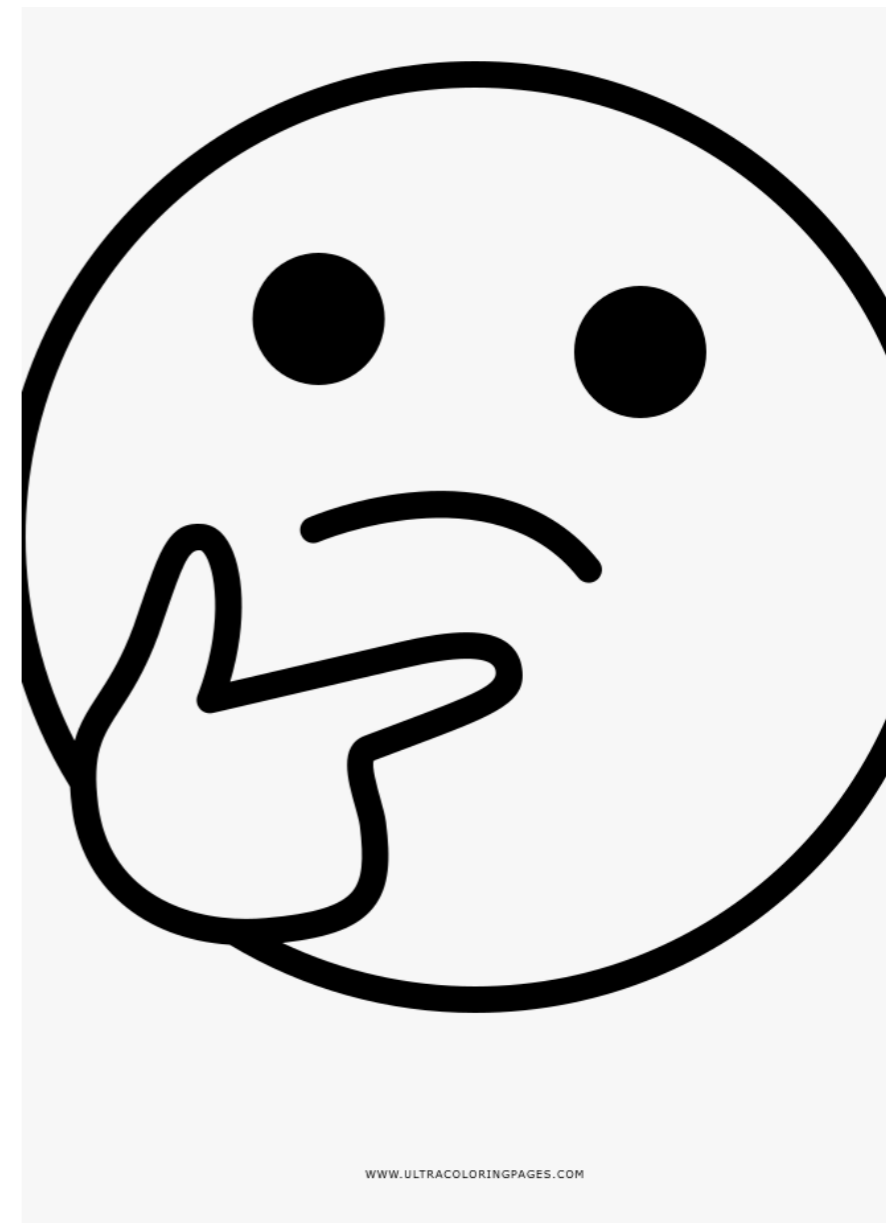
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Why is this activity appropriate at lower secondary?

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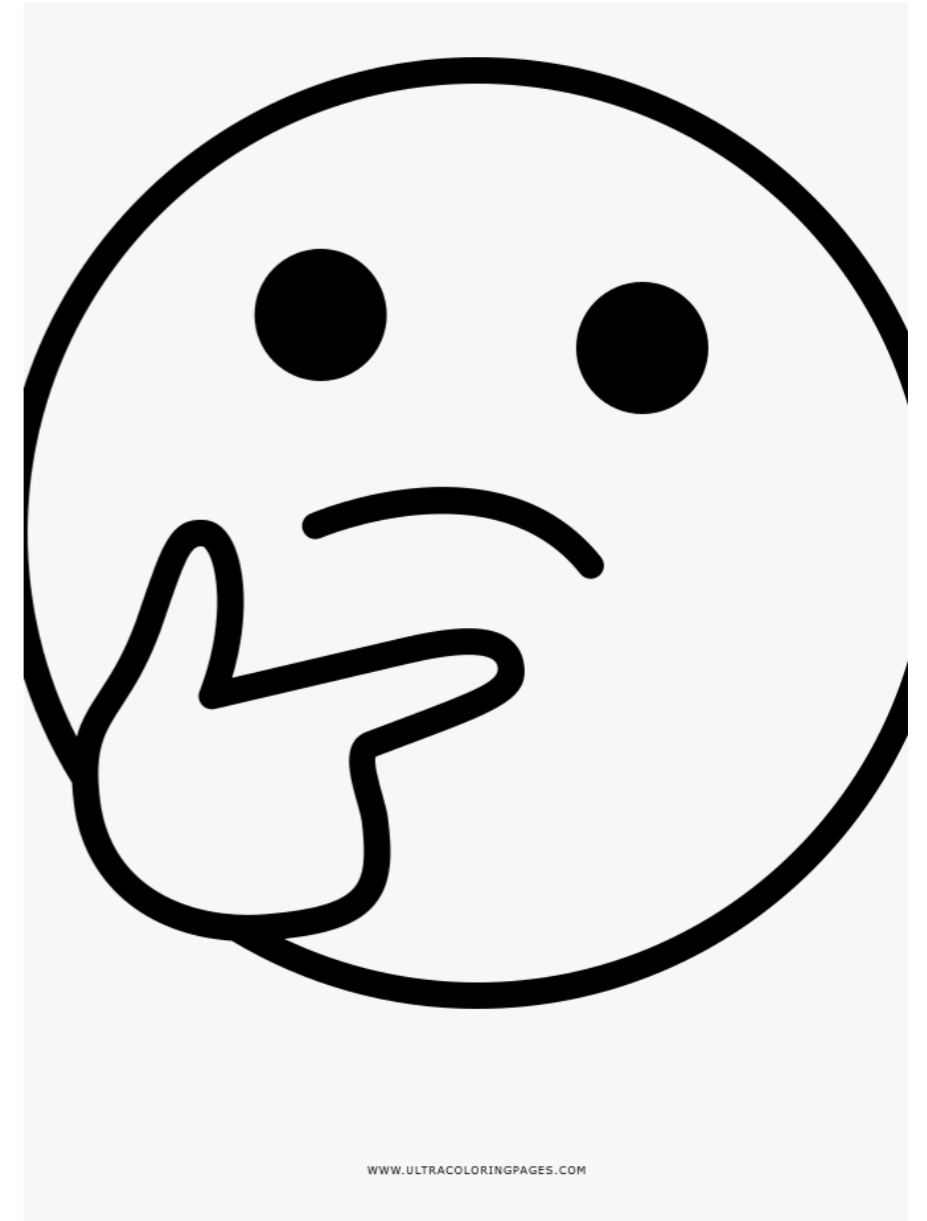
What is the context of the lesson? How does the warmer help to establish this context?

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# Reflection: Warmer (possible answers)

1. What is the purpose of a warmer?
  - To stir students, and to motivate them for learning
  - To have fun
  - To activate schematic knowledge useful for the lesson
2. Why is the activity appropriate at lower secondary?
  - It's competitive and allows students to collaborate with their peers
  - It has a strong link to subject knowledge from other classes (e.g. geography)
  - It is visual and engaging, appeals to any ambitions the learners have for travel and adventure
3. What is the context? How does the warmer help to establish the context?
  - The context of the lesson is likely to be a geography or general knowledge quiz
  - The warmer is a quick activity which gets learners thinking about subject knowledge they may need in the lesson. The colourful visuals and the competitive element should help to raise interest





# Processing the text for meaning

- Learners complete the general knowledge quiz individually. (Teacher monitors)
- They then work in pairs and agree on an answer for each question. (Teacher monitors)
- The teacher provides feedback on all the answers, focussing on the ones which caused most disagreement.

## The Great Secondary Geography Quiz



1. This is the state (which/where) Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego are located.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. This is the river (which/where) runs along the border between Texas and Mexico.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



3. This is the country (which/where) borders Nicaragua to the West, and Panama to the East.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



4. This is the country (which/where) has the largest population in the world.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

# The quiz

5. This is the country (which/where) the River Nile enters the sea.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. This is the ocean (which/where) Christopher Columbus crossed.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



# The quiz - answer key



4. This is the country (which/where) has the largest population in the world.

Answer: **China**

5. This is the country (which/where) the River Nile enters the sea.

Answer: **Egypt**

6. This is the ocean (which/where) Christopher Columbus crossed.

Answer: **The Atlantic**



## The Great Secondary Geography Quiz

1. This is the state (which/where) Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego are located.

Answer: **California**

2. This is the river (which/where) runs along the border between Texas and Mexico.

Answer: **Rio Grande**

3. This is the country (which/where) borders Nicaragua to the West, and Panama to the East.

Answer: **Costa Rica**





# Reflection: the quiz

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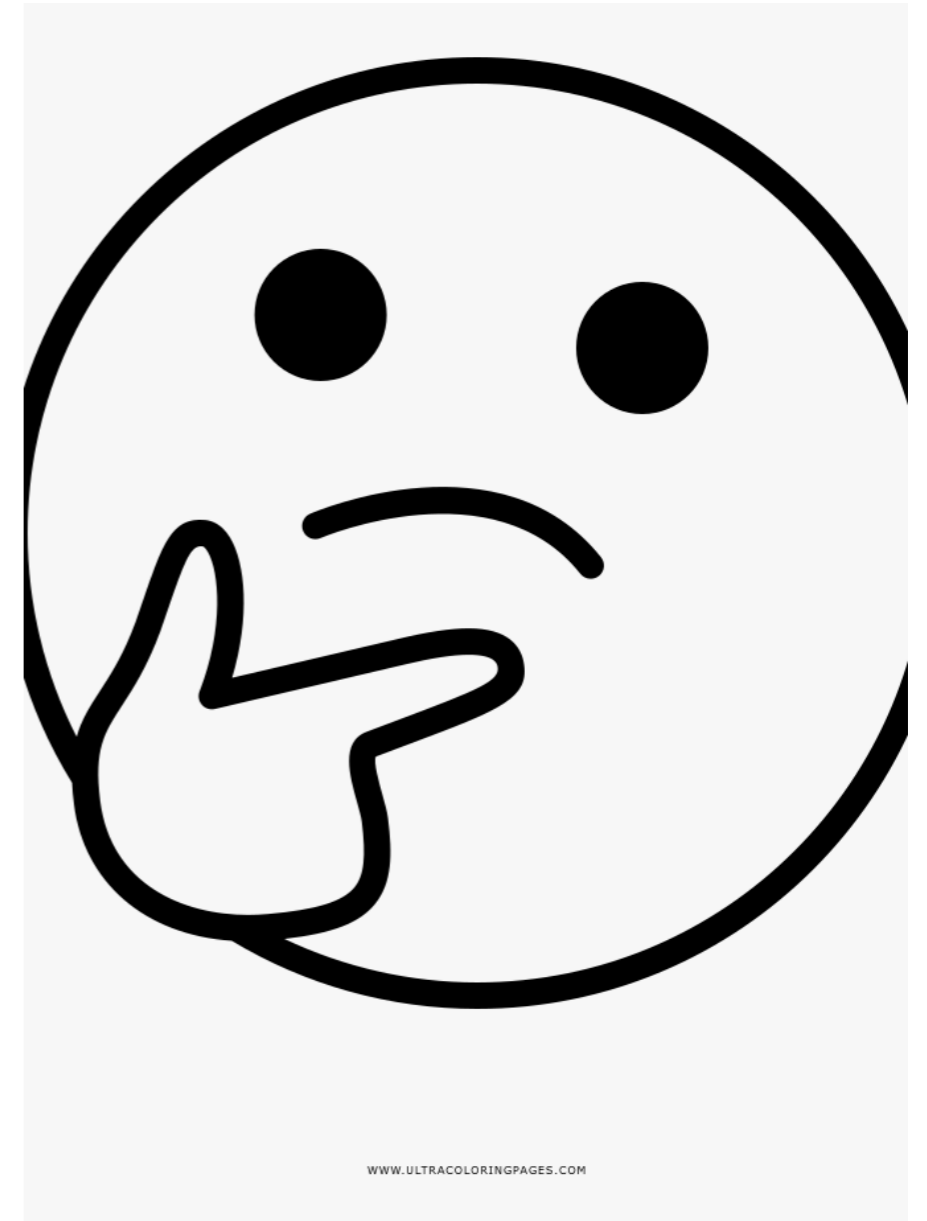
Why do learners complete the quiz individually, and then in pairs?

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Why is the highlighted language not dealt with at this stage?

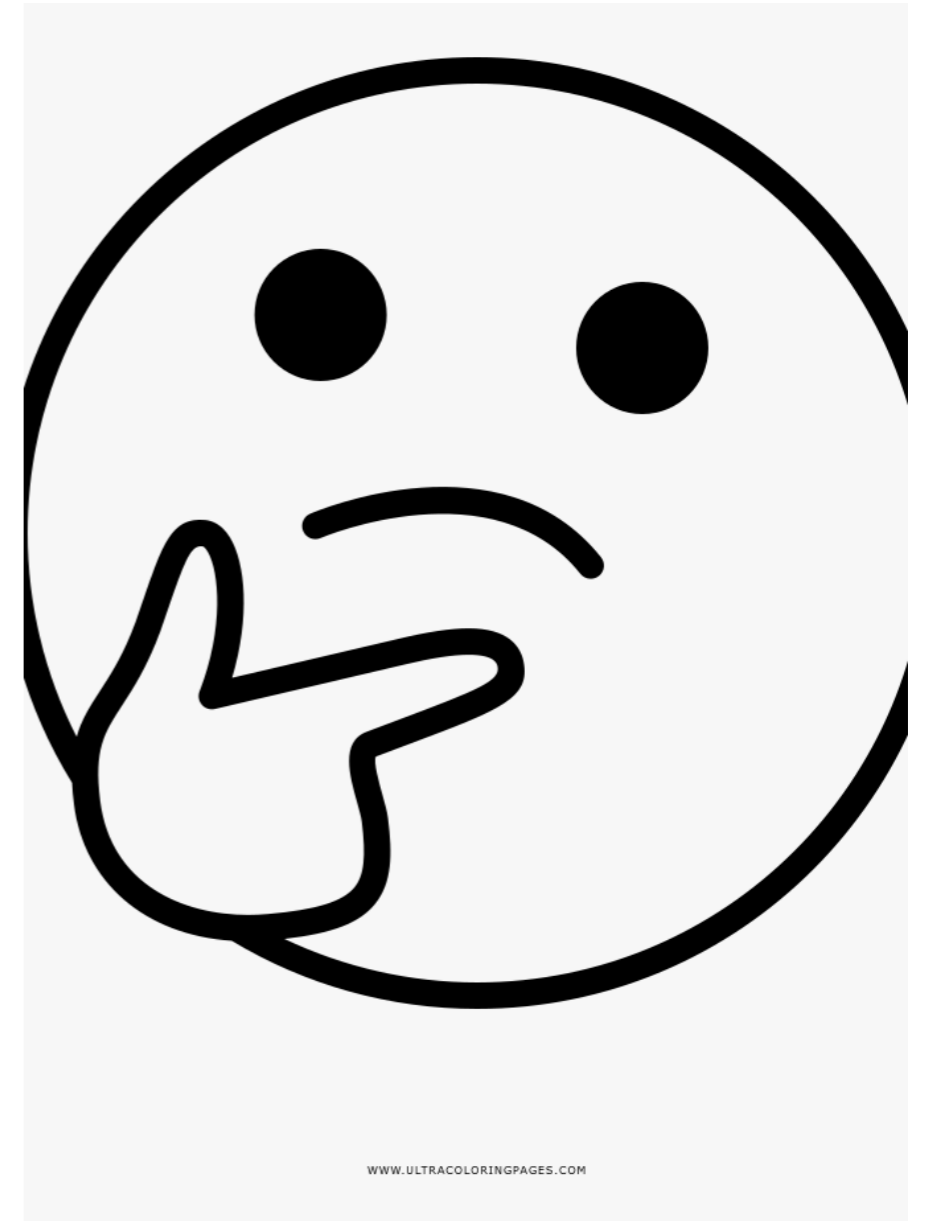
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Remember the target language is defining relative clauses. Why are quizzes used so much in this lesson?



# Reflection: the quiz (possible answers)

1. Why do learners complete the quiz individually, and then in pairs?
  - It is important to vary interaction and pace
  - When reading, learners need time to process information by themselves first
  - The pair work provides support, and helps build confidence
2. Why is the highlighted language not dealt with at this stage?
  - Language needs to come from a clear context. If students are not interested in the quiz, they are less likely to be interested in the language
  - Motivation is a key issue at lower secondary. Learners need to see **why** they are studying language.
3. Why are quizzes used so much in this lesson?
  - This grammar, defining relative clauses, is not used frequently in a wide variety of contexts
  - This context, the general knowledge quiz, often uses this target language in quiz prompts
  - Learners should encounter language as it appears in the real world



# Language clarification - meaning and use

- T asks **C**oncept **C**hecking **Q**uestions:
- “Look at the six sentences. Why do we need “which” or “where”? What do these words do?” (Add information about the main clause to define or explain it)
- “Do we use this language a lot in everyday conversation?” (No)
- “When do we use defining relative clauses?” (Common in quizzes when we are getting people to guess answers)



# Language clarification - marker sentences from the quiz

- This is the state (which/where) Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego are located.
- This is the river (which/where) runs along the border between Texas and Mexico.
- This is the country (which/where) borders Nicaragua to the West, and Panama to the East.
- This is the country (which/where) has the largest population in the world.
- This is the country (which/where) the River Nile enters the sea.
- This is the ocean (which/where) Christopher Columbus crossed.

# Language clarification of form - guided discovery

- Learners are told to work in pairs, and choose between 'which' and 'where' to complete each sentence.
- They also have to decide why
- In this activity, learners should be encouraged to speak in English. However, while discussing grammar, if they need to switch to L1, the teacher can be lenient
- The teacher then shows the answers and gives further prompts (guidance) to help learners discover the rules of form (see following slides)

# Language clarification - extra guidance

- This is the state **where** Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego are located.
- This is the river **which** runs along the border between Texas and Mexico.
- This is the country **which** borders Nicaragua to the West, and Panama to the East.
- This is the country **which** has the largest population in the world.
- This is the country **where** the River Nile enters the sea.
- This is the ocean **which** Christopher Columbus crossed.

The teacher gives prompts. Learners try to answer in small groups

- Look at the sentences with 'where'. What type of word always follows 'where'?
- Look at the sentences with 'which'. What type of word usually follows 'which'? Why is the sixth sentence different?



# Language clarification - answer key

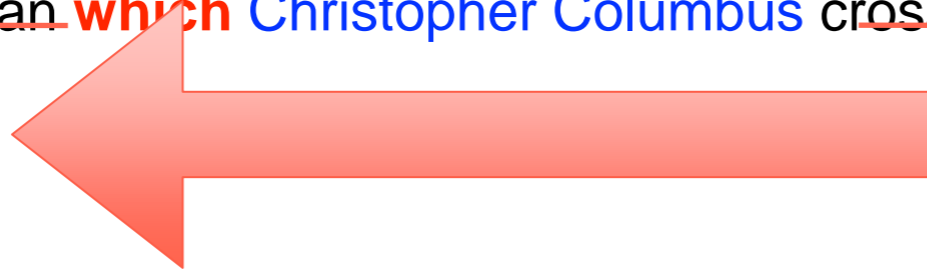
- This is the state **where** Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego are located.
- This is the country **where** the River Nile enters the sea.

**where** + **noun** (always)

- This is the river **which** runs along the border between Texas and Mexico.
- This is the country **which** borders Nicaragua to the West, and Panama to the East.
- This is the country **which** has the largest population in the world.

**which** + **verb** (usually)

- This is the ~~ocean~~ **which** Christopher Columbus ~~crossed~~.



# Reflection: Language Clarification

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Why is meaning dealt with quickly, while form takes more time?

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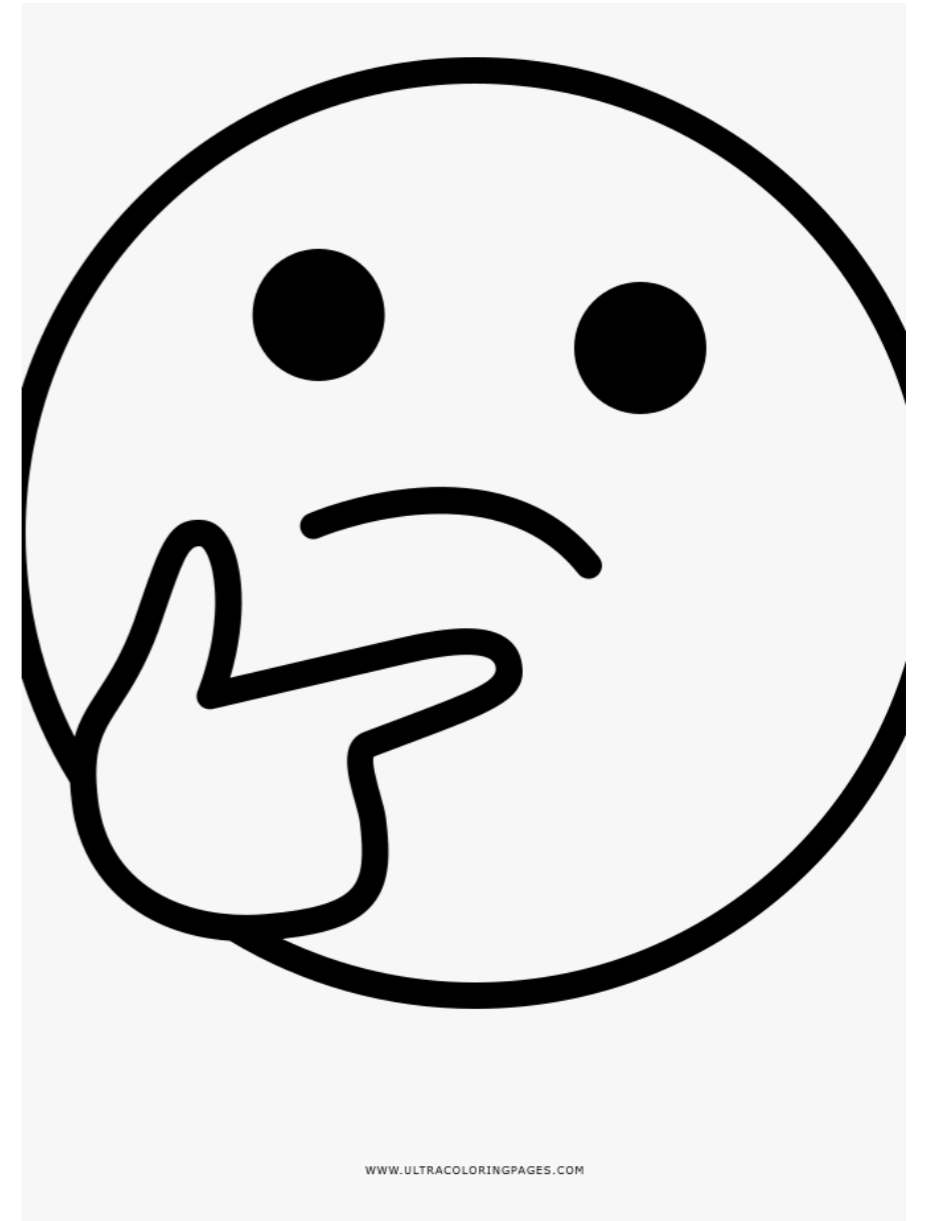
Why are learners encouraged to discuss grammar?

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How does the teacher use patterns to help learners discover the rules?

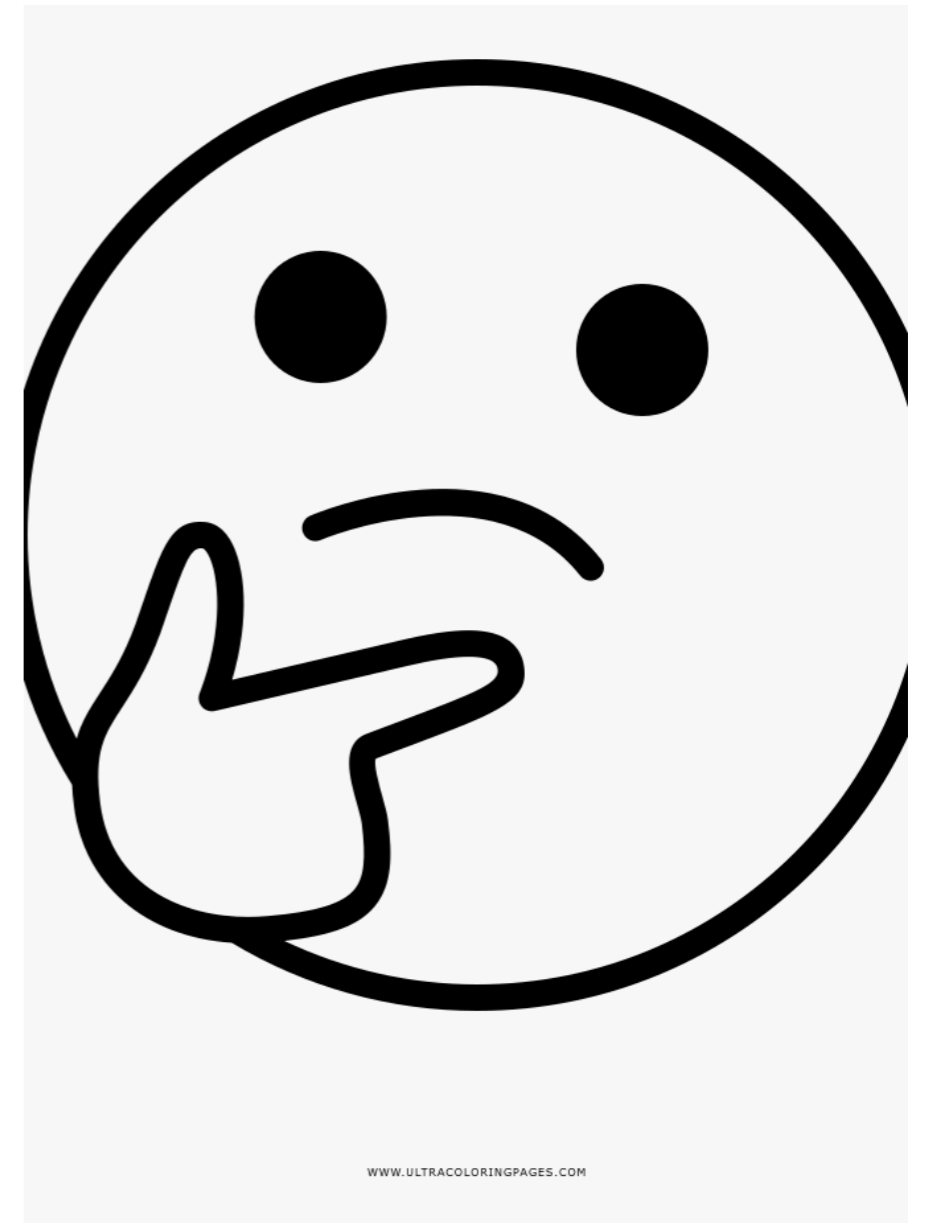
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Why is the language focus so narrow? Why doesn't the material include other relative pronouns, or mention 'that' as a substitute for 'which'?



# Reflection: Language clarification (possible answers)

1. What is meaning dealt with quickly, while form takes more time?
  - The meaning/function of this language is easy to understand. Form is much more complicated
2. Why are learners encouraged to discuss grammar?
  - At age 12-14, learners are developing an awareness of grammar rules, and becoming more analytical
  - It is motivating for learners to find out answers by themselves
  - This increases learner independence
3. How does the teacher use patterns to help learners discover the rules?
  - The marker sentences include three examples of one rule, and two examples another rule, with one 'odd one out'
  - Colour coding is very important in these patterns, to make them visual and easier to understand, especially if learners do not have much metalanguage to discuss grammar
4. Why is the language focus so narrow?
  - At aged 11-14, learners are likely to be quite new to complex sentences, and embedding. It is important not to overload them
  - The form of this language is complicated, so it is easier to teach and learn more complex rules with limited target language



# Controlled Practice - Flashcards

- The teacher models the activity with one learner at the front of the class first (teacher folds over the card, uses the prompt to make a defining relative clause) and the student guesses the answer.
- Learners take packs of flashcards and quiz each other in small groups of three
- The teacher monitors and corrects errors in word choice between 'which' and 'where'

# Controlled Practice - Example flashcards



Answer: **Dallas**

city.....Kennedy.....shot dead



Answer: **Paris**

city.....Eiffel Tower.....located



Answer: **Florida**

state.....Miami.....located



Answer: **New York**

city.....can see.....Empire State Building



Answer: **Thailand**

country.....borders.....Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia



Answer: **Argentina**

country.....Che Guevara.....born



Answer: **Amazon**

longest river.....flows...South America



Answer: **South Africa**

country.....Mandela.....born



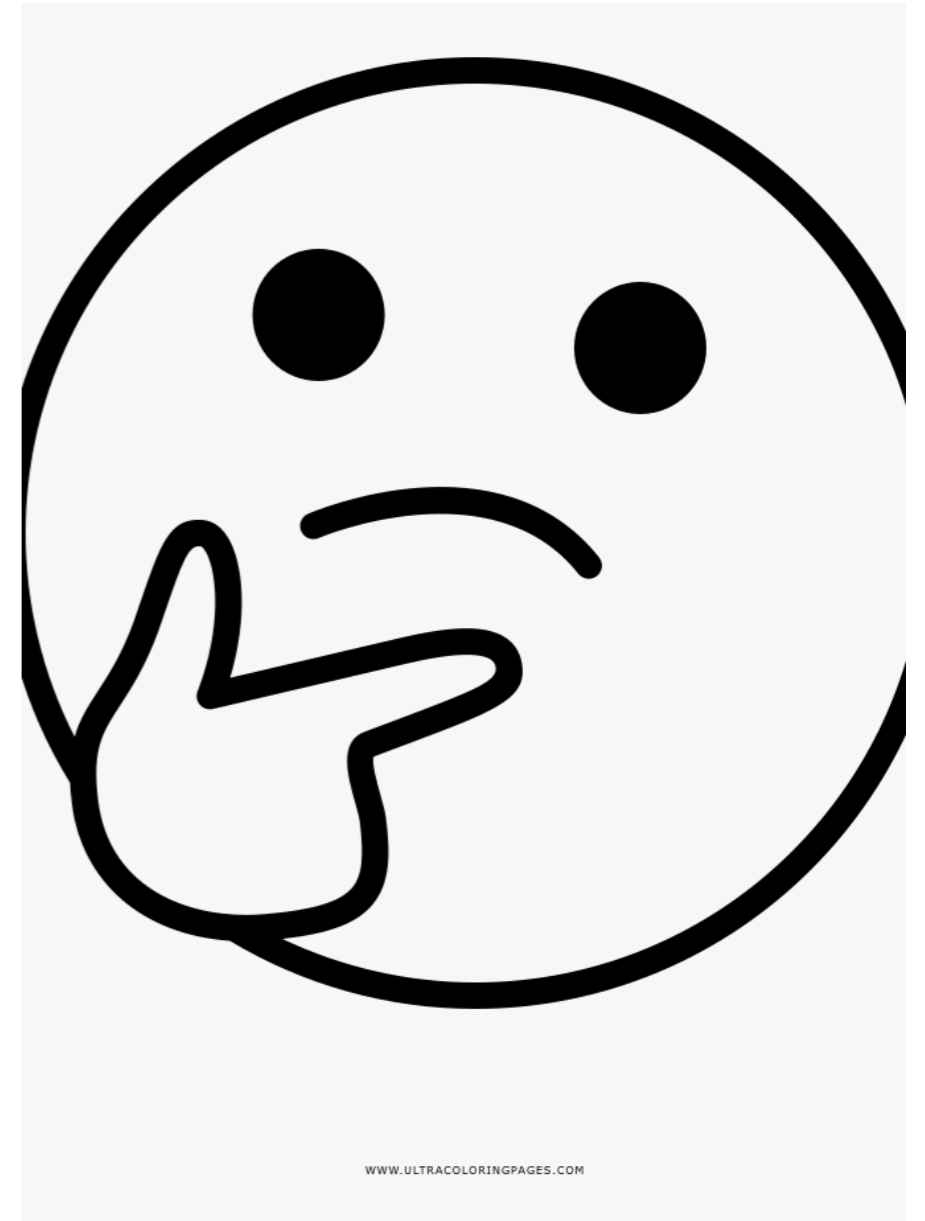
# Freer Practice

- Think of a country or a city
- Don't tell your group mates its name
- Describe the place, using 'which' and 'where'
- Your partners should try to guess the name of the place
- Take it in turns

# Reflection: Practice activities

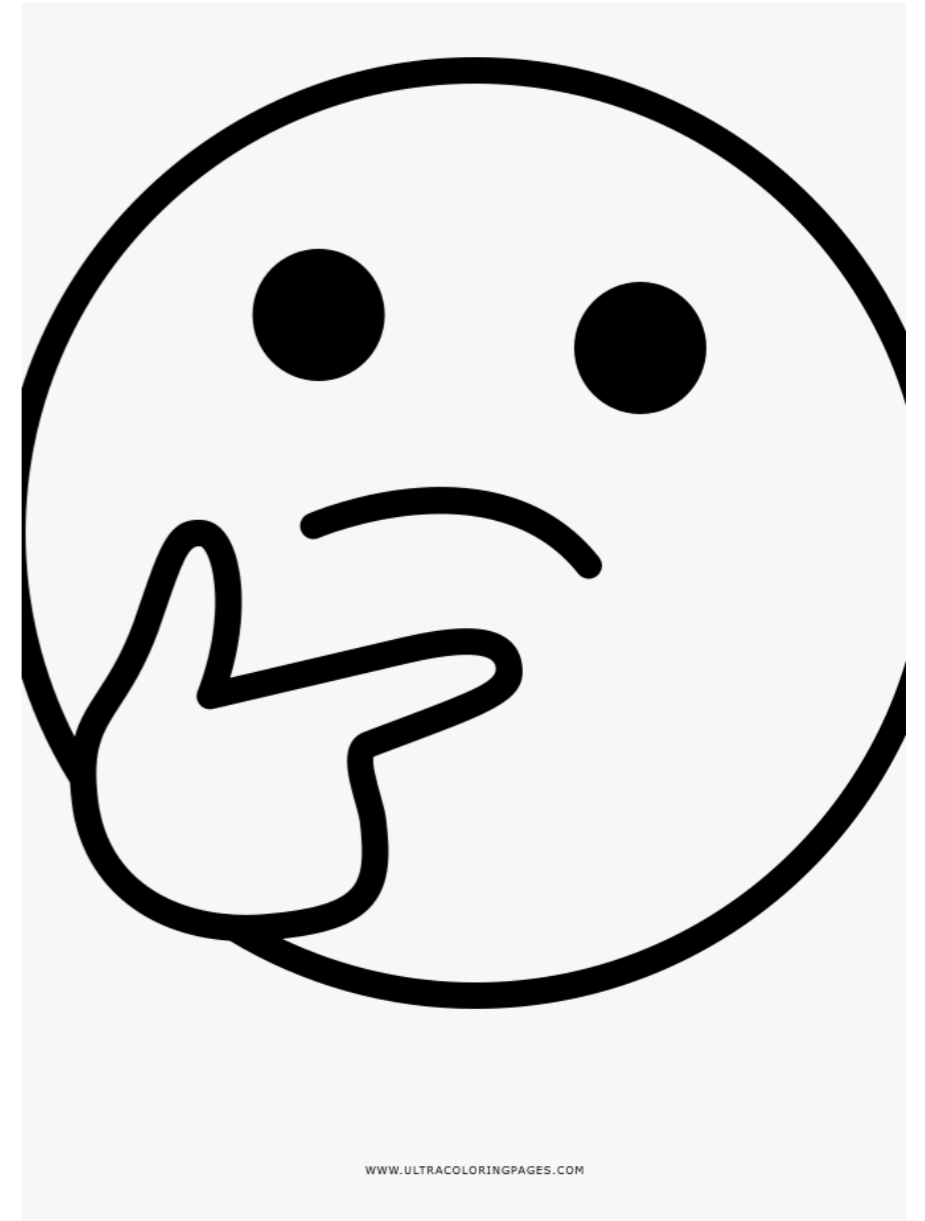
What are the main differences between the controlled and the freer practice activities?

Why does the teacher correct errors with 'which' and 'where' during the controlled practice?



# Reflection: Practice activities (possible answers)

1. What are the main differences between the controlled and freer practice activities?
  - There is much more language support in the controlled activity.
  - The controlled practice is less challenging in terms of fluency (shorter spoken turns required)
  - Learners are focussed on accurate production of 'which' and 'where'
  - In the freer practice, there is more personal choice, and fluency is developed through longer descriptions
2. Why does the teacher correct errors with 'which' and 'where' during the controlled practice.
  - This practice activity is very form-focussed, and the aim is accurate spoken production of the target language. therefore it is appropriate for the teacher to do a lot of on-the-spot error correction



# The language through text framework

- Warmer or Lead-in
- Process text for meaning
- Language Clarification (guided discovery)
- Controlled Practice
- Freer Practice