

Gapped dictation

Gap-fill exercises are commonly used in coursebooks to check and consolidate learners' understanding of new vocabulary. A **gapped dictation** is a straightforward, materials-free technique for adding variety to lessons by lifting gap-fills 'off the page' and converting them from a written to a spoken medium.

- 1 You've just focused on and clarified the meaning of some words or expressions, for example those in exercise 6a below:

VOCABULARY	6 a These adjectives and nouns often go together.		
Personality	Which adjective is used with each noun 1–3 in the listening? Check in the script on pp153–4.		
1 a	difficult great character miserable	2 a/an	interesting person strange calm
		3 a	bright nice guy/woman charming
b Choose expressions from 6a to complete these sentences.			
1 My boss is a _____. She's not easy to get on with.			
2 It was fascinating talking to your sister. She's a very _____.			
3 My new assistant is a _____. He learns things really quickly.			
4 That teacher is such a _____. She never smiles at anyone.			
5 The new managing director is a _____. I just don't understand him.			
6 My brother finds it easy to get whatever he wants. He's such a _____.			

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Now you want learners to practise the expressions using the gap-fill exercise in 6b. But instead of doing the gap-fill in the usual way, you've decided to make it into a gapped dictation.

- 2 Ask learners to close their books. Display the expressions from 6a on the board or give them to your learners on a handout.
- 3 Now read aloud the sentences from 6b. When you get to the gap in each sentence, say 'gap'. Alternatively, you can whistle or say a random word like 'banana':

My boss is a banana. She's not easy to get on with.

Learners listen and write down the expression which they think fits in each gap. Be sure to pause for a while between sentences so learners have time to write down their ideas.

- 4 When you've read through all the sentences, ask learners if they want to hear any (or all) of them again.
- 5 Ask learners to compare their answers in pairs or small groups.
- 6 Go through the answers as a class, writing them up on the board. If learners come up with different possible answers, you should of course acknowledge this. In fact, it shows that learners have really understood the vocabulary!

1. a difficult character (a miserable character, a strange person)

- 7 Finally, have learners open their books and quickly fill in the sentences so that they have a written record of the target language.