Cognates in the ESL Classroom/February 2022

Similar words in Spanish and English are cognates. That’s how my students answer the question: What are cognates? Of course, if there are speakers of languages other than Spanish in my ESL classroom, I don’t use Spanish/English cognates.

Following is a set of cognates with some activities (mostly cloze). I use them for a short pronunciation practice at the end of class, when everyone is a bit tired.

In Spanish, an accent over a syllable indicates a stressed syllable. As I say the English word, students place an accent mark over the stressed syllable for the English word.

When students realize that they already have a deep store of vocabulary and just need to learn the English pronunciation of those words they feel encouraged.

If they learn the pronunciation of the words in this packet, they will have learned more than 140 words.

Pronunciation practice of cognates also helps students unconsciously pick up the stress patterns in English words.

**Here are a few activities** I’ve used in addition to the cloze exercises:

Listen and repeat. And then see if the students can produce the English words with correct pronunciation.

Match index cards (Are you a lion?)

Spelling bee

Teams – 3 minute scramble, write as many words as you can think of. Probably best for ción-tion. There are thousands. Read aloud …

Quizlet

Put a story in order (index cards)

Jenga (make a sentence using a cognate from the lesson)

I hope you and your students enjoy learning about cognates!

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