

Bean castle

Refers to **Chapter 6: Exploring Fun 1: Novelty objects.**

Content

Some considerations for designing your own bean-style worksheet, with examples from the author's own bean castle.

This resource will take you into the sphere of materials design, above and beyond what is normally expected of a classroom practitioner on an everyday level.

Rationale

In terms of range and the activity type, the bean-based activities described in Chapter 6, and elsewhere in the book, all have common elements. They involve learners decorating beans by drawing on them and then sticking them onto a template and perhaps responding to additional textual clues included on the worksheet.

The language on your worksheet will need to be tailored to your class in terms of complexity and compatibility with the syllabus you are covering. This is the most important element and the reason why designing your own template is always ideal.

Pointers

1. Establish what materials you need and what types of beans are available in your locality.



Figure 1: Dark-coloured beans can be drawn on with liquid correction fluid. Light-coloured beans can be drawn on with permanent markers.

2. Decide on a setting. Are you going to construct a bean town, a bean castle (Figure 1), a bean stadium for sports events or a bean zoo inhabited by bean animals? Keep the basic design of the template simple, with maybe one advanced feature. Your bean stadium, for example, might consist of a number of concentric ovals to represent the track and various lanes where children can position beans running against each other, with an 'H' shape in the centre for a pole-vaulting bar and an area marked out for javelin throwing. Your bean town might consist of a row of three houses at the top of the page and three more at the bottom, with the rest demarcated as streets.
3. You can make more complex features by combining shapes. For example, the dragon in Figure 2 is made up of four different shapes selected in PowerPoint. The fill for each shape and the outline are the same shade of grey, so that the shapes can be combined seamlessly to create a silhouette.

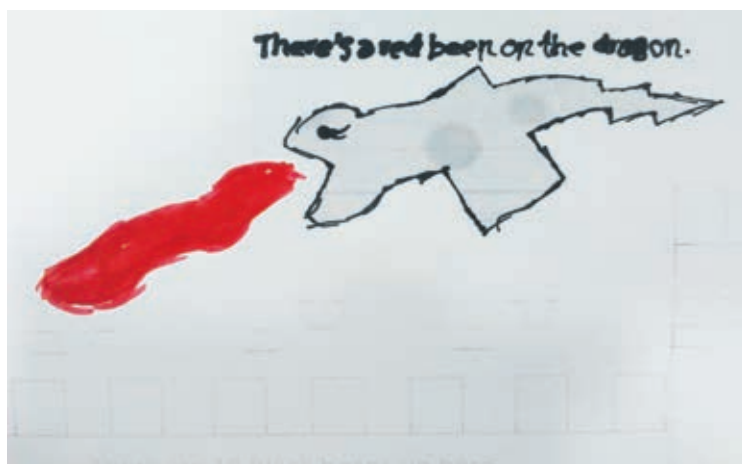


Figure 2: Complex silhouettes can be made up from simple shapes.

4. Decide whether you will put language prompts on the template. If so, decide how you are going to phrase them: *There is a/an [X] here*, as in Figures 3 and 4? Or something slightly more specific, e.g. *This is a/an [Y]*. Which sentence pattern will be most useful to your learners at this point of their English language learning trajectory? If you are designing a sports stadium, you will need to decide whether to include language in the first person singular, such as: *I like running* or in the first person plural such as: *We are running*.



Figure 3 (Left): Here you can see a simple language prompt.

Figure 4 Right: The prompt here reads: 'There is a big white bean here'. If the learner chooses simply to react to it and follow the instructions, fine. If they wish to go one step further and overwrite the letters – that is even better.

5. Provide support. In Chapter 14 you will see another bean-based activity – **The Bean Haunted House** on pages 313–317. There you will see how I ran a short dictation, with pictures modelled for my students, before they drew those characters on their beans (ghost, zombie, skeleton, etc.). If, for example, you have designed a template for a bean zoo, you may wish to show them how to draw their bean lions, bean crocodiles and bean monkeys.
6. Be flexible. You will not always get what you expected (as discussed in Chapter 6 when we looked at how my students wanted to use multiple breadsticks on their worksheets on page 140). I would recommend allowing your learners to respond to any textual prompts you include as and how they wish. In Figure 5, for example, there is more than one red bean on the dragon, contrary to what is suggested by the prompt. You can redirect the student's attention back to the prompt, as in 'Ah so you've decided to put two beans here, not one', but you do not need to insist that they take one off.



Figure 5: There is more than one red bean on the dragon, contrary to what is suggested by the prompt.

7. Finally, when your students come to you with their finished templates, allow them to tell you something about what they have done. You may ask them to read any prompts they have overwritten or to model the ones they have not.

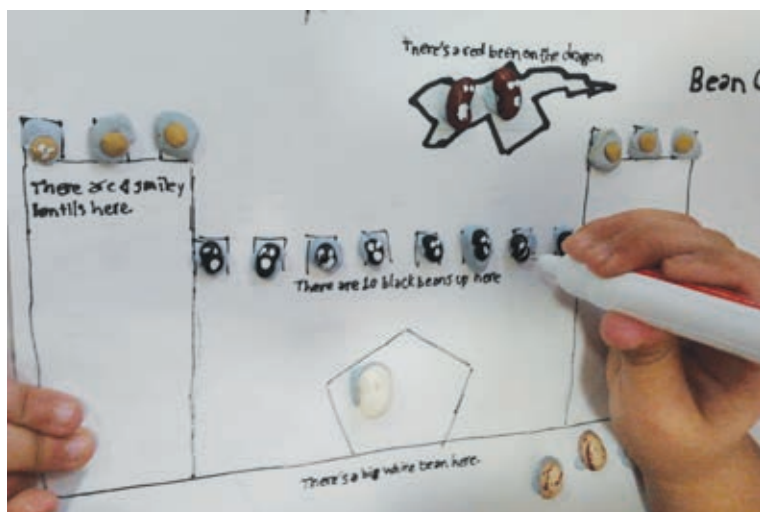


Figure 6. A bean castle in progress