

The materials are used from: **ETTE-English for Teaching - Teaching for English project**

Teaching large classes

Teachers in Action, BBC World Service / OLSET

Taken from teachingenglish.org.uk

Large classes are a reality in many countries and they pose particular challenges. This article suggests ways to help discipline, to use group work and to cope with limited resources.

- What are the challenges of teaching a large class?
- How can you use group work to help learning in a large class?
- How can group work help in a large class when resources are lacking?
- How can you develop good discipline in a large class?
- The advantages of a large class
- Next steps

What are the challenges of teaching a large class?

- It's difficult to keep good discipline going in a large class.
- You have to provide for more children of different ages and different abilities, wanting to learn different things at different speeds and in different ways.
- You can't easily give each child the individual attention they need.
- You may not have enough books or teaching and learning aids.

How can you use group work to help learning in a large class?

In a large class children pairs and groups can help each other and learn from each other. They don't get bored listening to teacher talk. Try these strategies:

- **Organise the groups to suit the children's abilities**

Teachers of large classes have tried different strategies:

- mixed-ability groups: The more able learners in the group can help the others to master the work so that the teacher need not teach some parts..
- same-ability groups: The teacher can leave the groups of faster learners to get on with the work on their own. S/he can give extra help to individual learners in the slower groups.
- using group leaders/monitors: Some teachers appoint faster, more able learners as group leaders or monitors who can help slower learners.

- **Monitor the groups yourself**

The teacher needs to move around the classroom to see what progress learners are making and what problems are coming up. S/he can give advice, encouragement and extra individual help where it is needed.

How can group work help in a large class when resources are lacking?

Group work can help you manage with few textbooks, or even only one text book.

If you do not have enough books for each child, form groups so that each group has one book.

If you have only one book: - let each group have some time to work with the book. The other groups can do activities that fit in with the theme of the passage in the book. For example, if the topic is 'family life' those groups who have not read yet can work on pre-reading tasks around 'family life'. They can write down words they know on that topic, or talk about their families. Those groups who have finished reading can talk about what they have read, or write down a summary. After about ten minutes give the book to another group, so that by the end of the lesson all the groups will have done some work with the book.

With or without group work, if you have only one book, you could:-

- write the important bits of text on the blackboard before the lesson.
- make the text into a dictation, so everyone has a copy of the text written down.

How can you develop good discipline in a large class?

- Establish a code of behavior that is created by teacher and learners together. It should state clear basic rules of conduct that learners understand, such as:
 - o They have to work quietly;
 - o They may talk, but not loudly;
 - o Children who have finished the lesson tasks can read a book to keep them busy.
- Use the environment outside the classroom. It offers a new, different space when children get noisy or bored, and helps to reduce overcrowding. Remember that:
 - o You can work with some groups inside the classroom while the other groups are working outside (use different tasks or the same task)
 - o You need to set up outdoor activities clearly and carefully and monitor them.
- Appoint responsible group leaders who can help maintain discipline. They can also give out and take in work for the groups, and explain what groups must do.

The advantages of a large class

- When there are many children in a class they can share many different ideas and interesting life experiences. This stimulates the children and enlivens those parts of your lesson where children can discuss and learn from each other.
- During project work, children can learn to share responsibility and help each other. This also brings variety and speeds up the work.

Next steps

Remember these are not the best or only ways to teach and learn in large classes, but if you have not used these techniques before, you may want to try them with your class.

- Discuss with your class a code of conduct, that would suit your situation. The children can write the points on a poster. Put this poster in a visible place.
- Plan a variety of activities that can be used when you have only one book.
- Plan a group project in which each group member will have their own special task that is connected to the others. Each group should sign a contract in which they each agree to do their own task and finish it by a certain date.

Learner-centeredness

Worksheet 1

Ways of making your training room more learner-centered

1. Look at this list of ways of making your training room more learner-centered. Which do you think are the 3 most important tips? Be ready to justify your choice!

- Use pair and group work before discussing ideas in plenary (think-pair-share)
- Elicit ideas from participants before you tell them your ideas
- Ask participants the questions instead of answering them yourself
- Ask participants to *reflect* on what they've learnt, and give them time to do so
- Give input, then give participants some 'buzz' time
- Demonstrate a technique or activity, then ask participants to copy and practice
- Ask participants to demonstrate sometimes
- Provide water and enough air- and let participants move around
- Listen carefully to participants

2. Now add another tip if you have one!

Learner-centred teaching

When teaching is learner-centred, the learners or students are the focus of attention, not the teacher.

Read column 1 of the table. Your trainer will demonstrate each activity. Decide which are learner-centred and which are examples of active learning ✓ or X.

	Learner-centred	Active learning
1 T asks students questions.		
2 Two students asking and answering questions while the other students and the teacher listens.		
3 Ss answer questions in pairs all Ss speaking at the same time.		
4 T reads a text aloud.		
5 T sets some questions for Ss to answer then reads a text aloud and Ss answer the questions.		
6 T explains some grammar to students.		
7 T elicits and asks Ss questions about grammar.		

Worksheet 1: Eliciting

Reflection

Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

- 1) What was the most important rule in the game we played?
- 2) Did you enjoy the game?
- 3) Could you use it with your classes? Why / why not? Would you have to make any adaptations?
- 4) What different ways did you use to elicit the words / phrases? Did you give definitions, use gestures, mime etc?
- 5) Do you use any of these techniques in the classroom to elicit from learners? Why / why not?

Worksheet 2 - Eliciting questionnaire

In groups discuss the following statements. Do you agree or disagree with each one. Why?

1. You can't elicit vocabulary and grammar from young learners because they don't know enough
2. Eliciting is a good way of finding out how much your students know.
3. It's much easier and faster just to explain new words and grammar.
4. The best way to elicit words is by using definitions.
5. You should keep eliciting until you get the correct answer from your students.
6. Once you get the correct answer you can move on to the next thing.
7. Eliciting keeps the students involved and active.

Worksheet 3 - How can I elicit....?

- In groups look at the words on the left. Think of the best technique to use to elicit each one and the language you, the teacher, might need to use (if any)

Language to elicit	Technique used	Language use by T
A living – room		
A tissue		
Hard – working		
To sip your coffee		
A cooker		
Would you mind if I open the window		
Angry		
Vegetables		
A film star		

FOLD-----FOLD

- Describe a situation
- Draw a picture
- Give examples of different types
- Give famous names
- Mime
- Realia
- Show a picture
- Show facial expression
- Use an antonym

Workshop- Instructions

Worksheet 1 Classroom Instructions

Language focus

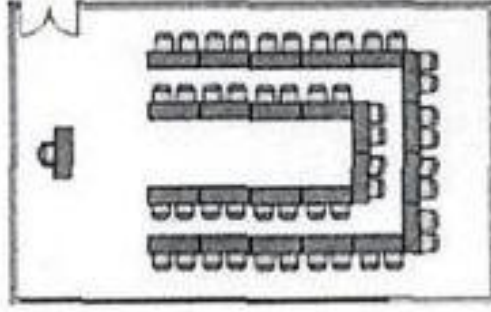
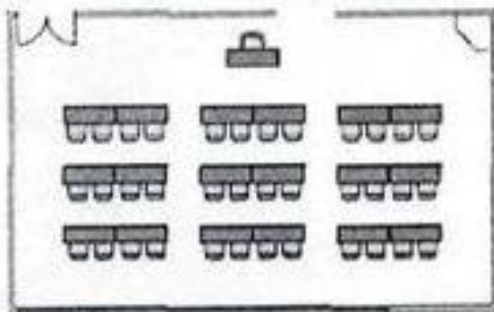
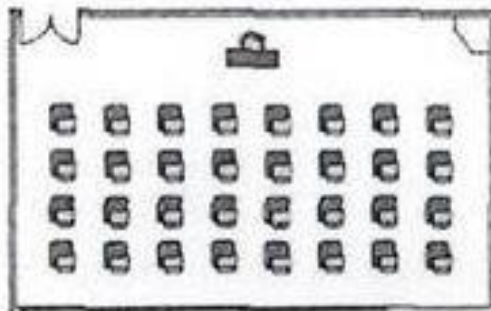
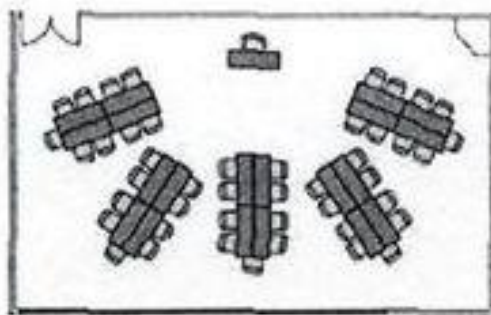
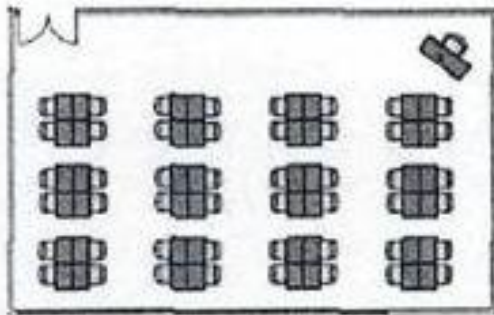
Find as many endings as you can for these instructions.

- o Work in
- o Open your
- o Repeat
- o Please stop
- o Listen
- o Stand
- o Five minutes
- o Don't show
- o Sit

Worksheet 2 Classroom layouts

Part 1 Types of classroom layouts

What are the names of the following classroom layouts?



Part2 Large classes

How could you get a class of 41 students to work in the following ways?

- 1) Pairs
- 2) Groups of three
- 3) Groups of nine



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Current Location: Home → Methodology → Methodology: debates

The onestopenglish debate: Classroom management

Author: Adrian Tennant

Type: article

This month Adrian Tennant kicks off a debate about classroom management. He examines a number of areas often lumped together under the umbrella term 'Classroom Management' and suggests an approach to dealing with these issues and problems.

If you would like to share your thoughts on this hot topic, please have your say in the [onestopenglish Forum](#).

[Introduction](#) | [Looking at the issues](#) | [So, how should we view the issues?](#) | [So, how do we deal with the issues?](#) | [Why is this important?](#) | [From Macro to Micro and back again](#) | [Who should be responsible for managing the classroom?](#) | [Sharing](#)

Introduction

Earlier this week a colleague asked me how he could manage his class. At first I was a bit lost as to what to say so I asked him exactly what he meant by *managing his class*. His reply left me pondering a whole series of questions and reminded me of the number of times I've been asked to do workshops on the theme of *classroom management*.

Briefly, some of the problems he had were: discipline; motivation (or lack of); a wide range of knowledge; covering all the material and getting the students to complete the tasks set.

Looking at the issues

When it comes to classroom management issues I think part of the problem is the way we approach them. To start with they are often seen as *problems*. This initial negativity creates an issue in itself. Rather than being seen as part and parcel of the teaching process, they are seen as being weaknesses and things that shouldn't happen to a 'good' teacher. In reality they are often things that most, if not all, teachers have had to deal with throughout their teaching career.

So, how should we view the issues?

To start with, we should understand that we're not alone in facing these issues and we may well find that our colleagues can help. Having problems with our classes isn't something we should be ashamed of, but something we should share in order to find a solution (and I was glad that my colleague felt comfortable enough to do this with me).

Secondly, we need to see these as issues that can be solved. Challenges that will, in the end, make us teachers who are better equipped to help our students.

So, how do we deal with the issues?

The starting point is to explore the issues. I've found that asking myself a series of questions can help. These are the questions:

- What is the problem?
- How does it affect the class?
- What are the underlying reasons for the problem?
- What do I do about these at the moment?
- Are any of the things I do effective?
- Why (not)?

Once I've gone through these questions I have a clearer picture about what the issue is,

what might be causing it and how I am currently trying to deal with it.

Why is this important?

It's vital to have a clearer picture of what the problem (or issue) is. Often the main problem is a lack of understanding. We know we have a problem and we've categorized it in broad terms, i.e. under the heading of *discipline* or *mixed abilities*. But categorizing the problem doesn't actually help us deal with it (at least not unless we go further, or deeper).

Asking ourselves what the effects are on the class - how the problem manifests itself - will help us understand why it's a problem (why it annoys us or causes us distress). It will also help us later on when we try to find solutions.

The next step is to explore the underlying reasons. If someone is misbehaving and it disrupts the class (other students can't concentrate, the teacher gets angry, we don't cover all of the material etc.) we know what the problem is and what the consequences are, but we are no closer to a solution. If we know why they are misbehaving (the class is too easy, they are bored, they have problems at home etc.), then we are in a better position to actually do something that will lead to a change.

Finally, it's useful to look at what we are currently doing. Clearly, if what we were doing was working then we wouldn't still have the problem. In most cases we start to fret about the problem because we've been unable to come up with a solution (this is when the *issue* has shifted to become a *problem*).

From Macro to Micro and back again

Often the first thing we do when faced with a problem is to try and categorize it in broad terms (and this is how most literature seems to deal with classroom management issues). However, as we've already seen, this is not particularly helpful. What we need to do is dissect the problem and try to find out exactly why it's happening. Once we've gone to this micro level we will almost certainly find that there is more than one contributing factor or reason. This might at first appear unhelpful, but in reality we are more likely to be able to address these small issues than the overall problem. By tackling each of the underlying causes we will eventually solve the original issue (or at least make it less of a problem).

For example, one of the problems my colleague had was to do with discipline. He had a student who was being disruptive and he was finding him difficult to deal with. I asked him what this student was doing. It turned out that she was constantly taking out her mobile phone and texting while the other students were working. The teacher had tried to remove the phone and this had led to an argument. Then, rather than playing with her phone, the student had started reading a newspaper and was still being disruptive.

So, we knew what the issue was, we knew what the effect on the class was and we knew what action had been taken so far (and what effect that had had). But what hadn't been explored were the causes (the underlying reasons) behind this behaviour. In the end it turned out that the student was bored. She found the topics uninteresting as she didn't know much about the topics in the coursebook, and she found the tasks too difficult. By pairing her up with a stronger student who was willing to help, and by discussing the topic beforehand it was possible to help the student.

Who should be responsible for managing the classroom?

Although the teacher should take overall responsibility, quite often students can deal with problems themselves. It is important that we make students aware of how their behaviour affects other people around them and that we create an atmosphere in the classroom that encourages open discussion. Obviously, there are some problems (and underlying reasons) that are private and we need to be sensitive to these. However, creating an environment in which people feel they have a say and where views can be aired can only be a good thing. Treating your students as intelligent people and encouraging them to be responsible for their own learning, and to be aware of each other, helps to reduce the onus on the teacher.

Sharing

A problem shared is a problem halved, or so the saying goes.

- Have you had any classroom management issues?
- How did you deal with them?
- Do you currently have any classroom management issues you would like to share?
- Do you have any useful suggestions or tips?

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Language Focus Worksheet (Large classes)

Situation	What the teacher does	What the teacher says

Workshop- Listening & reading skills

Handout 1

Bedtime

A survey into people's sleep habits was carried out, based on the questions below. Answer the questions and then compare your answers with a partner.

1. On average, do you think you get enough sleep?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c Don't know

2. Do you need to be mentally alert in your work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c Don't know

- 3 How many hours do you usually sleep on weeknights
 - a. Less than 5 hours
 - b. 5 to 6 hours c 6 to 7 hours
 - d. 7 to 8 hours
 - e. More than 8 hours

4. On average, how much sleep do you get on weekends nights?
 - a. Less than 5 hours
 - b. 5 to 6 hours
 - c. 6 to 7 hours
 - d. 7 to 8 hours
 - e. More than 8 hours

5. When you're sleeping, what do you think your brain is doing
 - a. Resting
 - b. Working
 - c Don't know

SLEEP SURVEY REPORT

According to recent medical research, sleeping more than nine hours or less than six hours a night can shorten your life expectancy. Those who are likely to live longest are people who regularly get between seven and eight hours a night.

A new survey of 1,000 adults conducted by the Better Sleep Council (BSC) found that few people understand the important role sleep plays in normal daily brain functions and many people actually reduce their brain power by getting too little sleep.

One in three adults admit that they do not get enough sleep, and lack of sleep is

leaving millions of people without the energy to work as hard as they should. Although a large number of people say that they need to be mentally alert in their work, over half of the people interviewed say that they sleep just under seven hours a night during the week.

On the other hand, most of the people interviewed say that they sleep more than seven hours a night at the weekend. This suggests that a significant number of people try to catch up on their sleep at the weekend instead of getting enough sleep during the week, when they most need it.

According to this survey, nearly half of the population

believe that the brain rests when the body sleeps. In fact, the opposite is true.

Sleep allows the brain to go to work, filing and storing the day's events. Most people incorrectly think the brain is resting or recuperating during sleep.

Actually, some parts of the brain are more active when you're asleep,' confirms Dr Mark Mahowald, director of the Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center. 'Your brain is like a cluttered desktop at the end of the day. At night, when you're asleep and no more information can be put on the desk, or in your brain, your brain can then file away the information.' ●

Workshop- Listening & reading skills

Handout 3

Task

In your group:

1. Look at the reading or listening text you have been given, or have chosen.
2. Prepare a lesson following these guidelines. REALLY FOCUS on the BEFORE stage. (Don't take more than 25 minutes to prepare the lesson)
3. Make sure that each person in your group has a written version of the lesson plan.

Before

Create context which interests and motivates students. Really get the students into it!

Make sure you establish a reason for doing the listening: i.e. what are the students going to do?

Sometimes it's useful to use pictures to get students to predict what the listening or reading might be about.

While

Students do the task or tasks.

After

Think of a follow-up which uses the information the students have gained from the reading or listening.

Reading handout 4

- 1 Work with a partner. Write five questions to ask people about their sleep habits using the words and expressions in the box.

dream have nightmares talk in your sleep snore sleepwalk
sleep on your back, on your side or on your front have a nap alarm clock
feel sleepy suffer from insomnia yawn fall asleep while travelling
fall asleep in front of the television early bird night owl go without sleep
in a double bed have a lie-in at the weekend

- 2 Now ask other students in the class all five questions and write down their answers.
- 3 Write sentences reporting the results of your survey. Use expressions from the language toolbox to help you.



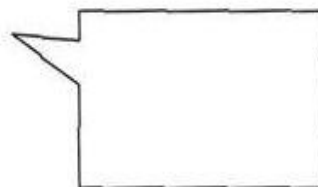
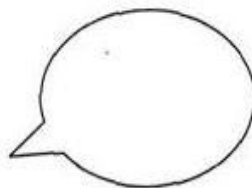
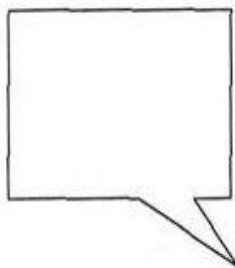
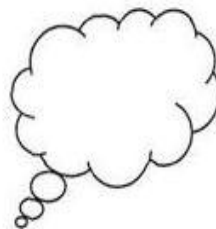
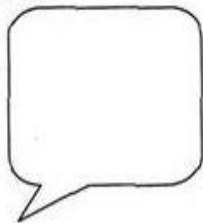
Workshop- Listening & reading skills

Handout 4

Reflection



Fill in the bubbles with tips for teachers about the BEFORE stage of listening and reading lessons.



ETTE-English for Teaching - Teaching for English

Reflection and action plan

1. Complete the following sentences

i) One thing that I found very useful at the training is

ii) One thing that I have to study / read about more is.....

2. Think about the classes you teach. Write two action points for your classes.

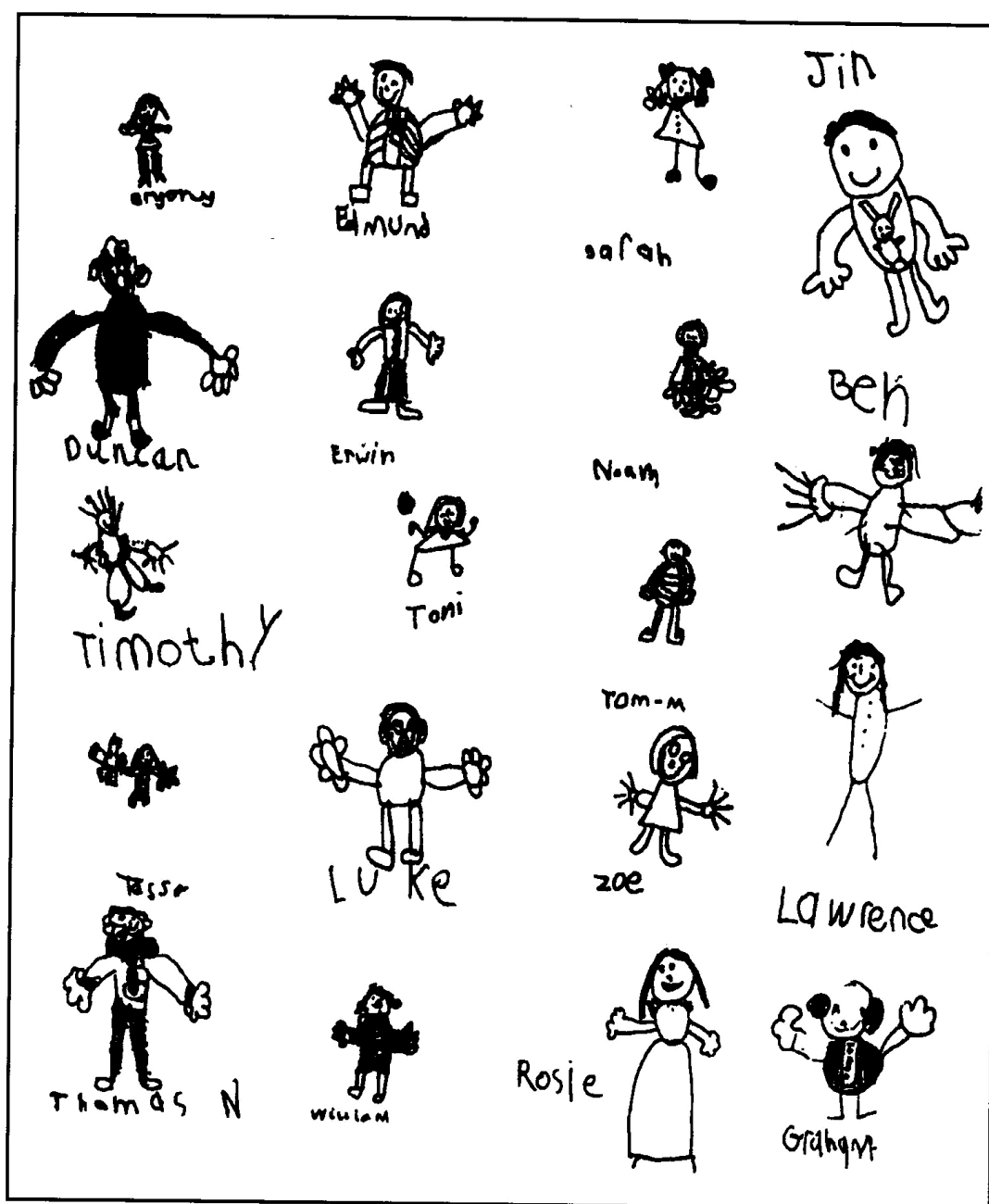
	1	2
Class Which class will I work with?		
Goal What will I try?		
How What materials or aids do I need?		
When When will I try it?		
Evidence How will I know I have been successful?		

Trouble in the classroom

Starter activities

- 1 Look at the pictures of some five- and six-year-old British children which were drawn by the children themselves. What kind of personalities do you think these children might have? Do you think any of them might be difficult to teach?

Discuss your answers with a partner.



- 2 What kinds of pupils/students do you find it difficult to teach? Why?

Reading

- 1 Read the passage below about a child with behavioural problems. Decide how you would deal with Daniel if he was a pupil of yours. Discuss your answers.

Nine-year-old Daniel was . . . troublesome at school. His parents were well off, but they were divorced. Daniel was in the habit of pushing children for no apparent reason, and on one occasion he scratched a girl's leg with a cocktail stick until it bled. ...In spite of this very objectionable behaviour, the teacher reported that there was something very appealing about Daniel when she talked to him and reprimanded him.

Daniel was also a problem at home. There was a close connection between his home circumstances and his behaviour at school. He lived with his mother and a younger brother with whom Daniel quarrelled all the time. Mother preferred the younger brother, who was much better behaved at home and much more successful at school than Daniel. The mother tried not to favour her younger son, but she was aware of her preferences.

It seemed very obvious that Daniel's attacks on other children at school were connected with his jealousy of his younger brother. He attacked his brother at home, just as he attacked the children at school. His attacks on his brother were, of course, linked to his feelings of being unwanted and unloved at home. They also ensured that his mother took notice of him. Similarly, his attacks on the other children at school necessitated the teacher's attention. Once he had the teacher's attention, e.g. when she talked to him, he could be very appealing. Just as his frequent quarrels with his younger brother can be seen as his way of telling his mother that he felt hurt by her preference of the younger child, he showed his teacher how hurt he was by her attending to other children. Neither the mother nor the teacher neglected him. Neither of them could give him as much attention as he desired. The reasons for Daniel's insatiable greed for attention were very complex and complicated and not easy to discover.

Daniel's attention-seeking behaviour made the teacher's life very difficult. She understood that he wanted attention and that he needed it, yet as one of forty children he could not get what he wanted. She also had to protect the other children from his attacks. So she had to reprimand him and punish him, just as his mother did at home. In this way Daniel was caught in a vicious circle which was difficult to break. He wanted to be loved, he felt angry because he could not get what he wanted, he attacked other children because he was angry, and therefore could not get the love he wanted.

- 2 The words and expressions below are taken from the passage about Daniel. They are used to describe (a) Daniel, (b) his brother and (c) his mother. Which word or expression is used to describe whom?

objectionable	troublesome
appealing	unloved
divorced	angry
better behaved	attention-seeking
hurt	caught in a vicious circle

Now pronounce each of the words and expressions.

- 3 Read the passage again and make brief notes on the following:

- a) Daniel's classroom behaviour
- b) Daniel's behaviour at home
- c) the causes of Daniel's behaviour
- d) how Daniel's teacher treated him.

Then compare your answers with a partner.

4 Talking points

Talk about one or both of the points below with a partner or partners.

- Do you think psychotherapy might have helped Daniel and his mother?
- Have you ever had a student – child, or adult – like Daniel? What did you do about them?

Speaking

- 1 Read the descriptions of three students and decide how you would deal with each one.

L. is seven. He is very bright, as his contributions to discussions and his oral work show. However, in his written work he has great problems concentrating. As a result, his reading and writing are poor. This is affecting his performance in all subjects and may be affecting his general motivation. He seems to be a sociable and friendly boy.

J. is sixteen. She has missed a lot of school lately through truanting. She seems unhappy and other pupils tease her a lot as she is very fat. Her father is unemployed and her mother has a drink problem. In her lessons, she is inattentive and shows little interest.

M. is a 36-year-old lawyer. He joined your evening class of adults last term. He always arrives late, is very noisy when he arrives and sits complaining and talking through most of the lessons. He disturbs the other students who have started complaining to you about him. Although he says he really needs to learn English for his work, he doesn't seem to be very interested and doesn't work very hard.