

Partners' Pastimes: *An activity with Wh- questions*

[For basic to low intermediate levels]

Directions for the teacher:

Step 1 – Explain the meaning of *pastime*. Do the students know of any other word with a similar meaning (i.e., *hobby*)? List a few of your favorite pastimes on the board, and as you write single words or short phrases, be sure to speak in full sentences. For example, you may write *reading* as you say, “I enjoy reading.”

Step 2 – Create several question cards. You can use index cards or slips of paper. Ask the students to help by telling you question words in English that ask for more information. Write one word on each card. [Suggestions: *how, why, where, when, who, how often, how much, how many, with whom, at what time, which, etc.*] Shuffle the cards and place them in a stack.

Step 3 – Hand the stack to the first student. When a student takes a turn, she or he will take the top card from the stack and make a question about one of your pastimes using that question word. Example: [where] “Where do you read?” / “Where do you like to read?” Answer each student’s question. The stack will be passed on to the next student on the left.

Step 4 – Place students in small groups, one group for each of your pastimes. Ask them to compose a short text based on the information they learned during the questioning. When possible, they should combine information. For example, they may know when and where you like to do an activity. That information can be stated in a single sentence.

Model: *Jennifer enjoys reading. She likes to read at home in the evenings. She reads many different books. She gets books from the library. Her favorite books are science fiction.*

Step 5 – Have students pair up for partner interviews. They will use the following handout to learn more information about their partners’ pastimes and then write a short text.

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Ask: *What is your name?*

My partner's name: _____

Ask: *Where are you from?*

My partner's home country: _____

Ask: *What are some of your pastimes?*

My partner's pastimes: _____

Ask: *Which of those pastimes are your favorite?*

My partner's favorite pastime: _____

Now ask 4-6 questions about your partner's favorite pastime. Use question words, such as *how*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *etc.* Make notes in the box below.

Now use your notes to write a text about your partner. Look at the models to help you.

Model A: *Jennifer enjoys reading. She likes to read at home in the evenings. She reads many different books. She gets books from the library. Her favorite books are science fiction.*

Model B: *Jennifer enjoys music. She plays the piano and listens to her CDs. She listens to music every day, and she plays the piano on the weekend. She can play on Saturday and Sunday mornings because she doesn't work then.*
