

- 2 Students write the first draft of their paragraph.
  - 3 Students read their paragraphs aloud to the teacher and with his/her help make corrections.
  - 4 Students write the second and final draft of their paragraph.
- These four steps can be completed in one forty-minute class period; in the event they are not, students can write their final copy for homework.
- If one period per week is allotted to paragraph writing,

two months' time will be adequate for most students to have mastered the mechanics of writing a well-organized paragraph. What's more, they will have enjoyed learning how to write, using each week's picture as a new challenge.

Teachers should take advantage of beginning students' enthusiasm for language learning and teach them the fundamentals of good paragraph writing while they're still expanding their linguistic skills. In this manner, the way in which they acquire the tool of writing will hardly be noticed. It's worth a try — for both students and teachers!

GEORGIA MARKETOS

# Nurse station

Paul Nation is a senior lecturer at the English Language Institute in Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. He is at present on secondment to the DTEC Language Institute in Bangkok, Thailand.

Ruangyuth Teeravanich is an architect whose hobby is drawing. He recently won a British Council scholarship to study housing for developing countries in Britain. He has illustrated several books for Thai children.

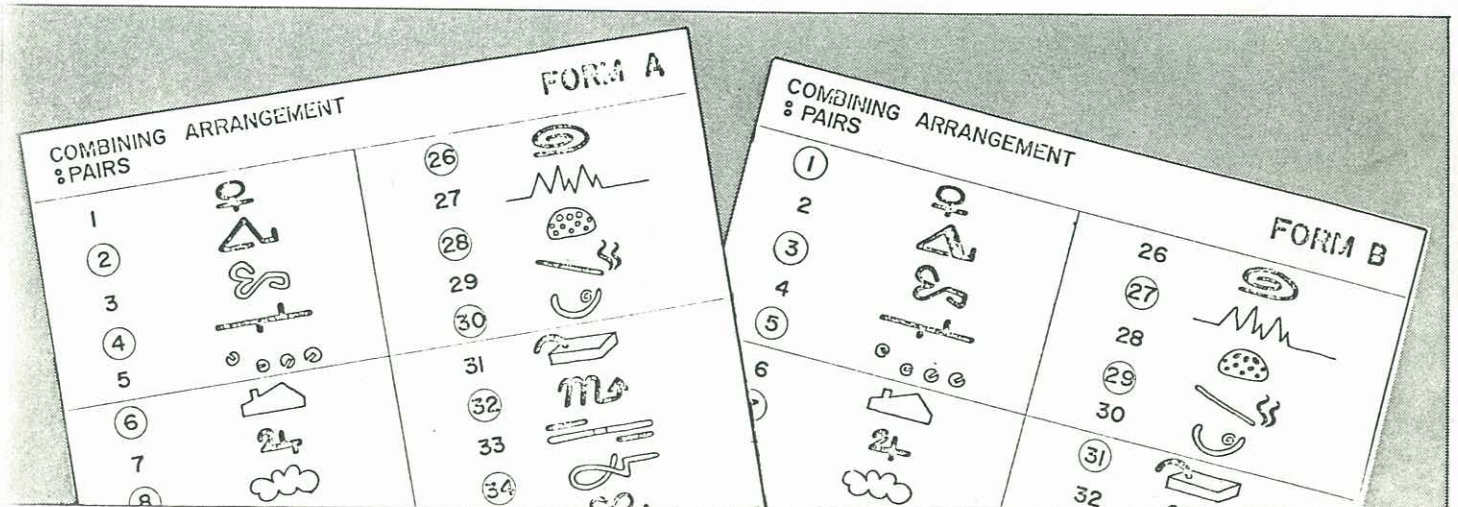
This exercise is an example of the combining arrangement. (i) Information is divided among the learners and it must be combined in order to do the exercise. The learners work in pairs. One learner in each pair has sheet A and the other has sheet B. They do not show their sheets to each other. They take turns at describing their sheets to each other in order to find the 20 differences between the two pictures.

There are two ways of organising this. In the first way the two learners in a pair work together until they have found all the differences. They number the differences on their sheets as they find them. In the second way, each learner works with one partner for only a short time — four or five minutes is about right at the beginning, but the time should increase a little with each change of partner. Then Learners A stay still while Learners B move along one seat. In this way, the learners have new partners every five minutes or so. As soon as they have new partners the two members of

the pair should tell each other all the differences they found previously. This makes the exercise go much faster. A group of advanced learners will take about twenty to thirty minutes to do the exercise in this way.

Some teachers may wish to prepare the learners for the exercise by presenting relevant vocabulary and structures. Other teachers might prefer to wait until the learners strike a problem and then ask for help. The teacher then deals individually with the request. The reason for this is that the combining arrangement described here splits up the information so that learners must share what they have in order to find the answers. It is therefore an excellent opportunity for learners to learn from each other. Changing partners every few minutes increases this type of learning. Thus unknown vocabulary can be picked up from each other. If neither learner knows however then the dictionary or the teacher is the next source of information.

Similar exercises can be made with each learner having forty or fifty small pictures to describe to each other. The learners decide, on the basis of their description, if the pictures are the same or different. When they have decided if the pictures are the same they both write s next to 1 on their sheet. After five items have been done the learners change partners. A circle around the number means that the learner should begin describing. His partner, of course, can ask any questions he wishes and can describe his own picture.



Often exercises like *Nurse Station* can be made in the following way. Two photocopies of a picture are made. On one of the photocopies some parts are blanked out by using typists' white correcting fluid. On the other photocopy different parts are blanked out. Stencils are made from the photocopies.

More difficult exercises can be made requiring the learners to draw the missing parts of their pictures. This requires greater accuracy and detail of description. Maps — one with the roads missing and the other with the railway lines missing — are good for this. Plans of houses or villages are also suitable because only simple stylized drawing is needed.

With less advanced classes, instead of the learners working in pairs, the teacher can be A and the rest of the

class can be B. In this way the learners can help each other with the description and can also learn by listening to the teacher's description.

Combining exercises with pictures can be varied in many ways and are always successful in producing meaningful communication within the classroom. There are two rules the learners must follow.

1 Speak English.

2 Don't let your partner see your picture.

As long as these rules are followed almost anything else is allowed.

(i) I S P Nation (1977) 'The Combining arrangement: some techniques' *Modern Language Journal* LXI, 3, pp. 89-94

PAUL NATION  
RUANGYUTH TEERAVANICH

