

# Action Research Final Report 2014

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**Title:** Teaching grammar communicatively ( Focus-on-form instruction )

**Teaching context:**

Level: 2nd year of senior high school

Class size: 18 students×6 classes

Time: 50mins×2/ week

Textbook: Select English Expression I ( SANSEIDO)

**Problems:**

① **Teaching method and textbook.** The Ministry of Education has a stated goal of teaching English for communicative and enjoyable purposes, but textbooks, instructional practices, and assessments have been slow to change. Consequently, English teachers are often left to make the shift from traditional to communicative instruction on their own. In my high school, for example, in the course called English Expression I , the textbooks are still grammar-focused and drill-based, as they have been for many years.

② **Students' behavior problems.** Most of the students are slow learners and they easily lose attention in class. They can do pair work, however, after they finish it, they tend to continue to chat in Japanese.

③ **Students' English proficiency.** Since most of the students failed to learn English in the previous English learning experience, the level of their English proficiency is very low and they do not like English, either.

④ **The lack of experience as students' centered learning.** They have few chances of being centered in learning. In most of the classes in high school, there is a tendency that teachers are the ones who can give knowledge and students are the ones who listen to teachers and receive knowledge. Simply they have few chances to state their opinions and express themselves.

⑤ **Teacher collaboration.** We use the same handouts and follow the same procedure in teaching English, however, because we do not have regular meetings, information exchange among teachers is not sufficient.

**Goals:**

① To develop the students' communicative abilities in English.

Students will be able to express themselves and exchange information with their classmates.

② To have the students use grammar as a means of communication.

③ To give them appropriate assessments, including performance tests and a fun essay writing to have them participate in class actively and appreciate the importance of the class.

④ To motivate the students to learn English.

⑤ Students learn English through cooperative learning.

## **What I did:**

### **① *Introducing focus-on-form instruction.***

I made the shift from a traditional grammar teaching to a communicative language approach. I stopped teaching English as one of the subjects and I started teaching English as a tool of communication. My goal was to make this course as communicative as possible in order to enable students to communicate with others in English.

First I set up a final goal as an information exchange task, and then plan the activities as structured input and output activities; and noticing part so that the students can reach the goal. I tried to make handouts based on the theory of focus-on-form instruction, which were meaningful and relevant to students, aiming to promote their communicative activities. As input activities, I chose topics which kept students' interests and tried to give them good inputs. As output activities, I tried to give a lot of opportunities for students to express themselves by using target grammar items.

### **② *Students are centered.***

I had my class students-centered. I used a lot of pair and group work which helped them to do something during class. I encouraged them to notice grammar rules through cooperative learning. I tried to speak less and to have them speak more.

### **③ *How to assess students.***

I changed how I assessed the students. At the beginning of this course, I stated clearly how I would assess them. I showed them the rubric of assessment components. For example, term tests could be 50%, performance tests would be 30 %, a fun essay could be 10 % and attitude points would be 10 %. I carried out a performance test each semester, which promoted students' positive wash-back effects. Gradually I set the goal higher but within reach of the students and gave more scores from 30 points at the beginning to 50 in the end. Also I gave one fun essay writing task.

Performance tests: 1 ) Talking about yourself. (tense) (in July) 30 points  
2 ) My ideal boy/girlfriend ( modal ) ( in December ) 35 points  
3 ) Cool Japan ( passive voice ) ( in February ) 50 points

Self-evaluation after each performance test ( students )

Fun essay writing: Cool Japan ( passive voice ) ( in March )

### **④ *Introducing Conversation Strategies.***

I introduced several conversation strategies in small talks, which are needed most for beginner students.

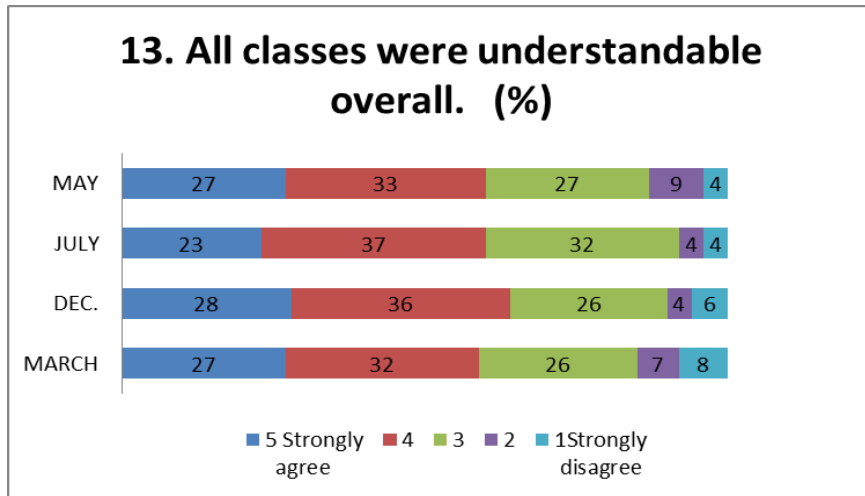
(1) Openers (2) Closers (3) Showing Interests (4) Showing you are listening (5) Getting time to think (6) Asking to hear it again (7) Shadowing (8) follow-up questions (9) Summarizing comments (10) Asking for an explanation

### **⑤ *Questionnaires in May, July, December and March. ( Students ) Questionnaire in March. ( Teachers )***

### **⑥ *A video taking ( The speaking test )***

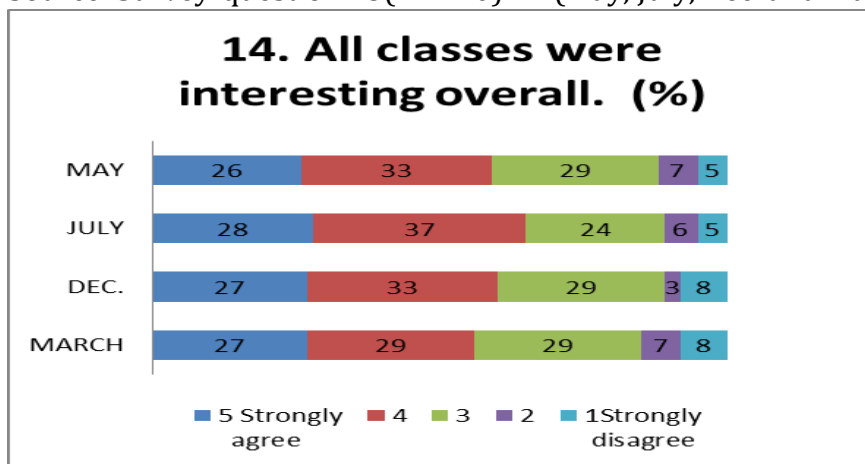
**The Results and What I learned:**

① *The students' overall reception to this course was positive.*



AVG.	/5
May	3.7
July	3.7
Dec.	3.6
Mar.	3.6

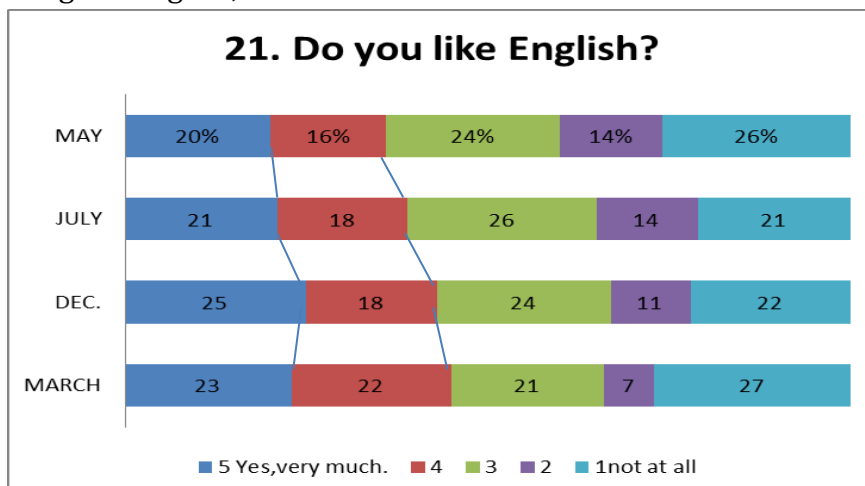
Source: Survey-question 13 (n=210) (May, July, Dec. and March)



AVG.	/5
May	3.7
July	3.8
Dec.	3.6
Mar.	3.6

Source: Survey-question 14 (n=210) (May, July, Dec. and March)

The result of the survey in May, July, December and March to the question 13 and 14 shows that about 60 % of the students answered that all classes were understandable and interesting, on the other hand, less than 15 % of them answered negatively throughout this year. Considering the fact that most of them are slow learners and have a negative image of English, this number is assessable.



AVG.	/5
May	2.9
July	3
Dec.	3.2
Mar.	3.1

Source: Survey-question 21 (n=210) (May, July, Dec. and March)

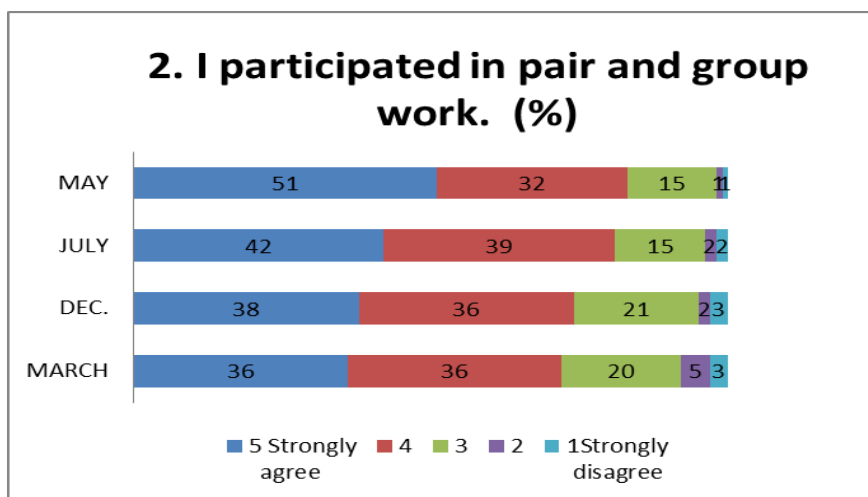
The percentage of the students who answered 'I like English very much.' or 'I like English.' was 36 % in May and gradually increased 39 % in July, then 43 % in December, in the last semester up to 45 %.

Students' comment:

\*Just fun! \* I enjoyed this class very much. ( A lot of comments )

② **Pair and Group work is a key to success.**

How to pair the students became one of the key issues in teaching this course. Because most of the classes consisted of pair and group work, these tasks being successful was a key to their language acquisition. In the first term, students sat in the provided seats. They moved the seats when they changed their partners. In the second semester, the seats were decided by drawing lots. In this way they had different partners every class from the beginning. This went well in some classes but it did not in others. The relationship among students had a big influence on pair work. There were some students who did not want to do pair work with classmates who they had never talked to before. So in this case, I tried to have them paired with partners students felt comfortable to work with.



AVG.	/5
May	4.3
July	4.2
Dec.	3.9
Mar.	4

Source: Survey-question 2 (May, July, Dec. and March) (n=210)

Compare the result of the questionnaires in May at the beginning of this year to the one in March at the end of the year, the number of the students who participated in class actively dropped from 83 % to 72 %. There were more students who started to take pair work less seriously compared to the first semester. That would be a future issue for next year.

Students' comments:

Positive:

I like to talk in pairs. It is a lot of fun. ペアで話すのは楽しいから好き。

We could understand each other better through pair work. ペアワークでよりお互いを理解できた。

I was able to talk with the classmates I didn't know well. That was fun to get to know them. よく知らないクラスメイトと話すことができ、彼らのことを知ることができて楽しかった。

Negative:

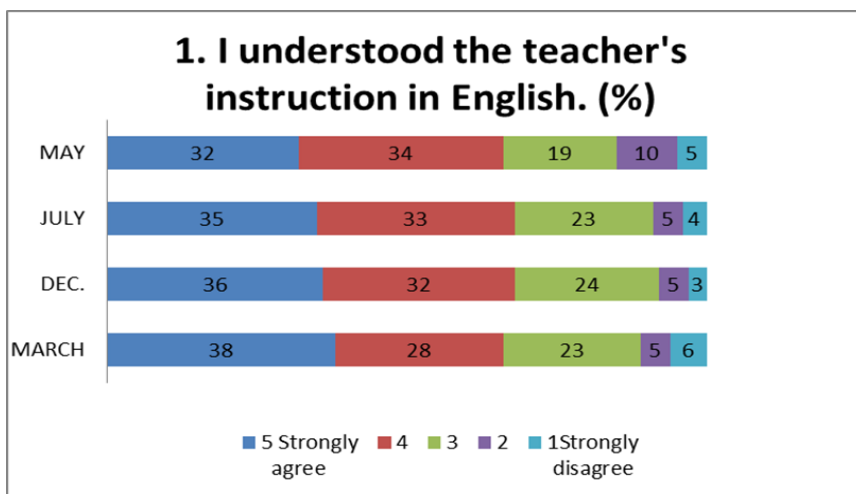
When my partner did not want to work with me, it felt very difficult.

相手がペアワークをやってくれないと、やりにくさを感じた。

I don't like pair work and I would rather have a lecture style. 一斉授業の方がいい。

I don't want to move seat to change a partner. ペアを変えるのに動きたくない。

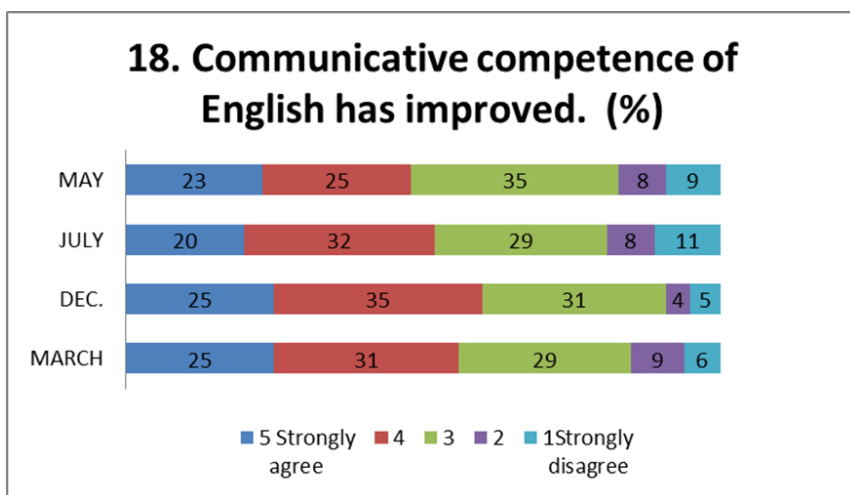
③ *The Students are making progress.*



AVG.	/5
May	3.8
July	3.9
Dec.	3.6
Mar.	3.9

Source: Survey-question 1 ( n=210)  
(May, July, Dec. and March)

The percentage of the students who strongly agreed with the statement 'I understood the teacher's instruction increased from 32 % in May to 38 % in March.



AVG.	/5
May	3.5
July	3.5
Dec.	3.7
Mar.	3.6

Source: Survey-question 18( n=210)  
(May, July, Dec. and March)

The percentage of the students who answered 'My communicative competence of English has improved a lot.' or 'My communicative competence of English has improved.' was 48 % in May and gradually increased 52 % in July, then 58 % in December, in the last semester almost same as December to 56 %.

**Students' comments**

Positive:

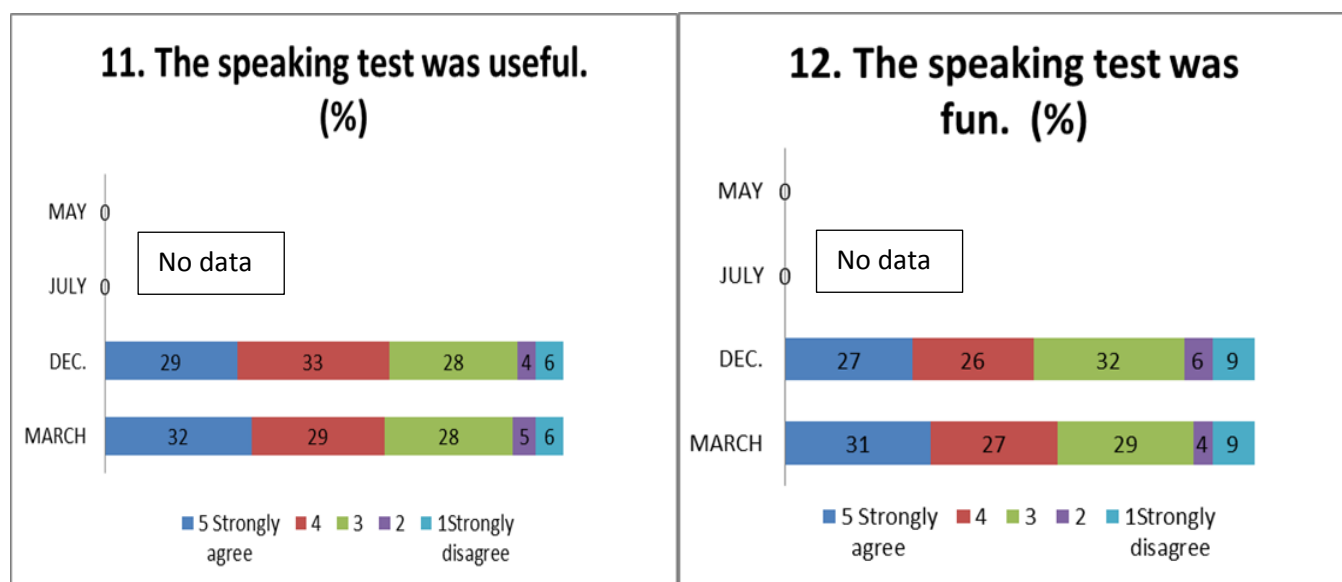
- \* I was not able to think of what I wanted to write in English before, but now I can write my thoughts in English. 前は英語で何を書いて良いか分からなかったけれど、できるようになってきた。
- \* I improved my listening skill throughout this year. 今年を通じてリスニングの力が伸びた。
- \* I improved my speaking skill. 話す力がついた。
- \* I improved my communicative competence. コミュニケーション能力が伸びた。
- \* I understand grammar better. 文法が分かるようになった。

Negative

- \* Because I failed to learn basic English in junior high school, English is very difficult to understand. 中学での基礎が分かってないから、英語は分かりにくい。

④ **The effectivity of the speaking tests.**

Assessment should correspond to what students do in class. The course puts an emphasis on speaking, listening and writing activities and a final goal is that students can express themselves in English. Therefore a speaking test is a must. I gave the students one speaking test for each semester. The speaking tests really encouraged the students to communicate in English. There was a positive wash-back effect to what they did and how they did in class. I set the bar higher for each performance test, keeping the test challenging but attainable.



Source: Survey-question 11 and 12 ( n=210) (May, July, Dec. and March)

The results show the number of students who answered that the speaking test was fun increased from 53 % in December, 2014 to 58 % in March, 2015.

**Students' comments:**

**Positive:**

The speaking test was fun and useful. The practice for the speaking test was useful, too.

スピーキングテストは楽しくて役に立った。スピーキングテストの練習も役に立った。

I improved my speaking skill through the speaking tests.

スピーキングテストを通じて話す力が伸びた。

We could understand each other better through the speaking tests.

スピーキングテストを通じてお互いをより知ることができた。

We should have only speaking tests instead of paper tests.

ペーパーテストの代わりにスピーキングテストだけでよい。

**Negative:**

The speaking test was difficult, so I didn't like it.

スピーキングテストは難しかったので、好きではなかった。

**⑤ Developing worksheet is something I need to make a lot of effort doing, but it is rewarding.**

Developing worksheets was difficult and time consuming for me, however, it was rewarding. I could see the students enjoy the activities. I tried to choose the topics which were relevant and meaningful to students' lives. English is a means of communication, therefore activities have to be related to their real lives. In the last semester, my colleagues made handouts based on focus-on-form instruction, too. It was wonderful that we could help each other to make good handouts.

Students' comments:

\* I liked the handouts very much. They were useful, too.

プリントがおもしろいし、分かりやすくて好き。役にも立った。

\*She used the topics which we were familiar with such as characters on TV. It was fun.

テレビのキャラクターなど身近なものを使って授業するのも楽しかった。

\*I could understand better because the teacher used well organized handouts step by step.

プリントとか丁寧にやってくれるから分かりやすい。

**⑥ The questionnaire in March ( for Teachers ).**

Participants : 3 teachers teaching English Expression I this year.

Data collection : the questionnaire

(About Students):

Positive:

\*The students were very excited about this course throughout this year. A lot of activities include characters which were interesting for the students such as *Doraemon*, *Matsuko* and so on.

\*The students improved especially the listening skill because the teacher used English during class.

\*They became not passive but active in trying to find out grammar rules by themselves.

\*Some students became very interested in English, tried to take *Eiken* or said that they wanted to go abroad and study English.

Negative:

Gradually they started to lose concentration in class because they had a lot of pair work, which meant they had more chance to talk other things with their classmates, too.

(About teaching methods and activities in class )

Positive:

\*I learned that it is important to follow the procedure from input, then noticing to output.

\*I would like to learn more about focus-on-form instruction.

\*It took me a little time to get used to this teaching style, however, once I understood what it was like and then I thought this was an easy way to teach.

\*The pair and group work is a must in terms of that student can enjoy learning English.

\*This course was totally different from other subjects, which was new and interesting for the students.

\*Since the activities were very interesting for the students, they could get rid of a negative image of English somehow.

Negative:

\*Cooperative learning didn't work well, so I need to improve it.

### (About the speaking tests )

#### Positive:

- \*The students practiced hard for the speaking tests. The last speaking test weighted the highest point of 50, so they tried hard more than I expected.
- \*We need to think about how to make rubric carefully and learn more from other examples.
- \*The number of the speaking tests and the points were appropriate.

#### Negative:

- \*The students and I felt difficult until we got used to it.

### (About the fun essay writing )

- \*The students greatly have improved the ability that they express themselves. Even the students who were not good at English were motivated to write.
- \*It was a nice idea that they typed out their writing by using computers.
- \*To be honest, I worried if they really could write, however, after they did the fun essay writing wonderfully, I think they became more confident and motivated.

### (Anything you learned throughout this year? Any change in your teaching style?)

- \* Students should be centered in learning and teachers should play a role as a facilitator.
- \* I have learned how to make interesting and useful handouts and also learned that a speaking test is very effective. We should conduct a speaking test at least once in a semester.

### (Problems and improvements)

- \*Without an agreement with all teachers teaching the same course, I think it is difficult to try a new thing.
- \*Since we could not cover all the units of the text, we should improve on how much we should spend for each unit.

### **⑦ *The statistics gave me a chance to look back what I did objectively.***

I gave questionnaires four times, in May, July, December and March in this year. The number is not everything and there are a lot to learn from students' comments, however, I could see the results of what I did from an analytical point-of-view.

#### **Future Issue:**

- ① I would like to increase the number of the students who actively participate in pair and group work. I would like to find the best way to pair students.
- ② I would like to continue to teach grammar communicatively by using incidental focus-on-form instruction.
- ③ I would like to develop well-organized worksheets, which help students to enjoy learning English.
- ④ I would like to introduce more Conversation Strategies. I would like to see my students' progress so that students will be able to talk and write longer than now.
- ⑤ I would like to share more information with my colleagues. I would like to have regular meetings.
- ⑥ I would like to learn more about cooperative learning.



## From AR Report for the month of July: Lesson Plan: Infinitive

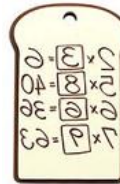
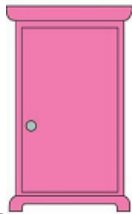
1. Level: Senior high school second year students
2. Class size: Each class is divided into 2 ( 20 students for each )×6 classes
3. Textbook: Select English Expression I ( SANSEIDO)
4. Goal: Students can express themselves by using the target grammar 'infinitive'.
5. Objectives:
  - (1) Students can become familiar with 'infinitive' by being introduced to the target grammar with meaningful and relevant topics and activities to them.
  - (2) They can elicit the grammar rule and then understand the usage of 'infinitive'. They can learn the target grammar through 'cooperative learning' in groups.
  - (3) They can express themselves by using 'infinitive'.
6. Procedure:
  - (1) Day one: Infinitive as adverb ( Input + Noticing + Output )
  - (2) Day two: Infinitive as noun ( Input + Noticing + Output )
  - (3) Day three: Infinitive as adjective ( Input + Noticing + Output )
  - (4) Day four: Infinitive 3 usages are mixed ( Two Input and Review activities )



**1 Doraemon's friends and tools (ドラえもんの友達と道具)**

**(1) Please finish the sentences! (Input)**

- ① Nobita uses 'Dokodemo-door'( ) a) **to remember** everything for a test.
- ② Shizuka goes to the bathroom '( ) b) **to go** anywhere he wants.
- ③ Doraemon goes into the Japanese closet ( ) c) **to fly** in the sky.
- ④ Doraemon uses the time machine ( ) d) **to take** a bath.
- ⑤ Shizuka uses 'Honyaku-konnyaku' ( ) e) **to sleep**
- ⑥ Suneo uses a small light ( ) f) **to go** to the past or the future. 過去
- ⑦ Nobita eats 'Anki-bread' ( ) g) **to make** things smaller. make A B: A を B にする
- ⑧ Nobita puts 'Takekoputa' on his head ( ) h) **to speak** any language.



Takekoputa Dokodemo-door Time machine Anki-bread Small light

**(2) Please check the answers in pairs!**

A: Read the first half of the sentence. ①~⑧ 文の前半を読む。

B: Choose the correct latter half and read it.

a)~h) から正しい文の後半を選んで読む。

Please take turns. (A and B) A と B を交代してね。

**Noticing(気づき) 不定詞(副詞的用法)**

.....に共通している英語の形は? [ + ]

.....に共通している英語の意味は? [ ]

⇒ ( ) を詳しくする

## **2 Why do you come to school?**

### **Why do you live? 不定詞(～するために:副詞的用法)output 1**

Why do you come to school? 何のために学校に来る?

Write!

I come to school to\_\_\_\_\_.

- 
- 
- 

Why do you live? 何のために生きてる?

I live to\_\_\_\_\_.

- 
- 
- 
- 

Speak!

3. Let's talk with your partner!



A : Why do you come to school?  
Why do you live?

B : Answer the questions.

Conversation Strategies 会話技術を使って  
Repeating: 相手の言ったキーワードを繰り返す。  
Oh, really? Oh, yeah? I see. 本当? へえ~, なるほど

My partner ( )

Write!

Please rate the input and output activities. 不定詞副詞的用法  
 5 = very とても 3 =so-so まあまあ 1= not at all 全然 interesting( ) useful( ) easy ( )

### 3 Who says that! (Input) それを誰が言うの?

#### (1) Match each of the people and what each person says.



Nobita

Mayuyu

Pooh

Hikomaro



Sora( Yuka's son) Yuka

Nakayamakinnikun

(hobby:趣味)

(muscle:筋肉)

ホビ-

マッソウス

1. I like **to go** to the gym. My hobby is **to train** my muscles. ( )

2. My goal is **to be** No.1 in this group. ( )

3. **To marry** Shizuka is my dream. ( )

4. I love **to eat** honey. ( )

5. I want **to be** Tokkyujya- no.6. ( ) トッキュージャー6号

6. **To teach** English is a lot of fun. ( )

7. My job is **to eat** delicious food and make good comments on it. ( )



#### (2) Please check the answers in pairs!

A: Read the sentences. 1~7 1~7 の文を読む。

Who says that?

B: Answer the names. 名前を答える。

Please take turns. (A and B) A と B を交代してね。

#### Noticing(気づき) 不定詞(名詞的用法)

.....に共通している英語の形は? [ + ]

.....に共通している英語の意味は? [ ]



# 4 Let's write and talk about your dreams!(Output2)

(不定詞 ~すること:名詞的用法)

1. What are your dreams?( from small things to big ones: anything is o.k.)  
Please list up 5 things you want to do?

Ex. My dream is to go to Hawaii.  
I want to eat a big pudding.  
I want to win a lottery.

I want to get a nice boyfriend  
My dream is to be a nurse..  
My dream is to go to Disneyland in the U.S.

Write!

No.1 \_\_\_\_\_

No.2 \_\_\_\_\_

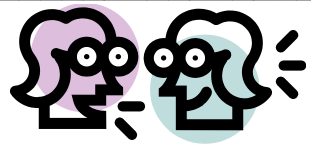
No.3 \_\_\_\_\_

No.4 \_\_\_\_\_

No.5 \_\_\_\_\_

Speak!

3. Let's talk with your partner!



A : What are your dreams?  
B : ( Read 5 your dreams.)  
Take turns. 交代する

Conversation Strategies 会話技術を使って  
Repeating: 相手の言ったキーワードを繰り返す。  
Oh, really? Oh, yeah? I see. 本当?へえ~,なるほど



4. Let's write about your partner's 5 dreams!

My partner's name ( )

Write!

No.1 \_\_\_\_\_

No.2 \_\_\_\_\_

No.3 \_\_\_\_\_

No.4 \_\_\_\_\_

No.5 \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the input and output activities. 不定詞名詞的用法  
5 = very とても 3 =so-so まあまあ 1= not at all 全然 interesting( ) useful( ) easy ( )

**5 What is this? (Input) これはなに?**

**(1) What is this? Please choose the correct answer!**



elephant



snowboarding



Sorry-seishun



listening to music



hot cocoa



naan



coat



nabe

1. This is something **to wear** in winter. ( )
2. This is a sport **to do** in winter. ( )
3. This is a way **to relax** when you are tired. ( )
4. This is something hot **to drink** in winter. ( )
5. This is a popular animal **to see** in the zoo. ( )
6. This is something hot **to eat** in winter. ( )
7. This is a good drama **to watch**. ( )
8. This is something **to eat** with your hands. ( )

**(2) Please check the answers in pairs!**

A: Read the sentences. 1~8 1~8 の文を読む。

What is this?

B: Answer. 答える。

Please take turns. (A and B) A と B を交代してね。

**Noticing(気づき) 不定詞(形容詞的用法)**

.....に共通している英語の形は? [ + ]

.....に共通している英語の意味は? [ ]

( ) を詳しく説明する。

A

**6 What is this ? Give a Quiz!**

**不定詞(～する, ～すべき, ～するための:形容詞的用法)output3**

You will explain 5 things below and give a quiz. 下の5つについて説明しクイズを出します。

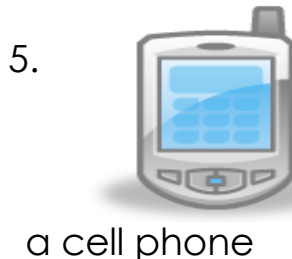
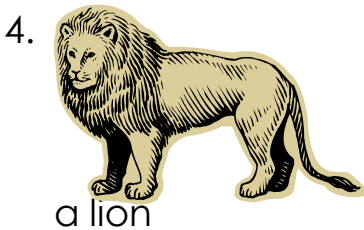
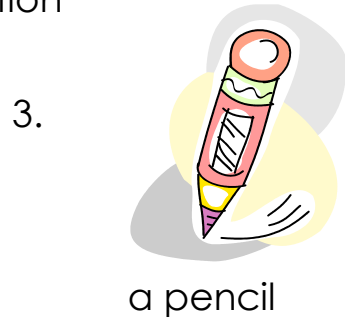
Don't show the pictures to your partner. 相手に絵を見せてはいけません!

Please use the expression ' This is something/ 名詞 **to 動詞の原形** .....

16

これは～するなにか/名詞です。という表現を使ってください。

+ more information



Please write hints before you give a quiz. (クイズを出す前に1～5のヒントを書いてみよう!)

1 This is something ( ) ( ) your house.

きれいにするための

2 This is something ( ) to ( ) at a summer time. 冷たい・食べる

It is ( ) and ( ). 甘くておいしい

3 This is something ( ) ( ) with. 書くのに使う

4 This is a strong animal ( ) ( ) in a zoo. 見るのに

5 This is something ( ) ( ) <sup>テキスト</sup>texts and ( ) on.

メールを送るのに

話すのに

**Give a quiz**

A : This is something to..... + more information.

B: Is this ' ?

A: Yes, you are right. No, it is not.

How many right answers did you / your partner get?

You ( ) Your partner ( )

Please rate the input and output activities. 不定詞形容詞的用法

5 = very とても 3 =so-so まあまあ 1= not at all 全然 interesting( ) useful( ) easy ( )

**7 Please finish the sentences! (Input + Review)**

<p>1. Shizuka likes ( ).</p> 	<p>2. Dekisugi studies hard ( ).</p> 	<p>3. Oden is something hot ( ).</p> 
<p>4. I went to USJ ( ).</p> 	<p>5. I have decided ( ).</p> 	<p>6. It is crazy ( ).</p> 
<p>7. Kyoto is a traditional place ( ). (伝統的な)</p> <p><small>トラディショナル</small></p> 	<p>8. We went to 'Marino'</p> <p>( )</p> 	<p>9. Doraemon wants ( ).</p> 

**1) Please write the correct alphabet in the blank to finish the sentence.**

- A) to enjoy the 'Harry Potter' attraction.
- B) to take a bath.
- C) to eat pastas and pizzas.
- D) to eat in winter.
- E) to get a perfect score on a test.
- F) to jump in to hot water.
- G) to fight with Demons. (fight with: ~と戦う) (demons: 鬼)
- H) to visit in this country.
- I) to eat a lot of *Drayaki*.

**2) Check the answers with your partners.**

- A: Read (No.1~No.9)
- B: Finish the sentences.
- Please take turns each time.

Please rate the input activities.

5 = very とても 3 = so-so まあまあ 1 = not at all 全然 interesting( ) useful( ) easy( )