

A Fun Cultural Indoor Rally

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This is an activity which combines fun with general language review. It will take some time to plan, but it is well worth the effort.

What is a Cultural Rally?

A "Cultural Rally" is a competition which requires students to visit different "bases" (locations).. They may walk, run, cycle or skate from base to base. At each "base" students answer different kinds of questions, read some printed material, get "crazy things", perform some activities, such as: "sing a popular folk tune", or "dance an African ritual". Students are then awarded points at each of the "bases" depending on their answers. The students with the most points win. The rally combines knowledge, speed, wit, skills and a little bit of luck. Though this is usually an indoor activity, it can also have some outdoor activities if the location of the school guarantees the students' safety, or if parents and friends are also included. Students organise their teams for the contest as well as the materials which they consider could be useful in achieving better results. This includes things such as dictionaries, stationery and costumes. Teachers should write the instructions in English for each "base" using vocabulary and structures suited to the students' level, making sure that they are always challenging.

Here are some sample instructions:

1. Get a mud footprint from somebody in the team.
2. What time does the New Year begin?
3. Read the passage on page X in your English textbook, write the three most important ideas which appeared on the page.
4. Dress up for a wedding. Choose a bride and a bridegroom and go to the Principal's Office. Ask him/her to "marry" them. (If he/she speaks English)
5. Find a bug. Catch up. Keep it alive for the last base and show it to the judge.
6. Now rush to the next base. You must look for a place where students can wash their hands.

As you may notice, a "Cultural Rally" requires the students to read English information, perform something and then locate the next "base" where the next clues are.

Getting Ready

Before you organise your rally you should inform your school authorities and ask them for permission, since some may be a little reluctant when you first tell them about this activity. However, you should be able to convince them about how useful and fun it will be for the students.

First of all you should consider time availability and specific goals:

- What words and structures will be included?
- How you are going to organise the teams?
- What will the prizes be?
- How are you going to evaluate your students' partial and final results?(if only the winners can get prizes, then some teams may feel disappointed when they realise how far back they are during the competition and they will stop exerting any effort. Tell them their partial results will count toward their grade.)
- Will you have many groups participating at the same time or is it going to be among teams in the same group? The former would be the better option, because the challenge increases.
- Optional: Who will the judges at the different bases be? (You may invite some other teachers, students' parents, or friends of yours.) You will not need judges if you have the instructions to continue to the next base at each of the bases. However, having

judges helps to add excitement and fun.

General guidelines:

- Choose a starting point, the different spots in the school you can use as bases, and the final goal.
- Make a list of words and structures already known by your students. You should only include well known material so that they will be able to understand every instruction in the rally.
- Prepare the necessary stationary: sheets of paper, colour markers, cards in different colours, glue and masking tape.
- Have your textbook at hand so you do not forget important material to be included in the different questions and challenges.
- Ask people who have participated in "normal rallies", they may provide you with ideas of crazy things which will be great fun for your students.
- Use encyclopaedias and dictionaries for some of the questions, as this will require your students to use these materials to find the answers.
- Find out what your students' interests in music and films are. You may then include some challenges like:
 - X Characterise Metallica and sing one of their songs (if there will be judges at some of the bases)
 - Y Name three characters in Meg Ryan's last film. (This one only needs a written answer.)

Now you are ready to organise your rally. Welcome any ideas you get from your colleagues, family and friends.

How to Organise the Rally

- When writing the instructions for the different bases, be clear and concise on what they must answer or do.
- Tell them where to proceed by giving them just "clues". Don't tell them to "Go to the school library", but make them think a little by saying "You will find the next base at the place where you can borrow books in the school".
- Number the bases, so that none of the teams misses one.
- Make clear to your students that a rally combines both speed and accuracy. Tell your students to answer as many questions or get as many things they can at each of the bases. If they cannot answer all of them or get exactly what you ask for, they must proceed to the next base. Tell them that quantity counts as much as quality. If they answer all of the questions but the answers are not correct, they will not count. If they answer only a few questions, some of the teams could beat them by having more answers.
- Avoid any possible danger or harm for your students. Be careful when you choose challenges.
- Try not to interrupt other classes at work. Some teachers could feel annoyed because of your students' natural excitement.
- Tell them what the prizes will be for the first, second and third places. Be as generous as you can. If the prizes are not worth it, the students will not be motivated to get them.
- Be ready to help any teams in trouble, but never do the work for them by answering their questions or getting something for one of the teams. If you did, the other teams would feel betrayed.

This is an example of a paper for one of the bases.

Base Three

Base three is located where students can have lunch together. There are tables and chairs for everybody. You can buy sandwiches and sodas there.

1. Copy the menu on a paper napkin (with no mistakes), and be careful not to tear it. Keep it and hand it in at the end of the rally.
2. Find out how much these are:
 1. a. a ham sandwich
 2. b. a small order of French fries
 3. c. a regular pizza
3. How many people work at the cafeteria every day? What are their names and addresses?
4. Clean something in the cafeteria and ask somebody in the cafeteria to sign a note to back up your word.
5. Sing a "lullaby" three times to somebody in the cafeteria and request his/her fingerprint in ketchup or mustard (you may use a napkin for the fingerprint).

Now rush to the next base where you can find this interesting specimen in a jar.



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