

# Chapter 6

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## *Visiting a local department store to practice our English skills*

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### ***Summary***

On April 16<sup>th</sup> 2019 we visited a local department store with seven students from class C. Students were divided into three groups and each group participated in the activity for two hours. The groups were asked to notice and write down English words found in the department store and correctly label and write down the types of products sold on each floor. They also took turns speaking in English to the salespeople. Last, they ordered a beverage in English from the department store's coffee shop.

### **Name of the activity**

Visiting a local department store to practice our English skills.

### **Introduction**

English is a universal language and thus spoken by the majority of people in the world. The best way to practice English oral and listening skills is through real-life experiences with the language. It is important that students have the opportunity to use the language "hands-on". Visiting a local department store and using English to communicate with salespeople was a great opportunity for learning.

### **Learning objectives**

- Identify English words used in the department store's shops
- Learn and label shops, floors and types of clothing found in a department store
- Practice asking for a specific item/size/cost of an item
- Practice every day language skills in English (greeting new people, saying please and thank you, saying goodbye etc.)
- Enhance listening skills
- Enhance group skills
- Enhance student's confidence in speaking

## **Resources**

Photocopies were given to each team with various exercises for each to fill out as they explored the department store.

## **Activity**

Each team had to choose a group leader. The group leader would be in charge of noting down the findings of his/her team.

Each team chose a floor to begin on. They then proceeded to find English words used in that specific area of the department store.

They also had to identify what type of clothing was sold on that floor. There was a vocabulary bank available to help the students and pictures of different articles of clothing.

On the last page of their set of photocopies there were examples of how to ask for a specific size and/or colour, how to state what they are looking for using the phrases "I'd like..." or "I'm looking for...", how to ask for help and how to ask for the cost of a specific item. Using this as a guideline the students went up to different salespeople and practiced these speaking skills.

After exploring all floors the three groups met up at the Department store's coffee shop. Students ordered a beverage in English and then shared their findings with the other groups.

Last, each team completed a word search that entailed various items of clothing.

## **Comments from the learners' surveys**

The students were very enthusiastic and loved their trip to the department store. They especially enjoyed practicing their oral skills, even though some admitted to being shy at first. They were surprised at how many words are written in English in a Greek department store and talked about how important the English language is.

## **Final remarks**

In second language learning it is important that students get the opportunity for hands-on learning. In traditional classroom settings students often lack the enthusiasm to practice their oral skills. They find it very tedious and repetitive. However, in an actual experience with real people, students are motivated to use the skills they have learned to engage in dialogue. It is the greatest learning experience they can have! Our students really enjoyed this activity and expressed their interest in doing it again!

## **Supplementary material**

<https://www.facebook.com/189143001818475/photos/pcb.422699771796129/422699321796174/?type=3&theater>