

THE POWER OF CREATIVE HOMEWORK AND PROJECTS IN ELT.

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ANNOTATION

This article explores the pedagogical potential of creative homework and project-based learning in primary English language teaching, drawing on classroom-based practical experience. It examines how authentic, learner-centred tasks transform homework from routine practice into purposeful language use, fostering vocabulary retention, grammatical competence, speaking fluency, creativity, learner autonomy, and social interaction. Through practical examples, the article illustrates how integrating play, personal expression, and real-life communication can enhance learner engagement and create meaningful opportunities for language development beyond the classroom.

Key words: 40 creative homework ideas, project-based learning, primary English language teaching, collobaration, emotional engagement, real-life tasks, communicative competence, learner autonomy, language acquisition, learner engagement, experiential learning, creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, experience in foreign language teaching has expanded considerably, and the advantages and disadvantages of different teaching methods have become increasingly apparent. Research into English language teaching and learning continues to develop, generating new knowledge, approaches, and practical insights. Current educational demands and teaching experience indicate that even homework should become more innovative, engaging, and aligned with modern educational practices.

To understand this development, it is useful to look back at the evolution of English language teaching methodologies in Uzbekistan. In the relatively recent past, English homework often began with translating texts, followed by memorizing vocabulary related to those texts. During the periods when university entrance

examinations in English consisted of 36 questions and later 30 questions, teaching and preparation largely focused on grammar and reading comprehension. As a result, numerous grammar books became widely used and remained popular among learners until relatively recently.

In 2012, a law was adopted to strengthen the teaching and learning of foreign languages, gradually increasing attention to foreign language education in Uzbekistan. Educational practices and assessment systems began to change progressively. From the second year following Shavkat Mirziyoyev's election as President, changes in English examination requirements had a significant impact on teaching methodologies. Instead of relying primarily on 36-question or 30-question tests, assessment increasingly incorporated the four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Subsequently, assessment approaches also began to recognize the importance of evaluating all five skills in certain contexts, including the assessment of grammar as a separate component. The opportunity to apply for higher education using results from the national CEFR-based assessment system or international examinations such as IELTS has also become an important part of the educational system. In recent years, foreign language proficiency has become increasingly important for students pursuing different academic and professional fields, including postgraduate studies. Consequently, developing proficiency in all four major language skills has become an essential educational objective.

These developments demonstrate that homework should also contribute to the development of listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Rather than relying exclusively on translation exercises or constructing grammatically correct sentences, homework practices have increasingly incorporated workbooks containing structured exercises related to the topics covered in class. Assigning exercises from workbooks has consequently become a common practice across educational institutions throughout Uzbekistan. However, although workbooks provide structure and support the consolidation of classroom learning, homework should not become repetitive or limited to completing similar exercises. Therefore, this article aims to share practical experience and methodological insights into making English homework more varied, engaging, and effective. It explores ways to move beyond routine workbook exercises and create meaningful homework activities that support the development of learners' language skills and encourage greater independence in the learning process.

METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a practice-based qualitative approach grounded in the author's classroom experience in primary English language teaching. It examines

creative homework and project-based activities, including posters, recipe videos, educational games, paper puppets, classroom simulations, and gift-making tasks. These activities are analysed in terms of their potential to develop vocabulary, grammatical competence, speaking skills, creativity, and collaboration. Particular attention is given to learners' active participation and the practical application of English in meaningful, real-life contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative homework draws on several established approaches to language learning. Dewey (1938) emphasised learning through experience, while Vygotsky (1978) highlighted the role of social interaction in learning. In language education, Krashen (1982) explored comprehensible input, and Swain (1985) emphasised the importance of language production in developing communicative competence. Stoller (1997) and Beckett and Slater (2005) demonstrated the value of project work for integrating language, content, and practical skills. Additionally, Liao et al. (2018) examined creative pedagogy in elementary EFL classrooms, focusing on learning performance, creativity, and motivation. Kapp (2012) discussed the educational potential of game-based learning, while Thomas (2000) reviewed the principles of project-based learning. These perspectives support creative homework activities such as recipe videos, posters, educational games, role-play, and classroom bazaars, which connect vocabulary and grammar with purposeful communication, creativity, and collaboration.

DISCUSSION

In today's rapidly developing world, creativity, originality, and the ability to move beyond uniformity and established standards have become essential qualities. We live in an era that demands the ability to explore unfamiliar perspectives, discover possibilities that others may not have considered, and introduce innovative ideas. In English language education, this concept is known as *creativity*. Therefore, we need to design tasks, assignments, and homework activities that encourage young learners to think independently and actively engage their minds while acquiring language skills in interesting and meaningful ways. Rather than confining children to fixed patterns and limiting them to teacher-directed activities in which the teacher remains the central figure, we should provide homework and assignments that allow learners to go beyond these boundaries. Such tasks should give children the freedom to explore new ideas, express their own thoughts, and demonstrate their creativity in ways that reflect their

individual perspectives. The primary goal is to enhance their language potential by encouraging independent thinking, imagination, and personal discovery. The rapid development of artificial intelligence, which has increasingly demonstrated its ability to perform tasks traditionally carried out by humans, has become a global reality. Artificial intelligence is making significant advances across numerous fields, including various professions, software development, medicine, education, and manufacturing. As technology continues to evolve, it is becoming increasingly important to prepare younger generations for a future in which creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, and independent problem-solving will be essential. For this reason, we emphasize the importance of teaching methods that nurture children's creative potential and prepare them to respond effectively to future challenges. Rather than viewing technological progress solely as a threat, we can use it as an opportunity to demonstrate and strengthen the distinctive capabilities of the human mind. By developing learners' intellectual abilities, reasoning, imagination, and creativity, educators can help young people discover their potential and demonstrate their abilities through meaningful learning outcomes.

Consequently, homework and supplementary assignments should no longer be limited to the traditional formula of “make a sentence and translate it.” Instead, they should incorporate a variety of engaging, practical, and real-life activities that encourage creativity and active language use. This discussion therefore focuses on creative approaches to English homework that move beyond routine exercises and provide learners with opportunities to explore, experiment, communicate, and express themselves while developing their language proficiency.

RESULTS

If a student perceives homework not as a written assignment to be submitted, but as an engaging experience of using English, the learning process will become even more memorable and effective.

Figure 1. Traditional vs Creative Homework

Traditional (Mechanical repetition)	Creative (Living the language)
Approach	Approach
Memorization-based	Experience-based

Connection to language Rules and word lists	Connection to language A tool for real communication
Motivation External obligation	Motivation Internal curiosity
Memory type Short term, fades fast	Memory type Emotional, long lasting
Independence Follows fixed instructions	Independence Makes own decisions
Social aspect Usually done alone	Social aspect Supports family or peer work
Skills built Reading and writing only	Skills built Video, art, storytelling
Examples Write 20 sentences, memorize vocabulary	Examples Film a daily routine, find words at home, make a comic



To explain the figure above more simply, traditional homework mainly focuses on written tasks, such as “Write 20 sentences using this structure” or “Complete the following exercises in the workbook.” In contrast, creative homework depends on the topic covered in the lesson. For example, learners may be asked to “Make a video showing your daily routine,” “Create a poster about your daily routine,” or “Present it in front of the class.” Each learner approaches the lesson with their own creativity and ideas. Every student is given approximately five minutes to talk about their daily routine. Since each group consists

of around 10–12 learners, the presentations are followed by a vocabulary-based question-and-answer game related to the topic “My Daily Routine” (Picture A).

Picture A
Learners put considerable effort into their homework and complete it with attention to creativity, they are able to acquire and remember new vocabulary related to the topic during the learning process itself. Such creative tasks encourage active participation, develop speaking confidence, and make language learning more meaningful and enjoyable.

A wide range of ideas and digital tools can be used to design engaging creative projects and homework activities. Below, we share some practical ideas for implementing such tasks in English language teaching.

Creative Homework Ideas:

1. Daily Routine Video/Poster
2. Family Interview
3. Photo Story (creating a story using photos)
4. Describing your home video/poster
5. "In Bazaar"©
6. Cooking In English (explain a recipe -video and recipe poster)
7. Role-play at home
8. Create your own Newspaper

9. Make a mini English book
10. Create a restaurant menu
11. Fashion designer challenge
12. Voice Message Homework
13. Create a song or poem
14. Build a word wall
15. Find these words around your house and take photos
16. Create a shopping list
17. Keep and Write a Secret Diary in English
18. Silent Cartoon+English narration
19. Teach sb 5 English words
20. Make a paper puppet and describe it in Class

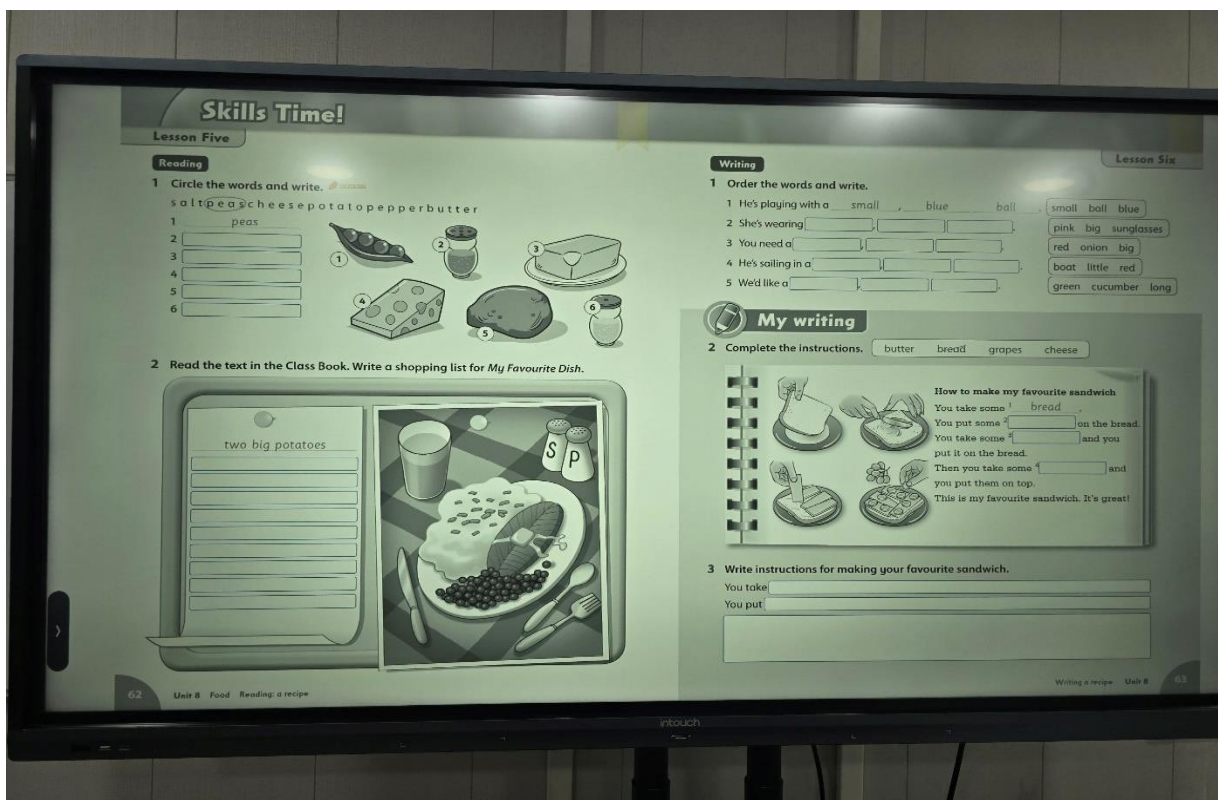
Projectwork Ideas:

- A. My Family Tree
- B. Create Cartoon Character
- C. Create your own Island
- D. My Dream Country
- E. Design a New City
- F. Become a Tour Guide
- G. Create a Travel Brochure
- H. Design a map from home to school
- I. Invent a Superhero
- J. Invent a Robot
- K. Create a new Toy and describe it
- L. Create your own Fairy Tale

- M. Create a useful YouTube Channel
- N. Make a podcast
- O. My eco-friendly City
- P. A Day without speaking Uzbek
- Q. Making a Gift and sharing
- R. Make an advertisement buying/selling
- S. Create a game book on grammar
- T. Mini Library Project

All these homework assignments and project-based activities are designed to help learners practise English grammar, acquire essential vocabulary, and develop their speaking skills. The teacher plays a key role in guiding learners and adapting tasks to their learning needs. Now, drawing on our classroom experience, let us analyse several creative homework and project ideas in greater detail.

In *Family and Friends 3*, Unit 8 focuses on the topic of “**Food.**” We begin by introducing and practising the topic-related vocabulary with a group of 12 third-grade learners, representing half of the class. Audio materials and reading texts are explored,



followed by songs and a variety of interactive writing and speaking activities. Next, we study the grammar point featured in the unit. Once learners have covered the vocabulary, listening, reading, speaking, and grammar components, they move on to the consolidation stage by completing the relevant workbook exercises. The final pages of the workbook for the “Food” unit (pp. 62–63) contain two or three writing tasks that bring the unit to a close. These exercises provide an opportunity to review the language learned throughout the unit and prepare learners for more creative, practical applications of their knowledge.

Having completed these activities, learners are now ready to combine their knowledge by writing a food recipe and preparing a creative homework assignment. Under the title “My Favourite Dish,” they create a video at home in which they demonstrate how to prepare a dish, dessert, or even a simple snack they can make themselves. While preparing the food, learners present the ingredients and explain the steps of the recipe in English. They then share their videos (Picture C) in the designated class group created for homework submission. As this activity involves food preparation, learners are expected to complete it with the support and supervision of their parents or another responsible adult. Each submitted video is assessed by the teacher, who values every learner’s effort,

Picture C



creativity, and individual contribution. The assessment focuses on the appropriate use of topic-related vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and the correct language structures used to describe ingredients and explain the preparation process. Furthermore, this activity promotes peer learning and knowledge sharing. By watching one another’s videos, learners discover different recipes, expand their vocabulary, and observe how English expressions can be used naturally and effectively in spoken communication. In

this way, creative homework transforms language practice into a meaningful, practical, and collaborative learning experience.

Following this activity, learners bring another creative product to the classroom: a recipe poster based on the dish they presented in their videos. They illustrate the finished dish or draw its ingredients and write the “Ingredients” and “Recipe” sections in English alongside their pictures. These posters serve as examples of learners’ written creative work, allowing them to combine visual expression with written language practice. Through this task, learners reinforce food-related vocabulary, practise writing instructions in English, and develop their ability to organise information in a clear and logical sequence. Furthermore, the activity encourages creativity, independence, and the practical application of the language learned in class.

This approach further enhances learners’ creativity, as each student brings a unique perspective to the task. Consequently, their work reflects a wide variety of ideas and creative approaches. Most importantly, these activities help learners build a solid foundation in the targeted areas of English by reinforcing topic-related vocabulary and grammatical structures while simultaneously developing

their speaking skills. For example, when teaching the topic of “**Family**” to first-grade learners, we begin by creating a *Family Tree*, one of the most widely used activities for teaching family-related vocabulary. After learning the relevant vocabulary with the teacher, learners create their own family trees and place their family members in the appropriate positions.





After that, learners are given homework to make paper puppets of their family members. They make the puppets to fit their five fingers, or, if they have a large family, they can make up to ten puppets to fit all ten fingers. They bring their paper family-member puppets to class. Standing in front of the class at the board, each learner puts the puppets on their fingers and describes their family in

Picture E

English, using sentences such as “This is my



Picture F is my”

Other similar engaging and creative homework tasks include making posters of body parts or creating paper toys using animal templates. Afterwards, learners bring their creations to class and describe them in English.

"This is its hand. These are its eyes and ears..."

Once the key language has been taught by the teacher, learners put it into practice.

Using “In Bazaar” Method for Homework

While exploring teaching methods, I came across a guide uploaded in 2025 for the popularisation of effective teaching methodologies for the *Prepare and Guess What?* coursebooks in schools. The guide was prepared by Nodira Shodmonkhonova, an English language teacher at School No. 21 in Yangiyo‘l District, Tashkent Region. The “In Bazaar” method particularly caught my attention. Indeed, this methodological guide was rich in new teaching methods. In this article, I would like to introduce this method to fellow teachers, acknowledging its author. I have also actively used it in my own lessons and achieved positive results. This method meets the requirements of creative homework and its practical, interactive use in the classroom. For example, when teaching the topic of “**Food and Products**,” teachers first introduce the relevant vocabulary and then give learners opportunities to use it in practice. At the same time, learners can practise the grammar

Picture G



structures “**How much?**” and “**How many?**”, learn numbers and how to state prices, and use key language for asking for goods and negotiating. Furthermore, after working in pairs and groups, learners develop their collaborative skills. As homework, learners prepare small flashcards related to the topic of *Food*. They draw pictures of the fruits, vegetables, clothes, or other products they have studied, depending on the lesson topic. They then assign prices to their products using agreed-upon numbers. Each learner also makes the same amount of paper money to bring to class.

After preparing their flashcards at home, learners arrange them on their desks in the classroom. The teacher explains the key language on the board, including “How much?”, “How many?”, “There is...”, “There are...”, “I need...”, “Do you need...?”, and “You’re welcome.” The learners then work in pairs, creating dialogues in English and bargaining with each other to collect products in their baskets. At the end of the game, the pair that fills its basket most successfully while making the most effective use of the target language wins. Through this game-based method, learners develop a wide range of skills. In addition to vocabulary, grammar, and speaking, they practise bargaining in English, discussing prices, and developing collaborative skills.

Creative Game Books Based on the Taught Topic, Vocabulary, or Grammar

With this method, homework or project work is designed to engage learners in thinking independently about the topic they have studied. For example, suppose the indefinite articles “a” and “an” have been taught in class. We may want to assign homework that presents the topic in a slightly unconventional way. In this case, learners are asked to create an interesting game, quiz, crossword, or task related to the use of “a” and “an” and bring it to class.



Picture H

The learners came to class with interesting games they had created, each one different from the others. They enjoyed playing each other's games and completing the activities, while also reinforcing the target topic. Such homework tasks are completed with genuine enjoyment and enthusiasm, and learners look forward to doing them.

Creating Cartoon Characters

In our previous article, we discussed the contribution of watching cartoons with English subtitles to the development of language skills. Now, we would also like to include this activity in the category of creative homework. Learners prepare posters describing the cartoon characters they have watched at home and then present their posters in class.



Picture 1

You can believe me, this is one of the learners' favourite projects, and it also produces excellent results. Through this activity, learners experience creativity and enjoy learning in an interesting and meaningful context.

Gift-sharing

This activity is not simply about exchanging gifts; rather, it is presented as a communicative and social English language activity. As part of this method, learners are assigned homework to make small gifts for one another and bring them to class. They then present their gifts to each other in the classroom.



Picture J

The aim of this method is to improve speaking skills and encourage learners to use everyday English expressions. When exchanging gifts, learners practise using key language such as “This is for you!”, “Thank you!”, “You’re welcome!”, “I made it especially for you at home”, “I like it!”, and “This is a surprise!” in real-life communication.

Furthermore, this activity fosters social interaction and emotional engagement, allowing learners to learn through real-life experiences. They realise that English can bring them together and help them develop mutual respect, care, and affection for one another.

CONCLUSION

Creative homework and project-based activities transform traditional assignments into meaningful, engaging, and practical learning experiences. By integrating creativity, play, and real-life communication, teachers can create opportunities for learners to apply vocabulary and grammatical structures in authentic contexts. These

approaches not only strengthen language skills but also foster learner autonomy, collaboration, confidence, and motivation. Ultimately, creative homework demonstrates that effective language learning extends beyond the classroom, where curiosity and purposeful engagement turn learning into a natural and enjoyable process.

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