Tag Questions
To Show Concern/To Empathize

Materials developed by Katie Leite

Class Demographics:

Primary Skills: Listening & Speaking
Students: Adults
Type of Institution: Adult Education, Continuing Education Program
Proficiency Level: High Beginner
Length of Class Time: 2 hours
First Language Background: Varied
Suggested Follow-Up Lesson: Offering suggestions to classmates' problems
TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"
Language Presentation

Directions: Listen to each conversation below. Practice each conversation with your partner.

**Conversation 1:** Juanita and Fredo are classmates. They are talking after class.

Juanita: I'm having such a hard time speaking English.

Fredo: It's tough, isn't it?

Juanita: Yeah.

**Conversation 2:** Hamid and Elsa are classmates. They are doing homework together.

Hamid: I'm having such a hard time learning new vocabulary words.

Elsa: They're impossible, aren't they?

Hamid: Umm-hmm.

**Conversation 3:** Masha and Neeraj are classmates in a night class. They are talking during the class break.

Neeraj: I'm having such a hard time staying awake in class.

Masha: It's late, isn't it?

Neeraj: Yes.

**Conversation 4:** Deepak and Kumi are classmates. They are studying together before class.

Deepak: I'm having such a hard time reading the books for this class.

Kumi: They're long, aren't they?

Deepak: Oh yeah.
**TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"**

**Highlighting Structure**

**Directions:** Use the conversations to fill in the grid. Then, answer the questions below.

I'm having such a hard time...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>TAG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>speaking</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb (+)</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Verb (-)</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it</td>
<td>'s</td>
<td>tough,</td>
<td>isn't</td>
<td>it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now, think about these questions:

1. On the grid you see both "is" and "are". How do you know which one to use?

2. What is the difference between the verb in the STATEMENT and the verb in the TAG?

3. a) What is the relationship between the speakers?
   
   b) Would it be ok to respond, "It's great, isn't it?" Why or why not?

4. What does the speaker who uses the tag question do?

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TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"

Controlled Exercises

Part I:
Directions: Complete the conversations below.

Conversation 1:
Won Jung and Pablo are classmates. They are studying together.

Won Jung: I'm having such a hard time understanding the homework.

Pablo: _______________ difficult, _______________ ?

Won Jung: Umm-hmm.

Conversation 2:
Hironoshi and Carol are classmates. They are talking during the class break.

Hironoshi: I'm having such a hard time reading the sentences on the board.

Carol: _______________ messy, _______________ ?

Hironoshi: They sure are.

Conversation 3:
Mikko and Bonnie are classmates. They are doing homework together.

Mikko: I'm having such a hard time seeing the words on the overhead.

Bonnie: _______________ small, _______________ ?

Mikko: Yeah.

Conversation 4:
Chenara and Yong Hwon are classmates. They are talking in class during pair work.

Chenara: I'm having such a hard time hearing in class.

Yong Hwon: _______________ noisy, _______________ ?

Chenara: Umm-hmm.
Part II:
Directions: Complete the conversations below. Use the adjective bank to help you.

**Adjective Bank**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tough</th>
<th>impossible</th>
<th>small</th>
<th>late</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>messy</td>
<td>noisy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conversation 5:**
Pepe and Arlene are classmates. They are walking to class together.

Pepe: I'm having such a hard time writing the essays for English class.

Arlene: ____________________________? ____________________________?

Pepe: Yeah.

**Conversation 6:**
Joohyang and Bill are classmates. They are studying together.

Joohyang: I'm having such a hard time staying awake during class.

Bill: ____________________________? ____________________________?

Joohyang: Umm-hmm.

**Conversation 7:**
Jim and Raquel are classmates. They are talking in class during pair work.

Jim: I'm having such a hard time understanding the assignments.

Raquel: ____________________________? ____________________________?

Jim: I think so!

**Conversation 8:**
Lisa and Felipe are classmates. They are talking after class.

Lisa: I'm having such a hard time speaking English outside class.

Felipe: ____________________________? ____________________________?

Lisa: Yeah.
TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"
Semi-Controlled Activity

Directions:
- Write the problem that the person might have with English or in English class.
- Then, respond to the person... don't forget to use a tag question.
- Use the words in the bank to help you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Bank</th>
<th>Adjective Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reading...</td>
<td>tough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the textbooks</td>
<td>difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the sentences on the board</td>
<td>impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning...</td>
<td>messy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the new vocabulary words</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the grammar rules</td>
<td>noisy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding...</td>
<td>late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the class work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seeing...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the words on the overhead</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the sentences on the board</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hearing...</td>
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<tr>
<td>the teacher directions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the announcements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>speaking...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Conversation 1:
Eliene: I'm having such a hard time...

You: ..................................................

Eliene: Yeah.

Conversation 2:
Gustavo: I'm having such a hard time...

You: ..................................................

Gustavo: Umm-hmm.
(continued)

**Conversation 3:**
*Marika:* I'm having such a hard time...

*You:* ..........................................................

*Marika:* Yes.

**Conversation 4:**
*Cesar:* I'm having such a hard time...

*You:* ..........................................................

*Cesar:* Umm-hmm.

**Conversation 5:**
*Lea:* I'm having such a hard time...

*You:* ..........................................................

*Lea:* Yeah.

**Conversation 6:**
*Abdul:* I'm having such a hard time...

*You:* ..........................................................

*Abdul:* I think so.
TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"

Communicative Activity

Directions:
• Write some problems you are having with English or in English class in the grid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I'm having such a hard time...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• Now, find a partner
  ➔ Student A tells Student B one of his/her problems.
  ➔ Student B responds appropriately.
• Switch roles and practice again!

Sample Conversation

Student A: I'm having such a hard time...

Student B: ..... 

Student A: Umm-hmm.

• Last, get the phone number of one of your classmates and pick a time to call each other and talk about your problems in English class.

Classmate's Name: _______________________

Phone Number: _________________________

Day/Time to Call: _______________________

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TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"
Looking Ahead...

- Now record your classmates' problems in the grid below.
- Count the number of classmates with the problem.
- In our next class we will learn how to offer solutions to our classmates to help with these problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>How many classmates</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
TAG QUESTIONS with “BE”
Homework

Directions:
• Call your partner
  ◦ Student A tells Student B one of his/her problems.
  ◦ Student B responds appropriately.
• Switch roles and practice again!

Sample Conversation

Student A: I'm having such a hard time...
Student B: ....
Student A: Umm-hmm.

Name _______________________

• In the space below write your conversations to give to the teacher next class.

FIRST CONVERSATION

(Studen A) __________________________________________

(Studen B) __________________________________________

(Studen A) __________________________________________

SECOND CONVERSATION:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
ANSWER KEY

TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"
Highlighting Structure

Directions: Use the conversations to fill in the grid. Then, answer the questions below.

I'm having such a hard time...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>speaking English</td>
<td>It's tough, isn't it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staying awake in class</td>
<td>It's late, isn't it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning new vocabulary words</td>
<td>They're impossible, aren't they?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading the books</td>
<td>They're long, aren't they?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, think about these questions.

1. On the grid you see both "isn't" and "aren't". How do you know which one to use?

   Use isn't with singular (it) and aren't with plural (they).

2. What is the difference between the verb in the STATEMENT and the verb in the TAG?

   In the statement it's positive and in the tag it's negative

3. a) What is the relationship between the speakers?
   b) Would it be ok to respond, "It's great, isn't it?" Why or why not?

   Close, Informal
   No, because the person feels bad.

4. What does the speaker who uses the tag question do?

   The speaker acknowledges/shows concern for the other person's feelings

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**ANSWER KEY**

**TAG QUESTIONS with "BE"**

**Controlled Exercises**

**Part I:**

**Directions:** Complete the conversations below.

**Conversation 1:**

*Won Jung and Pablo are classmates. They are studying together.*

*Won Jung:* I'm having such a hard time understanding the homework.

*pablo:* __It's__ difficult, __isn't__ it?

*Won Jung:* Umm-hmm.

**Conversation 2:**

*Hironoshi and Carol are classmates. They are talking during the class break.*

*Hironoshi:* I'm having such a hard time reading the sentences on the board.

*Carol:* __They're__ messy, __aren't__ they?

*Hironoshi:* They sure are.

**Conversation 3:**

*Mikko and Bonnie are classmates. They are doing homework together.*

*Mikko:* I'm having such a hard time seeing the words on the overhead.

*Bonnie:* __They're__ small, __aren't__ they?

*Mikko:* Yeah.

**Conversation 4:**

*Chenara and Yong Hwon are classmates. They are talking in class during pair work.*

*Chenara:* I'm having such a hard time hearing in class.

*Yong Hwon:* __It's__ noisy, __isn't__ it?

*Chenara:* Umm-hmm.

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**ANSWER KEY**

**Part II:**

**Directions:** Complete the conversations below. Use the adjective bank to help you.

**Conversation 5:**
Pepe and Arlene are classmates. They are walking to class together.

Pepe: I'm having such a hard time writing the essays for English class.

Arlene: ***They're*** (tough/difficult/impossible). ***aren't*** **they**?

Pepe: Yeah.

**Conversation 6:**
Joohyang and Bill are classmates. They are studying together.

Joohyang: I'm having such a hard time staying awake during class.

Bill: ***It's*** (late/tough/difficult). ***isn't*** **it**?

Joohyang: Umm-hmmm.

**Adjective Bank**

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**Conversation 7:**
Jim and Raquel are classmates. They are talking in class during pair work.

Jim: I'm having such a hard time understanding the assignments.

Raquel: ***They're*** (tough/difficult/impossible). ***aren't*** **they**?

Jim: I think so!

**Conversation 8:**
Lisa and Felipe are classmates. They are talking after class.

Lisa: I'm having such a hard time speaking English outside class.

Felipe: ***It's*** (tough/difficult/impossible). ***isn't*** **it**?

Lisa: Yeah.

Answers will vary for the Semi-controlled, Controlled, and Homework activities.

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