M E M B E R S H I P

VISUAL PUNS

About this activity

A slideshow of wordplay images, all created by artificial intelligence

▶ **Language level**: B1/B2
▶ **Main task**: Creating prompts for DALL-E3 (the AI image generator)
▶ **Topics**: Artificial intelligence
▶ **Language focus**: Visual idioms; noun phrases; giving instructions

For this activity, you will need the following:

- **A slideshow of images** (see below)
- **The worksheet** on page 4 – one for each student

Note: For all materials and discussion, go to the corresponding page in the Resources section:

https://membership.lessonstream.com/resources/visual-puns/

The images

This activity makes use of a slideshow of twelve images, each of which depicts a play on words. The images were created by DALL-E3, the AI image generator. Students have to work out what the images represent and then create their own.

A "cash cow" = a business, product, or investment that consistently makes money

Activity outline

1. Display the first image in the slideshow and ask students to say what it is. Encourage them to find different ways to describe the picture. Accept all answers and offer corrections when necessary.

> Possible answers include:
> - A dog dressed up as Marilyn Monroe
> - A dog wearing a wig and a dress
> - A dog wearing lipstick

2. Tell students that you are looking for a specific answer which is a play on words. What they see in the picture is something that you can eat. If no one can guess the answer, tell students that what they see is a *hot dog* (= a hotdog 🌭).

> **Note**: a "play on words" is a clever of funny use of language, often involving words that have different meanings. In this case, the adjective hot can mean 'sexy' or 'high in temperature'.

3. Tell students that you are going to show them twelve more images. Each image refers to an English word or phrase (all nouns) and they are all plays on words. In each case, students should try to work out the word or phrase. You can let them do this in pairs or groups.

4. Work through the slideshow. Encourage students to write down an answer for each of the twelve images. They should not shout out answers.

> **Notes**:
> - In some cases, students might not be familiar with the words/phrases that are represented. But you can still encourage them to make guesses. All they have to do is say what they see.
> - Power Point has an autoplay feature which means that you can choose exactly how long each slide will be displayed for (45 seconds per slide, for example).
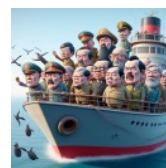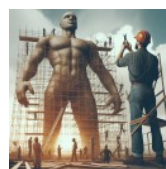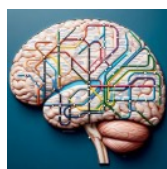
5. Once you have gone through the slideshow, go back to the beginning and listen to your students' answers. They might have some interesting or funny ideas!

6. Give out copies of the worksheet on page 4. Ask students to read the definitions and try to fill in the gaps to work out all twelve words/phrases.

7. Once students have completed the worksheet, go back to the start of the slideshow and go through the twelve images one last time. For each image, listen to students' ideas and give the correct answers when necessary:

1. Football match	4. Party crasher	7. Cash cow	10. Eggplant
2. Butterfly	5. Body builder	8. Family tree	11. Sleeping pill
3. Mind map	6. Coat of paint	9. Fire drill	12. Dictatorship

A follow-up idea

All of the images in this lesson plan were created using an artificial intelligence image generator called DALL-E3. The image generator is integrated with Bing, Microsoft's online search engine. In order to use it you will need a free Microsoft or Outlook account.

https://www.bing.com/images/create/

It took me an average of around 30 minutes to create each of the images in this lesson plan. This is not because the image generator is difficult to use but because it is unpredictable. You can never be sure what sort of image will result from your verbal prompt. This means that behind each image is a process of trial and error, in which you original ideas are prone to changing.

To give an example, look at all the various attempts I made to create the image of the fire drill:

i. "A power drill on fire" (the results were very similar to "a power drill in flames")
ii. "A giant power drill in flames (The word giant seems to have been misunderstood!)
iii. "A cosy fire place with a power drill in the fire" (It refused to put the drill in the fire!)
iv. "A cosy fireplace. Inside the flames of the hearth is a power drill" (It misread the word 'hearth')
v. "A cosy fireplace. Inside the flames, the silhouette of a power drill" (Bingo!)

I suggest that you use the image generator to create your own visual puns and then show your students how they can do the same. Ask students to use DALL-E3 to create similar images and make sure they keep a note of the process behind it (i.e. all prompts and images).

⚠️ **WARNING**: Any DALL-E3 activity should come with a warning that in neutral situations, the image generator has a strong bias towards white, healthy people of European descent.

Twelve plays on words

Use the definitions to work out the answers and fill the gaps:

Image	Definition	Word or phrase
1.	A game of soccer	A _____ _____
2.	An insect of the order *Lepidoptera*	A _____
3.	A diagram used to organize information, ideas, or thoughts around a central idea	A _____ _____
4.	Someone who turns up to a party without being invited, often causing surprise or problems	A _____ _____
5.	A person who does regular exercise to develop and strengthen their muscles	A _____
6.	A layer of paint that you put on a wall, fence, etc.	A _____ of _____
7.	A business, product, or investment that regularly makes money	A _____ _____
8.	A diagram showing the relationships between different members of a family across generations	A _____ _____
9.	A practice event to prepare people for what to do in case of an emergency	A _____ _____
10.	The American name for a vegetable with a dark skin, often used in Mediterranean cooking	An _____
11.	Something that people take to help them fall asleep or improve the quality of their sleep	A _____ _____
12.	A type of government where a single person holds absolute power, often without the peoples' agreement	A _____