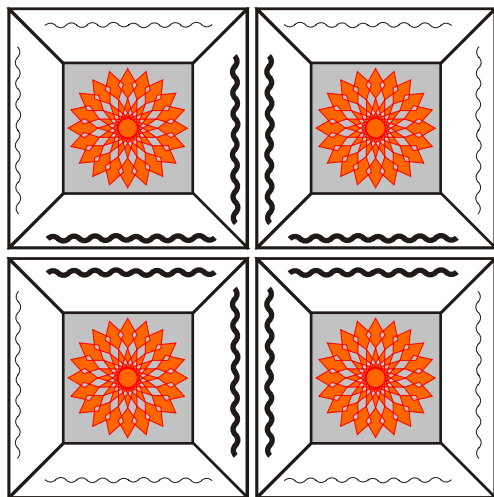


# Puzzle it out!

When I first started teaching in a German 'Gymnasium' thirty two years ago the pupils occasionally greeted me with a song which will be familiar to many colleagues. The title was: "What shall we do with an English teacher, early in the morning?" (Sung to the tune of "What shall we do with a drunken sailor?" The chorus to the song was: "Hoorah and exercises, hoorah and exercises, hoorah and exercises,, early in the morning!"

Well, as my mother always used to tell me: "Nothing is achieved without effort", and although a lot has happened in the field of foreign language teaching since the seventies, even in the most communicative language lessons, there is still the need for the traditional exercises. However, 'variety is the spice of life' and there is nothing in any of the many curricula in Germany to stop us whetting the pupils' appetites by wrapping up the exercise in the form of a puzzle. Maybe you would like to try out a few of the 'Legespiele' on the next few pages. Photocopy them onto card or paper ( If you do not wish to make coloured copies, then copying them onto coloured paper or card is a good second best choice). Make enough sets for groups of two to three pupils and either put each set in an envelope or fasten the pieces together with a paper clip.

In our first type of puzzle, four cards have to be placed next to one another in such a way that where the cards touch in the middle four grammatically correct sentences are formed. The problem is that if you have constructed the



puzzle accordingly, the pupil may find that he has two or even three correct sentences, but not four! This sort of puzzle can also be used for revising vocabulary: The pupils have to place the cards next to one another so that pairs of opposites, collocations, synonyms, etc. are formed. I have included a few examples with object pronouns, reflexive pronouns; *a few, a little, much, many, etc.*, phrasal verbs and *question tags*. It is, of course, possible to increase the number of cards, but in order to avoid too much frustration, the pupils should be told the position of at least one or two of the cards. In the example included here, I have indicated which card is the middle card of nine.

The classic Chinese puzzle of tangrams can also be adapted to help our pupils revise and practise vocabulary and structures in an amusing way. With only seven geometrical shapes - the so-called *tans* - a variety of animals and objects can be produced. As in the



squares, the pupils have to place the shapes in such a way that the words or parts of sentences on the parts of the shapes touching each other 'fit'. If you tell them the animal or object they should have in front of them, they can check if they were right.


Dear Colleagues,

I hope that the examples here will inspire you to think up more examples yourselves.

Yours sincerely,  
Bernard Brown



her mum.  
He's reading  
in the garden.  
We're cleaning our



a book.  
I'm helping dad  
the dog  
My dad is watching



CDs.  
We're doing  
teeth.  
My sister is playing



a letter.  
Jo is feeding  
dancing.  
Dan is helping



in the kitchen.  
Dad is washing  
sport.  
They're listening to



our room.  
I'm going  
my homework.  
I'm reading a



the pets.  
Dan is writing an  
cards.  
I'm doing



the car  
Pat is calling  
e-mail.  
Bill and Ben always make



their beds.  
My brother is playing  
hockey.  
I'm helping



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>my homework.<br/>I'm going</p>       | <p>the dog.<br/>My dad is watching</p>  | <p>her mum.<br/>He's reading</p>              |
| <p>dancing.<br/>Jo is feeding</p>       | <p>sport.<br/>Dad is washing</p>        | <p>teeth.<br/>My sister is playing</p>        |
| <p>the pets.<br/>Dan is writing an</p>  | <p>the car<br/>Pat is calling</p>       | <p>their beds.<br/>My brother is playing</p>  |

There's Sophie. I like



Dan and Jo. I can see

There's Tim. I can see

There's Dilip. I like



me.

It's Jack. I can hear

These are my glasses. Don't drop



us.

The cake is very good. Try


them.



it.

I can't do this. Please help

time



apples.

There aren't many

water.



orange juice.

I've got a few

crisps.



exercises.

We've got a little

taxis.



He hasn't much

I haven't many

There's Sophie. I like



Dan and Jo. I can see

There's Tim. I can see


There's Dilip. I like



me.

It's Jack. I can hear


orange juice.



water.

There are lots of


time



apples.

There aren't many


taxis.



He hasn't much

We've got a few

crisps.



He hasn't much

I haven't many

can't you?

will you?



He didn't come, yesterday,  
 Sue lives in London,

doesn't she?

haven't you?



You don't like milk,  
 Tony didn't work last week,

doesn't she?

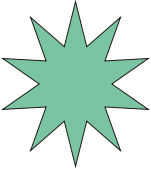
did he?



You don't live here,  
 Bill & Sally aren't here,

are they?

do you?



You've got a brother,  
 You can play the banjo,

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <div>can't you?</div> <div>will you?</div> <div>  </div> <div>               He didn't come, yesterday,<br/>               Sue lives in London,             </div>    | <div>doesn't she?</div> <div>haven't you?</div> <div>  </div> <div>               You don't like milk,<br/>               Tony didn't work last week,             </div> |
| <div>doesn't she?</div> <div>did he?</div> <div>  </div> <div>               You don't live here,<br/>               Bill &amp; Sally aren't here,             </div> | <div>are they?</div> <div>do you?</div> <div>  </div> <div>               You've got a brother,<br/>               You can play the banjo,             </div>            |

Sue talks to  
 We can teach

herself.  
 They can look after



Tim hurt  
 I hurt

ourselves.  
 They looked at



themselves  
 She can look after





myself.  
 I looked at



We enjoyed  
 herself.

yourself.  
 himself.



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <div>They looked at</div> <div>  </div> <div>               I hurt<br/>               Tim hurt             </div>  | <div>               Sue talks to<br/>               We can teach             </div> <div>               ourselves<br/>               themselves             </div> <div>  </div>        |
| <div>               himself<br/>               herself             </div> <div>               We enjoyed<br/>               I looked at             </div> <div>  </div> | <div>               They can look after<br/>               She can look after             </div> <div>               myself<br/>               herself             </div> <div>  </div> |

after his son.

She goes out

She gives

They kept

Sue out every Saturday.

Can you come

with everyone.

They went

round tomorrow?

on working.

for his daughter.

With a nice guy.

He is looking

out for a meal.

She gets along

He takes

after his dad.

They kept

She gives

She goes out

with a nice guy.

for his daughter

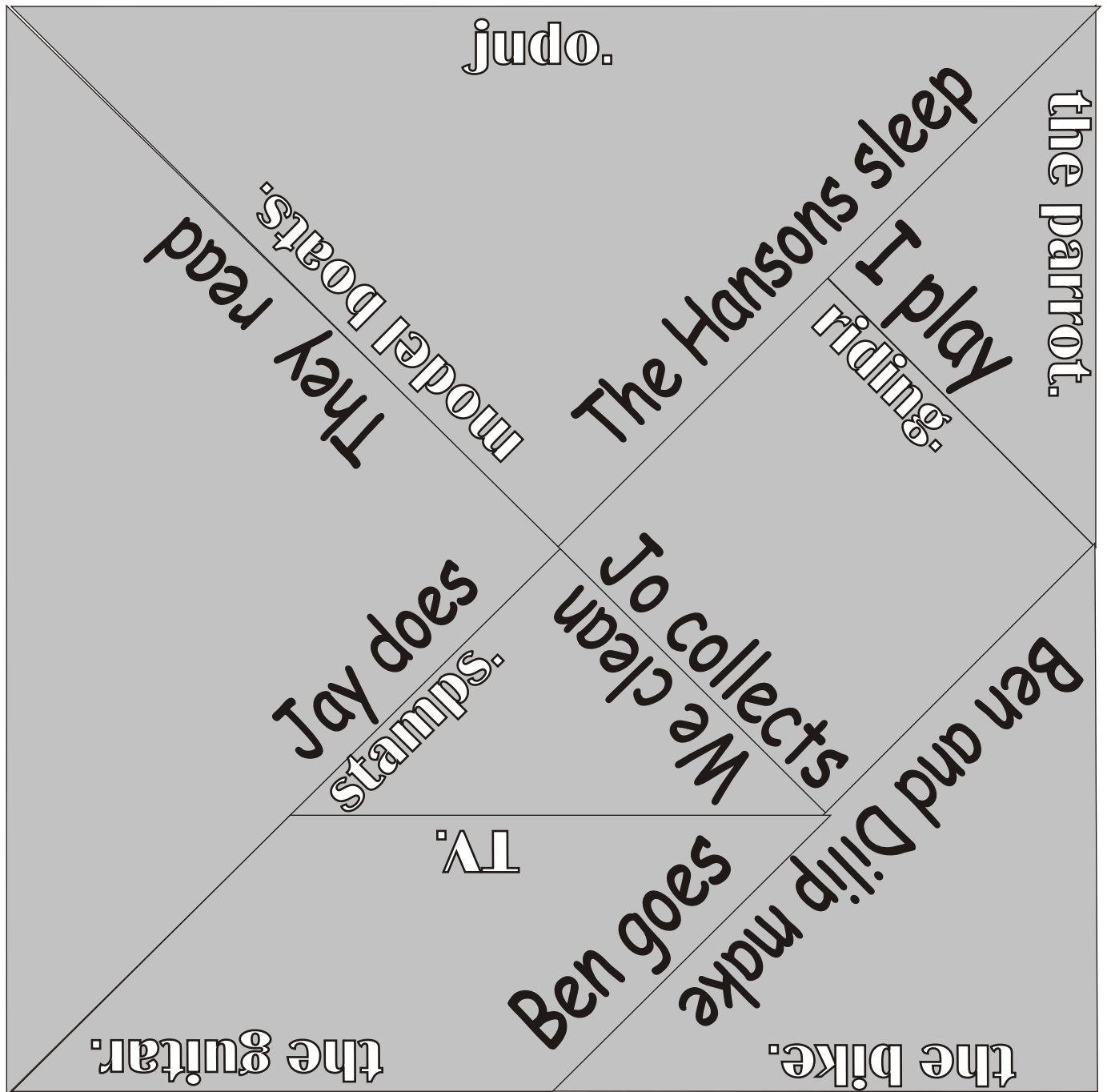
He is looking

He takes

She gets along

They went

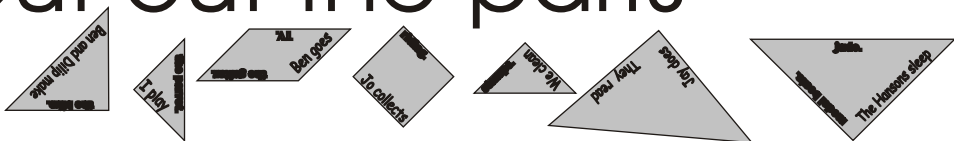
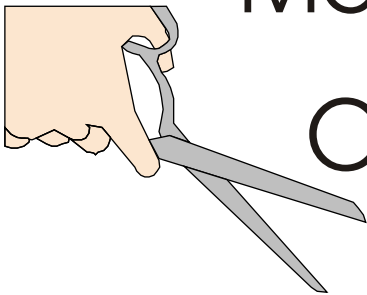
# A TANGRAM



Make a swan



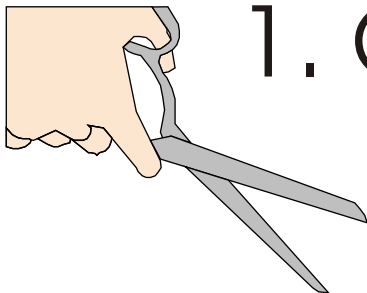
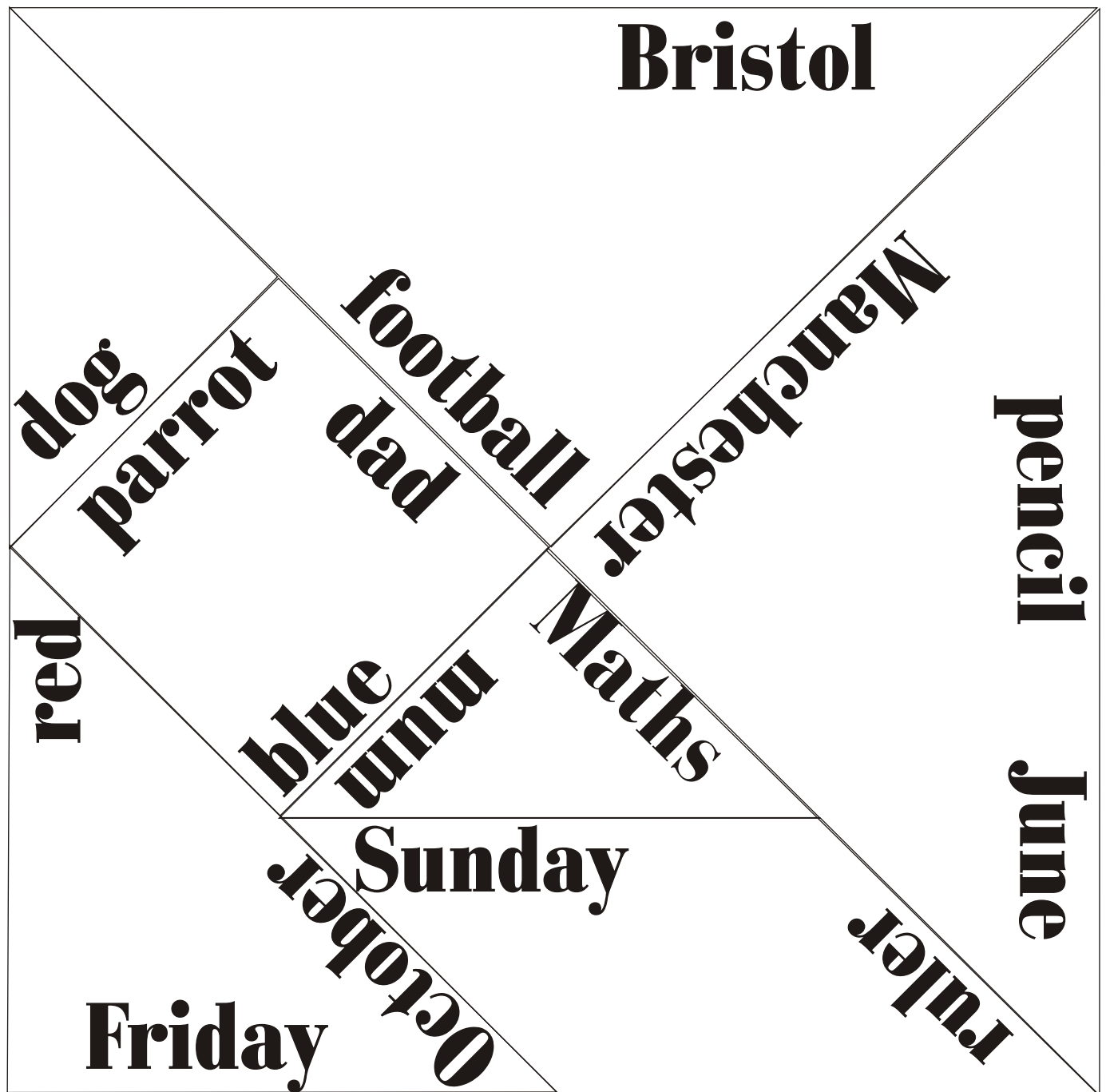
Cut out the parts



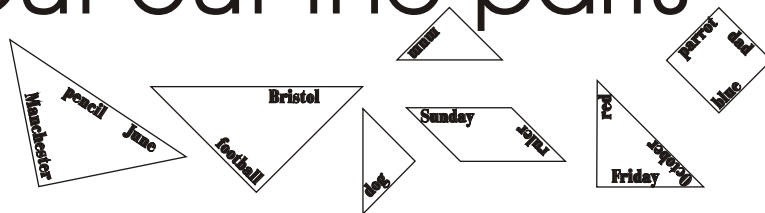
and put them together



# A TANGRAM



1. Cut out the parts



1. Put the parts together:  
What have you got?



# TANGRAMS

