

A penny for your thoughts.

Only a penny? Oh, well. From one can come many! When in the course of teaching events, it becomes desirable for one teacher to dissolve the bonds that tie him or her to the required textbook, there are many, many effective and fun things to do with only one set of visual and/or related print materials

Another Creative Idea Workshop by

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Just as an example, a teacher can take or create a set of portraits with information about famous people, living or dead. These can be the bases of lessons in ESL pronunciation, listening, speaking, grammar, reading, writing, composition, vocabulary, . . .

We hold these truths to be self-evident. And on the other side of the coin, *content* matters too. For instance, classroom activities based on material about well-known figures should include women, world history, other cultures,



De Unam Pluribus:

**Creative Multi-Skills Language & Content Lessons
Based on *One* Set of Visual and/or Print Materials**

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SAMPLE MATERIALS: FAMOUS-PEOPLE PORTRAIT GRID

Clipart is from Corel MegaGallery, 1996: Portraits

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3				
4				

Sample Materials: Backs of 16 Famous-People Cards

(may be printed on reverse side of Famous-People Portrait Grid on page 3)

Pelé (Edson Arantes)

born in Brazil, S.A.

1940—

soccer player, named Athlete of the Century

Kristi Tsuya Yamaguchi

born in California, U.S.

1971—

American figure skater, Olympic gold medal winner

Konishiki (Salevaa Atisanoe)

born in Samoa

1963—

former Heavyweight in Sumo wrestling (most popular in Japan)

Mohammed Ali

(Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr.)

born in Kentucky, U.S.

1942—

American boxer, world heavyweight champion, “the Greatest”

Alan M. Dershowitz

born in New York City

1938—

Professor, author, defense attorney in high-profile cases

Leona Helmsley

born in New York City

1920—

“the Queen of Mean” business & real estate executive, convicted of tax evasion

William H. (Bill) Gates

born in Seattle, Washington, 1955—

Cofounder of Microsoft Corporation, multi-billionaire, philanthropist

Carlo Gambino

born in Sicily

1902-1976

Crime boss—gambling, loansharking, hijacking, drugs

Woopie Goldberg

(Caryn Elaine Johnson)

born in New York City

1949—

Actress, comedienne, many movies

William (Bill) Cosby

born in Philadelphia PA

1937—

Comedian, actor, educator, hit TV series, son murdered in L.A.

Lucille Ball (Desirée)

born in New York, U.S.

1911—1989

Television comedienne, actress, star of “I Love Lucy,” wife of Desi Arnaz

Milton Berle (Berlinger)

born in New York City

1908—2002

Comedian, actor, “Mr. Television,” “Uncle Miltie”

Queen Elizabeth II

(House of Windsor)

born in England

1926—

Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, mother of Prince Charles

Saddam Hussein

born in Iraq

1937—

President of Iraq, accused of supporting terrorism

Indira (Priyadarshini) Gandhi

born in India

1917—1984

Indian stateswoman and prime minister, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru

Fidel (Ruz) Castro

born in Cuba

1927—

Cuban revolutionary and political leader, socialist state, longest time as head of state

SAMPLE MATERIALS: MATCHING STRIPS: NAMES OF 16 FAMOUS PEOPLE

First Names: Given Names, Middle Names, Nicknames	Last Names: Father's Names, Maiden Names, Married Names
<i>Muhammed</i>	<i>Tsuya Yamaguchi</i>
<i>Salevaa "Konishiki"</i>	<i>Arantes do Nascimento</i>
<i>Kristi</i>	<i>Gates, III</i>
<i>Edson "Pelé"</i>	<i>Ali</i>
<i>Carlo</i>	<i>Berle</i>
<i>William (Bill) H.</i>	<i>Atisanoe</i>
<i>Leona</i>	<i>Dershowitz</i>
<i>Alan M.</i>	<i>Gambino</i>
<i>Milton</i>	<i>Priyadarshini Gandhi</i>
<i>Lucille</i>	<i>Helmsley</i>
<i>William (Bill) Henry</i>	<i>(Ruz) Castro</i>
<i>Whoopi</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>
<i>Fidel</i>	<i>Hussein</i>
<i>Indira</i>	<i>Ball</i>
<i>Saddam</i>	<i>Cosby</i>
<i>Queen Elizabeth II</i>	<i>(of the House of Windsor)</i>

Lesson Activity Ideas: Names of (Famous) People

Language-Skills & Learning Focus: Pronunciation (Syllable-Stress Patterns), Names in Culture, Improving Memory for Vocabulary

- MATCH NAMES WITH PEOPLE:** On their copies of page 6, learners may draw lines from first names to last names. They tell the logic behind their choices. They may want to print the names on their copies of the 16-portrait grid of famous people (page 3).
- PRONUNCIATION OF NAMES (SYLLABLE-STRESS PATTERNS IN WORDS):** Teach or review clear pronunciation of syllable-stress patterns in words. (In American English, stressed syllables are said longer, louder, higher, and clearer than unstressed syllables, which are pronounced more quickly, softer, with lower pitch, and with reduced sounds.) Learners can match individual names with these stress patterns by printing these or other symbols above or after them.

1. ' = ● as in BILL	2a. ' . = ●○ as in WILliam	2b. . ' = ○● as in LuCILLE
3a. ' .. = ●○○ as in JACqueline	3b. . ' . = ○●○ as in GambINO	3c. .. ' = ○○● as in DesirEE
4a. ' ... = ●○○○ as in	4b. . ' .. = ○●○○ as in ELIZAbeth	4d. ... ' = ○○○● as in
	4c. . . ' = ○○●○ as in YamaGUCHI	
5a. / 5b. / 5c. / 5d / 5e.	6a. / 6b. / 6c. / 6d / 6e / 6f.	And a few more patterns?

- BEYOND THE MATERIALS:** Learners can print the parts of their own names on name cards, showing the stress patterns in some way. These can be used for name chains, introduction games, and other name activities. The name cards can become materials for lessons on the differences in syllable-stress patterns in various languages, as well as for discussions of the parts of names from various cultures.



Given Name JUN
Middle Name CHI ko
Family Name AM STER DAM
<small>A Sample Three-Sided Name Card</small>

- MEMORY LESSONS:** You can use the names of famous people and/or the names of learners for instruction in memory improvement. The same techniques are also applicable to other kinds of learning, especially vocabulary.

Some steps in the memorization of names may be: *focus on the person (decide to remember), pick an outstanding facial feature, make sure you get the name correctly (ask for repetition or clarification), imagine a concrete image, link or associate the name with the image, say the name clearly, repeat it, review it, etc.*

In other words, you can do a lesson on mnemonics, visualization, association, and other techniques for learning and remembering.

DON'T FORGET: All the materials and ideas in this handout are generic. They are designed to be expanded, adapted, improved upon, applied to other topics and areas, etc.



5. **NAME MEMORIZATION & PRONUNCIATION GAMES:** Use copies of the *Famous-People Portrait Grid* from page 3 of this handout without printed names. In pairs, each participant in turn tries to tell the name of one, two, or three of the personalities in order—from left to right (A-D) and from top to bottom (1-4). To “take” the boxes, he or she puts his or her initials in them. The game “winner” is the player to correctly pronounce the name of the last picture (D-4).

6. **FAMOUS-NAME BINGO:** For another game, the “caller” in each small group says the names of the famous people in random order. Listeners mark the boxes of those pictures. Everyone should get “Bingo” (four markers in a row, a column, or a diagonal line) at the same time.

As a variation, the caller can say only the first or only the last name of each “Bingo item.” The first participant to pronounce the matching name correctly gets to mark that box on *his or her* “Bingo Board” only.

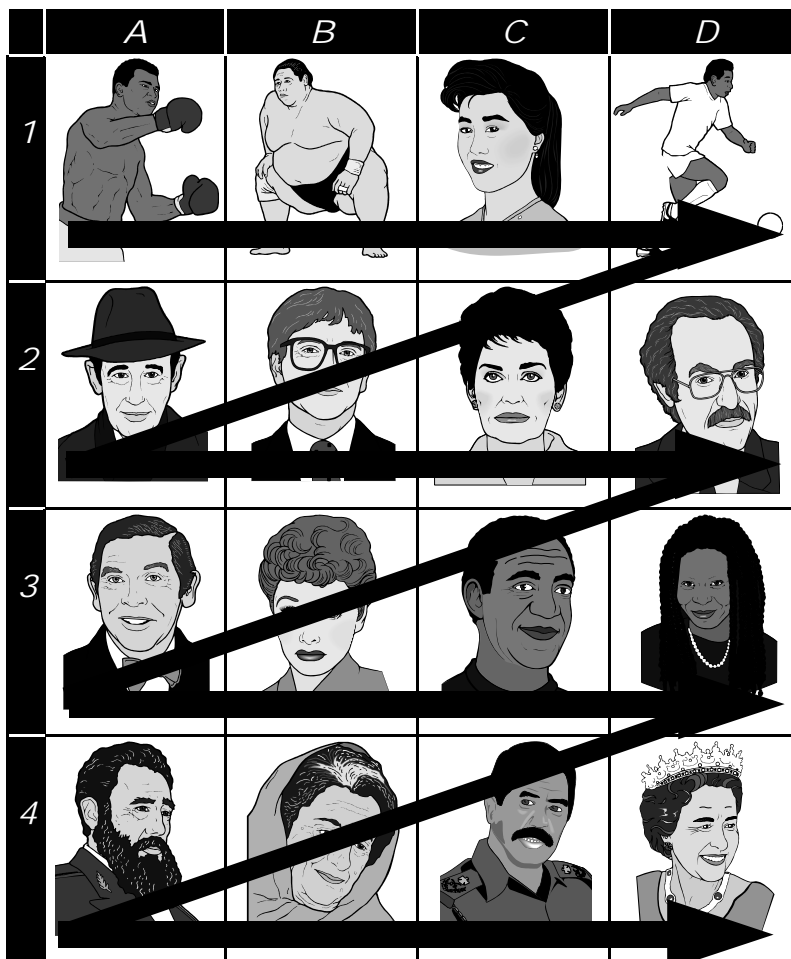
Alternatively, the caller can say the letters and numbers of the pictures in the grid in random order—for example, 1-C, 2-D, 4-B.

For each number-letter combination, the first player to correctly name the person puts a marker on that box of his or her grid. Who can get “Bingo” (four markers in a row, a column, or diagonally) first? That player wins and becomes the next caller.

Of course, participants can also make their own “Famous-People Bingo Boards” by printing the 16 names in random order in a 4 x 4 “board” so that each player has a *different* arrangement of items to work with. The 16 Famous-People Portraits can be cut apart and used as “Caller Cards” for Bingo or Lotto. When learners have acquired more knowledge about the famous personalities, the same boards can be used for other games and “oral quizzes.” For instance, each participant in turn can give three facts or clues about a different famous person, and their listeners can mark the corresponding box.

7. **FAMOUS-NAME TIC-TAC-TOE:** In turn, two players or teams with distinguishable markers (like X’s and O’s) can “take” various boxes on a “Famous-People Portrait Grid” by naming a personality correctly. (For more challenge, they can tell something about each person.) The first competitor to cover four boxes in a row, column, or diagonal line wins.

8. **MATCH PARTS OF NAMES:** On a card-stock copy of the names on page 5, you can cut apart the boxes—so that there are 16 first-name and 16 last-names “cards.” Give these out in random order to participants, who match the names to find their partners for the next activity or step. For example, each pair can print the full name of the famous personality on the board, pronounce it, explain the parts, tell why the person is famous, research that person’s life for a later report, etc.



A reduced-size copy of the “Famous-People Portrait Grid,” showing how it can be used for some kinds of board games.

Leona Helmsly	Kristi Yamaguchi	Indiri Gandhi	Alan Dershowitz
Carlo Gambino	Queen Elizabeth	Mohammed Ali	Milton Berle
Whoopi Goldberg	Bill Cosby	Saddam Hussein	Lucille Ball
Edson Pelá Arantes	Fidel Castro	Bill Gates	Konishiki Atisanoe

A Learner-Created Famous-People Bingo Board



Lesson Activity Ideas: Categories or Classifications

Language-Skills & Learning Focus: Organization of Material, Outlining

- PUT ITEMS INTO CATEGORIES:** Make decks of sixteen cards each—with one of the portraits from the *Famous-People Portrait Grid* on page 3 on each card. (The drawings can be pasted onto index cards, or the boxes on the page can be [enlarged and] copied onto card stock and cut apart.) Introduce or review the concept of classifying or categorizing items into groups. With the 16 “Portraits of Famous People,” the most likely categories are: four athletes, four businesspeople, four entertainers (comics), and four political leaders. Learners can play a variety of games that involve these groupings:

 - GET INTO GROUPS.** The sixteen cards of one deck can be shuffled and distributed—one to each participant. Then players can arrange *themselves* into logical groupings of four each. Each group tells the names of its four famous people and explains what it is about each famous person that gives him or her “membership” in that group. Perhaps learners can stay in these groups for the next step or the next activity.
 - PLAY FOUR-OF-A-KIND GAMES.** Each group of four players receives a shuffled deck of sixteen cards, which are dealt out randomly—four to each person. The object of the game is to be the first to collect four-of-a-kind—e.g., four athlete cards, four businesspeople cards, four comedian cards, or four political-leader cards. After arranging their cards in their hands, all players pass one of their cards to the person on their left, picking up the card passed to them by the player on their right. The passing continues until one player has a set of four; if he or she can name the people, that person gets four points. After more passing, the second person to collect a set of four gets three points; the third person gets two, and the last person gets one.

Alternatively, instead of passing and picking up cards one by one, players in turn can ask others for the cards they need, in sentences like, “David, do you have any athlete cards in your hand?” If everyone is familiar with the names of the famous people in the deck, they can use strategy and be more specific—asking, for instance, “Alma, do you have the comedian Bill Cosby?” Every time they are successful in their request for cards, they get another turn.
 - PLAY “CONCENTRATION.”** Each group of players spreads out a shuffled deck of sixteen one-sided cards face-down on a table. The object of the game is to collect the most matches—i.e., pairs of cards with famous people in the same category. In turn, each player turns two cards face up, telling the names of the personalities on those cards and what they do. If they are a “match,” that person keeps the pair and gets another turn. If not, the cards are turned face down again, and play passes to the next participant. Of course, players should concentrate on the location of the various cards and use strategy to win the game.
- RETHINK WHAT ITEMS HAVE IN COMMON:** Groups can work together to put the cards of their deck into *other* logical categories, such as “Men Vs. Women,” “Ethnic Groups,” “Living Vs. Dead,” etc. They can list the names in various ways, competing with other groups to figure out the most different ways to classify the same items. Or they can arrange the items in a “chain”—some sort of logical order.
- CLASSIFY BEYOND THE MATERIALS:** Introduce or review the concept of “general vs. specific.” For instance, the most general category that applies to these sample materials is “Famous People.” Together, list fairly broad classifications (“Kinds of Famous People”), such as “Sports Figures,” “Businesspeople,” “Entertainers,” “Political Leaders,” “Scientists,” “Literary Figures & Artists,” “Historically-Significant People,” and “Miscellaneous.”

Men Vs. Women		U.S vs. Other Citizens	
Mohammed Ali	Kristi Yamaguchi	Mohammed Ali	Pelé
Konishiki	Leona Helmsly	Kristi Yamguchi	Carlo Gambino
Pelé	Lucille Ball	Bill Gates	Fidel Castro
Carlo Gambino	Whoopi Goldberg	Donald Trump	Saddam Hussein
Bill Gates	Indira Ghandi	Milton Berle	Queen Elizabeth

The Beginnings of Two Classifying Systems

Individually, in small groups, or as a whole group, learners list subcategories for each of the broad classifications. For example, some sub-groupings of “Sports Figures” could be “Managers,” “Sportscasters,” and “Athletes.” Some smaller classifications of “Athletes” could be “Team Players” and “Individual Performers.” Subcategories for “Team Players” might be “Baseball Players,” “Soccer Players,” etc. “Individual Athletes” may include “Boxers,” “Wrestlers,” “Figure Skaters,” and so on.

4. **PLAY CLASSIFICATION GAMES:** The more specific the category, the more difficult it will be for learners to think of a lot of items that fit it. On the other hand, less general classifications are easier to research, especially on the *Internet*. Together, you can choose *Famous-People Categories* at the same level of generalization for competitive listing games. For example, if the agreed-upon grouping is “Individual Athletes,” players or teams can compete in listing the names of famous personalities in that category, as in the example to the right:

Famous Individual Athletes

1. Kristi Yamaguchi (figure skater)
2. Nancy Kerrigan (figure skater)
3. Mohammed Ali (boxer)
4. Hulk Hogan (wrestler)
5. Jackie Joyner-Kersey (track & field athlete)
6. Jack Nicklaus (golfer)
7. Joe Louis (boxer)
8. Jesse Owens (track & field)
9. Andre Agassi (tennis player)
10. Arthur Ashe (tennis player)
- 11.

The beginning of a list for a subcategory of “Athletes”

After a time limit, competitors in turn tell one name on their list. If other teams have that name, they cross it off. If no one else has thought of it, the person or people that did circles it. After all the names have been pronounced, players repeat the process with another category of famous people. At the end of the game, the winner is the competitor with the most correct items (for one point each?) and/or the most items that no one else came up with (five points each?).

4. **PLAY THE GAME OF CATEGORIES:** For the game of “Categories,” on the chalkboard, create a grid with the letters of a word across the top and various classifications in the boxes of the first column. Competitors copy the grid. To play this game on the topic of “Famous People,” they try to think of (or look up) names in the categories that begin with the letters at the tops of the columns. To the right is a sample game in progress:

	F	A	M	O	U	S
ATHLETES	George Foreman	Mohammed Ali	Willie Mays			Sam Snead
BUSINESS-PEOPLE	Malcolm Forbes		Rupert Murdoch	Christina Onassis		
ENTERTAINERS	Sally Fields	Christina Applegate		Sinead O'Connor	Tracy Ullman	Will Smith
POLITICAL FIGURES	Louis Farrakhan	Madeleine Albright	Nelson Mandela		Walter Ulbricht	
SCIENTISTS, WRITERS, ARTISTS		John James Audubon	Edouard Manet			William Shakespeare

After a time limit, competitors in turn tell their items—one box at a time. The winner is the person or group with the most boxes filled in correctly or the most names that no one else has thought of.

5. **OUTLINING:** A common and useful “academic” activity that involves categorization is outlining. For example, the beginning of a detailed outline based on the sample material of these “Famous-People Portraits” might look something like the example to the right:

Less-proficient learners might start with simpler outlines—containing fewer levels of organization and/or fewer items per category and sub-category. More advanced participants can make their outlines longer and longer (more complete) by revising it several times. Each revision can include smaller (more specific) classifications and/or more examples—in this case, the names of famous people.

If the outlining process lasts more than one class period, it can include research. Learners can look in magazines, newspapers, and reference books, and on the *Internet* for the names of well-known people to put into their ever-growing outlines. Alternatively, using the same lists of famous people, groups can build outlines in different ways, reinforcing the principle that are various ways to organize the same material.

A well-formed outline can be used to advantage as the basis of composition writing, especially for the rhetorical form known as “Classification.”

Some Famous People (Alphabetical Order)	
1. Hank Aaron	19. Jimmy Carter
2. John Adams	20. George Washington Carver
3. Madeleine Albright	21. Wilt Chamberlain
4. Mohammed Ali	22. Chiang Kai-Shek
5. Gracie Allen	23. Sir Winston Churchill
6. Woody Allen	24. Bill Clinton
7. Wally Amos	25. Hillary Rodham Clinton
8. Jane Austen	26. Johnnie Cochran
9. Johann Sebastian Bach	27. Christopher Columbus
10. F. Lee Bailey	28. Katie Couric
11. Lucille Ball	29. Gottlieb Daimler
12. Antonio Banderas	30. Salvador Dali
13. John Barrymore	31. Clarence Darrow
14. Ludwig van Beethoven	32. Robert DeNiro
15. John Candy	33. Claude Debussy
16. Truman Capote	34. John Denver
17. Jim Carrey	

Beginning of a sample list of famous personalities for learners to categorize

Famous People	
I. Sports Figures	
A. Individual Athletes	
1. Boxers & Wrestlers	
a. Mohammed Ali	
b. George Foreman	
c. Konishiki	
2. Figure Skaters	
a. Kristi Yamaguchi	
b. Nancy Kerrigan	
B. Team Athletes	
1. Soccer Players	
a. Edson Arantes (Pelé)	
b. Zinedine Zidane	
2. Baseball Players	
a. Henry (Hank) Aaron	
b. Zinedine Zidane	
II. Businesspeople	
A. Founders & CEOs	
1. Bill Gates	
2. William Randolph Hearst	
B. Attorneys	
1. Johnnie Cochran	
2. Alan Dershowitz	
C. Crime Figures	
1. Leona Helmsley	
2. Carlo Gambino	
III. Entertainers	
A. Comedians (Comics)	
1. Milton Berle	
2. Lucille Ball	
3. Bill Cosby	
4. Whoopi Goldberg	

Lesson Activity Ideas: Describe People

Language-Skills & Learning Focus: Grammar—Simple Present Statements, Questions, & Answers; the Verb BE + Adjectives

1. **DESCRIBE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:** Use copies of the *Famous-People Portrait Grid* on page 3. Without saying the *name* of the personality, each participant in turn describes the physical appearance of a different picture. Here are some common sentence patterns and suggested vocabulary for this activity:
 - a. *This person is(n't) . . .* [tall, short, slim, heavy-set, fat, dark-skinned, white, black, young, middle-aged, attractive, nice-looking, etc.]
 - b. *He / She is(n't) . . .* [Hispanic, Asian, Anglo, a U.S. Citizen, still living, dead, well-known, popular, shown in a full-body portrait, etc.]
 - c. *He / She (doesn't) has (have) . . .* [long, short, curly, braided, graying, unusual, etc.] *hair and / or . . .* [a beard, a mustache, etc.]
 - d. *His / Her . . .* [hair, face, nose, ears, cheeks, chin, etc.] *is(n't) / are(n't)* [long, short, wide, narrow, pointy, far apart, etc.]
 - e. *He / She is(n't) wearing . . .* [a hat, a crown, a tie, a bowtie, jewelry, a necklace, braids, a suit, a veil, something on the head, glasses, etc.]
 - f. *He / She looks / seems / appears (to be) . . .* [happy, sad, serious, stern, funny, silly, successful, well-dressed, modern, etc.]

For each description, how many statements does it take before listeners can tell the number and letter (e.g., 1-C, 3-D) or the name of the person described?

For variation and challenge, speakers can be directed to use only *negative* statements in their physical descriptions so that listeners have to pick out the appropriate drawing by the process of elimination. Some sample sentences might be “*This person isn’t shown in a full-figure portrait. He’s not wearing glasses or a hat or any jewelry. He doesn’t have a beard or a full head of hair. He isn’t smiling. Who is he?*”

2. **ASK & ANSWER QUESTIONS:** Alternatively, each participant in turn can silently choose a different picture. Without saying the personality’s name, he or she answers *yes/no* questions about that person’s appearance. Questioners should be directed to listen carefully so that they don’t repeat any questions. They should also ask questions in logical order—from more general to more specific, developing a “strategy” for successful guessing.

Lesson Activity Ideas: Tell About People

Language-Skills & Learning Focus: Grammar—Present Vs. Past Time Sentences

1. **USE “FLASH CARDS” FOR LEARNING:** To make two-sided flash cards on the topic of famous people, put pictures (photos or drawings) of them on the front of the cards and basic information (full name, place and date of birth [and death], reasons they are well-known) about them on the backs. The material on pages 3 and 4 can be printed out back-to-back and cut apart as sample sets. The cards can be used in many ways. Here are only a few possibilities:
 - a. Working individually or in groups, learners can arrange (sequence) the cards according to various criteria: the alphabetical order of their last names, their dates of birth, or . . . ? Then they can list the names in order. On a map of the world, they can write the names with arrows pointing to the birthplaces of the people.
 - b. Looking only at the card faces (the portraits), learners can name the people, tell the approximate dates of their lives or their approximate ages at present, and say what they are best-known for. If they forget facts, they can refer to the back of the card—until they have “mastered” the material sufficiently.
 - c. Each learner can be responsible for the information about a different famous person. Showing the picture, he or she can summarize the important information in a few sentences, such as: “*Leona Helmsley was born in New York City in 1920, so she’s in her 80s now. She is better known for her conviction for real-estate fraud than for her successes in business and real estate.*” Before giving information about the person on his or her flash card, the next participant can repeat or paraphrase what the previous learner said.
2. **USE “FLASH CARDS” FOR REVIEW, REINFORCEMENT, & ASSESSMENT:** From the information in their card decks, learners can create *wh*-questions, such as “*Who used to be a sumo wrestler? What show did Lucille Ball star in? Where was Mohammed Ali born? When did Carlo Gambino live? How long (to what age) did Milton Berle live? Why is Fidel Castro famous?* These can be used for oral and written quizzes, competitive games, and other purposes.