




# eslactive

## Gossip

Tags: [advanced](#), [beginner](#), [intermediate](#), [kids](#), [past continuous](#), [past simple](#), [reported speech](#)

In the Gossip ESL activity students tell their partner a 'secret', who then spreads it around the class.

 8+  10-20 mins  None

### Setup

Students initially work with a partner, but later stand up and mingle with the whole class.

### Activity

1. Each student invents one piece of gossip. If your target language is the past simple and/or the past continuous, the gossip should use this grammar. For example, *Fabiana was playing tennis yesterday when she broke her ankle.*
2. The students share their piece of information, but only with the person to their left.
3. Then, the whole class stands up and mingles, each student repeating the gossip they have just heard (not their information). They can also spread any new gossip they hear as they go.
4. After a few minutes, the students sit down again.
5. They then take turns sharing a piece of gossip that they heard with the class, using the target language. This should demonstrate how far the gossip has spread, and the potential for information to become corrupted. If you have a large class, you could do this in smaller groups.

**Tip** – Especially when teaching kids, be careful to ensure that the gossip does not involve negative statements about other students. You might want to make a rule that the gossip can only be about yourself or celebrities.

### Target Language

The Gossip ESL activity can be used in two main ways. With high beginner or low intermediate students, practise the [past simple](#) and/or [past continuous](#) by having students produce that grammar repeatedly. This works particularly well when combining the two tenses as the gossip takes the form of mini stories (as in the above example).

Alternatively, for high intermediate or advanced students, use it with [reported speech](#). One option is just to use the Gossip ESL activity to introduce the topic, by demonstrating a situation when it might be used. In this case students do not share their gossip in reported speech, but you can work through an example at the end.

Or (with students familiar with the grammar), ask them to share the gossip they've heard at the end using reported speech. For example, *Jaime told me that Elena had gone to the movies recently*, or *Someone told me that Elena would go to the movies tomorrow if it rains*. Try and elicit a range of different grammar for the gossip at the start for the best possible practise.

**Tip** – It's probably best not to try and combine the two uses of this activity by converting past continuous/simple combinations to reported speech. Things can get confusing when even native speakers don't use the correct grammar!