

Making grammar practice meaningful and effective

Nick Avery

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Today's talk

- Meaningful practice
- Research-informed principles for 'practice'
- Presentation of resources

Meaningful practice

Practice is a ‘learning journey’ between the first encounter with new language and its fully independent use (Marsden & Hawkes, 2020, p.1).

- involves intentional engagement in a range of activities (DeKeyser, 2007)
- frequent, yet spaced, and involve different modalities (oral, written)
- opportunities to connect new forms with their **meanings**

But meaningful grammar practice is difficult!

- we naturally rely on vocabulary to understand meaning (VanPatten, 2002; 2017)
- hard to make attention to meaning really matter!

Principles for grammar practice

- practising with '**pairs**' of features
- activities that make form-meaning connections **essential**
(e.g., Marsden, 2006; Kasprowicz & Marsden, 2018; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten & Oikkenon, 1996)
- other cues may need to be removed (e.g., time markers)
- plenty of **initial comprehension practice** (reading and listening)
- **later** moving to production (speaking and writing)

Spanish example

Pair of features:

-er and -ir verbs 3rd person singular present (-e) vs preterite (-ió)

Where in scheme of work:

Year 8, Term 2

Activities:

listening, and then paired speaking/listening

Context:

describing travel in the past and present

Ahora Lucía habla de las vacaciones de un amigo, Enrique.
 Escucha las frases. ¿La acción pasa normalmente o ya pasó?
 También escribe el verbo en español y la actividad en inglés.



escuchar

	Pasa normalmente	Ya pasó en el pasado	El verbo en español	La actividad en inglés
1		✓	vivió	lived for a year in Mexico
2	✓		conoce	knows the border with the United States
3		✓	sufrió	suffered a car accident there
4	✓		ofrece	offers gifts to friends after the holidays
5	✓		decide	decides to visit old villages/towns
6	✓		aprende	learns things about the culture of the cities
7		✓	rompió	broke the camera near a mountain
8		✓	salió	went out with a friend

Hablamos de las vacaciones.

hablar / escuchar

Persona A lee cada tarjeta en inglés y habla en español.

Persona B mira las opciones con el mismo número y escucha: ¿es presente o pasado? Luego, escribe el nombre correcto, según el verbo.

Ejemplo:

Persona A habla:

1

Say: S/he lost a camera.

Perdió una cámara.

Persona B escucha, mira las opciones y escribe el nombre correcto en una lista:

1



loses a camera
[Marta]



lost a camera
[Paula]



	Nombres
1	Paula
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Después, Persona B habla y Persona A escucha.

Persona A

1 Say: S/he suffered accidents.

2 Say: S/he broke a mobile.

3 Say: S/he learns about the culture.

4 Say: S/he shares an ice cream.

5 Say: S/he offers drinks.

6 Say: S/he printed the tickets.

7 Say: S/he lives in the United States.

8 Say: S/he got to know France.

Persona B

1 Say: S/he suffers accidents.

2 Say: S/he broke a mobile.

3 Say: S/he learnt about the culture.

4 Say: S/he shared an ice cream.

5 Say: S/he offers drinks.

6 Say: S/he prints the tickets.

7 Say: S/he lived in the United States.

8 Say: S/he got to know France.

1



**suffers
accidents**
[Marta]



**suffered
accidents**
[Paula]

2



**breaks a
mobile**
[Pablo]



**broke a
mobile**
[Quique]

3



**learns about
the culture**
[Irene]



**learnt about
the culture**
[David]

4



**shares an
ice cream**
[Alba]



**shared an
ice cream**
[Adrián]

5



offers drinks
[Nerea]



offered drinks
[Álvaro]

6



**prints the
tickets**
[Pablo]



**printed the
tickets**
[Marta]

7



**lives in the
United States**
[Irene]



**lived in the
United States**
[Adrián]

8



**gets to know
France**
[Alba]



**got to know
France**
[Álvaro]

German example

Pair of features: word order 1 versus word order 2

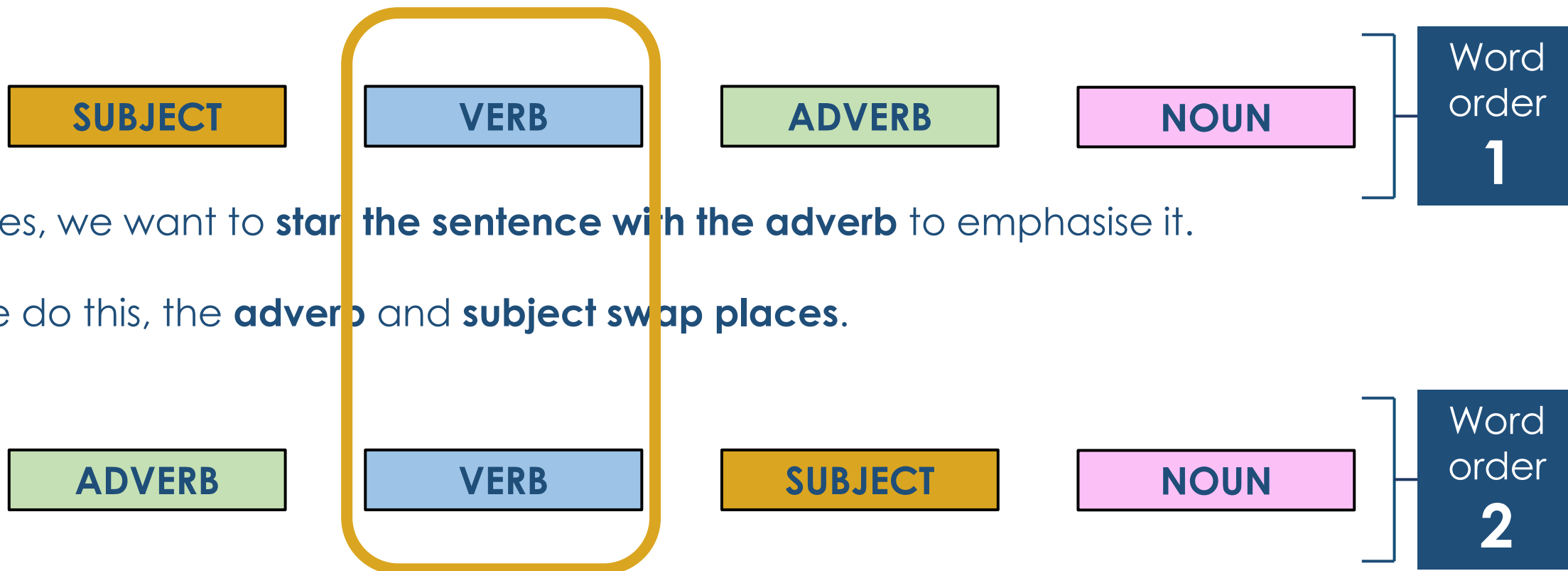
Where in scheme of work: Y7, Term 3

Activity: reading

Context: talking about when people do things

Word order 2

As you know, the order of words in a simple German sentence is:



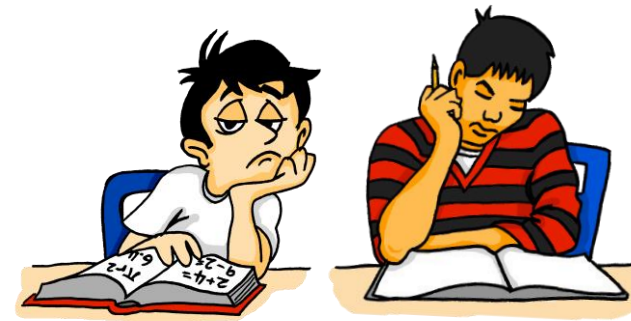
Sometimes, we want to **start the sentence with the adverb** to emphasise it.

When we do this, the **adverb** and **subject swap places**.

The position of the **verb** does not change. It is always **between** the subject and the adverb.

Was schreiben sie?

lesen



Wolfgang und Mehmet finden Mathe langweilig.

Sie können aber im Unterricht nicht reden!

Was schreiben sie?

Hey Mehmet, was machst du heute?

A

Heute

-

ich spiele Gitarre. Und du?

B

Heute

-

spiele ich Schlagzeug!
Und am Dienstag?

C

Am Dienstag

-

chille ich ein bisschen zu Hause. Und du?

D

Am Dienstag

-

ich habe Tanzunterricht. Was machst du am Samstag?

E

Am Samstag

-

gehe ich mit Mama ins Theater. Langweilig!. Und du?

F

Am Samstag

-

gehe ich shoppen! Mit Heidi :D

Dein Freund versteht kein Englisch! Schreib die Sätze auf Deutsch. Word order 1 or 2?

1. I'm cleaning my room on Monday.
2. I'm staying at home on Tuesday.
3. I'm eating ice cream on Wednesday.
4. I'm sleeping on Thursday.
5. I'm playing in the Orchestra on Friday.
6. I'm singing in the choir on Saturday.
7. I'm getting a present on Sunday!

1. Am Montag ...
2. Ich ...
3. Ich ...
4. Am Donnerstag ...
5. Ich ...
6. Am Samstag ...
7. Am Sonntag ...

French example

Pair of grammar features: masculine nouns ending in singular ‘-al’ vs plural ‘-aux’ (e.g. cheval – chevaux)

Where in scheme of work: Year 8, Term 2.1, Week 5

Activity: listening

Context: describing things

Trouve la mouche !

* la grenouille = frog
* la mouche = fly

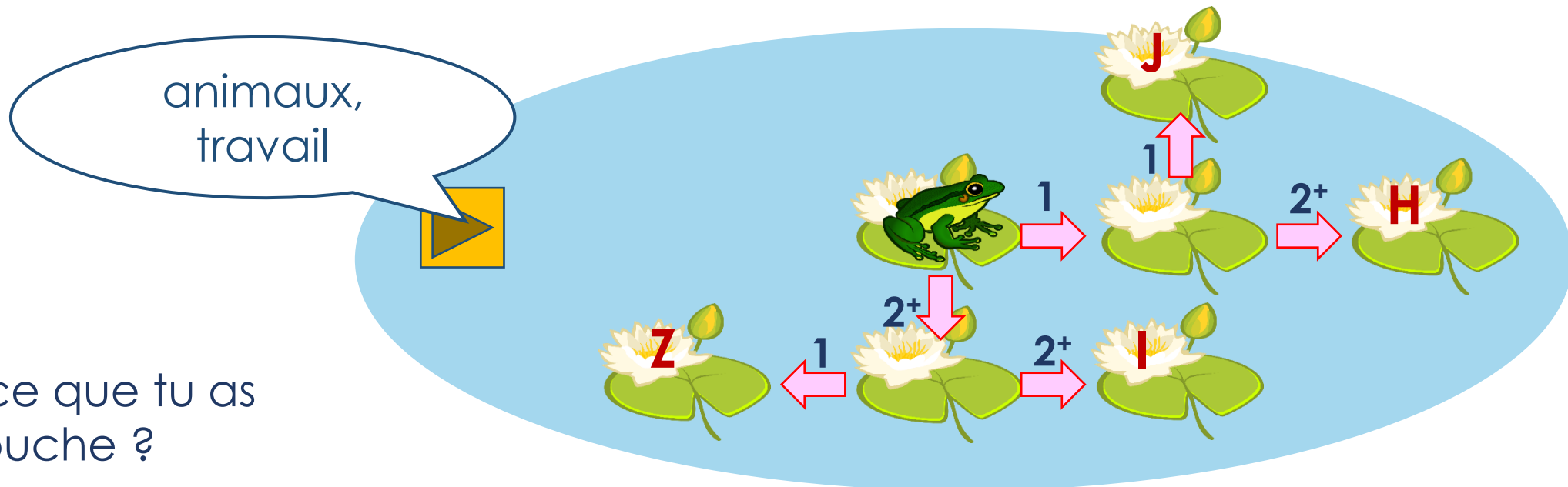


écouter

La grenouille* cherche une mouche* ! Peux-tu aider?

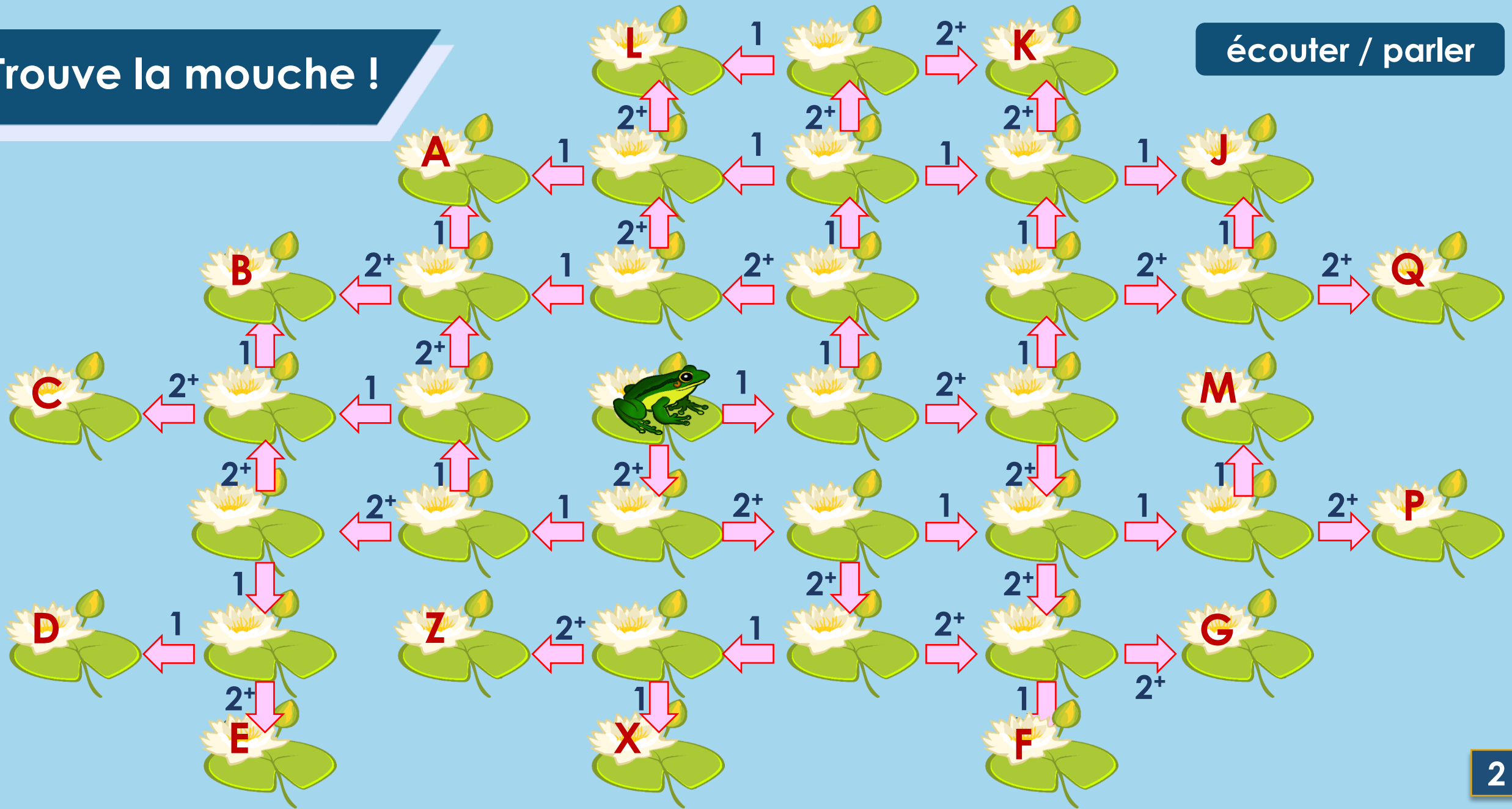
Exemple

Écoute. C'est quoi ? Une chose **(1)** ou plusieurs choses **(2⁺)**?



Trouve la mouche !

écouter / parler



Where to find more resources

NCELP resource portal

- Hundreds of freely accessible lessons
- Other resources including professional development material
- Rationale documents (e.g. [principles for teaching grammar](#) and [meaningful practice](#))

Gaming grammar

- [Digital game](#) with activities in a 'spy mission' context
- Reading and listening-based grammar practice
- Allows teachers to track student progress

NCELP | *Resource Portal*

National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy

<https://resources.ncelp.org/>



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