

Check the answers before you assign a worksheet

When a teacher is pressed for time and wants to find a lot of worksheets quickly, it seems that the best way is to just use the most popular worksheets, which appear at the top of the list unless we select the "Newest first" option. However, this is a bad idea: the most popular worksheets are not necessarily the best; they are often just the oldest. Having been around for longer, and being some of the few options available at the initial stages of the site's development, these worksheets have an advantageous position in the "Most popular first" list which only serves to encourage new users to add them to their favourites and workbooks.

Checking that a worksheet's answers are correct is essential if we want to avoid wasting a lot of time giving explanations to our students about why their answer was considered wrong when it was correct, as well as recalculating and manually changing their scores. The time you invest in doing the exercise yourself will not only point out errors and shortcomings, like not recognising a contracted or uncontracted form as a correct alternative answer, but also give you a good idea of how difficult or long an activity is going to be for your students. This is therefore the recommended SOP (standard operating procedure) that you should follow.

Nevertheless, liveworksheets provides another option that you will find useful if you really are in a hurry and cannot afford to spend too long choosing your worksheet. This option will allow you to see the codes which authors used to create their worksheets, which means you can check that all the alternative correct answers that you want to be accepted are really there, and also that you can check that there are no spelling mistakes in the answers, as well as learning from more experienced users to use the codes correctly in order to make your own worksheets. If you are a new user to the site, we therefore recommend you start by reading the three main help sections, which are really well designed and will teach you 90% of what you need to know about liveworksheets in one evening. In my own experience, it was the most profitable evening I had spent in a lifetime of attending teacher training courses that were supposed to teach us how to improve our didactic skills, how to use didactic tools or how to make didactic materials.

Here is a link to a worksheet where you will find a short description to the contents of each of those three help sections, as well as the order in which you should read them to get the most of them:

<https://www.liveworksheets.com/zf1288534bj>

If you want to find it but you don't have this link handy, you can easily find that worksheet by looking up "help ayuda" in the worksheets search bar at the top of the main liveworksheets page. If you order them by date ("Newest first" option), it will be the third one from the end.

Now you may be thinking "Does this text really have to be this long?" It is a very reasonable question, and the answer is that this worksheet has been made to look deliberately long, boring and hard to read so that the students who often pretend to be teachers and sneak into the forum to ask for help with the answers to a worksheet can be bored to death before they learn how to cheat in this way. Be warned, though, that there are an awful lot of different ways students can cheat, so using liveworksheets for exams is not a very good idea. Personally, I consider it as a very useful resource that helps my students practise what they need to learn again and again, until they feel they have mastered it, without worrying about interrupting the teacher in class to ask for more exercises to practise something that is giving them trouble.

A very clear advantage over, for example, HotPotatoes exercises, which I hitherto had been using a lot, is that with liveworksheets the teacher can get a lot of information and effectively use it as an assessment tool, not **instead of** exams on paper done in the school, but **before** exams are done at school, so that the teacher can be reasonably sure that the students have mastered what they need to learn and do not need any extra practice in the classroom. Of course, there will always be students who can do with more practice, and that's where liveworksheets can help them: while their classmates move on to other things, they can repeat again and again the same activities, as many times as they wish, provided the teacher uses the correct options to allow repetition. This way, the feedback the teacher receives will also show how particular students are making progress. In order to find out how to get this information, new users of the site are encouraged to read the three help sections mentioned and linked to above. Does this mean that liveworksheets is useless during a

confinement situation in which some or all the students in one class or one school cannot attend lessons at school? Well, not totally useless, as I have already explained, but certainly not very well suited for the task of formally evaluating our students.

I am not going to describe all the possible (and numerous) ways they can cheat, because they may easily access this file when posting a question about answers to a worksheet in the forum (indeed, I intend to just point out this worksheet to everyone who asks that sort of question), but suffice it to say that using liveworksheets as a substitute for an exam is like giving your students the photocopied exam, asking them to take it home with them and then bring it back the next morning to hand in. The same applies if you intend to replace traditional homework done on paper with liveworksheets: no doubt you have sometimes come across homework that has been obviously copied from a classmate or done with someone else's help. The same can happen with liveworksheets. Resorting to limiting the time available to do the worksheet will only make it harder for students who need to think carefully, but will not really prevent other ways of cheating which I will not mention here.

If you have reached this point you may be wondering "didn't you mention another way to access the correct answers and even the codes for a worksheet?" Yes, I did, but rather than explain it again here I suggest you take the time to read through the three help sections I mentioned before. At the risk of sounding repetitive, you will learn a lot of useful things in a surprisingly short time, and save a lot of time thereafter, both to yourself and to the volunteers who, like me, like to help others but sometimes get tired of answering questions to which the answers could be found really easily if one bothered to read the help sections before starting to use this site.

Here's one last piece of advice to help you make better use of the liveworksheets forum:

<https://www.liveworksheets.com/sm1322185fr> (English)

<https://www.liveworksheets.com/cx1322249rd> (Spanish)