

Teaching Tip

Circles of Life: a simple,
adaptable, resource-free
classroom task

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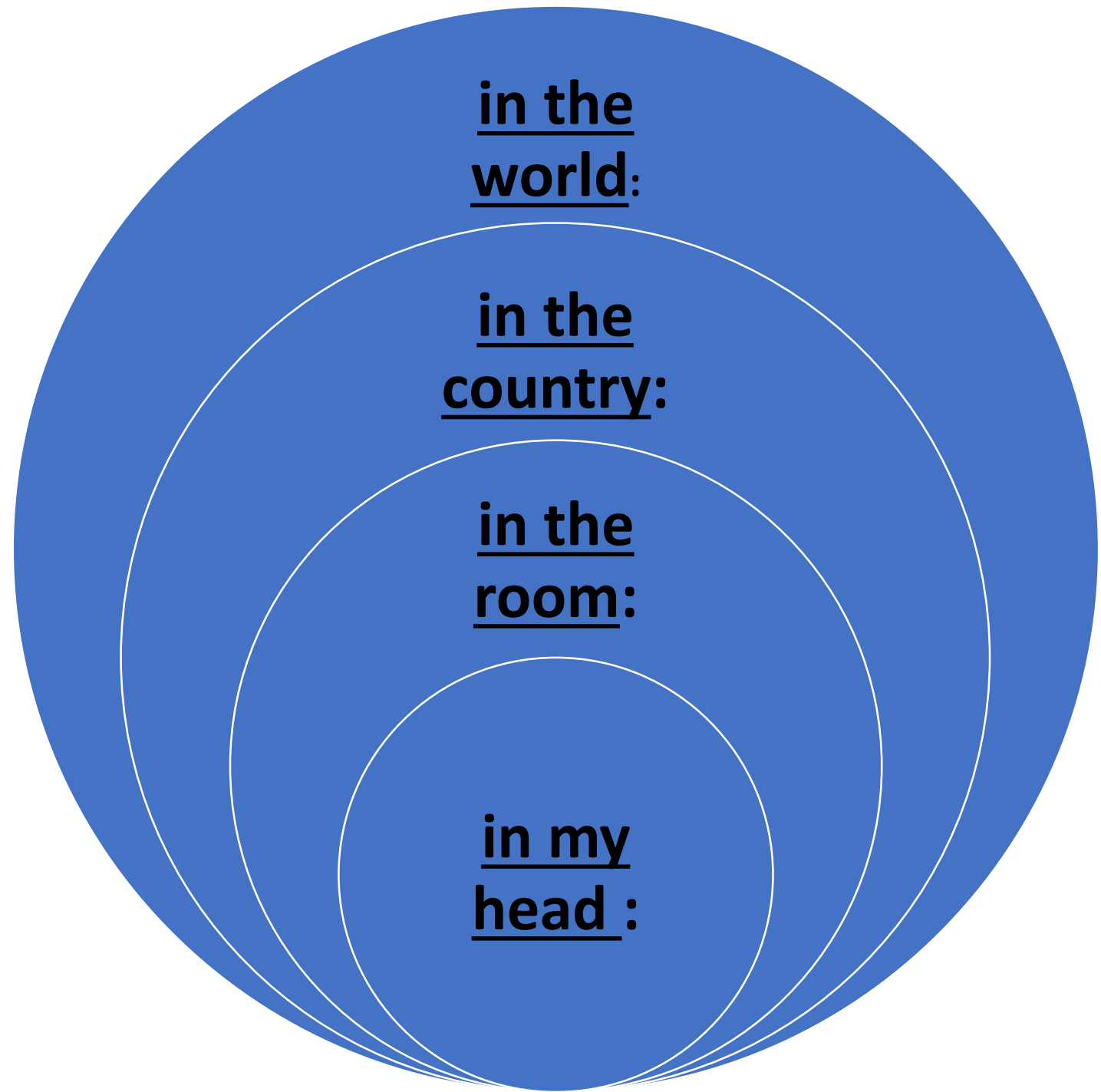
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My favourite classroom task – why?

- **No preparation needed!**
- **Personalised**
- **Real, meaningful and authentic**
- **Involves the intensely personal AND the global / whole world**
- **Easy to manage and organise**
- **Can be adapted to practise or present any area of grammar and vocabulary**
- **The circles take less than 5 minutes to create and can be re-used hundreds of times**
- **Helps the learners find out more about each other, and the teacher find out more about the learners (facts, opinions, experience, dreams)**
- **Can be used as a warmer, relaxation task between other tasks, to diagnose what learners know or can remember, to review language, to bring a new topic into class**

Draw this diagram: 4 circles, one inside the other. Then write 5 initials of people in each circle:
people who are in your head, in the room, in the country and in the world



For
example:
this is my
'circles of
life' -
5 initials of
people in
each circle:



In pairs, one will point at initials in the other's diagram, and ask a question.

Let's do one together first:

1/ Now

A: what do you think OP is doing now?

B: Oh, that's my mum – I think she's probably having a cup of coffee, sitting in the garden looking at the flowers



This first example practises the present continuous

You, the teacher, can listen and write a few errors on the board afterwards to see if the learners can correct them.

Eg. I think my sister reading now

>>> I think my sister is reading now

5 initials of people in each circle:
Now repeat with different
questions (involving, naturally, a
range of different grammar
structures):

1/ Now

2/ Last year

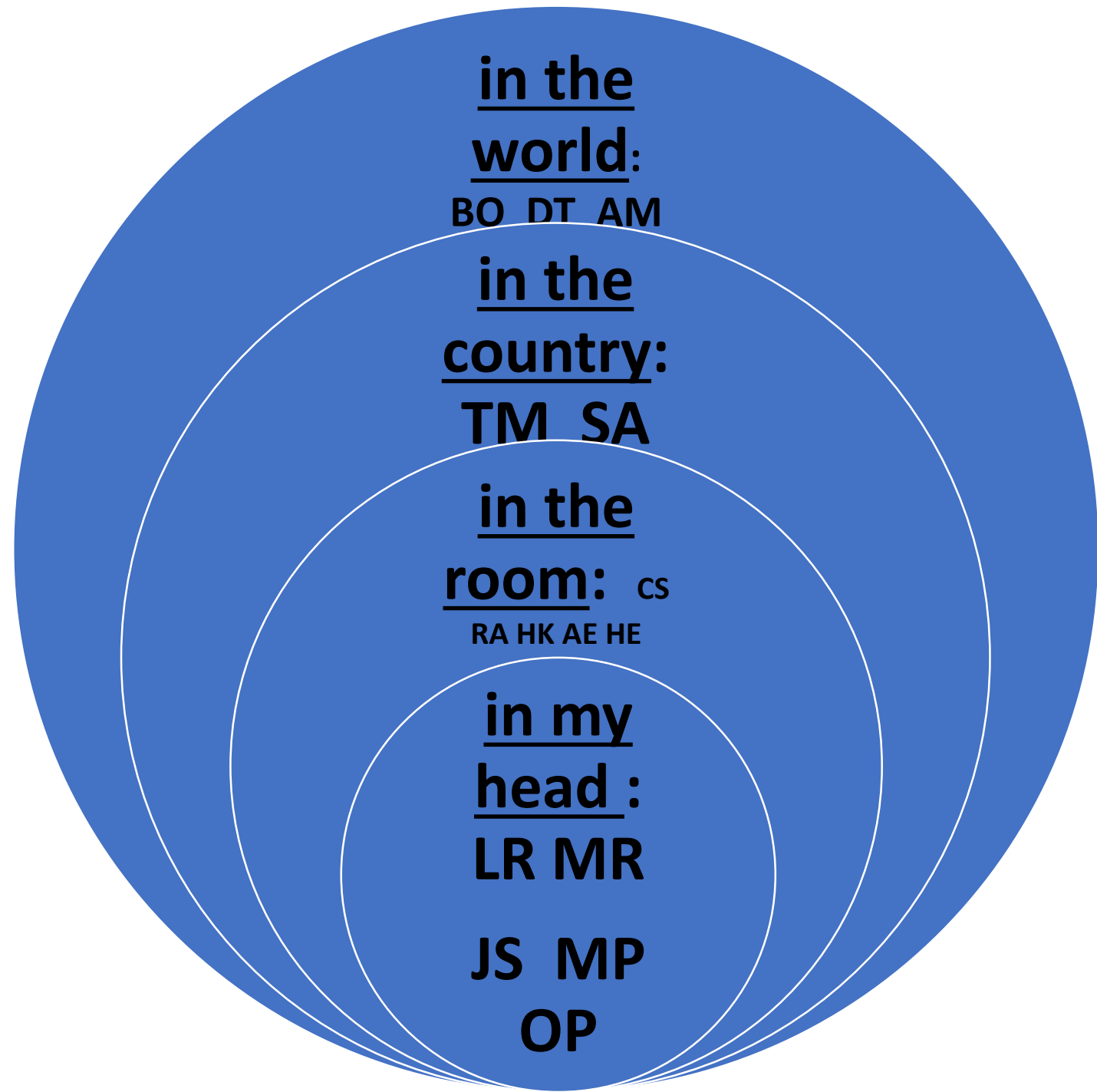
3/ In 10

years' time

4/ Yesterday at

11.15

5/ If



More ideas:

1/ Describe this person physically

2/ Describe the character of this person

3/ What jobs has this person had / would this person like / would this person be suitable for?

4/ House(s)

5/ Food

6/ Hobbies

7/ Holidays

8/ Family



You can also use it to bring other people, opinions and topics into class:

What does this person (point) think about:

- **Climate change**
- **Politics**
- **Fashion**
- **Solar energy**
- **Music**
- **Child slavery etc**

**The task helps develop empathy, imagination and creativity
(imagining what another person might think and might have done / do)**

Would this work with your classes?

Why? / why not?

How might you need to adapt it?

How many times could you use it?

How can you give feedback?

How can you develop other activities (eg. writing) based on it?

Thank you for coming!

These slides at: gisig.iatefl.org and
eewiki.newint.org

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