

# Weather Method

## Language Teaching and Sensibility Cultivation by the Use of Weather Forecast Programs

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### Outline

Weather forecast programs have a couple of good stories every morning. There are quite a few words and phrases we can teach to our students, which certificated climate modelers and weather forecasters use daily in their programs. Such phrases include rich sense of the season and the topics vividly reflecting both nature and our daily lives. Thus, I believe that I can have my pupils understand these descriptions with colorful information about four seasons, and have them learn and enjoy fruitfully a sense of the season. From this point of view, my “Weather Method” is a good way of teaching elementary school pupils such words and phrases that are deeply rooted in our lives.

Expressions in weather forecast programs vary according to the forecaster, the program, and the broadcasting station.

**A Forecast by “A” Station:** “The highest temperature in Tokyo reaches over 30 degrees centigrade today. You’ ll be able to feel yourself breaking into a sweat.”

**A Forecast by “B” Station:** “This afternoon, the highest will get above 30 degrees Celsius. I’ m sure you’ ll feel as if you are sweating in a sauna bath.”

By learning plural of sentences, which describe the same weather condition, pupils can experience some different ways of expression and widen their knowledge about the weather and the season in their mother tongue. In the same way, they learn various expressions about the climate, and this will help them improve their language competence.

### How Weather Method Works

At the beginning of a school year, I ask all my pupils and their parents to talk a little about weather at home every morning before they come to school. Then at school, they hear and see some weather expressions I use and enrich their knowledge about how they describe the weather in their mother tongue. This is a sort of language instruction in the morning meeting every day.

### Teacher’ s Preparation

Every morning, right after I get up, I turn on the TV and watch some forecast programs. I write down the outline, and some words and phrases for the morning meeting. Then at the meeting in class, I talk with my pupils about the weather using some expressions I’ ve found in TV forecast programs. I also write them down on the edge of the blackboard every day in order for my pupils can review the expressions.

### Example 1

“North wind is strong all day today. The smoke comes out horizontally from the chimney top. You’ d better put clothespins firmly onto your laundry.”

[evolutionary learning to physics, home economics]

Listening and reading the expression above, pupils are asked to draw a picture that portrays the weather of the day: smoke from the chimneys, laundry, swirling leaves, etc.

In this example, some pupils could not understand what “trail of smoke (たなびく煙, *tanabiku kemuri*)” means. Also, few of them drew the trail of smoke in the wrong direction from the wind.

It is rather difficult for hard-of-listening and auditory-disordered pupils to precisely understand what is happening around them and to imagine and draw it well on a sheet of paper. This is because they are usually short of getting good amount of information from the environment, which is obtained by listening.

### Example 2

“It’s fine today, but there may be a sudden shower in the afternoon. The highest temperature is expected to reach 35 degrees Celsius. There’s a high risk of suffering from heat exhaustion, so please take good precaution when you do the laundry or clean up, go out to shop or get rid of weeds in the hot sun.”

#### [evolutionary learning to physical education]

Listening and reading the expression above, pupils are asked to draw a picture that portrays the weather of the day as usual.

In addition to the drawings, most pupils put speech balloons or dialogue balloons in their work. Their words in the balloons are as follows:

“I can’t do without a sunshade umbrella today!”

“I have to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration!”

“I think I have to wear a neck cooling scarf.”

“I’ll have my house get a good cross-breeze.”

I’m sure that my pupils drew good pictures and that they devised proper words in their balloons.

### Example 3

“It will be a cold rainy day today. Yesterday, we had a ‘summer day,’ with temperatures above 25 degrees Celsius. The highest today will be 10 degrees Celsius, which is lower than that of yesterday by 16 degrees.”

#### [evolutionary learning to arithmetic]

I asked my pupils, “Then, what was yesterday’s highest temperature?” And then, I had them draw a bar chart and think carefully with the chart. Consequently, I found some of them not being able to hit upon the formula that ten and sixteen makes twenty-six ( $10+16=26$ ) to solve this problem. In this way, I can have them improve their arithmetic problem-solving abilities by the use of weather forecast expressions.

### Conclusion

The words and phrases certificated climate modelers and weather forecasters speak are rich in the sense of the season, and therefore they are good language materials both for pupils with auditory disorders and their teachers. It is quite probable that they include many good expressions that you cannot find in school textbooks. Through these activities, they can obtain lots of information about the world they live in, broaden their knowledge, and brush up their language capabilities.

Finally, I’d like to add one fact: it is indeed that this method is good for pupils with hearing impairment, but that it is also good for ordinary elementary school pupils.