Word Family Tree

To work

the work

the worker

working

work flow

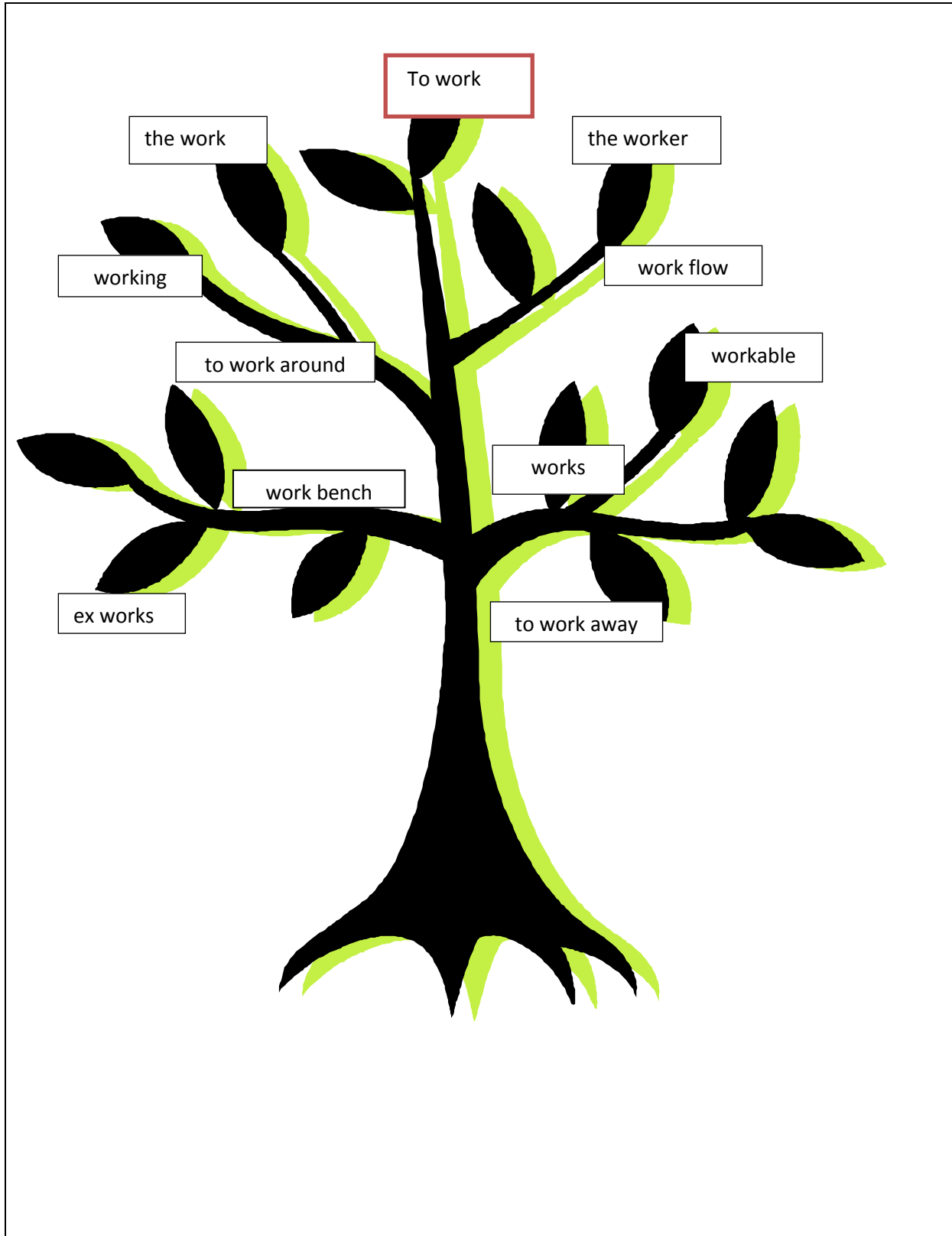to work around

workable

works

work bench

ex works

to work away

Brief Description
Word Family Trees are a visual way of learning vocabulary. They can be compared to vocabulary cards. They help learners/students in memorizing words and in seeing the relation between them. All competences (reading, speaking, listening …) can be improved due to the variety of possible exercises. Different approaches are possible. Here are some of them. It is recommended to change the form of the tree when repeating the exercise for new topics. Word Family Trees can also be used to collect ideas on a topic (e.g. instead of spider map).

Materials
Drawing or copy of a tree. Empty cards to be fixed on the tree. Or a large sheet with a tree and spaces to write in. Pins or clue.

Pair work
Suggestion 1:
Write a verb or a noun on a card and fix it on the top of the tree.
Give each learner one empty card. Ask the groups to write one word of the same family as the word given on the empty card. When ready the learner pins his word on the tree. Words which appear several times are just pinned together.
When all words are collected, some learners or the teacher read the words added and verify them.
After that learners have one minute to memorize them.
Then they have to reproduce the tree with as many words as they can on a sheet of paper.
If the result is not satisfactory at the first time, let students drawn the tree and write the words again.
Suggestion 2:
A following step could be to take two or three cards away from the tree and to ask learners to write down the missing words.
Suggestion 3:
A further step could be to change the places of cards on the tree and by doing that to introduce a further word that does not really exist (e.g. for the above picture: "workingfull"). The students are asked again to memorize the new position of the words and to write them down on a new sheet of paper with the empty tree on it.
The learners should write as many words as possible in the tree and identify the wrong one.

Additional task:
1. Give learners a sheet with an empty tree and a card with a verb (e.g. take, play, visit, …) and ask them to fill the tree with all the words of the same family (or related to it) they can find with help of dictionaries or online.
   Students could present their results in plenum. All trees are fixed on the wall so that all students can see them. Learners can then add words if they know some more.
2. Ask learners to pick up 4 words of one tree and to use them in short dialogs with their partners.