

US TEFL METHODOLOGY COURSE

Our Methodology Course will cover all you need to know about teaching methods and strategies so you can step in front of a class as a confident EFL teacher.

Units in this course:

- Unit 1: Understanding teacher and student roles
- Unit 2: Teaching structures, strategies and methods
- Unit 3: Activities in the classroom
- Unit 4: Classroom management, correcting errors and giving feedback
- Unit 5: Teaching vocabulary and functions
- Unit 6: Teaching reading and listening
- Unit 7: Teaching writing and speaking
- Unit 8: Introduction to phonology
- Unit 9: Teaching young learners: Mini-module
- Unit 10: Teaching Business English: Mini-module
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- Resources

Unit 1: Understanding teacher and student roles

Welcome to the course

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: Hi there, and welcome to unit 1 of our methodology course. This is where you'll really get a handle on what it means to be a teacher and cover all of the theory necessary to step in front of a class and teach English as a foreign language.

Actor 2: This course is packed with information, and there's a lot to learn. Some of the key things you'll cover are: structuring a lesson with different methods, managing your students and getting them involved, teaching age groups from young learners to adults, teaching general English and more specific English, teaching one-to-one and teaching larger classes.

Actor 1: That might sound overwhelming, but we're going to give you lots of handy tips that will help you make the most of your teaching skills. We'll show you how to write great lesson plans, set up your lessons clearly and effectively, and how to run some really useful and engaging activities to get your students involved and help them progress. We'll even teach you how to deal with those unruly students, who could be adults too by the way!

Actor 2: By the end of the course you will have mastered the methodology of TEFL and will feel much more confident about your teaching abilities.

Actor 1: It's time to get started, click on to the next lesson to start the course.

Welcome to Unit 1

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, we're about to start the methodology course – but let's think for a moment: what exactly is methodology? You've already covered grammar, which is the nuts and bolts, if you like, of the English language, so now with methodology you're going to learn about what you should be doing in the classroom to impart that knowledge to your students.

We've already outlined the things that we're going to teach you so you can be as effective as possible when you've got your own class of students. But before moving on to that, we're going to focus on you and what your role will be as a teacher in the classroom. It's not quite as simple as just being a teacher and that's it! Teachers have to fulfil all sorts of roles at once, like organizer or controller, elicitor or assessor. Your students will also have their own roles to play, so it's important that you learn what lies ahead of you as a teacher so you can do the best job possible of teaching your students.

Let's start! First up, we're going to find out what it is that makes a good teacher.

What makes a good teacher?

Good teachers make a massive difference in students' lives, and we're sure that you'll have an idea of what characteristics are required of someone to manage a class and help students learn effectively.

Activity:

To start off, think for a minute about the qualities that make a good teacher and try to write down the first five things that come to mind.

Name 5 qualities that a teacher should have.

Start timer

The role of the teacher

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

A lot of students, and even some teachers, don't fully understand what role teachers play in the classroom. Is teaching simply about transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the student, or is it more about creating an environment where students can learn for themselves? In a classroom, where would you expect to find a teacher? Standing at the front of the class controlling the students, or moving around trying to respond to students' individual needs and questions?

There's no right or wrong answer to these questions in general, but it all depends on the group of students you are teaching. That flexibility in your teaching repertoire is what you'll need to focus on to help students learn as much as they can. It also gives you the amazing opportunities you'll find as a teacher to go anywhere in the world and teach any set of students. If you get a job in a private language school, you may find that you need to become more chameleonic, adapting your approach to suit each class that comes through the door. You could have an advanced group of teenagers one moment and then go into an elementary one-to-one lesson, and you'll need to adapt to this without missing a beat.

That's why it's important to understand the students you'll be teaching, their motivations for learning English and their level of ability. This knowledge will show you the roles you'll need to fulfil for them, and then you can plan your lessons accordingly. When you decide on your roles and plan your lessons, always keep in mind whether they are appropriate for your students' age, ability, motivations and learning needs. If you can do this, you'll be amazed at how much your students can learn even in one short lesson.

Teacher-centered or Student-centered?

▶ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Over the years, the teaching style that we use in TEFL lessons has shifted towards being student-centered rather than being teacher-centered. But what does this actually mean?

Well, teacher-centered lessons usually involve the teacher being in the focus of most of the lesson's activities: doing most of the talking, explaining grammar and vocabulary and the like, while students listen and take notes.

Can you think why this might not be the best methodology? Generally, if the teacher is the only one actually using the language, with the students taking a more passive role, the students might develop a pretty good understanding of the language, but no great ability to use it themselves. And helping students use English is the aim of the lesson in the end, isn't it?

It's also worth considering that if there is too much teacher talking time (TTT) compared to student talking time (STT), then students will get bored and lose attention.

So what's the difference between this and with student-centered lessons? Here, the teacher is still present and involved, but they encourage the students to use the language themselves as much as possible, and to discover grammar rules and vocabulary on their own. Rather than a lecturer, the teacher becomes a guide to the English language; eliciting responses from the students rather than dictating to them. This all adds up to a much more memorable learning experience for the students, and that means that when they leave the classroom they are much more able to use their new English skills than they would be after a teacher-centered lesson.

Teacher-centered vs Student-centered: Quiz

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

There is lots of group work and pair work activities that students do whilst the teacher monitors.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

The students answer each other's questions and refer to the teacher for information if needed.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

The teacher writes new vocabulary on the board and students copy it down.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

The teacher explains grammar rules with the use of the board and a timeline.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

Students identify common patterns they can see in sentences to try to identify the form of a tense.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

The teacher asks guiding questions to students to see if they can decide when to use a tense.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

After a speaking activity, the teacher corrects all the students' mistakes.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

After a speaking activity, the teacher encourages the students to identify any mistakes they heard and try to correct them.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

The teacher models a language point and then students try it out for themselves.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

multiple-choice

Choose whether the statement below describes a teacher-centered lesson or a student-centered lesson.

The classroom is usually quiet.

Select the correct answer from these options

Teacher-centered

Student-centered

Teacher roles: Introduction

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Being a teacher isn't simply about standing in front of a class and giving a lesson; sometimes you'll have to play other different roles in the classroom.

We're now going to show you 9 roles you might play as a teacher.

Think about what each role could entail, and then click to reveal the definition.

Teacher roles

Now let's look at some of the specific roles you will play as the teacher.

Click on the boxes below to see an explanation of what each role entails.

Controller

Presents explanations in the lesson and takes charge of the class and activity. There will be a lot of TTT (teacher talking time) and you will need to snap into this role if the activity isn't going to plan. Best to keep this to a minimum.

Organizer

Gives instructions, organises students into groups or pairs, initiates activities or brings them to a close, and organizes feedback. This is one of the most important roles, as students need to be confident as to how the activities will work or how the groups are supposed to function so that they are not confused.

Assessor

Gives feedback and correction to students as well as evaluating and grading their abilities. Students are usually very keen to find out how they are doing, but try not to correct every mistake you hear as that could discourage them.

Elicitor

Prompts the students into working things out for themselves and giving a response. The teacher can ask guiding questions or give activities and tasks designed to allow students to discover things by themselves rather than be told.

Participant

Participates in an activity as an equal, rather than as the teacher. This livens up an activity from inside the group, rather than prompting from outside. However, you need to make sure you don't dominate or take over the activity.

Tutor

Provides guidance, support or encouragement – more suited to a one-to-one role when students are working individually or in pairs. Be careful to give equal attention to all students and not to intrude too much.

Resource

Models the language for students and helps them look up meaning or explanations. As a native or high-level English speaker, you are likely to be the main resource in the classroom. However, rather than spoon-feeding answers to questions like: "What does this mean?", you may want to encourage students to work things out on their own whenever possible. It's also important for students to be exposed to how you speak, so they can learn a natural way of speaking English.

Observer

Monitors to see how activities are progressing, to get an idea of how long it will take and how successful it has been. Try not to distract the students when you are observing.

Facilitator

Facilitates communication between students in the classroom. English teaching is often regarded as facilitating, as it is about encouraging the students to communicate successfully in the classroom.

Which role and when?

As you'll have seen, the role you take on in the classroom depends on what type of activity you are doing, what stage of a lesson you are in and what you find yourself having to respond to.

Some stages of a lesson will require you to be more controlling and in charge, while others will see you taking more of a back-seat role. It's important to be able to switch between these roles appropriately so your teaching is at its most effective throughout the lesson.

In the following quiz, each question will feature a clip of a real lesson. Watch the teacher's actions and try to decide which role the teacher is fulfilling, then choose the correct role from the options provided.

Teacher Roles: Quiz

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher performing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: From 3:26 the teacher is giving feedback.

Select the correct answer from these options

Assessor

Observer

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: Up to 1:37 the teacher is explaining an activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

Controller

Participant

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: the teacher extracts answers from students.

Select the correct answer from these options

Assessor

Elicitor

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: From 1:14 the teacher is putting students into groups.

Select the correct answer from these options

Organizer

Resource

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: At 5.20 and after, the teacher joins in with the students.

Select the correct answer from these options

Participant

Tutor

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: From 0:13 the teacher gives an answer.

Select the correct answer from these options

Observer

Resource

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: From 0:37 the teacher prompts students to speak.

Select the correct answer from these options

Controller

Facilitator

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: From 1:00 the teacher helps a student.

Select the correct answer from these options

Participant

Tutor

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Clue: the teacher is checking students' work.

Select the correct answer from these options

Observer

Resource

multiple-choice

Which role is the teacher playing in the video below?

[Watch video \(popout\)](#)

Clue: the teacher extracts answers from students.

Select the correct answer from these options

[Assessor](#)

[Elicitor](#)

Student roles: Introduction

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We now know about all the various roles a teacher might have in the classroom, so let's look at what students will have to do as well.

To learn effectively, students need to do a lot more than just turn up to class.

To start off, give yourself a minute to think about which things a student should be willing to do to help their own learning.

We think you can name 6, so give it a try!

Student roles

We hope you managed to think of a few student qualities on your own. Hopefully some of these ideas below were on your list:

- A willingness to listen to the language.
- A desire to experiment with the language.
- A willingness to ask questions.
- An ability to think about their own learning process and methods.
- An acceptance of error correction.
- A desire to learn.
- A willingness to attend lessons regularly.

When we try to decide how to teach our English students, we need to consider a number of factors such as: age, culture, language ability and motivation for learning.

You may also find that some students are better at some skills than others, so some may be better at reading and listening than they are at speaking or writing. You could also have students that are confident speakers, but lack accuracy when writing. All of this can be related to how introverted or extroverted they are, which brings in the factor of the students' individual personalities to your considerations.

One mistake new teachers can sometimes make is to regard students that don't grasp the language well or quickly as slow or stupid. This isn't the case at all, as students could excel in other subjects but not be natural linguists. These students will require a teacher in the "tutor" role more than others.

Another reason a student might not be performing to expectations is because they have a different way of learning than what a teacher offers. To overcome this, you might need to rethink the way you teach often and teach new target language in an eclectic way to give all your students a chance to learn in a way that suits them.

Adult & Young learners

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: We're now going to look at adult learners and young learners. As a teacher, you could end up with classes of adults or classes of children, and there are some key differences in the way you go about teaching them. Let's outline some of the factors you'll need to bear in mind.

Actor 2: **Nervousness.** Nerves can be an issue for some students when getting to grips with English, which is a language they might not be familiar with. But who do you think will be more nervous in class? Think about this for a moment: How would you feel if you were thrown into a French lesson just now? Or Turkish? Or anything new? You'll find adult learners tend to be more nervous learners, as they are often more anxious about new learning experiences and more concerned about losing face or feeling embarrassed by making mistakes.

Actor 1: **Learning experience.** Naturally, adult learners will have spent more time in education than younger learners and have more experience of the learning process – but this can bring a lot of baggage with it. By this we mean that adults might be stuck in their ways about how languages should be learned or how a lesson should be conducted. You'll find younger learners are much more open to new ideas and teaching methods.

Actor 2: **Life experience.** Related to the concept of learning experience, adults also have more life experience to bring into the classroom. This can make lessons more interesting and varied, as you can have more detailed conversations and build rapport with adult learners more easily.

Actor 1: **Language awareness.** Adult learners have a more practical sense of how language works for them, and this means they often try to translate new terms in a foreign language into their own. This can create problems, especially where direct translations don't exist!

Younger learners usually absorb language from context and usage, the same way they learned their own language. It's worth noting that the opposite of this can be true for some students, with young learners more comfortable in their own language and adults, particularly those who are already multilingual, being happy to accept differences between languages. You'll need to make sure you understand your students' attitudes so that you can help them to learn in way that suits them.

Actor 2: **Culture and first language.** On a similar note, different cultures will have different learning approaches which means that students will respond differently to the way you teach them.

Asian students, for example, are often noted for being serious about their learning and very respectful, but perhaps more accustomed to plain writing tasks than creative activities. Latin American students, however, can be the complete opposite!

Students from different linguistic or cultural groups might have very different issues with the way they learn English, and a good teacher should be aware of the barriers that could affect their students – without slipping into stereotypes, of course.

Actor 1: **Behavior.** Unruly students; bad behaviour; discipline issues. Whatever you want to call it, most new teachers worry about these things to a certain extent. It's hard to know as a beginner how best to deal with students that are messing around and being disruptive. Adults tend to have a better attention span than younger learners, but that doesn't mean that they're always better behaved. We'll deal with this topic in more detail later in the course, but for now let's continue looking at how to identify what our students should learn.

Student levels

Now that we've covered the roles you'll face as a teacher, and taken a look at what affects our students' attitudes to learning English, we're now going to show you the different student ability levels you may end up teaching.

When students join a language school, or start learning in another environment, they are typically given a series of tests to determine their "starting" English level. If you work privately, perhaps as a one-to-one teacher, one of the first things you'll need to do is determine the level of your students so you can make sure you are pitching your classes correctly to their ability and using suitable materials and resources.

There are a number of free English level tests online that teachers can use for this, which you can find through our resources section or an online search.

Let's get you thinking now. How many different levels of study do you think there are to go through on the way from being an absolute beginner in English to reaching native speaker fluency?

[Click here to find out how many there are](#)

7

That's right – there are 7 levels. We have TEFL names for these levels, which means that regardless of where you end up teaching you will know what the level of your students is and be sure you are teaching the right topics at the right time!

In general, it will take a student an academic year to progress from one level to another. Some schools will add in additional levels to this based on the needs of their students, for example: a "False Beginner" could be a student who has had some exposure to the language and knows a couple of words or phrases, but still has only a very basic knowledge of English. This would make them a slightly higher level than a true beginner, but not by much.

Some schools spread their levels over more than one academic year, which is particularly common at the intermediate stage. To avoid plateauing here, students need to spend a significant amount of time consolidating their knowledge rather than actively progressing in the way they do at lower levels.

Activity:

Here are the levels of study – have a go and see if you can put them into the right order.

Beginner	↓	↑
Lower intermediate	↓	↑
Upper intermediate	↓	↑
Elementary	↓	↑
Proficiency	↓	↑
Intermediate	↓	↑
Advanced	↓	↑

[Check answers](#)

[Hide answers](#)

Student levels explained

We've shown you what the seven student levels are, but it's time to go into a little more depth about what each level actually entails.

In each of the boxes below you'll see what typically identifies a student at that level of ability, in terms of what they can do, and what they will be learning at that stage.

Hopefully this will help you understand how to identify a student's level and how to prepare lesson plans to help them progress.

Click on the level to find out what the students can do and what they should be learning:

Beginner

What they can do

Students' knowledge at this level will range from knowing absolutely nothing to having picked up a few words or phrases (i.e. a False Beginner student). They will have no knowledge of how to structure the language correctly.

What they should learn

- Personal basic information and introductions (name, age, family)
- Colours
- Numbers 1-100
- Asking about names and jobs
- Yes/no questions and short answers
- Present simple
- Telling the time
- Useful classroom language e.g. "I haven't got a pen".
- Pronunciation: Consonant clusters and other problematic areas – these are taught at all levels, but are essential at Beginner level.

Elementary

What they can do

They are improving quickly, getting to grips with basic tenses and able to communicate simply about general topics. There will still be lots of errors though, and new tenses and forms will require a lot of consolidation.

What they should learn

- The verb “to be” (am, is, are)
- Basic common adjectives
- Personal pronouns
- Possessive adjectives
- Present Simple
- Articles (the, a/an)
- I like/don't like + nouns/-ing forms
- There is / There are
- This, That, These, Those
- Possessives: 's
- Can/can't for ability
- Some and any
- Present continuous
- Past simple
- Comparatives and superlatives
- Adverbs of frequency
- “Wh” questions
- Present Continuous for future
- Prepositions of time and place
- Auxiliary verbs: be and do
- Conjunctions

Lower intermediate (or Pre-intermediate)

What they can do

Students at this level are growing in confidence with their tenses and are now learning lots of vocabulary, phrases and functions (what a word or phrase is used for and why).

What they should learn

- Past simple irregular verbs
- Future simple
- Future with going to
- Past continuous
- Auxiliary verbs: have and had
- Zero Conditional
- First Conditional
- Present perfect simple
- For, Since and Ago
- Should, May, Might, Have to, Must (modal verbs)
- Introduction to phrasal verbs
- So and such
- Question tags
- Quantifiers

Intermediate

What they can do

Students at this level are keen to use English, but not quite fluent yet. They have a good knowledge of grammar, but need to consolidate it further. Vocabulary is also strong here.

Students often feel they are stagnating at this stage, with lots of time spent on consolidating learning before moving on further, which can be frustrating for some.

What they should learn

- Transitive and intransitive verbs
- Present perfect continuous
- Unless
- Second Conditional
- Passive present and past
- Past perfect simple
- Past perfect continuous
- Gerund or infinitive
- Relative clauses and relative pronouns
- Verbs + preposition
- Causative "have sth done"
- Despite/in spite of
- Stop to /stop doing

Upper intermediate (or Post-intermediate)

What they can do

Students' English levels here are high and they should be able to communicate on a wide range of topics. There will still be mistakes though, particularly with use of idioms, phrasal verbs, etc.

What they should learn

- Third Conditional
- Mixed Conditionals
- Wishes and regrets
- Reported speech
- Future Continuous
- Future perfect simple
- Future perfect continuous
- Impersonal passives
- Prepositional phrases
- Would/used to

Advanced

What they can do

Students make fewer mistakes than at the post-intermediate stage and use the language confidently. They should have no problems studying at an English-speaking university.

What they should learn

- Developing speaking, writing, reading and listening skills
- Grammar consolidation
- Improving and expanding idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs

Proficiency

What they can do

Students at this level are as close to a native speaker as a student can get, and some may have spent some time living in a native English speaking country or environment. There should be little accent and near perfect use of the language. This level is often required for academic purposes, though it should be sufficient for most employment.

What they should learn

- Perfecting writing, reading, listening and speaking skills (particularly accent)
- Perfecting understanding of idioms, phrasal verbs and natural fluency

Unit 1: End of Unit Quiz

true-or-false

The teacher plays many roles in the classroom, including: assessor, facilitator, organizer and controller.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The teacher's role is more important than the students'.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The best way to learn English is to listen to the teacher use it in class and take notes.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

A student-centered lesson involves students using and exploring the language themselves.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You will get the same results whether your lessons are teacher-centered or student-centered.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

No part of the lesson should be teacher-centered.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Students should be encouraged to work things out for themselves in class.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Adult and young learners have different challenges and natural advantages when learning English.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Children tend to be more nervous learners than adults.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

There are only 6 levels of study in English.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Unit 2: Teaching structures, strategies and methods

Welcome to Unit 2

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, and welcome to the second unit! This time we're going to have our first look at how to plan a lesson. Obviously, you'll need to mould your lesson plans to suit each individual class you teach; bearing in mind the students' ages, the size of the class and lots other factors we discussed in Unit 1.

What we're going to show you here are the structures, strategies and methods that are used in planning an effective lesson, no matter who you are teaching. This bit is hidden from the students in a sense, but without it your lessons won't teach the students much in the end and it'll be much harder for you to figure out what you're doing when you're up there in front of the class.

Your goal as a teacher is to have students leave the class not only understanding the language points you're teaching them, but feeling confident in using them – so that's why we plan our lessons thoroughly beforehand!

You're going to come across lots of acronyms in this unit: PPP, ESA and STT are just some of them, but don't worry! We're going to teach you all about them so you can deliver fantastic and engaging lessons.

Why do we need to use a structure, strategy or method?

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Think for a second about what it will be like to teach your first lesson with a real class of students. We know they are there to learn English, and that you are the one responsible for teaching them. But what exactly are you going to do?

Are you going to teach them some grammar or vocabulary, and how are you going to do that? Or maybe you can focus on reading or listening practice instead?

What about engaging the students? How are you going to make sure they pay attention for the whole lesson and understand what you're saying, what they're supposed to do and what they are supposed to learn? How are you going to make sure they're motivated enough and feel like they've improved their English ability by the end of class?

All of these questions naturally spring to mind when you first think about teaching, but as challenging as it may seem, a good understanding of lesson planning can just about answer them all.

Lessons can't just be improvised; you need to put careful thought into how to match up the ability of your students and what they need to learn, and to do so in a way that's both engaging and educational.

Really successful lessons begin outside of the classroom, when you prepare your lesson plans. That's why we're going to teach you all about structures, strategies and methods that will make this all become clear to you.

What structures, strategies or methods can we use?

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

There are a number of lesson preparation structures, strategies and methods that we can use in the classroom – but they all have the same end goal: to get the students to use the language for themselves! For many years, the approach in schools was for the teacher to use the language, leaving the students to listen attentively and take notes to build their awareness of grammar, vocabulary and so on.

You'll understand, though, that you won't learn a language effectively just by listening to just one person using it, you'll need to use it for yourself!

All of the approaches to lesson planning that we'll show you have that student-centered approach in common – helping the student speak, read, write, listen and eventually think in English. They'll discover the language for themselves so they can leave the class each day feeling they know more than they did before. This will build their confidence and help them consolidate their knowledge of the language and move on to new points that enhance their ability.

All students learn in different ways depending on their ability, their culture and even their personalities, so the structures, strategies and methods we'll use are eclectic by nature. In this way, we can adapt what we do to the students' own needs.

We'll now look at two of the lesson structures you can use: PPP and ESA. These structures will focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary but we'll cover the methodology required to plan reading, writing, listening and speaking lessons later on in the course.

PPP lesson structure: Introduction

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We're going to start by showing you the PPP lesson plan structure, which is a great method for new teachers as it is flexible enough to work for any grammar or vocabulary lesson and any type of student.

You could use it for: teaching animal vocabulary to beginners, the present perfect simple tense to pre-intermediate students, or idioms to advanced learners. The PPP method works for them all.

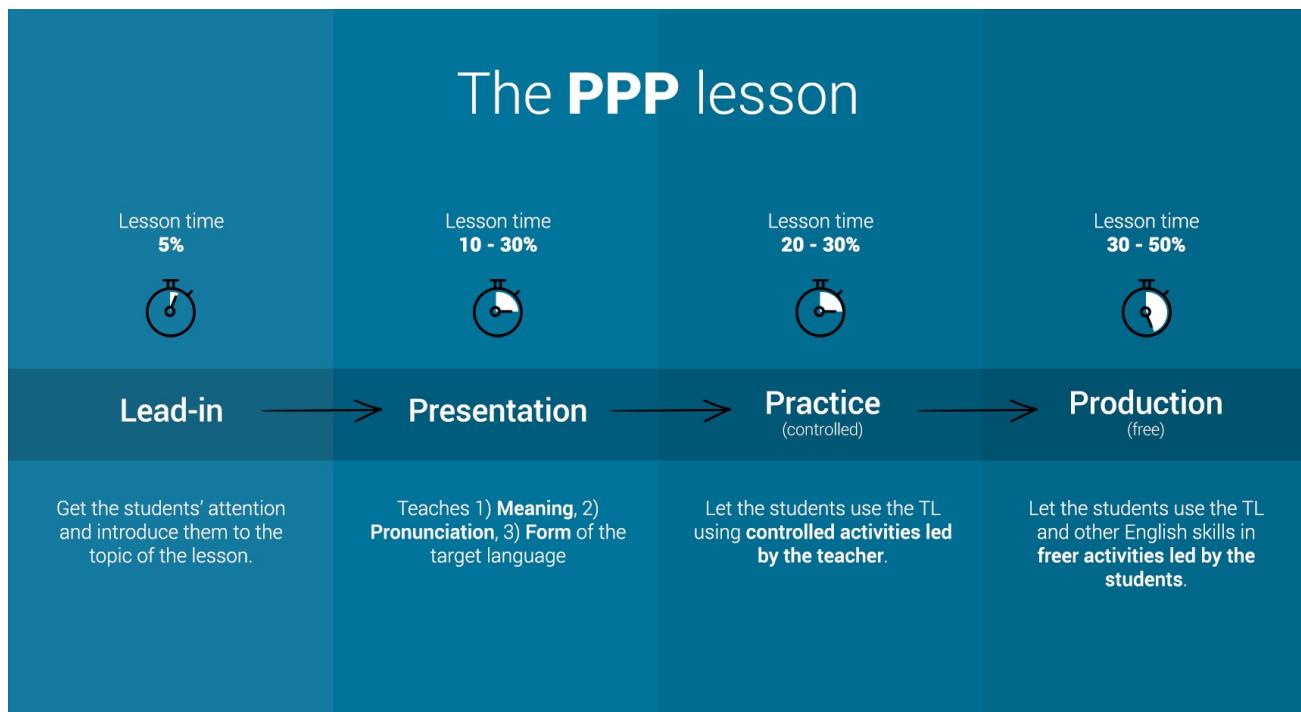
PPP stands for the key stages of the lesson: presentation, practice and production, which we'll explain in greater detail in the following pages.

The PPP format is ideal for guiding students towards using the target language themselves, progressing from controlled exercises to free practices.

This lesson format also maximizes STT (student talking time), as the students are the ones that need the practice, not you!

PPP lesson structure

We're now going to outline what is included in each stage of a PPP lesson, before you get to watch the different stages in action in a real classroom video:



Lead-in

This first stage of the lesson is vital in grabbing the students' attention and engaging them from the get-go. Here you will discover what they already know about the TL (target language) and warm them up for the lesson.

The goal here isn't to teach the students anything new – that happens later. This simply sets the scene for the topics we're going to present using the new language.

You should be only spending up to 5% of the lesson on this stage, so try not to get too bogged down in correcting or explaining things here.

Presentation

Either you or the students will start using the TL here and we need to teach three different things at this stage:

1. Meaning

We need to find a way for students to discover the meaning themselves here rather than simply lecturing and telling them. This is called guided discovery. Then you can consolidate that by explaining the meaning in terms the students have already learned.

2. Pronunciation

You may drill the students (get them to repeat the phrase or word you are teaching) so that they get a feel for pronouncing what you're teaching them. Focus on any problem areas such as contracted forms (haven't, didn't), etc.

3. Form

This is the last part you teach. Here you can write the new phrase or word on the board so students can see how the phrase is built or the word is spelled.

That's it for the presentation stage, and you need to remember that we don't teach any new target language after this in the lesson. This stage should take up about 10-30% of the full lesson, focussing on introducing the topic before students get involved with it.

The presentation stage features more teacher talking time (TTT) than other stages of the lesson, and around 50% of it will be made up of you explaining the language. Even though this part of the lesson is more teacher-centered, you should aim to involve and engage your students as much as possible through eliciting and building on prior knowledge. You'll also need to use concept checking here to make sure the students understand the new TL, which is a technique we'll discuss more in Unit 3.

Practice (controlled)

Here students will practice using the language they have learnt through structured activities that look at the meaning, pronunciation and form of the TL.

This should be done with as few mistakes as possible, with the focus of this stage being on accuracy rather than fluency, and this is your chance to make sure that students get it all right.

You may want to use as many as three different activities here, which become progressively more challenging while still focussing on the meaning, pronunciation and form of the TL.

Activities you can use here could include pair work, with writing and speaking exercises to fill in sentence gaps or fix incorrect sentences that you give them. You could have an activity done orally as a full class, with the group standing in a circle asking each other questions and giving answers. There will be more lesson ideas in our resources section.

This stage of the lesson should take up 20-30% of the total lesson time, and be as student-centered as possible. About 60-80% of this stage of the lesson should be made up of student talking time (STT).

Production (free)

This stage continues on from the practice stage, and you can reach this stage when you're happy that the students have grasped what you have presented and have practiced it with little difficulty.

The activities in the production stage allow them to practice their new TL with all their previous knowledge of English brought in. This will help them feel more natural using what they've learned, which is the focus of this stage. We are now aiming to improve students' fluency rather than their accuracy.

To engage students in activities, you can set up role plays that allow them to use their mix of new and existing knowledge, or you can ask them to discuss a topic in groups using the new TL.

If you find yourself having to tell them to use the TL, then you haven't set up the activity in the correct way and might end up forcing them to use the target language in a way that doesn't fit. You can find ideas for this stage of the lesson in our resources section.

The production stage should take up about 30-50% of the full lesson, or as long as you have left. The STT here should be about 90%, since we want the students to use the language as much as possible.

The following videos will show you different examples of how each stage of the PPP lesson is delivered. Pay attention to the amount of TTT and STT in each and try to focus on how the lesson flows between the explanations and activities the teacher uses.

PPP lesson structure: Lead-in classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows a lead-in stage of a PPP lesson.

PPP lesson structure: Presentation classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows a presentation stage of a PPP lesson.

PPP lesson structure: Practice (controlled) classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows a practice (controlled) stage of a PPP lesson.

PPP lesson structure: Practice (controlled) classroom example 2

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows an alternative practice (controlled) stage of a PPP lesson.

PPP lesson structure: Production (free) classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows a production (free) stage of a PPP lesson.

PPP lesson structure: Production (free) classroom example 2

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows an alternative production (free) stage of a PPP lesson.

ESA lesson structure: Introduction

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

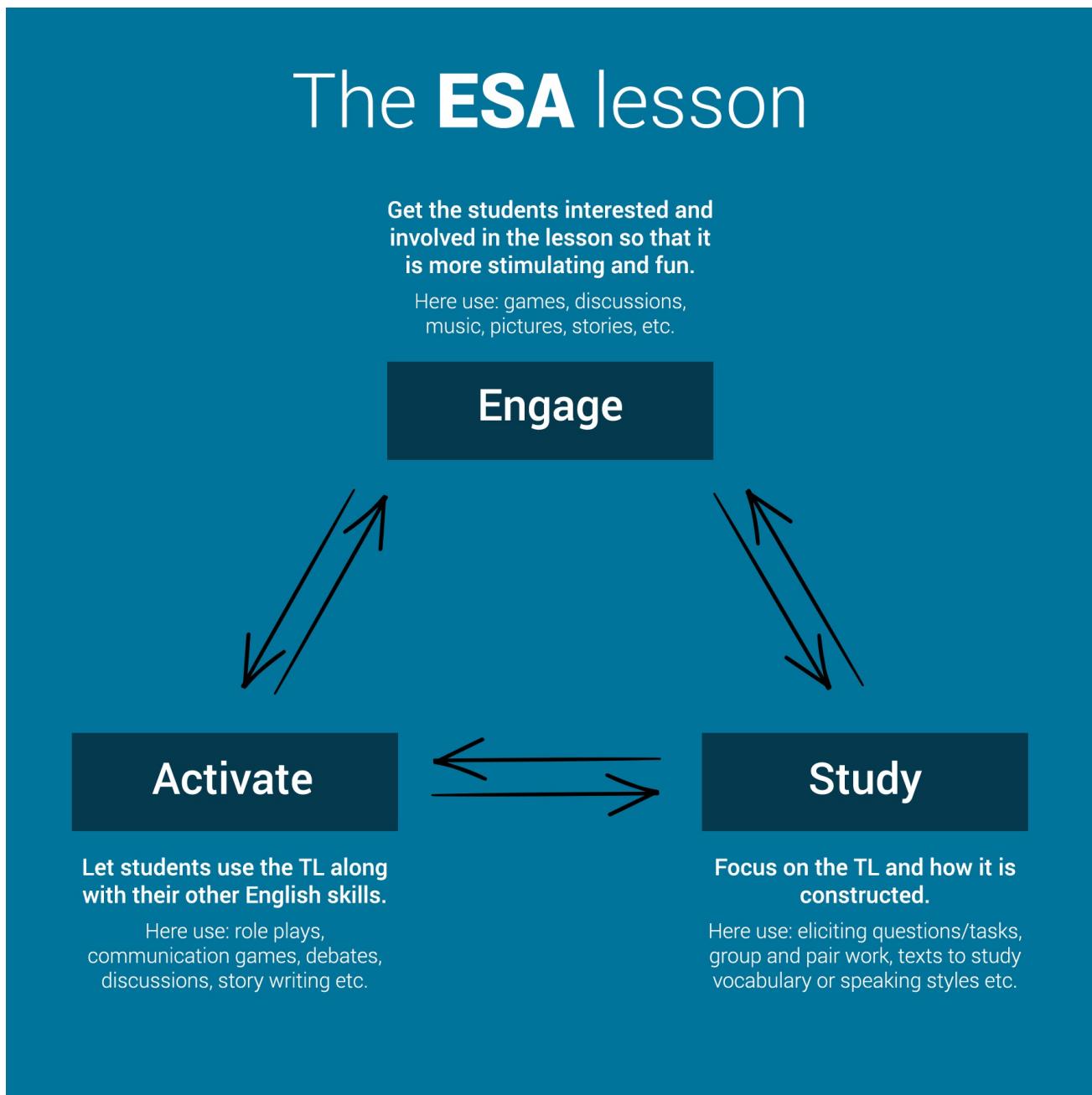
Now we're familiar with one type of lesson planning, PPP, let's look at another type: ESA.

ESA stands for Engage, Study, Activate, and while broadly similar to the PPP lesson structure, it allows you to move backwards and forwards between stages if you need to, unlike PPP.

We use ESA to focus on grammar and vocabulary lessons, as it can be useful to allow for lots of eliciting, which creates high levels of STT.

ESA lesson structure

Now that you've been introduced to the ESA lesson plan structure, let's break down what the Engage, Study and Activate stages actually mean:



Engage

In this stage, the teacher gets the students interested and involved in the lesson so that it is more stimulating and fun. By reducing inhibitions and relaxing students, it creates an environment that is more conducive to learning. It is essential that students engage with the topic and the target language (TL) here, as they will be working with it in other stages of the lesson.

Here use: games, discussions, music, pictures, stories, etc.

Study

Here, students focus on the language and how it is constructed. The teacher will elicit the TL from students and give them the chance to discover it for themselves.

Here use: eliciting questions/tasks, group and pair work, texts to study vocabulary or speaking styles, etc.

Activate

Students should be encouraged at this stage to use any English they know, using it as freely and communicatively as possible. The focus here is more on fluency than accuracy, as there are no restrictions on language use.

Here use: role plays, communication games, debates, discussions, story writing, etc.

Remember though, that unlike PPP, you can go backwards and forwards between ESA stages during a lesson. If you reach the study stage and students seem to be flagging, you can go back and have a discussion to renew their interest. If students are struggling to come up with their own examples in role play, you can go back to the study stage and teach them some new examples of the TL or even back to the engage stage to show them a game that helps them understand the basics.

ESA is more flexible than PPP, so remember it can come in handy for certain types of lessons.

Now you can watch the following ESA lesson in action. Be sure to make note of where the teacher moves between the stages.

ESA lesson: Classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, shows you an ESA lesson in action.

PPP & ESA: Quiz

true-or-false

You should always use a structure, strategy or method to prepare your lessons.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You can teach and practice anything with your students using PPP or ESA.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

ESA and PPP lesson structures are the same.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

PPP has just 3 stages – presentation, practice, production.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

With ESA it is essential to grab the students' interest and attention straight away.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

With PPP you can move backwards and forwards through the stages.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

It is important to elicit in both the PPP and ESA methods.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

With PPP you do controlled activities like gap fills and error correction, followed by free activities like role plays and discussions.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should only use these lesson plan structures to teach grammar.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

One of these methods is better than the other.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Other teaching methods

Structures are the ways in which we build our lesson plans, but methods are just as important – as these are the ways in which we deliver those plans.

We're going to outline some of the more important methods that you might want to use when teaching to add variety to your lessons, or focus on particular areas with your students.

Teaching methods			
Task-based learning	Communicative Language Teaching	Community Language Learning	Minimal TTT
<p>This method focusses more on a task than the language.</p> <p>Useful for: applied learning, engaging students' imagination, building vocabulary</p>	<p>This method stresses the importance of language functions (e.g. agreeing, inviting, suggesting etc.) as opposed to reliance on grammar and vocabulary alone.</p> <p>Useful for: business English, everyday use</p>	<p>This method involves students deciding what to talk about themselves and building their knowledge around that.</p> <p>Useful for: letting students control their learning, building vocabulary, refreshing classes</p>	<p>This method is where the teacher speaks as little as possible, letting students be the focus.</p> <p>Useful for: improving students' confidence, discovering language points</p>

Task-based learning

This method focuses more on a task than the language.

For this, students are given a task to complete in English. After they have completed the task, the teacher can then provide some language study to help clear up any problems they ran into.

This method can be very effective as it engages the students' imagination by letting them solve a problem and complete their task, while using English to do so. It's also great for building co-operation in a class, as students need to work together and communicate using the TL. These tasks have the advantage of being more "real world" than theoretical, which can help students use the language in similar situations outside of the classroom.

This method is very useful for teaching vocabulary or grammar. For example: if you gave the students the task to write about the moon landings, it would involve the students needing past tense and space-related vocabulary. If it was to design a school of the future, the grammar would include future tenses and the vocabulary would be educational words.

Useful for: applied learning, engaging students' imagination, building vocabulary

Communicative Language Teaching

This method stresses the importance of language functions (e.g. agreeing, inviting, suggesting, etc.) as opposed to reliance on grammar and vocabulary alone.

Communicative Language Teaching suggests that if students have enough exposure to the language and opportunity to use it, then they will be able to learn the language through this alone.

Activities typically require students to use the TL in real-life situations, so generally this is best suited to role plays and simulations.

There is far more emphasis on the completion of the task than the accuracy of the language, as we're focusing on the function rather than anything else.

Useful for: Business English, everyday use

Community Language Learning

This method involves students deciding what to talk about themselves and building their knowledge around that.

This method normally involves students sitting in a circle discussing things they want to, with the teacher outside the circle and helping when necessary with problems the students have during the discussion.

These are student-centered activities that let students learn the topics and language they want to while the teacher can focus on what the students need.

This can make a nice change for your class and is more effective for mid-level and higher-level students.

Useful for: Letting students control their learning, building vocabulary, refreshing classes

Minimal TTT

This method is where the teacher speaks as little as possible, letting students be the focus.

Having as much STT as possible allows the students to discover the language for themselves.

Teachers can find this unnatural in application, but this can be overcome by starting the lesson with the students discovering a grammar point and letting the students discuss it among themselves. The teacher should only intervene when no-one can answer.

Useful for: improving students' confidence, discovering language points

Which structure or method should you use?

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: Hi there, we've now looked at some of the structures and methods that are available to you when you start teaching, but you might now be wondering: which ones should I actually use?

Most teachers have used a range of the methods and structures at some point or another. You may start doing a PPP lesson with a communicative format, but you can decide to adopt some of the other methods you've seen to make your lessons more interesting and varied for your students.

Whatever you do, make sure you choose a structure and prepare a proper lesson plan before going into the classroom. This plan is your single most important tool as a teacher, as it will give you the confidence to step in front of the class and know what you're talking about. It also makes sure that your students aren't subjected to a chaotic, ineffective lesson.

Actor 2: Before you start thinking about what you want to teach a class, remember the things you need to know: the students' level, their reasons for learning English and, of course, the length of the lesson.

You'll then decide what the subject of the lesson will be: whether it is vocabulary, functional phrases, a grammar point or a tense. Setting out this information before writing your lesson plan means you can be focused and make sure you devote enough time to the student-centered activities that will really help students build their knowledge of English.

Actor 1: Then once you're in the class, it'll be a piece of cake! You will lead the students in to the lesson and warm them up. Then you give them the language you want to teach and let them practice to see if they understand. Once the students seem comfortable with what they've learnt, you can move on to the freer practice, where students can use the language in their own way and let you help them only when they need. Use your structures and methods right, and teaching will be as simple as PPP.

Actor 2: Or ESA!

Unit 2: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

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Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

multiple-choice

Which section of a PPP lesson is displayed in the video below?

Watch video (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Presentation

Practice (controlled)

Production (free)

Unit 2: Assignment

Unit 3: Activities in the classroom

Welcome to Unit 3

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, and welcome to the next unit in your methodology course. We've already learned about the role of the teacher and the students in the classroom, and we've also looked at some of the lesson plan structures and methods you can use to create fantastic lessons.

For Unit 3 we're going to focus on the actual activities you'll be using in class, in particular when presenting grammar. We're going to show you that even though students might think it's a boring subject, you can make fun, engaging and educational lessons if you choose the right activities.

We're also going to look at some other activities you can use for other topics, and how to make sure you set up your activities correctly so that it's clear to the students what they're supposed to be doing.

Good activities will make your job as a teacher a whole lot easier, and give your students a head-start with their learning of English. So, let's find out some more!

Teaching grammar

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: The first thing we're going to look at in this unit is how to teach grammar. For this, we're going to use the PPP structure we looked at in the last unit. Let's have a quick recap on what we need to include.

Actor 2: To start with, we'll have the lead-in. We want to grab students' attention and find out what they already know about the grammar points we're going to teach. We also want to warm them up so they're ready to learn.

Actor 1: What you can do here perhaps is act out a conversation, tell a story or use flashcards to elicit the target language from the students who might already know it. Make sure to get everyone involved here or you'll lose their attention early on! Visuals are a great way to get students talking, so think about including them. This activity should be fairly quick, maybe only taking 5 minutes or so to set the scene for the lesson.

Actor 2: Next up is the presentation stage. This can also be called the teaching stage, as this is where you'll go through the actual process of sharing knowledge with the students. Once you know what the students know already, you can start covering the meaning or use of the grammar point, going over the pronunciation that the construct uses and then explaining the form it takes.

Actor 1: Remember to elicit here as much as possible to see if they know the grammar rules already, rather than just telling them. By setting the scene in the lead-in, students will hopefully have an idea of what the meaning is already.

For activities you could use some example sentences to see if they can identify patterns or see the structure being used, and maybe they can think of other places where they've seen the grammar point in action. This could be done in pairs or small groups as well, getting the student talking time up and leaving you to monitor them.

Actor 2: Once you've covered the meaning, then pronunciation, then showed them the form or grammatical structure, it's time to move onto concept checking. This is where you ask students questions to test if they have really understood the topic. Try to use specific questions rather than just asking: "Do you understand?"; as you might not get an honest answer if you do.

Actor 1: After that it's time for you to let the students use the language you've taught them! The practice stage will have some controlled activities so you can check what they have learned in the presentation stage, and they'll be able to use the language in the way you showed them.

This can be done through gap fill activities, sentence ordering, error correction or maybe even basic sentence construction, with a limited number of possibilities.

Actor 2: The final stage is the production stage. This is where you use a free activity where the students can use the target language more naturally along with their whole repertoire of English skills.

This should be mainly a speaking activity, like a role play game, or a discussion or maybe a chain story.

Actor 1: Now we know all about the structure of your grammar lesson, let's find out how to make them as fun as they can be!

Teaching grammar: Points to remember

When you teach a grammar lesson, there are some key things you need to remember to make sure that the students understand what you're teaching and feel engaged in the topic too.

Here are nine rules to remember when you teach your grammar lessons:

1. Allow plenty of time for students to write down and memorize the grammatical structure being used.
2. Avoid mixing the target structure with other structures too much.
3. Personalize the TL by using real examples that relate to the students' lives and experiences.
4. Keep checking the students have fully understood the structure.
5. Teach meaning and pronunciation before form.
6. Elicit first, don't dictate the grammar rules to students.
7. Use examples rather than long explanations.
8. Use practice activities to consolidate and fix the language in your students' minds.
9. Avoid overly complicated vocabulary as this could distract from the TL.

Making grammar fun

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Unless your students are passionate about linguistics and language, most of them probably won't choose grammar as their favorite subject of their English lessons.

Nowadays we see that some teaching methods have taken that to heart and don't focus on grammar that much. Some schools focus entirely on language acquisition only and avoid teaching grammar altogether. However, in other schools teaching grammar will be an essential part of the curriculum. In these schools, grammar can often be a big part of students' exams, and if that's the case then it's going to be crucial that you teach them about the different points they could be tested on so that they can do well.

Teaching grammar doesn't have to be dull, you just need to remember that students will have their own learning styles – some taking a more analytical approach where they work things out themselves, while others like to be led by the teacher. In order to teach the whole class effectively you need to mix and match your teaching styles so everyone has a chance to learn in their own way.

To add variety into your lesson, you can use different games or use grammar in real-life situations. You could use songs or stories to involve students in a more cultural way. There's also plenty of materials and activity ideas available online to get students engaged, perhaps even using technology to bring them a new style of teaching.

However you want to go about it – there's lots of opportunity for you to teach grammar to your students in both an effective and fun way. So let's show you how it's done!

Using resources

Resources don't have to be boring worksheets full of rules and examples, they can be living things that students will come across in their day-to-day lives.

There are four main categories that you can use in the classroom to make grammar lessons more fun: **songs, games, stories and real-life situations**.

Activity:

Take a minute and think of two different ways you could use each resource in a grammar lesson. Remember to think about what the focus of the lesson would be, and what topic would you be teaching or practising.

How can you use **songs, games, stories and real-life situations** as resources?

Start timer

Using songs

Songs are a fantastic way of introducing students to grammar points, as these can allow students to connect knowledge they already have with new target language, and allow them to access and enjoy more songs in English.

Here are four easy ways to use songs in your grammar lessons to make them more fun:

- Choose a song that mainly uses a single grammar structure or one that uses several different tenses or grammar points. Students can identify and practice these by looking at the lyrics or listening to the song.
- Get students to listen out for particular language points in the song, e.g. adjectives, adverbs. Now get them to replace them with synonyms or antonyms and try out how the song sounds then.
- Do a lyrics gap fill activity and take out all of the verbs. Students can then listen and fill in the verbs with the correct form. You could get them to predict which verbs are missing first too.
- Choose individuals to say or sing a verse from the song but change the tense. This way they can practice using different tenses and verb forms, but in a more light-hearted way.

Teaching grammar using songs: Classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you an example of using songs to teach grammar points.

Using games

Games are a classic way of injecting some fun into lessons, and there are thousands of variations of common games that you can use to liven up grammar for your students.

Here are some reasons why games work so well and some principles to think about when you're planning and delivering games:

- Using games make learning easier for all students, whether they're children or adults. It gets students to be more active in their learning, with more STT, and it also adds more fun and enthusiasm to the learning process.
- Adding some competition to your games will often motivate students to get the answer right, and help them learn the correct way of using a grammar point much faster. Competitive games don't always work so well for younger children though, as they might not really understand competition and get upset. It's also worth remembering that not all cultures enjoy competitive activities, so don't force them on students if it might not help them.
- You shouldn't force a student to participate in a game. Some learners may not want to participate for personal reasons, and making them take part against their will can disengage them from the learning process in a big way.
- Well-chosen games at the right stage of a lesson will give students a break and allow them to practice language skills too.
- Games should be thought of as supplementary activities, not as the main event. They're a great way of helping students learn, but they're no substitute for showing students the correct forms – even for young learners.
- Make sure your games are appropriate for the class in terms of their ability, target language and the type of participation you want. Remember to be aware of the stage of the lesson when you want to interrupt students to correct mistakes; this is fine in the practice stage, but if it's a production activity, you should leave them until after the game is over.
- A game that looks great on paper doesn't always turn out that way in the classroom. If the students are looking tired or disengaged, try something different.

The next video will show you our teacher demonstrating some common games you can use in the classroom to teach them in a fun way.

Teaching grammar using games: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, we're now going to look at four different games that you can play with your students in the classroom to help them get engaged in your grammar lessons.

1. Blackboard race

For this game, divide the board in two halves. Split the class into two teams. You can decide what the theme will be. The students need to race to the board one by one and write as many related words as possible (one at a time) These could be grammar or vocabulary related. You could go for irregular past verbs for example. Remember to set a time limit. Students who like competitions love this. With larger classes, you could have them work in teams using flipchart paper. Always remember to set a time limit.

2. Tic-tac-toe

To play this game, draw a tic-tac-toe grid on the board. Fill each square with a grammar point you want to practice. This could be any grammar point, for example, 2nd conditional sentences. You could fill the grids with two verbs in their infinitive form. Students work in teams. The first team picks a square, allow time to confer in their group. They need to come up with a correct 2nd conditional sentence. If they get it right, they can claim the square of the grid; if not they 'lose' the square. The game goes on until one team scores a tic-tac-toe.

3. Hot potato

You could use a soft ball or a soft toy. The objective of the game is to pass the ball in a circle as fast as possible. It's a very flexible game. You can adapt it based on what grammar point you want to practice. It could be based on words, like verb forms, or full sentences, maybe comparatives. You could use it as a warm-up, controlled practice or review stage of the lesson.

4. Sentence matching game

You will need cards - the same number as the number of students in the group so that every learner can have one card. On each card write a subject, verb or object/ prepositional phrase. Distribute the cards and play some music, the students have to walk freely around the classroom. When the music stops, they have to get into groups and create correct sentences. You can use this as a controlled practice if the sentences are set and there are a limited number of possibilities. It would be a production (free) activity if students use the prompts to make up sentences themselves.

Using stories

There's very little that captures our imagination in the way that stories do, so that makes them ideal candidates for classroom activities.

You can use stories to highlight grammar points and make lessons more interesting, and here are some ways that you can do this:

- Use spoken or written stories to make grammar more fun. The students can visualize what's being said in their heads which will help them understand and assimilate the new grammatical structures they're being taught.
- Focus on grammatical structures in stories, or summarize and report about a favorite story taking place as though it was on the news.
- Students can choose a character from a story to describe, which could let them practice the present simple (through routines), adjectives, adverbs of frequency, etc. Make sure you correct students at the end of the exercise, perhaps by writing the incorrect parts on the board and getting the students up to correct it. Remember to allow all students, even the shy ones, to take part so that everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- Use a chain story, where every student takes a turn to contribute a line to the story. You can direct them to use almost anything grammatical here e.g. irregular verbs or a particular tense.

The following classroom video will show the teacher using three different chain stories to practice a grammar point for each. Try to figure out which particular point they're focssing on in each story.

Teaching grammar using stories: Classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you an example of using chain stories to teach grammar points in the classroom.

Using real-life situations

Bringing in real-life situations to your lessons makes perfect sense, as it allows your students to engage with the target language in a way they can relate to. Real-life contexts are also really useful to give students a functional grasp of English, in that they'll learn vocabulary and grammar constructs that they can start using outside of the classroom as soon as they leave.

Here are some situations where real-life situations can be very effective in your grammar lessons:

- Use personalized topics to make students more interested and engaged, which will lead to the lesson having more STT.
- Use comparative adjectives to compare two films that students like.
- Use modal verbs to give advice to students, for example: what to do on a trip to your home town or city.
- Use the past simple tense to talk about a recent holiday, event or celebration.
- Use the future simple to speculate on what life will be like 6 months, 5 years or 10 years from now.
- Use the present perfect to find out what amazing experiences your students have had!

In the next classroom video, our teacher will get students to use real-life situations in a production (free) activity. They'll use the target language (the future simple tense) in a way that they would in the real world outside of class.

Teaching grammar using real-life situations: Classroom examples

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you how to use real-life scenarios in the classroom to teach grammar points.

Other classroom activities

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We hope that you're now full to the brim with classroom activity ideas and buzzing with anticipation to use them in an actual classroom!

We've got some more activities that you might want to use though, for different types of lesson that focus on something other than grammar, or as part of a different lesson type than the usual PPP or ESA class you give.

All of the activity types we've shown you are great and really effective, but there are plenty more activities out there that can be used during different stages of a lesson: as a warm-up, cool-down, consolidation or revision exercise. These activities can give students a mental break from learning full-on, which is helpful in keeping lessons varied and keeping students engaged.

These other activities include icebreakers, warm-ups, discovery tasks, tests, drilling and skills-based activities which help make your lessons richer.

You can find lots of examples of these activities in our resource section, so feel free to browse it and see what you can add to the lesson plans you're already thinking about.

Classroom activities: Quiz

true-or-false

You can use the PPP method to teach grammar.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You can make grammar fun to learn by using different resources in class.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Songs should only be used in skills lessons to focus on listening practice.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When teaching grammar, you teach meaning and pronunciation before form.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The teacher should tell the grammar rules to the students to start with.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should use competitive games to practice grammar with all age ranges.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Personalized activities, like real-life situations, motivate students and increase STT.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

A chain story is a written activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should never use more than one tense in an activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You can only use games, songs, stories and real-life situations to practice tenses.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Giving instructions

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We've now got a grasp on all the activities we can use in our grammar lesson, but now it's time to think about how we are going to make sure that the students understand what we want them to do.

There's no real trick to this, we just need to give students clear, simple instructions.

Even if we have a complex activity, if we explain it in a clear and concise way this shouldn't matter and the students will fully grasp what they're asked to do. It's important to use language that the students understand here, and avoid being too wordy, otherwise students will get confused and start to switch off. Remember though, that giving instructions isn't a one-step process. Once you've told the students what to do, you need to make sure they understand, so that's where concept checking comes in.

These steps will make sure your lessons and activities start off on the right foot so that you can spend less time explaining and your students spend more time learning.

Giving clear instructions

One of the first things you'll need to master as a teacher is giving clear, simple instructions to your students and making sure that they fully understand what you're asking them to do.

Although you might think it helps, too much repetition and rephrasing can actually leave them feeling more confused. Rephrasing, in particular, increases the risk of them being overloaded by foreign language they don't understand – so try avoiding it when you can.

Here are some useful tips to help you give clear instructions:

- Speak clearly
- Grade or simplify your language to a level students will understand
- Use as few words as possible
- Use gestures and visuals to help
- Demonstrate tasks
- Check that students understand what they're being asked to do
- Establish procedures and routines for yourself to help provide effective, consistent instructions
- Write your instructions into your lesson plan at first so you remember them, although you won't need them as much when you acquire more experience

Giving clear instructions: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

As you may know already, giving clear instructions is a key factor in teaching and it's not only relevant to lower levels! When it comes to instructions, you need to be clear and concise at any level, even with more advanced students. It's a good idea to plan your instructions beforehand and practice them.

Let me show you a few demonstrations and ideas.

To start off simply, you might want your students to stand up.

First of all, you need to get their attention. You need to make sure your students are listening and are focused. You can say something like: pens down please. Use gestures- down. And then another gesture with your hands - to stand up. "Stand up please."

You will do the same to get your students to sit down:

Get their attention: if they are doing an activity, you can clap your hands and say in a decisive voice "Thank you". Wait a few seconds to get their full attention and gesture to go back to their seats. "Sit down, please".

To get them into pairs, get their attention and gesture pairs - to every pair, saying "pair work, two... two, two ... etc.

For group work by letter, get their attention and approach every learner saying the letter in a clear voice and using gestures: A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B... You can use laminated cards for this which will last longer and give one to each learner. Here's an example of how you can do this:

"As stand up... and stand here please... Bs stand up... and stand here please ..., Cs stand up ... and stand here please ...

Next: 'As sit down'- gesture and show where. Then do the same for Bs and Cs.

Now let's look at running a "Find someone who ..." activity.

Get the students' attention. Show the Students the handout or part of the handout on the board.

The handouts should have a range of things on them, for example 12 squares with experiences such as: eat sushi, swim in the sea, etc.

Elicit: Ask a question about an experience. Point to one square.

Student: Have you ever eaten sushi?

Praise and ask another or the same student, Have you ever eaten sushi?

If the answer is positive. write their name in the square; if negative, don't write the name ...

When you are confident the Students understand, distribute the handout, gesture for them to stand up and come to the middle and tell them to 'ask different people'.

A grammar task can be as simple as asking them to underline all past tense forms in a text.

Before you distribute the handout, show it to the class. Make sure you speak to the whole group.

'Read the text, underline ...verbs in the past tense.'

Another effective example is to Demonstrate on the board - maybe by writing:

I go shopping every Friday. Yesterday I went to the supermarket.

Nominate a stronger learner to come up to the board and underline the relevant verb.

You can then tell the class: 'Work on your own' ... Set a time limit for the task and distribute a handout.

Remember, when you give your students instructions, try to keep things as simple and as visual as possible. A visual demonstration will always work much better than a lengthy verbal explanation. So, keep it short, keep it visual, and only give instructions when your students need to know something!

Concept questions: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

It is important to make sure your students understand the target language clearly. However, it's not only the target language that you need to be concept checking regularly. Your students should understand task instructions, special announcements, like a cancelled class, exam dates, change in class times, and so on, as well as their progress and ways of improvement. Concept checking is especially useful for abstract concepts or culturally loaded concepts, for example Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras..

Well-structured concept questions will let you find out whether your students have understood the message you want to convey. It's no use asking:

"Do you understand?"

Your students might simply nod because they might think it's embarrassing not to understand, or simply because it makes things seemingly easier.

It's a good idea to plan your concept questions when planning your lesson, for example concept checking vocabulary, instructions, or a grammar point. Make sure the questions use simple vocabulary and words that your learners know. It should be possible to answer them using yes or no, so keep them as closed questions. And it's important not to use the target language when asking concept questions.

For example, if the target language is present perfect, "I have been to Japan". Incorrect concept questions would be:

"Where have you been?" or
"Have you eaten sushi?"

These don't check understanding of the tense - they just ask for further information on the topic.

Or if the target language is likes and dislikes, for example "She likes cats but she doesn't like dogs".

What does she like? Would again be an incorrect concept question. It's an open question which again asks for more information.

Here are some examples of concept questions:

If the target language is "He cooked dinner", you could ask:

"Am I talking about now?" No
"Is he still cooking?" No
"Is the action finished?" Yes
"Am I talking about the past?" Yes

If the target language is "They speak French", you could ask:

"Are they speaking French at the moment?" No
"Do they know how to speak French?" Yes

We can also concept check vocabulary.

If the target language is "The house is huge", we could ask:

"Is the house small?" No
"Is it big?" Yes
"Is the house veeerrry big?" Yes

You can also concept check instructions.

For example, as a teacher I'll ask students to work in pairs and discuss questions 1-6. My concept check questions would be:

"Are you going to work on your own?" No.
"Are you going to answer all the questions?" No.
"Are you going to answer questions 1 to 6?" Yes.
"Are you going to speak?" Yes.

As we said before, concept questions can be used when presenting new target language or checking instructions. These aren't the only times we can use them. The teacher may decide to concept check at any stage of a lesson, for example if you notice the students are not following instructions or haven't understood the concept. The teacher may also decide to concept check in the plenary of the lesson at the end. Be careful not to concept check every single new word though. Some concepts can be easily understood using other means, like context or images.

Unit 3: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

When teaching grammar, the most important thing for students to memorize is the _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Target structure

Homework

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

You should avoid mixing the grammar point you are teaching with too many _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Other structures

Examples

Exercises

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

You should ideally try to _____ the grammar rules first.

Select the correct answer from these options

Dictate

Elicit

Explain

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

When teaching grammar, you teach _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Form, meaning and then pronunciation
- Pronunciation, form and then meaning
- Meaning, pronunciation and then form

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

Use resources like _____ to make grammar more fun.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Games and real-life situations
- Songs and stories
- Either of the above

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

Instructions should be _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Repeated until students understand them
- Clear and simple and graded to the level of language your students use
- Given and then repeated by the students

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

Tasks will work better if you _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Demonstrate them for the students

Don't use too many different types of activities

Always use the same activities in every lesson

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

Using _____ makes learning grammar much easier.

Select the correct answer from these options

Homework

Teacher-centered lessons

Games

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

Concept questions should always be _____ questions.

Select the correct answer from these options

Open

Closed

True or False

multiple-choice

Read the sentence below and choose the answer that best completes it.

Which one of the following is not a concept question?

Select the correct answer from these options

Are you working in pairs or individually?

Do you have to fill in the gaps on the handout?

Are you choosing true or false for each question?

Unit 4: Classroom management, correcting errors and giving feedback

Welcome to Unit 4

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi again, and congratulations on your progress so far!

We now know how to structure lessons and make them fun and engaging, and we're going to continue looking at how to make your classes as successful as possible.

The next subject we're going to explore is classroom management – or how to set up your classroom and activities and make sure the lesson goes the way you want it to.

We'll look at improving your presenting skills and how to use visual aids to enhance your lessons. We'll also look at how to give instructions and feedback to your students so they understand what to do and how they are progressing in their learning.

This is also where we'll show you how to control your students, which means talking about how to deal with those problem students you might come up against. They do tend to be few and far between, but we'll give you some tips about how to encourage good behavior.

The first step though is to improve your presenting skills, so click on to the next lesson to get started on that.

Your presenting skills

We've already discussed some of the qualities that go into making you an effective teacher, and one that we'll help you with now is your presenting skills. Being a good teacher doesn't depend on how extroverted you are, or how naturally confident you are, it's all about how you get across information in your own style. Being in front of the class means you'll need to present language points to your students, and this is how you will lay the groundwork of a successful lesson so students can discover the language. This is a skill you may or may not have yet, but it's definitely one that you can learn and perfect. The more you practice your teaching and presenting skills, the better you'll become.

Activity:

Before we start, write down five things you think will affect how well you physically present information in class. Consider things like body language, voice projection, facial expressions and so on. Hit the timer below to start and we'll compare answers after a minute.

Name 5 things that contribute to your presenting skills.

Start timer

Giving instructions

Imagine you have a great game to play with your students, maybe "Hot Potato" as we saw in Unit 3. Let's remind ourselves of the rules of the game quickly:

The objective of the game is to pass the ball around a circle of students as fast as possible. You start by setting a timer and then saying a food, like: "banana". Then you pass the ball to the next student who has to say a food that starts with the last letter of your word, so here that's "a". The student says "apple" and passes the ball to the next student. They now say a food starting with "e" and the process continues. Everyone needs to try to take a turn before timer runs out.

This is a fun game and the rules are pretty clear to us, but how are you going to explain these rules to the students?

Activity:

Let's imagine that they're at an elementary level, one step above beginners. Think for a minute about how you would explain the game in a way that they'll understand.

Think about how to explain "Hot Potato" in an understandable way.

Start timer

Presenting and giving instructions: Classroom examples

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

These classroom clips featuring our TEFL course tutor, Kirsty, will show you examples of using presenting skills and giving instructions to students in the following scenarios:

- An information gap activity
- Listening for gist
- A matching task
- A chain story in small groups

Using visual aids

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: We're now going to look at visual aids in the classroom, which are the things we can use to help students see what we're talking about. There are lots of different visual aids we can use in a lesson, and some you might not even have considered before.

Actor 2: The most obvious visual aid is the board. This will almost certainly be your primary visual aid in the classroom, and you can use it for much more than just writing up grammar points and spelling. The board can be a focal point for you and your students to draw or display pictures, draw timelines, record answers or be used in games and activities.

Your board might be something different in every classroom – from a small flipchart or a blackboard, to a large whiteboard or even an interactive board – so be aware of what you'll have available in the classroom when you plan your lesson.

Actor 1: Using the board takes a bit of practice to do well, as you'll want to avoid writing with your back to the students. If you do that, they won't be able to see what you're writing, and you won't be able to keep an eye on them either.

Remember to write as you want your students to write, with proper spelling, capitalisation and punctuation too. Make sure your writing is nice and clear, so use colors that contrast with the board you're using and large, legible handwriting. Once you get into the habit of it, you'll only need to use the board for one or two parts of your lesson, which means you won't flood your students with notes.

Actor 2: So, what other visual aids can we use? What about flashcards? These are perfect for eliciting vocabulary or showing the meaning of new words, and they can be used to base a discussion on much more than what's shown on the card. I'll show you what I mean. (hold up flashcard of a train and hold it face other actor) What is this?

Actor 1: A train

Actor 2: And where do we go to catch a train?

Actor 1: The station

Actor 2: And what do we need to catch a train?

Actor 1: A ticket

Actor 2: And so on. A picture can really paint a thousand words it turns out!

Actor 1: That's right, and you can use pictures in more ways than just for flashcards. They can be used as part of a lesson's lead-in activity, or you can ask students guiding questions based on what the pictures are showing. These can be about anything, just so long as you have them prepared in advance so your students don't go off on too much of a tangent. These questions are great at engaging your students, and can really create student talking time.

Actor 2: Our next form of visual aid is realia, which includes real-life objects and props that you can use to improve students' understanding of real-life situations through the medium of English. These are similar to flashcards, in that you can use them to elicit vocabulary or ideas or discussion points that interest students. Remember not to overdo it though; a couple of props is fine, but carrying a bag into each class like Santa Claus isn't going to be easy!

Actor 1: For modern classrooms, an OHP or overhead projector, is fantastic way of presenting topics to your students. You can use this to show presentations you've prepared beforehand, or slideshows of pictures that are relevant to the class. It may also allow you to access online resources, like videos or interactive online games, that will add some technological pizzazz to your teaching.

Actor 2: And finally, if you're really lucky you'll get to use an interactive whiteboard. This combines the resourcefulness of a normal board, the technology of an overhead projector and the ability to communicate between the two. Like all resources, it's important not to rely on this too much – but it can be a great tool to make fun and interesting lessons for your students. We'll talk more about these interactive whiteboards later in the unit.

Actor 1: We hope you're now aware of the wide range of visual aids you can use in the classroom, but we want to give you a final note of caution. These aids are fantastic ways of livening up your lessons, but they'll only be effective if used in the right way, and not too much. So remember this when you're sitting there planning your lessons!

Eliciting using pictures: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson with our TEFL tutor, Caroline, will show you an example of how you can elicit vocabulary and grammar points from students using pictures.

Interactive whiteboards

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

An interactive whiteboard might seem a bit scary at first but after a short period of familiarization, it can prove to be an excellent teaching and learning tool. As it's connected to the classroom computer and the internet, you can share with the students anything you have prepared on the computer. Remember not to fall into the trap of teacher centered lessons though. Incorporate the whiteboard, but don't let it dominate the lesson. You can also allow the students to use it as well.

Interactive whiteboards are great for presentations, feedback, listening, watching, playing games and much more.

Here are a few of our ideas how to incorporate an interactive whiteboard into your lesson.

1. Using pictures for various activities. It's possible to hide the picture and "wipe" only a small fragment of the screen for the students to guess what it is. You can then reveal more and more of the picture. This is called the spotlight tool.
2. You can save whatever you write on the board and use it as revision in the following lesson, print it out for absentees, or use it for brainstorming during the lesson and then print it out for reference during subsequent tasks.
3. Whatever you write on the board with a whiteboard marker can be transformed into a font version. Tap the word or phrase at the end. The software will show you a choice of printed text, select it and voilà! You can then move the text/words all over the board as one entity.
4. You can put a text in the correct order, or group words and expressions into columns, e.g. regular / irregular verbs.
5. You can also minimize and maximize what you write (that is, make the font size smaller or larger), or flip the text backwards. This is great for vocabulary games.
6. You can also use a screen shade to reveal the text little by little. This can be done from top to bottom or from one side to another. This is useful when eliciting answer, and giving feedback little by little as answers are slowly uncovered by the screen shade.
7. You can use it for listening tasks.
8. You can use it for displaying images, explaining words (Google a word to show a picture), showing handouts and writing in them during feedback, displaying lesson objectives, using texts or listening materials on the internet, etc.
9. You will not run out of space on the board – you can simply open another page every time you need more space. You can go back between the pages.
10. You can prepare lessons in advance. And then use the material in the classroom – you can then use different color pens, create gap fills, etc.
11. You can use pictures from the IWB gallery, your own, or from the internet.
12. Every IWB comes with a built-in activity toolkit. There you have ready-made activity templates you can easily adapt to your learners' needs. You can revise words, or have the learners guess the topic of the lesson.
13. Another great tool is the Random Selector. You pick your students at random to ask them questions, e.g. during feedback.

Teaching presentation: Quiz

true-or-false

You need to be an extrovert to be a good teacher.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

How you present information to your students is very important.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Maintaining eye contact with students helps them to focus and engage while also helping you check their understanding.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Students will only understand by listening to what you say.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should keep moving around during the lesson – the more the better.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should aim for high levels of STT, or student talking time.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

A really good way of explaining activities is by demonstrating them for students first.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should write everything you say on the board.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Your board work is not important.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

It's very useful to use visual aids like pictures, flashcards and realia when there's an opportunity to do so.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Organizing activities: Introduction

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We've looked at how to give instructions and use visuals in your lessons, so let's move on to look at another important part of your lesson planning: How to organize your activities with students and how to arrange your classroom.

Organizing activities

It's important to add variety to your lessons, so you'll need to make sure that students don't always work with the same partner.

Can you think why that's important?

[Click here to find out](#)

Students need to learn how to understand and talk to a range of different people, and working with other students in class allows them to hear a different vocabulary, accent and pronunciation of words. Letting people work with new partners also helps build group rapport, which can really make lessons more enjoyable and engaging for the whole class, so it's best to ensure students are mixed up a bit during pair work and group work.

In class, we have three different types of student-to-student interaction: individual, pair work and group work. There are positives and negatives to using each of these, can you think about what they might be? Here are our thoughts on each type of work:

Individual work

Positives

- Individual, or solo, work allows you to respond to individual students' needs in terms of their pace of learning, ability, etc.
- It can really help increase a student's confidence as they don't have to perform in front of others, and some students really enjoy showing their individual ability

Negatives

- It restricts student interaction and levels of STT will be much lower. It also doesn't build any group rapport.

Pair work

Positives

- Pair work increases STT and is the preferred set-up for many teachers.
- It allows for easy monitoring and is quick to set up.
- This can be less stressful than group work, and you can pair strong and weak, or confident and shy learners together to build confidence.
- You can easily mix groups up and can use the pairs as open or closed, either talking across the class or together.

Negatives

- It can be noisy when the whole class is talking, but this can be managed by sitting students next to each other.
- Some pairings don't always work and it can be difficult to get pairs to work together if you don't know them.

Group work

Positives

- Great levels of STT and interaction.
- Can include a sense of team bonding or competition into the groups to make learning more engaging.
- It can also be easier to control the whole class.

Negatives

- More dominant students may do more talking, which lessens STT for some.
- Setting up smaller groups can be more time-consuming and it's difficult to keep students on task if they get confused.

Seating arrangements

It might be a simple thing from the sound of it, but how you physically arrange the seats in your class can make a big difference to the way your lesson runs and how students learn.

Arranging your class will depend on the amount of space you have available, and the number of students, but you should also tailor it to the pace you want for the lesson and the activities you'll be undertaking.

There is no right or wrong way to arrange a class, but remember to make sure it is set up before the lesson begins as you don't want to be wasting valuable lesson time rearranging the furniture.

Our demonstration video on the next page will show several ways you can set up your classroom.

Seating arrangements: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This video will show you some of the ways in which you can arrange the seating in your class to encourage the sort of student interaction that works best for your lesson.

Horseshoe

This is a very popular arrangement in many language schools. As a teacher, you can easily establish eye contact with the students and make sure they are on task, as it's easy to approach every learner. From a classroom management point of view, it gives the teacher good control and visibility of the class. The students can see the board with ease. The seating plan is good for presentations and whole class activities. Students can also work in pairs; you can easily change the pair arrangement by moving one student from one end to the other to form new pairs.

This seating arrangement does not promote small group work, as the Students sit next to each other. Also, some Students might feel intimidated to speak with many pairs of eyes watching them from all directions.

Rows

This is a very common arrangement in traditional classrooms in teacher-centered schools. It uses the space of the classroom floor to the maximum. The teacher can walk freely between the rows.

This seating arrangement does not promote group work, mingling or varied pair work. Also, it can be sometimes tricky to control a larger class, especially if the more disruptive learners sit at the back. However, in general, this arrangement is considered to be classroom management friendly.

It might make the students feel disengaged with lesson. The teacher is the controller while the Students become secondary participants.

This seating arrangement works well for individual written work.

If your classroom is arranged this way and you can't change it, try to use the space at the front and in between the aisles for mingling activities.

One large table

This set up is also called boardroom. It works well for debates and times when students need to act as one group.

The disadvantage is the teacher always approaches the Students from behind when monitoring.

Cluster tables

This layout works best for group work activities as it facilitates free discussion. It also promotes individualized and personalized learning - the groups could be different levels working on different tasks.

Students feel confident to discuss answers in a small group.

This arrangement might be challenging for the teacher from a classroom management point of view. In larger classes some learners might have their backs to the board. Also, some learners might rely on other members of the group to do all the work.

Two rows opposite (runway)

This arrangement works best with smaller classes. The teacher can move freely between the two rows. The layout works well for debates and whole group discussions, as well as lecture based lessons.

Disadvantage: the layout may be very teacher-centered.

Keeping discipline

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: As I'm sure you're aware, discipline is an important part of keeping a class running smoothly and making sure that everyone has the chance to learn effectively. Whether you do this through behaviour management, rewards, behaviour charts or class rules, they all help contribute towards a positive atmosphere that stops unnecessary disruptions or distractions.

As a teacher, you'll need to get the balance right between controlling your class and encouraging a relaxed, friendly atmosphere so that students are comfortable but also in line with what the lesson requires of them. Let's look at some issues you might face in the classroom.

Actor 2: For starters, let's discuss why some students may be disruptive. It might be easy to blame them, but quite often it can be the teacher's fault!

You need to project an image of being in charge of the class so that students respect you and follow your guidance. First, don't appear careless, disorganized or unprepared or some students might take that as a cue to be like that too. Next, make sure you put time and thought into planning your lesson so it works for all your students. That can make a big difference to how engaged students are, and if they feel involved in the lesson, they'll be less likely to disrupt it.

Actor 1: This leads us on to how to treat your students in class. We want everyone to take part and to be given a fair chance to participate, so make sure that it's not just the strongest students kicking the lesson off or giving their opinions. We need to let weaker students have a chance to practice their English too, and we should do this in a way that doesn't put them on the spot too much and make them feel uncomfortable. Try to give the weaker students some slightly easier tasks or questions, and they'll feel more involved and happier.

Actor 2: If a student is being disruptive, it's often because they want to draw attention to themselves. There are lots of reasons why students might do this: maybe they're sensing the lesson isn't going well, or that they aren't being given a chance to speak; maybe they're feeling bored and the lesson isn't going at the right pace; they might be tired and overworked; they might also be struggling with the activity and feeling upset that they're falling behind other students.

The key is to make sure they get a little bit of extra attention to show you're aware they need some help, and perhaps pairing them with someone of a higher ability to guide them through the lesson. It's important to be subtle about this though, as you don't want to draw attention to someone if they feel they're struggling.

Actor 2: Setting up some class rules is always a good idea. This means that students clearly know what's expected from them, and you can use the rules to refer students to if they're misbehaving. You don't want to overload students with rules and regulations though, as they need to focus on the lesson more than the rules, so be selective and keep it to just four or five. You could even make a lesson out of it and ask the students what rules they think would help them learn better in class. Getting them involved in setting the rules mean they're far more likely to follow them as well, so it's a win-win situation!

Actor 1: Finally, consistency is another trait you'll need to have when teaching classes. If you lay down class rules, you'll need to follow them and make sure that students know if they break the rules, they'll face a punishment. Make sure this applies to all students as well, so no student is punished for something while

another gets away with it. Part of being consistent is to always keep your cool and be respectful: treat your students in the way you'd like to be treated yourself and you'll find that they'll play along much better. And that's the goal of discipline in the classroom.

Discipline with young learners

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Discipline issues can happen with both adults and young learners, but with younger students we do tend to have more factors to bear in mind.

Young learners might have more discipline issues because they tend to have shorter attention spans, lower ability in both their native language and English and more difficulty in coping with longer school days.

To overcome this, rules are necessary to make it clear to students what types of behavior are appropriate and not.

You'll also find great results if you praise and reward good behaviors, to improve students' confidence and morale, rather than just punishing the bad.

So how can you reward good behavior? Check out the following demonstration to find out.

Rewarding good behavior: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

There are many benefits of using reward systems in your classes. The key factor is to promote positive behavior and participation in classroom activities.

The system can be simple, for example scoring points for class participation or correct answers. The students receive points, stickers, move up on a behavior charts and so on as they do well in some way in class. They can also lose points for bad behavior. It's best when the points carry some meaning, especially with older children who like to work towards a bigger prize.

Another way to promote good behavior is 'the teacher's helper'. The teacher gives the students some responsibility, like helping with distributing or collecting handouts. This method works well with disruptive students as it can encourage them to behave so they can have a turn at being the helper.

You can also encourage learners to vote for the best student of the week. Again, if you reward effort rather than ability it creates a level playing field for all the students and really encourages good behavior.

Traffic lights: at the start of the lesson all students' names are on green. Depending on their behavior the names can move to amber and red, but also back to green if a child improves.

In case of adult learners, it can be even more challenging when it comes to behavior management. You may be younger than some of your students and not feel comfortable tackling the issue. It is always a good idea to ask for help and advice from your boss. It is also always a good idea to find the source of the issue. You can arrange a private tutorial with the learner to find out what the problem is. It might be that they need more challenge in the lesson or they don't feel confident and are scared of making mistakes.

There are some ground rules that should be followed by students of any age. For example, coming to class on time. Latecomers disrupt the lesson for the students who make an effort to arrive on time and they also miss out on valuable learning time themselves. Mobile phones should be on silent and the classroom should be a safe and comfortable environment for learning and making mistakes. You could elicit these simple rules at the start of the year and write a class agreement together with the students to make them take ownership of it. It could then be mounted on the wall and referred to when necessary.

Behaviour issues: Examples

Here we've outlined some situations that might come up in class where students' behavior isn't what we'd expect from them.

Have a think about how you would deal with each situation, then click the button below it to find out how we'd recommend dealing with it.

Issue 1

A couple of students are chatting with each other in their native language during class.

[Click here to find out the solution](#)

Refer the students to the class rules, which should hopefully say students should only use English in the classroom (since that is what we want them to work on and improve). If they continue to use their native language in class, split the students up and sit them with different students.

Issue 2

A student is persistently late to class, sometimes arriving 20 minutes late, which disrupts the lesson for others.

[Click here to find out the solution](#)

Talk to the student after class about why they are late. Do they have a scheduling conflict or another reason why they can't make it on time?

If they do, discuss this with the school, as they may be able to move them to a later class or help the student otherwise.

If not, then explain to them that they are disrupting the lesson for the other students and missing out on important parts of the lesson.

With adults, you could ask that if they are late to the class they'll need to wait until after a break to come into the lesson, which may encourage them to be more punctual. With younger learners, you or the school should talk to the parents about the issue.

Issue 3

A student doesn't want to take part in an activity.

[Click here to find out the solution](#)

Simply ask them why! Check if they understand the task, as sometimes it is a lack of understanding that leads them not to participate. Try explaining the task again, or pair them with a different student who is more of their level. You can even help them through the task yourself.

Some students may have personal reasons for not taking part, and if that's the case, it's important not to force them into participating or they might become disengaged for the rest of the lesson.

Discipline and Behavior: Quiz

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

You can have behavior issues with _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Young learners

Adult learners

All types of learners

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

There _____ for behavior issues.

Select the correct answer from these options

Can be many reasons

Is usually one reason

Is no good reason

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Be _____ with classroom rules.

Select the correct answer from these options

Casual

Consistent

Relaxed

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Students can be disruptive if they are bored or _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Struggling to understand

Older than everyone else

Feeling insecure

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

You should have around _____ rules for your class.

Select the correct answer from these options

20

10

5

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Who should decide on the rules?

Select the correct answer from these options

The teacher and the students together

The teacher

The parents

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

You can have rules about _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Language use in the classroom

Punctuality

Participation

All of the above

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

You should pay attention to _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Bad behavior

Good behavior

Both good and bad behavior

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

You should reward good behaviour by _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Giving the students sweets

Using rewards like games, stickers and positive praise

Finishing the class early

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

You want the atmosphere in your classroom to be _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Strict with everyone following all the rules all of the time

Relaxed and friendly with few disruptions

Lively and loud

Correcting errors

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We're getting towards the end of the unit, and you've learned a lot about classroom management so far!

The last thing we need to cover is how to correct your students' errors and give them feedback in constructive ways so that they can improve their English skills.

First of all, here's a question for you: what's the difference between a mistake and an error?

Native speakers make mistakes all the time, by tripping up over words or saying things in a way they didn't quite mean, so it's natural that students of English will be the same. Mistakes happen, so you don't need to worry about them!

Errors, though, are something you will need to fix when they come up. These are cases when a student misunderstands something, which leads to incorrect use of the language. It might be that the student doesn't understand the correct form, or pronunciation or grammatical structure. They might think what they're saying is correct, or on the other hand they may be unsure of how to get it right. In any case, this is when you need to correct your students, but it's important you do so in a way that maintains their confidence and doesn't disrupt the fluency of the activity.

There are lots of ways you can do this though, and we're about to show you just how to do it.

What, when and how to correct

It's easier to start with **what** you should correct, so here are the three things that you'll need to look for:

- Errors with the target language you are teaching.
- Errors that impede understanding.
- Consistently repeated errors.

If an error comes up that's not related to the focus of the lesson, you might be best just letting it go. Sometimes students will have a slip of the tongue, like native speakers do, and they'll make an error that they know isn't correct use of the language. This can be common when students' native language, or L1 as it's known, interferes with the grammar or vocabulary they're trying to use in English. This is common with things like word order, for example.

It's important not to overcorrect your students, since if you do this endlessly, you'll stop students from thinking for themselves. Working it out for yourself creates a stronger memory of the correct way to do things. You'll also risk undermining students' confidence if they feel they're getting things wrong a lot, so it's sometimes worth letting small errors go if a student is struggling.

Now let's look at **when** to correct students.

During a PPP lesson, the presentation and practice (controlled) stages of the lesson are the perfect times to correct, or better yet elicit corrections. Do this as soon after an error as possible, as the focus here is on accurately learning the target language.

In the production (free) activity, the focus is on fluency – so it is better to let the activity flow and then give feedback and error correction at the end.

When you want to correct students, think about whether the activity you are doing is for accuracy or fluency and follow the recommendations we gave you, as this will give the best results.

Finally, let's talk about **how** to correct.

Ideally students will be given as many opportunities to correct themselves as possible, so if you can encourage this when they make an error before jumping in and correcting, it will help the students to learn more naturally.

You could write some errors that you have seen or heard used on the board, keeping things anonymous to avoid embarrassing any individual student, and ask the students to identify the errors and make corrections.

Students should also get into the habit of listening to themselves and their peers when they speak and correct themselves as they go along. They won't always be right with their corrections, or even be able to correct themselves, but they'll manage to fix a few errors and feel more engaged in the learning process by doing so.

How to correct errors: Classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This video from our TEFL course tutor, Asif, will show you how to correct errors in the classroom.

Other ways of correcting

As you've already seen, there are lots of ways to correct your students in the classroom.

Here are some more methods that can make error correcting into a more integral part of a lesson rather than something that is just done as an afterthought, click on the buttons to find out more:

Correction Activities

As a teacher, use students' mistakes and errors in activities or perhaps start off with showing students some incorrect information and asking why it is wrong.

This can be particularly useful if you want to focus on common and repeated errors your students are making.

Error race

This activity has a teacher writing mistakes/errors from a previous activity onto the board and students work in pairs to see who can correct them the fastest. This could be kinesthetic by having students race up to the board to correct in teams.

Remember though that students need to correct things properly to win the race!

Right or wrong

The teacher selects errors from homework or a previous activity and corrects some but not others. The teacher dictates each sentence and the students write them down.

In pairs, or individually, they have to mark down whether a sentence is right or wrong – and they'll get a bonus point if they can correct a sentence that is wrong.

Error poker

As an extension of the previous activity, students are given some fake money to play with. In groups or pairs, they decide which sentences are correct/incorrect and then decide how much they'd pay to buy them. The teacher auctions off the sentences to the highest bidders, and students can correct any that they believe to be incorrect. The winners are the ones with the most correct sentences in the end.

Correction city

The teacher writes mistakes on the board and the class corrects them all together, in groups or in pairs.

This takes very little set-up and is great for focusing on a couple of errors or mistakes.

Editing

The teacher hands out or reads a pre-prepared text containing typical student errors/mistakes. Students then circle the errors or shout out when they hear them.

Sometimes it's better to have all students read the text and circle the errors, as it gives everyone a chance to consider the mistakes – and then feedback at the end of the lesson.

Alternatively, having students shout out the errors in a dictated text can create a faster-paced and more exciting lesson, and perhaps make the experience more memorable.

Correcting errors: Quiz

Giving feedback: Introduction

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Feedback is an important part of the teaching process, as it enables students to get a feel for how well they are progressing and where they need to improve.

There are lots of things you can give students feedback on, and it's important to know how and when to give feedback.

Let's look at how we can do this effectively.

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is a crucial part of the learning process, as students often learn best by discovering what they have done right or wrong. Here are some of our tips on how best to give feedback, and to make sure that your lessons get the benefit of feedback too.

How do we give feedback?

Feedback isn't for the teacher's benefit, it's to assist the students to learn and progress. As teachers, we need to make sure that the feedback we give is relevant, concise, understandable and supportive. To achieve this, it is important that your feedback is honest, though sometimes this might need to be tempered to make sure that you are still encouraging your students. Some students will also benefit from having lots of feedback, while others will prefer only small snippets.

Once you've considered all of this, it's important to be mindful of some cultural factors that might affect the way feedback is perceived. Some cultures may be very clear and direct, and so appreciate the same style of feedback, while others might be more indirect, and prefer a lighter and less critical approach.

Above all, though, feedback must not be personal; it needs to be factual and as related to the topics you've covered as possible, so avoiding negative adjectives is a good way of doing this. For example: "Your grammar is awful" will not help students nearly as much as "You should revise page 4 of the grammar section to make sure you understand it." Keeping things factual and as direct as possible will maximize understanding, and hopefully encourage students to act on the feedback.

Giving positive feedback

In the midst of a lesson, it can be difficult to remember to praise students when they do well, rather than just pick up on mistakes. Praise is just as important as critical feedback, since it reinforces good behavior and good practice in the language.

Different teachers adopt different words and phrases to give feedback such as "OK", "Excellent" or "Well done".

You might also find that you repeat one word over and over again, so try to be aware of this if you can. Overusing a phrase means it loses its effect pretty quickly, so make sure that your feedback and praise is varied in order to keep its impact.

Receiving feedback

Feedback is a two-way street, and you'll find that you get feedback in many different ways from your students.

In terms of business English, your students may be asked to fill in formal feedback or evaluations about your lessons to the company paying for their tuition. In other scenarios though, you'll need to get feedback yourself. You can do this by being open and receptive to students' attitudes in class.

If students are quiet and reserved in your class, they might not be too comfortable with the learning environment. If older students are getting bored, you may not have conducted an adequate needs analysis and might be covering ground that isn't relevant to them, or that they already know. You'll naturally pick up on these cues as you get accustomed to teaching, and they will help you to change your lessons to suit your students better, without them having to say anything.

You can always ask students for feedback too; don't be shy about asking them to let you know if there's something they like or don't like about your lessons (perhaps via a feedback box). Students will feel empowered by this, and it can improve the trust that they have in you if they know they can give you some feedback.

Being open and engaging with your students about their learning will not only help you plan better lessons, but will also improve students' engagement with them too.

Giving and receiving feedback: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Relevant feedback is essential in the classroom environment. The teacher needs to be present and responsive to the students' needs. As a teacher, you need to monitor activities and make sure your students are on task and making progress. It's vital to bear in mind that feedback is not only error correction. You will need to encourage and praise your students in a meaningful way. However, avoid over-using fixed expressions like "well done", or "excellent" as your students will soon realize you aren't praising them but mechanically repeating the same phrases without any real value.

You also need to use ongoing feedback: as we mentioned before, you need to monitor and support your students on a regular ongoing basis, for example during activities. You can also give group feedback to the whole class or smaller groups after an activity. When students do a piece of writing for you, it's a good idea to give them some more detailed written feedback from time to time. Remember to include what they did well and what they need to work on, including suggested ways of improvement.

For example: 'Anna, you have included some very interesting ideas about using the internet. You have a wide range of vocabulary. Work on the correct use of the present simple, especially for the 3rd person singular.' Then suggest a website or a book they can use for further practice. This way you will provide relevant personalized feedback as opposed to a generic "well done".

In the classroom, there are various ways of giving feedback. Try to avoid using whole class feedback after every task you do. It makes lessons very teacher-centered. Here are some ways of providing whole class feedback - just remember not to do it all the time.

1. Display the answer key on the wall or the board.
2. Hand out the key and encourage the students to peer mark their work.
3. Hand out the key and encourage self-marking.
4. Write down errors during an activity, or choose errors from a homework task and distribute for the learners to correct before you doing the whole class feedback on the board.
5. Encourage the students to listen for the correct answer.
6. Have a competition in teams.

If you keep a record of the students' homework, tests and assignments it will be easier to give them constructive formal feedback when required. This is especially important when teaching young learners. Parents normally want to know how their children are doing in class.

Even responsible adult students cannot fully understand their learning process. For example: someone might feel they aren't making sufficient progress. The reason might be never handing in homework and being constantly late for class. If you keep a log, you will be able to provide constructive feedback.

It can also be a good idea to encourage the students to self-reflect on their learning process. You can ask them verbally or through feedback forms whether they are enjoying the classes, if they feel comfortable and safe in the classroom and if the classes meet their expectations. Also, if they enjoyed a particular activity, what they liked about it/ what they didn't like about/ what was difficult and why and so on.

Unit 4: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

Which of the below is particularly important for a teacher in a classroom situation?

Select the correct answer from these options

Being an extrovert.

Being consistent and clear with instructions and gestures.

Having a perfect memory.

multiple-choice

What is the best way of introducing students to a new activity?

Select the correct answer from these options

Give all the instructions at the beginning of an activity.

Ask the students what they think the instructions are.

Drip-feed the instructions through the activity when students need them.

multiple-choice

Before you start an activity, what should you do?

Select the correct answer from these options

Do a demonstration to clarify what students should do.

Ask a student to explain what they are supposed to do.

Repeat your instructions multiple times.

multiple-choice

Which of these statements is correct?

Select the correct answer from these options

You should only use the board as a visual aid in class.

You should write everything you say on the board.

You should write accurately on the board to model the written form for students.

multiple-choice

Which of these statements is correct about realia, flashcards and pictures?

Select the correct answer from these options

They make lessons more interesting and can elicit the TL from students.

They are only for low-level students.

The pictures are only for vocabulary lessons.

multiple-choice

When setting up your classroom, what should you bear in mind?

Select the correct answer from these options

There is only one correct way to set up your classroom.

There are different ways to set up your classroom, depending on your class size, space

Students should always be sitting at desks in rows.

multiple-choice

If a student misbehaves, whose fault could it be?

Select the correct answer from these options

Sometimes the teacher

Always the student

Always the school

multiple-choice

What language should ideally be used in the classroom?

Select the correct answer from these options

English and the students' native language.

English and the students' native language when they need to explain something or look

Only English.

multiple-choice

Which is the best approach to take when correcting students?

Select the correct answer from these options

It is better for students to correct themselves rather than be spoon-fed an answer.

It is the teacher's responsibility to correct all the errors students make in class.

All mistakes and errors should be corrected immediately in the lesson.

multiple-choice

How should feedback be dealt with in the class?

Select the correct answer from these options

The teacher only gives feedback to the students.

The teacher gives feedback to the students and gets feedback from the students too.

The teacher should be blunt and honest in their feedback.

Unit 4: Assignment

Unit 5: Teaching vocabulary and functions

Welcome to Unit 5

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi again, we're now on to Unit 5 of the methodology course! We've already looked at teaching grammar, and just as importantly how to make those lessons fun and interactive, but now it's time to look at teaching vocabulary and phrases.

Vocabulary is naturally an important topic to cover for your students but we need to teach different types of vocabulary to different groups of students. What you need to teach them will depend on their ability level, their age and their motivation to learn English. Let's look at some areas of vocabulary we can teach different students.

We know the basic types of vocabulary are things like animals, transport, clothes and food. Then further along the line we look at nouns that go together often, like post and office, car and park, or train and station. But what about more advanced things like slang and idioms, that don't translate properly into other languages? How are we meant to teach students that "pulling someone's leg" means to have a joke with them, or that something easy can be "a piece of cake"? These are all part of the vocabulary students need to be taught to avoid any confusion when they are engaged in everyday conversation.

It's up to us to teach students functional vocabulary too, which is language we use to do certain things like requesting something, offering something or advising someone. We have set phrases for this in English that sometimes don't sound right to learners, so they need to be taught them specifically.

All-in-all, we need to make sure our students have a wide range of vocabulary so they can use English naturally, understand native speakers and use the language correctly in their day-to-day lives.

Vocabulary plays a part in lots of different lessons, but we can also teach it on its own. For this we can use our PPP structure, which as you'll be able to tell is really handy for this sort of thing.

Through this lead-in, presentation, practice and production format, our students can learn all about different types of vocabulary and walk out of a class with an increased understanding of vocabulary use. Let's start by showing you what a lesson could look like.

Teaching vocabulary with PPP lessons

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: Our aim with this unit is to get you teaching vocabulary successfully, and the PPP lesson structure is the best way to do that. We're sure you're familiar enough with PPP now, but let's have a quick look at how we can structure a lesson that focuses on vocabulary. Our lesson will be based on hobbies, but it can be used for anything your students need to learn!

Actor 2: To start with, we'll have our lead-in activity. It's important not to dive straight into teaching the students, so we'll get them warmed up first. A good way of doing this for lower-level students, for instance, is to ask them to mime or draw some things they did last weekend.

Actor 1: After that we'll move on to the presentation stage. We can use flashcards or mime to elicit 8 to 10 different hobbies, like reading, swimming, and cycling from the students. Don't forget the three things to cover here: meaning first, then pronunciation and then form, or spelling, last.

Actor 2: Now students know the vocabulary for these hobbies, let's get them to recognize them and use the words they've learned. Here you could have a handout with pictures of hobbies and ask the students to match each picture with the word that's being demonstrated.

Actor 1: Finally, there's the production stage. What works well here is asking students to tell each other which hobbies they enjoy and which ones they don't. You can stick to the ones you've covered during the day, or let students branch out if they know other hobbies too.

Actor 2: Seems easy, doesn't it? That's the beauty of the PPP structure – once you've got the hang of it, you can teach almost anything with it!

Actor 1: Move on to the next lesson and we'll start breaking down the vocabulary lesson in a little more detail.

What do we need to include?

Now we've seen the basics of a vocabulary lesson, we're going to look in more detail at the things we'll need to cover while teaching the lesson itself. Our aim is for students to be able to use the vocabulary for themselves when they leave the class, so there are some key things that go into building students' understanding of a new word.

But before we tell you, have a little brainstorm yourself about what you think needs to be covered during a vocabulary lesson. Start the timer below when you're ready, then think of 4 things that are important to talk about when teaching new vocabulary to students.

Name 4 important discussion points for teaching new vocabulary.

Start timer

How to teach the meaning

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

The first thing we'll do in a vocabulary lesson is teach the meaning of the word, so let's look at how to do this in a bit more detail.

How do you think you would do this most naturally? For lots of people, the way they'd do this is by giving a translation to students – but this is something you've got to avoid! Translating for students might be a quick fix, but it won't do them any favors in the long run as they might rely too much on translations or resort to using their own language. The classroom should be an English-only environment to help increase students' immersion in the language, so make sure that you and your students use English as much as possible.

Even with translation off the table, there are lots of ways you can get the meaning of a word across to your students. Visual aids are fantastic for this, as they can clearly show what words mean in a way that students will understand quickly. You can use mime and gesture to elicit meanings and encourage students to think for themselves. For some words, like adverbs of frequency, you might want to use the board and write them on a scale, or you might want to use synonyms or antonyms to help students get the meaning right.

No matter which method you use, remember to engage the students as much as possible to make sure they understand the meaning as clearly as possible. Avoid lengthy or overly detailed explanations, and use plenty of eliciting to get students involved in the learning process. If you can do this, they'll pick up the meaning in no time.

How to teach the meaning: Examples

Here are some more details about the different ways we can teach meaning, click the buttons to find out more:

Visual Aids (realia, flashcards, pictures, drawings, etc.)

These are fantastic for showing students exactly what something means. You can show the item to the students and ask them to tell you what it is. If they don't quite understand, you can lead them into an explanation and get the class to repeat the word so they can get the pronunciation right too.

Mime and gesture

Using this is very effective as it plays upon a technique we call TPR (total physical response), and it's perfect for eliciting the meaning of vocabulary.

For example: if you want to teach the verb 'walk', you can walk around the classroom. If you want to teach the verb 'eat', you can mime eating.

As long as your actions are clear and represent the word you are teaching, this should work well – as it should translate in the students' heads even without language being used.

Remember though that not all gestures are international, and some things are trickier than others to mime correctly, so you need to make sure that what you are doing will be understood, or students will get confused.

Synonyms, antonyms and contrast

These can work well with lower-level students who may know some relevant vocabulary already. For example: you can teach "dry" by contrasting it with "wet", or contrast "cold" with "hot".

At higher levels, you can qualify this by explaining some context and subtleties in which we use the words: such as calling a wine "dry", but not "wet" or calling a curry "hot" but not "cold".

Definitions

Definitions can work in a lesson, but it's best to give example sentences as well so students can place the word in context.

Avoid simple language-to-language translation dictionaries or phrasebooks: let lower level students use picture dictionaries and higher levels an English-only dictionary if you need them to look up definitions.

Scales

These can work well for vocabulary such as adverbs of frequency, or agreeing and disagreeing. Students can understand the meaning by seeing the words that come before and after them.

How to teach the meaning: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

There are various ways of teaching meaning of vocabulary to your students.

Let's start with mime. Some words and phrases are easy to mime. You can use gestures or make noises to help your students understand certain words, especially actions like drink, eat, run and walk, but also words like loud, quiet, big, small, round, square, etc.

Pictures and visual aids always add variety to the lesson, especially for objects. You can display pictures from magazines, do quick drawings on the board, use the internet or take pictures with your phone and then display them on an interactive whiteboard. You can also print them off and stick them on the board or walls. The students can take their own pictures as well, which you can then use in class. This is a really good way of personalizing the lesson and making it more interesting and engaging for the students.

Using realia is a great way to make your lessons more interesting, especially for younger learners or tactile students. Any object that can be easily brought into class will add variety to the lesson. Look at this scarf. You can use it in a lesson connected to clothing, weather, colors...and how about adjectives? Get students to feel the scarf and tell you, is it fluffy? Soft? Will it keep you warm? Realia works well with adjectives that are otherwise difficult to explain, like fluffy, soft, rough, bumpy, and so on.

How about this one? We can use this to teach shapes, sports, size, or even words like bounce, throw or catch. Realia can be very versatile and you can also use it for other stages of the lesson, it's not just for the presentation. For example, you can use the text on cereal boxes in warm-ups for reading comprehension tasks.

Synonyms and antonyms can be a great way of conveying meaning for some words. They work best for teaching direct opposites like long/short, ugly/beautiful, lazy/hard-working, early/late, good/bad, polite/impolite, cheap/expensive.

And finally, we have examples. Some terms can be explained easily by providing examples, like leisure activities: things you can enjoy in your free time like swimming, listening to music, playing the guitar.

Remember to use a variety of these techniques in your lessons - students don't want to see the same things lesson after lesson and the best approach depends on the type of vocabulary you want to teach. And above all, remember to elicit the vocabulary from your students. Don't just stand at the front and dictate the words to them.

Checking understanding of new vocabulary

We've already come across the practice of concept checking, which is how we test students' understanding without simply asking them if they have understood. It's all too easy for students to answer "yes" when asked if they understand something, regardless of whether they actually do. Concept checking can also test for misunderstandings, for example: they might have thought you said "holidays" rather than "hobbies", which wouldn't get picked up on if you asked a simple question.

Simple questions to ask while concept checking new vocabulary include:

- What does X mean?
- Can you give me another word/phrase for X?
- How does an X type of person act? (Maybe let students show you here)
- Can you give me a sentence with X in it?

This should all happen in the presentation stage of the lesson, so that when we move on to the practice and production stages the students will be able to take part in the activities and expand upon their understanding rather than being confused and maybe disengaged.

Remember to use vocabulary beyond a single lesson, by using it in warm-ups at the start of future lessons, for example. This allows you to recycle some material and reinforce learning for students so they don't forget what they have previously learned.

Activities: Quiz

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Role-play

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Gap fill

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Word search

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Crossword

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Chain story

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Matching pictures to spellings

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Debate

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Making posters

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Quizzes

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

multiple-choice

Decide whether the activity below is a practice or production activity.

Example sentences

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice

Production

Teaching functions: Introduction

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We're now going to look at teaching functions, which are specific reasons for and methods of communicating that are essential for students to know and use in the classroom and in the wider world. Functions include: inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, offering, making requests, apologizing, greeting, prohibiting, suggesting, speculating and many more.

Teaching functions

What are functions?

When we talk about functions, we are talking about the reason we use the language. Grammar will teach us how the language works, or how it fits together in a structure we can understand; but functions tell us why we use the language. Examples of functions include: to greet people; to give advice; to order a meal; to ask someone out; to ask the time, etc.

There are lots of functional phrases we know instinctively as a native speaker. We know when meeting someone that we say: "nice to meet you" or "good to see you again". If we agree with someone we could say, "I was thinking the same thing", or if we disagree we could say, "Are you sure?"

These phrases only make sense in context, and sometimes can't be taken literally. Functions, therefore, are an important part of communication in English and need to be taught to students.

Why do students need to learn functions?

We use functions a lot in English to express ourselves, and in many ways understanding what these functions mean is just as important as learning things like grammar.

It'll be up to you to decide what to focus on when teaching your students. If students have exams on the way where grammar is going to be tested, then that's what your lessons should focus on. If your students are perhaps going to move to another country or a new job soon where English is needed, functions will be more useful to these students and that's what you should teach them.

Both grammar and functions are important in their own right, but it's worth remembering that covering grammatical structures and then putting the vocabulary in place to use them can take longer for students to learn than picking up some functions and using the language right away. This is especially true for Business English students whose needs are much more focused on the functional and practical side of English learning rather than grammar.

To show you the difference between grammar and function-based lesson goals, compare these two sentences:

- Today's lesson is on how to form questions.
- Today's lesson is on how to ask for something.

The first lesson would focus on the formation of questions (word order, etc) whereas the second lesson would focus on different ways of asking for something, eg, Could I have ...? Have you got ...?, etc.

Functional language

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: Functions are a very important part of learning the English language, and without them, it would be hard for students to use the language naturally in context or to understand the reasons people say things the way they do.

We're going to demonstrate with a quick conversation. Just watch and see what you think.

Actor 2: Where is the closest station?

Actor 1: Up the road on the left, 5 minutes away.

Actor 2: What one is it?

Actor 1: Baker Street.

Actor 2: No, it isn't, Baker Street is back there.

Actor 1: No, you're wrong, it's definitely Baker Street.

Actor 2: Okay, thanks. Do I need a ticket?

Actor 1: Of course!

Actor 2: Thanks!

Actor 1: The conversation there was grammatically correct, but in terms of the correct use in context it might seem a bit strange to learners. It wasn't really polite, and it was rather informal for two strangers meeting on the street as well. We also missed out a lot of common parts of the language so that the conversation was shorter. All this means that there's a chance what was being said would be misunderstood, even though it was in this example. Let's compare it with something students might expect:

Actor 2: Excuse me. Could you tell me where the closest station is?

Actor 1: Sure, it's just up the road and to the left. It's about 5 minutes away.

Actor 2: Do you know which station it is?

Actor 1: Yes, it's Baker Street.

Actor 2: Mmm, are you sure? I think I passed by Baker Street back there.

Actor 1: Really? I'm pretty sure that it's Baker Street.

Actor 2: Great, thanks. Do you know if I'll need to get a ticket?

Actor 1: Yes, I'm sure you do.

Actor 2: Okay, thanks a lot.

Actor 1: Hopefully you've seen there that the only thing that changed was the language itself, with everything else staying the same. This time, though, we were a lot politer, we phrased things in full and made sure that our language suited the situation much better. This is what we mean by functional language, which gets



across the meaning of what we're trying to say clearly – and politely.

Functional language: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you how to teach functions and functional language to your students.

Functional language: Quiz

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

Would you like a piece of cake?

Select the correct answer from these options

Suggesting Offering Requesting

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

I'm with you on that.

Select the correct answer from these options

Agreeing Suggesting Advising

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

How about going for a walk?

Select the correct answer from these options

Requesting Obliging Suggesting

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

I'm afraid I don't have time at the moment.

Select the correct answer from these options

Apologizing

Disagreeing

Prohibiting

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

That can't have happened!

Select the correct answer from these options

Prohibiting

Disagreeing

Refusing

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

Why don't you see the doctor?

Select the correct answer from these options

Advising

Requesting

Speculating

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

You're not allowed in here.

Select the correct answer from these options

Disagreeing Prohibiting Speculating

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

I think there's a shop on the corner.

Select the correct answer from these options

Advising Offering Speculating

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

I'm sorry I never met him!

Select the correct answer from these options

Refusing Regretting Disagreeing

multiple-choice

Choose the function performed by the sentence below.

I'd like a coffee, please.

Select the correct answer from these options

Suggesting

Requesting

Greeting

Unit 5: End of Unit Quiz

true-or-false

You have to use a different lesson structure to teach grammar and vocabulary, or it may confuse students.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

With vocabulary, the best way to start a lesson is to write the word on the board.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When teaching vocabulary, we only teach words individually.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The meaning and use of a word are the same thing.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Visual aids and mime are a good way of teaching the meaning of words.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You can use synonyms, antonyms and examples to teach the meaning of a word.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Asking “Do you understand?” is the best way to check students’ understanding.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should teach grammar first before teaching functions.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should teach grammar or functions but not both.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Functions are all about communicating in the right way.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Unit 6: Teaching reading and listening

Welcome to Unit 6

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi again, and welcome to Unit 6. Once you've completed this unit, you'll be halfway through the course, so keep going!

So far, we've done a lot of work with the PPP lesson structure, as it's the ideal way of teaching concepts like vocabulary and grammar to students.

We're going to change pace now a bit and look more at teaching students new communication skills. These skills are the four ways of engaging with the English language: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Most lessons you give will require students to use a combination of these skills, with our goal of maximizing student talking time being complemented by reading things on the board, writing being used as part of an activity and listening an essential skill for students to acquire as you explain things. Speaking is the final outcome.

However, while PPP works best when we are presenting new grammar or vocabulary, when we want to focus primarily on teaching a skill, we need to be more flexible in our approach and use a different structure, which we'll show you later on in this unit.

If you're ready to find out more about enhancing your students' skills, and your teaching skills too, click onto the next lesson.

Why do we need to practice skills?

Grammar and vocabulary are important to learn to get a good understanding of English, but on their own they won't give students enough ability to use the language themselves, especially outside of the classroom. The four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are part of everyday life, and they are the ways we actually use the language: by reading or listening to something, writing something down or having a conversation.

Students' progress is often assessed by how well they can use these skills, so it's important to make sure that students are taught how to improve them in class and are allowed to practice them regularly.

Are all skills the same?

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We know that the four basic skills in English are reading, listening, speaking and writing. What we want you to think about is: are they all the same? and can we teach them in the same way?

The answer is that while they are all different, they do have similarities which mean we can group them together.

Reading and listening are receptive skills, where students are working with resources already in English.

Speaking and writing are productive skills, so students need to produce the language here themselves.

We can use the same lesson plan structure for all four of these skills though, and in this unit we'll focus on the receptive skills: reading and listening.

Why are reading and listening skills difficult for students?

Our first thought when planning a skills lesson should be about what our students need to learn from it. We know that for some students, and in some situations, these skills can be difficult to learn – so we need to identify what features of reading and listening are particularly difficult, so we can overcome them during the lesson.

Drawing upon any knowledge you might have of learning a foreign language yourself, try to think of the reasons why reading text in a new language can be difficult and why it can be a challenge to listen to someone speak in a language you don't fully understand.

Activity:

Spend a minute coming up with some reasons why these skills are difficult to learn then move on to the quiz.

Name some reasons why reading and listening can be difficult skills to learn.

Start timer

Learning challenges: Quiz

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

They may have heard the word but not recognize it in its written form.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

They may not have heard the accent before.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

They are unlikely to understand every single word.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

The speed may be too fast.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

The language may be colloquial.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

They get left behind while trying to work out what a previous word meant.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

They may struggle to differentiate between different sounds, or words like homophones, e.g. "there", "their" and "they're".

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

The language may not be presented in the way they were taught it – it may be less formal, or not strictly adhere to grammar rules.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

There is less thinking time.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

multiple-choice

Decide whether the challenge below applies to reading, listening or both.

A non-native speaker may mispronounce words.

Select the correct answer from these options

Reading

Listening

Both reading and listening

What do we need to practice?

Reading and listening are such general skills that it might be difficult for you to think about how to build appropriate lessons in order to teach them.

The way to do this is to focus on particular reading and listening sub-skills to improve our students' receptive skills in a well-rounded way.

What are the sub-skills?

Stop and think for a moment about the different ways we can practice reading and listening, and the ways in which you can read a text or listen to someone speak to gain information.

Once you have some ideas about what they can be, click below to find out more:

Predictive skills

Students can predict the content of an article or dialogue from a headline, title or short introduction. This encourages the students to contextualize what they are about to read or hear in the lesson.

Reading or listening for gist

This is where students read or listen to a piece of text or speech to get a brief idea of what it's about, perhaps featuring key people or headlines involved. For example: you can scan a newspaper to find a reference to someone, or listen to the news for a specific headline. Students need to practice doing this in English.

Reading or listening for detail

This time, students look for the key people and facts and some more information relating to them. This doesn't focus on every detail, but gets a broader understanding of the content.

Detailed information

This is where we read or listen to something in order to understand everything, for example: reading or listening to detailed directions. This activity is often accompanied by note-taking.

Deducing from context

Students need to be able to deduce the meaning of individual words or phrases from the context in which they hear or read them. It's a good idea here to allow students to work out meanings of unknown words where possible before giving them an explanation.

Choosing the right materials and activities

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: It's hard to run a skills lesson without using some materials, so what sorts of texts can we use for reading and listening practice in class? Well, in theory we can use anything we like. Just remember, when you do reading or listening with our students, you'll need to choose material that is interesting and challenging to the students, but that matches their ability level too.

Actor 2: You can choose material that's designed for the classroom if you like, with the language being carefully chosen and graded to a certain level. However, using real-life material at times is important as well. This allows students, especially higher-level ones, to be exposed to natural uses of English they'll meet outside the classroom.

Actor 1: These materials can come from anywhere: newspapers, leaflets, menus, articles, adverts are great and authentic material for reading lessons.

Actor 2: For listening you could go for: music, movie clips, podcasts or pre-prepared dialogues. These are all available on YouTube, so it's not hard to find something that works.

Actor 1: No matter what material you use, the focus of it should be to allow students to develop their reading and listening sub-skills. You can challenge students to develop their skills with difficult texts, or consolidate what they've already learnt with easier ones, depending on what you think your students' needs are.

Actor 2: Once you have the materials ready, you can start thinking about activities to make use of them. You can have a lot of fun with these, coming up with a variety of tasks that hone students' receptive skills but also include plenty of student-to-student interaction. For example: you may have pairs of students working to understand different paragraphs of a reading passage, then get the pairs together to put the whole thing together as a jigsaw activity.

Actor 1: We think that gives you the gist of what reading and listening skills lessons can look like in the classroom, but move on to the next lesson for a bit more detail.

Choosing the right materials and activities: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Using authentic materials can function as a bridge between the classroom and the real world. You will also be introducing elements of culture and everyday life. You need to choose authentic materials carefully. When choosing a resource ask yourself the following questions.

Is the content interesting and relevant?

Is the length appropriate? Remember you can use as much or as little of an authentic piece as you need, so plan ahead!

Is the material of appropriate difficulty? Again you need to plan carefully and know in advance what you want your students to do and achieve with the material. They need to be challenged, but if the lesson is too difficult, it can demotivate your students.

Let's have a look at a few ideas you can use in class.

You can use weather reports in a variety of ways in reading or listening tasks across all levels: predicting the weather, using the first conditional, planning a party outside or indoors or using comparatives and superlatives like colder, the hottest and so on.

The students don't need to understand every single word; the way you use the material will determine what level it is suitable for.

For example: you could have a detailed listening comprehension based on a weather report for more advanced learners and use the same authentic material for lower levels: for example pre-teach certain words from the listening, like fog, rain, sunshine, cloudy and have the students tick the words they hear from a list of other words. This will boost your learners' confidence since they will be using an authentic resource successfully. It will also be a good way of preparing them for the real world of English.

This can be used for lower levels. You can ask questions about the length of train journeys, platforms, delays, compare train journeys, etc.

What time is the first train?

How long does it take to get to a destination?

You are meeting friends at 5 pm in Chicago, what time do you need to take the train?

Download a copy of a restaurant menu like this one. Make a worksheet for your students to write what they want to order for their group. Set a budget, you can add some special requirements, like vegetarians, people who don't like fish, etc. A follow up could be a writing task on healthy eating or eating out. This works with elementary level and up.

Another good resource is the news. You can use headlines and pictures for speaking activities or as a spring board for other tasks. You can cut out some pictures from papers and have the learners speculate what the article is about. You can also use recent news pictures for the learners to recognize and discuss.

Another activity could be to ask students to choose a short news item and re-write it, changing some facts. The students have to read and comment on the news, trying to guess what the lies are.

Watch the news, there are always a few pieces of news at a time. The students are asked to watch and take notes. They then pick one piece of news they want to find out more about and do online research using their mobile phones. They then share their findings within small groups in the form of mini presentations. This task is suitable for higher levels.

Songs can also be an excellent teaching or learning source. You can use it for practicing days of the week, or daily routine for higher beginners - they can say what they do each day of the week.

Skills lesson plan structure

When you have your materials and activities ready for practising reading and listening sub-skills, the next step of your lesson planning is to get the structure right.

For skills-based lessons we move away from the PPP lesson, using the skills lesson plan structure. This includes more stages that can help improve the amount of practice given in a lesson for all four of the basic English language skills. PPP and ESA focus more on teaching and practising grammar and vocabulary.

Here we want to focus more on taking the students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge and using what they already know to focussing on practising and improving their reading, writing, listening and speaking ability. A skills lesson plan is specifically tailored to do this.

Check out the various stages below; click the name to expand its description:

Lead-in

Here we introduce the theme of the reading or listening lesson to contextualise the content for the students. We don't need to focus on the actual skills here yet.

Pre-teach vocabulary

The goal here is to help students with words in the text that might be unknown to them, so that they aren't confused as the activities are taking place. We do this in different ways, depending on the lesson:

Reading: Try to get the students to work together to figure out the meanings of some unknown words from the text. Give them only a handful of words before they go on with the text, as this will allow them to get a confidence boost and also get real-life experience of dealing with unknown vocabulary.

Listening: This stage is more important in a listening lesson, as students aren't able to take time to find out the meaning of a word while they're listening to a text. Choose words that are crucial to the understanding of the text or that can't be figured out from context and teach them here. This will build their confidence and help them get the most out of the lesson.

Remember not to teach too many new words here, as it's not a vocabulary lesson. A handful of important words is plenty.

Prediction

Here we set a task for the students to do before they do the main listening or reading task. The purpose of this task is for the students to predict something they think they will hear or read in the main activities.

You could give them the title of the text or listening resource and get them to come up with ideas or vocabulary they think they will hear or see, or you could set some questions about the resource and get them to predict the answers. The key here is to get them predicting and speculating on something about the resource and task they are about to do.

Setting up the two reading/listening stages

At this point we give students the questions or activity they'll be expected to complete in the two reading/listening stage activities; so that they are prepared and know what to look/listen out for.

There are two reading/listening stages:

1. General gist questions to understand the story or theme of the text, or perhaps the general feelings or mood
2. Questions designed to show students understand things more specifically. So more detailed questions.

Checking understanding

Once you have given the students the questions, you need to make sure they understand them using a form of concept checking. Get students to read the questions back to you and let them explain what they mean. With listening questions, it's a good idea to get students to predict answers – which can help focus their attention.

Doing the task

This is where the students get to read/listen to the text. For a listening text, play it two or three times to allow students to absorb it all. The aim here is to allow students to understand the text in general and to pick up some key points, so it's not essential that students know everything. Don't forget to monitor during the activity to see how students are progressing.

Feedback

Getting feedback on the passage and asking students what answers they have to the questions allows students to speak and interact more, increasing STT. You can also ask students to expand on their answers. Feedback is a good way of linking on to the next and final stage of the lesson.

Follow-on activity

This should be a productive activity, a speaking or writing task, where students build upon what they have learnt and use it themselves. It's best when this activity links in with the theme of the lesson, as it engages the students and allows them to consolidate their different skills.

Reading lesson: Classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you a reading lesson delivered with the skills lesson plan structure.

Listening lesson: Classroom example

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you a listening lesson delivered with the skills lesson plan structure.

Unit 6: End of Unit Quiz

true-or-false

You teach skills using a PPP lesson plan structure.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Reading and listening are receptive skills.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Speaking and writing are productive skills.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should practice the skills regularly as they allow students to use the language rather than only understand it.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Students struggle with reading and listening for a variety of reasons.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We need to think about what sub-skills we are practicing in a skills lesson.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Students should listen or read for gist only.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We can only use everyday materials, like newspapers, leaflets and movies in lessons to practice reading and listening with high level students.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Similarly to PPP, we start a skills lesson with a lead-in.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The complete stages of a skills lesson are as follows: lead-in, pre-teach vocabulary, set the task, check understanding, do the task and feedback.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Unit 6: Assignment

Unit 7: Teaching writing and speaking

Welcome to Unit 7

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, we're now onto unit 7 of the course. Last time we learned all about how to run lessons focusing on the receptive skills of reading and listening, and now it's time to move onto the productive skills: speaking and writing.

What we're going to show you here is how to plan lessons around these skills using the structure we learned in the last unit. We'll also show you, though, how to work on these skills as part of the practice and production stages of a PPP lesson.

With these skills, we want your students to get all the practice they can get to make sure that their speaking and writing abilities are as good as they can be. So, we'll show you in this unit how to make sure your lessons do just that.

Why practice speaking and writing?

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We're now familiar with our productive skills, which are speaking and writing, so now we're going to explain why they are so important to your students' overall English learning experience and why they need to practice them.

Students will be speaking with you every day as part of their classes, and you'll remember that there should be as much STT as possible during a lesson. If we're looking to specifically enhance students' speaking abilities, though, it's important to give a lesson a proper structure to focus on students' language use and ensure they get the practice needed to improve.

With writing, students will need more guidance from you. Lower-level students might need help with forming the letters of the English alphabet or to distinguish between capitals and lower case letters. More advanced students might want some help to choose vocabulary for an email or postcard, or structure their writing into paragraphs. Lots of students struggle with punctuation too, which you'll need to be on hand to help with.

Just like reading and listening, speaking and writing are essential skills for English language communication. All that time you spend teaching grammar and vocabulary won't be much use if students don't have the ability or confidence to actually use it!

Let's now look at some problems students have with their productive skills, and how we can help solve them.

Productive skills difficulties: Activity

Activity:

Below we've listed 14 different problems that students have relating to productive skills, and we want you to guess whether they apply best to speaking or writing.

Read the statements, and when you've decided whether each statement is describing speaking or writing, choose an option in the dropdown box to see if you were correct.

Don't worry too much about how you do, this activity is just for fun!

Lack of confidence or embarrassment at making mistakes.

Speaking

Writing

English is not phonetic, so words don't look the way they sound.

Speaking

Writing

Word and sentence stress can be difficult to get right.

Speaking

Writing

Natural intonation is hard to master.

Speaking

Writing

Errors are more obvious.

Speaking

Writing

Punctuation use doesn't match students' own language.

Speaking

Writing

There is little time to think.

Speaking

Writing

Different text types have to be laid out in different ways.

Speaking

Writing

Some sounds are unlikely to exist in a students' native language.

Speaking

Writing

It's easy to confuse homophones – that is, words that sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings – like: "hi" and "high", or "your" and "you're".

Speaking

Writing

It can be difficult to distinguish between formal and informal language.

Speaking

Writing

It is difficult to blend words together to use the language naturally.

Speaking

Writing

An individual word doesn't always sound the same when it is put into a sentence.

Speaking

Writing

Using grammar correctly is more important.

Speaking

Writing

Why can speaking and writing be hard for students?

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Speaking and writing are two skills that students will end up struggling with, but why is that?

Part of the reason is that these are productive skills, which means that the students are more under pressure to produce correct English. Some students will lack confidence to do this, and might feel shy or embarrassed by it, but this is especially true with speaking, as its more spontaneous nature means that more mistakes can happen.

Writing can be just as tricky for some, as there's more focus on: getting the grammar right as well as the different approaches required for different genres of writing. For example: writing an email to a friend will be different to a cover letter to go with a job application. Then of course there's the thorny issue of punctuation, which might be completely different in English compared to the students' native language. For example: question marks might not always identify questions in other languages, and in Greek they don't use them, with what we know as a semi-colon indicating a question.

Working through students' issues with speaking and writing requires you to help them build confidence in their abilities through practice and explanation, and well-structured and planned lessons will let you do that. Move on to the next lesson and we'll start showing you how it's done.

Getting the most out of a speaking lesson

We're going to show you how to plan lessons for both speaking and writing in this unit, but let's start off with speaking.

We know that one of the aims of every lesson should be to maximize STT as far as possible, and that's especially true when we use the PPP lesson structure.

But what do we do when we want to make speaking the primary focus of the lesson? How do we get the most out of a speaking-centered lesson? What should we do before the lesson to maximize the practice, and what activities work best? Should we extend the lesson after the main practice in some way as well to give students more opportunities to speak?

There are lots of things to consider when planning a speaking lesson, but breaking it down into smaller chunks might help you collect your thoughts.

Activity:

We want you to think of two things you can do before, during and after a lesson to maximize students' speaking practice. When you're ready, start the timer below and get thinking.

Name two things for **before**, **during** and **after** a lesson to maximise speaking practice.

Start timer

Before, during and after a speaking lesson: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Let's have a look at what you should do before, during and after a speaking activity to really get the most out of it.

Let's start with before. This is the preparation you need to do as part of your lesson planning, that is, choosing what materials you will use and what kind of task you will set. First of all, make sure the students have a purpose for speaking. The task you set will ideally prepare them for real life situations they will encounter outside the classroom. You can do this using activities like information gaps, where students have to find information out from each other, so the practice feels more genuine. And make sure the task is relevant to your students' needs and experience. Although it might be beneficial to expose students to a range of situations, we need to keep in mind the relevance of the material as well.

Now for the material. First, make sure it's interesting! The students need to be eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and want to add information or learn something new. It's a good idea to base speaking tasks and materials on what they are interested in. Aim at personalizing the material so that it generates authentic language. Even if the topic is new or slightly 'alien' make sure the students can relate to it, for example through contrast. If you use a skiing holiday topic in a class of students who have never left their country and hardly ever go on holiday you can still generate a discussion through contrast by sharing what they do in their free time and stating their opinion on various ways of spending time.

OK, so now we're ready for our speaking task. Let's look at how to get the most out of the activity as students actually do it. First of all, make sure you give clear instructions so that your students know exactly what they are supposed to be doing. You can write the instructions down as part of your lesson plan to make sure they're clear, and don't forget the concept questions. You can have a quick session with the students before they start and elicit a few phrases they could use, maybe even elicit the tenses that are appropriate for the task. This will build confidence in your students in that they know what to do. And when they do the task, make sure you monitor. You can take a few notes on things to feedback later, or get some fresh ideas for future activities you can do. Also, if they seem to be responding well to a particular theme, you can use this over a few lessons, or even connect it to homework.

And what about afterwards? It's important to give some feedback to students on what they have done so they are clear on the purpose of the activity and know how well they did. You could run through a few errors you heard here, elicit the corrections, and also get feedback from the students, particularly if they had to find something out about each other. From time to time, you can give the opportunity for the students to listen to themselves after the activity and self-reflect on their performance. You could use dictaphones, smartphones or even the students' phones. If a student doesn't feel comfortable sharing their own recording, they could be the only person to listen to it. And when you give feedback, don't forget that as well as showing students what they need to work on and improve, you need to give them some pointers about how to do that.

Using practice (controlled) activities to practice speaking

One of the ways we can plan a speaking lesson is to use the skills lesson plan structure that we used in the last unit for reading and listening lessons. This included pre-teaching vocabulary, setting a task, checking it was understood, doing the task and then seeing how students did.

For speaking lessons, we can also go back to using the PPP structure. We know that this can be used effectively for teaching and practicing grammar and vocabulary, but we can also practice speaking with it too, particularly in the practice and production stages of the lesson.

Let's look at how we can use speaking activities in the practice stage, where the focus is on building students' confidence and accuracy. Remember that these activities are controlled by you, the teacher.

Drilling

Get students to repeat what you are saying to practice their pronunciation. Do this chorally (as a group) and then individually so that everyone can get a chance to pronounce the word or phrase correctly.

Open pairs

Students work in open pairs across the room, for example: asking and answering simple questions like "What's your name?", "My name is..."

You can gesture to get other students to go next. The whole class will pay attention here and students can correct each other if necessary.

Guided role plays

You assign roles to the students but give them lots of information to use so they can focus on using the phrases given to them in a contextualized way.

Dialogues

Students can read out a dialogue given to them or you can give them an incomplete dialogue where students need to fill in the missing parts.

Find someone who

Students ask and answer questions to complete a questionnaire. For example, ask students to find someone who likes cooking, can play a musical instrument etc.

Gap fills

Students complete gap fill sentences verbally. For example, if you are focusing on the past simple tense, you could give the verb "go" and students have to complete the sentence "Last year I ---- on holiday to Spain."

Practice (controlled) speaking activities: Classroom examples

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Kirsty, will show you three different examples of practice (controlled) activities you can use to teach speaking:

- Open pairs
- Guided role plays
- Chain story

Using production (free) activities to practice speaking

We've now mastered how to plan practice activities for speaking lessons, so let's move on to production activities.

These activities are focused on improving students' fluency in English, and while you'll set up and monitor the lesson, what they'll actually say is up to them.

Click below on some of our ideas to see what's involved.

Role play

You create a scenario for students to act out, perhaps with one student taking the part of a travel agent and the other a customer, then it's up to students to complete a task. The task could be the travel agent offering three different destinations for a vacation, and the customer choosing one and explaining why they preferred it. This can be good for practicing comparatives and superlatives ("hotter than", "the wettest", "more expensive than", etc.)

Discussion

You can set up discussions in lots of different ways: with pairs, small groups, teams, or as a whole class. You'll set the subject, maybe elicit some suitable phrases and vocabulary from students and then they'll do the task.

Information gap

This is ideal for pair work, where different students are given a different piece of information. They have to discuss and share the information to complete the task.

Games

There are a huge number of games you can use to practice vocabulary, and lots of these are speaking based. Have a look at our resources section to get some ideas.

Production (free) speaking activities: Classroom examples

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video from our TEFL course tutor, Kirsty, will show you two different examples of production (free) activities you can use to teach speaking:

- Pair discussion
- Group discussion

Productive skills lessons: Quiz

true-or-false

Writing and speaking are the same types of skill as reading and listening.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Speaking is always harder than writing.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Shy students aren't good at speaking.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Difficult sounds, intonation, word and sentence stress and fluency are all things that can make speaking challenging.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Punctuation is the same in all languages.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You can only practice speaking and writing in skills lessons.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

A guided role play is a production activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

A discussion activity where students choose what to say is a production activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You only have to think about what students are doing in the activity itself.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Speaking is usually more spontaneous than writing.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Teaching writing skills

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Many teachers avoid practicing writing in class, because they believe that this is something students can work on at home and that the focus of their lessons should be on speaking.

Now, it's true that we don't want our classes to be silent and full of writing tasks from start to finish, but it is important for students to get some guided practice at writing during lessons. How else are they going to be able to ask for help with their writing, or learn techniques properly if they don't have a teacher on hand?

When writing in class, do your best to give help and guidance to students wherever possible. Give them a clear idea as to the purpose of the writing tasks you are asking them to complete, how long they should be and what they should include. This will help them improve their writing skills and allow them to continue writing when they leave the class too. It'll also mean that they stay engaged with your lesson, and this will help you control the class better.

If you don't want to let writing take over your lesson, you could use some time to set up a homework assignment by covering different words or phrases, trying new sentence structures or preparing for the next lesson. If you choose this though, remember to give them plenty of guidance so they know exactly what to do.

Writing is a tricky subject for some students, so make sure you devote enough class time to it so they can produce the best pieces of writing they can.

Why practice writing?

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

As we saw earlier, we need to practice writing to help assimilate new language.

For example: the form of a new tense, or the spelling of a new word.

Writing activities, as we saw with speaking activities, can help consolidate something you have been taught earlier in the lesson.

Writing is also a skill and form of communication that needs to be practiced to be perfected, so it's worth letting students get the chance to use their writing skills as part of a lesson when it makes sense, or as part of a lesson on its own.

What you need to cover in writing lessons

Before planning a writing lesson, you need to make sure you know what topics you want to cover within the lesson.

There are lots of different aspects of writing that you could include in your classes, perhaps more than you think.

Activity:

Have a look at the grid below and select the topics or sub-skills you think you should be teaching your students to improve their writing skills:

Punctuation Correct	Learning new vocabulary No, this is not necessary when the focus is on writing	Spelling Correct	Writing for different audiences Correct
Capital letters, lower case and joined up writing Correct	Formal vs informal language Correct	Handwriting Correct	Tricky sounds This is more for speaking
Paragraphing Correct	Note-taking Correct	Shorthand This isn't relevant for EFL students	Layouts, e.g. for a formal letter Correct

Obviously, it would be too difficult to teach all of these sub-skills to your students in one lesson, so it's important to progress through them in a logical order.

A good starting point would be the basics of handwriting, as young learners may not have had much practice with using their writing skills even in their native language. As students improve upon their basic skills, you can progress to more complicated writing skills.

It's also important to think about what your students will need their writing skills for when they leave the classroom. A lot of writing lessons are focused on getting the layout (paragraphs, addresses etc.) and register (formal/informal language or tone) correct in writing. This is important for the likes of business English students, or when students are preparing for exams, as they might have to write a letter for instance. However, with younger learners this may be unnecessary since learning how to structure a basic written sentence will be more important at this stage.

Practicing writing in the classroom: Example lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you how to deliver a writing lesson in the classroom.

Unit 7: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Writing and speaking are _____ skills.

Select the correct answer from these options

Receptive

Productive

Both receptive and productive

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

In a PPP lesson, you can practice writing and speaking in _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Practice activities only

Production activities only

Practice and production activities

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Students often lack _____ in speaking.

Select the correct answer from these options

Confidence

Partners

Lessons

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

English is _____ language.

Select the correct answer from these options

a phonetic

not a phonetic

a phonetically-neutral

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

To maximize speaking practice, you should plan activities for _____ the activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

before and during

during

before, during and after

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Open pairs is a type of _____ activity.

Select the correct answer from these options

Lead-in

Writing

Practice

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Production activities are about practicing _____ .

Select the correct answer from these options

Accuracy Fluency Comprehension

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Writing should _____ be done as homework.

Select the correct answer from these options

Always Sometimes Never

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Understanding the difference between formal and informal language is _____ .

Select the correct answer from these options

Not important Important Not applicable to writing lessons

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Intonation is to do with _____ .

Select the correct answer from these options

Speaking

Writing

Both speaking and writing

Unit 8: Introduction to phonology

Welcome to Unit 8

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi, and welcome to the eighth unit of the methodology course. Now we're going to take a look at a rather different topic from what we've seen before and teach you all about something called phonology.

Phonology includes how to pronounce individual sounds such as consonants and vowels. Naturally you'll know how to pronounce them, but a lot of sounds we have in English are very different to those in other languages – and some might not even exist in your students' native tongue.

Other topics we'll cover include word and sentence stress, intonation and how to connect speech in order to sound natural when we speak. These are things we take for granted, but they are very important to make sure that we effectively communicate what we are trying to say. Without knowing about them, you won't be able to teach your students how to understand the way most native English speakers talk, and that would leave them struggling at times outside of the class.

A good rounded knowledge of phonology will help students become more independent learners, picking up different types of pronunciation with little or no help. And if it's important for your students to learn, it's important for you to learn, too.

Move on to find out more about phonology and how it can help boost your teaching skills.

What is phonology?

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Phonology is more than likely a new topic to you, so let's break down what it really means.

To put it as a simple definition: phonology is the study of how sounds are used and organized in natural language.

So, the phonological system of a language includes an inventory of all the sounds and their features, and this system also rules how these sounds interact with each other.

Don't worry if that seems a little complicated at the moment. We are going to break things down further for you starting with the consonant and vowel sounds that will hopefully be much more familiar to you.

As we all know, there are 26 letters in the English alphabet, and hopefully you'll also know there are 21 consonants and 5 vowels.

With sounds, though, it is much more complicated, as we can pronounce letters, and combinations of letters, differently depending on their context within the word.

In standard American English, there are 24 consonant phonemes and 16 vowel sounds that make up all the words we say, which will probably come as a surprise!

We promise this will all make sense by the end of the unit, and you'll learn everything you'll need to know about phonology along the way. Click to the next lesson when you're ready to start.

Consonant sounds

We all know what consonants are in terms of letters, as they make up the vast majority of our alphabet. But even though we have only 21 consonant characters, we do have 24 consonant sounds in English.

To help you reconcile the two, here is the definition of a consonant sound:

Consonant sound:

A sound formed when the airflow from the lungs is obstructed by the moveable parts of the mouth, including the tongue and lips.

Try pronouncing these sounds and deciding where the obstruction is occurring:

/m/ as in **man**
/v/ as in **van**
/n/ as in **nan**
/t/ as in **tan**
/r/ as in **ran**
/k/ as in **can**

These should all be relatively straightforward, but now try saying these two examples where the spelling of the consonant sound is the same, but the sound itself is very different:

θ think ð that

By looking at the spelling of the “th” there is no difference, but you can tell naturally as an English speaker that the two are pronounced differently.

As spelling and sounds are different, we need to use a special type of alphabet called “phonemic script” to transcribe our spoken language.

Here are all 24 consonant sounds of standard American English in phonemic script:

Phonemic chart Consonants

Key:
voiced
unvoiced

MONOPHTHONGS							
CONSONANTS	p <u>pea</u>	b <u>boat</u>	t <u>tea</u>	d <u>dog</u>	tʃ <u>cheese</u>	dʒ <u>June</u>	k <u>car</u>
	f <u>fly</u>	v <u>video</u>	θ <u>think</u>	ð <u>this</u>	s <u>see</u>	z <u>zoo</u>	ʃ <u>shall</u>
	m <u>man</u>	n <u>now</u>	ŋ <u>sing</u>	h <u>hat</u>	l <u>love</u>	r <u>red</u>	w <u>wet</u>

 Download

Voiced or Unvoiced consonants

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

The 24 different consonant sounds we have in English can be further broken down into “voiced” and “unvoiced” sounds, which group them together by way in which they are said.

Voiced sounds use your voice when they are spoken.

The easy way to test this is to put your finger on your throat as you say the sound.

If you feel a vibration, then the sound is voiced. If not, it must be unvoiced.

Unvoiced sounds are typically harder sounding, and use the tongue and lips to create all of the sound.

You can test if a sound is unvoiced in the same way – by putting your finger on your throat as you say it.

This time you will not feel a vibration, and there will be a short explosion of air as you pronounce the sound.

Voiced or Unvoiced consonants: Quiz

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

j

(as in "joke")

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

l

(as in "look")

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

p

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

r

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

t

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

th

(as in "thing")

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

d

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

z

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

s

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

multiple-choice

Decide whether the consonant sound below is voiced or unvoiced.

f

Select the correct answer from these options

Voiced

Unvoiced

Vowel sounds

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: We hope you've got the hang of consonants and their variety of sounds now, so it's time to move on to the other type of sound: vowels.

Actor 2: We know there are 5 vowels in English: a, e, i, o and u. Can you remember how many vowel sounds there are, though? There are actually 16 of them, which is probably far more than you thought.

Actor 1: So why do we have so many sounds compared to letters? Again, it comes down to the fact that we can spell words with the same letters but have them sound differently. We have words like put, where the vowel is an /ʊ/ sound, where in cut it is an /ʌ/ sound.

Actor 2: We also have individual vowel sounds, called monophthongs, and vowels that are combined, called diphthongs, which add to the number of sounds we can use. One thing all of these vowels have in common though is that they are all voiced.

Actor 1: Let's have a look now at how we form these different vowel sounds. The way we do this is by modifying the airflow through the mouth, rather than obstructing it. Try saying the sounds of the vowels we have in the alphabet:

Actor 2: a, e, i, o, u.

Actor 1: Hopefully you'll hear there that the sound is being changed by modifying the sound without obstructing the airflow. This happens just the same when we use the sounds within words:

Actor 2: Apple, Egg, Fish, Orange, Hungry

Actor 1: You'll see that the vowel sound has changed in each of these words from its alphabet form, but it is still being produced without obstructing the airflow. All of the sounds are still voiced as well, with vibration in the throat when they are being said.

Actor 2: We hope you can see now how vowel sounds are pronounced and why there are so many of them! Let's move on now to cover one more sound in the English language that comes up very often.

The Schwa sound

There is a vowel sound that is so frequent in the English language that it has its own recognizable name: the Schwa (ə).

This is a neutral vowel sound, which means that it is never stressed and is always surrounded by stressed vowels. This feature of the English language is what helps it sound almost musical when it is spoken.

The Schwa is a small sound and hard to distinguish at times if you're not aware of it, so students often have difficulty in hearing and saying it. This makes it important for learners to recognise the sound and to practice it if they want to be able to pick up on conversations and have a natural-sounding accent.

The Schwa sound: Examples

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Let's look at some examples of the schwa sound – notice how it has nothing to do with the spelling of the word.

persuade	hospital	doctor	cigarette	station
statement	mother	delicious	certificate	revision

All vowel sounds

Now we've covered vowel sounds, let's show you all of the phonemes we have for the 16 vowels in American English:

Phonemic chart Vowels

VOWELS	MONOPHTHONGS				DIPHTHONGS	
	i: bean	ɪ ship	ʊ good	u: sh <u>oo</u> t	eɪ wait	əʊ show
	e bed	ə teacher	ɜ: bir <u>d</u>	ɔ: d <u>oor</u>	ɔɪ boy	aʊ cow
	æ cat	ʌ up	ɑ: far		ai my	

 Download

Vowel sounds: Quiz

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Sheep

Select the correct answer from these options

/ɪ/

/i:/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Map

Select the correct answer from these options

/a/

/æ/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Understand

Select the correct answer from these options

/ə/

/e/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Bite

Select the correct answer from these options

/aɪ/

/ɪ/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Follow

Select the correct answer from these options

/ɒ/

/əʊ/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Donkey

Select the correct answer from these options

/ɒ/

/ə/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Monkey

Select the correct answer from these options

/ʌ/

/ə/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Moon

Select the correct answer from these options

/ʊ/

/u:/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Ranger

Select the correct answer from these options

/ə/

/æ/

multiple-choice

Identify the phoneme that represents the highlighted vowel sound below.

Bother

Select the correct answer from these options

/a/

/ɒ/

The phonemic chart

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

It can be hard to keep track of the 16 different vowel sounds in American English, and that's why we have the phonemic chart.

This is a set of symbols, individually known as phonemes, that we use to represent each of these sounds in spoken English.

The phonemes show us how to pronounce a particular vowel sound, which then helps us with pronouncing a word.

Having these symbols on a phonemic chart is useful for learning pronunciations, as in English the way a word is spelled doesn't always tell us how it will sound.

These charts are especially useful in helping students visualize individual sounds they might be struggling with, so they can practice those sounds accurately.

Teaching techniques using the phonemic chart

Phonemic chart

Key:
voiced
unvoiced

		MONOPHTHONGS				DIPHTHONGS	
VOWELS	i: bean	I ship	ʊ good	U: shoot	eɪ wait	əʊ show	
	e bed	ə teacher	ɜ: bird	ɔ: door	ɔɪ boy	aʊ cow	
	æ cat	ʌ up	ɑ: far		aɪ my		
CONSONANTS	p pea	b boat	t tea	d dog	tʃ cheese	dʒ June	k car
	f fly	v video	θ think	ð this	s see	z zoo	ʃ shall
	m man	n now	ŋ sing	h hat	l love	r red	w wet

Download

We're now familiar with the phonemic chart, and hopefully you found it useful as a way to visualize the different sounds we have in English. It can also be very useful for our students to use, but how exactly can we do that in the classroom?

We don't want to be over-reliant on using phonemes to explain new words, as some students may be confused by them and it won't necessarily help all students understand the word, but they can be useful to help students that are struggling with particular sounds. Phonemes are also a good way of helping students

remember the pronunciation of a word that may be spelled similarly to another, but which sounds different e.g. "I read a book every week", "Yesterday I read a book".

In our next lesson, our teacher will use the phonemic chart in class with their students to help them improve their pronunciation.

Teaching pronunciation with the phonemic chart: Classroom examples

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom video featuring our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you two examples of how you can use the phonemic chart in the classroom to teach pronunciation. These examples will cover:

- Practising tricky consonant sounds
- Pronunciation of regular “ed” past simple endings /t/, /d/, /ɪd/

Word stress

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We've now finished looking at all the different sounds we have in English, and the ways that we can represent and teach them to our students.

Now it's time to have a look at word stress, which is how we emphasize different syllables in a word. An easy example of that is the word 'syllable' itself, syl-la-ble. Notice how we give the emphasis to the first part of the word there, we don't say it like this: syl-la-ble.

We find word stress in all words with two or more syllables, as we add weight to one part of the word to give it emphasis. The other syllables in the word that aren't stressed are said in a weaker and quieter way.

Why do we do this then? Fluent and native speakers of English listen for the stressed syllable of a word, rather than the weaker ones, to identify the word more quickly. We can do this because a particular word will always have the same stress pattern, and this can make it easy to distinguish in spoken English between similarly spelled words.

All this means that your students will need to use word stress correctly to improve their pronunciation and help others to understand them better. It will also help them communicate more quickly and accurately too, and can be a big benefit to their understanding of English.

How can we teach all this to our students? Let's find out.

Word stress: Examples

There are two key rules in English regarding word stress that you'll need to remember when teaching your students:

Word stress rules:

1. A word can only have ONE stressed syllable. If you hear more than one stress, you are listening to more than one word.
2. The stress is always on a vowel sound (but not a schwa sound).

Explaining the stress of a word when teaching new vocabulary to your students is a great idea, to help them start using it naturally right away. This might not work as well with some words, and may not be necessary for others, so use your best judgement when planning your presentation of new words.

There are lots of ways of teaching word stress, but one that's quite useful is to use dots to represent different syllables of a word. There will always be one dot that is larger than the others, which denotes where the stress is. Have a look at the following examples:

Computer oOo (com-PU-ter)

Internet Ooo (IN-ter-net)

Automatic ooOo (aut-o-MAT-ic)

Market Oo (MAR-ket)

We have some general rules that you can use to help students figure out the way stress is used in a variety of different word types and when words come together. Here are a few of them:

Stress in compound words

When two words come together to form a compound noun, the stress can be identified as follows:

If the compound word consists of an adjective and a noun, they have equal stress:

Mobile phone Oo O

If the compound word consists of a noun/gerund and another noun, the stress is on the first noun/gerund:

Can opener O ooo

Stress in verbs, nouns and adjectives

Some words can be used in different parts of speech, and might have a different stress pattern because of it. Look at the following examples of uses of the word "record":

I have a large collection of records.

Get your students to record new vocabulary in a notebook.

In the first sentence "record" is a noun, and the stress is on the first syllable. In the second, it's a verb, and the stress is on the second syllable.

This stress change doesn't happen for all words. "Control" and "mistake", for instance, always have the stress on the second syllable. Word stress can also have regional or dialectal differences too, so it's worth recognizing those whenever you can.

In a phrasal verb, the word stress will be on the particle, rather than on the main verb. However, if the phrasal verb has an associated noun, the rule above for compound nouns will take over:

Guests have to check in at reception on arrival at the hotel.

Check-in time at the airport is usually a couple of hours before the flight departure time.

You'll also notice here that the noun from the phrasal verb is usually written with a hyphen or as one word.

Word stress in longer words and word families

Some word endings will have regular stress patterns. For example: words ending in -ion, -id, -ish, -ic usually have the stress on the second-last syllable:

Occasion oOo

Insipid oOo

Accomplish oOo

Characteristic oooOo

Since there are always exceptions to the rule, it is a good idea for students to learn the stress pattern of new words as they come across them, while also having the pronunciation charts as a useful point of reference.

Individual words in groups called "word families" can also have different stress patterns for each word, but not always. Compare the following:

Photograph (ooo), Photographer (oOoo), Photographic (ooOo)

Invention (oOo), Inventor (oOo), Inventive (oOo)

Word stress: Quiz

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Photography

Select the correct answer from these options

Oooo oOoo ooOo oooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Bad-tempered

Select the correct answer from these options

Ooo oOo ooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Dependability

Select the correct answer from these options

oOoooo ooOooo oooOoo ooooOo

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Critical

Select the correct answer from these options

Ooo

oOo

ooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Television

Select the correct answer from these options

Oooo

oOoo

ooOo

oooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Democracy

Select the correct answer from these options

Oooo

oOoo

ooOo

oooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Understanding

Select the correct answer from these options

Oooo

o0oo

ooOo

oooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Leadership

Select the correct answer from these options

Ooo

oOo

ooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Misunderstood

Select the correct answer from these options

Oooo

o0oo

ooOo

oooO

multiple-choice

Choose the correct word stress for the word below.

Coca-Cola

Select the correct answer from these options

o^ooo

o^ooo

oo^oo

ooo^o

Word stress: Quiz 2

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Yesterday

Saturday

Happiness

Laughter

Select the correct answer from these options

Yesterday

Saturday

Happiness

Laughter

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Information

Kindergarten

Coca-Cola

Demonstration

Select the correct answer from these options

Information

Kindergarten

Coca-Cola

Demonstration

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Follow

Impress

Event

Allow

Select the correct answer from these options

Follow

Impress

Event

Allow

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Disappear

Understand

Internet

Magazine

Select the correct answer from these options

Disappear

Understand

Internet

Magazine

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

China

Table

Eighteen

Clever

Select the correct answer from these options

China

Table

Eighteen

Clever

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Computer

Internet

Microwave

Hollywood

Select the correct answer from these options

Computer

Internet

Microwave

Hollywood

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Novel

Painting

Pillow

Alarm

Select the correct answer from these options

Novel

Painting

Pillow

Alarm

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Window

Follow

Japan

China

Select the correct answer from these options

Window

Follow

Japan

China

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Understand

Japanese

Successful

Disappear

Select the correct answer from these options

Understand

Japanese

Successful

Disappear

multiple-choice

Choose the word that is the odd one out in terms of word stress.

Foreigner

Irony

Computer

Telephone

Select the correct answer from these options

Foreigner

Irony

Computer

Telephone

Sentence stress

We're now aware of how word stress works to change how a word sounds, but we can also use sentence stress to emphasize particular words within a sentence. With word stress, the pronunciation of a word will always stay the same, but sentence stress means that different words will be emphasized depending on the context of the sentence.

For example, say the following sentence out loud:

Sometimes, I like to take my bike to the park and ride around the beautiful lake.

Click below to see what words can be emphasized:

Sometimes, I like to take my bike to the park and ride around the beautiful lake.

Think about the kind of words that are stressed in a sentence if you say it normally. What types of words are stressed in the sentence above?

Nouns, main verbs, negative auxiliary verbs, adjectives and adverbs can be known as "content words" and these are the ones that are normally stressed in a sentence. Words like articles, prepositions, quantifiers, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs are more important in a grammatical sense and are called "structure" words. These are normally unstressed in a sentence.

In the example we have above, you can see that the adverbs (sometimes, around), verbs (like, take, ride), adjectives (beautiful) and nouns (bike, lake) are the stressed words. The structure words, though, are unstressed. Examples include pronouns (I, my), prepositions (to), articles (the) and conjunctions (and).

But while this is the case for sentence stress that we say normally, we can break these rules to add emphasis to what we are saying.

Try saying the example sentence again, but this time stress the highlighted structure word and see what this does to the meaning of the sentence:

Sometimes, I like to take my bike to the park **and** ride around the lake.

You can see that the meaning here is a bit different compared with the first example, as the stress on the word "and" means that the two clauses of the sentence are separate.

You can use stress like this to give emphasis to certain information in a sentence. We can add extra stress to either content or structure words, and this can entirely change the meaning or context of a sentence.

Move on to the next lesson to see a demonstration of how sentence stress can work.

Sentence stress: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, now we're going to look at the topic of sentence stress - which may be rather new to you.

First of all, we'll talk about how words function within sentences.

Words in sentences can be divided into two categories: content words and structure words.

Content words carry crucial information, and they are the most important. Structure words are much less important, they don't carry the essential meaning, they just make the sentence grammatically correct.

So, here's an example sentence for you:

"Can you cook dinner because I'm going to be late."

In natural speech we would stress those phrases: "cook dinner" and "be late", as they carry the meaning.

By emphasizing certain words we can change the whole meaning of the message. I'll now give you a sentence and emphasize different parts of it to show you how much of a difference it can make.

Let's start with the sentence: "I adore his grandma's cakes."

"I adore his grandma's cakes."

(someone else might not like the cake, I do!)

"I **adore his grandma's cakes."**

(emphasis of natural meaning)

"I adore **his grandma's cakes."**

(that's a particular grandmother. I might not like my grandma's cakes)

"I adore his **grandma's cakes."**

(this particular family member's cakes. I might not like his mother's cakes)

"I adore his **grandma's cakes."**

(I adore this aspect of his grandma. I might not like his grandmother's steaks, for instance).

So with this, you can see that depending on which word we emphasize the sentence changes in meaning.

Getting this across to your students is an important way of making sure they can use the language naturally when they leave the class.

Sentence stress: Quiz

true-or-false

Sentence stress always stays the same.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We can stress up to four words per sentence.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

It's more important for students to use word stress correctly than sentence stress.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Sentence stress can change depending on whether we are speaking naturally or emphasizing something.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When speaking naturally, we stress content words.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Content words are auxiliary verbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We can't stress structure words.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Sentence stress doesn't change word stress.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

"My favorite hobby is cycling". This sentence means that the speaker has more than one hobby and cycling is their absolute favorite.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

"Is Alice wearing that dress tonight?". This sentence means the speaker doesn't like Alice's choice of dress.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Connected speech

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We've learned a lot about phonology so far, covering things like consonant sounds, vowel sounds and the Schwa, word stress and sentence stress. So, what else is there? We've only got a couple of topics left, and one of them is connected speech.

This is something we covered a little when looking at stress, and as you might imagine, connected speech is about how we link or merge words together when speaking naturally.

We do this a lot in sentences with the "structure" words that we talked about, so that we talk with a steady stream of sounds rather than: individual...separated...and...very...unnatural...sounding...speech

There are actually no clear boundaries between words in spoken English, which makes it very different from the written form where we can see where each word begins and ends. When speaking, words flow together smoothly and we even change sounds at the beginning and end of some words to make them all fit together better.

For some students, this will be difficult to grasp right away and it can lead to a lack of understanding of what native speakers are saying, or how to connect words together themselves. This makes it important to spend some time covering connected speech and helping students to understand it.

We connect speech in different ways, so let's show you how it can be done. Listen to the pronunciation of these film titles, and try saying them out loud yourself too, to see what happens when you say them at a natural speed.

- My Big Fat Greek Wedding
- The Green Mile
- Stand By Me
- The War of the Worlds
- We Are Family

You can really hear the difference when you say the words naturally and the sounds run together, and you won't hear the words connecting if you say each word separately.

Weak or unstressed forms of words allow native speakers to say the "little words" quickly enough to maintain rhythm when speaking. However, it can be tough for students to learn these words if they can't hear them being used and they might not be sure about which ones to emphasize when speaking, either. Let's look at some other features of connected speech.

Connected speech: Examples

There are four different ways in which we connect speech naturally, which we can categorize based on the ways in which we link the words together.

Linking sounds

When a word ends in a consonant and is followed by a word starting with a vowel, the consonant and vowel join together:

"This is Mike."

"This is" sounds like one word.

Changing sounds

When a consonant is followed by another consonant, one or both sounds change, resulting in one sound becoming more like the other or changing altogether.

"Don't forget to phone me."

The /n/ sound becomes an /m/

"Put him over there"

Often the /h/ sounds can be dropped so the word sound like /pʊdɪm/.

Disappearing sounds

When a word ending in a consonant is followed by a word that starts with another consonant, we often drop the consonant on the first word:

"I'll be just a couple of minutes"

The /v/ in "of" is often not pronounced.

Extra sounds added

When two vowels occur next to each other, we often link them with one of three sounds: /r/, /w/ or /j/. This makes it easier to say, since it's difficult to say two vowels together.

"I saw /r/ it"

"Do /w/ it"

"The /j/ end"

Connected speech: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson from our TEFL course tutor, Caroline, will show you how to teach connected speech to your students.

Connected speech: Quiz

true-or-false

Connected speech is the same as sentence stress.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Connecting speech correctly will help speakers sound more fluent.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

There is only one way to connect speech.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Words always sound the same in English.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When a word ends in a consonant and the following word starts with a vowel, we link these together, for example: "carrotsare healthy".

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When a word ends in a consonant sound and the next starts with a consonant, both consonant sounds are said clearly.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Sometimes sounds totally disappear from words in connected speech.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When two vowel sounds are next to each other we add /r/, /j/, or /w/ to link them together.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

These two words are linked by a /j/ sound – “banana and”

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

These two words are linked by a /w/ sound – “no end”

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Intonation

In this final part of the unit, we're going to look at intonation; which is how your voice rises and falls in natural speech. Intonation has a variety of important roles in English, so it's very important to integrate it into our teaching.

We use intonation to denote different things, such as politeness, annoyance, sarcasm, interest, etc.

With students being unfamiliar with the language, they can sometimes sound unintentionally rude or misinterpret the meaning of what a native speaker is saying because they lack understanding of how intonation works in English.

Here are some key points to consider about intonation:

If a request is made using polite vocabulary and grammar, but the intonation is rude, native speakers will usually interpret this as rude. Likewise, short and direct vocabulary and grammar is usually interpreted well if the intonation is polite.

Native speakers use intonation to indicate when they have finished speaking. Incorrect use of intonation can lead to a listener not responding because they think the speaker will continue, or interrupting because they think the speaker has finished.

Intonation can change a question into a statement, or vice-versa, and it can also be used to determine whether a question is asking for confirmation of something or for it to be explained again.

Attitude can also be expressed through intonation. Look at the following example:

"Paul is the new manager."

This could be a simple comment, but depending on intonation it can express surprise, disbelief, disgust, admiration, etc. Intonation can be used to express meaning more accurately.

Intonation: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We're now going to look at intonation - or the rise and fall of your voice as you're speaking. Intonation is about how we say things, rather than what we say. Without intonation, it's impossible to understand the expressions and thoughts that go with words. At its simplest, intonation could be described as 'the music of speech'. A change or variation in this music (or pitch) can affect the meaning of what we say.

Here I'll give you some different examples of phrases and show you how intonation affects them. First, here are some examples of questions with falling intonation.

Where do you live?
How are you?

They are just general questions and we're not emphasising anything. This suggests we're neutral towards the answers, or simply don't know. But now I'll give you some examples of questions with a rising intonation.

Do you live in an apartment?
Have you finished work?

Here, I've emphasised apartment - because I've reason to believe the person I'm asking lives in an apartment. For the second example I'm not sure, or maybe even slightly surprised, that the person might have finished work.

Generally for statements we'll use a falling intonation, where our voice drops towards the end of the sentence. Some examples include:

I live in the centre of town.
My name's Kirsty.

Notice how the intonation drops without much drama there, this can sometimes be difficult for non-native speakers to pick up on - but it is there. We use a falling intonation for other things, such as rhetorical questions where we're not looking for an actual answer. For example:

What are we all waiting for?

It's more of a general question again, so the intonation falls a little. For some questions, most often requests, we might have intonation that rises and then falls. Listen to this example:

Could you do me a favor, please?

Here the question is really "Could you do me a favor?" so we have the rising intonation there, and adding please on to the end is an extra - so we have the intonation falling there like at the end of a sentence. We use this falling intonation often to mark that we've finished speaking, so in the last example to indicate our question is over.

This happens more generally too when we finish sentences, for example:

I really want to improve my pronunciation. I work on it every day.

You can clearly hear where the sentences end there because of the intonation.

But all this intonation might come natural to you, but be tricky for non-native speakers. Teaching this is really important though, as it helps their speech become more natural and helps them understand nuance we have when speaking.

I'll leave you with some examples of the same question, one genuine and one rhetorical, so you can see the difference intonation makes:

You know him, don't you? (genuine question),

You know him, don't you? (rhetorical question).

Intonation: Quiz

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Intonation is about the _____ in natural speech.

Select the correct answer from these options

rise and fall of the voice

way we connect words

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Intonation is _____ in all languages.

Select the correct answer from these options

the same

different

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

We use intonation to add _____ to what we're saying.

Select the correct answer from these options

more meaning

more vocabulary

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Students can sound _____ if the grammar and vocabulary is correct but the intonation is incorrect.

Select the correct answer from these options

rude like native speakers

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Intonation can be used in English to indicate when someone has _____ speaking.

Select the correct answer from these options

started finished

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Intonation with questions tags _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

is always the same can change

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

A rising intonation in English is _____ used with a question.

Select the correct answer from these options

sometimes

always

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Intonation is about _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

what we say

how we say something

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

You can use intonation to express _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

limited emotions

many emotions

multiple-choice

Choose the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

Teaching intonation is _____ teaching grammar so students can understand people well and sound more fluent and natural themselves.

Select the correct answer from these options

as important as not as important as

Unit 8: End of Unit Quiz

true-or-false

Phonology is the study of how sounds are used and organized in natural language.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

English has 21 consonant sounds and 5 vowel sounds.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

With voiced sounds, you can feel a vibration in the throat.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

/ch/, /t/ and /p/ are example of voiced sounds.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The Schwa is a vowel sound.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Word stress is about which word we emphasize in a sentence.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You can't change sentence stress, it always has to be the same word.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We say every word in a sentence clearly.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We always use a rising intonation when we ask a question.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

There are set rules you can teach your students about word stress.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Unit 9: Teaching young learners: Mini-module

Welcome to Unit 9

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, and welcome to unit 9 of our methodology course. This unit is going to focus on teaching young learners – which we define as students between 3 and 12 years old. This is a very common age group that you might end up teaching, so we're going to share some techniques and ideas with you to make these lessons as good as possible.

First of all, while you might assume that young learners have the lowest level of ability of your students, it's not always how it turns out. While the youngest learners will still be trying to master their own native language, you will come across many 10, 11 or 12 year olds with a pretty good level of English. They'll probably already know quite a lot of vocabulary, how to deal with some simple tenses and be able to use natural English phrases. This can mean some students can be at a pre-intermediate or intermediate level, but again this might not be the case for all. We need to remember that a student's age is not necessarily a great indicator of their ability level.

Another assumption that many teachers make is that younger learners are like sponges, and will absorb all the knowledge you pass down to them in the class. This isn't quite true, and while they might be a bit more open to learning the new language than adults, and more comfortable in making mistakes, this doesn't mean that they'll pick up English effortlessly.

If we want to teach young learners effectively, we need to take some specific approaches to make sure the learning experience works best for them. We'll still use the same lesson plan structures, for PPP lessons or skills lessons, but the focus of them needs to be more on the activities, rather than explaining things. The goal of teaching younger students is to improve their comprehension and confidence in using the language, so we need to do lots of work on the skills of reading, listening and speaking. Writing is important too, but it can take up valuable class time that might be better spent on correcting pronunciation or letting students improve their reading ability, so make sure you don't spend the whole class writing!

What doesn't change with teaching young learners is that we need to use proper English with them at all times. Grading your language to suit their level might seem natural, and you might even want to use their native language at times, but making sure that the students are exposed to natural English as much as possible is key to helping them improve. Just keep things clear and simple and everything will go just fine! We're going to look into these approaches in much more detail in this unit, and by the end you'll be able to plan great lessons that young learners find fun and educational. Let's get started!

How is teaching young learners different?

To start off, we want you to think about the main differences you think there are between teaching an older class of teenagers or adults, and teaching young learners. These differences will shape how you plan and deliver your lessons, so it's important to be mindful of what young learners classes will be like in order to prepare effectively.

Activity:

We've given you some areas below where young learners differ from older students; try to think of some reasons and explanations why the age difference matters in at least 5 of these categories. We'll give you 2 minutes to think about it.

Native language ability

Other study

Life experience

Attention span

Learning styles

Expectations

Motivation

Speed of progress

Willingness to speak

Age

Behavior

Lesson content

Think about reasons why age difference matters in different areas of teaching

Start timer

Teaching young learners – things to be aware of: Demonstration

▶ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

We've already looked at some of the differences between teaching teenagers and adults and younger children. Here are a few more for you to consider.

When teaching young learners the teacher has to make sure the meaning and the context are clear.

The teacher needs to make sure the lesson is interesting and sufficiently challenging. The material can't be too difficult or too easy or you will quickly lose the students' attention.

When teaching new grammar concepts, keep the vocabulary accessible. It needs to be simple and familiar so that the students can focus on the new target language.

Young learners need a lot of revision and consolidation of the language. You need to revise what you have been doing in class regularly and in a variety of ways.

Make sure you integrate pronunciation practice into every lesson - you can use drills, songs, and chants for this. With drilling, you can drill chorally, which means the whole group together or small groups, and then individually.

Young learners benefit from a varied pace of activities. Make sure you include quite a few shorter tasks.

Resources to use for young learners: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

When you're teaching younger learners, it's important to make sure that they're engaged in the lesson as much as possible - as that's when they'll learn best. Today we're going to look at some of the resources and materials you can use to make lessons as interesting as possible for your young students, and hopefully keep them focused on their lesson from start to finish.

Games

Use the whiteboard for games. Games are an excellent way to revise and consolidate language. They also provide an element of competition. You can play games as warm-ups, lead-ins, fillers or even at the end of the lesson. You could include games like hangman, tic tac toe, drawing pictures to guess the meaning of the word, spelling races, anagrams, jumbled phrases or sentences, missing letters or gap fills. There are loads of games you can use! For example, if you decide to play tic tac toe, you could have the students in 2 rows facing the board which has your tic tac toe board on it. In each square of the tic tac toe board you can write an animal, like this. Each team has a different colored pen. Now you give the students some clues, for example - "4 legs...long tail...big...orange and black stripes..."). As soon as the students have guessed which animal you are describing they should race to circle the name on the board. The first team to get it correct claims that square. The first to get an unbroken line of 3 squares wins. You can also play this game and allow the students more control over which square they are fighting for. Number the squares and teams take turns to choose a number. You read out a clue, the first team to shout out the correct answer wins that square.

Stories

Stories are an excellent way to introduce new vocabulary or grammar. You can be very creative with the story, for example you can introduce sounds and movement, change your voice, sing songs, use body language or mime and gestures.

Here's an example of a well-known children's story - The Gingerbread Man. Here's a quick extract of the story exactly as it is written:

"Once upon a time, a little old woman made a gingerbread man. She put him in the oven to cook. Soon, the gingerbread man was cooked. The little old woman took him out of the oven. The gingerbread man jumped up and ran away! 'Stop, little gingerbread man,' shouted the little old woman, 'I want to eat you!'. But the gingerbread man would not stop. The little old woman chased the gingerbread man, but she could not catch him. Soon, the little gingerbread man met a cow."

Now let's try making this story more interesting for our young learners.

"Once upon a time, a little old woman made a gingerbread man. She put him in the oven to cook. Soon, the gingerbread man was cooked. The little old woman took him out of the oven. The gingerbread man jumped up and ran away! 'Stop, little gingerbread man,' shouted the little old woman, 'I want to eat you!'. But the gingerbread man would not stop. The little old woman chased the gingerbread man, but she could not catch him. Soon, the little gingerbread man met a cow."

OK, so that was certainly more interesting! And don't forget you can get the students involved too. Maybe you can show a cue card when the word "gingerbread man" appears in the story - you show the cue card and the students say, "gingerbread man" when it appears in the story. Or have some picture clue cards - maybe cow, oven, little old woman...there's a horse and a fox later in the story too! You read the story and pause before one of the picture words - see if the students can guess which word come next. You can check at the end if the story made sense.

Songs and chants

Using songs and chants can be effective too. Songs are repetitive and they have got rhythm which makes them easy to learn for children. Songs reinforce language in a natural context. They can also aid concentration and develop memory. If children use gestures they can also develop their motor skills and co-ordination.

Songs can be used for reinforcing grammar points and new vocabulary. They also develop listening and pronunciation skills. For example, if you're teaching the months of the year you can teach and practice the Months of the year song. . Or choose songs that the students can do actions for as well as repeat. Heads, shoulders, knees and toes is a well-known example.

TPR

Total Physical Response or TPR is based on the way children learn their language. Parents instruct young children while they physically perform the actions: Give me the teddy. Touch your nose . Give me a hug . Children take in this language long before they can speak. TPR makes meaning clear and memorable. It stimulates both hemispheres of the brain. Here are some ways of using TPR with young learners in the classroom. to teach new action-related vocab : jump, smile, toothache, stomach ache, run, A good way of practicing this is to play a game of Simon says. TPR is very useful for:

- Teaching tenses such as: present simple for routines : I brush my teeth every day, present continuous for actions happening now: He is reading a book.
- Teaching classroom language : look at the board, close your books.
- Teaching Imperatives : jump, stand up, close your eyes.
- Making storytelling more engaging.
- Or singing with actions to make the language more memorable.

Young learners: Introduction Quiz

true-or-false

Young learners are defined as being between 3 and 18 years old.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The younger the age of the student, the lower their ability level will be.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

We focus on building comprehension with young learners – so more reading and listening and less on speaking and writing.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Young learners will move at the same pace through the levels as adults

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should include lots of variety in your young learners lessons.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Pronunciation isn't important with young learners.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Young learners' attention spans will be shorter than with older learners.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Young learners tend to be less worried about making mistakes when speaking.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Young learners usually have a clear motivation for learning English.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should use simple vocabulary in class with young learners.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

How to motivate young learners

Motivating young learners is crucial to keeping their interest and making sure they not only enjoy your lessons, but learn from them too. This can be tricky at times, as in most cases young learners in English lessons are obliged to be there by their school or their parents, and you might find yourself teaching them after they have finished their regular school day.

Even if students are tired, or unenthusiastic, you can turn this around with some fun and engaging lessons. If you make sure you: show an interest in the students' learning; have well-prepared lesson plans; build rapport with them; are enthusiastic; use lots of intonation in your voice; and avoid shouting, then students should hopefully keep interested. Rewards can also help, simply by giving students stickers for completing a task or letting them play their favorite game at the end of the lesson.

Make sure to think carefully about the activities you choose for young learners' lessons when you plan them. Ask yourself these questions to make sure that they are appropriate:

- Are they interesting for that age group?
- Can the activity be turned into a game, or vice-versa?
- Are the activities simple enough to participate easily?

If you keep those questions in mind, then you should be able to help students get the most out of their lessons.

Making lessons fun

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Let's face it, lessons that are stuffy and boring aren't going to endear your students to learning English. That's why it's important to inject fun into your lessons wherever you can, and this is especially true for young learners.

While you need to make sure you're controlling your class, letting students have fun can be your greatest tool for motivating them. A fun class will have a better learning atmosphere, will encourage students to take part more, and you'll also be able to avoid behavior issues that happen with bored and distracted students. Let's show you how to have fun in class with younger students: move on to the next lesson to find out more!

Making lessons fun: Examples

So, what exactly is fun for a young learner? Not all young students will be the same, and you'll also find general differences between very young students and those that are older.

There are some easy ways of engaging young learners though, which can be adapted to suit your activities and students as and when you need to. Some of these include: games, songs, rhymes and role play.

Another good thing to try is to use humor in the classroom. If students can find something funny in English, the fact that they understand the situation well enough in another language will give them great confidence.

Here are some ways you can add humor to your lessons:

- Put a sticker somewhere on your body. The first child to spot it when you walk in the class gets to keep it.
- Walk into class with your coat on backwards, or socks on your hands. Tell the students you are handing out pens for writing and hand out liquorice instead. When the students tell you it's a sunny day, put on your coat and shiver.
- Ask silly questions. If you show a picture of a rhino, ask if it is a dog. If you show a picture of a fridge, pretend to open the door and take out a glass of milk. Offer it to a nearby student.
- With stories, young children tend to enjoy humorous books that are easier to read. They are more interested in humor based in characters' actions than humor of language and wordplay.

Teaching grammar to young learners: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Here are some ideas on how we teach grammar to young learners. You can use similar activities to when you practice vocabulary, but remember to have a grammar focus here.

First let's start with how to present the grammar. Obviously you don't want to over complicate things and still keep it fun for the students, and a great way of doing this is to use create characters - you can use drawings or even puppets. A picture of Superman with a big S on his chest could make an appearance every time a student drops a third person S, for example, he drive the car. You could laminate it and have it with you in every lesson and use it when necessary. It could be used by you but you could also have the students use it while doing certain activities.

Or how about Captain Present Simple? Children have to imagine what this superhero does every day, for example he flies to the baker to get his breakfast, he washes his red cape every morning, at one o'clock he has lunch with his friend Super Present Continuous etc. Or use a soft toy or a puppet as Doctor Where. This character can be moved around the room to teach prepositions of place like in, beside, next to, on, behind, under etc.

Involve the students as much as possible in these characters and the sky is the limit with where these can go. You could also ask them to bring in certain objects to the lesson to involve them even more.

Now let's look at practising the grammar.

You might include all your usual activities, especially drilling to practice what you are teaching, and you might include a gap fill or a sentence completion. Remember to involve the students - they can come up to the board to write a word, tick or cross answers, stick a word or picture on the board, and so on. However, you need to vary what you do and keep up the pace. So, here are some other ways to practice what you are teaching.

First, use the board! A board is available in most classrooms and is an effective focus for your students. You can use it to present your characters, play games, get the students to run up and write on the board or stick words on it with poster putty and so on.

Imagine you are doing a brainstorm for adjectives and verbs. Use the 'Adjective-eater' as one heading and the 'verb-cruncher' for the other heading. Your students can race to put words they have on cards into the correct column.

Think about how you can use the board in an interactive way to adapt existing games to include the board and the students more.

Also think about incorporating stories into your lesson. Children love stories and are prepared to listen to the same story again and again. One of the best ways to introduce the past simple is through a story. You can use well-known traditional tales, like The Three Bears, or make up your own to suit what you are teaching. You may even want to involve the students in this; they love to play act and you could assign them roles in the story. A really fun way to involve the students is to use story bags. You will need to prepare a bag of props, cards, pictures and objects related to the story and take them out one by one while you are telling the story. Your students will love it! For older students, you can prepare story bags for a subsequent writing or speaking activity. Each group gets a bag, they then need to create a story based on their props.

Of course, stories are a tool for teaching, so you will use the story to elicit the grammar from the story. You may ask questions like 'What did Goldilocks do when she went into the house?', You want students to answer using the past simple so you may need to pull it out of them or get the whole class to work out the answer together.

As mentioned earlier in the course, chants and songs are a lot of fun and really appeal to youngsters. You can also invent chants to suit what you are teaching, for example:

Knock on the door.
Ring the bell.
Open the door.
And walk in.

You can teach students an action for each line. This chant can be useful for greeting or practicing verbs like knock, ring, open, and walk.

And don't forget TPR - or total physical response. This term refers to action and mime and getting the students to respond using action. This has an obvious attraction to young learners. It helps the students connect with English and can change the pace of the lesson. If you can break up other activities with something physical it does wonders for the students' energy levels.

"Simon Says" is a good example of this and is useful for practicing imperatives, prepositions and movement vocabulary.

You could also adapt the game to practice other vocabulary ranges, like parts of the body. For example, touch your nose, touch your elbow. Think of ways to vary it and all the vocabulary you could review with this game. Also, call it "Your name says". You could even try assigning control of the game to the students, so it becomes "Maria says", or "Yuki says". They will love this.

TPR doesn't have to be a game like this, but could also be part of the drilling, getting students to do actions as they repeat a word; for example, drink and the students do a drinking action.

As with all games and activities, think how you can use them to review language. With young learners it is important to keep the activities fun, but make sure there is a learning benefit to them as well.

Here are a couple of ideas for other games you can use to teach grammar.

Yes or No

This is great for comprehension. You have a 'yes' ball and 'no' ball. The teacher asks a question, "Can you drive a bicycle?" Throw the two balls, two students chase the balls and the one to bring back the correct one, wins. This is really useful for testing a wide variety of language.

Jaws

A simple game of hangman becomes a way of saving you, the teacher, from being eaten by a shark. The only way your students can stop you being eaten is by guessing the letters and the word. Every wrong choice moves you down a step towards the sea and the waiting shark. You can vary this by coming up with different scenarios each time you play it.

Hot-seat

This is an old favorite and practices comprehension as well as production. One student sits in the hot seat with back to the board and facing the class. The teacher stands behind and holds up a word or flashcard. The class have to describe the word. You can also add a timer to make it more competitive.

Teaching grammar to young learners: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Joe, will show you an example of how to teach grammar to young learners.

Teaching vocabulary to young learners: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Joe, will show you an example of how to teach vocabulary to young learners.

The importance of lesson planning with young learners

Being prepared for lessons with young learners is just as important as it is for lessons with adults, and in some cases you'll need to put in more work to make sure the lesson can be delivered as smoothly as possible.

One thing to bear in mind is that you should plan more activities than you'll need in the class, as you might find that you want to change the pace of a lesson, or drop an activity you think isn't working, or maybe students will work through the activities more quickly than you thought.

Another thing to prepare is a warm-up for the start of the lesson, with physical games like Simon Says being a good example. Young students need to be engaged from the start of the lesson, so warmers are essential to make sure they're involved and using their English right away.

Younger students may get tired or bored more easily, so it's useful to have little breaks during a longer lesson. Ideally this will be a short activity, like a song or another warm-up, which will come between longer activities. In your lesson plan, make sure you vary your activities throughout so you can restore energy levels when you need to.

Finally, remember that consolidation is important for younger learners to remember things they have learned in previous lessons and be able to use them. Repeating activities between lessons often can be a great way of doing this, as long as it takes place within a varied lesson.

Behavior of young learners: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Young learners may misbehave when there is not enough structure and consistency in the lesson. Children need to know what to do. They need routine in every single lesson. Young learners like to know what will happen next, what to expect and what the teacher expects of them. This makes them feel safe and secure. It also promotes a sense of belonging and cooperation.

So what kind of bad behavior can you expect from young learners? Well they might be disruptive, not listen to the teacher, or they can be loud and refuse to work in the lesson.

You should also explain to the children why it is important to behave and act in a certain way. So make sure you establish clear rules. For example, you could have routines for entering the classroom, getting ready and ending the lesson.

Let's look at entering the classroom first. You should wait for your learners outside, establish contact with them and small talk outside of the room. However, to enter the classroom the learners should be in 'learning' mode. They should enter quietly, without chatting or pushing. There should be a clear boundary between the break time and the lesson time. Establish a routine to start your lessons. The way you start a lesson affects the whole lesson.

It's a good idea to finish about 5 minutes before the end of the lesson. The students then pack their things away quietly (if they are very young you can give them step by step instructions). The remaining time of the lesson is used for a fun activity, e.g. revision, game, etc. In this way your students will know that packing doesn't mean the end of the lesson.

Other useful rituals may include: taking the register, getting the students' attention, greeting them, or collecting and returning homework. When choosing your rituals take into consideration the class size and age group. You should establish around four rituals you will stick to in every class.

Classroom layout is also important. Make sure your learners work with different friends. You could also mount and change wall displays. Apart from language posters remember to display students' work as well. Young learners take a lot of pride in their work.

Young learners have a lot of energy. They sometimes become restless, which can lead to disruptive behavior. Allow for some energy burning exercises, like "Simon Says".

It's also important to provide meaningful written feedback. Young learners love stickers, stars, stamps and happy faces. Older students will appreciate a couple of lines of written feedback.

Children are competitive by nature. You could have a points system or behavior or achievement charts. Make sure you provide prizes, like stickers and try to pick a different winner each time.

Discipline with young learners

We now know how to encourage good behavior in the classroom through well-planned, well-paced and varied lessons, but what do we do when things go wrong and students start misbehaving? How should we deal with it?

Have a look at our tips on how to handle bad behavior below:

Warnings

Prior to making any disciplinary decision, make sure that the student has been given a clear warning that you are not satisfied with their behavior and will be punished if they continue.

Understanding

Try to understand why the student might be causing a problem. Perhaps they are acting up because they have a cold or flu coming on, or they might be tired after a bad night's sleep. Understanding why a problem is happening allows you to be in a better position to fix it and re-engage the student with the lesson.

Assistants

Making a problem child your assistant is a popular and successful way of dealing with misbehavior. It gives the more talented students in your class a new challenge of communicating with someone other than the teacher, and the students that aren't doing so well will get a boost of confidence.

It's important, however, not to appear as though you are rewarding bad behavior, or you will run the risk of creating further problems for yourself later in lessons.

Exclusion

As a later, but not necessarily last, disciplinary step you can exclude the misbehaving child from activities. Some teachers have a "time-out" spot in their classroom to let students sit down when they are being disruptive.

Be consistent

Being consistent in the classroom is important, even from your very first lesson, as it allows students to recognize what is allowed and expected of them in class. Decide on the rules you want for the class right at the start: Will students be able to ask questions without raising their hand? Will you allow students to talk to each other while you teach? What happens if one student pushes another?

Many teachers only start applying these rules later into their teaching, which means that students may be confused and might feel punished for something they were allowed to do in previous lessons. Being consistent from the start solves these problems and makes sure students focus on the lesson.

Alert parents

If a child is continually misbehaving, talk to the parents or ask the school to do so. Parents can often straighten out any behavioral problems a young child might have much faster than you'll be able to.

Changing strategies

There are always new ways of dealing with misbehavior in the classroom, but you need to make sure that you know the tactics you want to use and make sure that they are appropriate for the country and school you're teaching in.

Unit 9: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

"Younger learners are like sponges and will absorb everything you teach them!". This is _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Always true

Always false

A stereotype

multiple-choice

The focus with young learners is building their _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Grammatical knowledge

Comprehension

Vocabulary

multiple-choice

Lessons with young learners need to be _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Fun and varied

Serious and structured

The same as lessons with adults

multiple-choice

You can motivate young learners by _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

Giving them homework

Showing an interest in them

Talking to their parents

multiple-choice

You can use games to _____ in your lessons.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Practice grammar
- Practice vocabulary
- Practice both grammar and vocabulary

multiple-choice

You need to have _____ in your lesson plan.

Select the correct answer from these options

- The same weekly activities
- Lots of short, varied activities
- A song

multiple-choice

You can encourage good behavior by having consistent classroom _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Routines
- Punishments
- Homework

multiple-choice

If a student is misbehaving give them a _____.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Reward
- Punishment
- Warning

multiple-choice

Always include _____ at the beginning of the lesson.

Select the correct answer from these options

- Revision
- Warm-ups
- Pronunciation

true-or-false

You can deal with bad behavior in the same way regardless of the country you are teaching in.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Unit 9: Assignment

Advanced Teaching Young Learners Course

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Congratulations on making it to the end of this unit! We hope you've learned a lot about how to teach young learners and make your lessons interesting and fun for them.

If you're interested in teaching young learners specifically when you become a teacher, you might want to check out our more comprehensive Teaching Young Learners advanced course. This expands on what you've learned here with a 30-hour course that goes into more depth about this specific area of TEFL. It's also a fantastic way of boosting your teaching CV with a qualification that will impress schools when you apply for positions.

On the Teaching Young Learners advanced course, you'll learn what makes young learners behave the way they do, how to plan activities and lessons that will really engage students fully and we'll also give you more ideas for lessons and activities that you can use straight away in the classroom.

Go to our main website and [visit the advanced courses section](#) to find out more!

Unit 10: Teaching Business English: Mini-module

Welcome to Unit 10

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi, and welcome to Unit 10! You're almost at the end of the methodology course, and we're now going to look at another type of teaching available to you, and that is Business English.

You might be wondering: "Do I need a business background to teach Business English?", but the answer is no! Teaching Business English is about helping students communicate in the workplace using English, not about how to do the jobs that they're employed in. Having some knowledge of the field your customers are employed in will help you understand your students' needs, but you can always work with your students and their employers to learn more about this if you need to.

Business English is one topic that falls under the term ESP, which stands for English for Specific Purposes. Other topics include: English for tourism, English for engineering, or English for academia. What we'll teach you in this unit is how to tailor your English lessons to a specific purpose, and although we'll focus on Business English, you can apply the principles to any type of ESP teaching.

What we'll cover includes: conducting a needs analysis so you can understand your students and plan appropriate lessons and activities; how to set up lessons over the telephone or Skype; how to improve your cross-cultural understanding; and how to solve any problems you might come across with this specific style of teaching.

It's time to get down to business then, move on to the next lesson to start learning about Business English.

What is Business English and who can teach it?

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

First things first, let's explain exactly what Business English is. We know that it comes under the umbrella of English for Specific Purposes, and that makes it a specialization within English language learning and teaching, but why does it exist in the first place?

Well, much of the business communication that takes place around the world happens between non-native English speakers. This means that for a significant number of businesspeople there is room for improvement in their English skills to help them conduct their business more easily, or perhaps even to get better results at work.

The content of Business English is generally different to everyday language, as it focuses on things like global business culture, or a day at the office, rather than topics like friends or family.

The first part of Business English that differs from everyday use is vocabulary. Many of the words used in business are specialized, and would not necessarily be understood by native English speakers. Part of studying Business English is to study the vocabulary of business, which may be further specialized by the different industries your students work in. For example: aviation uses different terms and vocabulary to banking.

The second category is that of functional language. In Business English, this refers to the language needed to conduct typical business functions, such as running a meeting, negotiating, or giving a presentation in English.

So now we know "what" we should teach, let's start showing you how you can teach it. This unit will give you guidance on tailoring your lessons so that they're appropriate for businesspeople and so you and the students both get the information you need to get results from the class.

To start off with, let's look at how to find out what your students need from you; and we'll be doing that by a needs analysis.

Understanding your students – The needs analysis

When you meet your students for the first time, it's crucial that you understand what their needs are. This is true for all English lessons, whether it's a general English class or an ESP one.

However, simply asking students what their needs are doesn't necessarily give you the information you need to plan a lesson, or lesson program; we need to be a little more scientific about it, and for that purpose we can carry out a needs analysis.

This can be done in a number of ways: you could give students a form to fill in before their first lesson, or interview your students in the first lesson you have with them. You can even make it part of the lesson if you are teaching a group, with the students interviewing each other and discussing learning options, subjects they want to learn and the language areas they need to work on.

The aim of this needs analysis isn't to figure out the level of ability the students have, but to find out where students want to be once they've progressed through lessons with you. That means it's important to have a needs analysis for all your students, whether your class is a group of students or just a single student being tutored one-to-one.

Watch our demonstration video to see what you'll find out from a needs analysis, and how you can use it to plan your lessons.

The needs analysis: Demonstration

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Learning and teaching now generally take a student-centered approach. We look at what our learners need and design our courses and activities around those needs. A needs analysis will allow the teacher to find out a range of useful information about the students and it can take the form of a questionnaire, interview or class discussion, or maybe even all of these!

Let's look at what information you need to find out.

First, we have your students' nationality, age, job and qualifications. This will have cultural implications. Then there are their reasons for learning English: hopefully your students will want to be on your course, but even if they don't, perhaps if they've been sent by their company, it will help you to understand them better and find a way to inspire them and want to learn for themselves.

Next is educational background and English learning experience. You might get learners who have completed a standard level of education, and others who have studied at a higher level. Some students might not be used to the English script. Also, the teaching methods your students might have encountered might have been very different to how you teach. Some students, particularly those from very teacher-centered backgrounds, can be reluctant to work in groups, mingle or accept peer correction. You will need to introduce them to a totally different way of learning. Another factor is the length of time they have been learning English. They might have spent many years studying on and off and not progressed much for various reasons. This will have a huge impact on their motivation and confidence level.

Your students should also reflect on their strong and weaker skills. In this way, you will know which skills to focus on more. For example, you might have some really good speakers who are poor at writing.

And finally, we have what functions the students need English for. What you teach in the classroom should be a reflection of what your students will be using English for in the real world. Do they need to give presentations in English? Do they need to take part in meetings? Or maybe they have to negotiate with clients?

The more you know about your students, the more relevant and useful you can make your lessons.

What to teach in a Business English lesson

Now you know who you are teaching, let's look at what you will teach them.

Your needs analysis will guide this part of lesson planning, as you'll use the analysis to decide what areas you'll cover with your students.

Business English students generally want to learn the language to carry out specific functions and communicate in the workplace, such as:

- talking to international customers or departments/divisions on the phone
- conducting themselves in meetings
- understanding or producing materials in English, e.g. instructions, reports.

What you'll find is that these tasks are all skills-based. Even though we will teach grammar as part of Business English lessons, the main focus is on functional English and how to do specific things. Examples of the functional language we often teach students include: phrases for agreeing and disagreeing, presenting something, negotiating, introducing people, etc.

We've compiled six lists of skills below, with each list representing a specific area of business where students might want to improve their English.

Activity:

Try deciding which area of business uses the skills below, and choose the correct option from the dropdown boxes to see if you are right.

--Select--



Carrying out meetings

Structuring presentations

Making and changing appointments

Organizing and collecting information

Negotiating solutions

Making predictions

---Select---



Comparing products

Interpreting statistics

Designing contingency plans

Developing products and product information

Discussing technical features

---Select---



Conducting market research

Describing changes

Discussing causes

Explaining financial results and achievements

Making presentations

Recommending action

---Select---



Understanding types of accounting and the banking industry

Issuing stocks and shares

Getting a loan

Following taxation issues

Describing figures

Graphs and flow charts

--Select--



Understanding cultural attitudes and differences

Polite gestures and language

Showing interest

Dealing with visitors

Impressing important people

Social chit-chat

Business lunches

---Select---



Filling a vacancy

Interviewing

Attending conferences

Executive recruitment

Reaching targets

Reporting on a work project

Writing invitations

Negotiating agreements

Business English: Introduction Quiz

true-or-false

You need to have a business background to teach Business English.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English comes under the area of ESP, or English for Specific Purposes.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English classes are the same as general English classes.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English classes will be more skills-based.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English lessons are always one-to-one.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English students always choose to learn English.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English students generally need English for specific functions in the workplace.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Functional English is more about how to do something. For example: how to introduce yourself, how to agree or disagree and so on.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You need to do a needs analysis with Business English students.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Business English students only use English to communicate with native English speakers.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Why you should tailor your Business English lessons

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Just as with general English lessons, there are a lot of Business English books and resources out there that you can use to make your classes fun and engaging. You could pick up just about any good English teaching book and get started on planning a lesson, but to get the most out of your class you need to tailor your lessons to the particular students. Let's look at an example of how to do this:

Imagine you are teaching a group of managers from a paper mill. You are focusing on how to make predictions, so first of all we'll think about the vocabulary and structures that will be useful. These will be words and phrases like: "I think" or "I don't think", "If", and "will" or "won't".

But because the group works for a paper mill, we'll also need to tailor the vocabulary we teach to them so we could download an article on paper manufacturing or recycling, and let the students use this as a listening or reading resource.

You might have to pre-teach some vocabulary for this, so focus on the target phrases like "I think" and "will" or "won't" that we discussed earlier and perhaps take some words out from the article and use it as a gap fill activity.

You could then finish the lesson with a discussion on what they thought about the article, and let them predict the future of paper and what it means for their company.

So, our lesson includes relevant vocabulary, a relevant article and task, followed by a relevant discussion. This means that the lesson has been tailored to this particular group of students.

This may sound like a lot of work, especially if you were to be teaching many classes, but as your Business English students are all likely to be in different roles and industries, it's an essential part of getting your lessons to work for them. Students will expect a programme that is tailored to their needs, but this means that they should also be helpful when it comes to getting things right – so feel free to ask them for brochures or material from their industry or company to let you plan ahead for lessons.

To make things easier, though, you will more than likely be able to use similar lessons with different groups, just with the materials and resources changed. Not every lesson has to be focused on industry-specific material either, so from time-to-time use articles from business newspapers or magazines, or get recordings of business news, podcasts or videos. TED talks are also a great resource that you can use.

Tailoring your lessons to your students is important to help them learn so they can become stronger English speakers and better businesspeople too. Do your best to give them a rounded English programme, together with the more specialized element, and they'll be delighted with their progress.

Activities and Lesson Planning

The activities you use in a Business English classroom will not differ hugely from those you'll use in a general English lesson, and you'll still use the PPP or skills lesson structures too.

However, there are some activities that work better or worse in Business English classes. Role plays are very effective in Business English teaching, as they maximize student talking time and allow students to use the language in scenarios that they will face outside of the class. You might find that adults are more self-conscious than younger learners when it comes to role play, but you need to explain that without practicing the target language in the classroom, they're unlikely to remember it outside of the class.

Another difficulty you might come up against is that games are seen as a waste of time by many business students. However, as long as the learning benefit of the games are clear, adults will enjoy them just as much, with the competitive aspect of a game perhaps adding to their engagement.

Homework might also be an issue, as many students will be busy with long working days and won't have time for extra work. Be flexible and careful when setting homework, as this will give your students the best chance of actually completing the work. By making it manageable and as engaging as possible, you'll also be able to encourage students to put the effort in to do well. You could do this by setting an online task, such as replying to emails that you send them.

Telephone and Skype lessons

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Telephone or Skype lessons are really popular in teaching Business English, as students may not have the time to make it to a lesson in a classroom. Naturally, a 30-minute telephone lesson is easier to fit into your schedule than having to travel to and from a lesson, so this flexibility is something you'll need to get used to when teaching business students.

The other reason this type of lesson is popular is that speaking on the telephone is perhaps one of the most difficult forms of communication for your students, even though it might be the most common. Skype or videoconferencing is a little easier, as you can see the face of the person you're talking to and can read their visual cues to help with understanding. However, it's not quite the same as speaking face to face, so students will need practice at doing this.

Some students will prefer only doing telephone or Skype lessons, while others might favor an integrated approach of some classroom time and a telephone/Skype lesson too.

Telephone and Skype lessons: Examples

The key to a good telephone or Skype lesson is to make it as realistic as possible, so that students get a real demonstration of what it would be like to do this in their own work setting. A perfect way of doing this is to call and ask for information or to confirm a meeting.

You can vary these scenarios as well to teach your students how to respond in different circumstances. Some examples for this include: if the person you want to speak to isn't there, how to ask for more detail, how to deal with misunderstandings, etc.

Here are a couple of ideas for language that you can use in your telephone role plays:

Introducing yourself

- This is Joe.
- Joe speaking.

Asking who is on the telephone

- Excuse me, who is this?
- Can I ask who's calling, please?

Asking for someone

- Can I have extension ...?
- Could/Can I speak to...?
- Is John in/there?

Connecting someone

- I'll put you through
- Can you hold the line?
- Can you hold on a moment?

When someone is not available

- I'm afraid ... is not available at the moment
- The line is busy...
- Mr Jones isn't in...
- Mr Jones is out at the moment...

Taking a message

- Could/Can/May I take a message?
- Could/Can/May I tell him who is calling?
- Would you like to leave a message?

Here is an example role play you could use where your student takes one role and you take another:

Requesting Travel Information

Student A: Choose a city in your country. You are going to travel to this city for a business meeting over the next weekend. Telephone a travel agency and reserve the following:

- Round-trip flight
- Hotel room for two nights
- Restaurant recommendation
- Prices and departure times

Student B: You work in a travel agency. Listen to student A and offer him/her the following solutions:

- Round-trip flight: Air JW \$450 Coach, \$790 First Class
- Hotel room for two nights: Hotel City \$120 a night in the downtown area, Hotel Relax \$110 a night near the airport
- Restaurant Recommendation: Chez Marceau - downtown - average price \$70 a person

Cultural understanding

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Your students might be fantastic English speakers after learning with you for a while, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they'll be able to understand some cultural aspects of the language. This is an area you'll need to teach your students so they have a natural use of English. You may decide to do this as a series of lessons on culture, or simply work it in as you go. A good way of making this work is to compare cultures and the way certain customs work; for instance, showing what's acceptable in a meeting and what's not.

One of the most difficult intercultural skills your students need to acquire and use is an appropriate level of formality. Business English students often think that the correct way to speak English is to be very formal, for example: using "may" instead of "can", or using "I will" instead of "I'll". The problem is that in spoken English, we naturally use contractions and idioms even in a business setting, so students will need to be aware of that in order to communicate effectively.

Other areas of inter-cultural understanding you might want to teach include shaking hands, how to greet someone, how to buy rounds of drinks at the bar, how to wait in line, or how to apologize! These will become more apparent if you live abroad for a while, as you are bound to see the striking differences between customs abroad and at home.

Whether you have business experience or not, you can also discuss how to negotiate or conduct yourself in meetings and presentations, which are topics your students will find extremely useful.

Giving your students a better knowledge of English-speaking business culture will give them a noticeable boost in their ability and bring them a step closer to being the speaker they want to be.

Difficulties in teaching Business English

In this final part of the unit, we are going to look at some of the difficulties you might experience when teaching Business English to your students.

Activity:

First of all, what difficulties can you imagine will come up? See how many things you can write down in a minute – we think you can get as many as four.

Name 4 difficulties with teaching Business English.

Start timer

Business English difficulties: Quiz

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with demanding students?

Select the correct answer from these options

Have well-prepared lessons that are appropriate to their level.

Ask students what they want to do at the start of each lesson and do that.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with demanding students?

Select the correct answer from these options

Make the content easy.

Make the content challenging.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with unmotivated students?

Select the correct answer from these options

Understand your students' motivations – you can use a needs analysis for this.

Concentrate only on the students who seem more motivated.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with unmotivated students?

Select the correct answer from these options

Make lessons achievable, fun and less demanding.

Make lessons really challenging – students will be motivated to do better.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with stressed or tired students?

Select the correct answer from these options

- Let them use their native language in class as it's easier for them when they're tired.
- Use warm-ups to re-energize them and make the mood more upbeat.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with stressed or tired students?

Select the correct answer from these options

- Be understanding if they are quiet or uncommunicative.
- Make everyone talk as much as possible to wake them up.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to improve group dynamics?

Select the correct answer from these options

- Let the people who seem most comfortable do all the talking.
- Direct questions to individuals rather than the whole group but ensure everyone partici

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to improve group dynamics?

Select the correct answer from these options

- Break down barriers with icebreakers to create a comfortable learning environment rig
- Students should decide for themselves who they want to, or don't want to, work with.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with poor attendance?

Select the correct answer from these options

Keep notes of your lessons so you can email them to students who have missed the lesson.

If students miss class, it is up to them to catch up on their own. When they realize they have missed a lesson, they will come back to you.

multiple-choice

Which of the options below is the best way to deal with poor attendance?

Select the correct answer from these options

Keep your activities flexible, so they work regardless of how many students turn up to the class.

Complain to the company about students who consistently miss lessons.

Business English: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson, from our TEFL course tutor Kirsty, will show you an example of a Business English lesson.

Unit 10: End of Unit Quiz

Advanced Teaching Business English course

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Congratulations on making it to the end of our Business English unit, you now only have 2 more units left of the methodology course!

We've given you a really good grounding here in Business English, and teaching English for Specific Purposes in general, but there's a lot more to this sub-section of TEFL.

Our advanced Teaching Business English course goes into much more depth on how to plan and deliver lessons for business students. This is ideal if you want to show prospective employers that you can develop a program to improve speakers' use of English in the workplace.

This 30-hour course covers: planning engaging business English lessons; creating and sourcing relevant materials to enhance your lessons; tailoring your lessons to specific purposes and needs more effectively; improving your students' communications skills to help them sell or negotiate much better, and a lot more.

To check out this course, visit our main website and go to the [advanced courses page](#).

Unit 11: Teaching one-to-one: Mini-module

Welcome to Unit 11

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Welcome to unit 11, which is the penultimate unit in this methodology course! The next type of teaching we're going to cover is one-to-one teaching, which can be both rewarding and challenging in equal measures.

One-to-one teaching can be a fantastic experience for you as a teacher, as you'll be able to see your student progress very clearly, and you can form a much better rapport with them this way. There's also a challenge though, as you'll need to provide the student with all the motivation and inspiration they need to learn – which can be hard to do lesson after lesson.

The students you teach in one-to-one lessons can be quite varied, and you could end up teaching just about anyone from a Business English student at a company, to a young student needing extra after-school grammar practice or anything in between. Teaching one-to-one is a common private option for teaching, and can be quite lucrative depending on the students you end up with. This makes it a very attractive option for teachers, either as a full-time job or as an extra income on top of other work commitments.

In this unit, we'll explore how you can get the most out of your one-to-one lessons and how you can deal with the challenges you might encounter in planning and delivering them.

How do one-to-ones differ from group lessons?

You'll already recognize that there's a different learning environment for students depending on whether they are in a larger class or an individual student by themselves, and this changes the way lessons are run. Teaching a class with just one student has its pros and cons, with different approaches being required to make sure the student gets the most out of the lesson.

Activity:

We've listed ten statements below, and we want you to decide whether they are a positive or a negative feature of one-to-one teaching.

Click on the sentence to find out the answer.

Students get more individual attention from the teacher.

POSITIVE

There is no peer correction.

NEGATIVE

Classes can be tailored towards the student's learning style and preferences.

POSITIVE

Lessons can feel very intensive.

NEGATIVE

You can focus on particular areas of interest or weakness.

POSITIVE

You generally need more material to fill the lesson.

NEGATIVE

There is more STT.

POSITIVE

The increased attention can feel intimidating.

NEGATIVE

There are fewer types of activities (such as no group or pair work).

NEGATIVE

Expectations can be unrealistic.

NEGATIVE

The needs analysis

As we discussed in the previous unit, we need to conduct a needs analysis to understand the motivations, needs and goals of a particular student. With one-to-one lessons this is just as crucial, as having only an individual student means we need to be more focused on meeting their aims.

With a one-to-one needs analysis, we can go into more depth and find out more about the student as a person. What are they interested in? Why have they chosen one-to-one lessons? What kind of learner are they, and what type of activities do they enjoy? The answers to these questions can shape our lessons and give us lots of ideas for creating fun and engaging activities to help the student learn.

Teaching a student one-to-one also gives you the opportunity to tailor lessons specifically to the student's learning style, so let's have a quick recap on some of the styles they might prefer.

Activity:

Check the definitions of learning styles below and try to decide which describes a visual, kinaesthetic or auditory learner:

--Select--



Learn by seeing

This learner needs to see a word written down to remember it and will often want to take down notes.

They respond better to visual stimuli such as: facial expressions, gestures, pictures, images and diagrams.

--Select--



Learn by listening

This learner gathers meaning from the context of what you say.

They use the pitch, tone and pace of your voice to help comprehension

They prefer discussion, dialogues, songs, etc.

--Select--



Learn by doing

This learner prefers lots of activities and to keep things moving.
They don't respond well to lots of Teacher Talking Time.

The needs analysis: Demonstration

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This demonstration video will show you a demonstration of how a needs analysis can be conducted in a one-to-one lesson.

Teacher: Hi, my name's Kirsty, nice to meet you. And what's your name?

Student: Ines.

T: Ines, excellent. Em, and how long have you been in Scotland, Ines?

S: One year now.

T: Okay, so I want to ask you a few questions about your English, just to build a picture of you and see if we can help you. First of all, what did you do last weekend?

S: Last weekend I was running in the hills.

T: Okay that sounds nice. How long did you run?

S: Well, between half an hour and two hours.

T: Wow, you must be fit! So you filled out a questionnaire with information about yourself: what's your reason for learning English?

S: Well, the reason for improve my English is that I'm going to start at the uni in August and I really need a good level, especially my speaking.

T: Okay, what are you hoping to study?

S: Teacher training.

T: Oh, great! Do you have a place at college?

S: Yes I do.

T: Great, and what do you think you need to improve?

S: My speaking, my pronunciation and get rid of my accent.

T: Yeah that can be quite difficult sometimes, but we can do some work on pronunciation. Do you read English much in your free time?

S: I do, especially teacher training books.

T: Okay, and do you read any novels, or magazines, or anything like that?

S: I don't really have time for reading anything apart from teacher training.

T: Okay, what's important for you to concentrate on in the class?

S: In our lessons?

T: Yeah, what would you like to learn?

S: Speaking actually, just improve my pronunciation because I need to be understood by children and other teachers.

T: Okay, and do you have internet access at home?

S: Yes I do.

T: Do you have a laptop, or a computer?

S: Yes, a laptop.

T: Good, cause that's really important. There's a lot of things that you can do by yourself from home on the computer. Fantastic, do you have any questions for me, Ines?

S: Em, I don't know. How long are the lessons, I mean.

T: We can try to make the lessons at a time that suits you, usually we have lessons for one and a half to two hours but we can find out a time that fits in with your work schedule.

S: Is it one a week, or...?

T: Yeah again we can be flexible, but once or twice a week is probably a good idea to start.

S: Okay.

T: Okay, thanks.

The needs analysis: Quiz

true-or-false

The learner is highly motivated and has future goals.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The learner shows some signs of being a visual learner.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The teacher asks about the student's job and future plans merely to initiate the conversation.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Judging by the use of grammar and tenses the learner is at advanced level.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The teacher is hoping to set homework for the learner.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

When doing a needs analysis, it's not important to find out what the student wants as the teacher always knows best.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Looking up every single word when reading a text is a great learning strategy.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The teacher might use the Internet in designing the student's learning process.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The student wants to focus mainly on speaking, so that is all that will be covered in her lessons.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The teacher did not use a questionnaire to help conduct the needs analysis.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Getting the most out of one-to-one lessons

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: One-to-one lessons might seem a bit strange to plan if you've been thinking of teaching in a traditional classroom situation, so we're going to show you just what to do so your lessons are as effective as can be.

Actor 2: The first thing to consider is that it's really important to build a rapport with your student. For the most part it will be just the two of you in a lesson, so you need to feel comfortable with each other. Building a solid relationship means you can create the most effective learning environment possible, which in turn makes your job as a teacher easier. Remember to focus on what works best for the student though, as that's the most important part of the lesson, so this is where your needs analysis will come in handy.

Actor 1: Next, you need to understand where the student is having difficulties with the language. To start with, you can do a level check to see where their English skills need some work, and as you go on you can keep a log of issues the student has. When working through the lessons, refer back to this log and check off the things the student is now able to do. This will help you keep track of the student's progress as they improve. It's always fantastic to show a student how they've overcome problems they once had to become better English speakers!

Actor 2: With only one student in your class, you have an excellent opportunity to theme your lessons around things the student is interested in – and this student-centered approach can work wonders. Why not ask your student to bring in their own materials, for example? You can build your lesson around what they bring in, and this will help them feel much more comfortable in their learning environment. In this way, they'll improve their English skills by connecting with a topic they're interested in, which will help them feel more involved in their own learning, too.

Actor 1: These student-centred lessons mean that you can also be more flexible. You know you can decide when to have your lessons, but you can also be flexible about where you have them. Having only one student means you're not tied to a classroom or a desk, so you can have a lesson that involves going to the shops, to a café or to a museum. This can be a great change of scene, which gives students real-world English learning opportunities. Just make sure that wherever you go is a relevant place to learn.

Actor 2: Don't forget to go at the pace of the student too, as some students will need time to let things sink in. With group lessons, students can assimilate what they're learning when other things are going on, but because one-to-one students don't have this luxury, you need to create the time for them to absorb what they are learning.

Actor 1: Finally, try not to fall into too much of a routine. Vary your activities, as well as your locations, and discuss new ideas for lesson types with your student. A fun and varied lesson will help students learn, and your lessons will be far more effective for it.

Actor 2: These are some excellent ways of making one-to-one lessons as fun and educational as possible, so let's look now at some activities you can use in these classes.

Activities and ideas

One-to-one lessons are the most flexible, as having only one student means you can tailor activities much more closely to their needs and be more open to different locations and styles of learning.

Here are some ideas that can be really effective ways of teaching one-to-one:

Tours

You could tour a work place, local town, or a museum. Think of the vocabulary and language you want to practise. Prepare the student for the tour earlier in the lesson by presenting and practising the language. The “tour” would be the **production** part of the lesson.

Role play and telephone lessons

Any kind of role play can be done with two people. Telephoning, sitting back to back or in another room in the office is an easy thing to do.

Recording your student

Using video and audio recordings and playing them back enables your student to analyse their own language output. Because the lesson is one-to-one, it is an opportunity for you to give them that time and attention which you wouldn’t normally have in a classroom situation.

News stories

Collect a week’s worth of newspapers and cut out pictures of news stories from each one. Aim for a selection of five or six topical news pictures from that week. Then take an A4 or letter size sheet of heavy paper (or card). Cut a small square out of the middle of this card. When you come to class, place a picture from the news under the card so that only some of the picture is visible. The student must 1) speculate about what the picture is about, and 2) tell you as much as they know about the news story.

Sight translation activities

Many one-to-one students are business people who are expected to learn English for their job. One typical area that people at work need English for is sight translation. Give them a document related to their work and ask them to explain it quickly to you in English.

Interviews

Prepare a series of question prompts on a topic. For example, if your topic was sports, you could have the following question prompts:

- Do you like sports?
- What sports do you play?
- What sports do you watch on TV?
- Have you ever won an award for sport? etc.

First interview the student using the prompts. When you have finished, review any special vocabulary or grammar that came up. Tell the student that for the next class he or she must prepare a similar list of questions on a different topic to interview you

Our tips

To finish off this unit, check out our top ten tips for teaching one-to-one English lessons:

1. Do a good needs analysis when you first meet a student and re-evaluate it periodically. Your student's requirements might change over time.
2. Give students enough time to let things sink in.
3. Vary the pace and focus of the lesson from time to time, and include short breaks to avoid overworking students.
4. Don't feel you have to be involved at all times in a lesson. Sometimes short written activities like gap fills can work well.
5. Have extra material in reserve in case you need to change the lesson plan or you have more time on hand than expected.
6. Don't forget to teach the skills of reading, listening and writing as well as speaking.
7. Set clear rules for how much lesson time is for speaking and how much is for other work.
8. Adapt your activities so you can sometimes use pair work with your student.
9. Let your student talk, but remember your rules about conversation time and other work time.
10. Give regular feedback to your student on how they are progressing, pointing out their achievements as well as areas that need improvement.

One-to-one: Classroom lesson

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

This classroom lesson will show you an example of a one-to-one English lesson.

Unit 11: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

Who will your one-to-one students be?

Select the correct answer from these options

Mostly Business English students

Mostly children

They could be anyone

multiple-choice

What is the best way to find out about your students – their reasons for study, their strengths and weaknesses, and learning preferences, etc.?

Select the correct answer from these options

A grammar test

A needs analysis

A report from the student's previous teacher

multiple-choice

Discussions and dialogues are usually preferred by which type of learner?

Select the correct answer from these options

Auditory

Visual

Kinaesthetic

multiple-choice

Which type of student doesn't usually like high levels of TTT?

Select the correct answer from these options

Auditory

Visual

Kinaesthetic

multiple-choice

How can you make one-to-one lessons more interesting for your student?

Select the correct answer from these options

Make your classes student-centered and varied

Choose something you know well to base the lesson on

Have one really good lesson plan that you use with all your one-to-one students

multiple-choice

What should be the priority when pacing your lessons?

Select the correct answer from these options

Stick to your timings in your lesson plan – it's important to get everything done.

The pace of your student – it's important they have time to absorb the language.

Your own pace – you can tell when it's time to move on.

true-or-false

You have to stay in the same location when you have a one-to-one lesson.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

Recording your student is a great way to get them analyzing and correcting their own speech and errors.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

You should do every activity in the lesson with your student.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

true-or-false

The student should decide what to do in every lesson.

Select the correct answer from these options

true

false

Advanced Teaching English Online course

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Congratulations on finishing the one-to-one teaching unit, you're almost at the end of the course!

We've covered the basics of what it means to teach an individual student here, including how to conduct a needs analysis, how to maximise the efficiency of the lesson and what activities work well when you're teaching just one student.

If you're interested in learning further about this subsection of TEFL, you might be interested in our advanced Teaching English Online course. This goes through the ins and outs of how to plan and deliver effective English lessons over the internet and also how to get your name out there and market yourself to students around the world.

Head over to our main site and visit [our advanced courses page](#) to find out more. When you're ready, move on to the final unit of the course!

Unit 12: A PPP lesson

Welcome to Unit 12

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, and welcome to the twelfth and final unit of our methodology course! Congratulations on making it to the final step, and we hope you've learned a lot so far.

You've almost got all the skills you need to become an English language teacher, but we're now going to consolidate what you've learned so you're ready for the final review assignment.

This unit will focus on something you'll be really familiar with already: the PPP lesson. Here we want you to focus on the way it is used in classroom situations so that you're fully comfortable with putting lessons into practice.

Simply watch all of the videos in this unit and finish the quiz after each one. At the very end, you'll be asked to complete the review assignment, which will be the last step before completing the whole course.

Move on to the next page to start this final unit, good luck!

How to work through this unit

In this unit, you will see a whole PPP class being delivered to students. There are nine videos in total and after all of them there'll be a final quiz based on what you've seen.

Start with Video 1 and work your way through the rest of the videos in the order you find them. Feel free to watch the videos again to ensure you absorb the content and the techniques used in that particular stage of the lesson.

The videos are as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Lead-in (setting the context)
3. Presentation - Eliciting the TL
4. Presentation - Concept checking
5. Presentation - Drilling
6. Presentation - Board work
7. Practice
8. Production
9. Language review

Video 1: Introduction

Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Hi there, I'm about to deliver a PPP lesson with a group of students to teach them vocabulary. The class is made of multilingual adults at an intermediate level. The lesson uses the communicative approach that we've looked at, and is as student-centred as possible.

In the lesson, I'll use a wide range of EFL techniques that you'll have seen, such as: context setting, eliciting, drilling and concept checking. I'll be setting tasks to encourage the students to improve both their accuracy and fluency. The lesson will include visuals and realia to teach target language, and this will help make the lesson more realistic and relevant to the students.

Watch through the lesson in chronological order, and then make sure to re-visit each part and focus on what's included in that specific stage of the class.

Video 2: Lead-in (setting the context)

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a lead-in activity for a PPP lesson.

Video 3: Presentation - Eliciting the TL

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a presentation activity for an EFL lesson where the tutor elicits the meaning of new vocabulary from students.

Video 4: Presentation - Concept checking

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a presentation activity for an EFL lesson where the tutor concept checks new vocabulary.

Video 5: Presentation - Drilling

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a presentation activity for an EFL lesson where the tutor drills the students on new vocabulary.

Video 6: Presentation - Board work

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a presentation activity for an EFL lesson where the tutor shows how board work can be used.

Video 7: Practice

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a practice activity for an EFL lesson.

Video 8: Production

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a production activity for an EFL lesson.

Video 9: Language review

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

In this classroom lesson, from our TEFL tutor Kirsty, you will see an example of a language review activity for an EFL lesson which aims to consolidate what students have learned through the lesson.

Unit 12: End of Unit Quiz

multiple-choice

In Video 2 (the lead-in), why does the teacher revise clothing vocabulary?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Any topic will do really as long as students are engaging in the language

To get them relaxed before really starting the lesson

It is useful for the language focus of this lesson

multiple-choice

In Video 2 (the lead-in), what is the target language?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Shopping vocabulary

Describing clothing

Names of clothing

multiple-choice

In Video 3 (presentation/eliciting), why does the teacher try to elicit the new target language before teaching it?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

To allow bright students to shine

Simply to engage them in the language. No other reason.

The teacher wants to see if students know any of the TL before teaching it

multiple-choice

In Video 4 (presentation/concept checking), why does the teacher concept check?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

To double check they understand the new TL

All students need extra practice

Simply to practice pronunciation

multiple-choice

In Video 5 (presentation/drilling), why is drilling (repetition) a key feature of the presentation stage?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

To practice pronunciation and intonation of the new TL

To get students speaking in a freer way

To simply add a fun dimension to the lesson

multiple-choice

In Video 6 (presentation/board work), why is using the phonemic script important?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

To make the lesson more challenging

To help students see how words are pronounced

To help with spelling

multiple-choice

In Video 7 ;(practice), how do we know this is a controlled and not a freer activity?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Students are using flashcards

The activity focusses on accuracy over fluency

The students are speaking in groups

multiple-choice

In Video 8 (production), how do we know this is a freer activity and not controlled practice?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

The students are sitting in a horseshoe seating arrangement

The teacher is using realia.

The activity focuses on fluency over accuracy

multiple-choice

In Video 9 (language review), why does the teacher revise the new target language even after providing two practice activities?

Watch video again (popout)

Select the correct answer from these options

Revision helps consolidate the target language.

The students didn't do well enough in the practice activities.

To fill in extra lesson time.

Methodology Review Assignment

Congratulations!

■ Video

This video is available online. The transcript appears below.

Actor 1: Congratulations! You've made it to the very end of the methodology course now. Thanks so much for all your hard work and patience, and of course, a massive well done from us!

Actor 2: You've now got information on all the skills that go into making great English lessons, so let's have a recap on what you've covered. You know what roles students and teachers play in a classroom, how to structure lessons, how to teach grammar and, most of all, how to make it fun!

Actor 1: You know how to teach a vocabulary lesson, and to teach the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Actor 2: You know how to use different activities in the classroom and set them up clearly and effectively.

Actor 1: You know how to give feedback to students and correct errors. You even know the difference between errors and mistakes.

Actor 2: You know how to control a classroom and deal with the trickier students you might end up with.

Actor 1: Finally, you know how to teach in several specific scenarios: teaching young learners, teaching Business English and teaching one-to-one lessons.

Actor 2: Once again congratulations on finishing the methodology course. If you still have modules to complete, we hope you continue to enjoy learning about TEFL with us. If you're now at the end of your course, we wish you the best of luck in getting out there and making your teaching dreams come true.

Resources

Introduction

Here are many extra ideas based on what you have learnt throughout the methodology course to help make your classes more fun, varied and interesting. Make sure you think about your students' level, age, ability and interests but you will find many activities here you can adapt and use in your lessons.

Also, don't be afraid to take these ideas and adapt them to fit your lesson plan structures. Many of the activities can be used as icebreakers and fillers, or you can take a game and adapt it to a practice (controlled) activity if structuring a PPP lesson.

This resources PDF also includes the song lyrics you need for the assignment in Unit 6.

[Click here to view or download the resources PDF.](#)