



Tutor Overview Training for FilipinoTutor.com

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Part 1

Attached, is a short 12 slide PowerPoint presentation that shows a few of the MOST frequently made mistakes for non-native learning. Please, note that I am an American professor and my students participate in American conversations, thus the reference to “American English.” Should you only be interested in teaching British English to your student(s), disregard the American information. There are many other hints topics that are not covered within the short confines of this presentation...prepositions, for example. English is a crazy language, the second most difficult to teach/understand (Mandarin Chinese is the first.) The best tip I can give you is have fun, laugh and have patience!

Slide 3: It’s true; people who want to learn English want to do it well, and quickly. They want their grammar perfect, their fluency masterful and comprehension immediate. It just doesn’t work that way. It is CRITICAL to make sure your student understands that no one (even old English professors/tutors) speak English perfectly! Language is first and foremost about COMMUNICATION! If someone can be made to understand through facial expression, body language, sign language and/or minimal vocabulary...THAT is communication. Work on these skills and the rest will follow. It is also important at the beginning to let your student(s) know mistakes are appropriate. You are there to guide and instruct! The learning environment must be a “safe place” in which to make mistakes without criticism. If it’s not, you will lose the student! Stress COMMUNICATION over GRAMMAR! “Mistakes are Learning Experiences/Opportunities!” They are OKAY!

Let your student know that he/she need not understand EVERY WORD in a conversation. It’s difficult to achieve, but try to get him/her to keep the

mind open and continue listening, even if there is a word that pops up that is not understood. By watching body language and other context clues, the main idea usually becomes apparent. If a listener stops listening due to an unfamiliar word...he/she misses the whole next part of the conversation. ...teach "KEEP THE MIND OPEN!" ...don't let it stop for a word!

A note here: I recommend having your student(s) watch English speaking news. Make sure it is spoken in the version of English you are teaching. At the next tutoring session have him/her recount the story as best as he/she can. NO NOTES...just friend-to-friend...you don't use notes when you are telling a friend something, do you? This way your student is getting practice with speaking AND listening. I prefer the news because it has pictures, which can help with comprehension. Encourage your student to bring in words that he/she has heard. This is kind of a fun translation exercise for both of you...he/she doesn't know the word, so has difficulty spelling it so you don't recognize it...great for you BOTH!

Slides 4, 5 & 6: These are not scientifically created "Rules"...they are mine and have worked with my students. They will help students with vowel pronunciation probably, at least, 85% of the time. Naturally, each of these rules have exceptions, for which there are no rules...I HATE that. What a crazy language! ..but my students always say this is a huge help to them.

Slide 7: The "th" sound, both voiceless and voiced is a very complicated sound for non-native English speakers to master! I always have a mirror handy for this class. The students laugh as they exaggeratedly stick their tongue out in the correct position for making this sound...can't do it unless the tongue is OUT and the teeth are down! (It doesn't matter if the "th" is in the beginning of the word, "the," "then; the middle of the word, "father," "mother;" or the end of the word, "math," "bath," the mouth position of the word is the same!!!! Think about This sound in everyTHing you do and teach.

This is another slide that you may or may not need. If your student(s) is not a Spanish speaker, you won't need this, but if he/she is, remember that you are going to ask him/her to reverse something that he/she has been doing since starting to speak. Additionally, (Spanish speakers and some other

languages) put the adjective AFTER the noun...example; "She has hair brown." This, too, needs to be reversed when speaking English.

Slide 9: American English is NOT English...it is American. If you are teaching students to understand English, you MUST teach "wanna, gonna, havta, etc... Your student will be unable to understand if you haven't. Books usually cover the "correct" English...that's a great thing until you leave the classroom for the real world. British speakers have been adapting some of our reductions recently. I usually say and then write: "Ahm gonna havta go ta thuh store." Now, I DON'T have a southern accent, but this is what I would say to another American speaker. We discuss the words the student(s) understands and I write the "correct" form under the word. Of course, correctly, stated, or written in "proper English" the sentence becomes "I'm going to have to go to the store." WOW! Important stuff!!!!

Another note: Americans do not pronounce the first syllable of "be" words as "bee." For example; become, between, behind, etc... Americans pronounce the "be" as "ba," which creates a lot of confusion when a non-native speaker says it. ...so teach the word and what the student will hear in conversation.

Slide 10: Contractions are WORDS...they are NOT abbreviations. A student who reads, "I'm" as "I am" is not reading correctly! Americans use more contractions than the British, but the Brits are catching up and you will hear more and more contractions used by them.

Slide 11: This is true in America but sometimes in the United Kingdom as well. If a person goes in (anywhere) and immediately begins speaking his/her native language to a person, that individual might get impatient...but this little trick makes the person WANT to help. He/she will do everything he/she can, to help the non-native speaker.

There are many fun ways to work with and tutor your student. Be creative, use the internet, be AWARE! Once you begin working with your student you will start to notice things that YOU take for granted, but would confuse someone to whom English is not his/her first language. I could go on for ages on idioms. I always stop when an idiom comes up I class or when

tutoring. We discuss it. Idioms are used in books, magazines, on the Internet, in conversation...well....EVERYWHERE. A person cannot understand English without a basic knowledge of the most used idioms.

I end with this little “poem” that I found years ago....

CRAZY ENGLISH

**Let's face it: English is a crazy language.
There is no egg in eggplant or ham in hamburger,
neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
We take English for granted.
But if we explore, we find that quicksand can work slowly,
boxing rings are square,
and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't fing,
grocers don't groce, and hammers don't ham?
If the plural of tooth is teeth,
why isn't the plural of booth beeth?
One goose, 2 geese. So, one moose, 2 meese?
If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables,
what does a humanitarian eat?
In what language do people recite at a play
and play at a recital?
Ship by truck and send cargo by ship?
Have noses that run and feet that smell?
Park on driveways and drive on parkways?
How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same,
while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites.
When a house burns up, it burns down.
You fill in a form by filling it out
and an alarm clock goes off by going on.
When the stars are out, they are visible,
but when the lights are out, they are invisible.
And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it,
but when I wind up this essay, I end it?**