

ESL Tutoring Session 1: Conversation Basics

Tutor Guide

This 40-minute Zoom tutoring session is designed to help develop clear English communication skills. Remember to:

- Speak clearly at a moderate pace
- Face the camera directly when speaking
- Use visual cues and gestures alongside verbal instructions
- Provide immediate, supportive feedback
- Use the icons for visual reinforcement

How to Use This Guide

1. Review the entire worksheet before the session
 2. Follow the section order, spending about 5-7 minutes per section
 3. Use the icons for visual cues:
 - 🎧 = Listening activity
 - 💋 = Speaking activity
 - 👁️ = Visual observation
 - ✓ = Practice task
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Section 1: Conversation Practice (7 minutes)

💋 Saying Hello

Instructions: Practice these greeting patterns. Tutor demonstrates first, then student repeats.


Pattern 1: "Hi, my name is _____. What's your name?"

Pattern 2: "Hello! I'm _____. Nice to meet you."

Examples:

- "Hi, my name is Sarah. What's your name?"
- "Hello, I'm David. Nice to meet you."
- "Good morning! My name is Maria."

✓ **Student Practice:** _____

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Introducing Yourself

Instructions: Practice sharing basic information about yourself.


Pattern 1: "I am a _____. I am learning English."

Pattern 2: "I go to _____. I like _____."

Examples:

- "I am a student. I am learning English."
- "I'm in 10th grade and I'm studying English."
- "I go to school and English is my new language."

✓ **Student Practice:** _____

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Asking for Help

Instructions: Practice asking for assistance politely.

Pattern 1: "Can you help me, please?"

Pattern 2: "Excuse me, could you help me with _____?"

Examples:

- "Can you help me, please?"
- "Excuse me, could you help me with this?"
- "I need some help, please."

✓ **Student Practice:** _____

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Section 2: Minimal Pairs & Phonological Awareness (8 minutes)


Listening for Different Sounds

Instructions: Today we'll focus on four minimal pairs that are challenging for many English learners. Say each word pair clearly with emphasis on the different sounds.

Today's Focus Pairs:

1. /l/ vs. /r/ (Consonant Pair)

- **light** (brightness) vs. **right** (correct; opposite of left)
- **long** (not short) vs. **wrong** (incorrect)
- **glass** (drinking container) vs. **grass** (green plants)


 **Visual Cue:** For /l/, your tongue tip touches behind your upper teeth. For /r/, your tongue curls back without touching.

✓ Practice Sentences:

- "Turn on the **light** on the **right** side."
- "It is **wrong** to wear **long** sleeves in summer."
- "The **glass** is on the **grass**."

2. /b/ vs. /p/ (Consonant Pair)

- **big** (large size) vs. **pig** (farm animal)
- **bat** (sports equipment) vs. **pat** (gentle touch)
- **buy** (purchase) vs. **pie** (dessert)


 **Visual Cue:** For /b/, lips close and open with voice (feel vibration). For /p/, lips close and open with no voice (no vibration).

✓ Practice Sentences:

- "The **big pig** lives on a farm."
- "The baseball **bat** fell with a **pat**."
- "I want to **buy** an apple **pie**."

3. /θ/ vs. /t/ (Consonant Pair)

- **thin** (not thick) vs. **tin** (metal container)
- **three** (number 3) vs. **tree** (plant)
- **thank** (express gratitude) vs. **tank** (container for liquid)


 **Visual Cue:** For /θ/ (th), place your tongue between your teeth. For /t/, your tongue touches behind your upper teeth.

✓ **Practice Sentences:**

- "The soup in the **tin** can is **thin**."
- "I counted **three trees** in the park."
- "I want to **thank** you for filling the water **tank**."

4. /ɛ/ vs. /æ/ (Vowel Pair)

- **bed** (for sleeping) vs. **bad** (not good)
- **head** (part of body) vs. **had** (past tense of have)
- **said** (past tense of say) vs. **sad** (unhappy)

 **Visual Cue:** For /ɛ/ (bed), your mouth is less open. For /æ/ (bad), your mouth is more open.

✓ **Practice Sentences:**

- "The **bed** was **bad** for my back."
- "My **head** hurt because I **had** a cold."
- "She **said** she was **sad** about the news."

✓ **Student accuracy:** ☐ Got it! ☐ Needs more practice

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____


Section 3: Word Stress Practice (7 minutes)

Finding the Strong Syllable

Instructions: In English, one syllable in each word is stressed (spoken louder and longer). The CAPITALIZED part shows which syllable to stress.

Practice: Say each word with the correct stress pattern.

1. Banana = ba-NA-na (*yellow fruit*)
2. Computer = com-PU-ter (*electronic device for working*)
3. Teacher = TEA-cher (*person who helps students learn*)
4. Student = STU-dent (*person who learns at school*)
5. Hello = he-LLO (*greeting word*)

 **Visual Cue:** When we stress a syllable, our voice gets louder and our mouth opens wider.

✓ **Practice Sentences:**

- "I eat a ba-NA-na for breakfast."
- "I use a com-PU-ter at school."
- "My TEA-cher helps me learn English."
- "I am a STU-dent in this class."
- "He-LLO, how are you today?"







 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Section 4: Pitch & Intonation Practice (6 minutes)


Voice Direction

Instructions: In English, our voice goes up or down at the end of sentences depending on the type of sentence.

Practice: Read each sentence with the correct intonation:

1. Hello! How are you? ( *rising*)
2. My name is Alex. ( *falling*)
3. Wow! That is great! (  *rise-fall*)
4. Can you help me? ( *rising*)
5. The school is big. ( *falling*)

✓ **Student accuracy:** ☐ Got it! ☐ Needs more practice

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Section 5: Expressing Emotions (6 minutes)

Showing Feelings With Your Voice

Instructions: The same words can sound different based on the emotion. Practice saying these sentences with different emotions.

Sentence: "I am so happy!"

Say it with:

- 😄 Excitement: (speak louder, faster, with enthusiasm)
 - Voice: Higher pitch, energetic tone
 - Face: Big smile, wide eyes

Sentence: "I don't understand."

Say it with:

- 😞 Confusion: (speak slower, uncertain tone)
 - Voice: Lower volume, slightly hesitant
 - Face: Furrowed eyebrows, slight head tilt

Sentence: "That is very important."

Say it with:

- 😐 Seriousness: (speak clearly, with emphasis)
 - Voice: Lower pitch, slower pace, clear articulation
 - Face: Serious expression, direct eye contact

Sentence: "Can you help me?"

Say it with:

- 🙋 Asking for help: (polite, slightly higher pitch)
 - Voice: Gentle tone, rising at the end
 - Face: Open expression, leaning forward slightly

Sentence: "I love pizza!"

Say it with:

- 😊 Happiness: (enthusiastic, warm tone)
 - Voice: Energetic, emphasis on "love"
 - Face: Smile, animated expression

✓ **Student accuracy:** ☐ Got it! ☐ Needs more practice

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Section 6: Reading Practice (6 minutes)

My First Day at School - Reading Practice

Tutor Instructions:

1. First, ask the student to read the entire paragraph out loud
2. Next, you (the tutor) model-read the entire paragraph with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation
3. Then, read one sentence at a time and have the student repeat after you, correcting any pronunciation errors
4. Finally, ask the student to read the entire paragraph again on their own

Reading Passage:

My First Day at School

Today is my first day at my new school. I feel excited and nervous!

I walk into the classroom. The teacher smiles and says, "Welcome!"

I sit next to a new friend. "Hi, my name is Alex," I say.

"Nice to meet you, Alex!" my friend says.

The teacher asks us to read a book. I try my best to read the words.

At lunch, I sit with my new friends. We talk and eat together.

After school, I tell my family, "Today was a good day!"

Reading Tips:

- Pause at commas (,)
- Stop at periods (.)
- Sound excited at exclamation points (!)
- Make your voice go up for questions (?)
- Use different voices for dialogue (" ")

✓ **Student Reading:** _____

 **Tutor's Notes:** _____

Wrap-Up

Areas That Need More Practice:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Overall Difficulty Rating:

Very Easy	Easy	Just Right	Challenging	Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5
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Note for the tutor: Focus particularly on the /l/ vs. /r/ distinction which is challenging for many ESL learners. The visual cues and physical descriptions of mouth position are especially helpful for students with cochlear implants who may need additional sensory feedback to distinguish certain sounds.