Overview: Module 1

As an English as a Foreign Language Teacher, you, and only you, are in charge of what goes on in the classroom. The success of a lesson and what has been learnt is pretty much up to you.

You are responsible for many things such as setting up the classroom, setting up tasks, giving instructions, correcting students, and to a certain extent, the group dynamics of a class.

In a nutshell your primary role is to "create the conditions in which learning can take place" (Scrivener 2009).

If you have ever learnt a language in a traditional classroom setting, you will understand how difficult it can be. If you haven't learnt another language, it might be a good idea to start!

This will provide you with the ability to view the learning experience from a student's perspective. You'll realise how challenging it can be.

You might be worried about making a mistake in class; you may not understand what the teacher wants you to do. You might not understand what has been written on the board or how to pronounce words put in front of you.

An otherwise confident person, in this setting may feel incredibly shy and self conscious and the whole experience could, perhaps be rather stressful.

A number of authors have discussed such stresses in the classroom or "affective filters" (Krashen 1985) and their detrimental effect on the learning process and, in our case, language acquisition.

You progress through the course by taking the test at the end of each module. These tests are not there to try to catch you out. On the contrary, it has been proven that assessment aids learning so we will only ask you questions that are based on key information given in the modules.

In this Unit, we will explore two very important elements. Knowledge and understanding of these elements will serve you well on your TEFL journey.

The first of these elements relates to some specific characteristics of the English language.

1. Some Specific Characteristics of the English Language

Why would you want to learn about some specific characteristics of the English language? Well, we imagine it's quite helpful and interesting but there are other reasons.

You may be sitting in the staffroom one day when, say, a native-Chinese teacher colleague asks you this: *What is special about the English language?* How will you feel if you cannot answer this?

Your colleagues-to-be in many countries will view you as an expert and will believe you know everything about the English language. Again, this question may come up in an advanced class.

This has happened to us and it could easily happen to you. So, absorb this and it will serve two purposes: it will provide help and interest for you, and it will get you out of a tricky situation.

But there is also another critical reason. You need to be fully aware that there will be key differences in language structures, grammar, vocabulary usage etc. in the native/first language of the learners you will be teaching, compared to your native English language.

You'll have grasped the importance of this already if you have studied a foreign language at school or university, or if you are a seasoned traveller who likes to pick up a bit of the native language of the country you are visiting.

Specific Characteristics

Here are some specific characteristics of the English Language:

Fairly easy to learn

English is one of the simplest and easiest natural languages in the world.

Of course, the concept of easiness is relative, and it depends on which language a learner knows already. However, the concept of *simple* is undeniable. English is a fairly easy language to learn, understand and speak when compared to very complex languages such as Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Japanese.

Latin alphabet

The English language uses the Latin alphabet, the most universal, simple and short alphabet (only the Greek alphabet is shorter and simpler). In addition, in English, the Latin alphabet presents its most clean form as a true alphabet with only 26 basic letters.

Its simple inflection

Inflection is the name for the extra letter or letters added to nouns, verbs and adjectives in their different grammatical forms, e.g. *cat, cats; eat, eats; big, bigger*.

English is considered a weakly inflected language when compared to, say, French or Russian. Its nouns have only traces of inflection (plurals, the pronouns), and its regular verbs have only four forms, e.g. *look, looks, looked, looking*.

Even for irregular verbs, there is almost no variation in person (except the 3rd person singular in the present tense, e.g. *I eat, you eat, she eats*). The English language can indicate the relationship of words in a sentence with only the minimum of change in their structure. There are other languages which do this but this is a strong characteristic of English.

Its receptiveness

A major characteristic of English language is its receptiveness to accepting and adopting words from other languages. Here are a few examples from Spanish:

- alligator from *el lagarto* meaning *the lizard*
- barbecue from the Chibcha word *barbacoa*, meaning a *wooden framework for sleeping on, or for storing meat or fish to be dried*
- cargo from the verb *cargar*, meaning *to load*

This is regarded as an extraordinary feature of the language. It has accepted and adopted words from Asian, European, African, Indian, Japanese, Chinese and other languages. And English has kept an open-door policy of accepting words from classical languages like Latin, Greek and Sanskrit.

Its (generally) fixed word order

Another strong characteristic of English language is its (generally) fixed word order. Most English sentences (clauses) conform to the SVO word order.

This means that the Subject comes before the Verb, which comes before the Object. Examples:

- *I (S) bought (V) a new computer (O).*
- *She (S) doesn't like (V) dogs (O).*
- *Why did you (S) do (V) that (O)?*

There are other word orders in English but this is by far the most used, making it easy for learners to grasp.

No markings on letters

There are no diacritics (a mark that is placed over, under, or through a letter in some languages to show that the letter should be pronounced in a particular way) such as happens, for example, in Spanish:

- exámenes
- muñón
- muñones
- canción

The exception is words imported from other languages, e.g. rôle and *naïve* from French.

Pronunciation

The pronunciation of English words such as *this, thin, clothes, thirteenth, months* inevitably causes problems for learners who do not need to use the tip of the tongue to produce words in their own language.

Continuous tense

Many languages do not have a continuous tense form, so English learners may make mistakes such as: *I had a bath when the phone rang*; instead of *I was having a bath when the phone rang*.

Articles (a, an, the)

The article system is another feature of English grammar that causes some students enormous difficulties; particularly, of course, those whose native language does not use articles.

Phrasal verbs

A phrasal verb is an idiomatic phrase consisting of a verb and another element, typically either an adverb, as in *break down*, or a preposition, for example *see to*, or a combination of both, such as *look down on*.

These phrasal verbs are a VERY significant feature of the English language and can cause severe difficulties for learners. Sentences such as *I put it down to the weather*, or *I made it up with my sister*, are usually gobbledegook to beginner non-native speakers.

Unfortunately for the English language learner, phrasal verbs are extremely common in colloquial English language.

Non-tonal

English is a non-tonal language.

In tone languages, e.g. Chinese and Vietnamese, pitch (the degree of highness or lowness of a tone) is used to distinguish word meaning. So, a word said with high pitch may have a different meaning from the same word said with a low pitch.

In English, changes in pitch are used to emphasise or express emotion, not to give a different word meaning to the sound. It is not surprising that native speakers of tone languages often have strong accents when speaking English.

Sound and spelling

A final feature of English that is enormously problematic for non-native learners and some native-speakers is the unpredictable correspondence between word sound and word spelling.

It is often impossible for learners of English to predict the spelling of an English word they first encounter in speech, or the pronunciation of an English word they first encounter in writing.

In fact, the majority of English words do conform to spelling patterns. The difficulty for the learner, however, is that the words which don't conform are some of the most common words in the language, and thus the ones that learners encounter first. For example:

- Words containing *ough*: *thought, although, rough,*
- Words which have the same sound but different spellings: *ate, eight; hear, here; their, there*
- Words with silent letters, not pronounced: *know, could, hour*

- Words that look exactly the same but must be pronounced differently: *read* (present tense), *read* (past tense); *present* (a gift), *present* (to give to); *close* (near); *close* (to shut)

Let's explore the second element which covers how important it is for you to recognise some key differences in some languages compared to English.

2. Examples of key differences in some languages compared to English

It's important to be aware that there will be key differences in language structures, grammar, vocabulary etc. in the native/first language of the learners you will be teaching.

Never assume that your students' native language will be structured or pronounced in the same way as English. If you do, this may lead to confusion in your classroom.

Note that this is simply an awareness session, to emphasise this point. So, you don't need to 'learn' the materials in this section if you aren't teaching either Spanish or Chinese students.

The key learning point is that all languages are different and it's wise to learn a bit about your students' native language to ensure you choose the right strategy when teaching them specific elements of the English language.

You don't need to be able to speak or write your students' native language; it's just so helpful when you know some of the key differences between their native language and the English language.

Let's have a quick look at this in practice. Imagine you are teaching a group of either Spanish or Chinese students. What are some of the key differences you need to keep in mind from day 1?

Remember! Note that the points below are generalisations based on our TEFL experiences; individual students may differ.

Here are some general observations:

Spanish EFL Students

1. Gender and articles: In Spanish, all nouns have gender, whereas we just use *a, an,* and *the* no matter the gender:

- *a boy: un niño; a girl: una niña*
- *the boy: el niño; the girl: la niña*

Also, there is no equivalent in Spanish for *it* that we use for inanimate objects.

Note that there are situations where we do not insert articles but these will usually be inserted in Spanish. Their article for *the* is underlined in these examples:

- Cars are a hassle: <u>*Los*</u> *coches son una molestia.*
- Mr. Smith is here: <u>*El*</u> *Sr. Smith está aquí.*

2. Relationship between sound and spelling: In Spanish, words are spelled as they sound and vice versa. In English, there is little correlation between sound and spelling.

3. Vowel sounds: Spanish has fewer vowel sounds than English. The length of the vowel sound in Spanish is not so important when distinguishing between words; there is little distinction between short and long vowel sounds. In English, however, there are many more vowel sounds and the length of the vowel sound is very important.

Thus, Spanish learners have a lot of difficulty in first distinguishing differences in vowel sounds and then producing them. This results in confusion when hearing and pronouncing many groups of words, for example:

- ship/sheep
- fool/full
- cat/cut
- beat/bit

4. Consonant sounds: Spanish-native speakers frequently confuse the consonants *v* and *b* in English, and the first sounds in words beginning with *y* as in *yacht* and *j* as in *jeep* with *ch* as in *cheap*. Some speakers also have difficulty with sounds at the end of words such as *thing/think*.

5. The *s* sound: Spanish words do not start with an *s* sound. As a result, they often add an *e* sound to English words beginning with the *s* sound, resulting in utterances such as *I come from* <u>*Espain*</u> and *I went to* <u>*eschool in*</u> *Barcelona.*

6. Consonant clusters: These are groups of consonants which have no intervening vowel, e.g. split. These are much more common in English than in Spanish. Sometimes they may add in a vowel sound or an extra syllable when tackling these, e.g. *ad-vance-ed*. In addition, sometimes they 'swallow' sounds when faced with a cluster, e.g. *next* becomes *nes*.

Remember: A syllable is a part of a word that is pronounced with one uninterrupted sound.

7. Syllable-timed and stress-timed languages: Spanish is a syllable-timed language, where an equal amount of time is given for each syllable when syllables are expressed. On the other hand, English is a stress-timed language where stresses tend to occur at regular intervals and unstressed syllables are squashed in between the stresses to maintain the regular beat of the stress.

So, what does this mean? It means that many Spanish learners have difficulty in mirroring the combination of stress, pitch and rhythm required to project the exact meaning of their utterance in English. That is, their flattened, slightly robotic-like and evened-out syllable-timed speech in English makes it difficult for native English speakers/listeners to grasp the important words in the sentence.

A popular example used to demonstrate this difference in TEFL classes is:

- *The **Beat**les were **big**ger than **El**vis:* English, stress –timed, stress bolded
- *The / Beat / les / were / big / ger / than / El / vis:* Spanish, syllable-timed, each syllable in each slash pronounced in an equal timing

Overcoming this flat-sounding intonation is very important, particularly in formal and important situations in English, where clarity and stressing a point are paramount.

8. Pronouns often omitted: When speaking Spanish, native speakers of Spanish will often drop the pronoun subject unless they're stressing it to avoid ambiguity, because whom they're referring to, e.g. *you/they/he* is normally clear from the Spanish verb conjugation.

So, this can transfer across to English. You may find Spanish speakers making expressions such as:

- *Came with me to the train station,* when they mean *He/She came with me to the train station.*
- *Is Carlos here? Yes. Is here.*

9. Word order: In English, the word order in everyday statements is generally: subject, verb, object. In Spanish, though, more variations are allowed:

Here are three variations of the same meaning: *Carlos wrote the letter.*

- *Carlos escribió la carta.* (subject, verb, object; very common in Spanish and the same order as in English)

- *Escribió Carlos la carta.* (verb, subject, object; very common in Spanish but <u>not </u>used in everyday English)

- *La carta la escribió Carlos* (object, object pronoun, verb, subject; not as common as the two above but it is used.)

The opportunities for making errors in the word order of everyday statements in English, due to the influence of their native language, are self-evident.

10. Prepositions: English has many prepositions, much more than many other languages. Most English prepositions have multiple meanings. In addition, many are monosyllabic and are thus difficult to pick up in rapid speech.

Also, non-native speakers cannot depend on prepositional knowledge from their first language. For example, the Spanish *por* could be expressed in English by the prepositions *by, for, during* and *through*. You can see the potential for error when they are attempting to use English prepositions.

11. Adjectives: In English, an adjective generally comes before a noun but in Spanish it generally comes after the noun. But there are Spanish adjectives which come before the noun. And note that Spanish adjectives have gender and also have plural forms with plural nouns.

12. Possessive apostrophe: In English, we express possession in one of two ways. We use the possessive apostrophe*: the boy's book,* or the *of* construction: *The wellbeing <u>of</u> the refugees is paramount*. Spanish uses only the *of* construction.

The possessive apostrophe is probably the greatest challenge for all native-English writers, so you can imagine how difficult this will be for Spanish learners.

<u>Chinese EFL Students</u>

1. Different writing systems: A major difference is that the Chinese languages use a logographic system, whereas English uses an alphabetic system. Some Chinese learners may be fully au fait with pinyin, a system of writing Mandarin Chinese which uses the Latin alphabet. However, pinyin is a phonetic system and so the sound to letter correspondence differs in various areas.

2. Lack of cognates: Lack of cognates is a second major difference. Cognates are words which share an historical origin, which makes the learning of some words in a new language easier to grasp.

Although we majored above on the differences for a Spanish native learning English, one of the great advantages is that there are many cognates Spanish natives can lean on to help them guess the meaning of English words. But Chinese learners do not have this advantage.

In addition, there are very few borrowed words from English in the Chinese lexicon (vocabulary).

3. Syllable-timed and stress-timed languages: The third major difference is that, similar to Spanish, Mandarin is a syllable-timed language whereas English is a stress-timed language. Thus, Chinese learners also have difficulty in mirroring the combination of stress, pitch and rhythm required to project the exact meaning of their utterance in English.

4. Uninflected language: Although we have said earlier that English is, generally, a weakly inflected language compared to some other languages, it does convey much meaning by using auxiliary words (often called 'helping verbs') and verb inflections (changes to the verb structure): *is/are/were, eat/eats/ate/eaten,* etc.

In contrast to this, Chinese is an uninflected language which conveys meaning via its word order, context and adverbials.

5. Consonant sounds: In Mandarin, there are only three consonant sounds which can be used at the end of a syllable. Chinese speakers thus have great difficulty with the pronunciation of any English words that end with any sound outside of the three they are familiar with and, as a result, the final consonant is often omitted.

6. Some other common difficulties:

- Distinguishing the difference between *l* and *r*, and so they may mispronounce *rake* and *rice* as *lake* and *lice*.

- Getting to grips with unfamiliar sounds, e.g. *v*, so that *very* may become *wery*

- Pronouncing each syllable in an English word too clearly (because Chinese is a monosyllabic language where each character has only one syllable)

- Placing adverbial phrases of time and place at the end of a sentence as these are never placed at the end of a sentence in Chinese

- Confusing personal pronouns, e.g. *he* and *she*, because these words have the same pronunciation in Chinese

- Omitting the verb *to be* before an adjective, e.g. *He sad,* and omitting articles as these don't exist in Chinese

Unit 2: L1 and L2

You may or may not have heard the terms 'L1' and 'L2'. No matter which, this Unit will tell you all you need to know.

1. What do we mean by L1 and L2 learning?

L1 is the label given to a person's first language (the student's native language). When this person learns a second or foreign language, this additional language is labelled the person's L2 language.

So, all the students you will be teaching will have a non-English language, e.g. Spanish, as their native/first language (L1) and you will be teaching them English which will be a second or foreign language for them, known as L2.

Another teacher may ask you: *Do you occasionally allow L1 in your classroom?* She is asking if you allow your students to drop back into their native/first language (L1) in your classroom now and again or do you always ensure they can only speak English (L2) at all times within your classroom.

Let's just hit this on the head right now as it's a critical factor in EFL and EYL (English for Young Learners) teaching.

2. Should learners use their L1 in class?

Have a look at this:

Example: True story demonstrating the need to use the L1

Some years ago, we were teaching older learners (a wide range of ages 12 to 20+) in the heart of Africa. The only resources we had were chalk, a blackboard and old printed workbooks with passages and exercises for students.

There were no printing or copying facilities or internet facilities, so the workbooks had to be used.

The workbooks were generally OK, except that they had clearly been written by someone who had never been in our situation. One of the passages was based on a plane getting into difficulty and having to land on an aircraft carrier.

The passage was important for other language and continuity reasons, so it needed to be used.

Now, all of these learners had seen a single small plane flying over the game parks. In this land-locked country, they had certainly never seen a big ship.

They had seen small canoe-type boats on the river. It was impossible for them to grasp the complex concept that a plane like the one they had seen could land on a canoe.

Thus, an explanation was clearly necessary. And this explanation had to be made in their L1; otherwise, they would have endured a long, long period of confusion as we attempted to explain this complex concept in English.

For over a century there has been a continuous debate amongst theorists and practitioners about the use of the L1 language in the L2 classroom.

For most of that time, the pendulum swung in favour of those who were against using the students' native language in the English classroom.

The anti-L1 usage lobby often propounded (amongst other things) that non-usage of the L1 resulted in maximum classroom time for studying the L2. *Use English only* was a commonly heard exclamation.

During this period, the use of the students' L1 within the classroom was forbidden in many schools and programmes.

In recent years, though, the pendulum has been swinging back gradually and a number of educationalists see value in using the students' L1 in specific circumstances.

Based on our lengthy experiences, we would view the L1 as another classroom resource and would use the student's native language judiciously

to achieve certain goals. We suggest that you also consider the L1 as another classroom resource.

Here are some good and practical reasons for using the L1 in class:

1. To clarify meaning, where a word or idea in English is complex and it's easier and more time-efficient to use a similar word in the L1 to get to the meaning quicker.

2. To clarify anticipated problems. A short reference to the L1 will help to demonstrate the potential problem. For example, some languages, e.g. Thai, do not have definite articles.

Instead of students making mistakes later in the lesson, it seems sensible to pre-empt these mistakes and show the differences between the two languages a bit earlier via L1 examples.

3. To demonstrate that languages often have more similarities than differences. By helping them to understand the similarities using L1 examples, the linguistic challenge may seem less daunting for the learners.

4. To save time, now and again, e.g. explaining instructions for an activity. We have often observed teachers taking longer to put over their instructions than the time it took the learners to do the activity. This seems a bit silly to us.

Translation is a time-efficient means of conveying meaning, compared to, say, demonstration, explanation, or working out meaning from context. But use it only on specific occasions.

5. To carry out any disciplinary measures. Using the L1 makes them sit up and really listen and will demonstrate to them that what you are saying is real and not a pretend statement.

6. To tell a student how well she has done, in her own language, adds import to the feedback.

7. To show that we care. We have made an effort to learn a bit of their language, probably in a short time, to make their learning even better. They will really appreciate this. Remember this!

3. Key differences between acquiring a first language (L1) and learning a foreign/second language (L2)

There's no doubt that L1 learners learn differently from L2 learners. It's important for you to reflect on the key differences.

You can easily work out for yourself the key points relating to L1 learning as you have been an L1 learner. But here some points to get you reflecting.

L1 learner

- Generally immersed in the English language at all times from birth
- Wants, needs and is motivated to communicate by signs or baby words, with meaning, e.g. *I want some food!*
- Adults often praise and encourage the child's use of language, spurring her on to greater linguistic achievements
- Gets a lot of attention to aid the learning
- Learns by playing and experimenting with new language, and has lots of time to do so
- Not often corrected

Let's now consider the L2 learner's learning situation

L2 learner

- Not intensively exposed to the L2
- Most often exposed by being taught the English language; often limited exposure outside the classroom
- May not be motivated; but could be, though
- Often only learns through interaction with you and her classmates; may not be motivated to try out functions outside of the classroom
- Often learns by using language in a controlled setting with you and other students and often with lots of controlled practice activities
- Teachers vary in the amount they praise or encourage L2 learners. Some teachers may not do this effectively, certainly not as effectively as a mother/ father/guardian would do in an L1 situation. When you see good, specific examples of positive behaviour, praise your students.
- The learner typically receives limited attention from the teacher.
- Many teachers regularly correct learners for accuracy; this can be demotivating for some learners.

So, there are some big differences in L1 and L2 learning. Remember these and another piece will be in place in your 'Good Teacher Jigsaw'.

4. Influences on L2 learning

Why do some L2 learners learn faster and better than others? Here are some important points for you to remember and reflect on regularly when you are on the job. They are not in any specific order.

1. Degree of intellect: Some learners are just brighter than others.

2. Learning style: if the teaching is not carried out in line with the student's preferred learning style, e.g. lots of visuals or lots of audio or lots of discussions and exercises etc., learning may very well be curtailed. We'll explore learning styles in-depth in Module 7.

3. Motivation: Whether this be intrinsic (learning for its own sake) or extrinsic (for some goal or reward, e.g. getting a new job), every student has varying degrees of motivation. It's also a challenge to keep students motivated all the time.

Remember this! The whole person comes to school, be it your students or you. Students have their ups and downs. They come with all their personal baggage, e.g. worrying about a sick parent/child, or upset due to a breakdown in some personal relationship. So, the motivated person yesterday may not be the motivated person today. Help and show empathy wherever you can.

And the same applies to you.

You may feel a little bit down due to some personal issue. Or you may have had just one too many social events the nights before. You'll need to make a supreme effort not to let this happen. Your learners need you to be constant, i.e. positive, welcoming and full of life all the time.

We'll explore motivation in-depth in Module 3.

4. Language proficiency in L1: There's no doubt whatsoever that a learner who is proficient in her L1 language (grammar, structure, mood etc.) and understands all of this, has a great head start on others.

These were pretty easy for you! Let's ramp it up a bit. Now, let's look at some trickier additional issues that we have come across in our years of teaching EFL:

5. Prior learning

Learners may bring to class their expectations regarding teacher relationships, teacher behaviour and teacher approaches to learning that prevailed in their home countries, especially if they had extensive schooling there.

Thus, learners from more traditional educational systems may expect you to behave in a more formal and authoritarian fashion during classes and may be displeased, puzzled, or offended if you use an informal instructional style, such as using first names in class or allowing learners to move freely around the room. This will affect their learning.

When teaching students, it's imperative that you try to find out how they have learned previously and how they prefer to learn now. The learners may welcome a change in method, but they may want to learn in the same way as they learned before. Simply put, you need to ask them.

6. Pattern of classroom activity

Some learners may also want you to maintain a clearly ordered pattern of classroom activity and, perhaps, engage in extensive correction of grammatical form or pronunciation during all activities rather than at irregular points in a lesson or not at all.

Failure to conform to these ideals may give some learners the impression of lazy or inadequate class preparation on your part.

7. Your behaviour

You, similarly, bring to the classroom your own expectations regarding teacher behaviour. This includes your views on appropriate behaviour within society in general, as well as in the classroom.

If, for example, you come from a culture of self-reliance, are at ease in expressing and defending personal opinions, and are interested in personal advancement, you will likely provide instruction that addresses these goals and may unconsciously attribute these same goals to your students.

The potential for conflicting expectations and evaluations of behaviour between you and your learners is evident.

8. Gender

You need to find out whether learners have ever experienced mixed educational groupings, whether they expect male and female teachers to behave differently, and how different classroom activities, e.g. role plays or

dialogue practice, might affect learners differently because of their native cultural constraints.

Failure on your part to take this into account may affect student learning.

9. Female participation

In encouraging women students to speak up and take an active role in class, you may sometimes encounter reluctance from both men and women from cultures in which women have historically been constrained by social roles that do not promote active participation in mixed-sex settings.

It's critical that you reflect on this point continuously.

10. Appropriate topics for learning

Cultural expectations regarding the nature of education and what is appropriate to talk about may also affect the kinds of topics students are willing to pursue in class and their motivation to learn. Cultural as well as personal sensitivity is vital in knowing if, when, and how to introduce topics or lessons that may be inappropriate or difficult.

11. Participation

Verbally expressing ideas and asking questions during class can prove difficult for students unaccustomed to this form of active participation. In addition, some students' perceptions of their classroom participation may not concur with your perception.

12. Communication styles

There are patterns of expression and rules of interaction that reflect the norms and values of a culture.

A lack of understanding of these communication styles could lead to confusion, anxiety and conflict – and a reduction in learning. Let's consider just two of these styles.

1. Direct Style v Indirect Style

Direct style

Here are the key indicators of a direct style of communication presented by the teacher and, perhaps, some students in the classroom:

- Straightforward talking
- No beating about the bush – straight and to the point
- Directness means there is honesty and respect for the other person
- Avoiding ambiguity

Here are the key indicators of an indirect style of communication presented by the teacher and, perhaps, some students in the classroom

Indirect style

- Meaning conveyed by subtle means, stories, implication – not getting to the point
- Indirectness means politeness and respect for the other person
- Frequent use of implication – not directness

2. Idea-focused style v person-focused styles

Idea-focused

- Ideas and person are separate
- Open disagreement is acceptable
- Disagreement with person's ideas is not seen as personal attack

Person-focused

- Ideas and person are not separate
- Feelings are important
- Disagreement is handled very carefully
- Disagreement is attack on the person

So, here we have two conflicting ways of looking at communication. This is a potential boiling pot. Learning will be affected and your critical task will be to find a balance. **It's not your role to try and change people's cultural ways of working. It is your role to find a solution to this.**

So, in summary, there are lots of ways a student's L2 learning can be influenced.

5. Some effective L2 learning strategies

Language learning strategies are the conscious steps or behaviours used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of new information.

Research shows that the most successful learners tend to use learning strategies that are appropriate to the material, to the task, and to their own goals, needs, and stage of learning.

Strategies can be assessed in a variety of ways, such as diaries, think-aloud procedures, observations, and surveys. More proficient learners appear to use a wider range of strategies in a greater number of situations than less proficient learners.

For example, proficient L2 learners:

- Employ appropriate language learning strategies that often result in improved proficiency or achievement overall or in specific skill areas.
- Tend to select strategies that work well together in a highly-orchestrated way, and which are tailored to the requirements of the language task. These learners can easily explain the strategies they use and why they employ them.
- Use cognitive strategies, such as translating and analysing, and other strategies, such as planning and organising. Using combinations of strategies often has more impact than relying on a single strategy.
- Use certain strategies or clusters of strategies that are linked to particular language skills or tasks. For example:

  - L2 writing, like L1 writing, benefits from the learning strategies of planning, self- monitoring, deduction, and substitution.
  - L2 speaking demands strategies such as risk-taking, paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation.
  - L2 listening comprehension gains from strategies of elaboration, inference, selective attention, and self-monitoring.
  - L2 reading comprehension uses strategies like reading aloud, guessing, deduction, and summarising.

Remember to introduce your learners to some of these strategies if they are not already using them.

Unit 3: What makes a competent and effective teacher?

If you have never taught before, this will be the biggest question in your mind. Even if you have already started teaching but it's early days, this will still be a big question in your mind.

As in any working role, the goal a person aims for is competence. But what is competence and what makes a competent teacher?

The best place for us to start is for us to agree on what the word *competent* means. The Oxford Dictionaries tells us that *competent* means *having the necessary ability, knowledge or skill to do something successfully*.

Far be it from us to question this dictionary definition when relating it to teacher competence… but here goes.

Our experience tells us that you also need to include **habits** when considering how competent you are as a teacher.

For example, it seems to us that you turning up at the classroom on time, ready to greet your students and welcoming them as they come into the classroom is a very good habit. So is you reflecting on how the lesson panned out, immediately after the lesson or as soon as it's possible.

So, let's expand our definition of *a competent teacher* to: *A person who has the knowledge, ability, skills and habits necessary to teach successfully.* We hope you agree with this definition.

Notice that we changed the order of the words a bit. There was a practical reason for this as you will be able to recall these critical components of competence by the **mnemonic *KASH* for knowledge, ability, skills and habits.**

So, when you're asked to contribute your thoughts on what makes a competent teacher during a staff meeting, you'll have a good aide-memoire by using the mnemonic KASH.

Here's what we believe are the key traits and characteristics of a competent and effective teacher. We have broken this down into 2 sections:

- **adheres to a Code of Practice for Teachers – at all times**
- **demonstrates the necessary knowledge, abilities, skills and habits – at all times.**

1. Adheres to a Code of Practice for Teachers at all times

You'll find on your travels that many schools do not have a Code of Practice that you are asked to follow. Don't worry about this – it's just the way things are. It doesn't stop you from following YOUR Code of Practice.

So, where do you get this? Don't worry; we have one already made up for you. YOUR Code of Practice has been developed by ACCREDITAT (www.accreditat.com), who are our accrediting body. It's based on their experiences and the experiences of thousands of teachers in EFL. Here it is:

ACCREDITAT Code of Practice for Teachers

At the heart of the ACCREDITAT Code of Practice for Teachers is:

- a conviction that excellence is achieved via competence
- a belief in the worth, individuality and dignity of each person
- a commitment to truth, excellence and democratic principles
- an allegiance to freedom to learn and teach
- a dedication to the principle of equal opportunity for all

Members of the TEFL/TESOL teaching profession are committed to demonstrating the following values and ideals which underpin the profession:

Honesty and Integrity

- creating and maintaining appropriate professional relationships in the classroom, school and in public
- acting with impartiality, truthfulness and honesty
- displaying consistently high standards of personal and professional behaviour
- refraining from disclosing information about colleagues in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law

- refraining from any abuse of a position of authority or relationships with students, parents, carers or colleagues for financial, political or personal gain
- acting according to the law

Dignity and Diversity

- valuing diversity and treating students, parents, carers and colleagues equitably and fairly and with care and compassion while respecting the uniqueness of family and socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, races, religions and beliefs
- valuing the learning needs, effort, and potential, and acknowledging the uniqueness, of each student
- improving the wellbeing and progress of those students with special needs
- fostering the valuing of diversity and encouraging the development of international, multicultural, gender, and indigenous and other perspectives
- allowing, reasonably, the students' access to varying points of view

Respect and Trust

- acknowledging that relationships with students and their families must be based on mutual respect, trust and confidentiality of personal information, unless disclosure of any information serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law
- acknowledging the contribution that mutual respect, trust and confidentiality make to students' wellbeing and learning
- acknowledging the desires and hopes of the students' families and carers
- acting with educational colleagues and the wider community in ways which enhance the profession
- acknowledging the status, responsibilities and authority of colleagues
- remaining open to constructive criticism from peers and showing respect and consideration for different viewpoints

Responsibility and Accountability

- giving priority to the education and welfare of all students in our care

- guiding and encouraging students to achieve their potential, ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to achieve their potential

- creating interactive learning environments, rather than environments in which the students are merely passive recipients of information

- regarding themselves as learners and engaging in continuous professional development, and improving teaching and learning strategies for themselves and colleagues

- working collaboratively, co-operatively and enthusiastically with colleagues and other educational bodies in the best interests of the education and welfare of the students

- taking precautions to distinguish between their personal views and those of the local school district or governing body

- promoting the ongoing development of teaching as a profession

- upholding school policies, procedures and practices

- modelling the behaviour, attitudes and positive values which are widely accepted in society and encouraging students to apply them and critically appreciate their significance

Care and Protection

- having empathy and respect for, and rapport with, students and their families and carers, colleagues and communities

- committing to students' wellbeing and learning through the practice of positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice

- adhering to the school's student protection policies and procedures

- making reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety

- refraining from any racial, gender, political, verbal, physical or emotional abuse, embarrassment or harassment

- being generous with praise and giving positive inputs and feedback

Fairness and Justice

- being fair and reasonable at all times

- being committed to the wellbeing of individuals and the community and to the common good

- resolving competing claims or problems arising from different ethical principles and different interest groups through reflective professional discussion

Adhere to this and you won't go wrong. Print this off and keep it with you always. Reflect on it frequently. It will serve you well.

2. Demonstrates the necessary knowledge, abilities, skills and habits – at all times.

Here are the key areas of knowledge, abilities, skills and habits you should aim to nurture and demonstrate in your day-to-day teaching.

1. Demonstrate that you are warm, caring and approachable

You can demonstrate this in many ways, e.g. being approachable at all times, being a person that students can go to with any concerns or to share an amusing story, being an active listener, trying very hard to be consistent even although you may feel under the weather etc.

2. Establish good rapport and relationships with all learners at all times

This doesn't mean that you strive to be humorous at all times. Some older students may not take to this. They may feel that too much fun is eating up their valuable time. Or some students may come from a culture where humour in the classroom is not the accepted thing.

Rapport exists when people develop a feeling of harmony, well-being and security. The same processes are involved whether we're applying them to learners or anyone else in the school.

3. Foster a constructive learning experience

For example:

- everything is planned

- there are good class routines

- standards of behaviour are agreed

- an inclusive environment is created where all learners are treated fairly and equally

4. Create a sense of community and belonging in the classroom

A classroom community is one where:

- everyone feels accepted and supported as a vital part of the community
- there is a sense of belonging
- collaboration to achieve the goal is at the centre
- positive social skills are promoted
- students know they can depend not only on the teacher but also on the whole class

Creating a classroom community spirit is critical to the success of you and your students. This promotes learning, engagement, and retention. The more students feel comfortable, the more they will participate, engage, learn and retain the learning.

5. Set high, yet achievable, expectations for your students

The expectations that you propound for your students will influence their achievement levels. If you set low achievement expectations, then it's likely you'll get low achievement levels. Generally, students give their teacher as much or as little that is expected of them by the teacher. So, set high, yet achievable, expectations.

6. Plan and work flexibly

Although you will have planned well, things don't always go to plan. So, reflect on what might not go to plan. Based on continuous monitoring, you'll be ready to change tack a bit or find a new way to present the material seamlessly, without anyone else being aware of these necessary changes.

7. Adjust your own level of English to suit the class

There are no prizes for any teacher who uses fancy or complex language.

8. Always give clear, precise instructions

9. Choose appropriate moments for correcting the learners' language

When students are in full flow and are communicating, it's often wise to let it run even if there are mistakes. After they have finished, you can then pick up on the mistakes.

10. Understand the need to use a range of relevant and suitable materials and resources

Be prepared to make your own supplementary materials. These are often much better and more relevant than materials in course books.

11. Work successfully with learners at different levels

Yes, this can be daunting at first but with good planning and good materials everything will work seamlessly.

12. Enable learners to feel a sense of progress

13. Assess fairly and frequently, and plan on the basis of assessment

14. Recognise and understand the range of backgrounds and experiences within the learner group

15. Employ a range of teaching styles and approaches at different stages and in different contexts

16. Understand the broad range of learner needs including the needs of learners with learning difficulties

17. Reduce your teacher talking time (TTT) and maximise student talking time (STT)

Teachers just talk far too much.

18. Reflect and self-appraise continuously

Of course, things don't always go according to plan. Even NASA sometimes has to change plans at the last moment! By making reflection and self-appraisal a daily habit, you will reduce the occasions where things don't exactly go to plan.

19. Facilitate language learning and acquisition both inside and outside the classroom

Never view your classroom as an island.

In addition to bringing bits of the real world into the classroom (e.g. newspapers, CDs and videos), you can, if allowed by the school authorities, take your students out into the world during class time, effectively using it as an extension of the classroom.

Learners need to use and understand language outside the classroom, so that they can progress. Become a user of inside and outside activities and you will observe remarkable progress in your students as they put into practice what has been learned in the classroom.

In summary, the end goal for you should be a mix of these traits and characteristics. In essence, the end goal you are aiming for is an 'effective and competent teacher cocktail'.

Unit 4: Setting the stage

Seating

One of the best ways of making sure you engage your students and maximise on communication in the classroom can be as simple as arranging your classroom so that its layout encourages interaction. Unless you are particularly unlucky, most classrooms, even in the most modest of schools, will have moveable chairs and/or tables.

Your previous learning experience probably involved sitting at rows of static desks. Human nature also normally means that on each return visit to the classroom, you'll sit in the same position in the classroom. One of our roles as an EFL teacher is to maximise student interaction and increase confidence in the ability to communicate in English.

A very simple method of achieving this is by thinking about the layout of the classroom. It's important to experiment with different seating and standing arrangements to find out what works best for different tasks such as group activities, pair work and opposing team games.

- Whole class discussion: In a horseshoe layout students are able to interact more naturally because they can see each other. It also ensures that the same students aren't always dominating at the front of the class.
- Small group work: When students are placed in 'islands' they are able to collaborate effectively, feeling part of a team but are close enough to work with neighbouring groups if necessary.
- Pair work: A traditional seating plan which allows students to work together in twos with the added advantage that the teacher is able to monitor from the front of the class or by moving between rows.
- Opposing teams: Each team has its own corner which gets students really excited at the prospect of winning against the 'enemy' side; great for getting students participating wholeheartedly in the task!
- A/B role-play: For role-play activities it's best to have students facing each other rather than sat side-by-side, this way they focus on their own part of the task rather than trying to work on the activity as a whole. Another alternative would be to line up all the chairs in two rows in the centre of the classroom.
- Student-led lesson: Much like the horseshoe style, students in the circular layout can make eye-contact and interact together easily. In this arrangement, however, the teacher is positioned in the circle with the students, putting them on an equal level and encouraging the students to lead the class themselves.

Classroom rules

Whether you're teaching a class of forty Chinese five-year-olds or twelve Arabic men, you will need to enforce some rules in the classroom in order to establish control.

One option is to hand out a copy of the rules on the very first lesson and get students to sign it like a contract.

It may seem patronising but, the success of your lesson lies in not only building rapport, but in getting all students involved and engaged in tasks.

There is nothing more frustrating than effectively setting up a task, all your students understanding and ready to start, then a couple of late students wander in and the whole equilibrium is ruined.

Hence, a rule about punctuality is important. Having said that, people will always be late. A good way to deal with is to ask the rest of the class to explain what has happened and what they are about to do.

This further clarifies understanding for the class, encourages communication and means that not all the language and explanation come through you. We want to maximise on student participation after all!

Another technique for establishing classroom rules is to engineer a discussion of how the students are going to learn, and for them to brainstorm their own classroom rules.

You can then suggest a few key areas such as only speaking in English in the classroom. This approach engages students and stands a better chance of working if they are responsible for the creation of the rules.

Below is a guideline for some effective rules that are suited to an EFL classroom:

Effective rules guide

- Only speak English in the classroom.

- Switch off your mobile phone and never answer it in class.
- Be on time for class and come back from breaks on time.
- If another student is speaking, show interest and listen.

Below is a list of some ineffective rules that would not encourage communication in the EFL classroom:

Ineffective rules

- Silence in the classroom.
- Don't ask questions.
- Only sit next to the students that you already know.
- It's OK to say small sentences in your language e.g. "Can I borrow a pen?"

Instruction-giving

So, once you've set up your classroom and established some ground rules, before you can undertake any activity you need to tell your students what they need to do.

Surprisingly, this can often be one of the trickiest things as many students will nod along when in reality they aren't sure what's going on (which becomes obvious when you ask them to begin!).

That's why it's essential to keep your instructions clear and concise.

An untrained or inexperienced teacher might think it useful to constantly repeat words and instructions or speak more loudly to help students understand what they want them to do but this isn't really the case.

Compare the following examples of instruction giving and decide which one would be easier to understand.

Scenario 1

"Right then. What we're going to do is to put you in pairs. One half of the class will be A and the remaining half will be B. Both of you will be given a role card that will contain all the information that you'll need. So, to clarify, half of you will be A's and half of you will be B's. I'm going to tell you who you'll be working with, alright? So, we're going to do a role play where one of you is a tourist and the other student will be a tour guide, then we're

going to practise all the vocabulary and grammar that we've learnt this week. Right then. So, you're in pairs. If you wouldn't mind, could you all sit in two lines parallel to each other. The one on the right is the tourist and the one on the left is the tour guide. You're on a coach, and the tour guide is going to point out what you can see out of the window. The tourist should ask as many questions as they can. Next, we're going to swap and take turns. OK then. So get yourselves into the two rows and off we go. Let's start."

Scenario 2

- Before class, set up the classroom chairs in two rows.
- Instruct each student (by name) where to sit and appoint them A's and B's
- "A's you are the tour guide. B's you are the tourist"
- "OK. Look" (gesture to board of picture of tourists on a coach travelling through a city)
- Elicit the names (nouns) of what students can see, pointing to each; "coach, tourist, tourist guide, (name of the city)"
- Write the words next to the pictures as you go.
- Hold up clear role cards stating "A: TOURIST listen to the tour, showing interest and ask questions " and
- "B: TOUR GUIDE give a tour of the city."
- "Speak." (gesture to mouth). "10 minutes."

Check understanding of the task by asking the following:

1. Who is student A?
2. What do they do?
3. Who is student B?
4. What do they do?
5. How much time?

Unit 5: Icebreakers

Think about the type of task you're going to be teaching and try to use a variety of ice breakers to introduce the topic.

Look at the next unit to see some examples.

Introduce your partner

INTRODUCE YOUR PARTNER

Where are you from?

Who is your best friend?

Aye you married?

Do you have children?

Why are you on this course?

What's your favourite type of food?

What do you love and hate about learning?

Introduce your partner explained

This classic ice breaker is great for the first day of a new course and is particularly appropriate for adult learners.

Essentially students work in pairs and get to know their partner then present the information to the rest of the class.

The good thing about it is that it gets students to ask slightly more interesting questions such as 'who is your best friend?' rather than the mundane 'where do you live?'/'when's your birthday?'.

You could also encourage students to ask for more information and even leave a space for them to invent a couple of their own questions.

This ice breaker can also be adapted for children, where they draw a humorous picture of their partner in the box and you put it up on the classroom wall to help the students remember each other's names.

By introducing a partner instead of themselves students are also able to practice the ever-important third person forms of the verb (most third person verbs in the present end in '–s' e.g. I live (1st person), he lives (3rd person).

Equally, having to memorise the information to present to the class allows them to really interact with their partner rather than just going through the motions and immediately forgetting their partner's responses!

This particular version is most appropriate to classes at pre-intermediate+ levels but the questions can be adapted to suit any class.

Teacher Tic Tac Toe

In this game the teacher draws a noughts and crosses board and writes a word or number in each.

The information in each square is an answer to a particular question, for example you could write '3' in one of the squares as the answer to the question 'how many brothers do you have?'

Students work in two teams, choose a square and try to guess the question it corresponds to. Whichever team gets three in a row wins.

This is a great activity for the first day when the students already know each other but you are teaching them for the first time as it allows them to relax and get to know you in a fun and interesting way.

All the information should answer questions about you so you can make it as personal as you like and level appropriate.

For higher levels it's good to throw in some 'trick' answers if possible, I knew an English teacher who used to always write 'gin' in one of the squares and everyone would assume the question was 'What's your favourite drink?' The real question was actually 'What's the name of your first pet?'

As well as being a fun game which can induce some friendly rivalry between teams, this game is also great for practising word order in questions and for higher levels you can decide to only give the teams a point if they ask the correct, and grammatically correct, question.

3	Jane	Chocolate
Flying	Gin	31
1987	Argentina	Liverpool

Mingle / Find someone who...

FIND SOMEONE WHO...   NAME

... plays a musical instrument

... likes school

... has been to a wedding lately

... thinks watching football on television is boring

... likes Chinese food

... listens to music for more than one hour a day

... thinks opera is moving

... is terrified of spiders

... thinks cold showers are refreshing

... gets excited watching a football game

... feels depressed when listening to the blues

... would like to learn to dance salsa

Mingle / Find someone who... explained

'Find Someone Who...'

This activity is perfect as a warmer for a conversation lesson or as an ice breaker for higher levels as it gets students to talk to as many people in the room as possible. The aim of the game is to find one person who has done each of the items on the handout and get some more information about each. The questions can be adapted to fit in with a particular theme or can be left random for use on the first day.

An element of competition can be added by making the activity into a 'first person to finish wins' and can get students to really launch themselves into the task without having time to feel nervous. They also have to practise question formation by transforming the statements on the worksheet into appropriate inquiries.

Unit 6: Student Feedback

The ability to give good, constructive feedback is essential for student motivation and performance.

1. What do we mean by the term 'feedback'?

Feedback is information that is given to the learner about her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving performance. While such feedback is generally verbal, your body language can also provide the student clues about her performance.

The main purposes of feedback are:

- to motivate learners when they are doing well
- to help them understand what their problems are and how they can improve when they are not doing so well

Some examples of feedback in language teaching might be:

- *Yes, right!* to a learner who has answered a question correctly
- An arched eyebrow in response to a mistake in grammar
- Comments written in the margin of an essay

- An *Almost; do you want to try again?* to a student who may not have provided a correct or full answer to an exercise

Feedback can focus on learners' language or skills, the ideas in their work, their behaviour, their attitude towards learning, or their progress. Sometimes we give feedback to the whole class, while at other times we give feedback to small groups or individual learners.

2. Importance of constructive feedback

It's critical that your feedback is constructive and not destructive.

Remember these key points:

- Feedback is a way of students learning more about themselves and the effect their behaviour has on others.
- Constructive feedback increases self-awareness, offers guidance and encourages development, so it is important to learn how to give it. Constructive feedback does not mean only giving positive feedback (praise). Negative or critical feedback given constructively and skilfully can be very important and useful.
- Destructive feedback, which is negative feedback given in an unskilled way, generally leaves the recipient feeling bad with seemingly nothing on which to build and no useful information to use for learning.

Here's how to give constructive feedback to achieve a positive outcome:

Start with the positive

Students need encouragement, to be told when they are doing something well. When offering feedback, it can really help the student to hear first what they have done well. It is often common for the giver of feedback to emphasise the negative, therefore the focus is likely to be on mistakes more often than successes.

In a rush to criticise, we may overlook the things we liked. If the positive is registered first, any negative is more likely to be listened to and acted upon.

Be specific

Try to avoid general comments which are not useful when it comes to developing skills. Statements such as *You were brilliant!* or *It was not so*

good! may be pleasant or upsetting to hear, but they don't give enough detail to be useful sources of learning.

Try to pin-point what the student did that led you to use the label of *brilliant* or *not so good*:

Brilliant: *The way you introduced your point just at that moment was really helpful and enabled us to resolve that issue more quickly.*

Not so good: By *responding in that way you seemed to want to impose your opinions on the rest of the class.*

Specific feedback gives more opportunity for learning.

Refer to behaviour that can be changed

It is not likely to be helpful to give a student feedback about something over which they have no choice or control; in fact, it may be frustrating and even de-motivating.

Seek/offer alternatives

If you do give negative feedback then try to turn it into a learning opportunity by asking the student what they could have done differently, or will do differently next time. It is always more powerful to get ideas coming from the student.

However, if they are struggling to think what they could have done differently, offer some suggestions.

Be descriptive rather than evaluative

This is expanding on 'be specific'. Describing what you saw or heard and/or the effect it had on you is much more powerful than just giving a judgement i.e. *the way you kept calm, quiet and focussed during that situation helped everyone cope* rather than *you handled that situation well.*

Own the feedback

It's easy to say to the student *You are…*, suggesting that you are offering a universally agreed opinion about her rather than an individual one. It is important that you take responsibility for the feedback you offer.

Begin with *I think … or I feel that…* to avoid being the giver of a general opinion which you don't own.

Leave the recipient with a choice

Feedback which demands change or is imposed on the student may invite resistance, and is not consistent with a belief in each of us being personally autonomous. Skilled feedback offers students information about themselves; it leaves them with a choice about whether to act or how to act.

It can help to examine the consequences of any decision to change or not to change, but does not involve prescribing change.

3. Different types of feedback

Key points:

- We can give feedback to individual learners or groups of learners.
- Feedback can be oral or written.
- Feedback can be linked to formal or informal assessment and can be given to learners in the classroom or during individual meetings.
- You can also write regular feedback in the form of comments, grades or marks on a learner's record sheet. You can use this feedback when you make your end-of-course assessment.
- When learners give feedback to one another, this is called peer feedback.
- Peer feedback is useful for all learners. The learners who give the feedback reflect on the work of their classmates. The learners who receive feedback are given information on how they can improve. The learners are often guided by a feedback observation sheet.
- Peer feedback can have a positive effect on classroom dynamics and can help to train learners in skills they need to become autonomous.
- Young learners, though, are not able to give very detailed peer feedback because they are not yet able to think about their classmates' work very carefully.
- Learners can also give you feedback about the lessons, activities and materials. They can tell you when they like what they are doing and when they are not so interested in the materials or activities, or when they are having problems with the language. They can also make suggestions for materials and activities to use. Be open to this.

Summary and some examples

When we talk about feedback we don't just mean writing 'well done' at the end of a student's written homework.

Although written feedback is essential, oral feedback can be equally constructive.

We as teachers need to comment (in a variety of ways) on the students' work, their language skills, their progress and their attitude not only in order to help them understand their weaker areas and give them the tools to improve but also to praise good work/behaviour and give them the motivation to continue in that vein.

Giving useful feedback is an essential part of how you manage a class and allows the students to know that their individual learning is being monitored whilst being encouraged by gaining an understanding of how they can constantly develop.

As far as the option of not giving feedback at all is concerned, what is the difference between this and the teacher leaving the classroom for the duration of the activity?

Learners expect the teacher to listen to them and the vast majority will welcome feedback and error correction, if such correction is constructive and comes at an appropriate point in the lesson. They expect their written work to be corrected so why not their spoken language?

Feedback, whether written or oral, should aim to be balanced and useful. This can be by **praising an achievement and identifying an area of weakness** (with specific information on how to get better) or by praising current efforts compared to past errors.

The comments given should also concentrate on one or two specific fields to give the learner direction and avoid confusing them. This could include any of the following:

- Language
- Content
- Progress
- Effort
- Behaviour
- Achievement

A few examples…

Oral: "I'm not sure all of you have fully understood today's grammar point, let's go over it again together on the board."

Written: "Well done, excellent use of prepositions in your work, now just focus on using the past simple and past perfect correctly. Have another look at the last chapter in the textbook and make sure you know when to use each."

Overview: Module 2

English learners are generally grouped into the following six levels:

- Beginner
- Elementary
- Pre-intermediate
- Intermediate
- Upper intermediate
- Advanced

However, in some schools/institutions you may find different classifications. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is widely accepted in European countries, as well as increasingly on an international scale, and aims to standardise language learning, teaching and assessment. There are three general categories (A-Basic User, B-Independent User, C-Proficient User) which are further broken down into two levels.

- **Basic User**

A1 – Breakthrough *or* Beginner
A2 – Waystage *or* Elementary

- **Independent User**

B1 – Threshold *or* Intermediate
B2 – Vantage *or* Upper Intermediate

- **Proficient User**

C1 – Effective Operational Proficiency *or* Advanced C2 – Mastery *or* Proficiency   Another method commonly used is grouping

students into classes named after the exams they are preparing for, particularly in the case of the Cambridge ESOL examinations. These are:

- KET – Key English Test
- PET – Preliminary English Test
- FCE – First Certificate in English
- CAE – Certificate in Advanced English
- CPE – Certificate of Proficiency in English

There are additionally two Cambridge exams for young learners (ESOL YLE) known as Starters, Movers and Flyers.

More about the CEFR

The CEFR is very important, so it's crucial that we explore this further.

You may teach in a school where their approach and syllabus is fully built on the CEFR classifications and terminology; thus, it's paramount that you have a solid grasp of it. It's not difficult.

Background

Different terminology is used in EFL when describing a student's proficiency/competency in language as compared to mainstream English classes in, for example, the USA or the UK.

- As you'll already know, measuring a student's proficiency in language is not an exact science.
- No universal system of rating exists.
- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR or CEF) is, perhaps, our best guide. There are other guides.
- Many organisations adapt the CEFR levels to suit their particular levels.

Fortunately, nearly all good coursebooks will identify which level the materials are intended for and schools will have similar class labelling to indicate what level the students are studying. So, there's no need to worry!

1. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; sometimes called the CEF): What is it?

The CEFR is a standard, international scale of levels for language learning. It has 6 levels in ascending order from A1 to C2.

The CEFR gives you a detailed description of learner level by skill, in a language-neutral format. Because it is language-neutral, it can actually be used for any language in the world.

It is a useful reference document for school directors, syllabus designers, teachers, teacher trainers and proficient learners.

Language testers and examination boards are increasingly using the CEFR as their scale of levels, though some give each level their own name.

The table we will explore in a moment shows the 3 bands (A-C) with each of those bands divided into two, giving us six main levels. It also describes (provides descriptors) which represent what a student should be able to do at each level.

You may have heard of other student level terminology in EFL, i.e. Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. Very loosely, you can see the CEFR levels as similar to Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced – though the CEFR levels are more precise than these terms (and calls them Basic, Independent, and Proficient).

2. The CEFR's approach: Communicative language competence

The CEFR's approach is based on the notion of communicative language competence– the increasing ability to communicate and operate effectively in the target language

It will be useful for you if we expand a bit on the CEFR's view of communicative language competence.

Communicative language competence has **a number of component parts**: it includes linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic competences. Each of these competences is made up of knowledge, aptitudes and skills.

Linguistic competence

Linguistic competence comprises the knowledge and skills related to:

- lexis (generally, words and phrases)
- phonology (generally, relationships among the speech sounds)
- syntax (generally, the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language)
- and other features of language systems, considered independently of the sociolinguistic impact of variations in use and of the pragmatic functions of the utterances produced.

It concerns not only the range and quality of knowledge (for example, the range and precision of lexical knowledge) but also involves cognitive organisation and the way this knowledge is stored in memory (for example, the question of how a lexical item fits into the networks of associations the speaker has available) and the accessibility (for example, how an item can be recalled, activated and its availability for use).

Socio-linguistic competence

Socio-linguistic competence refers to the knowledge and skills involved in using language functionally in a social context.

Since language is a social phenomenon, its use requires sensitivity to social norms and customs which affect to an important degree all linguistic communication between representatives of different cultures, even if the participants are frequently unaware of them.

These social norms affect, amongst other factors, rules of address, greetings and politeness, the way in which relations between generations, sexes, people of different social status, social groupings are expressed through special language markers, linguistically codified rituals, differences in register, dialect and accent, through vocal rhythms, for example.

Linguistic competence leads us to consider social and intercultural parameters and the way in which they influence language use.

Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence involves the functional uses of linguistic resources (carrying out language functions, speech acts) using scenarios or predetermined scripts of interactional exchanges. It also involves mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the recognition of text types and genres, using irony or parody. Even more than in the case of this factor than for linguistic competence, the development of pragmatic skills is strongly influenced by interactive experience and by the cultural environment.

Let's have a look at these **CEFR Bands and Level Descriptors at a Global Level**

You will find the Global Scale is a useful starting point. Study this well. It's not difficult. It's an excellent guide, an aide-memoire, which will keep you on track when you start on your TEFL journey.

CEFR Bands and Level Descriptors - Global Level

Level		Level Descriptors
Proficient User	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

We can also use the '+' to indicate the top half of a level. For example, 'B1+' means the top half of the B1 range. You will find this convention followed in various course books.

3. Why do we need the CEFR?

Even among teachers of the same language in similar contexts there can be a lot of variety in what is meant by terms like 'beginner', 'intermediate' or 'advanced'. This variability increases significantly across different languages, in different countries, with different age ranges of learners, etc. The CEFR makes it easier for all of us to talk about language levels reliably and with shared understanding.

4. What is it used for?

The CEFR is used for many different practical purposes:

- Developing syllabuses
- Creating texts/exams
- Marking exams
- Evaluating language learning needs
- Designing courses
- Developing learning materials
- Continuous assessment of others, or self-assessment
- Teacher training programmes

5. Is it just about levels?

The CEFR has been very significant in language learning and teaching because its impact goes beyond merely describing learner levels. It has underpinned a particular approach to language learning as the one most commonly recommended or expected in language teaching today. This is the Communicative Approach we explored earlier.

It not just about levels. The descriptions of levels in the CEFR are skills-based and take the form of **Can Do statements**, as in the examples below. These descriptions of ability focus on communicative purpose and make for a very practical approach, **which looks at what people can do – rather than on specific linguistic knowledge.**

The CEFR is particularly useful because it applies the same set of levels to all the various sub-skills and areas of competence:

- the basic four skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening)
- communicative language (e.g. turn-taking, asking for clarification)
- types of interaction (e.g. obtaining goods and services, interviewing)
- and more linguistic skills (e.g. vocabulary range, phonological control)

It allows you link up skills in each of these areas with the student's overall level.

Examples of 'can do' statements from the CEFR

Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. [A2, Global Scale]

Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. [C1, Listening]

Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning. [C2, Reading]

Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important. [B1, Written interaction]

Can use stock phrases (e.g. "That's a difficult question to answer") to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say. [B2, Turn taking]

You can view a list of Can Do statements at https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045b15e

6. What's in it for you? How can the CEFR be useful for teachers?

Understanding language levels better

The CEFR helps you to understand a standardised terminology for describing language levels. National, local and school policies are increasingly being described in CEFR levels – and so it's important to understand what they mean.

Seeing more clearly what learners need to work on

The CEFR describes what learners need to be able to do to reach the next level. You will find it particularly useful in showing how different component skills are described at each level. You have an idea of what a B2 student is like, but what should they be able to do in terms of listening to lectures/speeches, or writing correspondence, or spoken fluency? The CEFR helps you see what is needed for different aspects of learning English.

Curriculum plan

If a teacher responsible for working out what is going to be taught in a class – just her own or for the whole school – it is very helpful to use the CEFR as a broad framework. Look carefully at the descriptors for the levels you need – not just the Global Scale, but component scales as well where relevant.

What do you want your students to achieve in each course on their path to the target level? This can be further elaborated by looking at the information coming from English Profile, which we'll come to in a moment.

Of course, most teachers do not need to create their own curriculum. By choosing a course book that is aligned to the CEFR, you have a syllabus created by experts – which you may then choose to adapt for your own circumstances.

7. Should you introduce your students to the CEFR?

Yes, it's very useful for students to understand how mastery of a language builds up from beginner to mastery. Of course, this needs to be suitable for their level and age, and it is probably adults and teenagers that will find it useful.

Scales – adapted to their language level – are really useful for self-assessment, which can be very helpful in developing language skills.

8. English Profile

The English Profile Programme involves major research projects that are all working towards a reliable, detailed description of the actual learner English that is typical of each CEFR level.

Initially, the focus has been on vocabulary and grammar, and the English Vocabulary Profile is now complete for all six levels, A1-C2. A separate research team is developing a similar resource, the English Grammar Profile, which describes the gradual mastery of grammar across the six CEFR levels.

Cambridge University Press has given teachers around the world access to their research into vocabulary learning across the CEFR.

Go to the English Profile website – www.englishprofile.org and click on Free Registration English Vocabulary Profile. This will allow you to find out which words and phrases – and individual meanings of each word – are typically mastered by learners at each CEFR level.

This is a really valuable tool to make decisions about what to teach students as they progress. Cambridge University Press authors and editors make extensive use of this research in developing their course materials. Use it well!

In this module we're going to look at an overview of the grammar taught at each level as well as going over some key grammatical terms and what they actually mean, and see how to teach the different tenses.

Unit 1: Grammar at every level

Needless to say, your teaching will change according to the level of the group or individual, particularly in terms of grammar. Have a look at the following table to get an idea at what is taught when.

Beginner	Subject pronouns (I, you, he/she…) Object pronouns (me, you, him/her…) Verb 'be' – present tense (I **am**, you **are**…) This, that, these, those Basic prepositions (in, at, to…) Articles (a, an, the) Singular/plural nouns Possessive adjectives (my, your, his/hers…) Possessive 's' Likes and dislikes
Elementary	Verb 'be' – present tense questions and negatives Present simple (I **walk**, she **walks**…) Present continuous (I'**m walking**, she'**s walking**…) Adverbs of frequency (sometimes, often, never…) Possessive pronouns (mine, yours…) Past simple, regular and irregular (play> play**ed**, go>**went**) Like + -ing (I like swimm**ing**) Want, like and would like Telling the time
Pre-Intermediate	Past simple, regular and irregular verbs Past continuous (she **was going**, they **were walking**…) So, because, but, although Future forms: 'going to'/present continuous for future arrangements/'will/won't' Present perfect + ever, never, for and since Comparatives (more/less…than, as….as) Superlatives (the most/least….) Modals of obligation (have to, don't have to, must,

	mustn't…) 'Used to' 'so/neither' + auxiliaries (so do I, neither has he…)
Intermediate	Present perfect vs continuous Past simple vs past continuous vs past perfect Future forms: 'going to' vs present continuous vs 'will/shall' Usually vs used to Reported speech ("I'm going to the park" > **he said he was going to the park**) Passives (the church **was painted by** Michelangelo) Relative clauses (the girl **who** is sat over there…) Modals of obligation and deduction (must, may, might, can't…) Can, could, be able to (ability) First conditional and future time clauses (**If** I **pass** the exam, I'**ll celebrate**) Second conditional ((**If** I **was** famous I'**d give** money to charity))
Upper Intermediate	The…the… + comparatives (**the more** you learn **the more** you know…) Using adjectives as nouns (rich people are privileged > **the rich** are privileged) Adjective order Narrative tenses Adverbs and adverbial phrases Passive structures (it is said that…, he is believed to…) Future perfect and continuous (the ice caps **will have melted**, we **will be using** solar powered cars) Reporting verbs (recommend, threaten, advise…) Third conditional (if I **had known**, I **would have come**) Past modals, 'would rather' and 'had better' Gerunds and infinitives Used to, be used to, get used to Structures after wish Quantifiers

Advanced	Inversion for emphasis (little **did he** know that the dog had escaped) Linkers (although, nonetheless, whilst…) Mixed conditionals (**If** her eyesight **was** better she **would have seen** the squirrel) Cleft sentences (**the reason why I've come** is…, **the thing that annoys me most** is…) Compound nouns 'So' and 'such' Gerunds and infinitives Phrasal verbs (go **up**, go **in**, go **out**, go **on**, go **for**…) Unreal uses of past tenses (it's time we **left**, suppose we **opened** our own shop…) Uses of the verb 'get' Participle phrases (the horse, **trotting up to the fence**, hopes you have a carrot) Passive and active voice

Although this may look a bit overwhelming, you will never be left without resources to work from and many teacher's books even give a step-by-step guide of how to teach all the grammar listed above. Today we're going to look together at an example from each level so that you have an idea of how to teach appropriately at every stage.

Beginner Level

When teaching absolute beginners it is crucial to 'grade' your language as much as possible because even some of the simplest sentences may confuse your students. At this level you really need to be animated and reduce the complexity of anything you say.

If, for example, you start your lesson with, "Okay guys, today we're going to cover subject pronouns" you will probably be greeted by a sea of blank stares. Instead, it is essential to use visuals, for example, "Look (point to eyes) at the board (point to board)" before clearly writing the title 'subject pronouns'.

This is a technique called 'modelling' and is really necessary at this level.

Basically, it means demonstrating exactly what you're talking about by pointing and using visuals. In case you're unsure, subject pronouns are used to replace the noun which is the subject of the sentence.

If we take the sentence "Mary is American", we can replace the noun (Mary) with 'she', a subject pronoun. The subject pronouns in English are:

- **I** – 1st person singular
- **you** – 2nd person singular
- **he/she/it** – 3rd person singular
- **we** – 1st person plural
- **you** – 2nd person plural
- **they** – 3rd person plural

Rather than simply writing this list on the board and getting your students to copy it, you first need to demonstrate. Look at the example below of how to present a lesson on subject pronouns…

- "**I** (point to yourself) am a teacher". Write the word 'I' on the board, then repeat the sentence, again pointing at yourself as you emphasis the word 'I'.
- "**you** (point to an individual student) have a red bag (e.g.)". Write 'you' on the board underneath 'I' and repeat.
- Say both sentences together, always demonstrating as you speak, "I am a teacher. You have a red bag"
- "**he** (point to a male student) is tall (indicate height with your hand)".
- Continue with this pattern until you have demonstrated all the subject pronouns.
- Get the students to repeat after you and drill pronunciation.
- At this point there are a variety of activities you could do from matching activities to sentence completion but remember not to ignore the visual aspect: any handout should include clear pictures that the students can relate the pronouns to.

Pre-intermediate Level

At pre-intermediate level we often introduce modal verbs of permission and obligation.

Modal verbs are verbs such as can, must, may etc. which are always followed by another verb but they tell us the function of that main verb.

For example, 'you *can* run' is very different in meaning from 'you *must* run'. Many pre-intermediate students will have heard a lot of these verbs before but may not be completely sure of their meaning.

Especially because some of the modals of permission/obligation (must, may, can, should, have to) have negatives (must not, may not, don't have to etc.) which aren't exactly opposite in meaning.

There are numerous resources online and in EFL books which cover this topic but an idea of how to present the lesson is shown below.

- Write the title 'School Rules' on the board and try to elicit as many as possible from the students e.g. 'you must switch off mobile phones in class', 'you have to wear a school uniform' etc.
- Go back through the rules and highlight all the modals of permission/obligation. If there are any missing you can try to elicit them by writing the first letter of each in hangman-style (e.g. m_ _) until all are on the board.
- Write a list of definitions on the board or have a handout prepared and ask students to match the modals (positive and negative versions) up with each definition.

Lets look at some modal verbs. Please note, as will all these question types, you need to drag all the answers into the correct zones.

Intermediate Level

Relative clauses are used to give additional information about something without starting a new sentence. They combine sentences in a way that is natural and avoids repetition. Without relative clauses, speech and writing can sound heavy and strange, for example:

Mark is talking to a girl. Do you know the girl?

Here we have two very short sentences, repeating the word 'girl'. Instead we could join the two together using the relative pronoun 'who'

Do you know the girl **who** Mark is talking to?

There are five different relative pronouns (who, which, whom, that and whose) and three relative adverbs (where, when, why) which can be used to link sentences together.

A typical exercise used to present relative clauses is to give students a number of sentences that they have to link together using an appropriate relative clause. At intermediate level the essential ones are who, which, that, where and when. Whom, whose and why can be taught at higher levels.

Upper-Intermediate level

At upper-intermediate level your students should be comfortable writing and conversing in English but will most likely continue to make small mistakes particularly with verb patterns.

An important feature of any upper-intermediate course should be the distinction between gerunds and infinitives.

In sentences where more than one verb is used, the first verb determines the form of the second.

Native English speakers do this automatically, without thinking, but for EFL students it's not so obvious. You would know instinctively, for example, that it is incorrect to say 'I enjoy *listen* music'. This is because the first verb 'enjoy' is always followed by the gerund (the -ing form of the verb).

Likewise, the sentence 'I've decided *going* to university' doesn't sound right at all (although we do understand the meaning of the sentence). Here we need the infinitive form of the verb (the verb in its original state) with 'to' : 'I've decided *to go* to university'.

A good way to introduce upper-intermediate students to this topic is to first off give them a variety of sentences and use their instinct to tick the correct verb form. This is because at this level they will already have been exposed to a lot of English and will feel satisfied to know that their subconsciouses have absorbed some valuable information!

Advanced Level

As an example of advanced level content we're going to look at active and passive sentences. An active sentence is one which follows the usual formula of subject + verb + object/complement:

- He built the stadium in 1998

A passive sentence, however, inverts this order, placing the object at the beginning.

- The stadium was built (by him) in 1998

We use passive sentences to place emphasis on the object, rather than the subject of the sentence, or when the subject is unknown or unimportant.

In passive sentences, we call the subject the 'agent' and stating the agent is optional, as in the above example.

To form a passive sentence we always use the verb 'be' (in the same tense as the verb from the active sentence) + past participle. If we look at the previous example, the verb is 'built' which is the past simple form of the verb 'build'.

Therefore, in the passive sentence, it is the verb 'be' which must change to the past simple form 'was' + the past participle which in this case is '*built*'.

To recap how to form passive sentences with your class you could give them a list of active sentences and ask them to re-write them in the passive.

Example Grammar Practice

Whilst most of your students should feel comfortable forming passive sentences in a controlled exercise, they may still make mistakes in their writing by using the passive form in an active sentence or vice versa.

It can therefore be useful to find a text which uses a variety of active or passive sentences, erase all the verb forms and have students write the correct active or passive verb in the blank spaces.

Look at the following example which you are free to use with your own lessons.

Student instruction "Fill the gaps with the active or passive form of the verbs in brackets"

Reuters 'News Agency

Martin Webb_____(work) for the Reuters News Agency for ten years. He describes the company. "Reuters is one of the world's biggest news agencies. It_____(supply) news and stock market price to media and financial institutions all over the world_____ (start) by Paul Reuters in 1849 - with pigeons.

Reuter_____(be) born in 1816 in Germany. During the 1840's he _____(employ) as a bank clerk in Berlin. German bankers _____(need) to know the price on the Paris stock exchange, but the French telegraph system only went as far as Belgium. From there the information_____(send) to Germany by train. The journey_____(take) nine hours. The same information_____ carry by Paul Reuter's pigeons in only two hours!"

"Reuters _____(change) a lot since those days. Over the past fifty years, we _____(open) offices in many different countries and we _____still_____(expand). Now, news and stock market prices_____(send) all over the world within seconds."

*text taken from www.busyteacher.org

Again there are variety of resources available to teach the various grammar points but the important thing to remember is how to teach appropriately at each level!

Unit 2: Key grammatical terms and their functions

Many novice EFL teachers are afraid of teaching grammar because, although they can intuitively sense if a sentence is correct or incorrect, they often don't know how to explain why because they themselves are unfamiliar with all the jargon.

If you struggle recognising your nouns from your pronouns, your adjectives from your adverbs then you're not alone. But grasping these key concepts is essential to EFL teaching.

Here we're going to focus on the nine parts of speech (adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, determiners, exclamations, nouns, prepositions, pronouns and verbs) and look at them in a bit more detail than the typical "a verb is a doing word" approach we all learned at school.

Part Of Speech	Function	Examples	A Few Subcategories
Adjective	to describe a noun, a pronoun or part of a sentence	tall intelligent	comparative (taller) superlative (most intelligent)…
Adverb	to describe a verb, adjective or another adverb by giving more information about how, when something happens	quickly finally sometimes yesterday	frequency (sometimes), time (yesterday), manner (angrily), degree (completely), quantity (few), attitude markers (apparently)…
Conjunctions	to connect a clause, sentence or word	but and so	addition (and), condition (since), contrast (yet), purpose (so that), reason (because), result (therefore), time (before)..
Determiners	to clarify which noun is being referred to	this my both	articles (the), demonstrative adjectives (that), possessive adjectives (his), quantifiers (both)…

Exclamations	to express strong feeling (informal, spoken language)	ouch wow oh no	doubt (erm), pain (ouch)…
Nouns	to name things, people, places, concepts	milk parents beauty	abstract (hope), countable (people), uncountable (sugar), proper (Liverpool), collective (army)…
Prepositions	to link a noun/noun phrase/pronoun to another word or phrase	at until throughout	cause/effect (due to), contrast (unlike), dependent (wait for), movement (towards), place (under), time (during)…
Pronouns	to replace/refer to a noun or noun phrase	I him ours herself	personal (subject pronouns he, object pronouns them…), possessive (mine), reflexive (himself), relative…
Verbs	to show an action or state	walk believe try	Transitive, intransitive…

Further grammatical terms

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

A transitive verb, used with a direct object, transmits action to an object and may also have an indirect object, which indicates to or for whom the action is done. In contrast, an intransitive verb never takes an object.

Transitive verbs

A transitive verb takes a direct object; that is, the verb transmits action to an object.

He sent the letter. (letter = direct object of sent)

She gave the lecture. (lecture = direct object of gave)

In these sentences, something is being done to an object.

A transitive verb can also have an indirect object that precedes the direct object. The indirect object tells to or for whom the action is done, although the words to and for are not used. In the following examples, notice the difference between the direct and indirect objects.

The direct object (letter) receives the action (sent). The indirect object (Robert) is the person to whom the letter is sent.

He sent Robert the letter.

The direct object (lecture) receives the action (gave). The indirect object (class) is the group to whom the lecture is given.

She gave her class the lecture.

Learn to recognise words that are direct and indirect objects of verbs. When these words are pronouns, they must be in the objective case.

Intransitive verbs

An intransitive verb does not take an object.

She sleeps too much.

He complains frequently.

In these sentences, nothing receives the action of the verbs sleep and complain.

Many verbs can be either transitive or intransitive.

She sings every day. (no object = intransitive)

She sings rock 'n' roll tunes. (rock 'n' roll tunes receives the action of sings = transitive)

Gerunds

Gerunds are words that are formed from verbs but act as nouns.

You can spot them because they will be verb+ing acting as a **noun**.

E.g. I love shopping!

The word 'shop' is a verb. Shopping is a verb with an –ing ending acting as a noun.

It is the subject of this sentence.

Root words

Word 'trees' or 'maps' can also be useful for identifying different parts of speech and helping students increase their vocabulary. You essentially start with a 'root' word, then try to find as many different variations on that word by adding prefixes (e.g. un-, mis-), suffixes (e.g. –ly, -ful) or by adapting different parts of the word. Take a look at the example below using the root word 'believe'
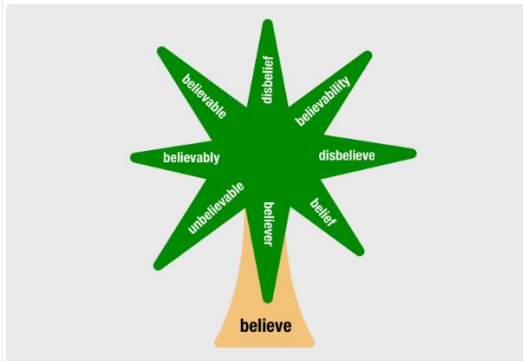
Before clicking onto the next page, and using a pen and paper, see how many words you can write down from the root 'understand'.

Root words continued

You will hopefully have written some of the below:

Understanding
Understandable
Understandably
Misunderstand
Misunderstanding
Pre-understood

Simple sentences

A **simple sentence** consists of one clause that has a subject and a verb. A simple sentence puts across one simple idea or thought. It's a sense unit – a complete unit of meaning.

Here are some examples of simple sentences:

- *Carlos smiled.* (*Carlos* is the subject; *smiled* is the verb)
- *The dog barked.* (*The dog* is the subject; *barked is* the verb)
- *The boys are playing soccer.* (*The boys* is the subject; *are playing* is the verb)
- *Will you help me?* (*you* is the subject; *will help* is the verb)

There is no minimum number of words a sentence must contain in order to be a sentence. Again the only pre-requisite is a main subject and a main verb. For example, *He phoned* is as much of a sentence as is *Atlético Madrid is one of the best teams in Europe.*

Note: A simple sentence is a complete unit of meaning which contains a subject and a verb. It may have other words which help to make up the meaning.

But look at this group of words:

Made in France.

This is correct English but it is not a sentence. It doesn't have a subject. To make it into a complete sentence with a subject and verb, we would need to change it to something like:

My fridge was made in France.

So, that's simple sentences done. But there are other types of sentences too.

Compound sentences

Another main type of sentence that speakers and writers use is called a **compound sentence**. This is a sentence of two or more main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (also called a connective).

Compound sentences contain two or more pieces of information and the pieces are linked by connectives. Coordinating conjunctions are connectives which link text together, such as:

- but

- and
- or

Two simple sentences can be joined together with a connective to make a compound sentence. For example:

I do not like eating strawberries is a simple sentence.

I love eating carrots is also a simple sentence.

If we join them together we have a compound sentence:

*I do not like eating strawberries **but** I love eating carrots.*

Note: *but* is the connective

Here are other examples of compound sentences with the connectives written in bold:

- *The boys walked down the road **and** they met their friends at the bus stop.*
- *The postman came to the door **so** the dog barked loudly.*

One advantage of compound sentences is that a writer can build more variety into her writing. However, one problem is that some writers can get carried away and write long rambling sentences:

We went the park and we met some friends and then we went into town which was not too far but I was quite tired when I got there so I sat down.

Writers and speakers need to take care with connectives. Two in a sentence is usually adequate, and they don't need to be used in every sentence.

There is one other main sentence type – complex sentences.

Complex sentences

A **complex sentence** is used to put across more **detailed** ideas. A complex sentence contains one main clause that can make sense on its own and one or more minor or subordinate clauses that are linked to it. We'll call these minor clauses *subordinate clauses* from now on. It just sounds better.

*When the noisy vehicle passed, **the mighty lion roared.***

The main clause is *the mighty lion roared* because it has a subject and a verb and <u>makes sense by itself.</u>

The subordinate clause is *when the noisy vehicle passed*. Although it is a clause with a subject and a verb, it <u>doesn't make sense on its own</u>. It needs to be attached to a main clause for it to make sense.

We can add more subordinate clauses to make a more complex sentence. In the following examples the main clause is in bold and the two subordinate clauses are underlined.

*When the vehicle passed**the mighty lion roared**because it was annoyed.*

We can even split the main clause with a minor clause and still have a complex sentence.

*When the vehicle passed, **the mighty lion**which was annoyed**roared.***

<u>Another example</u>

In a complex sentence there is one <u>main</u> idea and one or more subordinate ideas. We can take the main idea out of a complex sentence so that the idea stands on its own. Let's consider this sentence:

The alarm was raised as soon as the fire was spotted.

We can cut out the main idea (the **main clause**) and it will stand on its own as a meaningful unit:

The alarm was raised (main idea/main clause because it is meaningful on its own, has a subject and a verb)

What we are left with is:

as soon as the fire was spotted (even although it has a subject and verb, this clause cannot stand on its own; it's not a meaningful unit as it stands and is therefore regarded as subordinate to the main clause, i.e. it is a **subordinate clause.**

Note:

The main clause in the example above is also called an <u>independent</u> clause. It contains both a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence.

The subordinate clause in the example above is called a <u>dependent</u> clause. It contains a subject and verb but cannot stand alone as a sentence. It's dependent on the main clause for it to make sense.

Unit 4: Tenses

Part of the difficulty of teaching tenses is not only that many of us take for granted subtle distinctions ('I **went** to Brazil in 2006' vs 'I'**ve been** to Brazil').

It's also the assumption that many of us have that other languages have neatly corresponding tenses. This, unfortunately, is not the case.

Whilst there are obviously overlaps, especially with many of the European languages, other cultures may have entirely different concepts of the relationship between time and tense.

Rosemary Aitken suggests an approach known as CASSIAL (Choose, Analyse, Sequence, Select, Identify context, Auxiliary materials, Learner error).

Although this acronym may seem a tad long-winded, her approach is relatively self-explanatory: you need to think about the tense you've chosen to teach (what's its purpose? When do we use it? Are there any exceptions).

Make sure you have enough material to illustrate your point and pre-empt any problems your students may have with grasping the nuances of that particular tense.

A deeper understanding of tenses will develop as you become more and more familiar with teaching them and the contrast between each but here we will see an overview of the various English tenses for you to get to grips with.

Look back at the two example sentences given in the first paragraph of this unit.

The first "I **went** to Brazil in 2006" is an example of a past simple sentence, it's the verb 'go' in its past form.

The second, "I'**ve been** to Brazil" is the present perfect tense. We form the present perfect by using the have/has + the 'past participle' of the verb.

In this case the past participle of the verb 'go' is 'been'. Don't get confused with the name '*present* perfect' though, we're still referring to the past. But if we're talking about the past in both cases, why do we need two different

tenses? Why can't we say "I've been to Brazil in 2006"? This is where your 'Analyse' and 'Identify context' steps come in.

Present and Past Tenses

Now let's look at the other English tenses in more detail...

<u>Present</u>

Present simple: routine/habitual actions or things which are generally true

- e.g. 'I work every Saturday', 'cats chase mice'

Present continuous/ Present progressive: happening now or around now

- <u>Form</u>: am/is/are + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'John is working today'

<u>Past</u>

Past simple: completed, finished actions with a specific time reference

- <u>Form</u>: use the past tense of the verb
- e.g. 'I wrote 10 letters *yesterday*'

Past continuous/ Past progressive: actions in progress at a particular time in the past, actions interrupted in the past, two actions happening simultaneously in the past

- Form: was/were + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'What were you doing at 10.00 last night?', 'I was writing letters'

Future Tense

<u>Future</u>

Present continuous: fixed future plans/arrangements with a specific time reference

- Form: am/is/are + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'He's seeing Jim on *Sunday afternoon*'

'going to' + infinitive verb: future intentions and predictions

- e.g. 'She's going to have a baby!'

'will/won't/shall' + infinitive verb: predictions, instant decisions, promises, suggestions and offers

- e.g. 'I think it will rain tomorrow', 'I promise I'll do my homework later'

Future Continuous/ Future Progressive: an action in progress at a particular time in the future

- Form: will + be + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'In 2050 we will all be driving electric cars'

Perfect Aspect

Present Perfect (simple): general past experiences with *no* specific time reference, past actions that have importance in the present, in expressions with yet, since, for, already, just, actions which started in the past and continue now (*non-action verbs only*)

- Form: have/has + past participle
- e.g. 'I've worked here for 3 years', 'a car has crashed into a house', 'I've known her since I was at school'

Present Perfect Continuous: actions which started in the past and continue now (action verbs), recent continuous actions

- Form: have/has + been + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'I've been learning English for 4 years', 'You're all red, what have you been doing?' – 'I've been sunbathing   in the garden'

Past Perfect (simple): when we're already talking about the past but want to refer to an earlier past time

- Form: had + past participle
- e.g. 'I couldn't get in because I had forgotten my keys'

Past Perfect Continuous: an action in progress in the past leading up to another past moment

- Form: had + been + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'He had been cleaning the car for an hour before he stopped because of the rain'

Future Perfect (simple): an action that will have already happened before a specific point in the future

- Form: will + have + past participle
- e.g. 'I'll have already left by the time you arrive'

Future Perfect Continuous: an action that will continue up until a certain future point

- Form: will + have + been + verb + -ing
- e.g. 'I'll have been working here for 10 years when I retire'

FULL Tense Table: Introduction

You will already have a reasonably good grasp of tenses from the introductory materials above. But it's wise go a bit deeper into this.

So, we have provided you with a FULL Tense Table which you should always keep by your side, just in case you are asked a question and your mind goes blank for a moment. It happens to us all!

The table covers the 3 main verb structures for each tense:

- Positive: *You like* Edinburgh.
- Question: *Do you like* Edinburgh?
- Negative: *You do not like* Edinburgh.

This is useful when you decide to cover, say, the positive form and the negative form one after the other. The table will keep you right.

Also, you may get an off-the-wall question from an advanced student: *What's the difference between the two forms of the Future Continuous (Progressive) Tense: will be or be going to?*

Again, your mind may go blank for a moment, particularly when you're deep into another tense. You have your table to keep you right.

In this scenario, you could give the student a copy of the relevant pages for her to read later and she can ask you questions later if she's still not sure. Just for interest, there's little difference between the two forms!

In addition, the table has been constructed so that you can copy a page for a specific tense and give this out to your class. This will save you time rummaging around and making up your own table for that particular tense.

Here is the tense table. Study it well and keep it by your side. It's not difficult; it just takes a bit of time if you're a little bit rusty.

FULL Tense Table: Twelve tenses in modern English

A. There are three <u>simple tenses</u>:

1. Present Simple: showing whether an action or condition *occurs*

2. Past Simple: showing whether an action or condition *occurred*

3. Future Simple: showing whether an action or condition *will occur*

B. There are three <u>perfect tenses</u>

4. Present Perfect: showing whether an action or condition *has occurred* relative to the present

5. Past Perfect: showing whether an action or condition *had occurred* relative to the past

6. Future Perfect: showing whether an action or condition *will have occurred* relative to the future.

C. There are six <u>continuous (also called *progressive*) tenses:</u>

7. Present Continuous: showing whether a continuous action or condition *is occurring* in the present

8. Past Continuous: showing whether a continuous action or condition *was occurring* in the past

9. Future Continuous: showing whether a continuous action or condition *will be occurring* in the future

10. Present Perfect Continuous: showing whether a continuous action or condition *has been occurring* relative to the present

11. Past Perfect Continuous: showing whether a continuous action or condition *had been occurring* relative to the past

12. Future Perfect Continuous: showing whether a continuous action or condition *will have been occurring* relative to the future.

FULL Tense Table

Tense 1: Present Simple Tense (also called the Simple Present Tense)

In regular verbs, this tense is formed by using the verb stem, adding -s in the third person singular (he, she, it).

Subject	Verb Stem
I	*like*
you (singular)	*like*
he/she/it	*likes*
we	*like*
you (plural)	*like*
they	*like*

Positive: You like Edinburgh.
Question: Do you like Edinburgh?
Negative: You do not like Edinburgh.

Tense 2: Past Simple Tense (sometimes called the Simple Past Tense)

This tense refers to actions in the past. In regular verbs, it is formed by adding –ed to the verb stem (or -d if the verb stem already ends in e):

Subject	Verb Stem (adding –ed)	Verb stem (adding -d)
I	*requested*	*liked*
you (singular)	*requested*	*liked*
he/she/it	*requested*	*liked*
we	*requested*	*liked*
you (plural)	*requested*	*liked*
they	*requested*	*liked*

Positive: You played tennis.
Question: Did you play tennis?
Negative: You didn't play tennis.
Note: In irregular verbs, there is a variety of past tense forms: become → became, blow → blew, catch → caught. These just have to be learned.
Note: The past simple can also be formed with the verb be. The past of be, i.e. was and were, is used:
Positive: I was annoyed because the show was cancelled at the last moment.
Question: Were you annoyed because the show was cancelled at the last moment?
Negative: I wasn't annoyed because the show was cancelled at the last moment.

Tense 3: Future Simple Tense (also called the Simple Future Tense) Form 1

For this tense, we use will or shall, followed by the verb stem:

Subject	will, shall	Verb Stem	
I	'll, will, and also shall	close	the door.
you (singular)	'll, will	close	the door.
he/she/it	'll, will	close	the door.
we	'll, will, and also shall	close	the door.
you (plural)	'll, will	close	the door.
they	'll, will	close	the door.

Note that we often use contractions when using will and shall, e.g. I'll and We shan't. Shall is much more common in British English than in American English.
With will:
Positive: You will see her on Sunday
Question: Will you see her on Sunday?

Negative: You won't see her on Sunday.
With shall:
Positive: We shall see her on Sunday.
Question: Shall we see her on Sunday?
Negative: We shan't see her on Sunday.

Tense 3 continued: Future Simple Tense (also called the Simple Future Tense) Form 2

Often called the goingto future, this form is a combination of be + going to + verb stem.

Subject	am/is/are	going to	Verb Stem
I	am; 'm	going to	object.
you (singular)	are; 're	going to	object.
he/she/it	Is; 's	going to	object.
we	are; 're	going to	object.
you (plural)	are; 're	going to	object.
they	are; 're	going to	object.

Note that we often use contractions when using the verb be, e.g. I'm, you're
Positive: You are going to see the show tonight.
Question: Are you going to see the show tonight?
Negative: You are not going to see the show tonight.

Tense 4: Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense is formed by combining the present tense of the verb have with the past participle of the main verb.

Subject	Present Tense of the verb have	Past Participle of the Main Verb	
I	have	washed	the dishes.

you (singular)	*have*	*washed*	*the dishes.*
he/she/it	*has*	*washed*	*the dishes.*
we	*have*	*washed*	*the dishes.*
you (plural)	*have*	*washed*	*the dishes.*
they	*have*	*washed*	*the dishes.*

Note that we often use contractions when using *have*, e.g. *I've* and *we've*

Positive: *You have visited the Prado Museum before.*

Question: *Have you visited the Prado Museum before?*

Negative: *You have not visited the Prado Museum before.*

Tense 5: Past Perfect Tense

This tense is formed by *had,* followed by the past participle:

Subject	had	Past Participle of the Main Verb	
I	*had*	*failed*	*again!*
you (singular)	*had*	*failed*	*again!*
he/she/it	*had*	*failed*	*again!*
we	*had*	*failed*	*again!*
you (plural)	*had*	*failed*	*again!*
they	*had*	*failed*	*again!*

Note that we often use contractions when using *had*, e.g. *I hadn't*

Positive: *You had studied Spanish before you went to Madrid.*

Question: *Had you studied Spanish before you went to Madrid?*

Negative: *You hadn't studied Spanish before you went to Madrid.*

Tense 6: Future Perfect Tense

This is a tense formed by *will have* followed by the past participle.

Subject	will have	Past Participle of the Main Verb	
I	*will have*	*finished*	*my work by 7pm.*
you(singular)	*will have*	*finished*	*my work by 7pm.*
he/she/it	*will have*	*finished*	*my work by 7pm.*
we	*will have*	*finished*	*my work by 7pm.*
you (plural)	*will have*	*finished*	*my work by 7pm.*
they	*will have*	*finished*	*my work by 7pm.*

Positive: *Dad will have cooked dinner by the time we get back.*

Question: *Will Dad have cooked dinner by the time we get back?*

Negative: *Dad won't have cooked dinner by the time we get back.*

Sometimes, the *going to* format is used (*am/is/are* + *going to have* + past participle]:

Positive: *Dad is going to have cooked dinner by the time we get back.*

Question: Is Dad going to have cooked dinner by the time we get back?

Negative: *Dad is not going to have cooked dinner by the time we get back.*

Either form can usually be used.

Tense 7: Present Continuous Tense (also called the *Present Progressive Tense*)

This tense is formed by using the present tense of the verb *be* and the present participle of the main verb.

Subject	am/is/are	Present Participle of the Main Verb	
I	am	drinking	Coke.
you (singular)	are	drinking	Coke.
he/she/it	is	drinking	Coke.
we	are	drinking	Coke.
you (plural)	are	drinking	Coke.
they	are	drinking	Coke.

Positive: *You* **are watching** *TV.*

Question: Are *you* **watching** *TV?*

Negative: *You* **are not watching** *TV.*

Tense 8: Past Continuous Tense (also called the *Past Progressive Tense*)

This tense is formed by *was* or *were* followed by the present participle of the main verb.

Subject	was/were	Present Participle of the Main Verb	
I	was	drinking	Coke.
you (singular)	were	drinking	Coke.
he/she/it	was	drinking	Coke.
we	were	drinking	Coke.
you (plural)	were	drinking	Coke.
they	were	drinking	Coke.

Positive: *You were sleeping when she phoned.*

Question: *Were you sleeping when she phoned?*

Negative: *You were not sleeping when she phoned.*

Tense 9: Future Continuous Tense (also called the *Future Progressive Tense*) Form 1

There are two forms. Form 1: This tense is formed by *will be* followed by the present participle.

Subject	will be	Present Participle of the Main Verb	
I	will be	dining	late.
you (singular)	will be	dining	late.
he/she/it	will be	dining	late.
we	will be	dining	late.
you (plural)	will be	dining	late.
they	will be	dining	late.

Positive: *You'll* **be cooking dinner when they arrive.**

Question: Will you be cooking dinner when they arrive?

Negative: *You* **won't be cooking dinner when they arrive.**

Tense 9 continued: Future Continuous Tense (also called the *Future Progressive Tense*) Form 2

Form 2: This form is made up of: *am/is/are* + *going to be* + present participle

Subject	am/is/are	going to be	Present Participle	
I	am	going to be	jogging	to work.

you (singular)	are	going to be	jogging	to work.
he/she/it	is	going to be	jogging	to work.
we	are	going to be	jogging	to work.
you (plural)	are	going to be	jogging	to work.
they	are	going to be	jogging	to work.

Positive: *You* **are going to be sleeping when she gets home.**

Question: Are *you* **going to be sleeping when she gets home?**

Negative: *You* **are not going to be sleeping when she gets home.**

Remember this: It is possible to use either *will be* or *be going to* in order to create the Future Continuous tense. There's not much difference.

Tense 10: Present Perfect Continuous Tense (also called the *Present Perfect Progressive Tense*)

This tense is formed by combining the present perfect of the verb *be* with the present participle of the main verb.

Subject	has/have been	Present Participle of the Main Verb	
I	have been	serving	customers for nine hours.
you (singular)	have been	serving	customers for nine hours.
he/she/it	has been	serving	customers for nine hours.
we	have been	serving	customers for nine hours.
you (plural)	have been	serving	customers for nine hours.
they	have been	serving	customers for nine hours.

Positive: *You* **have been standing** *here for two hours.*

Question: Have *you* **been standing** *here for two hours?*

Negative: *You* **have not been standing** *here for two hours.*

Tense 11: Past Perfect Continuous Tense (also called the *Past Perfect Progressive Tense*)

This tense is formed by using *had been* followed by the present participle.

Subject	had been	Present Participle of the Main Verb	
I	had been	waiting	for four hours.
you (singular)	had been	waiting	for four hours.
he/she/it	had been	waiting	for four hours.
we	had been	waiting	for four hours.
you (plural)	had been	waiting	for four hours.
they	had been	waiting	for four hours.

Positive: *You had been sitting there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.*

Question: *Had you been sitting there for more than two hours when she finally arrived?*

Negative: *You had not been sitting there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.*

Tense 12: Future Perfect Continuous Tense

Usual Form: This tense is formed by using *will have been* followed by the present participle.

Subject	*will have been*	Present Participle of the Main Verb	
I	*will have been*	*studying*	*for three hours.*
you (singular)	*will have been*	*studying*	*for three hours.*
he/she/it	*will have been*	*studying*	*for three hours.*
we	*will have been*	*studying*	*for three hours*
you (plural)	*will have been*	*studying*	*for three hours.*
they	*will have been*	*studying*	*for three hours.*

Positive: *You will* **have been waiting** *here for two hours.*

Question: Will you have been waiting *here for two hours?*

Negative: *You* **will not have been waiting** *here for two hours.*

Another Form: *am/is/are* + *going to have been* + present participle. This is not used as much as the usual form above.

Positive: *You* **are going to have been driving for more than six hours by the time you get back.**

Question: Are *you* **going to have been driving for more than six hours by the time you get back?**

Negative: *You* **are not going to have been driving for more than six hours by the time you get back.**

NOTE: It's possible to use either *form* with little or no difference in meaning.

Unit 5: Teaching grammar

Well, now you know all the requisite grammar. But how do you teach it?

We're going to show you how so that you'll be able to handle this from Day 1 – and get it right first time.

We're going to cover the 3 key areas which will ensure you get it right first time:

1. Understanding prescriptive and descriptive grammar
2. Different modes of presenting grammar
3. Teaching grammar to different levels

If you take your time with this and absorb it all, it's unlikely you'll ever have to check any book or site about teaching grammar. Unless, of course, you really like reading grammar books!

Understanding prescriptive and descriptive grammar

1. Understanding prescriptive and descriptive grammar

The term *grammar* generally refers to the rules and conventions by which words are ordered and changed to form a sentence.

Grammar can be prescriptive or descriptive.

Prescriptive grammar sets out rules which should be followed if you wish to write 'correct' or 'good' English. Sometimes, these 'rules' are based on observation of the way in which 'educated' speakers actually use the language.

At other times, they are based on what the speaker was taught at school, many years ago. For example: *My teacher always said you should never start a sentence with And* or *But.* Oh, really?

Prescriptive grammar rules are the right rules, according to some 'experts', e.g. *Never start a sentence with And* or *But.*

Prescriptive rules make a value judgment about the correctness of an utterance.

<u>Descriptive grammar</u> seeks to describe how language is actually used in the real world.

Descriptive rules accept the patterns a speaker actually uses and try to account for them. Descriptive rules allow for different varieties of a language; they don't ignore a construction simply because some prescriptive grammarian doesn't like it.

Descriptive rules describe the way grammar is actually used. Descriptive grammar is a reaction to the way people speak and is accepting of alternative, less nit-picking forms.

Descriptive rules also tend to change since language itself is always undergoing change.

Have a look at these example sentences:

1. *Let's start at the very beginning.*

Prescriptive rules of grammar would tell us that this is wrong because the beginning is a specific start point and you can't make it any more specific by using *very*. But descriptive rules say that this type of phrase is common in spoken English, So, we'll align with the descriptive side and we'll keep *very* in.

2. *That's very true, absolutely true.*

Native speakers also say *very true* or *absolutely true*. Again, prescriptive rules of grammar would tell us that this is wrong because you can't have anything stronger than *true*. Something cannot be *more true*. But, again, descriptive rules say that this type of phrase is common in spoken English. So, again we'll align with the descriptive side and use *very true* and *absolutely true.*

3. *Who do you want to speak to?*

A proponent of descriptive rules would say this sentence is fine.

A proponent of prescriptive rules would say the sentence is incorrect; we should never end a sentence with a preposition (i.e. *to*). To satisfy the prescriptive group we would need to change this to: *To whom do you want to speak?*

To us, this seems a bit cumbersome and out-dated but you decide which is best.

4. *Never start a sentence with And or But.*

Let's have a look at this prescriptive rule a bit further by exploring these sentences:

It's a pretty smart long-term business plan but do you think those changes go far enough?

*It's a pretty smart long-term business plan. **But** do you think those changes go far enough?*

The first sentence fits with the prescriptive rule. The second does not and fits with the descriptive approach. There's no doubt in our minds that the second sentence creates a more forceful effect. The introductory conjunction *But* gives more weight to the thought expressed in the sentence and is more emphatic.

So, again, we'll align with the descriptive side in this particular context.

But don't get the impression that prescriptive rules are not important:

1. When we adhere to most prescriptive rules, we are adhering to a standard form of a language that is accepted by most speakers of that language. By doing so, this allows us to be understood by the greatest possible number of individuals.

2. Most prescriptive rules are critical for those who are learning a foreign language. It just wouldn't work if there were no guidelines for, say, learning English.

3. Most prescriptive rules allow a speaker of a non-standard dialect to learn the rules of the standard dialect and employ them in appropriate social circumstances – if they wish to. Unfortunately, non-standard dialects are still frowned upon and not accepted by many groups and can inhibit a person's progress in society, and in business.

<u>Here are some common prescriptive rules relating to English. If these didn't exist, there would be lots of confusion:</u>

The subject of a sentence must agree with the verb. We mustn't say *He go to school.*

In English, capitalise the first letter of a sentence: *My computer isn't working. It needs to be fixed.*

Use subject pronouns after the verb *be* (*It was I who phoned you* NOT *It was me who phoned you.*)

Use the definite article *the* before names of rivers and geographical areas but not before the names of lakes or continents (*the Amazon, the Far East; Lake Superior, Europe*).

Being able to distinguish between the two types is important since you will need to ensure that your learners are familiar with some prescriptive grammar rules, while also alerting them to alternative or more informal descriptive uses.

Both types of grammar have their supporters and their detractors, which in all probability suggests that both have their strengths and weaknesses.

You need to decide how you will approach the teaching of grammar.

Different modes of presenting grammar to learners

2. Different modes of presenting grammar to learners

There is no doubt that a sound knowledge of key grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language. But it's the way that you teach these rules that paves the way to success by better embedding the learning.

Here are some practical ideas you can use to do this:

1. Present material visually

One effective way to show how a given structure is formed, what it means, and how it is used is to present the material visually, using board drawings, illustrations, pictures, objects or props.

You could show them pictures and ask: *What differences do you notice in the pictures?* To practise, for example, *must/must have* (as in *He must have fallen.*) and *could/could have* (as in *He could have been hit by a car.*).

2. Use timelines

Another powerful visual is the timeline, which you can draw on the board. Timelines are simple diagrams that can help learners see relationships between verb forms and their time reference. They are a visual representation of the passage of time. Students can see how the verb works.

We have made this simple timeline to explain the simple past tense.

Yesterday, I walked to school.

There are is no set format for making a timeline. Just make sure you explain it first of all. You can use an X or any symbol to mark the event.

Here's another one to demonstrate the simple future progressive (continuous) tense:

Next year he is climbing Kilimanjaro.

Here we have used a squiggly line to demonstrate the event continuing.

The following exercise will give you huge opportunities for embedding timelines – and it will make grammar learning interesting and fun. The key point is the grammar part is integrated into the key skills of speaking, reading, writing, listening as much as possible.

Exercise –Timelines

As they get used to these, you could introduce the idea of *My Timeline* where students draw up a timeline of important events in their lives from the past till now.

Older students will easily come up with a range of important events. Young students could ask their parents/carers for important dates in the students' short lives– when the student was born, when the student first walked and talked, when the student first went to school, etc.

And you could add in when the student did something silly (this last one will create a lot of fun later when they read out what they've completed).

Then you can change the format – student A interviews student B and draws up a timeline for student B. Then they change roles, and after this they read out the other student's timeline to the class.

You can also give them a short list of important historical past events that have happened in their country and future events the country hopes to accomplish by some date in the future and get them to plot them on the timeline.

These dates could be mixed up on the list. Keep away from serious 'political' events such as attempted coups. Or you could centre it on a world event such as space exploration or the Olympic Games or the key successes in the development of medicine.

You could also give the students a short written text and ask them to read it for comprehension and then they prepare a timeline based on the important facts in that text.

As they progress with the verb timelines, their *My Timeline* can be expanded to marking future events on their personal timeline, for example: when will they be going to the 'big' school, when they hope to accomplish something; when they think they will start working etc.

Remember. Ensure the grammar part – relationships between verb forms and their time reference – is integrated into, and reinforced by, the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

3. Present material through situations

Let's imagine you are presenting the concept of *going to*. Draw a face on the board with a name under it. Name her *Maria*. Put a thought bubble above her. Introduce Maria. Say: *This is Maria and she's thinking about something nice. I wonder what it is.*

Draw an aeroplane. Say: *Ah, she's thinking of her holiday next week. Next week.* (Using gestures of forward movement.) *She's going to fly on an aeroplane. She's going to fly. Repeat this class: She's going to fly.* Class repeats.

Say*: I wonder where she is going.*

Draw or show a big picture of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona – elicit until you get the response. *Yes, she's going to visit the* Sagrada Familia. *Repeat this class: She's going to visit the* Sagrada Familia. Class repeats.

Say: *She's so lucky. I wonder what she will do there.*

Next, draw a camera on the board. *She's going to take pictures. She's going to take pictures. What is she going to do?* Class repeats.

Say: *I wish I was her. What other things is she going to do?* Elicit answers to this.

When the correct response comes up, e.g. *She's going to walk around Barcelona,* drill this (with the whole class and some individuals). Write this response on the board.

Follow the same format now with some additional *going to* questions, then writing the correct response on the board. Then check with concept questions (checking understanding) at random. *So, tell me: What is Maria going to do next week. Where is she going to visit?*

You can then recap on the structure avoiding metalanguage (language about language, e.g. noun, verb), and move them on to practising it with different activities, e.g. a gap-fill exercise and then move them on to producing the correct structure, say, by conversation in pairs and a writing activity.

By giving several different examples through a situation, or specific context, you help the class to build up a clear idea of what the structure means and how it is used. After giving a few examples, you can simply present the situation and try to get the students to give the example.

This will verify how well the students have understood the concept, and this also helps to get the class more involved.

4. Present material through demonstration

Yet another way of showing meaning is to present the learning material through physical demonstration.

Let's just use the language item above – *going to*. You could also demonstrate the concept of *going to*. You could tell them that you're:

- going to open the door
- going to give a prize in a few minutes to whoever is best behaved
- going to open to the window because it's too hot
- going to close the window because it's too cold

and so on.

Using the same format above for situations, it will be another successful way for you to get them to grasp the grammatical concept.

Teaching grammar to different levels

3. Teaching grammar to different levels

Presenting grammar in the EFL classroom is no different from teaching other skills, in that you need to take into account a range of factors, e.g. age, level of competence, previous grammar experiences in the native language and the like.

It would be foolhardy for anyone to say that a specific grammar structure should always be presented to a specific learner at a specific age. There are several variables at play.

So, bearing this in mind, it's best to look at grammar presentations in fairly general age groups. You'll soon know it's time to focus more on grammar when learners start asking you questions, such as: *Mr. Brown, why does this word have an extra letter (dogs) but the other one hasn't (dog)?*

Here is a pretty useful grouping:

1. Young learners: *younger* young learners
2. Young learners: *older* young learners
3. Teenagers
4. Adults

Teaching grammar to younger young learners

1. Teaching grammar to *younger* young learners

1. Key points

Here's what to do and what not to do:

1. It just wouldn't be appropriate to teach grammar formally and explicitly to students **under the age of, say, 8-9 years old.** That's a general age guide. But that doesn't mean you won't be involved in grammar activities!

2. You should not use any metalanguage with your younger young learners. However, there is the possibility that your younger young learners may already be aware of some metalanguage, e.g. *naming word, noun, and adjective* – from their learning in their native/first language (L1) classes.

You need to find out if this is the case. If so, you can use the terms *naming word* and *noun* etc.

3. Your aim is to get them to **notice** some forms and patterns, and then use them automatically after lots of practice.

4. The grammar you help them to **notice** must emerge from meaningful contexts and there should be some sort of meaningful communication that leads to a focus on grammar, e.g. listening to you reading a story or singing a song such as *This is the way we wash our hands*.

Remember this: Never teach grammar in isolation when teaching younger young learners. This would be a recipe for disaster.

5. Younger young learners need to be able to see (gradually) the relationship between form, function, meaning and use, i.e. what form is used to express what functions and meanings, e.g. *Please Miss, can I have a pencil?*

You should strive to balance form, meaning, function and use. Learners should understand not only the mechanics of the language, but also (gradually) the how, why, and where a particular structure, word, or phrase gets used.

6. Where grammar progress is slow, don't think that this is all down to influences of, and differences in, the learners' L1. Some learners have difficulties with grammar in their L1. In addition, some aspects of difficulty in grammar are pretty universal.

7. Developing foreign language knowledge, understanding and application skills is a lengthy and complex process. It is not a linear process, so take your time with them.

Your key role is to help them to <u>notice</u> grammar. Here's an extended example of how to go about this:

An extended example: Noticing grammar

Younger young learners need grammar to take their language learning forward to the next step. They won't know they are getting grammar input. Unknown to them, you will be selecting grammatical features in stories, dialogues, songs, chants, rhymes etc. so that you can bring their attention to these features in non-formal ways.

At this early stage the form-focusing techniques you use will be very simple but very important at the same time.

Imagine you are reading them a story that goes like the one below.

Note:

- The words in bold should be emphasised.
- Take into class three real apples and hold up the requisite number when each number is mentioned.

One day, Piggy the pig ate one **apple**

One day, Lionel the lion ate two **apples**

One day, Ellie the elephant ate three **apples.**

Remember: Here our goal is form-focusing, grasping a correct structure. So, it would go something like this:

T: *Can anyone tell me what Piggy ate?*

Camila: *One apple.*

T: *That's right Camila. One* **apple.** *Hugo, can you tell me what Piggy ate?*

Hugo: *One apple.*

T: *That's right, Hugo. One* **apple.** *Let's say it together –* One **apple.**

SS: *One apple.* (We're using *SS* to stand for *all students.*)

T: *Well done, class. Can anyone tell me what Lionel ate? Yes, Alana?*

Alana: *Two apple.*

T: *Yes, Alana, he ate two* **apples.** *Listen everyone, he ate two* **apples.** *Again, who can tell me what Lionel ate?*

Camila: *Two apples.*

T: *That's right, Camila. Two* **apples**. *Two* **apples**. *Lionel ate two* **apples.** *Let's say it together.* **Two apples.**

Piggy ate **one apple.** *Lionel ate* **two apples**. *Let's say it together: Piggy ate one* **apple.** *Lionel ate* **two apples.**

Good!

Can anyone tell me what they hear? Is it the same? One **apple**, *two* **apples**.

Alvaro: *Not same.*

T: *Why is it* **not the same**, *Alvaro?*

Alvaro: *Two apples has sss sound.*

T: *That's right, Alvaro. Two* **apples** *has a sss sound at the end.*

Everyone, when we have **one apple** *we say* **apple.** *When we have* **two apples** *we say* **apples** *– a sss sound at the end. If we have* **more apples than one,** *we say* **apples** *– a sss sound at the end.*

Can anyone tell me what Ellie ate?

Daniel: *Three apples.*

That's right, Daniel. He ate **more than one apple**. *He ate three* **apples.** *So, Piggy ate* **one apple**. *Lionel ate* **two apples.** *Ellie ate* **three apples.**

Then you could finish the story and recap with an oral exercise on the plural sound with other animals, to reinforce the plural ending *–s.*

Of course, you wouldn't mention the word *plural.* And you can leave exceptions to this plural formation till another time.

Remember this: Do your research and find out beforehand how the plural form is constructed in the learners' native language (L1). This can help you with your planning, particularly where the construction in the native language is much different from English.

You may even be able to impress them by using a bit of their language to show differences or similarities in plural forms. They will love that.

In this example, your prime role is to help the learners **notice** this aspect of form – the *–s* at the end of plural nouns. Further fun exercises based on the topic will help to internalise this grammatical point into their internal grammar system in their memory bank.

Once it is internalised, they should be able to draw on this knowledge and form later as required.

This is an example of learning-centred grammar, taking the opportunity to highlight and help them **notice** some **grammar form** point whilst they are in the midst of the learning process - listening to and speaking about a story.

So, at this very early stage of learning, we are taking an opportunity to attend to form, without them being aware of it.

Also, remember this: Frequently, the best way to get a learning point over is to make up your own material. At these early stages, a story may only last one or two pages, with very few words.

So, it's easy to construct something that fits the bill, using only a few words and relevant pictures you can draw, download from the internet, or take in as realia, particularly where you feel the class materials are not exactly what you want.

We just made up the apples bit when we got to this part of the course. It only took 10 minutes or so. If we had built a little story around it, we doubt if it would have taken more than 20 minutes.

As children get older, you can introduce more explicit forms of instruction but with younger young learners it's much too early to bog them down with too much explicit grammar input.

Abstract and formal presentations of grammar with difficult words and concepts such as *adjective* just won't work with younger young learners.

Softly, softly is the key. Your role for these learners is to help them notice and then try and use some grammatical forms and items as they crop up, assuming they are ready to take these on board.

In the early years, your teaching of English as a Foreign Language will centre mostly on **meaning,** e.g. *This is a* **dog.** This makes sense. But it's important that we do not overlook **accuracy**, so opportune moments should be grasped to help the learners with the form of the language.

Clearly, fun exercises and games will be useful tools to make the grammar input more enjoyable and less abstract for your younger young learners.

Remember: They need to learn words and expressions in context.

2. Different practical techniques for increasing younger young learners' grammar

1. Classroom routines

Younger young learners start to learn a language by picking up chunks of language, primarily from you in the classroom, e.g. *Good Morning, Mr Brown; Please Miss* …

So, the first steps have been taken in building their internal grammar.

2. Whole class instructions

Whole class instructions can be fairly easily grasped and again you can introduce them to patterns and new vocabulary. Backed up with gestures and mime from you and perhaps a game such as Simon Says, these can be transferred to their grammar memory banks:

1. *Speak quietly, please.*
2. *Stand up, please.*
3. *Sit down, please.*
4. *Choose a partner, please.*

3. Chants and rhymes

Chants and rhymes also provide excellent opportunities for introducing grammatical constructions and patterns. You can use many of the traditional songs and chants, e.g. *This is the way we wash our hands* or you can be more adventurous and write your own to suit the targeted language form.

Your song/rhyme to the same tune as *This is the way we wash our hands* could easily be something like:

This is the way we stand up quietly

This is the way we sit down quietly etc.

Use your imagination and don't hang back from singing, even if you can't keep a tune very well. You could always try rapping!

4. Little planned conversations

With younger young learners, it's important to build in planned little chats as an integral part of your daily routine. You can do this with individuals, pairs or groups.

In addition to building bonds, these chats will bring out useful information about their language competence and their interests. This is quality information for you.

You may learn about some structure that you can help them with:

My foot sore. (Oh, your foot is sore? Why is it sore?)

My books is wet. (Oh, your books are wet. Why are they wet?)

This corrective feedback is an essential tool for helping all learners of all ages.

Or your chat may give you useful information about their likes and dislikes. You then have good information as to what your next topic might be – pets, football, superheroes and so on.

5. Increasing their noticing skills

As their learning progresses, you can step up the work on their noticing skills. They may now be ready for more controlled noticing activities. So the story you read is not just for listening and improving their speaking skills, it is also for enhancing their noticing skills.

Example-noticing skills

Prepare a worksheet with statements and drawings:

1. The cup is ……….. the table (with a picture/drawing of a cup on a table). Write the words *on, under* beside the picture/drawing.

2. The plate is ……….. the table (with a picture/drawing of a plate on a table). Write the words *on, under* beside the picture/drawing.

3. The spoon is ……….. the table (with a picture/drawing of a spoon under the table). Write the words *on, under* beside the picture/drawing).

Teach them the meanings of the prepositions: *on, under* – via visual presentation, miming, via puppets or dolls/action men, board work, a little bit of drilling etc.

Now read your prepared story, which might be something like this:

It was time for baby Alexa's dinner.

*Mummy put baby Alexa's cup **on** the table.*

*Daddy put baby Alexa's plate **on** the table.*

*Baby Alexa was watching. She wanted to help. She took her spoon to the table but she put it **under** the table.*

Now give your instructions re what they need to do to complete the exercise in pairs. Read the story slowly, and then read it again at normal pace.

Guide them through the exercise. Read each statement through. Ask them to tick the right choice – **on** or **under.**

You can then build on this simple exercise as time goes on, e.g. increasing the number of prepositions, removing the drawings, putting the questions in a random order so that they are not sequenced in line with the story sequence etc.

You could involve the learners by getting one of them to do the actions, e.g. sitting **on** your chair, crawling **under** your chair etc.

6. Language practice activities for enhancing form/structure

Here are some examples of activities, most of which have been discussed before in other units.

1. Story reading
2. Drilling
3. Cloze Activities
4. Questionnaires, surveys and quizzes
5. Information gap activities - a worksheet activity where learners work out missing and different information that each have on their worksheet.
6. Intentional little chats with individual learners to check their progress and give corrective feedback on the spot
7. Projects. For example, if you are using an excellent story book such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* you could extend this into project work and keep caterpillars in the classroom. The opportunities for grammatical work would be immense, e.g. *Alejandra, your caterpillar is big. But, look, Pablo's is bigger.*

Teaching grammar to older young learners

2. Teaching grammar to *older* young learners

As mentioned before, we hesitate to name an age range as all children are unique and cultural approaches to learning grammar vary.

But to help you, some would say that **grammar learning and metalanguage are best left until children are aged about 8 or 9 years old. So, this section focuses on these older young learners from 8-9 up to the age of 12 or so.**

If they are ready for it, you can start to introduce some language analysis and some metalanguage.

1. Key points

1. Everything we have said above for *younger* young learners applies to *older* young learners. Similar activities can be used but they will be a bit more in-depth and a bit more complex. So, continue to use activities such as:

    1. Rhymes
    2. Chats with individual learners and groups – and discussions amongst themselves
    3. Some drilling
    4. Cloze activities
    5. Questionnaires and surveys
    6. Information gap activities
    7. Presentations
    8. Fun activities and games for motivation and learning

2. Gradually, for older young learners it will be possible to introduce some explicit activities which focus on separating grammar for study. If a set curriculum is not prescribed by the school organisation, you need to decide when to do this. You'll know it's time to do it when your older young learners show an active interest in grammar forms such as: *Why is it that eat becomes ate but beat doesn't become bate?*

3. Ensure you are aware of what grammar they have learned and are learning in their first language and make yourself aware of what metalanguage they know. Don't overdo this. Of course, sometimes it may be necessary to introduce some of these words.

4. Generally, they should be ready for work on some tenses and punctuation and may be ready for some self-correcting.

5. Also, they should enjoy puzzles and crosswords where they can start to discover some basic grammar rules for themselves, e.g. most nouns are formed in the plural with adding *–s* or *–es* but other groups make the plural in different ways.

6. They may be ready for creating basic sentences with models, e.g. Pronoun + Verb + Noun, e.g. *I like apples* or Pronoun + Verb + Adjective + Noun, e.g. *I like green apples.*
   Remember this: Always think: *How can I make this easier for them to grasp?* So, for example, you could give all the word classes a different colour.
   To make it more challenging, you could mix up the order of the words and your learners have to rearrange them to the order of the model.

7. Fun grammar activities are important for older young learners, so include puzzles where students are encouraged to discover grammar rules for themselves, e.g. describing differences between two pictures, which can be used to practise prepositions. Also use some of the grammar activities we will explore later, adapting them accordingly.

8. As with all learning, recycling is critical for success. To embed words and meanings in their memory banks and recall them when they need them is dependent on lots of factors, particularly the number of times they hear and come across a word (frequency). This is language recycling: meeting and using a word several times so that eventually it is remembered and recalled naturally.

Learning grammar can be a tricky business for older young learners. It needs a lot of meaningful practice, recycling and guidance in attending to language form.

Teaching grammar to teenagers

3. Teaching grammar to teenagers

The sections above have focussed on young learners up to about age 12. Young teenagers up to age 16 to 17 or so will continue their progress in grammar in the school environment, doing more of the type of study we have cited for the older young learners but at a more complex level.

Some will continue to progress during the period, so for that group there's not much to add in terms of grammar input. It will be a continuation of the grammar syllabus.

Sometimes, though, this group can be a bit challenging, often because the learners have reached a plateau or because some of them act as if they are a bit 'too cool for school' and they lack interest in learning grammar.

Here's what to do to make your grammar input more interesting, particularly with those who are struggling a bit or are a bit disenchanted with grammar:

1. Avoid using metalanguage

Instead, you could say, for example: *Let's look at another way of describing things you'll be doing tomorrow by using an –ing word* (i.e. am going to)

2. Empathise with them

Tell them you also had struggles with some aspects of grammar when you were younger. But, with a bit of extra effort, you came through. And look at you now!

Remind them, from time to time, how useful grammar is for writing blogs and stories that others will admire, for passing examinations (not only in English), for helping them in later years when they may wish to travel or work in an English-speaking country, and so on.

3. Play to their interests as much as possible

Make a huge effort to find out what they really like. It may be watching action movies, or soccer or fashion programmes on video. Catch their interest.

Then it's easier to introduce some grammatical aspect by stopping the video at one or two specific parts, to ask, for example, why the character made two similar meaning statements but used different words for each statement.

4. Add in a bit of controlled competitiveness

Always do the competitive grammar activity in pairs or groups, so that students are not alone and may feel embarrassed if they can't find the solution. Put time limits on these types of activities to heighten the tension. The activity shouldn't be complicated in any way.

Using the *am going to* example above, it could be:

I'm going to give out a sheet to each group. On the sheet you'll see the words will and won't several times. Put in am going to or am not going to in place of will or won't. Be careful. There may be some parts where you can't do this. (For example, the text may include the construction *Will you come back tomorrow?*)

One person in each group must put their hand up when their group has finished the exercise and checked it all over. Remember, it needs to be correct to get points added for your end-of- term group prize. If it's not fully correct, no points. I'll then pass it to the second group to have a go at getting points for the prize. Are you ready?

Remember this: When doing this type of competitive activity, ensure that it's not the same group that wins all of the time. You may have to change the groups around from time to time to achieve a better balance, but you wouldn't tell them the reason for this.

5. Inspire them by giving them more autonomy

For example:

- Let them do the dictionary work to find synonyms they can use in a passage.
- On occasions, ask those who have grasped a concept to help teach those who haven't.
- Sometimes, let them choose the video they want to watch or the story they want to read (say, from a choice of three). With lots of effort beforehand, you will have chosen areas of grammar in each of the three items that you want to major on.
-

6. Make it fun

Use lots of games to keep up their interest such as snakes and ladders where they pick up cards you have prepared and they have to decide whether the sentence is correct or not if they are to move up the board.

Again, give the groups some autonomy in deciding what's correct or not, but you need to be moving around, monitoring and listening to ensure they've got it right.

Teaching grammar to adults

4. Teaching grammar to adults

In this section, we focus on the older teenager as a young adult, and adults themselves.

Our key focus is not on the grammar items you will cover, because these may very much be the same as we have discussed for *older* young learners above.

So, what is our key focus? It's to ensure you have the best practices and approaches in place for meeting the needs of this diverse group.

This adult class will be a diverse group, diverse in educational background (and therefore competency), age, employment history and culture.

They will have different goals for attending your English class. Some may be immigrants who need to grasp English quickly if they are to secure a job and some may be young adults who need this learning to help them secure entry to college or a vocational programme.

Some may be adults who need this additional learning for their job and some may be young or older adults who want to travel, work overseas or just want to learn English as it's good to have. There may be other goals.

The challenge is evident. How do you satisfy the grammar needs of a diverse group with diverse goals? There is no easy answer to this. However, the challenge is lessened for you due to one key characteristic of this group.

All of the learners in your group have a desire to succeed in learning English. Otherwise, why would they be there?

So, they will be motivated. This is a huge plus point. So, what remains to be resolved is deciding on the best practices and approaches to meet their needs.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Don't assume adults are competent in grammar.

Remember this:Do not fall into the trap of thinking that teaching young and older adults will be easier because they will have made more progress in grammar learning before you have met up with them. It might be the case on some occasions; however, there is no guarantee.

Some may not be any more competent in grammar than a young learner.

2. Don't worry about the level.

When you are teaching grammar to young and older adults, all of the above information about young learners and teenagers is wholly relevant. The key differences will be that there will likely be more explicit sessions on grammar and you will be helping them to be much more autonomous, identifying and fixing the errors themselves where possible.

And with all the work you have completed during this course, you'll be armed and dangerous, ready to handle any query about the Present Perfect Continuous or Phrasal Verbs.

3. Do a needs analysis.

This is imperative.

A needs analysis is a process of finding out what needs a learner has. Don't make this into a big formal event. Do it informally. You could do it during your first meeting with the class or an individual where you explain that you need to find out their purpose for attending your class.

What you're trying to find out is:

1. What are the learner's communicative competence needs at present?

Whilst chatting, think about questions such as:

- *How good is her use of English at present?*
- *What aspects of her English need to be improved to get her to the target situation?*
- *What are her grammar needs?*

2. What are the learner's <u>communicative needs in terms of her goal for learning English?</u>

Ask <u>directly</u>, questions such as:

- *When you go to college next year, what do you have to do in English?*
- *When you're at work, what do you have to do in English?*

Later, <u>analyse, identify and decide what needs to done</u>, via your teaching, to get the learners to their desired situation in the future.

4. Help them to become grammar detectives.

In general, young adults and adults will be able to handle concepts much easier than young learners. This is a key difference between adult and younger learner classes.

Because of their adult ability to handle concepts, you can introduce them to some concepts directly, whilst using the appropriate metalanguage. By doing so, all of this will save time and get them faster to their goals. They will appreciate your plan.

Your aim is not just to introduce them to concepts: it is to ensure they can put these into practice.

Let's explore 4 concepts that are critical in the grammar classroom. They relate to words and their positions and functions in a sentence. By understanding what these are, your adult learners can quickly become grammar detectives.

They will better and faster understand word classes, word order and the nature of words themselves.

If you ensure that they are fully au fait with the terminology and meaning of these concepts, you'll be off to an excellent start. These concepts are:

- Meaning
- Form
- Framework
- Function

If adult learners understand these terms, it will make their grammar learning easier. Not only that, it will involve them in analysing a sentence and working out **themselves** where something may have gone wrong. They

will be able to self-correct, to a degree. Adults enjoy and get great benefit from this technique.

<u>1. Meaning</u>

This seems easy. But it's not that easy. Words can have two meanings:

- A literal meaning - what the word normally means in everyday communication
- A meaning for the context it's being used in

The literal and usual meaning of *wet* is something like this: *not dry; covered in water or another liquid*, as in:

<u>Examples</u>

I slipped on the <u>wet</u> floor.

However, in the next sentence, the meaning of wet bears no resemblance to the meaning above:

Come on, John, don't be such a tiresome <u>wet</u>.

In the UK, *wet* is a disapproving term for someone who displays weak character and does not express any forceful opinions. He 'sits on the fence' most of the time.

So, understanding meaning is crucial. But it's not just dictionary definitions which help us to know meaning. Grammar constructions help us to work out meanings by creating mental images in our mind which help us to work out meaning.

For example, when reading *John was a tiresome…* and coming to the last part of the sentence, we expect the sentence to finish with some kind of complement, some kind of explanation as to who he was. In this case, it's a *wet*.

We can then work out that the meaning of *wet* here is not the not-dry *wet* (adjective), but *a wet* (noun), some kind of person. We know that it can't be *wet* with the meaning not-dry, as that wouldn't make sense after the word *a*.

So, grammatical constructions help us to work out meaning. Grammar and meaning are intertwined. If the adult learner understands this process, in many cases she will be able to identify the meaning of a word from grammatical analysis.

2. Form

Form is what a word looks like, how it is structured, e.g. *boy, boy's* in this sentence:

Example

The big boy took the small boy's ball.

In our analysis, we can have a good go at working out that *boy* is a noun, not just because we know its meaning. We know that nearly all nouns add endings in the plural and in possession, so that's a good clue to this being a noun.

We can add *–s to boy* and it still makes sense. We know too, for example that adjectives, adverbs, determiners etc. don't do this – they don't add plural or possessive endings.

There are other ways to confirm this is a noun but these are not related to form, e.g. it immediately precedes the verb, so it's likely to be a noun or pronoun. Then we can eliminate the pronoun forms, e.g. *he, she, it.* Yes, it's a noun

Knowing all about form can help us work out what part a word is playing in a sentence.

3. Function

Function is another key element.

Function is what a word does in a sentence. Earlier, you will have taught them that nouns are primarily subjects, objects and complements in a sentence. That is, the noun can function as a subject, the object or the complement in a sentence. (It can function as other things too).

With this bit of knowledge, students can better analyse a sentence. Have a look at this interesting sentence:

Example

The ugggawagga kicked a thnollanugga.

Even if they don't know what an *ugggawagga* is, they can work it out its function from analysis. They know that nouns commonly function as subjects, so this is likely to be a noun. It can't be a pronoun, as there is *The* before it.

Plus, the verb functions as a doing word and the shape of the verb tells us that the *ugggawagga* is doing something, i.e., something is not being done to

it. So, they can work out that *ugggawagga* is functioning as the subject of the sentence and it is a noun.

4. Setting

In a sentence, words form a setting into which other words can fit.

If we recognise the setting, we have a good idea of what type of word can be placed in that setting.

Examples

1. *The/A/An ------------ ate the apple.*

We know that most nouns can fit after *the, a, an.* So, the word to complete the sentence is likely to be a noun. It's not a pronoun, verb, adjective etc. We could work out again that the missing word is the subject due to the action word *ate* and the object word *apple.*

At this stage we don't know if the noun is singular or plural. If we take away *The*, then we know it's singular. If we take away *The* and *A*, we know it's singular and begins with a vowel. In any case, we know it's a noun that fits this frame.

2. *The big boy -----------the small boy's ball.*

If we are told that when this is completed it will be a sentence, then it's easy. Into the frame steps a verb. We don't know which verb it is but we do know it is a verb because it can't be a sentence without a verb. We also know it's a transitive verb because there is an object.

Encourage your adult students to become grammar detectives applying these four tests/tools in order to work out word classes, to find what or who is doing what in the sentence, to find out what's wrong, and most of all to enable them to identify and repair errors on their own, where possible.

5. Use games and drills sparingly.

Use games and drills sparingly with young adults and adult students. All of them are there to achieve a goal within a time limit. Although you may see great benefit in these, some of your students are unlikely to look at it the same way. This can have a dampening effect on the class atmosphere.

You could use the odd game or two, so long as you carefully explain the end goal.

Many adults see drilling as a childish activity. You can often see a disgruntled look on some of the faces. Why let this spoil the good atmosphere you have built up?

You'll need to play this by ear. If you feel it's right to introduce these techniques now and again, then we're sure it will work out fine.

Overview: Module 3

A lesson plan is essentially a step-by-step guide detailing exactly what you will do throughout the course of the lesson. It is an important way of ensuring the lesson is coherent and achieves its final objective(s).

But that's not the only important purpose. Your lesson plan needs to **motivate** your students to learn. Because motivation is so important in teaching and learning, we have dedicated the whole of Unit 4 to motivation. So, for the moment, remember that a key purpose of a lesson plan is to motivate your learners to learn.

For most schools, lesson planning is a formal requirement but there's not necessarily one method of EFL lesson planning which is considered universal.

Ideally your school should have a general procedure, partly because if you are absent for any reason another teacher can understand exactly what you were intending to do and can carry that out with as little confusion as possible.

The important thing, therefore, is that your plan is thoughtful and detailed, not only to achieve your lesson aims but also for the smooth-running of the class.

When planning a lesson, you need to think about a variety of factors, including:

- Overall objective
- Learning outcomes
- Logical development of stages
- Time management

The way you plan an EFL lesson depends largely on the type of skill you are focusing on (language, pronunciation, reading etc.) on that particular day. There are certain recognised procedures for the preparation of each and in this module we are going to look at the three most common:

- Presentation Practice Production (P.P.P.)
- Test Teach Test (T.T.T.)
- Task-based Learning

Practice

Practice, or controlled practice, is the important middle stage towards effective language production.

Most of the exercises you do in class, from gap-fills to matching sentence halves, make up this stage and you will often do these exercises as a natural part of your lesson.

However, this can mean that the practice stage takes over and becomes just a series of ill-thought-out tasks to get your students through the lesson. However tempting this is, you really need to remember that this section is supposed to be part of three equal steps which make the lesson as a whole.

This stage should be all about ensuring that the students have understood the target language presented and can practice using it accurately. Exposure to the language through a variety of tasks is an important part of the practice, as is checking for correct usage through reporting back.   A typical practice stage activity could be getting the students to complete grammar tasks like the following…

Production

Whilst many students will be able to give accurate responses in the controlled practice stage, original production of the language can often be much more difficult.

This is the step where students go from being passive learners to active users. If the presentation and practice sections are not well thought-out, it will be evident when students come to produce the language themselves.

It's important to remember not to tell the students what to say at this stage, the production needs to be 'free' so that students can become

independent language users. There are a variety of activities that can be used for free production:

- Role-plays
- Debates
- Quizzes/games
- Descriptions
- Writing…

Here you could get the students into small groups and ask them to discuss a particular question e.g. 'what would you buy if you won the lottery?' perhaps asking them to give reasons for their choices or rank the order of their hypothetical purchases.

Or groups could even act out their own version of the video clip shown in the presentation stage.

Any number of activities are possible but just remember to give students the time they need to effectively produce the language because some may be daunted by the prospect of playing an active role and, of course, thinking in another language always takes a bit longer!

Lesson plan structure

This is the traditional structure of a lesson plan. This lesson's aim is get students to notice how the use of past continuous interrupted with past simple creates a dramatic story. It could be used with a pre-intermediate to intermediate level class. Please pay attention as you will be tested on this later!

Build context   e.g. Ask students to talk about the most frightening experience of their life.

Model sentence e.g. Teacher says 'I was crossing the road when I was hit by a car!'

Highlight meaning e.g. Teacher shows a past entry in their diary of the date when it happened (fictional hopefully!).

Highlight spoken form e.g. teacher says the sentence naturally with linking sounds and intonation.

Check understanding. E.g. What was I doing just before being hit?" (Answer, crossing the road) This highlights what was in progress just before the interruption.

Highlight written form e.g. Teacher writes on board 'I was crossing the road when I was hit by a car!'

Summarise rule e.g. Teacher clarifies that this sentence starts with past continuous (I **was crossing**) interrupted by past simple (when I **was hit**…)

Restricted practice e.g. Teacher hands out two cut up parts of sentences with past continuous and past simple actions to match up. (Teacher monitors students while they do this task to see which students need further help).

Report back e.g. Teacher asks students with correct answers to feedback to the rest of the class.

Freer practice e.g. In groups, students are given some pictures e.g. a train, a wet floor, a horse, an aeroplane and a puddle and are instructed to create a dramatic story to use the target language. (Teacher monitors and takes notes for further work). Students perform/tell their story to the whole class.

Consolidation and error correction e.g. Teacher highlights some common errors with this tense on the board to help clarify the meaning and use of these two tenses (never singling out individual students of course).

Unit 2: Test Teach Test

Another popular method of lesson planning is known as the Test Teach Test (TTT) approach. In this method, students are immediately asked to do an activity using the target language. This allows students to call upon their prior knowledge and lets the teacher assess whether they know the language or not and teach accordingly.

Test

The initial 'test' shouldn't be anything too demanding or long-winded. The idea is that it's diagnostic, allowing you to identify any gaps in the students' knowledge. An advantage of this type of lesson planning is that it mixes things up a bit for the students so they don't get bored with the same old lesson format. It also means that the class feel that what you're teaching them is tailored to their needs rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.   Even for lower-level classes this method can work as long as you sufficiently 'grade' the exercise, you don't want to overwhelm the students too much at this stage and make them feel as if they know nothing! An example format for a pre-intermediate class could be:

- **Lesson aim**: Describing people and clothes
- Give the class a handout with an image and ask them to describe the people in pairs.

- Move around the room monitoring and answering any questions
- Elicit any good vocabulary you heard from students related to physical descriptions and clothes

Teach

The next stage is to fill in your learners' knowledge or present the new language point from scratch if necessary.

This can be difficult to plan ahead of time because you do not know exactly what your students' requirements are until you test them, so it may be a bit daunting when you are a novice teacher. But don't let this put you off, it can be a really beneficial method for students who have been learning English for a period of time but only 'half-know' certain language.

Once you have tested your students, you can try to 'complete' their knowledge.

- Ask students to come up and write one or two sentences on the board that they used when describing the two police officers
- Get the class as a whole to discuss if the sentences are correct or not, guiding them to form accurate sentences. Correct common errors such as "she hasn't long hair" or "he is wearing a trousers"
- Look together at grammar related to physical descriptions e.g. she's got…, he's wearing… etc.

Look at this example:

Match the sentence halves:

1. He's wearing…
2. She's got…
3. His…
4. He has…

1. …tie is blue [3]
2. …blonde hair [2]
3. …a hat [1]
4. …dark hair [4]

Test

This stage is similar to the Production step from PPP and requires students to use the target language in a freer practice session. Hopefully, (if you've filled in their knowledge sufficiently!) students will here be able to become accurate users of the target language. As mentioned in unit 1, any number of activities can be used and this is often the most fun and interesting part of the lesson where students can actually enjoy using the language.

Student A:

1. Find someone in the magazine your teacher gives you.
2. Describe that person here:

....
....

Student B:

- You are an investigator.
- There was a murder, and student A saw who did it. It was a famous person, but student A doesn't know their name.
- Ask questions to find out as many details as possible. Ask complete questions.

Wearing?...
Looks?...

Search in the magazine and ask "Is this the person you saw?"

Unit 3: Task-based Learning

Task-based Learning is a method which focuses on learner autonomy and user fluency through students undertaking 'real-life' or problem-solving activities.

Nunan describes it as "teaching and learning a language by using language to accomplish open ended tasks".

Learners are given a problem or objective to accomplish but are left with some freedom in approaching this problem or objective."

Usually this involves an introduction to the theme before setting a quite open task such as 'plan a birthday party' or a 'murder mystery' style activity.

Afterwards, learners feedback via a report or reviewing the language used for the task.

Some tips to keep in mind come from the Asian ESL journal:

- The purpose of the task must be clearly stated
- The task must be suitable for the level of the students
- Tasks must be interesting and motivating to the students
- The language that the task will produce must be predicted
- Tasks should have variety and flexibility

Task Based Learning ideas

A Task-based approach

As pioneered by N. Prabhu. Task -based learning offers an alternative for language teachers. In a task-based lesson the teacher doesn't pre-determine what language will be studied, the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it. The lesson follows certain stages.

For TBL activities examples given, make note of the following stages for the activity:

- **Assignment**: Resources and instruction are given to students.
- **Planning**: Students use the resources to complete their assignment.

- **Reporting**: Results are reported orally through formal oral report before the class or conversational engagement.
- **Analysis**: The teacher evaluates performance of tasks and highlights areas of interest.
- **Practice**: By participating in tasks that are relevant and practical a student's confidence and proficiency in learning a new language grows.

Pre-task

The teacher announces the material and informs the students what they will have to do. During the task stage the teacher may prompt the students to remember applicable language that will help them for the task. It can also be helpful to play a recording of other students who have completed this task so that the students know exactly what they need to do. You can offer the students time to prepare for the task and make notes.

Task

The teacher can guide the students and praise them as they work through the set task, applying the language skills they have acquired.

Planning

As a group, create lists of everyday problems and the people, places, things and actions related to these problems. Prepare a written report based on the lists for each group member to use in delivering an oral report.

Report

Students report back to the class with teacher advising on the order of reports to be presented and possibly also giving some feedback. Teacher may compare other students' interpretation of the same task to provide some contrast.

Analysis

Next the teacher highlights relevant parts from the main text of the recording which students should analyse. The teacher may ask students to identify remarkable features within the text. The teacher can also demonstrate the language that the students used during the report phase for further study and analysis.

Practice

Finally, the teacher identifies language areas to focus on based upon the needs of the students and what transpired from the main task and reporting phase. The students go ahead and undertake practice activities to increase their confidence whilst making a note of useful language.

TBL Maximizes Learning Opportunities

Teachers who take advantage of a TBL approach provide engaging learning opportunities that are practical for their students. It is important to stimulate students as much as it is to encourage them. The use of tasks designed to specifically relate to learning a new language allows students to have more meaningful classroom experiences.

The positive results of a TBL approach can be attributed to the following factors:

- Freedom in applying language to practical tasks that are relevant to the student.
- Natural language patterns develop within the context of the tasks.
- Exposure to a broader vocabulary results, including phrases and figures of speech.
- Language responds directly to the needs of the students.
- TBL is communication centred which is motivational.

The language explored arises from the students' needs. This need dictates what will be covered in the lesson rather than a decision made by the teacher or the course book.

It demands a strong communicative approach where students spend a lot of time speaking. PPP lessons seem very teacher-centred by comparison.

The focus of the lesson is on the task itself. This takes the focus off "learning and producing English" which is very helpful in terms of increasing self confidence and is authentically communicative.

It is enjoyable and motivating.

Look at the following lesson plan based on TBL.

Aims:

Students will collaboratively write instructions

Students will demonstrate understanding of their peers by making a paper wallet and boat.

(You will need two laptops or two Interactive Whiteboards if you are really lucky)

Lesson outline

Teacher's instructions "Today you are the teachers."

Teacher appoints two groups, A and B. Each group watches a video of how to make something (approx 2 minute long) in different rooms.

Each group watches the video as many times as they like.

Task: Students write instructions on how to make the object. (Set a time limit of say 20 minutes)

Teacher instruction check question: "What are you doing now?" (Answer, staying in this classroom, watching the video, writing instructions.)

"How long is the video?" (answer: 2mins)

"How many times can you watch it?" (As many as we like)

Here is the video used:

Teacher instruction: "Group B. Come with me into a separate classroom. Watch the video."

Here is the video used:

Teacher monitors each group, correcting and feeding in useful language.

After 20 minutes, teacher brings students back into the same classroom together.

Sit student A's directly opposite students B's with a desk in between and hand out paper/card.

Teacher instruction "OK. A's go first. Do not show the object. Do not say the name of the object. Do not use your hands to gesture."

B's listen and do what A asks.

Outcome:

Hopefully most students will have been able to make the paper boat and wallet.

Post task.

Teacher instruction "I'd now like you to write a short text on what you did in class".

Summary

Present Practice Produce (PPP)

Although many teachers may have been trained to use a Present Practise Produce (PPP) method, the task based approach has been proven to be more effective specifically when teaching a new language.

A standard PPP lesson

- Teacher presents an item of language in context to convey its meaning. There are several ways to do this: through a text, a situation or a conversation as an example.

- Students are then requested to complete a controlled practice stage. Here, they may have to repeat target language through choral or individual drilling, fill gaps or match sentences. The emphasis is very much on students using the language correctly and helping them become more comfortable with it

- The final stage is the production stage, also known as the 'free practice' stage. Students undertake a communication task such as a role play and are expected to produce the target language whilst also using any other language that they have already acquired which is deemed suitable and relevant to the task.

Students will often produce the language but the form sounds unnatural as they completely overuse the target structure.

Additionally, they may not produce the target language during the practice stage because they will fall back on existing language that they already know to complete the task.

Although the logic and structure of a PPP method has its appeal, students respond better to TBL. TBL has also proven to deliver a better quality of learning.

Producing structured language results through the PPP method does not create the results students need outside the classroom. For more natural, organic speech, TBL is much more effective.

With activities that are interesting and engaging, it also produces those results in a shorter period of time.

For further reading on this area see 'A Framework for Task-Based Learning' by Jane Wills, Longman; 'Doing Task-Based Teaching' by Dave and Jane Willis, OUP 2007.

Although in this module we've looked at the most commonly-used methods for planning an EFL lesson there are many more styles which can be used, all with their own advantages and disadvantages.

As long as your aims are well thought-out and you have a clear plan of what you intend to do in each lesson then you're already more than half way there.

Play around with the different styles to see what suits you best and, most of all, keep you and your students engaged and responsive!

Unit 4: Motivation

Motivation

We've mentioned the word 'motivation' several times during this Module. Motivation is so important that it deserves a whole Unit to itself.

Motivation is important in everything you say and do with your learners, and not only in lesson planning.

We would be taking up a big chunk of your valuable time if we went deeply into theories of motivation which, although sometimes interesting, are unlikely to add much to your learning at this stage. You can delve into these if you wish.

You know what motivation is and you know that at times you are highly enthused and driven, whilst at other times, you don't quite feel the same drive or you're bereft of any drive at all. Of course, your students are no different.

When you are motivated, there's some kind of inspiration and eagerness to succeed in what you are doing, no matter what this is. If you apply this awareness to your students, you can identify the motivated learner; this is a learner who is willing and eager to invest great effort and substantial time in language learning, and is driven to make progress and do better.

Learner motivation, then, makes learning, as well as teaching, immeasurably easier and more pleasant, not to mention more productive.

What is more enlightening – instead of digging into the numerous theories – is how motivation occurs and how knowledge of this may be of practical use in your role.

1. Two types of motivation

Generally, there are two types of learner motivation:

Intrinsic motivation

This is the urge to engage in a learning activity for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes. This type of learner is driven by personal achievement.

Extrinsic motivation

This is derived from external incentives and reward and success, e.g. a qualification, need for a high proficiency score (e.g. to gain entry to an English-speaking university), or the desire for higher pay (where language proficiency offers that).

Whether one type of motivated learner is more motivated than another is up for grabs. There is not enough conclusive research. What is more important for you is to give thought to this when meeting up with your new class, particularly adults.

Asking them why they have decided to take your course (and noting the reasons) will be of great benefit to you when you are teaching them or when you happen to mingle with them during some other school activity.

By being informed, you can empathise with them, foster the necessary attitudes, and directly encourage their drive, be it personal achievement or reward. You will contribute to their motivation and will be able to kick start any drop in this if there is a lapse.

Unfortunately, a motivated learner's motivational levels can drop, as we'll see in the next section.

2. In general, some key elements of motivation

Here are some key elements of motivation, drawn from our experience:

You need to be motivated to motivate them

You have to be motivated before you can motivate your learners. Don't expect your students to be motivated if you are not. There may be times when you feel lacking in vitality or conviction and find it difficult to overcome a temporary lacklustre feeling.

Tough though this is, you will need to get out of it or your students will quickly become deflated.

Everyone can be motivated in some way or another

There may be the odd student who appears to be demotivated. There may be many reasons for this – perhaps there are cultural considerations, e.g. he doesn't like you taking up his learning time when you get your students involved in fun activities. Or he may be finding the work too hard. Or, perhaps, he's not convinced by the whole communicative approach.

Therefore, you need to find out as much as possible about your students from Day 1. What are their likes and dislikes? How have they previously been taught? Did they communicate with you during the lesson or were your lessons wholly teacher-centred?

And if you can't identify a reason for the drop in drive, make up some reason for meeting with the student for a few minutes after class (away from his classmates) to try and identify the reason for the drop in motivation. It's amazing how a little chat can help.

Once you trace the reason why, you can work out ways to help build up his motivation.

Motivation should be multi-directional

When you take up your teaching role, remember that motivation should be multi-directional. Don't just think that your role is only to motivate learners. You can also help to motivate a colleague when he is feeling down. You will reap rewards from this in the future, when he will help you when you are a bit lacklustre.

Motivation doesn't last

Motivation doesn't last. You need to keep at it all of the time. Motivating others is a strenuous activity but it's also rewarding. You cannot give up when you, your students or any of your peers are feeling down. Dig into your reserves and help as much as you can.

Remember this! We have mentioned this before and we mention it again. The whole person comes to school, be it students or teachers. They come with all their personal baggage, e.g. worrying about a sick parent/carer, or upset due to a breakdown in some personal relationship.

So the motivated person yesterday may not be the motivated person today. Help and show empathy wherever you can.

3. Relationship between motivation and language learning

As research has shown, and as your own personal learning and any teaching experiences probably confirm, motivation is very strongly related to achievement in language learning. You will be in a position to strongly influence your students' motivation to learn their new language.

To this end, you will need to ensure that your lessons have clear objectives and goals, that your activities are varied and personalised for students, and that you give feedback and assess on an ongoing basis.

By doing so, you will be able to foster, stimulate, or even rekindle your learners' motivation to learn.

If you are able to accomplish this, learning will happen regardless of whether your students' motivation is extrinsic or intrinsic.

There's little doubt about it.

4. Recognising a motivated learner

What do you think are the characteristics of learner motivation? How will you recognise a motivated learner?

Think of motivated students you have observed in the past. You may have thought: *She's always on the go, wanting to learn. How does she do it?* What traits and qualities did she have?

Or, perhaps, you have always been a motivated learner. What traits and qualities do you have in relation to learner motivation? Reflect on this.

Research has shown that the motivated learner will typically display most or all of the following characteristics:

- The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges, and has confidence in her success.
- The learner finds it important to succeed in learning in order to maintain and promote her own positive self-image.
- The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what she sets out to do.
- The learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, and top grades.

- The learner is very aware of the goals of learning, or of specific learning activities, and directs her efforts towards achieving them.
- The learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning, and is not discouraged by setbacks or apparent lack of progress.
- The learner is not bothered or frustrated by situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; she can live with these patiently, confident that understanding will come later.

5. How you can influence and drive learner motivation

Always focus on practical ways in which you can influence and drive motivation.

Here's what to do:

Make them aware of their own success

A very simple yet effective way you can motivate your students is to make sure that they are aware of their own success. This message can be conveyed by a nod, a tick, or a smile. But a sense of pride and satisfaction may, of course, be enhanced by explicit praise or approval, or by a comment in the learner's answer book.

Set clear objectives and goals

Learners should be aware of the objectives of the task – both language-learning and content. Tell them. For example, a guessing-game may have the language-learning goal of practising questions, and the content goal of guessing answers.

Remember! Some learners, particularly adult learners, may get annoyed by too many fun activities. If you tell them the purpose of the game before you start, then they will be more accepting of the fun element.

Explain purpose and usefulness

It may seem obvious, but learners sometimes need to know why they have to learn something. For example, students may wonder why they have to learn prepositions.

If you explain to them that preposition errors are the most common form of mistake in student writing, your learners may be more motivated to pay closer attention to the material. At the very least, they won't think that they are wasting their time learning something they think they don't need.

Vary classroom topics and tasks

Topics and tasks should be selected carefully to be as interesting as possible. However, there are very few single types of activities that interest everyone, so you should use a wide range of different ones over time. Even within a lesson, we can organise a series of tasks that have students doing different things to keep them engaged.

For example, you can get your students to listen to a dialogue about 'School Routines'; then have them complete a worksheet; then get them to compare their answers with a partner; then have students partner up to create an original dialogue on the same topic. Variety is a major key to success.

Generate tension and challenge

Game-like activities provide pleasurable tension and challenge through the process of attaining some 'fun' goal while limited by rules. The introduction of such rules (an arbitrary time limit, for example) can add excitement to almost any goal-oriented task.

Create a fun atmosphere

Entertainment produces enjoyment, which in turn adds motivation. Entertainment can be teacher-produced, such as jokes, stories, mimes, songs, or even dramatic presentations. It can be in recorded format, such as movies, video clips, or television documentaries.

Other activities such as a role play and simulations that use the imagination and put learners in other situations can be very motivating.

It is important to note, however, that some students are inhibited and may find such activities intimidating at first. As such, you especially want to try to avoid running students up to the front of the class to 'perform' spontaneously.

Personalise learning

Students are more likely to be interested in tasks that relate to themselves or their interests. For example, getting students to use their own or each other's opinions, tastes, experiences, and suggestions as material can be very motivating since they're relating the learning material to their own life experience and context.

We have taught boys-only classes in the Far East where the English Premier Soccer League was king, as was David Beckham at the time. Every single boy in the class was mad on football and anything to do with football, e.g.

magasines, strips, soccer cards with their favourite player's picture on the front and key details about him on the back, etc.

There was no need to motivate them when a lesson was built round, for example: *What are the 3 questions you would ask David Beckham if you met him?* OR *Draw your own football strip and tell your group why you chose the colours and the shape of the badge.*

Create open-ended exercises

A cue which invites a number of possible responses is usually much more stimulating than one with only one right answer. By aiming for this, the participants' contributions become more unpredictable. They are also more likely to be interesting, original, or even humorous. For example, *If I won 100,000 euros, I would...*

Give students a sense of autonomy

An example of autonomy would be to have students pick from a list of topics to debate. Or you can let students choose partners with whom they would like to team up with to take part in a specific activity or game.

Assess students

Whether or not a learner admits it, regular and formal assessment is a very powerful motivator. The motivating power of tests/quizzes, in particular, appears clear: learners who know they are going to be tested on specific material next week will normally be more motivated to study it carefully than if they had simply been told to learn it.

Assessment is a very useful and needed incentive, provided there is not too much stress attached, and provided it is not overused or given without purpose.

Overview: Module 4

So, now that you know the different approaches to lesson planning, it's time to go about actually creating your plan!

There are a number of factors to consider when planning, and a variety of materials, resources and aids you can use to make the best lesson possible for your students.

In this module we're going to look at lesson aims, components of a lesson plan, planning an individual lesson and how to choose assessment tasks, course books, reference materials, supplementary resources and teaching aids.

Much of what is covered corresponds to what is examined in part of the Teacher Knowledge Test (the TKT); a qualification teachers can take to show their knowledge of language and EFL teaching.

Unit 1: Lesson Aims

Every lesson must have some sort of purpose or end goal, otherwise what's the point?! This doesn't necessarily mean that every lesson will have the final aim of learners understanding a particular grammar point though. The goal could be anything from developing listening skills to practising language for some kind of 'real-life' situation like booking a hotel.

Although it may seem quite formal to 'identify the aim' of every lesson, it really can help you concentrate on delivering a successful lesson as well as naturally leading you to materials which will best fulfill this aim.

However, aims aren't all necessarily direct learning objectives. They could be aims for yourself, for example, limiting your Teacher Talk Time as much as possible, or even aims focused on a particular student to make sure they're keeping up. As well as overall aims, therefore, you will also have a number of secondary or personal goals.

Look at the following table taken from The *Teacher Knowledge Test Course* focusing on different types of aims:

1. Subsidiary Aims
2. Main Aim
3. Personal Aims

Main Aim	Subsidiary Aims	Personal Aims
To practise making polite requests in the context of making holiday arrangements. Example: 'Could you give me some information about hotels?'	Grammar: to revise modal auxiliary verbs. Functional example: Could/Would you…? Vocabulary: to consolidate lexis for travel, accommodation. Phonology: to focus on intonation. Speaking: to give controlled practice	To improve my organisation of the whiteboard. To give clearer examples.

In order to fulfil your lesson objectives, you will have to work out a procedure to do so. For example, if your aim is to 'consolidate vocabulary for travel', the procedure could be 'give students a crossword of travel/transport vocabulary'.

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Lesson components

Components	Questions to ask yourself
Information about the learners	Who are the students? What level are they? How many are there in the class?
Materials used	What course book/materials do I need?
Extra teaching aids	Is there anything else I need to bring with me to the lesson i.e overhead projector?
Main aim	What is the overall lesson objective?
Assumed knowledge	What do the students already know in relation to the topic/lesson?
Subsidiary aims	What are some of the other lesson goals?
Personal aims	In what ways can I develop or improve upon my own teaching?

Procedures	What are the activities for each stage?
Interaction	Will the students be working in pairs? Groups? Will they feedback to the teacher or will the teacher present to the class?
Stage aims	What's the goal of each stage in the lesson?
Timing	How long will each stage take?
Anticipated problems	What might go wrong? What might the students find difficult?
Potential solutions	How can I deal with any problems?
Reserve tasks	What will I do if students complete tasks ahead of schedule?
Homework	What extra work will the students need to do at home?

Summary of lesson components

Rather than thinking of a lesson plan as a formal procedure, you can instead think of it as answering a series of questions like the ones in the Lesson components section.

Try to use colours and diagrams even, whatever makes it clear to you.

The idea is that it works like a 'road map' (Scrivener) guiding you through the stages of the lesson and ensuring that you meet all your objectives successfully!

Unit 3: Planning a lesson

When planning a lesson, therefore, we should think about a number of things.

After deciding on the lesson objectives, we must consider how to accomplish them.

Depending on the type of lesson aim (understanding a new grammar point, developing reading skills etc.) the structure of your plan will change dramatically.

Perhaps you will choose the PPP approach to present the past simple, or, for a listening skills lesson, you may prefer to follow the TTT method.

Once the format of the lesson has been chosen, the individual components need putting together. What are the desired learning outcomes? Are the students already a little bit familiar with the topic? Is there anything I want to work on personally during this class?

When these more general considerations have been addressed, you can get down to planning each individual procedure as a step-by-step guide to lead you through the lesson. Analysing the aims of each stage will ensure that the activities are appropriate to the learners' level and work to fulfill the main objective. You also need to see whether the stages follow a logical order and if they flow well into one another.

Anticipating potential problems at each stage and having back-ups prepared if necessary will help to reduce any anxiety you may be feeling as a new teacher.

Timing can be important too, your lesson may run over or be too short and if you think about these possibilities ahead of time and what to do in each eventuality you won't be caught off-guard.   Formal lesson planning such as this is usually a requirement for teacher training courses to help you understand how to prepare a lesson and to analyse how well you've grasped the key concepts.

However, in the real world you may not always do such detailed written preparation. You may even see some teachers write their plan as a numbered list on a scrap of paper, but this isn't to say that they haven't thought about the elements listed above, it may just come as second nature to them to incorporate the necessary factors.

Lesson procedures

Compare the 'procedure' sections of two different lesson plans:

Time	Procedure	Stage Aim
10 mins	1. Give students pictures of two towns and ask them to describe the contrasts.	To introduce the target language
10 mins	2. Read article describing differences between the two	to give students a context for the TL in use
5 mins	3. Elicit forms from text used for comparison	To ensure students understand the meaning of the TL
7 mins	4. Students work out rules for using comparatives	To check students' understanding of the TL
10 mins	5. Gap-fill exercise using correct form of comparative adjectives	To give students controlled practice of the TL
15 mins	6. Speaking activity contrasting new pictures (in pairs)	To encourage freer use of the TL

Time	Procedure	Stage Aim
10 mins	1. Ask students some lead-in questions about topic	To introduce and generate interest in the topic
7 mins	2. Pre-teach essential vocabulary	To focus on useful language in preparation for the task
5 mins	3. Students read quickly for gist and feedback answers to some general questions (what is the text about?...)	To develop students' ability to skim/scan for essential information

7 mins	4. Students match headings to the paragraphs	To develop understanding of how the text fits together as a whole
10 mins	5. T/F detailed comprehension activity. Check with a partner	To encourage students to read for detail
15 mins	6.Split students into As and Bs, give each a different follow-up text to read and then summarise orally to their partner	To give freer practice of consolidating information they've read in spoken form

Lesson Planning Plus

In Modules 3 and 4, you have studied lesson planning. This study will have given you a solid foundation for lesson planning and the various approaches to it.

However, we have had many requests from students who want to learn more about lesson planning.

Here is a summary of their key points:

- They feel that lesson planning is the most important teacher skill of all. (They're right, of course.)
- They feel that they need a lesson planning route which they can follow from start to finish, for every single lesson.
- They would like to have a lesson-planning template that they can use for every single lessonplan during their TEFL career.

This is a big ask, as they say. But we couldn't ignore this. It's our role to help our students whenever we can.

Remember this: You have learned enough so far to ensure you can plan a good lesson.

You decide!

Unit 4: Choosing assessment tasks

Assessment is a necessary part of any course which helps you understand your students' strengths and weaknesses, their progress and even their receptiveness to learning.

Formal assessment

Some types of formal assessment are:

- Proficiency test (assesses overall language ability)
- Progress test (assesses how well the students have understood a unit or section of a course)
- End-of-course test (assesses learning at the end of the programme)
- External examinations, such as IELTS Cambridge ESOL exams etc. (a form of proficiency test which gives students a certificate of language ability)

Formal assessments need to include a variety of tasks so that all of the four language skills are covered and because each kind of activity has its own pros and cons.

There is also the need to assess both passive and active language knowledge (understanding and being able to produce).

A good test should be fair, appropriate and not too difficult to mark. Single-focus tasks such as True/False/Don't know and matching exercises are easy to mark because the answers are either correct or incorrect.

Extended activities such as interview or writing tasks are best for assessing productive skills but are slightly trickier to mark because they are subjective.

Match the following activity types below with their purpose shown in the table:

a. summary writing
b. sentence transformation
c. cloze test
d. re-ordering jumbled sentences

Activity	Example	Purpose
1	Complete the sentence so that it means exactly the same: 'My brother lent me a pen' 'I borrowed a pen from my brother'	To test knowledge of grammatical structures and relationships between language
2	to want go Do the you park to? Do you want to go to the park?	To test grammatical knowledge, cohesion and collocation.
3	Read the novel extract and write a synopsis for a young audience	Test reading comprehension, writing ability and a range of language knowledge
4	Using a text with blanked out words, complete using only one word in each space. The missing words may or may not be provided in a word bank.	To test knowledge of grammar and lexis as well as reading comprehension

Assessment

However, assessment needn't always be in the form of a test or formal examination.

Informal assessment is equally as important and can come in the form of homework tasks or class activities. Formal assessment doesn't always reflect your students' true language abilities – perhaps they are nervous or misread instructions – but informal assessments can often provide a better overview of students' all-round skills. They also help you to understand how successful your teaching has been and plan future lessons with the students' constant development in mind.

Informal assessment really can be any activity done in class or at home for which you keep a note of marks/progress but without giving students an actual grade. You could also ask your students to build up a portfolio which provides continuous assessment and allows them to evaluate their own work. This lets you track the ongoing progress of your students regularly so that you are able to adapt your teaching according to their needs.

Both performance-based assessment and portfolio assessment can be used to measure progress and ensure objectives are met and can be monitored by teacher observation and student self-assessment.

Unit 5: Course books and reference materials

When choosing a course book for your class (if the school hasn't already assigned one) there are a number of factors to consider.

You need to think about who your students are and what they need. So, what should you consider?

The basics such as age group and level are obvious, but it's also important to think about why that particular class are studying English. Is it for work? As a hobby? Are they children being sent for extra lessons by their parents? And if so is this because they struggle with English or because they want to get ahead? Are they planning to travel or move to an English-speaking country? All of the above will influence what type of course book you choose – it's not just a 'one-size-fits-all' thing.

Another element to consider is whether your students will be taking a test at the end of the course or not. Course books which prepare students for the IELTS exam are very different to those aimed at students taking the FCE, for example. Or is there simply an internal test to see if they can move up to the next level. Are all of the students taking the exam or just a handful?

If the course does aim to get students ready for a particular exam then the likelihood is that a general English course book will not be sufficient, you need material which helps students not only get up to the right level for the exam but one which also trains them in the techniques required for that particular test.

Books and Articles

Grammar books

Many teachers who are new to EFL teaching are quite unsure about grammar. You will know whether your students' language is correct or not instinctively but may not know why. You may also be hesitant about teaching all the nitty gritty rules and exceptions. Although we've done an overview of some key grammar points and how to teach them in Module 2, it's still important to increase your grammar knowledge if you still don't know exactly what it's all about.

You may actually want to start with a grammar book intended for non-native speakers of English because the grammar contained in these kinds of books is much more simplified such as Murphy's "Grammar in Use". It also gives you a good idea of what exactly your students need to know at each level.

When teaching the present continuous to a pre-intermediate group, for example, there's no point going into detail about the fact that we can also use the present continuous for future arrangements – it will probably just confuse them. These kinds of books can equally help ease you in to a more thorough grammar knowledge without being overwhelming.

Once you're a bit more experienced, however, and are teaching higher levels, you may need to consult grammar books intended for EFL teachers though.

These contain detailed explanations and will enable you to really understand the nuances in English grammar that students at advanced level really need to know.

If you're a visual learner you might want to try newer grammar books which have corresponding interactive activities online, or ones which contain exercises to put yourself in your students' shoes!

Teacher's books

Teacher's books are available with any course book but some are better than others. The idea is that they provide suggestions as to the best way to use the material in the course book. Some give a detailed, step-by-step guide for the teacher while others just give correct answers and ideas for extension activities.

Depending on how confident you are in your own ability to plan a lesson independently will therefore also affect which course book and matching teacher's book you will choose.

Lots of newer teacher's books contain supplementary worksheets, end of unit tests, progress tests or extra photocopiable activities too. They can even give detailed explanations about the answers given and procedures to follow if students have difficulty with a particular exercise. For most they are a valuable resource!

EFL articles for teachers

Many articles in EFL magazines can shed light on learners' difficulties with language. Often this is due to interference from the students' mother tongue because many don't understand why it's not possible just to 'translate' everything they would say in their own language into English.

Unfortunately, that is not how it works because different languages have developed over thousands of years and certain tenses or vocabulary don't necessarily match up from one language to another. When teaching overseas to students who all have the same mother tongue, it will become easier to spot the difficulties those leaners face, but if teaching to a mixed class of Mexicans and Chinese, for example, those groups of learners may have different problems and you may want to read up on how to get the best from them. (see learner English)

Keeping up with research into new approaches to EFL teaching can also help liven up your lessons and keep students engaged.

You may want to try out a new planning method or a more informal way of presenting a grammar point, or just gain some new ideas. A couple of popular ones are *English Teaching Professional*, *Modern English Teacher* and *Asian EFL Journal*.

Dictionaries

Bilingual dictionaries provide individual words translated to and from English into another language. They can be very useful for quickly checking a word the student doesn't know but in certain contexts can lead to mistranslation.

This is because many words have several meanings and these aren't always listed, especially in a pocket dictionary.

A student may not understand the word 'bow' (as in bow and arrow), look it up in a bilingual dictionary and find a translation in their own language which corresponds to 'taking a bow'.

We also don't really get much information about the word itself, for example if it's a verb with an irregular past form or how to use it correctly in a sentence.

That's why it's usually best to refer students to a monolingual English dictionary (what most of us would think of as a 'normal' dictionary).

These contain the words, their meaning and examples all in English so students can really get to grips with how to use the word properly.

They can also be great as a reference material for you to ensure you give clear definitions of words and useful examples.

Learner dictionaries are similar to monolingual dictionaries but are probably even more valuable as they provide definitions appropriate to different levels.

They can also give detailed information about collocations, whether the word should be used in formal or informal situations and even notes which warn students about common mistakes associated with its usage.

Some also provide synonyms (words which mean the same) and antonyms (words which mean the opposite) just like a thesaurus.

Thesauruses are particularly useful for when you teach more advanced students because they can help to expand the learners' vocabulary. Sometimes giving synonyms to help your class understand a new vocabulary item is more effective than a definition. For example, it's very difficult to explain the word 'furthermore'.

You could say "furthermore is an adverb used to introduce a fresh consideration in an argument" (Oxford English Dictionary), or you could simply list a number of synonyms such as 'additionally', 'moreover' etc. to get across the meaning.

One of best approaches however, is to give students example sentences or within the context of a text. For example "English is an international language. Furthermore, it is now considered essential for a successful career".

Phonemic Chart

A phonemic chart shows the different sounds which make up the English language using the phonetic alphabet. These are very useful for helping your students with correct pronunciation of English words.

There are many words in English which are spelt differently but sound the same, e.g. 'm**ee**t' and 'm**ea**t'. Here both the 'ee' and 'ea' spellings correspond to the phonetic alphabet letter 'i:'. But in other words 'ea' can be pronounced 'ɜ:' as in '**ea**rn'. There are also plenty of words with similar spellings which are pronounced entirely differently e.g. 'th**ough**' and 'en**ough**'. This phonemic chart from the British Council is interactive and allows you to hear the sound by clicking on it, whilst this one from the course book series New English File makes each letter of the phonetic alphabet into a picture which can be especially useful for young learners:

Colleagues

Don't forget that more experienced EFL teachers can often be the best source of reference material. Chances are that they've taught the same level or same language before and can give you some good advice. They may have even encountered certain difficulties that they can warn you about or give suggestions on how to overcome them. Every teacher has their own methods though, so don't worry if what they advise doesn't suit you, but any guidance can at least make you consider your own planning more carefully.

Unit 6: Supplementary tasks & materials

Supplementary materials can be anything from extra worksheets to DVDs, basically anything we can use in addition to the course book.

As mentioned in the previous unit, some course books come with supplementary materials in the teacher's book which complement each lesson, but you may also wish to use other sources to add a bit of variety. It's all too easy just to follow the course book exactly, but this can be quite unimaginative and may not always suit your students' needs.

You may also have a mixed ability class, so providing learners with slightly different activities linked to the same language/theme/skill can make sure you provide the right material for different students.

They can also be useful as back-ups for students who complete the assigned tasks more quickly than others.

Can you think of any other reasons for using supplementary materials?

Unit 7: Teaching Aids

Teaching aids are the equipment and tools we use in the classroom. They can be used to illustrate a point, reinforce a skill, relieve anxiety or boredom or help learners memorise information. There are many different teaching aids available to us as EFL teachers and these include, but are not limited to,

- CD players
- DVD players
- Puppets
- Interactive white boards
- Boards
- Computers
- Visual aids such as flash cards
- Games
- 'Real-life' materials such as menus
- Language laboratories where students can listen and record themselves speaking

There are many different ways to use all of the teaching aids available to you but you must think about the best ones to fulfil your specific objectives and suit your students. For example, using puppets is a fantastic resource for teaching children but may seem patronising to an adult class of business English learners – unless used ironically perhaps!

Try to prepare any aids in advance and always check to make sure equipment works before the lesson; there's nothing worse than planning a listening skills lesson only to find that the CD player is faulty.

Board

The board is an essential part of any classroom which allows you to write grammatical structures and explanations as well as elicited vocabulary in a place that all students can see easily. You can also build up ideas into diagrams as they crop up and for team competitions (most students secretly love being given the opportunity to write on the board, even adults!). Try to use different colours to highlight rules or parts of speech and it can be an idea to divide the board into different sections e.g. a space for grammar rules and model sentences and one for vocabulary.

Overhead projector

An overhead projector can be really useful for showing a worksheet to the class rather than holding up a book or piece of paper and pointing to the sections you want them to work on. If you prepare a completed handout with the correct answers written this can also be a quick way of going through an exercise or piece of homework. If you want students to only focus on one specific exercise, you can even cover up sections and gradually uncover them as the lesson progresses. Aside from this, the overhead projector also provides a great resource for groups to present their work to the class.

CD and DVD player

Obviously CD players are essential for any listening exercise where students listen to a dialogue and complete comprehension tasks. They can also be used to model pronunciation though and even to listen for pleasure as a 'Friday afternoon' activity. DVD players add a visual element and can therefore really help those learners with visual memories. You can also do a variety of activities such as pausing the DVD and predicting what happens next, watching without sound and getting the students to guess what's being said and even for playing a recording of the students themselves in action.

Computer

Computers can be really useful for accessing the web and the various resources available online. There are millions of interactive EFL exercises out there and so you can easily find extra practice to add to any lesson, getting the students involved by asking them to click on the correct answers themselves. The students can also join English language forums and find an English-speaking penfriend to e-mail or chat with. You can set projects for your students too, either at home or if you have a few computers available in class. And you don't necessarily need an Internet connection; it can be as simple as typing a group story or making a poster.

Language Laboratory

Many schools have a language laboratory or self-access area where there are books, computers, CDs etc. for students to use and where they can study by themselves. This encourages autonomous learning and allows learners to choose the activities they want to do. Language labs have listening and recording equipment that students can use to practise speaking and pronunciation and assess their own performance by listening back, promoting self-evaluation. You can also get them to record speaking tasks done in class or for homework so that you can monitor their performance and give individual feedback.

Flash cards

Flashcards can be used to present vocabulary along with a matching image so that students are better able to remember it. They can also be useful for drilling pronunciation or even grammatical structures. The idea is that they are 'flashed' up quickly to elicit a quick response. For learning new vocabulary, the word is usually displayed with the picture but you can then erase the word and only show the picture (or have the word written on the back) to test what the students know.

Real-life materials

When teaching abroad it's always a good idea to take some authentic material with you from home. This could be newspaper articles, menus, maps, tourist information about your home town or even bus/train timetables. These are known as 'realia' and can make the learning experience much more authentic and memorable for our students. It doesn't necessarily need to be things from your home though, when teaching food vocabulary you could take in different fruits and vegetables to stimulate all the students' senses and add an element of fun to the lesson. Realia can even be used to tell a story, as part of a game or to form a dialogue.

Unit 8: Self-made supplementary materials and teaching aids

Our key focus in this section will be to consider two particular situations:

- where you are teaching with minimal resources and cannot depend on pre-made supplementary materials being readily available
- where you find that the coursebook, if you have one, lacks the types of materials you wish to have

In these situations, you must resolve this yourself and make them.

Your supplementary materials are worksheets and other materials you can make and use in addition to the classroom text, if there is one. They include skills development materials, grammar, vocabulary and phonology practice materials, collections of communicative activities and the like.

Of course, supplementary materials may also come from authentic sources. Examples of these authentic materials are newspaper and magasine articles, pictures, and videos.

You can use your supplementary materials to:

- overcome the lack of materials when you are teaching with minimal resources
- replace unsuitable material in the classroom text, if there is one
- fill gaps in the classroom text, if there is one
- provide appropriate material for learners' particular needs and interests
- give learners extra language or skills practice
- add variety to your teaching

Making your own supplementary materials may seem daunting at first but it's not if you know what to do. Teacher-made materials can be very effective, assuming that they are relevant and personalised and answer the needs of the learners in a way no other materials can.

They offer some very important benefits.

Designing your own materials

1. Benefits of designing your own materials

1. Making them fit the context

Several criticisms of commercially made materials continue to be voiced, particularly in relation to context. Here are the main criticisms:

- The coursebook and accompanying materials produced for the global EFL market, including the EYL (English for Young Learners) market, are too generic.
- They are not geared to specific groups of learners.
- They are not geared to any specific educational or cultural context.
- They contain functions and speech outputs based on situations that the majority of foreign language learners will never be in.
- They are Anglo-centric in their construction and production and therefore do not reflect any local varieties of English.

Thus, many teachers find it much, much better to make their own materials to make them fit their own specific educational and cultural context.

2. Making them fit the individual learners

Commercially produced generic materials cannot address the needs of all the unique individual learners in classrooms. But you can by:

- creating or adapting materials to the individual needs and learning styles of students
- creating or adapting materials that take into account the learners' first language and the learners' culture and personal experiences
- creating or adapting materials at the right level for particular learners, to ensure the materials present an appropriate challenge and degree of success
- changing the often-repetitive model and organisation in the coursebook to add more variety within the classroom to meet developing needs (e.g. using whatever is appropriate to meet the goal – topics, situations, functions etc.)

3. Making them fit today's events

Commercially produced materials cannot keep up to date with local and international events. World and country changes can happen rapidly and learning materials need to keep up with changes and events that are of special interest to learners in their situation.

Only teachers on the ground can make the materials relevant to today's world.

4. Lack of finance

Many schools may not have the budget to supply modern resources for the TEFL classroom. Instead of moaning and groaning, most teachers step up to the plate and design their own materials as a matter of course. The school and your learners will be very appreciative of this.

Guidelines for designing your own materials

2. Guidelines for designing your own materials

Remember the words of the Cheshire Cat in 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Alice: *'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'*

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where —' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

If you haven't had much experience in designing materials, or none at all, it's important that you have a route to follow; otherwise, things may not turn out as planned and you and your learners may miss out on learning opportunities.

Here are the practical points you need to consider when planning your materials, whilst constructing your materials and when reviewing your materials after completion.

Here's what to do:

1. Meet your learners' needs

Ensure your materials meet the learners' needs in terms of their language skills, their cultural and educational context and experiences, their learning preferences and their interests. In addition, ensure you are aware of the culture-specific learning processes of the learners in their situation.

For example, in some countries parents/carers and educational institutions want to see less fun and more work, so you will need to take this into account.

Also, in some countries, there is often more emphasis given to rote learning, e.g. parents/carers and institutions wanting to see you giving the

young learners lists of vocabulary to rote learn even though these may be learned out of context with the classroom learning at that time.

Always ensure the materials link with what the learners already know; otherwise the materials will not meet the intended objective without a whole lot of additional input.

Where you do feel that something must be included but is not linked to their knowledge or experience, ensure you clarify the inclusion before they start working with the materials.

2. Fit your materials with the syllabus and curriculum

Ensure the materials fit with the goals and objectives of the syllabus and curriculum, if these are in place. Make sure you are au fait with the complete syllabus and curriculum.

3. Consider your skill base

Consider whether or not you have the skills to do a reasonably professional job. Designing materials from scratch needs a bit experience to draw on, creativity, competent artistic skills and a sound understanding of materials design and construction.

Absorb all of this section and, when in situ, ask others for help where you need to. Do not hold back on this.

That being said, it's not that difficult. There are plenty internet sites that can guide you in drawing.

4. Ensure you search for resources

Ensure you have the required resources. Don't spend time on planning the creation or adaptation of materials if you do not have the ready resources to enable you to do a good job.

Some teachers will propound that it's necessary to be able to access computers and the internet, a good colour photocopier, a laminator, CD player etc. Well, we know teachers who survived nicely for years in the heart of Africa without any of these in the school.

But they made friends inside and outside of the school and soon had access to some of these tools. You'll never get if you don't ask. If you don't have these, it's not the end of the world.

We mentioned *access*. Schools are busy places and often other teachers have planned to use a particular resource. Ensure you plan well with the school administration so that you can use the resource at a planned time. Book these well in advance.

5. Consider copyright

Ensure you consider copyright. Yes, you must-not just for your sake but also for the sake of the Academy. Unless an artist, writer or producer clearly states that the material can be freely used within your classroom, then you need to take care.

If you use copyrighted material without permission in your class, which then goes down so well it is included in the school brochure or on the school website, this could cause a problem for the school.

If, say, a writer or producer says you can use their material in class, that's fine. If, say, they say you need to ask permission to do so, then you should follow this up and seek permission. If, say, a writer or producer says you cannot use the material, then steer clear of it.

In general, an idea cannot be copyrighted, so you may see something that sparks your interest and make up your own material based on that idea. However, the simple lifting of photos and text as they were originally produced is not generally allowed.

Re pictures and images, there are numerous sites that offer these without any copyright, but at a price, e.g. www.shutterstock.com

6. Work out your time

Ensure you have adequate time to see this through. Experienced teachers will share one indisputable fact with you, based on their experiences: it always takes longer than you think it will.

7. Stimulate interaction within cultural 'rules'

Ensure you materials stimulate interaction and provide a communicative purpose. There's little point spending lots of time on the production of materials if those materials are not going to stimulate interaction in the classroom. Such interaction should be in line with the types of interaction they will come across in the outside world.

The materials don't need to be complex. A simple information gap activity worksheet will fit the bill nicely.

However, good spoken communication does not just rely on the words spoken.

There are other factors such as turn-taking (me then you then me then you), and recognition of personal space (proxemics) that you need to take into account when designing interactive activities for a communicative purpose.

8. Stretch your learners

Ensure your materials provide a necessary 'stretch'. It's critical that you produce materials that stretch your learners' knowledge, understanding and application skills.

This is necessary for ongoing development of the learners' language competence.

To do this your materials should build on what they already know but should include new items (e.g. new vocabulary or a new structure) which will stretch them to generate new language, e.g. by guessing, predicting, hypothesising, noticing links etc.

9. Develop their 'how to learn' skills

Ensure your materials 'push' learners to develop language learning skills and strategies.

You need to teach your learners how to learn, e.g. understanding learning strategies that can help them whenever they have difficulties in communicating.

Some examples of learning strategies are re-wording (trying their communicative piece in a different way, saying it differently) and the use of good body language (facial expressions, nodding etc.) which can help their communication move forward.

Also, through time, young learners can be taught how to self-evaluate their work.

10. Focus on form too

Ensure your materials focus on form as well as communicative function. In the modern communicative classroom, the emphasis is often on independent and creative expression with less emphasis on the form of the language.

Some teachers may take their learners through a lengthy period of learning without focussing on any aspects of language form.

For inexperienced teachers, in particular, this may be because their TEFL course of learning focussed entirely on communicating (at all costs) and little time, if any, on ensuring that issues of form and structure etc. are addressed.

Or it could be the inexperienced teacher is unsure of some elements of form which often come under the heading of *grammar*.

Nevertheless, you owe it to your learners to help them notice and understand the forms of language so that they don't just use speaking and writing to communicate but also understand that knowing the form of the language will help them speak and write correctly at the same time.

What this means is that you should also include exercises and activities that will encourage learners to analyse the language and form and test their own hypotheses as to how the English language works, depending on their level, of course.

11. Integrate all the language skills

A lot of language materials focus mainly on speaking and writing. And, in the TEFL classroom you often see the same focus-speaking and writing. But listening and reading are also important.

This phenomenon is peculiar, particularly with listening skills. When communicating, your listeners will not only speak. In turn, they will listen. Listening is an important skill and plays a critical part in the overall communication. But it is not focussed on to the same extent as speaking is.

So, don't fall into the speaking and writing trap. Create materials that give the learners opportunities to integrate all the language skills.

12. Ensure authenticity

It is paramount that your learners are exposed to authentic materials. In essence, authentic materials are materials which are **unscripted** and not developed specifically for language learning purposes. They haven't been fabricated for a language learning purpose.

This applies not only to written texts (e.g. newspapers, magasines, original letters etc.) but also to spoken and visual texts. Ensure the recording of the spoken voices is real and not fabricated for a learning purpose. Ensure too that any video you use hasn't been performed for a language purpose.

If you record your own materials, ensure that they consist of people saying and doing things in normal situations, unaffected by the microphone or camera and making no effort to change their communication to suit a

language purpose, so that your learners have access to truly authentic language.

13. Link materials

Ensure your learning materials connect. If you lose sight of your objectives and the need for steady progression in language learning to achieve goals, you may end up with a pile of unconnected materials which may confuse your learners.

So, keep a close eye on coherence throughout your development process. Ensure one piece links with another in steady progression towards the language learning goal.

14. Impress

Ensure you make a good impression. Ensure your materials look as good as they can, with consistency in the layout.

In addition, ensure you don't cause anxiety or confusion for the learner. For example, when designing an information gap or cloze activity ensure there is adequate room for the learners to write their answer.

Ensure they know whether the hatched lines in the gap represent the number of letters or not. Ensure they know whether to write or print their answer.

Also, it's always wise to consider whether or not you will be using these materials again. If they are materials which will be used frequently, get them laminated (where possible) so that they still look fresh when used again and again.

15. Ensure clear instructions

Following on from the example above, clear and precise instructions are critical. If you need to start the exercise again because the instructions are weak or unclear, this doesn't look good and is unfair to your learners. It will be frustrating for you and them.

In addition, the language in instructions needs to be appropriate to their level and in simple words. There are no prizes for you for using complex words.

Follow these guidelines and you won't go wrong.

One of the most rewarding experiences in teaching is designing and developing your own materials and reflecting later on how well they helped you and your learners to achieve the language goal. Go for it!

Effective teacher-made materials

3. Effective teacher-made materials

Four effective forms of teacher-made materials/aids are worksheets, workcards, flashcards and your own realia.

They can be used for oral practice in pairs or groups, or for listening, reading and writing practice, with students working with other students or on their own.

Remember this: Many of the examples of worksheets on the internet are pretty boring to look at. Usually, there is just a list of questions with spaces for the answer. Try and make your materials a bit different and add in a picture or some colouring.

1. Your worksheets

- A worksheet is typically a Letter/A4 sized page (or two) of tasks.
- It is given out to individuals, pairs or groups, depending on the approach required.
- Learners give their answers/responses on the worksheet.
- You circulate during the completion.
- You typically check the answers/responses with the whole class.
- Sometimes they are disposed of, sometimes the learners can keep them, sometimes you'll take them in to study progress, e.g. handwriting, or to include them in the learners' portfolios.
- Information gaps are
  See http://bogglesworldesl.com/information_gap.htm for examples of a typical worksheet activity where learners work out missing and different information that each have on their worksheet.

Here are three simple worksheets we have created for you, to demonstrate that it doesn't take long to construct them. We've used ready-made pictures but you could just as easily draw or

trace these, or ask some artistic teacher or student to help you, if need be.

Example 1: Where is our butterfly?

Choose one word to fill the space: **behind / above / below / beside**
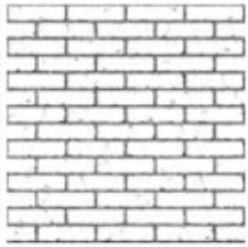
_____ the wall

Example 2: Word game

(Note that we have scaffolded this activity, from easy to not so easy.)

I've made some small words from the letters in this big word:

caterpilla

What are they? Fill in the spaces.

1. Clue: it eats mice	C _ _
2. Clue: water comes from this	T _ _

3. Clue: you can get this from the doctor	P _ _ L
4. Clue: make a noise with your hands	C _ _ _
5. Clue: not early	_ _ _ E
6. Clue: a fruit	_ E _ _
7. Clue: the cost of something	P _ _ _ E
8. Clue: part of a flower	P _ _ _ _

Example 3: The Gruffalo

(Note that this worksheet is based on an excellent storybook for young learners.)

Put these sentences in order from 1-8. I've done number 1 for you.

Mouse: Here, by those rocks, and his favourite food is roasted Fox.	
Fox: A gruffalo? What's a gruffalo?	
Mouse: It's terribly kind of you, Fox, but No. I'm going to have lunch with a gruffalo.	
Fox: Where are you meeting him?	
Fox: Where are you going to, little brown mouse? Come and have lunch in my underground house?	
Mouse: He has terrible tusks, and terrible claws, and terrible teeth in his terrible jaws.	
Story teller: A mouse took a walk through the deep dark wood. A fox saw the mouse and the mouse looked good.	1

Mouse: A gruffalo! Why didn't you know?	

Workcards

2. Your workcards

- You would typically create these yourself for all kinds of tasks and situations.
- These are typically small laminated cards, about the size of an index card. You would laminate them so they can be used repeatedly with different learners. But if there's no laminator, just keep them in plastic files.
- The learners complete their activity on a separate blank sheet or in their notebooks, not on the workcard.
- They are typically for short tasks – individual, pair or group.
- Different learners may be working with different workcards at the same time.
- Depending on your choice you can colour them, and put little pictures on them.

They are excellent for:

- Recycling activities where, for example, some individuals need more practice with some specific element
- Giving out to more able learners who have finished ahead of the others who are still completing the whole class activity you set
- Giving the class a break from learning after they have all been working hard. Quizzes, small puzzles and riddles can all be entered on these cards for these relaxing moments.

The workcards are then handed back to you.

Here are some examples which should be self-explanatory:

1. These could be used for a discussion between pairs or groups, for a short written piece, or for a student presentation to the whole class:

When?   Where?
My favourite... what?
Why?   How often?

friend   relative
My oldest.......
toy   book

2. This type could be used for relaxation and perhaps a little prize could be given to the winning group. You could encourage them to do some dictionary work for any difficult words, where dictionaries are available. Remember this: Don't use examples of animals or things which don't exist in their culture.

What is it?

This is a large, dog-like animal.

It is strongly built.

It can weigh as much as 40kgs.

Its coat can vary in colour, from a lighter grey in the warmer months to a darker, reddish brown during the winter.

It has white marks on its upper lips, and dark marks on its tail and front legs.

When hungry, it will kill sheep and cows.

Over 50% of these animals live in Northern Castile and León

It is, of course, the Iberian Wolf. Depending on student levels, you could increase or decrease the level of difficulty.

Some practical ideas for workcards

<u>1. Stamps</u>

Put different postage stamps on a card. Ask the pairs to identify what countries the stamps are from. A word bank can be supplied. Higher

performing students can be asked to add the capital of the country, name of language spoken, etc.

2. Read and draw

Read and draw. You could write a description of a place, a person or an unusual animal (e.g. an armadillo) on the workcard. The students have to draw a picture from the description and compare their efforts.

Then you can let them see a real photo/picture of the place, person or animal. This can be good fun. Some may go right off track as they have misunderstood an important part of the instructions. Remember, though, that this is not a drawing task per se. It's a reading and comprehension activity.

3. Things in common

Give a list of 3-4 words. The students write what the words have in common. For example, beginners could get *dog, cat, bear:* animals. Older learners could be challenged with *pint, silver, width.* They may take some time to work out that no other English words rhyme with these words.

4. Matching

You make up two lists, one of countries and the other of capitals. The students match the country with its capital city.

5. Words that sound the same

You make up two lists of words that sound the same but have different meanings, e.g. *right, write.* The students have to match the words that sound alike. This can also be done with opposite words and words that rhyme.

Flashcards and Realia

3. Your flashcards

A flashcard is a laminated picture of, say, a house with the word *house* below it or on the back of the picture that you can hold up for all to see.

You could make these Letter/A4 size. You could also make smaller versions so that, say, each pair can have their own to look at. Gradually, through time, you'll be able to miss out the picture and just show the word.

It's good to intersperse showing the word with also writing it on the board, to get their minds thinking further that spoken words can be written down.

It's a good idea to colour your flashcards from the start, if you can, e.g. nouns in pink, adjectives in blue, verbs in green etc. You would typically start with nouns. Of course, you won't use the metalanguage with them. You would just call it a thing or animal etc.

When you move on to say, adjectives, you'd point out that this card is not in pink like the other card (nouns) and this will help them a bit to understand categories and differences through time.

With 'showing' activities like holding up flashcards, always plan to do some other activity after this to consolidate the learning. For example, once they have learned some simple words, they can practise in pairs, reading words to their partners.

Remember! Become familiar with what supplementary materials are available in your school.

When you arrive, draw up a needs analysis checklist at the beginning of the course to find out what you will want to add to the classroom text, if there is one, when you are planning your lessons. Plan ahead!

4. Your realia

We've already mentioned realia in a previous section.

We mention it again to demonstrate that you should consider using your realia and not just stuff that's already in the classroom or in a teachers' cupboard.

With a bit of good reflection, you can come up with your new and fresh idea.

For example, all you have to do is bring in 3 glasses and a jug from your apartment. Then fill the jug with water.

This simple realia aid can be used for several activities:

- Vocabulary: degrees such as *full*, *half-full, empty, half-empty*
- Comparatives and superlatives: *big, bigger, biggest* amounts of water
- Colours: showing colours or different degrees of colour, e.g. pink, by adding some cake colouring. To really capture their interest with this, take a few bottles of baking/icing colouring with you in your suitcase. Put a hidden drop or two of a different colour in the bottom of each glass, before the class begins.

Let it dry. They won't notice this. Then, as if by magic, your blue, red and green colours will appear as you pour in the water. They'll think you are a magician!

- The concept of weight and the vocabulary arising from this

Overview: Module 5

- Over the last thirty years or so, attitudes to language learning have changed dramatically. In the past, the focus was on grammatical accuracy and the minimisation of errors. This meant that lessons were largely focused on learning grammar mechanically through repetition of a rule. Drilling was also a technique used repeatedly by most teachers and practice of the target language was very controlled; learners were expected to memorise dialogues in order to reduce mistakes as much as possible.

- Students, therefore, often had a very good understanding of the building blocks of a language but couldn't put them together themselves in real time. But in today's society, the need for people to be able to communicate effectively in English, whether for work or travel, has altered the way we think about teaching. This has meant that the role of teacher and student has almost reversed – the learners are now expected to be active participants in the lesson and can increasingly shape their own learning. The teacher has become a facilitator for learning rather than a regulator.

- Compare the two lesson plans. What are the features which characterise each?

Theme: Thanksgiving

Group: Level: Intermediate

Age: Pre-adolescents / Adolescents

Objectives: Students will learn about Thanksgiving, will be able to compare their national holidays with the American Thanksgiving Day.

Grammar topic: Students will learn how to turn sentences in direct speech into reported speech.

Procedure:

1. Teacher sticks a picture about Thanksgiving Day on the blackboard (It should be a scene in which the Pilgrims and the Indians are eating together). Then she asks students to describe the picture and asks them why they think are eating together if they belonged to completely different civilizations.

2. Teacher asks students about Thanksgiving. If students don't know anything about it, she starts by asking them to deduce through the name of the holiday what people do when they get together and why.

3. Teacher asks students about their national holidays. Students talk about the history, customs, food prepared and dates of their national holidays, like Independence Day.

4. Teacher plays a video about Thanksgiving (part of the third act of Episode 6 from Family Album, U.S.A. Macmillan, Inc., U.S.A.) without volume. This way, students have to describe the whole scene and imagine what the people on the video are saying.

5. Teacher plays the scene again but this time with the volume on. Students compare their versions with the real one.

6. Teacher gives the students the script of the act but with some gaps on it. Students are asked to listen to the video again and to fill the gaps.

7. After completing the passage with all the missing words, the teacher explains the vocabulary and the expressions that the students might find difficult to understand.

Example: settlers, harvest, in that spirit, touchdown.

8. Teacher asks the students to write down all the things that the people on the video did for Thanksgiving like taking hands before giving thanks, giving thanks, cooking an apple pie, watching

Lesson Plan Title: Dialogue

Grade: 5th
Concept / Topic to Teach:
Dialogue memorization

Standards Addressed:
Oral Communication

General Goal(s):
The students develop their oral skills by repeating a series of short dialogues

Specific Objectives:
Using short dialogues, the students will be able to:
1. Repeat the dialogues with a partner.
2. Transform questions into statements.
3. Complete a dialog using nouns, verbs or adjectives.

Required Materials:
1. Short readings
2. Dialogues, questions or paragraphs

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In):
1. Greeting
2. Date
3. Roll call (attendance)
4. Introduce the activity by explaining and discussing the dialogue and its parts

Step-By-Step Procedures:
The teacher will give out the dialogues. She will read the dialogue to the students. She will explain if necessary words of the dialogue they don't understand. The students will read the dialogue to themselves and to the teacher. They will then pair up with another student to practice the dialogue. The will come to the front to practice the dialogue in front of the class. If some of them want they can say it without reading from the paper. The students can create their own dialogue by changing the names or things of the old one. The teacher will ask them a few questions in order to change questions to statements.

Plan for Independent Practice:
The students will fill out the dialogue using noun verbs or adjectives.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set):
The students will share their dialogues to the rest of the class.

- Which style do you think is an example of CLT? [2] All this has led to new approaches to EFL teaching, one of the most popular modern methods being Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or the Communicative Approach. In this module we're going to look at what CLT actually is, the tasks and activities used in a communicative classroom and error-correction techniques which are effective and don't discourage communication.

Unit 1: Communicative Approach

- The communicative approach emerged during the 70s and 80s as teaching began to move away from audio-lingual methods (basically drilling grammar) and the focus was on more meaningful and authentic language.

- Most EFL teachers today would probably like to think that their classes are "communicative" in the widest sense of the word. Their lessons probably contain activities where learners communicate and where tasks are completed by means of interaction with other learners. To this end there will probably be extensive use of pair, group work and mingling activities, with the emphasis on completing the task successfully through communication with others rather than on the accurate use of grammatical form. During these activities the teacher's role is to facilitate and then to monitor, usually without interruption, and then to provide feedback on the success or otherwise of the communication and maybe also on the linguistic performance of the learners.

- As for how the lesson is organised, Presentation Practice Production is giving way more and more to Task-based Learning or Test Teach Test in communicative approach lessons. Even the way you teach grammar can change: instead of presenting the verb 'be' via the grammar rule you could use basic introductions, requests and questions (I **am** English, **are** you French?...) to enable learners to begin speaking in English right from the start.

- Which of the following do you think characterise CLT? Choose all that apply.*

- A. Grammar is not important
- B. People learn a language best when using it to do things rather than through studying how language works and practicing rules.
- C. People learn a language through communicating in it.
- D. Errors are not important when speaking a language.

- E. CLT is only concerned with teaching speaking.
- F. Classroom activities should be meaningful and involve real communication
- G. Dialogues should not be used.
- H. Both accuracy and fluency are goals in CLT.

- Check answer

- * adapted from Richards, J. *Communicative Language Teaching Today* (Cambridge University Press 2006)

- The idea behind CLT is maximising 'communicative competence' (i.e. knowing how to maintain communication despite limitations and being able to produce appropriate language for a range of purposes). This is done through minimising Teacher Talking Time and making the lesson learner-centred. Interaction is generally student-student where the teacher takes a step back and acts more as a resource and a facilitator than somebody who inputs all the language.

- However, there is a danger of going too far, being so obsessed with reducing teacher talking time that the lesson has, or seems to have, no direction and is just a series of speaking activities. That's why Scrivener distinguishes between 'strong CLT' where the role of explicit teaching is very limited and the students learn by doing communication tasks, and 'weak CLT' where there is a variety of teaching and activities but with a bias towards speaking/listening. Perhaps this weaker approach is more balanced because there are opportunities for structural input but still with an emphasis on communication in authentic contexts. Otherwise you may hear your students complaining "Why do I have to talk all the time to my fellow students. I can do this in the pub"!

Unit 2: Communicative Activities

Communicative Activities aren't just speaking tasks which give oral practice. For real communication we need interaction and an exchange of information, otherwise the speech is meaningless. The only time you would ever describe a picture to someone already looking at that picture, for example, would be in a classroom. So that's not particularly authentic. But the communicative approach is all about reflecting real-life situations which language-learners may be faced with if they ever genuinely need to converse in English.

The reason that describing a picture to someone who can see it in front of them is *not* a communicative activity but describing a picture to someone who *can't* see it is, is because, here, information is changing hands. In the second scenario, the students are interacting for a specific purpose and one which could reflect reality if they had to describe something over the phone say. There are many different types of communicative activities but they must include some kind of information *exchange* and either reflect a real-life situation or reflect language that could be exploited in a real-life situation. Some commonly-used ones are a variety of gap-fill style tasks, spot the difference, problem-based discussions, board games and instruction giving.

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Spot the difference

A great task for practising detailed descriptions is a picture difference task (done by communication, not looking, of course!). In this activity, pairs are given the same image with a few slight differences, or big ones depending on the level of your class, and they have to find them. Imagine you are a student, how would you describe image A to your partner?

What are the differences?
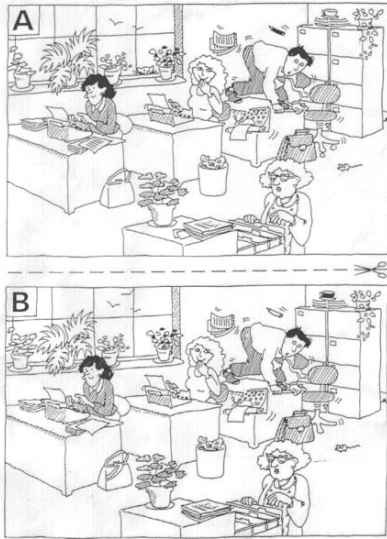
Problem-based discussions

Problem-based discussions can be anything from 'desert island scenarios' to ranking the importance of certain statements or ideas. In discussions such as these, the teacher really just acts as a facilitator for the discussion, introducing the problem and the language needed to work on it before putting students into small or larger groups. You then need to go around the class observing and supporting, occasionally joining a group to stimulate discussion if necessary. It's important not to dictate though, as you want students to address the problem for themselves.

Unit 3: Error Correction

Sometimes it's easy to think that because your students make errors that they've not understood, or even that you're a bad teacher. But this isn't necessarily the case at all. Error can actually often be a good thing because it shows that students are willing to experiment with the language as they find out what works and what doesn't.

In communicative classrooms it's really important that students are allowed to communicate without worrying about every tiny little detail of speaking accurately. That's not to say, however, that we should just let all their errors go unnoticed. After all, how would they improve if that was the case? But there are certain techniques we can use to correct errors without destroying learner confidence!

There are many different types of error that students can make when learning a language and these can be either spoken or written. They may be to do with incorrect grammar (tenses, word order, verb-noun agreement), lexis or pronunciation even. Or sometimes the language itself may be correct but inappropriate in the situation given.

What to correct

When deciding what exactly you should and shouldn't correct, you need to think about your lesson aims. Is the objective to work on a particular grammar point or is it a skills lesson? If it's the former, then yes, it can be constructive to correct your students because you're working on producing accuracy. However, if a student has made a few errors whilst speaking, it's not always necessary to correct *every* one. Instead, you should focus on errors made which relate to the target language you're studying that lesson. Especially for lower level students who are naturally going to make several errors, you don't want to overwhelm them, certainly if those errors relate to something they haven't even studied yet! Otherwise your correction isn't particularly constructive.

For skills lessons (which focus on developing reading, writing, listening and speaking proficiency), however, correction may not always be necessary. If the aim of the lesson is to encourage fluency, then you jumping in to correct all the errors can really hinder this and will actually work to obstruct your main goal of fluid spoken language. Sometimes students just need to shake off their fear of speaking a foreign language and a good way to do this can be to say, "okay for this exercise I just want you to speak as naturally as possible, don't worry about making mistakes, that's not important today, the aim is just to develop your fluency." A lot of learners respond really well to this, others may be a bit sceptical, but the important thing is to let students know that exercises like these can be very useful (and that there's a reason

why you're not correcting them, not that their language was absolutely perfect and they don't need to improve at all!).

When to correct

As we've mentioned, for fluency exercises it can be really inappropriate to interrupt students while they're speaking by jumping in with corrections. There are ways of correcting discreetly during conversation classes/exercises but we'll look at those in more detail in the next section. For speaking tasks, we can therefore decide to correct at the end of the task, later on in the lesson or not at all (as in the example above). If you decide to correct later then it's important to use your listening skills to note down any errors you overhear to discuss at a later stage or plan future tasks.

Choose an appropriate point to correct once the activity is over. With delayed correction, though, you may want to make it anonymous so that students don't feel embarrassed in front of their classmates. There's something about being singled out directly in this way that is never pleasant! Aside from which, all students can always benefit from more generalised error correction: just because it wasn't them that particular time isn't to say that they never make that error.

For accuracy activities you may also want to correct afterwards or possibly on-the-spot. This kind of immediate correction can be a bit trickier and you have to be more careful so you don't end up jumping on the student or slow down the pace of the lesson too much. This requires you to be an active listener and there are various techniques we can use to correct learner errors as we go along. Barnett also suggests that by correcting in this way we can "give learners an experience of partaking in meaningful dialogue" in order to inform and motivate them.

So once you've decided whether to correct or not and when exactly to do it, here are a few different ways you can do it…

How to correct

There are several ways to correct errors as you go along but rather than saying outright what the problem is, there are plenty of ways you can encourage student self-correction. This can simply be through facial expressions; raised eyebrows, a frown, a look of surprise perhaps to show the students that something is not quite right. If they need more prompting you can repeat the sentence up to the error, for example 'you were waiting for a…?' or perhaps a more direct question such as 'tense?' or 'pronunciation?'

Other methods include repeating the sentence but placing stress on the problem word, such as 'last week you *go* to the cinema?' or even saying directly 'there's an error in that sentence'. Finger correction is also a useful technique which involves holding up one hand and pointing to each finger with the other as you say each word of the phrase. You can then hold on to the problem finger/word or skip a finger to indicate a missing word.

If the student is unable to self-correct, though, we can use different types of reformulating/recasting. This can be when we repeat a sentence but without drawing the student's attention to it directly, for example:

- Teacher "What did you do at the weekend?"
- Student "I go to the cinema with my friends"
- Teacher "Ah you went to the cinema, that's nice. What did you see?"

We use this technique when we don't want to interrupt the flow of conversation or discourage the student from continuing to speak. To make it slightly clearer that an error has been made, however, you can recast the sentence more obviously, for instance,

- Student "I'm not agree with Sara, I prefer skiing"
- Teacher "Oh, so you mean you don't agree with Sara, you disagree with her. Why do you prefer skiing?"

Even when using on-the-spot correction it's a good idea to make a note of any problems to review afterwards. Sometimes, when we correct students, they may still make the same mistake time and again because they haven't really absorbed the correction. That's why it is good if you can prompt them to self-correct because if they learn for themselves they tend to remember better. Yet, there are ways of drilling error correction even when it was given by you, the teacher. Once you've laid the groundwork in the initial task, you can do some drilling of the correct form afterwards:

- Teacher "Do you remember when you said 'I'm not agree with Sara'? Yes? What did I   say instead?"

- Student "Erm, I don't agree"
- Teacher "Good yes, who don't you agree with"
- Student "Sara"
- Teacher "What about Sara, sorry?"
- Student "I don't agree with her, with Sara"
- Teacher "Okay good, do you remember the other expression too? No? Okay well just answer my questions. Do you agree with Sara?"
- Student "No"
- Teacher "What's the opposite of 'agree'? We can add a prefix to change the meaning."
- Student "Oh yes, disagree"
- Teacher "So do you agree with Sara?"
- Student "No, I disagree with her."

When using delayed correction, on the other hand, some of the methods already discussed can still be employed (i.e. finger correction, one word questions), but you will obviously need to reintroduce the problem sentence. You could use examples of errors the students made but unless several class members said very similar incorrect sentences you may want to change the exact phrases to make them more anonymous. Here, you could write the sentence on the board and ask the class to identify the problem before eliciting the correction. Diagrams can help at this stage, for example a line indicating past, present and future with an 'x' to mark 'last weekend', showing that we can't use "I go to the cinema with my friends" but instead need the past form of the verb.

If your students have just learnt a grammar rule then sometimes all it takes is repeating the rule and perhaps modelling an example sentence. Or for pronunciation errors, you can indicate which syllable should be stressed "Japan" not "Japan". Sometimes it's difficult to get students to self-correct pronunciation because you automatically correct when you say the word! If your class is familiar with the phonemic chart, however, you can indicate which sound they used and which one is correct by pointing or drawing the symbol on the board.

Obviously any errors your students make in their writing have to be corrected afterwards, but don't be tempted to just give them everything on a plate; it is still possible to encourage self-correction.

Overview: Module 6

Although grammar and skills are obviously going to be key areas for EFL teaching, we shouldn't forget the building blocks of the language: words and their meanings.

Whilst it can be relatively simple to relate an object to the word used to describe it, for example 'fountain', a student won't automatically remember after hearing it once.

They also won't understand all the various meanings that word may have, the way it should be pronounced and the different contexts it can be used in.

Learners of English need to be exposed to a range of vocabulary and expressions time and again in order to fully understand their correct usage.

That's why in this module we're going to look at the ways in which we attribute meaning to certain words, the sound of the language and functional language (the expressions we use for certain purposes i.e. greetings, polite requests etc.).

Unit 1: Lexis

In many respects the word vocabulary is limiting as it really only refers to single units of the language i.e. words. The reason this is limiting is that there are situations where a combination of words function as a single item in terms of their meaning. So, what is lexis?!

It's really just words, either individual or grouped together, which have a specific meaning. For example, 'house', 'find out', 'to have your head in the clouds'.

In order to use a certain lexical item effectively, students need to be exposed to it many times and in many different contexts for it to really sink in and for them to fully understand its meaning and usage.

When we think about the 'meaning' of a word, though, it can get a bit more complicated because there are different types of meaning. When we talk about meaning, some things to consider are:

- denotative meaning
- figurative meaning
- compounds

- prefixes/suffixes
- collocations
- fixed expressions
- idioms
- homophones
- homonyms
- false friends

Denotative meaning

If we look again at the word 'fountain' we can take it to mean a man-made structure which shoots out water. This is its denotative meaning; it denotes the 'thing'. However, many words have several denotative meanings; a fountain is also a spring or source of water or even the head of a stream.

Compounds

Then there are compounds (nouns made up of two or more separate words), in this case there's 'drinking fountain'. The two words exist separately but when put together have a particular meaning; a structure which ejects a jet of water that can be drunk without the need for a cup. Compound nouns get their meaning specifically from being together, although the words alone have other distinct meanings. Take 'phonebook', for example, the words 'phone' and 'book' have their own meanings but when placed together denote something else specific; a directory containing an alphabetical list of people and their telephone numbers.

Lexis continued...

Homophones and homonyms

A homophone is a word that's pronounced the same way as another but is spelt differently and has a different meaning. There are many homophones in English which can be quite confusing to language learners. Common ones include 'your/you're', 'see/sea', 'their/there/they're', 'for/four' etc.

Be aware that students can make spelling mistakes which can result in the entire meaning of the sentence being changed so you may need to use your imagination occasionally when marking their written work!

Homonyms have the same pronunciation and spelling but different meanings depending on their context. We can see, for example, that 'there's a **bear** in the woods' refers to the animal, whereas 'I **bear** the brunt of the work' means to have the worst of it.

False friends

False friends are especially important in language learning. They are words which look alike in the student's native language but which have very different meanings. These can often be harmless, for instance 'achèvement' French does not mean achievement, it means completion.

Others, however, may be quite amusing or even impolite so you do need to watch out; never translate preservative into Italian as 'preservativo', for example, as it actually means condom! If you have a class who all have the same L1 language (or mother-tongue language), you could even plan a fun lesson around avoiding common false friends from and into that language. With a class of students with mixed L1 languages it's not as simple but you can still draw their attention to any false friends as they crop up.

Unit 2: Phonology 1 - Phonological awareness

The next three Units are an introduction to three concepts of phonology:

- phonological awareness
- phonemic awareness
- pronunciation

You may not be aware of some of these terms. You'll soon find out, though, that they're not difficult to grasp.

Lots of people, including some teachers, get a bit confused with these terms. Some teachers put all of this under the heading 'Pronunciation' but this is wrong.

So, take your time with the next 3 units and see if you can grasp the differences amongst these elements. Again, they're not that difficult.

Our focus in this Unit 2 is on phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness

Although your focus in the early stages will be on helping your learners to grasp the meaning of words, at the same time you need to help them become aware of the sounds of words.

Not only will they be better able to produce the right sounds for words that they hear and become familiar with them but also this attention to the

sounds of words will prepare them well for later success with reading and writing.

Phonological awareness is the ability to focus on the sounds of the language. In essence, it's about you making your students aware that words are made up of individual and different-sized sounds.

You need to help them to improve their ability in this, bit by bit. It can be a bit challenging for some younger learners but it needs to be done.

So how do you promote this phonological awareness?

Here is a practical route to follow. Stick to this order as best as you can:

1. Do lots and lots of listening games that focus your learners' attention on words.

2. Move on to rhyming practice, e.g. rhymes, songs, and poems, to draw their attention to the sounds at the end of words

3. Then, focus on alliteration (e.g. *A big, bad bug bit the little beetle*.) which will draw their attention to the sounds at the beginning of words. Look out for stories and rhymes and songs that will help them with this.

4. Building on what they have learned in the rhyming and alliteration work, focus on and practise the comparison and contrast of sounds at the beginning and end of words.

5. Move on to sentence segmenting, helping them to be aware of, and counting, the number of words in sentences.

6. Then focus on syllable segmenting and blending, clapping and counting the syllables in words and then blending them back together into words. **Remember:** A syllable is a part of a word that is pronounced with one uninterrupted sound. For example:

- lion: li-on (two syllables); clap and count the syllables *li-on, li-on, li-on* then blend back to *lion*; help them with the pronunciation at the same time
- elephant: el-e-phant (three syllables); clap and count the syllables *el-e-phant, el-e-phant, el-e-phant* and then blend back to *elephant*; help them with the pronunciation at the same time

If you are unsure about syllables, check out http://www.howmanysyllables.com

7. Move on to onset and rime, dividing one-syllable words by their initial consonant sound and all their other sounds. A syllable can normally be divided into two parts: the onset, which consists of the initial consonant or consonant blend, and the rime which consists of the vowel and any final consonants.

So, in the word *cat*, *c* is the onset and *at* is the rime. Words which share the same rime will also rhyme, but the spelling will be constant and does not vary as it does with rhyme. So, following on from *cat*, you could then use *m-at, s-at, b-at* etc.

8. Focus on phoneme deletion and phoneme substitution of sounds in words. A phoneme is each meaningful sound in a language.

- Here is an example of phoneme deletion: *Now, class, let's look at the word smile. Smile. Take away the /s/ sound. What have we got? That's right, mile. Smile without the /s/ sound is mile.*
- Here is an example of phoneme substitution: *Now, class, I saw a bug. Let's look at the word bug. What sound does it end with? That's right – /g/. Now, change the /g/ sound to /n/. What's the new word? That's right – bun.*

9. Then focus on phoneme blending - blending together individual sounds. The learners listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes, and then combine the phonemes to form a word. Then they write and read the word, e.g. */b/, /i/, /g/* to make *big*.

10. Focus on phoneme segmentation, breaking down words into individual phonemes. Your learners break a word into its separate sounds, e.g. breaking down *grab* into */g/, /r/, /a/, /b/,* saying each sound as they tap out or count it. Then they write and read the word.

11. Then help them to move to overall phoneme manipulation, replacing individual sounds in a word. When learners work with phonemes in words, they are manipulating the phonemes.

Types of phoneme manipulation include blending phonemes to make words, segmenting words into phonemes, deleting phonemes from words, adding phonemes to words, or substituting one phoneme for another to make a new word.

Strategies to promote phonological awareness

Here's what to do and what not to do:

1. Ensure it is an integral part of communication

Learners will do well with their phonological awareness so long as it is not run in isolation and you ensure it becomes an integral part of communication in the classroom. Don't just suddenly bring up a word out of thin air and start to analyse it.

2. Do not aim for perfection

No, the more realistic goals for you are that your learners:

- develop intelligibility (the degree to which the learner's speech can be understood in different language situations)
- increase communication ability
- develop increased self-confidence in speaking the language and listening and understanding the language

3. Plan the phonological awareness experiences

Don't just do these as they come up. You have a route to follow, as outlined above. So, make a plan of what you'll do when and how.

The activities need to be fun. Always add a bit of fun to keep up their motivation and participation.

It's so easy to promote enjoyment and fun when dealing with younger learners. For example, when guiding them through alliteration, you could easily change a song they love, such as *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* into *Binkle, Binkle, Bittle Bar*. They'll find it funny but will be learning at the same time.

Utilise all the activities they are already familiar with. There's no need to try and introduce some new activity. Their focus may be more on understanding the new activity than the phonological awareness you are striving for.

So, use experiences they are familiar with, e.g. singing songs, rhyming games, chanting nursery rhymes, poems etc. Just adapt what's already there.

Don't just focus on games and activities. Use familiar routines to practise and recycle their phonological awareness. For example:

Everyone whose name begins with the llll sound, bring your books to me. Remember this: you must emphasise the sound and not the letter name.

When lined up outside the class, you could say: *All those whose name begins with an ssss sound come in first. Next, those with a tttt sound.* Each time you would vary the order. You could also do this when they leave your class.

Think how you can involve parents/carers in this. In some countries, their parents/carers may not know a single word in English. However, depending on the cost and the effort you are prepared to put into it, you could record this week's sounds onto copies of CDs or memory sticks that the children take home with them and the parents/carers support them in the sound activity practice.

This won't be too challenging for non-English speaking parents/carers.

Generally, you are best to start with phonological awareness activities and then move on to phonemic awareness activities. But sometimes, it will be apt to interlink the two at the same time.

Now, that wasn't difficult, was it?

Unit 3: Phonology 2 - Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness relates to the correspondences between letters or groups of letters and the sounds they represent.

If the learners do not first become phonologically aware, later instruction in phonemic awareness and **decoding (breaking up a word into sounds)** will not make sense.

Learners with phonemic awareness can break up words into their different sounds. They can join sounds together to make words.

It helps beginning readers to see the links between the spoken and written words. Once they grasp this, they can recognise familiar words quickly and can have a go at figuring out new words.

Research shows that progress in learning to read depends on how much phonological and phonemic awareness they have.

Remember this: Phonemic awareness aims to help learners see the correspondence between letters and sounds, so that when they see a letter or sometimes a group of letters, they learn that these symbols (letters) represent speech sounds heard in words.

When learners break up a word into sounds this is called decoding. The end goal is for the learner to join the individual sounds in a word and then utter the word as a whole.

Inexperienced teachers get confused between phonemic awareness and pronunciation and often use the word *pronunciation* as a label for all aspects of sound production in the classroom. This is wrong.

Phonemic awareness is the teaching of sounds as part of decoding letters in words to decipher the individual sounds.

Pronunciation is different. It refers to how a person articulates specific sounds.

Decoding – the deciphering of individual words – is of great importance. In English, decoding can be tricky due to the exceptions there are between sound and symbol correspondence. It differs from other languages such as Spanish, which has a straight one-to-one sound and letter correspondence.

Learners of English can find this very tricky as there may be no indication of how the letter symbol should be pronounced. For example, the letter c can be:

- a hard sound, /k/, as in *can, cake, cage*
- a soft sound, /s/, as in *cent, circle, city*

Here are the key points to remember when enhancing their phonemic awareness:

1. Always remember that the end goal is the understanding of meaning, not phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness instruction is a key objective which needs to be met on the way to the goal of reading comprehension. It is not an end goal in itself.

2. In some schools, a full phonemic awareness approach early in the programme may be the norm. If this is what the school leaders have set down, there's not much you can do about this, at least until you have been there some time.

Or this type of approach may be followed because that's the way it has always been done. In this case, there may be some room for manoeuvre.

The problem with a full phonemic awareness approach is that it's unlikely to work well in the early stages of learning, where your learners have limited meaning of words in English and lack oral proficiency.

Unlike native-English learners, they don't know lots of chunks and phrases which they have already picked up from songs, stories, rhymes and chat from their parents/carers and siblings.

It will be wise to remember this.

3. Some teachers, for various reasons, often overemphasise the role of phonemic awareness. Perhaps it's because they and the learners enjoy this type of activity. Or perhaps it's a comfort zone for the teacher and he stays in that zone just a bit too much.

The problem is that where there is more emphasis on phonemic awareness than on meaning and comprehension, the learners may lose sight that they are reading words. The decoding is very important but it must not replace meaning and comprehension.

Phonics teaching should enhance comprehension; it should not usurp the main goal of comprehension.

4. Never ask learners to decode a word where they don't know its meaning. You need to focus on words they already know.

5. Phonemic awareness instruction should be tackled briskly and relevantly. It should always take place in activities which are relevant and have a purpose. Learners should not be involved in phonics instruction which has the effect of isolating letters and sounds from meaningful use in text.

6. It should emphasise chunks and patterns in words that learners will recognise when reading other words with similar chunks and patterns.

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Activities

Here is a mix of phonological and phonemic awareness activities. We've put them together as you'll likely be doing quite a bit of interlinking of activities. A variety of activities and lots of practice are the keys to success.

Explore and reflect on what's best to meet the need. And, remember, make it fun. Here are some activities:

1. Listen and imitate: This is a technique in which learners listen to a model (you or a recording) and repeat or imitate it, e.g. breaking up a word into its syllable parts and noticing the change in mouth and lip movements.

2. Minimal pairs: Seeing if learners can distinguish between minimal pairs. A minimal pair is a pair of words that differ in only one phoneme (each meaningful sound in a language). Examples of common minimal pairs are:

- ship/sheep

- pin/pen
- buy/boy
- hut/hat

3. Contextualised minimal pairs: In this technique, you establish the context/setting, such as a blacksmith shoeing a horse, and present key vocabulary. Learners are then trained to respond to a sentence stem with the appropriate meaningful response (a or b):

Sentence stem:

The blacksmith (a. hits / b. heats) the horseshoe.

Cued learner response:

a. with the hammer / b. in the fire.

4. Visual aids: For sound formation, it may help to use a sketch of the mouth, or a colour wall chart, and to describe the pronunciation of a sound in terms of lips, tongue, teeth, etc.

5. Tongue twisters: This is a technique from speech correction strategies for native speakers. One well-known example is: *She sells seashells by the seashore*. You could make up your own twisters. Rhymes and jingles are also effective, as are chants.

6. Drilling: These can include imitation drills, with repetition of sounds, words and sentences and varied repetition of drills (varied speed, volume, and mood)

7. Linking: Trying to link the sound to a word that they already know. For example, they may find the sound in *cheese* quite easy, but then find it quite difficult when it appears in the middle of a word like *purchase*. Reminding them of the sound in the word *cheese* will help them to form it correctly in *purchase*.

8. Same or different : Read a short list of three words to the learners and ask them to tell you if you are reading the same word, or if there is a different word in the list. If the words are all the same they say same, and if there is a different sound, they say different.

The learners will not see the list of words of course, e.g. *sit   sat   seat; ship   sheep   ship*

9. Stop me: Very similar to the example above, except that the learners stop you when you use a different sound, e.g. *ship, ship, ship, ship, ship, sheep*

10. Listen!: Place minimal pairs in sentences so that the learners have to listen carefully and decide on the word being used.

Notice that both words must make sense in the context, e.g. *Come here and have a look at this lock / rock*; *If you sit up straight you won't slip / sleep*; *He came to ask me about his cut / cat*.

11. Pictures: Pictures can be very effective with learners of all ages. The learners can have pairs of pictures in front of them; e.g. *ship* and *sheep*. When you say a word (or read out a sentence) they have to point to the appropriate picture.

Again. That wasn't too difficult, was it?

Unit 4: Phonology 3 - Pronunciation

Pronunciation simply refers to how a person articulates specific sounds. You should not confuse this with phonological or phonemic awareness. Pronunciation is also very important.

1. Teaching pronunciation

The overall aim of teaching pronunciation is for the learner to develop spoken English so that:

- the learner is easy to understand when speaking English
- it allows a positive image of himself as a speaker of English

Here's what to do and what not to do:

1. Ensure it is an integral part of communication

Students will do well in the pronunciation of English if the pronunciation episode is not run in isolation and becomes an integral part of communication in the class.

2. Do not aim for perfection

The goal of pronunciation in the CLT class is not the attainment of 'perfect' pronunciation. Who has this, anyway, and who says it's 'perfect'? And how

can it be proved? No, the more realistic goals for you are that your learners:

- develop intelligibility (the degree to which the learner's speech *can* be understood in different language situations)
- increase communication ability
- develop increased self-confidence in speaking the language and listening and understanding the language

3. Give lots of practice

Remember! The more practice given, the better the pronunciation will be.

All of the activities listed in Unit 3 under *Phonological and phonemic awareness activities* can be used to enhance pronunciation, as can the Phonemic Chart.

iː READ	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	uː TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜː WORD	ɔː SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑː PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

The Phonemic Chart is an alternative method of approaching the teaching and learning of English pronunciation. A phonemic chart provides a set of symbols, each one intended to represent an individual sound of the language, irrespective of the way it appears in the standard written script.

Phonemic symbols
Each phonemic symbol represents a phoneme, a single unit of sound that either alone or combined, can confer linguistic meaning. Some of these symbols look like letters from the English alphabet but remember that the normal alphabet gives us the letters to use when writing a word whereas the phonetic alphabet of phonemic symbols tells us about how they sound. The letter 'I' as pronounced in the word 'fit' would be spelt phonetically using the phoneme /ɪ/, whereas the same letter in the word 'pile' has a

different pronunciation, represented by the phoneme /ai/. Don't get confused just because a phoneme looks like a normal letter. Here is a phonemic chart of the sounds used in the English language:

Phonemes are divided into vowel sounds, diphthongs and consonants according to how we make the sound with our mouths. Vowel sounds are made when the mouth is open and not blocked by the tongue, for example /e/ as in 'men'. Diphthongs are sounds which are made when one vowel sounds transforms into another in a single syllable, like the /ei/ sound in 'say'. Consonant sounds occur when the tongue, lips or teeth partly block the sound, like the /m/ in 'milk'.

There are a few different phonemic charts. You can use ours above or you could use the British Council phonemic chart. Go to: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/phonemic-chart   where you will see the symbols, you can hear all the sounds and you can download it to your computer or iPad.

It may take several weeks for you to familiarise yourself with all the sounds. But it will be worth it. In preparation for your TEFL career, you should start to familiarise yourself with the chart and the sounds. Once you have had a first look at it, the following information will be useful.

Having received a basic knowledge and teaching in this system and a good quality English-English dictionary, most older learners should be able to discover the pronunciation of unknown words without your help.

Many teachers are reluctant to introduce the phonemic chart to their learners for several reasons:

- They do not feel that the time spent learning the system is justified.
- They feel that learners already have an uphill task dealing with English spelling without asking them to learn another alphabet.
- They feel unsure about the system.

But:

- Learning the phonemic alphabet is not as difficult as it first appears and it can be made considerably easier by introducing it piece by piece to the class as part of your daily lesson plan.
- With a little application, you often discover that the system becomes second nature.

Note:

- Languages across the world have unique phonemic systems. For individuals learning English as a second language, it is common for the phonemic system of their first language to influence the production of sounds in English.

- Please remember that in an English-speaking country, dialectal differences should be considered when using the phonemic charts.
- Note there is not always a correspondence between the number of letters and number of sounds.
- Also note that most English dictionaries show where the stress of a word is by using the mark '.

Give it a go!

Pronunciation continued...

2. Pronunciation: vowels, consonants and syllables

When teaching pronunciation, you'll want to have a good knowledge of vowel sounds. Vowels sounds are made with the mouth open and the airway unobstructed, whereas with consonants the flow of air is briefly obstructed in some way.

In speech, the exact number of vowels depends on regional accent but there are more than 20 English vowel sounds.

Diphthongs are an important element of pronunciation. A diphthong is a vowel sound that is composed of a sequence of two vowels. The vowel in the word *so*, for example, begins with the *o* sound of *hot* and then glides into the *u* sound of *put*. Other diphthongs are the vowel sounds in *high* and l*ate*.

When teaching pronunciation, you'll also need to know a bit about consonants. As mentioned above, a consonant is a sound that is made by blocking the flow of air while speaking.

For example, the first sound in the word *mark* is made by closing the lips briefly, while the last sound is made by pressing the blade of the tongue up against the hard palate. There are 22 consonants in spoken English.

Let's consider some other key features of speech which you need to know to help your learners' pronunciation.

3. Pronunciation: word and sentence stress

Word stress is where we say part of a word with greater energy, i.e., with more length and sound on its vowel sound. Compare the stress in the vowel sounds in the stressed syllables and the other syllables in the words pen<u>cil</u>, phot<u>og</u>raphy, volun<u>teer</u> (stressed syllables are underlined).

Like English, there are many languages that give especially strong stress to one syllable in a word. Other languages give equal length to all the syllables.

Stress can also influence how sentences and incomplete sentences are pronounced.

We say different parts of the sentence with more or less stress, i.e., slower and louder, or quicker and more softly. This is called sentence stress.

Generally, one word in the sentence will have a main stress. This is the word which the speaker thinks is most important to the meaning of the sentence.

Other words can have secondary stress. This is not as strong as main stress and falls on words which are not as important to the meaning as the word with main stress.

Other words in the sentence are unstressed.

For example, in this spoken sentence: *She came home late last night*, the word with the main stress is the underlined one - *late*; the words with secondary stress would probably be *came, home, last, night*; and the unstressed word is *she*.

But remember: It is possible to stress any word in a sentence if the speaker thinks it is important.

Whether you are focussing on word stress or sentence stress, provide the class with some guidance about the position of the stress in one of two ways.

Either write the word/sentence on the board and show the stress by using a symbol or use a hand to make a gesture (perhaps a chopping movement) to demonstrate where to place the stress when you say the word.

Here is how it could look if you were using a symbol on the board:

pencil

Word stress and sentence stress rules

We're going to stick to the simple rules here as many rules are full of exceptions. For example, there are many two-syllable words in English which are spelt the same but their meaning changes depending on the stress:

1. You will progress a lot with your English if you follow this rule.

You will make a lot of progress with your English if you follow this rule.

2. He rejected the plan.

This bowl was a reject, so I bought it at half price.

3. Everyone was present at the meeting.

I will present my ideas to the company tomorrow in a presentation.

Here are some key <u>word stress rules</u>:

1. One word has only one stress. One word cannot have two stresses. If you hear two stresses, you hear two words. Two stresses cannot be one word. It is true that there can be a secondary stress in some words. But a secondary stress is much smaller than the main (primary) stress, and is only used in long words.

2. We can only stress vowels, not consonants.

Here are some key <u>sentence stress</u> rules*:*

1. Content words are stressed. Content words carry meaning, e.g. main verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and negative auxiliaries (*don't, can't, aren't*)

2. Structure words are unstressed. Structure words are used for correct grammar, e.g. pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions and auxiliary/helping verbs (e.g. *do, be, can, have, must*).

3. The time between stressed words is always the same.

There's the odd exception to sentence stress rules, but far fewer than word stress exceptions. For example, we have said that structure words are unstressed in a sentence. But look at the structure word *she* below, which the speaker is stressing for emphasis whilst confirming information:

Lisa didn't do that, did she?

Yes, she did.

Pronunciation: intonation, rhythm, linking

4. Pronunciation: intonation

Intonation is another important part of pronunciation. It is the movement of the level of the voice, i.e., the tune of a sentence or a group of words.

We use intonation to express emotions and attitudes, and to emphasise or make less important particular things we are saying.

We also use intonation to signal to others the function of what we are saying; that is, to show we are starting or stopping speaking, or whether we are asking a question or making a statement.

<u>Practice</u>

To hear these intonation uses, try saying *School's just finished* with these meanings:

- as a statement of fact
- with surprise
- with happiness
- as a question
- to emphasise *just*

You should hear the level of your voice rising and falling in different patterns.

<u>Here's another example:</u>

Think of all the different ways you could say the following sentence: 'She didn't marry him because of his money' (statement)

'**She** didn't marry him because of his money' (but his second wife did)
'She **didn't** marry him because of his money' (strong denial)
'She didn't **marry** him because of his money' (but that's what first got her interested)
'She didn't marry **him** because of his money' (he doesn't have any)
'She didn't marry him **because** of his money' (that wasn't the main reason but maybe it was a factor)
'She didn't marry him because of his **money**' (she married him for love)
'She didn't marry him because of his money?' (Did she?)

Think about the way your voice rises and falls when you express uncertainty, indignation, exasperation. You may say the word more loudly, in a higher pitch or perhaps drag the word out, saying it more slowly. Pausing at different parts of the sentence can also change meaning dramatically in both spoken and written English.

Compare the pairs of sentences and think about what difference in meaning is conveyed (the emphasized word is in bold).

The people who left suddenlystartedrunning.

1. The people who left suddenly....... **started** running.
2. The people who left.......**suddenly** started running.

I like Italian art and opera.

1. I like **Italian art**...... and opera.
2. I like....**Italian art and opera**.

My sister who lives in Hong Kong has a penthouse.

1. My sister ....**who lives in Hong Kong**.... has a penthouse.
2. My sister who lives in Hong Kong ....**has a penthouse**.

Match the intonation with the meaning it corresponds to:

Different intonation patterns can show many different meanings. However, there is no short and simple way of describing how the patterns relate to meanings.

Intonation patterns can also be demonstrated with the use of arrows on the board or hand gestures to show the 'musical' pattern. Wherever possible try to speak in a normal manner without a distorted intonation pattern as this will provide the students with a better model to follow.

5. Pronunciation: rhythm

Sentence stress is what gives English its rhythm or beat. Look at this sentence:

Will you CLOSE the DOOR because he's GONE to WORK?

In our sentence, the 4 key content words (close, door, gone, work) are stressed.

Why is this important for pronunciation? It is important because it adds music to the language. It is the rhythm of the English language. It changes the speed at which we speak (and listen to) the language. The time between each stressed word is the same.

There is 1 syllable between CLOSE and DOOR and 3 syllables between DOOR and GONE. But the time between CLOSE and DOOR and between DOOR and GONE is the same. We maintain a constant beat on the stressed words.

To do this, we say *the* more slowly, and *because I've* more quickly. We change the speed of the small structure words so that the rhythm of the key content words stays the same.

6. Pronunciation: linking

Students need to hear natural fast relaxed pronunciation as we speak it every day, not a carefully over-articulated overly-pronounced one-word-by-one-word phrasing of sentences. Speaking too slowly and too emphatically is a common characteristic of the inexperienced teacher.

Speaking unnaturally can have a detrimental effect:

- Your learners will imitate your speaking style and speak unnaturally too
- They will not recognise and understand natural rapid speech when they hear it

This doesn't mean you shouldn't slow your speech down a bit to help your students get some basic ideas, but it does mean that you should speak naturally most of the time. It also means that you need to teach them what natural speech sounds like.

There is some evidence that says that if students don't speak naturally, they won't recognise normal speech when they hear it.

Some examples:

- *How much is it?* sounds something like *How muh chi zit?*
- *Don't eat apples!* sounds something like *Don tea tapples!*

If you habitually speak slowly and over-enunciate, your students will listen for *How much is it?* and won't understand when they hear the normal speech sounds of *How muh chi zit?* You need to instruct your students in these differences, how to pronounce them and how to listen for them.

The idea of the end of one word connecting to the beginning of the next word is called 'linking'. Linking is a naturally occurring phenomenon in the speech of every native speaker of English and is not the result of sloppy or defective speech.

One major feature of linking occurs when a word ending in a consonant sound precedes a word beginning with a vowel sound – as in *don't eat apples*.

When the native English speaker says this, the consonant sound at the end of *don't* runs into the vowel sound at the beginning of *eats* and the consonant sound at the end of *eats* runs into the vowel sound at the beginning of *apples*. Thus it sounds like *don tea tapples*.

Many learners of English tend to separate out the words into distinct units and so their speech sounds 'staccato'.

There are other structural features that cause this, e.g. linking between one word that ends in a vowel sound and the second which begins with a vowel sound.

You should encourage your students at least to attempt to approximate these linking features of English because they are so commonly used in normal speech. This, in turn, should raise their awareness of the existence of these features and will make the task of listening easier.

You have now finished all the phonology input in the 3 Units. Well done!

Authentic 'Functions' video lesson

You are going to watch an Elementary functional language lesson. The main aim of the lesson is to help the students to understand and use the following lexis (vocabulary) to describe illness.

Lexis

He's got_____ .

- a headache
- a temperature
- a broken leg
- a cough
- stomach ache
- toothache

It will also look at functional language for giving advice:

Target language

You should...

go to the doctors
go to the dentist
go to bed
have a rest
go on holiday
go to hospital

take some tablets
take some medicine

Before watching, think about what type of problems a low level Elementary class might have with the grammar and pronunciation of the above target language. Please also look at the teaching materials.

Lesson materials

Questions for the 'Functions' video

We feel watching an authentic lesson will help you with the practical elements of teaching as well as to think about how you would plan this type of lesson. We advise you to print off the following questions and refer to them as you watch. Try to notice how the teacher, Jane, deals with these anticipated problems. Once you have watched the video, you can then check your answers.

Questions to consider while watching the Functional language video.

1. Elementary students could be confused with the difference between *medicine* and *tablets*. How does Jane deal with this?

2. Low level students might get confused by '*He's got*'. They might think this represents *is* rather than *has*. How does Jane deal with this?

3. Students may leave out the article (a) before the illness for example '*He's got cough*'. How does Jane deal with this?

4. Students could have difficulty pronouncing whole sentences accurately using the correct spoken stress. How does Jane deal with this?

5. An Elementary class might struggle with individual sounds such as 'Ache (as in headache/toothache/stomach ache). They might say /tʃ/

as in *cheap* instead of /k/ or they may not realise that *cough* is pronounced /f/. How does Jane deal with this?

6. These learners might not use contractions for example *'He's got a headache'* and instead say *'He got a headache'*. How does Jane deal with this?

7. How does Jane avoid overly long explanations and instructions?

8. How she manage what she writes on the board?

9. Focus on the materials that Jane has prepared for this lesson. Has she used large amounts of different materials?

10. How does Jane help the students with the pronunciation of new or difficult language?

You could of course, just look at the answers first then watch the video. However what will you learn from that?

You wouldn't want your students to do that so....

Answers to the video questions

1. Jane used Realia. She simply showed them a strip of tablets and a bottle of medicine.

2. She highlighted the grammatical form using her fingers. She also put a clear written record of *he's got = he has got* on the board.

3. She modelled and drilled the sentence and again, used her fingers to correct the students. She also provided a clear written record on the boards.

4. Jane did a lot of choral (whole class) and individual drilling. She elicited the stress placement from students and then followed this up by marking the stress on the board.

5. Again, Jane did a lot of choral and individual drilling. She encouraged her students to copy her lips, teeth and tongue position. She also marked the phonemic symbols next to the difficult sounds.

6. She used finger highlighting, drilling and a clear board record.

7. She graded her language and kept things simple. She said things like 'OK….. question?' 'Listen…a kind doctor says it like this' 'So… ask me'.

8. Jane had planned her board work before the lesson so that it was clear and useful for her students. Try to make sure yours is something they can read, understand and benefit from a few days later.

9. No! In fact quite the opposite. You will hopefully have noticed that a small amount of material can go a long way. An elementary class will need an awful lot of recapping and recycling of new language. It's also important to make sure you leave enough time for practising language in your lesson plans.

10. Repetition! As you will have seen, this level of students want and need lots of drilling of new or difficult language.

11. Overview: Module 7

12.

13. **The four language skills are listening, reading, writing and speaking. These skills can be broken down into two groups: receptive (or passive) and productive (or active) skills.**

14. Listening and reading are both classed as receptive skills because they require learners to receive language and understand it.

15. Speaking and writing, on the other hand, are productive skills which require students to produce language for themselves.

16. Learners often find it easier to develop their receptive skills, especially at the beginning, as they need to be exposed to the language before they can go on to produce it.

17. However, all the four skills are linked and need to be developed more or less simultaneously. For example, if a student is able to pronounce a word correctly, then they are

more likely to be able to understand it when they hear it spoken.

18. Similarly, working on reading skills can help to enhance a student's writing. The four skills naturally support and complement one another.

19. In the following modules we're going to look at each of the four skills in more detail and focus on ways of developing each when teaching EFL.

20. **But first, it's critical that we explore Learning Styles. These influence what materials and examples you will use, and the way you will present them, when teaching your learners. An awareness of learning styles is paramount when teaching the 4 skills, and vocabulary and grammar.**

Unit 1: Learning Styles

1. So, what is a 'learning style'?

A learning style is a more or less consistent way in which a person perceives, conceptualises, organises and recalls information. In essence, a learner often has a preferred learning style.

This could be a preference for learning through visual activities as opposed to, for example, audio activity.

There are other preferences, as we will see below. Proponents say that learning styles are influenced by the individual's genetic make-up, previous learning experiences, culture and society.

2. Identification of learning style – useful or not?

There are different opinions and lobbies as to the relevance of the identification and usage of learning styles in the classroom. Unfortunately, many of the opinions from either side of the debate lack real or scientific proof as learning style methodologies remain unproven.

However, our opinion based on our experience is that learner style identification is useful and is pretty successful, particularly with adult learners.

Many teachers and educators continue to find value and benefit by using learning styles approaches in one way or another and, as often applies in

such situations, there is likely to be usage which is appropriate and other usage which is not.

So, especially if you are working with young people, use methodologies with care. It is wrong to apply any methodology blindly and unquestioningly, and wrong not to review and assess the effectiveness of methods used.

In any case, we feel it's important that you are aware of learning styles, no matter whether you end up being in favour of using them or against using them.

3. Different learning styles approaches

There are a many different approaches used to determine an individual's learning style.

We will focus on two of these.

1. Kolb's theory

The work of Kolb and others produced the classification of learners into four groups: activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists.

According to this approach:

- Activists like practical work such as labs, field work, observation exercises and using visual source material for information etc.
- Reflectors like to learn by watching others, by taking time to consider observations of their own experience etc.
- Theorists like lectures, reading papers on topics, considering analogies etc.
- Pragmatists like simulations, case studies, homework etc.

Thus, the four types might approach learning a software programme in different ways:

- Activists might just start using it and feel their way into it.
- Reflectors might have a go at using it and then take time to think about what they have just done.
- Theorists might begin by reading the manual.
- Pragmatists might start using the programme, but make frequent references to the help files.

The four types of learning can be seen as cyclical stages through which a learner can progress (Watch>>>Think>>>Feel>>>Do), as well as categorising specific kinds of learning experience.

2. The VAK approach

This is our preferred approach. It's simple and easy to administer.

The VAK analysis identifies three learning styles: Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (sometimes an *a* is added in: *kinaesthetic)*. Sometimes kinesthetic is said to include *tactile* learning and sometimes this is added as a separate learning style.

Key points underlying this approach:

- Any individual will operate in all three modalities, but with a preference for one or two.
- Visual learners are likely to prefer mind-maps, diagrams, picturesque language, flow charts, use of colour, white space on the page etc.
- Auditory learners are likely to prefer discussion, explaining things to others, using a tape recorder, and teaching linked to anecdotes/jokes etc.
- Kinesthetic learners are likely to prefer group work, using models/objects in describing things, walking around while learning, hands-on activities, books with strong plot etc.
- You should be aware of your own VAK preferences. When doing a learning styles analysis with students, the students should be made aware of their individual preferences.
- Some research has shown that students can perform better on tests if they change their study habits to fit their own personal learning styles. For example, visual-learning students will sometimes struggle during essay exams, because they can't recall test material that was 'heard' in a lecture.
- However, if the visual learner uses a visual aid when studying, like a colourful outline of test materials, he or she may retain more information. For this type of learner, visual tools improve the ability to recall information more completely.

General characteristics of the visual, audio and kinaesthetic learning styles based on the VAK approach

Visual learner characteristics

Visual learners are those who tend to learn best through seeing things. Look over the characteristics below to see if they sound familiar. A visual learner:

- is good at spelling but forgets names
- needs quiet study time
- has to think a while before understanding a lecture
- likes colours and fashion
- dreams in colour
- understands/likes charts
- is good with sign language

Learning suggestions for visual learners

- Draw a map of events in history or draw scientific process
- Make outlines of everything
- Copy what's on the board
- Ask the teacher to make a diagram/sketch
- Take notes, make lists
- Watch videos
- Colour code words
- Outline reading
- Use flashcards
- Use highlighters, circle words, underline

Best test type for visual learners

Diagramming, reading maps, essays, showing a process

Worst test type for visual learners

Listen and respond tests

Auditory learner characteristics

Auditory learners are those who tend to learn best through hearing things. Look over these traits to see if they sound familiar to you. You may be an auditory learner if you are someone who:

- likes to read to self out loud

- is not afraid to speak in class
- likes oral reports
- is good at explaining
- remembers names
- notices sound effects in movies
- enjoys music
- is good at grammar and foreign languages
- reads slowly
- follows spoken directions well
- can't keep quiet for long periods
- enjoys acting and being on stage
- is good in study groups

Auditory learners can benefit from:

- using word association to remember facts and lines
- recording lectures
- watching videos
- repeating facts with eyes closed
- participating in group discussions
- using audiotapes for language practice
- taping notes after writing them

Best test type for auditory learners

Auditory Learners are good at writing responses to lectures they've heard. They're also good at oral exams.

Worst test type for auditory learners

Reading passages and writing answers about them in a timed test

Kinesthetic learner characteristics

Look over these kinesthetic learner traits to see if they sound familiar to you. You may be a kinesthetic learner if you are someone who:

- is good at sport

- can't sit still for long
- is not great at spelling
- does not have great handwriting
- likes working in science labs
- studies with loud music on
- likes adventure books, movies
- likes role playing
- takes breaks when studying
- builds models
- is involved in martial arts or dance
- is fidgety (restless) during lectures

Kinesthetic learners can benefit from:

- studying in short blocks
- taking lab classes
- role playing
- taking field trips and visiting museums
- studying with others
- using memory games
- using flash cards to memorise

Key points to consider when you start teaching:

- To what extent does your teaching provide a range of activities to cater for the visual, audio and kinesthetic learning styles?
- What opportunities do you see to enhance the range of types of activity in your classroom?
- What learning style preference do you have? Is it visual, audio or kinesthetic? Or is it a mix of two or more?

Some people find that their learning style may be a blend of two or three styles.

Naturally, it is not always practical or even possible to account for all learning styles in a class. However, if you do identify learning styles to

inform your classroom approach, you may find that you can gain a deeper understanding of your students' learning preferences and a greater appreciation of their strengths.

You may also discover that an awareness of the different kinds of learning styles will help you to create more creative and appealing lessons. This, in turn, promotes more student engagement, as students will be leveraging learning modes that match their particular strengths.

Your students' increased engagement and success in learning may also stimulate you to raise their expectations. This initiates a powerful expectation-response cycle that can lead to greater achievement levels. This in turn leads to increased motivation for your students and you.

You can do your own analysis of students' learning styles through close observation, noting what you hear and see.

There's also a range of materials on the internet which will give you some ideas as to how to approach this – and you can even try out a learning styles analysis on yourself to find out what preferred learning style you may have if you are not aware of this already.

Please note that materials on the internet may be protected by copyright and you may be restricted to using materials for your own personal use, i.e. you must not print them off and use them with a group of students if the materials are under copyright. Check carefully.

The best route is always to carry out your own analysis via your own approach, by observing your students closely and noting what you hear and see.

Summary – the VAK approach

As with any learning approach, you need to decide whether this offers you any practical usage. The VAK learning styles approach has its proponents and detractors but, overall, we feel it serves as a good aid/reminder for you when choosing appropriate learning activities:

1. Structure learning materials around the learners' strengths

If you have individuals or groups who have particular interests or strengths, e.g. sport, music, and you want them to be involved and successful in their language learning, then structure your learning materials around these interests and strengths.

2. Variety brings life to the classroom

Providing a rich mix of learning activities derived from a mix of the different preferences will result in a lively and engaging classroom for all your learners.

3. A whole person approach

Every individual exercises all preferences to some degree or another. A multi-faceted teaching approach that appeals to all preferences addresses the whole person in ways that more one-sided approaches do not.

The VAK approach helps to develop the whole person within each learner, which best serves the person's language learning requirements as well.

Give it a try – preferably with older students.

Unit 2: Listening

Although listening is a receptive skill, some students do still find it very intimidating. It may seem to them that people speak too fast, they don't understand the accent or can't tell where one word finishes and another starts.

Aside from this, listening isn't just about understanding each word; students may need to listen for gist or for detail, they may need to infer a speaker's attitude or comprehend the meaning behind what is said.

In real-life situations we always have a context when listening; we can see the speakers, know/can infer their relationship and have an idea of what they're talking about based on previous conversations or previous knowledge.

When listening to a recording in a foreign language, however, we don't have any of this, which makes listening even harder. It can also be difficult because spoken language is generally much less well organised than written language.

There may be hesitations, incomplete sentences or a sudden change of topic.

This is very challenging for students and that's why it's important to expose them to both authentic listening material which prepares them for the challenge of real language, as well as 'graded' material to build their confidence.

You should also consider the different types of spoken language which exist. These are a few examples:

- Conversations
- Songs
- Speeches
- Announcements
- Advertisements
- Stories
- Lectures

Listening involves being able to understand a range of different 'spoken texts' and to take meaning from them.

In the classroom we can expose students to a variety of these text types via CDs, DVDs and, of course, our own speech. As we've already mentioned, when listening to a recording, whether authentic or otherwise, we can't see the speakers and therefore can't infer context, whereas in real life we usually have at least some idea of what we're going to hear.

So, when using CDs in the classroom it's a bit unfair to expect students to "listen to the recording and answer the questions" without any introduction at all. If we approach listening lessons like this, students are either able to understand and get the right answers or not, but if *not* then there's no way for them to improve.

Instead, there are a number of ways we can actually develop listening skills. The British Council gives some really fun and interesting pre-listening tasks which can really help. They include:

- **Setting the context** – giving students an idea of who is speaking, where, when and an outline of the situation
- **Warmers to generate interest** – if you're listening to a dialogue about food, you could start off by asking students their favourite foods etc.
- **Activating knowledge** – asking students what they already know about the topic to bring relevant vocabulary to the forefront of their minds or giving them a short, fun quiz
- **Predicting content** – once they know the context they can guess what might/might not be mentioned

- **Giving students the questions before they listen** – this means that they can focus and listen out for cues in the dialogue rather than being overwhelmed trying to listen for absolutely everything
- **Predicting answers** – give students time to read all the questions and make notes on possible answers so that they're not concentrating on reading a question when they should be concentrating on listening!

While listening, learners often have to answer a variety of questions. It's usually best to start with questions which assess the students' understanding of the general gist of the dialogue, such as 'why did the girl phone her friend?', before asking them to concentrate on more specific details i.e. 'what time did they arrange to meet?'. This way they are less likely to become overwhelmed and think, 'I don't understand anything at all!'.

Additionally, some students may have understood what they heard but may be unable to vocalise it. For example, if they listen to a story which they have understood, they might not necessarily be able to re-tell that story. It's unreasonable, therefore, to ask hugely generalised questions such as, "Okay, so what did you hear?" that students may not be able to respond to.

Use tasks such as true/false questions or table completion to help focus students' attention and allow you to assess accurately whether they have understood.

After listening, the students need to feedback the answers and this can be done in several ways.

A good one is getting students to check what they've written in pairs and if they have wildly different responses you may need to play the recording again. If there are still problems then you need to grade the questions or activities to a more appropriate level and then build up.

You can grade tasks rather than the recording so that students are exposed to authentic material from an early stage but aren't asked to complete overly-complicated activities.

Even a BBC radio interview could technically be used as a listening exercise for lower levels where you ask them just to listen for who is being interviewed, for example. The same piece can then be used for more advanced levels as they can be asked to identify attitudes, opinions and more specific details.

Obviously some recordings are always going to be more appropriate for different levels but don't get stuck in the notion that lower levels can't handle realistic material – they may find it an interesting challenge!

Effective Strategies/Activities

Effective Strategies/Activities for Developing Students' Listening Skills

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different listening strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these listening events interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun (but not too much fun with adults).

Here are some of the most practical approaches:

1. Strategies

Questions and answers

Very short exchanges can be used to provide elementary or lower intermediate students with practice in listening and understanding. Exchanges like this can later be practised by the students themselves, and preferably recorded.

Recording the students on tape is almost always universally enjoyed by students even when they laughingly protest a little at the beginning because they are shy about hearing their own voice on tape.

Short dialogues

The way in which the dialogue is recorded will affect its authenticity; traffic noise or café noise in the background adds a further degree of authenticity.

Short passages

Unlike dialogues, it's not so easy to make the language authentic in a short passage; however, a story with a touch of humour always appeals to learners. A wide range of factual questions could be prepared together with one or two deductive questions.

Reordering information

The students are given a number of items on paper, written out in the wrong order: actions, description, events and so on. They are also given one or more specific tasks, and then they listen to the text. The task(s) may involve categorising information, reordering actions in the correct order, classifying events and so on.

Information transfer

Information transfer activities involve students translating part of the spoken message into a new format, such as a table, chart, picture, map and so on. They may then use this new format to carry out a further activity, such as working in pairs with a friend to solve a related problem.

Note that information transfer activities involve any transfer of any information in a text or utterance to a new format: a listening passage to a table; a reading text to a dialogue; a telephone conversation to a map and so on.

Using humour to develop listening skills

Language learning is much less painful if the students have something to smile about from time to time, and a bit of humour can do this.

Dictation

Dictation went out of fashion in language teaching for a long time, but it can be a valuable form of listening practice and it has now returned in revised forms. The important thing is that the dictation passage should normally be one which the students have met already.

It would normally be inappropriate with English language students to give them a dictation passage that they have never met before. This would be tantamount to a test, which is very different from practice.

Jigsaw listening

This involves students listening to different parts of a passage or a conversation (or different passages and different conversations), and then coming together in pairs to try to complete a particular task. Each person has a different piece of information.

The task might, for example, involve completing another dialogue or filling in a table or drawing a map. With a large class, the students can first be divided into two different groups so that they listen to two different tapes.

Then they get together in pairs with one person from each group. It is possible to prepare such materials yourself, but you will occasionally find that jigsaw listening and reading tasks are provided in your coursebook.

2. Some activities

Choose passages, topics and exercises that are participative, interesting and good fun.

Here are some tried and tested suggestions:

Add on

One student starts off with *I went to the market and I bought some apples*. The next student adds to this: *I went to the market and I bought some apples and a spoon*. This continues until the sentence is unmanageably long and the students start to get a bit confused.

This could be a competitive game with teams but would be better as a co-operative activity. It's good fun and you can change the model sentence to anything you like so that you can do this again and again in future classes.

Pass the message

This activity can be used to emphasise the importance of listening. One student thinks of a 'message' and writes it down. The student then whispers this to another student, swiftly, and so on. The message can only be said once, but it must be spoken clearly.

Nevertheless, however clearly the message is spoken, it will almost always be distorted in some way or other which often produces a comical sentence. It can then be compared with the original sentence.

Think of a verb

Each group writes a short passage of about 3-4 sentences. The verbs (excluding the verb *to be)* are removed from the passage. One member of, say, group A, then reads out the passage and the other groups suggest appropriate verbs to fit the space.

The final version of the newly constructed passage can then be read in full and is then compared to the original passage. This will often provide a lot of laughs. It can be done again in future classes by changing the verb to a noun or adverb, i.e. linked hopefully to whatever else they are studying.

What's the word?

You spell out words quickly, and the students have to shout out the word.

Hands up!

You write up 5-10 words relating to what the students have been currently studying. You then incorporate these words into a passage. You read out the passage. Students put their hands up as soon as they hear each of the words.

Missing word

You write up 5 words relating to what the students have been currently studying. You read out a short passage – incorporating 4 of the words. After the passage has been read out, students suggest the missing word.

That's not right

You speak out an incorrect sentence-nothing too difficult, e.g. *An elephant big is*. Students have to decide what the correct version should be.

Overview: Module 8

Reading, like listening, is a receptive skill because it involves responding to a text instead of producing one.

Work through this module to find out the key concepts related to reading skills.

You are going to watch a video of an authentic reading skills lesson. We feel this is a very effective way to demonstrate some practical areas of teaching as well as helping with your lesson planning thought process.

Unit 1: Reading

Reading is actually much more complicated than it seems at first glance.

When we read in our own language, we don't realise all of the skills we are in fact using to make sense of a text. In a foreign language, though, there are several things that come into play which we take for granted in English.

You need to understand the individual letters, the words, sentences, connections between sentences and the type of text. You also need to bring your previous knowledge of the world to make sense of the discourse.

There are many different types of text, from letters to articles to stories and the genre of text, as well as other factors, determines *how* we read it.

We might be skimming for the overall gist or reading for detail, even reading parts to predict what the whole is all about.

These are the different reading skills we can help our learners to develop so that they become active readers and get the most out of any reading activity.

Skimming & scanning

We skim a text when we want to get a general impression of what it's about. You read it quickly, running your eyes over the words to understand the overall meaning.

We would often skim through the first couple of pages of a book before deciding to buy it, for instance. With EFL students, this can be a good skill to practice because it gets them to see the broader structure and meaning of a text without stopping at and worrying about the words they don't know.

It also avoids one of the typical complaints that reading in a foreign language is boring because it's so slow when you think you have to look up every single word in a dictionary!

Scanning is a similar technique which is also to do with 'speed reading'. It's slightly different, however, in that you scan a text to find specific pieces of information quickly.

You might be looking for a phone number, a name, opening times etc. so you don't read the whole text, just parts of it until you find the information you need.

A typical 'scanning' question could be 'What time does the last bus leave?' or 'Where is Lucy going on holiday?'

Reading for detail

Reading for detail is when we really focus on each individual word. This allows you to work out how each word in a sentence fits together to deduce meaning and can be used to learn new vocabulary or understand certain aspects of grammar.

Most students are familiar with this method but be aware that often in real life we don't read like this except on certain occasions (i.e. to understand a complex set of instructions). It's therefore important to make sure that learners are aware of different approaches to reading so that when they do encounter texts in the real world where they don't understand every word, they still have strategies to cope.

Deducing meaning from context

In those instances where some words are unknown, it's not always useful to go straight to a dictionary and find a definition or translation. Instead we can encourage students to work out the meaning of a word from its context.

This involves looking at all the words around it in order to give an educated guess as to its meaning.

Predicting

There is a lot of information we can get from a text even before we read it.

Help students tap into this useful skill by encouraging them to look at the other visual information on the page before reading. This could be pictures or photographs, a title or subheading, even the author's name.

All of these things can help us predict the genre of a text (letter, newspaper article, novel extract etc.) as well as possible content and even grammatical structures which may be used.

If we're reading a letter of application, perhaps readers might expect to see use of modal verbs such as 'could and would' to make polite requests or some fixed expressions such as 'enclosed is a copy of my Curriculum Vitae'.

When students predict correctly, they can feel satisfied and reassured that even though they might not understand every word, they can comprehend more than they may have thought.

Inferring

Inferring is a slightly more subtle skill.

This is when we can understand the meaning behind the words to deduce attitudes, opinions etc. For this, students need to be able to recognise register(formal or informal) and style and identify words and structures that tell us how the writer is referring to something.

This type of skill is often practised at higher levels because it takes a certain amount of knowledge of the English language.

However, even at lower levels you can grade a task so that it is suitable for lower level students to infer meaning.

Noticing the unknown words position in a sentence and recognising whether it's a verb, noun, adjective etc. will help to deduce meaning.

As you can see, there are many different ways of reading a text for a variety of purposes depending on the skills you want your students to develop. Yet,

it's still necessary, as for listening, to introduce the task rather than just launching in asking your students to read and answer the questions.

Unit 2: Reading Skills DVD Lesson

You are about to watch in intermediate level class focusing on reading. We have included this lesson to show you an authentic lesson using a **top down approach** to teaching reading.

The question from the previous unit focusing on a reading lesson procedure was a good example of this approach.

The lesson first looks at the text from a general and wider perspective then gradually focuses on more detail. We have also included the lesson plan.

When you first start teaching, many questions will arise when you are planning.

Below are some of the typical ones that new teachers tell us about. In this lesson, Celia's language comes from a text about the comedian Lenny Henry's likes and dislikes.

In a lesson where the language comes from a text, the text provides the context but this still means that your students need to have processed the text to understand the meaning before moving onto working with the language.

Read through the questions that Celia asked herself before planning this type of lesson, then:

1. Look at the lesson plan
2. Print off the questions
3. Watch the video and try to notice some solutions to these questions.
4. Read the suggested solutions to the questions. (Yes. You could cheat and look at the solutions before watching the video but that probably wouldn't help you learn!)

Question 1. The text is about Lenny Henry and some of the students don't know him as they were not present for the previous lesson where a film was shown about him. What should I do?

Question 2. Do I need to spend a long time pre-teaching language before the students read the text?

Question 3. The students have to understand the text and process it to understand the meaning. How many tasks should I have before focusing on the language?

Question 4. I have a scanning task but my students often end up reading for detail and then we get hung up on difficult language. What can I do?

Question 5. Timing is going to be my problem. I only have one hour with this class. How can I save time at different stages in the lesson?

Question 6. Do I need to concept check all the lexis (vocabulary) in the lesson when the language has already been presented clearly?

Question 7. I don't feel confident about dealing with grammatical form and there seems to be a lot to cover. What can I do?

Question 8. Do I need to link the language to the text?

Reading text lesson materials to print

Lesson materials. Board game (print)

Reading lesson materials (print)
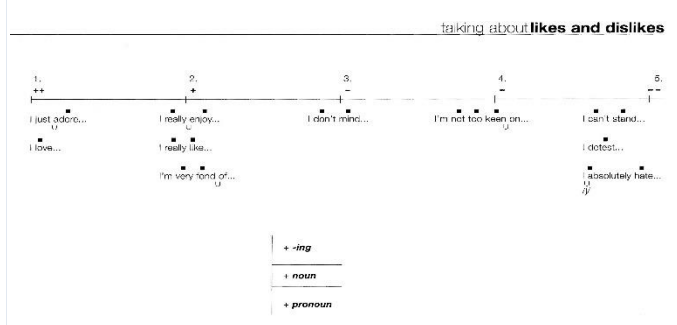
Unit 3: Suggested solutions

Question 1:For your lead in at the beginning, show a picture of Lenny Henry and ask those who were there to tell those that weren't there about him. Ask them basic questions about what they remember e.g. Who is he? Where is he from? Where's his family from? What does he do?

Question 2: No. Only pre-teach the absolutely key vocabulary that would stop them understanding the general message of the text. You might find you don't need to teach anything or that you can just tell them what a few

items mean during the lead-in stage. A common problem is that pre-teaching takes up most the lesson so your main aims are not achieved. Also, if you pre-teach everything then your lesson becomes too teacher centred.

Question 3: There's not a set number but you shouldn't need more than two. During the first task in Celia's lesson, students scan the text for information about his likes and dislikes. The second task is also scanning and this time the aim is to take out the target language to be analysed in the next stage.

Question 4: Set students a time limit that only gives then time to scan the text. Make sure that the task itself is one that only requires them to scan the text. Tell them that they don't need to understand all the vocabulary to do the task but that you'll look at the vocab at another stage if they still want to.

Question 5: Some general tips are…don't spend too long on the lead in. Give clear instructions and have the language analysis on the board and on a hand out so that students don't have to waste time copying from the board.

Question 6: No. In Celia's lesson the cline/scale was clear enough to not need it. Visuals that are clear usually don't need to be concept checked.

Question 7: Read up on your target language and plan carefully. Naturally you will be a bit nervous in this area but remember; as long as you understand the main structure of grammar you will be fine.

The main aim of any lesson is that students can *use* the language effectively so the focus is never solely on grammar. It will also be on skills, meaning and pronunciation for example. Pre-prepare exactly what you are going to do in the lesson and maybe also a hand-out to give to students.

Also think about whether you are trying to do too much. If that's not the case, then think of the most efficient way to do it – as in Celia's lesson.

Question 8: Yes! This is very important and often isn't done enough. The text that you decide on is the context for the language and will help your students understand it so it is something you should exploit and use to help your students.

Effective strategies/activities for developing students' reading skills

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different reading strategies and activities. Your

goal is to make these interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun (but not too much fun with young adults and adults).

Here are some of the most practical approaches:

1. Strategies

- Guessing word meanings by using context clues
- Word formation clues
- Considering syntax and sentence structure by noting the grammatical functions of unknown words
- Analysing reference words
- Predicting text content
- Reading for specific pieces of information
- Learning to use the dictionary effectively.

There are many integrative activities you can use. Use your imagination!

Here are some practical ideas:

- Matching/contrasting – e.g. Matching/contrasting the characteristics of two individuals in the story
- Timelines – these lines will help them to understand the way a text is structured with tense changes, linking words and flashbacks
- Character study – depending on the content, you could make this much more interesting by getting the students to complete, say, a doctor's report or a police report on the character
- Students reacting to texts by writing summaries
- Writing new endings
- Re-enacting the text
- Dramatising interviews based on the text
- Carefully listening for key words or phrases from the text which are in authentic video or audio tapes
- Creating role-play situations or simulations of cultural experiences based on the text
- True/false questions, factual questions and 'why' questions as a basis for discussing the text (not testing)

- Gap filling - the gaps might all be factual words from the passage; alternatively, they might be linking words that hold the sentences together; they could also be grammatical items
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- Drawing conclusions
- Relating what they have read to their experiences or to other texts
- Noting contradictions and inconsistencies, perhaps in what characters say and do

2. Some activities

Choose passages, topics and exercises that are participative, interesting and good fun.

These can be used both by younger and older learners. You can just adapt them a bit, e.g. perhaps only using separate words with younger learners but using sentences with older learners.

Here are some tried and tested suggestions:

Distraction

To liven up your reading materials, bring a learner from each group to the front of the class and have them all try to finish reading the extract simultaneously whilst you are trying to distract them with silly comments, sound effects, funny faces or any other way, without touching the learners.

Award points for the first person to finish reading or the one who kept a straight face for the longest.

DVD control buttons

Draw a DVD player style control panel on the board i.e. a box with a series of buttons; play, pause, slow motion and fast – but not rewind. Use the symbols that you would see on a DVD player. Have the class read out the extract or story together.

When you hit a button, they must adapt their reading style according i.e. start, stop, slow down, speed up etc. Develop the game further by adding

buttons with happy and sad faces, musical notes (indicating that they sing instead of read). Be creative. The possibilities are endless.

One student one word

Before you start reading as a class, put your learners into teams. Go around the room having the learners read the story or extract- one person, one word. When a learner says the wrong word or delays for more than 3 seconds, give the other team a point.

Encourage them to be alert and keep a good fast pace going.

Read to me- circle

Get the learners to stand in a circle with their reading books. Designate pairs within the circle and instruct them to read to each other simultaneously. When you shout 'switch', they turn to the person on their other side and start reading to them instead.

Walk and read

Tell your learners to stand up and hold the reading book close to their faces. Have them read the book whilst walking around in a certain direction or in any random fashion. Tell them to hop and skip etc. to mix it up.

Upside down reading

Put learners into pairs. Have them hold their book upside down and race to read through the extract. After each round tell them to switch partners and do it again.

Banned words

Before you start, say that words with a particular grammatical value are banned, e.g. *on, over, under, before*. It could be anything: words that begin with a certain letter or a past participle verb. Read the text and when a banned word emerges learners must replace it with a sound or a different word.

Reading bingo

Tell learners to choose 10 random words from a reading extract and write them down. Read out sentences from the text in a random order. When learners hear their words, they cross them off. The first learner to cross off all their words is the winner and becomes the reader.

Note that many activities already discussed for speaking, writing and listening can also be used for intensive reading, e.g. identifying mistakes, reordering sentences etc.

Overview: Module 9

The two productive skills are speaking and writing because they require students to produce language.

They are sometimes also known as active skills as opposed to the passive, or receptive skills of listening and reading.

Normally these skills develop after the receptive skills because students need to receive language before they can produce it, but ideally they should be developed simultaneously as they complement each other.

In this unit we'll look in more detail at speaking skills and what is required to develop them. Please also refer back to the 'Functions' video (module 6) which provides you with a good example of a speaking lesson.

Unit 1: Speaking

As with reading, when we speak there's a lot more going on than you might realise.

It's not just about using grammar and vocabulary accurately; we also use an appropriate register (level of formality), self-correct, hesitate, use stress and intonation and use different interactive strategies to ensure that we're communicating effectively.

This can be anything from asking opinions, clarifying our meaning, turn-taking and agreeing/disagreeing to keep up interaction.

Even native speakers aren't actually 100% accurate when they speak because of the necessity to talk in real time.

Unlike when we write, we do not have time to properly organise our thoughts, therefore we often make mistakes, interrupt, flit between topics and correct ourselves or clarify meaning.

This lack of preparation time makes speaking in a foreign language especially difficult.

Already your students may not know the necessary vocabulary to speak about a certain topic and then on top of that they may not have the necessary skills to respond immediately to a task.

That's why you need to develop these skills in your students to ensure they are able to communicate effectively.

Before you start any speaking skills lesson you need to decide if your main aim is fluency, accuracy or both. This will affect how you conduct the lesson, the kinds of activities you will do and how/whether to correct.

Controlled Practice

Examples of controlled speaking practice are scripted role-plays, repetition and drilling.

Whilst they don't give practice of fluency or interaction, these exercises can be very useful for working on accuracy, pronunciation and word/sentence stress.

They help build learners' confidence too and motivate them to produce grammatically correct language. They can also be less overwhelming for shyer students so are a great way to lead into freer practice.

Students often find it difficult to transfer the knowledge they have in their heads to what comes out of their mouths, so controlled practice can be a good mid-way point on the road to spontaneous communication.

Through controlled practice, learners can apply what they know passively to active production to ensure that all that passive knowledge isn't going to waste.

It can sometimes be embarrassing for students when they don't know what they're supposed to say and fear making errors, so if they have the language in front of them, it's more reassuring.

Controlled practice confines the conversation to the target language so it's a great way to get students to practice a language point sufficiently so that it sticks in their heads.

All the instructions/prompts elicit a particular response and are fully predictable. If you are focusing on the functional language of polite requests for example, you may wish to have students act out a scripted dialogue on the topic so that they can memorise the useful fixed expressions.

Or for a numbers lesson you could put students in pairs and give them a card each with some questions on it e.g. 'What's the population of the UK?' or 'How high is Mount Snowdon?'

One of the students will have half the answers the other will have the other half and by asking and answering questions they can complete both sets of questions. In this instance, only the target language is being practised and the responses are 100% predictable.

Free Practice

Freer practice, on the other hand, is more challenging.

Whilst controlled practice encourages accuracy and builds confidence, free practice improves fluency (the ability to speak at a natural speed without too many hesitations).

The idea is that your students get better at speaking by speaking. In the past, learners often had a good grammatical and theoretical knowledge of the language but were unable to use it.

This is more or less useless in today's society where people from all over the world must be able to communicate effectively in English.

A variety of communicative activities can be used to encourage fluency (look back at Module 5 for more details) but the important thing is to maximise the amount of time that the students themselves have to speak. It can often be difficult to take a step back from jumping into the conversation/discussion.

As we've already discussed, error correction needs to be used tentatively with fluency activities so that the flow is not interrupted too much. Give the students the freedom and more importantly the time they need to undertake the task at hand.

An appropriate lead-in can be key to getting any discussion-based task off to a good start. This can be as simple as focusing on an image or a statement just to get some ideas flowing and can be a good opportunity to pre-teach some essential vocabulary.

Don't just start with, "Let's talk about global warming. Ahmed what do you think?" This will catch your students completely off-guard and is not conducive to a lively debate. Although it's supposed to be 'free' speaking, that doesn't mean there shouldn't be any structure to the activity.

You could give the students role cards, i.e. 'you're a member of a green activist group'/'you work for the logging industry' etc. Or set a scenario and

give the class some information/data to read through first. Simulating real-life activities e.g. 'A wind-farm is planned to be built 3 miles from your house, you are going to a meeting for local residents to discuss your views…' is also a great way of getting students to practice language in a natural setting which may actually serve them in the future.

Your role in these activities is to introduce the task and then to monitor rather than being a full contributor. Whilst you should avoid taking part too much yourself, that's not to say you can't play devil's advocate every so often to prompt the discussion if it starts to die off.

Another method is to split students into smaller groups which switch round to keep their interest if you feel conversation is dwindling. Hopefully, this won't happen, but a common cause of students drying up can be if they haven't had any preparation time.

As we mentioned earlier, speaking in a foreign language is a much slower process and we need more time to think.

If you just throw your class in at the deep end without any thinking time, they may become too flustered to think of the words they need and so not say anything at all.

Step back and give them time to process the task.

Effective Strategies/Activities

Effective Strategies/Activities for Developing Students' Speaking Skills

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different speaking strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun (but not too much fun with young adults and adults).

Here are some of the most practical approaches:

1. Strategies

Help your students with speaking strategies, using strategies like minimal responses, recognising scripts, and clarification and comprehension responses, which they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it.

You are helping your students to learn how to speak so that your students can use speaking to learn.

1. Using minimal responses

Language learners who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way you can encourage such learners to begin to participate is to help them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges.

Such responses can be especially useful for beginners.

Minimal responses are predictable phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying; for example: *Oh, I see. Is that so? That's good. Oh, sorry. I didn't catch that.*

Having a stock of such responses enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response.

2. Recognising scripts

Many communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges - a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. For example:

Can I help you?

Yes, please.

So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated.

You can help your students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response.

Through interactive activities, you can give your students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain.

3. Using clarification and comprehension responses

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realise that a conversation partner has not understood them.

You can help your students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participant's language skill levels. You can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension checks. For example:

For clarification check:

- *Do you mean...?*
- *Could you clarify that, please?*
- *Can you elaborate on that, please?*
- *Could you be more explicit, please?*
- *Could you explain what you mean by...?*
- *Could you give me an example, please?*

For comprehension check:

- *Sorry, I don't understand.*
- *Sorry, I don't know what you mean.*
- *Sorry, I'm not sure I'm following you.*
- *Sorry, I've missed your point.*
- *Sorry, I don't see what you're getting at.*

By encouraging students to use clarification and comprehension phrases in class and by responding positively when they do, you can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself.

As they develop control of various clarification and comprehension strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

2. Some activities

Your aim is to get them to talk.

The classroom, of course, is an artificial environment in which to be practising a language. Some students find it a rather scary place because they are constantly being asked to say things in the target language.

They may have little confidence in being able to say it correctly and fear being laughed at.

It is your job to ensure that the students are happy and relaxed in the classroom, and are willing to practise speaking. A lot depends on the activities and tasks that you ask the students to do and the way you structure the practice. There are a number of points to remember:

- Don't make the tasks too complicated or difficult.
- Prepare the students properly so that they know what to do.
- Let them work in pairs or groups rather than having to perform in front of the class.

Here are some tried and tested practical ideas:

A little-known fact

Ask students to share their name, age, and one little known fact about themselves. This little-known fact, e.g. *I have a pet snake*, can become a regular conversational element in future interactions with partners in the classroom. That is, it gives the learner a reason to talk and respond: *I got it for my birthday. It loves eating mice. It is three feet long. No, it doesn't bite.*

The hot seat

Put a chair with its back facing the board; this is the Hot Seat and a volunteer must sit here. Then write a word on the board (for beginners, tell them the word category or theme – this is likely to be vocabulary they are presently studying). Then students try to prompt the Hot Seater into guessing what the word is by describing it.

Interviews

Ask students to get into twos. Give them a short list of things they might ask about, e.g. favourite sports, favourite food. Each person then interviews his or her partner for a set time while paired up. When the group reconvenes, each person introduces their interviewee's favourites to the rest of the group.

A few of my favourite things

Whatever you're talking about, ask your students to share their top three favourite things relating to the topic at hand. If you have time, turn it around: what are their three least favourite things? This information will be even more helpful if you ask them to explain why.

Describing a drawing/map

Student A has a picture that she has to describe to her partner B who will then draw the picture based on A's instructions. This picture can be one that the student A has been given, or it could be one that she has previously drawn.

Student A then has to describe the drawing to student B. B is not allowed to look at the drawing. She can ask questions in order to be clear about what to draw. Then they can reverse the roles. It is an interesting and challenging activity, and the students really enjoy it.

Twenty questions

The students work in groups and one of them thinks of a well-known character (and writes it on a piece of paper) and the others have to guess who the character is. They can ask questions such as *Is it a man? Is he a sportsman? Is he alive? Does he play basketball?* And so on.

They cannot ask questions with *or*, such as: *Is she a sportswoman or a politician?* These are two separate questions. They can only ask a total of 20 questions; once they get the idea, a total of 10 questions may be enough.

Time for a change

Ask your students to close their eyes while you change five things about yourself. For example, you could take off one shoe, take off your watch, put on different glasses, put on your sweater, and take off your ring.

You then ask them to pose questions to figure out the changes you have made. Students may ask: *Did you take off a shoe? Did you put on a sweater?* This kind of activity can be fun and, more importantly, it engages students in a way that requires them to think and not just provide mechanical responses.

Find a classmate who

In this exercise, students stand up, circulate about the room and ask questions of other students to find those who can do different activities, e.g. play football, do painting etc. Students then report their findings back to class.

Unit 2: Some vocabulary activities and exercises

Although vocabulary is not regarded as one of the 4 skills per se, it is, of course, an integral part of teaching the 4 skills.

So, we feel it will be useful to give you some activities and exercises to work with when you are specifically presenting new vocabulary items. And this seems to fit well with this Module focussed on speaking.

Here are some practical options for presenting new vocabulary items. These are best carried out in pairs or groups:

Context: Students see the text that contains vocabulary items and deduce the meaning of the item based on the surrounding language.

Miming or gesturing: Students guess the meaning of a vocabulary item based on your or another student's miming and gesturing.

Substitution drills: These kinds of drills enable students to focus on structure while learning related vocabulary. For example, a dialogue or sentence structure is first taught, then students substitute different content words.

Antonyms/synonyms: Students match items from a list of synonyms or antonyms to the word(s) in a text.

Hangman: The classic vocabulary game where students choose letters to spell out the vocabulary item in a limited number of rounds.

Odd-Man-Out: You list four words for your students to analyse. Students have to determine the relationship between the words and then explain why one word does not belong.

Matching definitions: Students literally match words to a list of definitions.

Gapped dictation: You read a text with some vocabulary missing, and the students have to deduce what the vocabulary item is, based on the context.

Using dictionaries: These can be used for a number of reasons:

- Using the alphabet and placing words in alphabetical order
- Checking the pronunciation of new words

- Positioning the stress correctly
- Distinguishing different uses of the same word
- Distinguishing different meanings of words with the same spelling
- Checking the grammatical role of a word
- Distinguishing British and American spelling or meaning
- Checking on the formality or informality of a new word

Keeping a vocabulary record: Jotting down any new words. You can then use this as a warmer exercise, a few days later, to check whether the word and its meaning and usage have been embedded.

Remember: A warmer is a short activity at the start of your lesson to get your students engaged and participating, and into the 'English mode' immediately. A warmer can just be a fun activity but you should always try, as best as you can, to make the warmer related to what they have already been learning; that is, not just using an unrelated warmer just for fun. We will return to warmers when we explore lesson planning.

Using drawings/pictures: These can be used very effectively to teach vocabulary.

Labelling: Working in pairs or small groups, or pairs and then small groups, the students can, for example, label the various parts of a picture of a bicycle, or the parts of the body.

One student alone may not possess all of the vocabulary that is needed, but by working in pairs or small groups they are likely to have a larger group of words. They can then combine with another pair or small group to see if they have a complete list.

When teaching vocabulary/lexical items to students, you should keep in mind that a student's learning of a word means not only knowing its dictionary meaning, but also understanding its form, different connotations and its correct use.

Rather than simply giving students the meaning of a vocabulary/lexical item, you need to make sure that your students understand the meaning.

To this end, you can help your learners develop effective vocabulary learning strategies. You can also develop student-centred presentation techniques, such as eliciting and effective concept checking, which make vocabulary learning, and teaching, much more engaging.

Overview: Module 10

Writing is the last of the four skills we're going to look at in detail. Like speaking, writing is a productive, or active, skill because it requires students to create language themselves in written form.

Today, written communication, especially in the workplace but also for social purposes, is incredibly important. There are many different texts types, some of which we write on a daily basis, others which we use less often. A few of these are listed below:

- E-mails
- Shopping lists
- Essays
- Stories
- Text messages
- Reports
- Letters
- Minutes of meetings
- Postcards
- Diaries etc.

Because there are a range of reasons why we write a particular text, there are several different styles of writing we employ to communicate our message appropriately. Take a look at the following two units to learn more about what's involved in writing skills and how to teach them effectively.

Unit 1: Writing

Writing is one of those skills that is often considered difficult to teach, after all teachers often don't know how to improve their own writing. Yet it still remains an important skill.

Some students may need to improve for academic purposes, for business, or just to communicate with friends/colleagues in English.

Although it is sometimes thought of as an individual activity, there are ways to actually incorporate activities which improve writing ability into your lesson. But first we need to see what writing in a foreign language involves.

Writing requires quite different mental processes from speaking, as we have time to prepare, organise material, take our time and check for errors or inaccuracies.

However, there are also challenges: in order to write successfully there are a number of elements to consider. We need to think about the purpose of our writing and who we are writing for/to.

This will affect not only the content but the register, style and structure of what we write. There's a lot going on, it's not just about producing grammatically correct sentences!

Imagine you are writing a letter and match the questions you would ask yourself with the elements of writing they correspond to:

1. Why am I writing?

2. Who am I writing to?

3. What do I need to say?

4. What will I talk about first, second, last etc?

a. content

b. register

purpose

structure

Check answer

There are different writing activities we can do to work on some, or all, of the above elements. This depends on the type of exercise we do with our students and how controlled the practice is. Some of the different task types are listed as follows:

- **Copying** – Young learners in particular, or students who use a different alphabet from the Roman one used for English, often need to copy characters or words in order to learn how to formulate them.

- **Controlled exercises** – Learners write single words or phrases in response to questions. There is little room for error as the task is so focused.

- **Guided writing** – Using samples or models of longer texts to demonstrate to students appropriate language and structures for the task

- **Process writing** – Students choose what they want to write but you guide them through the process

- **Unguided writing** – Students write without too much assistance

Although you may prefer to set writing tasks for homework, there are ways of usefully incorporating writing into the lesson itself. You can do this in several ways from analysing sample answers, to discussing ideas, to helping students decide how to organise their work.

Before, During and After Writing

Before Writing

Both creative and 'real-life' writing can develop different skills in your students and challenge them to use language they may not otherwise put into practice.

As with any other skills lesson, before you set a writing task, you need to lead in appropriately. This could be through reading a text, for example an article introducing the topic or a short story, or even by doing a listening or speaking activity to spark the students' interest.

You may then want to look at some sample or model answers and do a variety of activities analysing the good and bad points of each and the key elements in each. This could be in the form of fixed expressions, a particular structure, appropriate register etc.

Once you've done this you can get a discussion going about ideas for writing or things to include, don't just leave learners facing a difficult task without any inspiration!

During writing

The next stage is one that is often missed out but is actually really essential for any good piece of writing: planning.

You should encourage your students to think about the four points we mentioned earlier (purpose, register, content and structure).

Many examinations to assess English language proficiency in fact give a large percentage of marks to students who write appropriately and in a clearly structured way.

This means that even if your learners have difficulty with accuracy they can still gain high marks if the other elements are all done well.

Start off with the general outline and then ask students to really think about exactly what they want to say in each paragraph and how they're going to say it.

Brainstorming relevant vocabulary and expressions at the beginning can help too.

After writing

Surprisingly, many students don't actually check their work once they've written it! This is a big mistake because even mother-tongue speakers sometimes make mistakes when they write because they may have a change of idea half way through a sentence and don't go back to adapt everything else accordingly.

Obviously, during exams or timed exercises, your students won't have enough time to do a complete re-draft but you can encourage them to do this for the other writing tasks you set them. Hopefully it will make them more aware of how to improve their own writing.

Don't just get them to re-draft the language though, make sure they're thinking about the task as a whole and asking themselves, 'Have I really answered the question here?', 'Is it too formal/informal for the audience and purpose?', 'Does it follow a clear and logical structure?'

After that comes proof-reading, i.e. checking for errors/mistakes. This is essential even for timed writing activities as the students must leave themselves enough time to check over their work.

It can sometimes be difficult to see mistakes when you're looking at the text as a whole because there's too much to take in. Instead, it can be useful to get students to look through what they've written several times but each time focusing on a different element.

For instance, they could read through once to check for verb-noun agreement (i.e. have they written 'she go' instead of 'she goes'), another time for prepositions, a third for correct word order etc. This enables the student to focus and be more successful at spotting mistakes.

If there's time, reading each line backwards so you really concentrate on every word is another good technique to check for errors and again helps learners concentrate.

When marking your students' work remember to not only mark it in terms of accuracy.

It's all too easy just to focus on the language and forget yourself about all the other elements involved in the writing process. You should also award marks for how well they've answered the question, if the text develops clearly and you can identify a structure and how appropriate the register is.

You're asking your students to think about all of these things so it's only fair you do too!

And remember to give learners the opportunity to self-correct and thereby improve their writing by using different error correction techniques (i.e. a 'correction code') as we looked at in Module 5.

Unit 2: Questions to think about while watching our authentic writing lesson

Before watching the writing video, think about the following questions relating to teaching writing to a foreign student.

1. Look at this: الكتابة بلغة أخرى مجهدةٌ في بعض الأحيان

What problems would the student who wrote the above have with writing in English?

This is an Arabic speaker who has written *'Writing in another language is often stressful'.* This speaker writes from right to left so would obviously have problems with the basic script of English. This is also worth bearing in mind when teaching anyone whose first language uses a different script. As you can see from the Arabic writing above, letter formation is completely different so it is likely that, whatever level, help would be needed with handwriting.

2. In speaking, the listener/addressee is usually present (except on the phone). Think about how this affects speaking and writing?

When speaking, you can stop, restart and pause if the addressee has not understood part of the conversation. For example, if you were giving instructions on how to use a DVD player, it would be unusual not to have

to repeat something for full understanding. In writing however, the addressee is not present so information conveyed needs to be clear, logical and generally concise. You also need to think about tone as this can be misinterpreted in a text message, email or letter for example. The implication here is that writing in a second language can be stressful as accuracy and tone are very important.

Think back to the last time you had to write an essay or formal email. What process did you go through before producing the final product?

The writing process can have a number of different stages.

We suggest that you print off the following lesson stages and try to match and order them according to the what happens in the authentic writing lesson video.

Lesson stages (these are not in the correct order):

Revising / redrafting
Having a reason / being motivated to write
Making notes
Editing for final draft
Brainstorming ideas
Making the first draft
Planning and outlining

It will also really help you to print off the lesson materials so that you can follow the activities as the students do them.

Now watch the authentic writing lesson video.

Writing lesson materials. Competition to print

AUGUST

WRITING COMPETITION

"Summer in London"

• Open to students of all levels

• Can submit originals, redrafts or marked copies

• Audience: other students

• Poetry, prose, lyrics, articles....max 250 words

• Entries to go into file in the library by 7 pm
  Wednesday 24th August

• 1st prize: good dictionary, 2 runners up:
  vouchers for readers from the shop

• Queries: ask Vicky in the library

Writing lesson materials. Competition entry to print

Competition Entry - Melissa

Blimey! It was pitch black and I had no idea where I was. My heart was pumping like an out of control steam train and I was covered in sweat. Slowly my eyes got used to the dark and I was able to make out the familiar furniture in the room. With a sigh of relief I realised it had all been a nightmare. But what was it that gave me such awful thoughts?

Well a few days ago my boss had asked me to do something quite petrifying. I was stunned by his suggestion, "What do you think of us videoing your class?" I couldn't believe what I was hearing! Teaching with two cameras in my face, my boss in the room and five scared stiff students. How embarrassing would that be? And later my colleagues watching? I'd never live it down.

When I told my students…

The morning of the big event…

It seemed like it would go on forever…

You wouldn't believe how relieved I felt…

All in all…

Analysis of Style

In the text can you find…?

Two examples of direct speech

Two examples of informal writing

Two examples of dramatic language

An example where the writer tries to paint a picture for the reader.

Correct order of writing lesson stages

Correct order

1. Having a reason / being motivated to write **(To help the students to activate their existing knowledge on the topic and to generate interest).**
2. Brainstorming ideas (To practise strategies for the pre-writing stage and to generate even more ideas as well as vocabulary on the topic)
3. Making notes
4. Planning and outlining **(To encourage students to note down ideas, as Melissa did with the mind map)**
5. Making the first draft **(To encourage students to do an initial draft in a safe and supported environment i.e. the classroom)**
6. Revising / redrafting
7. Editing for final draft

Now that you have watched a writing lesson, you will hopefully have noticed that the *process* of writing is important. In Melissa's lesson, it is key to notice that the students only got as far as the first draft stage. The actual writing was set as homework.

Effective strategies/activities for developing students' writing skills

Effective strategies/activities for developing students' writing skills

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different writing strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun (but not too much fun with young adults and adults).

Here are some of the most practical approaches, a few of which we have mentioned above:

1. Strategies

Research would seem to show that many learners do not employ many strategies when writing in L2. The reasons are not clear. Anyhow, here are some strategies that some learners do use.

These will be useful for you so that you can introduce them to learners who have few or no strategies to improve their writing:

- Rewriting spelling patterns to embed the word structure in their mind
- Copying pieces of text
- Writing numerous sentences with the structures newly studied
- Practice by translating a piece in their L1 into English (and sometimes using a translator tool to check it)
- Note-taking to increase their practice in writing
- Seeking amusing punctuation examples, where the punctuation changes the meaning, so that they can grasp the differences that punctuation can make
- Writing word connections and phrases down for later use
- Consulting textbooks and dictionaries
- Summarising a larger piece of text
- Highlighting little chunks of language that they can later use in writing

In addition to making students aware of these and other strategies, what can you do to drive them on to perform better in their writing? You could:

- Let students know that you value good writing. This may inspire them.
- Regularly assign brief writing pieces in your classes and for homework – not just filling in the blanks.
- Draw up some short writing guidelines. Students welcome handouts that give them specific instructions.

- Remind students that you were exactly the same when you were learning to write in a foreign language – but you stuck at it. Share with your class your own struggles in grappling with difficult topics.
- Give students opportunities to talk about their writing. Take five or ten minutes of class time for students to read their writing to each other in small groups or pairs. It's important for students to hear what their peers have written.
- Emphasise to your students that good writing skills are important, both to their satisfactory completion of the unit and to their future careers.
- Provide adult students with an anecdote about the implications of substandard writing or the value of good writing. For example, you may talk about a job candidate who missed selection due to his poor writing.
- Read aloud quality writing done by a former student, and encourage students to listen to its flow.
- Encourage students to pay close attention to the grammar and punctuation they see in textbooks and other books and articles.
- Provide students with poorly structured sentences from assignments of prior years. Ask the students to improve the sentences, and then discuss the improvements as a class.

2. Some activities

Choose passages, topics and exercises that are participative, interesting and good fun.

Here are some solid, tried and tested, practical suggestions:

1. Copying text (for beginners)

2. Grouping: For example, learners are given three headings, say *classroom, my kitchen, a fruit shop,* and a separate list of words, containing, say, *teacher, fridge, tap, banana etc....*

They need to write the right words under the right heading. You could also expand this to have a heading with a question mark, where they write silly words from your list that cannot be fitted under the other three headings, e.g. *a blue elephant, a square football* etc.

3. Substitution tables: When the learners use substitution tables, they take one item from each box to create and write a new sentence. With a correctly prepared substitution table, as long as the learners select one item from each box, they will always write a grammatically correct sentence.

The	old poor tall	man woman	is	carrying buying	a	black brown blue	coat. hat. walking stick.

4. Matching tables: This requires the learners to think very carefully before they match items and then write a sentence. The result will be incorrect in terms of grammar or meaning unless the learners select very carefully. This is not just copying. It requires thinking about meaning and accuracy.

The	boy girl children	visits visit	her his their	elderly young	children grandparents friend	every	day. week. month.

5. Gap filling: Gap filling exercises involve the learners completing sentences using appropriate words, often filling the gaps with the correct vocabulary or tense.

Examples:

In this exercise, the learners will use the verb base to form the correct tense.

a) Thomas …… swimming in the clear, blue sea every morning. (enjoy)

b) Maria …… in the shop today. (work)

6. Tables and charts: Tables and charts can be used very effectively in writing exercises. The work can be designed around the learners themselves in order to provide a more personal task.

For example, learners are asked to survey/ interview 5 other learners and list information in a table with the headings: *name, sisters, brothers, hobby, and pets.* The learners can then produce sentences about the other five orally and then write them.

7. Reordering words/sentences and re-writing them correctly: Young learners could be given a sentence where a word is in

the wrong place and they need to re-write the sentence to so that it makes sense. For example, *I like to the guitar play.*

Teenagers and adults, when they are ready, could attempt the re-ordering of sentences. For example:

They decided to walk to the top of the hill.

Suddenly, on reaching the door, they heard a noise coming from inside.

The old, rusted gate creaked as they walked towards the door.

When they reached the top, they saw the haunted house.

8. Sentence completion: The learners may be provided with alternatives to choose from or they may be required to decide how to complete the sentences for themselves. For example:
I wonder if:

- *they arrived tomorrow*
- *they will arrive tomorrow*
- *they have arrived tomorrow*

9. Transformations: This involves the learners in altering an existing passage according to specific instructions, e.g. changing it from positive to negative or present to past etc.

10. Dictation: Ensure learners are already familiar with the text, perhaps from previous readings. If you use a recording, ensure it is clear. Don't be afraid to try recordings where the speaker has an accent, so long as the words spoken are clear. Accents are a key part of the real world.

11. Short essays based on pictures: For younger learners, you should try to use an explicit, uncomplicated picture, e.g. a cat chasing a mouse. For older learners, though, there could be several pictures from which the learners deduce what has happened. For example:

- Picture 1: *Schoolboy misses bus to school*
- Picture 2: *Arrives late-school clock shows the time*
- Picture 3: *Teacher appears to be giving him a row*
- Picture 4: *Back home, parent holds up newspaper with the title page saying: Buses late today.*
- Picture 5: *Boy takes newspaper into school and shows it to the teacher*

- Picture 6: *Teacher looks apologetic*

12. Dialogues: Learners could be given half of the dialogue and can use their own words to complete the conversation:

A: *What's your favourite food?*
B:

A: *I don't like them. I like pears.*
B.

A. *I've never liked apples because they're sometimes sour.*
B.

13. Letters: Informal mostly for younger learners; older learners may be ready for a slightly more formal letter. Where possible, ask the head of department if you can pop these in the school's mail basket, with the school providing the stamps, so you don't have to pay the postage.

Or ask if it's possible to take the class to the post office, if it's not too far. If this all works out, get them to write a suitable letter to their parents/carers. They will be really happy and inspired when the parents/carers thank them for their wonderful written letter.

14. Writing predictions: For young learners, predicting what might happen next in a story will usually be done orally. With older learners, this could be done in writing. At various times in a story, you could stop and ask them to write their prediction of what happens next.

You could also use a suitable video for predicting, stopping it at relevant parts and asking them to write their prediction as to what happens next.

15. Projects: These are suitable for older learners. In groups, they could perhaps collate and write down information from short interviews and surveys in the school; for example, they could interview some teachers about what they like doing in their spare time.

You would then guide them on how to collate and group the information under headings, showing what the most and least popular likes are.

To make this even more interesting, you could ask your learners to try and predict and write down what the top 3 likes might be before they carry out the survey. The person whose prediction is closest could be given a small prize.

Or, in groups, they could design a holiday leaflet/mini-brochure.

Overview: Module 11

Overview

In this Module, we will first explore the areas of grammar which are often deemed to be a little bit tricky.

It's often not the meaning of a grammar element that's the tricky bit. It's the teaching of it where some teachers feel a bit unsure.

So, we'll cover these key tricky grammar areas first of all. These are in separate Units:

- **Unit 1: Phrasal verbs**
- **Unit 2: Prepositions**
- **Unit 3: Idioms**
- **Unit 4: Conditional forms**
- **Unit 5: Direct and reported/indirect speech**
- **Unit 6: Modal verbs**

Then, we will move on to some very useful and practical Grammar DVD lessons.

With what you absorb and learn in this Module, together with what you have already learned in *Module 2-Grammar Awareness*, you'll be good to go and ready to handle any grammar question in any situation.

Unit 1: Phrasal verbs

Unit 1 – Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs present learners with a huge challenge as there are thousands of phrasal verbs, all with different meanings.

They are so prevalent in everyday speaking and informal writing that learners must learn them and learn how and when to use them; otherwise, they will have difficulty in communicating fully.

Phrasal verbs also present a challenge to teachers, who need to decide how best to present these to the learners.

1. What are Phrasal Verbs?

Phrasal verbs are a construction which consists of a **verb** and **a preposition or adverb**, or both, e.g.

*Hopefully, they'll **put** us **up** for the night.*

*I'll **pick up** some coffee when I'm out.*

*If we all **chip in,** we'll finish it soon.*

These items exist in many languages in different shapes and forms although inexperienced teachers of English often give learners the impression that they only exist in English. That's just wrong.

Many languages have composite verbs with similar constructions acting like phrasal verbs in English.

English language phrasal verbs have increased significantly over the years. They continue to increase.

So, why do people use them? There's something about phrasal verbs that makes a speaker feel happier with them as they are often less formal (but not always) and more colloquial than previously established single words. Also, they often convey more emotion and promote images more so than single words.

A definition of a phrasal verb would be something like this: *a phrase that consists of a verb with a preposition or adverb or both, the meaning of which is different from the meaning of its separate parts, e.g. pick up, look at*

Example – the verb *to come*

This is an everyday common verb that learners will learn pretty quickly. The main meaning they will learn is something to do with moving forwards to something or moving to a particular place:

Come here.

She came to her house.

Now notice that if we add a selection of tiny words to this verb, the meaning we now have bears no relation whatsoever to the meanings of *come* above.

- *I've been looking for this for ages. I've just **come across** it.* (found)
- *My bag has **comeapart**.* (broken up)
- *I think she has **come up with** a good idea.* (thought of)

- *I hear you've been chosen. How did that **come about**?* (transpire)
- *I had no idea who he was. Then it **came back** to me. He was my first boyfriend.* (remembered)
- *He doesn't want to play soccer. I'll talk to him. I'm sure he'll **come around**.* (change his mind)
- *What a reaction. He **came down** on us like a ton of bricks.* (scold/punish verbally)
- *I think she's about to **come down** with something.* (be ill)
- *The police have reported that two witnesses have **come forward**.* (contacted willingly)
- *She **comes from** Edinburgh.* (hails from)

There are even more variations.

Thus, the meaning of the phrasal verb *come down* cannot be construed from joining together the meanings of its separate parts: *come* and *down*

Example 2

Let's try another one – the verb *look.* This verb has several meanings; here are some of them:

To direct your eyes in order to see: **Look!** *There's grandpa.*

To try to find something or someone: *I **looked** everywhere but I couldn't find her. Perhaps we'll meet again.*

To seem: *You look well. You **look** nice in that dress.*

To show direction: *The garden **looks** south.*

To give a warning or strong reminder: **Look** *where you're going!*

This is another example of the dilemma facing learners of English. They may come across the verb *look* early in their learning, probably from their classroom studies: *Look at Page 27.* There's nothing particularly difficult with that. However, the more they explore the language, the more they will come across these constructions:

- *look after* - meaning to take care of someone or something
- *look ahead* - meaning to think about and plan the future
- *look at* - meaning to read something quickly and not very thoroughly

- *look at* - meaning to investigate or think carefully about a problem or situation
- *look back* - meaning to think about something that happened in the past
- *look down on* - meaning to think something or someone is inferior
- *look for* - meaning to try to find something lost or that you need
- *look forward to* - meaning to feel excited and happy about something that is going to happen
- *look into* - meaning to examine a problem or situation

There are even more than these.

2. The difficulty with phrasal verbs

The learner needs to get to grips with all these subtle meanings. One problem is that there are few, if any, clues as to the meaning of each construction. Some will argue that there are but this can confuse the learners further.

For example, let's imagine that we tell learners that ***in*** gives a clue to the meaning of the phrasal verb, an idea that you're delving inside something or going inside somewhere, e.g. *I had a look **in** the book, I had a look **in** the shop.*

However, *look in* is often used for dropping in to see someone, often unplanned, often for a short time, to make sure the person is OK: *I **looked in** on old Mrs Brown.* This is a totally different meaning, and proves the point that some clues may be more of a hindrance than a help.

Another problem is that some constructions can be the same but have different meanings:

*I **looked at** your drawing. It seems fine to me.*

*Oil prices are rising swiftly again. We need to **look at** that.*

Clearly these are different. The first gives the impression of a fairly quick look. The second gives the impression of a longer enquiry/investigation into the effects.

Yet another issue is that learners of English soon find that although English has a wide and varied vocabulary, some constructions just have to be learned:

*The curtain **went up**. The show began!*

Even where a curtain in a theatre is opened from the middle to the sides (as can happen in a cinema or school production), we almost always say the curtain *went up*. A few people may say *the curtain was raised* but most would say *the curtain went up.* We do use *raise* but this is usually before the actual event:

It was time to raise the curtain. The curtain went up. The show began!

No wonder learners get confused!

We never think of phrasal verbs when we acquire our native language. But, for all L2 learners, these present tough challenges. There are only a few concrete learning strategies you can use so that they can learn these.

You need to explain these individually when they come up in the classroom and encourage them to rote learn other examples as much as possible.

Phrasal verbs can be difficult to understand because they often have meanings that are idiomatic. The meaning cannot be deduced from the elements added to the verb.

They can also be difficult to use because of variations in the placement of the particle. In phrasal verbs the particle is the word tagged on to the verb to give the specific meaning of the phrasal verb , e.g. *on, back* but it has little or no meaning in itself when it is tagged on. It has a grammatical purpose but no meaning.

In some cases, the particle can be put in more than one position in the sentence; in other cases the particle usually appears in only one position.

Example

Form 1: You can say: *I **put** my coat **on.***

Form 2: You can also say: *I **put on** my coat.*

Form 1: You can say: She***gave** it **back.***

Form 2: **But you wouldn't say:***She **gave back** it.* This is a non-standard construction. (The fortunate thing is that the learner would likely communicate her meaning but when we focus on form we would say this is an incorrect form.)

And very many phrasal verbs have three components. Such verbs are often particularly difficult to understand because the learner hears a string of words, each of which she knows very well, but which in combination do not make any sense. Here are some common 3 part phrasal verbs with their meaning and an example:

get up to – *What have you been **getting up to** since we last met?* (doing)

go in for - *I don't really **go in for** cooking programmes on the TV.* (like)

come out with – *Juan's always **coming out with** outrageous comments.* (saying)

Phrasal verbs continued...

3. The characteristics of phrasal verbs

Here's what you need to know:

1. A phrasal verb is a combination of words (a verb + a preposition or verb +adverb) that when used together, typically take on a different meaning to that of the original verb.

2. They are a very important aspect of everyday English. There are thousands and thousands of them.

3. Learners need to learn many of them if they wish to communicate successfully.

4. Phrasal verbs are idiomatic, meaning that the meaning of a phrasal verb cannot be determined by combining the meanings of the verb and preposition but must be learned as a single lexical item.

5. Learners need to think of each phrasal verb as a separate verb construction with a specific meaning.

6. When we use phrasal verbs, we use them like normal verbs in a sentence, regardless of whether it's a regular or irregular verb. These are irregular verbs:

*Lisa **tore up** the Valentine Day's card and threw it in the bin.*

*The bus **broke down**.*

*Did you **deal with** the complaint?*

7. Phrasal verbs are confusing. One main verb may have many combinations. Also, one phrasal verb may have more than one meaning.

8. **Phrasal verbs tend to be more informal and are used more often in spoken than written English**, although they're used frequently in informal written communication like emails to family or friends and on

internet blogs. But note that some will still pop up in formal communications.

9. Some phrasal verbs can be **transitive**, i.e. they can be followed by an object.

Examples

*I **made up** an excuse.An excuse* is the object.

*I **conjured up** activities at the last moment.Activities* is the object.

10. Some phrasal verbs are **intransitive.**An intransitive verb cannot be followed by an object.

Examples

*Her ex-husband suddenly **showed up.*** (*show up*cannot take an object)

*The baby **woke up** early this morning.* (*woke up* cannot take an object)

Note that intransitive phrasal verbs are **inseparable.** You cannot separate the verb and the particle.

Example

*The baby **woke up** early today.* (Correct)

*The baby **woke early up today.*** (Incorrect)

*The baby **woke early today up***. (Incorrect)

11. Some transitive phrasal verbs are **separable**. The object is placed between the verb and the preposition.

Examples

*I **talked** my brother **into** letting me use his season ticket.*

*Matteo l**ooked** the phone number **up**.*

12. But some transitive phrasal verbs are inseparable. The object is placed after the preposition.

Examples

*The cyclist **got on** his bike.*

*Bill **ran into** an old colleague in the pub.*

*The police are **looking into** the theft.*

A good dictionary will often tell you whether the words are separable or inseparable.

13. Some transitive phrasal verbs can take an object in both places.

Examples

*I **looked** the number **up** in the phone book. I **looked up** the number in the phone book.*

*They **turned down** my request. They **turned** my request **down**.*

*Cristina **called off** the blind date. Cristina **called** the blind date **off**.*

14. **Remember this:** Although many transitive phrasal verbs can take an object in both places, you must put the object between the verb and the preposition if the object is **a pronoun**. There's no choice.

Example 1

The object is a noun:

*Carlos **looked** the number **up** in the phone book.* (Correct)
*Carlos **looked up** the number in the phone book.* (Correct)

The object is a pronoun:

*Madison **looked** it **up i**n the phone book.* (Correct)

But not:

*Madison **looked up** it in the phone book.* (Incorrect)

4. Teaching phrasal verbs

Getting students to come to terms with phrasal verbs is a constant challenge. The fact of the matter is that phrasal verbs are just difficult to learn.

Inexperienced teachers fall into (a phrasal verb!) **these typical traps** when teaching phrasal verbs:

1. They randomly select a list of phrasal verbs and ask the students to learn these before the next meeting.

2. They ask the students to select a number of phrasal verbs from the dictionary. The students have to learn these before the next meeting and perhaps demonstrate their usage in speaking or writing.

3. After reading a random passage the students are asked to identify the phrasal verbs in the passage and try to work out their meaning and explain them.

4. The teachers run brainstorming sessions where students are asked to create lists of phrasal verbs to share with one another.

5. They run sessions focused on a particular verb and all the phrasal verb combinations that emanate from the verb, e.g. the list of the verb *come* uses and meanings we explored above.

Let's stop at that. There are other traps but these are the key ones. Let's run through these:

1. We've said before and we say again that the learning of random items is not conducive to learning. Learners need to use meaningful language in context to ensure that they can draw on the specific meaning from their memory bank at a later time.

Again, we cannot just dismiss dictionary work out of hand. Learning phrasal verbs out of the dictionary can help, but students really need to read and hear phrasal verbs in context for them to be able to truly understand the correct usage of phrasal verbs.

2. Learners are unlikely to choose meaningful words on their own unless they are shown how these are regularly used by native speakers in context.

3. A random passage will include phrasal verbs that the students may not use again, if ever, in communicative contexts. We need to ensure that what they do learn can be used. Thus, passages need to be selected carefully or written bespoke by you to ensure learning can take place in a meaningful context.

4. Brainstorming is a useful tool in the classroom. However, proper brainstorming is an uncontrolled event. The result may be a list of obscure or uncommon phrasal verbs which the students cannot use on a day-to-day basis.

5. Running sessions focused on a particular verb and all the phrasal verb combinations that emanate from the verb has inherent flaws. In addition to confusing the students with a host of different meanings at the same time, again there will be phrasal verbs that they are unlikely to use or may never use in everyday communicative English.

Of course, some of these approaches may have some merit if used wisely and in context.

So how do you teach phrasal verbs effectively?

Experience is a wonderful thing. To get it right first time, here is what you should do:

1. Start right from the beginning.

Teach plenty of phrasal verbs at elementary level, in the context of general vocabulary teaching. Don't suddenly try to start teaching hundreds of them all together at higher levels.

2. Don't isolate phrasal verbs

Don't isolate phrasal verbs from other types of vocabulary. Encourage learners to look for differences of meaning in very small sets of vocabulary items like these for younger students:

- *get up*
- *get ready*
- *get dressed*

Or these, for more competent students:

- turn down: *He turned down the light. He turned down the offer.*
- turn up: *He turned up the light. He turned up at the meeting.*
- turn out: *They turned out in big numbers. It turned out pretty well in the end.*

3. Vary your approach

Cartoons, for example, are an excellent way to illustrate and reinforce phrasal verbs visually. For example:

Come down with could be illustrated by the character being upright and active, compared to being physically down and in bed with spots/a rash.

Come up with something could be illustrated by a group sitting and puzzling over some paper drawings and then one of the characters jumps up, physically demonstrating he has found a solution and has it in his hand.

4. Compare with their native language

If possible, use examples of similar verbs from the students' first languages to help clarify what a phrasal verb is.

For example, other Germanic languages like German and Dutch have verbs similar to English phrasal verbs in the form of separable prefix verbs.

Foster an awareness of any similarities between English and the learners' L1.

5. Focus on everyday communicative language

Identifying phrasal verbs from a discussion about the moon may be interesting. However, focus on an everyday context and the phrasal verbs arising in that context, so that the students are ready to use them in their **everyday communicative events** – speaking or writing.

All of the above are very useful, but here is the key:

6. The key: Think of an everyday context and topic that applies to all of them.

Ask yourself: what do **all** of my students do to some degree?

 Choose a **relevant and meaningful topic** to bring out a tranche of **related phrasal verbs**. For example:

- All of your students need to eat, be it at home or in a café/restaurant. They may either buy the food or make the food, or watch their parents or friends making food.
- All of your students are likely to use a phone, to different degrees.
- All of your students need to shop. It doesn't matter what type of shop it is. Most of the communicative functions are the same, e.g. *Do you have …?; I would like a thing that …; Can you show me a selection …?* All of these will include relevant and appropriate phrasal verbs in common use.
- All of your students need to travel from school to home, be it on foot, by bus etc. Again, all of these events will include relevant and appropriate phrasal verbs in common use.

Example 1

Let's choose 'Making a Sandwich' as the topic. All students will have had some experience of this, either making a sandwich themselves or watching their parents or siblings doing this in the kitchen.

You could use your teacher table as the kitchen top and use plastic vegetables for your demonstration.

Here are some of the phrasal verbs that you could plan to bring out:

- **peel off** (fruit or vegetable skin)
- **fry up** (breakfast or vegetables)
- **slice off** (meat from bone)
- **cut up** (into slices)
- **cut off** (fat)
- **chop up** (into small pieces or cubes)
- **boil away** (the water boiling in the pan for a set time)
- **boil over** (the water boiling over because there's too much heat)

You would explain these, get them to repeat the sound, write what's necessary on the board and handle any queries. The students could role play a simple scenario of making a sandwich explaining to each other what they are doing and who should do what next. You could also reinforce these later by, say, a gap-fill exercise or a short written piece on 'How to make the Perfect Sandwich'.

Then, perhaps, you could bring in some dictionary work which would add to the phrasal verbs which they can use in this context.

And you could encourage them to use these phrasal verbs at home; and you could ask their parents or carers to encourage the students to do the activity whilst explaining to the parents or carers what they are doing.

This is how to do it, focusing on meaningful language they can use frequently in familiar everyday contexts.

Example 2

Or you may choose to focus on the topic: 'Using a Phone'. Whilst working on phrasal verbs associated with this topic, mix them in with other useful relevant vocabulary:

Phrasal verbs

- to **ring** somebody **up**
- to **get through**
- to **hang on**
- to **hang up**

Other useful phone vocabulary

- dialling tone
- hold the line
- hold the line
- wrong number
- Speaking!
- leave a message
- bad line

And, of course, bear in mind all the general recommendations for the teaching and learning of grammar: the importance of practise, exposure, recycling, learning in context and so on.

Unit 2: Prepositions

Unit 2: Prepositions

Learning phrasal verbs is the trickiest challenge for learners of English. Prepositions come a close second. Many phrasal verbs are constructed with prepositions, so we can see that there is a link.

The thing about prepositions is that they have few specific characteristics that learners can hang on to. It's very difficult to make a solid list of guidelines showing common features of prepositions.

Many prepositions are very small words but they are so important in a sentence. The problem is they are used in so many different ways in so many different situations.

Prepositions are words which relate a noun or pronoun to another word in the sentence: *The book is **on** the table*. In this sentence **on** is a preposition.

Prepositions join parts of sentences. For example, two parts in this sentence are linked by the preposition *on*: *I found my book **on** the table* and might not make full sense without it. Prepositions act as a bridge between two parts of a sentence and provide readers with information, such as location and time.

The preposition and the object of the preposition together with any modifiers of the object are known as a prepositional phrase. So, **on** *the table* is a prepositional phrase.

Here is a list of common prepositions used on a day-to-day basis by native English speakers:

about	above	cross	after
against	along	among	around
as	at	before	behind
below	beneath	beside	between
but	by	despite	during
except	for	from	in
inside	into	like	near
of	off	on	over
past	round	since	through
throughout	till	to	towards
under	underneath	until	up
upon	with	within	without

1. Features of prepositions

There are just a few main features:

1. Prepositions usually come before a noun.

The noun does not necessarily come immediately after the preposition as there may be determiners or adjectives in between the preposition and the noun.

Examples

- *after* the match
- *on* big ships
- *under* the old system

We can say that almost always the preposition comes before the noun.

There are exceptions, though, due to the way some sentences are constructed. In these, the preposition comes after the noun. These are called stranded prepositions:

- *This is what I was talking **about.***
- *Where does haggis come **from**?*

- *It's a problem I just have to live **with***.

2. All combinations of prepositions come before the noun

There are prepositions which contain more than one word, e.g. *according to, on behalf of*

No matter how many words make up the preposition, these prepositions also come before the noun:

- *according to the BBC*
- *on behalf of the company*

These are called complex prepositions. One word prepositions are called simple prepositions.

3. Prepositions do not change their form

They do not take any inflections. An inflection is a change in the form of a word (usually the ending) to express a grammatical function such as:

- *happy* changing to *happ**ier*** and *happ**iest*** in the comparative and superlative forms
- verb ending of the verb *like* changing to *likes* in the third person singular: *I like, you like, she **likes***

The preposition *in,* for example, remains the same, no matter the gender, quantity etc. of the noun following it:

- in the box
- in the boxes
- in her purse

2. Using and categorising prepositions

Prepositions are used in many different situations and for many different purposes. They are difficult to categorise concisely and definitively.

For example, let's take the preposition *on*. It seems fair to say that *on* is generally used to describe somebody or something on top of a surface of some kind, e.g. *on the first floor, on the table, on the floor, on the wall, on her arm* etc.

But look at these:

- We saw Taylor Swift **on TV.**
- I heard Brad Pitt **on the radio.**
- I saw David Beckham **on the plane.**

There's no idea here about something or somebody on top of a surface.

This highlights the danger of categories. Sometimes there can be many exceptions that the learner needs to get to grips with.

That being said, here is a brief list of common categories which teachers often build topics around, when teaching prepositions:

1. Some prepositions show the position or location of something

Examples

- *Her bag was **under** the chair.*
- *His flat was **over** the shop.*
- *The plate is **on** the table.*
- *Lisa is **in** the garden.*
- *The picture is **on** the wall.*
- *The disease had spread **throughout** the village.*
- *Dad always keeps his wallet **in** the drawer.*
- *The school is **near** the cinema.*

2. Some indicate the time and date when something happens or will happen:

- *Their parents arrived **on** Sunday.*
- *The course starts **at** 9 am.*
- *Shortly **after** their engagement, they broke up.*
- *I haven't seen him **since** last week.*
- *He will continue working **until** the official retirement date.*
- *We usually get together **on** the first Friday of the month.*
- *My birthday is **on** 24th December.*

3. Some explain the way some action is done

- *We arrived **by** boat*
- *We came **by** train.*
- *They stared at each other **without** speaking.*

4. Some describe direction

- *He went **to** the match.*
- *She dived **into** the pool.*
- *She saw someone was coming **towards** her.*
- *He crawled **through** the tunnel.*
- *They walked **up** the hill.*

5. Some link with adjectives

- *Françoise is **good at** spelling.*
- *France is **famous for** wine.*
- *I'm **concerned about** the new proposals.*
- *Rosa is **proud of** her achievements.*

3. Teaching prepositions

Our advice is to build prepositions into a topic you are covering, which will help to make the learning of some prepositions less random.

In points 1-4 immediately above, there is something to build on. A topic will help students to grasp the meaning. But the examples in point 5 will just have to be learned as they come up

Unit 3: Idioms

Idioms are a series of fixed lexical items (words and phrases) that have their own figurative meaning different from their literal component elements.

Let's just expand this a bit further in case the difference between literal and figurative language is not so clear.

Literal language is when we say what we mean. There is no other meaning intended when you say something like this: *I'm leaving early tomorrow. I have lots to do.* These words say it as it is. If I were to report back your words to someone else it would be exactly the same message: *She says she's leaving early tomorrow because she has lots to do.* There's no ambiguity, no hidden meaning.

Figurative language is different. When we use figurative language, we say or write a group of words that do not mean what we say: **they imply something else**.

Grandmother: *My granddaughter Valeria is the **apple of my eye.***

She is not saying here that her granddaughter is a piece of fruit in her eye. No, as native speakers we know that this has an implied meaning: *My granddaughter is wonderful. I love her more than anything on this earth.*

This is figurative language.

We learn this figurative use of language from an early age and it becomes a natural part of our language that we draw on in specific circumstances, e.g. to emphasise something or make a comment:

*I hear he's been invited to meet the Princess. He's **gone up in the world.*** (entered a 'higher' social circle than before, in the eyes of the speaker)

Depending on the way this is said, there could be some degree of envy in the expression or some implied meaning that he has left his old group of friends behind in favour of a fancier social circle. It all depends how it is said.

So, idioms use figurative language and we use them to imply another meaning. The words used together have a meaning that is different from the dictionary definitions of the individual words.

Many EFL students have huge difficulties with idioms. For example:

- *I'm at a loose end.*
- *She's at the end of her tether.*
- *He did a runner.*
- *I'm sure he'll get a fair crack of the whip.*
- *You're flogging a dead horse.*

Remember this: Some inexperienced TEFL teachers seem to think that idioms are something special to the English language. That's just not true. All languages have their own idioms.

Unfortunately, the form and structure and content words of the idioms in their native language will bear little or no resemblance at all to idioms in English, even although there might be great similarities in the end meaning intended.

To make a mistake

English idiom: *To put your foot in it*

French idiom: *Se mettre le doigt dans l'œil*: To put your finger in your eye.

2. Teaching idioms

We are often asked for tips on how to teach idioms. Remembering that there are thousands of idioms, and that you need to be selective, here's what you need to do:

1. Ensure they know what idioms are

First and foremost, you need to ensure that they know what idioms are and how they are used. They are mostly used in spoken language, in everyday informal conversation. and in novels where conversation takes place. They are also used in popular journalism.

They are widely used on the internet, in blogs etc., with some used correctly and some that are just pretty poor due to the writer's lack of competence in English or real understanding of idioms.

Inexperienced teachers often say that idioms are not used in formal writing or formal speaking events such as presentations and lectures. This just isn't true. For example:

It's hoped that our findings will **open the door** *to further research in this area.* (could be found in an academic piece)

It's hoped that our new investment account will **open the door** *for us in the Far East.* (could be found in a business report or heard at a business presentation or lecture)

We noted above that all languages have idioms in all shapes and forms. Depending on the level you are teaching, invite them to give examples from their own language.

At this first stage, you wouldn't use the term 'idiom'. Just ask them what they or others may say in their language about a friend who just says the wrong thing at the wrong time. This may then lead you to introducing the idiom in English:

She put her foot in it.

Don't get hung-up about trying to explain the derivation of idioms:

He's as daft as a brush.

We have used this one intentionally because there are several suggestions as to its derivation. Even the Oxford English Dictionary which tries to find the original source of all words in English is still seeking 'real' evidence of how, why, where and where this expression was used in the past.

2. Always introduce idioms in context.

Idioms must be introduced in context. It's a waste of time to introduce an idiom in isolation unless, of course, learners ask you to give them an example. A French native may ask you if there is a similar expression in English for the French idiom about 'putting your finger in your eye'. Then you can introduce her and the class to:

She put her foot in it.

Apart from that, random introduction of idioms just won't work. There's no point in asking them to go away and learn a list of 5 random idioms from a dictionary. That's just silly and wholly ineffective. But some teachers do this!

The learning of any random items of language is hardly conducive to learning. Learners need to use meaningful language in context to ensure that they can draw on the specific meaning from their memory bank at a later time – helped by the memory of the context it was used in at the time of learning.

3. Some action-centred dictionary work may be useful

We're not saying, of course, that dictionary work on idioms should be ruled out. But we need to be more inventive than just asking them to look up an idiom in a dictionary.

For example, it would be much more beneficial if they are asked to come up with some suggestions as to how an idiom may have come about, based on the words it contains. We used an idiom above: *He's as daft as a brush.* Why is it *brush* and not *mop* or a totally different word like *spider*?

What are the definitions of the word *brush*? Is there a clue as to how one of the meanings is now included in this idiom? This is much more action-centred and conducive to learning than just searching like an automaton through a dictionary for a definition of an idiom.

4. Group everyday idioms related to the topic

When you're about to cover a topic, e.g. time, animals, parts of the body, it should automatically spring to mind that this may be an excellent opportunity to introduce everyday idioms, just one or two at a time, that can be practised and used during the topic. In this way, the meaning and usage will be better embedded in their memory banks.

A random passage will include idioms that the students may not use again, if ever, in communicative contexts. We need to ensure that what they do learn can be used. Thus, texts need to be selected carefully or written bespoke by you to ensure learning can take place in a meaningful context.

For example, if part of the animals' topic includes dogs, you could introduce an idiom such as:

*My friend was **as sick as a dog** after eating cheese.*

Or, if the main thrust of their learning at a particular time is fruit, there may be an opportunity, depending on their level and age, to introduce the 'apple of my eye' idiom or one or two other idioms centred on fruit:

I went bananas.

Don't upset the apple cart.

He's a bad apple.

She's got a plum job

And so on.

By adding these in context, they will be better embedded in the students' memory banks.

Ensure you identify and present **everyday i**dioms in simple conversations and in texts.

5. The goal is to get them to use them

It's all very well that students learn what an idiom means. That's only part of the journey. The other part is learning how to use it effectively. So, they need to practise usage. Get them working in pairs, writing short conversations with the idiom(s) included. Then they can practise the conversation in their pairs. If they are keen, get them to act this out in front of the class.

But they'll need more than this. Language needs to be recycled (used again and again) for it to be fully embedded. So, follow this up at later times through other activities, e.g. filling in blanks, crosswords, conversational activities etc. which will further increase their use of the idioms they have met previously.

6. Use authentic materials

Show them that idioms are used in everyday authentic materials, particularly materials they enjoy. These could be sport or music magasines, videos, and songs in particular. This will emphasise that these are current expressions in everyday use, used by real people.

Unit 4: Conditional forms

Unit 4: Conditional forms

Let's first set out again a short definition for the word *clause*: *A clause is a part of a sentence that typically has its own subject and verb.*

A definition of a conditional clause would be something like this: *This is clause which describes something that is possible or probable, depending on something else happening.*

Such clauses usually begin with *if* or *unless*. In the classroom, we often call these *if clauses*. They all focus on what may or may not happen and what might have happened but didn't happen. They express different degrees of reality.

There are set constructions for these, which learners need to grasp.

Examples

Note that we can put the *if* or *unless* clause before or behind the main clause.

If it snows, we won't get the car out.

If we go now, we'll arrive on time.

I'm not going shopping unless Jane comes too.

We'll never succeed if we don't study hard.

Note: If we put the condition before the main clause, we use a comma.

Here's what you need to know:

1. Conditions can be categorised as real and unreal

Real conditions

With real conditions, we do not know if the condition is, will be or was true. Here are some examples:

If it rains tomorrow, I'll stay in.

If Lisa is coming to the party, you can tell her the news.

I'm sure she'll come if Carlos has remembered to tell her.

Note: We cannot use *will* for future time in a condition:

We say *If it rains tomorrow* Not *If it will rain.*

We say *If she's coming* Not *If she will be coming.*

We sometimes use *unless* at the beginning of a condition:

Unless it rains tomorrow, I'll go to the beach.

Unless she's in England, I'm sure she'll come.

Unreal conditions

With unreal conditions for present and future time the condition is not, or probably will not be, true. We use a simple or continuous verb formation.

*If Maria was coming, you could tell her the news. (*But she isn't coming; you can't tell her.)

I would have more money if I didn't smoke. (But I do smoke; I have less money.)

I'd phone him if only I could find his number. (But I can't find it; I can't phone him.)

If I found a lot of money in the road, I'd give it to the police. (I don't expect to find any; I'm imagining.)

Note this construction: *Would you mind if I left early?*

Would + mind + unreal condition is a polite way to ask for permission.

For past time (the condition was not true), we use a perfect verb formation in the condition:

If Maria had come, you could have told her the news. (But she didn't come; you couldn't tell her.)

I'd have phoned him if only I could have found his number. (But I couldn't find it; I didn't phone.)

If I had found that money, I would have given it to the police. (I didn't find it; I'm just imagining.)

I'm sure Maria would've come if John hadn't forgotten to tell her. (But John forgot; she didn't come.)

2. There are different types of conditional constructions

There are four types:

- The Zero Conditional
- The First Conditional
- The Second Conditional
- The Third Conditional

1. The Zero Conditional (certainty)

Form

if + present simple tense (for the condition) and verb stem in the present simple tense in the main clause (for the result).

Examples

If people don't eat (condition), *they get hungry* (result).

If you heat ice (condition*), it melts* (result).

Babies cry (result), *if they are hungry* (condition).

Remember this: It doesn't matter if the *if clause* is placed at the start of the sentence or in the middle of the sentence.

Note that it's possible to replace *if* with *when* in a zero conditional.

Use

We use this conditional form when the result is always true for this type of condition.

The result is certain. It's a fact.

There is no thought given to the future or past.

2. First Conditional (real possibility)

Form

if + present simple (for the condition) and will + verb stem in the main clause (for the result)

Examples

If I see Valeria tomorrow, I'll tell her about the party.

If it rains, I won't go shopping.

If I study hard, I'll pass my exams.

I'll walk to work if the bus is late.

Will you walk to work if the bus is late?

Will you go shopping if it rains?

Use

Here there is a good possibility that the condition will happen at a future time. I may not see Valeria tomorrow but I might. There is a possibility that the condition will happen.

3. Second Conditional (unreal possibility)

Form

if + past simple (for the condition) and would + verb stem in the main clause (for the result)

If I married Taylor Swift, I'd be the happiest person on earth.

If I won the lottery, I would quit my job.

I would be happy if I married Camila.

Would Camila be happy if she married you?

Would you quit your job, if you won the El Gordo?

Use

Here we are talking about a particular condition in the future (although we use the past tense in the condition) **but there is not a real possibility that this condition will ever happen.** It's all a bit of a dream, an unreal possibility that this condition will ever happen.

Note that we sometimes use the second conditional, with the same structure, to talk about certain situations in the present.**These are when the condition is pretty impossible and far from a true situation and therefore the result won't come to fruition.**

Examples

If I knew where he was, I'd contact him. (but you have no idea where he is and so you cannot contact him at all)

If I were you, I wouldn't get involved. (but I'm not you and never will be)

4. Third Conditional (no possibility)

Form

if + past perfect (for the condition) and would + have + past participle in the main clause (for the result)

Examples

If I had seen Alejandro, I would have asked him. (but I didn't see him at all so I wasn't able to talk to him)

If he had not passed, he wouldn't have gained entry into university. (but he did pass)

If we had grabbed a taxi, we wouldn't have missed the train. (but we didn't grab a taxi and therefore we did miss the train)

If it had rained yesterday, I would have stayed at home. (but it didn't rain yesterday and so I went out)

Use

Here the focus is on the past. We talk about a condition in the past that didn't happen. We use it to describe a situation or event that didn't happen and we imagine the result of the situation.

There is no possibility for this condition, and therefore no possibility of the result happening. Not then and not now.

3. Teaching conditional forms

Conditional forms are tricky for learners. Usually, the key problem lies with an inexperienced teacher who attempts to take the learners too far too quickly. Students' ages and levels will be the key factors in deciding whether they are ready for a particular conditional construction.

Then you can wait your time, see how well the learning is embedded in their memory banks and then decide to try another type of construction.

Take it softly, softly.

Here's what to do:

1. Awareness in context

When they are ready, start by raising their awareness of conditionals. Get them to notice the use of conditionals in written pieces/activities you are using in class. Make up your own pieces containing the odd conditional, for whichever conditional form you plan to teach.

Point attention to the construction and get them to have a go at the meaning. They can then try and mirror the construction with other situations. Don't get too hung up about tenses at this time.

<u>2. Start at the beginning</u>

Some teachers start with the first conditional, leaving the zero conditional till last. We don't know why. We have always started with the zero conditional as it's good fun getting them to think about certainties in life: *If you heat ice, it melts*.

Once they've come up with lots of suggestions, including some you have written on the board, see if they can work out the structure and tenses for a particular conditional structure. Then it's time to practise them.

<u>3. Practice</u>

There are lots of activities that can be used to embed the learning of conditionals. Here are some of them:

- Matching exercises: matching the condition with the result, and matching the result with the condition.

- Cloze activities: where they try to insert a selection of *if clauses* into a piece which has six or seven blanks in it.

- Partnering activity: one student states the condition and the other has to complete it with some sensible result. Then they reverse roles.

- Student surveys: Students can survey each other about what they will and would like to do in the future, using the appropriate conditional forms.

- Wish lists: emphasising the unreal conditionals, students can interview each other and make up wish lists for their partners.

- Advice columns: Students can write letters of advice to each other or famous figures, such as the President or Prime Minister, using the conditional.

- Probability Discussions: Guessing the probability of certain events, using the conditional, e.g. *If Chelsea are on form, they'll win the match.*

Unit 5: Direct and reported/indirect speech

Unit 5: Direct and reported/indirect speech

Direct Speech

The exact words that someone says are called direct speech. Quotation marks (also called inverted commas) are used to highlight direct speech.

Dad said, *"It's time to go."*

"I want to be an astronaut," Lucy said.

"Where are you going?"

Reported/Indirect Speech

Reported speech (also called indirect speech) is when you <u>report</u> what someone <u>says</u> or <u>tells</u> you without using their exact words. We often want to tell someone what another person has said to us. In most cases, we do not report the exact words that we hear. Instead, we often make some changes so that it sounds more natural.

<u>Examples</u>

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
John said *"I'm ready."*	John said (that) he was ready.
Dad said, *"It's dinner time."*	Dad said (that) it was dinner time.
"I can't find my keys," said James.	James said (that) he couldn't find his keys.
"Bill is annoying me," said Ben.	Ben said (that) Bill was annoying him.
Lucy said, *"I haven't had time to do it."*	Lucy said (that) she hadn't had time to do it.
Fred said, *"I'm going to tell you a secret."*	Fred told me (that) he was going to tell me a secret

Note first that there are several differences between a sentence with direct speech and a sentence with reported speech:

- We don't use quotation marks in reported speech.
- We introduce what someone says/said by using a reporting verb, e.g. *said* or *told*
- We *often* change the tense of the verb in reported speech.
- We change the pronouns and determiners, e.g. *me → her, this → that*

Note that in indirect speech people often leave out the conjunction *that*.

1. Reporting verbs

The most common reporting verbs are *say* and *tell*.

Say

Say is never followed by an indirect object (e.g. *her, us, them, my brother*):

John said (that) he was ready. NOT: *John said **me** (that) he was ready.*

We follow *say* with a *that* clause (e.g. *that he was ready*) or a clause beginning with a question word (e.g. *Marie didn't say who was there*)

Tell

We must use an indirect object after *tell*:

*John told **me** (that) he was ready.*

The tell + indirect object structure is followed by a variety of clause types and with a noun phrase:

*John told me **that he was ready**(that)*

*My friend told me a **secret.**(noun phrase)*

*My boss told me **to stay.** (infinitive)*

*The interviewer told me **where to sit.** (question word + infinitive)*

*Marie told me **where she was going.** (question word)*

But we also use some other reporting verbs, depending on the context, function, attitude, opinion, interpretation, and to avoid repetition in a longer piece of reported speech.

- *He **asked** if he we had seen the accident.*

- *She **added** that it would be the most suitable course to take.*
- *She **explained** why the deduction had been made.*
- *He **replied** that it was not down to him.*
- *She **mentioned** that it could be a solution.*
- *He **claimed** that he had never been in Madrid.*
- *He **alleged** that it was his brother who had been there.*
- *The customer **complained** that the goods were faulty.*
- *Our lawyer **warned** us the contract might be invalid.*

Again, the conjunction *that* can be omitted if the speaker/writer wishes to do so.

2. Reported speech with no change in verb tense

We said above that we *often* change the tense of the verb in reported speech. Sometimes we don't. Here are two important examples:

1. When we are using reported speech to report a statement that is still true:

John said, *"My foot hurts." → John said his foot **hurts.***

"I live in Miami," Marie said. → *Marie said she **lives** in Miami.*

"Madrid is a wonderful place to visit," he added. → *He added that Madrid **is** a wonderful place to visit.*

2. When we wish to convey exactly what a person said, perhaps where the exact words are very important (in a legal case) or for dramatic effect.

He said, *"Watch your back."*

He told me, *"Pull up your socks or you'll be fired."*

Then she claimed, *"You have been cheating customers for years."*

3. Reported speech: questions

The verb *ask* is usually used to report questions.

Mike asked, *"Where is my wallet?"* → Mike *asked where his wallet was.*

Mum asked, *"Have you finished your dinner?"* → *Mum asked if we had finished our dinner.*

Note that once we report the question to someone else, it's no longer a question, no longer in question form. So we need to change the grammar to a normal positive sentence.

So, to report a question, put the subject before the verb or helping verb (**we had** finished). Remember that the subject comes after the helping verb when you ask a question (**Have you** finished?). Here are some examples.

Examples

"Where are they heading?" → *I asked* **where** *they were heading.*

"Can Lucy count to ten?" → *I asked* **if** *Lucy could count to ten.*

"Did your teacher give the drawing back?" → *I asked* **if** *the teacher had given the drawings back.*

"Has she gone to town?" → *I asked* **if** *she had gone to town.*

Note that when you are reporting on questions which would result in *yes* or *no,* we use *if* after the reporting verb. Sometimes we randomly use *whether:*

I asked **whether** *she had gone to town.*

So, the reported question structure is much the same as the structure for reported statements. The tense changes are the same, and we keep the question word.

Direct and reported/indirect speech continued...

4. Reported speech: requests

When someone requests you to do something for them, often a polite request, we often use the following form, even when the request is in question form:

Form

ask (me, her, Cristina, us) + to + infinitive

Often we don't report every word when we tell someone else about it.

"Please help me with this". → *He asked me to help (him).*

"Could you give me a hand?" → *He asked me to help (him).*

"Would you mind giving me a hand?" → *He asked me to help (him).*

"Could you pass the magazine, please?" → *She asked me to pass the magazine.*

"Please don't shout." → *She asked me not to shout.* (insert *not* in a negative request)

5. Reported speech: commands/orders

When someone gives an order or a command in direct speech and instructs you very directly to do something, we use verbs like *tell, order*, and *warn* to report these. The construction is similar to reported requests: to + verbOR not to + verb.

The teacher shouted, *"Be quiet!"* → *The teacher ordered us to be quiet.*

"Go into your groups, children," said Mr. Brown. → *Mr. Brown told us to go into our groups.*

Carlos told Alejandro, *"Don't be late ever again."* → *Carlos warned Alejandro not to be late again.*

6. Reported speech - typical changes in tenses and common expressions

A few of these are not set in stone. Some tenses can depend on when we heard the direct speech and when we report the speech. That said, here is a useful guide - it's all pretty solid.

Tenses

Tense	Direct Speech	Reported Speech
present simple	*"I adore Brad Pitt."*	*She said (that) she adored Brad Pitt.* (past)
present continuous	*"I am living in Barcelona."*	*She said she was living in Barcelona.* (past continuous)

past simple	*"I broke my computer."*	*He said he broke his computer.* (past; **no change**) OR *He said he had broken his computer.* (past perfect)
past continuous	*"I was eating a burger."*	*He said he had been eating a burger.* (past perfect continuous)
present perfect	*"I haven't seen the movie."*	*She said she hadn't seen the movie.* (past perfect)
past perfect	*"I had scored 200 goals by that time."*	*He said he had scored 200 goals by that time.* (**no change**)

Auxiliary verb changes:

1. Auxiliary verbs in the present **change to the past.**

"We're busy and can't come." → *She said they were busy and couldn't come.*

"I'm coming!" → *He said he was coming.*

2. Auxiliary verbs in the past **change to the past perfect**

"I was searching for Juan." → *He said he had been searching for Juan.*

3. The auxiliary verbs in the future forms **change from present to past.**

"I'll see you on Saturday." → *He said he would see me on Saturday.*

"I'm going to win tomorrow." → *He said he was going to win the next day.*

Modal verb changes

The following modal verbs often change: *can, may, must*

"I can hear them." → *She said she could hear them.*

"We may enter the competition." → *She said they might enter the competition.*

"I must stop." → *She said she had to stop.*

<u>Some forms that don't need to change</u>

1. Verbs already in the past perfect

"I'd eaten earlier." → *He said he had eaten earlier.*

2. The following modal forms: *could, might, ought, should, would*

"You could win the prize." → *She said I could win the prize.*

"You might be successful." → *She said I might be successful.*

"You ought to win." → *She said we ought to win.*

"You should eat more." → *She said I should eat more.*

"I would enjoy that." → *He said he would enjoy that.*

Some common changes to pronouns and possessive adjectives

I → *he or she*

me → *him or her*

my → *his or her*

we → *they*

We also often use names instead of pronouns when we report – to ensure there's no confusion as to whom we are talking about:

"I can't stand Rosa." → *She said that she couldn't stand <u>Rosa</u>*

Common expressions: common changes

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
now	then / at that time
today	that day
yesterday	the day before
last night	the night before, Thursday night
last week	the week before / the previous week
tomorrow	the next day
this week	that week
this month	that month

here	there
this	that
these	those
bring	take
come	go

Unit 6: Modal verbs

We have already mentioned a little bit about Modals.

Here's everything you need to know:

Modals are complex and very challenging to present and they are complex and challenging for students to learn, both conceptually and formally.

They are a set of auxiliary verbs and are often called modal auxiliary verbs.

Modal verbs are used in a variety of ways to enable the speaker to express feelings about, for example, the probability of an event, or the ability of a person to carry out a certain action or the level of an obligation – but seldom the actuality of it happening.

Other uses of modals are to express one's attitude, politeness, or advice; modals are also used for making requests or giving permission.

The verbs in this category, although there are some different views on this, are:

can	could	may	might	will
would	must	shall	should	ought to

Examples

- **Can** you speak French?
- He **could** speak it well if he studied more.
- **May**I come in?
- It **might** rain tomorrow.

- He **will** speak German once he feels confident.

1. Key points

1. Modals do not change their form at any time. *Must* remains *must* however you use it. There is no *musted* or *musting*. They have no infinitive or past or present participle. There is no infinitive *to can* or *to must.* There are no participles such as *canning, musting, canned* or *musted.*

Just plain and simple *must, can, should* etc. at all times.

2. A modal verb is always the first word in the verb phrase. After a modal verb, we put the base form of the verb (the verb stem – without *to*).

- It will be windy.
- You should look after your money.
- You could go on Saturday.

3. Like the other auxiliary verbs (*be, have,* and *do*), modal verbs are important in negatives, questions, tags, and so on. A modal verb can have *not* after it and it comes before the subject in questions.

- Positive: *Your room should be tidier.*
- Negative: *Your room shouldn't be untidy.*
- Question: *How should I organise my room?*
- Question tag: *You should tidy it each Saturday, shouldn't you? I suppose I should.*

We do not use *do* with a modal. NOT *How do I should organise my work?*

4. Modal verbs do not take -*s* in the third person.

Examples

- She should be here by now. (no –s)
- He must try again. (no –s)

5. *Will* and *would* have the written short forms *'ll* and *'d.*

- I'll call her now.
- I wouldn't do that.

6. Many modal verbs cannot be used in the past tenses or the future tenses.

Examples

- *She musted travel there last year.* (Incorrect)
- *She will can travel with us. (Incorrect)*

7. We can stress a modal if we want to put emphasis on its meaning.

- *You really must be quiet.* (Meaning: It is very necessary.)

8. A modal verb does not usually have a tense. It can refer to the present or the future.

- Present: *We must act now. The instructions might be in my desk.*
- Future: *We must act soon. The instructions might arrive tomorrow.*

For the past we use *had to, was able to* etc. or we use a modal verb + *have.*

- Past: *We had to know then. The instructions might have arrived yesterday.*

But in some contexts, *could, would, should* and *might* are past forms of *can, will, shall* and *may.*

- *I can't remember the password.* (present)
- *I couldn't remember the password.* (past)

9. A modal verb can go with the perfect, the continuous, or the passive.

- Perfect: *I may have told you this before.*
- Continuous: *They may be waiting at the station.*
- Passive: *We may be shown the figures later.*
- Perfect + continuous: *You must have been sleeping.*
- Perfect + passive: *The castle must have been destroyed.*

10. We cannot use two modals together. NOT *You will must come soon.*

2. Common uses

Below is a table showing the most useful modals and their most common uses.

This is not definitive as there are a few other constructions that some people deem to be modals.

We've stuck by what we think are the frequent and typical modals used on an everyday basis. The tricky bit with modals is that there are nuances in meaning, so even one native user may choose a different modal from another native speaker.

That said, the table below will serve you well.

Modal	Example	Typical Uses
Can	*I can speak four languages.* *They can work out their own travel plans.* *You can make it if you try.* *We can't do that.* *Can I sit down?* *Can you give me a hand, please?* *We can try that when we arrive.*	Ability Ability / Possibility Possibility Inability / Impossibility Asking for permission Request Opportunity
Could	*Could I open the window a little bit?* *Could you repeat that?* *We could try to repair it ourselves.* *The bad winter could affect next spring's crop.* *He had done it before so he could do it again.* *We could get the bus or phone a taxi.* *We could go if I didn't have to attend that meeting.*	Asking for permission. Request Suggestion Future possibility Ability in the past Suggestion Conditional
May	*May I sit down?* **You may play with the iPad once you've finished.** *The rain forests may soon disappear.*	Asking for permission Giving permission Future possibility Present possibility

	She may be in Walmart or perhaps Dairy Queen.	
Might	*Your keys **might** be in your coat pocket.* *They **might** give us a lift.* **You might drop in in on Uncle Bill during your trip.** **Might I open the window?** **If I had tried harder, I might have succeeded.**	Present possibility Future possibility **Suggestion** **Request** **Conditional**
Must	*We **must** leave now.* **Lucy, you mustn't touch that.** **This must be Uncle Bill's house!** **You must do a bit more training before you compete.**	Necessity / Obligation Prohibition **Certainty** **Recommendation**
Ought to	*We **ought to** own up to that.* **You ought to stop smoking.** **Lisa ought to win.** **The exchange rate ought to drop this quarter.** **You ought to try it.** **You ought not try it. (notice that the to is omitted)**	Doing what's right Recommendation Deserving of it Probability Giving advice for Giving advice against

Shall	***Shall** I help you with that?* ***Shall** we meet the same time next week?* ***Shall** I do that or will you?* **I shall never forget the first time we met.** **We shall overcome.** **With the economy in its present state, I'm afraid we shall lose our jobs.** (*Shall* is much more common in British English than American English)	Offer Suggestion Asking what to do Promise **Belief it will happen** **Sense of inevitability**
Should	*We **should** resolve this now.* *I think we **should** action this now.* *Profits **should** rise next quarter.* **You should strive for a better work/life balance.** **I really should be studying right now.** **I think they should already be in the hotel.**	Doing what's right Recommending action Uncertain prediction Advice Obligation Expectation
Will	*I'll phone her right now.* *I'll do that for you if you like.* **I promise that I will phone as soon as I arrive.** *Profits **will** increase next year.* **He thinks the office will be closed due to the snow.**	Instant decisions Offer Promise Certain prediction Less certain prediction

Would	***Would** you mind if I brought my wife along?* ***Would** you pass the milk, please?* ***Would** 8pm in Billy's Bar suit you?* ***Would** you like to join us?* ***Would** you prefer red or white?* ***If he were more ambitious, he would be the CEO by now.*** ***When he first got the car, he would wash it every Saturday.***	Asking for permission Request Making arrangements Invitation **Preferences** **Conditional** **Repetition**

Modal verbs continued...

3. Teaching modals

We've already said that this is very challenging. One of the best ways to teach modals is to use visual representations of the modals, where it's easier to show the degrees of probability, prediction etc.

We have found this to be the best way to demonstrate modals and to keep the learners' attention when teaching this difficult topic.

<u>Example</u>

The following context shows the least probability:

Alejandro: *Somebody is at the door.*

Cristina: *It **could** be Mum.*

Now look at the range of probability expressed through the use of different modals:

High Probability

It **should** be Angélica.

It **may** be Angélica.

It **could** be Angélica.

Low Probability
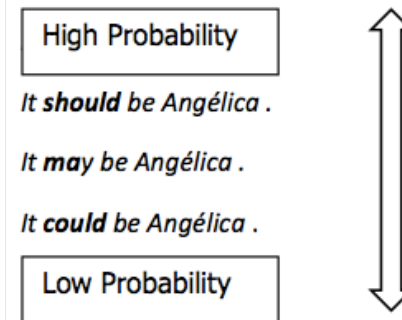
Here are the past forms of these modals:

High Probability

It **must have been** Angélica.

It **should have been** Angélica.

It **may have been** Angélica.

It **could have been** Angélica.

Low Probability
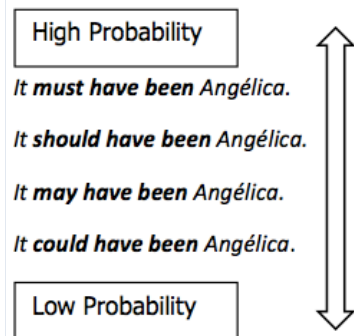
Here is another set of modals that express degrees of prediction:

High Probability

It **will** rain in January.

It **should** snow in January.

It **may** snow in January.

It **could** rain in January.

Low Probability
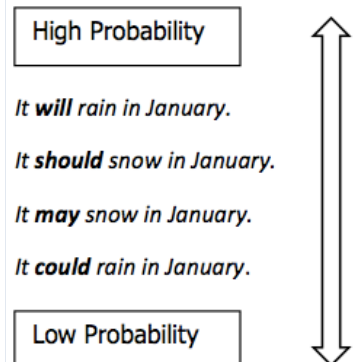
Finally, here's a visual representation of modals for giving advice; as you can see a general suggestion escalates into urgency:

Urgency

You **must** discuss it with your doctor.

You **had** better talk to your doctor.

You **should/ought to** talk to your doctor.

You **could** talk to your doctor.

Suggestion

Authentic grammar lesson overview

You are going to watch a pre-intermediate level lesson.

The aims of the lesson are for students to talk about things they should / shouldn't have done in a past situation.

The focus of the lesson is grammatical so it also looks at the meaning, grammatical form and pronunciation of the target language '*would have*' and *could have*'.

You should look at the lesson materials that accompany this lesson and print them off to refer to whilst watching.

We have included this lesson because it demonstrates many useful techniques in how to teach grammar. Please also print off the following three questions and try to answer them as you watch the video.

You can of course check your answers once you have watched the video.

1. How did Catherine check that students understood the target language?
2. Did she explain the grammatical form to the students or did she elicit it from them?
3. Did her students know the grammar terminology?

4. Grammar lesson materials. Barcelona text to print

5. **A.**

6. My Dad's Experience:

7. **'Home Alone in Barcelona**

8. Last weekend my dad was in Barcelona. Alan and I were there for the weekend with him and then we left him in our house alone for four days. He's 70 years old and that was the first time he'd been alone in a foreign country, so he was excited but a little nervous too because he doesn't speak Spanish. We told him what he should and what he shouldn't do before we left, but we were also a bit nervous because we had invited him to visit and felt responsible. Anyway, on his first day alone he went into the centre of Barcelona and some girls who try to sell flowers outside the churches stole his wallet! I couldn't believe it because I'd warned him not to take his wallet into the centre. Men! He didn't lose much money but he lost all his travel passes and two credit cards.

9. **B.**

10. Now answer the questions. More than one answer is possible. Tick (√) the ones that can be correct.

11. **1. What did I say to him when he phoned me to tell me:**

12. a. You shouldn't have taken your wallet with you.

13. b. You could have carried just a little money in your pocket.

14. c. They would have taken your mobile if they had seen it.

15. **2. My dad then asked me:**

16. a. What would you have done when the girls asked for money?

17. b. What can't I have done when the girls asked for money?

18. c. What could I have done when the girls asked for money?

19. **3. I told him:**

20. a. I wouldn't have given them anything.

21. b. I must have ignored them.

22. c. I might have told someone in the church.

23. Complete the gaps in these sentences with a phrase from the box and the best form of the verb in brackets. The first one is an example.

Shouldn't have	would have
Could have	couldn't have
Should have	wouldn't

24. 1. Oh no. I've lost my homework! I knew I shouldn't have done (do) it on the tube. Now Catherine won't believe I did it!

25. 2. Watch where you're going! Phew! That was close! We - _____ (crash) into that car.

26. 3. The cleaning lady didn't clean my flat very well. I _____ (do) it myself and saved money.

27. 4. Why didn't you tell your friend the truth? I'm sure she _____ (believe) you.

28. 5. I did my best to catch the train but I _____ (run) any faster.

29. 6. I had to remind Alan to buy me a ring when he asked me to marry him! I _____ (get) one if I hadn't asked!

1. How did Catherine check that students understood the target language? She asked them concept questions using three model sentences. The practice activities also help the teacher see how the students are coping and what needs to be revised at the end of the lesson / in another lesson. 2. Did she explain the grammatical form to the students or did she elicit it from them? She elicited the form from the students and highlighted it on the board after they had discussed it in pairs. This is much more effective than just explaining it. 3. Did her students know the grammar terminology? Yes they did. It is part of good practice to always familiarise yourself with the terminology before the lesson so you can use it correctly and confidently. This will also help you deal with any questions from students. Another tip is that if a student asks an unrelated question whilst teaching, it's a good idea to note it down but to tell the student that you want to continue with the focus of this lesson. You should then go back to the student at the end of class (or the next day once you have had the chance to go and look it up if it's a particularly tricky grammatical question for example!)

Unit 7: Further lesson evaluation

Look at the following questions Catherine asked in her lesson based on the below target language.

They would have taken your mobile if they'd seen it

Did they see his mobile?
Did they take his mobile?
Was my dad lucky they didn't see his mobile?
Can I change this situation?

These are examples of good concept check questions and are used to check that students have understood the target language (the sentence in bold).

So, concept question should….

A. Be short and simple
B. Avoid using the target language
C. Not use language that is more difficult than the target language
D. Not check nouns that could be better checked by using pictures / drawing / props
E. Be specific and unambiguous
F. Check the concept of the target language and not other information that is obvious or irrelevant

Overview: Module 12

Teaching children can be the most challenging and most rewarding experience of teaching.

Once you become an experienced EFL teacher, you will be able to compare teaching different types of classes for example, adults versus children.

It is true to say that children's brains really are like sponges.

Adults may need to work very hard at remembering vocabulary for example whereas children will surprise you in that you need to do far less to help to stimulate their memory reserves.

If you can engage them in tasks and maintain control, you will be responsible for helping a child learn a second language.

As a result, this could be a life changing experience for them in terms of future relationships perhaps and career possibilities.

Unit 1: Managing behaviour in the classroom

Set some ground rules

When you start teaching a class of children, it is essential to establish clear parameters for working together. By this we mean actively seeking to create a positive relationship with the children and to set up a framework for 'the way we are and the way we do things in our classroom' in which you and the children can work together side by side.

First and foremost, it is important that have a clear idea of how you would ideally like things to be in your classroom and then implement a consistent and fixed approach in order to achieve this. If you don't it won't just happen by chance.

The best moment to start establishing parameters for working together is as soon as you meet a new class.

The early days are often referred to as a 'honeymoon period' and gives you the perfect chance to implement your rules and expectations going forward.

It is important to make the most of this time, as it is always much more difficult to change things later down the line. If you appear a little strict on day one or two, then that is not bad thing.

They will soon get to know you and discover that you are not an ogre and that you do in fact like them. Why on earth would you be teaching children otherwise?!

During the first few weeks of lessons, the children will be getting to know you and will be willing to respect you, like you and do things your way.

Students will naturally test your limits to see how much they can get away with. Subconsciously or wilfully, they are trying to establish boundaries so that they can model their behaviour accordingly.

Bearing this in mind, it is then essential to be prepared for this **before** going into the class room.

The actual rules of the classroom will vary from teacher to teacher and be influenced by your upbringing, your own school experience and your own beliefs.

Other factors will also affect the class such as the age of your students, the number of children and the culture of that country.

Therefore, as a basic guide for classroom management it would be useful to think about 'The seven R's approach'.

Unit 2: The Seven 'R's

The seven 'R's are Relationships, Rules, Routines, Rights, Responsibilities, Respect and Rewards.

If you consider this combination before teaching your class, you will, without doubt create a dynamic and positive learning environment. Your students will never forget you!

Relationships

The relationships that you establish with the class as a whole, and with the individuals that make up each class, lie at the heart of establishing a healthy and happy working environment and managing children positively.

On asking a number of children over the years the question "What makes a good teacher?" The answers indicated the following:
"Knowing that the teacher likes me"
"Being funny"
"Strict but never gets angry"
"Doesn't make me feel stupid if I make a mistake"
"Kind, patient, helpful"

Here are some more tips to ensure that you receive positive feedback from your young learners.

- Learn the children's names as soon as you can and always use them. This may sound easy however, if teaching in China for example; you could have a class of *forty* children! All with difficult to pronounce names so getting each child to write their name in English on a large piece of paper and sticking it to their desk on the first day is one suggestion. You could also make small badges yourself and ask the kids to wear them for the first week to help you.
- Avoid having favourites (or at least make sure that this doesn't show).
- Listen to what the children have to say (if a child wants to tell you something at an inappropriate moment, postpone till later but don't then forget, as this will give the message that you're not really interested).
- Challenge the children appropriately and encourage them to believe that they can succeed.
- Be patient if you need to explain or give instructions more than once.
- Create time for personalised moments in which you convey that you know and care about each child as an individual. This may be, for example, at the start or end of lessons, before or after formal teaching begins or while children are working individually.
- Model the behaviour that you would like the children to adopt. For example, be polite and courteous, use *please* and *thank you* when you ask them to do things, smile and greet them whether in or out of the classroom.
- Use praise appropriately to provide feedback and encourage participation and effort.
- Use humour and show a sense of fun.
- Be fair and firm about enforcing rules and acceptable classroom behaviour.
- Keep calm at all times if possible; try not to raise your voice or shout.
- if you tell a child off, make it clear it's their behaviour that you don't like, not them.

- Be consistent. If you say that you or the class will do something, make sure it happens.
- Mark and return work promptly. Be constructive in your comments and respond to children's intended meanings, rather than just language accuracy or spelling. As you develop your relationship with different classes and children, it is a good idea to get into the habit of monitoring yourself and how things are going. Through reflection and analysis of your own behaviour, you will be able to identify different aspects of your teaching that make your relationships work better and produce a more positive response in the children.

Rules

As discussed in module 1, there are a number of different approaches to establishing rules. We discussed the idea of asking the learners which rules they think would be useful within the classroom.

With teaching children however, they often like to know the ground rules from the start.

Providing clear boundaries helps children to feel secure so, when teaching a new class especially, this area needs to be a little more prescriptive.

Rules may either be imposed by the institution or instigated by you. It is usually best to have as few rules as possible and to make sure that the rules themselves are clear to everybody

e.g. *We must put up our hands if we want to speak* – as well as the reasons for the rules – e.g. *If everyone is talking at the same time, we won't be able to hear what anybody is saying.*

It is important that any rules you establish are perceived as *fair* by the children and that you can actually enforce them.

For example, with teaching adults, a rule which states *We must always speak English in class* may be perceived as unfair by children if, for example, they have something they desperately need to say. It may also at times be impossible for you to enforce. You don't want to set yourself up for a fall and then lose control.

In this case, a communication rule formulated differently – e.g. *We must ask if we need to speak Spanish (May I speak Spanish, please?)* – might be more effective.

This version of the rule will not only establish English as the main language of communication in the classroom, but will also encourage the children to think twice before giving you a signal that they need to resort to their mother tongue.

The most effective rules are those which are expressed using inclusive language (our rules for our classroom) and for which the children feel ownership.

It also helps when rules can be expressed positively rather than negatively in order to highlight desired behaviour.

For example, in a rule such as *We mustn't shout in our classroom*, the immediate association is to think of shouting, whereas if it is expressed positively, e.g. *We must talk quietly in our classroom*, the same rule is more likely to work.

Routines

Routines are established patterns of behaviour in which everyone knows what is expected of them and what they should do.

The introduction of classroom routines is instrumental in setting up working parameters which function effectively.

It is vital that routines are established during the 'honeymoon period' before patterns of behaviour are set.

In order to introduce and establish routines successfully, you need to have a clear plan of the areas these will cover and the form they will take. For example, you may like to think of routines for such things as:

- greeting the children
- taking the register
- starting lessons
- getting into pairs or groups
- moving from one part of the classroom to another
- doing particular activities, e.g. those involving movement or stories
- getting the children's attention
- starting and stopping activities
- giving out and collecting in materials
- looking at and/or correcting children's work
- collecting in and returning homework
- going to the toilet
- tidying up
- ending lessons

Familiar routines help to make children feel secure and confident in the classroom. They promote co-operation as, for example, when we all help tidy up together. They also foster a sense of community and belonging, in the sense that we all know and share the way we work and do things together in the classroom.

As children become increasingly familiar with routines and what is expected of them at different stages of learning, they begin to act more independently.

This helps you to manage your classes positively. It also helps save your energy and your voice (highly important if you are teaching full time) as, in some areas at least, once routines are established, children will only need a prompt to know what to do.

Rights and responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities are often two sides of the same coin. Here are some examples from the children's perspective:

- If you have the right to join in the lesson, then you also have the responsibility to remember to bring your books.
- If you have the right to speak in the classroom and have others listen to you, then you also have the responsibility to listen to others when they do the same.
- If you have the right to use the classroom scissors, crayons and glue, then you also have the responsibility to share them with others when they need to use them as well.
- If you have the right to have a turn in games, then you also have the responsibility to respect the turns of others when they play.
- If you have the right to see the pictures when the teacher tells a story, then you also have the responsibility not to block the view of others.
- If you have the right not to be mocked or laughed at, then you also have the responsibility not to mock or laugh at others.

Although it is unlikely to be appropriate to talk about rights and responsibilities explicitly with children, it is important to model through your own behaviour the way you value these.

For example, with responsibilities, if a child constantly forgets their book, it may be necessary for the teacher to issue frequent reminders and reprimands. Reinforcement through positive interaction will help encourage the child to be a more responsible student. The desire for praise and approval can be a strong motivator. Show that you value a student's actions by offering praise and specifically identifying what they have done so well.

For example, many children are forgetful. Students may forget to bring books to class. If you have a forgetful student that shows up with their book, make sure to comment on how well they have done to remember their book.

A quiet word of praise – e.g. *Well done for remembering your book today, Juan!* – is much more likely to reinforce the behaviour you want than saying nothing, which may leave the child wondering why he bothered to bring his book anyway or whether you even noticed or cared.

Similarly with children's rights, it is important to show through your behaviour that you value these and are willing to protect them. If, for example, a child mocks or laughs at another child in the class, you need to make it clear that this behaviour is completely unacceptable.

In this case, it may be also be worth explicitly discussing the reasons for this, possibly in a private moment after the class, and inviting the child to consider the situation from the other child's point of view by asking how they would feel if the same happened to them.

Encouraging children to reflect on their behaviour and see things from someone else's point of view means they will be more likely to act towards others in a responsible way.

Respect

Respect is the glue which underpins and holds together all the other 'R's.

Respect cannot be taught explicitly, but it can be modelled in all your behaviour, such as using the children's names, being polite, respecting personal space, valuing diversity, recognizing that children contribute and participate in different ways and understanding that they have feelings and 'off days' just like you.

The most important thing about fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect as part of managing children positively is to remember that respect works two ways.

If the children feel that you respect and treat them like individuals rather than a class to control, they will also respect and respond to you as individuals, rather than with a collective group mentality which is always much harder to manage positively.

Rewards

It is usually best not to use any system of extrinsic rewards to raise motivation levels and/or ensure good behaviour, at least at the outset.

This gives a positive message that you expect everything to go well and could also mean that you have to spend a fortune on chocolate and sweets to get your class to do anything!

However, there may be times with some classes when introducing a reward system can be an effective way to reinforce appropriate behaviour and/or to add an additional, motivational and competitive feel-good factor to things that are already going well.

Reward systems can be devised in all kinds of different enjoyable ways, e.g. using stars, stickers, points, smiley faces, raffle tickets or marbles in a jar.

If used effectively, they can help promote collaboration, appropriate behaviour and individual as well as class effort.

However, if used without care, they may also have the opposite effect and create a divisive atmosphere of 'winners' and 'losers', in which some children become obsessed by collecting stars or points, while others adopt a strategy of opting out, which has a correspondingly negative effect on their motivation, effort and behaviour in class.

The kinds of reward systems which generally work most effectively are ones which are designed to involve each child working cooperatively for a prize or pay-off which will be won by the whole class.

For example, in the case of collecting marbles in a jar, individual children, pairs or groups may be awarded marbles during lessons for such things as working well, making an effort to speak English, helping others, completing their work carefully or whatever you decide.

As soon as the jar is filled with marbles, the whole class gets a reward.

This may be something as simple as watching a favourite video, having a quiz, playing a favourite game or whatever else you and the children choose.

The jar for the marbles should not be too big, so that the reward is attainable over a reasonably short period of time, for example a week or, maximum, two.

If it takes a whole term (a long time in the life of a child!) to fill up the jar and earn the reward, then they are likely to lose interest and enthusiasm.

Giving a reward is best done instantly as an ongoing part of your teaching, so that the association between the reward and the reason for it is always fresh in the children's mind, e.g. *Great work, Daniel and Antonio. I only heard English in the game. Two marbles in the jar for you!*

The effect of individuals collecting rewards for the benefit of the whole class creates an atmosphere in which there is positive peer pressure to make an effort, work well and produce appropriate behaviour.

A collaborative reward system like this can also be made fun by your challenging the class, e.g. *Can you fill the jar by Friday? I don't think so. Show me I'm wrong!*

If you do decide to use a reward system such as the one described above, it is a good idea to vary the system you use for accumulating rewards (marbles, raffle tickets, stars, etc.) regularly, as, if you always use the same one, it is likely after a while to lose its associations of pleasant expectation, surprise and fun.

It is also essential always to use reward systems in the positive way in which they are intended, i.e. as rewards, rather than negatively or punitively, for example, by taking or threatening to take marbles back out of the jar once they have been awarded.

To sum up, the seven 'R's provide an integrated framework for thinking about ways of managing children positively and creating a happy working environment in which teaching and learning take place in an effective and harmonious way.

Unit 3: Storytelling

Storytelling and drama both lend themselves perfectly to the EFL classroom as they allow us to play to children's natural affinity for imagination and play.

In many ways, children learn through stories and drama.

They can learn about themselves by becoming completely engrossed in a story or by becoming a character in a very familiar, fun and safe way.

Imagine how much fun your children will have when your classroom, by the power of some blue paper and a lot of imagination becomes an underwater world for you all to act out the story of the little mermaid for example.

Storytelling and drama are above all shared, communal classroom events which engage children's interest, attention and imagination and develop their language skills in a holistic way.

They also appeal to children with different intelligences (musical, movement etc) and learning styles and allow us to facilitate social skills and attitudes, such as active listening, collaborating, turn taking and respect for others, in a positive way.

Learning through stories

Most children start school familiar with stories in their own language and quickly transfer this into a willingness to listen to and participate in stories in English.

Stories provide a natural, relevant and enjoyable context for exposure to language and an opportunity to familiarise children with the sounds, rhythm and intonation of English.

The discovery and construction of meaning is supported through things such as visuals, mime, gesture, voice and characterisation, and children also develop learning strategies and thinking skills, such as predicting, hypothesising, guessing and inferring meaning.

Stories help young children to develop concentration skills and also aspects of emotional intelligence, such as empathy and relating to other people.

Stories also provide a springboard for a wide range of activities which develop language, thinking skills as well as appreciation of other cultures.

As children increasingly develop their ability to understand, retell, act out and/or create their own stories in English, this also has a positive effect on their motivation, confidence and self-esteem.

Choosing stories

Stories can be selected from a range of sources, including graded readers, story websites on the internet or picture books originally written for children whose first language is English.

If you are employed to teach children, it would be advisable to buy a few second hand story books to take with you as you never know what resources will be available to you once you arrive.

Suitable material for children's stories can be mined from a variety of resources. It is important to ensure the material is appropriate to the learners' needs.

Review the content to determine if the subject matter is relevant to a lesson plan. Use interesting stories that will appeal to the background of your students. Select stories with illustrations that will capture the attention of students.

Make any adjustments necessary to ensure that a story's vocabulary and level is appropriate for the class / curriculum you are following.

Provide your class with a variety of stories. Literary classics, light-hearted funny stories, moving dramatic accounts, delightful fantasies all move the imaginations of children and help to captivate their attention and effectively draw them into lessons.

You could also think about using fables or stories with a moral, myths, legends, funny stories, rhyming stories, stories with flaps or pop-ups, biographical stories, stories which help children understand their own feelings and stories from other cultures.

Telling stories

It is important not to let the flow of concentration be interrupted. That is why it is recommended to rehearse your storytelling. This also gives you an opportunity to discover points in the story where a particular word or phrase can be enhanced with miming or actions. There may be moments when it is appropriate to change your tone of voice or facial expression to convey meaning which will help facilitate learning. A pause at just the right moment can create suspense or give a student the chance to pose a question. Critical pauses are invitations for engagement.

If you read a story from a book, make sure that you are not hiding behind it thus making it difficult for the class to hear you. It is also important that students see your lips forming the words. Strike a position where you can hold the book in your hands with your face open and forward to the class. If the book has illustrations, stop from time to time and let the class enjoy associating pictures with words for reinforcement of what they are learning.

It is also important to consider the seating arrangement of the class during story time. You may be tempted to keep them in their seats. However, a semi-circle of students on the floor at your feet creates an intimacy that captivates their attention. It also makes it easier for them to hear you clearly. When illustrations are shared, children who sit at the back of the room would have difficulty seeing them. By sitting in a semi-circle right in front of you, they won't feel left out.

You may want to set the mood before you begin reading. A reading ritual of repeating a rhyme or song is perfectly appropriate right before story time.

Although it is easy to get wrapped up in the story, don't forget to keep an eye on your students. Frequent eye contact serves two purposes. One, it helps students stay attentive on you and the story. Secondly, it helps maintain order in the classroom. So, remember to look up frequently as you read the story and make eye contact with your class.

Respond to cues and body language that can indicate if a student has a question or may be struggling to understand. It is also appropriate if a student simply wants to comment about the story. Encourage engagement and interaction.

When the story is over don't just say, "The End" unceremoniously and close the book. Hopefully, the interest of the children has been piqued with the story. Before adjourning, give students the opportunity to respond or ask questions. They may have a similar experience to share. Perhaps they want to explore feelings a story provoked. It is an excellent opportunity for everyone to exercise new vocabulary and reinforce conversational skills while you, as a teacher, prompt and promote further discussion.

Planning story-based lessons

As with other listening and reading activities, it can be helpful to plan story-based lessons following the three stages of before, while and after.

Consider using extended stories over several lessons. It is easy to pick up a story where you left off the day before. This element also creates suspense, motivating children to not miss a class or they will not be able to find out what happens next.

Create lesson plans that are centered on featured chapters with activities that follow story time to reinforce learning about the events that took place. Ask open ended questions which will allow students to predict, summarize and develop upon the narrative.

Another way to improvise storytelling is to re-tell the story. This can be done with activities like acting out the story. Create an illustrative activity with children designing a comic book version of the story or re-writing it in a theatrical play version. The goal should be for students to use as much of the target language from the story as possible.

The storytelling cycle can be an effective lead-in to students producing the language through role-play or other forms of dramatization. (A traditional top down approach to listening as discussed in modules 7 and 8 'Receptive skills').

It is important for older children to be aware of how stories are created. The emphasis should be on giving students an opportunity to create their own stories based on what they have learned. (Ideas for this have been covered in modules 9 and 10 'Productive skills'.

As part of activities in the storytelling cycle, and in order to enrich and enhance children's learning, it is often appropriate to integrate storytelling with drama

Unit 4: Drama

Drama provides opportunities for multi-sensory, kinaesthetic (movement) responses to stories and engages children in 'learning by doing' at a number of different levels.

Dramatization of a story involves several skills which are useful in learning a new language. It involves, first, listening to the story. Next, students may respond and engage by asking questions to ascertain that they understand the meaning of all of the language. Word association with actions is a natural part of the learning process. Memorization, usually a boring but necessary part of learning, becomes more interesting and dynamic. Finally they are able to demonstrate their understanding of the language with gestures, sounds, imitation and miming of the story.

A natural extension of dramatizing language skills is to re-tell a story through another medium, such as using puppets. This is an effective way to recycle a story via a fresh perspective. For shy children, a puppet show is a great option to boost their confidence because the spotlight is on the puppet rather than on themselves.

A play or performance can also be a special way to enjoy using drama as part of the learning process. It can be highly motivational for students and encourage them to work even harder at their language development knowing that they will be performing in front of parents or peers.

For everyone involved, teacher, students and audience, it is a very rewarding experience. A class coalesces with a sense of identity that is unified in a collective performance with peers relying upon one another for ultimate success.

Managing drama activities

It is common for children to experience anxiety and stage-fright when faced with the prospect of performing in front of others. Therefore, it is important to gradually build confidence before introducing drama.

Use stage direction cues like, "Action!" or "Freeze!" to control the students when conducting drama activities.

Remember that students look to a teacher as a role model. So, don't just direct from the side-lines!

Teacher participation in the drama is also very important and serves as a way to model the response you expect from your students.

This also helps prevent the students from developing that uncomfortable feeling of being watched and judged. If the teacher is also performing, students will feel freer in their expressive movements.

Module Questions: Reflection Time

As you use the storytelling and drama activities in this section with your classes, you may like to think about the following questions and use your responses to evaluate how things went and plan possible improvements for next time:

1. Interest: Did the story engage the children's curiosity, interest and attention? Why? / Why not? If so, how was this sustained?

2. Participation: Did the children participate actively? What factors encouraged – or discouraged – this?

3. Creative thinking: How did the children respond to activities which invited a creative or imaginative response? Did this affect the way they used language? If so, how?

4. Kinaesthetic learning: How did the children respond to activities involving mime and movement? In what ways did such activities seem to help or detract from the children's learning? What were the reasons for this, do you think?

5. Collaboration: Did the children collaborate and work well together? What factors influenced this?

6. Enjoyment: Did the children enjoy the story and related activities? Why? / Why not? What effect did this have on their motivation, confidence and self-esteem?

Unit 1: Teaching with limited resources

There is nothing worse than arriving at your new school, all full of enthusiasm and ideas for great hand-outs, only to realise that your school does not have a photocopier!

This has happened to many an EFL teacher (including the writer of this module!). On completion of this course, some of you will be jetting off to schools in all five continents of the globe.

If you are planning on teaching in a developing country, or a very small school, it would be a good idea to consider the very practical notion of teaching with limited resources.

To follow, are a number of practical ideas and techniques to ensure that your students are still engaged and learning despite you only having perhaps some broken bits of chalk and a blackboard!

A–Z

A firm favourite with all my students, especially with large classes who are not used to getting up and moving around in the classroom.

- Choose a lexical set like sports.

- The student at the front of each line must run to the board and write a sport beginning with A, hand the chalk to the student behind them and then go to the back of the line.

- The next student goes to the board and writes a sport beginning with B, hands the chalk to the next student and goes to the back of the line and this continues until students reach Z.

- Other students in the team can help the person writing if they cannot think of a sport. If nobody can think of one, they go on to the next letter in the alphabet.

- The winner is the team with the most sports written on the board by the end of the game.

Tip: use large lexical sets for this game: food & drink, jobs, things you can find in the house, countries, parts of the body NOT furniture or musical instruments which are limited and will frustrate all the players!

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a fun, creative strategy for teachers with limited textbook resources. It involves the entire class in a creative project. Able to input their own ideas, students become energized and enthusiastic. A typical brainstorming session would go something like this:

- Decide upon a theme and write it on a dry erase or chalkboard for the entire class to see. For example, use the theme of a mountaintop camp-out.

- Divide the class into two teams.

- Instruct students to take turns making a quick dash to the board to write a word or phrase that could be used in a mountaintop camp-out story. Examples: backpack, climb, struggle, rope, echo, fire.

- Create a time limit, such as 5 minutes. Whichever team has the most words or phrases at the end of the time limit wins.

For an additional exercise, use the students' work in the brainstorming race, and have them craft their own versions of a mountaintop camp-out story.

Advantages and disadvantages

This is a high energy, fast-paced activity that gets the whole class involved.

- Create an imaginary boundary down the middle of the classroom with an equal number of students on either side.

- Divide the groups up into "thinkers" and "runners".

- Assign the terms "advantage" to one side and "disadvantage" to the other.

- Write on a dry erase or chalkboard subjects that have advantages and disadvantages like: technology, zoos, canned goods, etc.

- Determine a time limit for the game.

- Thinkers will come up with words to describe either the advantages or disadvantages of the subject, tell a runner the word who will then dash to the board and write the word.

- The team with the most ideas within the time limit wins the game.

To get further instructive use out of this game, have the students write an essay about the advantages or disadvantages of one of the subjects.

Even if you work in a classroom with furniture fixed in place, making it difficult to accommodate games like this, there are always workarounds.

For example, you may take the class outside or use the space at the front of the classroom.

Games that require movement and teamwork can be extremely effective so it pays to use classroom space effectively or think up innovative ways to help students move around while producing the material.

Do not be discouraged by the physical limitations of your classroom but enlist your students in trying to find solutions to these problems.

Label the room

Use the classroom and everything in it as a learning resource.

A labelling game may sound boring but this is an exercise that introduces practical language in convenient format.

- Cut strips of paper and label them with everything within the classroom. Example: desk, window, door, cupboard, etc.

- Pass out the labels to students and instruct them to affix the labels to the correct objects. Use tape, blue-tack or something similar.

- Leave labels up as long as you like as helpful reminders students can refer to, reinforcing the word meanings.

This task is kinaesthetic, great for beginner/elementary levels learners and shows your students that you like to do things differently.

Create your own poster

Ready-made posters are expensive and not always easy to find. Involving the class in a poster project is a great language exercise. All that is needed are large sheets of paper, even recycled paper can be used if at least one side is clear of any print, images or text. Add paint or markers and a class is ready to create English language posters to decorate a classroom with.

Poster content will depend on what is age appropriate for individual students. Younger students can create alphabet oriented posters. Older children can create posters with words and pictures representing the words.

When the class has completed their posters, gather them all together and put them up on a wall as a single feature or decorate the classroom wherever it is appropriate to hang them. If you have resources like magazines and newspapers, let students cut out pictures and stick them to a corresponding poster for another language exercise.

Posters related to a student's loved ones and family are another language project that students enjoy creating.

They can draw or use cut out images or even family photos. Instruct them to use their new language skills to write captions for the images on their posters. Not only will students be strengthening their language skills, but they will also be creating a project that will be a source of personal pride.

Older students can create Grammar posters. Some of my Thai teenagers particularly enjoyed creating these. As students are presented with new items of grammar, working in groups, they create posters to explain the grammar in a way that is meaningful to them – it could be with sample sentences, a 'rule', or an example of the target language in the context of a sentence or short paragraph.

They can decorate these posters and use them to help remember the grammar and how to use it.

No photocopier?

In fact teachers who have unlimited access to this handy machine often churn out worksheets unnecessarily. Rather than handing out 4 or 5 comprehension questions in a hand-out to students, try this. Dictate each question, but jumble up the words. For example:

away Peter you do why think ran? (Why do you think Peter ran away?).

This adds a number of extra layers to the activity and challenges learners. A language exercise that also involves sorting skills starts with the teacher reciting sentences that, when arranged in the proper order, create a story. The students write down the sentences as they are recited in a mixed-up fashion. Next, pair up students. Working as a team, the students arrange the sentences in the proper order to tell the story.

Having to teach with limited resources pushes you to be more creative with your lesson ideas and in the long run, will make you a far better teacher. As a result, you will never feel that the success of your lesson hinges on a pile of hand-outs or a book.

Unit 2: Teaching Large Classes

Most teachers agree that teaching a small group of students is easier, more enjoyable, and less time consuming than teaching a large group.

Unfortunately, due to budgets, space, or lack of teachers, many EFL schools offer large classes.

This is more common in Asian countries, and in particular China. In some schools, large classes may consist of up to 40 or more students.

While your class may look more like a University lecture hall, your job is not to lecture.

Just like teaching a small class, you must come up with engaging activities that keep all of your students interested and participating with the goal of improving their communication skills.

While there are numerous challenges when it comes to teaching large classes, there are many coping skills and activities that you can use to make your job easier.

Whilst teaching a large class may sound a bit daunting, there are also many positive aspects of teaching a large group of students.

Large classes can be noisy, but they are also fun and exciting as long as you have the energy to keep up! Time flies in a large class, and you will rarely find yourself clock watching. You will probably find that you in fact planned too much work for a lesson so you can save and use in your next class.

Another advantage of teaching a large class is that there is always someone who is willing to answer questions even if they are just guessing. Make sure to take answers from a variety of students.

You will also discover that you will have less need for fillers since core activities and lessons take longer to complete.

Teaching a large class can be challenging – particularly with the needs of so many individuals to consider. Here are some tips about how to succeed when teaching large classes:

- **Intimacy:** Remembering students' names can take a while. Ensure students remain in a set seating plan over a reasonable period of time to help achieve this aim.

- **Anxiety:** Some teachers feel anxious about being vastly outnumbered by the students. Establish rules and guidelines from the very beginning which will help maintain discipline in the classroom. It is also advisable to have back-up materials ready in case you need to switch up the lesson should things not be going according to plan.

- **Student needs:** Meeting individual student needs can be difficult when the class size is very large. They may feel too intimidated to raise their hand and speak up. It is important for the teacher to remain accessible during the lesson. Don't always stay behind your desk, instead walk among the students to foster a more personable atmosphere which will encourage them to express themselves

- **Marking:** Grading assignments and tests for a large class can be very time consuming. Quick ways to gauge progress could be having a quiz on the previous lesson at the start of class, or you could include participation as part of a student's overall assessment. A daily exam where students switch papers and mark each other's

answers, feeding back to the group, is also another effective time-saver

- **Distractions:** There are more distractions for teachers in large classes, such as latecomers and students chatting while you are teaching. Choose your battles and understand that some distractions are inevitable.
- **Preparation:** Making photocopies for a large class is not always time-efficient. Try to use visual aids and the dry erase or chalk board to display assignments to the whole class. Also, take note of when other teachers use the photocopier and plan your own usage accordingly. Hogging the photocopier in busy times is not a good way to endear yourself to fellow faculty members!
- **Noise level:** Large classes can become noisy and frenetic when students are working in pairs or groups. A lot of the time this is earnest enthusiasm for the task at hand. However, when the behaviour turns rowdy and learning is impaired, it is important to highlight what levels of noise are acceptable. Instead of shouting at students, manage the noise level creatively – perhaps through a noise meter at the front of the class where students can see they are crossing the threshold of what is acceptable. When they get back within a reasonable level of noise, find creative ways to reward their behaviour. This might be the promise of a game at the end of class for example.
- **Monitoring students:** Teachers may find it difficult to keep students on task as they monitor pair and group work. Listen carefully for any common errors students are making and feed them back to the class at an appropriate time. It is important not to single out individuals for correction, rather address the issue as a common error and demonstrate how it can be effectively resolved.
- **Space:** There is limited space in a classroom for energetic activities such as role-playing or other movement based tasks, which may be required from time to time. Be creative with the space you have, move desks to one side or even take the students outside to give them fresh learning impetus.

Suggestions for Coping with Large Classes

Your first step is to realise that developing rapport will take longer than teaching a small class however; you can help this process by prioritising learning everyone's names.

You could ask each student to write their name on a piece of paper and stick it to their desk or perhaps give then each a name badge.

Your first lesson could start with that old chestnut of taking them out into a larger space and positioning everyone in a large circle.

You then model the name game by throwing a football (or large scrunched up piece of paper) and throwing it at one of the students while saying "David (teacher) to Ting Ting" etc.

Instruct students to continue throwing the ball to different people while stating their own name and that of the ball catcher.

Continue for about ten minutes, or for as long as you feel that you have got to grips with a good number of names.

- **Establish trust:** Allow your students to see you from a different perspective by telling them some things about your interests outside of the classroom. There is no need to get too casual but telling them you support a particular football team or have a favourite movie can be an effective way of establishing trust and dialogue.
- **Effective note-taking**: Ensure you monitor pair or group learning effectively by taking notes and feeding back common errors to the class as a whole once the activity is complete.
- **Use the space**: Where you are working with large groups for energetic activities, take students outside or find indoor space that is fit for purpose. It is important to let students spread out when they are preparing for a performance or project.
- **Encourage participation**: Aggregate homework and attendance so that it becomes part of a student's final grade. Giving exam hints and tips daily also encourages students to attend.
- **Competition is good**: A fun, competitive classroom atmosphere is a great way to stimulate learning. Split the class into teams, award points for a win and also subtract points for bad behaviour or excessive noise.
- **Stay calm**: It is so important to start your classes in a relaxed frame of mind. Students can pick up on teacher anxiety and will

usually sense when lessons have not been sufficiently prepared. Avoid this by planning classes well in advance and having one or two extra activities at the ready in case the lesson is not going well.

- **Manage noise**: From day one establish an acceptable level of noise and a way of getting your class to stop what they are doing and pay attention. Be consistent in implementing this strategy and take care not to use any offensive gestures or sounds that may offend the local population.

- **Reduce marking and prep time**: Establish the target language that you are grading and design quizzes and tests which are on point and streamlined. Peer evaluations are also a good time-saver. Encourage student confidence in writing by leaving a short comment or suggestion at the end of their paper rather than putting a red line through each and every mistake (see module 10 unit 2). Find out when the photocopying room is quiet and use this time effectively to prepare most of your photocopying for the day or week ahead.

- **Enforce a late policy:** Notify students of your late policy on the first day and stick to it. For example, don't let students enter your classroom after a warm-up has ended or after the first 10 minutes. You should also check that your employer, manager of Director of Studies supports you in this in case of any students complaining. They are the paying customer after all and some language schools are hesitant to enforce rules on their students. If students miss class, make it their responsibility to catch up, not yours.

- **Share your e-mail address:** In a large class, you will find yourself feeling drained before and after class if you let students come early or stay late to ask questions every day. This alone can make you hate your job, especially if you are not paid for hours when you are not teaching. Encourage students to e-mail you with questions or set up a Facebook page for that class, and answer them on your own time. If you don't like the e-mail suggestion, try finishing your class ten minutes early once in a while and allow your students free conversation time. Take questions on a first come basis during this time.

Activities to use in Large Classes

- **Small group discussions:** Use topics related to a theme, or ask students to submit topic suggestions.

- **Who Am I?:** Stick the name of a famous person to the back of each student. Students walk around the room asking questions and trying to identify themselves. Once they guess who they are they can place their name tag on the front and continue helping other students identify themselves.

- **Team spelling contests:** Each student who gets the spelling correct gets a point for their team.

- **Balderdash:** Large classes can be split into teams. Teacher calls out a word and students must write down that word and it's meaning. Each student to get both correct gets a point for their team.

- **Write the question:** Large class can be split into teams. The teacher gives an answer and the students must write the question. (eg. "Amanda") Each student that writes the correct question gets a point. (e.g. answer: What's your middle name?")

- **Questionnaires:** Students circulate around the room asking each other questions. Students can create their own questions on a given topic or theme, or you can provide a questionnaire hand-out. Follow up by asking each student to report the most interesting answer they received. This could then progress onto groups preparing presentation about the results and any conclusion they may have come to.

- **Categories:** The teacher calls out a category, such as fruit, and each student has to name a fruit when it's their turn. If a student hesitates for more than five seconds, they have to choose a new category and sit out the rest of the game. The last person to get out wins.

Unit 3: Teacher roles

Unit 3: Teacher roles

Why have we placed this Unit in this Module: 'Classroom Survival Tips'?

Plainly and simply, it's because **there's more to your role than you might think.**

You've already studied what it takes to be a competent and effective teacher – and you will be if you take all our ideas on board and marry them with your own ideas. And we have already discussed the key knowledge, ability, skills and habits elements you require to deliver up a successful lesson.

However, there are other skills you need to have to ensure success. It would be very pleasant if your role simply comprised of passing on information, creating an enjoyable atmosphere and other pleasant activities. It would be truly wonderful! However, it's not as easy as that.

There are other personal and supervisor- type roles and activities you will be responsible for and these require skill and energy. They come with the job, as they say.

The range of teacher roles

Assessor:

- assessing progress
- correcting errors
- allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of the material in different ways
- diagnosing what needs to be done in follow-up lessons
- preparing and delivering tests and examinations and marking them, as required
- communicating grades/results/progress with sensitivity and support
- ensuring that you too can meet any required external standards or inspections

Controller:

- ensuring that the whole class is tuned into what needs to be done, e.g. starting off a new activity
- ensuring that classroom order is maintained

Facilitator:

- knowing what facilitation really is

- stepping back and allowing students to find their way along the language journey, whilst still monitoring and motivating as needs be
- being available and ready to act as a resource when needed

Guide:

- guiding those who are unsure of what to do

Manager:

- ensuring all the nitty-gritty elements that underpin a successful lesson are carried out, e.g. giving effective and coherent instructions, arranging the most effective seating, ensuring instructions are carried out as planned, and ensuring that tasks are completed as planned
- ensuring group dynamics skills are utilised to provide efficient classroom routines, smooth transitions and different types of groupings to encourage specific types of learning
- ensuring a sense of community and belonging in the classroom

Materials producer and collector:

- producing more appropriate, more relevant and often much better materials than a coursebook offers
- ensuring a variety of material mediums – paper/image based, audio and video, realia, where appropriate

Monitor:

- observing and analysing ongoing interactions – on a daily basis
- monitoring what's going well and what's not going so well – on a daily basis
- reflecting on the evidence and deciding what needs to be done in a feedback session later
- being able to deliver effective, constructive and timely feedback to all students you are responsible for
- recognising when there is a need to act as a counsellor, providing emotional support as needed to help learners feel confident in their learning

Motivator:

- motivating some of the students who may not be so keen on the activity or who may be tired or are thinking elsewhere, perhaps due to the stresses and strains of life outside the classroom
- understanding that lessons should be interesting, meaningful and stimulating and should respond to the learners' emotional, cognitive and linguistic needs
- remembering that the whole person comes to school, so even the intrinsically motivated person yesterday may not be the motivated person today

Needs analyst:

- identifying the learning needs expressed by the learners
- accounting for differing language ability levels and varying backgrounds, interests, and needs
- Remember: Learners may have other needs that you may identify, e.g. behavioural or social needs, **but here we use the term 'needs analyst' primarily in relation to learners' learning needs.**

Planner/organiser:

- preparing lesson plans for the class or age group you are assigned to
- accounting for differing language ability levels and varying backgrounds, interests, and needs
- embracing a multicultural perspective in the planning and encouraging this in the learning episodes
- accounting for maximum student interaction within the plans
- ensuring that there is plentiful opportunity for authentic and communicative language use
- setting out the roadmap for the lesson and organising all the tasks and activities for all the learners

Sometimes, many of these skills and roles are required in the one lesson. The ability to seamlessly master **the skill of multi-tasking** will make your lessons more fluid, more effective and more enjoyable.

You may have picked up some of the skills necessary for your teacher role already in another job or activity, so that experience will serve you well.

If not, you should consider delving into these areas **before you take up your teaching post.** Our course will help you with some of these personal and supervisor- type skills in some areas, e.g. assessment, motivation, planning and you'll likely have friends who use other skills in their job and can help you.

A good book on general supervisor or management skills will also be of benefit.

The majority of inexperienced TEFL teachers setting out for their first teaching post have often given little thought to this. Perhaps their course did not make them aware of this. It's then a severe shock to their system when they realise they're unprepared in some of these skills areas.

But you won't be unprepared!

Unit 4: Discipline in the classroom 1-10

While more movement of students and more communication amongst students have had a positive effect in the communicative classroom, they have also increased the potential for things to go wrong in the classroom, leading to possible problems relating to student discipline and behaviour.

These issues of discipline and student behaviour are the most frequently mentioned concerns of inexperienced teachers.

Gradually, you will develop your own strategies and techniques for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Often, indiscipline arises due to confusion over:

- weak classroom rules, or lack of them
- roles and expectations, i.e. your and your students' roles and expectations

In essence, inadequate classroom management is likely to be at the root of it, most of the time.

1. Teacher attitudes to discipline

Although it is a bit of a generalisation, there seems to be two main categories of teachers with their differing attitudes to discipline.

There are those who see the learner as the recipient of information that the teacher, as the fount of knowledge, has to provide. They see the learner's role as relatively passive. They control. They tend to accept the need for minor punishments as an incentive to learning.

On the other hand, there are the teachers who see learning as a process that requires the active commitment of the students. These teachers try to avoid punishment, relying on the students' interest in the work to keep them out of trouble.

These teachers see themselves more as guides than controllers, and so they seek to maintain discipline through persuasion and by tapping into the students' basic good nature.

Experience tells us that if you genuinely care for your students (as you will), and communicate well with them in not only their subject content but in all social ways, you will bring out the best in your students. When you keep these goals in sight, you will often get the better of even the most troublesome student.

You'll decide on your approach.

2. Key issues that can affect student behaviour negatively

Here are some common issues for you to reflect on:

- You try to be liked instead of respected.
- An innate urge among some teachers to control students rather than elicit their respect for authority
- Some teachers never seem to develop effective strategies for dealing with unacceptable student-created problems.
- Confusion over rules, roles and expectations – on both sides
- Poor teacher-student communication
- School supervision and discipline policies which are unbending, i.e. zero tolerance
- A lack of school supervision and discipline policies

3. Strategies for preventing/minimising discipline issues

It is pretty impossible to provide a set of rules and procedures that will work in all student situations and settings. But there are many practical strategies that work well.

Here's what to do, and what not to do:

1. Good planning and organisation

The teachers who are most successful in maintaining discipline in class are not those who are good at dealing with problems, but those who know how to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

Careful planning and organisation are the keys to preventing problems arising.

Careful planning and organising promotes a constant momentum, pace and a feeling of purpose which keeps the students' attention on the task at hand and does not allow the formation of a `vacuum' which may be filled by distracting or counter-productive activity.

An awareness that everything is planned and you know where you are going contributes a great deal to your own confidence and to your ability to win the trust of the students.

Because the bulk of your students are motivated by your quick-paced and organised momentum, the misbehaver is often ignored by the rest of the class. He has no audience to perform to and will give up his counter-productive activity.

2. English-only environment

Cultivating an English-only environment as much as possible will go a long way towards creating a classroom that does not get side-tracked with L1 usage. But there may be some occasions where you will allow L1 usage.

3. The skill of distraction

Creating a distraction is an almost guaranteed way to close the curtains on the misbehaving performer. His performance will stop abruptly.

Always have some already-prepared distractions up your sleeve.

This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- *Hands up those who want to see this amazing picture.*
- *The first group to put these words into a proper sentence, and write it on the board, will get 10 points added to the best group end-of-term award.*

- *Ah! I forgot the box. Who wants to be first to see what I've got in my box?*

- *Let's try this out. I'm going to whisper something to Adriano. Then he must whisper the same thing to Alanza, and then Alanza to another member of the group and so on. The last person in the group must stand up and tell me what was whispered. Are you ready?*

- *Who wants to hear about something funny that happened to me yesterday?*

He'll want to be a part of this new activity, like everyone else.

4. Clear and succinct instructions

Clear and succinct instructions are critical. Too much hesitation and mind-changing on your part can easily distract students.

5. Stay alert at all times – for negatives and positives

You need to be constantly aware of what is going on in all sectors of the classroom, keeping your eyes and ears open. Don't fall into the trap that some teachers fall into, using the time in class to mark previous work. **That's a recipe for disaster.**

Your role is to facilitate learning at all times in the classroom. When you're up and about, you will be fully alert as to what's going on.

But it's not only negative behaviour you should be keeping an eye on. Look out for positive behaviour too. When you see good, specific examples of positive behaviour, praise your students.

Don't just praise them with a common phrase such as *Well done, group B.* Tell them why you are praising them: *Well done, group B. I've noticed that everyone is doing a separate part of the task. That's what group work is all about. Thank you!*

And, of course, communication with parents and carers is paramount. If school policy allows it, find time, on a termly basis, to send a note to parents/carers, **telling them what the students have done well.** This will be discussed at home and will provide further motivation to your students.

6. Set and agree a code of behaviour in the classroom

This should be set with the students, where possible, so they know the consequences of their behaviour should it not be socially acceptable to the

rest of the group or to you, e.g. in relation to homework, letting others speak without interruption, sticking to routines etc.

Also, be wise and present to the class your code of behaviour too, e.g. how you will behave at all times (be patient, never shout etc.). This acceptance by you that you too will follow a code will build their trust in, and respect for, you.

7. Fairness and consistency

Be fair and consistent at all times with all of your students. The classroom rules for dealing with each aspect of misbehaviour need to be applied consistently at all times, no matter if the misbehaver is normally one of your best students.

8. Focus on the behaviour, not on the person

Don't make any comments about the person who is misbehaving. Stick to commenting on the behaviour.

9. Encourage even your misbehaving students

When they are behaving well, catch them doing that. Tell them: *Well done, Juan. You've got some very good examples there.*

10. Use your body language

Often, there is no need to speak. Most students will stop misbehaving when you:

- stare at them at length
- clap your hands, once
- shake your head, signalling *No!*
- use a tool agreed in the class rules, e.g. ringing a bell

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11. Get them up and moving

Ensure you build in movement into your lessons. The movement may be part of a lesson, e.g. roleplays, or intentional movement for its own sake, e.g. changing places, doing part of the lesson outside the classroom.

When students are sitting still, lesson after lesson, lethargy can creep in. **A lethargic environment is a ripe environment for misdemeanours.**

12. Keep up the pace

Another ripe environment for misdemeanours is when there is a break in the pace of your lesson. Breaks and lulls in the pace may result, for example, due to technological issues or spending too much time with an individual or group over some issue.

When you are planning your lessons, you need to take these possible periods of inactivity into account. Ensure you have some quick and meaningful activity that the class can do during these breaks and lulls.

13. Do not ignore minor issues

Inexperienced teachers tend to ignore minor issues in the hope that the problems will go away by themselves. Occasionally they do, but more often they simply escalate. Generally, it is advisable to respond immediately and actively to any potential problem you detect.

14. Deal with it quietly

The best action is a quiet but clear-cut response that stops the activity.

15. Move students

Ensure your potentially disruptive students sit at the front of the class – close to you.

16. Stay close to them

Move around in the proximity of the student when the behaviour is persistent. Move towards her and ask if you can help her; then, when you have calmed the student, walk away with a smile and a *Well done!*

Or you could sit down close to any disruptive students and carry on the lesson from that position. They'll stop what they are doing when you're up close and personal.

17. Don't use threats

If you use threats, they are likely to exacerbate the problem. Sometimes, teachers make threats which they will not implement.

Some of your students will soon become aware of this and will take their misbehaviour to the brink, knowing that very little will happen. They work out: *Nothing happened last time, so why will it happen this time?*

18. Never lose your temper

Losing your temper in any classroom can be disastrous. This especially applies in cultures where showing strong negative emotion is one of the worst things you can ever do.

Here's what to do:

1. Approach the offender and tell him he needs to stop doing what he's doing.

2. Deliver this up in a confident manner but do not shout.

3. Pause, whilst keeping full and confident eye contact, showing an expectation that you expect him to stop.

4. Repeat this process if the offender does not stop immediately.

This calm and confident approach will work in most cases.

19. Dealing with more serious incidents

These will be few and far between, if ever. But it's important to have a strategy in case this ever happens.

Here's what to do:

1. Always remember that the whole person comes to school. Has something happened externally, e.g. at home and is this the underlying cause of their misbehaviour? So, take care and take a moment to consider this.

2. Speak loudly but don't shout.

3. Don't go down the argument track or things will get worse. Stop and go silent. Remember you have a class to look after.

4. Offer, with empathy, the opportunity for the misbehaver to take time out in the fresh air and then return to class.

5. Then get the class back on track.

Depending on the seriousness of the issue:

Arrange a meeting with the student later to discuss the issue, emphasising the focus of the meeting is not about discipline.

See if you can get to the bottom of it all – the cause of the behaviour - and try to help the student to move on in a more positive vein. You may still have to impose some sanction in line with the classroom rules.

For a very serious action, e.g. threatening other students or vandalising property, you need to alert your Head of Department/Director of Studies

as soon as the lesson ends. Seek advice and be guided on the best route to take. Don't be afraid or don't feel weak about asking for help.

Unit 5: Culture and its implications

In this final course Unit, we will explore two key cultural aspects, both of which are important for classroom survival:

- Appropriateness: cultural contextualisation
- Cross-cultural aspects in the classroom

1. Appropriateness: cultural contextualisation

In the language arena, there are several meanings of the word 'appropriateness'. Here our focus is on cultural contextualisation.

A subtler aspect of meaning that often needs to be introduced to learners is whether a particular item is appropriate for use in a certain context.

Appropriateness of a speech act is measured against sociocultural norms. The norms may vary somewhat within a given group of society, but they are generally recognised within the society as a whole.

However, the same speech act in one society's culture may not be considered appropriate in another culture.

There are possible repercussions arising from a learner saying words that would be viewed as inappropriate in another culture and society. If repeated many times, the learner would probably be viewed negatively by the native speakers in that culture and society.

For this reason, you must make your learners aware of possible cross-linguistic problems.

Thus, it is important that your learners know that a certain word or phrase is very common, or relatively rare, or 'taboo' in, say, polite conversation. Or, perhaps, the word tends to be used in writing but not in speech; or that it is more suitable in formal than in informal discourse.

For example, *weep* is virtually synonymous in denotation with *cry*, but it is more formal and poetic, tends to be used in writing more than in speech, and is much less common.

But what does this mean for YOU?

Here's what you need to know and reflect on to ensure you get cultural contextualisation right first time:

1. Remember this: Communication is culture bound. The way an individual communicates and the words and structures she uses emanate from her culture.

2. Students with different cultural norms are at risk if you have little knowledge, sensitivity or appreciation of the diversity in communication styles. You may perceive differences as problems and respond to students' diversity with negative attitudes, low expectations and culturally inappropriate teaching and assessment procedures.

3. Remember: Cultures vary internally and are changeable. There are usually many cultural differences within a single race or nationality. Avoid stereotyping your students.

4. What is logical and important in your culture, e.g. always tagging on *please* to a request, or taking turns to speak, may seem irrational and unimportant to learners in another culture.

5. In describing another culture's language, teachers tend to stress the differences and overlook the similarities. Ensure you do not fall into this trap.

6. Avoid some inappropriate cross cultural communication barriers:

- Be aware of words, images and situations that suggest that all or most members of a racial group are the same.
- Be aware of possible negative implications of word/colour symbolism and usage that could offend people or reinforce bias. For example, terms such as *black magic* or *black market* can be offensive in some cultures.
- Avoid words that have questionable racial or ethnic connotations. For example, a phrase such as *you people* may have a racial overtone.
- Be aware that words, objects, characters and symbols may reflect different beliefs or values for different groups. For example, the confederate flag and Uncle Remus stories may offend African Americans because they reflect the culture of slavery and the Old South.

- Be aware of different rules for taking turns during conversations. For example, some cultures frequently perceive 'breaking in' to reinforce or disagree with another's point to be perfectly permissible, indeed desirable.
- Cultures may use different standards for loudness, speed of delivery, silence, attentiveness and time to respond to another's point. For example, Far East societies place high value on contemplation and tend, therefore, to feel little responsibility to make immediate responses during conversation.

Understanding another culture's language appropriateness is a continuous process.

2. Cross-cultural aspects in the classroom

An awareness of cross-cultural aspects in your classroom is vital.

Here are some practical guidelines to ensure you get it right:

- Cross-cultural aspects play a key part in the classroom dynamics. Handle these aspects right and the class will be on fire. Get any important cross-cultural aspect wrong and the learning may well be disrupted.
- You will need to be sensitive to cultural differences and cultural elements at all times, particularly as they pertain to the host culture, since they can influence overall student learning behaviour.
- It is important that you are fully aware of the environment in which you are working and don't judge the students on the basis of your own cultural background and educational experiences.
- If you are **not** aware of cultural nuances, it can prove to be detrimental to your success.
- You cannot assume that your expectations of the classroom will be the same as the learners' expectations.

Remember: The comments below are general comments – every single student from a particular culture won't necessarily display the same behaviours.

Examples of cultural differences

Here are some cultural differences that can come up in class. It will all depend on where you are teaching and the cultural background and educational experiences of your students.

This information will serve you well, so reflect on this regularly.

Learners' expectations

Learners from more traditional educational systems may expect you to behave in a more formal and authoritarian fashion during classes.

They may also want you to engage in extensive correction of grammatical form or pronunciation during all activities rather than at specified points in a lesson, or not at all.

In some cultures, e.g. Brazil, Norway and Spain, students are expected to be vocal and pro-active in the learning process; in other cultures, such as Japan and Korea, learners are expected to be silent, passive recipients of knowledge.

In some cultures, silence is taken as a sign of respect and a willingness to learn; in other cultures, it is seen as boredom and a refusal to participate.

In some cultures, asking a question is seen as disrespectful, challenging and inappropriate; in others, asking a question is seen as an important sign of students taking responsibility for their own learning, and something to be welcomed.

Teachers' expectations

Similarly, you bring to the classroom your own expectations regarding teacher behaviour. This includes your views on appropriate learner behaviour within your culture in general, as well as in the classroom.

You may unconsciously attribute these same expectations to your students, which can heighten the potential for conflicting expectations and evaluations of behaviour between you and your learners.

Gender, age and status-related issues

You need to find out whether your learners have ever experienced mixed educational groupings; whether they expect male and female teachers to behave differently; and how different classroom activities, including various group configurations or activity types, such as role plays, might affect learners due to native cultural constraints. Research this before starting off.

You may encounter reluctance from both men and women from cultures in which women have historically been constrained by social roles that do not

promote active participation in mixed-sex settings, e.g. Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia

In some cultures, if some students think that women (especially younger or other lower status women) are lower in the ranking, that will exaggerate any negative reactions they have to being interrupted, corrected, told to do things in the classroom that are unfamiliar etc.

Some students might feel they cannot interrupt or correct students who are older, in a high-status job, are male etc. or may be shocked when you (or another student) do not pay attention to such distinctions.

Inappropriate topics for discussion in various countries - general

- Religion
- Politics
- Dating, sexual relations
- Gender roles
- Civil strife (where some students are refugees from this strife)
- Immigration (where some students are in the process of this and may be unsettled by questions about their personal details)
- Freedom and democracy
- Human rights issues
- Conflicts with other countries
- Discussing opinions and beliefs

There are some cultures in which the reaching of a group consensus is more highly valued than the statement of personal opinion, so discussion-type tasks should be used with care.

The cultural make-up of your class will determine your approach; when well used, of course, these activities can be very successful.

Gestures

The main point to note with gestures is that people do not stop finding a gesture offensive just because they understand that it means something else in other countries.

Impulsiveness v reflection

In some cultures, such as most of the USA, children are encouraged to give an answer to any question quickly, while in other cultures, e.g. Japan, reflection is encouraged before answering.

Proxemics

Each culture has its own norms for the distance between two people standing and conversing, and these norms may also differ between you and your students.

Eye contact

In some cultures, respect is shown by avoiding eye contact, or shortening the length of contact, while in others making eye contact is evidence of honesty and respectfulness. One frequently misunderstood example is that East Asian students often close their eyes when concentrating.

Your failure to make eye contact with students in some cultures could be interpreted by some students as you lacking in confidence.

Active participation

Verbally expressing ideas and asking questions during class can prove difficult for students unaccustomed to this form of active participation.

Communication styles

You must become aware of the cultural differences in reasoning and communication. There are patterns of expression and rules of interaction that reflect the norms and values of a culture. A lack of understanding of these communication styles could lead to confusion, anxiety and conflict. Two key communication styles are Direct v Indirect and Attached v Detached.

Direct: straightforward, no beating about the bush, avoiding ambiguity v Indirect: meaning conveyed by subtle means, stories, and frequent use of implication.

Attached: communicating with feeling and emotion, subjectivity is valued, sharing one's values and feelings about issues is desirable v Detached: communication should be calm and impersonal, objectivity is valued; emotional, expressive communication is seen as immature or biased.

Motivation and memorisation

You will already be thinking of many different ways to motivate students which, in the main, will work. Be aware that in many schools in China and

Taiwan, there are numerous learning strategies based entirely on memorisation - the greatest motivator is success in exams and is based on how much students can remember.

Writing

In many cultures, students are not encouraged to express their opinions and ideas. They may have little experience with creative writing to bring from their native language.

Interrupting

In some cultures, several students talking over each other is normal, whereas others will wait until there is complete silence before making their contribution.

Volume

Another variant is the volume at which people pitch their voices for 'normal' conversation. This can vary widely, even among subcultures, and will also put a learner at a disadvantage if either speaking too softly or too loudly is viewed negatively by you.

Autonomy

You will tell your students that they should take charge of their learning, that you are a helper and guide rather than the source of knowledge and authority. Yet these wishes may not fit with educational traditions from different cultures.

Movement in class

If you are accustomed to walking about the room to monitor your students' performance and crouch down to help a student, and if you are teaching in a culture that views this as somehow offensive, it will be your responsibility to modify your technique to conform to the expectations of your students.

Summary

- Be aware of culture at all times.
- Increase your learning of culture in the classroom.
- If ever asked about any subject we have suggested as taboo, simply reply: *I'm sorry. I'm a guest here in your country and I don't think I'm in any position to comment.*

3. Handling any cultural issues in the classroom

If any cultural issues come up in class, then go into your memory bank and decide if it's any of those areas mentioned above: e.g. religion, politics and democracy

If it is, it's closing time and you need to close down the conversation or debate straight away.

1. Do it courteously.
2. Empathise with the student(s) involved that their point is important, worrying, concerning -whatever emotion is stated by the speaker.
3. However, state that you need to move on. Something like this: *I'm sorry everybody, we'll need to move on. We've got lots to cover. I suggest the two of you continue the discussion outside the classroom. Right, where were we?*

Of course, if it's a general discussion about superstitions or what foods are eaten in different countries and appropriate areas like these, then you will let it run for a bit as real communication is taking place.

Remember! Keep your eyes and ears open all of the time for any inappropriate discussion topics starting and head them off at the pass quickly!