

Teaching pronunciation



Drilling

Drilling helps with pronunciation. It's like training for a sport – you need to train the muscles in your tongue, and repetition helps.

- Choral drilling involves the whole class. It makes learners feel safe while they are learning new language. Even if their pronunciation is not perfect, they repeat with the group and can practice safely. The teacher models the language and the learners repeat like this:
 - Teacher: You should wear a suit.
 - Learners: You should wear a suit.
- When you are modelling a phrase you can start at the end, getting the learners to repeat after each part you give them. For example:
 - yesterday/
 - get up yesterday/
 - did you get up yesterday /
 - what time did you get up yesterday?

This really helps learners focus on correct pronunciation and intonation.

Word stress

Stressing the wrong syllable in a word can make the word difficult to understand. A good way to introduce the importance of correct word stress is by using people's names as examples.

- Introduce word stress with your name:
 - How many parts/syllables are there in my name?
 - Which is the strongest – the first or second?
 - Is it Emma or Emma?
- When you write a new word on the board, say the word and ask learners to tell you which syllable is stressed. Underline the stressed syllable; for example 'sofa'. Encourage learners to underline the main stress on words in their vocabulary records.

sofa

Vanishing dialogue

This activity involves lots of repetition and pronunciation practice in a more communicative context. The learners invent a dialogue then try to repeat it from memory.

- Draw two faces on the board: the learners invent names for them. Ask the class to invent a short dialogue between the two people. Write the dialogue on the board as you build it up with the learners.
- Drill the dialogue. Then divide the class into two sides – each side takes a different role – and drill the dialogue again. Swap roles and drill again. With younger learners use different voices to keep it lively and interesting.
- Remove a word or phrase and drill again. Learners have to remember the dialogue without the missing words.
- Gradually remove more words until all the dialogue has gone. Drill each time you remove a part of the dialogue.
- Put learners into pairs. Can they remember the whole dialogue?

