



Knowing the subject

Teaching **English**

Author: Mary Gorman

British Council advisers: Kirsteen Donaghy and Zoë Tysoe

How to use this resource

Teachers

Work through the module at your own pace. Do the self-assessment activity on the page after the Introduction to check your skills in this professional practice. The self-assessment activity will help you to decide which elements of practice you want to improve. Each area has four sections:

- A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?** This section looks at real teachers' situations and a part of the practice they're finding difficult. Think of the advice you would give the teachers in the case studies. This section helps you to think about what you already do, and gives you some ideas to try in your own classes.
- B Think: What do you know?** This section gives an explanation of the area of practice. It might have new terminology. It is a good idea to have an ELT glossary, such as the [Teaching knowledge database](#) on the TeachingEnglish website, open for you to look up any words you don't know. This section also has a short task for you to check your understanding of the area of practice described.
- C Try: How does it work?** This section asks you to try something out in a class or over a number of lessons. The tasks will help you to think more about the area of practice in Section B and also to understand how the area applies to your teaching context. Some of the tasks need resources, but many can be done without any special preparation. It is a good idea to read several in-classroom tasks and then plan which task to do, with which groups of learners, and when.
- D Work together: What will help your teaching?** These sections have ideas for how you and your colleagues can do the activities together and support each other's professional development. If you are working on your own, then choose some of these activities and think about the questions. It's a good idea to keep a journal of your thoughts.

If you can, make a regular time to meet in a teachers' club or activity group, and together discuss your self-reflections. Write a plan for the year, deciding which sections to look at each time you meet. Make sure you consider the time you need for the in-classroom task, as you will need to do some things before the meeting, and so that you have ideas to talk about with your teacher activity group.

Teacher educators

If you're a teacher educator working with teachers, there are many ways you can use this resource. Get an idea of the teachers' strengths and weaknesses using the self-reflection page. You can also use other needs analyses you've done with your teachers, such as observations of classes and informal chats about their professional development.

Next, create a professional development plan for your teachers, choosing three to five of the most useful elements over a school year. Ask the teachers for their input into the plan as well, so they feel in control of their professional development.

If the teachers you are working with are in a group, you can use many of the *Work together* ideas. If you're working with individual teachers, you might like to work through sections yourself first, with your own classes if you have them, or perhaps by team-teaching parts of your teachers' classes, so that you can discuss and compare ideas.

Knowing the subject: Introduction

Effective teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and that enthusiasm often helps to motivate learners and encourage a love of the subject. Effective teachers have good subject knowledge. They are constantly developing and improving their knowledge of and proficiency in English, as well as learning more about good practice in the classroom. They are open to new ideas and keep up to date with research into English language teaching and learning. They use this knowledge to plan effective and engaging lessons.

What does it mean to know your subject? The focus in this module is on selecting appropriate methodology and resources for introducing and practising language systems (grammar, lexis and pronunciation) and language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). You will analyse problems and consider solutions, use frameworks to help plan different types of lessons, and learn new strategies and activities that will engage, motivate and support your learners.

From our research and work with teachers, the element of this professional practice that most teachers ask for help with is selecting appropriate methodology and resources for introducing and practising specific areas of the target language and language skills. Within this element, the six areas teachers often look for support with are:

1 Grammar

Effective grammar teaching is important because knowledge of grammar allows learners to become creators of language, to use familiar structures to communicate many different ideas, e.g. *I'd like to (have a coffee, borrow a pen, go home...)*. Grammar also helps learners to communicate their ideas more accurately. There is, for example, a big difference in meaning between *I like coffee* (statement) and *I'd like a coffee* (making a request).

2 Lexis

Teaching lexis, often called vocabulary, is a key teaching skill because lexis allows learners to communicate ideas and meaning, even if they don't have much grammatical control. This module will help you to make effective decisions about what lexis to teach and how you teach it. You will investigate practice activities and strategies you can use to help learners recall and use vocabulary to communicate their own ideas confidently.

3 Pronunciation

There's no doubt that pronunciation is essential for successful communication. You can know all the words in the world, but if you can't say them in a way people understand, there will be breakdowns in communication. Doing regular and frequent pronunciation practice is important so that your learners can interact successfully and easily with other speakers of English.

4 Speaking

What makes speaking a foreign language difficult? For most people, it's the immediate need to understand a question, think of an answer, think of the right English words, and get their tongues around what they want to say. There is performance pressure. However, by planning engaging speaking activities, and using techniques and strategies to support learners, you can increase their confidence and prepare them for success with this important skill.

5 Listening and reading skills

Receptive skills (listening and reading) are essential for communication, as at least half of all communication is about receiving information. To support learners with listening and reading, you can help by working on developing their linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary etc.), providing strategy training, and helping them make use of their background knowledge to make sense of a situation.

6 Writing skills

Writing is an essential skill for university study, business or employment. In this element, you will consider different techniques to prepare learners to write in a second/additional language. These might include brainstorming techniques or studying a model text to notice the order and organisation of ideas and any useful language. You will also think about techniques to scaffold the demands of writing, i.e. steps you put in place to reduce the difficulty.

Knowing the subject: Self-reflection

The table lists the elements that are included in this chapter. Consider what you already know and what you're good at. Self-assess by colouring in the stars. You can colour in more stars as you progress. The page numbers show where you can find out more about the element and work through some related professional development tasks.

| Element | Rating | Pages |
|---------------------------------|--|-------|
| 1. Grammar |  | 4–7 |
| 2. Lexis |  | 8–11 |
| 3. Pronunciation |  | 12–15 |
| 4. Speaking |  | 16–19 |
| 5. Listening and reading skills |  | 20–23 |
| 6. Writing skills |  | 24–27 |

Further reading

Batstone, R (2003) *Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hancock, M and McDonald, A (n.d.) Hancock McDonald English Language Teaching. Available online at: <http://hancockmcdonald.com/> (Pronunciation ideas)

Harmer, J (2014) *How to teach writing*. Harlow: Pearson.

Moon, J (2006) *Children learning English*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.

Pinter, A (2015) *Teaching young language learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Read, C (2007) *500 activities for the primary classroom: Intermediate ideas and solutions*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Scrivener, J (2005) *Learning teaching*. Macmillan.

British Council (n.d.) Knowing the subject. Available online at: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development/continuing-professional-development/knowning-subject>

British Council (n.d.) Phonemic chart. Available online at: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/phonemic-chart>



Introduction

Effective grammar teaching is important because knowledge of grammar allows learners to become creators of language, to learn one structure and be able to communicate many different ideas, e.g. *I'd like to (have a coffee, borrow a pen, go home...)*. Grammar also helps learners to communicate their ideas more accurately. There is, for example, a big difference in meaning between *I like coffee* (statement) and *I'd like a coffee* (making a request).

Learners respond to learning grammar differently. Some enjoy studying the rules while others are confused by terminology and analysis. Children, especially, are still developing their thinking skills and ability to analyse language, so grammar needs to be introduced carefully in child-friendly ways. This element provides a framework for planning grammar lessons, and a variety of activities to help learners notice patterns in language and develop some fluency and accuracy in using different structures.

Aims

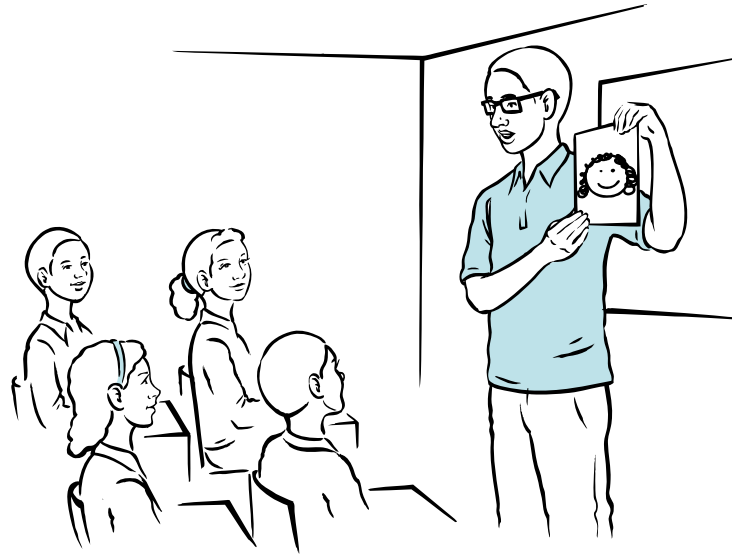
In this section you will:

- give advice to a teacher who is teaching grammar to seven-year-olds
- study a framework for planning grammar lessons and match different grammar activities to the stages in the framework
- plan and teach a grammar lesson and reflect on the results
- work with your colleagues to produce a list of dos and don'ts for teaching grammar and a list of grammar practice activities.

1A

Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Nadia is observing Lyle as part of his teacher training. Lyle is teaching grammar (third person present simple) to seven-year-olds.



Lyle starts the lesson by showing a picture of his sister. The children guess who she is, how old she is and what she does. Lyle tells the children about her:

She goes to university.

She likes playing basketball.

She wants to be a nurse.

She plays tennis on Saturdays.

She loves animals, especially cats.

She loves playing computer games.

Next, Lyle holds up different pictures (e.g. a cat) and asks the learners to try to remember the sentences. Lyle drills each sentence for pronunciation practice and to help the children remember. He writes every sentence on the board and shows how it is different from first person (see below). He explains carefully how the verb is conjugated when using third person and explains the verb *conjugate*. The children start to move around at this stage and do not pay much attention. To finish the lesson, Lyle asks three of the children to come to the front of the class and talk about someone in their family. When they make a mistake, he corrects them and asks them to say the sentence again.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| She goes to university. | | |
| I go | to university | go → goes |
| You go | | like → likes |
| He/She goes | | want → wants |
| It | | play → plays |

Reflection

- What positive feedback do you think Nadia will give Lyle?
- How could Lyle improve the lesson?
- What other activities could Lyle give the children so that they practise using third person present simple?
- How do you think children learn grammar differently from teenagers or older learners?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 28.

1B Think: What do you know?

As well as teaching grammar in age-appropriate ways, how else do you plan for an effective grammar lesson? There has been a lot of research into how teachers can help learners to notice and learn new grammar. Batstone (2003) has summarised this in a three-stage approach:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. 'Noticing' DISCOVER</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners read or listen to a text that has a number of examples of the grammar (e.g. in stories, songs and dialogues). Learners are helped to notice the grammar (often called target language or TL). This could be, for example, by asking them to repeat lines in a story, match pictures and sentences, or to circle all the examples in the text. |
| <p>2. 'Structuring' UNDERSTAND</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are given sentences and have to change the grammar in some way to show the correct meaning. For example, they might put a cut-up sentence in the correct order, or put the correct verb in a gap. Through this practice, they come to a better understanding of how the grammar is formed and its meaning. The focus is on accuracy. |
| <p>3. 'Proceduralising' USE</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are given opportunities to use the grammar to express their own ideas in speaking/writing and to develop fluency, e.g. in role plays, writing emails and making posters. |

Activity

Look at the grammar activities below. Decide which stage they would be appropriate for: **A.** discover, **B.** understand or **C.** use.

1. Circling all the past tense verbs in a story _____
2. Learners write a social media post describing what's happening/what they are doing in photos (present continuous) _____
3. Singing action songs _____
4. Learners ask their classmates questions about their likes/dislikes, repeating the same question form *Do you like ...?* _____
5. Total Physical Response (learners listen to commands and follow them) _____
6. Substitution drills/question-and-answer drills _____
7. Matching sentence beginnings and endings, e.g. *If I were late ... I'd take a taxi.* _____
8. Correcting grammar errors _____
9. Giving learners lines from a story (that include the TL) to hold up when they hear them _____
10. Comparing English grammar with L1/a shared language _____
11. Learners make a mini-book to write a story in past tense _____
12. Telling a story from pictures _____

Reflection

1. Tick any ideas that are new for you and write an asterisk (*) next to any that you are unsure about. Why?
2. What age group do you think each activity is appropriate for: 5–7, 8–11 or 12–17 years?
3. Take a look at your coursebook. What activities does it have for discovering, understanding and using new grammar? Do you need to add anything?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 29.

1C Try: How does it work?

Resources: A lesson plan and materials for a grammar lesson

Time: One lesson

Rationale

The Discover/Understand/Use framework can help you plan grammar lessons. While it is unlikely that learners will use new grammar accurately after one lesson, as they begin to notice and understand a structure, they are more likely to notice it outside the classroom and increase their confidence with it.

Instructions

Choose one of your classes and look at the syllabus/coursebook to select a grammar point. Write a lesson plan and prepare the materials for your lesson. Use the questions below to help you with the planning.

| Stage | Questions to think about for your plan | Examples |
|------------|--|---|
| Notice | What's the context? How will you get learners interested in it? Will you use a dialogue/reading/listening/story/chant/cartoon/song? How will you get learners to notice the grammar? | Third person present simple could be presented in the context of talking about people in your family. |
| Understand | What activities can the learners do to practise the grammar? | Re-ordering cut-up words, choosing the correct verb forms, performing actions. |
| Use | What activities can learners do to use the grammar in a freer way to talk about their own ideas and their own lives? | Writing stories, role plays, dialogues, drawing a picture and describing it. |

At the end of the lesson ask the learners to complete three sentences in discussion or on a piece of paper and pass it to you: 1. *Today I learned ...*, 2. *One thing I enjoyed was ...*, 3. *One thing I found difficult was ...*

Reflection

- Overall, how happy were you with the lesson? Why? What would you change if you taught the lesson again?
- How effective was your context? Were the learners interested in it? Did they notice the target language? How do you know?
- How successful were your practice activities (Understand/Use stages)? How do you know?

1D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Share your lesson plans and reflection notes. Write down two things you learn from your colleagues.
- 2 Work together to make a list of dos and don'ts for teaching grammar at a particular age group, e.g. 5–7, 8–11, 12–17 years. What are the main differences between each age group?
- 3 Work together to make a list of different grammar practice activities. Decide whether they are appropriate for the 'Understand' or 'Use' stages in a grammar lesson.



Introduction

Lexis refers to all the words in a language. When we talk about vocabulary, we mean just those words that an individual person knows. Learning lexis is more than just memorising lists of words. Learners make faster progress if they learn groups of words (lexical chunks) that often occur together. If teaching the word *vocabulary*, for example, you could highlight *to learn (new) vocabulary*, *remember vocabulary* or *write down vocabulary*. This approach means learners can put sentences together more easily, and speak more fluently and accurately than if they had to think of each word individually.

Teaching lexis is a key teaching skill because lexis allows learners to communicate meaning, even if they don't have much grammatical control. This module will help you to make effective decisions about what lexis to teach and how you teach it. You will also investigate strategies and practice activities that help learners recall and use vocabulary confidently.

Aims

In this section you will:

- offer advice about teaching lexis to a teacher on a social media forum
- study and reflect on some tips for teaching lexis
- plan and teach a vocabulary lesson using some of the techniques from this module
- get feedback on your vocabulary lesson plan and work with your colleagues to write a list of useful lexis practice activities.

Yousef and Nan are new to English teaching. They are enthusiastic and hardworking but they are the only English teachers in their schools. They have joined a social media group for English language teachers and want some advice about teaching lexis.



Yousef

I spend a lot of time teaching vocabulary with my learners. I feel it's important because without the right words there is no meaning and they can't communicate. I help them with the meaning using pictures, definitions or translations; they practise saying the words, and write them down in their notebooks. But I find when it comes to end of term tests, they've forgotten just about everything. I tell them to revise their words but I don't think they do it. What do you do to help learners remember vocabulary?



2 Like



1 Reply



Nan

My learners have problems with the national exams. The vocabulary is very difficult and there are too many words they don't understand. The readings are especially difficult. I give them tests to practise for the exam, but when they get a lot of answers wrong, they just give up. It's hard to keep them motivated. Any ideas? I'd really appreciate your advice.



1 Like



0 Reply

Reflection

- Underline all the problems Yousef and Nan's learners have. Do your learners have any of the same problems? Do they have any other problems with learning vocabulary?
- What advice would you give to Yousef and Nan? Use these headings to help you: 1. recycling; 2. practice; and 3. strategy training.
- Think about how you learned English lexis. Do you teach your learners the same strategies or have you developed new techniques? If so, what are they?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 30.

2B Think: What do you know?

This section looks at different tips for teaching lexis.

Activity

Match the questions (1–4) with the answers (A–D).

1. How can you show the meaning of new words/chunks?

A. What does it mean to 'know' a word/chunk?

- the meaning
- the pronunciation
- the part of speech (noun, verb etc.)
- the spelling
- any important collocations (words that often occur together), e.g. with the noun *rain* we often use the adjectives *heavy, driving, torrential* and *light*
- connotation (ideas or feelings a word shows other than its meaning), e.g. *slim* has a positive connotation but *skinny* has a negative one
- grammatical information, e.g. countable/uncountable nouns, past tense/past participle for verbs
- the style (formal/informal, used mostly in writing, speaking or both)

2. How can you help learners to remember new words?

B. As a general rule, somewhere between six and ten words/chunks is enough. If you try to teach more, the learners are unlikely to remember them and they won't have enough time to practise using them. Think about the level of the learners, how difficult the lexis is and whether they are likely to know some of the words already.

3. How many words should you teach in one lesson?

C. pictures; video; teacher drawings; mime/gestures; definitions; opposites/synonyms; translation; clines; concept check questions; a context/story; examples; real objects

4. What do learners need to know about a new lexis?

D. Learners remember more when they need to think. When you present lexis, it's a good idea to show the meaning of a word (using pictures, mime, definitions, etc.) and see if any of the learners can guess the word. We call this eliciting. Even if you can't elicit the word, the learners are more likely to remember it if they have tried to work it out first. Another way to make learners think is to provide words and definitions/pictures and ask learners to try to match them.

Reflection

- Put a tick next to anything above that is new to you or you think is a good idea. Choose one new idea that you want to try.
- Is there anything you disagree with, or anything that would cause problems with your learners? Why?
- Imagine you are teaching *vegetable* and *embarrassed*. What information from A above would it be important to highlight? How could you show the meaning?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 31.

2C Try: How does it work?

Resources: Materials for a vocabulary lesson

Time: One lesson

Rationale

Planning how to teach lexis before you teach it means you will be able to present new words in a way learners can understand. You can help learners to avoid errors by highlighting important information about the form, pronunciation and use of the words. It also makes the lesson more efficient and means you are better prepared for any questions the learners ask.

Instructions

Look through your coursebook/syllabus and choose a vocabulary lesson to teach to one of your classes. If possible, choose lexis that you won't find it easy to show the meaning of with a picture so you have to try different techniques. Analyse the words before the lesson. Check the words in a good English learners' dictionary to get simple definitions and information about pronunciation, part of speech, etc. Think about the context for presenting your lexis and your practice activities. Teach the lesson. Here is an example of analysis for a lexical chunk in a lesson about personal characteristics.

| Lexis | Show and check meaning | Important things to highlight |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| physically fit (adv + adj) | definition translation | <p>Pronunciation /fɪzɪkli/; only three syllables with stress on the first; 'ph' pronounced as /f/; the 'a' is not pronounced.</p> <p>Form: to be physically fit (I am, he is, you are, etc.)</p> <p>Spelling of physically (adv)</p> |
| Practice activities | Choose the top three most important characteristics for different jobs. Role play interviews for different jobs. Job applicants answer the question 'Why are you suitable for this job?' | |

Reflection

- What, if any, difference did planning your vocabulary lesson make?
- Which words, if any, did the learners have problems understanding? Why? What could you do differently?
- Were you able to elicit the words without saying them yourself? How did that make the learners feel?
- How effective were your practice activities? What would make them better?

2D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Present the lexis you taught in 2C to your colleagues. Try to elicit the words without saying them.
- 2 Swap your lexis analysis pages and get feedback.
- 3 Discuss the tips in 2B. What was new? Is there anything you don't agree with?
- 4 Work together to make a list of vocabulary practice activities, some that are controlled (e.g. completing sentences, drilling) and some that are freer (e.g. role play, making a video).



Introduction

There's no doubt that pronunciation is essential for successful communication. You can know all the words in the world, but if you can't say them in a way people understand there will be breakdowns in communication. People get confused, some aren't patient enough to listen and others judge you badly if your pronunciation isn't clear.

English pronunciation can be difficult because the spelling and sounds don't always match. You only have to think of the different sounds for 'ou' in words such as *round*, *through*, *although*, and *bought*. Because of this, learners need regular and frequent pronunciation work. You can, of course, spend whole lessons on pronunciation, but usually a 'little and often' approach is best, making pronunciation a fun part of any vocabulary, grammar or speaking lesson.

Aims

In this section you will:

- suggest solutions to specific pronunciation problems learners have
- study some pronunciation practice activities and decide whether they provide receptive or productive practice
- try out a new pronunciation activity/technique to develop an area of pronunciation your learners have difficulty with and reflect on the results
- share your favourite pronunciation activities and produce a list of useful activities, techniques and websites.

3A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

A new teacher has posted the question 'What problems do your learners have with pronunciation?'



Maria

My learners can't pronounce consonant clusters. Words like *school* are difficult and they pronounce it as *s-a-chool*, adding in an extra vowel between s and c. *Drive* sounds like *d-a-rive*. Any ideas?

1 Like



0 Reply



Ibrahim

At my school, the children have problems saying words with /p/. It's because there is no /p/ sound in Arabic, so the children choose the nearest sound and make words like *bolice* or *combuter*. How can you help them if they just don't know the /p/ sound?



Lee

2 Like



1 Reply

Learners in my country don't pronounce /s/ at the end of words, particularly when /s/ comes after a consonant, e.g. *books*, *wants*. It makes their grammar sound wrong (e.g. *I have three book*), but it's really a pronunciation problem. Any suggestions?

1 Like



1 Reply



Annisa

My learners can't say the English 'th' sounds. *Thin* sounds like *tin*; *this* sounds like *dis*. I really want them to have good pronunciation but they just can't make this sound. Do you think it matters?



Irene

3 Like



1 Reply

The children in my class have problems with word stress. They want to put the stress on the last syllable of every word. It's especially a problem with three and four syllable words, e.g. *dinosaur* instead of *dinosaur*; *elephant* instead of *elephant*. Do you think people will understand them?

Reflection

- What strategies, activities or advice would you give to each of the teachers?
- Which of the pronunciation problems above do you think is the biggest problem? Why?
- What are the biggest pronunciation problems for learners in your school? What are the causes?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 31.

3B Think: What do you know?

Babies who are learning to speak their first language have many months just listening to language before they try to speak. They need to hear the sounds before they can say them. In the classroom, you should also provide opportunities for learners to listen to the sounds of English and notice the difference between similar sounds. We call this *receptive* pronunciation practice, *receptive* meaning the learners receive information.

Activity

Are these activities/techniques for receptive practice, productive (speaking) practice or both?

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. A drill is a repetitive practice where learners repeat a word, phrase or sentence the teacher says.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>I'm doing my homework.</i> Learners: <i>I'm doing my homework.</i></p> <p>You can also change one word and have the learners make a new sentence.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>I'm doing my homework.</i> Learners: <i>I'm doing my homework.</i> Teacher: <i>He</i> Learners: <i>He's doing his homework.</i> Teacher: <i>football</i> Learners: <i>He's playing football.</i></p> | <p>2. A minimal pair has two words that have only one sound that is different, e.g. <i>lip/rip</i>, <i>she/see</i>, <i>chip/ship</i>, <i>seat/sit</i>. You decide what sounds your learners need practice with and find/think of minimal pairs for those sounds. There are examples on the internet. You can then think of games to play with the minimal pairs. You could play bingo by writing six minimal pairs on the board (12 words) and asking learners to choose any six to write down. You could play board slap by writing the 12 words randomly all over the board and have two learners play at a time. They listen to you (or another learner) say one of the words and then slap the word you say.</p> |
| <p>3. Hand mirrors are very helpful in a pronunciation lesson. Learners can watch you as you say particular sounds or words and then compare the shape of their mouths in the hand mirror.</p> | <p>4. Read my lips. After teaching some vocabulary, try saying the words silently to the class and asking them to guess what you are saying. The learners have to focus on the shape of your mouth as you pronounce different sounds.</p> |
| <p>5. Tell me when I'm out. Read aloud lists of words that have the same vowel sound, and ask the learners to clap their hands when they hear a word with a different vowel. For example: <i>bee, tree, me, she, pet, three, he ...</i> (when the learners hear <i>pet</i> they need to clap).</p> | <p>6. Fit fit feet. Played like 'duck duck goose', learners sit in a circle. One person walks around the outside and taps each person on the shoulder and says <i>fit</i> or <i>feet</i>. If a child is tapped on the shoulder and hears <i>feet</i> he/she needs to stand up, chase the speaker around the outside of the circle and try to tag them. The winner sits down. You can use any minimal pairs for this, e.g. <i>right/light</i>; <i>back/pack</i>.</p> |

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 32.

Reflection

- Which of these pronunciation activities/techniques have you used before? Which ones would you like/not like to try? Why/why not?
- What minimal pairs will be useful with your learners? For example, if your learners say /l/ instead of /r/, your minimal pairs could be *lice/rice*, *long/wrong*.
- Do your learners enjoy doing pronunciation practice? Why/why not?

3C Try: How does it work?

Resources: Any materials you need for the pronunciation practice you choose

Time: One lesson

Rationale

Learners have different pronunciation problems depending on their home languages. You can help by analysing their speech to identify problem sounds and providing receptive and productive pronunciation practice in fun ways. To keep the learners interested, it's a good idea to keep adding to your bag of pronunciation games and activities.

Instructions

- **Plan:** choose one of the pronunciation activities from 3B (or the *Answers and commentary* section) to try. Think about the problem sounds that you want to work on and prepare any vocabulary or minimal pairs you want to use. You could search books or look online for pictures of how the sounds are made with the jaw, mouth, lips and tongue. Practise pronouncing any words/sentences you plan to use yourself.
- **Do:** during the lesson, make sure learners know what the words mean before you focus on pronunciation. Present the sounds you want to focus on with some example words and show learners how the sounds are made. If appropriate, play the game/do an example of the activity with the whole class first. Later on, let the learners control the game perhaps by working in pairs or small groups. Most of all, have fun! Make it fun.
- **Review:** ask the learners *What did you learn? How did you learn it? Did you enjoy the activity? Why/why not?*

If you have time, repeat the activity with another class, or do the activity again with the same class but change the words/sounds you use.

Reflection

- How did the learners respond to the activity you chose?
- How confident did you feel about doing this activity? Would you do it again? Why/why not? What would you change if you did it again?
- How successful were the learners with the sounds you chose? What helped them the most? What, if any, problems were there?
- What's your own favourite pronunciation activity, technique or website (not from 3B)? Prepare to share it with your colleagues in 3D.

3D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Share your pronunciation activities and reflections from 3C. If your colleagues don't know your activity, teach it to them.
- 2 Make a list of problems learners in your school have with pronunciation. Discuss any strategies you have for dealing with these problems.
- 3 Show and tell: teach your favourite pronunciation activity to your colleagues or show them your favourite pronunciation website. Make a poster/shared document with useful activities, websites, etc.



Introduction

What makes speaking a foreign language difficult? For most learners, the immediate need to understand a question, think of an answer, think of the right English words, and get their tongue around what they want to say, makes speaking a challenging business. Unlike writing, where you have time to think, there is performance pressure. As well as this, some learners are shy, teenagers may not want to speak – in any language – and many learners lack confidence because they have been corrected too many times.

How, then, can you develop speaking skills? The key is to support speaking by using strategies that reduce the difficulty of a speaking task. Selecting engaging topics and activities, providing useful language and giving time for learners to prepare what they want to say all help to increase learners' confidence and set them up for success. We call this kind of temporary support with a task *scaffolding*.

Aims

In this section you will:

- compare your approach to developing speaking skills with other teachers' ideas
- use a framework to plan speaking activities that motivate learners and scaffold speaking tasks
- plan a speaking activity, do it with a class and reflect on the results
- collaborate with colleagues to plan other speaking activities and identify places in the coursebook where you could add some speaking.

4A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

These teachers wrote about their approach to teaching speaking on a social media forum for English language teachers. Tick all the strategies and ideas you agree with or like.



Thandi

I think it's really important to give the learners confidence. For that reason, I praise them for anything they say and I never correct their errors. It's natural for learners to make mistakes so I don't want them to avoid speaking because they never 'get it right'.

1 Like



1 Reply



Daniel

I teach teenagers and they are too shy to speak. I've tried everything but it always ends in an awkward silence. These days, after we do some listening, I give them the transcript and they work in pairs to read the conversation. That's the best way to get them speaking.

3 Like



1 Reply



Duc

I never have much time to do speaking. There are 50 learners in my classes, so when they all take a turn to do a presentation it takes forever. Sometimes I do pair work and group work but then it's impossible to correct all the errors.

1 Like



1 Reply



Zahra

It helps my learners if I give them support with speaking. I like to drill useful language and put it on the board. I give them time to think of ideas first and let them practise with a partner before speaking to everyone else.

2 Like



2 Reply



Trang

I choose topics that the learners are familiar with and ones where they know a lot of vocabulary. I also try to make the tasks interesting ones in which they really need and want to communicate. They always like being police officers interviewing robbers.

Reflection

- Which teacher(s) do you relate to and agree with the most?
- What, if any, ideas do you disagree with? Why?
- What else do you do to develop your learners' speaking skills?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 32 and compare your ideas with the suggested answers.

4B Think: What do you know?

The CROP framework below helps you to plan effective speaking activities. The examples given are for a speaking activity where learners talk about their grandparents.

| | | |
|----------|--------------------|--|
| C | Context | <p>Think about the people, place and situation in which the learners are speaking. What is something real-life, surprising or unexpected to get the learners interested?</p> <p><i>Enter your grandparent in the 'Grandparent of the Year' competition. Tell us what makes them special and interesting. (Learners can adopt a grandparent if they don't have one – an older person they know well.)</i></p> |
| R | Repetition | <p>When learners repeat a speaking activity, they become more accurate and more fluent, and they use better language. How can you build in repetition in your speaking task?</p> <p><i>First, learners speak in pairs. Then they form a group of four and tell their stories again. Finally, they work in a group of eight to tell their stories and vote on the most interesting one.</i></p> |
| O | Outcome | <p>What is the outcome of the discussion/speaking? Why do the learners need to speak and listen to each other? What are they trying to find out?</p> <p><i>Listen to your classmates talk about their grandparents. Decide what is the most interesting or surprising thing about them.</i></p> |
| P | Preparation | <p>What useful language will the learners need? Will you give them time to prepare what they want to say? Will they need to practise first?</p> <p><i>Learners listen to the teacher tell a story about his/her grandparent to decide what was the most interesting or surprising thing about them. The learners listen again and tick useful phrases they hear from a list the teacher gives them, e.g. He/She is special because ... One surprising thing is ... The teacher drills the useful phrases. The learners make notes about their grandparents under headings the teacher gives them (e.g. when they were young, their jobs, interesting stories, something surprising, why they are special) either in class or as research for homework.</i></p> |

Activity

Imagine your class has been studying health vocabulary and *should* for giving advice. Plan a role play between a doctor and a patient. Use the CROP framework.

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 33.

Reflection

- How different was your plan for a doctor–patient role play from the one in the *Answers and commentary* section? Which one do you prefer? Or would you like to take ideas from both plans?
- What other ways can you help learners to prepare for a speaking activity?
- Which of the CROP areas engage and motivate the learners? Which ones scaffold the speaking task? Which one do you think is the most important? Why?

4C Try: How does it work?

Resources: Materials for your speaking activity

Time: One or more lessons

Rationale

The CROP framework helps you to plan effective speaking activities. It makes you think about ways to motivate and engage the learners (setting an interesting context and having an outcome/reason to communicate), and how you will scaffold the task through preparation activities/time and opportunities for repetition.

Instructions

Look ahead in your coursebook/syllabus and choose a speaking activity you would like to do with one or more of your classes that is related to the topic. Here are some suggestions for speaking activities. The links show you examples, but you will need to change them for your topic.

- [Board games](#)
- Discussion
- Drama
- [Find someone who](#)
- [Information gap activities](#)
- Interview classmates
- Make something out of modelling clay (e.g. a zoo/park) and talk about it
- [Picture dictation](#)
- Role plays
- Surveys
- Tell a story from pictures

Use the CROP framework from 4B to plan your activity. Teach the lesson. At the end, write these questions on the board, using a shared language if appropriate (or ask the questions yourself if you have young learners): *What did you enjoy about the activity? What helped you the most? What was difficult for you?* Ask the learners to reflect on the lesson and give you feedback. If possible, repeat the lesson with another class and compare the results.

Reflection

- What were you happy with in this lesson? What would you change if you did it again?
- Did you notice any changes when the learners repeated the activity? What were they?
- What was the most surprising/interesting feedback the learners gave you?

4D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Share your lesson plans and reflections from 4C. Which speaking activities from your colleagues would you like to try? Why?
- 2 Discuss any problems with doing speaking activities in your school and brainstorm solutions.
- 3 Work in small groups. Choose another speaking activity and plan it together.
- 4 Look through your coursebook. Are there any places where you could add in a speaking activity? For example, before a reading lesson, could learners speak to a partner about the topic or interview some of their classmates?



Introduction

Receptive skills (listening and reading) are essential if you want to communicate, as at least half of communication is about receiving information. It is motivating for learners when they are able to understand a spoken or written text in a foreign language. Foreign media, e.g. news, movies and social media, become available to them. Reading and listening to English helps learners increase their vocabulary and understanding of grammar too.

Helping learners with listening and reading involves developing their linguistic knowledge (vocabulary, grammar, etc.), providing strategy training and helping learners use their background knowledge to make sense of situations. What do they know about the topic? What can they see to help them (e.g. pictures, titles, gestures and places), and what do they expect to happen in the situation? For example, when you get into a taxi in any country, you expect the driver will ask where you want to go, even if you don't understand what they say.

Aims

In this section you will:

- read about why having a purpose is important when listening/reading and analyse different types of comprehension questions
- match activities to pre/while/post stages in a listening/reading lesson
- prepare and teach a receptive skills lesson, paying special attention to preparing learners to listen/read
- work with your colleagues to evaluate the activities provided for listening/reading in your coursebook and produce a list of listening/reading tips for learners.

Michael is doing some online teacher training about teaching listening and reading. He needs to read the text below and answer the questions. Can you help him answer them?

1. Read the text quickly and choose the best title.
 - A. How to teach listening and reading
 - B. Why it's important to set listening/reading tasks
 - C. The purpose of listening/reading



When you read or listen to something, you nearly always have a reason for doing so. You read or listen for a purpose. It is rare that someone would pick up a text and start reading it with no purpose in mind. You read the back of a book for a summary of the story, you listen to a song for enjoyment and you read and listen to GPS to find your way somewhere. In each case, you know why you are reading or listening, which helps with understanding because you know what to listen or look out for. In the classroom, you need to create a reason for learners to listen/read. What do they want to find out? This is why you always set them questions or a task to do while they listen and read. You give them the task beforehand so that it helps them focus. If there is no task, learners try to understand every word; they can become stressed by all the words they don't know and feel they have failed. Focusing on the task you set gives listening/reading a purpose, reduces the difficulty of listening/reading, and increases feelings of confidence and success.

2. True or false?
 - A. People often read things without knowing why they are reading them.
 - B. It's best to give the questions to the learners before they listen to/read the text.
 - C. Learners should know the meaning of every word they read.

Reflection

- There are four different ways we listen to/read a text: a) for gist (general) understanding of the whole text; b) for specific information (e.g. dates, names); c) for detailed understanding; d) listening to/reading longer texts for enjoyment (extensive listening/reading). What type of reading does question 1 (above) encourage? What about question 2?
- What is the problem if you give learners the questions after they listen/read?
- In what other ways can you get learners interested in what they are going to listen to/read?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 34.

5B Think: What do you know?

How do you go about planning a listening or reading lesson? Most teachers find it best to divide the lesson into three stages – pre (before), while and post (after) listening/reading.

| Stage | Aim |
|--------------|--|
| Pre | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To get learners interested in the context• To help learners remember what they already know about a topic or situation• To review and teach any essential vocabulary |
| While | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide a focus while learners listen/read• To help with comprehension• To develop listening/reading skills• To build confidence |
| Post | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To give learners the opportunity to give their opinions about what they listened to/read and connect ideas from the text to their own lives• To develop productive skills (speaking/writing)• To practise and use some of the language in the text |

Activity

Look at the following activities you can use in a listening/reading lesson. Decide whether they would be 'pre', 'while' or 'post' activities. Some could belong to two stages.

1. Learners put pictures in order as they listen/read.
2. Learners transfer information from a text into a diagram.
3. The teacher shows pictures, key words or sentences from the text and asks learners to guess what the text is about.
4. Learners have a debate.
5. Learners answer multiple choice or true/false questions.
6. Learners write a similar story/text/conversation.
7. Learners act out a story.
8. Learners interview their classmates about the topic.
9. Learners play games to review language in the text.
10. Learners watch a video related to the topic.
11. Learners complete a summary of a text with gaps in it.
12. The teacher reads a text aloud and stops along the way to check understanding and ask learners to predict what will happen next.
13. Learners make a poster, a book or other craft projects related to the topic.
14. Learners do research related to the topic.

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 34.

Reflection

- Tick the activities that you already use and write an asterisk (*) next to ones that you would like to try.
- Add two more activities you know to each stage – 'pre/while/post'.
- What do you like/not like about the 'pre/while/post' approach? Can you see any problems with it?

5C Try: How does it work?

Resources: Materials for the listening/reading lesson you chose

Time: One lesson

Rationale

To help your learners listen or read successfully, the way you start your lesson is very important. First, you need to get the learners engaged with the topic – make them curious and make them want to listen/read. Second, you need to prepare learners to understand the text through activities, discussion and pictures, etc. that help them to remember and think about all their vocabulary and background knowledge related to the topic or situation.

Instructions

Choose a listening or reading lesson you have coming up. Plan your lesson paying special attention to the 'pre' stage.

1. Listen to/read the text and answer the questions yourself before you plan the lesson.
2. Are there any pictures in your coursebook you can use to set the context? If not, find or draw your own pictures. What questions will you ask the learners about these pictures to get them interested? Learners will be more engaged if you elicit their ideas rather than tell them.
3. Is there any difficult vocabulary in the questions or answers that you need to teach before the learners listen/read? (It's not necessary to teach every word they won't know. Aim for three to four key words.) How will you teach this vocabulary?
4. What activity will you use to get learners thinking about the ideas in the text, e.g. to predict what the text is about. Prediction is effective because it makes learners want to listen/read. The first time they listen to/read the task can be to check if their prediction was correct.
5. Plan and prepare the 'while' tasks (are there questions in your coursebook you can use?) and a 'post' task, using ideas from 5B.
6. Teach the lesson and ask the learners for feedback. What did they enjoy about the lesson? How successful were they with listening/reading? What helped them/didn't help them?

Reflection

- How effective was your pre-listening/reading stage? How could you improve it?
- How do you think the 'pre' stage affected the 'while' and 'post' stages?
- What was most surprising/interesting about the feedback from the learners?

5D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Share your lesson plans and reflections from 5C. What things worked well? What could you improve?
- 2 Look through the listening and reading texts in your coursebook. Does the book already have pre/while/post activities? If not, what do you need to add? How could you make the activities in the book more interesting?
- 3 Make a poster of tips for learners to help them with listening and reading, e.g. *Don't worry if you can't understand every word. Look at titles and pictures to help you understand the topic.*



Introduction

Writing is an essential skill for university study, business or employment. Modern societies favour those who are literate, and more and more communication is happening through text as we interact online. For language learners, writing is a good way to practise grammar and vocabulary. When learners write their ideas down, they can study, correct and improve them.

In this section you will consider different techniques to prepare learners to write in a second/ additional language. These might include brainstorming techniques or studying a model text to notice the order and organisation of ideas and any useful language. You will also think about techniques to scaffold the demands of writing, i.e. steps you put in place to reduce the difficulty. This section focuses on sentence, paragraph and text level writing, after learners have some ability to produce letters and words.

Aims

In this section you will:

- evaluate a writing lesson plan and make suggestions about how to improve it
- read about different techniques that support learners with preparing to write and the challenge of writing
- prepare and teach a writing lesson in which you support/scaffold the writing task
- read about ways to motivate learners to write, and plan a motivating writing lesson together with your colleagues.

Sarawut produced a new writing lesson plan for his 11- to 12-year-old learners. They will write a short text about a wild animal. Read the plan and think about any improvements he could make.

Lesson plan

Learning outcome: Learners will be able to write a short description of a wild animal.

1. Show a picture of a meerkat. Ask questions to find out what the learners know about them. *What is it? What colour are they? How big are they? Where do they live? What do they eat? What else is special about them?* Write their ideas on the board but **do not give any answers.** (Reading prediction)
2. Learners read the short text about meerkats (in the *Answers and commentary* section) to find out if their ideas were correct.
3. Learners read the text again and complete Task 1 below, correcting facts that are wrong.
4. Learners research a wild animal using a website such as animal fact guide and take notes (Task 2 below).
5. Learners write about their animal and draw a picture.
6. Learners work in pairs and check each other's writing for spelling and grammatical errors. They make corrections.
7. Take in the writing for marking.

Meerkats

Full colour: light brown

Height: 35 cm tall

Where they live: Sahara Desert
in Africa. Underground

Families: 20–50 meerkats

Food: animals and insects

Something interesting:
good watch guards

Task 1: Correct any wrong information

My animal

What do they look like?

Where do they live?

What do they eat?

Task 2: Make notes about your animal

Reflection

- What are the strengths of Sarawut's lesson plan? How could he improve it?
- What could Sarawut do at the beginning of the lesson to get the learners engaged with the topic and warmed up for learning?
- How else could Sarawut support the learners when they come to write their own descriptions?
- Would you use this lesson plan? Why/why not?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 35 and compare your ideas with the suggested answers.

6B Think: What do you know?

Often the hardest thing about writing is getting started. In this section, you will look at more techniques and activities you can use to support learners before and while they write.

Activity

Match the techniques for supporting writing (1–5) with the examples (A–E) below.

1. Gap-fill texts for learners to complete (useful for very low levels).
2. Writing frameworks show learners how to lay out their writing on the page and what they should include in their writing.
3. Brainstorming ideas, selecting and rejecting ideas, and ordering information.
4. Buzz groups – speaking in groups quickly to think of ideas.
5. Writing in pairs.

A Learners work in groups and have a limited amount of time to brainstorm ideas. For example:

Write 10 wild animals

Write 5 arguments for/against having zoos

Write 8 words to describe a zebra

B

light brown fur

1. Appearance

stripes on backs

very little fat

dark around eyes

Meerkats

good watch guards

Other

4. Something special

love insects

3. Food

babies drink milk

plants and animals

Kalahari Desert

2. Where they live

underground

C

How to

Materials

1. First
2. Second
3. Then
4. Finally

D Learners plan and write a text together in pairs – ‘two heads’, one piece of writing.

Why is pair work useful for writing? Learners feel less stressed and anxious. Together the learners have more ideas and know more vocabulary. One person can write while the other is thinking of ideas/words and checking what is being written. It’s usually more fun than writing by yourself.

E

Meerkats

What do they look like?

Meerkats have _____
 _____ fur, stripes on their back,
 and dark circles around their eyes.
 They stand about _____ tall.

Where do they live?

Meerkats live in _____
 _____ in _____. They dig
 holes in the sand and live underground.
 They live in _____ of 20–50
 meerkats.

Reflection

- Which of the techniques would you use before the learners write? Which are to help them while they write?
- Which of the techniques do you already use? Which ones would you like to try? Why?
- What other techniques do you use to support learners with writing?

Now read the *Answers and commentary* section on page 36.

6C Try: How does it work?

Resources: A plan and materials for a writing lesson

Time: One lesson

Rationale

Although writing is an important skill for learners, they often feel anxious about what to write, the English words they need, and making mistakes. When you take steps to prepare them with ideas and vocabulary and support them while they write, learners become more confident and successful writers.

Instructions

1. Choose a class to do some writing with. Look through the syllabus/coursebook and choose an interesting writing task.
2. Plan the lesson using ideas from 6A, 6B and the *Answers and commentary* section. Think about:
 - how to get learners interested/engaged at the beginning of the lesson
 - any vocabulary/language you need to review
 - if you want to use a model
 - how you will get the learners to think of ideas and organise them
 - how you will support the learners while they are writing
 - who will read it – could it be their classmates, another teacher or one of your family members?
 - any problems you anticipate – how can you solve them?
3. Teach the lesson.
4. Ask the learners for feedback. *What did you like about the lesson? What helped you with the writing? What problems did you have?*

Reflection

- Look at the learners' writing. What did they do well? What do they need more help with?
- What did you like about the lesson? What will you change if you teach it again?
- What was interesting/surprising about the feedback from the learners?

6D Work together: What will help your teaching?

- 1 Work in pairs. Share your lesson plan and get feedback. What does your colleague like about your lesson plan? What improvements can he/she suggest?
- 2 Work together to brainstorm different text types learners can write (e.g. recipes, emails, shopping lists, advertisements). Write an asterisk (*) next to ones that you would like to try.
- 3 Work together to make a list of different ways you can publish the learners' writing and provide an audience for them, e.g. making a book for a junior class or writing for people in a rest home. Try an online search for 'publishing students' writing' to get ideas.
- 4 Print and read [this article](#) about planning motivating writing lessons. Discuss what you like/don't like about the ideas. Work together to plan a writing lesson for your learners. Think about creating motivation, challenge and follow-up.

Answers and commentary

1. Grammar

1A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Positive feedback for Lyle

- Lyle has a clear and real context for the language (talking about a family member).
- He gets the children interested by asking them to guess things about his sister.
- He uses pictures to keep the learners interested and help them to remember the sentences.
- He drills the sentences.
- He shows the form of third person present simple clearly and uses colours well to highlight the grammar.

Things Lyle could improve

- Lyle needs to think about the age of his learners. The children do not pay attention when he analyses all the sentences on the board; they are bored. Children under 9–10 years have not usually developed the ability to learn grammar by analysing it in this way. They learn holistically, meaning they use the whole situation to help them understand without needing to make sense of every word.
- He should avoid using complicated language to talk about grammar e.g. *conjugate, third person* with young children. He might check by asking simple questions such as *Why do we say 'wants'?* (saying the /s/ in 'wants' loudly), *Who am I talking about – me or my brother?*
- Lyle needs to provide more appropriate language practice. In this lesson, only three children get to practise and the activity is difficult, especially if there is no time to prepare. Children need a lot of repetition and learn best with a multi-sensory approach, i.e. using sight, sounds and movement. Games provide effective grammar practice for children because they are engaging and something children do in their lives outside of school. They also have a lot of repeated language.
- He should be careful about correcting every error learners make when they are trying to communicate; it may embarrass them and decrease their motivation to speak.

Practice activities: speaking activities and ones using pictures work well with younger children. Here are some ideas.

- **Receptive pronunciation practice:** to make sure the learners can hear /s/ in third person, Lyle could say phrases, sometimes in first person and sometimes in third person (e.g. *go to university, wants to be a doctor*). If the learners hear /s/, they make a hissing sound and a snake gesture with their hands.
- **A flash mingle:** give each learner a picture related to the sentences about Lyle's sister e.g. *a cat, a nurse, a basketball*. Learners stand up and show their pictures to other children. The other child says the sentence for that picture (e.g. *She wants to be a nurse*). The children then change pictures and repeat with another child. They repeat until they get tired/bored of the activity.
- **Picture talks:** the learners draw a picture of someone in their family and things they do or like. The children talk about their family members and pictures with a partner. Afterwards they can walk around and talk to other children or work in small groups to describe their pictures. Another option is to make mini picture books.
- **Sentence chains:** ask the children to think of a job they want to do when they grow up and help them with the English if necessary. Children stand in a circle. The first child says a sentence *I want to be a ...* The child next to them repeats what they said *He/she wants to be a ... and I want to be a ...* The next child needs to make three sentences: *He/she wants to be a ... He/she wants to be a ..., and I want to be a ...* Continue adding more people to the chain until the children can't remember.

1B Think: What do you know?

A. notice; B. understand; C. use

| | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Circling all the past tense verbs in a story | ✓ | | |
| 2. Learners write a social media post describing what's happening/what they are doing in photos (present continuous) | | | ✓ |
| 3. Singing action songs | ✓ | | |
| 4. Learners ask their classmates questions about their likes/dislikes, repeating the same question form <i>Do you like ...?</i> | | ✓ | |
| 5. <u>Total Physical Response</u> (learners listen to commands and follow them) | ✓ | | |
| 6. <u>Substitution drills/question and answer drills</u> | | ✓ | |
| 7. Matching sentence beginnings and endings, e.g. <i>If I were late ... I'd take a taxi.</i> | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 8. Correcting grammar errors | | ✓ | |
| 9. Giving learners lines from a story (that include the target language) to hold up when they hear them | ✓ | | |
| 10. Comparing English grammar with L1/a shared language | ✓ | | |
| 11. Learners make a mini-book to write a story in past tense | | | ✓ |
| 12. Telling a story from pictures | | | ✓ |

Which ages are the activities appropriate for?

5–7 years 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12

8–11 years 1, 3+, 4, 5+, 6, 7, 8*, 10*, 11, 12

12–17 years 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12

+ it depends on your learners; some may find this childish and not want to participate

* 8- to 11-year-olds will need support with these activities

2. Lexis

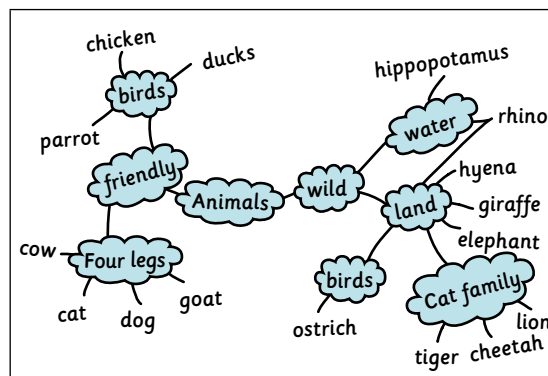
2A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

Here are some ideas to help Yousef and Nan with teaching lexis. Tick any ideas you had that were the same and add more of your own ideas to this list.

Recycling

Learners need to see/hear and use new words many times before these 'stick' in their long-term memories. Recycling is when you plan activities that encourage learners to revisit lexis they have learned before so that they recognise and remember it but also so they deepen their understanding of the words and how they are used (e.g. *handsome* can be used for men but not usually for women). Learners need to develop their ability to recognise words when reading/listening, spell them, write them in a sentence, and use and understand them in speaking. Here are some ideas for recycling.

- Create a class vocabulary bag/box. Cut up small pieces of paper and make one learner or group responsible each day for writing down any new vocabulary and placing the words in the bag/box. Use the bag/box to play games at the beginning or end of lessons.
- Keep a notebook of vocabulary games so you don't forget them. Keep adding new games to keep the learners interested. Try some [here](#).
- Ask learners to categorise words, i.e. put them into groups. When you categorise words, it builds connections to other words in your vocabulary, which helps memory. Let's say you have a lexical set of animals. The learners might categorise them as *wild/domestic*, *big/small*, *fast/slow*, *water/land*, etc.
- Have learners build spider diagrams (see opposite). Using colour also helps you to remember words.
- Plan ways for learners to meet and use new words in all skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing.



Practice

After you present learners with new vocabulary, it's important that they practise using the words too. Trying out words for yourself is more memorable and useful than listening to the teacher. It's a good idea to start with easy practice first, e.g. playing a matching game with pictures of animals and words, and then provide freer practice where the learners make their own choices about what language to use. For the animal topic, you could, for example, ask learners to design a zoo, choose ten animals to put in it and give reasons for their choices. If you want to provide written practice, you could have the learners research different animals to make posters or mini-books.

Strategy training

To be able to communicate in an English-speaking country, it is estimated that learners would need to know about 2,000 words. This is far too many to cover in the classroom so it's important to train learners to also work on vocabulary in their own time and to teach them how to cope when they don't know a word. Strategy training is essential to help learners with all the unknown words they will see in exams. You can help learners with how to:

- use a dictionary
- recognise high frequency words (those that it's important to know) and low frequency ones that aren't used very much; good learner dictionaries show you high frequency words using a symbol such as a key or circle
- write down new vocabulary, e.g. using pictures, definitions, translation and spidergrams
- revise vocabulary, e.g. working with a friend to test each other
- guess the meaning of words they don't know from the context

- (as children get older) understand parts of speech, and suffixes and prefixes, e.g. they might learn that when words such as *redo* begin with *re* it means again (do something again).

2B Think: What do you know?

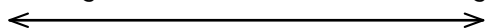
Answers: 1–C; 2–D; 3–B; 4–A.

| | Important things to highlight | Ways to show the meaning |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>vegetable</i> | Pronunciation: only three syllables, stress on first syllable Spelling Countable noun | Picture/drawing of lots of vegetables Translation Elicit examples of different vegetables |
| <i>embarrassed</i> | Pronunciation: <i>ed</i> pronounced as /t/ Spelling: <i>rr</i> and <i>ss</i> – <i>embarrassed</i> Adjective (although it looks like a verb) | A teacher story about a time when they felt embarrassed Concept checking questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did I feel stupid or good? (stupid) • Was I by myself or with other people? (with other people) • What happens to your face when you are embarrassed? (it goes red) Elicit examples of other situations when the learners have felt embarrassed |

It's a good idea to use one technique to show the meaning and elicit the word, and a different technique to check learners understand, e.g. you might use a picture to elicit the word *vegetable* and then ask learners for the word in a shared language.

An example cline

freezing – cold – cool – warm – hot – boiling



3. Pronunciation

3A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

Maria – consonant clusters. It's a good idea for Maria to start by practising consonant clusters that have only two consonants (e.g. *br*, *fl*, *pr*) before working on three consonant clusters. It's helpful if she does a lot of drilling, focusing on only the consonant cluster, slowly at first and then speeding up to normal speed.

Ibrahim – /p/ and /b/. Ibrahim's children first need to hear the difference between /p/ and /b/. He could play lots of games where the children listen and decide if they hear /p/ or /b/, e.g. *pear* or *bear*. When they make the sounds, the children will know if they are making /p/ sound correctly by holding a piece of paper in front of their mouths as they speak. For a /p/ sound the air will make the paper move. The paper won't move for /b/.

Lee – /s/ at the end of words. Most teachers get tired of correcting learners every time they forget to say /s/ at the end of a word, and it can be demotivating for the learners. What Lee could do is have a signal for the learners. Every time they forget the final /s/, he could make a snake gesture with his hand and arm, to remind young children to add an 'ssssss' sound like a snake. If Lee has older learners, he could put a poster on the wall with a large *s* on it. When the learners forget to pronounce the /s/, he could point to the poster, without saying anything, to remind them.

Annisa – ‘th’ sounds. Other than English, very few languages have the English ‘th’ sounds. It is a common problem sound for most learners. However, it usually doesn’t cause any breakdown in communication so it’s not a problem if learners replace ‘th’ with /t/, /d/ or another similar sound. If your learners really want to pronounce the ‘th’ sound, it can help to use small hand mirrors so they can see if their tongue is placed under the top teeth and can be seen through the lips.

Irene – word stress. The children are probably transferring word stress patterns from their first language. Should Irene worry about it? It really depends who the children will be speaking English to. If they are going to speak with non-native speakers, word stress is less likely to be a problem; however, if they interact more with native speakers, incorrect word stress could cause some difficulty and misunderstanding.

3B Think: What do you know?

Answers: 1. productive; 2. receptive; 3. productive; 4. receptive; 5. receptive; 6. receptive and productive.

Other pronunciation activities

1. **Tongue twisters** are sentences that are difficult to say quickly because they repeat the same and similar sounds. They’re usually silly and don’t make sense. The most famous tongue twister, useful for the sound /p/, is: *Peter Piper picked a piece of pickled pepper*. Make sure you find tongue twisters that practise sounds your learners find difficult and practise them yourself beforehand. You can 1. write them on the board, drill them and let learners practise in pairs; or 2. write different tongue twisters on pieces of paper, give one to each group and ask them to practise together. Pass the papers around the different groups until they have practised them all.
2. In **sounds brainstorming board race**, the learners work in teams of 4–6 at the board or on large pieces of paper. In two minutes, they write as many words as they can that rhyme with another word (e.g. **make**, take, break, steak, lake). The learners take turns writing a word for their team and then passing the pen to the next person. Some other words to try are:

Bat (mat, hat, sat, pat, that)

Fit (hit, fit, bit, sit, kit, lit)

Won (done, sun, fun, gun, bun)

Man (pan, tan, ban, than, fan)

Bee (he, tree, she, sea, me, tea, three)

This game is not suitable for beginners as they don’t know enough vocabulary.

4. Speaking

4A Analyse: Can you advise these teachers?

Thandi: It’s great that Thandi praises the learners, although she should be careful not to over praise them. If she gives praise just for saying a word, the learners won’t value it. It doesn’t mean anything. Thandi needs to think about whether her speaking activities are accuracy practice (e.g. doing some grammar practice) or fluency practice, communicating the learners’ own ideas in a free way. If the focus is on accuracy she should correct errors, in a kind way of course, so the learners get feedback on where they need to make changes.

Daniel: It’s a good idea to make use of the transcript after a listening activity, but this should be preparation for learners’ own speaking. After reading through the transcript, learners should be encouraged to start adding in some of their own ideas. Then Daniel could write some useful phrases on the board (or have the learners copy them from the transcript) and encourage the learners to try their own similar conversations without looking at the transcript.

Duc: It’s not effective use of class time to have learners make presentations one by one, as Duc says. Each learner would speak for three minutes and then wait 147 minutes for everyone else to speak. Pair work and group work are much more effective because more people are speaking and because learners will feel a lot more confident about speaking to one or two learners than to the whole class. Duc can monitor and listen for errors, write them down and then discuss them with the class at the end of the activity.

Zahra: It's a good idea to give thinking time and practice opportunities before learners speak to the class. Zahra uses effective techniques for supporting speaking.

Trang: Interesting topics and tasks are important. Trang has effective strategies. She also makes speaking easier by choosing familiar topics and making sure the learners have the vocabulary they need.

4B Think: What do you know?

Here is a suggested plan for a doctor–patient role play. There are many possible ways to do this activity. Tick any ideas you like in this plan.

Outcome: Learners will be able to talk to a doctor about common health problems.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Context | Set the context with a picture of a doctor and patient. Ask learners to guess what could be wrong with the patient. Make a list of symptoms or illnesses on the board so they can be used later. |
| Repetition | Patients will visit three different 'doctors'. Patients and doctors change roles and repeat the role play three more times. In total there will be six doctor–patient interviews (or as many as you have time for). |
| Outcome | Patients: find out which doctor gives the best advice. Doctors: find out which patient has the most serious illness. |
| Preparation | <p>Brainstorm with the whole class different advice doctors could give, e.g. <i>stay in bed for three days, drink plenty of water, take some aspirin.</i></p> <p>With the learners, build up a dialogue on the board (similar to the one below). Try to involve the learners by asking for ideas about what could come next after each line. It doesn't matter if the example is different to this.</p> <p>D: Good afternoon. P: Good afternoon. D: What's the matter? P: Well, I have a bad headache. It really hurts. D: I see. When did it start? P: This morning. D: Do you have a stomach ache? P: No. D: How much water did you drink today? P: Not much. I forgot to take my water bottle with me today. D: Well, I think you should go home, take two aspirin and drink lots of water. P: OK. Thank you, doctor.</p> <p>Drill the dialogue. Split the class into two – one half as doctors, one half as patients – and have them read it again. Swap roles and do it again. <i>Vanishing dialogue</i>: rub off one or two words/phrases and drill again. This time learners will need to remember some parts. Keep rubbing off words/phrases and repeating the dialogue until the board is empty.</p> <p>Learners practise in pairs, changing the illness and advice the doctor gives.</p> <p>Set up the role play and start the activity.</p> |

4C Try: How does it work?

Find someone who (an example)

Change the questions to fit your topic/grammar.

Ask all your classmates the questions. If they say 'yes' write their name and ask another question to get extra information.

| | Name | Extra information |
|------------------------------------|------|-------------------|
| ... can swim. <i>Can you swim?</i> | Ana | Every day |
| ... can play football. | | |
| ... can ride a bike. | | |
| ... can play the guitar. | | |
| ... can speak Chinese. | | |

5. Listening and reading skills

5A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Answers: 1–B; 2A false; 2B true; 2C false.

Question 1: reading for gist (general understanding).

Question 2: reading for detailed understanding; learners need to find the correct place in the text and read closely to fully understand it.

Question: What is the problem if you give learners the questions *after* they listen/read?

Answer: You would be testing their memory, not their listening/reading. The questions wouldn't be helping the learners by focusing them on particular parts of the text. They might get lost and confused by trying to understand all the words.

Question: In what other ways can you get learners interested in what they are going to listen to/read?

Answer: There are many ways to engage learners with a text. The most popular way is to ask them to predict what they will listen to/read about. You might show them pictures related to the text and ask them to guess what is going to happen. You could give them a quiz, but not tell them the answers; the learners need to listen/read to find out if their answers are correct.

5B Think: What do you know?

Answers:

1. while; 2. while; 3. pre; 4. post (possibly pre); 5. while; 6. post; 7. post; 8. post (possibly pre); 9. pre (possibly post); 10. pre; 11. while; 12. while; 13. post; 14. post (possibly pre).

6. Writing skills

6A Analyse: Can you advise this teacher?

Strengths of Sarawut's lesson plan:

- Clear and interesting context (wild animals).
- Questions about meerkats will get the learners interested. They will be keen to read to find out the answers.
- The writing task is supported by:
 - reading a similar text (providing a model)
 - doing research
 - having a template with headings to organise the writing
 - doing editing in pairs.
- The plan has an editing stage.

Things to consider/improve:

- Sarawut could add a step to introduce all the animals on the animal fact guide website, e.g. showing pictures and asking learners to work in groups and name as many as they can.
- Learners could highlight useful sentences in the meerkats text, e.g. _____ *live in* _____.
They stand about _____ *tall. They eat* ____ *and* _____.
- There is no audience for this task. Who will read it? Why are they writing it? Writing is more motivating when there is an audience. Learners could put their texts together to make a book or website. Sarawut could have the learners stick their writing on the wall around the room and ask them to read them to find out which animal is, e.g. the heaviest, the hungriest, the most interesting, etc.
- Providing a model and a template to help the learners with writing is a good thing, but Sarawut should also be aware of how these might limit what the learners can do. He could leave more space on the template for learners to add their own headings (Task 2) and he could encourage the learners to change the template if they want to.

Some ideas to get the learners engaged with the topic and warmed up for learning:

- do an A–Z brainstorming quiz in groups
- play animal vocabulary games
- mime different animals for one another to guess
- show a video of different wild animals and have learners write them down
- show a video of meerkats
- hide a picture of a meerkat behind a piece of paper and slowly move the paper down to show the picture; the learners try to guess what it is
- have a quiz with different animal facts.

Animals A–Z

| | |
|---------|---------|
| A _____ | N _____ |
| B _____ | O _____ |
| C _____ | P _____ |
| D _____ | Q _____ |
| E _____ | R _____ |
| F _____ | S _____ |
| G _____ | T _____ |
| H _____ | U _____ |
| I _____ | V _____ |
| J _____ | W _____ |
| K _____ | X _____ |
| L _____ | Y _____ |
| M _____ | Z _____ |

Other ways Sarawut could support the learners with writing:

- let the learners research and write a description together with a partner
- provide sentence frames for learners to complete, e.g.:

They stand about _____ tall and weigh _____.

They live in _____.

They eat _____.

- do a shared writing with the class. To do this Sarawut would have notes written about another animal that the learners could look at. He would use these to write a description on the board, asking questions all the time to elicit what to write from the learners and to ask them to provide the vocabulary.
- provide a gap-fill text for learners to complete the gaps.

6B Think: What do you know?

Answers: 1–E; 2–C; 3–B; 4–A; 5–D.

Techniques A (buzz groups) and B (brainstorming, selecting, rejecting and ordering) are used before writing. Techniques C, D and E are to support learners while they write.

A model text for Sarawut’s meerkat lesson

Meerkats

What do they look like?

Meerkats have light brown fur, stripes on their back and dark circles around their eyes. They stand about 30 cm tall.

Where do they live?

Meerkats live in the Kalahari Desert in Africa. They dig holes in the sand and live underground. They live in families of 20–50 meerkats.

What do they eat?

Meerkats are omnivores. That means they eat plants and animals. They mostly like eating insects.

What is special about meerkats?

Meerkats are good watch guards. While the family is hunting for food, one meerkat will stand up tall on its back legs and watch for any dangerous animals that might hurt them.



Photography: © Mat Wright
Illustrations: ETi asset bank

© **British Council 2019/J105**

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.