

4 Pronunciation – Intonation – Trainer Notes

OVERVIEW	<p>DVD content In programme 4 John Kay gives ideas on how to help students be more aware of the stress, rhythm and intonation of English. We see teachers in the classroom in Thailand and they share their ideas about helping students learn English rhythms.</p> <p>Materials content The materials ask participants to think about their own pronunciation problems with stress, rhythm and intonation. They are asked to match techniques to improve stress rhythm and intonation to specific pronunciation problems. Teachers are also asked to try out some pronunciation activities themselves.</p>										
KEY CONCEPTS	<p>Stress, Rhythm, Intonation, Pitch</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Stress is about which sounds we emphasise in words and sentences. For example in the word ‘banana’ the stress is on the second syllable, in the word ‘orange’ the stress is on the first syllable. In sentences, we usually stress the most important, ‘content’ words.</p> <p>Rhythm is about how we use a combination of stressed and unstressed words in sentences. Sentences have strong beats (the stressed words) and weak beats (the unstressed words).</p> <p>Intonation is the way the pitch of a speaker’s voice goes up or down as they speak. We use intonation to help get our message across.</p> <p>Pitch movement is the way the quality of the voice changes as a speaker communicates. English often uses changes in pitch to communicate meaning, especially attitude.</p> </div> <p>One of the aims of this session is to help participants identify the specific problems their learners have with English rhythm as well as to give them useful ideas which they can then try out in class.</p>										
PLAN SUMMARY	<p>Note: All sessions in the Teaching Speaking series will be more effective if participants are able to discuss things in pairs or groups. You should arrange your training room to facilitate this as far as possible.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="430 1444 1444 1691"> <tr> <td>Warmer</td> <td><i>‘I went to market’ – intonation practice</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Before you watch</td> <td><i>Terminology and identifying problems..</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Watch</td> <td><i>Matching/gist comprehension.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Watch again</td> <td><i>Multiple choice/listening for specific information</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 Analysis & Reflection</td> <td><i>Recognising stress and intonation patterns and planning activities.</i></td> </tr> </table>	Warmer	<i>‘I went to market’ – intonation practice</i>	1 Before you watch	<i>Terminology and identifying problems..</i>	2 Watch	<i>Matching/gist comprehension.</i>	3 Watch again	<i>Multiple choice/listening for specific information</i>	4 Analysis & Reflection	<i>Recognising stress and intonation patterns and planning activities.</i>
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Procedure

Warmer

(optional)

- Play 'I went to market' – described in the **Suggested Classroom activities** section of the materials.

1 Before you watch

- Before the session begins, cue the DVD to the menu screen. You could then turn off or cover the TV set until you're ready to watch.
- With a confident strong group, you could ask participants to work in pairs or small groups to share definitions of stress, rhythm and intonation and ask them to check their ideas with the definitions given in the booklet. Alternatively you can draw attention to the definitions by reading them with the group.
- Look at the problems learners have with English stress and intonation. Ask participants to work in pairs or small groups to say if they find them difficult and to add any other problems they have. Show them where they can make notes in the booklet.
- When participants have finished, ask for any feedback on difficulties they or their learners have. It may be quite hard for teachers to admit that they have pronunciation problems so be sensitive to this and move on if participants don't seem to want to talk.

2 Watch

- Look at the question in part 2.
Match the things the teacher says to the photo.
- Read through the comments and make sure that teachers understand 'primary stress' (the syllable with the strongest stress) and 'content words' (words that carry the meaning in a sentence, ie not auxiliaries, prepositions etc).
- Now watch Programme 4 all the way through.
- When the programme finishes ask the participants to compare their answers in small groups. When they have finished their discussion, elicit the answers from the group as a whole.

3 Watch again

- Look at the exercise in Section 3, Watch Again. Ask the participants to tick the ideas given in each section of the video for each area: intonation, rhythm and stress patterns. Show them the example in the rhythm section.
- Watch the Programme. At the end, ask participants to check their answers in pairs. They can then check their answers using the key.
- Ask the group if there were any pronunciation activities they particularly liked or didn't like in the programme.

4 Analysis & Reflection

- Draw attention to the multiple choice activity. Ask participants to choose the activity that would help students with that area of pronunciation.
- Check that participants understand what backchaining is. As explained in the video, this is where the teacher gives the last part of the sentence they want the students to say and asks the students to repeat it. The teacher then builds up the sentence from the end, asking the students to repeat more and more of it, allowing students to focus on stress, and rhythm more accurately.
- For this activity, the participants could work alone and then compare their answers in small groups or alternatively work in pairs to discuss each option and choose each activity together.
- Elicit the answers from the group and read out the comments for each activity.

Recognising intonation patterns

A Asking students to raise their heads if the **intonation** rises

Comments:

Students enjoy this way of showing intonation patterns. As well as simple rises (e.g. on yes/no questions) or simple falls (e.g. on affirmative statements or “wh” questions), they can also show more complicated patterns, such as the polite fall_rise (e.g. on “Can I help you?”)

Getting used to the alternation of weaker and stronger beats

B Click your fingers to emphasise **stress beats**

Comments:

You can get students used to thinking about the “music” of English by overemphasising the beats in sentences, by clicking your fingers or clapping your hands when they are repeating something, and asking them to do the same.

Giving students a way to remember intonation patterns

B On the board; you can put different colour arrows for rises and falls.

Comments:

You can mark the main stresses and the direction of the main pitch changes on the script on the board. This may help visual learners to understand and remember them. All students can keep a record in their notebooks, and the teacher can ask them to look at it again to remember the patterns if they have problems.

- If you want to do the second activity with participants during the session, then you will need to choose a very short tapescript and bring along the cassette/CD. Give a photocopy of the tapescript to each participant. Alternatively, you could demonstrate the activity and ask participants to do this at home.
- Ask participants to listen to the chosen text and mark all the words they hear with the most stress.
- Then, ask participants to say the text, copying the listening.

- Then ask them to say it again, saying only the stressed words.
- Participants then say it again, clicking their fingers on the stressed beats.
- They practise again, but this time they put the weaker forms back in between the main stresses.
- Finally they listen again and draw a line that represents the intonation pattern across each sentence.
- Participants should now be very confident with the listening text. Ask them to discuss in small groups how they might help their students with the text. For example, coloured arrows to show intonation, or clicking fingers to help with rhythm etc.
- Once participants have had a chance to make a note of some ideas, elicit some suggestions from the whole group about how they could help their students' pronunciation of the text.

6 Suggested classroom activity

- A good way to end the session is to do the activities suggested, with the trainer taking the part of the teacher and the participants taking the part of the students.
- You will need to prepare some sentences to read out for the rhythm activity.