**TEFL 2**

**(Teaching English as a Foreign Language )**

**Ms. Karam Abughazaleh**

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**Unit 1: The TEFL World**

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

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

**Specific Characteristics**

Here are some specific characteristics of the English language:

**Fairly easy to learn**

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

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

**Latin alphabet**

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

**Its simple inflection**

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

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

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

**Its receptiveness**

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

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

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

**Its (generally) fixed word order**

Another strong characteristic of English language is its (generally) fixed word order. Most English sentences (clauses) conform to the SVO word order. This means that the Subject comes before the Verb, which comes before the Object. Examples:

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

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

**No markings on letters**

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

* exámenes
* muñón
* muñones
* canción

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

**Pronunciation**

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

**Continuous tense**

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

**Articles (a, an, the)**

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

**Phrasal verbs**

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

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

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

**Non-tonal**

English is a non-tonal language.

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

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

**Sound and spelling**

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

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

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

* Words containing *ough*:  *thought, although, rough*
* Words which have the same sound but different spellings: *ate, eight; hear, here; their, there*
* Words with silent letters, not pronounced: *know, could, hour*
* Words that look exactly the same but must be pronounced differently: *read*(present tense), *read*(past tense); *present* (a gift), *present* (to give to); *close* (near); *close* (to shut)

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

# Major Differences between English and Arabic



Some languages have a few things in common, but the differences between Arabic and English are quite distinct. Due to the evolution of each language, even those from the same language family or branch may have some differences. Therefore, it’s no surprise that English and Arabic, which come from different language families, will have more dissimilarities.

Here’s a look at the many differences between Arabic and English.

### **Different language families**

**English** comes from the large **Indo-European language family**. It is divided into three major branches: East Germanic languages, North Germanic languages and West Germanic languages. English belongs to the **West Germanic languages branch**, further divided into the **North-Sea Germanic group’s Anglic linguistic varieties**.

**Arabic** comes from the **Semitic languages** group from the **Afroasiatic language family** from the Middle East. Among the Semitic languages, the most spoken are Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Hebrew, Tigre, Aramaic and Maltese.

English is the third most spoken language in the world, with 379 million speaking it as their first language. English is spoken in 137 countries. Arabic on the other hand is spoken in 59 countries. As the fifth most spoken language in the world, it’s the first language of 319 million people.

### **Arabic texts**

Arabic has eight vowels/diphthongs and 28 consonants. The short vowels are not very important in Arabic and often not written. For example, maktab (office) is written as **mktb,** omitting the vowels, much like stenographic shorthand. This is difficult for English speakers trying to learn Arabic since they have to deduce which vowel sound to use based on the other Arabic letters. Arabic texts are written and read from right to left, using a cursive script, compared to English which is written using Latin script and read from left to right. In Arabic, there is no distinction between lower and upper cases and the rules on the use of punctuation are looser compared to English.

### **Vowel and consonant sounds**

English only has five vowels (or six, if you include the letter y). There are six regular vowels in Arabic and two occasional vowels. But these vowels have their singular distinct sound.

Arabic has six individual phonemes that are not found in the English language. It’s one of the reasons why Arabic to English translation is difficult. English speakers find it hard to vocalize Arabic sounds because of the different way these are produced. Arabic speakers are used to contracting their epiglottis when they speak, something that English speakers are not used to.

The sound of the letters in a language is different from the speech sounds they can create. Phonemes are the individual speech sounds. The [English alphabet](https://www.daytranslations.com/blog/origin-english-alphabet/) has 20 consonants creating 24 consonant phonemes while the six vowels (including y) can create 22 vowel phonemes, whereas Arabic only has eight vowel phonemes and 28 consonant phonemes.

Although Arabic uses consonants heavily, English uses more consonant clusters (phoneme groupings) when forming words. Some Arabic words use two consonant clusters in the beginning of the word but never a three-consonant cluster. Arabic also does not have three or four consonant clusters at the end of the word unlike English.

Three primary vowel sounds in Arabic are similar to the **I**, **A** and **U**sounds in English. They each have a long and short form. But Arabic does not have a vowel sound for the letter **E** and **O**. For example, the English pronunciation of Cairo becomes **Kahirah**in Arabic. The sounds of o and e are used in brand names and foreign loan words only.

### **Verb tenses**

Various verb tenses as well as irregularities in English are not present in Arabic. The language does not have a present tense conjugation of the verb to be. Likewise, Arabic does not have a present perfect tense conjugation.

### **Word stress**

In Arabic, word stress occurs regularly. Changes happen frequently in English, as word stress can change the lexical category and meaning of the word. For example, **ob’ject** is a noun while **object**is a verb. A change in stress does not change the word’s meaning in Arabic however. The difference can only be noticed through the pronunciation of the word using a different short vowel. However, it is not very obvious to English speakers, because the word is written in the same way.

### **Sound elision**

Elision means dropping of a sound between words or in the middle of the word when saying a sentence. Sound elision is very common in English, so you often hear **dunno** (I don’t know), **wanna** (I want to), **kamra** (camera) or **cap’n** (captain). Elision does not occur in Arabic because the spelling of the words are very closely related to the sound the letters create, therefore, as a rule, any letter sound is not omitted.

### **Grammar**

Arabic differentiates between females and males in its sentence structure, words, verbs, pronouns. It even has specifications for **you**and **they** in singular, plural, male and female forms.

The way verbs are conjugated in Arabic is different. All verbs come from the root verb, with the conjugation starting in the past tense of the verb. They are conjugated according to gender and number.

Although complex, Arabic grammar structure is systematic. It does not have an extensive range of exceptions. Arabic words are written the way they are verbalized.

### **Arabic word roots**

Since Arabic is consonant-heavy, it is not surprising that its word roots do not contain vowels. A consonantal root is another term used for this occurrence. To form the words, vowel infixes between a series of consonants are added. The change in the meaning of the word depends on the use of a vowel infix. Thus, it is normal to see Arabic words that start with consonants. English words on the other hand, are formed by syllables with a combination of vowels and consonants. Moreover, English words can start with either a consonant or a vowel.

**But did you know that despite being consonant heavy, Arabic has less consonant clusters than English?**

Examples of consonant clusters in English:

* **Spl**ash
* Twe**lfths**
* Si**xth**
* Twi**sty**
* Cri**sp**
* Scri**bble**
* **Spr**y

### **Vowel quality and length**

Another significant difference between English and Arabic is in the quality and length of the vowels. Arabic generally uses diphthongs and long vowels as infixes, treating short vowels as insignificant in word formation. Only three short vowels are present in Arabic and they are closely allophonic, meaning they are used in several variations or used interchangeably.

Short vowels are not completely represented in their writing system. Often, the representations of the short vowels are done through the use of diacritics.

In English, short and long vowels are equally vital in word formation because they contribute to the difference in the words’ meanings.

### **Sentence structure**

Basic sentence structures of English and Arabic are different as well. **English** only has **verbal sentences**. **Arabic** has **verbal and nominal sentences**. Arabic’s nominal sentences do not need verbs and typically comprise two nouns only.

A complete and grammatically correct English sentence contains a **subject**, **verb** and **object.**

Arabic has four different types of sentences: verbal, functional, nominal and non-functional. The verbal sentence and the nominal sentence are the most common. In a nominal sentence, you need a **topic** and a **comment**(object). There is no need to add a verb. Nominal sentences describe a thing or a person. The other one is the verbal sentence, which in Arabic has a **verb**, **subject** and an **object**or**comment.**Both of these types of sentences in Arabic have different variations as well.

Due to the many differences between Arabic and English languages, learners of Arabic and English find it difficult to comprehend the complexities of the individual languages. In Arabic the sounds of the letters depend on the mood of the sentence and students have to memorize the pronunciation of the sun letters and the moon letters as well.

Several variations or dialects of Arabic are also present. However, if you are studying Arabic, one good thing to know is that Modern Standard Arabic is the version that is taught today, which is understood by Arabic speakers all over the world. It is the

**Unit 2: L1 and L2**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. To save time, now and again, e.g. explaining instructions for an activity. We have often observed teachers taking longer to put over their instructions than the time it took the learners to do the activity. This is not a productive use of time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**L1 learner**

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

Let’s now consider the L2 learner’s learning situation.

**L2 learner**

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

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

**4. Influences on L2 learning**

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

**1. Degree of intellect:**  Some learners are quicker to learn than others.

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

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

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

The same obviously applies to you. You may sometimes feel down due to a personal issue. Or you may have had just one too many social events the nights before! You’ll need to ensure that you keep positive in the classroom. Your learners need you to be consistent, i.e. motivated, welcoming and vibrant all of the time.

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

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

**Now, let’s look at some trickier additional issues that we have come across in the EFL classroom:**

**5. Prior learning**

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

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

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

**6. Pattern of classroom activity**

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

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

**7. Your behaviour**

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

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

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

**8. Gender**

You need to find out whether learners have ever experienced mixed educational groupings, whether they expect male and female teachers to behave differently, and how different classroom activities, e.g. role plays or dialogue practice, might affect learners differently, because of their native cultural constraints.

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

**9. Female participation**

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

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

**10. Appropriate topics for learning**

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

**11. Participation**

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

**12. Communication styles**

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

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

1. Direct Style v Indirect Style

Direct style

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

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

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

Indirect style

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

2. Idea-focused style v person-focused styles

Idea-focused

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

Person-focused

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

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

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

**5. Some effective L2 learning strategies**

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

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

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

For example, proficient L2 learners:

* Employ appropriate language learning strategies that often result in improved proficiency or achievement overall, or in specific skill areas.
* Tend to select strategies that work well together in a highly-orchestrated way, and which are tailored to the requirements of the language task. These learners can easily explain the strategies they use and why they employ them.
* Use cognitive strategies, such as translating and analysing, and other strategies, such as planning and organising. Using combinations of strategies often has more impact than relying on a single strategy.
* Use certain strategies or clusters of strategies that are linked to particular language skills or tasks. For example:  
  + L2 writing, like L1 writing, benefits from the learning strategies of planning, self-monitoring, deduction and substitution.
  + L2 speaking demands strategies such as risk-taking, paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.
  + L2 listening comprehension gains from strategies of elaboration, inference, selective attention and self-monitoring.
  + L2 reading comprehension uses strategies like reading aloud, guessing, deduction and summarising.

**Unit 3: Learning Styles**

**1. So, what is a "learning style"?**

A learning style is a more or less consistent way in which a person perceives, conceptualises, organises and recalls information. In essence, a learner often has a preferred learning style.

This could be a preference for learning through visual activities as opposed to, for example, audio activity.

There are other preferences, as we will see below. Proponents say that learning styles are influenced by the individual’s genetic make-up, previous learning experiences, culture and society.

**2. Identification of learning style – useful or not?**

There are different opinions and lobbies as to the relevance of the identification and usage of learning styles in the classroom. Unfortunately, many of the opinions from either side of the debate lack real or scientific proof, as learning style methodologies remain unproven.

However, our opinion - based on our experience - is that learner style identification is useful and is pretty successful, particularly with adult learners.

Many teachers and educators continue to find value and benefit by using learning styles approaches in one way or another and, as often applies in such situations, there is likely to be usage which is appropriate and other usage which is not.

So, especially if you are working with young people, use methodologies with care. It is wrong to apply any methodology blindly and unquestioningly, and wrong not to review and assess the effectiveness of methods used.

In any case, we feel it’s important that you are aware of learning styles, no matter whether you end up being in favour of using them or against.

**3. Different learning styles approaches**

There are a many different approaches used to determine an individual’s learning style.

We will focus on two of these.

**1. Kolb’s theory**

The work of Kolb and others produced the classification of learners into four groups: activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists.

According to this approach:

1. Activists like practical work such as labs, field work, observation exercises and using visual source material for information, etc.
2. Reflectors like to learn by watching others, by taking time to consider observations of their own experience, etc.
3. Theorists like lectures, reading papers on topics, considering analogies, etc.
4. Pragmatists like simulations, case studies, homework, etc.

Thus, the four types might approach learning a software programme in different ways:

* Activists might just start using it and feel their way into it.
* Reflectors might have a go at using it and then take time to think about what they have just done.
* Theorists might begin by reading the manual.
* Pragmatists might start using the programme, but make frequent references to the help files.

The four types of learning can be seen as cyclical stages through which a learner can progress (Watch>>>Think>>>Feel>>>Do), as well as categorising specific kinds of learning experience.

**2. The VAK approach**

This is our preferred approach. It’s simple and easy to administer.

The VAK analysis identifies three learning styles: Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (sometimes an *a* is added: *kinaesthetic)*. Sometimes kinesthetic is said to include *tactile* learning, and sometimes this is added as a separate learning style.

**Key points underlying this approach:**

* Any individual will operate in all three modalities, but with a preference for one or two.
* Visual learners are likely to prefer mind-maps, diagrams, picturesque language, flow charts, use of colour, white space on the page, etc.
* Auditory learners are likely to prefer discussion, explaining things to others, using a tape recorder, and teaching linked to anecdotes/jokes, etc.
* Kinesthetic learners are likely to prefer group work, using models/objects in describing things, walking around while learning, hands-on activities, books with strong plot, etc.
* You should be aware of your own VAK preferences. When carrying out a learning styles analysis with students, the students should be made aware of their individual preferences.
* Some research has shown that students can perform better on tests if they change their study habits to fit their own personal learning styles. For example, visual-learning students will sometimes struggle during essay exams, because they can't recall test material that was "heard" in a lecture.
* However, if the visual learner uses a visual aid when studying, like a colourful outline of test materials, he or she may retain more information. For this type of learner, visual tools improve the ability to recall information more completely.

**General characteristics of the visual, audio and kinaesthetic learning styles, based on the VAK approach**

**Visual learner characteristics**

Visual learners are those who tend to learn best through seeing things. Look over the characteristics below to see if they sound familiar. A visual learner:

* is good at spelling, but forgets names
* needs quiet study time
* has to think a while before understanding a lecture
* likes colours and fashion
* dreams in colour
* understands/likes charts
* is good with sign language

Learning suggestions for visual learners

* Draw a map of events in history or draw scientific process
* Make outlines of everything
* Copy what's on the board
* Ask the teacher to make a diagram/sketch
* Take notes, make lists
* Watch videos
* Colour-code words
* Outline reading
* Use flashcards
* Use highlighters, circle words, underline

Best test type for visual learners

Diagramming, reading maps, essays, showing a process

Worst test type for visual learners

Listen and respond tests

**Auditory learner characteristics**

Auditory learners are those who tend to learn best through hearing things. Look over these traits to see if they sound familiar to you. You may be an auditory learner if you are someone who:

* likes to read to self out loud
* is not afraid to speak in class
* likes oral reports
* is good at explaining
* remembers names
* notices sound effects in movies
* enjoys music
* is good at grammar and foreign languages
* reads slowly
* follows spoken directions well
* can't keep quiet for long periods
* enjoys acting and being on stage
* is good in study groups

Auditory learners can benefit from:

* using word association to remember facts and lines
* recording lectures
* watching videos
* repeating facts with eyes closed
* participating in group discussions
* using audiotapes for language practice
* taping notes after writing them

Best test type for auditory learners

Auditory learners are good at writing responses to lectures they've heard. They're also good at oral exams.

Worst test type for auditory learners

Reading passages and writing answers about them in a timed test.

**Kinesthetic learner characteristics**

Look over these kinesthetic learner traits to see if they sound familiar to you. You may be a kinesthetic learner if you are someone who:

* is good at sport
* can't sit still for long
* is not great at spelling
* does not have great handwriting
* likes working in science labs
* studies with loud music on
* likes adventure books, movies
* likes role-playing
* takes breaks when studying
* builds models
* is involved in martial arts or dance
* is fidgety (restless) during lectures

Kinesthetic learners can benefit from:

* studying in short blocks
* taking lab classes
* role playing
* taking field trips and visiting museums
* studying with others
* using memory games
* using flash cards to memorise

**Key points to consider when you start teaching:**

* To what extent does your teaching provide a range of activities to cater for the visual, audio and kinesthetic learning styles?
* What opportunities do you see to enhance the range of types of activity in your classroom?
* What learning style preference do you have? Is it visual, audio or kinesthetic? Or is it a mix of two or more?

Some people find that their learning style may be a blend of two or three styles.

Naturally, it is not always practical or even possible to account for all learning styles in a class. However, if you do identify learning styles to inform your classroom approach, you may find that you can gain a deeper understanding of your students' learning preferences and a greater appreciation of their strengths.

You may also discover that an awareness of the different kinds of learning styles will help you to create more creative and appealing lessons. This, in turn, promotes more student engagement, as students will be leveraging learning modes that match their particular strengths.

Your students' increased engagement and success in learning may also stimulate you to raise their expectations. This initiates a powerful expectation-response cycle that can lead to greater achievement levels. This in turn leads to increased motivation for your students and you.

You can do your own analysis of students’ learning styles through close observation, noting what you hear and see.

There’s also a range of materials on the internet which will give you some ideas as to how to approach this – and you can even try out a learning styles analysis on yourself to find out what preferred learning style you may have, if you are not aware of this already.

Please note that materials on the internet may be protected by copyright and you may be restricted to using materials for your own personal use, i.e. you must not print them off and use them with a group of students if the materials are under copyright. Check carefully.

The best route is always to carry out your own analysis via your own approach, by observing your students closely and noting what you hear and see.

**Summary – the VAK approach**

As with any learning approach, you need to decide whether this offers you any practical usage. The VAK learning styles approach has its proponents and detractors but, overall, we feel it serves as a good aid/reminder for you when choosing appropriate learning activities:

1. Structure learning materials around the learners’ strengths

If you have individuals or groups who have particular interests or strengths, e.g. sport, music, and you want them to be involved and successful in their language learning, then structure your learning materials around these interests and strengths.

2. Variety brings life to the classroom

Providing a rich mix of learning activities derived from a mix of the different preferences will result in a lively and engaging classroom for all your learners.

3. A whole person approach

Every individual exercises all preferences to some degree or another. A multi-faceted teaching approach that appeals to all preferences addresses the whole person in ways that more one-sided approaches do not.

The VAK approach helps to develop the whole person within each learner, which best serves the person’s language- learning requirements as well.

Give it a try – preferably with older students.

**Unit 4: Listening**

You should also consider the different types of spoken language which exist. These are a few examples:

* Conversations
* Songs
* Speeches
* Announcements
* Advertisements
* Stories
* Lectures

Listening involves being able to understand a range of different "spoken texts" and to take meaning from them.

In the classroom, we can expose students to a variety of these text types via CDs, DVDs, sound-only Youtube clips, etc., and, of course, our own speech. As we’ve already mentioned, when listening to a recording, whether authentic or otherwise, we can’t see the speakers and therefore can’t infer context, whereas in real life we usually have at least some idea of what we’re going to hear.

So, when using audio in the classroom, it’s a bit unfair to expect students to “listen to the recording and answer the questions” without any introduction at all. If we approach listening lessons like this, students are either able to understand and get the right answers or not but, if *not,* then there’s no way for them to improve.

Instead, there are a number of ways we can actually develop listening skills. The British Council gives some really fun and interesting pre-listening tasks which can help. They include:

* **Setting the context** – giving students an idea of who is speaking, where, when and an outline of the situation
* **Warmers to generate interest** – if you’re listening to a dialogue about food, you could start off by asking students their favourite foods, etc.
* **Activating knowledge** – asking students what they already know about the topic to bring relevant vocabulary to the forefront of their minds; or giving them a short, fun quiz
* **Predicting content** – once they know the context they can guess what might/might not be mentioned
* **Giving students the questions before they listen** – this means that they can focus and listen out for cues in the dialogue, rather than being overwhelmed trying to listen for absolutely everything
* **Predicting answers** – give students time to read all the questions and make notes on possible answers, so that they’re not concentrating on reading a question when they should be concentrating on listening!

While listening, learners often have to answer a variety of questions. It’s usually best to start with questions which assess the students’ understanding of the general gist of the dialogue, such as: "Why did the girl phone her friend?", before asking them to concentrate on more specific details, e.g. "What time did they arrange to meet?". This way, they are less likely to become overwhelmed and think: "I don’t understand anything at all!".

Additionally, some students may have understood what they heard, but may be unable to vocalise it. For example, if they listen to a story which they have understood, they might not necessarily be able to re-tell it. It’s unreasonable, therefore, to ask very generalised questions such as: “Okay, so what did you hear?”, that students may not be able to respond to.

**Use tasks such as true/false questions or table completion to help focus students’ attention and allow you to assess accurately whether they have understood.**

After listening, students need to feed the answers back, and this can be done in several ways.

A good one is getting students to check what they’ve written in pairs and, if they have wildly different responses, you may need to play the recording again. If there are still problems, you need to grade the questions or activities to a more appropriate level and then build up from there.

You can grade tasks, rather than the recording itself, so that students are exposed to authentic material from an early stage, but aren’t asked to complete overly-complicated activities.

Even a BBC radio interview could technically be used as a listening exercise for lower levels, where you ask them just to listen for who is being interviewed, for example. The same piece can then be used for more advanced levels, as they can be asked to identify attitudes, opinions and more specific details.

Obviously, some recordings are always going to be more appropriate for different levels, but don’t get stuck in the notion that lower levels can’t handle realistic material – they may find it an interesting challenge!

# Effective Strategies/Activities

**Effective Strategies/Activities for Developing Students’ Listening Skills**

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different listening strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these listening events interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun.

**Here are some of the most practical approaches:**

**1. Strategies**

Questions and answers

Very short exchanges can be used to provide elementary or lower intermediate students with practice in listening and understanding. Exchanges like this can later be practised by the students themselves, and preferably recorded.

Recording the students is almost always universally enjoyed even when they laughingly protest a little at the beginning because they are shy about hearing their own voice.

Short dialogues

The way in which the dialogue is recorded will affect its authenticity; traffic noise or café noise in the background adds a further degree of authenticity.

Short passages

Unlike dialogues, it's not so easy to make the language authentic in a short passage; however, a story with a touch of humour always appeals to learners. A wide range of factual questions could be prepared, together with one or two deductive questions.

Reordering information

The students are given a number of items on paper, written out in the wrong order: actions, description, events and so on. They are also given one or more specific tasks, and then they listen to the text. The task(s) may involve categorising information, reordering actions in the correct order, classifying events and so on.

Information-transfer

Information-transfer activities involve students translating part of the spoken message into a new format, such as a table, chart, picture, map and so on. They may then use this new format to carry out a further activity, such as working in pairs with a friend to solve a related problem.

Note that information-transfer activities involve any transfer of any information in a text or utterance to a new format: a listening passage to a table; a reading text to a dialogue; a telephone conversation to a map, and so on.

Using humour to develop listening skills

Language learning is much less painful if the students have something to smile about from time to time, and a bit of humour can add this.

Dictation

Dictation went out of fashion in language teaching for a long time, but it can be a valuable form of listening practice and it has now returned in revised forms. The important thing is that the dictation passage should typically be one which the students have met already.

It would be inappropriate with English language students to give them a dictation passage that they have never met before. This would be tantamount to a test, which is very different from practice.

Jigsaw listening

This involves students listening to different parts of a passage or a conversation (or different passages and different conversations), and then coming together in pairs to try to complete a particular task. Each person has a different piece of information.

The task might, for example, involve completing another dialogue or filling in a table or drawing a map. With a large class, the students can first be divided into two different groups so that they listen to two different audio clips.

Then they get together in pairs with one person from each group to complete the task. It is possible to prepare such materials yourself, but you will occasionally find that jigsaw listening and reading tasks are provided in your coursebook.

**2. Some activities**

Choose passages, topics and exercises that are participative, interesting and engaging.

Here are some tried and tested suggestions:

**Add on**

One student starts off with I went to the market and I bought some apples. The next student adds to this: I went to the market and I bought some apples and a spoon. This continues until the sentence is unmanageably long and the students start to get a bit confused.

This could be a competitive game with teams, but would be better as a co-operative activity. It’s good fun and you can change the model sentence to anything you like, so that you can do this again and again in future classes.

**Pass the message**

This activity can be used to emphasise the importance of listening. One student thinks of a "message" and writes it down. The student then whispers this to another student, swiftly, and so on. The message can only be said once, but it must be spoken clearly.

Nevertheless, however clearly the message is spoken, it will almost always be distorted in some way or other, which often produces a comical sentence. It can then be compared with the original sentence.

**Think of a verb**

Each group writes a short passage of about 3-4 sentences. The verbs (excluding the verb to be) are removed from the passage. One member of, say, group A, then reads out the passage and the other groups suggest appropriate verbs to fit the space.

The final version of the newly-constructed passage can be read in full and is then compared to the original passage. This will often provide a lot of laughs. It can be done again in future classes by changing the verb to a noun or adverb, i.e. linked to whatever else they are studying.

**What’s the word?**

You spell out words quickly, and the students have to shout out the word.

**Hands up!**

You write up 5-10 words relating to what the students have been studying. You then incorporate these words into a passage. You read out the passage. Students put their hands up as soon as they hear each of the words.

**Missing word**

You write up 5 words relating to what the students have been studying. You read out a short passage – incorporating 4 of the words. After the passage has been read out, students suggest the missing word.

**Unit 4: Reading**

**Skimming & scanning**

We skim a text when we want to get a general impression of what it’s about. You read it quickly, running your eyes over the words to understand the overall meaning.

We would often skim through the first couple of pages of a book before deciding to buy it, for instance. With EFL students, this can be a good skill to practice because it gets them to see the broader structure and meaning of a text, without stopping at and worrying about the words they don’t know.

It also avoids one of the typical complaints: that reading in a foreign language is boring, because it’s so slow when you think you have to look up every single word in a dictionary!

Scanning is a similar technique, which is also to do with ‘speed reading’. It’s slightly different, however, in that you scan a text to find specific pieces of information quickly.

You might be looking for a phone number, a name, opening times, etc., so you don’t read the whole text, just parts of it until you find the information you need.

A typical ‘scanning’ question could be: ‘What time does the last bus leave?’; or: ‘Where is Lucy going on holiday?’

**Reading for detail**

Reading for detail is when we really focus on each individual word. This allows you to work out how each word in a sentence fits together to deduce meaning and can be used to learn new vocabulary or understand certain aspects of grammar.

Most students are familiar with this method but be aware that often in real life we don’t read like this, except on certain occasions (e.g. to understand a complex set of instructions). It’s therefore important to make sure that learners are aware of different approaches to reading, so that when they do encounter texts in the real world where they don’t understand every word, they still have strategies to cope.

**Deducing meaning from context**

In those instances where some words are unknown, it’s not always useful to go straight to a dictionary and find a definition or translation. Instead, we can encourage students to work out the meaning of a word from its context.

This involves looking at all the words around it, in order to prompt an educated guess as to its meaning.

**Predicting**

There is a lot of information we can get from a text even before we read it.

Help students tap into this useful skill by encouraging them to look at the other visual information on the page before reading. This could be pictures or photographs, a title or subheading, even the author’s name.

All of these things can help us predict the genre of a text (letter, newspaper article, novel extract, etc.), as well as possible content and even grammatical structures which may be used.

If we’re reading a letter of application, perhaps readers might expect to see use of modal verbs such as 'could' and 'would' to make polite requests; or some fixed expressions, such as ‘enclosed is a copy of my Curriculum Vitae’.

**When students predict correctly, they can feel satisfied and reassured that even though they might not understand every word, they can comprehend more than they may have thought.**

**Inferring** …Inferring is a slightly more subtle skill.

This is when we can understand the meaning behind the words to deduce attitudes, opinions, etc. For this, students need to be able to recognise register (formal or informal) and style, and identify words and structures that tell us how the writer is referring to something.

This type of skill is often practised at higher levels because it takes a certain amount of knowledge of the English language.

However, even at lower levels you can grade a task so that it is suitable for lower-level students to infer meaning.

Noticing the unknown word's position in a sentence and recognising whether it's a verb, noun, adjective, etc. will help to deduce meaning.

As you can see, there are many different ways of reading a text for a variety of purposes, depending on the skills you want your students to develop. Yet, it’s still necessary, as for listening, to introduce the task rather than just launching in and asking your students to read and answer the questions.

Top of Form

Look at this plan for a Top Down Approach reading skills lesson and put the procedures in the correct order:

1

2

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**a. Give students time to read through questions and predict answers**

**b. Task which focuses on meaning: complete the table with information from the text**

**c. Use photographs in the text to make predictions**

**d. Follow-on task: writing**

**e. Lead-in: spark interest in the topic by a discussion of the main themes**

**f. Scan for specific pieces of information in the text**

**g. Pre-teach necessary vocabulary**

**h. Task which focuses on more detailed meaning: True/false questions**

**i. Skim text to decide on general content and choose a suitable title (out of three options)**

**j. Task which focuses on vocabulary: guessing meaning of unknown words from context then checking in a dictionary**

Bottom of Form

**Remember this:** you have learned enough so far in this course to ensure you can plan a good reading lesson.

However, if you are like some of our other students, who want to study more about lesson planning and have a lesson-planning template that you can use for every lesson, then it would be wise to explore our **Module 16: Lesson Planning Plus in our 150-hour course.**

The reading we do in class is generally known as intensive reading, because we use short texts and do different tasks to understand the discourse and develop certain skills, usually with a language focus.

**Yet, extensive reading outside the classroom should be encouraged too.**

This involves reading longer texts, such as novels, stories or newspapers for pleasure. Extensive reading can really have an impact on language learning, as students are exposed to such a range of language - often without even realising it.

They also develop lots of different reading skills without noticing; for example, they may skim some parts of a novel as their attention drifts in and out or read in detail a particular chapter.

They can predict what might happen next or go back to scan for some information they missed.

According to Scrivener, all of this increases “their overall linguistic confidence, which then influences and improves their skills in other language areas too” (Learning Teaching p.188).

Graded ‘readers’ can be a great way for students to start reading extensively outside the classroom if they are overwhelmed by the prospect of picking up an English novel.

These readers are specially designed for EFL learners and adapted to different levels, appropriate to the student’s capabilities.

They also have footnotes and glossaries, as well as often having little exercises to do as the learner goes along.

**Encourage your students to read for pleasure as much as possible because when we enjoy something, we tend to learn a lot more!**

**Suggested solutions**

**Question 1**: For your lead-in at the beginning, show a picture of Lenny Henry and ask those who were there to tell those that weren't there about him. Ask them basic questions about what they remember, e.g. Who is he? Where is he from? Where’s his family from? What does he do?

**Question 2:** No. Only pre-teach the absolutely key vocabulary that would stop them understanding the general message of the text. You might find you don’t need to teach anything; or that you can just tell them what a few items mean during the lead-in stage. A common problem is that pre-teaching takes up most the lesson, so your main aims are not achieved. Also, if you pre-teach everything then your lesson becomes too teacher-centred.

**Question 3**: There’s not a set number, but you shouldn't need more than two. During the first task in Celia’s lesson, students scan the text for information about his likes and dislikes. The second task is also scanning and, this time, the aim is to take out the target language to be analysed in the next stage.

**Question 4**: Set students a time limit that only gives them time to scan the text. Make sure that the task itself is one that only requires them to scan the text. Tell them that they don’t need to understand all the vocabulary to do the task, but that you’ll look at the vocab at another stage if they still want to.

**Question 5**: Some general tips are… don’t spend too long on the lead-in. Give clear instructions and have the language analysis on the board and on a handout, so that students don’t have to waste time copying from the board.

**Question 6**: No. In Celia’s lesson the cline/scale was clear enough to not need it. Visuals that are clear usually don’t need to be concept-checked.

**Question 7**: Read up on your target language and plan carefully. Naturally you will be a bit nervous in this area, but remember; as long as you understand the main structure of the grammar, you will be fine.

The main aim of any lesson is that students can *use* the language effectively, so the focus is never solely on grammar.  It will also be on skills, meaning and pronunciation, for example. Pre-prepare exactly what you are going to do in the lesson and maybe also a handout to give to students.

Also, think about whether you are trying to do too much. If that’s not the case, then think of the most efficient way to do it – as in Celia’s lesson.

**Question 8**: Yes! This is very important and often isn’t done enough. The text that you decide on is the context for the language and will help your students understand it, so it is something you should exploit and use to help your students.

**Effective strategies/activities for developing students’ reading skills**

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different reading strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun (but not too much fun with young adults and adults).

**Here are some of the most practical approaches:**

**1. Strategies**

* Guessing word meanings by using context clues
* Word formation clues
* Considering syntax and sentence structure by noting the grammatical functions of unknown words
* Analysing reference words
* Predicting text content
* Reading for specific pieces of information
* Learning to use the dictionary effectively

There are many integrative activities you can use. Use your imagination!

**Here are some practical ideas:**

* Matching/contrasting – e.g. matching/contrasting the characteristics of two individuals in the story
* Timelines – these will help them to understand the way a text is structured, with tense changes, linking words and flashbacks
* Character study – depending on the content, you could make this much more interesting by getting the students to complete, say, a doctor’s report or a police report on the character
* Students reacting to texts by writing summaries
* Writing new endings
* Re-enacting the text
* Dramatising interviews based on the text
* Carefully listening for key words or phrases from the text which are in authentic video or audio tapes
* Creating role-play situations or simulations of cultural experiences based on the text
* True/false questions, factual questions and ‘why’ questions, as a basis for discussing the text (not testing)
* Gap-filling - the gaps might all be factual words from the passage; alternatively, they might be linking words that hold the sentences together; they could also be grammatical items
* Distinguishing fact from opinion
* Drawing conclusions
* Relating what they have read to their experiences or to other texts
* Noting contradictions and inconsistencies, perhaps in what characters say and do

**2. Some activities**

Choose passages, topics and exercises that are participative, interesting and good fun.

These can be used both by younger and older learners. You can just adapt them a bit, e.g., perhaps only using separate words with younger learners but using sentences with older learners.

**Here are some tried and tested suggestions:**

**Distraction**

To liven up your reading materials, bring a learner from each group to the front of the class and have them all try to finish reading the extract simultaneously whilst you are trying to distract them with silly comments, sound effects, funny faces or any other way, without touching the learners.

Award points for the first person to finish reading or the one who kept a straight face for the longest.

**DVD control buttons**

Draw a DVD player-style control panel on the board, i.e. a box with a series of buttons: play, pause, slow motion and fast – but not rewind. Use the symbols that you would see on a DVD player. Have the class read out the extract or story together.

When you hit a button, they must adapt their reading style accordingly, i.e. start, stop, slow down, speed up, etc. Develop the game further by adding buttons with happy and sad faces, musical notes (indicating that they sing instead of read). Be creative. The possibilities are endless.

**One student, one word**

Before you start reading as a class, put your learners into teams. Go around the room having the learners read the story or extract- one person, one word. When a learner says the wrong word or delays for more than three seconds, give the other team a point.

Encourage them to be alert and keep a good fast pace going.

**Read to me circle**

Get the learners to stand in a circle with their reading books. Designate pairs within the circle and instruct them to read to each other simultaneously. When you shout ‘switch’, they turn to the person on their other side and start reading to them instead.

**Walk and read**

Tell your learners to stand up and hold the reading book close to their faces. Have them read the book whilst walking around in a certain direction or in any random fashion. Tell them to hop and skip, etc., to mix it up.

**Upside-down reading**

Put learners into pairs. Have them hold their book upside-down and race to read through the extract. After each round, tell them to switch partners and do it again.

**Banned words**

Before you start, say that words with a particular grammatical value are banned, e.g. *on, over, under, before*. It could be anything: words that begin with a certain letter or a past participle verb. Read the text and, when a banned word emerges, learners must replace it with a sound or a different word.

**Reading bingo**

Tell learners to choose ten random words from a reading extract and write them down. Read out sentences from the text in a random order. When learners hear their words, they cross them off. The first learner to cross off all their words is the winner and becomes the reader.

Note that many activities already discussed for speaking, writing and listening can also be used for intensive reading, e.g. identifying mistakes, re-ordering sentences, etc.

# Unit 5: Speaking

As with reading, when we speak there’s a lot more going on than you might realise.

It’s not just about using grammar and vocabulary accurately; we also use an appropriate register (level of formality), self-correct, hesitate, use stress and intonation and use different interactive strategies to ensure that we’re communicating effectively.

This can be anything from asking opinions, clarifying our meaning, turn-taking and agreeing/disagreeing to keep up interaction.

Even native speakers aren’t actually 100% accurate when they speak because of the necessity to talk in real time.

Unlike when we write, we do not have time to properly organise our thoughts; therefore we often make mistakes, interrupt, flit between topics and correct ourselves or clarify meaning.

**This lack of preparation time makes speaking in a foreign language especially difficult.**

Already your students may not know the necessary vocabulary to speak about a certain topic and then - on top of that - they may not have the necessary skills to respond immediately to a task.

That’s why you need to develop these skills in your students to ensure they are able to communicate effectively.

Before you start any speaking skills lesson you need to decide if your main aim is fluency, accuracy or both. This will affect how you conduct the lesson, the kinds of activities you will do and how/whether to correct.

**Controlled Practice**

Examples of controlled speaking practice are scripted role-plays, repetition and drilling.

Whilst they don’t give practice of fluency or interaction, these exercises can be very useful for working on accuracy, pronunciation and word/sentence stress.

They help build learners’ confidence too and motivate them to produce grammatically-correct language. They can also be less overwhelming for shyer students, so are a great way to lead into freer practice.

**Students often find it difficult to transfer the knowledge they have in their heads to what comes out of their mouths, so controlled practice can be a good mid-way point on the road to spontaneous communication.**

Through controlled practice, learners can apply what they know passively to active production, to ensure that all that passive knowledge isn’t going to waste.

It can sometimes be embarrassing for students when they don’t know what they’re supposed to say and fear making errors so, if they have the language in front of them, it’s more reassuring.

Controlled practice confines the conversation to the target language; it’s a great way to get students to practice a language point sufficiently, so that it sticks in their heads.

All the instructions/prompts elicit a particular response and are fully predictable. If you are focusing on the functional language of polite requests, for example, you may wish to have students act out a scripted dialogue on the topic, so that they can memorise the useful fixed expressions.

Or for a numbers lesson, you could put students in pairs and give them a card each with some questions on it, e.g. ‘What’s the population of the UK?’ or ‘How high is Mount Snowdon?’

One of the students will have half the answers; the other will have the other half and, by asking and answering questions, they can complete both sets of questions. In this instance, only the target language is being practised and the responses are 100% predictable.

Top of Form

Out of the following speaking exercises, which are designed to improve accuracy? Choose all that apply:

Word and sentence stressLanguage for asking for clarification politelyInformal language for greetingLanguage for suggesting and recommendingUsing conjunctions and past tenses in storiesDistinguishing minimal pairs of soundsUsing intonation to show doubtTaking part in discussionsGetting your partner to agree with youTelling storiesIntonation in tag questionsInterrupting politely

Check answer

Bottom of Form

**Free Practice**

Freer practice, on the other hand, is more challenging.

Whilst controlled practice encourages accuracy and builds confidence, free practice improves fluency (the ability to speak at a natural speed without too many hesitations).

The idea is that your students get better at speaking... by speaking. In the past, learners often had a good grammatical and theoretical knowledge of the language, but were unable to use it.

This is more or less useless in today’s society, where people from all over the world must be able to communicate effectively in English.

A variety of communicative activities can be used to encourage fluency (look back at Module 5 for more details), but the important thing is to maximise the amount of time that the students themselves have to speak. It can though often be difficult to take a step back from jumping into the conversation/discussion.

As we’ve already discussed, error correction needs to be used tentatively with fluency activities, so that the flow is not interrupted too much. Give the students the freedom and, more importantly, the time they need to undertake the task at hand.

An appropriate lead-in can be key to getting any discussion-based task off to a good start. This can be as simple as focusing on an image or a statement just to get some ideas flowing, and can be a good opportunity to pre-teach some essential vocabulary.

Don’t just start with, “Let’s talk about global warming. Ahmed, what do you think?” This will catch your students completely off-guard and is not conducive to a lively debate. Although it’s supposed to be ‘free’ speaking, that doesn’t mean there shouldn't be any structure to the activity.

You could give the students role cards, e.g. ‘You’re a member of a green activist group’/‘You work for the logging industry’, etc. Or set a scenario and give the class some information/data to read through first. Simulating real-life activities, e.g. ‘A wind farm is planned to be built three miles from your house, you are going to a meeting for local residents to discuss your views…’ is also a great way of getting students to practice language in a natural setting, which may actually serve them in the future.

**The whole point is to provoke spontaneity and challenge learners to use language that they perhaps haven’t tried out before**.

Top of Form

Out of the following speaking exercises, which are specifically designed to improve fluency? Choose all that apply:

Word and sentence stressLanguage for asking for clarification politelyInformal language for greetingLanguage for suggesting and recommendingUsing conjunctions and past tenses in storiesDistinguishing minimal pairs of soundsUsing intonation to show doubtTaking part in discussionsGetting your partner to agree with youTelling storiesIntonation in tag questionsInterrupting politely

Check answer

Bottom of Form

Your role in these activities is to introduce the task and then to monitor, rather than being a full contributor. Whilst you should avoid taking part too much yourself, that’s not to say you can’t play devil’s advocate every so often to prompt the discussion if it starts to die off.

Another method is to split students into smaller groups which switch round, to keep their interest if you feel conversation is dwindling. Hopefully, this won’t happen, but a common cause of students drying up can be if they haven’t had any preparation time.

As we mentioned earlier, speaking in a foreign language is a much slower process and we need more time to think.

If you just throw your class in at the deep end without any thinking time, they may become too flustered to think of the words they need - and so not say anything at all.

Step back and give them time to process the task.

**Effective Strategies/Activities**

**Effective Strategies/Activities for Developing Students’ Speaking Skills**

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different speaking strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun.

Here are some of the most practical approaches:

**1. Strategies**

Help your students with speaking strategies, using strategies such as minimal responses, recognising scripts, and clarification and comprehension responses, which they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it.

You are helping your students to learn how to speak, so that your students can use speaking to learn.

1. Using minimal responses

Language learners who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way you can encourage such learners to begin to participate is to help them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges.

Such responses can be especially useful for beginners.

Minimal responses are predictable phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt and other responses to what another speaker is saying, for example: *Oh, I see. Is that so? That’s good. Oh, sorry. I didn’t catch that.*

Having a stock of such responses enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response.

2. Recognising scripts

Many communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges - a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. For example:

*Can I help you?*

*Yes, please*.

It's the same for the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated.

You can help your students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations, so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response.

Through interactive activities, you can give your students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain.

3. Using clarification and comprehension responses

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realise that a conversation partner has not understood them.

You can help your students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participants' language-skill levels. You can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension checks. For example:

For clarification check:

* *Do you mean...?*
* *Could you clarify that, please?*
* *Can you elaborate on that, please?*
* *Could you be more explicit, please?*
* *Could you explain what you mean by...?*
* *Could you give me an example, please?*

For comprehension check:

* *Sorry, I don’t understand.*
* *Sorry, I don’t know what you mean.*
* *Sorry, I’m not sure I’m following you.*
* *Sorry, I’ve missed your point.*
* *Sorry, I don’t see what you’re getting at.*

By encouraging students to use clarification and comprehension phrases in class - and by responding positively when they do - you can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself.

As they develop control of various clarification and comprehension strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

**2. Some activities**

Your aim is to get them to talk. The classroom, of course, is an artificial environment in which to be practising a language. Some students find it a rather scary place, because they are constantly being asked to say things in the target language.

They may have little confidence in being able to say it correctly and fear being laughed at.

It is your job to ensure that the students are happy and relaxed in the classroom, and are willing to practise speaking. A lot depends on the activities and tasks that you ask the students to do and the way you structure the practice. There are a number of points to remember:

* Don't make the tasks too complicated or difficult.
* Prepare the students properly, so that they know what to do.
* Let them work in pairs or groups, rather than having to perform in front of the class.

**Here are some tried and tested practical ideas:**

**A little-known fact**

Ask students to share their name, age and one little known fact about themselves. This little-known fact, e.g*. I have a pet snake*, can become a regular conversational element in future interactions with partners in the classroom. That is, it gives the learner a reason to talk and respond: *I got it for my birthday. It loves eating mice. It is three feet long. No, it doesn’t bite.*

**The hot seat**

Put a chair with its back facing the board; this is the Hot Seat and a volunteer must sit here. Then write a word on the board (for beginners, tell them the word category or theme – this is likely to be vocabulary they are presently studying). Then students try to prompt the Hot Seater into guessing what the word is by describing it.

**Interviews**

Ask students to get into twos. Give them a short list of things they might ask about, e.g. favourite sports, favourite food. Each person then interviews his or her partner for a set time while paired up. When the group reconvenes, each person introduces their interviewee’s favourites to the rest of the group.

**A few of my favourite things**

Whatever you’re talking about, ask your students to share their top three favourite things relating to the topic at hand. If you have time, turn it around: what are their three least favourite things? This information will be even more helpful if you ask them to explain why.

**Describing a drawing/map**

Student A has a picture that she has to describe to her partner B, who will then draw the picture, based on A’s instructions. This picture can be one that the student A has been given, or it could be one that she has previously drawn.

Student A then has to describe the drawing to student B. B is not allowed to look at the drawing. She can ask questions in order to be clear about what to draw. Then they can reverse the roles. It is an interesting and challenging activity, and the students really enjoy it.

**Twenty questions**

The students work in groups and one of them thinks of a well-known character (and writes it on a piece of paper) and the others have to guess who the character is. They can ask questions, such as: *Is it a man? Is he a sportsman? Is he alive? Does he play basketball?* and so on.

They cannot ask questions with *or*, such as: *Is she a sportswoman or a politician?* These are two separate questions. They can only ask a total of 20 questions; once they get the idea, a total of 10 questions may be enough.

**Time for a change**

Ask your students to close their eyes while you change five things about yourself. For example, you could take off one shoe, take off your watch, put on different glasses, put on your sweater and take off your ring.

You then ask them to pose questions to figure out the changes you have made. Students may ask: *Did you take off a shoe?* *Did you put on a sweater?* This kind of activity can be fun and, more importantly, it engages students in a way that requires them to think and not just provide mechanical responses.

**Find a classmate who**

In this exercise, students stand up, circulate about the room and ask questions of other students to find those who can do different activities, e.g. play football, do painting, etc. Students then report their findings back to class.

**Some vocabulary activities and exercises**

Although vocabulary is not regarded as one of the four skills *per se*, it is, of course, an integral part of teaching them.

So, we feel it will be useful to give you some activities and exercises to work with when you are specifically presenting new vocabulary items. And this seems to fit well with this Module focussed on speaking.

Here are some practical options for presenting new vocabulary items. These are best carried out in pairs or groups:

**Context:** Students see the text that contains vocabulary items and deduce the meaning of the item, based on the surrounding language.

**Miming or gesturing:** Students guess the meaning of a vocabulary item, based on your or another student’s miming and gesturing.

**Substitution drills:** These kinds of drills enable students to focus on structure while learning related vocabulary. For example, a dialogue or sentence structure is first taught, then students substitute different content words.

**Antonyms/synonyms:** Students match items from a list of synonyms or antonyms to the word(s) in a text.

**Hangman:** The classic vocabulary game, where students choose letters to spell out the vocabulary item in a limited number of rounds.

**Odd-Man-Out:**You list four words for your students to analyse. Students have to determine the relationship between the words and then explain why one word does not belong.

**Matching definitions:** Students literally match words to a list of definitions.

**Gapped dictation:** You read a text with some vocabulary missing, and the students have to deduce what the vocabulary item is, based on the context.

**Using dictionaries:** These can be used for a number of reasons:

* Using the alphabet and placing words in alphabetical order
* Checking the pronunciation of new words
* Positioning the stress correctly
* Distinguishing different uses of the same word
* Distinguishing different meanings of words with the same spelling
* Checking the grammatical role of a word
* Distinguishing British and American spelling or meaning
* Checking on the formality or informality of a new word

**Keeping a vocabulary record:** Jotting down any new words. You can then use this as a warmer exercise, a few days later, to check whether the word and its meaning and usage have been embedded.

Remember: a warmer is a short activity at the start of your lesson, to get your students engaged and participating, and into ‘English mode’ immediately. A warmer can just be a fun activity, but you should always try, as best as you can, to make the warmer related to what they have already been learning; that is, not using an unrelated warmer just for fun. We will return to warmers when we explore lesson planning.

**Using drawings/pictures:** These can be used very effectively to teach vocabulary.

**Labelling:** Working in pairs or small groups, or pairs and then small groups, the students can, for example, label the various parts of a picture of a bicycle, or the parts of the body.

One student alone may not possess all of the vocabulary that is needed, but by working in pairs or small groups they are likely to have a larger group of words. They can then combine with another pair or small group to see if they have a complete list.

When teaching vocabulary/lexical items to students, you should keep in mind that a student’s learning of a word means not only knowing its dictionary meaning, but also understanding its form, different connotations and its correct use.

Rather than simply giving students the meaning of a vocabulary/lexical item, you need to make sure that your students understand the meaning.

To this end, you can help your learners develop effective vocabulary-learning strategies. You can also develop student-centred presentation techniques, such as eliciting and effective concept checking, which make vocabulary learning, and teaching, much more engaging.

**Unit 6 :Writing**

Writing is the last of the four skills we’re going to look at in detail. Like speaking, writing is a productive, or active, skill because it requires students to create language themselves in written form.

Today, written communication - especially in the workplace, but also for social purposes - is incredibly important. There are many different types of text, some of which we write on a daily basis, others which we use less often. A few of these are listed below:

* E-mails
* Shopping lists
* Essays
* Stories
* Text messages
* Reports
* Letters
* Minutes of meetings
* Postcards
* Diaries, etc.

There can be a wide range of reasons *why*we write a particular text, and so it follows that there are different styles of writing we can employ to communicate our message appropriately. Take a look at the following two units, to learn more about what’s involved in writing skills and how to teach them effectively.

Top of Form

Imagine you are writing a letter and match the questions you would ask yourself with the elements of writing they correspond to:

1. Why am I writing?

2. Who am I writing to?

3. What do I need to say?

4. What will I talk about first, second, last etc?

**a. content**

**b. register**

**purpose**

**structure**

Bottom of Form

There are different writing activities we can do to work on some, or all, of the above elements. This depends on the type of exercise we do with our students and how controlled the practice is. Some of the different task types are listed, as follows:

* **Copying**– Young learners in particular, or students who use a different alphabet from the Roman one used for English, often need to copy characters or words, in order to learn how to formulate them
* **Controlled exercises** – Learners write single words or phrases in response to questions. There is little room for error, as the task is so focused
* **Guided writing** – Using samples or models of longer texts to demonstrate to students appropriate language and structures for the task
* **Process writing** – Students choose what they want to write, but you guide them through the process
* **Unguided writing** – Students write without too much assistance

Although you may prefer to set writing tasks for homework, there are methods of usefully incorporating writing into the lesson itself. You can do this in several ways, from analysing sample answers or discussing ideas, to helping students decide how to organise their work.

# Before, During and After Writing

**Before Writing**

Both creative and ‘real-life’ writing can develop different skills in your students and challenge them to use language they may not otherwise put into practice.

As with any other skills lesson, before you set a writing task, you need to lead in appropriately. This could be through reading a text, for example an article introducing the topic or a short story, or even by doing a listening or speaking activity to spark the students’ interest.

You may then want to look at some sample or model answers and do a variety of activities analysing the good and bad points of each, and the key elements in each. This could be in the form of fixed expressions, a particular structure, appropriate register, etc.

Once you’ve done this, you can get a discussion going about ideas for writing, or things to include - it's always a good idea to get a wide variety of items listed on the board for students to draw inspiration from, so that they feel appropriately prepared for their assignment.

**During writing**

The next stage is one that is often missed out, but is actually highly essential for any good piece of writing: planning.

You should encourage your students to think about the four points we mentioned earlier (purpose, register, content and structure).

Many examinations that assess English language proficiency, in fact, give a large percentage of marks to students who write appropriately and in a clearly-structured way.

This means that, even if your learners have difficulty with accuracy, they can still gain high marks if the other elements are all done well.

Start off with the general outline and then ask students to think about exactly what they want to say in each paragraph, and how they’re going to say it.

Brainstorming relevant vocabulary and expressions at the beginning of the lesson can help too.

**After writing**

Surprisingly, many students don’t actually check their work once they’ve written it! This practice should be discouraged because even mother-tongue speakers will make mistakes when they write. For example, there may be vague pronoun referencing, missing punctuation, lack of capitalization, etc.

Obviously, during exams or timed exercises, your students won’t have enough time to do a complete re-draft, but you can encourage them to do this for the other writing tasks you set them. Hopefully it will make them more aware of how to improve their own writing.

Don’t only get them to re-draft the language though; make sure they’re thinking about the task as a whole and asking themselves: ‘Have I really answered the question here?’; ‘Is the tone too formal/informal for the audience and purpose?’; ‘Does it follow a clear and logical structure?’

After that comes proof-reading, i.e. checking for errors/mistakes. This is essential even for timed writing activities - the students must leave themselves enough time to check over their work.

It can sometimes be difficult to see mistakes when you’re looking at the text as a whole, because there’s too much to take in. Instead, it can be useful to get students to look through what they’ve written several times, but each time focusing on a *different*element.

For instance, they could read through once to check for verb-noun agreement (e.g. have they written ‘she go’ instead of ‘she goes’); another time for prepositions, a third for correct word order, etc. This enables the student to narrow their focus and be more successful at spotting mistakes.

If there’s time, reading each line backwards - so there is high concentration on every word - is another good technique to check for errors and, again, helps learners focus.

When marking your students’ work, remember to not only mark it in terms of accuracy.

It’s all too easy to purely focus on the language and forget about the other elements involved in the writing process. You should also award marks for how well they’ve answered the question; whether the text develops clearly and you can identify a structure; and how appropriate the register is.

You’re asking your students to think about all of these things, so it’s only fair you do too!

**And remember to give learners the opportunity to self-correct and thereby improve their writing by using different error correction techniques (i.e. a ‘correction code’) as we looked at in Module 5.**

# Questions to think about while watching our authentic writing lesson

Before watching the writing video, think about the following questions relating to how to teach writing to a foreign student.

1. Look at this:  الكتابة بلغة أخرى مجهدةٌ في بعض الأحيان

What problems would the student who wrote the above have with writing in English?

This is an Arabic speaker who has written: **‘Writing in another language is often stressful’.**This student writes from right to left, so would obviously have problems with the basic script of English. This example is worth keeping in mind when teaching anyone whose first language uses a different script. As you can see from the Arabic writing above, letter formation is completely different and so it is likely that, whatever their level, help would be needed with adapting to the alphabetic writing system.

2. In speaking, the listener/addressee is usually present (except on the phone). Think about how this affects speaking and writing?

When speaking, you can stop, restart and pause if the addressee has not understood part of the conversation. For example, if you were giving instructions on how to use a laptop, it would be unusual not to have to repeat something for full understanding. In writing, however, the addressee is not present, so information conveyed needs to be clear, logical and generally concise. You also need to think about tone, as this can be misinterpreted in a text message, email or letter, for example. The implication here is that writing in a second language can be stressful, as accuracy and tone are very important.

Think back to the last time you had to write an essay or formal email. What process did you go through before producing the final product?

The writing process can have a number of different stages.

We suggest that you print off the following lesson stages and try to match and order them according to what happens in the authentic writing lesson video.

**Lesson stages** (these are not in the correct order):

Revising/redrafting   
Having a reason/being motivated to write   
Making notes   
Editing for final draft   
Brainstorming ideas   
Making the first draft   
Planning and outlining

It will also help you to print off the lesson materials, so that you can follow the activities as the students do

**Correct order of writing lesson stages**

**Correct order**

1. Having a reason / being motivated to write **(To help the students to activate their existing knowledge on the topic and to generate interest).**
2. Brainstorming ideas**(To practise strategies for the pre-writing stage and to generate even more ideas as well as vocabulary on the topic).**
3. Making notes
4. Planning and outlining **(To encourage students to note down ideas, as Melissa did with the mind map).**
5. Making the first draft **(To encourage students to do an initial draft in a safe and supported environment i.e. the classroom).**
6. Revising / redrafting
7. Editing for final draft

**Effective strategies/activities for**

**developing students’ writing skills**

**Effective strategies/activities for developing students’ writing skills**

If your students are going to be able to operate effectively, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different writing strategies and activities. Your goal is to make these interesting, productive, enjoyable and fun.

Here are some of the most practical approaches, a few of which we have mentioned previously:

**1. Strategies**

Research would seem to show that many learners do not employ a wide range of strategies when writing in L2. The reasons for this are not fully clear but here are some strategies that some learners do use.

These will be useful for you, so that you can introduce them to learners who have few or no strategies to improve their writing:

* Rewriting spelling patterns, to embed the word structure in their mind.
* Copying pieces of text.
* Writing numerous sentences with the newly-studied structures.
* Practising by translating a piece in their L1 into English (and sometimes using a translator tool to check it).
* Note-taking, to increase their practice in writing.
* Seeking amusing punctuation examples, where the punctuation changes the meaning, so that they can grasp the differences that punctuation can make.
* Writing word connections and phrases down for later use.
* Consulting textbooks and dictionaries.
* Summarising a larger piece of text.
* Highlighting little chunks of language that they can later use in writing.

In addition to making students aware of these and other strategies, what can you do to drive them on to perform better in their writing? You could:

* Let students know that you value good writing. This may inspire them.
* Regularly assign brief writing pieces in your classes and for homework – not just filling in the blanks.
* Draw up some short writing guidelines. Students welcome handouts that give them specific instructions.
* Remind students that you were exactly the same when you were learning to write in a foreign language – but you stuck at it. Share with your class your own struggles in grappling with difficult topics.
* Give students opportunities to talk about their writing. Take five or ten minutes of class time for students to read their writing to each other in small groups or pairs. It's important for students to hear what their peers have written.
* Emphasise to your students that good writing skills are important, both to their satisfactory completion of the unit and to their future careers.
* Provide adult students with an anecdote about the implications of substandard writing or the value of good writing. For example, you may talk about a job candidate who missed selection due to his poor writing.
* Read aloud quality writing done by a former student, and encourage students to listen to its flow.
* Encourage students to pay close attention to the grammar and punctuation they see in textbooks and other books and articles.
* Provide students with poorly-structured sentences from assignments set in prior years. Ask the students to improve the sentences, and then discuss the improvements as a class.

**2. Some activities**

Choose passages, topics and exercises that are participative, interesting and good fun.

**Here are some solid, tried and tested, practical suggestions:**

**1. Copying text**(for beginners)

**2. Grouping:**For example, learners are given three headings, say, *classroom, my kitchen, a fruit shop,* and a separate list of words, containing, say, *teacher, fridge, tap, banana etc....*

They need to write the right words under the right heading. You could also expand this to have a heading with a question mark, where they write silly words from your list that cannot be fitted under the other three headings, e.g. *a blue elephant, a square football* etc.

**3. Substitution tables:**When the learners use substitution tables, they take one item from each box to create and write a new sentence. With a correctly-prepared substitution table, as long as the learners select one item from each box, they will always write a grammatically correct sentence.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The | old  poor  tall | man  woman | is | carrying  buying | a | black  brown  blue | coat.  hat.  walking stick. |

**4. Matching tables:**This requires the learners to think very carefully before they match items and then write a sentence. The result will be incorrect in terms of grammar or meaning unless the learners select very carefully. This is not just copying. It requires thinking about meaning and accuracy.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The | boy  girl  children | visits  visit | her  his  their | elderly  young | children  grandparents  friend | every | day.  week.  month. |

**5. Gap filling:**Gap-filling exercises involve the learners completing sentences using appropriate words, often filling the gaps with the correct vocabulary or tense.

Examples:

In this exercise, the learners will use the verb base to form the correct tense.

a)  Thomas …… swimming in the clear, blue sea every morning. (enjoy)

b)  Maria …… in the shop today. (work)

**6. Tables and charts:**Tables and charts can be used very effectively in writing exercises. The work can be designed around the learners themselves, in order to provide a more personalised task.

For example, learners are asked to survey/interview five other learners and list information in a table with the headings: *name, sisters, brothers, hobby and pets.* The learners can then orally produce sentences about the other five and then write them.

**7. Reordering words/sentences and rewriting them correctly:**Young learners could be given a sentence where a word is in the wrong place and they need to rewrite the sentence, so that it makes sense. For example, *I like to the guitar play.*

Teenagers and adults, when they are ready, could attempt the reordering of sentences. For example:

*They decided to walk to the top of the hill.*

*Suddenly, on reaching the door, they heard a noise coming from inside.*

*The old, rusted gate creaked as they walked towards the door.*

*When they reached the top, they saw the haunted house.*

**8. Sentence completion:**The learners may be provided with alternatives to choose from, or they may be required to decide how to complete the sentences for themselves. For example:

I wonder if:

* *they arrived tomorrow.*
* *they will arrive tomorrow.*
* *they have arrived tomorrow.*

**9. Transformations:**This involves the learners altering an existing passage according to specific instructions, e.g. changing it from positive to negative or present to past, etc.

**10. Dictation:**Ensure learners are already familiar with the text, perhaps from previous readings. If you use a recording, ensure it is clear. Don’t be afraid to try recordings where the speaker has an accent, so long as the words spoken are clear. Accents are a key part of real-world English.

**11. Short essays based on pictures:**For younger learners, you should try to use an obvious, uncomplicated picture, e.g. a cat chasing a mouse. For older learners, though, there could be several pictures from which the learners deduce what has happened. For example:

* Picture 1: *Schoolboy misses bus to school*
* Picture 2: *Arrives late - school clock shows the time*
* Picture 3: *Teacher appears to be scolding him*
* Picture 4: *Back home, parent holds up newspaper with the title page saying: Buses late today.*
* Picture 5: *Boy takes newspaper into school and shows it to the teacher*
* Picture 6: *Teacher looks apologetic*

**12. Dialogues:**Learners could be given half of the dialogue and told to use their own words to complete the conversation:

A: *What’s your favourite food?*  
B:

A: *I don’t like them. I like pears.*  
B.

A. *I’ve never liked apples because they’re sometimes sour.*  
B.

**13. Letters:**Mostly informal for younger learners; older learners may be ready for a slightly more formal letter. Where possible, ask the Head of Department if you can pop these in the school’s mail basket, with the school providing the stamps, so you don’t have to pay the postage.

Or ask if it’s possible to take the class to the post office, if it’s not too far. Students could write an appreciative letter to their parents/carers. They will be happy and inspired when the parents/carers thank them for their wonderful-written letter!

**14. Writing predictions:**For young learners, predicting what might happen next in a story will usually be done orally. With older learners, this could be done in writing. At various times in a story, you could stop and ask them to write their prediction of what happens next.

You could also use a suitable video for a prediction exercise, stopping it at relevant parts and asking them to write their ideas as to what happens next.

**15. Projects:** These are suitable for older learners. In groups, they could perhaps collate and write down information from short interviews and surveys in the school; for example, they could interview some teachers about what they like doing in their spare time.

You would then guide them on how to collate and group the information under headings, showing what the most and least popular likes are.

To make this even more interesting, you could ask your learners to try and predict and write down what the top three likes might be, before they carry out the survey. The person whose prediction is closest could be given a small prize.