

Introduction for trainers and tutors on courses

This book can be used as a basis for any training courses for teachers of English to 4–12 year olds.

We recommend that all tutors and teachers begin by reading carefully through the Introduction, as this gives insights into how the book was planned and advice on how to approach each section.

Recommendations for training sessions

There are some activities which would be best done in group sessions. Many activities denoted by the symbol ➞ will benefit participants more if done in pairs or small groups. On all training courses, there are some participants who feel shy and ashamed of their level of English, and who hesitate to speak English in front of the whole group. In the relative privacy of a small group or pair, they are less likely to worry about making mistakes and are more likely to try out new words and phrases. Working in pairs increases the opportunities they get for spontaneous speech, and helps them develop their fluency and confidence.

Starting a new section

Begin each new section by letting participants read the rationale for the activity type, and then summarize and/or discuss the main points either as a class or with participants in groups.

Using the CD and the classroom extracts

A CD is provided with this book because it gives teachers examples of English in use in the classroom. It is the simplest and most direct way to show how listening to English can improve pronunciation and intonation.

Before playing the CD, ensure teachers understand the classroom context. As you progress through the book, you may get to know some of the teachers on the CD quite well. Note that some of the teachers contributed several lessons at different levels. You may need to explain to participants that the original teachers' recordings had to be re-recorded by actors in a studio, which is why some teachers sound rather similar to each other. (Reassure them that the actors had heard the original tapes and kept as close as possible to the original.)

In the session, you may need to play the CD more than once. Ideas for what to focus on each time are given in the section itself and there are more ideas in the main Introduction. Participants might profit from some choral repetition of short chunks and phrases, to focus on stress and intonation, as well as pronunciation of key words.

In the Language Focus sections we have focused on certain aspects of language used in the lesson extract. Participants could, however, analyse other aspects of an extract.

TEACHING TIPS: participants can read through the tips and relate them to their own experience. Then in pairs or groups they can

- tell others about their own experience of similar techniques, situations ('I once did/used ... with a class of 8 years olds ...')
- suggest situations in their classes where such tips might help, and say how they might actually carry them out
- give ideas for adapting the tips or setting activities up differently.

After this, ask some pairs to report their best idea to the class. Give the whole group time to prepare what to say, if they are asked.

EXTENSION IDEAS: participants read through these ideas, then

- choose one they have experience of, or would like to try out, and tell each other what they did/might do in class and what the good things/difficulties were/might be
- try to suggest another similar activity, or another topic this could be done with
- think of ways to extend them further, and add reading or writing activities.

After this, ask some different pairs to report their best idea to the class. Again, give the whole class time to prepare what to say.

Language Focus exercises

These can be done in pairs. Encourage participants to

- add to and adapt the language in the tables (explaining to each other in what context their phrases would be used) and then practise in pairs

- do the task (for example, pairing, adding, sequencing, spotting the odd one out) first on their own and then compare the way they did it with their partner, reading the phrases out loud.

Let participants try out some short interactions, role-playing with each other, and building on the examples a little more. Encourage them to

- exaggerate the intonation and expression they use while doing this, for fun
- say the phrases/examples out loud from memory, without reading them from the book
- see how many they can remember in one minute without looking back at the book
- choose the most useful language and tell the class what it was and when they could use it
- write new words and expressions in their language notebooks
- prepare together in pairs what they are going to record on their personal cassette at home.

During the following session, ask participants if you can hear a short sample from some of their recordings. (Participants can choose what bit to play to the class, and have their cassettes wound back, ready to play, at the start of the session.) This is a good way of ensuring that participants actually do make the effort to record. And always think of something positive to say about their contributions.

We emphasize getting participants to record themselves because we believe that 'going public' greatly enhances the desire to improve their own language, and the effort put into preparing for the recording aids both memory retention and recall.

Topic Talk and Storytelling

These are best done in small groups, to increase opportunities for teacher talk. Topic Talk sections are set up differently in each unit on purpose to give teachers experience of a variety of types of interaction and activity. See the main Introduction for further rationale. You may well wish to change or supplement these topics to suit your local syllabus.

If your participants need more fluency practice and opportunities for sustained talk, ask them to prepare a simple story on a familiar topic, to tell in the next group session. They can do this even before they get to the units on storytelling. You can set a one-minute time limit to begin with. Sometimes they can record their story in their own time and play it back in a group session. If they are shy, they can tell or play their story in small groups of three or four.

Follow-up presentations

After pair or group discussions of Extension Ideas, Teaching Tips, and Topic Talk, participants can be asked to present their findings or best ideas to another small group or to the whole class. Because this constitutes a more 'public' performance, there will be a natural urge to be as accurate and as organized as possible. But before they present their findings in public, they will benefit from some planning time, when they plan roughly what they will say and try to make their language suitably accurate. During this planning time, they can ask a trainer if they are not sure of a language point, or check in a dictionary or with their co-participants.

This process mirrors a three-part Task-based approach (Willis 1996):

TASK

- done in pairs or small groups
- spontaneous talk (mistakes don't matter).

PLANNING

- pairs decide what ideas to present to the whole group
- efforts made to plan appropriate language that is both fluent and accurate.

REPORT

- tutor asks some pairs/groups to report their ideas, i.e. to present their ideas to the whole class
- this is more formal planned talk
- the ideas can then be summarized or discussed.

Further study ideas

Here we would like to encourage teachers to continue in their own personal self-development. Many of the ideas ask teachers to look back again at specific activities and language, to listen again to extracts, and then to plan, work out, and write down ideas for lessons. Then finally teachers can try out their ideas, teach, and record their own classes.

Teachers could keep a record in their journals of any comments or analysis, and the self-evaluation they are doing. Using journals helps trainees structure their own learning and become more aware of their specific needs.

You might find it useful to make notes on some of the things you learn from looking at their journals, if you have agreed beforehand that you can read them.

Organizing teaching practice activities with a focus on classroom language

The following pattern has proved useful for practising classroom language in training sessions. It could be used with the activities or situations illustrated in a classroom extract, or suggested in a Teaching Tips or Extension Ideas section.

Divide participants into groups of three (or possibly four, but not less than three).

Ask them to appoint one teacher, one or two children, and one language secretary.

- Tell and show the ‘teachers’ from each group what they have to do.
- Tell the ‘children’ from each group that they must *only* do what they are actually told by the teacher, and nothing else. (As teachers they may see in advance the point of activities and may do what they know is required, not just what the ‘teacher’ says.)
- Tell the language secretaries to write down as much as they can of what the ‘teacher’ says. Some groups could use a tape recorder if conditions allow this.

When the activity is finished each group can analyse their performance in terms of language used with the help of a form like the following:

Participants’ names _____

Language used for activity	What was clear and why	What was unclear and why	How to improve

Each time you do this let different participants role-play the teacher, the children, and language secretary. When all the groups have finished they can pool their findings and see what they have learnt.

This kind of group activity should help teachers support one another and help them feel less nervous about teaching in front of larger groups.

Contact time on training courses is often limited. You may want to ask course participants to read and study some parts of each unit on their own. They can write down in their own language notebook any new language they see or questions they have, to ask you in class.

Recommendations for individual study during a course

- a **in preparation for course sessions, as introductory reading, participants could:**
 - read the Introduction to the book
 - read the outline contents and introduction to each unit
 - read the beginnings of sections where some rationale is given
 - prepare some ideas for Topic talk or storytelling.
- b **as a follow-up to course sessions, for language consolidation purposes, participants could:**
 - listen to the classroom extracts on the CD again
 - practise their personal pronunciation and intonation using the CD
 - record themselves and play back their recordings
 - prepare to talk about activities that they have done with their own learners.
- c **for preparing class activities and teaching practice sessions, and keeping records:**
 - prepare new activities to try out in class or in group sessions
 - write their journal and keep up a language notebook
 - keep a record of successful activities and teaching materials for a portfolio.

At the end of the course

Encourage teachers to form local support groups so they continue to have the opportunity to compare and discuss teaching ideas with colleagues. After the training session they may arrange to meet occasionally or regularly, and to share ideas and materials.