

## 1. Warm-up activity

A warm up activity is a short introductory activity to set the stage and help focus the students' attention on the topic and on English. It is also used to help activate the students' prior knowledge about the topic. The activity should take no longer than five minutes.

Activities may be as simple as showing a picture and saying, "Today's lesson is about things in a kitchen." Or pantomiming actions that take place in a kitchen while saying, "I cook in the kitchen. I open the refrigerator. I take out the milk," etc. The activity may include the students looking at a picture of a kitchen and identifying the words they already know, and the teacher writing those words on the board. It could consist of brainstorming about the topic—writing the word *kitchen* on the board and asking the students what they think about when they hear the word.

The activities you select will vary according to the language level of your students. Your ESL text usually provides suggestions for this type of activity. The ESL texts may use a different term to describe this activity—but they serve the same purpose. Look for labels such as *getting ready* or *previewing the vocabulary*.

## 2. Hearing and comprehending the new words

ESL students must hear and understand the individual vocabulary words before they are required to say them. A teaching technique called Total Physical Response (TPR) helps accomplish this first step. TPR is a comprehension drill to help the student begin to hear and understand the meaning of the words. It is the least stressful drill because it does not require the students to speak. Instead of speaking, students demonstrate they are connecting the sound of a word to its meaning by responding to a command such as *point to*, *pick up*, or *walk to*. Connecting physical actions with learning new vocabulary helps beginner students master and retain the material more quickly.

When you don't have to say a word, but only physically respond to commands, the stress level is much lower. This technique is primarily used to introduce vocabulary to beginner and low-level intermediate students. However, it can be adapted for use with higher level students.

Use pictures, diagrams, real objects, pantomime, etc., to aid in comprehension.

Introduce and practice the vocabulary words in groups of four or five. Do not overwhelm the ESL students by trying to teach too much at one time.

### Total Physical Response (TPR)

#### **Step 1:**

*Purpose:* allows students to hear sounds of new vocabulary words and begin to connect those sounds to meaning through the use of pictures or real objects.

#### *Procedure:*

*Teacher:* says each word 4 or 5 times while showing a picture illustration or object and then places the picture or object where all students can see it—on a wall or table. The teacher continues until all new words are displayed.

*Students:* watch (Students remain silent.)

#### **Step 2:**

*Purpose:* shows students an action (command) that connects the sound of a word to its meaning (picture).

*Procedure:*

Teacher: gives a command and models the action with all the words, one at a time. For example, “Point to the chair,” or “Point to the table.”

Students: listen and observe but do not respond

**Step 3:**

*Purpose:* conveys to students that the teacher wants them to do the action when commanded.

*Procedure:*

Teacher: gives a command and models the action. (Teacher does this with each word, one at a time, gesturing for students to join in doing the action.)

Students: perform the action together but do not speak.

**Step 4:**

*Purpose:* checks to see if students are connecting sound with meaning by selecting the correct picture. If students are able to select the correct object/picture when given the command, the teacher knows they are connecting the sound with its correct meaning. To be effective, the students must have several (or all) the pictures to choose from. This is the most important step.

*Procedure:*

Teacher: gives a command but does **not** do the action.

Students: perform the action but do not speak.

(Repeat Step 4 with all new words until students can correctly match each word with its corresponding picture.)

Some common commands are these:

- Point to the...
- Pick up the...
- Put the... on the... (excellent for teaching prepositions)
- Walk to the...
- Touch the...
- Give me the... (excellent for teaching pronouns)

**3. Practice saying the new words**

ESL students need to practice saying the individual vocabulary words. A basic language teaching technique called repetition is useful here. Some ESL texts use the term “choral repetition”; others say “teacher models and student repeats.” This technique is used both for individual vocabulary words and for sentences. Repetition is the key to language learning. Repetition is important for all fluency levels—beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

*Repetition Procedures*

**Step 1:**

*Purpose:* gives students time to hear and begin processing the sounds in a word

*Procedure:*

Teacher: says the vocabulary word five or six times while the students listen.

Students: listen

For beginners and intermediate students, if you have a picture or an object, hold it while repeating the word.