

Tutoring Tips

Resources objects, pictures, signs, logos, printed material, radio and TV recordings.

Use resources to:

- 1 Introduce/focus on a topic (for example, photos of local landmarks, a driver's licence, Christmas decorations, supermarket items, birthday cake candles).
- 2 Help the learner get information (for example, the weather forecast on TV or in the paper, a calendar, a public notice).
- 3 Introduce vocabulary (for example, the emergencies page in the Yellow Pages, school notices, job advertisements).
- 4 Practise useful grammatical forms or phrases (for example, written instructions).

Using a written text

- Talk about the context first (using visual clues: pictures, maps etc). Always use the context of the topic, as language learned in a contextual way is better understood and remembered for longer.
- Elicit language related to the topic that the learner may already know. Use this context to build on their knowledge, perhaps introducing and pre-teaching any items that may be difficult.
- The learner retells the text after reading.
- The text is used as a cloze ('fill in the gaps' activity), focusing on vocabulary, verb forms, prepositions.
- The tutor gives the answer and the learner asks the appropriate question.
- The learner writes the text in their own words after reading (compare with the original).
- The text can be cut into two halves, one for the tutor and one for the learner. Each person reads their half. Talk together to combine the information by retelling, asking questions, and checking details.
- Part of the text can be used for a dictation or dictagloss.

Using recorded material

- Talk about the context first; perhaps introduce and pre-teach any items that may be difficult. Relate the listening to the topic or to something that happened in a previous session.
- Give the learner a list of important words and get them to circle the word as they hear it.
- Stop the recording and ask the learner to repeat after each small section. Or they could say it in their own words to give an idea of what they understood.
- Replay and listen again, a few times if necessary.



- Try TV with no sound; watch for non-verbal signals, guess what the exchange is about. This works well for programmes where people are having a conversation or argument etc, where the non-verbal signals are important for understanding the relationship or emotional content.
- Give the learner a number of words from the listening piece, on cards, and they reconstruct it by putting those words in an appropriate order to retell the piece.
- The learner writes what they understand from what they heard.
- Play a dialogue one speaker at a time and try to predict what the other person might say.
- Stop a dialogue to focus on the connecting signals between speakers.

Using a tape recorder, camera phone or voice recorder

- Record a story or conversation or role play with the learner.
- Replay and write down what the learner said. Look at the language. Can the learner suggest alternative vocabulary or grammar? Do they notice particular problems with the pronunciation?
- Record the story or conversation or interaction again. Compare with the first recording.

Listening skills

Encourage learners to listen actively. This is particularly important in phone conversations.

- Let the learner repeat what they understand from what has been said, to check understanding – *So you think... ? So it was... ? So you didn't... ? You all went?*
- Use signals to indicate listening – *Yes, Right, I see, Aha...*
- Clarify when they don't understand – *Could you say that again? Did you say... ? Do you mean... ? Was that 6 o'clock? Sorry, you lost me there.*

Using a role play

Role plays give the learner the chance to practise an exchange in the safe environment of the teaching session. The learner generally plays themselves in a role play. For example, this may involve phoning to make a doctor's appointment or, if the learner is looking for a job as a receptionist, they would take the role of the receptionist. The tutor takes the role of the other person in the exchange; this may require some thought about what the receptionist, neighbour, interviewer, teacher would possibly say in the situation. Phone conversations can be practised sitting back to back, to remove the non-verbal signals of face-to-face situations.

