Action Plan for Teachers

a guide to teaching English

by

Callum Robertson
Richard Acklam

BBC WORLD SERVICE

Learn English with BBC World Service

BBC World Service broadcasts radio programmes for learners and teachers of English. Many programmes include explanations in the learner's own language. The programmes are graded to suit all levels of learner and cover a variety of topics, such as English for business, current affairs, science, literature, music and English teaching.

Many of the radio programmes are accompanied by printed material, including free information sheets and booklets. These support materials are based on the content of the radio programmes and also contain additional background information on the subjects covered. **Action Plan for Teachers** is one of three new booklets from BBC World Service. The other two are **The Mediator**, which uses authentic material to present and explain the language used in the news and broadcast media and which is of particular interest to anyone pursuing a career in the media, and **The Business**, which is a self-help guide to essential business concepts - from entrepreneurship to globalisation - that includes practical help on how to get ahead.

The BBC World Service's **Learning English** website is a comprehensive online resource for both learners and teachers of English. Material from the radio programmes plus information on many topics associated with English language learning can be found on these pages. The site also includes interactive exercises combining audio, video and text and can be found at:

www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish

For an automatic email response giving information about English learning and teaching programmes, send an email to:

eltradio@bbc.co.uk

To find out more about learning English with BBC World Service, write to:

**BBC World Learning
BBC World Service
Bush House
Strand
London WC2B 4PH
UK**

© British Broadcasting Corporation 2000

Action Plan for Teachers

Written by: Callum Robertson and including some material adapted from the **English One to One** teacher's book written by Richard Acklam.

Edited by: Tim Moock

Illustrated by: Tania Lewis at Doodlebugs, except for page 30 illustrated by Tim Moock.

Cover images: top and bottom © British Broadcasting Corporation, middle © The British Council

About the authors

Callum Robertson
has worked in English Language teaching since 1986. He has taught in Japan, China and Denmark as well as in the UK. He is a teacher trainer and writer, producer and presenter for BBC World Service. He has a degree in Drama from the Univeristy of Hull and the RSA Dip. TEFLA.

Richard Acklam
is a freelance ELT teacher, teacher trainer and textbook writer. He has worked in Cairo, Paris and London and has an MA (TEFL) from the University of Reading.

Contents

Introduction

Who this book is for

Action Plan for Teachers is a practical guide for teachers of English. It contains tips and suggestions for the English classroom that are suitable for the newly qualified teacher working in a language school, as well as the experienced teacher working in secondary education.

Action Plan includes the subject matter of BBC World Service radio series *Lesson Plan* and *Teaching With Technology*. It also includes material adapted from other sources including the teacher's book that accompanied the radio series *English One To One*. However, *Action Plan for Teachers* is independent of those productions and is a free standing guide and resource book for anyone who might have to teach an English language lesson.

What this book is about

This book covers the subject of the English language lesson – what to put in it, how to plan it, and how to put that plan into action. There are three sections: **Planning**, **Action** and **Glossary**.

Planning

In **Planning** we cover the main principles of English Language Teaching and look at the basics of lesson preparation. We consider how to put those plans into practice in the classroom.

Action

Action is a tool box of practical activities and a guide to classroom practice. There are examples of different types of exercises and how to exploit them in your class. **Action** also includes information and advice on using a range of technology in your lessons, from the tape recorder to the computer.

Glossary

The subject of English teaching, as with most professions, contains terminology which is specific to the subject. Where possible we have tried to avoid using this jargon in *Action Plan for Teachers* – however, the **Glossary** section at the end of the book provides examples and explanations of terms and expressions which are frequently used in the field of English Language Teaching. Wherever a word is underlined, you can find a clear explanation of that term in the **Glossary**.

Planning

"The best teachers are those who think carefully about what they are going to do in their classes and who plan how they are going to organise the teaching and learning."

Jeremy Harmer - The Practice of English Language Teaching, 1991

In this section of *Action Plan for Teachers* we will be considering some universal principles of classroom practice and how they can be applied to the preparation of effective English language classes.

In **Pre-planning,** we will be looking at the following questions:

- What should go into an English language lesson?
- What is a lesson plan?
- Why is planning important?
- Do you need to plan if you have a course book?
- What are the principles of planning?

In **Planning a lesson,** those principles are put into action in a model plan for different stages of an actual lesson.

- Aims and concepts
- Contexts and marker sentences
- Starting a lesson
- Presenting new language
- Controlled practice
- Freer (less controlled) practice
- Finishing the lesson

Pre-planning

What should go into an English language lesson?

Every lesson is unique and is made up of different stages. Lessons can focus on grammar, vocabulary, reading or writing. They may contain listening and speaking activities and concentrate on introducing new language items or on revision. The actual content of any lesson will depend on what the teacher aims to achieve during the lesson, the students and the teaching situation. However there are some ideas that can be considered for every lesson.

Students who are interested in, involved in and enjoy what they are studying tend to make better progress and learn faster. As teachers, it is important then to provide students with lessons that are not only well-structured but which are also interesting and enjoyable. Careful thought and preparation will help to achieve this.

When thinking about an English lesson it is useful to keep the following three elements in mind:

Engage   Study   Activate

These three elements, E. S. A. should be present in every teaching sequence, whatever your teaching point. But what do we mean by E. S. A.?

E is for Engage

It is important to engage the students. This means getting the students interested in the subject, in the class and in the language point and hopefully enjoying what they are doing. But why is this important? After all, you may feel that students come to school to learn, not to be entertained!

If students are engaged, if they're genuinely interested and involved in what's going on, the chances are that they're going to learn an awful lot better because they're not just doing what they have to do because they're in school, they're also actively involved in what's going on.

Jeremy Harmer, author of The Practice of English Language Teaching - Lesson Plan, Programme 2

Engaging students is important for the learning process. Engaged students learn better and are likely to cause fewer discipline problems.

S is for Study

In any lesson students usually need something to study. In an English teaching lesson there needs to be some language focus for the class. Students need to be introduced systematically to the way that English is put together. The Study element of a lesson could be a focus on any aspect of the language, such as grammar or vocabulary and pronunciation. A Study stage does not have to be new language input. It could also cover revision and extension of previously taught material.

A is for Activate

Simply telling students about the language is not usually enough to help them to learn it. In order for students to be able to develop their use of English, they need to be given the chance to produce it. In an Activate stage the students are given tasks, normally writing and or speaking activities which require students to use not only the language they are studying that day, but also other language that they have learnt.

Here are some reasons why it's important to let students have this kind of practice:

- It gives students the chance to rehearse English, as if they were doing it in the real world but in the safe environment of the classroom.
- Some theories of language learning suggest that by giving students this kind of practice, it helps them to 'switch' language they have been studying, into language which they can use instinctively without having to think about it.
- These kind of activities are often fun for the students. As we have mentioned before, providing an enjoyable classroom experience for students helps the learning process.
- This kind of activity, because it does not restrict the students to using only a particular area of language, is an effective way for both students and the teacher to assess how well the class is progressing.
- Providing suitable tasks which the students can achieve using lots of different language has a positive motivational effect on students. Motivated students tend to learn better.

Engage, Study and Activate - three important considerations for any lesson. Every activity, every exercise, every part of a lesson should fit into one of these categories. Although ESA is a guide to what should go into a lesson, it is not necessarily a guide as to what order activities should come in a lesson. For example, it is possible to have an Activate stage before a Study stage. In this order the teacher can <u>monitor</u> the activity to find out what it is that the students need to know. In other words, the Activate stage helps the teacher to decide the content of the Study stage.

What is a lesson plan?

A lesson plan is a framework for a lesson. If you imagine that a lesson is like a journey, then the lesson plan is the map. It shows where you start, where you finish and the route to take to get there.

Lesson plans are the product of teachers' thoughts about their classes; what they hope to achieve and how they hope to achieve it. They are usually, though not always, in written form.

There are as many different kinds of plan as there are teachers. Trainee teachers often have to produce very detailed written plans, with descriptions not only of each activity but also listing the exact questions and instructions they will give the class as well as the timings for every activity. In a full-time teaching situation, however, it is impractical to expect teachers to plan with this level of detail each lesson they teach.

Newly qualified teachers may rely on a less detailed, but still fairly comprehensive written plan. As teachers gain experience and confidence, planning is just as important, but teachers develop the ability to plan much quicker and with less need for detail.

Very experienced teachers may be able to go into a class with just a short list of notes or even with the plan in their head.

Whatever the level of experience though, it is very important that all teachers take the time to think through their lessons before they enter the classroom.

Why is planning important?

Imagine starting a journey but with no idea where you are going. You are the driver of a bus full of students and although you know you have to drive them for a particular period of time, without your map you have no idea where you want to go or how to get there. It may still be an interesting journey but it would be very easy to get lost and your passengers would not be very happy!
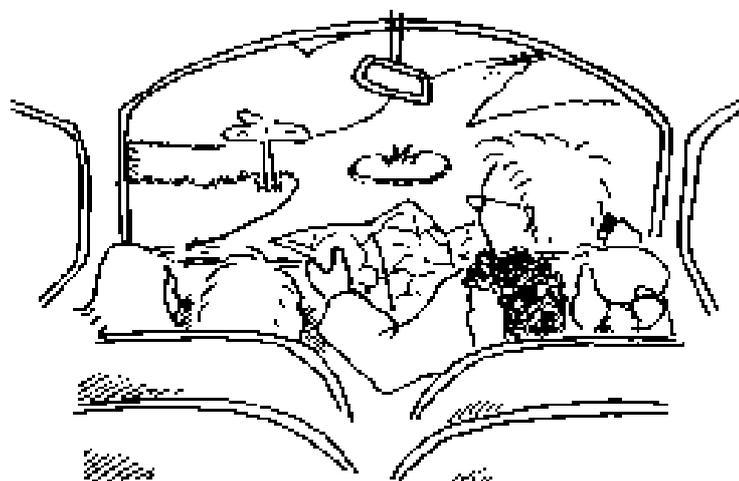
If you imagine the lesson is like a journey, then the lesson plan is like a map

Without some kind of planning, a lesson could be just as chaotic and could leave the students with no clear idea of what they were doing or why. This kind of uncertainty is not good for effective learning or class discipline.

One of the most important reasons to plan is that the teacher needs to identify his or her <u>aims</u> for the lesson. Teachers need to know what it is they hope to achieve in the class, what it is they want the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson that they couldn't do before.

Here are some more reasons why it is essential to plan:

- Planning is a sign of professionalism. Students expect teachers to be professional. If you are prepared, the students can tell. They also know if you are not prepared. Planning is a way to help gain the respect of your students.
- By planning you are considering your teaching situation and your particular students. However good your teaching material or course book may be, it is unlikely that it was prepared for your particular students. Planning gives you the opportunity to tailor your material and teaching to your class.
- As we have seen, lessons need to have certain elements and features such as ESA. Planning encourages teachers to consider these points and ensure they are included in the lesson.
- Planning gives the teacher a chance to predict possible problems in the class and think about ways to deal with them. By thoroughly researching the <u>target language</u> and being prepared for difficult questions, for example, the teacher can feel confident in the classroom.

Do you need to plan if you have a course book?

Most schools provide their teachers with a <u>syllabus</u> and materials for teaching that syllabus. This is often in the form of a course book. Course books provide a variety of material in a structured way and can be a great benefit for the teacher and the student. However, having a course book does not reduce the need for planning.

Here are some advantages and disadvantages of using a course book:

Advantages

- A course book gives the students a sense of security. As the class moves through it, the students can see the progress they are making and what they have achieved.
- Course books are good resources for teachers, providing material and ideas which saves time when planning.
- A good course book can give a structure for a series of lessons, providing continuity and consistency for the class. There is usually a logical progression of language items including built-in revision as well as a good balance of skills work, with listening, reading and writing practice as well as activities for speaking.
- Most course books are written by experienced teachers of English. That knowledge and experience is invaluable, particularly for inexperienced teachers.

Disadvantages

- The course book may not be suitable for your particular class – perhaps it is not appropriate for your age group, nationality or culture. For example, the topics may be too adult or childish.
- Many course books are very predictable. They follow the same pattern unit after unit. This can become boring for both the students and the teacher if the book is followed too strictly.
- Course books can encourage teachers to be less creative and imaginative – preferring to use ideas in the book rather than their own.

Course books are, without doubt, a very useful aid for teachers. However it is often more productive to try and adapt and supplement the material in the book to suit your particular class. If you do use a course book, try not to follow the same routine each lesson – vary the order of the activities and remember that it isn't always necessary to do every exercise to achieve your aim.

A course book can certainly help you to plan, but it cannot replace your own ideas for what you want to achieve with your class.

What are the principles of planning?

Aims

One of the main principles of planning is establishing a clear aim for your lesson. It is important that aims are realistic. If the subject is too difficult for the students, then they can become frustrated and lose motivation. However, if the subject is too easy, the students may become bored. Bored and frustrated students can often cause discipline problems. So it is important when planning to think about your particular class. You may find it useful to bear these points in mind:

- What do the students know already? If you are planning to introduce completely new language items allow more time than if you are revising or extending a topic the class are already familiar with.
- What do the students need to know? If the students are studying for an exam, for example, then you may need to focus on different skills and language than for a General English class. Do your aims suit that need?
- What did you do with the students in their previous class?

- How well do the class work together?
- How motivated are the students?

All these factors are important when deciding realistic aims for your class.

Variety

As we have seen, it is important to try and keep the students engaged and interested. Providing variety in a lesson and a series of lessons is a way of achieving this. Repeating the same kinds of exercises can become monotonous and demotivating for students. Where possible it's a good idea to try and vary the kinds of activities, materials and interactions.

When the teacher sits down to plan what they're going to be doing, one of the things they need to have in their heads is, how can I vary the pace of the class? How can I vary the kind of thing that's going to happen so that sometimes maybe the students will be silent, sometimes they'll be loud, sometimes they'll be talking to me, sometimes they'll be talking to others, sometimes I'll do a bit of writing, sometimes they'll do a bit of reading. If you vary the patterns of student to student interaction, if you vary the kind of activity the students are involved in, if you vary the kind of material they're looking at … there's a good chance that most of the students will remain engaged and involved. If you don't build variety into your plan the danger is that they'll switch off at some stage.

Jeremy Harmer - Lesson Plan, Programme 1

Flexibility

However well you plan you never actually know exactly what's going to happen in a class until it happens! Exercises may take longer or shorter than anticipated, the students may be more or less interested in a topic than you imagined, something unexpected may happen during the lesson. In these cases if the teacher sticks rigidly to their plan the careful preparation may actually have a negative effect. Imagine our journey again. If the road ahead becomes blocked, it's no good trying to carry on, you have to find a different route.

Careful planning is very important but teachers need to be able to adapt their plan during the lesson to suit the circumstances. This is something that becomes easier with experience, but in the planning stage it is often a good idea to consider extra optional or alternative exercises. Then, if your material runs short or you think the class might not respond well to a particular activity, you have something to fall back on.

Similarly, teachers need to be aware of what is happening in and around the class. Students may raise interesting points and discussions could provide unexpected opportunities for language work and practice. The teacher needs to be flexible enough to be able to leave the plan if such opportunities arise.

Summary

- **ESA**   Engage, Study Activate. Plan to have all these stages in each lesson.
- **Aims**   Establish clear and realistic aims for your lesson.
- **Variety**   Try to use a variety of techniques, materials and activities to keep your students interested in the subject.
- **Flexibility** When you have a clear plan it's easier to be confident in adapting it if what happens in the class is not what you expected or an unplanned opportunity arises.

Planning a lesson

We are now going to put the above points into practice. For our imagined lesson we'll take the topic of the use of the prepositions 'for' and 'since' with the present perfect aspect. We'll consider the following topics:

- Aims and <u>concepts</u>
- <u>Contexts</u> and <u>marker sentences</u>
- Starting a lesson
- Presenting new language
- <u>Controlled practice</u>
- <u>Freer (less controlled) practice</u>
- Finishing the lesson

Aims and concepts

For our task we are assuming that the students have recently been introduced to the structure and use of the present perfect.

It's important to have clear and realistic aims for your lessons. One way to check this is actually to write out what your objectives are. Here's an example for our lesson:

Aim To present and provide practice of the use of 'for' and 'since' with the present perfect.

This is a clear but basic statement of aims. The language point is shown but without any natural context. It is helpful also to define the overall concept or meaning of the target language when it is used naturally. For our teaching point we need to consider when native speakers use 'for' and 'since' with the present perfect. We can now adjust our aim accordingly.

Aim To present and provide practice of the use of 'for' and 'since' with the present perfect when talking about the duration of a continuing state or action.

It is important to identify the concept of your target language. Many language items are used in different ways, with different concepts. For example, the present continuous aspect. The present continuous can be used to describe an action that is in progress at the moment of speaking, for example, 'I'm working on my computer at the moment.' However, it can also be used to refer to a future planned arrangement, such as, 'I'm seeing my mother next weekend.'

Although the language point is the same, the concepts are different. It can be confusing for students if different concepts are not clearly identified or are mixed up during a presentation. By expressing the concept in the aims, it provides a focus for the planning and that can help to prevent possible confusion. Every planned activity and every marker sentence can be referred back to the aim, to check that it does actually fit the concept you are trying to teach. It is essential to make sure that the exercises and activities you decide to do actually fit your aims.

Contexts and marker sentences

Once you have established your concept you need to consider actual contexts or situations where the language is used. For our lesson we need to think of a situation when a native speaker would use the present perfect with 'for' and 'since'. It is used when people talk about how long they have had their jobs or possessions. We do this, for example, when describing our lives - so we can take a biography as our context.

Then you need to think of model or marker sentences that are good examples of the contextualised target language. Marker sentences are used in the Study stage when presenting new language. They are shown to the students to illustrate how to 'make' the language and if the context is clear, they show the students when and how it is used. A marker sentence can be taken from almost any source. It could be from a listening or reading text, it could come from the students themselves or the teacher can provide it. The main point is that the sentence is a natural and accurate example of the target language.

Here are two possible marker sentences which we could use for our lesson. They draw on the experience of the teacher:

> I've been a teacher for 15 years.
> I've had a bicycle since 1998.

Now that the initial planning is complete, it's time to start looking at how to achieve these aims. We need to plan a series of stages that will:

- Engage the students.
- Establish the context through which the new language can be introduced.
- Show the students the language.
- Give the students opportunities to practice and produce it themselves.

Before you read below why not think about the way that you would teach this same language point. How would you engage the students? What kind of presentation and practice would you use in the study stage? And how could you activate the students' language use?

Summary

To help, here's a summary of the main considerations that have gone into the first stages of planning our lesson:

- **Language point**   Present Perfect with 'for' and 'since'.

- **Concept**   Talking about the duration of a continuing state or action.

- **Context**   Biography (saying how long you've had a particular job or possession).

- **Possible marker sentences**   I've been a teacher for 15 years.
  I've had a bicycle since 1998.

Starting a lesson

Every lesson has a beginning. And like the beginning of a book or a film, if it doesn't interest the reader, viewer or in our case, the student, then it may not be successful. The teacher should try to engage the students from the very start of the lesson. A good way of doing this is through activities called warmers or ice-breakers.

Warmers were described in the first programme of *Lesson Plan* by trainer, Gareth Rees:

A warmer is a short activity that demands an active involvement from the students. We use warmers at the beginning of lessons for a variety of reasons. Firstly and perhaps most importantly to get the students going at the beginning of the day or the beginning of the lesson, to warm them up just like an athlete would warm up before their big race. Also it gives the students a chance to switch on to using English, to get their brains ready to use a different language.

Here are the main features of warmers:

- A warmer should be an interesting activity to encourage the students to use English.
- Warmers are meant to be short activities, they should not be a dominant part of the lesson.
- Warmer activities do not necessarily have to be connected with the target language of the lesson. It is possible to adapt many activities to suit your teaching point – but the main purpose of warmers is to get the students ready to study and work in English.
- Warmers can often be adapted to provide revision, giving the students an opportunity to use previously studied language.

Here's an example of a possible warmer for our class:

A good warmer to do is the ball game which can be used to revise many language items. As we're going to be presenting the present perfect with 'for 'and 'since', we can use it to revise the part participle of irregular verbs. Take a ball into the classroom and get the students sitting or standing in a circle if possible. Don't worry if you don't have enough space you can still play the game if they remain at their desks. Throw the ball to a student and say the infinitive of a verb. When the student catches the ball he or she should say the past participle and then throw the ball back to you. Continue for a short time in this way until you've been through all the irregular verbs that you want to practise. This activity will have engaged the students and got them using some of the language that comes up later in the lesson.

Boo Tumber, teacher and teacher trainer - Lesson Plan, Programme 1

This is a very simple activity which engages the students by the introduction of the physical element of catching and throwing a ball.

Using a warmer is an excellent way to start a lesson. There are many different kinds of activity. See page 30 for more ideas and examples.

Presenting new language

When planning to present a new language item the teacher needs to be sure of the following points:

- How the language item is made - what the grammatical structure of the form is, how it is pronounced and written, how negatives and questions are formed if appropriate.
- Concept - what the form actually means.
- Context - when the form is actually used.

Once those points are clear for the planner, a way has to be thought of to pass on that knowledge to students. Only telling a class what something means and how it is used is not usually a good way for the students to learn. Thankfully there is a wide range of interesting activities, techniques and materials for presenting new language. Most involve exposing the students to the language through written texts and dialogues. Most course books have these but here are a few more of the materials that are commonly used to introduce new language:

- Video tapes
- Audio tapes
- Newspapers
- Songs
- Pictures
- Realia
- Stories and anecdotes

Using different approaches to presentation in your teaching helps to create the variety that is so important to effective class management. Here are two examples of presentation techniques which are both engaging and involving for the students:

Picture presentation

This first example is called a picture presentation and it also makes good use of the board. As you read, consider the role of the student during the process.

Using a picture of a person is a simple way to present the present perfect with 'for' and 'since' without using the course book. Take a picture of a man or a women from a magazine or newspaper or even draw one yourself. Pin it up on the board so that all of the students can see it. Ask the students to build up an imaginary life history for this person. To do this you can ask them questions - ask them what the person's name is, how old they are, where do they live? what do they do? Ask about hobbies, children, marriage and pets. Remember that the more unusual the life history is, the more interested students will be. So encourage them to use their imaginations.

Write up their answers on the board, but don't write whole sentences - just write words. For example, What does he do? He's a postman - write 'postman'. Make sure you include dates and times so that you can introduce 'for' and 'since' later. Now use the words that you've got on the board to focus on the language. Get a student to try to make a

sentence using two words from the board. E.g. 'postman', '1995'. With any luck the student should come up with the sentence, 'He's been a postman since 1995'. Write the sentence on the board and highlight the language. If the student doesn't come up with the sentence, write it yourself and highlight the language. Write up another example on the board with 'for'. Such as, 'He's had a pet dog for seven years'.

Encourage students to give more examples using the language and words on the board. You can then compare and contrast the difference between 'for' and 'since'.

<div align="right">Boo Tumber - Lesson Plan, Programme 3</div>

Did you notice that the students have an active role in the process? They actually provide all the information that the teacher needs to present the language. Rather than just telling the students the target language, the teacher has tried to <u>elicit</u> it from the students. Asking questions and eliciting are good techniques for involving the students more in the lesson. It helps to make sure that the students are as involved as possible in the language learning process.

Looking back at the first part of our plan we can see that in this example the marker sentences are a little different from our original suggestions of: 'I've been a teacher for 15 years', 'I've had a bicycle since 1998'. However, the context is the same. The teacher could not predict exactly what the students would say, but the context she provided, that of a biography, and the questions she asked the students, ensured that she would be able to provide accurate models of the target language that closely matched the possible marker sentences.

Realia presentation

This second presentation method uses realia. This time consider the way that the teacher introduces the context.

One way to present the present perfect with 'for' and 'since' is to use an object from the real world or what we call a piece of realia. My favourite pieces of realia are my shoes. I don't take them off, that might be a little too dangerous for the students! However, I do focus the students' attention on them.

First, I talk with the class about fashion - what kind of clothes do they like and so on. It's also an opportunity to teach some vocabulary on that subject - items of clothing, for example. Then I focus them on my shoes. I ask them questions. Do they look fashionable? Do they look new? Do they look old? Do they look clean? You can do the same with any item of clothing. Then I ask the students to discuss in pairs, 'How long have I had my shoes?'. While they're discussing their ideas, on the board I write the beginning of my marker sentence, that is, my example sentence. In this case, 'I've had my shoes …'.

Once I have written my marker sentence on the board I ask the students for their suggestions as to how long I've had my shoes. I write their answers on the board leaving a space between my marker sentence, 'I have had my shoes' and their answers, '2 years', '6 months', '1995'. Then I ask the students what word connects the beginning of the sentence with the end of the sentence. Some students may know, if not, I can tell them, 'I have had my shoes 'for' 2 years', or 'I have had my shoes 'since' 1995'. Then, showing other examples they can see the difference between the use of 'for' and 'since'. So the grammar point has been explained through a clear, real world example. I have created interest in the language by creating interest in the subject of fashion and in particular, my shoes. And so their interest - as well as a clear context - should lead to a good, clear understanding of the grammar point in question.

<div align="right">Gareth Rees - Lesson Plan, Programme 2</div>

The teacher didn't start directly with the subject of his shoes. He gradually led the students to the grammar through the subject of fashion. This kind of introduction is known as a <u>lead-in</u>. The students are engaged and involved in the lesson through the lead-in and the grammar presentation seems to come naturally from that context.

For more ideas and practical examples of different presentation techniques, see page 32

Controlled practice

Once new language has been introduced to the students, they need to have an opportunity to try it out for themselves. To become familiar with the form and get their tongues and brains around it, controlled practice activities can be used. These activities focus only on the target language, giving the students many opportunities to use it.

There are many kinds of controlled practice activities as well as those in grammar and course books. Here are a few examples:

- Drills
- Gap-fill

- Sentence completion
- Quizzes
- Games
- Tests
- Information search
- Dictation

This is an example of a very simple game that we could use in our lesson:

A good way to practise 'for' and 'since' is with the pointing game. On one piece of paper write 'FOR' in capital letters. On another piece of paper write 'SINCE'. Pin the two pieces up on opposites sides of the class room. Tell the students that they have to point to the correct word when you say a time, date or year. For example, if you read out '5 years' they should point to 'FOR'. And if you read out '1988' they should point to 'SINCE'. When you've used all the examples, stick the pieces of paper with 'FOR and 'SINCE on the board. Read the time expressions out again. This time students shouldn't point, they should shout out 'for' or 'since'. As they shout the words, write the time expressions under the correct word, 'FOR' or 'SINCE'. Now get the students to use the time expression in other examples. Divide the students into pairs and tell them to make sentences using the time expressions and 'for' and 'since'. Tell them to make the sentences true for them. Give an example of your own to get them started. For example, 'I've been a teacher since 1992'.

Boo Tumber - Lesson Plan, Programme 4

This activity helps to reinforce the target language by repetition, but it's done in an entertaining way for the students and it leads on to students creating sentences about their own lives. This is another very important feature of teaching and learning. If teachers can personalise the target language, that is, get the students to use it to talk and write about their own lives and experiences, it can greatly help the learning process.

Here's another practical idea for personalised controlled practice. It's a form of sentence completion exercise. Notice again that although the practice is very controlled, it involves the students using their own ideas as sources of material.

Many course books and grammar books have excellent activities for practising new language. However, I try to do something that is perhaps a little more personal or more closely connected to my students' lives. One of my favourite activities or most productive activities, the 'negative sentence completion', is an ideal quick activity. For this activity the students are in pairs. Each student writes the beginning of some sentences that use the target language, for us today the present perfect with 'for' and 'since'. A student might write, 'I haven't eaten chocolate for ...', 'I haven't played football since ...', 'I haven't been to the beach for ...'. Ask the students to write the beginnings of four or five sentences and when they have done that they can do one of two things. Either they pass the sentences to their partner who now completes them with suitable language that is true for their lives. So for me, 'I haven't eaten chocolate for 10 minutes', 'I haven't been to the beach since 1997', 'I haven't played football for 10 years'. Or perhaps for a higher level class the student reads out the beginning of their sentence and the partner has to complete it with the language that is true for them. For very adventurous classes you could ask the students to stand up and to walk around the class asking different students to complete different sentences. This is an excellent way to extend a very controlled activity. So this activity allows the students to practice the target language in a very controlled way. They have an opportunity to use it many times, this repetition will help the students acquire or learn the new language. And most importantly, they've had a chance to use the language in a real, meaningful way. They've been talking about their own lives using the target language.

Gareth Rees - Lesson Plan, Programme 4

The purpose of controlled practice is to allow the students to internalise the new language successfully so that they understand it, they know how and when to use it and they've had a chance to produce it. Ultimately, we want students to be able to use the target language in appropriate ways in a less controlled and more natural environment. Controlled practice helps to fix the language in the students' mind so that this becomes more possible.

By it's nature, controlled practice can be very repetitive. Too much repetition can have a negative effect on the students. They can become bored and lose interest. In order to create and maintain a good atmosphere for learning, it's important to have variety in the practice stage and to be sure that activities do not go on for too long.

Freer practice

Controlled practice activities develop students' accuracy. Less controlled activities work on their fluency. To improve fluency, whether oral or written, students need to have the chance to activate their language through activities and tasks that encourage them to use a wide range of English as naturally as possible. Here are a few ideas:

- <u>Role plays</u>
- Discussions - on subjects of interest to the class. Let the students suggest topics from current news stories or their own interests and hobbies.
- Writing activities, such as keeping a diary or writing letters and postcards.
- Projects and tasks - a class newspaper for example.

All of these require a lot of different language. With careful preparation though, the teacher can choose or adapt even such freer exercises to include use of the target language of the day.

Here's an example of a role play that we could use in our lesson:

One good way to get students to use the language you have taught them is to perform a role play, for example, a job interview. In this kind of activity the teacher is responsible for clearly setting up the situation. You should divide the class into two. One half of the class will be the candidates for the new job, the other half will be the bosses of the company. You should give the students time to prepare for the interview. The candidates should think about their character, their employment history. How long have they had their previous job? How long have they been looking for a new job? What are their skills? What are their interests? Meanwhile, the bosses prepare demanding questions with which to interview the candidates. Obviously some will be, 'How long have you had your previous job?', the rest you leave up to the students' imagination. Once the students are ready, you should put them together in pairs. One boss and one candidate and then allow the interview to proceed. It's best to set a short time limit on the activity and you may encourage the students to use the target language, in this case, 'for' and 'since'. However, this isn't strictly necessary as you really want to see what language the students can use in that situation. With younger students who may be not so used to the world of work, try to make the jobs as imaginative as possible - perhaps an astronaut, perhaps a sailor or perhaps a supermodel, whatever you think might catch your students' interest. That's the important part of role play.

<div align="right">Gareth Rees - Leson Plan, Programme 5</div>

The activity needs to be very carefully explained and set up because for most of the time the students will be working without the teacher's direct guidance. It is the students who will be writing and asking questions, it is the students who will be creating their own real or imagined life histories for the interview, it is the students who will be practising their English, not the teacher!

Some teachers may feel that in activities such as this, they do not have control over the students and what they are saying. Perhaps they'll make a lot of mistakes which won't be corrected. This is certainly true, but it is not something to worry about. In fact, it's the main reason for doing this kind of exercise. If students are only given controlled activities, then all we can know is how well they can use language in a controlled way. Most authentic language use is far from controlled!

During activities such as role plays, the teacher's job is to monitor the class and activity. If possible, the teacher should move around the room and listen to the students. Unless asked for help, it's better for the teacher not to interrupt students during the activity. If there are particular errors that are being made, then the teacher can make a note of them and give <u>feedback</u> at the end of the activity.

Here is another practical example of a less controlled practice activity:

An interesting freer practice activity to encourage students to use 'for' and 'since' and to practise writing skills at the same time is to get students to put together a mini-biography of one of their classmates. Divide the students into pairs or alternatively, let them choose their partner. Give them time during the lesson - perhaps 15 minutes - to prepare at least 10 questions about their partner's life. You don't need to tell them to use the target language - present perfect with 'for' and 'since' - because you want to see if the students use the language in a situation where it occurs naturally. As they prepare the questions, walk round and encourage them to use their imagination to find out new facts about their friends. When the questions are ready, the students can interview each other and make a note of the answers. For homework, they write up all the information they've found out. You could even read out a mini-biography of yourself at the beginning of the class or before they do their homework to give the students an example. All the mini-biographies can be collected together and made into a kind of class book for everyone to read. Writing a mini-biography of a family member or neighbour can be fun too. The questions can be prepared in class and the interviewing and writing done for homework. This activity is particularly productive and works especially well with children who love finding out about their friends and family.

<div align="right">Boo Tumber - Lesson Plan, Programme 5</div>

After a less-controlled activity, it is usually a good idea to provide some feedback. This could take the form of simple praise and encouragement, it may include getting some of the more confident students to 'perform' their role plays in front of the class, for example, or it could involve looking at some of the serious language errors made by students.

Finishing the lesson

Any lesson is only as long as the school timetable allows. When planning, teachers obviously have to consider the amount of time that they have with the class and stage their lessons accordingly. A longer lesson may have more than one teaching sequence. Shorter lessons may not, for example, contain a study stage, but may follow on from the study stage of a previous lesson. But one thing is sure, every lesson does have to finish and a good ending of a lesson is as important as a good start.

It is important when ending a lesson that the students have some sense of achievement. Some teachers like to give a recap of the subject of the day, highlighting again the main points - directly or through elicitation. This is a good way to consolidate the language point and give the students a clear sense of what they have accomplished.

It is also common for teachers to finish the session with activities similar to warmers. The aim here is not to warm up the students but to round off the lesson with an enjoyable game or activity. As with warmers, the activity may or may not be connected with the focus of the lesson.

Summary

Our aim here has been to demonstrate the importance of planning and preparation and the considerations that guide it. Teachers need to plan so that their teaching can be efficient and professional. The elements that need to be considered when planing are summarised here:

Background

- **Have clear aims** - realistic and appropriate for your class.
- **Know your subject** - if it's a grammar point, make sure you understand how that language is used and formed - if it's vocabulary, check pronunciation and spelling and so on.
- **Know your students** - base your materials and activities around the needs and character of your group.
- **Know your school** - what room are you in? - this may influence what kind of activity you can do. What materials and equipment can you use? What is the syllabus of the course? - and so on.

In class

- **Involve the students in the process** - try to give them as much time using the language as possible. Personalise language work so they can use English for describing their own lives. Elicit where possible, don't 'lecture'.
- **Variety** - keeps the students motivated and engaged.
- **Engage, Study, Activate** - three key planning considerations for effective teaching and learning.

To demonstrate these principles in action, we took the example of a teaching sequence based around a language point and planned a sequence as follows:

1. **Warmer**   To engage and activate.
2. **Lead-in**   To establish a context for the target language.
3. **Language presentation**   To show the students a model of the target language and establish its concept.
4. **Controlled practice**   To allow the students to become familiar with the concept and form of the target language.
5. **Freer practice**   To allow students to activate their English.
6. **Feedback**   For reinforcement, consolidation and correction.

This is a basic model for teaching a grammar point. There are other elements to lessons which we haven't considered here such as homework and revision, for example, and there are, of course, many other kinds of lesson. However, in this section we have highlighted the overall principles of planning which can be applied to most lessons and teaching situations.

Action

In this section of *Action Plan for Teachers* we'll be looking more closely at putting planning theory into classroom practice. We examine classroom **methodology**, the use of **technology** in English lessons and provide further ideas for practical **activities**.

Methodology

There is no single correct way to teach English. There are different theories as to how students learn, so there are different ideas as to what can and should be done in the classroom. In this section you will find some basic ideas which are common in modern communicative methodology. We consider the following areas:

- Use of the mother tongue
- Eliciting
- Board work
- Drilling
- Pronunciation
- Organising student practice
- Exploiting listening and reading texts

Use of the mother tongue

Everyone has a different opinion about when, how and how often a teacher should use the mother tongue of her/his students. It clearly makes sense to use English as much as possible in the classroom if we want our students to progress rapidly. It is surprising how little the mother tongue needs to be used if we keep our classroom language to a minimum and use plenty of non-spoken devices such as gesture, mime and pictures.

You may find it necessary to give instructions or explain certain items of grammar in the mother tongue. However, think carefully about how and when you use it and take every opportunity to expose your students to English. Make it clear to students when you expect them to use English and encourage and praise them at all times when they make serious effort to practise their English in class.

Eliciting

This is a popular technique which encourages the learners to become active participants in language production. It involves the teacher encouraging the students to produce the target language rather than supplying it her/himself. If, for example, you were aiming to teach the word 'chair', you could point to a chair in the classroom and ask students to say if they think they know the English word. You may well find that one or two students already know the word or have a rough idea.

Approaching the new language like this, rather than immediately telling students, focuses their attention on the item, gets them thinking to see if they know the word in English and motivates them to learn the word when it is finally established. If no students know the word, this is not a problem. You can supply it and students will be equally ready and motivated to learn it.

Eliciting can be done through a variety of techniques depending on the type of language you are teaching. For example:

- you can draw on the board or use pictures to elicit such things as rooms, methods of transport, etc.
- you can use mime to elicit such things as sports, everyday activities, etc.
- you can work backwards from answers to elicit question forms. e.g. Write 'She's a doctor' on the board to elicit 'What does she do?'

Eliciting is particularly good for keeping students involved in their own learning process and for showing the teacher what the class already knows.

Board work

It is generally helpful for students to have a written record of new grammar or vocabulary that is being taught. However, this is often best done after students have been drilled with correct pronunciation as English spelling can be an unhelpful distractor.

It is important that the teacher doesn't spend too long writing on the board with their back to the class during the lesson, otherwise the students will lose interest. If possible, have any longer pieces of information for students on a prepared handout, on an OHT, or written, in advance, on the blackboard and covered.

When writing new vocabulary on the board, try to make it clear what part of speech the word is. If you only write single words, students may not remember whether it's a verb or a noun, for example.

So, instead of writing 'play', write 'to play (with something/someone)'. Then the student can tell that is a verb and also that it can be transitive and uses the preposition 'with'. In the same way you can add articles to nouns that are written on the board. Write 'a house' instead of just 'house', for instance. Although only a very small thing to remember it does provide far more useful records for the student.

Drilling

'Drilling' is a basic technique whereby we can give students the opportunity to practise saying a new word, phrase or structure in a highly controlled environment. Students should always understand the meaning of the target language before they are drilled and at this stage the aim is that they should achieve the best possible pronunciation.

Choral drilling

Having taught the meaning of the new language, it can often be appropriate to drill the students chorally.

1. The teacher 'models' the target language or plays the relevant part of the cassette. The students in the class listen carefully to the correct pronunciation. The teacher should say or play this language at least three or four times.

2. The teacher then asks the students to repeat the target language together. By doing it all together, the students are able to try out the new language without fear of embarrassment at being singled out in front of their peers. Three or four times is probably enough to help build up the students' confidence. (You should not worry about trying to hear the pronunciation of individual students at this stage; that will come during the individual drilling that follows.)

Example classroom exchange for a choral drill:

(The teacher shows the students a picture of someone playing tennis).

Teacher
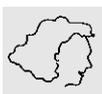
She's playing tennis. (PAUSE)
She's playing tennis. (PAUSE)
She's playing tennis. (Gesture for class to repeat)
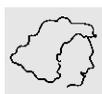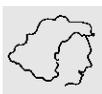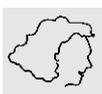
All students

She's playing tennis.

Again.

She's playing tennis.

Again.

She's playing tennis.

Good!

Individual drilling

After the new language has been chorally drilled to build students' confidence, it should then be individually drilled to enable you to check that each student can pronounce the new language clearly and accurately.

The teacher should ask as many students as possible to repeat the target language. You will need to pay attention to the pronunciation of sounds and word stress of individual words and to the sounds, stress and intonation of longer phrases or sentences. It is generally a good idea NOT to go round the class in order, so that students are all encouraged to remain alert and attentive. It is also important not to spend too much time on one student otherwise the rest of the class will get bored and stop paying attention.

Example classroom exchange for an individual drill:

Teacher

She's playing tennis. (PAUSE). **Milan.**

Milan

She's playing tennis.

Lech

Lech

She's playing tennis.

etc.

Correction

If a student makes a mistake during the individual drilling stage, it is important that this is highlighted and corrected. Ideally the student will be able to correct their own mistake.

Example classroom exchange for self-correction by the student:

Teacher

She's playing tennis.

Student

She playing tennis.

No, she …

She's playing tennis.

Yes, good.

If a student cannot correct their own mistake after encouragement and guidance from the teacher, then other students should be given the opportunity to help the original student and correct the mistake.

Substitution drill

A substitution drill is used to practise a structure which has different elements. In each part of the drill the teacher asks the class or student to change one of the parts of the sentence. It's particularly useful for verb forms.

Example classroom exchange for substitution drill:

Teacher

He - **He's playing tennis.**
He - (*gestures for class to speak*).

Students

He's playing tennis.

They - (*gestures for class*).

They're playing tennis.

I - (*gestures for class*).

I'm playing tennis.

Football.

I'm playing football.

etc.

Drilling is a very useful technique which students enjoy. It is important though that, as with all controlled practice activities, it does not go on for too long. The teacher also needs to use clear gestures when drilling, to make sure that the class or individual students speak when the teacher wants them to.

Pronunciation

When new language is introduced, the meaning must be established. This can generally be done by 'eliciting' (see above). If students are expected to use the new language, it is essential that the correct pronunciation is taught. This will usually involve 'modelling' the pronunciation of new language for students to imitate in the drilling stage. The modelling can either be done by you, the teacher - remember to check the correct pronunciation of words yourself before attempting to teach them - or by playing the course book cassette.

There are different elements of pronunciation which will need to be considered depending on the type of language being taught. When teaching individual words or small words and phrases, the sounds and word stress will require attention. For example, if 'telephone' is the new word it will be important to make the correct word stress apparent to students:

Example classroom exchange for drilling stress patterns: (The teacher has established the meaning of 'telephone'.)

Teacher

Listen. Telephone. (PAUSE)
Telephone. (PAUSE)
Telephone. (*Gesture*)

Students

Telephone.

After choral drilling and individual drilling, students will need a written record of the new language. In this case, it will be important to highlight the position of the word stress. This can be done by underlining the stressed syllable (see above) or by putting a small line just before the stressed syllable - a 'telephone. This is the style in many good English monolingual dictionaries. Another, perhaps clearer way is to draw a shape, such as a circle, above the stressed syllable.

o
telephone

You may also want to highlight particular sounds in new words.

Example a tel / e / phone.

It is not essential for students to know all the English phonemic symbol but it can be helpful for them to learn them gradually, little by little. For reference you can find a copy of the phonemic chart with examples on page 37.

Organising student practice

There are many ways to organise student practice of new language.

Amongst them are:

Open class

All students listen to the teacher or to the contributions of individual students. This is particularly appropriate when the teacher is introducing new topics before pair/group work and also when getting students to report back after closed pairs/group practice.

Open pairs

Two students are chosen by the teacher to ask and answer while the rest of the class listen. It is often a good idea to choose students from very different parts of the class so that the rest of the class can hear what is happening and feel included. This often provides a good model and clarifies instructions before a 'closed pairs' activity.

Closed pairs

All students work with a partner. This encourages maximum practice and is particularly appropriate for dialogue work. It is important that the teacher monitors the different pairs as they are working and doesn't spend too long with any individual pair.

Group work

This is best for activities which involve the collection or discussion of ideas. Students work in small groups and usually report back 'open class' to share their ideas with the class as a whole.

'Mingle' activities

These allow constant repetition of a particular question or collection of the opinions of many students. Students stand up and walk from one student to another, asking and answering as required - they 'mingle'! These activities are effective with classes where furniture can be moved out of the way to allow for free movement around the room. Clearly, activities like this (especially with a large class) need to be set up carefully with clear instructions given.

Giving examples

It is always a good idea to give students an example of any exercise or practice activity that you want them to do. It is much easier to understand a practical example than a verbal one. If, for example, you want them to do an exercise where they have to choose the correct tense in a series of sentences then ask students to look at the first one and say which tense they think is correct. Confirm the correct answer and then let them continue.

Classroom management

If your class is large and mingling is not possible, put students in groups of four or five. They take it in turns to ask the question while the others listen and write the answers, or they ask:

- the student on their right.
- the student on their left.
- the student behind them.
- the student in front of them.

If you are setting up a pairwork activity and you have an odd number of students in your class, put three students together where possible. This will leave you free to monitor the other students. It may, however, sometimes be more appropriate for you to act as a student's partner, in order to balance the numbers and help that student with particular problems.

Exploiting listening and reading texts

When you are going to use an extended listening or reading text rather than a few individual words, there is a basic procedure which it can be helpful to refer to and follow if appropriate. This is a model procedure which can obviously be adapted if necessary but it does provide a generally sensible starting point.

Establish context

In real life, whenever we listen or read anything, we know what the context is, we are aware of the situation, the location, the kind of conversation, for example. These factors affect our ability to understand and make sense of what we hear and read. In class, it's necessary to introduce the students to the context before they listen or read. The context can be elicited or prompted from earlier work, the course book, pictures, discussions and so on. Without 'setting the scene' like this, the tasks can become unnecessarily difficult.

Pre-teach vocabulary

It is useful to teach certain key items of vocabulary before students begin a listening or reading activity. For example, if they are going to listen to a conversation about people smoking, it may be necessary to pre-teach 'to smoke', 'a cigarette', 'to give up' and so on.

When pre-teaching language it is important to establish the meaning clearly. Try to elicit (see page 14) the new word from students via prompts such as mime, pictures, definitions or whatever seems most appropriate. If no students are able to provide the new word then, of course, you will need to supply it. Having supplied it, write it on the blackboard for students to make a note of.

However, be careful not to swamp the students with new vocabulary. There may be many words the students don't know, but focus only on those that they will need to complete the task you are going to give them. Seven or eight new vocabulary items is probably more than enough for a pre-teach stage.

Set gist questions

We need to give students a reason to listen or read. There is little point in asking the students just to read a text, for example. When native speakers read, they know what they are reading and why. There are different kinds of reading. For example, the way you find a number in a telephone book is very different from the way you read a newspaper. So the students need to be given some purpose for their reading or listening.

This can simply be done through the setting of gist questions. Gist questions are general questions that refer to the overall meaning of the text. They are usually not too difficult. The students listen or read only for that information.

If you don't set gist questions, students may try and read all of the text in detail, focussing on trying to understand every word. It is worth letting the students know that they do not need to understand everything because:

- That is not how we listen/read in real life.
- It is extremely difficult to do and can, consequently, be quite demotivating.

Play tape/read

For a reading text, set a short time limit. This again will encourage the students not to try to understand everything.

Check in pairs

After the tape has finished or the time limit is up, let the students check with each other to see if they have the same answers. This gives the students the opportunity to speak. Also, if they have confirmed the answers with their partner, then they will be more confident if asked to answer in front of the whole class.

Check answer in class

Elicit and confirm the answers in open class.

Set more detailed questions

Now that the students are familiar with both the context and text, they can be given more detailed comprehension questions to answer. These questions will require the students to identify specific pieces of information and can be different types. For example:

- Comprehension   Where did Jim go?
- True or False   Jim went to Russia
- Multiple choice   Jim went to a) Russia b) China c) Canada d) Romania

Play tape/read again

For a reading, set a longer time limit at this stage. Because the questions are more detailed than gist questions, they will require more careful reading.

Check in pairs

Again, after the tape or time limit, let the students compare their answers with a partner. Monitoring carefully will let you know whether the students need to listen again or have more time for reading.

Check answers in class

Elicit and confirm answers in open class. In this stage, be prepared to play or focus on passages in the text which apply to the particular questions you set.

Technology

For many years, the blackboard was the only teaching aid many teachers had. In today's technological world, this is no longer true. There is a wide range of modern resources available to many teachers. Technology provides variety in your lessons and makes them more interesting for your students. Technology can help to present ideas in different ways, generate new activities and stimulate discussion. But only if it's used well.

In this section of the book we hope to provide a few practical ideas on using technology more effectively in your lessons. We'll be looking at the following resources:

- Overhead projectors
- Tape recorders
- Radio
- Television and video
- Computers and the internet.

Overhead projectors (OHP)

An Overhead projector is a small portable machine which shines a light through a sheet of transparent plastic. We can write on this sheet of plastic and the light shines it onto the wall or your white board or a blind pulled in front of your blackboard. Usually an Overhead projector is called and OHP and the sheets of plastic are called OHT, Overhead transparencies.

Joanna Baker, teacher and teacher trainer
- Teaching With Technology, Programme 1
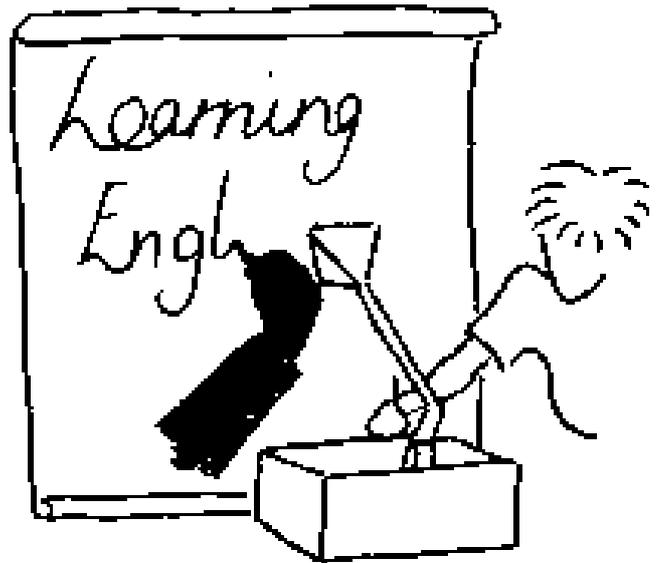
Like the blackboard, an OHP is used to display information to a class. Here are some reasons to use it:

- You can prepare OHTs in advance, either written or typed. This is a way to make sure your materials are clearly presented.
- By preparing in advance you save time in the classroom.
- Using an OHP you don't have to turn your back to the class as you do when writing on the board. You can face the class and what you write in front of you is projected behind you.
- You can use prepared OHTs again and again. When you clean a board, the information is gone for good.
- You can use it for drawings and illustrations that might be difficult as well as time-consuming to do freehand on the board.

Here are two ways of using an OHP:

1. The overlay

An overlay is when you put one OHT on top of another one. Because OHTs are transparent, what is on each one is shown together on the screen. This is useful when checking answers to questions. You write the questions on one OHT, leaving a space underneath. Then put the second OHT on top and line them both up. In the spaces you left after or to the side of the question, write the answers, in a different colour if possible. In the class, first you display only the questions. Then when you are ready, you put the answers OHT on top, being sure to line up the two OHTs. The students can then see each question followed by its answer.

This same technique can also be used for gap-fill exercises. Write a text or sentences with missing words on one OHT and write the missing words on the second. In the class you display the first OHT and when ready for the answers you overlay the second. If they are lined up correctly, as described above, the answers will sit clearly in the gaps.

2. The reveal

This technique involves covering part of the OHP with a plain sheet of paper. Because paper is not transparent, any text on an OHT under the paper cannot be seen. Instead of using an overlay to show the answers to questions, you can have all the information on one OHT. Line up the piece of paper so it is covering everything except the first question and answer. When you are ready to go on, move the piece of paper down to reveal the next question. Using this technique means that the students aren't looking at all the questions at the same time. You can focus only on the question you want to.

The OHP is a very useful classroom aid but there are a number of practical considerations to think about when using one.

- Too much information!

Although the OHP is a very clear and convenient way of displaying information, try not to use it as the basis of a classroom lecture. If everything is shown on your OHT the students might get bored because all the information is there and they won't need to listen to you. So, either use it with the blackout technique and just reveal each point as you've talked about it, or put it up at the end of your lesson as a reminder and a summary.

- Placement and focussing

For the projected image to be clear and easy to read, the OHP has to positioned carefully and focussed manually. It's best to set this up, if possible, before the start of the class.

- Bulb

Many OHP's have a spare bulb inside the body of the projector. It is not uncommon for OHP bulbs to 'blow'. If this happens in the class all is not lost if you know how to find and change the old bulb for the replacement one.

- Pens

There are many different coloured pens available for use on OHTs. They come in different thicknesses. Be careful though as some pens are 'permanent' - this means that once you write on an OHT you cannot erase what you have written. If you want to be able to clean and reuse OHTs be sure to use a temporary marker.

- Copying on to OHTs

It is possible to obtain OHTs which you can use in a photocopier. However, normal OHTs will cause great damage to a photocopier. If you want to photocopy on to an OHT, make sure you have the right kind!

- Light

As the image from an OHP is projected light, it is often necessary to darken the room so that the information can be seen clearly. When using an OHP be prepared to turn off some or all of the lights and close curtains and blinds.

Tape recorders

The tape recorder is perhaps the most common piece of technology that teachers have access to. Most course books have listening activities and the course cassette is an invaluable resource for the teacher.
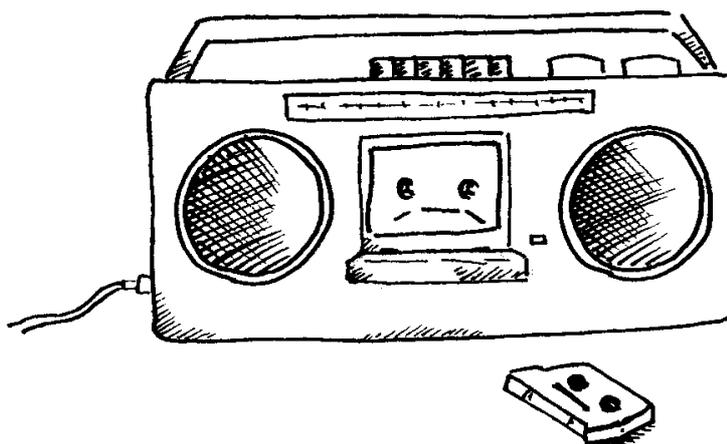
Pre-recorded listening material is useful in the classroom. It brings variety to the lesson and lets the students hear English speaking voices other than the teacher's. But the use of the tape recorder is not limited to pre-recorded course material. There are other sources of listening material such as radio programmes (see page 24) and music. Activities such as 'jigsaw listening' (see below) are a communicative way of using the tape recorder and recording the students themselves is a student-centred way of developing language skills and confidence.

Using music

Using the tape recorder to play music quietly in the background while students are working is a good way to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

Songs can also be used as sources of language learning activities. Students like to work with songs. It's a change from normal activities and can involve them in a subject most young people are interested in. Songs contain a lot of useful language and can be used to highlight grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. They are good for prompting discussions and even as a tool for introducing new language. Here are a few suggestions for activities with songs:

- Gap fill

Prepare a copy of the words of a song. However, in each line delete a word or words. The students have to listen to the song while reading the text and try to complete the text by filling in the missing words.

- Wrong words

Prepare a copy of the words of a song. However, in each line make a mistake, for example substituting words with other words of similar spelling/pronunciation. The students listen to the song while reading the text and try to correct the mistakes.

- Comprehension

The teacher prepares a list of comprehension questions based on the song. The song is used as any other listening material. The students listen and answer questions.

When using songs it is important that the teacher chooses a suitable piece of music. It should not be too difficult for the students to hear the lyrics clearly. If possible, it should be a song the students like or even one they have suggested.

Jigsaw listening

In 'jigsaw listening' activities, the teacher divides the class into groups. Each group listens to a different section of material and later they have to explain their section to people in another group. Jigsaw listening activities can work with all kinds of subjects. Many course books contain jigsaw listening materials but it is possible for teachers to create their own, although they may need access to tape-to-tape recording equipment and more than one cassette player. Here's an example:

- News room

The aim of this task is for students to create their own radio news bulletin based on an actual one. As with most activities it requires a lot of preparation and planning by the teacher but it does lead to a complete and very productive lesson for the students.

First the teacher records a news bulletin, then copies different stories from the bulletin to different tapes. The teacher prepares a list of comprehension questions for each tape. In class the students are split into groups. Each group is given a tape and a time limit. They have to listen to their tape and answer the questions. The questions are designed to help the students understand the listening and give them a reason to listen.

After the time limit the students make new groups, joining up with students who have heard different stories. Together in these new groups the students have to share information about the stories they heard to decide on the contents of their own news bulletin. The students then use their own words and imaginations to recreate the news stories which can then either be recorded or 'performed' for the class.

Throughout this activity the students are using English extensively. They get a lot of practice of different skills and it is engaging and interesting for them.

Recording the students

As we saw in the last activity, the cassette player can be used not only for listening but also for recording. Students, like most people, can feel embarrassed or self-conscious when recording themselves. However, it is an excellent way to build students' confidence and help their pronunciation. It is often difficult for students to know how to improve their pronunciation. If they are able to listen to themselves, then they can have a clearer idea as to what they need to do.

> *If the students are able to assess their own progress by listening to themselves, by perhaps having a check list of things they have been working on ... and if they do this regularly over a period of time and they can see that there is improvement, that helps.*
>
> Kenny Graham, teacher and teacher trainer at the Bell School in Cambridge - Teaching With Technology, Programme 3

Students can record themselves as part of activities such as 'news room' above, or when doing specific pronunciation exercises. This kind of work is made easier if there is access to a <u>language laboratory</u> where the teacher can monitor and give feedback to students individually.

Some practical considerations when using a tape recorder:

- Listen to any material fully before you use it in class. Is the quality good enough? Do you know the answers to the questions?

- Make sure you know how to operate the cassette player. Play the tape in the class before the lesson and adjust and position the player so that it is clearly audible even at the back of the room.

- Cue the tape. This means find the place on the tape where you want the listening to start. Some tape recorders have a counter. If yours has, zero it. This means that even after you have played the tape you should be able to find the starting point again without difficulty.

- Check that everything works before the lesson. Remember, technology can always fail. If you lose power or the tape recorder doesn't work, what are you going to do? You should at least have a transcript of the material which you can read out if necessary.

For details on how to stage a listening activity, see **Exploiting listening and reading texts** on page 19

Radio
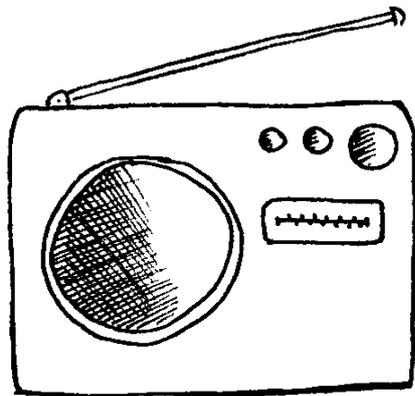
The radio is by no means a new form of technology. It has been used in education for many years, but have you ever thought of using a live radio broadcast in an English language lesson?

There are a wide range of English language programmes broadcast around the world through organisations such as BBC World Service and Voice of America. These can provide useful language learning resources for the teacher whether the programmes are designed for learners of English or not. Most course books supply listening materials, but these can easily become dated. Radio programmes supply authentic and up to date materials. Using them can help to bring variety to the lesson and can be motivating for the students. Radio English is seen as 'real' English, not the artificial English of the classroom. It is also a way to expose students to other cultures and ways of life.

The teacher who wants to use radio material has to be carefully prepared. Here are some points to remember when thinking about using a radio programme in the classroom:

- Try to select programmes that will be of interest to your students, not just yourself!

- Reception of radio programmes can often be difficult, be sure to check that you have clear reception at the same time

of day in the room you'll be using. If reception is a problem in your room, then it may be necessary to arrange to record the programme and use it on cassette later.

- If possible, try to become familiar with programmes before using them in class. It is usually possible to get programme guides for the different stations. Increasingly, information is available on the internet. For example, on the BBC World Service site you can find broadcast timetables, frequency charts as well as programme resources such as scripts and task sheets. You can find more information at: **www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/**

The same considerations go into using a radio broadcast as with any listening task:

- The listening should not be too long. Course book recordings are limited to useful lengths of time. Radio programmes can last much longer, so the teacher needs to be aware of the duration of programmes and be prepared to 'switch off' before the end if necessary.
- Students should always be given suitable and appropriate tasks to do while listening. This way, if a teacher carefully grades the exercise then even lower level classes can benefit from authentic listening.
- Students need to be prepared for the listening. They may need to be taught some vocabulary or discuss in advance issues that come up in the programme, for example.

For details on the procedures of staging a listening activity, see **Exploiting listening and reading texts** on page 19.

It may often be more convenient for the teacher to record a programme beforehand. This gives the teacher time to listen to the material and work out what exercises will be suitable. It also means the students are able to listen more than once. However, some teachers may enjoy the challenge of the live broadcast, as teacher Karen Adams explains:

I like taking risks in class with my students and I think one of the great risks that I enjoy taking is bringing in live radio, particularly the news. I cannot predict really what's going to be on the news. I might have an idea of some of the real headlines. I think the students get a sense of the excitement as well, they know that I don't know what's going to be said, and I know that they don't.

Karen Adams, director of teacher training at International House London - Teaching With Technology, Programme 2

Many international broadcasters put out the news every hour. Although it's difficult to prepare completely for live news broadcasts, there are certain things that the teacher can do. One of these is to get the students to predict what stories they think are going to be on. Then, when they listen, their task is to listen to see if they had predicted correctly. This can also be a useful prompt for further discussion on the stories of the day and other topical issues.

News bulletins and other types of radio listening activities can also be set for homework.

Another thing I've used the radio for is setting listening homework. Students often get very bored if all they have to do is write an essay for homework. So what we've done in class is make sure that everyone has access to the radio and decide together on a programme to listen to. This means that students can actually do some extensive listening. They can listen to things that are longer than they would be able to listen to in class and they can also do something that's a little bit different at home. So let's say that everyone in the class has decided they're particularly interested in a science programme. Then for homework, their task is to go home and listen to the science programme and then the next day to come in and again to discuss together the kind of things they'd heard. Now if there is a problem and there are things that they haven't understood, the teacher can also record the programme and bring it into the classroom. So you can replay the bits that were difficult, but I think setting listening tasks outside the classroom is helping the students to apply what they're learning in school outside in a real-life situation.

Karen Adams - Teaching With Technology, Programme 2

Radio programmes, whether live or recorded can be a valuable source of useful authentic listening materials. As with any other activity, the teacher needs to plan carefully. Radio exposes students to 'real' English and it can also encourage them to become better learners.

Television and video
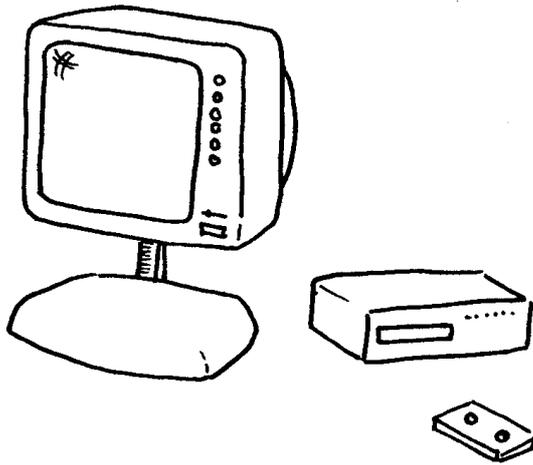
Because television, unlike radio, is a visual medium, it adds another dimension to the learning experience.

I think always to listen and to see something at the same time is useful, particularly if some students find it easier to learn through visual things and other students find it easier to learn through hearing. If you can get the combination of the two, then that is particularly helpful.

Margaret Johnson, deputy director of Britain's Open University
- Teaching With Technology, Programme 5

Using television and video in the classroom provides variety and interest for the lesson. Many students enjoy watching television in the classroom. It's something which they like to do in their own time and to have that activity brought in to the classroom is motivating for them.

Virtually any kind of programme can be used in the classroom. What is important is that the tasks the students are given are appropriate and suitable for their level. In some countries, national and local television stations put out specialist educational programmes on a whole range of subjects. Even if you can't find material locally, you may be able to access international satellite or cable channels that broadcast educational material. It is not only programmes designed for schools that can be used. Many teachers use feature films, documentaries, the news and so on as sources of classroom material.

Live programmes

As with radio, it is often more convenient to use material which has been recorded on video tape. This gives the teacher a chance to prepare specific tasks and questions. But it is possible to use live material. This makes different demands on the teacher and student.

There are certain psychological elements that come into play when you listen to a broadcast for the first time and you know you can only hear it once. Your concentration usually becomes sharper and that's very, very useful in a classroom situation.

Barry Tomalin, author and ELT expert - Teaching With Technology, Programme 5

If your students know that they have only one chance to watch a broadcast, they are more likely to pay attention, especially if you give them a task to complete as they watch. It is important that students are given something to do as they watch. It helps to focus the mind and provides material to use for following up.

By using carefully graded tasks it's possible to use authentic broadcasts even with lower level students. For example, if using live or recorded news broadcasts it's simple to create a worksheet that is suitable for any level. Give the students a chart with four columns - time, people, place, events. As they watch the news broadcast they fill in information in the four columns. This information they use after viewing in feedback. Of course the amount of detail the students complete will vary depending on the level, but because news bulletins contain pictures as well as words even lower levels should be able to fill in a reasonable amount of detail.

However, it is important to remember that for lower level students shorter broadcasts are more suitable.

Preparation for live programmes can be difficult, but many broadcasters provide support material for educational programmes. If you know the topic of the programme, it's a good idea to do some work on that subject before, either through discussion of the topic - even in the mother tongue - or by pre-teaching some anticipated vocabulary. The students can even create their own tasks.

Before the programme comes up on the air, either by looking in the TV bulletin or by looking at the title of the programme as it comes up, they write down very quickly three questions that they want to get answered during that programme and they see whether the programme answers those questions. The questions might be answered directly, they might be answered by inference, or they may not be answered at all. In which case you've got a perfect opportunity to get the students to go to the library and do a little bit of research.

Barry Tomalin - Teaching With Technology, Programme 5

Here's another interesting and challenging way to use live television in the class. It's called 'zapping' and it's easiest if you have a television with a remote control.

You show a channel for let's say ten, fifteen seconds and then you go to another channel and then you go to another channel and then you go to another channel and then you stop and you say, 'Right, I want you to tell us what those programmes were about!'.

Barry Tomalin - Teaching With Technology, Programme 5

Recorded programmes

Television allows students to see a wider world and different cultures.

I think it is wonderful for teaching what I think is one of the most underrated aspects of language learning right now, which is culture. You can see the culture in action, you can see the body language, you can see the environment. You can see the way people behave and, therefore, for that alone I feel video should be part of almost every class and every classroom session.

Barry Tomalin - Teaching With Technology, Programme 4

Here's an example, focussing on markets:

You ask the class to think of a scene which they know, let's say a market, for example, in their country. Then you play a video of the same scene - the market. Then you ask your students to think of one difference and one similarity while they're watching the scene. Play the video. Always get the similarities first and then find out the differences. At the very end of the session, you can ask your class what have you learned about British culture, or American culture, wherever the video comes from.

Barry Tomalin - Teaching With Technology, Programme 4

So far the activities we have discussed involve the students watching and then reacting to programmes. However, there are many activities which involve the students more dynamically with the material. Here are a few examples:

Silent viewing 1

The students watch a section of video with the volume turned down. They have to describe the situation and imagine and predict what is being said.

Silent viewing 2

With the screen turned away from the class, students take it in turn to watch a section of video with the sound turned down. The student has to describe what is going on for benefit of the class. This is a very challenging but productive and rewarding exercise. It's important to choose the video carefully. For higher level classes a scene with lots of action is appropriate. For lower levels, a scene with less action but more opportunity for description is suitable. This activity can also be done in pairs, with half the class describing for a partner before they swap places.

'Blind' viewing

In this activity, the students hear the scene but the screen is turned away from them. They have to predict and describe what they think can be seen. After some discussion the scene is played with the screen turned to the class.

What happens next

The teacher shows the students a scene and uses the pause control to stop the tape at various points. The students try to predict what is about to happen or what is going to be said.

If a teacher has access to a video camera then a further dimension can be added to the class. As with recording the students voices, the video can be used as a monitoring tool.

What I think is most useful for me is to use it for feedback purposes, actually recording the students themselves. I think it's useful for the students and the teacher. From my point of view as a teacher, I find that it helps a lot to have a second chance to see what the students actually said. It's very hard when you're listening to the students doing a debate or a discussion or a role play to simultaneously follow the debate and try to pick up things that you'd like to focus on at the same time.

Sue Garton, teacher of academic English at the Palma Univeristy, Mallorca - Teaching With Technology, Programme 4

As well as a tool for monitoring the students, the video camera can be used to create actual programmes. As a role play, get the students to make their own programmes, such as talk shows and advertisements. If the students are allowed to have control of the camera, then this becomes a very student-centred activity. It gives the class the opportunity to be

creative and imaginative in English.

This kind of activity is not suitable for all classes or students and as with any role play has to be set up and explained very carefully. It's also important to be sensitive to the fact that some students may not be comfortable being 'on camera'.

Some practical considerations

Before using television or video in your class:

- Make sure you know how to operate the equipment.
- Check everything is working.
- Ensure that the screen can be seen and the sound heard throughout the room.
- If using a video, make sure it is cued up to the place you want it to start from and the counter is set to zero so that you can find the same place easily.
- If using a live broadcast, check programmes times and that you have good reception in your classroom.

Computers and the internet
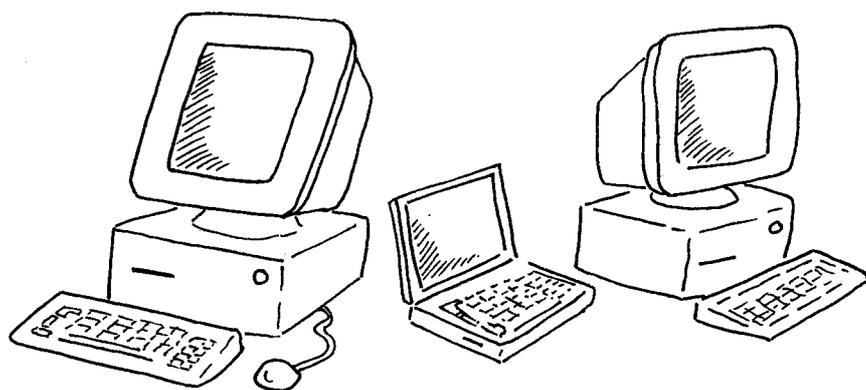
Computers are increasingly a part of everyday life and the internet has, since the middle of the 1990s, revolutionised communication. This revolution has found its way into the classroom. Many schools have computers and many students have access to computers at home.

There is an ever growing range of software available for the student of English. There are programmes that teach and test grammar, vocabulary, writing skills and even pronunciation. Many programmes are available on CD-ROMs and increasingly directly on the internet.

Many computer programmes which are not specifically designed for the language classroom are useful as well. A word-processing package is a good example of this. If the students are doing a piece of written work the teacher can monitor them while they are working. Corrections and alterations can be made immediately without the crossings out needed on paper.

Reference CD-ROMs and encyclopaedias can be used as sources of material for project-based activities in class or for self-study and homework.

Students can create class newsletters or even mini-newspapers with word-processing or desktop publishing software.

The advantage of using software in this way is that the students are focussed on the task and using the technology rather than thinking about English. They need to use English to complete the task, but as they are not consciously thinking about it, their use is more natural and communicative. Computers are another source of variety and interest in the classroom.

It is important to remember that however you use computers in your class, they are not a substitute for teaching. They are an extra tool for the teacher and their use needs to be planned and prepared as with any other activity.

The computer is also an excellent tool for the teacher for the preparation of work sheets and exercises as well as a source of material. Well-prepared and presented materials make a good impression in the class and in the staff room!

Internet

I'm not very computer literate myself but the students are and we encourage them to use the internet - which they can access quite easily - and they use it to get up-to-date information on all sorts of things ... because sometimes in the library the books aren't as up to date as the information they can get off the internet. The internet is a revolution really and I think that we need to make sure that learning keeps up with that revolution and it's actually part of it and it's in the forefront of it.

<div align="right">From Teaching With Technology, Programme 7</div>

The internet is an enormous resource of information which is getting easier to access. It is a resource that can be exploited in many ways. Here are a few examples:

I've used it for project work and research work. I've got students to research and design, for example, a plan for a group of tourists, so they then look up for particular museums their opening times and how to get there and find information for them and then produce some kind of advertising material to go along with it. That kind of research they enjoy.

<div align="right">From Teaching With Technology, Programme 7</div>

I had a group of students once who were interested in Austria in museums. And we did the usual thing, we looked up museums on the internet. And then somebody suggested creating their own museum. So the plan was that they would visit different sites and when they visited each one they would decide as a group on one piece of art and then they would 'steal' that piece of art by copying it and then they would post it back to their own website to create their own virtual museum.

<div align="right">David Eastment, internet and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) expert - Teaching With Technology, Programme 7</div>

These examples show the internet being used as a source of material for research projects. The nature of the internet also means that students can create their own pages which can be seen by anyone in the world with internet access. As English is the dominant language on the internet, it means they will be exposed to English and using it for a variety of motivating and interesting tasks.

Some sites on the internet offer interactive grammar exercises - this means that when the students complete an exercise their answers are checked and corrected automatically. One site that does offer this is the BBC World Service Learning English website. You can find exercises at: **www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/**

It is also possible to interact not only with the computer but with other learners around the world. This can be done through finding 'e-pals', the email version of pen-pals.

It means that a classroom in Africa could be sharing information with a classroom in Asia or a classroom in America and so on. The classroom walls are falling down.

<div align="right">Stephen Bax, internet and distance learning expert - Teaching With Technology, Programme 7</div>

The advantage of e-pals over pen-pals is that communication is much speedier! You can send your correspondent information about yourself including photos and you don't have to wait weeks to receive a reply from the other side of the world! It also gives students an incentive to find out more about other cultures. For information on finding e-pals for yourself or students try: **http://www.lecc.org/**

Computer technology is becoming cheaper and more available around the world. However, because it is a relatively new and rapidly changing technology the teacher needs to be familiar with the equipment and the possibilities. We have outlined just a few possible uses of computers and the internet here. If your school does have access to these facilities, why not give them a go, or even better, use your imagination to create interesting tasks and activities suitable for your own students and their interests.

Here are a few more practical ideas for the following areas:

- Warmers
- Presentation techniques

Warmers

Warmers are short activities for the beginning of lessons. They engage the students and get them using English from the start.

There are many different kinds of warmers. Here are a few ideas:

Spot the difference

This is an activity where the students are divided into two groups, A and B. All the 'A' students are given one picture and all the 'B' students are given the same picture but with a certain number of differences. These kinds of pictures can be found in many resource books and often as quizzes in newspapers and magazines. If none of these is available you can always make simple drawings yourself.
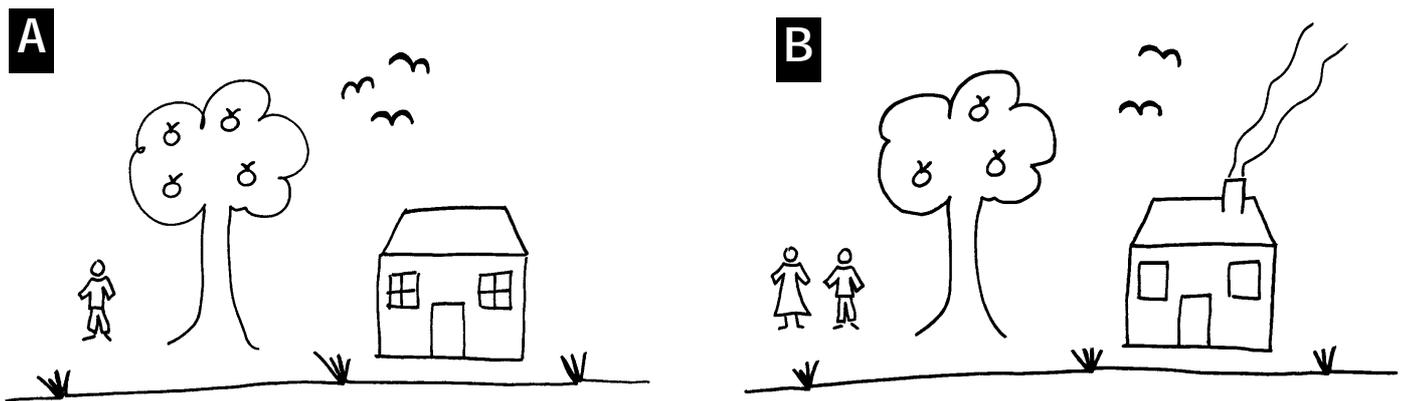
Students are then put into A/B pairs. Tell them that they must not show their picture to their partner, but that they must describe their pictures to each other to find a certain number of differences. Give a time limit of about five minutes.

This activity is very student-centred and can be used to practise and revise the use of prepositions of place, the grammar of description as well as any vocabulary topic you choose, if you have a suitable picture.

Describe and draw

Put the students into A/B pairs. Give student 'A' a picture. That student now describes his picture to student 'B' who tries to draw what his or her partner describes. 'A' should not show his picture, but 'B' can ask questions to help. The pictures should not be too difficult to describe and should contain objects and shapes that the students have the vocabulary for.

After a few minutes, let the pairs compare the original picture with 'B's drawing. Then change over and give student 'B' a picture to describe for 'A'. Again, after a few minutes let them compare.

This is a challenging but enjoyable exercise which can provide practice for a wide range of vocabulary and structure.

Hot seat

Hot seat is a vocabulary quiz for teams. First the teacher needs to prepare a list of words and expressions. These should be vocabulary items that the students have studied.

Split the class into groups of about seven or eight students. For each group, put one chair, or 'hot seat' at the front of the class, facing away from the board. Ask for one member of each group to come up and sit in a 'hot seat' in front of their group.

When they are all seated - with their backs to the board remember - the teacher writes one of the words or expressions on the board. The other students in the teams can see the word but they can't say it. They have to describe it, or give examples, or opposites, or synonyms, anything they can think of to help their team mate in the 'hot seat' to guess it as quickly as possible.

The first 'hot seat' student to say the correct word or expression wins a point for their team. Then, ask a different student from each team to come up and then continue as before until you have completed your vocabulary list. The competitive element of this activity really engages the students, but be warned - it can be rather noisy!

All change

All change is a physical activity that can be used to practise a wide range of structures and vocabulary. Ideally, you will be able to put a circle of seats in your classroom. The circle should have the same number of seats as there are students.

The teacher stands in the middle of the circle and the students sit around the outside. The teacher tells them to 'Change seats if ...'. The way the sentence ends depends on the particular grammar or vocabulary area the teacher wants to practise. For example, if you wanted to practise food vocabulary - 'Change seats if you like chocolate'. Then all the students who do like chocolate have to stand up and find a different seat as quickly as possible. While they are doing this, the teacher quickly leaves the circle and takes away one of the chairs. Then, when everyone has tried to find a new seat there will be one student who is left standing in the middle. This student then has to make a new 'Change seats if ...' sentence. And so the activity continues.

The physical and competitive nature of this activity is engaging for students and can really get a class started well at the beginning of a day. Remember though, don't let it go on for too long. Three or four minutes should be enough.

Find someone who

This is a 'mingle' activity which again can be used to practise a range of vocabulary and structure. It is also a particularly good exercise to use with groups who are just starting or maybe don't know each other very well.

The teacher needs to prepare a questionnaire. For example, here are some questions which could be used to practise the present perfect:

Find someone who ...   ... has been to England.

.   ... has eaten Japanese food.

                                                  .. has read a book in English.

                                                  ... has won a competition.

                                                  ... has lived in another country.

                                                    etc.

There should be at least about eight different questions.

Each student is given a copy of the questionnaire. They will have to turn the information on the questionnaires into grammatically correct questions. They then have to talk to as many of the other students as possible to try and find people for each question. This is best arranged by letting the students stand up and move around the class, or 'mingle'. When someone answers a question positively, the first student should write down that student's name and if appropriate ask for extra information.

For example:

Student 1

Have you been to England?

Student 2

Yes I have.

(*writes down name*) **When did you go?**

Last year.

How long did you ... ?

etc.

During the activity the students will be repeating the target language many times as they ask and answer questions. It is a form of controlled practice but is interesting for the students as they are using the target language to talk about their own lives. After a few minutes, get the students to sit down. Then you can do some feedback, asking students to tell the class any interesting information they found out about their classmates.

Presentation techniques

An important part of teaching English is to introduce students to new language. This could be a new grammar structure or new vocabulary. The introduction of these features is often called 'presentation'. There are many different ways of presenting new language and it is important to use a variety of techniques in your teaching. Whichever technique or method is followed, there are important elements of any presentation.

These are:

Context - the language needs to be illustrated in a natural context. Showing a realistic use of the language helps to make the meaning clear for the students.

Clarification of meaning/form - the students need to find out how the language is actually structured and what it means.

Controlled practice - the language point is reinforced through activities which usually involve repeated use of the target language.

The main aim of presentation is to introduce students to new language by exposing them to it in a natural context. There are different ways of establishing and developing contexts. In **Planning** we saw a presentation based on the use of realia - the teacher's shoes in our example from page 10.

Realia is a very useful classroom aid, but it's not the only way of providing a context. Also in **Planning** we saw a presentation based on the use of pictures. In that example, the teacher used the students' own words and ideas to build up a description of the person in the picture. These words and ideas became the marker sentences which highlighted the grammar point.

Picture presentation

Pictures are a good resource for the teacher and can be used in a variety of ways. Here are some guidelines for the procedure of using a picture in a presentation:

• Setting the scene

Pictures can be used as prompts to help generate interest in a topic and help establish a context. Generally the teacher uses the picture to elicit responses from the students. The type of details the teacher elicits will depend on the language point to be taught.

- Elicit/feed marker sentence

Using the picture as prompt, the teacher tries to elicit the marker sentence, through asking questions and asking for descriptions, for example. If the students do not produce the marker sentence then the teacher supplies it.

- Check understanding

Using concept questions the teacher checks that the students understand the meaning of the structure.

- Model and drill marker sentence

The students get controlled practice of the pronunciation of the form. Notice that drilling is usually done before the students have seen the written form.

- Write up and focus on form

Now the teacher writes the marker sentence on the board and highlights the form.

The lesson now progresses to controlled and less controlled practice exercises.

Here's an example of a picture presentation showing how the different stages fit into the E.S.A. (Engage, Study, Activate) model. Look at the following pictures. What structure do you think the teacher is trying to present?
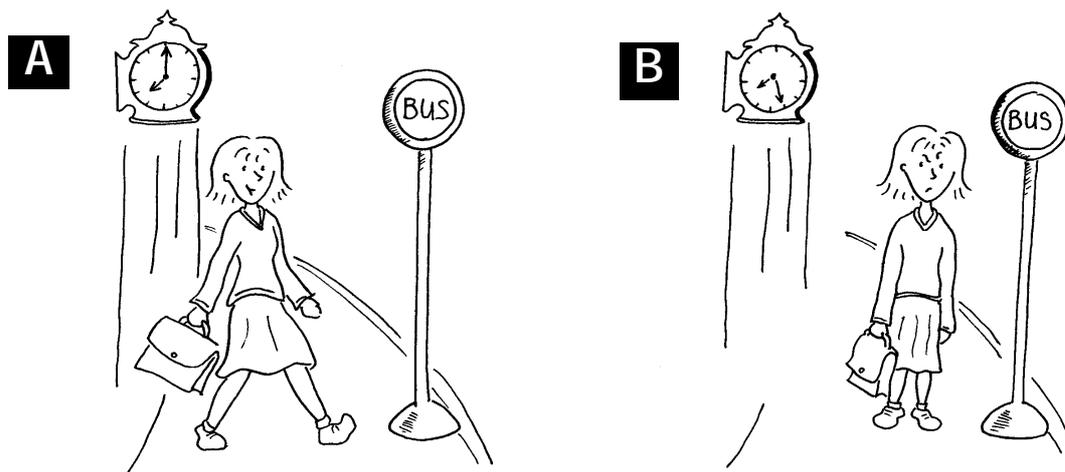
Pictures like these could be used in a presentation for the present perfect continuous.

Lead-in (Engage)

The teacher leads in to the subject by telling an (imaginary) anecdote about his or her terrible journey to school that day. He asks the students about their journeys to school and other places. It's possible here to do some vocabulary, maybe on different kinds of transport - 'by bus', 'a bus stop', 'by train', 'car', 'on foot' and so on.

Elicitation (Activate)

The teacher shows picture A to the students and asks them to describe what they can see. This will establish the context.

Then the first picture is taken away and the second is shown. The students are asked to describe picture B in the same way.

The teacher then puts both pictures on the board and asks the students if they can think of a sentence to link the two pictures. It may be possible for the teacher to elicit, 'She's been waiting for 25 minutes'. If not, the teacher provides it.

To check the meaning, the teacher could ask the following concept questions:

Teacher

Where is she?

Student
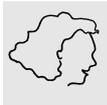
At the bus stop.
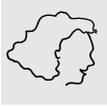
What's she doing?

Waiting for a bus.
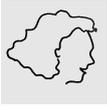
When did she start waiting?

At 8.00/25 minutes ago.

What's the time now?

8.25.

So, she's been waiting for 25 minutes.

Teach (Study)

The teacher says the sentence two or three times before indicating to the students to repeat. The teacher drills the class, paying attention to the contracted 'she's' and the weak pronunciation of 'been' - /bɪn/.

Then the teacher writes up the marker sentence on the board and elicits or highlights the form, in this case:

> have/has ('ve/'s) + been + present participle.

This is then followed by controlled and then freer practice activities to activate the students' use of the language.

In this example, the teacher has used a context established by the lead-in and the pictures to present the target language. The teacher has tried to elicit the target language before giving it directly to the students. The advantage of this approach is that the teacher can find out what and how much the students know before he or she starts to teach. This means that the teach stage can be more closely directed at what the students actually need to know. It also has the advantage that it engages the students and involves them in an active production stage early on in the lesson.

Another common technique for presentation is to let the students see or hear the target language in context and then get them to work out the grammar themselves. This is what is sometimes called a 'guided-discovery approach'. The teacher doesn't tell the students directly what the target language is, but leads the student to discover it themselves. Reading and listening texts are often used for this.

Reading and listening presentations

For a reading or listening presentation the teacher needs to select or create a short text which contains the target language. As the text is being used for presentation purposes, rather than as a resource for skills development, it should not be too difficult for the students. It should not contain a lot of new vocabulary or structure.

The stages of the presentation are similar to those for most presentations. There should be a lead-in, to establish interest and context. This may include some vocabulary work, particularly if there are any words in the text which the teacher feels the students need to know. There is a focus on form and meaning and then controlled practice.

The teacher exploits the text following the stages listed below. (For a full description of this process see **Exploiting listening and reading texts** on page 19).

- Establish context
- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Set gist questions
- Listen/Read text
- Check in pairs
- Check answers in class
- Set more detailed questions
- Listen/Read again
- Check in pairs
- Check answers in class

The teacher can use the second set of questions for comprehension or to start focussing the students on the target language.

As an example, to teach the structure 'used to' for past habit, the teacher could use a text in which someone is writing or speaking about their life when they were younger compared to their life now. In the text, the speaker or writer actually uses the target language in phrases such as:

'I used to go swimming every day, but not now. I haven't been swimming for 20 years!'

The teacher asks the students questions to clarify meaning:

Teacher

Student

Does she swim now?   No.

Why not?   She's too old.

Did she swim before?   Yes.

How often?   Every day.

When the meaning is clear, the teacher can tell the students to look at or listen to the text again and make a note of the way that meaning is expressed. The teacher can then elicit from the students the form 'used to'. This can then be highlighted and practised in the normal way.

Using this technique the target language and it's meaning have been presented without the teacher ever saying it. The students have done the work of discovering the language through careful guidance from the teacher. Involving students in their own language development like this is a very productive approach.

Dialogue build presentation

Another way to introduce new language is to use a dialogue build. A dialogue is a conversation between two people and in this activity the teacher uses the conversation to show the students the language being used in a natural way. The students listen to the conversation and have to try to remember and rebuild the dialogue.

As always, it's very important to create a clear context for the students. For example, to present the present perfect with 'for' and 'since', a possible situation would be two people meeting in the street who haven't seen each other for a long time. The teacher establishes the context through elicitation, possibly using pictures or anecdotes and then the dialogue is played or 'performed' by the teacher.

A

Hello!

B

Hello.

I haven't seen you for ages!

Well, I've been on holiday for three months.

Really, where did you go?

I went to London.

How wonderful.
How long have you been back here?

Well, since Saturday.

Really, shall we go for a coffee?

Why not!
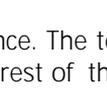
The students listen to the dialogue again and then try to recreate it sentence by sentence. The teacher elicits the first lines and writes them on the board. He then asks the students in pairs to try an rebuild the rest of the dialogue.

After a few minutes the teacher elicits the rest of the sentences to the board, being careful to point the students towards the correct language. Following the complete rebuilding of the dialogue, the teacher asks concept questions to check the students have understood the meaning of the language. He or she can then focus on the target form and continue with practice exercises. For dialogue builds it is useful to get the students to practise the dialogue with their partners. First by reading from their books or the board, but then from memory. This can then lead to further exercises.

The Phonemic Chart

iː	ɪ	ʊ	uː		ɪə	eɪ	
see - /siː/	sit - /sɪt/	good - /gʊd/	food - /fuːd/		near - /nɪə/	may - /meɪ/	
e	ə	ɜː	ɔː		ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ
head - /hed/	ago - /əgəʊ/	bird - /bɜːd/	saw - /sɔː/		tour - /tʊə/	boy - /bɔɪ/	snow - /snəʊ/
æ	ʌ	ɑː	ɒ		eə	aɪ	aʊ
cat - /kæt/	cup - /kʌp/	car - /kɑː/	hot - /hɒt/		hair - /heə/	my - /maɪ/	now - /naʊ/
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
pen - /pen/	bad - /bæd/	tea - /tiː/	did - /dɪd/	chin - /tʃɪn/	june - /dʒuːn/	kick - /kɪk/	get - /get/
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
fall - /fɔːl/	voice - /vɔɪs/	thin - /θɪn/	then - /ðen/	so - /səʊ/	zoo - /zuː/	she - /ʃiː/	pleasure - /pleʒə/
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j
man - /mæn/	no - /nəʊ/	sing - /sɪŋ/	how - /haʊ/	leg - /leg/	red - /red/	wet - /wet/	yes - /jes/

Glossary

In this glossary you can find definitions and clarifications of many of the specific terms used in this book. Items are listed alphabetically.

aims (n)

The aim of a lesson is its goal or objective. It's what you plan the students will learn during the lesson. The aim is usually the first thing to consider when planning lessons. Aims need to be clearly expressed and need to be realistic and appropriate for your class.

Here is an example of an aim - do you think it is suitable?

Aim: To teach the future

This aim would be an extremely over ambitious one! There are many ways to talk about the future in English and to 'teach' them all successfully in a single lesson would be an impossible task. When looking at introducing new grammar, the teacher needs to restrict the aims to a single concept which can be covered in the time allowed. Here's a more suitable way to express an aim:

Aim: To present and give practice in the use of 'going to' for future plans.

concept (n)

Concept refers to the meaning of a particular piece of language, usually grammar. Many grammatical items are used in different ways, they have different concepts. For example, the present simple. Here are some concepts of the present simple:

- For a timetabled future event   - e.g. The train leaves at 10.30 tomorrow.
- For general or scientific fact   - e.g. Water boils at 100° Centigrade.
- For habitual action   - e.g. I get up at the same time every day.
- For 'permanent' conditions   - e.g. I live in London.

Although the structure is the same, the concepts are different. When planning to teach a grammar point it is very important to identify the concept you wish to teach and make sure that all your activities and examples fit that concept. If the concepts are mixed up it can make it very confusing for the students.

Part of the teaching process is checking that the students understand what they are being taught. Unfortunately, the question, 'Do you understand?' is not a reliable way of doing this! A far more productive technique is to use concept questions. Well-phrased concept questions help not only to confirm that students have understood, but can also help those who may be not so sure to reach that understanding. Concept questions are often of the yes/no type. For example, here are some concept questions that could be asked for the Second Conditional:

e.g. If I had enough money, I'd buy a big house.

Possible concept questions:

- Can I buy a big house?   No.
- Why not?   Don't have enough money.
- How can I buy a big house?   If you had enough money.
- Do I have enough money?   No.

If the students give answers similar to these, then it shows the teacher that they have understood the concept or the meaning of the language you have presented to them.

Concept checking through the use of concept questions is a very important classroom skill to develop and use.

context (n) contextualised (adj)

Context is a word for the situation in which language occurs naturally. Students will learn and remember better if the language is presented in an appropriate context. For example, the phrase, 'This is a pen.' is often used as a model for stating what things are. However, when do native speakers declare such things? Rarely, in fact. So, although the example sentence shows the form of the language, because it has no context, it doesn't help the students to learn when they could actually use that structure.

Natural language always occurs in some context, so, when planning, teachers need to think of contextualised examples of the language point.

controlled practice

A type of exercise that gives the students repeated opportunities to use, recognise and/or manipulate a particular language point. Repetition is often a part of these activities. The aim is to develop accurate use of the form and fix it in the students' minds.

elicit (vb) eliciting/elicitation (n)

Eliciting is a technique for encouraging the students to be involved in and actively contributing to the lesson. Rather than the teacher telling the students everything, the teacher asks the students for responses and information throughout the lesson. Eliciting can be done through questions, gesture, mime and pictures. For a good example of this, see the picture presentation activity on page 9 where the teacher elicits the students' ideas and uses them for her presentation.

Eliciting is also a good technique for correction, giving the student a chance to correct him- or herself, before offering other students the chance to help. Only then, if there are no responses does the teacher supply the correction. For example:

Student 1

Yesterday I goed to the park.

Teacher

Yesterday you ..., not goed, you ...

Wented!

Good idea, close but no, not wented, can anybody else help?

Student 2

Went?

Good yes, so (turning back to the first student) **tell me again about yesterday.**

Student 1

Yesterday I went to the park.

Excellent.
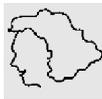
Notice that the teacher responds positively, even where there is a mistake. The student is not left feeling embarrassed by the correction as it has been handled sensitively with praise and encouragement.

feedback (n)

Feedback is a response from the teacher to the class after an exercise or task has been completed. It takes a number of forms but could, for example, be praise or correction of errors the teacher has heard.

freer practice

Freer practice activities, sometimes called 'less-controlled' activities, are used to activate the students' language. Through these activities, students have the opportunity to use the target language in a reasonably natural contextualised situation. This means that they may need to use a wide range of English as well as the target language. Role plays and discussions are examples of freer practice activities.

general English

An expression used for everyday English. That is, the students are not studying for an exam, or because they want to learn business or other specialised vocabulary, for example. General English topics include, for example, going to the shops, asking for directions, writing postcards, and so on.

grade (vb)

To grade your language means to simplify what you say so that it is understandable for the class. When teaching lower levels, teachers need to grade their language carefully.

ice-breakers

Short, entertaining activities at the start of lessons to get the class 'warmed-up' or to get a new class working together. Another word for 'warmers' (see page 30).

language laboratory

A room with individual booths where students have their own cassette player. The students wear headphones so they are able to work by themselves. This means that listening exercises can be conducted at the students' own pace. Students are also able to record and listen to their own voices.

lead-in

A lead-in is a way to introduce the topic of a lesson. The teacher may use a story, anecdote or pictures to lead the students into the subject of the day.

marker sentence

A sentence used by the teacher during the presentation or study stage of a lesson to illustrate the form of a piece of language. It's a model or example sentence.

monitor (vb)

When students are working together in pairs or groups the teacher needs to be aware of what they are doing. This is not mainly from the point of view of discipline, although that is a consideration. Monitoring means walking around the class, listening to the students and looking at what they are doing. If the teacher does this then they can get a good idea as to how the class are progressing, they can make notes of any particular language problems and of course they can help students on an individual or group basis if necessary.

realia (n)

A name for real-world objects that are brought in to the classroom as tools or aids. See page 10 for an example.

role plays

A kind of freer practice activity. A simulated situation designed to give students practice in real world English. Imagining the class is a restaurant where some students play customers and some are waiters is an example of a role play.

syllabus (n)

The content of a course. Similar to the aims of a lesson, but usually the aims of a longer period. What the school expects the students to cover during the period of the tuition, whether it's a week, a term or a year. Syllabuses vary considerably depending on whether they are aimed at an exam class or a General English class, for example.

target language

Similar to aims. The target language of a lesson is the language that you want the students to be able to use by the end of the teaching sequence, whether it's grammar or vocabulary, spoken or written.