

- Tell students you are going to dictate a five-line limerick and they should write down what they hear. Emphasise that the dictation is not a test and the aim is to help students with stress, weak forms and linking. Check/Pre-teach *doze* and write the surname *Creek* on the board. Dictate the limerick at normal speed, then line by line.
- Hand out copies of the worksheet to each student and have them check their dictations. Demonstrate the stresses in the first line and then ask students to identify the stresses in the other four lines by marking a dot or circle above the appropriate syllable. Encourage students to try beating a regular rhythm with a finger as they read. Check the answers and then have students read the limerick aloud, focusing on the stressed syllables.
- Demonstrate the weak forms in the first line and remind students of the schwa /ə/. Ask students to identify and mark weak forms in the rest of the limerick by lightly crossing out the relevant word/syllable. Check the answers and then have students practise reading the limerick aloud again.
- Mark the links in the first line and then ask students to find the links in the rest of the limerick by joining the appropriate letters at the base of the words. Check the answers. Check students understand elision (the disappearance of a sound that is linked to another) and then ask them to find two examples of elision – *ol(d)* and *pitche(d)*. Students practise reading the limerick aloud one final time.
- Check/Pre-teach: *snorter* (an old-fashioned word for an alcoholic drink) and *porter* (an old-fashioned word for a dark brown beer). Students mark stress, weak forms and linking, and practise reading the second limerick. Check the answers by writing the limerick up on the board with the appropriate marks in place.
- Ask students what they know about Richard Nixon and his unsuccessful TV debate with John F. Kennedy in 1960. (He participated in a TV debate with JFK as part of his presidential campaign and came across badly. Elected President in 1968 and re-elected in 1972, he was forced to resign in 1974 over the Watergate scandal after the burglary of the Democrat Party HQ; his 'economy with the truth' earned him the nickname 'Tricky Dicky'). Check/Pre-teach: *stubble*, *sticky* (here meaning 'difficult') and *tricky* (here meaning 'untrustworthy'). Students re-order the limerick and then check the answers.
- If students are enthusiastic about limericks, give them the 'formula' in the table below to help them write their own. (Remember that it is difficult even for native speakers to write limericks that rhyme and scan correctly, so this should be an optional follow-up.)

Person	There was a	(adjective)	(noun)	called from	(name) (place)	(rhyme A)
Background	who					(rhyme A)
Problem (1)						(rhyme B)
Problem (2)						(rhyme B)
Resolution						(rhyme A)

Answers

Exercises 1, 2 and 3

There was an old salesman named Creek,
who pitched to his clients in Greek.

He said, 'While they doze
it's much easier to close,
and I do love to hear myself speak.'

Exercise 4

A young Irish chemist from Cork
was nervous when giving a talk.

She concocted a snorter
from whiskey and porter,
and now she can talk but not walk.

Exercise 5

An old politician called Ricky
found TV appearances sticky.
His five o'clock stubble
got him into trouble,
and Ricky became Tricky Dicky.

4b Business language

Overview

Students roleplay working for a consultancy. They prepare and deliver presentations on the pros and cons of different language training providers. Students then hold a meeting to choose the school they wish to recommend.

Preparation

One copy of the worksheet for each student. Cut the worksheet into four.

Procedure

- Ask students which language course they would prefer: three hours a week all year, five courses of three days in a year or two weeks studying in the country of the target language. Ask them to give reasons for their choices.
- Hand out the role card and client information to each student and ask them to read the details. Check students understand the scenario.
- Divide the class into three groups, A, B and C. Hand out copies of the correct advert to each group. Have students read the information and check vocabulary as necessary. Ask each group to prepare a detailed presentation on their language provider. They should outline the pros and cons of recommending their school/programme to the client. Ask them to support their arguments with costs if appropriate. Allow about 15 minutes for this stage and monitor the activity. (With larger classes, the three groups can be sub-divided with one group of students presenting the pros, the other the cons.)
- Students give their presentations. Set a time limit for each one of about 10 minutes.
- Students then hold a general meeting to decide which school/programme to recommend to their client. This should last about 15 minutes.

5a Problems, problems

Overview

To practise and consolidate the language of dealing with problems, and of making and dealing with complaints.

Preparation

One copy of the worksheet for each pair of students. Cut the worksheet into cards. One copy of the complete worksheet for each student to be given out at the end of the activity.

Procedure

- With the whole class, brainstorm areas of problems/complaints that people experience both at work and outside work e.g. *in a hotel, at an airport, hiring a car, making a telephone booking, phoning customer services, in a restaurant, a faulty product, an incorrect invoice, a delayed delivery, an inaccurate report, a difficult meeting, a badly organised business trip*. Write the ideas on the board.
- Divide the class into pairs and give each one a copy of the cut-up cards, shuffled and face down. Tell the students that they are going to roleplay some of the problem situations on the board. As well as trying to reach a satisfactory agreement, the aim is also to use the expressions on the cards as part of their roleplays.
- For each roleplay, the students should decide who will be the complainant and who will deal with the complaint. They then choose a scenario from the board and spend a short time thinking about what they will say. Encourage the students to be imaginative.
- Each student takes one of the cards from the top of the pile. The students begin the roleplay and as quickly as possible they should use the expression on the card in a complete sentence and in a natural way. When they have done this, and while continuing the roleplay, they take another card and repeat this process. The aim is to use as many of the expressions as they can during the roleplay.
- The students choose a new situation, swap roles and repeat the process.
- Hand out a complete worksheet to each student at the end of the activity.

Alternative procedures

- Instead of taking the cards one by one, the students could take six cards per roleplay and try to use them in any order they like.
- Instead of cutting up the cards, give the students a complete copy of the worksheet. They refer to this and cross off the expressions as they use them.

5b Effective phoning

Overview

Students rephrase unhelpful phone language and then roleplay customer complaint situations.

Preparation

One copy of the worksheet for each student.

Procedure

- Students brainstorm their own positive and negative experiences of customer service on the phone. Establish what general problems/frustrations students have experienced.

- Hand out copies of the worksheet to each student. They can work in pairs or small groups to complete the flow chart.
- Elicit possible phrases to improve the tone of the language for each stage of the call. Write them on the board.
- Divide the class into pairs and have them roleplay the situations in exercise 2. Encourage students to refer to the flowchart to help them and remind them to swap roles for each situation. Monitor the activity.
- As an optional follow-up, ask students why a good telephone manner is important in business (projecting a professional image that takes care of customers; the key to keeping customers and finding new ones). Students can brainstorm a checklist for making the right impression on the phone e.g. *be prepared, make/take the call with customer information on hand, be polite, use an enthusiastic tone of voice and intonation, show interest in the caller, don't eat/drink/chew gum during the call, confirm/read back information, agree on action points*.

Possible answers

- How can I help you today?
What seems to be the problem?
I'll just make some notes as you are speaking.
- Could I just go over/check (your order) again?
I can suggest/recommend ...
Would you mind sending me a copy of your receipt?
- I can see how this creates a problem for you./ I agree wholeheartedly.
I don't blame you for being angry./ If I were you, I'd feel the same way.
We do pay serious attention to all customer comments.
- I'll call you back on .../I'll get back to you on ...
I'll look into it straightaway.
I'm sure we can sort this out for you.
- Could I help with anything else today?
Is there anything else I can help you with?
Do ring us again if you need further assistance.

6a The missing million

Overview

Students discuss the characteristics of a typical chairperson of a meeting and then hold an informal discussion to solve a logic puzzle in which a million dollars has gone missing. A brief feedback session raises awareness of different roles within group discussion.

Preparation

One copy of the worksheet for each student. Cut up the information cards.

Procedure

- Hand out copies of the worksheet to each student. Ask them to think about the profile of a typical chairperson. (This will point students in the right direction when identifying the culprit in the case.)
- Have students read the scenario in exercise 2. Tell them the aim of the activity is to use the information you will give them to identify the profile of each person at the meeting and decide who was in the chair.