

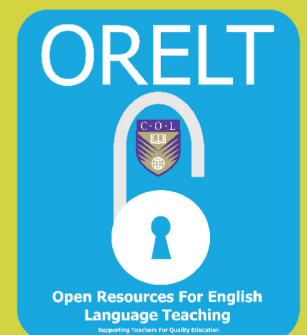
ORELT

Module 2 Speaking for Better Communication



Open Resources For English Language Teaching

Supporting Teachers For Quality Education





ORELT

Open Resources for English Language Teaching

Module 2 – Speaking for Better Communication



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Commonwealth of Learning, 2012



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About this module manual

Module 2 — Speaking for Better Communication has been produced by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). All module manuals produced by COL are structured in the same way, as outlined below.

How this module manual is structured

The module overview

The module overview gives you a general introduction to the module. It will help you determine:

- if the module is suitable for you,
- what you need to know,
- what you should expect from the module, and
- how much time you will need to invest to complete the module.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- study skills,
- where to get help,
- module assignments and assessments, and
- activities and units.

We strongly recommend that you read the overview *carefully* before starting your study.

The module content

The module is broken down into units. Each unit comprises:

- an introduction to the unit content,
- unit objectives,
- unit learning outcomes,

- new terminology,
- core content of the unit with a variety of learning activities,
- a unit summary,
- assignments and/or assessments, as applicable, and
- answers to assignments and/or assessment, as applicable.

Resources

For those interested in learning more on this subject, please see the list of additional resources at the end of each unit of this module. These may be books, articles, websites or audio/video files that can assist in the teaching of the unit, and so on.

Your comments

After you have completed **Module 2 — Speaking for Better Communication**, we would appreciate your taking a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this module. Your feedback might include comments on:

- Module content and structure.
- Module reading materials and resources.
- Module assignments.
- Module assessments.
- Module duration.
- Teacher support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.).

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this module.

Module overview

Welcome to Module 2 — Speaking for Better Communication

This module is aimed at helping Junior Secondary School (JSS) English teachers promote effective speaking in their classrooms by engaging their students in communicative activities to develop oral proficiency. The module aims to develop students' confidence in using English in various communication situations, both formal and informal. The ability to speak English effortlessly in a variety of situations requires good pronunciation, a wide range of vocabulary, grammatical accuracy and also the knowledge of what to say to whom and when. In short, proficiency in speaking includes knowledge not only of the language but also social and cultural norms, and the ability to respond appropriately in a variety of situations. This module contains a range of activities for the teacher to use in the classrooms to encourage students to speak effectively and with confidence. The activities are mainly designed around shared experiences, to be done in pairs and groups so that students learn to respond spontaneously in any communication situation.

Is this module for you?

This module is intended for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching at the JSS level.

The module is expected to strengthen students' foundation in speaking skills; that is, their mastery over the linguistic aspects of grammar, vocabulary and phonology, as well as their oral interactive strategies.

Module objectives



Objectives

The objectives of this module are to:

- enable teachers to help their students develop the ability to speak English effectively and with confidence;
- help teachers develop activities to encourage students to express themselves fluently using appropriate grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation;
- enable teachers to help students organise their ideas logically and to

present them appropriately in various communication situations;

- help teachers make their students understand the importance of performing language functions in English such as requesting, greeting, clarifying, apologising, inviting and so on; and
- encourage English teachers to collaborate with teachers of other subjects to develop students' academic skills such as oral presentations, extempore speech, debate, etc.

Module outcomes



Outcomes

Upon completion of **Module 2 — Speaking for Better Communication**, you will be able to:

- teach students how to express themselves effectively using appropriate grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation;
- show students how to describe people, events and objects appropriately in English;
- teach students how to perform common language functions in social situations, such as making a request, asking for clarifications, giving and accepting invitations and so on; and
- help students develop their oral skills for academic purposes (making presentations, participating in debates, extempore speech, group discussions and so on).

Time frame



How long?

You will need approximately 15 weeks to finish this module — eight weeks for formal study and seven weeks for self-directed study — to complete all the recommended activities.

This is a distance learning programme, thus the time frame is flexible and largely self-directed.

Study skills



Study skills

As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different from that of your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have a professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself with such things as essay planning, coping with exams and using the Web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be *time* and *space*; that is, the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now — before starting your self-directed study — to familiarise yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the Web. For example:

- <http://www.how-to-study.com/>

The “How to Study” website is dedicated to study skills resources. You will find links for tips on study preparation (a list of nine essentials for a good study place), taking notes, strategies for reading textbooks, using reference sources and coping with test anxiety.

- <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>

This is the website of Virginia Tech’s Division of Student Affairs. You will find links to tips on time scheduling (including one called “Where Does Time Go?”), a study skill checklist, basic concentration techniques, how to take control of your study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis and tips on developing memory skills (“Remembering”).

- <http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php>

Another “How to Study” website with useful links to learning about time management, efficient reading, questioning/listening/observing skills, getting the most out of putting your knowledge into practice, memory building, staying motivated and developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these Web links were active. If you want to look for more go to www.google.com and type “self-study basics,” “self-study tips,” “self-study skills” or a similar combination.

Need help?



Help

Contact your Google Group support email, SMS number or your tutor.

Group email: orelt_tutors@googlegroups.com

Assessment



Assessment















- Each unit of this module consists of a self-assessment activity. The assessments are for self-development purposes and need not be submitted to anybody. The goal of the module is to develop your teaching-learning skills, not to test you.
- Assessment is also meant to encourage you to think about and devise some innovative teaching practices that could make your teaching more exciting and relevant to your students.
- All assessments are to be completed at the end of every unit. You may cross-check your answers with your colleagues.

Getting around this module manual

Margin icons

While working through this module manual, you will notice the frequent use of icons in the margin. These icons serve to “signpost” a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity; they have been included to help you to find your way around this module.

A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarise yourself with the icons and their meanings before starting your study.

			
Activity	Assessment	Assignment	Case study
			
Outcomes	Summary	Objectives	Feedback
			
Terminology	Reading	Reflection	Study skills
			
Help	Time	Audio	Video

Unit 1: Speaking about Myself

Introduction

At the JSS level, students are at a transitional stage of life as they mature from childhood to adulthood. At this stage of life, they are more interested in themselves than at any other time, and they are trying to learn to come to terms with their physical and emotional selves. Expressing their thoughts and feelings is important to them, but they may lack the ability to project themselves with confidence in front of other people, especially in a different language. In this unit, we will introduce some activities that you can use in the class to develop your students' ability to talk about themselves in English. By sharing personal information through **information-gap** activities, students will learn to use English appropriately in both formal and informal situations.

Unit outcomes



Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- help your students develop the confidence and skills to express themselves appropriately and fluently in English;
- use interesting texts, conversations, stories and other materials as resources for promoting fluency and appropriateness in spoken English;
- improve your students' ability to perform language functions in English; and
- help your students organise their thoughts better and express themselves clearly and logically in academic situations.

Terminology



Terminology

Information-gap activities:

Activities that are designed to be done in pairs or groups so that each partner has some information on a given topic that the other does not. They find the missing information through discussion. Activities like these create situations for genuine communication to take place.

- Competence:** The ability to use a language spontaneously in various situations. In language studies, the term **competence** is also used to refer to the underlying knowledge of the sounds, words and structures of a language.
- Flashcards:** Paper cut-outs containing a series of pictures that are flashed one at a time for students to describe, identify, pronounce or spell for language practice.

Teacher support information

When engaging students in activities that require them to share personal information or describe one another, we should be careful to discourage comments on physical appearance, race, gender or skin colour as this might be offensive or hurtful. Also, both the teacher and students should practise speaking clearly, audibly and in a relaxed pace to ensure mutual intelligibility.

Case study



Case study

Mallam Haruna was a new English teacher at Barewa Junior Secondary School in Kaduna. Many of his students could barely speak any English and were reluctant to even try. Most of the time, they were found speaking Hausa, their first language. Mrs Uchendu, his mentor, noticed that he was desperate for guidance and invited him to observe her class at least once a week. He noticed immediately that she had divided her class into three ability groups. She had also designed special instructional materials for the weakest students. She spent more time with them while the others were engaged in reading or writing activities. She had **flashcards** and sentence strips, pictures and simple storybooks to read to them and allowed them to ask her questions in Hausa, if they wanted to. In this way, she made them feel at home. Most began to speak in groups and later in class directly, albeit in halting English. Mallam Haruna asked Mrs Uchendu to watch him try this in his own class and to see how it worked out. The new strategy worked very well, and the students developed confidence as well as **competence**.

Points to ponder

- 1 Do you have a mentor or colleague with whom you could collaborate to improve your students' oral proficiency? Can you think of activities you could develop together for your students?
- 2 Do your students also belong to different ability groups? Would grouping them according to this criterion work in your situation? Have you already tried using different sets of exercises for students who are falling behind?

Activities

Activity 1: Making introductions



Activity 1

One of the first things students have to do when they step out of the classroom into the real world is introduce themselves and others. School, which for many students is their only context for communicating in English, offers few opportunities for students to make introductions. This leads to hesitation and embarrassment when students are expected to use English in public. In this activity, you will be able to help your students develop their confidence in making introductions by engaging them in communicative exercises.

As a pre-speaking exercise, you might like to have a general discussion on the expressions we use in introductions. For this, you can distribute the worksheet in **Resource 1a** and have your students, working in pairs, say which expressions are appropriate for introductions. (The correct answers are 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12. The utterances in 1, 4, 5, 9 and 13 are greetings, and utterances 8 and 14 are examples of impolite introductions.) During the discussion, mention that introductions do not include only an exchange of names — we should add a little more information to make it easier to start a conversation.

For this activity, divide the students into groups of four and let each of them choose any one of the four information cards in **Resource 1b**. Using the information on the card, they have to introduce themselves to the others. Then, one person from each group should introduce a group member to the class. The activity should include not only making introductions, but also the appropriate responses. To give the students an idea of how it should be done, play the video in **Resource 1c** or read the transcript with two students whom you think are good at this. Have a quick discussion about the expressions used in the introductions. Remind the students that these are *informal* introductions. You can make a similar conversation to familiarise students with *formal* introductions.

During the activity, make sure every student gets to speak, and that each group gets to introduce at least one member to the rest of the class. This will give them practice in introducing themselves and others, and also responding appropriately.

Activity 2: Sharing personal information



Activity 2

As teenagers stepping into adulthood, your students are likely to welcome opportunities to share personal information such as talking about their families or hobbies, for example. Sharing information is also a skill they will need to develop in order to communicate with people in both formal and informal situations when they step out of school. This activity is meant to develop students' confidence in speaking as well as their ability to articulate their feelings.

For this activity, have the students work in pairs to find out three things they have in common with their partner and three things they don't. For example, both partners may enjoy watching soccer matches on TV (the common interest), and one of them may spend their free time listening to music while the other plays some sport (one thing they do not have in common). When each pair has finished noting down the information, they will have to exchange the information with another pair, identifying things that are common across all four group members, and interests that they do not share. In turns, representatives from each group should share the information with the rest of the class.

Since the focus of the activity is on practising the language of sharing information, remember to go around the class when the pairs and groups are sharing information. If you notice any inappropriate use of language, you can make a note of it and then draw attention to these mistakes later so that the whole class benefits. See **Resource 2** for a sample conversation. You can play the videotape/audiotape or read it yourself.

It is important to have the students share information amongst themselves rather than with a teacher as this will make them less self-conscious and elicit more information. Also, in real life, we rarely share information in public; this is normally done in a one-to-one communication situation.

Activity 3: Describing feelings and opinions



Activity 3

Describing feelings, opinions and beliefs are common activities we do in our home languages. In communication situations outside the home or classroom, your students may need to perform this function in English. Students at this level will probably be excited about sharing their feelings and opinions with others, and this exercise will help them articulate their feelings and opinions in a polite and appropriate manner. Students can practise doing this by engaging in speaking activities in the classroom.

Introduce the activity by asking students their opinions on a popular topic, such as whether tea is a better drink than coffee. Encourage the students, especially the quieter ones, to say how they feel about each drink. Encourage them to give reasons for their choice. If they respond by saying that they do not drink either tea or coffee, you can ask them to describe their favourite health drink, and to say why they have chosen it. This preliminary discussion is meant to prepare the students to express their feelings or opinions logically and clearly.

For this activity, put your students in small groups of four or five, and involve them in a group discussion on a similar topic familiar to them. **Resource 3a** has a set of topics you might like to use with different groups. To help the students articulate their feelings in an appropriate manner, you can distribute **Resource 3b**, which contains common expressions (and a vocabulary guide) for expressing opinions.

Make one group member the **scribe**: he or she should note down what opinion each group member is expressing, or how they feel about the topic. When the discussion time is over, the group scribes should share the information with the rest of the class.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit we looked at ways in which students can speak effectively in personal communication situations by introducing themselves and others, and sharing information, feelings and opinions. These activities are aimed at helping the students develop self-confidence while speaking, and also enabling them to use appropriate words and structures spontaneously. Speaking with their peers in class helps students express themselves without being self-conscious. Speaking activities such as these should become a regular part of classroom learning so that students can transfer their verbal skills to situations in the real world after they leave school.

Reflections



Reflection

- What did you find most interesting and helpful in this unit?
- Were there any problems in implementing the activities?
- What other activities could you use to motivate students to speak?

Assessment



Assessment

- How would you plan group activities to ensure that students of different abilities participate equally, and everyone has an opportunity to express themselves?
- How important is it to make students talk about personal things? How is this expected to help develop their verbal skills in the classroom?

Resources

Resource 1a: Introductions



Resource 1a

Which of the following expressions do you think are good ways of making introductions? Discuss with your partner and tick (✓) or cross (X) the utterances as appropriate:

- 1 Hey — how're you?
- 2 Hi, Musa! Meet my friend Rahila — she's visiting us for a week.
- 3 May I introduce Mrs Abida Raheem? She's our new English teacher.
- 4 Let's meet for lunch on Saturday!

- 5 Hello, nice to meet you!
- 6 Hello. I'm Catherine Smith. May I join you?
- 7 Hi! Have we met before? I'm Catherine.
- 8 My name is Catherine Smith. What is your name?
- 9 How do you do?
- 10 Rahila, I'd like you to meet Catherine Smith. Catherine, this is my good friend Rahila Yasmin.
- 11 Friends, I'm honoured to introduce to you Professor Rod Macintosh from the university. Professor Macintosh will speak to us today about global warming.
- 12 Hello, friends! I am Rod Macintosh from the University of South Africa, and I'm honoured to be here today.
- 13 Hello! How's life?
- 14 Hey — are you Rod Macintosh? I'm Catherine Smith.

Resource 1b: Information cards



Resource 1b

William Sisulu Doctor, Nairobi Central Hospital (Cardiologist: Specialist in heart diseases)
Miriam Ngege Assistant Headmistress Paradise Public School
Nicholas Robinson (Famous) Actor National Film Award winner
Connie Defoe Captain, women's soccer team Durban

Resource 1c: At a party: Introductions



Resource 1c

Transcript

- Walter: Hello, Liz! How have you been?
- Elizabeth: Walter! Good to see you. Meet my husband, Tony. Tony, this is Walter Kimolo — the friend from Nairobi I was telling you about.
- Tony: Oh, hello, Mr Kimolo. I've heard a lot about you from Liz.
- Walter: Good to meet you at last, Mr Price. It's kind of Liz to say good things about me!
- Tony: Call me Tony!
- Elizabeth: Are you here alone, Walter? Isn't Mrs Kimolo here?
- Walter: Sorry — so rude of me! Jane, dear, come and say hello to the Prices... Liz, Tony — my wife, Jane.
- Jane: How do you do?
- Elizabeth, Tony: How do you do?
- Jane: I'd like to introduce my sister, Gillian. Gillian — Elizabeth and Tony Price.
- Gillian: Glad to meet you, Elizabeth, Tony. Are you Walter's colleagues?
- Elizabeth: No, Gillian — Walter's an old friend.



Video

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit1\Activity1\Resource1c\Video\At_a_Party.mp4

Resource 2: Sharing personal information



Resource 2

Transcript

Student 1: What are your hobbies? I like to watch football on TV, play the guitar in my free time and just hang around with friends. Oh, I also like to sleep a lot, especially on Sundays. I hate waking up on Sunday mornings to go to church.

Student 2: Me too. Mother has to push me out of bed every Sunday morning! I love sleeping too! I wish I could play the guitar — I don't know how. I like to spend my free time working in my uncle's garage — I love cars, you know! That's why I never get time to watch TV. I don't miss it, actually — and I have many friends at the garage.

Student 1: Okay, let me write this down. Common things — we both love sleeping, we like talking to friends, we don't like going to church. Okay — we have three things in common.

Student 2: Yeah. And you like watching TV, you like football and you play the guitar. I don't like these. I love cars, I work in my uncle's garage in my free time, and what's the third point?

Student 1: Was it about friends? Oh, I remember: your friends are from the garage, mine are from school. Okay, we have our list ready!



Video

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit1\Activity2\Resource2\Video\Sharing_Personal_Information.mp4

Resource 3a: List of topics for expressing opinions



Resource 3a

- 1 School children should not be allowed to watch TV as it will make them lazy and inattentive towards their studies.
- 2 Girls are more serious students than boys.
- 3 Parents should listen to their children's views rather than just forcing children to listen to them.

- 4 School should be over by noon so that children have time to take an afternoon nap and play until evening.
- 5 Keeping the streets clean is not our business; there are officers to take care of that.
- 6 Girls should help with housework as they need to learn how to be a good housekeeper after they get married.
- 7 Examinations should be abolished. Everyone should be allowed to get into the next grade.
- 8 Reading and writing in English are more important than listening and speaking in English.

Resource 3b: Guide to expressing opinions: Sharing, agreeing and disagreeing (worksheet)



Resource 3b

- 1 I feel that _____
- 2 In my opinion _____
- 3 I think _____
- 4 I'd like to share my feelings on this _____
- 5 What I think is _____
- 6 If you want my opinion, I'd say _____
- 7 I agree with what you said about _____
- 8 I'm afraid I have a different opinion about this _____
- 9 I'm glad we feel the same on this _____
- 10 I'm sorry, but I don't agree with you here _____

Teacher questions and answers



Feedback

- Question:** Student-centred group work takes longer than when I am in complete control. How can I save time without being too teacher-centred?
- Answer:** Once you see your students making significant contributions and learning from each other, you are likely to see that group work is worth the effort, though it certainly comes at a cost. Clearly, not all topics call for group work and you don't have to insist that they finish all the group work within the class time.
- Question:** What do I do if my students are reluctant to share personal information, or are too shy to talk about themselves?

Answer:

The first time you do an activity like this, encourage all your students to contribute, but do not force shy students to say much. Instruct their group mates to direct questions to the shy partners so that they are gradually encouraged to speak. Most shy students take longer to open up than less self-conscious ones, and we cannot expect a change through just one activity.

Unit 2: Speaking Accurately

Introduction

This unit focuses on accuracy in pronunciation. In English, sometimes a difference in pronunciation can lead to a difference in meaning. Our pronunciation of the sounds of a second language (here, English) is often influenced by similar sounds in our home language. When people speak a language in a context, slight differences in pronunciation do not matter, because the context or situation makes the meaning clear. However, sometimes ambiguity (the possibility of more than one meaning) can arise, leading to misunderstanding or even embarrassment. The activities in this unit address pronunciation problems arising from different vowels, word stress and words containing silent letters.

Unit outcomes



Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- make your students aware of the correct pronunciation of some commonly mispronounced English vowel sounds in words;
- help your students practise pronouncing words accurately;
- teach your students that letters of the English alphabet have different pronunciations in different words;
- help your students pronounce words with silent letters correctly; and
- make your students aware of some conventions of English word stress.

Terminology



Terminology

- Monophthong:** A single vowel sound, such as /e/, /i:/ or /u/.
- Diphthong:** Also called a **vowel glide**, a diphthong is a vowel that begins in one sound but glides to another at the end, such as /ei/, /au/ or /eə/.
- Weak forms:** The unstressed forms of structure/function words like auxiliary verbs, pronouns and articles in an English utterance. (See **Module 1, Unit 1.**)
- Connected speech:** Speech that comprises utterances and not isolated sounds or words.

Teacher support information

To be able to teach accurate pronunciation, teachers must have good pronunciation themselves. Sometimes one may pronounce words accurately in isolation, but use faulty pronunciation in connected speech. If you are not sure of your own pronunciation, especially in conversations, keep a good English dictionary handy. Some of the better ones are the Advanced Learner's Dictionaries published by well-established publishers like Cambridge, Oxford, Longman and Macmillan. If you have access to a computer, you can install the CD-ROM that comes with most dictionaries now. These are very good, as you can hear the pronunciation in addition to learning meanings.

Most of our students have fixed speech habits rooted in their home languages. Try to identify some of the most obvious differences between the sounds of your students' home language and those of English to plan the nature of your classroom activities for pronunciation practice. When teaching pronunciation, ensure that you have a good model of spoken English on the tape you are using. Include the sounds in words' initial, medial and final positions (where they are available) — for example, **voice, envelope, involve**, for /v/; **think, bathroom, booth** for /θ/ — and group the words in sentences. You can give the students practice in intonation by having them articulate questions, commands, exclamations and tags. If you have access to a language laboratory, or at least audio-recording facilities, record the students as they speak, and play it back for them to help them identify any pronunciation errors. You can also use poems and songs to teach rhythm, stress and intonation.

Case study



Case study

Mallam Gwani, who teaches 15-year-olds at Community Secondary School, had always believed that speaking and reading skills were two separate things with very little in common. Because reading focused on comprehension, he thought reading classes could not be used to practise pronunciation — until he visited Mrs Afuwa's class at St. Mathew's College. Mrs Afuwa always used interesting reading texts from the course book as resources for improving students' pronunciation. She saw reading aloud as an opportunity to practise the sounds she taught in isolation and to train her students to read with proper stress and intonation.

To give them a good model of pronunciation, Mrs Afuwa took care to read the passage herself in a natural, unaffected style, using an audible voice and pacing her speed to help her students follow her easily. She injected a sense of drama by using facial expressions and gestures, and Mr Gwani noticed that the students listened with attention, mesmerised by Mrs Afuwa's enunciation. Because her class was quite large (47 students), it was difficult to give all the students the opportunity to read aloud, but Mrs Afuwa had a clever strategy to remedy this. She trained ten of the best students during breaks, and made each of them group

leaders for pronunciation practice. These students led the others in reading aloud in their groups, and made each group member, in turn, read a section every day. This way, all the students had an opportunity to improve their pronunciation, and so become familiar with the conventions of spoken English.

Mr Gwani noticed that these efforts had made Mrs Afuwa's students much more confident and fluent than his students. He decided to replicate Mrs Afuwa's strategy with his own JSS students.

Points to ponder

- 1 Do you agree that pronunciation practice can be made a part of reading classes? What difficulties do you anticipate in using this strategy?
- 2 Do you think reading lessons aloud actually helps students in speaking in English outside the classroom? Why or why not?

Activities

Activity 1: Pronouncing diphthongs accurately



Activity 1

- In English, as you are aware, there are vowels comprising **one** sound (i.e., **monophthongs** such as i, e, u), and vowels comprising **two** sounds (i.e., **diphthongs** such as ei, au, oi). If the students' home language does not contain similar vowel sounds or distinctions, they commonly mispronounce English words with diphthongs, often leading to ambiguity in meaning. In this activity, you will be able to help students practise using diphthongs correctly in connected speech.
- To test whether your students can detect differences in vowel sounds, you can give them a dictation. **Resource 1a** contains a list of pairs of words. The first column has monophthongs (single vowel sounds) and the second column has words with diphthongs (**vowel glides**). Read any one word from each pair in the list and ask the students to circle the word they hear. When they are done, ask them to peer correct. Then give them the answers, and highlight the pronunciation differences by asking them to repeat all the words after you. Have a discussion on how differences in pronunciation can signal difference in meaning as well.
- For this activity, put the students in pairs. Partner A in each pair will have Conversation A, and Partner B will have a copy of Conversation B. The partners take turns to dictate to each other the passages given in **Resources 1b** and **1c**. Partner A will read his or her conversation first, and Partner B will fill in the blanks in the worksheet with the words he or she hears. Then Partner B will read his or her passage and Partner A will fill in the blanks in his or her corresponding worksheet. When both partners have finished, they will exchange notes to see if they have filled in the blanks correctly.
- It is likely that not all the students will complete the exercise

successfully, as one partner may mispronounce or mishear some words. To ensure that your students learn the appropriate pronunciation, you could lead them in choral reading, by making them read both the passages after you. This should give them enough practice in articulating the diphthongs, with the correct pronunciation, when used in connected speech.

Activity 2: Working with silent letters



Activity 2

English has 24 consonant sounds and 20 vowel sounds, represented by just 21 consonant letters and five vowel letters. Also, unlike some other languages, English does not have a one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. For example, the spelling group *ough* is pronounced differently in the words **ought**, **rough**, **though** and **through**. Or take the letter sequence *gh*, which has different pronunciations in **rough**, **ghost** and **through**. In fact, in **through**, *gh* is not pronounced at all. There are many other such words in English where some letters remain silent — *calm*, *pneumonia*, *doubt*, for example. In this activity, students will practise the pronunciation of some such challenging words in English.

Distribute the words given in **Resource 2** to the students, working in pairs, and ask them what is common to them. The answer you are looking for is: **silent letters**. Then ask each pair to find which letter in each word is silent; that is, which letter is not pronounced. Each pair then has to add three more similar words. For example, in the word *calm* “l” is silent, so three other similar words are *talk*, *half* and *chalk*. Allow the students to refer to a dictionary if they wish — the more words they learn the better.

After the pairs have finished making their lists, they should give them to you. Jumble the lists and redistribute them to different pairs. Each pair will have to pronounce two words from the list given to them. The process will continue until all the words have been read aloud.

The last part of the activity involves helping students use the words in connected speech. For this, have them compose sentences using at least three of the words in a sentence. Each pair should make at least three sentences and read them aloud to the class. Give them an example like:

*Oh no, I'm late for church! Let me just **comb** my hair, grab a **sandwich** and quickly dash upstairs for my **hymn** book!*

(Silent letters: *b*, *d* and *n*)

Activity 3: Learning word stress



Activity 3

As you are aware, English words containing more than one syllable have fixed stress patterns. **Module 1 — Better Listening** contains an activity on words of two syllables that are pronounced differently when used as a noun, adjective or verb. The difference in pronunciation is simply a matter of stressing a different syllable (e.g., *PRE-sent*, pronounced /¹pre - zənt/, is a noun whereas *pre-SENT* is a verb and is pronounced as /pri - ¹zent/). To be intelligible to the listener — that is, to ensure that people understand the speaker clearly when speaking in English — we must pronounce English words with the appropriate stress. In this activity, students will learn to recognise and use appropriate stress patterns when they speak in English.

Before you have your students pronounce words with different stress patterns, you can test their familiarity with the pronunciation of common **disyllabic** (having two syllables) or **polysyllabic** (more than two syllables) words by giving them a listening exercise. Put words like the following on the board and ask two or three students to read them aloud. Point out to them how one part of each word is pronounced with more force than the others. Explain that this force or emphasis is called **stress**, and that each word has a fixed stress.

Words of two syllables:

¹tea-cher ¹gra-mmar ¹spe-cial ex-¹plain re-¹peat a-¹gree

Words of three syllables:

¹ac-tua-lly ¹con-fi-dent con-¹su-mer to-¹ge-ther add-re-¹ssee re-fu-¹gee

Change of stress:

¹pho-to-graph pho-¹to-graphy pho-to-gra-¹phic

To ensure that the students understand the stress patterns in the words, read them out once again, this time telling the students to place a stress mark (¹) before the part of the word that is said with more force than the others. Also explain that these “parts” are called **syllables**.

To add a little humour to the task, you could show them the importance of the stress patterns by reading the words once with the wrong stress — this usually evokes laughter, and makes your point clear more easily.

For this activity, divide the students into groups of three and have them read the funny poem in **Resource 3** (one stanza by each group member in turn). After they have read it, ask them which words were stressed on the first syllable, and which were stressed on the second. (Answer: *confused* and *exams* have stress on the second syllable; all the rest are stressed on the first.)

Now ask the groups to make their own short poems (four lines) with words of more than three syllables, and read them to the class. This will help them to pronounce words correctly in connected speech and to notice the rhythm of the language.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit we introduced a few activities to help you familiarise your students with some conventions of spoken English. These activities need to be supplemented with a lot of practice material — you could use the English lessons in the textbook for pronunciation practice. Good pronunciation is an important part of learning to speak effectively, and you can help your students by engaging them in activities that make them pronounce words and sentences in conversations and other verbal interactions in the classroom.

Reflections



Reflection

- Which activity interested your students the most? Did the activities help to improve your students' pronunciation?
- Were you able to involve all the students in the activities? Did the shy or quieter students participate?
- Which activity would need to be modified or improved? How would you do it?

Assessment



Assessment

- Identify five other areas of pronunciation use where your students need to improve. Can you make similar activities for your classroom?

Resources

Resource 1a: Identifying diphthongs



Resource 1a

In the list below there are pairs of words, one containing a single vowel sound (**monophthong**) and the other containing a vowel glide (**diphthong**). Can you hear the difference in their pronunciation? Listen as your teacher reads out one word from each pair, and circle the word that you hear.

- | | | |
|----|-------|--------|
| 1 | bet | bait |
| 2 | fare | fair |
| 3 | lord | load |
| 4 | man | main |
| 5 | wet | weight |
| 6 | red | ride |
| 7 | shut | shout |
| 8 | hat | hate |
| 9 | bread | braid |
| 10 | let | late |
| 11 | bird | beard |
| 12 | get | gate |

Resource 1b: Practising diphthongs — Emily’s story (for Partner A)



Resource 1b

- I. Read **Passage 1** to your partner and ask your partner to fill in the blanks.

“Run, Stephen, quick — **get** the **gate** open before I reach it!” shouted Emily to her ten-year-old younger brother. She had a whole wash load of clothes in her arms, and was struggling under the **weight** of the **wet** clothes. Emily was 15, and she was already taking care of the household. Their mother had died the previous year and, as the oldest of four children, Emily had to leave school to run the farmhouse. As Emily walked unsteadily towards the **gate**, she muttered to herself, “I **hate** the **hat** falling off my hair every time I run — I must remember to ask Papa to buy me a new one from the **fair**.” Emily reached the end of the yard and put down her **load**. “**Lord!**” she exclaimed. “I forgot the clips again!”

- II. Now fill in the blanks in **Passage 2** as your partner reads it out.

As she turned to see if any of the kids was playing nearby, she caught sight of her father in the field. He was taking a nap, and a _____ was perched on his _____, pecking at the crumbs of _____

on his _____. She loved him, but was a little scared of him too. As the _____ on the farm, she often heard him turn red in anger and _____ “S_____ up!” at the farmhands. “If only Mamma were alive,” Emily thought, “I could run and play with my friends instead of doing all this boring work!” She longed to _____ her _____ pony, _____ herself be _____, sleep until noon — do everything that Stephen, Johnny and Mindy did on holidays. “Poor me,” she thought. “I wish I could run away from all this!”

Resource 1c: Practising diphthongs — Emily’s story (for Partner B)



Resource 1c

I. Fill in the blanks in Passage 1 as your partner reads it out:

“Run, Stephen, quick — _____ the _____ open before I reach it!” shouted Emily to her ten-year-old younger brother. She had a whole wash-load of clothes in her arms, struggling under the _____ of the _____ clothes. Emily was 15, and she was already taking care of the household. Their mother had died the previous year and as the oldest of four children, Emily had to leave school to run the farmhouse. As Emily walked unsteadily towards the _____, she muttered to herself, “I _____ the _____ falling off my hair every time I run – I must remember to ask Papa to buy me a new one from the _____.” Emily reached the end of the yard and put down her _____. “L_____!” she exclaimed. “I forgot the clips again!”

II. Now read Passage 2 to your partner and ask your partner to fill in the blanks.

As she turned to see if any of the kids was playing nearby, she caught sight of her father in the field. He was taking a nap, and a **bird** was perched on his **beard**, pecking at the crumbs of **bread** on his **braid**. She loved him, but was a little scared of him too. As the **main man** on the farm, she often heard him turn red in anger and **shout** “**Shut** up!” at the farmhands. “If only Mamma were alive,” Emily thought, “I could run and play with my friends instead of doing all this boring work!” She longed to **ride** her **red** pony, **let** herself be **late**, sleep until noon — do everything that Stephen, Johnny and Mindy did on holidays. “Poor me,” she thought. “I wish I could run away from all this!”

Resource 2: Silent letters in English words (worksheet)



island muscle thumb pneumonia soften hymn
honour calf mnemonic knowledge reign sandwich

Resource 2

No.	Word	Silent letter	1st Word	2nd Word	3rd Word
1.	island	S			
2.	muscle	C			
3.	thumb	B			
4.	pneumonia	P			
5.	soften	T			
6.	hymn	N			
7.	honour	H			
8.	calf	L			
9.	mnemonic	M			
10.	knowledge	K			
11.	reign	G			
12.	sandwich	D			

Resource 3: Poem for stress practice



Resource 3

Studies!!

Physics is crazy and hardly ever easy

I have no interest in gases that are busy

Geometry is angular and algebra is messy

Give me history and four hundred B.C.!

The first planet's Mercury
I'm always confused, very sorry!
I'd rather read my A-B-C
Than practise horrid Do-Re-Me.

Soccer, cricket for company
End of exams and agony,
Every day a holiday
O heavenly, I would say!

Teacher question and answer



Feedback

Question: How do I know if my students can pronounce words correctly outside the classroom? In the classroom they seem interested, but would they remember what they have learned when they use English in other situations?

Answer: Since you can't keep track of your students' language use outside the classroom, the best thing to do would be to motivate them to follow your instructions closely. You can play them audio or video recordings (e.g., movie clips) to show how people sound when they use good pronunciation and when they don't. This is likely to make them more conscious and determined to speak with care even when they are not under your supervision.

Unit 3: Practice in Public Speaking

Introduction

This unit introduces students to strategies used in public speaking, such as debates, group discussions and extempore speech as a means of developing self-confidence, conviction and fluency in speaking. Speaking in public is not something that most people enjoy, and it can make them self-conscious and hesitant. At the JSS level, therefore, students need to be given practice in speaking in front of an audience. This can be done by organising speaking activities such as debates, extempore speech, group discussions, etc. This unit contains activities that should help your students develop public speaking skills. It should also help you make students aware of the conventions of **non-verbal communication** such as gestures and eye contact.

Unit outcomes



Outcomes

By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- develop your students' confidence in public speaking by giving them exposure to debates, discussions and extempore speech;
- give your students the strategies they need for expressing themselves clearly and logically in public contexts;
- give your students exposure to and practice in speaking in longer turns (as opposed to the shorter turns in conversations); and
- make your students aware of the importance of non-verbal communication such as eye contact and good posture.

Terminology



Terminology

Non-verbal communication:

Use of facial expressions, gestures, eye contact and other such means of signalling attention in an oral communication situation.

Teacher support information

Participating in debates helps students to improve their ability to express their point of view and to think critically. Ensure that the topics chosen are important to your students so that they will really want to express their point of view with enthusiasm. Also teach them to avoid the use of too many technical terms requiring boring explanations.

Before letting the students take part in debates and other situations that require speaking before an audience, have them brainstorm on ideas in groups — this increases their self-confidence.

Case study



Case study

Mr Maisamari's 14-year-old students had diverse abilities and personalities. Some were very shy and were reluctant to speak in class; others were more confident and fluent in English. He realised right at the beginning of the year that he would have to provide different types of activities and challenges for the different ability groups.

Charo was typical of the first group of students. Her home language was Fulfulde and when she first arrived at Essence Junior Secondary School, she spoke very little English. There were only two other students whose parents were Fulfulde, but they spoke no Fulfulde. All spoke Hausa, the widespread local language. So, they were of no help to Charo. She was unhappy for the first three months, afraid to speak the little English she knew for fear of making mistakes. The other students made fun of her English, which sounded like Fulfulde. But Mr Maisamari changed all that. He began by identifying Charo's difficulties. Then he took every opportunity to chat with her. He smiled, asked about her parents and siblings, what she did at home, and anything else that she could respond to comfortably. He asked her questions that were easy for her to answer. Soon, Charo developed enough confidence to participate in all the class activities. Her pronunciation improved, and she was no longer the focus of jokes. Towards the end of the year, Charo even improved her performance in other subjects because of her newfound confidence. For students with stronger English, Mr Maisamari organised class debates. These helped them generate ideas, and to organise them logically and present them in a convincing manner. The students were very highly motivated. In fact, some of them showed keen interest in participating in the inter-school debating competition, so Mr Maisamari decided to coach them. They met during breaks to go over their debating points and generally carried over their **organisational skills** and fluency into their writing composition. These efforts helped them win several prizes in the inter-school competitions.

Points to ponder

- 1 Do you agree that language skills develop only when students feel confident about speaking? What strategies do you use in your class to develop students' self-confidence?
- 2 How important is it for students to participate in speaking competitions? Do they really have a use for it in adult life?

Activities

Activity 1: Practising the language of debate



Activity 1

Participating in a debate is good preparation for public speaking. Taking part in a debate not only develops students' self-confidence, it teaches them to think logically, articulate clearly and respond effectively — all of which are effective oral communication skills. **Module 1, Unit 3, Activity 2** teaches students to *listen* attentively to a debate in order to learn how to *respond* effectively. For this activity, you can refer to **Module 1**, and have your students go over **Unit 3, Resource 3c: Preparing a Debate** again.

To begin this activity, take your students through a few preparatory exercises to help them generate and organise their ideas, and also learn the appropriate expressions to use in a debate. You can follow these steps:

- 1 Take a topic that is interesting and generally lends itself to differing opinions, such as **Women are better teachers than men** or **Boys and girls should be educated in separate schools**.
- 2 Assuming that the class decides on the first topic, divide the students into groups and let them brainstorm on the qualities of a good teacher. For example:
 - i good knowledge of the subject,
 - ii ability to explain difficult points,
 - iii good communication skills,
 - iv good classroom management skills and control,
 - v ability to make students think clearly and to participate, as well as learn from each other, and
 - vi kindness and helpfulness to students, etc.
- 3 Divide the class into two sections — one to support the motion (that is, women are better teachers than men) and the other to challenge it.
- 4 Let each section sit together and prepare a list of points that support their views.
- 5 When they are ready, each section should nominate three speakers to argue their viewpoint. With your help, the class should also agree on the judging criteria — for example, clear organisation of ideas, focus on the topic, grammatical accuracy, pace of speaking, logical presentation of points. (See **Resources 1a and 1b** for more ideas on the language of a debate.)
- 6 When they are ready, the debate can begin, with you as a judge. Decide on the modalities of the debate — for example, time allotted to each speaker, being polite and respectful to speakers in the opposite team, taking turns to speak and not interrupting, and so on.
- 7 If possible, record the debate, and play it back later so that the students can comment on it and learn from their experience. Extend the debate

experience by involving students from other classes, and asking other teachers to judge. This will extend the students' exposure to debates and help them improve their public speaking skills.

Activity 2: Taking part in group discussions



Activity 2

At college level and beyond, when students apply for placements or jobs, one of the requirements for selection is a **group discussion**, popularly referred to as a **GD**. In a GD, several candidates are put in a group and asked to share opinions on a topic. Their responses are monitored by examiners, who may or may not take part in the discussion themselves. Candidates are judged by their ability to initiate and conclude a discussion, make their opinions heard, speak audibly with good pronunciation and grammar, and behave politely.

At the school level, students are rarely exposed to the norms of a GD. Although in the classroom teachers do place students in groups for discussion, it is difficult to monitor all the groups at the same time, and the focus is mostly on the topic being discussed rather than the norms of speaking.

In this activity, you will be able to have your students practise the skills they need to take part effectively in a GD. You may need several classes to complete this, depending on how many students you have, but each session will benefit the entire class.

Before the activity, have a class discussion on the qualities of a good speaker. (See **Resource 2a**.)

Have another brainstorming session on the norms of good behaviour when working in a group. Or you can have your students respond to the worksheet in **Resource 2b** and have a discussion after that.

Once the students have some background in the qualities expected of a good speaker, and the norms of group behaviour, divide them into groups of seven or eight, and have them sit in circles (rearrange the furniture if possible). In every group, appoint a secret observer. Without letting the group members know, the observer has to monitor the group members' speech behaviour according to the norms discussed above, and record each member's performance. Since the observers will also be students, do not expect too much objectivity or incisiveness from their observations; the purpose of using them is simply to make the students aware of their abilities and areas for improvement. Give the groups a popular topic to discuss, such as **Respectable Professions**, where students discuss which professions are considered honourable and why. You can initiate the discussion by mentioning different professions, such as farmer, pilot, teacher or university lecturer, nurse, scientist, medical doctor, banker, computer expert, astronaut, or even professional sportsperson like Serena Williams of the United States (tennis) or Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal (football).

At the end of the allotted time, the class should reassemble and the observers present their observations on each member of their group. You need not encourage a debate on whether the members agree or disagree

with the observer; the focus should be on the qualities of a good presenter that emerged. In the next two or three classes, give students more practice in group discussions, with different observers in every group. The experience of participating effectively in group discussions and adhering to the norms of polite behaviour will develop students' self-confidence and clarity of expression.

Activity 3: Speaking extempore



Activity 3

At the Secondary School level, one of the most popular co-curricular activities is extempore speech, where students are asked to speak spontaneously (extempore) on a topic of general interest for four or five minutes. Unless students know beforehand which topics they have to choose from, speaking extempore requires both language proficiency and presence of mind. Unlike normal conversation, there is no time to think of a response, no break and no clue from the listeners. In addition, the speaker has to stand before an audience and speak at length, formulating ideas and presenting them logically instantly. All this requires both confidence and familiarity with a wide range of vocabulary and structures.

In this activity, you will be able to take students through the preparations for delivering a speech extempore. To introduce the activity, play the video/audio file in **Resource 3a** in which two speakers deliver a short speech on a topic. Ask your students to rate the speakers out of ten, and then ask them to explain their rating (i.e., which speaker they consider better, and why). Follow this with a discussion of the things to keep in mind while delivering a short speech effectively. (See **Resource 3b** for a list of points to remember.)

Now ask the students, working in groups of five or six, to think of three topics that they feel confident about speaking on — for example, sport (cricket, football, athletics, etc.), a movie star, a local hero, eating junk food, a pet. Ask them to write down the topics on slips of paper, then fold the papers and put them on the teacher's table.

Before asking students to come up and practise speaking extempore, it might be helpful if you gave a demonstration. Remember to follow the norms of effective speaking identified in the preceding discussion. Then ask your students to come up one by one and pick a topic to speak on. Encourage the shy and quieter ones to speak. Make sure all the students come up to speak, and appreciate their efforts even if they speak in halting English or cannot say more than a sentence. If you repeat this activity several times during the year, your students' speaking abilities are bound to improve.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit, you learned how to give your students practice and tips on speaking effectively in public situations. This practice and the strategies suggested will develop students' confidence and language skills. The focus of the unit was on giving every student an opportunity to stand in front of an audience and be able to express themselves clearly. The unit tried to help you prepare your students to speak for longer turns without hesitation. The activities address three important areas of public speaking relevant to students at the JSS level.

Reflections



Reflection

- Do the preparatory activities and discussions help students perform the activities with more enthusiasm?
- Does asking your students to make suggestions based on their own experience and understanding help you administer the activities better? Or do you feel you should provide the necessary information?
- How can you involve parents or guardians in developing your students' oral communication skills? Can you invite them to watch speaking competitions in the school? Would students be motivated to speak better if their parents were present?

Assessment



Assessment

- In what other situations do your students need to speak in English? Do they show enthusiasm about participating in public speaking competitions like extempore speech or debate? How can you help them become more motivated to speak?
- Do you think that, in addition to lessons, textbooks should include tips on public speaking like the ones given in the Resource section of this unit? Why or why not?

Resources

Resource 1a: Structure of a debate



Resource 1a

A debate, as you are aware, is a discussion in which speakers form two groups, and argue in favour of or against a topic. The topic is called a **motion**, and the speakers from each group not only give reasons to support their argument, they also counter the arguments made by the members from the opposite group.

A. (From the pros) Those who support the motion (proponents/proposers or pros, for short)

- The first speaker rises and states the motion as follows: *I move [or I support] the motion that all “out-of-school” youths who dropped out for any reason should be encouraged to return to school.*
- They define key terms in the motion. In this case, they need to say what they mean by “out-of-school youths.”
- They give their reasons in support of the motion: for example:
 - *My first reason for supporting this motion is that today’s youths are tomorrow’s leaders.*
 - *Secondly, they are the...*
 - *Thirdly, ..., etc.*
- They sum up their argument in support of the motion: *In summary, [or to sum up]...*
- Restate the motion: *I, therefore, repeat [or I, therefore, urge] you all to support the motion that...*

B. Opposing the motion

- The opposite team states their opposition to the motion by stating as follows: *I oppose the motion that... or I support those who oppose the motion that...*
- Like the pros, they define the motion, possibly differently. All those opposing the motion need to agree on their definition of the key term(s) in order to speak as a united team.
- They give their reasons for opposing the motion: for example:
 - *My first reason for opposing this motion is that not all youths need the kind of education one sees in schools today. Some are better as roadside mechanics, vulcanisers, house helps, etc.*
 - *Secondly, some have lost interest and confidence in schooling.*
 - *Thirdly, ..., etc.*

- They sum up their reasons for opposing the motion: *In summary, [or to sum up]...*
- They restate their opposition to the motion: *I, therefore, repeat [or I, therefore, urge you all NOT to support the motion] that...*

The process

There are two teams, each consisting of two or three speakers. One team (the affirmative) supports the motion, and the other (the negative) opposes the motion. A chairperson controls the proceedings.

The speeches and speaking time are divided equally between the two teams.

Each speaker makes a prepared speech to argue his or her case. The teams prepare collaboratively, building up their case. The sides speak in turn, starting with the proposer of the motion followed by his or her opponent and then the others in like order. Each speaker has a specified amount of time to speak (e.g., three minutes or five minutes).

Then the debate can be opened to the floor, with the speakers standing up to offer points supporting or opposing the motion. Each speaker from the floor is allowed a specified (usually shorter) amount of time (e.g., one minute or two minutes).

Important rules

- The team supporting the motion must not change their point of view. The same goes for the opposition, who must oppose the motion completely (whatever their private opinions may be).
- If a speaker makes a statement, he or she must be able to provide evidence or reasons to support it.
- The facts presented in a debate must be accurate.
- Speakers may not bring up new points in a **rebuttal speech**; that is, one that demonstrates that the opponent was “wrong” or ill informed.

Resource 1b: A sample class debate



Resource 1b

Motion: A teacher contributes more to the nation than a medical doctor

Pro: Mr Chairperson, distinguished panel of judges, ladies and gentlemen:

I rise to support the motion that teachers contribute much more to the development of the nation than medical doctors do.

First and foremost, without teachers there will be no doctors, to start with. Teachers produce doctors, engineers, governors, bankers, the

army officers and police as well as all of the civil servants, **to mention a few**. They mould character. Many national leaders were teachers at one time or another. Teachers never lose any lives while teaching, but many poor doctors lose their patients.

Con: Mr. Chairperson, distinguished panel of judges, ladies and gentlemen:

They say “health is wealth.” Without doctors who provide good health services, we would not all be here today. My worthy opponent forgot to tell this august audience that when teachers fail ill, they must rush to the doctor. Otherwise, they may never be able to teach anymore; they may be dead or disabled! It is because doctors are more valuable to the nation that they spend a longer time training to make sure that the nation remains very healthy. That is why doctors are better paid than teachers who are clearly less educated. Medical doctors are also always on duty. While teachers are engaged in chalk and talk, doctors are busy saving lives in emergencies all the time. Doctors are smartly dressed in clean white gowns and definitely look more respectable and attractive than teachers who only have a piece of chalk in their hand.

Resource 2a: Qualities necessary for an effective presentation



Resource 2a

Making a presentation effectively involves not only knowledge of the grammar of the language; it also includes features of good communication. Here are some features that should be elicited in the class discussion:

- Fluency
- Good pronunciation
- Clarity of speaking; that is, clear delivery in an audible voice and comfortable pace of speaking
- Knowledge of the topic
- Willingness to listen to others’ point of view
- Politeness and pleasant personal behaviour
- Ability to use humour
- Ability to maintain eye contact
- Ability to take listeners logically through their speech by using appropriate discourse/semantic markers (see **Modules 3, 4 and 6** for more information on discourse/semantic markers)

Resource 2b: Taking part in group discussions



Resource 2b

Group discussions involve the participation of several group members, each of whom has an opinion to share. Since group discussions are *social* events, involving human communication, members are expected to follow the norms of social conduct. Below is a list of things we do when we have group discussions. With a partner, decide which ones you think are examples of acceptable behaviour, and which ones are not.

- 1 Everyone speaks at the same time.
- 2 Participants have thought about the topic and what they plan to say.
- 3 A participant initiates the discussion by thanking the organisers, introducing himself or herself, laying out the general nature of the discussion, and invites everyone to speak.
- 4 People are willing to listen to what others have to say.
- 5 Some participants use a joke and a little humour to make a point.
- 6 Participants talk in whispers with their neighbours.
- 7 Everyone has a turn to speak.
- 8 A participant makes eye contact with the moderator but not with the other group members.
- 9 A participant is not afraid to defend what he or she believes.
- 10 Some people become emotional and burst out in anger or desperation.
- 11 Some participants make long speeches.
- 12 A participant is willing to change his or her opinion.
- 13 A participant gets annoyed when someone contradicts her.
- 14 Participants encourage others to speak.
- 15 Some participants think group discussion is a waste of time and do not hesitate to show their boredom.
- 16 Some participants make sarcastic comments.
- 17 Participants support good ideas made by other participants.
- 18 A participant picks on the previous speaker's point, acknowledges it and adds his or her own view.
- 19 Participants interrupt only to ask for clarifications, and do so politely.
- 20 A participant sums up the discussion by making his or her own concluding remarks and then summarising what the others had to say.

Resource 3a: Extempore speech: My favourite sport



Resource 3a

Transcript

Speaker 1

Good morning. Today I'm going to speak on the topic My Favourite Sport, which is soccer. Soccer is a game played by two teams of 11

players each, in which each team has to score goals by kicking a football into a goal. The team which scores the most number of goals is the winner. I love soccer because it is a fast game which requires great stamina, foot skills and the ability to control the movement of a ball. My favourite players are Didier Drogba of Ivory Coast, Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal and Wayne Rooney of England. My friends and I spend our weekends playing soccer, and we all dream of playing for our country one day. In short, soccer is the sport I love most, and I would like to be a professional soccer player when I grow up.

Speaker 2

Uhh... goo... good morning. I uhh... I am speaking on soccer. My favourite sport is soccer. Soccer is played 11 players. Soccer is my favourite game. Soccer is played with football. I love soccer because it is fast game. To win we need goals. Goals kicked into goalpost. My most favourite players Didier Drogba, Ivory Coast, Cristiano Ronaldo, Argentina, no, Portugal, I think. Wayne Rooney is also my favourite from England. I play soccer with friends on every afternoon. Oh, I forgot, soccer is national game.



Audio

Resource files

See in the enclosed DVD an audio recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit3\Activity3\Resource3a\Audio\My_favourite_sport_Speaker1.mp3
- Scripts\Module2\Unit3\Activity3\Resource3a\Audio\My_favourite_sport_Speaker2.mp3

Resource 3b: Speaking extempore: Effective strategies



Resource 3b

- 1 Make eye contact with the audience.
- 2 Speak at a normal conversational speed, neither too fast nor too slow.
- 3 Have positive body language — maintain a good posture by standing straight, with your arms in a comfortable position.
- 4 Follow these steps to speak on the topic:
 - a Define the topic.
 - b Give examples.
 - c Mention one or more characteristic of the topic.
 - d Say why it is good/bad/important.
- 5 “Buy” yourself time by using expressions to:
 - a introduce the topic: *My topic today is.../I'd like to begin by....*
 - b keep people interested: *What is interesting about this is.../I think the audience would be interested to know that...*

- c give illustrations: *For example.../For instance.../A good example of this is...*
 - d emphasise: *An important thing about this is.../Let me emphasise that...*
 - e conclude: *In the end.../I'd like to end by.../In conclusion...*
- 6 Choose your words carefully, and try to use different words in each sentence. For example, rather than saying: *Ghana is a beautiful country. It has beautiful scenery and beautiful animals*, use different descriptive terms like breath taking scenery, a variety of animals, etc.
 - 7 Use good pronunciation. Do not run over your words, and avoid an artificial accent. A natural and clear pronunciation impresses people.
 - 8 Be grammatical. The best of speeches fail to impress if the sentences are ungrammatical.

Teacher question and answer



Feedback

- Question:** Some students are more eager and rush to be the first to speak, and unconsciously make others feel inadequate. How do I handle this situation?
- Answer:** Take the more enthusiastic students aside and tell them you need their help. Students love to be given responsibility that makes them feel important. Put one student in charge of one or two quieter students and tell him or her to think of ways to encourage these shy students to speak more in class. Ask the brighter students to tutor the less articulate ones in a “study-buddy” style — buddies are friends, and are meant to help one another. However, be careful that the better students do not become overconfident and do not bully the buddies in their charge.

Unit 4: Social Communication: Performing Language Functions

Introduction

In the classroom, students have opportunities to perform some linguistic functions like asking permission, asking for information and making a request. However, these are not the only uses of English in daily life. To enable students to use English effectively for social communication, we need to have them practise performing other functions in English. Some commonly used functions are asking for clarifications, apologising and giving a description. In this unit, we will introduce a few activities to help students develop their skills in performing these language functions.

Unit outcomes



Outcomes

At the end of the unit, you will be able to:

- encourage students to speak spontaneously in various social situations;
- familiarise students with common functions of English such as apologising, giving clarifications and giving a description;
- provide students with a vocabulary guide appropriate for these functions; and
- give students opportunities to share information naturally in their peer groups as they would in real-life situations.

Teacher support information

For students, the preparation for participating fully in social life begins at school. If we look at the classroom as a communication situation, we will see that a lot of language in the classroom is used for asking for permission, giving information and so on. As adults responsible for preparing students to become responsible citizens, English teachers can play an active role in teaching students appropriate language use for other functions such as apologising, asking for clarifications, etc. The teacher has to ensure that students have plenty of opportunities in class to practise their language skills. Rather than following a question-answer mode of interaction, the teacher needs to involve students in peer activities.

Activities done in pairs and groups help students feel less inhibited and shy, and give them a real purpose for speaking, as their group mates will have similar interests and lead similar personal lives. It is important, therefore, to use an activity-based approach to teaching, not just in the English classroom, but in other subject areas as well.

Activities

Activity 1: Apologising



Activity 1

We are all aware that in everyday life we use the word *Sorry* several times a day to apologise for causing any inconvenience. However, *Sorry* is not the only expression that we use to apologise, and we do not use it only to apologise. For example, we can say *Sorry* with rising intonation when we want someone to repeat what they have said, or when we want to register our protest at someone's remarks.

In this activity, we provide a few more expressions that students should learn in order to apologise to others in social situations. This activity will involve students devising different communication situations so they can practise using the language of apology.

To prepare the students for the activity, play them the video in **Resource 1a**, and ask them to guess what is happening. Their answer should be: *making an apology*. Then ask them to watch the video again and to note down the words and phrases used by the people to make an apology, and also how people respond to an apology. For this they will have to fill in the blanks in the worksheet in **Resource 1b**. If you cannot play the video, read out the transcript like a conversation, and have students complete the worksheet.

Discuss the expressions used to apologise, and have the students brainstorm for more such expressions. Also draw their attention to the responses made by Christine in the video, and ask them to think of other ways of responding.

Now break the students into groups of five or six and let them choose a situation from the following:

at the bookstore/in a relative's house/at the airport/on a bus/at the shopping mall/at school

In their groups, the students should think of a situation for an apology, and write a short dialogue on a conversation like the one in the video. The dialogue should contain expressions of apology and appropriate responses. When the groups are ready, the group members should perform a role play based on their conversation. The other groups should note the expressions used for apologies. At the end of the role play session, you can wind up by discussing once more the different ways of making an apology, and ask students to practise these at home and in social situations.

Activity 2: Asking for clarifications



Activity 2

In the classroom and outside, one of the most common language functions one needs to perform is asking for and giving clarifications. Sometimes we ask someone to repeat what he or she said because of background noise interference; at other times, the speaker may be speaking too fast or we may not be paying attention. At home, we use fairly informal language to ask for clarifications, especially because we use the home language.

Activity 3: Giving a description



Activity 3

This activity should provide some strategies to help your students describe an object, another common function of any language. All through our lives, we describe things in our home languages, from what we put in our mouths as children, to describing creepy-crawly creatures lurking in our homes, to the exotic things we see on holidays, objects of beauty around us, and finally, in our old age, we are asked by our doctors to describe what we see with our failing eyesight! In short, we describe hundreds of things around us — people, objects, processes, beliefs (yes, the descriptions can be of non-tangible things!) — and some of these we describe in English.

Other modules contain activities describing people and processes; this activity contains strategies for helping your students to describe an object.

As a pre-activity exercise, familiarise your students with the language of description by taking them through two tasks. In the first task, have them identify from a set of pictures the object that they will hear being described. (See **Resource 3a** for the worksheet with pictures.) Give the students, working in pairs with one worksheet to a pair, the worksheet with the pictures of eight objects, and describe them randomly using the descriptions given in **Resource 3b**, *without naming the object*. The students' job is to identify the objects from the descriptions, and number them. This task is to familiarise them with the expressions used for descriptions. The next task is actually a game that could also be played outdoors. In this task, student volunteers are blindfolded and made to describe an object as they touch it. For this task, you will have to bring to the class interesting objects that are not too easy to describe. This task should generate a lot of laughter as the students make wild guesses about the objects. It is also a good activity for practising descriptions.

After these preliminary tasks, the students will have had a good exposure to the language of description. However, it might still be useful to have a discussion about some appropriate expressions. You can now distribute amongst the students **Resource 3c**, which contains a list of useful phrases for descriptions.

For the final part of the activity, give students a set of pictures of some differently shaped objects (see **Resource 3d**) and ask them to describe them. Working in pairs, they should first write out a description using

Resource 3c, and one partner should then read it aloud to the rest of the class. The rest of the classes will have to understand clearly which object on the page is being described. Keep a record of the best description, and discuss with the class what made it so good. The rest of the class can practise and modify their own descriptions to match the pictures better.

Unit summary



Summary

This unit aimed to familiarise your students with certain social functions of English. It exposed them to real-life situations where polite expressions are used for apologising, asking for clarifications and giving descriptions. It also tried to help you give your students adequate practice in using the appropriate language forms in conversations similar to those used in everyday life. The unit also gave you strategies to help your students practise these skills in the classroom.

Reflections



Reflection

Are you comfortable with dramatising conversations in English in class? Do you think you have the necessary pronunciation skills to make the conversations sound real? If not, you should listen to audiotapes of lessons for pronunciation practice that are readily available, and practise them privately. As a role model for your students, you should try your best to expose them to the most appropriate forms of English.

Assessment



Assessment

- This module is about speaking skills. How best can you integrate the activities in **Unit 3** with written English skills? Look at **Module 4 — Effective Writing** on written skills and identify areas of correspondence that will help your students integrate their oral and written communication skills.

Resources

Resource 1a: Making an apology (transcript)



Resource 1a

- Christina: Hey, Ravi! Why didn't you turn up at my place last evening? Everyone was waiting for you to show up, you know! In fact, we waited till 9:00 p.m. to start!
- Ravi: I'm so sorry, Tina — I just couldn't get away from the office!
- Christina: Well, since you didn't call to say you weren't coming, we didn't know for sure!
- Ravi: I know, Tina — it was really rude of me not to call — can you forgive me, please?
- Christina: It wasn't just me, you know — Suzie came only to meet you, and I had a real problem with the seating arrangement at dinner!
- Ravi: My sincere apologies once again, dear — I just hope I can make up for it soon!
- Christina: It's okay, but you better not repeat this — I don't know if I can take it one more time!
- Ravi: Please let it pass this time — I promise this will never happen again!
- Christina: All right, all right — you're forgiven! Now buy me an ice cream, or I'll tell everyone about this!
- Ravi: Really? Now who's being mean? Ha ha!



Video

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit4\Activity1\Resource 1a\Video\Making_an_apology.mp4

Resource 1b: Making an apology (worksheet)



Resource 1b

- Christina: Hey, Ravi! Why didn't you turn up at my place last evening? Everyone was waiting for you to show up, you know! In fact, we waited till 9:00 p.m. to start!
- Ravi: _____, Tina — I just couldn't get away from the office!
- Christina: Well, since you didn't call to say you weren't coming, we didn't know for sure!
- Ravi: I know, Tina — it was really rude of me not to call — _____?
- Christina: It wasn't just me, you know — Suzie came only to meet you, and I had a real problem with the seating arrangement at dinner!
- Ravi: _____, dear — I just hope I can make up for it soon!
- Christina: _____, but you better not repeat this — I don't if I can take it one more time!
- Ravi: _____ — I promise this will never happen again!
- Christina: All right, all right — _____! Now buy me an ice cream, or I'll tell everyone about this!
- Ravi: Really? Now who's being mean? Ha ha!

Resource 2a: Asking for clarifications (video muted)



Resource 2a

Transcript

- Rahila: Okay, everyone, let's finalise our plans for the Sports Day... Lisa, Ron, Nick, Didier, Wendy — everyone, please pay attention!
- Wendy: Sorry, Rahila — didn't catch it — _____?
- Rahila: I just said we should start discussing our plans for Sports Day... Did you talk to Coach Andrews?
- Wendy: Me? No — was I supposed to?

- Ron: Why, Wendy, wasn't it you who offered to meet Coach Andrews after classes on Friday?
- Wendy: But I thought we were supposed to meet him together — Lisa and I!
- Lisa: Hey — I thought I heard my name — _____?
- Rahila: Really, Lisa, why are you always so vague? Wendy says she and you were supposed to have met Coach Andrews together on Friday.
- Lisa: Oops! I forgot! _____?
- Nick: You don't remember? I was with you when Wendy called Thursday night, and I thought she said you two needed to discuss Sports Day preparations.
- Lisa: I'm confused now... weren't we supposed to meet Coach after we'd made our plans?
- Didier: Guys, guys, we're moving off the tracks now — _____?
- Nick: All right — let's go over this once more. Everyone, please pay attention! We need to discuss how to start planning the Sports Day events. Wendy and Lisa are going to discuss it with Coach Andrews. I hope this clarifies it for everyone now.
- Didier: Ummm... I was thinking, like, how about drawing up a plan ourselves and getting it past Coach? We don't have much time, y'know!
- Rahila: That's not a bad idea — Didier, _____?
- Wendy: Didier, remem...
- Nick: I have an ide...
- Rahila: Nick, please don't interrupt her — Wendy, _____?
- Wendy: What I was saying was that Didier and I were just talking about things we could do and he...
- Didier: Yeah, and I was saying we could divide the games into under 14, and over 15 or something like that...
- Rahila: Okay, I think I get it — you are suggesting we have two sets of competitions — one for kids under 14 years, and the other for the rest of us older kids, that is, 14 upwards.

- Nick: That sounds good...
- Ron: Someone _____.
Are we going to make a rough plan now, and everyone will contribute their ideas, and we will then take it to the Coach for confirmation?
_____?
- Everyone: Absolutely!
- Nick: Okay, everyone — let's be serious about this:
_____.



Video

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit4\Activity2\Resource2a\Video\Asking_for_Clarifications_Muted.mp4



Audio

If you have trouble playing the video, you can have your students listen to the audio recording (below) of the same conversation.

- Scripts\Module2\Unit4\Activity2\Resource2a\Audio\Asking_for_Clarifications_Muted.mp3

Resource 2b: Asking for clarifications (video)



Resource 2b

Transcript

- Rahila: Ok, everyone, let's finalise our plans for the Sports Day... Lisa, Ron, Nick, Didier, Wendy — everyone, please pay attention!
- Wendy: Sorry, Rahila — didn't catch it — **could you say that again, please?**
- Rahila: I just said we should start discussing our plans for Sports Day.... Did you talk to Coach Andrews?
- Wendy: Me? No — was I supposed to?
- Ron: Why, Wendy, wasn't it you who offered to meet Coach Andrews after classes on Friday?
- Wendy: But I thought we were supposed to meet him together — Lisa and I!
- Lisa: Hey — I thought I heard my name — **can someone explain what this is about?**
- Rahila: Really, Lisa, why are you always so vague? Wendy says she and you were supposed to have met Coach

- Andrews together on Friday.
- Lisa: Oops! I forgot! **Could you remind me what we were planning to discuss with Coach?**
- Nick: You don't remember? I was with you when Wendy called Thursday night, and I thought she said you two needed to discuss Sports Day preparations.
- Lisa: I'm confused now... weren't we supposed to meet Coach after we'd made our plans?
- Didier: Guys, guys, we're moving off the tracks now — **can someone explain this from the beginning please?**
- Nick: All right — let's go over this once more. Everyone, please pay attention! We need to discuss how to start planning the Sports Day events. Wendy and Lisa are going to discuss it with Coach Andrews. I hope this clarifies it for everyone now.
- Didier: Ummm... I was thinking, like, how about drawing up a plan ourselves and getting it past Coach? We don't have much time, y'know!
- Rahila: That's not a bad idea — Didier, **could you explain what you have in mind?**
- Wendy: Didier, remem...
- Nick: I have an ide...
- Rahila: Nick, please don't interrupt her — Wendy, **could you repeat what you wanted to say?**
- Wendy: What I was saying was that Didier and I were just talking about things we could do and he...
- Didier: Yeah, and I was saying we could divide the games into under 14, and over 15 or something like that...
- Rahila: Okay, I think I get it — you are suggesting we have two sets of competitions — one for kids under 14 years, and the other for the rest of us older kids, that is, 14 upwards.
- Nick: That sounds good...
- Ron: Someone **please pull this conversation together for everyone's clarification...** Are we going to make a rough plan now, and everyone will contribute their ideas, and we will then take it to the Coach for confirmation? **Am I on the right track?**

Everyone: Absolutely!

Nick: Okay, everyone — let's be serious about this: **I'd like everyone to clarify their points, please.**



Video

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit4\Activity2\Resource2b\Video\Asking_for_Clarifications.mp4



Audio

If you have trouble playing the video, you can have your students listen to the audio recording (below) of the same conversation:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit4\Activity2\Resource2b\Audio\Asking_for_Clarifications.mp3

Resource 2c: Asking for clarifications: List of useful expressions



Resource 2c

Here is a list of common expressions used to clarify information that the listener did not understand. Practise using them in the classroom when you do not understand something said by your teacher or classmates. This will help you use them in real-life conversations outside the classroom.

- 1 I'd like everyone to clarify their points, please.
- 2 Am I on the right track?
- 3 Please pull this conversation together for everyone's clarification.
- 4 Could you repeat what you wanted to say?
- 5 Could you explain what you have in mind?
- 6 Can someone explain this from the beginning please?
- 7 Could you remind me what we were planning to discuss?
- 8 Could someone explain what this is about?
- 9 Could you say that again, please?
- 10 Can I ask you to repeat what you just said?
- 11 Sorry, I think I missed the point.

Resource 3a: Describing objects (pictures)



Resource 3a



Resource 3b: Describing objects (descriptions)



Resource 3b

An open book: This is a rectangular object about the size of a shoe box. It is made of thin sheets of paper bound together. The inner sheets are encased in two covers, made of thick sheets. The object contains printed matter with margins on each side of the sheets. The object is used for gathering or displaying knowledge or information.

A pair of spectacles: This object consists of two pieces of glass that are held in place with a frame made of plastic, metal or wood. The two glass pieces are cut into a round, oval, square or rectangular shape, and held in a thin frame. The frame has two long sticks, about seven or eight centimetres long, which are bent at the ends to look like the letter “l.” This object is used to view things at a distance more clearly, or small objects and written matter that cannot be viewed by the naked eye.

A pencil box: It is a rectangular object, cuboid in shape, about 15 centimetres long, six centimetres wide and three centimetres high. It is made of plastic, metal or wood, and is used to store tools used for writing.

A mobile phone: This is a hand-held wireless instrument used to communicate with people at a distance. It has an in-built computer that allows the user to store the contact numbers of people they wish to speak to, and many other features that enable the user to communicate with other people. This object works on a battery and sometimes includes a torch. The advanced versions of this object can be used to watch TV, audio- or video- record events and sounds, and even allows the user to be visible to the listener.

A stethoscope: This is an instrument used by a doctor to listen to a person's heartbeat. It consists of a rubber tube, about two feet in length, connected at one end to two metal tubes with earpieces. At the other end, the rubber tube is connected to a flat, round, metal object that resembles a medal.

Electric iron: An instrument used to remove creases from clothes, this object works on electricity. The object, about the size of a book, is conical in shape, and has a flat metal plate on one surface, which can be heated. The flat surface is attached to a metal or plastic casing that contains wires and other heating apparatus. The plastic case also has a non-heating plastic handle for people to hold it. The object may have a wire attached at one end to connect it to an electric point, or it may be wireless.

A shoe: This object is an article of clothing used by both men and women. It is made of a sturdy fabric. The object is about the size of a human foot, and is rectangular in shape, but rounded at the front and back. It is hollow and has a thick bottom called a "sole," made of plastic or some other material that uses friction to keep it steady on the ground. The object has a soft inner lining for comfort. The fabric is stitched to the sole, and can be held in place by two laces that can be inserted into holes made in the front.

A clock: This is a round object made of plastic or metal. It works on a spring that is attached to three thin plastic sticks with arrows at the end. The sticks, which go round and round constantly in a fixed time span, are made of plastic. The longest stick is about one foot long, while the other two are about seven and five centimetres long respectively. The front of the object has a paper or plastic sheet glued to it, on which is printed the numbers 1 to 12. The sheet is protected by a glass cover. The object rests vertically on two metal feet. At the top of the object, on the circumference, there is a triangular handle. On either side of the handle, two round metal buttons are attached, each about the size of a coin. When pressed, these metal coins produce a sound.

Resource 3c: Expressions used to describe an object



Resource 3c

1 Expressions describing shape:

round, oval, square, flat, long, diagonal, diamond-shaped, pear-shaped, heart-shaped, zigzag, elliptical, rectangular, triangular, circular

2 Expressions describing size:

large, small, short, tiny, enormous, huge, average, pint-sized, microscopic, mid-sized

3 Expressions describing dimensions:

hollow, cube, spherical, conical, cylindrical, concave (turning in), shapely, convex (turning out), bent, stretched

4 Expressions describing directions:

up, down, left, right, north, south, east, west, above, below, over, under, between, beside, along, across, beneath

5 Colour expressions:

red, blue, yellow, green, amber, azure, turquoise, jade, ashen, grey, brown, crimson, maroon, magenta, indigo, purple, violet, orange, pink, beige, silver, gold, bluish-green, greenish-red, purplish-yellow, inky-blue, icy blue, copper, rust

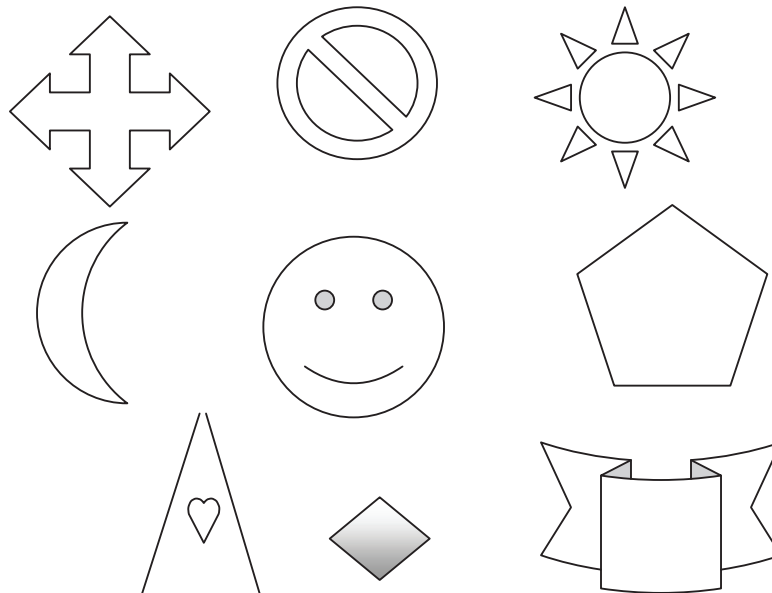
6 Useful phrases:

- a *This object is a...*
- b *It has...*
- c *It is used for...*
- d *It is made of...*
- e *It comprises...*
- f *It consists of...*
- g *The size of this object is...*

Resource 3d: Shapes to describe



Resource 3d



Teacher question and answer



Feedback

Question:

Students will need to describe so many different objects in real life! How can we teach them to describe everything? How many words or sentences should one teach?

Answer:

It is obviously not possible to teach your students to describe everything they see around them. However, if you give them a basic vocabulary and a set of common phrases or sentences used for descriptions, and have them practise using these, they will be gradually able to modify their language to describe new things effectively.

Unit 5: Speaking across the Curriculum

Introduction

The ability to communicate fluently in English is useful for more than just social purposes or public speaking. In Commonwealth countries, English is still the most common language in higher education — it is definitely the language in which most students complete their higher education. Students should therefore practise using English for academic purposes right from school level. In this unit, we will introduce a few important academic skills that your students will need to use in English; for example, being able to narrate an event or define, describe and illustrate their points. These skills include the ability to use subject-specific words and sentences, narrate points and ideas logically and interestingly, use discourse markers effectively to help the listener navigate through the discourse (for example, story, definition, explanation, argument). Along with accuracy of language, therefore, academic English requires fluency in formulating ideas and presenting them effectively. In this unit, we will present some activities that should help you improve your students' spoken English for academic purposes.

Unit outcomes



Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- help your students understand the value of speaking for a purpose;
- engage your students in academic tasks that improve their speaking skills;
- make your students aware of the language of definition, narration, illustration and description; and
- give your students opportunities to integrate their reading skills with their speaking and listening skills.

Terminology



Terminology

Ice breaker:

An introductory activity used to put people who have just met at ease with one another. The term comes from the metaphor *to break the ice*, which means to relieve tension in a situation by making people relax. An ice breaker is a popular activity for academic situations such as classrooms, seminars, workshops and conferences. It usually involves having people introduce themselves and others in interesting — and often fun — ways.

Teacher support information

To help students become more articulate — that is, express themselves appropriately in English — we have to give them opportunities in the class to share their thoughts and ideas with their peers. This will help make them less self-conscious, and will give them practice in preparing to speak before a more formal audience. The peer speaking activities, however, have to have a real purpose, because, as teachers, our aim is to teach our students to speak spontaneously, and not simply read out dialogues. In the class, therefore, we can give them academic tasks that involve sharing ideas to list points, giving reasons for their viewpoint on something, describing something, etc. — tasks that will make them focus on the information to be shared rather than on their (inappropriate) language skills. Such tasks are called **information-gap** tasks, and their purpose is to develop fluency and confidence. Once students have become more self-confident, they can be made to focus on pronunciation and grammatical accuracy. These strategies help develop students' academic skills across the curriculum, as they learn to use subject-specific language, and express themselves grammatically.

Case study



Case study

When Daniel Ntini, a JSS English teacher, joined Community Secondary School, Keffi, recently, he found his students serious about their studies and conscientious about following his instructions. Individually, they responded to him with warmth and respect, which made him feel happy in their company. However, he noticed that they kept to their own sets of friends, and rarely spoke to other classmates. They were self-conscious and shy, and did not make any new classmates feel comfortable. As a result, they were unable to work together in the class, preferring to study by themselves.

Daniel recalled his own English teacher Mrs Hannah Yusuf's class when he was a student at Hampos International School. He remembered how students never wanted to miss Mrs Yusuf's classes because not even the

weakest student was ever bored in her class. Her classroom exercises always involved doing something funny with a classmate, or simply stretching or walking around the classroom. These short exercises, which she called ice breakers, lasted for only three or four minutes, but she used them to make sure that everyone worked with everyone else, and that no one was bored, uninterested or shy.

Daniel felt the issue in his own classroom could also be resolved by an ice breaker. In his next class, he gave his students a task: in turns, each student had to share with the class three things the person sitting next to them does every morning, and three things they do in the evening. This activity forced the students to talk amongst themselves and share personal information. After it was over, the students seemed much happier and relaxed. Seizing the moment, Daniel introduced textual activities for students to do in pairs and small groups. They began to discuss lessons, read and answer questions together, solve problems themselves before bringing them to the teacher's notice and share information. The class gradually became more animated and responsive, and the attendance level went up. By the end of the first term, Daniel saw that these peer interactions had helped them approach their exams in a more relaxed manner, and their performance improved too.

Daniel's colleagues also noticed these improvements, and many colleagues began to incorporate his strategies in their own subject classes. Daniel felt happy that he had managed to make his students more sociable in the classroom.

Points to ponder

- 1 Do you have shy and withdrawn students in your class? Are your students self-conscious when they meet someone for the first time? What steps have you taken to make them more self-confident and fluent?
- 2 Do you think picking out the shy students and making them answer questions in the class is a good way of developing self-confidence and fluency? Why or why not?

Activities

Activity 1: Practising narrative skills: Story and event



Activity 1

An important academic activity that students are regularly made to do in class is retelling a passage from a lesson in their own words, or relating an event described in the textbook to their own experience. We expect students to be able to explain some part of the lesson because we want to check how much they have understood. To be able to retell a story or an event is part of the ability to *narrate*; that is, to talk about something logically, in chronological order and in an interesting manner.

This activity should help you familiarise your students with the skills required to present a narrative in an interesting manner. These skills include the ability to rephrase words and ideas and present them in

chronological order, and to use discourse markers of listing, introducing and summarising. This activity is meant to improve students' spoken English for academic purposes, so it will also involve the ability to read and understand a passage.

Put the students in small groups and give them the passage in **Resource 1a** to read. Then play the audio files of the narratives on the passage (**Resource 1b**) or read it aloud. Explain that they will hear someone retelling the events in the passage, and that this task is called **narrating**, and the content of what the speaker is saying is called a **narrative**. In their groups, the students should listen carefully to the two narratives and decide which one better represents the passage, and why. You will notice that the *second* version is the better one. The discussion that follows should include aspects of a good narrative:

- The information is clearly presented.
- The text is rephrased; that is, the narrative is not simply a repetition of the author's words.
- The appropriate vocabulary is used to retell the story as well as comment on it (e.g., *short and touching story...*, *inspired by her uncle... there was a big hurdle...*, etc.).
- There is a clear beginning, middle and end.
- The information is presented chronologically.
- The information is compressed so that only the important parts are narrated.
- Discourse markers are used to make the listener easily understand the passage (e.g., *but, also, even, however, interestingly*).

Once the students are familiar with the features of a good narrative, separate them into pairs and give them another passage, like the one in **Resource 1c**. Have each pair prepare a narrative on it. One member of each pair should then present the narrative, and the others will comment on its clarity. This activity will give the students practice in giving narrations. To test how much they have learned, select a passage from a textbook from another subject (History, Science, etc.) and ask the students to narrate the events described. Announce that the class will vote for the best narrative by grading each one.

Activity 2: Reporting in the classroom



Activity 2

At the JSS level, asking students to report what someone has just said, to explain in their own words what their teacher has discussed, or to simply repeat for understanding are common classroom activities. As teachers, we do this to test our students' comprehension, their attention span or simply their ability to speak in an articulate manner. The ability to explain and report someone else's words is a complex language skill that involves several language operations such as using appropriate grammar (reported speech), relating ideas in the correct order, reporting the facts accurately and so on. This ability has relevance beyond the JSS classroom, and is useful both across the curriculum and through life.

This activity should help you teach your students how to report fluently and appropriately. It should familiarise them with the important aspects of reporting, so that they develop the confidence to use this speaking skill with ease.

In the first step, show the students a short video clip of an event, with the sound muted. You can use any clip that is interesting and easy for the students to follow — from a film, a documentary, a TV clip, a home video and so on — or the video clip in **Resource 2a**. The video should contain a conversation in simple English, which students will have to report on. First, play the video scene twice in succession, then turn it off and ask the students to describe what they saw. After they have finished, describe it yourself and ask your students to pay attention to what you say. Remember to include in your description the sequence of events, and the important details. Explain to the class that this task was about *giving a description* of something they saw. Remind them that description involves listing the objects seen and narrating the events in the correct sequence. It also involves describing the emotions expressed by the people, if there are any.

Now play the video with sound twice again, and ask the students to report in their own words what the people in the video are saying. Then report it yourself, as you did the first time, and ask the students, working in pairs, to note down the differences they heard between the description and the report. Try to elicit the important aspects of reporting (see **Resource 2b** for some useful information on the language of reporting). After the discussion, put the students in groups and give them a passage containing a conversation from one of their course books, preferably their English textbook. Using the points given in **Resource 2b**, they should discuss how to report on it. You could also show them a video similar to the one in **Resource 2a** for the activity. Let one member of each group present the report. Let the class decide on the best report and why they voted for it. Gradually introduce passages from other subjects and have your students practise reporting on what they read. This skill will not only make them more articulate, it will also help them remember their lessons better.

Activity 3: Defining with illustrations



Activity 3

While studying subjects other than English, such as Science, Environmental Studies or Geography, students regularly need to learn and define concepts using subject specific vocabulary and illustrations. This academic exercise is relevant not just at the school level, but also at higher levels. Giving a definition requires conceptual knowledge; that is, knowledge of the topic, familiarity with the words and phrases related to the topic and grammatical accuracy. Students frequently complain of understanding concepts but being unable to explain or express themselves in an articulate manner, especially in front of their teacher and classmates. This might be because they do not have practice in organising the information in their mind before speaking, or are unable to connect ideas logically.

This activity will give your students opportunities to practise giving appropriate definitions. It should make them aware of the importance of understanding how to present an idea logically and to illustrate it with examples.

To prepare them for the activity, show them some definitions for a discussion on what constitutes a good definition. You could choose some concepts from their course books or use the list in **Resource 3**, in which the students have to match a set of concepts in Column 1 with the definitions given in Column 2. The definitions in **Resource 3** have been taken from JSS Chemistry, Biology, Politics and History textbooks. After they have completed the exercise, discuss how good definitions contain the following information:

- 1 The **category** to which the object/concept belongs.
- 2 The **use** made of it.
- 3 **Other** relevant information.
- 4 **Examples** and **illustrations** of the object/concept.

Selecting any one of the given definitions, illustrate each point above. For example, in the definition of **tissue**, the **category** mentioned is *A group of similar or dissimilar cells*; the **use** is *to perform a particular function*; **related information** is *which are held together by some intercellular substance produced by the cells themselves*; and the **examples** given are *parenchyma, collenchyma and chlorenchyma*. Now ask the students to categorise the other definitions in a similar manner. This will familiarise them with the language of definitions.

For practice in giving a definition, put up one or two terms on the board and ask the class to define them appropriately. Prompt them to remember the points mentioned above. After some practice, put the students in small groups and ask them to define the following terms:

A screwdriver, a barometer, a pair of forceps, equinox, a tsunami, gross domestic product (GDP), dictatorship, reserved forest.

Allow them to refer to a dictionary or their textbooks, but tell them to remember that their definitions should contain the points mentioned

above. For more practice, select a few students randomly and give them a few object/concept names to define with illustrations. Ask the class to grade each definition, and later have a discussion on which definitions were good and why. Conclude the activity by telling the students to practise using the skill of appropriate definition when they learn other subjects.

Unit summary



Summary

The unit explored the different ways in which students can communicate effectively for academic purposes, and how they can use such skills across the curriculum. The unit tried to help you familiarise your students with the appropriate language of narratives, descriptions, reports and definitions. It exposed students to recordings of actual situations so that they could learn to practise their speaking skills in natural contexts. The activities described here are relevant to other subjects and could be used by the English teacher in collaboration with other subject teachers.

Reflections



Reflection

- Do you think the activities suggested in this unit adequately address the particular needs of your students?
- Did the activities help improve your students' speaking in the class?
- Were the activities enjoyed by all the students, or were some of the activities easy for students while some others were difficult? How did you handle this?

Assessment



Assessment

- Identify three other oral English skills that your students need to develop for study purposes. Then make one activity for each skill on the lines of the ones suggested here. Record the students' responses and play them back for discussion. Try to note down the areas of improvement.

Resources

Resource 1a: Narrative passage: Zainab's dream



Resource 1a

Every time a plane flew across in the sky, Zainab Yakasai was reminded of her uncle. Zainab's favourite uncle, Wing Commander Musa Yakasai, had worked as a pilot for many years until he retired three years ago. Although there were very few female pilots, Zainab was hoping to be one of them. She was excited about taking a plane off the ground like a bird, and visiting different cities without having to pay for the tickets. Most of all, she just loved the pilot's smart uniform, and the salary and respect that pilots got. They also had a very responsible job: they were in charge of the lives of all the passengers and crew members aboard the plane. But Zainab's father did not think a girl should be a pilot. He spoke like most old men did — about her future husband not liking it, about taking care of her children and even about a possible plane crash. He was also worried about what people would say if they saw his daughter dressed like a man.

So Zainab went to speak to Uncle Musa. He was excited about her ambition and impressed by her courage. But he told her a secret — at first he himself had been very nervous about being a pilot. The training at the flying school for pilots was not at all easy. Some boys left, and he himself had almost given up. But he was also determined to be able to fly planes and earn the attractive salary experienced pilots got. So he had studied very hard and had remained committed. Eventually he completed his training as a pilot and passed with flying colours. During his long career, he had flown planes to London, New York, Karachi, Brisbane and many other cities. Mr Yakasai encouraged Zainab to think positively and not let other people stop her from fulfilling her dream. He promised to help her in every possible way.

Resource 1b: A narrative passage



Resource 1b

Version A: Transcript

This is uh... a short story called "Zainab's Dream." In the story, in the story describes ... the story about a young girl Zainab. She wanted to be a pilot. Zainab's favourite uncle Wing Commander, Mr. Musa Yakasai was retired. He was a pilot. He flew planes for many years. After that. ..no,... actually Zainab's father was dead against her. Zainab loved the pilot's smart uniform, and the salary and respect that pilots got. But her father thought what will people think of my daughter? She will dress like a man. She will have a husband, children and she will die in a plane crash. But Zainab wanted to fly a plane to var... different countries without paying for the tickets. A pilot had a very responsible job: they were in charge of the lives of all the passengers and the air hostesses on the plane.

So Zainab went to speak to Musa Yakasai. But he told her a secret — at

first he did not want to become a pilot because the training for pilots was not easy at all. He was... Umm... he was excited about her ambition and impressed by her courage. And in the training, some boys left, but he did not give up because he wanted to get the attractive salary of pilots. So he had studied very hard and,... and he had completed his training as a pilot and passed with flying colours. During his long career, he had flown planes to London, New York, um... New York... Ka-ra-chi, Brisbane and many other cities. He promised to help her in every possible way. Mr Yakasai told Zainab to think positively and not listen to anyone. He will help her in every possible way.

Version B: Transcript

This passage narrates a short and touching story called “Zainab’s Dream” about a young girl Zainab’s ambition to become an airline pilot when she grew up. Every time an airplane flew overhead, she longed to be up there. Inspired by her uncle who was himself a Wing Commander, Zainab dreamt of going off to different places without having to pay for it, wearing the smart pilot’s uniform, getting a good salary and respect from everyone. She also realised being a pilot was a great responsibility, as the lives of all the passengers and crew depended on the pilot.

But there was a big hurdle in Zainab’s path — her father was completely against her decision to become a pilot. He was worried about what people would say when they saw his daughter dressed in a man’s clothes. He even tried to frighten her by telling her she would have problems with her future husband and children, and might even face a plane crash.

Zainab was, however, a determined girl, and all her father’s tactics could not break her resolve. Unhappy at her father’s words, Zainab visited her uncle, Wing Commander Musa Yakasai, and shared her dream. Interestingly, Uncle Musa reacted in the exact opposite way than her father. Instead of telling her what problems lay ahead, he appreciated her resolve, and was impressed by the young girl’s determination. He encouraged her to pursue her dream, and shared a secret with her — as a beginner, he was also scared, especially since a pilot’s training was not easy.



Audio

Resource files

See in the enclosed DVD an audio recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit5\Activity1\Resource1b\Audio\Zainab’s_Dream_vA.mp3
- Scripts\Module2\Unit5\Activity1\Resource1b\Audio\Zainab’s_Dream_vB.mp3

Resource 1c: A narrative passage: *Rikki-Tikki Tavi* (adapted)



Resource 1c

Rikki-Tikki Tavi was a brave mongoose who was adopted by a very kind family after he was rescued from a flooded drain by their ten-year-old son. The family fed him meat, bananas and boiled eggs, and tried everything to make him healthy and strong again. Now, mongooses are wild creatures, but the child became so fond of the mongoose that he begged his parents to let him keep it. At first the child's mother was alarmed at the idea, because she felt the mongoose would hurt her son. But her husband noticed that the mongoose was very well behaved, and seemed to have become fast friends with their son. So it happened that the mongoose began to live with the family.

Now Rikki-Tikki Tavi, like all mongooses, was restless from the tip of his nose to the end of his bushy tail, and he liked to draw everyone's attention by announcing his presence with a loud "*Rick-tick-tikki-tikki-tav!*" And this is how he got the name Rikki-tikki Tavi. Like all well-bred mongooses, Rikki-Tikki Tavi was always very curious to find out as much about his environment as possible "*because it was there.*" So every morning and evening he made a round of the grounds of the bungalow, especially the parts of the vast garden that were overgrown with weeds.

One day, while playing in the family garden, he heard the tailor-bird Darzee and his wife crying over one of their babies which had fallen out of the nest and had been eaten by a cobra. Rikki-Tikki Tavi's tail bristled with anger when he heard this, and he determined to protect his family and friends against the evil cobra. He had always hated snakes, anyway. That night, taking his daily watchman's round of the garden, Rikki-Tikki Tavi overheard two cobras planning to kill the tailor-bird's family. Rikki-Tikki Tavi knew that he could not let this happen, and he had to kill them first. From then on, he kept a close watch over their movements.

The next day, Rikki-Tikki Tavi hid behind the large mango tree where the tailorbirds had their nest, and waited for the cobra. When the evil snake began slithering up to the nest, Rikki-Tikki Tavi pounced on the cobra. There was a terrible fight, in which he got bruises all over his furry body, but in the end, Rikki-Tikki Tavi managed to kill Nag, the cobra.

Resource 2a: Reporting on an event (video)



Resource 2a

A hospital scene

The scene: a busy hospital foyer, with receptionists, doctors, nurses and attendants milling around. The camera zooms in to two people rushing in, looking anxious and flustered, a young woman and an older man, possibly her father. In a rush, the woman bends over the counter to catch the attention of the busy receptionist who is on the phone. Without waiting for the girl to hang up the phone, the young woman demands to know where her husband is. She speaks all at once, mumbling something about a car accident. Her father tries to calm her down, and in a more composed manner, politely asks the girl at the counter for information about Peter Obama, his son-in-law. He explains that they have come over from Kaduna, after receiving a phone call from the police

about the car accident. The receptionist is sympathetic and kind, and informs them that Mr Obama is in very good hands. She confirms that he has been in an accident — his car was hit by a speeding truck — but because he was brought in immediately, the surgeons have managed to attend to his injuries. He is now in surgery for some injuries to his ribs. She gently reassures them that the hospital's best surgeon is with Mr Obama, and they should try to relax and sit in the lounge until there is more news. The young woman loses her composure and starts crying softly. Her father comforts her, thanks the receptionist and leads his daughter to one of the vacant chairs in the lounge.

Woman: Where's my husband? Where's my husband? Please, where's my husband? Accident, the car accident, where's my husband?

Man: Calm down. Calm down.

Receptionist: Madam.

Woman: Please, where's my husband?

Receptionist: Madam.

Man: Calm down, calm down. Excuse me, Ms.

Receptionist: Yes.

Man: We have come from Kaduna. We received a phone call from the police about a car accident. It was involving my son-in-law, Peter Obama. Can you tell us something about him?

Receptionist: Mr Obama is being operated on for some injuries to his ribs and the best surgeon is taking care of him. You don't have to worry. So relax and have seat a in the lounge.

Man: Thank you, Ms, thank you. Thank you very much.

Receptionist: You are welcome.



Video

Resource files

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module2\Unit5\Activity2\Resource2a\Video\Hospital_scene.mpg
- Scripts\Module2\Unit5\Activity2\Resource2a\video\Hospital_scene_muted.mpg

Resource 2b: Guidelines on the language of reporting



Resource 2b

When we report on some event or scene we need to remember that we are helping our listeners see the event or scene through our eyes. A good report is one that is objective; that is, it relates the factual details accurately without adding the reporter's comments. Here are some characteristics of a good report:

- 1 A report contains both **description** and **narrative**. The reporter has to give the listener the physical details of the situation (description) and then either the gist or the details of the communication that took place between the people present (narrative).
- 2 The description should contain the nouns identifying the objects, and descriptive adjectives that accurately tell us the dimensions and quality of the objects such as their size, shape and volume, and their placement (their relative distance from each other). For instance, in a hospital scene, we would use phrases such as *a crowded corridor, a line of counters behind the reception area, a busy receptionist on the phone, patients on noisy stretchers, the operating theatre, blood report, a large announcement board, speakers for paging the emergency doctor*.
- 3 There should be discourse markers signalling the sequence of events: *first, then, immediately after, suddenly, finally*.
- 4 To narrate the conversation exchanges, a report should use **reported speech**. Grammatically, this contains:
 - a reporting verbs such as *said, asked, requested, ordered, replied, shot back, cried*, usually modified by adverbs — *She said angrily..., He whispered softly..., They screamed in frustration..., She retorted quickly...*
 - b third-person pronouns to refer to the speaker's words — instead of, *He said, "How do I know?"* use *He replied that he did not know*.
 - c the pronoun *that*: *She replied that..., He answered that..., etc.*
 - d changes of verb tense: present tense changes to past, past to past perfect, etc. — instead of *She said, "Robin gave it to me"* use *She said that Robin had given it to her*.
 - e connectives in interrogatives — instead of *Did you know about this?* use *She asked whether/if he had known about that*.
 - f inverted word order in interrogatives — instead of *Can she do it?* use *If she could do it*.
- 5 A report should contain authentic details — that is, only what can be verified — and not the reporter's own additions, modifications or deletions. It should not contain any personal comments like *The Chief Guest's speech was very boring: he spoke on discipline for ages*.
- 6 The events in a report should be narrated in the correct chronological order, or the listener may lose the "thread" or direction of the event.

Resource 3: Matching definitions (worksheet)



In the table below, Column 1 contains the names of some concepts that you study in various subjects, and Column 2 lists their definitions. Discuss these with a partner and match the concepts to their definitions.

Resource 3

Column 1: Terms	Column 2: Definitions
Fixed capital	A process in which original constituents undergo change to form a new substance or compound with entirely changed properties. For example, when coal is burnt, carbon combines with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide.
Military coup	An instrument used in the laboratory to observe living or dead things that cannot otherwise be seen by the naked eye or a hand-held lens.
Pastoralism	A group of similar or dissimilar cells that are held together by some intercellular substance produced by the cells themselves, and that perform a particular function. For example, parenchyma, collenchymas, chlorenchyma.
Microscope	Tools, machines and buildings that can be used in the production of goods over a period of years. For example, generators, warehouses, computers, shredding machines.
Shifting cultivation	Income below 1 (one) dollar a day; and showing the proportion of people living under poverty in different countries.
Tissue	A form of government in which the rulers consist of elected representatives of citizens; that is, they are elected by the citizens themselves.
Chemical change	A situation in which the armed forces of a country (especially the Army) forcibly take over the administration of a country, usually by arresting the leaders of government.
International poverty line	A system of farming in which parts of a forest are cut and burnt in rotation to plant crops, so that seeds can be in the ashes after the first monsoon rain. For example, <i>chitemene</i> or <i>tavy</i> .
Democracy	A way of life in which communities rear cattle, camels, goats, sheep and other animals for a living, and sell milk, meat, animal skin, meat and other products obtained from animals for their livelihood.

Teacher question and answer



Feedback

Question: How can I ensure that students actually use the skills they learned in this unit — for example, defining, narrating or reporting — across the curriculum?

Answer: It would be a good idea to discuss this with your colleagues who teach other subjects, and decide on a system of monitoring the students' performance. Since these skills will also help students in later life, it might also be a good idea to involve both students and their guardians in monitoring the former's application of the skills they have learned. This will ensure that students take it seriously, and you will be free of the additional burden of keeping track of students' oral performance in other subjects. You could also encourage them to use these skills in the English class so that they become more confident about using them in other classes.