

# **Pop-up Pronunciation: Integrating Pronunciation Mini- lessons into All Skills**

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# Introduction: Why Pop-ups?

- Many programs do not offer pronunciation courses, but students still need it
- Teachers have a limited amount of time to address all course outcomes, so we need small but powerful activities that can perform linguistic multitasking
- Pronunciation connects to every skill, and improving pronunciation can help improve listening, reading, grammar, and even writing

# Considerations

- Explain from the beginning that you'll be injecting pronunciation throughout the course—and why
- Whatever the class, teach or review basic terminology
  - Vowels and consonants (plus sounds)
  - Parts of speech
  - Phrases and clauses (as appropriate to level)
- While the other skills are largely cerebral, pronunciation has a physical aspect, students must become more aware of their bodies—regardless of the class, it's well worth it to take 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the semester to set the stage (and to reinforce periodically)
  - Lip rounding, jaw and tongue position, voicing
    - Mirrors or smartphones in selfie mode
    - Boba straws and lollipops
    - Oral calisthenics (have students shift between high/low vowels, front/back vowels, etc. and then explain to the teacher what they feel their jaws, tongues, and lips doing)
- Consider coming up with a common set of motions or gestures to reinforce stress, intonation, linking, etc.

- Use inductive methods to get students to engage with the material and figure out connections
  - When giving a vocabulary list with two-syllable nouns and verbs, or when teaching suffixes, read the words, ask the students to identify the stress, and ask if they notice anything interesting.
  - When teaching articles, write lists of words that use “a” or “an” and ask the students to figure out the rule.
  - Instead of just identifying common phoneme or spelling errors, ask students to briefly analyze why they might be making them (“fry” versus “fly”); if feasible, ask how they would represent those sounds in their first language.
    - Make it general rather than singling out individual students!
    - Ask students about their problem areas—they know what they can and can’t do; help them figure out why
- Be mindful of appropriate times to correct (and not to correct) pronunciation

# Reading

- Students should learn pronunciation whenever they acquire new vocabulary
  - Syllables (plus syllable changes for certain verbs and plural nouns)
  - Word stress (and stress shift across word families)
  - Quality of the stressed vowel—should be clear
- Recognize the importance of phonics in addition to phonemic awareness (keeping in mind that while English has 26 letters, it has approximately 40 phonemes (and 250 possible spellings))

Maisy ate eight grey cakes today.

The pharmacist gave Fred enough stuff for his cough.

- Introduce chunking and blending when teaching thought groups

# Reading and Vocabulary Pop-ups

- Syllable scavenger hunt/word stress scavenger hunt—after introducing syllables and/or word stress, have students race to find examples in a given text
- Grouping activities—a great warm-up, especially if your students make and keep decks of flash cards
  - Syllable number
  - Stress pattern
  - Vowel sound
- Mark texts before reading aloud—for longer readings, assign one paragraph to a pair of students; only focus on one or two aspects of pronunciation
- A twist on popcorn reading—switch at each thought group; reinforce pausing and intonation

\*NOTE: We'll be focusing more on reading and vocabulary in tomorrow's presentation! Come see us again on Thursday at 3 p.m. in this same room.

# Grammar

Pronunciation informs grammar (and vice versa)

- Intonation connects to question formation
  - Yes/No versus Wh-?
- Parts of speech connect to prosody
  - Content words and function words

	X			X		X
	Mice			eat		cheese.
The	mice			eat	the	cheese.
The	mice	will		eat	the	cheese.
The	mice	will	have	eaten	the	cheese.

- Don't forget homographs—noun/verb pairs
- Continue sentence stress with *can* and *can't*
- Consider teaching elision and blending with pronouns
  - He gave ~~h~~er a call.
  - Please send ~~th~~em the information.
  - Would you, could you, should you /d+/j/ = /dʒ/
- Take a little more time when going over homework to focus on quality oral responses



# Grammar Pop-ups

- Review syllables when teaching plural nouns, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present tense verbs, and simple past tense endings
  - Inductive “What do you see?” activities
  - Quick syllable-counting (hold up fingers)
  - Sound Swat
- “I’m going on a trip to \_\_\_\_\_” listing game
- 5-minute mysteries
- Find Someone Who for “can” and “can’t”
- “Some” or “All” with adjective clauses

# Writing

- In some programs, ESL students may take only writing before entering credit programs (and no other ESL courses)
- Aforementioned issues of phonics and phonemic awareness should be considered and addressed based on language backgrounds
  - Interference with spelling (Japanese students who confuse /l/ and /r/ in writing, Vietnamese students who omit final consonants and consonant clusters)
- For sentence-level practice, reinforce sentence-level pronunciation such as focus stress, linking, and blending
- Highlight transitions and other signal words
- Read student writing aloud when doing peer editing, and encourage reading aloud at home for self-checks

# Writing Pop-ups

- 5-minute dictation warm-ups—focus on a minimal pair, consonant cluster, or word ending issue that you've noticed in student writing
- Thought-group story circles
- Sentence-Combination activities

# Sample Sentence Combination Activity

1. Monica likes to go to museums. Paul prefers to go to hockey games.
2. A huge winter storm struck the area. Power lines were knocked down.
3. Mix the butter, sugar, and eggs. Add the vanilla.

In a regular writing class, students would determine the logical connection between ideas, choose an appropriate connector, and be done with it. Add a pronunciation layer by asking students to find the key words, identify the intonation patterns, and insert appropriate pauses.

- Easily adapted to be a quick pairing activity

- Mark-ups--have students mark up one or two of their paragraphs for stress, intonation, thought groups, and linking, and practice reading aloud
- Adapt Reader's Theater activities that use student writing
  - Dialogues and plays for creative writing
  - Newscasts for more academic writing

Reading aloud can also help students hear and identify errors in their writing (and that of their peers).

- Re-examine whatever you're teaching with an eye on pronunciation. You'll start to see connections everywhere.

Questions? Suggestions?

Thank you!

After TESOL, visit [www.soundsofenglish.org](http://www.soundsofenglish.org) for a link to this presentation and additional activities and resources!