

ESSENTIAL

Teacher Knowledge

CORE CONCEPTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING



DVD

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ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

What's in a sentence?

- Parts of speech
- Sentence elements
- Getting things in the right order

Meet Manuela

Manuela is a teacher. She lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Last week she was presented with a 'Teacher of the Year' award by the director of her school. The prize was some money and some flowers.

Manuela teaches teenagers at a large secondary school and at the weekends she gives private English classes. She is married to a man she met when she was skiing in Bariloche. Bariloche is a famous ski resort in Argentina.

Yesterday was Manuela's wedding anniversary. In the morning her husband gave her a beautiful necklace. She was very happy. She cried! In the evening she gave him a new mobile phone. He thanked her enthusiastically, even though he had bought himself the same phone earlier in the day. He wonders when he will tell her, but he thinks today is not the right time.



Parts of speech

- In the story about Manuela there are quite a few **NOUNS** (which describe things) such as *Manuela, Buenos Aires, Bariloche, teacher, school, husband, award*. We will look at nouns in →000.
- There are also **PRONOUNS** (which take the place of nouns); *she, he, her*. We will look at pronouns in →000.
- The **ADJECTIVES** in the text (which describe the nouns in more detail) include *famous, beautiful* and *happy*. We will look at adjectives in →000.
- The text above also has a number of **VERBS** (which describe actions, states and events), such as *is, lives, was awarded, teaches, gave, had bought*, etc. We will look at verbs in →000.
- The word *enthusiastically* is an adverb (it describes the verb); there are **ADVERBIAL PHRASES** in the text, too, such as *last week* and *in the morning*. We will look at adverbs in →000.
- There are two articles in the text; the **INDEFINITE ARTICLE** *a*, and the **DEFINITE ARTICLE** *the*. The word *some* is a **QUANTIFIER** (it tells us 'how much'). We will look at articles (and quantifiers) in →000.
- **PREPOSITIONS**, such as *in* and *of*, show how other words are connected. We will look at prepositions in →000.
- The **CONJUNCTIONS** *and* and *but* connect sentences and clauses. We will look at conjunctions in →000.

Sentence elements

How do we know where to put the parts of speech to make a sentence? What are the **ELEMENTS OF A SENTENCE** and what order should they go in?

- Many sentences consist of some or all of the following: **SUBJECTS** (*She*), verbs (*teaches*), **OBJECTS** (*teenagers*) and **ADVERBIALS** (*at a large secondary school*).
- Sometimes sentences have more than one object. In the sentence *Her husband gave her a beautiful necklace, a beautiful necklace* is the **DIRECT OBJECT** (it is the thing that was given) and *her* is the **INDIRECT OBJECT** (she was the one who benefited from the action).
- Some sentences do not have an object. Instead they have a subject (*she*) a verb (*was*) and a **COMPLEMENT** (*happy*).
- Sometimes we only use a subject and a verb (*She cried.*) →000.
- Sometimes we make more complicated sentences by joining together a number of clauses: *She is married to a man / She met the man when she was skiing / She was skiing in Bariloche* becomes *She is married to a man she met when she was skiing in Bariloche*. We will look at clauses in →000.

Getting things in the right order

The basic sentence elements (subject, verb, object, complement) are slots into which we place words. But we have to be careful which words we put into these slots. For example we can put **PRONOUNS** (*she, he, they*, etc) or **NOUN PHRASES** (*The young woman, The director, her husband*, etc) into the subject slot, but the sentence would not work if we put an **ADJECTIVE** (*angry*) or an **ADVERB** (*seriously*) there: *angrily is a teacher!* We cannot put nouns or adjectives where verbs go, etc.

The sentence elements have to be arranged in correct sequences. For example, we can say *Manuela is a teacher* (SVC), or we can change the order to make a question *Is Manuela a teacher?* (VSC). But we cannot say *Is a teacher Manuela* because we do not use the sequence VCS.

However, Sometimes – because we want to focus on who 'receives' the action (or because we don't know who did the action) – we rearrange the order of the SVO elements and put the (indirect) object in the subject position. For example, instead of saying *The director (1) of her school presented her (2) with a 'Teacher of the Year' award*, we can make the sentence **PASSIVE** (*She (2) was presented with a 'Teacher of the Year' award by the director of her school (1)*).

Sentence-ordering activities

We often get students to re-order words to make sentences. This makes them think carefully about syntax (the correct sequence of sentence elements). For example, we can ask them to do exercises like the following:

Put the following words in order to make correct sentences:

- a / is / Manuela / teacher*
- Manuela's / was / wedding anniversary / yesterday*
- a / beautiful / gave / her / her / husband / in / morning / necklace / the*

We can ask students to put in punctuation, too, such as capital letters, full stops (periods), question marks, inverted commas (quotation marks), etc. →000.

An enjoyable variation is to have the students hold the words on cards above their heads (so they can't see them). The other members of the class have to tell them where to stand. DVD00-

- A popular way of introducing new language
 - An example of PPP in action
- How to show language construction

A popular way of introducing new language

Many teachers use a procedure called PPP (**P**RESENTATION, **P**RACTICE and **P**RODUCTION) to introduce simple language at elementary and intermediate levels. We present the form (the construction), the meaning and use of the new language, and then the students practise it (often using drilling and controlled practice →58). Finally, when they have become familiar with the new language, we ask them to produce their own sentences or phrases, using what they have just learnt.

An example of PPP in action

In this example the teacher is introducing the third person singular (*he, she, it*) of the **PRESENT SIMPLE** tense to describe habitual actions. She wants to make sure that her students understand the way we use the present simple (to talk about what people do on a regular basis). She wants to make sure that they understand that we need to add the **-s MORPHEME** to the verb with the third person singular. She wants them to hear the different pronunciations of *-s* (*/z/* in *goes*, */s/* in *works*, etc).

Stage 1

Amanda (the teacher) shows her elementary students a picture of a young woman. She tells them that the woman's name is Meera. She asks them to guess what Meera does, before telling them that she (Meera) is a doctor. Guessing helps to engage the students' attention.



Stage 2

The teacher shows her students a picture of a clock. She asks them what time it shows (six o'clock). She says:

OK. Six o'clock every day ... Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.



She then points to the picture of Meera and mimes waking up and getting up. She says:

She gets up at six o'clock

Amanda is introducing the meaning of the new language.

Now she models the sentence by saying:

She gets up at six o'clock ... listen ... gets ... gets ... get ... s ... get ... s ... gets ... gets ... she gets up at six o'clock

Notice how she says the sentence in a normal voice but then she **ISOLATES** the main grammar point (*gets*) before **DISTORTING** it (*get ... s ... get ... s*). She ends by modelling the sentence again in a clear voice. She may also write the sentence on the board like this:



Stage 3

Amanda now gets the students to repeat the new sentence using **CHORAL REPETITION** →57 (they all say the sentence at the same time) and then individually.

Stage 4

The students now see different pictures to teach sentences such as *She drives to work*, *She works in a hospital*, etc. Now Amanda can point to any of the pictures and have the students say the sentence which applies to that picture.

At various stages during this procedure Amanda can **CHECK MEANING** (make sure the students have understood the new structure) by asking concept questions such as *Does she get up at six o'clock on Thursdays?* (Yes she does because she gets up at six o'clock every day), *Does she walk to work?* (No she doesn't. She drives).

Final stage

When the students have practised all the sentences about Meera's daily routine, Amanda asks them to make their own sentences about what they themselves do every day (*I get up at seven o'clock*, *I take the train to work*, etc). This is the point at which students 'take the language' for themselves and make it their own.

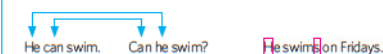
How to show language construction

We can use fingers and arms to show language construction (word order, contractions, etc). **00000**

We can use diagrams to show grammatical relationships. For example we can use a squiggly line to show the meaning of the present perfect continuous in the sentence 'They've been playing together in the orchestra since 2009'. **00000**



We can also use lines, boxes and arrows to show such things as the relationship between statements and questions. We can use different coloured pens to highlight such things as verb tense construction or show agreement between subject and verb.



There are other ways of introducing new language, apart from PPP →56a .

have moved 'Dialogues' to end of list to get DVD still as large as possible

- Contexts for introducing language
 - Stories
 - Pictures, objects, mime
 - Learning by doing
 - Texts
 - Dialogues
- Alternatives to *Introducing new language*
 - Discovery
 - Test-teach-test
 - Task-based learning

Contexts for introducing new language

In Unit 56 we saw how to use a **SITUATION** (Doctor Meera's daily life) to introduce the **PRESENT SIMPLE** using PPP. Situations like this are extremely useful for introducing language at lower levels (beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate). The number of situations we can use is only limited by our imagination! For example, we can teach the **WILL FUTURE** with an imaginary visit to a fortune teller (the fortune teller can say *You will meet a handsome stranger*, etc). We can teach *can* and *can't* by talking about someone in prison (*He can't go to the cinema*, etc). We can teach the present continuous with a situation in which two policemen or spies are observing a suspect (*What's she doing now? She's climbing through a window*).

We can use a number of different contexts and resources when we introduce meaning:

Stories can be used to contextualise new grammar. For example, we can tell our students the following story (and we can use pictures to illustrate it, if we want):

One day seven years ago, Mary's alarm didn't go off so she woke up late. She ran out of her door and fell down the steps. A neighbour called an ambulance and Mary went to hospital. In the hospital she met a handsome doctor. She offered him a job on her TV programme. They started to work together. They fell in love and got married. Now they have three children.

Now we ask the students to imagine if things had been different. For example, *If Mary's alarm had gone off, she wouldn't have got up late. If she hadn't got up late, she wouldn't have run out of her door, etc.*

Pictures, objects, mime Even though computers, electronic notepads and interactive whiteboards are common in a number of places, teachers still need to be able to draw quick pictures and diagrams when they are needed. For example, we can show pictures of people getting off, onto, out of, into cars, buses, clothes, etc. We can draw happy and sad faces, or rain and snow. But we can mime these things, too, just as we can mime people having a shower, making a cup of coffee or frying an egg.

Learning by doing is especially useful for students at low levels. Using gestures and movement, we can get the students to follow instructions, such as *Stand up! Sit down! Go to the window! Open the window!* etc. They can then start giving instructions themselves. This way of doing things, first suggested in the 1970s, is called Total Physical Response (TPR).

Meeting language in texts is always useful because students get to see the language in context; they see how the new language (grammar, vocabulary, etc) is used together with the other language that surrounds it. For this reason, many teachers ask students to analyse specific language in reading texts after they have worked on the meaning. They ask them to focus on specific language in an audio or video track after they have practised listening (and watching).

Dialogues can be used to introduce language. At pre-intermediate level, for example, we can draw two faces on the board (or show two people on the screen). We can then pretend to be each of the characters, one by one. We can stand in front of each picture in turn and demonstrate a dialogue. For example:

- A: *Would you like to come to the cinema tonight?*
 B: *I'm not really sure if I can.*
 A: *Oh go on, it will be fun.*
 B: *All right, then.*
 A: *See you outside the cinema at 8?*
 B: OK.

DVD00



We will need to use mime, gestures and exaggerated intonation so that the students can understand what is happening.

Alternatives to introducing new language

In **DISCOVERY LEARNING** (TBL) →44 we ask students to **RESEARCH** language. We will look at this in more detail in →59.

We can change the sequence of PPP and put the production stage at the beginning (rather than at the end) of the sequence. This was once amusingly called *The Deep-end Strategy* – ie similar to throwing people in at the deep end of a swimming pool to teach them to swim! In other words, we can put students in situations where they have to use language – and then, later, teach them the language they couldn't manage, or which they used incorrectly. Some people call this procedure **TEST-TEACH-TEST**.

In **TASK-BASED LEARNING (TBL)** →44, we ask students to perform **TASKS** rather than just learn new grammar and vocabulary; and perhaps we only deal with the language they had difficulty with after the task is over. In many ways this is like Test-teach-test, a kind of bigger deep-end strategy. What is special about TBL is that language learning only happens because of the task; the task comes first and the students learn language because they are doing it.

- Choral repetition; individual repetition
- Drills and drilling
- How much repetition and drilling is the right amount?

Choral repetition; individual repetition

We frequently ask students to repeat things that we have said or that they have heard. We do this because it is useful for them to try to make the new sentences or words – to see what it feels like. Repetition is part of an introduction sequence →56, but we can also use repetition at any stage if we want to re-present things (for example, if we just want to have the students say a word correctly in the middle of some other teaching).

We can use **CHORAL REPETITION** to get students to repeat a sound, a word, a phrase or a sentence all together. This helps them learn how to say the new language using correct sounds, stress and intonation. It gives individual students confidence. It can be enjoyable for the students.

When we want students to repeat in chorus, we have to give a clear model →56. We must make sure that all the students start at the same time so we will use gestures, like a conductor, to get them going. We can beat time with our hands, arms (and even stamping feet!) to try to keep the whole group together.

An example of choral repetition DVD00

Teacher: *She gets up at six o'clock ... listen ... gets ... gets ... get ... s ... get ... s ... gets ... gets ... she gets up at six o'clock. Everybody ...*
 Students: *She gets up at six o'clock.*
 Teacher: *Again.*
 Students: *She gets up at six o'clock.*

We can use **HALF CHORUS** work by dividing the class in two. For example, we can have half the class say a line from a dialogue, and then get the other half of the class to say the next line of the dialogue. DVD00

We often use **INDIVIDUAL REPETITION** to give students a chance to say a sound, word, phrase or sentence on their own – and to check that choral repetition has been a success. First of all, we **NOMINATE** the student and then, when he or she has repeated the phrase or sentence, we give feedback. We can nominate by using a student's name, by looking at individual students or by gesturing towards them. However, pointing can seem rude. It is better to use the hand with the palm upwards. DVD26

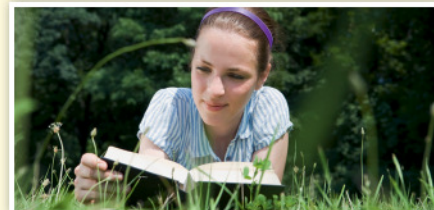
It is important not to nominate students in order (by going along a row from left to right, for example); it is much more dynamic to nominate individual students in a random order. They will then pay more attention because they do not know when they will have to speak.

Drills and drilling

When we start nominating individual students one after the other, and we ask them simply to repeat, we call this a **DRILL**. When we have more than one sound, word, phrase or sentence and we get students to *choose* which one to say, we call this a **CUE-RESPONSE** drill.

In a cue-response drill we give a **CUE** (we indicate what we want the students to say), then we nominate the students we want to speak and they respond.

An example of a cue-response drill DVD00



Teacher gives a cue by holding up a picture of a clock showing 6 o'clock.

Teacher (nominating a student): *Alice.*
 Alice: *She gets up at six o'clock.*



Teacher gives a new cue by holding up a picture of Meera the doctor at work.

Teacher (nominating a different student): *Mohamed.*
 Mohamed: *She works in a hospital.*

Cue-response drills are especially useful when we want students to practise *questions* and *answers*. We can, for example, give a question word as the cue and the student has to make a question with that word.

An example of a question and answer cue-response drill DVD00

Teacher: *Question ... what ... Mohamed.*
 Mohamed: *What does Meera do?*
 Teacher: *Answer ... Alice.*
 Alice: *She's a doctor.*
 Teacher: *Question ... what time ... Piotr.*
 Piotr: *What time does she get up?*
 Teacher: *Answer ... Yumiko.*
 Yumiko: *At six o'clock ... She gets up at 6 o'clock.*

Have a good mumble!

Sometimes, before we ask students to say something in a drill – or in other practice or speaking activities – it is a good idea to allow them think about what they are going to say first. In fact, we can suggest that they **MUMBLE** the words to themselves for a bit before they have to say the word, phrase or sentence out loud.

When all the students are mumbling to themselves in a classroom, it does sound a bit strange, but it gives them a chance to try something out and, as a result, gives them confidence when they have to speak in front of the teacher or their classmates.

How much repetition and drilling is the right amount?

We have said that drills help students to get used to the new language. But if we continue with drills for too long, they quickly lose their appeal. We have to judge when they stop being useful and challenging. That's the moment to move on to something else.



UNIT 17 Modality

REVISE

- 1 Underline the modal verbs in the following text.



- A: Hello.
 B: Hello, Jane. Where are you? You should have been here hours ago.
 A: I'm sorry, really. I just couldn't make it.
 B: But you ought to have arrived two hours ago. We were expecting you.
 A: Well again, I'm sorry. But I couldn't leave where I am now. I'm at the hospital.
 B: Where are you?
 A: At the hospital.
 B: Why?
 A: I fell off my bike on the way to see you. I hurt my arm. But it's not broken or anything.
 B: Poor you. You could have hurt yourself really badly!
 A: Yeah. But luckily I didn't. I think I can still play in the match. Are we going to win?
 B: That's difficult to say. We should win, but I think we may lose.
 A: You can't be serious. You must come out on top.
 B: Well, we're going to do our best.

- 2 Write the modal verbs that you underlined in Exercise 1 in the box below. Some verbs will appear in more than one column.

Obligation modals	Permission modals	Ability modals

- 3 Underline the mistakes in the following student utterances. Write the sentences correctly.

- a You must to get here on time

 b You mustn't bring food to the party. It is not necessary.

 c You could open the window, please?

 d You should get here earlier. We had a lot of fun.

 e You can't see him yesterday. He was at my house.

 f Will you turning off the computer, please?

 g It seems like if you failed your exam.

RESEARCH

- 1 Choose any two modal verbs. Using a) a dictionary or dictionaries, b) the Internet, c) grammar books/coursebooks, d) an online concordance (→59), make a list of:

- a their different meanings (possibility, permission, etc.). Write an example sentence for each.
 b lexical phrases which the modals occur in.
 Compare your lists with someone else.

- 2 Make notes on a language student's writing or conversation and answer these questions:

- a How do they express modality? (What verbs and expressions do they use?)
 b What mistakes do they make? How would you explain these mistakes?

- 3 Look at an intermediate-level coursebook (or other teaching materials). Find a unit or teaching sequence about modals. Answer these questions:

- a Which modals does the material focus on?
 b What is the meaning group (obligation, permission, etc.) that the material focuses on?
 c Would you like to teach/learn with this material? Why? Why not?

REFLECT

- 1 How important are modal verbs for speakers of English?
 2 How often do you use modal verbs when you use English? Which ones do you use most often? Which ones do you hardly ever use?
 3 Choose any three modal verbs. If you had to teach them to a group of elementary students, what context (story, situation, dialogue, etc.) would you use to do this?

UNIT 44 Acquisition and learning

REVISE

- 1 Match the terms (1-9) with the descriptions (a-i).

- 1 Audio-lingual methodology
 2 Behaviourism
 3 Comprehensible input
 4 Grammar-translation
 5 Noticing
 6 Scaffolding
 7 Task-based learning
 8 The communicative approach
 9 ZPD

- a A method which is sentence-based, and where students compare two languages.
 b A psychological theory which suggested that learning is based on habit formation (and that habits are formed through our responses to certain stimuli).
 c A teaching approach that relied on behaviourism – and so was based on habit formation.
 d Spoken or written language which students can understand even if it is above their own level.
 e Students are given many chances to use the language in the classroom. Their success is judged on how well they achieve their objectives.
 f Teaching is not focused on grammar and vocabulary, but instead on things that the teacher asks the students to do.
 g The support that teachers can give to students to help them learn.
 h The time when children are ready to learn new things, according to one psychologist.
 i When students become consciously aware of a language item for the first time.

- 2 Read the following descriptions and say whether they describe acquisition, learning or noticing.

- 1 'I fell in love with a really great Polish guy. We're married now. Yes, my Polish is pretty good!'
 2 'I was born in Japan (my parents are Japanese), but I went to the USA when I was about four because my father got a job there. I did all my primary education there. Some people think I sound like an American!'
 3 'I'll never forget all the lists of characters – the pictograms! They gave us tests every Friday. But even though I am not Chinese, I can write pretty well, thanks to that.'
 4 'The first time I went to Italy, I took a train ride and I kept seeing a sign on the stations we passed through, and I remember asking my companion why all the stations had the same name (because I recognised the same spelling every time). It turned out that it wasn't a name (Uscita). It meant 'exit!'
 5 'In my school in Turkey the teacher used to stand at the front of the class and explain grammar rules – and we wrote down what he said in our notebooks. My English grammar is good, thanks to him! At least I think it was thanks to him.'
 6 'Yeah, well after I left university in the UK, I worked on a farm in Cuba for ten months and I kind of picked up quite a lot of Spanish. Not many of the people there spoke any English.'
 7 'I started with being able to hear and say the same expression for "Good morning". Once I had heard it a few times, I recognised it when it came round again, and then I could use it myself. And it sort of went from there. I would start to identify little bits of language when I heard them, and then I could use them. Later I started stringing them together. Yes, that's how I started, I think.'

RESEARCH

- 1 Interview someone who speaks more than one language. Find out what languages they speak. For each language, ask the following:

- a Do they think they got the language more through acquisition or through learning? Why do they think this?
 b Can they remember any occasion when they first understood an item of grammar or vocabulary in a foreign language? What kind of experience was that in terms of acquisition and learning?

Which languages do they speak best: ones they acquired or ones they learnt?