

Running English conversation classes



The STAR mnemonic should help you to remember the following tips!

S Structure

- Plan enough activities to fill the time
- Break down into shorter activities to maintain interest
- Choose activities which are adaptable to different levels and don't require too much planning
- Have lots of reinforcement and correction (especially at lower levels)
- Link activities so programme cohesive

T Topic-based

- Choose topics appropriate to needs ie. health but not holidays
- Be sensitive about family and work
- Ask students what topics interest them
- Use topics to plan ahead

A Attractive

- Always start with warmer / ice-breaker to welcome and introduce everyone
- Make it fun, e.g. occasional game to change pace
- Have add-ons if possible, e.g. food, language exchange
- Have visuals / objects as focal point for discussion
- Involve students in contributing to input eg. bringing in objects / pictures / articles to talk about

R Rota

- Plan before who is to lead next week
- Always have back-up or more than one person to lead different activities
- Ensure good communication between lead people and back-ups

Ideas for activities

These are on the theme of food but can be used for any topic.

- a) **Name exchange** – Warmer / ice-breaker. Throw balloon / ball / orange (if doing food!) to someone in circle and say their name, they repeat action until everyone has thrown and received the balloon and learnt names!
- b) **Alphabet food** – think of item of food for each letter of alphabet. Good for low level – reinforces alphabet, spelling and practises vocab.
- c) **Fruit salad** – choose up to 5 fruits and give everyone a different one. Shout out ‘bananas’ and all those who are bananas form a group. Continue for other fruits. Good for all levels as warmer / filler and fun element. Can involve kids too.
- d) **Find someone who....** – give students prompts eg. find someone who has never eaten curry / find someone who had cereal for breakfast this morning and tell them to ask each person in group until they find someone to match prompt. Better for higher levels as they have to think of the right question to ask first. You may need to practise this together first. Once students are familiar with this activity you could get them writing own prompts. If you are unable to copy the prompt cards before, they can be written on a whiteboard or each one read out to a different student to memorise.
- e) **I went to the market and I bought.....** – each person says the start of the sentence and adds a food item for the next letter of the alphabet eg. I went to the market and I bought an apple, a banana and a cauliflower. Better at higher levels as requires good memory, listening skills plus vocab. Can be used to practise some / any / a / an too.
- f) **Role plays** – assign students different roles in food shop / café / market and get to practise dialogues. Needs some preparation to guide with prompt cards, realia etc. to make work better. Can be adapted to any level eg. give very simple instructions for low levels, get higher levels to practise polite requests / clarification etc.
- g) **Recipes** – read and share recipes from different countries. Students and volunteers can be asked to collect from free newspapers / magazines and bring in following week. Better at higher levels because of language but you can simplify recipes yourself for low levels to basic instructions to practise verbs.

h) **Interviews** – ask each other questions regarding favourite foods, eating habits, staple foods, food festivals, cooking, food production in respective countries etc. Can be adapted to low levels with very simple questions written down for students to ask you or question prompts for them to practise question formation and to higher levels with students thinking of own questions.

i) **Pictures / objects** – (show with postcards and popcorn) magazine pictures of food to prompt discussion at higher levels or to practise vocab. at low levels, food ads. to evaluate and practise language of opinion, comparison, description etc., food products to prompt discussion about fair trade, packaging etc. and at low levels to practise reading labels. Products can also be used for shopping role play and then enjoyed eg. biscuits, chocolate, fruit juice or pop corn!

Find someone who.....

NAME

has never eaten curry	
had cereal for breakfast this morning	
likes cooking	
went food shopping at the weekend	
buys their fruit and vegetables at the market (not the supermarket)	

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