

SPEAKING ENGLISH

LEARNERS' LIVES AS CURRICULUM ©

THEMATIC UNIT



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OPENING STORY



Nezha and Alla work in the computer lab

Alla's Story

People speak very fast. People don't speak clearly. I don't know how to pronounce many words. I don't know what many words mean. When I speak English, I feel nervous and forget many words that I know. Sometimes I remember English words, but I forget the meaning.

-Alla is from Russia

Questions for discussion:

How does Alla feel when she speaks English?

Do you feel the same way?

Do you think it's easy to speak English? Or is it difficult?

PLAYING WITH LANGUAGE

Work with a partner. One person reads the story. The other listens and writes the missing words. Change readers and repeat.

People _____ very fast. People _____ clearly. I

_____ how to pronounce many words. I _____

_____ what many words mean. When I _____ English, I

_____ nervous and _____ many words that I know.

Sometimes I _____ English words, but I _____ the meaning.

Affirmative and Negative Sentences

Affirmative Sentences

I talk a lot in English.

You study English everyday.

She/He understands what I say.

We listen to American music.

They read the paper every Sunday.

Negative Sentences

I don't talk a lot in English.

You don't study English everyday.

She/He doesn't understand what I say.

We don't listen to American music.

They don't read the paper every Sunday.

Read Alla's story again. Find the affirmative sentences. Change them to negative. Find the negative sentences, and change them to affirmative.

For example:

People **speak** very fast. - People **don't speak** very fast.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER



Julian and Tam do partner work together

Talk to 3 people in your class. Ask them the questions and fill in the chart. Think of another question.

| Name | First Country | Do you live in Lancaster? | Do you have any children? | Do you work? | Do you think English is easy? | _____? _____? |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Example:</i> Nicole | Chad | Yes | No | No | No | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Now write sentences in affirmative and negative about the people in your class.

For example:

Nicole lives in Lancaster. Candida doesn't live in Lancaster.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

MORE STORIES FROM OUR STUDENTS

Brissel's Story

I work as a bartender at Christina's Restaurant. I serve drinks and food. I feel bad and sad when I can't taking the order from the people. Then I call the other people for helping. I don't know in English the menu, like rice, water, juice, beer, what meats they wants. I don't like to call some people for helping with the English. I hate that, ok. For me it is very easy to write English but not to speak.

-Brisell is from the Dominican Republic

Jennifer's Story

When I started this class in September, I was nervous and I was scared. I didn't understand very much and I never spoke. Everyday I learned something. If you know and don't speak and don't practice you don't learn. In December I was worried because I planned to go to Puerto Rico for a month. In my family nobody speaks English. I said, "I will forget English!". But when I was here again I knew I learned English. I did not forget. Now I can speak a little bit and read and write much better.

-Jennifer is from Puerto Rico

Make a list of the new words. Write them here:

I don't know what these words mean:

I don't know how to pronounce these words:

Use your dictionary to find the meanings. Ask other students or the teacher, "How do you pronounce _____?"

VOCABULARY: EMOTIONS

Look at the pictures. Write the emotion word that matches the picture.



relaxed
scared
nervous

worried
angry
sad

happy
confident
frustrated

DOING IT IN ENGLISH

Finish the sentences. Read the sentences to a partner.

1. When I lived in my first country, I felt _____
2. When I moved to the United States, I felt _____
3. When I started English class, I felt _____
4. When people understand my English, I feel _____
5. When people don't understand me, I feel _____
6. When people speak English very fast, I feel _____
7. When I forget how to pronounce a word, I feel _____
8. When I talk on the phone, I feel _____

MORE PRACTICE

Write 2 more sentences and read them to your partner.

When I _____, I feel/felt _____

When I _____, I feel/felt _____

BRAINSTORM

Can you and your partner think of more emotion words?

Write them here:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

MORE STORIES



Adriana's Story

When I need to speak English, I feel timid and I'm not sure. Then I prefer not to talk **sometimes**.

-Adriana is from Colombia

-Do you ever feel like Adriana?

Fernando's Story

I **always** speak English at work. **Sometimes** my partner does not understand me. I **often** practice pronunciation. This happened to me. One time I was looking for 'alcohol'. I pronounced "al-ko". I forgot to say the last sound. For ten minutes my partner did not understand what I wanted. We laughed a lot and I tried to find a way to tell him what I wanted. This **seldom** happens to me. I was frustrated, but it was also funny. My partner is **always** very patient with me.

-Fernando is from the Dominican Republic.

-Do you speak English at work? Did you have an experience like Fernando?

Nobuko's Story

I live in a townhouse. Three neighbors talk to me. Two of them are a couple. Before, they told me many stories that they have Japanese relatives and they have a grandchild who is in sixth grade. But I **almost never** understood their stories. Their English is very fast.

-Nobuko is from Japan



-Do you talk to your neighbors?

PARTNER INTERVIEWS



Purita and Roberto interview each other

Ask your partner these questions.

1. Do you often use English outside of class?
2. Do you usually talk to people at the supermarket?
3. Do you always ask questions when you don't understand someone?
4. Do you often ask your family to talk for you?
5. Do you sometimes speak English on the phone?
6. Do you usually leave messages on answering machines?

Reporting it to the class

Tell the class what your partner said.

ASKING FOR REPETITION



Willow's Story

Some of my friends speak Spanish. Sometimes they call me and speak Spanish on the phone. If they talk too fast, I don't understand, and I have to say, "Could you say that more slowly?". Sometimes they leave me messages on my answering machine, and I can't understand them. I play the messages again and again until I understand what they said.

Discussion Questions:

Do you think people talk too fast on the phone?

Do you think it is difficult to understand phone messages?

What does Willow say when she doesn't understand?

What do you say when you don't understand?

Listening Activity

The teacher will read a conversation. Listen to the conversation and answer these questions. (*Conversation script at end of unit for teacher)

Who is talking?

What are they talking about?

What do they say if they don't understand each other?

The teacher will give you the conversation. Practice it with your partner.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

Asking for repetition



The Blah-Blah Activity

Practice these conversations with your partner.

1

Yomaira: Hi, I'm calling from *blah-blah* about *blah-blah*.

Odalis: I'm sorry. Could you say that again?

2

Pierre: Hi. Could I leave a message for your mother? Can you tell her *blah-blah*?

Ozoda: I don't understand. Could you talk more slowly?

MORE PRACTICE

Read these conversations with your partner. What do you say when you don't understand?

3

Kalbillah: Hi. This is *blah-blah*. Is *blah-blah* there?

Amie: _____

4

Edline: Hi, could I talk to *blah-blah*?

Marika: _____

5

Nicole: Hi, could I talk to Mr. Nguyen? This is *blah-blah*.

Thao: _____

COLLECTIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING



Kalbillah, Thanh, Nezha, and Alla work together

Talk to the people in your group about these situations:

What do you say if...

1. you call your friend and her brother answers the phone?
2. you call your cousin and the answering machine picks up?
3. somebody calls you and you don't understand?
4. somebody calls you and they have the wrong number?

Finish these conversations:

1. Flor calls Monica.

Monica's brother: Hello?

Flor: _____

2. Dung calls her cousin, Tam.

Answering Machine: Hi, I'm not here right now. Please leave a message.

Dung: _____

3. Luong: Hello?

Camilo: *Blah-blah.*

Luong: _____

4. Nezha: Hello?

Purita: Hi, I'd like to order a pizza.

Nezha: _____

Project Idea: Collect the conversations from all the groups in the class. Put them together in a book. Give this book to new students to help them talk on the phone.

TELEPHONE PARTNERS

The teacher will tell you who your partner is. Talk to your partner.
Plan a time when you can call each other.

My partner's name: _____

My partner's phone number: _____

I will call my partner at _____ on _____.

Practice this conversation with your partner. When you call your partner, you can use this conversation if you forget what to say.

A: Hi, is _____ there? This is his/her telephone partner from school.

B: Yes, this is _____.

A: Hi, _____, it's _____.

B: Hi. How are you?

A: Good. And you?

B: I'm good. What did you do today?

A: I _____. What about you?

B: I _____.

A: Do you have any plans for the weekend?

B: Yes, _____. What about you?

A: Yes, _____.

B: It was nice talking to you.

A: It was nice talking to you, too.

B: I'll see you tomorrow in school.

A: See you tomorrow.

STUDENT NARRATIVES

Here are some stories about telephone partners from students in other ESL classes.

Hang's Story



I never pick up the phone because I feel nervous speaking English. When I went to school my teacher encouraged everybody in class and said, "Don't worry."

On Saturday, I called my partner. Her name is Purita. We talked about learning English. I asked her if her daughter was sleeping, because she comes home from work very tired. We talked about some things but sometimes I didn't understand the words. I asked her, "Please, will you speak slowly so that I can understand you?"

When I talked on the phone with her, I felt confident, and so did she.

-Hang is from Vietnam

Ana's Story

Before I called my partner, I felt strange, because my blood was HOT in my head. I felt nervous because I didn't know who would answer me. Thao answered, and then I talked to her. I told her, "Hi, I'm Ana." And she answered, "Hi, Ana. How are you?" and I said, "Good, and you?" She said, "I'm good, too." Then we continued the conversation.

I talked to Thao about her apartment. We talked for 2 minutes and then we said, "Bye! I'll see you tomorrow in school." I felt relaxed.



-Ana is from Puerto Rico

Writing Activity

Writing Prompt: How did you feel when you talked to your telephone partner? What did you talk about? How did you feel after the conversation? Write at least 5 sentences.

MONITORING PROGRESS: CHECKLIST FOR LEARNING



Yomaira is from the D.R.

In this unit, I learned how to:

- introduce myself
- have short conversations with people
- ask for someone on the phone
- leave a message on the phone
- write a short personal story

I learned these words:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> relaxed | <input type="checkbox"/> confident | <input type="checkbox"/> seldom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> worried | <input type="checkbox"/> nervous | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> happy | <input type="checkbox"/> sad | <input type="checkbox"/> often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> scared | <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated | <input type="checkbox"/> usually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> angry | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> always |

I learned these phrases:

- Could you say that more slowly?
- Could you repeat that?
- Could you say that again?

REFLECTION/ FUTURE LEARNING

The activity I liked the most was _____

The activity I didn't like was _____

I want to learn more about _____

***Conversation script for the teacher (p. 10):**

Candida: Hi, is Roberto there?

Roberto: Yes, this is Roberto.

Candida: Hi, this is Candida.

Roberto: Hi, Candida. How are you?

Candida: I'm OK, but I have a problem.

Roberto: What's the problem?

Candida: My car broke down. Could you give me a ride to work tomorrow?

Roberto: I don't understand. Could you say that again?

Candida: Yes. My car broke down and I need a ride to work tomorrow.

Roberto: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?

Candida: Can you give me a ride to work tomorrow?

Roberto: Oh, sure. What time do you work?

Candida: I work at 9:00.

Roberto: OK, I can pick you up at 8:30.

Candida: Thank you!

Roberto: You're welcome. See you tomorrow.

Candida: See you tomorrow. Bye!