

1

This unit looks at

- how children **acquire** their first language
- how we can help children acquire English as a second language
- opportunities for using English when starting lessons, changing activities, and ending lessons
- the differences between teaching young learners and very young learners.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 1.1 First language – second language
LANGUAGE FOCUS
Caretaker talk
PRONUNCIATION POINT
Syllables
Sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/
- 1.2 Starting your lessons in English
LANGUAGE FOCUS
Greetings and forms of address
Checking attendance
Ways of starting lessons
- 1.3 Organizing your classroom
LANGUAGE FOCUS
Everyday instructions – organizing the classroom
- 1.4 Ending your lessons
LANGUAGE FOCUS
Ending lessons
Phrases with *else*
Word quiz
- 1.5 Very young learners (VYLs) and young learners (YLs)
LANGUAGE FOCUS
Telling the class what you are doing
Asking questions
TOPIC TALK
Introducing yourself

Teaching young learners

1.1 First language – second language

Knowing how children learn their first language can help us teach them a second language.

All children can speak at least one language when they come to school. Think about how they learn this first language. Think about babies and young children. Most mothers talk a lot to their children.

Babies

- hear voices from the time they are born
- respond to the voices of their mother, father, or carer
- listen to a lot of sound
- play with sounds and practise making sounds
- begin to associate the sounds with what they can see and understand
- begin to use language to interact with others and get what they want.

Young children

- say what they hear others saying
- pick up the accent of those around them.

Read this transcript of a mother talking to her little child of 16 months. Notice how much language she uses and how she talks about what is happening to the child.

- o^a a How many phrases does she actually say? And how many words does the child say?

MOTHER: Now we're nearly dressed ... OK now over your head ... good boy ... put in your other hand ... now shoes. Where are your shoes?
CHILD: Sus ...
MOTHER: Yes. Your shoes. Where are they?
(Both look around for the shoes.)
MOTHER: Oh there. Look ... your shoes ... on the chair.
CHILD: Sus. Sus.
MOTHER: Yes shoes.





1A

Thinking about the Easter Bunny and eliciting the phrase *chocolate eggs*

- TEACHER: And it's a holiday, isn't it?
 CHILDREN: Yeah.
 TEACHER: Yes. And on Easter Sunday he brings us what? Em?
 CHILDREN: Chocolate.
 TEACHER: Chocolate? Uh uh chocolate. Eh, chocolate ... ice-cream?
 CHILDREN: No.
 TEACHER: No, no it's not chocolate ice-cream. Eh ... chocolate ... eggs?
 Chocolate eggs. Yes?
 CHILDREN: Yes.
 TEACHER: Do you like chocolate eggs?
 CHILDREN: Yes, yes.
 TEACHER: Mm ... Yum yum yum, yes?
 CHILDREN: Yes, yes.
 TEACHER: Chocolate eggs. OK.
(later in the class)
 TEACHER: And he brings? He brings? Yes?
 CHILD: Chocolate eggs.
 TEACHER: Do you like chocolate eggs? Do you like chocolate eggs? I love chocolate eggs.

Clara with eight to nine year olds.

This kind of talk is called **caretaker talk**; parents as carers talk to help the development of their child's language.

Teachers in school can do the same with their learners. Think about young children learning English as a second language when they go to school.

- Young children will
- only acquire the language they hear around them
 - need to hear a lot of English
 - look on you – their teacher – as their new carer
 - listen to you and try to make sense of what you say
 - sound like the people they listen to.

Listen to the teacher in **1A** talking to her class about the Christian festival of Easter. It is important in many Western countries. Children have holidays and get chocolate eggs.

Although the topic is quite different from the mother dressing her child, she uses language in similar ways. Look at the transcripts and try to find two similarities.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 1.1

Caretaker talk

The conversation between the mother and the young child and classroom extract **1A** are similar in many ways.

- Firstly, both mother and teacher talk a lot more than the children do.
- Secondly, they provide a secure and supportive environment which gives the children confidence to try out language.

- b** Look at the table below. Find examples of four other similarities and complete this table.

What the teacher/parent does	Mother-child	Teacher-child
<i>Repeats phrases said earlier.</i>	M: Now shoes ... Yes your shoes. Look ... your shoes	1
<i>Keeps children's attention by asking them questions.</i>	2	T: And he brings us what? He brings? He brings?
<i>Reacts positively to what children say even if words are not complete or perfectly pronounced.</i>	CH: Sus – Sus M: Yes, shoes	3
<i>Adds to or improves what children say.</i>	4	CH: Chocolate eggs. T: Do you like chocolate eggs?

These features of caretaker talk can help learners acquire new language naturally. So they are very good things for teachers to do when teaching English in class.

Which of them do you do already?

🔊 Pronunciation point

Syllables

🔊 Sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/

- 1 Say the word *chocolate*. How many syllables are you pronouncing in this word?

Some words, like *chocolate*, have syllables that are written but are often dropped when people speak.

What about these words? *every, different, favourite, comfortable, vegetable.*

- 2 Which of the underlined sounds in these words is the odd-one-out? *chocolate, children, check, shoulders, cheacher, chicture.*

TEACHING TIPS

Helping children learn a new language

- ✓ Use English in class as the main language for communication.
- ✓ Use **gestures**, actions, and pictures to help children understand.
- ✓ Children often need to talk in order to learn – let children use their mother tongue for communication, especially to start with.
- ✓ **Recast** in English what children say to you in their mother tongue.
- ✓ Answer children in English as much as possible.
- ✓ Use their mother tongue for support when you do a new activity or if no one understands.
- ✓ Talk a lot in English to your pupils – they need to hear English.
 - Talk about
 - where things are
 - pictures or things children can see
 - what you and your pupils are doing in class
 - what you want your pupils to do next.

REMEMBER

- The more English the children hear, the more they will learn.
- They will learn gradually – they won't say everything perfectly to start with. Encourage them by responding positively.



1B

Greetings

TEACHER: Good morning.

CHILDREN: Morning, teacher.

TEACHER: How are you today?

CHILDREN: Very well. How are you?

TEACHER: Fine. Thanks.

Clara with eight to nine year olds.

1C

A question of routine

TEACHER: Good morning. Is today Monday?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: Or maybe Tuesday? Or Sunday?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: Oh I wish it was Sunday. OK, what day is it today?

CHILDREN: Thursday.

TEACHER: Great!

Cristina with nine to ten year olds.

1.2 Starting your lessons in English

To help your children acquire English, speak English from the beginning of each English lesson. What you say then will, of course, depend on whether you are their everyday class teacher, or whether you are a specialist English teacher.

Are you a class teacher?

A class teacher teaches every subject, including English, to the same class. Your pupils are listening to you, the class teacher, all day. Think about how you start your English lessons. Write down two or three things you might say or do to make sure they know it is English next.

Are you a specialist teacher?

A specialist teacher only teaches English but usually teaches several classes. You might work with pupils of different ages and levels. Think about what you say to the children in these different classes when you begin your lesson. Write down three or four things you might say in English, or things you might do.

1D**Calling the roll in English**

TEACHER: OK, let's check the roll. Now, remember to answer, 'I'm here'.

TEACHER: Giupone, Lorenzo.

LORENZO: I'm here.

TEACHER: Pierrotti, Jonathan.

(silence)

CHILDREN: Not here.

TEACHER: What about Jonathan. Where is he? 'I don't know'. Can you say that?

CHILDREN: (repeating) I don't know.

TEACHER: OK, everyone's here except Jonathan.

Clara with eight to nine year olds.

1E**Starting with a song**

TEACHER: Morning.

CHILDREN: Morning.

TEACHER: OK. Can you stand up now?

Please. OK, Amanda can you stand up too? Thank you. OK, let's sing a song.

But do you remember how to put your hands on your heads? Yes? Like this.

(Teacher puts his hands on his head.)

TEACHER: OK, do you remember this song? OK ... Head and shoulders,

knees and toes ...

(All sing together)

Juan with eight to nine year olds.



Listen to the teachers in extracts **1B** to **1E** starting their English lessons.

Look at the things you have written down.

Do any of these teachers

— do what you do?

— say what you say?



Listen again to extracts **1B** to **1E**. Pause after any useful phrases and repeat them, paying special attention to the intonation.

RECORD

Record yourself taking the teacher's part in some of these extracts. Then play your recording back and compare with the original. Re-record if you like.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 1.2**Greetings and forms of address**

Addressing a teacher by name is usual in some countries, whereas in others children use the word *Teacher* as a title. What happens in your country? Practise some suitable phrases from this table.

Teacher		Children	
Good morning,	children.	Good morning,	Miss/Mrs/Mr/Ms
Good afternoon,	everybody.	Good afternoon,	[surname].
Hello,	boys and girls.	Hello,	[first name].
	girls and boys.		Teacher.

Checking attendance

Think how you could have a small conversation with your children as well as calling their names. Practise, using the tables below and then add to these conversations by using the ideas under the tables.

RECORD

Record two possible conversations.

Let's call the roll. Let's take the register. Let's check to see who is here.	Thank you, everybody.
Remember to answer 'I'm here'.	So, everyone is here except ... So, only two people away.
Is everybody here?	Oh good, Paula, you're back. Nice to see you. Are you all right now?
Is anyone away? No-one absent today? Who is missing?	Oh, John's away. Who knows why? Is he ill? Maybe he's gone to the dentist. What do you think?
Let's all count to see if everyone is here – girls first, then boys.	So, how many is 13 and 15? OK ... Yes? So that is 28 altogether. Is that more than yesterday? Or less than yesterday? Or the same?

1F

Arranging the classroom

TEACHER: Now, you four Peter, Paula, Tony, and Ann. Move the tables back without making a noise. OK, leave these five tables here at the top.

OK, any more left? Right, we're nearly ready. OK, everyone listen, listen, don't move these desks, OK...

Cristina with nine to ten year olds.

1G

Changing from one activity to another

TEACHER: OK, now, now put everything away. We're going to do something else. We're going to do something else. OK now ... sh ... sh ... sh ... quietly ...

Jane with seven to eight year olds.

1H

Asking and giving permission

TEACHER: Have you finished?
Everybody finished?

DANIEL: Teacher, Teacher ...

TEACHER: What do you want Daniel?

DANIEL: May I go to the toilet please?

TEACHER: Yes, OK, but no one else.
Wait for the break.

Emi with eleven to twelve year olds.


 **a** Listen again and underline them.

RECORD Now choose one of the extracts 1F–1H which you like and repeat the teacher's part, using the same intonation.



LANGUAGE FOCUS 1.3

Everyday instructions – organizing the classroom

 **b** Listen to the three extracts 1F–1H again. Which teacher repeats and which two teachers **rephrase** a part of their instructions?

Now read the following ten instructions out loud.

- 1 Get your books and pencils out.
- 2 Pick your pencils up.
- 3 Move the tables back.
- 4 Turn your chairs round to face the wall chart.
- 5 Put all your things away.
- 6 Close the window beside you.
- 7 Put your pencils down.
- 8 Turn back to face the front.
- 9 Leave these tables here.
- 10 Leave the windows open.

- c** For each instruction, find one which has the opposite meaning. There are five pairs of opposites.
- d** Nine of these instructions contain phrases that end with an adverb or adjective, like *back* or *open*. Read these out loud with a slight stress on the adverb, and notice the similarities in rhythm.
- e** What words or phrases might you add *before* these instructions to get your children's attention? For example, *OK, all of you, get your books and pencils out*.
To get some ideas, look at the classroom extracts in the boxes above and below. Practise saying your longer versions out loud, as if you were in front of a class.

How else might you adapt these instructions for your class/es?

Play around with them and see how many small changes you can make to each one, to suit children of different levels. For example

Put all your things back in your bags.

Right, can you put everything away now?

You don't need to move these desks; they are fine as they are.

Practise saying your new instructions as if to learners of different ages or levels.

RECORD Choose around seven useful instructions to record on your cassette.

1.4 Ending your lessons

What do your children normally do after your English lesson?

Do they

- stay in the same room?
- go to another lesson in a different room?
- have a break?
- go home?

How do you normally finish your lessons? What might you say?

Write down three things.



Now listen to extracts 1I and 1J, and compare what these teachers do and say with your own ideas.



Listen again and imitate their intonation patterns. Repeat any phrases you find useful.

1I

Ending a lesson

TEACHER: Right, we have no time for anything else. Don't do any more. We don't have any more time today ...

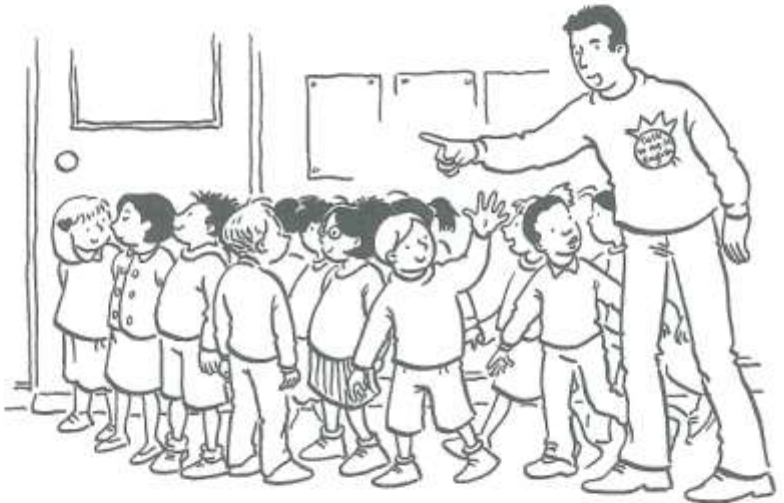
Cristina with seven to eight year olds.

1J

Finishing up

TEACHER: That's all for today. OK, on Monday there will be more. OK, OK, now children, now, make a line to say good bye ... following the leader ...

Juan with six to seven year olds.



LANGUAGE FOCUS 1.4

Ending lessons

Read the examples below. They all come from real lessons.

- 1 OK, that's all for now.
- 2 Right. We've no time for anything else – don't do any more – we don't have any more time today.

- 3 OK – just one more time before going out for a short break.
- 4 OK, now stop! We haven't enough time to finish the monster today.
So stand up ...
- 5 OK – just one more time – and then that's it.
- 6 OK, pick up all your things – and put the books in the cupboard.
- 7 That's all for today. On Monday, there'll be more.
- 8 OK, children, make a line to say good-bye – following the leader. Bye bye.
- 9 OK, it's break-time. So you can go out to play. But first – line up quietly by the door.

- o^a a Find four pairs of phrases that have similar meanings. Read them out loud in pairs.
- o^a b In each example, one word or a phrase is underlined. Change or substitute this one word or phrase for another word or phrase, for example, change now to this afternoon.

RECORD Practise saying them out loud and then record yourself.

Phrases with *else*

- o^a c Read 1G, 1H and 1I again and find whole phrases that go with *no one else*, *something else*, *anything else* and practise them. Can you think of two other common classroom phrases with *else*?

Word quiz

- o^a d *Now – OK – Right – OK now –*
What three things do these words and phrases have in common? Think of where they are used, how they are said, what their classroom function is.

RECORD Look back at the classroom extracts in this unit and write down and record on your cassette any more useful phrases you could use.

TEACHING TIPS

Using English for class organization

- ✓ While preparing your lesson, make a list of classroom language for each activity.
- ✓ Prepare to say all of this in English during the lesson.
- ✓ Use songs and rhymes when you change from one activity to another, e.g. an action song to start a game.
- ✓ Encourage your pupils to use English for routine classroom requests by praising any effort they make.
- ✓ Use wall charts or posters to help children remember what you are doing in the English class.

1.5 Very Young Learners (VYLs) and Young Learners (YLS)

- o Do you teach very young learners aged seven and under or young learners aged seven and over? What are the major differences? List three.
Read the section on VYLs and YLS in the Introduction (pages 4–5) again and tick the points that are relevant to your situation.
Now compare how the children react in the next two extracts, 1K and 1L.

1K

Very young learners listening to a story

TEACHER: Are they happy? Are they happy? Yes, they are laughing ...

CHILD: Happy, happy, happy ...

TEACHER: Yes, and are they laughing?

CHILD: Laughing, laughing, laughing ...

Susan with six to seven year olds.



1L

Young learners guessing from visual clues

TEACHER: Now I'm going to talk to you about a new person. Can anyone tell me who this is?

CHILD: A man.

CHILD: A person.

TEACHER: Yes, yes. A small person or a big person?

CHILD: Small... big... small...

TEACHER: OK, this is not a normal person. Who do you think it is?

CHILD: A child.

TEACHER: Look carefully... let's take out a bit more...

(There is lots of mother tongue talk as all the children try to guess – one child says in his mother tongue 'a snowman'.)

TEACHER: Yes. It's a snowman and look... I'm going to show you his face. Look... he has a carrot for a nose. What colour is the carrot?

CHILD: Orange.

TEACHER: This is a very nice snowman. Now before I take him out, look at his face. Is he a big snowman or a little snowman?

CHILD: Middle... middle...

TEACHER AND PUPILS: Middle sized.

TEACHER: OK, now listen.

Cristina with eight to nine year olds.



☞ The first teacher is telling a story to children under seven. They are making sense of the story with the help of the pictures. Some children are imitating the teacher – repeating naturally what she is saying, and looking at the pictures.

☞ Now listen to the next teacher, Cristina, with a group of eight and nine year olds. She is slowly taking a drawing out of an envelope. The children can only see a small part of the figure and they are trying to guess what it is. Compared to the very young learners, they are more aware of answering and recalling the words they need when she asks them a question.

Notice how the teacher allows the children to talk in their mother tongue (MT) and when she hears a child say something relevant in MT she immediately recasts it in English. What word does she recast in this transcript?

LANGUAGE FOCUS 1.5

Telling the class what you are doing

The teacher in 1L builds up the children's natural curiosity by pulling out the picture very slowly.

- o^a a Can you find three or four places where she tells the class what she is doing or about to do? Read them, then say each one out loud, from memory, slowly then quickly.

Asking questions

Can you find five questions and repeat them with the same intonation that she used?

- o^a b Which two questions are very similar?

TEACHING TIPS

Very young learners

- ✓ Introduce English slowly with enjoyable activities.
- ✓ Support what you say with gestures, actions, movements, and facial expression.
- ✓ Help the children feel secure by repeating familiar activities, e.g. songs and rhymes.
- ✓ Repeat in English what children say to you in their mother tongue.
- ✓ Use a puppet to talk to in English. Tell the children the puppet can only speak English so they have to speak in English to the puppet. If a child speaks in his/her mother tongue to the puppet, you can recast and speak to the puppet.
- ✓ Use drawings and photos.
- ✓ Tell lots of stories using pictures for support.

Young learners

- Adapt the approaches you use with VYLs, and in addition
- ✓ Explain in mother tongue on the first day why you are using English during the English lesson.
 - ✓ Teach the class useful phrases about language use, e.g. *Can I use... (mother tongue)? What's... in English?*
 - ✓ Plan for success and a positive experience.
 - ✓ Talk about your own personal experiences, e.g. What you like/dislike. This is like telling stories.

And above all, have fun!

TOPIC TALK**Introducing yourself**

If you are beginning a course or starting a class with new people, they will probably want to know something about you. How much you say and what you say will of course depend on who these people are – fellow teachers on a course, or pupils in a class. And the age and level of the pupils also makes a difference.

First, think of a possible audience. Think how you might introduce yourself to them.

- Here are some ideas to start you off. Select ideas that are suitable for your audience, and adapt and expand them. Practise putting some of them together to make a short personal **presentation**.

RECORD Then record it and play it back and listen to it. Re-record if you want to improve it.

My name is _____ but you can call me _____.

I've been working at _____ school for _____ years, and like it/the pupils very much.

So what are my interests, apart from teaching? Well, I enjoy _____.

Another thing I like doing is _____ but it is very expensive!

Shall I tell you about some of my favourite things? As far as food goes, what I like best is _____ and _____. On television, I always watch _____.

And as for the future, one of my dreams/ambitions is to _____. I'd really like that!

Further ideas

- 1 Buy a notebook to use for your private study. You could use this as a diary while you are following this course.
- 2 Play back and listen to the useful phrases you recorded while doing Unit 1. Start using them in class.
- 3 Plan a lesson where you hope to use as much English as possible. Work out what you can say in English at different stages in the lesson. Teach the lesson and see how it goes. Write down your reactions.
- 4 Take a cassette recorder with microphone into your next class. Record the first ten minutes of your lesson. Listen to it two or three times. In your notebook write down what you notice about your class. Think about the things you said and did. Answer the following questions:
 - How much English did you speak in the first ten minutes? 20%? 50%? 70%? More?
 - Did you switch to your mother tongue at all? When and why?
 - What did you use your mother tongue for? Can you now think of phrases in English that would be suitable? Write these down.
 - Did you notice yourself using any **caretaker talk**? Did you miss any opportunities for caretaker talk?
- 5 Read Chapters 1 and 2 from:

Lightbown, Patsy M. and Nina Spada. 1999. *How Languages are Learned* (second edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.