

4

This unit looks at

how to encourage children in their first efforts to speak English by

- encouraging the use of set classroom phrases
- introducing new vocabulary using pictures, gestures, and repetition
- helping learners remember new words and phrases in **context**
- teaching pronunciation and vocabulary together
- collecting suitable rhymes and songs.

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Introduction

In the last two units we looked at how to increase children's listening time. The more children listen, the better. When they are listening they

- are still actively learning
- are **acquiring** language and learning to understand
- are **absorbing** pronunciation and intonation
- can repeat what they hear
- can answer or comment in their mother tongue.

In this unit, the focus is on pupils' responding and beginning to speak some English. All the listening activities we looked at in Units 2 and 3 could lead on to speaking activities.

You can support children when they are starting to speak English

- by using English in the way we described in Unit 1 as **caretaker talk**
- by encouraging all the efforts children make to speak English, no matter how small
- by listening carefully when they speak and not interrupting to correct small errors.

4.1 Using classroom phrases

Pupils respond to their teacher (see 2.1).

They

- ask you questions and tell you things they want you to know
- often repeat comments and requests
- can easily learn to repeat the **set expressions** you use during their English lesson.



- o→ Read what the children in the drawing are saying. There are three empty speech bubbles. What are they going to say?

Think of what your pupils say to you in their mother tongue in class.

Think of what they

— ask you

— tell you.

- o→ Make a list of what you could help them to say in English.

When children repeat set phrases it does not necessarily mean language acquisition is taking place.

But they are

— getting used to saying English sounds

— practising the intonation pattern

— gaining confidence, especially if you praise them or show your approval in other ways.

REMEMBER

- When children are learning their first language they hear phrases and understand the general meaning before they understand individual words.
- They hear connected sounds before they separate them into individual words.
- Only written language is divided into words and sentences.
- Young learners who cannot read hear a flow of sound.
- They hear intonation patterns, and sounds or words that are stressed. These are the sounds they will say first.

It is best to introduce useful classroom phrases in the situation in which they are normally used.

4 A

Learning a new phrase in context

TEACHER: OK, Midori, red shoes ...

MIDORI: Red jumper.

HARUKA: A purple skirt.

TEACHER: Can't you go?

HARUKA: No.

TEACHER: OK, I can't go, say 'I can't go'.

HARUKA: I can't go.

TEACHER: Good, OK, now the next card. How do you say this in English? trou... trou

PUPILS AND TEACHER: Trousers.

TEACHER: Good. OK, your turn now.

HARUKA: Blue trousers.

TEACHER: Good.

MIDORI: I can't go.

TEACHER: No—you haven't got anything blue.

MIDORI: No—I can't go.

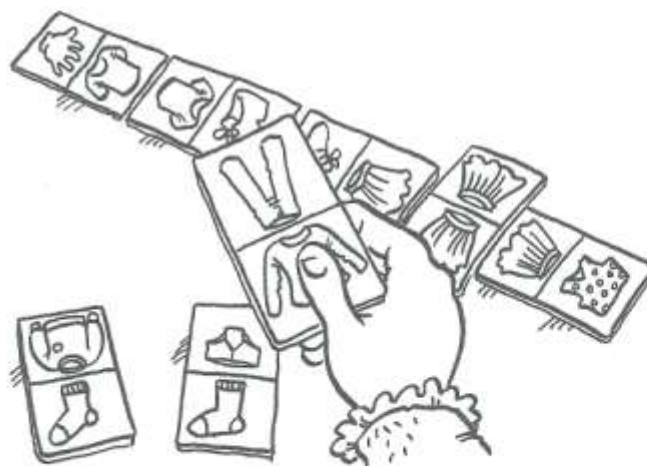
TEACHER: OK.

Bob with eleven to twelve year olds.



- o Listen to the teacher in 4A introducing a phrase during a game. His pupils are playing 'clothes dominoes' with cards. The cards show coloured clothes. The children play in turns by putting down the same colour or the same clothes item beside the domino card that is on the table. They are all playing in small groups and the teacher is working with one group.

The phrase they learn can be used again whenever they are playing games or taking turns.



LANGUAGE FOCUS 4.1

What learners need to say and ask

- a In the first two boxes below there are some possible things children might need to tell you. Add more things to the children's boxes. Then select a suitable response from the teacher in the second box.

RECORD Practise and then record three possible conversations.

Children	
I haven't got	my pencils.
I've lost	my colours.
I've forgotten	my book.
Look, I've got	a new bag/pencil case.
	some new felt tipped pens.
Teacher	
Has anyone seen Giorgio's pencil/book/colours?	Did you leave it at home? OK, never mind.
Can someone lend Giorgio a pencil/some colours?	Here's one. Here you are. Go and get one from my table.
Who's got a spare pencil?	Leila – can he look at your book?
Don't worry – I've got a spare one/set here.	Can he share with you? That's/Those are lovely. Who gave you that/those?

RECORD Add to the table below and practise some possible exchanges. Then record three on your cassette.

Child	Teacher
Excuse me! Can you help me?	Yes – of course, just coming.
Please Miss X! Is this right?	Wait a moment, Ana, I'm just helping Peter. Yes ... what is it you need?
I don't know what to do!	That's fine like that.
Please can I ask in Spanish?	Yes ... What do you need to know?

4.2 Saying rhymes and singing songs to practise pronunciation, stress, and intonation

We've already looked at how children love doing actions when they watch and listen to their teacher saying rhymes and chants (see 2.4). Children soon begin to repeat the words as they do the actions. They are speaking with the teacher. This builds confidence and a feeling of achievement. Children usually like singing and performing. It helps them feel at ease with English. They enjoy learning songs and rhymes they can sing or say to their parents at home.

As children acquire more English, chants, rhymes, and songs can form a real part of the learning process. Think about how you could use them in your lessons

- for enjoyment
- as part of your teaching plan
- as a change in activity
- to revise vocabulary
- to connect with new or familiar topics
- to practise up-to-date expressions
- for drama and to practise punctuation.

Think about choosing a song or rhyme. A song or rhyme should

- suit your pupils' age group and their interests
- match their level of English
- have a catchy, easy to remember melody.

Children often sing a song or say a chant or rhyme all together. However, when they are very familiar with the rhymes, songs, and chants they can perform them by singing or saying different parts in groups. This group performance is very useful with big classes. It helps develop teamwork but it still allows everyone to take part.

Read this chant about animals. The children can say it in groups as they ask and answer questions. The teacher could start by checking to see if everyone is ready:

OK, are you ready? All the groups ready? Spiders?

OK. Beetles? Puppies and sheep?

OK, now question group, you start one, two, three ...

Question group	Who's having fun?
Spider group	Spiders in the sun.
Question group	Who's having lunch?
Beetle group	Beetles in a bunch.
Question group	Who's chewing socks?
Puppies group	Puppies in a box.
Question group	Who's fast asleep?
Sheep group	Three black sheep.

(Chant by Carolyn Graham)

- Practise reading the chant out loud in a lively way.



TEACHING TIPS

Songs, rhymes, and chants

- ✓ Start with very short rhymes or chants.
- ✓ Look for songs and chants that have topics your children are learning about.
- ✓ Make sure the children generally understand what they are saying – they do not need to understand every word but maybe the gist of the lines.
- ✓ Use songs and rhymes to play with sounds: speaking softly – shouting loudly.
- ✓ Use simple instruments to add to the rhythm, such as tambourine, bell, drum, cymbal.
- ✓ Encourage your pupils to say them for family and friends outside school.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 4.2

How loud?

- ↻ Re-order these phrases in order of **volume** – from softest to loudest. Read them aloud in this new order, and then say them so that they illustrate what they mean (i.e. if it says *whisper*, then whisper it, if it says *very slowly*, then say it very slowly). Have fun trying this out. Make up one more of your own.

RECORD Then record all five.

- 1 Now say it very slowly and quietly.
- 2 OK – everybody whisper it! Just whisper!
- 3 Stand well apart from each other – now each person/group can take turns to shout their part. But not too loud!
- 4 Normal voices – nice and clear. Not too loud, not too soft.
- 5 Now, can you say it fairly quietly, but very fast?

TOPIC TALK

Spiders, beetles, and small creatures

- ↻ Which of these small creatures do your pupils know something about? Add others to the list.
- | | | |
|-------------|---------|--------------|
| spiders | beetles | caterpillars |
| butterflies | worms | snails |
| bees | wasps | flies |
- ↻ 1 Write down two things that children might know or ought to know about each of these creatures:
- Spiders have eight legs.*
They are usually black or brown.
Spiders make webs.
They eat flies and other insects.
- ↻ 2 Think of two questions you might ask children about each creature:
- What do bees say? Have you ever been stung by a wasp or bee?*

- RECORD 3** Record yourself telling someone else about four of these creatures, as if you were telling a class of young learners. Ask two questions about them and give possible answers.
- 4** Do you know any books or stories about any of these small creatures? Prepare to tell a colleague about one of them, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, a well-known book for children. In this story the caterpillar ate through an apple on Monday, two pears on Tuesday, three plums on Wednesday, four strawberries on Thursday and so on, until on the Saturday he ate so much that he got tummy ache.

4.3 Practising new vocabulary

When children are listening to you they often repeat words and phrases naturally and spontaneously. When you are introducing new vocabulary and learners want to speak, you can

- encourage them to repeat the new items
- use pictures, sounds, and other senses, e.g. touch and feel materials, to support meaning
- use **gestures**, movement, and actions
- get children to colour pictures of the new things they can name
- repeat new words as often as possible and use them in **context**.

All of these methods will help your pupils become familiar with new vocabulary.

Just like children learning their first language, they can practise and play with new sounds.

Teachers have different ways of introducing and practising new words.



Listen to the teacher in **4B**. She is

- connecting new vocabulary with what her pupils already know
- using pictures to help them understand and remember
- showing her class a small part of the picture first and asking them to guess the animal (moving from a part to a whole is a good memory aid)
- teaching meaning and sound first.

REMEMBER

- if your pupils cannot read yet they have to remember the word as a sound.
- if your pupils can read it is better if they first remember the sound of the word and then learn the spelling.

4B

Introducing new vocabulary

TEACHER: Very good. Now, we have some new animals ...

(Teacher holds up a picture card but only shows the animal's ears.)

TEACHER: What's this?

CHILD: It's a dog

TEACHER: A dog? No ... like a dog.

It's a ... a fox

(Teacher puts the picture on the board.)

TEACHER: Now what's this?

CHILD: A fox

TEACHER: Yes, OK, one more new animal ...

(Now the teacher covers the picture with her hand so only the nose and upper face is showing.)

TEACHER: Is this a dog?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: A kangaroo?

CHILD: No.

TEACHER: An elephant?

CHILD: No.

TEACHER: No, it's a mouse ... a mouse.

Repeat please.

PUPILS AND TEACHER: A mouse.

Pura with nine to ten year olds.



4 C*Either/or questions*

TEACHER: Now, remember, this was a?

CHILDREN: A fox.

TEACHER: And this is ... ?

CHILD: A mouse.

TEACHER: OK, and look at this picture.

OK. Is this an elephant or a kangaroo?

CHILDREN: An elephant.

TEACHER: Yes. Good, an elephant.

OK, and this one ... Is this a mouse or a frog?

CHILDREN: A mouse.

TEACHER: Very good. Now ...

Pura with nine to ten year olds.

4 D*Classifying*

TEACHER: Now let's draw two houses.

One big and one small. This is the big animal house and the other one is the small animal house.

OK. Now what's this?

CHILDREN: Mouse.

TEACHER: OK, a mouse. Which house does he go in?

CHILDREN: Small house.

TEACHER: Yes. The small animal house.

Very good, now, let's see ...

Lucy with nine to ten year olds.

🗣️ The teacher then elicits more animal names in **4C** by asking the children *either/or* questions.

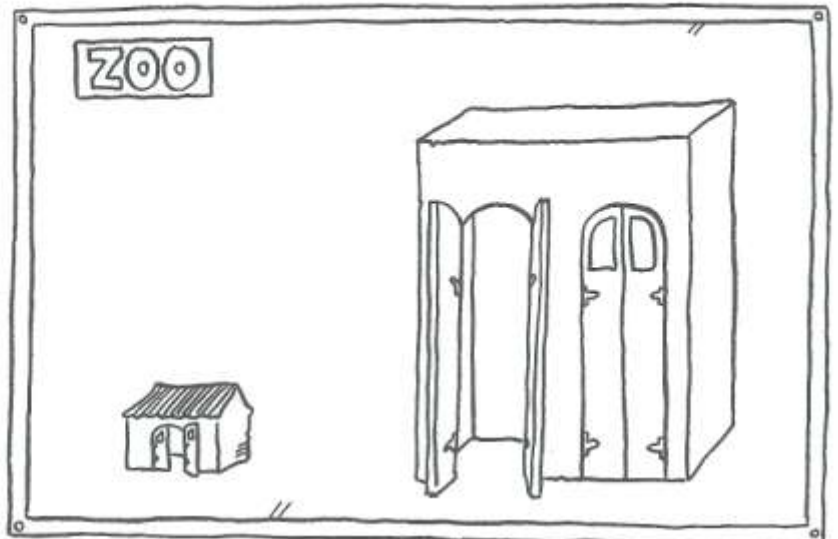
🗣️ Now listen to another class where the teacher is asking the children to **classify** animals into big and small. This is an easy way to extend any activity and it lets children

- repeat for a purpose
- practise new vocabulary
- **consolidate** vocabulary they already know.

Children are learning new things all the time so it's easy for them to forget. To help children remember it's a good idea to use new words and phrases several times in different ways. The teachers in **4B**, **4C**, and **4D** used

- guessing
- *either/or* questions
- classifying.

By doing these or similar activities you can give children extra opportunities to listen and repeat what is new and go back over what they know. In this way new and old come together in the child's memory.

**TEACHING TIPS****Teaching new vocabulary**


- ✓ Make class **displays** of pictures and other memory aids to support new vocabulary.
- ✓ Prepare to teach new words and phrases in a meaningful way by linking with a topic they are familiar with.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 4.3**Five ways of eliciting language**

🗣️ Play recordings **4B**, **4C**, and **4D** again, and listen to the teachers' intonation when **eliciting** a word from the children. When you **elicit** it is like asking a question. So, in the transcript, eliciting is followed by a question mark.

- o→ Here are five ways of eliciting. Can you find any more examples of these in the transcript?
 - a Wh- questions: *What's this?*
 - b Questions using intonation only: *A dog?*
 - c Questions using inversion: *Is this an elephant?*
 - d Unfinished sentence questions with rising intonation: *This was a ... ?*
 - e Either/or questions: *Is this an elephant or a kangaroo?*

RECORD Practise these and record them on to your cassette.

 Play recordings 4B, 4C, and 4D again, and listen to the teachers' intonation patterns when they ask pupils to respond.

⇒ RECORD Pause after each question, and repeat what the teacher says. Then select two examples of two or three different types of question to record on your cassette.

 Pronunciation point

Two sounds

- o→ Each of these sets of words has a different sound in common. Say them and decide what the sounds are.
 - 1 *phrase, four, elephant, fold, laughing*
 - 2 *jumper, orange, jam, strange, jeans*
 Can you think of any other common words with these sounds?

4 E

Guessing the picture

TEACHER: So, let's see who remembers?
I have a picture here ... of something
you know ... Can you guess what it is?

CHILD: Star.

TEACHER: Very good. That's right. Now
you come out ... pick one. Do you
know what it is? Whisper it to me.

Yes that's it. OK, off you go ...

FIRST CHILD: What is it?

SECOND CHILD: Sun.

FIRST CHILD: No.

THIRD CHILD: Garden.

FIRST CHILD: No.

FOURTH CHILD: Planet.

FIRST CHILD: No.

FIFTH CHILD: Clou.


FIRST CHILD: Yes.

TEACHER: OK, let's just check
pronunciation. Is it clou or cloud?

CHILDREN: (*all together*) Cloud.

TEACHER: Cloud. Yes very good.

Jane with seven to eight year olds.

 Listen to the teacher in 4E. She is going back over six new words. She taught them to her class earlier using pictures. The class have repeated and practised the words. Now the teacher wants to see if they can remember the words without seeing the pictures. They have to guess the picture. This is what happens.

After giving some instructions:

- The teacher takes one of the pictures.
- She doesn't let the class see it.
- She asks the children to guess what the word is.
- The child who guesses correctly comes up and takes the next picture.
- He does not show it to the other children.
- He whispers the word to the teacher.
- If he forgets the word in English, he can say it in his mother tongue and the teacher tells him the word in English and the sound.
- The others have to guess what it is.

This vocabulary game continues until all the cards have been guessed and put on the board.

4.4 Playing vocabulary games

Guessing games and memory games are useful to help children become familiar with new vocabulary in an enjoyable way.

When you show children what to do and at the same time give instructions for games in English, they are listening to you with a real purpose – to find out how to play. They are also absorbing new vocabulary and intonation patterns.

4F

Remembering a list

TEACHER: OK, we'll start with these four. OK, are you ready?

FIRST CHILD: I'd like an apple.

SECOND CHILD: I'd like an apple and a pear.

TEACHER: Good.

THIRD CHILD: I'd like an apple and a pear – and an orange.

TEACHER: Good.

FOURTH CHILD: I'd like an orange ... no ... an apple and a pear and an orange and a ... banana.

TEACHER: Very good. That was great, now ...

Brian with nine to ten year olds.



The teacher in 4F, Brian, is playing a memory game. The children are adding words to a list and so making phrases. Each child can add a new word but must also repeat the phrase that went before. The children are working in groups of four. The others are listening while each group makes a list.

Instead of objects, you can play this game with actions, also using pictures, if necessary. For example, a possible list might be:

Mun Ling went shopping and Chui Meng went swimming and ... I went jogging.

Other games that require just a few set expressions plus a few other words are:

FINDING PAIRS: a memory game where children have to pick up two cards with the same picture or word. (The cards are spread out face-down.)

SHOPPING GAMES: children act the parts of shop assistants and customers in different kinds of shops to practise different vocabulary.

HAPPY FAMILIES: a card game: players in groups of three or four have to collect four cards from each other from the same 'family' or topic.

TEACHING TIPS

Vocabulary games

- ✓ Show children how to play the game and give instructions in English while you are doing this.
- ✓ Use lots of different games but use the same vocabulary to help children become familiar with it.
- ✓ New words and phrases need to be used a lot after you have introduced them so that the children learn to use them actively.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 4.4

Instructions for games

- 1 Read transcript 4E and repeat both sets of instructions the teacher gives. Notice how she speaks in short chunks.
- 2 Read the two sample sets of instructions below: 'Find a pair' and 'Shopping game'. Think what actions you would do as you explain to your learners to help them understand.

Find a pair

Here are 12 picture cards of fruit; there are two cards with apples, two with oranges and so on. I'm going to put the cards face down on the table. You have to try to find two the same and say what they are. The person who has the most pairs at the end wins the game. Now, watch carefully and see where they all go. OK, I'm putting an apple here and an orange here ... – and so on. Now they are all down. But do remember you have to say what they are before you keep the pair.

OK, one at a time. Who wants to try first? Pick one, turn it over, say what it is, then try to remember where the other one is. If you are right, you can keep the pair. If you are wrong, put them back again, face down. Look, like this ...

An apple. Now I've got an apple, so I need another apple ... I need another apple. Oh no! that's a banana. OK, I'll put them back.

Now who would like to try to find a pair – two the same?





A shopping game

Let's play shopping. What kind of shop shall we have today? A pet shop?

OK. Here are the cards with pets. Who wants to be the pet shop assistant? Ah Bin? OK. Come out here. Everybody else think what you want to buy. What else could you buy in this pet shop? Could you buy any of these?

kittens puppies mice hamsters
snakes spiders fish ...

What does the customer say and what does the assistant say?

Good morning *Good morning*
I'd like a kitten please. *Yes, of course.*
How much? *Ten dollars.*
Here you are. *Thanks.*

- 3 Divide these instructions into short chunks/phrases. Put a dash between each chunk. Then read them out loud, as if speaking to a class. Practise these instructions, adapting them if you need to, until you can say them fluently without reading.
- 4 Make or find a set of suitable picture cards, then record yourself giving instructions.

What can you do with cards?

- a Look at the tables. Read three or four sets of instructions out loud from each table. Record them on your cassette.
- b Test yourself. Cover the tables up. Write a list of verbs/actions that you can use with cards, e.g. *mix them up*. If you can remember seven you have done very well.

Here are some cards.	Can you	give them out?	You should have three each.
These are picture cards.	Will you	deal them out?	Each pair should have six.
These are word cards.		share them round?	Check you have eight on each table.
Here are some cards with phrases on.		mix them up?	Put the rest in a pile, face down.
Here are some cards with actions on.		put them face down on your table?	
Don't look at them yet.		Don't show them to anyone else.	
Just look at your own.	Don't look at anyone else's.		
Spread them out so you can see them all.	Which ones make a pair?		
Whoops!	One's gone in your lap.	Can you pick it up?	
Oh dear!	One's fallen in your bag.	Can you reach it?	
Watch out!	One's gone under your chair.	Who hasn't got all six?	
Careful!	One's fallen on the floor.	Who's got one missing?	
Wait a minute!	You've got an extra one.	Who's got one extra?	
	You are one short.		

TEACHING TIPS

- ✓ When children are familiar with shopping play routines, you can have two or three shop assistants and more customers. Then they can play in groups.
- ✓ With more advanced learners you can add lines to the script:
Can I help you? What colour? White, please.

4.5 Practising pronunciation of new sounds

Children acquire pronunciation and intonation naturally by listening to you. When you talk they absorb the sound of the language. But this does not mean that they will produce perfect words or phrases when they begin to speak in English. They need

- to try out the sounds
- to play with sounds
- your help and praise all the time.

Young children naturally like playing with language. They can mimic new sounds more easily than older learners. When you praise their efforts you are motivating them to try again.

You can play games to encourage them to practise the sounds of English.

'I spy with my little eye' is a fun way to get children used to hearing new sounds. You can play it like this:

- Tell the children *'I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'sh' [or /s/]*.
- The children guess.
- The first child to guess correctly comes to the front.
- This child tells you a new word (in their mother tongue – or in English).
- Then you can say the first sound of the word to the child.
- The child waits while the others guess.

4G

Supporting pupils by saying a word

TEACHER: OK, we're going to play one more game ...

Do you remember ... this game we played? You have to point to what I am thinking about.

(Teacher sits on a chair and starts game.)

TEACHER: I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'pl'.
(One child points to a picture of planet on the board.)

TEACHER: Very good Anna ... pl ... planet, pl ... planet.
(Now Anna whispers her word to the teacher 'sun, sun' and she sits on chair.)

TEACHER: Now Anna's word ... I spy with my little eye ... something beginning with /s/ ... Can anyone point to something beginning with /s/?

Jane with seven to eight year olds.



Listen to the teacher in 4G, Jane, playing the game. She has pictures on the wall that the children have just used for another game. The children can see the words they are remembering.



TEACHING TIPS

- ✓ In the classroom
 - you can arrange pictures of words with the same sound together:
blue – shoe – two
 - if the children can read, add the written word underneath
 - use actions to help children remember the face movement that produces the sound:
Stretch your arms for wide mouth sounds.
- ✓ Use other expressions when you are playing the game 'I spy'.
I can hear with my little ear a word beginning with ...
I can remember ... I can remember a word beginning with ...
- ✓ You can use this little activity at any time and for one or two words to remind children of sounds and vocabulary.

TOPIC TALK

Animals

- ↻ a Make lists of animals that children know about under four headings:

pets	farm animals
wild animals/zoo animals	nasty or scary animals
- ↻ b For each animal think of two or three things to tell children about it and one or two questions to ask them. Write these down and then choose five to record. Also write down and record your responses to the answers you think they might give.

Further ideas

- 1 Rewind your own cassette and listen to everything you recorded while doing this unit. Practise the things you find most useful. Re-record any you would like to improve on.
- 2 Choose one section from this unit, and decide which activity to try out in class. Write down
 - the instructions you will give in English
 - the phrases you want your children to say when they are doing the activity.
 Teach the activity, using as much English as possible. If possible, record the lesson.
 - After the lesson, write down how it went in your notebook.
 - Listen to the recording if you made one.
 - Write down what you might change if you do it again.
- ↻ 3 Find some simple card games in a Resource Pack, or make some cards for the games in this unit. Work out two sets of instructions you could give in English to play them with very young learners and then older children.

RECORD Record at least one version of your instructions.
- 4 Read the Introduction to Chapter 7 from Philips, Sarah. 1993. *Young Learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (if you have it). Choose a song or chant that you could try in one of your classes. Write down the instructions you might give in order to set it up in English.

RECORD Then record yourself doing it with a class.