

500
TIPS

for
TESOL

(TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES)

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10 Tips for...

Teaching speaking

1 Run the class in English.

- The more English your learners can use in class, the better.
- If English is the language of classroom management, they will need to speak it to get things done.
- That said, a monolingual group will inevitably prefer to use L1 at times.

2 Use plenty of group and pair work.

- This maximizes the class time available for learners to speak.
- Each format has its own advantages: pair work means both students contribute, whereas group work gives practice in negotiating more complex interaction patterns.
- The teacher should not always be the focus of the class.

3 Make activities as spontaneous as possible.

- Most talk in the world outside the classroom is unplanned, and learners need to practice this kind of speaking.

4 Use guided activities where necessary.

- Learners with little experience of oral work may find it difficult if given a task involving spontaneous speech.
- For such learners, scaffolding with examples and a dialog can give confidence.

5 Consider role plays.

- They provide an opportunity for learners to imagine a wide variety of situations, relationships and attitudes and attempt to convey these in language.

6 Use task-based activities.

- Ask learners to collaborate towards an objective, for example, to plan a birthday party or to make a shopping list.
- Language is then used to achieve something as well as a subject of practice.
- Tasks like this can feel very realistic to learners.

7 Try out new tasks with friends or colleagues.

- Sometimes it's hard to tell what kind of language a particular speaking task is likely to generate.
- If you do the task yourself, you will get a better idea of its linguistic demands.

8 Make learners aware of varied speaking needs.

In the real world, speaking can be...

- planned
- semi-planned
- spontaneous speech

9 Correct spoken language selectively.

- The point of speaking activities is for learners to produce language in real time—do not inhibit them by correcting every mistake.
- Keep some time in the lesson to discuss ‘common’ mistakes.

10 Create an atmosphere of acceptance.

- Many learners can find it stressful to speak in the target language.
- Respond to the content of what they say, before deciding whether to correct any inaccuracies.