

Language for ...

the classroom

Age: Adult / Young adult

Level: Elementary-Pre-intermediate

Length: 60 minutes (approx.)

Language Focus: classroom objects,
key classroom expressions

Skills: speaking, reading

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the reading text per student (or at least for each pair of students); one set of role cards for each group of three students (see Task 4: Role Cards sheet)

Aims: to familiarize students with vocabulary for common classroom objects; to equip students with common expressions to use in class; to allow students to understand common expressions used by teachers



What are red words?

Ninety per cent of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in the Macmillan Dictionary in red and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent and three-star words are the most frequent. 'Language for' lessons are based on red words and encourage students to improve their English through communicative tasks using collocation and commonly used phrases. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/learn/red-words.html>

- 1 Begin the lesson by eliciting the names for a few simple classroom objects. For example, point at a book and elicit the word 'book', writing it on the board. Then point at the board and elicit the word 'board', and so on. Do this for four or five objects, so as not to give away too many of the words in the upcoming activity. Tell students that

today's lesson will focus on useful vocabulary and expressions for the classroom.

- 2 Students sit in groups of three or four. Hand out the student worksheets. Refer students to the photo of the classroom and read aloud the related instructions. Highlight that the students can write the name of any object that they see in the photo, whether it is strictly related to a classroom or not (e.g. 'window'). Specify that spelling does not need to be perfect at this point in the lesson, the words just need to be understandable. Remind students that they have one minute to work together and write the words. Start the timer. Monitor the class as they write the words, making a note of both correct and incorrect words suggested. When the time is up, ask each group to provide you with one completed worksheet. Pass this sheet to a different group for correction. Allow students to use dictionaries or smartphones to check whether certain words are correct or not. Before deciding on the winning group, write some of the correctly suggested words on the board. Also write some incorrect suggestions and elicit the right versions. Finally, get students to add up the number of correct words and to pass the worksheet back to the original group. Choose the winning group.
- 3 Ask the students to stand in a circle. Read aloud the instructions for Exercise 1.b. You may wish to begin with a trial run to make sure that everybody gets the idea. Then start the game. You might want to make a quick note of each word as it is mentioned to make sure that words don't get repeated. Continue the game as per the instructions until the circle has been narrowed down to just the one winner. Then provide feedback, particularly on the correct pronunciation of the words mentioned.

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- 4 Ask students to work in small groups again. Read aloud the instructions for Exercise 1.c. Give students a minute or so to brainstorm expressions for each of the three bullet points. Divide the board into three sections to correspond to the bullet points. Then, elicit a few suggestions for each section and write these on the board. This activity doesn't need to be exhaustive as students will come across further expressions in the next task.
- 5 Read aloud the introduction for Exercise 2 and the instructions for part a. Before you hand out the reading texts, allow students a moment to read the corresponding true/false questions. When students are ready, hand out the texts. Students should work individually to answer the questions. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs. Once they have done this, elicit the correct answers and write them on the board.
- 6 Students work in pairs. Read aloud the instructions for Exercise 2.b. Tell students that they must work together in pairs to find the corresponding expressions to complete both tables. Point out that in the reading text, bold text has been used to indicate all the typical classroom expressions. However, there are more expressions in bold than are needed to complete the tables. Allow students a few minutes to complete this task, monitoring them as they do so and helping weaker students. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 7 Read aloud the instructions for Exercise 3.a. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the missing words, emphasizing that they have already seen all the necessary words earlier in this lesson. As they do the task, monitor the class and perhaps give some hints. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 8 Refer students to Exercise 3.b. You may wish to correct the first item together as a class, then ask students to work in pairs to complete the remaining sentences. Point out that some of the corrections relate to basic expressions which appear in bold in the reading text but not in Exercise 2. For the more difficult sentences, give clues, such as telling students which exact word needs to be corrected. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 9 Divide students into groups of three. The best way to introduce Exercise 4 is by example, as outlined below.
- On the board, write a short description of a conversation, perhaps as follows – 'Teacher needs to express: students need to read a text on page 15. Student needs to express: the teacher is talking too quickly.'
 - Select two stronger students from the class, designating one as the Teacher and the other as the Student. Tell them that they need to have a conversation as specified on the board, but there's a twist. During the conversation, they need to use certain phrases. Write these phrases on the board as follows:
- | Teacher: | Student: |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 'turn to' | 'understand' |
| 'in pairs' | 'more slowly' |
| 'Let's go!' | 'Thanks a lot' |
- Before the conversation begins, write the word 'Observer' on the board. Ask for a volunteer to come to the board to fill this role. Hand this volunteer a board pen and tell them that all they need to do is listen to the conversation and tick each of the target phrases that gets mentioned.

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- Tell the Teacher and the Student that they now have about 30 seconds to have their conversation. They need to include each target phrase in a grammatically correct way, which also sounds reasonably natural. Allow them to begin, making sure that the Observer is listening carefully and ticking off the phrases. Once the time is up, reflect on whether the Teacher and the Student used all their target phrases – and whether they used them correctly.
 - Tell the class that they are now going to have three short conversations. In each one, they will have a different role: Teacher, Student or Observer. Hand out the role cards for Conversation 1, telling students not to show their card to the others.
 - Read aloud the instructions on the worksheet for Conversation Topic 1. Remind all Students and Teachers that they have about 30 seconds to have their conversations. Tell all Observers that as they hear the correct use of each target phrase, they must tick it on their card. However, if the phrase is not used correctly, the Observer should not place a tick and should make a note of the error.
 - Repeat the above procedure for Conversation Topics 2 and 3, making sure that each student plays a different role each time. Once all three conversations have been completed, ask all students to compare their role cards with the rest of their group. Who won the highest number of ticks? Did the Observers note any errors?
- 10** Read aloud the instructions for Exercise 5. Taking the first phrase ('Excuse me ...') as an example, ask individual students how important they think this expression is for them personally. (Will they use it frequently? Is there an alternative phrase which they would probably use instead?) You may wish to try to generate some classroom discussion on the importance of this phrase – you may encounter cultural differences between students on how important it is to be direct/indirect/polite/concise. Once this introduction has been completed, allow students a minute or so to individually complete the table. When they're ready, ask them to mingle and compare their tables with other students. Compile a list of the top three expressions. You may wish to also try to determine whether the class in general has a least favourite expression from the table.

KEY:

- 1. Example of objects which can be seen in the photo:**
desk, chair, whiteboard, board rubber, board pens, TV/screen, speakers, posters, cupboards, drawers, lamp, computer, folders, teacher's desk, bin, windows, bag, radiator, floor, carpet, ceiling, lights
- 2. a.**
 1. False
 2. True
 3. False
 4. True
 5. False
 6. False
 7. True
 8. True

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b.

Teacher (Chris)	
(C1) Open your books on page seven.	turn to page seven
(C1) Work with one of your classmates.	work in pairs
(C1) I want to know if you have everything you need to begin.	are you ready to start?
(C2) I want to know if you think this is easy or difficult.	How's it going ... ?
(C3) The period of time for the task has finished.	time's up
(C3) I don't want all the students to talk at the same time.	put your hand up

Student (Ola)	
(C1) I want your attention.	Excuse me
(C1) You are speaking too quickly.	Can you speak more slowly, please?
(C1) Not exactly yes, but not exactly no.	sort of
(C2) I want to know the meaning of that word.	What does that mean?
(C2) I want to know how to write that word.	Can you spell it?
(C3) I want you to say that again.	can you repeat that please?

3. a. 1. Excuse

2. sort
3. does
4. ready
5. almost
6. spell
7. guess
8. up

b. 1. **Student:** What **does** this word **mean**?

2. **Student:** Can **you speak** more slowly, please?
3. **Student:** Can you repeat **that/it/the word**, please?
4. **Teacher:** If you know the answer, put **your** hand up.
5. **Teacher:** How's it **going**?
Student: Oh, OK. I'm almost finished.
6. **Teacher:** Have you finished the task?
Student: No, **it's/it is** difficult!
7. **Student:** I **don't** understand the question.
8. **Teacher:** Your text is excellent!
Student: Oh, **thanks** a lot.

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In these three conversations, both the teacher (Chris) and the student (Ola) use typical classroom language. These typical expressions are in **bold text**.

Conversation 1: Starting the task

Chris (Teacher): OK, everybody, in your books, I want you to **turn to page seven**. OK? And now I want you to read the text and **work in pairs** to answer the questions.

Ola (Student): **Excuse me**, Chris?

Chris: Yes, Ola?

Ola: **Can you speak more slowly, please?**

Chris: Sure! So, that's page seven. Read the text and then answer the questions in pairs. **Do you understand** that, Ola?

Ola: Hmm, **sort of**. I need to read the text and answer the questions. But what does 'in pairs' mean?

Chris: Oh. 'In pairs' means that two people work together. So you answer the questions with your classmate. OK?

Ola: Ah! Yes, **now I understand**. Thanks!

Chris: Great. OK, everybody, **are you ready to start?** Let's go!

Conversation 2: Doing the task

Chris: **How's it going**, Ola?

Ola: Hmm. **It's difficult!**

Chris: Which part?

Ola: **I don't understand** question three. It has the word 'couch'. **What does that mean?**

Chris: 'Couch' is a common word in America. In Britain, people call it a 'sofa'. Do you understand that word?

Ola: 'Sofa'? **Can you spell it?**

Chris: Sure! S-O-F-A. 'Sofa'.

Ola: Ah! A sofa! The place where people sit!

Chris: Exactly!

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Conversation 3: Finishing the task

Chris: OK, everybody, **time's up!** Right, let's talk about the answer for question one. If you know the answer, **put your hand up**, please. Ola, you have your hand up. What's your answer?

Ola: I think the answer is 'Germany'.

Chris: Oh! **You're almost correct!** The answer is a different country, but it's next to Germany.

Ola: I'm sorry, **can you repeat that please?**

Chris: The correct answer is a country next to Germany. Any ideas?

Ola: Oh. I don't know.

Chris: Well, **take a guess.**

Ola: Maybe ... Poland?

Chris: Yes! Excellent! **Well done**, Ola!

Ola: Oh, **thanks a lot!**

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<u>Teacher (Conv. 1):</u>	<u>Student (Conv. 1):</u>	<u>Observer (Conv. 1):</u>	
'turn to'	'Excuse me'	Teacher:	Student:
'in pairs'	'sort of'	'turn to'	'Excuse me'
'Sure!'	'understand'	'in pairs'	'sort of'
'ready'	'repeat that'	'Sure!'	'understand'
		'ready'	'repeat that'
<i>(Player A)</i>	<i>(Player B)</i>	<i>(Player C)</i>	

<u>Teacher (Conv. 2):</u>	<u>Student (Conv. 2):</u>	<u>Observer (Conv. 2):</u>	
'How's it ... ?'	'easy'	Teacher:	Student:
'understand'	'mean'	'How's it ...?'	'easy'
'difficult'	'spell'	'understand'	'mean'
'Sure!'	'more slowly'	'difficult'	'spell'
		'Sure!'	'more slowly'
<i>(Player C)</i>	<i>(Player A)</i>	<i>(Player B)</i>	

<u>Teacher (Conv. 3):</u>	<u>Student (Conv. 3):</u>	<u>Observer (Conv. 3):</u>	
'time's up'	'I think'	Teacher:	Student:
'hand up'	'mean'	'time's up'	'I think'
'almost'	'repeat that'	'hand up'	'mean'
'a guess'	'thanks'	'almost'	'repeat that'
		'a guess'	'thanks'
<i>(Player B)</i>	<i>(Player C)</i>	<i>(Player A)</i>	

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1 Warmer

a. Work in groups. Look at the photo. Write the objects that you can see. You have one minute!



b. Play the Five Second Game! First, everybody stands in a circle.

- The first student has five seconds to say an object in your classroom (e.g. 'desk').
- The second student has five seconds to say a different object in your classroom (e.g. 'chair').
- Continue this for every student. If you repeat an object, or if you can't say an object in five seconds, you're out of the circle!
- The winner is the final student in the circle.

c. Apart from objects, classroom language also includes common expressions. With your classmate, think of some typical expressions for these situations:

- common **questions** from students (e.g. 'Can you **repeat** that, please?')
- common **instructions** from the teacher (e.g. 'Look at the board.')
- common **problems** for students (e.g. 'I don't **understand**.')

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2 Chris is teaching a class. One of his students is named Ola.

- a. Read the three conversations between Chris and Ola. Decide if sentences 1-8 are true (T) or false (F).

First conversation: Starting the task

- The students need to look at page eleven. _____
- Ola thinks that Chris is speaking very quickly. _____
- At the end of the conversation, Ola is confused. _____

Second conversation: Doing the task

- In question three, Ola is only confused about one word. _____
- When Chris **spells** 'S-O-F-A', Hasan doesn't **understand** this word. _____

Third conversation: Finishing the task

- Chris says that the answer 'Germany' is completely incorrect. _____
- Chris tells Ola to try to imagine the **correct** answer. _____
- Finally, Ola says the **correct** answer. _____

- b. Read the three conversations again. For each idea below, write an expression from the text.

(C1 = First conversation, etc)

Teacher (Chris)	
Idea	Expression
(C1) Open your books on page seven.	'turn to page seven'
(C1) Work with one of your classmates.	
(C1) I want to know if you have everything you need to begin.	
(C2) I want to know if you think this is easy or difficult.	
(C3) The period of time for the task has finished.	
(C3) I don't want all the students to talk at the same time.	

Student (Ola)	
Idea	Expression
(C1) I want your attention.	'Excuse me'
(C1) You are speaking too quickly.	
(C1) Not exactly yes, but not exactly no.	
(C2) I want to know the meaning of that word.	
(C2) I want to know how to write that word.	
(C3) I want you to say that again.	

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3 Language in use

a. Complete each sentence with one word.

1. **Student:** _____ me, teacher. Can I ask you a question?
2. **Teacher:** Maria, do you **understand** the sentence?
Student: Hmm. _____ of, but not everything.
3. **Student:** I don't **understand** this word. What _____ it **mean**?
4. **Teacher:** OK, that's the end of the instructions. Are you _____ to start?
5. **Student:** I think the answer is 'thirteen'.
Teacher: Oh, you're _____ **correct**! But the answer is 'fourteen'.
6. **Student:** Can you _____ the word 'mobile,' please?
Teacher: Sure! It's M-O-B-I-L-E.
7. **Teacher:** If you don't know the exact answer, take a _____!
8. **Teacher:** OK, everybody, time's _____! That's the end of the task.

b. Each sentence has a mistake. Write the correction. If you want to, look again at the conversations in Exercise 2.

1. **Student:** What means this word?
2. **Student:** Can you to speak more **slowly**, please?
3. **Student:** Can you **repeat**, please?
4. **Teacher:** If you know the answer, put the hand up.
5. **Teacher:** How's it doing?
Student: Oh, OK. I'm **most** finished.
6. **Teacher:** Have you finished the task?
Student: No, is difficult!
7. **Student:** I not **understand** the question.
8. **Teacher:** Your text is excellent!
Student: Oh, thank a lot.

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4 Communication

Game: Tick the words.

Work in groups of three (Player A, Player B, Player C). In this game, there are three conversations. In each conversation, you will have a different role. For example, in Conversation 1, the roles are: Player A = Student; Player B = Teacher; Player C = Observer.

Your teacher will now show you an example of how to play the game.

Are you ready? The ideas for each conversation are below. Good luck!

Conversation Topic 1 – Starting the task

Teacher needs to express:

students must open the book, look at page nine, complete the listening exercise

Student needs to express:

it is difficult to **understand** the instructions

Conversation Topic 2 – Doing the task

Teacher needs to express:

students can ask questions if they are confused; the task is not easy

Student needs to express:

the task is easy, but there is one difficult word; the teacher is speaking too quickly

Conversation Topic 3 – Finishing the task

Teacher needs to express:

students need to finish the task; students must give the **correct** answers

Student needs to express:

you know the answer to the first question in the task; it is difficult to **understand** the teacher

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5 Discuss

In the table below, you can see common expressions for students. We have seen all these expressions in this lesson. For each expression, decide how important it is for you personally.

Not very important = ●

Important = ●●

Very, very important = ●●●

Expressions for students

Expression	How important is it for you?
Excuse me ...	
Can you speak more slowly , please?	
... sort of.	
I understand .	
It's difficult!	
I don't understand ...	
What does that mean ?	
Can you spell it?	
Can you repeat that, please?	
Thanks a lot!	

Now compare your answers with your classmates. What are the top three most important expressions in the class?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Red Words

desk*** chair (noun)*** TV*** screen (noun)*** speaker*** poster**
 cupboard** drawer** lamp** computer*** folder* bin (noun)*
 window*** bag (noun)*** radiator* floor (noun)*** carpet (noun)**
 ceiling** light (noun)*** repeat (verb)*** understand*** turn (verb)***
 work (verb)*** pair (noun)*** ready (adjective)*** almost***
 correct (adjective)*** guess (noun)** slowly*** mean (verb)*** spell (verb)**