

Starting oral practice

So that's the class format and goals explained. What do you do next?



If the class started at 9 :00, it's now about 9 :35. From there we go straight into some guided practice. Even in the first class, I want students to start doing at least a bit of conversation practice, so that they see how easy and fun it can be. The crucial thing for students to understand is that if they practice the material seriously with their partner for say, ten minutes, they will easily be able to use it in a conversation and thus quite easily get quite a good grade.

What material do you use?

For the first class, I give students the material found in the *Grammar Toolboxes* on pages 16 and 17 of the textbook. If time is running short, I skip the top one on page 17.



In a regular class, I would give some sort of warming up exercise, like a word game, or ask students to make a list or ranking. For example, I'll ask them to individually jot down their top 3 ways of spending free time, and give them a few minutes. They seem to like it when we collate answers on the board, and find which activities were popular.




This also gives us a good starting point for vocab to be used in the lesson.

Note to teachers : warming up exercises for each lesson of CiC can be found in the teacher's book.

Students open their books to the first toolbox, and we read through the basic question together. I check that students know what it means, and then move on to varying it by substituting in vocabulary either the vocab listed in the textbook, or stuff left on the board from warming up.

It's also important for students to vary the form of the way they talk. Most of what goes on in conversation classes is open questions with simple answers. But to better reflect real speech, we show students that it's a good idea to use three different versions of the same question interchangeably (open questions, closed questions, and speaking about oneself without being asked a question). For example, instead of just asking the open question *Where do you live?*, I have them think about how to make a closed question on the same topic, once I have explained what open and closed questions are, of course. So they might come up with something like *Do you live near the school?* for a closed question, or for speaking about oneself *I live about twenty minutes from here, near the station.*

Vary Your Speech!

-  _____ exactly do you live? → I live in ...
-  _____ you work anywhere near here? → Yes, I work...
-  I live in a suburb of Kyoto called Arashiyama, and I study _____ an art college near my house. → In Arashiyama? I live in...

How about you? There are short exercises for students to work on for a minute or two after they have learnt a new grammar pattern, and although its a small thing, it really makes a profound difference to how fluent they sound in conversation.

Note to teachers : explanations about varying speech style can be found on page 15.

GOLDEN RULE 3: When you take part in a conversation in English, make sure that you vary the way you speak.
鉄則3 : 英語で話すときは、いろいろな構文を使う。

Even if you have mastered a grammar form and can use it easily, using it all the time can sound quite unnatural. Native speakers (sometimes unconsciously) vary the grammar structures they use even in a single conversation. In this book, for each Grammar Toolbox there is a "vary your speech" exercise, in which you will practice all three patterns below. Whenever you study a new phrase, make sure you practice it in all three ways! When you are having a conversation with a classmate, your teacher or a native speaker of English, try to use all different styles! You will sound much more natural than if you always use the same sentence pattern.

文法をマスターし、それを自由に使えるようになるのは大切なことです。常に同じ文法に同じ構文しか用いると、かたがた不自然に聞こえてしまうことがあります。ネイティブが話している会話でも、たとえ短期会話であっても、いろいろな構文を使いまわっています。この教科書のGrammar Toolboxでは、各題「vary your speech (変える構文を使いまわす)」として下記のようなる3つのパターンを練習していきます。新しい文法を習ったときには、3つのパターンを全て練習しましょう！授業中や先生、友達とのチャットやホームパーティーなど会話をするときには、様々な構文を使いまわしましょう。同じ構文を繰り返すのは聞き手にとっても自然な会話と聞き手にもなりません。

1 **Open questions**
These are questions that have many possible answers.
Examples:
- What sports do you like best?
- What did you do during the holiday?
- Around what age would you like to get married?
- When is a good season to visit your country?

オープン・クエスチョン
ある範囲に対して複数の答えが考えられるとき、この疑問文でオープン・クエスチョンと呼びます。
例文:
- 一番好きなスポーツは何ですか?
- 休みの期間中に、何しましたか?
- 理想の結婚年齢はいくらになりますか?
- 貴国を訪ねるのに、いつが最適だと思いますか?

2 **Closed questions**
These are questions that have only two possible answers.
Examples:
- Do you like baseball?
- Did you go anywhere during the holiday?
- How do you see "The Matrix"?
- Do you prefer American or Japanese movies?

クローズド・クエスチョン
答えが「イエス」「ノー」のよかに2つのみで答える疑問文、クローズド・クエスチョンと呼びます。
例文:
- 野球が好きですか?
- 休みの期間どこに行きましたか?
- 「マトリックス」を好きでしたか?
- アメリカの映画と日本の映画、どちらが好きですか?

3 **Speaking about yourself without being asked a question**
Examples:
- I love ping-pong. I wish I could take it up again.
- I want to get married when I am about 26, and have two children. How about you?

疑問が来ずとも自分のこと話す
例文:
- 私はピンポンが好きです。もう一度始めたいと思います。
- 私は結婚したいと思っています。子供は二人欲しいと思います。あなたはどうですか?

15

How do you go about pair practice?

As soon as the material in the first Toolbox is covered, I tell the students to start practicing the questions and answers in pairs, and remind them that the target is to be able to use it in real-time. While they are practicing, I go around the class and practice with students one-on-one, and give each of them a *hanko* stamp in the attendance column of their Progress Sheets.

Pair practice is kept fresh by the fact that all the answers are true and original for each student ; that is, they are responding with their own personal information, and not simply reciting role plays or pre-scripted conversations. It may sound like a big jump for first-year students with very minimal spoken English ability and confidence, but they handle it surprisingly well. Soon they are starting to play with the language ; making interesting questions about topics they really want to find out about, and thinking about how to make sentences that express their opinions and life situations.

How do you wrap up the class ?

At the end of the first class, I remind them that conversation classes are beginning next week and to bring their Presence Sheet to every class.

Finally, before the students leave, I go around the class and take a quick head shot photo of each student with my digital camera. I give them the printed pictures when they come to their first conversation test in the following week, and they paste it on their Presence Sheet. Pretty soon the Presence Sheet is looking like an official document (something like a 'passport to the class'), with personal information, a picture, stamps and marks. As a result the students realise how important their sheet is, and usually look after it . Among hundreds of students each year I have perhaps one lost sheet.

Students leave the room feeling that this class might be a little out of the ordinary. It seems what will be asked of them is possible, maybe even fun, that their efforts will be rewarded and that there is a potential for progress towards actually being able to speak some English. *Waku waku. Tanoshisou desune.*