

Joan Saslow
Allen Ascher

Teen & Teen

Tips for Teaching Teens

Practical techniques to maximize success

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About the Series

This series of short articles by *Teen2Teen* authors Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher will address three challenges of teaching teens in the English as a Foreign Language (“EFL”) setting: the lack of English in the environment outside of class, the social nature of teens, and the limited number of class hours per week.

Each article will focus on one aspect of language teaching and learning and examine and suggest practical techniques to maximize success.



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Address and overcome the challenges your teenagers face when learning vocabulary.



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Make grammar appealing to teens and help them understand and use it effectively.



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Build teens’ listening comprehension skills and enable them to listen to natural spoken language with success.



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About the *Teen2Teen* Authors

Joan Saslow is the author of numerous widely used multi-level courses for teens, young adults, and adults. She has taught English and foreign languages at all levels of instruction in both South America and the U.S. Ms. Saslow has also conducted teacher training workshops in foreign language teaching methods for over thirty years.

Allen Ascher taught English in both the U.S. and China and has been a teacher trainer, academic director, and consultant. As a publisher, Mr. Ascher was responsible for the creation of ELT materials for all age groups. As an author, he has written course books as well as an online training course for teachers.

Ms. Saslow and Mr. Ascher have coauthored materials together since 2002, including the new Oxford University Press course *Teen2Teen*.



Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

The EFL Setting

We often fail to appreciate the profound difference between teaching and learning new vocabulary *inside* of the English-speaking world (“the ESL setting”) and *outside* of it (“the EFL setting”). In the ESL setting, the classroom is merely a support to learning new words and expressions, much of which takes place outside of class. In the latter, the teacher, the classroom, and learning materials must make up for the lack of exposure to English outside of class. Let’s examine the teaching and learning of vocabulary in the EFL setting.

A purposeful methodology

In the EFL setting, the teenaged learner—highly social yet somewhat distractible—must acquire a large volume of vocabulary in very little time and with little opportunity to practice. A purposeful methodology is crucial to success. We know that students need repeated exposure and abundant practice of vocabulary in order to “learn” it. And recycling of that vocabulary is essential to prevent forgetting. Lessons that provide enough exposure, practice, and recycling are hard to create, and time is never adequate. A middle school schedule of two class hours per week yields 72 class hours spread over a year. While a year of instruction may sound substantial, 72 hours only add up to 3 days! What methodology, then, can increase exposure, practice, and memorability of vocabulary?

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

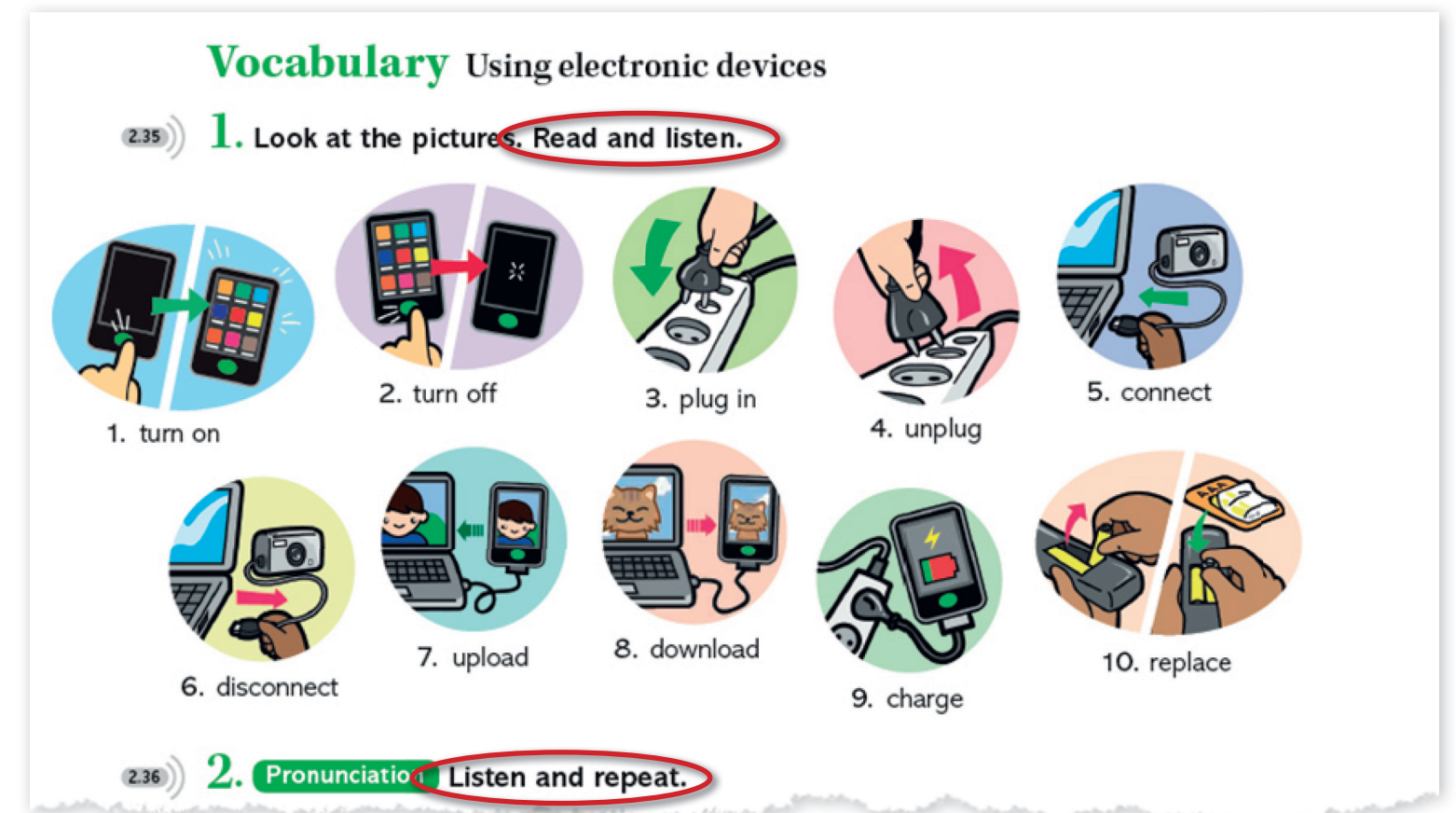
1. Explicit presentation.

In the EFL setting, we should assume that new vocabulary is unknown, so presentation should be explicit. The first step in learning a new word is understanding what it means. Though an occasional quick translation into students' first language is convenient and harmless, using translation as the principal method of teaching vocabulary can lead to students' paying more attention to the translation than to the actual English word being learned!

A captioned picture dictionary, on the other hand, can clearly show the meaning of a word. Captioned illustrations remain on the page of the student's book for later reference and review. When accompanied by audio, captioned vocabulary illustrations afford students a chance to read, listen to, and remember new words.

2. Repetition.

Hearing and repeating each new word is essential in the EFL setting because students are unlikely to hear the words outside of class or to have an opportunity to use them there. Imitating the speaker on the audio builds auditory memory of the words and ensures accurate pronunciation.



Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

3. Immediate practice.

Although exercises are important in any setting, they are crucial in the EFL setting because there students lack opportunities to practice the vocabulary outside of class. Exercises provide repeated exposure and intensive practice that replace the lack of practice in the world outside of class.

Vocabulary exercises ideally move from controlled practice, as in Exercise 3, to more productive and freer practice, as in About You. In Exercise 3, students complete meaningful sentences based on visual cues. As in the presentation of vocabulary, exercises with visual cues involve the sense of seeing, which greatly enhances memorability.

In the exercise that follows, About You, students personalize the vocabulary freely, using it to express their own ideas. Note how this productive exercise enables students to use the models they observed and worked with in Exercise 3.

3. Look at the pictures. Complete the instructions. Use the Vocabulary.



1. First, replace the batteries in your remote. Then _____ the TV.



2. _____ your laptop. _____ the battery for two hours. Then _____ your laptop and use it for up to eight hours.



3. _____ your phone. _____ the charger. _____ the phone for an hour.



4. First, _____ your camera. _____ your camera to your laptop. _____ your photos. Then _____ your camera.



About you!

What do you usually charge? How often?

I charge my phone twice a week.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

4. Integration and recycling.

How can we maximize recycling of new vocabulary, to ensure that students get enough practice? One way is to use the new vocabulary when practicing other target language, such as grammar.

In Exercise 3, a grammar exercise about questions with *Can* for Permission is an opportunity to re-use and recycle the electronic devices vocabulary at the same time. This integration of vocabulary and grammar greatly increases exposure and memorability of the vocabulary that is so important in the EFL setting. In the ESL setting, where students have an opportunity to use the new vocabulary outside of class, one or two vocabulary exercises might be enough. That is not so, however, for distractible teens in the EFL setting.

In similar manner, exercises in reading, listening comprehension, and writing can use the vocabulary intensively to provide even more exposure, practice, and recycling of grammar.

3. Look at the pictures. Complete each request for permission.



1. Can I charge _____ (I / charge) my phone here?
2. _____ (we / borrow) your laptop?
3. _____ (we / turn on / please) the TV?
4. _____ (I / use) your charger?
5. _____ (I / turn off / please) the music?
6. _____ (I / disconnect / please) your camera now?
7. _____ (I / replace) these batteries?
8. _____ (I / upload / please) your photos to my tablet?

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

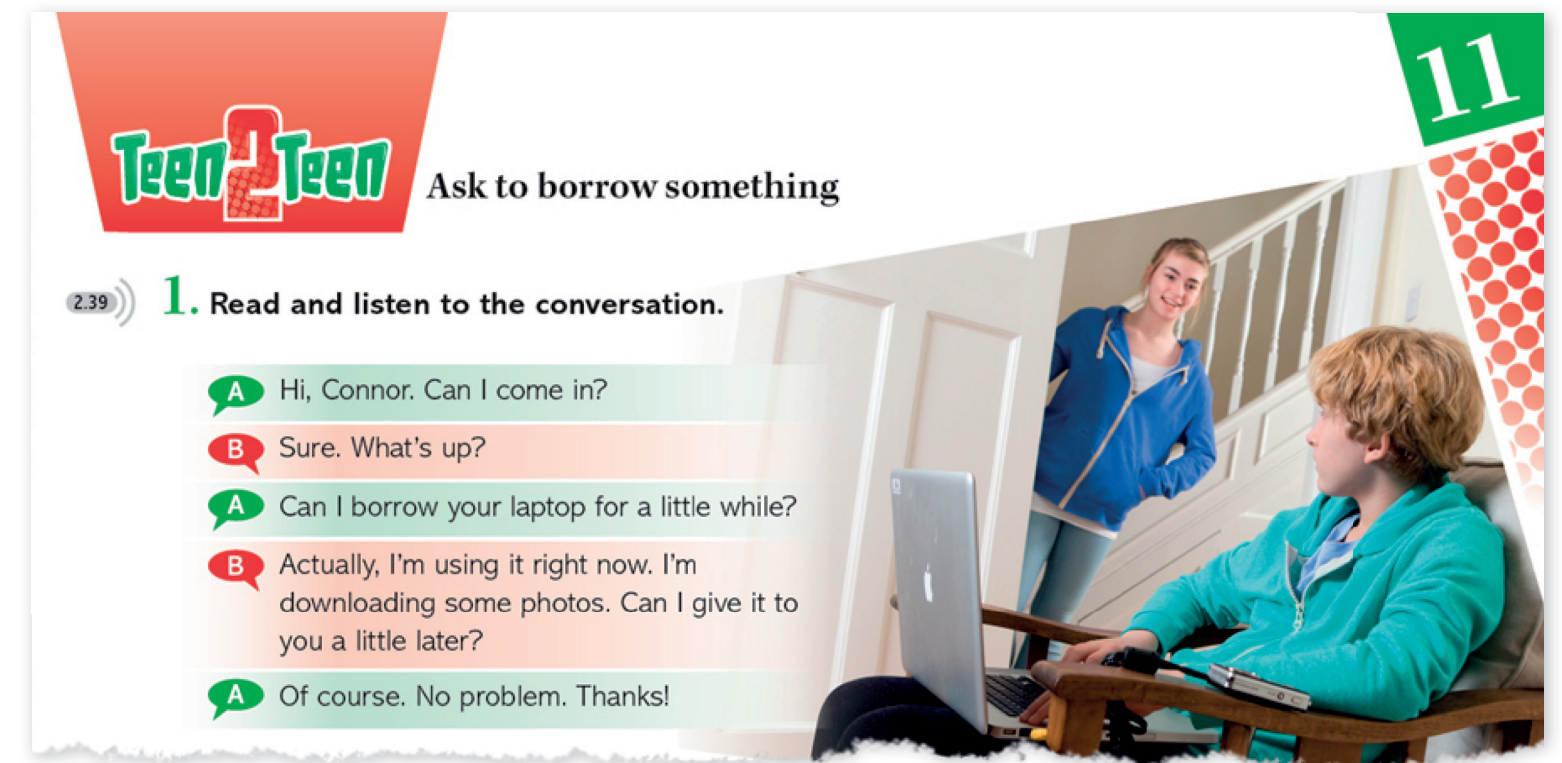
5. Social application.

Because teens are very social, model conversations that contain social language in familiar situations are appealing to them and ensure enthusiastic practice. Model conversations should, of course, practice the target vocabulary, but even more importantly, the conversations should bring natural, authentic social language into class.

The conversation in Exercise 1 contains the electronic devices vocabulary students are learning (*laptop, downloading photos*). But it contains more than that. Notice the social language: “Hi,” “Sure. What’s up?” “Actually, ...” “Of course” “No problem” “Thanks!”

In working with model conversations, it’s useful for students to listen and read them to further reinforce the use of the vocabulary in context. If you have audio, listening and reading at the same time can increase the impact of the integration of vocabulary and social language. As a second step, repeating the conversation after you or the audio increases memorability and ensures natural intonation of social language.

When teens practice something meaningful and relevant to their own lives it ensures focus and greatly aids in the memorability of new vocabulary.



Teen 2 Teen Ask to borrow something

2:39 1. Read and listen to the conversation.

A Hi, Connor. Can I come in?

B Sure. What's up?

A Can I borrow your laptop for a little while?

B Actually, I'm using it right now. I'm downloading some photos. Can I give it to you a little later?

A Of course. No problem. Thanks!

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

6. Personalization.

But it's important not to stop with mere practice of model conversations from a book. *Guided conversation practice* offers learners an essential opportunity to use the new words in their *own* conversations, bridging the gap between controlled practice and productive use.

After students have an opportunity to repeat a model conversation, it's important to offer them an opportunity to change it or to personalize it in some way. The model conversation is just that: a model. It contains language that can be used in other similar situations.

In Exercise 3, students modify the conversation changing the electronic device and the activity--which are all from the vocabulary in this study unit. Visual cues can support students and help them remember words that could be used in the activity.

To ensure rich practice, students can be given an opportunity to plan their changes to the conversation by writing them on a notepad, ensuring yet more practice.

Notepads and visual cues increase each student's involvement, motivation, and success.

3. Guided conversation On the notepad, write the names of two electronic devices. Imagine you are using the devices right now. Write a statement for each. Then create a NEW conversation, using one of the devices on your notepad.

Verbs
 listen
 do
 send
 write
 play
 upload
 download
 charge

A: Hi, _____. Can I come in?

B: Sure. What's up?

A: Can I borrow your _____ for a little while?

B: Actually, I'm using _____ right now. I'm _____. Can I give _____ to you a little later?

A: Of course. No problem. Thanks!

Device	What are you doing?
MP3 player	I'm listening to music.
1	
2	

Read your new conversation with your partner. Then read the conversation in your partner's book.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Vocabulary

Summary

In the reality of the EFL setting, with very few class hours, teen learners need many opportunities to observe and practice new vocabulary. And because they are teens, integrating vocabulary in relevant social conversations ensures the memorability and mastery of new words.

Text and illustration examples in this article are from Teen2Teen Two by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

A purposeful methodology

As with the teaching of vocabulary, we often fail to appreciate the profound challenge of teaching and learning grammar in the EFL setting. In the EFL setting, where comprehensible observable English is largely missing in the world outside of class, the teacher, the classroom, and the learning materials must make up for that and greatly enrich exposure and practice opportunities inside of class.

There's no escaping the importance of grammar. It has to be taught. It has to be learned. But, as with all language learning, motivation is key, and for the teenager—who enjoys English as a medium of communication, grammar is not at the outset the most motivating part of English study. While adult learners—and teachers—understand the importance of grammar for communication, teenagers don't readily see the connection. Let's examine some ways to keep teen learners interested and focused long enough to master the essential grammar points we have to teach.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

1. Show grammar in its social use.

Since teens' social life is paramount, connecting grammar to its social use makes grammar feel useful and valuable to them. Whenever possible, grammar should be contextualized in social interactions.

In Exercise 1, we see a natural interaction on social media between friends telling each other about their activities. This context serves as a natural vehicle for the target grammar students are learning: the present continuous for activities that continue in the present.

Although students require formal explicit presentation of the form, meaning, and use of the present continuous, showing it in social use showcases its value in communication.

3 What are you doing this year?

Grammar: The present continuous for actions that continue in the present • Information questions
Vocabulary: Extra-curricular activities
Social language: Greet someone after a long time

Topic Snapshot

1. Read and listen to the posts.

Sandra Pacheco

Meet new friends

Question of the day

My blog

Favorite places

Video webchat

My Friends:

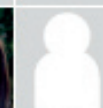

Adam Lucas


Gan Yu


Maya Ivanova


Phil Campbell


Emi Sato


New Friend

15:56

 Sandra: It's great to be back on Teen2Teen Friends! What's everyone doing this year?

 Adam: Hey, Sandra. Welcome back! Well, I'm playing on my school soccer team now. My teammates are really cool.

 Gan: Hey, that's great! I'm taking dancing lessons! It's lots of fun.

 Sandra: Nice! Hey, who's new on Teen2Teen Friends today? Say hello!

 Maya: Hi, everyone! I'm new. My name's Maya, and I'm from Moscow. I'm studying English this year!

 Phil: Hi, Maya! Phil Campbell here, from London. I'm new, too. I'm not doing anything special this year. But this month my parents are visiting Frankfurt, in Germany, so I'm staying with my aunt.

 Emi: Hello, I'm Emi, from Tokyo. Phil, why aren't YOU visiting Frankfurt?

 Phil: I can't go right now. There's school this month.

 Adam: Well, welcome to all our new friends!

Post a comment ...

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

2. Clearly illustrate form, meaning, and use of grammar.

The adult learner can see a grammar chart and make immediate sense of it. Teens, on the other hand, usually can't make the cognitive jump from seeing a grammar chart to understanding the grammar point's form, meaning, or communicative use. But if we illustrate the grammar form in actual use, students see its value, increasing their motivation to learn it.

Explaining grammar rules simply and explicitly is helpful for teens too.

Students benefit from both explanations of the grammar and clear examples. When presenting grammar on a board, always circle or underline the example of the grammar as you see in the presentation to the right so students focus on the form.

In the example to the right, we see a photograph of a teen actually using the grammar. Such models always help students capture the point of the presentation.

3

Grammar The present continuous for actions that continue in the present

1. Study the grammar.

- Reminder** You can use the present continuous for actions in progress now.
I'm **doing** my homework **right now**.

You can also use the present continuous for actions that continue in the present. You can use time expressions to be specific.

I'm **playing** on the soccer team **this year!**
The weather isn't good, so I'm **staying** home **today**.
She's **doing** her homework **this morning**.
We're **practicing** basketball **this afternoon**.

Language tip • Time expressions can also be at the beginning of a statement.
This year, I'm studying English.

2. Pronunciation Listen to the grammar examples. Repeat.

1.25

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

3. Include pronunciation practice.

Traditionally, textbooks present grammar forms in charts which students read and study. Though such charts are necessary, in the EFL setting, where students don't have opportunities to hear and practice grammar outside of class, including pronunciation practice in grammar presentations increases their impact and helps students use the grammar naturally and with meaningful intonation.

Two important benefits of listening to and repeating grammar examples follow:

- First: repetition increases the memorability of the grammar because it involves two more skills: listening and speaking.
- Second: paying attention to the sound, rhythm, and stress of the grammar leads to clear, comprehensible pronunciation.

Traditional textbook grammar presentations based solely on reading a chart can't provide these two benefits.

Who **is** Karen **calling**? (She's calling her friend.)
BUT Who **is** **calling** Karen? (Gary is calling Karen.)

Contractions with is

What's = What is	Why's = Why is	Where's = Where is	Who's = Who is
------------------	----------------	--------------------	----------------

Language tip • Don't contract *are*.
What are you doing? **NOT** ~~What're you doing?~~

1.27 **2. Pronunciation** Listen to the grammar examples. Repeat.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

4. Vary practice exercises.

Traditional grammar exercise types—gap fills, multiple choice, and completion—all help students focus on, practice, and master grammar. But increasing the *variety* of grammar exercises in a lesson boosts the speed and depth of learning. For example: adding listening comprehension to the mix of grammar exercises broadens the contexts in which the grammar is used, making it more memorable. Furthermore, including listening-based grammar exercises increases the amount of listening practice in class, an key ancillary benefit in the EFL setting. With teens especially, another exercise type is especially motivating: one that provides learners with an opportunity to use the grammar to *talk about themselves*.

In the exercises to the side, Exercise 3 is a traditional grammar exercise. Exercise 4 is a listening comprehension exercise in which students listen twice and perform two grammar tasks. The third exercise, About You, is a freer and more productive exercise in which students use the present continuous to talk about themselves.

3. Complete each statement about actions that continue in the present. Use contractions.

- We're studying (we / study) the geography of Africa this month. It's so interesting!
- This year, _____ (my cousin / take) singing lessons. Now he can sing!
- This week, _____ (we / collect) money for our school orchestra.
- _____ (my sister / stay) with our grandparents this week. She's so lucky!
- _____ (Mr. Mullin / teach) our math class this year. He's a nice teacher.
- Martha isn't here this week. _____ (she / visit) her cousins in Canada.

4. Listening comprehension Listen and complete the statements with the present continuous, according to the conversations. Then listen again and complete each statement with the time expressions.

- Janet is visiting her cousins
- Lucas _____ French
- Their classmates _____ clothes for charity
- Valerie _____ on the volleyball team
- Ms. Winnow _____ the class

a. this year.
b. this week.
c. today.
d. this morning.
e. this afternoon.

About you! Complete the statement about your extra-curricular activities. Use the present continuous.

This year, I'm _____.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

5. Continually integrate and recycle the grammar.

Along the same lines, integrating and recycling the grammar into teen-relevant reading texts further extends exposure to and reinforces newly learned grammar.

In the Reading text to the side, you can see an intensive integration of the present continuous, the target grammar students are learning. In the EFL setting it's very helpful for students to have multiple exposures to the grammar to make it memorable.

3

Reading Profiles to introduce new people

1. Read about two new people on Teen2Teen Friends. What cities are Emi and Maya from?

Meet new friends

Julie Duclos
Meet my new friend, Emi Sato!

Emi Sato is from Japan, and she's fourteen years old. Her hometown is the great city of Tokyo! **Emi is taking** violin lessons at a music school this year, and she can play really well. **She's playing** in her school orchestra for the first time. Her brother, Kenji, **is staying** with their aunt and uncle in the United States. They're both teachers at San Diego State University now, and **he's studying** computer science there. Emi and her brother are on Teen2Teen Friends every day, so they can speak by webcam.



Gan Yu
Meet my new friend, Maya Ivanova!

Maya Ivanova is fourteen, and she's from the fantastic city of Moscow, in Russia. **Maya is learning** English at her school this year, and **she's also taking** art lessons after school. She can draw people really well. This week, **people are buying** her drawings of famous people, and **she's collecting** money for charity. Maya's father is a musician in a jazz band, and her mother is a dancer. Maya's sister, Olga, is ten, and **she's studying** English, too. Maya says, "Teen2Teen Friends is great! I can meet people, and **I'm making** new friends from all over the world."



2. Complete the statements about Emi and Maya and their families.

- Emi is taking violin lessons this year, and Maya is taking art lessons.
- Emi can _____ really well. Maya can _____ really well.
- Emi's brother is studying _____ and Maya's sister is studying _____.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

6. Provide social practice of the grammar.

Natural, informal social language has compelling appeal to teenagers. Model conversations that integrate the grammar with this type of language motivate teens to practice. And practice ensures memorability and mastery.

In the model conversation to the side, you can see the target grammar twice: once in line 2 and again in line 5. But the conversation also includes social language with teen appeal, increasing enthusiasm for language practice: “Hey,” “Long time no see” “What are you up to?” “What about you?” “Me?” “No kidding” “Hey, ...” “Great idea.” This language can be used in many situations and its social nature as well as its inclusion in a situation familiar to all teens ensures that at the same time students will be practicing the target grammar.

Teen 2 Teen Greet someone after a long time

1.29 1. Read and listen to the conversation.

A Hey, Paula. Long time no see. What are you up to?
 B Well, I'm playing on the soccer team this year.
 A Really? That's great!
 B What about you?
 A Me? I'm taking dancing lessons.
 B No kidding! Hey! We should get together after school.
 A Great idea!

1.30 Positive adjectives
 That's great!
 That's nice!
 That's cool!
 That's awesome!

1.31 2. Pronunciation Listen and repeat.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Grammar

7. Personalize the grammar.

But it's important not to stop with mere practice of model conversations from a book. *Guided conversation practice* offers learners an essential opportunity to use the new grammar in their *own* social conversations, bridging the gap between controlled practice and productive use. Notepads and visual cues increase each student's involvement, motivation, and success.

Summary

In the reality of the EFL setting, with very few class hours, teen learners need many opportunities to observe and practice new grammar. And because they are teens, integrating the grammar in relevant social conversations ensures motivation, memorability, and mastery of new grammar.

Text and illustration examples in this article are from Teen2Teen Two by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher.

3. Guided conversation Make a list of some things you are doing this year, this month, and this week. Then use your list and create a NEW conversation.

A Hey, _____. Long time no see.
What are you up to?

B Well, _____.

A Really? That's _____!

B What about you?

A Me? _____.

B No kidding! Hey! We should get together after school.

A _____!

This year
I'm studying English.

This month

This week

Read your new conversation with your partner.
Then read the conversation in your partner's book.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

In the EFL setting, listening comprehension is perhaps the most challenging of the skills to learn. Students hear English from only a limited number of speakers--generally their teachers. But when confronted with natural spoken English by unfamiliar speakers, students are often at a loss. Teachers frequently worry that their students will be overwhelmed and frustrated by being asked to understand spoken English. In this short article, *Teen2Teen* authors Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher will:

1. Suggest strategies for the classroom use of natural spoken models and
2. Provide a framework for building the listening comprehension skill by challenging, but not frustrating, students.

A purposeful methodology

1. Maximize exposure to spoken English and use audio in every class.

Because in the EFL setting, students are deprived of opportunities to hear English, the classroom must attempt to repair that deficit. The classroom is a place for students to accustom their ears to the cadence, rhythm, and intonation of real spoken language. Comprehension begins with routine and intense exposure to spoken models of the language.

As the teacher, don't underestimate your value as a model of spoken English, even if you are not a native speaker. More than 80% of the people in the world who speak English speak with a non-native accent, so you are in the mainstream!

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

When using your textbook, make a habit of always reading the directions to exercises aloud. In the example to the right, the directions to Exercise 3 *Look at the pictures. Complete the statements* are simple and comprehensible.

Avoid translating the directions into students' first language. Ask yourself, *Can my students understand this direction to look at the pictures and complete the statements?* If you have any doubt, demonstrate the first answer for them, as you see in item 1 to the right. Keeping translation as a last resort is highly desirable in the EFL environment and aids in building comprehension.

When presenting new vocabulary, be sure students hear each new word or expression pronounced. In the example to the right you can see that the new vocabulary is included on the audio. Play the audio (or read the words aloud yourself) as students look at the pictures and read the words. In this way they won't be confused by English spelling while they are learning the new words.

3. Look at the pictures. Complete the statements.



1. She's catching / kicking / serving the ball.



2. He's catching / blocking / kicking the ball.



3. She's catching / hitting / blocking the ball

1. Look at the pictures. Read and listen.



1. rain



2. hail



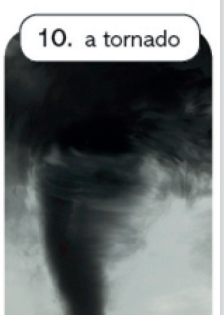
7. a thunderstorm



8. a hurricane / a typhoon



9. a blizzard



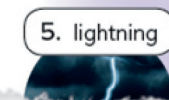
10. a tornado



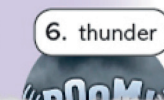
3. snow



4. wind



5. lightning



6. thunder



11. a drought



12. a flood



13. a mudslide

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

Every English class devotes time to the teaching of grammar. Traditionally, grammar is seen in grammar charts, which contain explanations and examples. If students encounter grammar solely from a printed presentation in their book they have no way to know how it would sound in actual communication. But all grammar has a natural intonation in spoken language.

The example to the right displays a presentation of questions in the simple past tense. Below the presentation, in Exercise 2, students have an opportunity to hear the examples on the audio. Why is this important? *Yes / no* questions are usually spoken with an upward intonation and information questions with a downward intonation. Hearing these ensures that students will understand them when spoken by an English speaker. For this reason, having students listen to the grammar in addition to reading it and practicing it in written exercises, has value in increasing their listening comprehension of natural spoken English.

Grammar The simple past tense: questions

1. Study the grammar.

yes / no questions		Short answers	
Did	the tornado do a lot of damage?	Yes, it did.	No, it didn't.
	they go outside during the blizzard?	Yes, they did.	No, they didn't.
	she buy supplies before the storm?	Yes, she did.	No, she didn't.
	you watch the weather report last night?	Yes, we did.	No, we didn't.

Information questions	
Where did they stay during the storm?	(They stayed in the school gym.)
When did they evacuate the city?	(This morning.)
Who did Paul call before the storm?	(He called his mother.)
BUT Who called his mom before the storm?	(Paul did.)
How many people died during the typhoon?	(Three people died.)

2. Pronunciation **Listen to the grammar examples. Repeat.**

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

2. Educate students about the purpose of listening comprehension exercises and tasks.

Language learners instinctively try to translate what they hear in English into their own language. But no one can listen fast enough to translate it simultaneously.

Resist the temptation to translate or ask students to translate what they hear. Instead explain to them that listening comprehension is the ability to understand even when what they hear contains some “unknown” words or when it is spoken at a natural pace.

In building students’ confidence, include exercises that expect students to understand main ideas. In Exercise 3 to the right, students listen to conversations about movies and demonstrate that they understood what kind of movie the speakers are discussing: the main idea. This exercise reinforces students’ understanding that understanding every single word is unnecessary.

More difficult and inferential tasks can follow, as you see in Exercise 4.

7

Vocabulary Movie genres

1. Look at the photos. Read and listen.



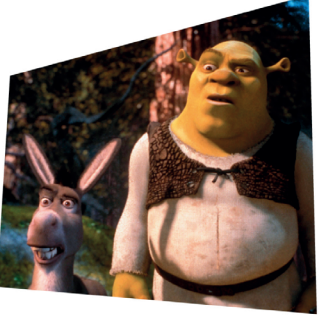



1. an action movie

2. a love story

3. a comedy

4. a sci-fi movie





5. an animated movie

6. a horror movie

7. a musical

2. Pronunciation Listen and repeat.

3. Listening comprehension Listen to the conversations. Then listen again and write the genre of each movie.

1. Movie 1 is an action movie.
2. Movie 2 is _____.
3. Movie 3 is _____.
4. Movie 4 is _____.
5. Movie 5 is _____.

4. Listen to the conversations again. Write a check mark for the movies the people will see.

Fast Car ☒ Little Fish ☐ Crazy Dancing ☐ Silly Billy ☐ Grizzly City ☐

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Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

3. Remember that exercises are designed for building the skill, not testing it.

Listening comprehension practice should be challenging, but not frustrating. Help students improve their listening skills by telling them to listen first just to get the main idea; e.g., *Who are the speakers and what are they talking about?* Then move toward understanding more detail; e.g. *What are the facts?* Finally, move towards more inferential understanding; e.g., *What can you guess from what you hear?* Provide positive reinforcement. Tell students you don't expect them to understand everything.

Your encouragement will reduce their anxiety and permit them to listen actively and with a positive attitude.



Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

Always give students the opportunity to listen to each passage more than once. If time permits, let students listen first without doing anything. Don't be concerned if students need multiple attempts in order to understand. With each listening, students' fear diminishes and their ability to understand grows.

In both sets of exercises below, students listen several times: first with no task; second with a receptive task; and finally with a very productive task. Students can also listen one last time to check their answers. In this way, you have achieved the goal of providing a lot of auditory input--so valuable in the input-poor EFL environment--but by providing a new task with each listening, you avoid boring students by having to listen several times.

1.43

3. Listening comprehension Listen to the conversations. Then listen to each conversation again and circle T (true) or F (false).

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Michael is feeding the dog. | T / <u>F</u> |
| 2. Scott's mom is walking the dog. | T / F |
| 3. Ella's mom is going to set the table. | T / F |
| 4. Brad's sister is going to wash the dishes. | T / F |
| 5. Jonathan is going to clean up Sarah's room with her. | T / F |
| 6. Dave and his dad are going to take out the garbage. | T / F |
| 7. Laura's grandma is doing the laundry for Laura's mom. | T / F |
| 8. The kids are making their beds. | T / F |

4. Correct the false statements in Exercise 3. Listen again if necessary.

1. Michael is feeding the cat.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Students listen with no task.

Students listen with a receptive task.

Students listen again with a very productive task.

2.44

4. Listening comprehension Listen to the conversations. Then listen again and complete each statement, according to the conversations.

1. The green pants are / aren't great. The brown ones are / aren't so nice.
2. The gray sweater is / isn't cool, but it is / isn't very expensive.
3. The jacket is new / old. It's nice / not nice.
4. His favorite color is / isn't orange. Her favorite color is / isn't orange.
5. The shoes are / aren't good-looking. They're black / blue.

5. Listen again and check your answers.

Students listen again just to check their answers to Exercise 4.

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

4. Vary the difficulty of exercises: the input-task ratio.

If a listening passage is relatively easy to understand, the exercise can be challenging or productive. If, on the other hand, a listening passage is relatively difficult, the exercise should require only a receptive response. The two exercises to the right demonstrate the principle of the input-task ratio:

In the first exercise, students listen to people discussing sporting activities. They then have to circle the equipment that the people will need. Since the speakers don't actually use the equipment words, students have to "listen between the lines." Because the task is challenging, the exercise is designed for a receptive response.

As a contrast, in the second exercise students hear speakers talk about various kinds of artwork they are looking at. The information is very easy to catch because it is explicitly stated. In this case, the exercise can be more challenging, requiring a productive response.

2.27 **3. Listening comprehension** Listen to the conversations. Choose the answer to each question, based on the Vocabulary.

1. What should they wear? 2. What should they wear? 3. What's she going to get? 4. What is she wearing?

a. b. a. b. a. b. a. b.

2.47 **3. Listening comprehension** Listen to the conversations. Then listen again and complete the information questions with *Whose*.

Conversation 1 a. Whose painting is it? (It's his friend Katie's.)
b. _____ it? (It's Jake's.)

Conversation 2 c. _____ they? (They're her sister's.)
d. _____ they? (They're Taylor's.)

Conversation 3 e. _____ it? (It's his brother's.)
f. _____ it? (It's Gordon's.)

4. Write *Whose* or *Who's*.

- These paintings are nice. Whose are they?
- I like that sculpture. _____ the artist?
- _____ making that collage? Is one of your classmates making it?
- I'm crazy about that photograph. _____ is it?
- _____ notebook is this? There are some great drawings in it.
- _____ your art teacher this year? Is it Ms. Samuels?
- There are some markers on the table. _____ are they?
- _____ going with you to the art show?

Teaching Teens in the EFL Setting

Listening Comprehension

Summary

In the reality of the EFL setting, where students have little opportunity to listen to English spoken outside of a classroom, building students' listening comprehension skill is challenging but important to address. Following the four principles in this article will build students' comprehension and enable them to listen to spoken language with confidence and success.

Text and illustration examples in this article are from Teen2Teen by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher.

Further Information

All text and illustration examples in these articles are from *Teen2Teen*, a 4-level course for teens, by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher.

To find out more about *Teen2Teen*, visit our [website](#) or contact your local Oxford University Press representative.

