

# Teaching Speaking



The topic  
of my ...

## “Classifications of oral production

The Council of Europe distinguishes [in the CEF] three types of activities (2001: 58-90):

- ‘**Oral production**’ (**speaking**), that is producing an oral text for one or more listeners, for example giving information to an audience in a **public address**. This may involve **reading a written text aloud**, **speaking from notes**, **acting out a rehearsed role**, **speaking spontaneously**, improvising [...] or singing a **song**.
- ‘**Spoken interaction**’, that is ‘the language user acts alternately as speaker and listener with one or more interlocutors so as to construct conjointly, through the negotiation of meaning [...] conversational discourse. Reception and production strategies are employed constantly during interaction. There are also [...] discourse strategies and co-operation strategies concerned with managing co-operation and interactions such as turntaking and turngiving, [...] proposing and evaluating solutions, recapping and summarising the point reached, and mediating in a conflict’ (Council of Europe 2001: 73). Examples of interactive activities include **conversation**, **discussion**, **debate**, **interview or negotiation**.
- ‘**Oral mediation**’, that is the language user does not express his or her own meanings but ‘acts as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly – normally [...] speakers of different languages’ (Council of Europe 2001: 87). Examples of mediating activities include **spoken interpretation** or **summarising** and **paraphrasing** texts. Contexts include **simultaneous** or **consecutive interpretation** at conferences or meetings, **informal interpreting** for **foreign visitors**, for **friends**, **family clients** etc.” (Müller-Hartmann / Schocker-von Ditfurth 2007: 62 f.)

## Types of speaking activities

- generally 2 types are distinguished

### 1. fluency-based activities

= free discussions, role-plays, information-gap activities (involve transfer of given information from one person to another), opinion-gap activities (articulating a personal preference, feeling, attitude in response to a given situation)

### 2. accuracy-based activities

controlled, focus on the development of one aspect of language, high degree of control over student input (e.g. focus on grammatical structure, communicative function ...)

(Müller-Hartmann / Schocker-von Ditfurth 2007: 65)

Willis, Jane (1992). *Teaching English through English*. Harlow: Longman (13<sup>th</sup> impression), page 131 f.

### 1. Just a minute

Teacher writes 4-8 topics that the class has already talked about, e.g. 'tea' or 'football' or 'holidays' or 'my village', on small pieces of paper which are then folded up. One person or team is chosen to pick one topic, and must talk about it for a set time e.g., 15 or 30 seconds, without hesitating or repeating anything. Points can be awarded for each 5 seconds of speech. Student or teams are out if they hesitate for over 3 seconds, or repeat the same thing. Mistakes in English need not matter, since the object of the game is to encourage fluency.



### 2. Don't answer 'YES' or 'NO'

One team asks members of the other team questions to try to make them answer YES or NO. The answering team can use other responses, e.g. 'Of course not' or 'I think so', or just 'I did' or 'It is', etc. The teacher times how long it is before a YES or NO is said. The team with the longest time wins.

### 3. Twenty Questions

One person or team thinks of an object or animal etc. The others can ask up to 20 questions with YES or NO answers, in order to guess what the object is. If they guess in less than 20 questions, they have won. Questions like 'Is it alive?', 'Is it made of wood?', 'Does it have 4 legs?', 'Is it bigger than a car?' etc. are possible.



### 4. My grandmother went to market and she brought ...

This game practises weights, measures, the use of 'a' and 'some' etc. Student 1 begins 'My grandmother went to market and bought a kilo of tomatoes.' The next student repeats that, and adds something new, i.e. 'My grandmother went to market and bought a kilo of tomatoes and a blue dress.' Student 3 repeats it and adds one item. If any student forgets something or gets it in the wrong order, he is out. This can be played individually or in teams; the members of the team can help each other out.

### 5. Conversation Gambits



The teacher sets a situation, e.g. 'in a restaurant', or 'meeting a friend in the street' or 'visiting a friend in hospital' or gives the first line of a conversation like 'I went to a party last night.' The aim of each team is to keep the conversation going by thinking of appropriate questions to ask every time there is a silence. If there is silence of more than a set time, e.g. 5 or 10 seconds, the team is out. Again, the teacher needs to time each team's performance.

### 6. Glug



Similar to 20 Questions, except that 'glug' stands for an action, e.g. dance. Questions like 'Do you like glugging?', 'Have you glugged today?', 'Do you glug in the kitchen?' etc. can be asked.