

## Tips for Using Dialogues/Role-plays

### Guidelines

#### 1. Use dialogues in conjunction with lessons from the student's ESL book.

- Connect the dialogue to a lesson the student has already learned. Use it to reinforce vocabulary and use grammar patterns at the student's current ESL level.
- Context is important. For example, If you just had a lesson on the grocery store, use a dialogue on asking about an item's price.

#### 2. The goal is for the student to be able to use the language from the dialogue in real life.

(Simply memorizing dialogues doesn't teach better conversational skills.)

- Think *easy* when it comes to speaking activities. If a dialogue is used out of context or is above a student's ESL level, the student won't be able to transfer the dialogue patterns to real life. If you pick a dialogue that is too difficult, it becomes a reading activity instead of a speaking one.

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### Outline for a Dialogue Lesson (Moving from dialogue, into role-play, into real life)

Step One: **Set the scene.** Refer to a lesson you had on the same subject as the dialogue. Do a quick review using pictures and vocabulary. Ask the student what he or she might say. Model what you might say in that situation. The student should just be talking and listening and not writing things down. Talk about any pictures or new vocabulary in the dialogue.

Step Two: **Practice.** Take turns reading each part several times. Have the student write the dialogue in his or her notebook.

Step Three: **Variations.** Change one part of the dialogue, plugging in other vocabulary that has been learned. Make sure the student has a vocabulary resource to refer to at this point.  
Ex. Asking how much something costs-change the item and price.

Step Four: **Performance.** Try the dialogue without looking. If possible, do variation as well.

Step Five: **Assign.** Ask the student do try to have this conversation in real life. Check next time to see how it went and practice more, if needed. For example, "Next time you go to the grocery store, ask how much something costs." Review with "role play" instead of the exact dialogue.

Step Six: **\*Role play.** Set the scene again, but don't rely on the dialogue. Allow for variations the student might use to communicate in this situation. Take notes and give feedback. This will help the student transfer his or her current ESL ability into this situation in real life. It will also show you the student's level of comfort with this topic.

*\* A dialogue uses a script and is more controlled than a role-play. A role-play gives a situation in which to have a conversation and is less controlled.*

Resources:

ESL Books: Extend an activity in the ESL book by writing a dialogue together from language used in the lesson. For example, you could do this from the "chat" role-plays in *English No Problem*.

Survival English: English Through Conversations, Lee Mosteller/Bobbi Paul  
(Beginning to intermediate levels)

Oxford Picture Dictionary: Use the pictures and conversation starters at the bottom of the page.

Online: <http://www.eslfast.com/easydialogs> (High Beginner to Intermediate Level)

<http://www.focusenglish.com/dialogues/conversation.html> (Intermediate to Advanced)

<http://www.eslideas.com> (Basic-click "Beginners' Scripts/Advanced-click "Abstract")