

Summer at St. George's English Language Learning Teaching Philosophy:

Careful evaluation of our Summer English language learning students over the years has consistently revealed strengths in written English and reading skills which contrast starkly with comprehension/ability to respond on an oral level. To counteract the consistent lack of oral fluency, oral comprehension/listening skills, and oral response times in our students we have developed a curriculum designed to increase each student's opportunities and motivation for oral contribution in the classroom and strengthen neural pathways, leading to improved oral fluency and a stronger grasp of the English language in general. All our ELL curriculum and resources are custom-made and both extremely effective AND hugely popular among our registrants. Students whose strengths are in oral output who feel they need reinforcement in writing and reading should consider registering in our "Intensive English" program which includes daily written assignments and a focus on all four language areas (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking).

The following is an excerpt from our lesson plans to give parents/guardians an idea of the class content and teaching methods used in our Essential English Skills classes for boarders:

SAMPLE Lesson Focus: Past Tense Irregular Verbs "Series I"

(begin, drink, sing, swim, break, choose, forget, get, speak, wake, wear, fly, grow, know)

Past Tense irregular verbs summary for review (5 minutes)

Past tense is the most common tense in the English language and is used to describe something that has already happened, whether five minutes ago or five thousand years ago. Irregular verbs conjugate differently and have specific rules.

To conjugate "Series I" verbs in the past tense you'll need to know that:

- Emphasized vowels in "begin, drink, sing and swim" change to an "a"
- Emphasized vowel(s) in "choose, forget, get, wake, wear, break & speak" are replaced with "o" & "wear, break and speak" also add a final "e"
- Vowels in "fly, grow and know" change to "e" and "fly" adds a "w"

Three examples are:

- She drank a lot of water./ They got a new car./ The bird flew away.

Verb Bingo (Game for pronunciation practice)

Each student is given a blank Bingo sheet to fill with the past tense forms of the focus verbs. Once the students have filled in their Bingo sheets, the teacher calls out the regular forms of the verbs one at a time and the students must find the past tense form on their Bingo sheets and yell out the corresponding conjugated form, allowing the teacher to check their conjugation and pronunciation, after which the student can mark off the square. The first student to get "Bingo" (all squares marked off) is awarded participation tokens* and becomes the next caller.

Tic Tac Toe (Activity for reinforcement of the Grammar lesson in groups)

The class is divided into two groups and a Tic Tac Toe grid is drawn on the board. Two custom-made card decks are laid out, one with a pronoun on each card, and one with a verb on each card (verbs that are part of the list of verbs irregular in the past tense which are being reviewed in this lesson). Team 1 chooses a square; Team 2 flips over a card from each deck and calls out the pronoun and verb as shown.

Team 1 is given 30 seconds to correctly create a sentence using the past tense of the pronoun/verb combination.

If the sentence is correct Team 1 puts their symbol in the square or if it's incorrect Team 2 is given the opportunity to steal the point. The first team to get three symbols in a row wins the round. The team that wins the most rounds receives participation tokens.

Museum Walk (Game for practice/reinforcement on an individual level)

Everyone stands up and begin walking around the room while the teacher takes on the role of the museum guard with his/her back turned to the students and the two custom-made pronouns and verbs card decks laid out face down behind him/her. Students are instructed to freeze into an interesting pose whenever the museum guard yells "freeze". After yelling "freeze" if a student is seen moving, even a little bit, by the museum guard, then the museum guard is to read the student the contents of a pronoun and a verb card and give him/her 20 seconds to come up with a conjugated past tense sentence using the pronoun/verb cards and conjugating the verb correctly. If the student can't come up with one in the 20 seconds, he/she must come to the front and become the next museum guard.

Cocktail Party (Activity for practice through repetition on an individual level)

Each student is given two cards and told that both are a secret and not to be shown to their classmates. One card will have an irregular past tense verb (in the infinitive form) on it and the other one will have a past tense sentence on it (that uses one of the target irregular verbs of this lesson). Once each student has their cards, they circulate as if at a party/socializing with friends, asking each other "What did you do last month?" In response, each student answers with the sentence that is on their sentence card without showing the asker the card. The object of the game is for each student to match his/her verb card to the sentence with the matching irregular past tense form of the verb while repeatedly practicing the target irregular past tense conjugations. To discourage students from showing others their cards instead of sharing orally the students are warned that they will lose participation tokens if the responses are not given orally. The first people to find the sentences that match their verb card verbs are awarded participation tokens and when all students find their matches the cards can be redistributed and the game can start again.

* Participation tokens are used to motivate student participation. They are stored in individual student piggy banks and then totaled at the end of the week for weekly prizes for the students with the most number of tokens. Participation tokens can also be deducted if students use a language other than English in class.