

Error correction.

When to correct, when to wait, and how to flag errors without breaking flow.

WHEN TO CORRECT

CORRECT WAIT FLAG IT

- **Controlled practice (drilling, gap-fills).** CORRECT immediately. Accuracy is the goal.
- **Vocabulary or grammar focus stage.** CORRECT in the moment. They expect it.
- **Free speaking, story telling, debate.** WAIT — collect errors, address after.
- **A student is mid-flow, finding their words.** WAIT — never interrupt the build.
- **Pronunciation that affects meaning.** CORRECT — but gently.
- **Pronunciation that's just accent.** LEAVE IT. Not your job.
- **Repeated errors across the class.** FLAG IT for next lesson.
- **A student looks confident & wrong.** CORRECT — confidence + error = future habit.

HOW TO CORRECT GENTLY

- **Reformulation.** Repeat the sentence back correctly — no comment.
- **Pause + look.** Stop, look at them. They'll self-correct 70% of the time.
- **Finger spelling.** Hold up fingers for each word. Tap the wrong one.
- **'Hmm?'** One syllable, neutral tone. Lets them try again.
- **Echo + rising tone.** Repeat the error as a question. They hear it themselves.
- **Write it on the board.** Silently. Comes back after the activity.

DELAYED CORRECTION FRAMEWORK

- STEP 1 · COLLECT**
During free speaking, jot down 5-8 errors on a sticky note. Code them: **G** grammar, **V** vocab, **P** pronunciation, **R** register.
- STEP 2 · BOARD WORK**
Write the errors on the board **without names**. Mix in 1-2 correct sentences as distractors.
- STEP 3 · PAIR ANALYSIS**
Ask pairs to find the errors and correct them. Walk around. Listen for who explains it best.
- STEP 4 · CLASS REVEAL**
Elicit corrections. Don't name who said what. Praise the analysis, not the right answer.

PHRASES THAT KEEP IT KIND

- "Try that again with a small change..." *soft invitation to self-correct*
- "I heard a small error — anyone notice it?" *shifts focus to class*
- "Close — but think about the tense." *narrows the target*
- "That works, and another way is..." *preserves dignity*
- "Good attempt — let's polish it together." *frames error as growth*
- "You almost had it. The word after 'I' was..." *specific cue*

The 3-second rule: Pause before correcting. Most adults will catch their own error if you give them three seconds of silence.