

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.*

50 classroom *phrases* that work.

Instructions, transitions, energy. Keep these in your back pocket.

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

"In pairs — discuss for two minutes."	clear, short, timed
"You're A, you're B. A goes first."	removes hesitation
"Read it silently first. Then we'll talk."	protects thinking time
"Stand up, find a new partner."	energy reset
"I'll give you 90 seconds. Ready?"	creates urgency
"Don't write yet — just listen."	stops premature copying
"Use full sentences, please."	raises register
"Find three things you have in common."	framed task

CHECKING UNDERSTANDING

"Who can repeat what we're doing?"	elicits not asks
"Show me, don't tell me."	physical comprehension check
"What's the first step?"	tests sequence
"In your own words..."	real comprehension
"Is this true or false?"	fast binary check
"How long do you have?"	tests the timing
"Hands up if you're ready."	visual check

PROMPTING SPEECH

"Tell me more about that."	extends a short answer
"Can you give an example?"	moves from abstract to real
"What do you mean by...?"	presses for clarity
"And why is that?"	deepens reasoning
"Anyone disagree?"	creates debate energy
"In one sentence — what's the main idea?"	synthesises
"Say it again, but slower."	for pronunciation focus

CHANGING ENERGY

"Quick brain break — 30 seconds."	lowers tension
"Everyone stand. Stretch."	physical reset
"Switch partners — new energy."	social refresh
"Last one before the break."	creates push
"Big finish — give me your best answer."	raises stakes for fun
"Quietly now. Just think."	calms down a hot room

TRANSITIONS

"Right — let's move on to..."	clear gear shift
"Pause there. Big question coming."	raises attention
"Before we continue, one quick thing."	for a vocab note
"That's good — and it connects to..."	links lesson stages
"Let's park that for a second."	defers without dismissing
"Now for the harder one."	signals challenge

RESPONDING TO ANSWERS

"Interesting — say more."	open-ended encouragement
"Yes, and...?"	asks for elaboration
"Nearly. Anyone else?"	redirects without crushing
"That's the right idea — try the word again."	credits thinking, refocuses form
"Two of you said that. Anyone disagree?"	creates conversation
"Bold answer. Defend it."	praises risk-taking
"I hadn't thought of that."	real, equal-status response

CLOSING THE LESSON

"One word — what stuck today?"	fast recall
"Who learned something they'll use this week?"	tests transfer
"Thank you for the conversation."	respects them as adults

The 80/20 rule: Twenty phrases will cover eighty percent of your classroom needs. Pick five from this sheet, try them in your next lesson, and notice which ones land.

Elicit, *don't* tell.

Pulling language out of students instead of giving it to them.

WHY ELICIT?

Every word you give them is a word they don't practise. Every word you pull out of them is a word they own. Eliciting is slow at first but pays back tenfold in retention.

ELICIT VOCABULARY

- **Visual.** Show a picture — let them name it. (Pictures > definitions every time.)
- **Definition.** "It's a person who works in a hospital, treats patients..."
- **Synonyms.** "What's another word for 'happy' — stronger?"
- **Antonyms.** "What's the opposite of 'expensive'?"
- **Gap fill.** "I'm really... I haven't eaten all day."
- **Mime / gesture.** Act it out. Cheap, fast, memorable.
- **First letter.** Write the first letter. Wait.
- **Number of syllables.** "It's three syllables. Starts with 'pho-'."

ELICIT GRAMMAR

- **Concept questions.** Test if they UNDERSTAND, not if they can RECITE. "Is this past or future?"
- **Timeline drawing.** Draw a line. Mark NOW. Ask: "Where does this verb belong?"
- **Negative model.** Say a wrong sentence. "Is this right?" Let them fix it.
- **Two versions.** Write two sentences. "Which one is more polite? Why?"
- **Function before form.** "How do you ask politely?" Then teach the structure.

ELICIT IDEAS & OPINIONS

"What do you think happens next?"	<i>before showing the answer</i>
"Why do you think that is?"	<i>deepens any statement</i>
"Has anyone experienced something like this?"	<i>connects to real life</i>
"What would you do in this situation?"	<i>creates investment</i>
"Anyone disagree with what was just said?"	<i>creates conversation</i>
"What's the strongest argument FOR?"	<i>forces both sides</i>
"If you had to choose one — which?"	<i>forces commitment</i>
"How would you say this in your country?"	<i>uses their context</i>

THINGS TO STOP DOING

- **Answering your own question.** You ask, wait two seconds, then answer. Wait FIVE. They'll fill the gap.
- **Speaking when they should.** Translating, defining, summarising what they just said. Let them struggle a beat.
- **Asking yes/no questions.** "Do you like coffee?" → "Yes." Dead end. Ask "What kind?" instead.
- **Using "why" too early.** It can feel like an attack. Try "What made you think that?"
- **Rephrasing your question.** If they didn't get it, the SECOND wording often confuses more. Just wait.

WAIT TIME — THE SECRET

RESEARCH SAYS

Most teachers wait **0.9 seconds** after asking a question. Wait **5 seconds** instead. Answer quality goes up by 300%. Response rate triples. Quieter students participate.

One question per silence. *Don't fill silence with three rephrasings. Ask once. Wait. Let it be uncomfortable. They'll talk.*

The 4-stage *lesson framework*.

How to structure any 45-60 minute lesson — even if you have nothing prepared.

THE FOUR STAGES

1 · WARM (5-10 min)

Get them talking. Activate prior knowledge. Set the topic. They speak more than you. Always.

2 · INPUT (15-20 min)

New vocabulary, grammar, or text. Short. Focused. They notice the language before you explain it.

3 · PRACTICE (15 min)

Controlled then freer. Drills → gap-fill → guided dialogue. They use the new language with support.

4 · PRODUCTION (10-15 min)

Open speaking task. They use today's language to express their own ideas. No safety net.

TIMING TRAPS

- **Talking too much in WARM.** 10 minutes max. If you're still warming after 12, you're teaching the warmer.
- **Over-explaining in INPUT.** If a slide takes more than 3 minutes, you're lecturing, not teaching.
- **Skipping PRACTICE.** Drills feel boring but they build automaticity. Don't skip.
- **No real PRODUCTION.** Without it, the lesson is academic. Always end with "use it."

SAMPLE 60-MINUTE LESSON

00:00 - 00:08	WARM — discussion question on board, pairs talk, brief share
00:08 - 00:12	Set context — quick image, headline, or short video
00:12 - 00:25	INPUT — vocabulary teach + check; grammar elicit
00:25 - 00:32	PRACTICE — controlled gap-fill, pair check
00:32 - 00:42	PRACTICE — freer dialogue or scenario role-play
00:42 - 00:55	PRODUCTION — speaking task using today's language
00:55 - 00:60	RECALL & CLOSE — what stuck? One takeaway each.

EMERGENCY LESSON — 10 MINUTES PREP

- 1 **Pick a topic they care about.** Work, money, relationships, technology, travel. Adult topics.
- 2 **Write 3 warmer questions.** Personal, open-ended, no yes/no.
- 3 **Pick 8 key words.** Half they probably know, half they probably don't.
- 4 **Write 5 gap-fill sentences** using those 8 words.
- 5 **Write one role-play scenario** where they'd use the language.
- 6 **Write one big closing question.** Personal, open-ended, makes them think.

The rule of three: Every stage needs three things — a clear goal, an active task, and a check that learning happened. If you can't name all three, redesign the stage.

THE STUDENT TALK RATIO

Aim for **70% student talking time**, 30% teacher. Record yourself once a month. Most teachers think they talk 40%. They actually talk 60-70%. Cut your sentences in half.