

Sample Lesson Script – Contrastive Stress

Introduction: to present the lesson content in a natural conversation before explicit instruction.

KD: So Jeremy, did you hear about our friend Heather?

KL: Yes! She's in England, right?

KD: No, she's in GERmany! She's going with her brother.

KL: I thought she was going with her HUSband.

KD: Oh...that's right. Well, anyway, I think she's going to stay there for 2 weeks.

KL: I heard she was going to be there for FOUR weeks.

KD: Oh yeah...

KL: I heard she will be staying in a very nice hotel.

KD: No, I think she's staying there with FAMily!

KL: So I guess we heard two different stories then.

KD: I think we heard the WRONG story.

KL: That reminds me of a very important part of English pronunciation: contrastive stress!

KD: Yes, it's VErY important! Let's talk about it!

Instruction: Explicitly teaching pronunciation concepts with examples

KL: First of all, let's talk about stress. If you stress a word, it is longer, louder, clearer, and higher. It's very obvious.

KD: For example: in the sentence, John is a teacher in Chinatown. The words John, teacher, and Chinatown are louder and clearer than the words is, a, and in.

KL: This is because, in English, the more important words are normally stressed. These are the words that send the message of the sentence.

KD: Sometimes in English, we use extra stress. This means the words are even louder and clearer than usual. This is called contrastive stress.

KL: We use contrastive stress when we want to show that information is wrong and we want to tell the right information.

KD: For example: If someone says...

KL: Boston is a very beautiful country.

KD: This is not correct. If I want to say the correct information, I would say, “No, Boston is a beautiful Clty.”

KL: As you see, “city” got extra stress because it is the correct information.

KD: The stress helps show that COUNtry is wrong and Clty is right.

Examples:

KD: Sushi is Chinese food.

KL: No, Sushi is JApAnese food.

KD: It’s too cold in the summer.

KL: No, it’s too HOT in the summer.

Minimal Pairs: Two words or phrases that differ only in the target pronunciation element (a sound, a syllable, an intonation pattern, etc) In this case, minimal pairs can help students more clearly distinguish between a stressed and unstressed word.

KD: Let’s practice putting extra stress on one word at a time. When you stress a word, you say it louder and longer.

KL: You should also change the pitch as you say the word. Your voice should go high and then low.

KL: For example: cookies (said normally) COOKies (said with stress)

KD: Library → LIbrary

KL: Cat → CAT

KD: Healthy → HEALthy

Quiz: This is the time for students to practice what has been presented and try to produce the target pronunciation element.

KL: Now we will give you some conversations to practice contrastive stress.

KD: We will say a conversation with no stress. You need to listen to the conversation and decide which word should be stressed.

A: Carrots are my favorite fruit.

B: No, carrots are your favorite vegetable.

Which word is stressed? (Wait 3 seconds)

A: Carrots are my favorite fruit.

B: No, carrots are your favorite VEGEtable

A: The address is 24 E. Main Street.

B: No, the address is 25 E Main Street.

Which word is stressed? (Wait 3 seconds)

A: The address is 24 E Main Street.

B: No, the address is 25 E Main Street.

KD: Remember, when correcting numbers, you only need to stress the number that is wrong. For example, you only need to stress the five because the twenty is correct.

So I said, “twenty-FIVE.” I only stressed the FIVE because the twenty correct.

A: That’s a very ugly dog.

B: What? I think that’s a very cute dog.

Which word is stressed? (Wait 3 seconds)

A: That’s a very ugly dog.

B: What? I think that’s a very CUTE dog!

KD: It’s quiz time! I will give you a word, and you will try to say it with extra stress.

KD: The first one is...old. How would you say it? (wait 3 seconds)

KD: OLD (with extra stress)

KL: Museum. How would you say it? (Wait 3 seconds)

KL: muSEum (with extra stress)

KD: Decide. How would you said it? (Wait 3 seconds)

KD: deCIDE (with extra stress)

KL: Now we are going to give you a wrong sentence. You need to say a sentence to correct it and use extra stress.

KL: The first one is...The sky is green. (Wait 3 seconds)

KD: No, the sky is BLUE.

KL: The second one is...in China most people speak Spanish. (Wait 3 seconds)

KD: No, in China most people speak ChiNESE.

KL: The third one is...I buy books at the library. (Wait 3 seconds)

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KD: No, you BORRRow books from the library.

KL: The next one is...I eat breakfast at 7 pm. (Wait 3 seconds)

KD: No, you eat DInner at 7 pm or you eat breakfast at 7 Am.

KL: The last one is...I go to the bank to buy medicine. (Wait 3 seconds)

KD: No, you go to the PHARmacy to buy medicine.

Conclusion: The lesson ends with more examples of the target pronunciation element in conversation to provide students with more listening practice.

KL: So you're going to New York for the holidays, right?

KD: No, I'm going to PennsylvAnia!

KL: Oh, okay, and your parents got a new cat, right?

KD: No, they got a new DOG!

KL: Oh, okay, and you're only staying for a few days, right?

KD: No, I'm staying for a WEEK! Ugh, you really need to listen better!

KL: Okay, I know I'm a bad friend...

KD: Aw, no you're a GOOD friend, with a BAD memory!

KL: (shrugs) I don't know... See you next time!

KD: bye!