NATURAL RHYTHM

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Introducing Intonation, Idioms and Short structured sentences as techniques for better clarity and understanding. Comprehension practice to test your skills.

(If you prepare answers to these questions before the lesson then you will be able to practice new vocabulary and an interesting discussion will follow..)*

1. Do you have a natural sense of rhythm?
2. Are you interested in nature?
3. Do you think nature is fragile or will nature always take over?
4. Do you find it difficult to understand native speakers in English?
5. Do you have a technique for understanding better?



Activity Two - Intonation and Stress in English.

As you learn English you will need to learn more and more about intonation, stress and phonology* in general.This is important in English because English is a **stress-timed language**. In stress-timed languages, the rhythm is based on the stressed words . In **syllable-timed language** (such as French) there is no stress differences. The language sounds more monotonous. Sentence stress is an important factor in fluency, as English spoken with only strong forms has the wrong rhythm, sounds unnatural and does not help the listener to interpret meaning. **In English we use strong and weak forms**. We say some words louder and more slowly and some words are 'swallowed' and spoken quickly. (Function words like prepositions, auxiliary verbs and conjunctions.) Research shows that stress rhythm and intonation are the highest priorities which contribute to a person being understood when speaking English. (Gilbert). The first step is to listen to English speech and hear the words which are emphasised.*(Phonology* is the study of the sounds used in language).*

Activity Three - Take turns **reading the short paragraph** to practice your intonation. *Decide where to place the stress (strong sounds - louder and slower) or which words are weak (spoken more quietly and quickly with some sounds omitted.) Where will the tone of your voice rise (rising pitch) and fall (falling pitch)?*

Wherever we go we can hear the rhythm of nature. Its softly beating heart is never far away. Green shoots pushing up from underground, unruly weeds popping up their heads between the cracks in the pavement. Bacteria multiply wherever we leave a crumb and in a neglected garden the plants will take over. The rhythm of nature plays its own tune. Lost in the forest, high on the mountain, and in the depths of the ocean. Everywhere you go you can hear the beat. If you are listening.

Activity Four - Listen to the Rhythm. ***Louie Schwartzberg:*** Nature. Beauty. Gratitude.
http://www.ted.com/talks/louie_schwartzberg_nature_beauty_gratitude

Watch the first seven minutes of the video and listen to the rhythm. Note the strong and weak sounds. Compare notes at the end of the video. Do you note any words which are shortened in speech? Are there some words which you don't hear? Which kind of words are always weak?

For more information - at home - http://esl.about.com/od/speakingadvanced/a/timestress.htm

Activity Four - **Short and Sweet.**

So as we see above, using intonation can help you to speak clearly. Recognising intonation can help you to understand.

Another thing which can make English easier to you is to use **short sentences**. Short sentences make your message much easier to understand. The more difficult the topic you are talking about, the more structured you need to be.

It's good to keep things simple. There is a natural pause after a sentence which gives your listener time to process your message. If you use falling pitch then the listener also has some warning that your sentence is about to finish.

Furthermore speaking in short sentences avoids you getting stuck or confused.

To make your sentences shorter avoid using words like ~~AND~~ or ~~BUT, AND THEN~~. Instead use **HOWEVER**, **FURTHERMORE**, **MEANWHILE**. These are used at the beginning of a new sentence instead of in the middle of two sentences.

Try to structure what you are saying, using linking words. Here are some examples:

Sequence	**For and against**	**Results**	**Contrasting facts**
First of all.	On one hand	We have found that	The fact is that..
After that..	On the other hand	It also seems that	However..
Finally.	All in all	In conclusion	Therefore..
			This means that..

Use this type of ***structure*** to help you to get into the habit of s



a series of short, clear sentences.

Activity Five - Discussion

Practice using short sentences. With your partner discuss the following questions. Each time your sentence is more than nine words long you must call your teacher. Together you will find a solution to be more concise.

Discussion questions:

1. Is nature stronger than man?
2. Do you think that most people are aware of nature around them or do they take it for granted?
3. What are the greatest threats to nature and the environment in today's world?
4. Do you believe that future generations will be more respectful of nature?
5. How can people be in tune with nature and more aware of it?

Activity Six - They Paved Paradise - Listen to the famous Joni Mitchell song "Big Yellow Taxi' Try to find answers to the following questions:

1. What changes were made in her neighbourhood?
2. What was taken away and what was built?
3. What does she conclude about the way people think?



Activity Seven - Natural Role Plays.

Act out the following situations using SHORT SENTENCES and INTONATION and stress to make your message really clear.

1. You see someone walking along lighting a cigarette and then throwing the empty packet on the floor. You decide to confront the person about their disrespect for the environment and for other people.

2. Your daughter has left her bedroom light on for the whole christmas holidays. When you get back from your holiday you decide to talk to her about waste.

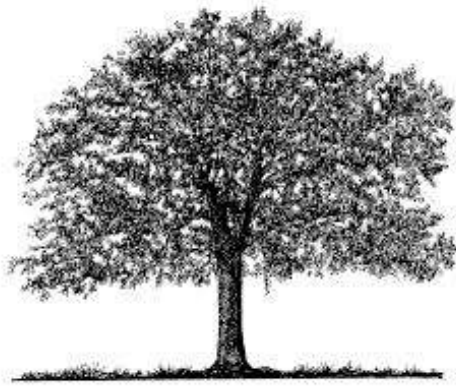
3. You are representing a group of local residents who are trying to persuade the local council not to allow a new development to be built in an area of outstanding natural beauty and diversity.

4. You are representing Greenpeace in talks with the French environment ministry about carbon emissions. You want more to be done in France to reduce pollution.

Activity Eight - Look and Listening…

Watch the first three minutes of this video about an American Nature photographer. Listen to the rhythm of his speech. His sentences are rather long which makes for challenging listening. You need to listen for the STRONG words to help you to understand what he is saying. (Mark Godfrey selects Jerry Monkman - the nature Conservancy - nature.org.)

http://www.nature.org/photos-and-video/markgodfreyselects/mark-godfrey-selects-jerry-monkman.xml



Comprehension questions.

1. What does Jerry Monkman do?
2. When did he first have a camera?
3. When did he think of photography as a career?
4. Where did he work when he had the idea?
5. Why did he want to be a nature photographer? (Combined passions.)
6. What became apparent to him pretty quickly?
7. How does he create a sense of place?
8. How old is his daughter?
9. Which park does he love particularly?
10. What is the advantage of photographing the same place many times?

