

Teaching Pack

Character-based speaking and listening

Cambridge IGCSE™ / IGCSE (9-1)

First Language English



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Introduction: Character-based speaking and listening

This *Teaching Pack* focuses on supporting learners to develop their ability to speak in character. This is one approach to preparing students for the individual talk/conversation element of the assessment.

The lessons presented here are designed for learners that already know that language choices are an important part of building a character.

It is expected that learners should already know how to analyse language to draw conclusions about characters and their thoughts and emotions.

It would be useful, but not essential, if learners have had the opportunity to take part in role play before.

The scenario used in Lesson 1 is based on the fight between Romeo and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet Act 3: Scene 1*. If your learners are studying this play as part of Cambridge IGCSE Literature in English 0475, then these lessons will help them to empathise and understand key characters. You could draw parallels between the roles in the videos and characters in the play if you wish to make these more explicit.

If your learners are not studying the play, the situation and the characters stand alone as a role play situation that allows us to analyse different characters and their responses.

Lesson 2 focuses on how language and physical techniques can build a character. The lesson is designed for learners that have completed Lesson 1 and looked at how language can be used to build character. It is expected that learners should already know that vocal and physical techniques can be used to convey character.

In Lesson 3, there is a focus on public words versus private thoughts. It is expected that learners should already know that there can be a difference between public words and private thoughts. It would be useful if learners have studied a literary text which demonstrates the clear difference between private words and public thoughts, considering the difference between what a character may think and what they actually say publically. You could also encourage learners to think about this idea in other real-life situations.

In this *Teaching Pack* we have suggested resources and links you may like to use as well as some worksheets and teacher notes to print off and use in the classroom with your learners.

Lesson plan 1: Language choices in building a character





Resources



- **Video 1:** Character-based speaking and listening 1a – *Comparing language, character and emotions*
- **Video 2:** Character-based speaking and listening 1b – *Contrasting language*
- **Worksheet 1:** Ask and switch
- **Worksheet 2:** Character transcripts
- **Worksheet 3:** Notes on the videos
- **Worksheet 4:** How would they say it?

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson learners will be able to:

- analyse how language choices help to build character and convey emotion
- compare and contrast how different language choices lead to different responses to the character from the audience/reader
- make sensitive language choices to build their own believable character

Timings	Activity
 10 min	<p>Starter / Introduction</p> <p>Task: Cut out the questions on Worksheet 1 and give each learner one question (it is fine if there are duplicates).</p> <p>Learners need to stand up and walk around, finding someone to ask their question to. When both partners have asked and answered their questions, they swap pieces of paper and find a new partner to pair with and ask/answer the questions.</p> <p>If they meet someone with the same question, they should move on until they meet someone with a new question.</p>
 10 min	<p>Main lesson</p> <p>Task: Hand out Worksheet 2 and Worksheet 3 to learners, giving them one copy each. Learners need to read through the scenario and then watch Video 1. Pause the video at the prompts to allow learners to answer the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the characters? • How does the language tell us who they are? • What are their attitudes to the events? • How does their language reflect their emotions? <p>Learners may wish to discuss these answers in pairs and/or as a class before you move on.</p> <p>Watch Video 2. Pause the video when prompted to allow learners to complete the answers on the same worksheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the characters? • How is the language different? • What does the language tell us about the different attitudes?

Timings	Activity
	<p>Learners may wish to discuss these answers in pairs and/or as a class before you move on.</p> <p>The last questions relate to the final speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are they? • What is their attitude? • What language choices would you make to show a different response from this character? <p>In groups of 2–4, learners choose characters from the scenario and imagine a conversation that took place just before or after the fight. (If you are studying <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, you may wish to use named characters from the play. If you are studying a different literary text you could choose characters and a scenario from that text or just use the generic fight from the start of the main lesson.)</p> <p>Learners role play this conversation, thinking about language choices and giving each other feedback to refine those choices.</p> <p>Allow groups to perform their role play to each other and, if there is time, show a selection in front of the class, highlighting effective language choices.</p>
	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Task: Distribute Worksheet 4 to learners. Learners create the dialogue from the different characters' perspectives to respond to the situation of a learner who has failed an important exam. Once learners have completed an activity like this they can use it to respond to other characters in literary texts.</p> <p>Homework</p> <p>Choose one of the characters from the fight scenario and write a diary event for the day of the fight, concentrating on language choice.</p>

Lesson 1 Teacher's notes



Key words / concepts you could highlight during Lesson 1, or have pre-taught before the lesson:

- **pace** – how fast you speak
- **pitch** – how high or low your voice is
- **pause** – taking a short break for emphasis
- **volume** – how loudly you speak
- **accent** – the way that that you pronounce your words

Ask and Switch

Ask and Switch is an activity that allows learners to hear perspectives from a variety of different partners, gives them the opportunity to ask the questions, and is active and engaging. If you would prefer not to have your students out of their seats, an alternative to Ask and Switch would be to write some of the questions on the board and allow learners to discuss the answers in pairs or threes.

The videos

The two videos are 1.42 and 1.46 in length. They have visual prompts to pause the video to allow learners to fill in the worksheet. In each video a series of different characters appears and gives their reaction to a fight that has happened between two rival gangs. These role plays were based on *Romeo and Juliet, Act 3: Scene 1* in which Romeo and Tybalt fight.

Below are the transcripts of the characters' short monologues. Some characters speak twice, conveying different emotions each time.

- Clip 1: **Gang leader** – (*victorious*) 'Yeah. We rule this town. Ain't nobody stronger than we are.'
- Clip 2: **Gang member** – (*frightened*) 'Wow. That was, err. Yeah. I mean. That was something.'
- Clip 3: **Police Chief** – (*in control*) 'We're currently dealing with a very serious civil disturbance in the city centre, which seems to be another episode in our city's continuing struggle with gang violence. Riot police have been deployed, and we have the situation under control. We ask all citizens to stay indoors. That's all for now. Thank you.'
- (*out of control*) 'Yes, we're currently bringing a very difficult situation under control. [off camera] What was that? OK. [back to camera] We'd ask all citizens to stay indoors. Thank you.'
- Clip 4: **Shop owner** – (*furious*) 'It's an absolute disgrace. The mayor, the chief of police, the parents. They all need to get this situation under control. How can I be expected to turn a profit with things like this going on?'
(*bereft*) 'I, I, I. Look at what they've done. Just look. I, I, I. I can't keep going on like this.'
- Clip 5: **Doctor at the hospital** – (*technical*) 'Yes, we're currently treating a number of casualties, including three young people who are in a critical condition with stab wounds to the chest and to the abdomen. I'm sorry, but I won't be able to make any further comment at this time.'
- (*emotional*) 'My team and I are doing the best we can. To be honest, we're hoping for a miracle tonight.'
- Clip 6: **Parent** – (*shocked*) 'She's fallen in with such a bad group of kids. She's nothing like that, really.'



Lesson plan 2: Vocal and physical techniques




Resources



- **Video 3:** Character-based speaking and listening 2 – *Giving and taking direction*
- **Worksheet 5:** Prepare for hot-seating
- **Worksheet 6:** My character

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson learners will be able to:

- understand that they can convey character and emotion to an audience by varying their physical and vocal techniques
- make physical and vocal choices to effectively convey a character to an audience
- skilfully deliver a variety of physical and vocal techniques to powerfully convey a character and their emotions to an audience

Timings	Activity
 5 min	<p>Starter / Introduction</p> <p>Task: Write on the board or display the lyrics ‘<i>All you need is love, All you need is love, All you need is love, Love is all you need.</i>’</p> <p>In pairs or small groups, learners take turns standing up and delivering the lyrics in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • starting quietly and becoming louder • starting happy and ending sad • starting angry and ending excited • starting as a teacher telling off a child and ending as a parent reading a bedtime story to a child.
 20 min	<p>Main lesson</p> <p>Task: Watch Video 3 of learners discussing how to use physical techniques to build character using a practical exercise.</p> <p>In groups of 4–6, try the exercise demonstrated in the video, with each learner taking turns to arrive in their character from Lesson 1 and introduce themselves in the circle while the rest of the group interrupt and give directions on different techniques to try. Learners should attempt their character three to four times, but should make sure that everyone in the group has time to present and receive feedback. If there is time, allow groups to nominate their best performance to show the whole class.</p>
 10 min	<p>Task: Using Worksheet 5 prepare learners for hot-seating. Worksheet 5 allows learners to make notes on questions they are going to ask other characters.</p> <p>Choose a confident learner to model the activity in front of the class. In their character from Lesson 1 and the earlier activity, the learner stands at the front of the class and answers questions posed by the rest of the class in character. The learner who is demonstrating their character should remember and use what they have learnt about language choices and vocal and physical techniques.</p>

Timings	Activity
	<p>While the learner is performing, you could offer some feedback on how they could change their performance so that this is really effective, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could they change their body language? • How could they make their facial expressions more convincing? • How could they vary their voice more to build character and communicate emotions? <p>Then divide the class back into groups of 4–6 and allow all learners the chance to be in the hot-seat, questioned by the other learners in their group.</p>
	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Learners complete Worksheet 6 where they need to list four words to describe their character and to explain how they conveyed these traits to the audience.</p> <p>Homework</p> <p>Learners practise reading aloud the diary entry that they wrote for homework in Lesson 1. Think about all the vocal and physical techniques you can use to bring your character and their feelings to life. If appropriate, learners could film themselves and post their recorded speech to the class Padlet site or bring in the footage to be discussed in class.</p>



Lesson 2 Teacher's notes

Key words / concepts you could highlight during Lesson 2, or have pre-taught before the lesson:

- body language
- facial expressions
- vocal techniques (pace, pitch, pause, volume, accent)

Starter

You could change these lyrics for any popular song or nursery rhyme and change the instructions to any emotion or situation to allow this to be a starter that you can use many times.

Video

The video runs for 3.22. It is designed to be watched all the way through, but you can of course pause it whenever you want to highlight or discuss features. The learners in the video are the same ones from the videos in Lesson 1.

Group exercises

This exercise encourages learners to change their performance based on the feedback they receive from their classmates. It is important that learners understand how to give constructive feedback that is helpful rather than criticising that person or their performance. Learners can interrupt the performer throughout so that they can adapt their performance straight away. It would be helpful to have circles of chairs, as you see in the video, but it is possible to do this around desks as well.

Worksheet 5

Learners may need to be monitored and guided to ensure that they are preparing open questions which will lead to successful hot-seating sessions.

Hot-seating

The lesson plan suggests using a confident learner to model taking the hot-seat, but it could be just as effective for the teacher to take on this role. This activity is not just about acting skills. Learners will need to empathise with their character and inhabit the character to see their perspective. During the exercises, you may wish to give learners feedback on their performances. Could they change their body language, their facial expressions, their voice more to build their character and communicate their emotions? Equally, continue to give feedback on appropriate language choices and their response to the character and their thoughts and feelings.



Lesson plan 3: Public words, private thoughts

Resources

- **Video 4:** Character-based speaking and listening 3: *Thought-tracking*
- **Worksheet 7:** Notes on the characters
- **Worksheet 8:** Self-evaluation

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson learners will be able to:

- understand the difference between public words and private thoughts
- articulate public words and private thoughts
- demonstrate empathy in their use of public words and private thoughts

Timings

Activity



Starter / Introduction

Task: Explain to learners that they are going to act as the good and bad conscience of a fourteen-year-old character who is faced with a difficult decision.

The character has homework to complete by the next day OR has agreed to visit their grandparents, but now their best friend has offered them a ticket to see their favourite band. What should they do?

You can come up with an alternative dilemma for learners.

Learners form two long lines facing each other at least three steps apart. One line should take on the role of the good conscience. They will be the inner voice who will tell the character why they should do the right thing. The other line is the bad conscience, the inner voice who will tell the character to do the fun thing.

The teacher, or a learner chosen to be the character, walks along the middle slowly. As they walk past, each learner in the line has their turn persuading the character to do the 'right' or 'wrong' thing. To show which side is more persuasive, the character steps closer to either the good or bad conscience line. At the end of the line the character must make their decision.





Main lesson

Task: Watch **Video 4**, which introduces the idea of thought tracking.

Divide the class into groups of six and within those groups put learners into pairs. Explain to the class that they will be completing a thought tracking exercise, similar to the one that they watched in the video where the groups will ask each other questions.

In groups learners discuss and decide:

- How will they structure their thought tracking: Is this a series of interviews? A formal statement? A conversation between two of the characters in the group?
- What kind of a person is their character?
- What private thoughts might their character have?
- What things might their character actually say and why?
- What language might their character use?

Timings	Activity
 <p>15 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What physical techniques could they use to express their character's feelings and emotions? <p>In their groups, learners practise their thought tracking to evaluate what is effective and how they might adapt or change their performance.</p> <p>When learners have had an opportunity to practise, learners perform their pair's thought tracking to their groups. You may wish to start by choosing a group to model the exercise at the front of the room, or you may wish to model some of the best at the end of the exercise. If you have six learners in each group, give them three minutes each before you announce that it's time to change. If only one pair of learners has decided to stage a conversation, with the rest of the group asking questions, then they can carry on for six minutes.</p> <p>Distribute Worksheet 7 to each learner. These questions ask learners to consider what they have learnt about language, physical techniques and private thoughts.</p>
 <p>10 min</p>	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Complete Worksheet 8. This allows learners to consider what they have done well and areas that they feel they may need to develop.</p> <p>Homework</p> <p>Choose a different character to the one you wrote a diary entry for in Lesson 1. As this character, write either a public speech or a private letter.</p>



Lesson 3 Teacher's notes

Key words / concepts you could highlight during the lesson, or have pre-taught before the lesson:

- **good and bad conscience** – this can be understood by learners as the voices inside your head which encourage good and bad behaviour
- **public and private selves** – learners need to understand that what people (and literary characters) say in public does not necessarily reflect their private thoughts. You could ask learners to think of Shakespearian soliloquies, where characters reveal their private thoughts to the audience or, learners could think about what they post on social media and what they say in private.

Starter: Conscience alley:

Think about what scenario your learners will be able to relate to. It could be the one in the lesson plan or you may need to come up with a different moral dilemma (or enlist the help of the class to generate one).

You may need to move the classroom furniture to allow the 'alley' (or 'corridor') to be formed by the two lines of the learners.

You could revisit this activity in literature lessons, for example, Macbeth walking down the alley deciding whether to murder Duncan.

Video

This video runs for 2.35 and is designed to watch through, though of course you can pause and discuss wherever you wish.

Thought-tracking

You could, if you wish, assign learners different characters than the ones they had in the earlier lessons, but it may be better to let them stay with the same character they have built. If you have used generic characters up until now, you may now wish to assign literary characters. You could also rearrange the groups.

You may need to arrange the furniture to allow learners to work in groups. Keep an eye on the time (or use a digital timer on the whiteboard) and make sure that learners are swapping every three minutes (or every six minutes if they are working on a paired discussion).

Homework

As learners have to choose a new character, this is another opportunity (if you have been using generic characters until now) to assign literary characters.

There are other in-character speaking and listening activities that you might want to explore in future lessons and/or in your literature lessons: balloon debates, chat shows, mock trials, news broadcasts and question times. For more information on these activities, visit

www.noisyclassroom.com



Lesson resources

Video 1: Character-based speaking and listening 1a – *Comparing language, character and emotions*

Video 2: Character-based speaking and listening 1b – *Contrasting language*

Video 3: Character-based speaking and listening 2 – *Giving and taking direction*

Video 4: Character-based speaking and listening 3: *Thought-tracking*

Worksheet 1: Ask and switch

Worksheet 2: Character transcripts

Worksheet 3: Notes on the videos

Worksheet 4: How would they say it?

Worksheet 5: Prepare for hot-seating

Worksheet 6: My character

Worksheet 7: Notes on the characters



Worksheet 1: Ask and switch

Do you use the same language when you talk to your friends and when you talk to your teachers?

Is there language that you use with your friends that you wouldn't use with your parents?

How would you change your language if you were you going to a job interview?

How do you change your language when you talk to young children?

Do teenagers use different language from adults? How?

What type of judgements do you make about people based on the language they use?

Are there ever bad consequences from using the wrong language to express yourself?

How do people use language to establish their authority?

Is the language you use when you speak different from the language you use when you write? How?

What type of language do you use in your private diary?

Can language be used to exclude people?

Do more-educated people speak using different language?

How has your use of types of language changed as you have grown up?

Do you use different language when you talk to men and when you talk to women? How? Why?

Do different jobs require people to use different types of language? Can you give an example?



Worksheet 2: Character transcripts

Clip 1:

Gang leader – (*victorious*) ‘Yeah. We rule this town. Ain’t nobody stronger than we are.’

Clip 2:

Gang member – (*frightened*) ‘Wow. That was, err. Yeah. I mean. That was something.’

Clip 3:

Police Chief – (*in control*) ‘We’re currently dealing with a very serious civil disturbance in the city centre, which seems to be another episode in our city’s continuing struggle with gang violence. Riot police have been deployed, and we have the situation under control. We ask all citizens to stay indoors. That’s all for now. Thank you.’

(*out of control*) ‘Yes, we’re currently bringing a very difficult situation under control. [off camera] What was that? OK. [back to camera] We’d ask all citizens to stay indoors. Thank you.’

Clip 4:

Shop owner – (*furious*) ‘It’s an absolute disgrace. The mayor, the chief of police, the parents. They all need to get this situation under control. How can I be expected to turn a profit with things like this going on?’

(*bereft*) ‘L, L, L. Look at what they’ve done. Just look. I, I, I. I can’t keep going on like this.’

Clip 5:

Doctor at the hospital – (*technical*) ‘Yes, we’re currently treating a number of casualties, including three young people who are in a critical condition with stab wounds to the chest and to the abdomen. I’m sorry, but I won’t be able to make any further comment at this time.’

(*emotional*) ‘My team and I are doing the best we can. To be honest, we’re hoping for a miracle tonight.’

Clip 6:

Parent – (*shocked*) ‘She’s fallen in with such a bad group of kids. She’s nothing like that, really.’



Worksheet 3: Notes on the videos

Two rival gangs have had a fight on the streets. At least one gang member has been critically injured. The police have arrived and broken up the fight. You will see the reactions of the following people who were involved in the incident:

Gang leader	Police chief	Parent
Doctor	New gang member	Shopkeeper

1. Watch the first part of the video.

	Character 1	Character 2	Character 3
Who are the characters?			
How does the language tell us who they are?			
What are their attitudes to the events?			
How does their language reflect their emotions?			

2. In the next clips you will see two different versions of the same character.

	Character 1	Character 2	Character 3
Who are they?			
How is the language different in the two versions?			
What does the language tell us about the different emotions and attitudes?			

Worksheet 3: Notes on the videos *continued*



3. Watch the next clip.

a) Who is the last character?

.....
.....

b) What is their attitude to events?

.....
.....

c) In pairs, have a go at a different response for this character. Think about the language you use to show an alternative response. Will your language be:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Formal or informal? | • Simple or complicated? |
| • Expansive or concise? | • Public or private? |
| • Emotional or rational? | • Inclusive or exclusive? |

Use this space to record your conversation

Worksheet 4: How would they say it?



A teenager has failed an important exam. Write what each of these people might say if it were their job to break the news. Pay careful attention to your language choices to build character and express emotion:

1. An angry parent

2. A supportive friend

3. A disappointed teacher

And, if you have time, choose one other yourself:



Worksheet 5: Prepare for hot-seating

List the other characters in your group and think of two or three questions to ask each.

Tip: Try to make your questions open, so that the person in the hot-seat can answer expansively rather than with short factual answers or yes or no answers.

- Example **open** question: How did you feel when the fight first started?
- Example **closed** question: How long have you been in the gang?

If somebody does ask you a closed question, try to expand on the answer. For example, instead of answering 'Yes' to 'Were you scared in the fight?' you could expand this to 'Yes, it was terrifying. I have never been so scared in my life. The most frightening part was when...'

Character name	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3

Worksheet 6: My character



You have been working on building a character, thinking about their language and their vocal and physical presence. Choose **four** words which best describe your character and explain how you have tried to convey that through your language choices and vocal and physical techniques.

Which four adjectives best describe your character?

Explain how you tried to show those words through your language choices and vocal and physical techniques.



Worksheet 7: Notes on the characters

Choose four characters that you and your class have been looking at. Make notes on how to express those characters through language choice, physical and vocal techniques and private thoughts.

Character	Language choice	Physical and vocal techniques	Private thoughts



Worksheet 8: Self-evaluation

1. Building a character through language choice

The main thing I have learnt is...

The main thing I would still like to work on is...

2. Building a character through physical and vocal techniques

The main thing I have learnt is...

The main thing I would still like to work on is...

3. Building a character by considering their public words and their private thoughts

The main thing I have learnt is...

The main thing I would still like to work on is...

4. Interpreting character

What will you take from this into analysing characters in literary texts?

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