CAMBRIDGE VERITAS®

Placement Readiness Club

# Demo Round: Lesson Preparation

Plan a short, communicative ESL/ELT demo lesson — not a lecture.

**10–20 minute self-paced lesson**

**Takeaway: the 11-stage demo lesson blueprint**



# By the end of this lesson

You will be able to prepare a clear demo lesson for an ESL/ELT interview.

## Your demo should show how learners move from exposure → clarity → practice → use.

✓ Choose a teachable theme and one realistic language focus.

✓ Write aims that describe learner performance, not teacher activity.

✓ Use MPF: meaning, form and pronunciation.

✓ Build practice from controlled to communicative.

✓ Finish with feedback, correction and a measurable exit ticket.

**Concrete output after watching: a one-page demo lesson plan you can rehearse.**

# What the demo round is really testing

The interviewer is not looking for a perfect performance. They are looking for teaching judgement.

**1**

## Can you create a learner-centred lesson?

Students must speak, think and practise — not just listen to you explain.

**2**

## Can you clarify language simply?

Meaning, form and pronunciation should be short, accurate and teachable.

**3**

## Can you manage interaction?

Pair work, monitoring, nomination, wait time and correction should feel natural.

**4**

## Can you adapt if learners struggle?

A strong teacher notices problems and changes the support, pace or task.

**A demo lesson is a sample of your teaching decisions.**

# The 11-stage demo lesson blueprint

Use this as your planning spine for most ESL/ELT demo rounds.

01 Theme

02 Aims

03 Warm-up

04 Context

05 Meaning

06 Form

07 Pronunciation

08 Restricted practice

09 Freer practice

10 Error correction

11 Exit ticket

**Think of the lesson as a learning journey: start human, clarify briefly, practise purposefully, then check learning.**

# Overall structure: task-based, not lecture-based

A strong demo makes learners do something meaningful with the language.

## Lecture-based demo

Teacher explains rules
Students listen
One example
Worksheet answers
Teacher talks again

## Communicative demo

Learners notice a need
Teacher clarifies briefly
Learners practise safely
Learners use language freely
Teacher gives focused feedback

**Your rule: every explanation must lead to learner action.**

# Stages 1–2: Theme and learning outcomes

Start with a topic people can understand quickly, then state exactly what learners will do.

**1 THEME**

**A theme is the situation or topic that gives the language a reason to exist.**

Examples: job interviews, giving feedback, making complaints, travel problems, classroom instructions, small talk at work.

**2 AIMS**

**A strong aim starts with: “By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to…”**

Weak: “I will teach modal verbs.”
Strong: “Learners will be able to make polite requests using could / would.”

**Good aims are observable: you can see or hear the learner do them.**

# Stages 3–4: Warm-up and context

Begin with engagement, then create a realistic need for the target language.

## Warm-up

Short
Personal
Low-pressure
Linked to theme

## Context

Story
Image
Dialogue
Problem situation

## Target language need

Learners understand why this language matters now.

**Example: Before teaching “Could you…?”, show a busy office problem: someone needs help, but wants to sound polite.**

# Stages 5–7: Clarify meaning, form and pronunciation

Keep clarification short. The interview panel wants accuracy plus simplicity.

**5 MEANING**

## Use CCQs. Don’t ask: “Do you understand?”

Example: “I used to play tennis.” CCQs: Do I play tennis now? No. Was it true in the past? Yes.

**6 FORM**

## Show the pattern clearly and visibly.

Subject + used to + base verb. Avoid long grammar speeches. Give one accurate pattern.

**7 PRONUNCIATION**

## Model, drill, mark stress and connect speech.

used to → /ˈjuːstə/ in connected speech. Use choral drill, individual drill, then correction.

**MPF = the minimum clarity learners need before practice.**

# Stages 8–9: Restricted practice to freer practice

Practice should move from safety to communication.

## Restricted practice

Goal: accuracy

Examples:
- gap-fill
- sentence transformation
- controlled substitution
- short drill with prompts

## Freer practice

Goal: communication

Examples:
- role play
- problem-solving task
- personalised speaking
- mini discussion

**Bridge question: “What support can I remove so learners can use the language more independently?”**

# Stage 10: Error correction

Correct in a way that protects confidence and improves performance.

## During fluency tasks

Monitor quietly
Take notes
Do not interrupt every error

## After the task

Write 2–3 useful examples
Ask learners to improve them
Praise before correction

## Correction language

“Good idea. Let’s make it more natural.”
“Can we say it another way?”
“Listen again.”

**In a demo, correct what matters for the lesson aim — not every mistake.**

# Stage 11: Exit ticket

End with evidence of learning, not just “Any questions?”

**An exit ticket is a quick final task that proves whether the aim was achieved.**

✓ Learners write one accurate sentence using the target language.

✓ Learners record or say one short response to a realistic prompt.

✓ Learners choose the best phrase and explain why.

✓ Learners complete: “Today I can now…” with one example.

**For an interview, the exit ticket gives you a confident closing sentence: “This tells me the learners can now…”**

# A simple 20-minute demo timing plan

You can adjust this for 10, 15 or 30 minutes, but the logic should stay the same.

| | |
|---|---|
| 0–2 min | Warm-up + theme |
| 2–4 min | Context + language need |
| 4–8 min | Meaning + CCQs |
| 8–10 min | Form + pronunciation |
| 10–14 min | Restricted practice |
| 14–18 min | Freer practice |
| 18–20 min | Feedback + exit ticket |

**Golden rule: If the demo is short, reduce the content. Do not remove learner practice.**

# Example: “polite requests” demo lesson

This shows the 11-stage structure in action.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Theme** | A colleague is very busy, but you need help. |
| **Aim** | Learners will be able to make polite requests using “Could you…?” and “Would you mind…?” |
| **Context** | A short workplace dialogue with one direct request and one polite request. |
| **MPF** | Meaning: polite / indirect. Form: Could + subject + base verb? Pronunciation: sentence stress on main verb. |
| **Practice** | Restricted: change direct requests into polite requests. Freer: office role play with three request cards. |
| **Feedback** | Board two good examples and one sentence to improve. Students correct it together. |
| **Exit ticket** | Write one polite request to a manager, colleague or student. |

**This is specific enough to teach and flexible enough to adapt.**

# 12 must-prepare questions before your demo

Answer these before you record or teach the lesson.

1. Who are the learners?
2. What is their level?
3. What exactly will they do by the end?
4. What language am I teaching?
5. What context makes the language useful?
6. What CCQs will I ask?
7. What form will I board?
8. What pronunciation point matters?
9. What controlled practice will I use?
10. How will learners speak freely?
11. What errors will I correct?
12. What is my exit ticket?

**If you cannot answer all 12, your demo is not ready yet.**

# Common demo mistakes to avoid

Small planning errors make a demo feel unprepared.

✕ Too many aims in one short lesson.

✕ Explaining grammar for five minutes before students practise.

✕ Using “Do you understand?” instead of CCQs.

✕ No pronunciation focus for spoken language.

✕ Jumping from explanation straight to freer speaking.

✕ Ignoring errors or correcting every error aggressively.

✕ Ending without checking whether learners met the aim.

✕ Teaching content that is too advanced for the stated level.

**A strong demo feels simple, intentional and learner-centred.**

# Use the 11-stage blueprint every time.

A demo lesson is not about showing everything you know. It is about showing that learners can do something useful by the end.

**Theme + aim**

**Context + MPF**

**Restricted + freer practice**

**Feedback + exit ticket**