COURSE NOTES

Wk.1. The Idea and Purpose of Listening:

Teachinglistening from a cultural perspective:

1. How will listening skills aid the student in his academic activities?
2. How will listening skills aid the student in everyday conversations? –social life
3. How will effective listening skills aid the student in work and business?

**Purpose of Listening Skills in English**

What does it mean to listen?

1. Students hear exactly what the teacher is saying. In this case, listening skills need to be integrated into the learning of the sound system of the English language. When this is done, students identify:
2. Correct pronunciation from lecturers thereby aiding their assimilation of their course content. Examples of correct pronunciation will be taken across cultures. Films of British and American origins will be played and students will be encouraged to listen and identify differences in pronunciation. Discs of voicing by educated Nigerians who have understood the art of articulation of English sounds will also be played to aid students’ comprehension of correct pronunciation from their lecturers.
3. Poor pronunciation from lecturers. When this is done, students are able to privately synthesise information from the cluster of incorrectly pronounced course content. This ensures that information is not lost in spite of improper pronunciation used in lecture delivery. A suggested approach to this is an integration of poor pronunciation models in the teaching of listening just as it is done in the teaching of speaking. Cultural interferences in pronouncing will be elaborately explored for examples in poor pronunciation amongst lecturers.
4. Students understand the logical sequences of their course content. To do this, discourse analysis will need to be integrated into the teaching of listening skills. Students will be taught how to understand both voiced and gestural informative matter in order to comprehend introductions, main ideas, change in thought trend, contrastive sequences, thought climaxes, resolutions, and closures. Students will also understand rhetoric’s, questions that stimulate analyses and questions that raise research. Listening closely for information will be the main thrust of this aspect of listening skills.

EXERCISES

Do a sample practise test in the following with students:

1. Play a tape of a lecture or a sermon by an indigenous speaker in class
2. Play an audio of a radio or TV programme in class
3. In class, visit the websites of universities in English-speaking countries and have students listen to students and staff talking about the experience of studying in their institutions.
4. Class exercise should focus on identifying pronunciation differences and how these interfere with logical sequences as well as assimilation.

Wk. 2 Effective Listening Skills

Here, students will be taught skills that will enable them achieve the following:

1. talk about their own work and study experiences and plans
2. express their opinions on a range of general topics, giving examples and reasons to explain why they think as they do
3. exchange conversation sessions with other students
4. give arguments for and against, make hypotheses, give clarifications and justify a point of view

Therefore, the model for teaching listening skills shall derive from the **listening ascomprehension model** rather than the **listening as acquisition model** as distinguished by Jack. C. Richards in the book titled *Teaching Listening and Speaking*. By this then, students shall be taught and given practice in **bottom-up processing** and **top-down processing** which are key strategies for achieving listening as comprehension skills. In bottom-up processing, the student is taught to process information directly from the linguistic phonemes bearing it without recourse to prior knowledge. By implication, everything that the student needs to know in order to comprehend is in the input. As the listening as comprehension tasks unfold, the student will develop skills by the following parameters:

* Retention of input while it is being processed
* Recognition of word and clause divisions
* Recognition of key words
* Recognition of key transitions in a discourse
* Recognition of grammatical relationships between key elements in sentences
* The use of stress and intonation to identify word and sentence functions

In this regard, tasks in listening as comprehension will require the student to:

* Identify the referents of pronouns in an utterance
* Recognize the time reference of an utterance
* Distinguish between positive and negative statements
* Recognize the order in which words occurred in an utterance
* Identify sequence markers
* Identify key words that occurred in a spoken text
* Identify which modal verbs occurred in a spoken text

EXERCISES

The following exercises practise listening for word stress as a marker of the information focus of a sentence. Students listen to questions that have two possible information focuses and use stress to identify the appropriate focus.

Exercise 1 (Words in italics are stressed.)

*Activity 1: Students check*

*Activity 2: Students hear information focus*

1. The bank’s *downtown* branch is closed today. Where? When?

2. Is the city office open on *Sunday*? Where? When?

3. I’m going to the *museum* today. Where? When?

Exercise 1

The following activity helps students develop the ability to identify key words.

*Activity 1: Students hear*

My hometown is a nice place to visit because it is close to a beach, and there are lots of interesting walks you can do in the surrounding countryside.

*Activity 2: Students’ task*

Which of these words do you hear? Number them in the order you hear them.

beach shops walks hometown

countryside schools nice

At the end of these exercises, specific exercises will be given to provide practice towards the achievement of the stated objectives of this lesson.

Wk.3. Introduction to Speech

Emphasis on the role of mother- tongue interference in articulation shall form the basis of this introductory class. In second language acquisition, the habits of our own language are so strong that they are difficult to break. According to J.D O’Connor in the book titled *Better English Pronunciation,* each native speaker arranges the sounds of his language in fixed boxes of sound units in his mind:

When we listen to our own language we hear the sounds and we put each into the right box, and when we speak we go to the boxes and take out the sounds we want in the order we want them. And as we do this over the years, the boxes get stronger and stronger until everything we hear, whether it is our own language or another, has to be put into one of these boxes, and everything we say comes out of one of them. (3)

Students shall be taught that every language has its distinctive sound system and the danger of using these fixed boxes of sound units to articulate other languages is that some of the sound units of the other languages might be absent in the learner’s native tongue.

In the English language, examples of sound units that are different but similar in sound to other sound units in other languages can be seen in the sound boxes below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| F | Th | S |

In many languages, the sounds in the first and last boxes, *f* and *s* commonly occur but not the sound in the second box, *th.* The sound boxes of these sound units as it occurs in other languages could be demonstrated like this:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| F | Th | S |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f | S |

In the ears of the foreign listener, the *th* sound is distinct but unfamiliar and in an attempt to articulate, he is forced by pronunciation habit to place the sound in either of the sound unit boxes, f or s.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| f | Th | S |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f | S |

This misplacement often occurs in the pronunciation of such words as *fin, sin,* and *thin*.

**ARTICULATION**

The articulation of the sounds of English remains a problem for the non-native speaker. What is the student to do? The student must open his ears to the distinctive sound units of the language which comes to us through films, the radio, documentaries, and television.In Nigeria, English is the language of trade, governance and education. Students shall be taught that we owe this to our colonial heritage from the British. In countries where English is spoken as a mother tongue, the speakers are classified as L1 or first language speakers while in Nigeria, and as such in many other countries of similar colonial ancestry, English is referred to as a second language or L2. The goal of articulation in the L2 speaker is not to transform a non-native speaker into a native speaker but to assist him to develop an effective pronunciation of the sound units of the language. This will enable the student achieve the following objectives:

* clear speech incorporating adequate stress and rhythm
* understanding of speech sounds
* ability to communicate in English articulately with speakers of other languages

EXERCISE

Students shall be told to make a list of ten indigenous languages of Nigeria found amongst them. Then they should attempt to identify, through personal interviews, examples of mother-tongue interferences existing in the languages.In the table below they should give a documentation of their findings:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indigenous Language | Mother-tongue interference in sound unit | Examples in sound-unit or word |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

ORGANS OF SPEECH

Students shall be taught that nearly all the organs of speech are sited in the human head. The organs sited outside the head are the lungs which produce the air necessary for speech. However, it shall be pointed out that these organs only function secondarily as speech organs but primarily as organs of existence. The primary speech organs are as follows:

* tongue
* lungs
* teeth
* vocal cords
* lips

The individual roles of these organs in speech articulation shall be briefly explained to students.

Students shall also be taught the role of cavities in speech production. Two cavities exist in the human head namely:

* oral cavity
* nasal cavity

In these cavities, sounds are strengthened to take their sound value and as a result, sound units are either oral or nasal.

MANNER OF ARTICULATION

Students shall be taught that all speech sounds are produced during exhalation and for this reason one cannot speak clearly when one is out of breath. The organs of speech are classified as either stationary or mobile. The **mobile organs of speech** are called **articulators** and they are:

* tongue
* uvula

While the **stationary organs of speech** are the **points of articulation** and they are:

* teeth
* alveolar ridge
* hard palate
* soft palate

Students shall also be taught that speech sounds are characterised according to their points of articulation. There are eight descriptions of speech sounds characterised by their points of articulation:

* Bilabial- sounds produced with both lips. Examples-/ p/, /b/
* Labiodental- Sounds produced with lower lip and teeth. Examples-/ t/, /d/
* Dental- Sounds produced with the tip of the tongue and both upper and lower teeth. Examples- /ɵ/, /ð/
* Alveolar- Sounds produced with the tongue on the alveolar ridge. Examples- /s/, /z/
* Palato-alveolar or fronto-palatal: Sounds produced with the front of the tongue on the hard palate. Examples-/ ʒ/, / ʃ/
* Palatal: Sounds produced by the gliding of the tongue on the hard palate. Example-/ j/
* Velar: Sounds produced at the velum or soft palate. Examples- /k/, /g/
* Glottal: Sounds produced at the glottis. Example-/ h/

CLASSIFICATION OF SPEECH SOUNDS

In the English language, speech sounds are classified into two categories:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Consonants |  | |
| Vowels | Monophthongs | Diphthongs |

Students shall be taught that there are 24 consonants in the English language while the vowels, which are twenty in all, are subdivided into monothongs and diphthongs.

Wk.4. The Monophthongs and Diphthongs of the English Vowel Sound

In this lesson, students shall be taught to recognise, distinguish and properly articulate the monothongs and diphthongs of the vowel sounds in English.

It shall be explained that vowels are classified according to the position and shape of the tongue and the concomitant position of the lips i.e. be they spread, rounded, or unrounded. The tongue and the lips are therefore the articulators of the vowel. Monothongs are usually described as the simple vowels which bear single units of sound. Diphthongs are two vowel sounds pronounced in a gliding manner to produce one unit of sound.

Given below is a comprehensive classification of the vowels of the English language.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vowel No. | Description | Symbol | As in |
| 1 | Long vowel (monothong) | /i:/ | s*ea*t, b*ea*t |
| 2 | Short vowel (monothong) | /i/ | p*i*t, h*i*d |
| 3 | Short vowel (monothong) | /e/ | b*e*d, p*e*t |
| 4 | Short vowel (monothong) | /æ/ | t*a*b, p*a*n |
| 5 | Long vowel (monothong) | /a:/ | c*ar*d, m*ar*k |
| 6 | Short vowel (monothong) | /ɒ/ | p*o*t, b*o*x |
| 7 | Long vowel (monothong) | /ͻ:/ | w*al*k, s*a*w |
| 8 | Short vowel (monothong) | /u/ | p*u*t, g*oo*d |
| 9 | Long vowel (monothong) | /u:/ | t*wo*, h*u*ge |
| 10 | Short vowel (monothong) | /ᴧ/ | c*u*p, m*u*ch |
| 11 | Long vowel (monothong) | /ɜ:/ | h*ear*d, h*er*b |
| 12 | Short vowel (monothong) | /ə/ | *a*go, us*er* |
| 13 | Diphthong | /ei/ | b*ay*, l*a*te |
| 14 | Diphthong | /əʋ/ | f*oe*, b*o*ne |
| 15 | Diphthong | /ai/ | h*igh*, sk*y* |
| 16 | Diphthong | /aʋ/ | h*ow*, b*ow* |
| 17 | Diphthong | /ͻi/ | ch*oi*ce, c*oy* |
| 18 | Diphthong | /iə/ | h*ear*, cl*ear* |
| 19 | Diphthong | /eə/ | st*are*, *air* |
| 20 | Diphthong | /ʋə/ | t*our*, p*oor* |

CLASSIFICATION OF MONOTHONGS AND DIPHTHONGS

Monothongs could be articulated in a high/low manner at the front and back positions of the mouth. Therefore, we have **front vowels, central vowels,** and **back vowels.** Diphthongs are described according to the direction of the tongue movement with respect to closing or centring movements of the tongue. By this we have **closing diphthongs** and **centring diphthongs.** Examples are given below:

* Front vowels- / i:/, /i/, /e/, /æ/
* Central vowels- /ɜ:/, /ə/, /ᴧ/
* Back vowels- /u:/, /ʋ/, /ͻ:/, /ɒ/, /a:/
* Closing Diphthongs- /ei/, /ai/, /ͻi/, /əʋ/,/aʋ/
* Centring Dipthongs- /iə/, /eə/, /ʋə/

EXERCISE

Students should identify the italicised vowel sounds in the list below and transcribe them in the adjoining column.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | B*ea*t |  |
| 2 | B*i*t |  |
| 3 | Wh*ere* |  |
| 4 | B*e*t |  |
| 5 | M*a*t |  |
| 6 | D*o*g |  |
| 7 | C*our*t |  |
| 8 | F*u*ll |  |
| 9 | B*om*b |  |
| 10 | Cr*ow*d |  |
| 11 | B*ee*r |  |
| 12 | H*eigh*t |  |
| 13 | Sh*ou*lder |  |
| 14 | *A*ge |  |
| 15 | P*oo*r |  |
| 16 | Th*ough* |  |
| 17 | C*oi*n |  |
| 18 | F*oo*l |  |
| 19 | T*ou*gh |  |
| 20 | *A*gain |  |

Wk. 5. The Consonants of English

A consonant is a speech sound that is produced with an obstruction of the airstream and this obstruction could be total or partial. A typical illustration is made with the production of the sounds /p/ and /f/. When /p/ is produced, the airstream is totally obstructed as the lips close to force the sound out. However, in the production of the sound /f/, the airstream is only partially obstructed as the lips come together to articulate the sound.

Students shall be taught that there are twenty-four consonants in English. In the chart below the consonants are represented according to their manner and place of articulation. Students shall be encouraged to master these sounds to enable them achieve better pronunciation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Articulation position/ manner** | **Bilabial** | **Labio-dental** | **Dental** | **Alveolar** | **Palato-Alveolar** | **Palatal** | **Velar** | **Glottal** |
| Stop | *p b* |  |  | *t d* |  |  | *k g* |  |
| Fricative |  | *f v* | *ɵ ð* | *s z* | *ʃ ʒ* |  |  | *h* |
| Affricate |  |  |  |  | *tʃdʒ* |  |  |  |
| Nasal | *m* |  |  | *n* |  |  | *ŋ* |  |
| Lateral |  |  |  | *l* |  |  |  |  |
| Liquid |  |  |  | *r* |  |  |  |  |
| Semi-vowel | *w* |  |  |  |  | *j* |  |  |

By this chart, students shall be taught the significance of the positions and manner of articulation as represented by the labels ***stop, fricative, affricate, nasal, lateral, liquid,*** and ***semi-vowel*** in the production of consonant sounds. These labels indicate the forms of blockages given to the airstream during the articulation of consonant sounds. It is also important to point out to the students that certain consonant sounds are **intervocalic** which means that when some consonant sounds occur in between vowel sounds, they are usually voiced. A typical example is the alveolar fricative /s/ which becomes /z/ in such words as *nose, nasal, advise, improvise.*

Below is a brief explanation of the labels given above:

**Stops (Plosives)** - These sound units are produced when there is a complete but momentary closure of the organs of speech resulting in the blocking of the airstream. They could be voiced or voiceless. Examples of voiced plosives are /b/, /d/, /g/ while examples of voiceless plosives are /p/, /t/, /k/.

**Fricatives** – They are the consonants produced with a friction as air is temporarily trapped and slowly exhaled through a small space in the oral cavity. They could also be either voiced or voiceless. Examples of voiced fricatives are /v/, /ð/, /z/, /ʒ/, while examples of voiceless fricatives are /f/, /ɵ/, /s/, /ʃ/, /h/.

**Affricates**- The production of these sounds bears resemblance to the production of plosives and fricatives. In the English sound system, there are only two consonant sounds which are affricates. They are/ tʃ/ and /dʒ/. The first is voiced while the second is voiceless.

**Nasal** – These are the sounds that are produced when a stream of air is sent through the nose. To produce these sounds, the oral cavity is blocked and air is allowed to flow out through the nose. Three nasal sounds occur in the English sound system and all three are voiced sounds. They are /m/, /n/, /ŋ/.

**Lateral** – This is a sound that is produced when a part of the tongue is placed against the palate in order that air flows around it on both sides. This is the name given to the sound of the consonant /l/ in English.

**Liquid** – This is the consonant produced when the tip of the tongue curls inwards to the palate just above the alveolar ridge. In this position, air is able to flow out freely from the mouth. This sound is the /r/ consonant sound.

**Semi-vowel**- In the English language, the vowel is a frictionless sound because it allows free passage of air through the oral cavity during its articulation. Similarly, these semi-vowel consonant sounds are produced as glides which allow a less obstructed flow of air than is applicable in the production of other consonants. The two semi-vowels in English are /w/ and /j/

Exercises

1. Articulate the words below and indicate if they are nasal or oral sounds by noting where the air escapes, from the mouth or nose.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sounds** | **Nasal** | **oral** | **Meaning** |
| Ooh |  |  | Regret |
| Fiaaun |  |  | Speed |
| shhh... |  |  | Hush |
| grrr... |  |  | Growl |
| hmm.. |  |  | pondering, pleasure |
| Meow |  |  | Cat |
| Boo |  |  | Dislike |

1. Identify the sounds of the italicised consonants according to their appropriate labels as consonants.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **consonant** | **sound** | **consonant** | **Sound** |
| mo*th*er |  | parti*ti*on |  |
| *ph*ysical |  | ta*s*k |  |
| me*th*od |  | *g*out |  |
| pa*tch* |  | a*gg*ravate |  |
| Py*rrh*ic |  | a*w*ard |  |
| ra*v*en |  | parti*s*an |  |
| rau*c*ous |  | a*l*umni |  |

Wk. 6 Conversation in English: Stress, Rhythm and Intonation

In continuous speech, especially when we are holding conversations, words come out in groups of stressed and unstressed syllables. Imagine a conversation that goes like this:

How are you today, Biola? I am fine, thank you,sir. What brings you to my office today? Sir, I have a problem which I hope that you could help me solve. A problem, Biola? That is quite surprising since you are one of our best students. Oh no, Sir, it isn’t concerned with grades. Then, what is it? I hope you’re not getting married, are you? Ha, ha, ha. Sir, how can I? I’m only in second year. Tell me then, my daughter. Sir, I just got information that I could be chosen as an overseas exchange student if my grades fall within a certain cumulative point average. Yes, that’s correct. Sir, I wonder if you could advise me on the true benefits of being an exchange student because I’m not quite clear on that. Is that all? Then, you have come to the right place. Last week, I was appointed the faculty representative at the university exchange programme. Let me tell you exactly what you need to know.

In the English language, certain words are stressed while some are not stressed. Additionally, some words have both stressed and weak forms. It is important that a student understands the stress component of every given word to enable the student achieve the complete articulation of that word. When proper use of stressed and unstressed syllables as well as stressed and weak forms of words is made in continuous speech, a rhythmic rendering of speech is achieved thereby making it sound more like English. Another component of the continuous speech corpus is intonation. By understanding the relationship between words and tunes in the English language, the student will convey meaning better in oral speech as he uses the right intonation. In this lesson, the student shall be introduced to the meaning of stress, rhythm and intonation in English as well as to a variety of examples of conversation models in English.

**STRESS**

Stress in spoken English simply implies pressure exerted on a part or whole of a word. Derived basically from the conventional meaning of the word ‘stress’, which means pressure, the idea of stress in articulation of sounds in English invites an increase in airflow at the point of production. Only vowels are stressed in the English language sound system. Stress occurs in syllables and every syllable must contain a vowel. Generally, words of more than one syllable are stressed while words of only one syllable are not stressed. Words of one syllable which are not usually stressed are pronouns, prepositions, and articles. On the other hand, words of one syllable such as infinitives, nouns, adjectives and adverbs are stressed because they help create images while we talk. Often, syllables which are not stressed contain the vowel /ə/ as well as other stronger vowels. This vowel sound is, however, never seen in stressed syllables. A good example is seen in the word /kəmˈplein/ which has the first syllable unstressed due to the occurrence of the sound /ə/. This could be contrasted with the word, /ˈhɒstail/, an adjective which has the stress on the first syllable due to the presence of the strong vowel /ɒ/.

Examples of stressed syllables are given below for practice:

|  |
| --- |
| judiciary /dʒuˈdiʃiəri/ dictionary /ˈdikʃənri/ immortality /imͻ:ˈtæləti/  fanatical /fəˈnætikl/ famous /ˈfeiməs/ consult/ kənsᴧlt/  bamboo /bæmbu:/ New York /nju: jͻ:k/ fourteen /fͻ:ti:n/  provide /prəˈvaid/ photograph /ˈfəʋtəgra:f/ invent /inˈvent/  Nebuchadnezzar /nebjʋkədnezə/ |

EXERCISE

Students should identify and transcribe the stressed syllables in the words given below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political | imagination | pandemonium | expectorant | revenge | Dismay |
| Mother | resurrect | preliminary | representation | colonisation | vocabulary |
| Aristocracy | unworthy | edition | orbit | unknown | conceal |
| Bullet | believe | unzip | warm-hearted | post-master | arch-enemy |
| loud speaker | banjo | promise | traditionally | anthropology | melodramatic |
| confectionery | medieval | passionately | interdependence | devaluation | matriculation |
| Tuberculosis | Ecclesiastes | preposition | permit | permit | Perfect |
| Perfect | reject | reject | indict | millennium | prepare |

**WEAK FORMS OF WORDS**

It is important that the weak forms of words are used in spoken English because that enables the speaker achieve the characteristic English sound of speech. The use of only the strong forms of words in English invites rigidity thereby reducing fluency. For example in the sentence *I’d buy you a toy if you are good*, the words *would*, *a,* and *are*are all used in their weak forms while the other words are stressed. There are 35 words with weak forms in English. They are given below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Word** | **Weak Form** |
| **Pronouns** | He  him  his  her  them  us  am | **/**i:/  /im/  /iz/  /ɜ:/ The weak forms /i:/,/im/,/iz/,/ɜ:/ are to be used at the beginning of sentences e.ghɜ: mᴧmizhiər : izka: izgri:n  /ðəm/  /s/ (used only in let’s) /əs/  /m/(used after I’) /əm/ (used elsewhere) |
| **Verbs** | Do  does  are  be  is  was  has  have  had | /də/ used only before consonants. The strong form du: is used before vowels. /ai du: ədmaiə u:/  /dəz/  /ə/ (used before consonants) /ər/ (used before vowels)  /bi/  /s/ (used after /p, t, k, f, ɵ/) e.g /ðəkap’s fain/: /z/ (used after vowels and voiced consonants but not /z, ʒ,dʒ/ ) The strong form iz is always used after /s,z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ,dʒ/  /wəz/  /əz/ (used after /s,z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ,dʒ/, /s/, /z/) :/s/ (used after /p, t, k, f, ɵ/): /z/ (used elsewhere)  /v/ ( used after *I, we, you, they*): /əv/ (used elsewhere)  /d/ (used after *I, he, she, we, you, they*): /əd/ (used elsewhere). Use the forms hæz, hæv,hæd at the beginning of sentences and other word groups : /hæz i: cᴧm?/ (Pronounce *has, have, had* as /hæz/, /hæv/, /hæd/ if they are full verbs and not auxiliaries e.gʃi:hæz ə ka:/ |
| **Modal Verbs** | Can  shall  will  would  must | /kən/  /ʃl/ /əl/  /ӏ/ (used after *I, he, she, we, you, they*) **:** /ḷ/ (used after consonants except /l/: /əӏ/ used after vowels and /l/  **/**d**/**(used after *I, he, she, we, you, they*) **, /**əd/ ( used elsewhere)  **/**məst**/** |
| **Demonstrative Pronoun** | That | **/**ðət/ (in phrases such as *that man*, *that’s good*, *that* is always pronounced as the strong /ðæt/ and not the weak form shown here. |
| **Determiners** | Some  the  a  an | /səm/ (*some* is however always stressed and pronounced as /sᴧm/ if it is used to denote a defined quantity of something**)**  /ðə/(used before consonants) [However, the strong form, /ði:/ is used before vowels].  /ə/ (used before consonants)  /ən/ (used before vowels) |
| **Conjunctions** | And  but  as  than | ən  bət  əz  ðən |
| **Prepositions** | At  for  from  of  to | ət  fə  frəm  əv  tə (used before consonants). [The strong form tu: should be used before vowels]. |

**STRONG FORMS OF WORDS**

All the 35 words with weak forms listed above also have their strong forms. There are defined circumstances under which these strong forms must be used. In all, the combined use of strong forms and weak forms in continuous speech is demanded of the English speaker who would give correct speech. Below are the different cases which require the use of the strong forms of these words in English:

1. Use the strong forms of these words whenever the word is stressed in a group of words. In these examples, the strong forms of the underlined words are used. *I can fly. I have a goal. He tries hard.*
2. Use the strong form whenever the word is final in a word group: *I must. She is. Who would?*

Exceptions

The pronouns *he, him, his, her, them and us* are used in their weak forms when they occur in final position. However, if they are stressed in the word group in which they occur, the weak form will not be applicable. It is important to note that, often, some of the 35 words are not stressed neither do they occur in the final position in word groups. Therefore, their commonest usage is in their weak forms. However, when they are stressed it is for the purpose of emphasising meaning. An example is this: I want *a* father, not *an* animal.

**RHYTHM**

Students shall be taught that it is the eloquent combination of stressed and unstressed syllables in continuous speech that produces rhythm in spoken English. There is usually a conscious attempt on the part of the English speaker not to stress words that occur closely. In continuous speech, it is preferable to adopt alternate stressing of words in word groups. This introduces interval stresses of words which help to achieve rhythm. Rhythm is regular as well as patterned and English prides itself on being a rhythmic language. How is this achieved? The secret is in alternate and flexible stresses placed on the syllables of words in word groups. The steps below give important tips on how to achieve rhythm in word groups:

1. Say the unstressed syllables before stressed syllables very quickly so that they are all produced as short sounds. Stretch out the stressed syllables as long as possible in order to introduce a marked difference in length and timing between the stressed and unstressed syllables. Examples:

he’s ˈhere he was ˈhere he was in ˈhere

you’re ˈhome you’re at ˈhome but you’re at ˈhome

we ˈwork we can ˈwork we were at ˈwork

1. If the stressed syllable is followed by one or more unstressed syllables, let the stressed and the unstressed syllable following it be said at the same time length as a single stressed syllable would demand:

ˈserious ˈseriously

1. Give the same amount of articulation time to each stress group within a word. A stress group is composed of a stressed syllable and any unstressed syllable which may follow it. Examples are given below:

ˈGive him ˈthe hat ˈTake your ˈbag now

ˈMay I ˈhave your hat? ˈHow is he ˈtoday?

ˈBoth of us ˈwill meet. ˈBring him to me.

1. To practise, beat the rhythm with your hand, one beat for each stressed syllable being careful to spend the same length of time between each pair of beats.

**FLUENCY**

Students shall be taught that the aim of fluency in spoken English is to achieve continuous speech in which words and sound units are said smoothly and clearly with no gaps or hesitation as speech is produced. The following tips are useful for improving fluency:

1. Extend word groups into manageable short groups which could be pronounced smoothly. Example- *I don’t know – how - long - I need - to shout - for my daughter - to hear - me.*
2. Say the first short group as smoothly as you can. Repeat the short group if you stumble until you can say it as smoothly as possible. Add all the other short groups without stumbling until you have said them all smoothly with competent English sound unit articulation and ease of production.
3. If a short group begins with a stressed vowel, glide smoothly from the final sound of the word before to the initial vowel of the following word with no break nor hesitation. Do not separate them with a glottal stop.

THE FORM CLASSES

The Noun

Definition: The noun is defined as the name of a person, thing, place or quality.

Examples:

Persons: Grace, Nwachukwu, Mummy, Joy.

Things: ruler, pen, banana.

Places: Onitsha, church, market, Port Harcourt.

Quality: goodness, charity, beauty, kindness.

Classification of Nouns

Nouns can generally be classified as proper nouns and common nouns.

PROPER NOUNS:

They name particular;

* persons
* things
* places
* countries
* days of the week
* months of the year etc.

They begin with capital letters.

Examples:

*Mr Abiola* is my teacher.

I shall see you on *Tuesday*.

Common Nouns

They are so called because they denote general names for persons, places, things and ideas.

They are not begun in capitals except at the beginning of sentences.

Persons: man, boy, grandmother

Places: market, church, city

Things: pencil, desk, chair, book

Ideas: wisdom, idleness

Examples:

1. My sister came home.
2. We are visiting another city.
3. The car hit the boy.

Proper and common nouns can be divided into concrete and abstract nouns.

* Concrete Nouns

These are nouns that can be perceived by the senses i.e can be touched, smelt, seen, heard, tasted etc.- ‘boy’, ‘water’, ‘river’, ‘yam’.

Examples:

1. Have you ever been to Aso Rock? Concrete proper noun
2. Ngoziand the dog went strolling. Concrete proper noun and concrete common noun

* Abstract nouns

These are usually common nouns. These name an idea, action, a thought, a quality or state (i.e. intangible things) that lack physical qualities.

Idea- virtue

Action-running

Quality- goodness

State- childhood

Examples:

1. The choice is yours.
2. She is very immoral.
3. Fear was on every face.

Collective Nouns

These name groups of individuals as if they were one individual.

Examples:

Assembly, flock, crowd, mob, group, board, congregation, committee, team, crew, staff

They are treated as singular or plural depending on whether the group is seen as a single entity or is seen as being made up of several individuals. Generally, they are viewed as singular.

Examples:

1. The mob has started shouting.
2. The group has been called.
3. Your team is strong.

COUNTABLE NOUNS

Common nouns whether abstract, concrete, or collective, can be classed as countable or uncountable.

These can be counted, and they usually have singular and plural forms.

Count noun Singular Plural

Things- book, fan, pen books, fans, pens

Ideas- decision, issue decisions issues

Persons- boy, woman boys, women

Sentences

1. I need to make a decision.
2. The boys came to work.

Uncountable Nouns (non-count nouns)

Since they cannot be counted, they have only the singular form.

Non-count Noun Examples

Fluids water, blood, kerosene

Materials wood, iron, cheese, sand, rice

Abstract ideas courage, anger, hatred

Natural phenomenon darkness, blindness, wetness

Gases oxygen, hydrogen

Examples:

1. There is no water in this bucket.
2. I can’t get away from the darkness.
3. She loves eating cheese.

Also, note the proper agreement of collective nouns as exemplified below:

A staff of teachers, a band of musicians

A herd of cattle, a troupe of dancers

A gang of thieves, a crowd of people

A crew of sailors, a team of players

A swarm of bees, a board of directors

A troupe of monkeys, a fleet of ship

OTHER FORMS OF THE NOUN

1. Compound Nouns:

These are made up of two or more words. The plural of the compound nouns will be treated, alongside the singular form.

Compound nouns can be hyphenated, fused into one word, or neither fused nor hyphenated.

Hyphenated:

Father-in-law, son-in-law, passer-by, Afro-American, aide-de-camp commander-in-chief,secretary-general, governor-general, grant-in-aid, fountain-pen, grown-up

FUSED SINGLE WORDS

Daredevil, jawbone, iceberg, longhand, chairwoman, fieldwork, brainstorm, postmaster, boyfriend, headmaster, policeman, barelegged, barman, boyhood, headmistress, choirmaster, songster, manservant, sundown, sunset, summertime

Neither Fused nor Hyphenated

Fire escape, the big ten, summer camp, summer holiday, summer time, suicide note

1. A substantive- This is any word or group of words used as a noun- an infinitive, a gerund, a phrase, a noun clause etc.

QUIZ

From the group of words written below, pick out the nouns that are common nouns:

1. Onitsha, person, they, death, gone, Lagos, goodness, unique, particular, decision, fact, river, water, headmistress, doctor, land, state, board, adequate, darkness, abstract, spoken, depend, talked, yesterday.

From the group of words below pick out the nouns that are concrete nouns:

1. Decision, issue, count, darkness, White House, Anambra State, Kaduna State, England, dog, Ngozi, immoral, choice, table, telephone, computer, laptop computer, light, sound, music, paper, desire, attitude, dance, love, hatred.
2. Make five sentences with five collective nouns
3. Write down five examples each of count and non-count nouns in the following order:

Non-count Nouns-

Fluids, materials, abstract ideas, natural phenomenon, gases

Count Nouns-

Things, ideas, persons.

FEATURES OF NOUNS

Inflection

This denotes the change in spelling that a word goes through to show a change in meaning. Noun inflection shows changes in number, gender, and case.

NUMBER: This is the form of a noun which shows whether it is singular or plural. Most nouns formtheir plural by adding the ending -s, -es, or –ves.

REGULAR PLURALS

Examples

Girl, potato, chief, scarf, church, loaf, hero, mango, teacher, buffalo, day, boy

IRREGULAR PLURALS

Examples:

Man, mouse, ox, foot, crisis, stadium, louse, foot, child, curriculum, tooth, goose, formula

ZERO PLURALS

These don’t admit the plural marker, ‘s’ before them because they are seen as (non-count nouns).

Furniture, fish, advice, sheep, cattle, deer, series, information, specie, cutlery

Unchanging plurals

Pains, scissors, shorts, trousers, shears, whereabouts, news, barracks, environs, shambles, pyjamas, earnings, thanks, savings, minutes of meeting, gallows, innings, condolences, crossroads, premises, headquarters, wages, valuables, particulars, remains, congratulations, surroundings, clothes, belonging, jeans, goods, spectacles, glasses, knickers, slacks, dungarees, binoculars, tights, pincers, pants, gloves, physics, genetics, linguistics, mathematics, economics, electronics, poetics, mechanics, athletics, paediatrics, bourgeois.

EXAMPLES

1. The news is good.
2. They live in the barracks.
3. The goods have been sold.

UNMARKED PLURALS

The poor, the rich, cattle, people, police.

Gender

This indicates sex or absence of sex:

Father, mother; bull, cow; cock, hen; Audu, Nneka.

Neuter (Objects):

fire, water, flower, house.

Common (no sex)

Parent, child, bird, cousin

CASE

This shows the change in form which reveals the grammatical relationship of nouns to other words in the sentence. Three cases of nouns are often recognised.

The nominative case

The objective case

The possessive case

1. The nominative case.

Here, the noun acts as:

1. The subject of a verb
2. A predicate nominative
3. A word in direct address (vocative)
4. An appositive

**Noun as subject of a verb**

To determine this ask- who? or what? before the verb. The answer gives the subject.

1. The boy is here.

Who is here? The boy- (subject of the verb)- is

1. How great is God!

In this case, the subject is not before the verb. However, we arrive at the subject by our method of questioning- Who is great?- God (subject of the verb)- is.

**Noun as a predicate nominative** (Subjective- complement)

1. They remain friends. (Friends: subjective complement)
2. The poet became a dancer. (dancer: subjective complement)

Here, we find that the nouns underlined and called predicate nominative or subjective complements, help to define or explain the subjects. The nominative case is used after a linking verb that expresses a state of being than an action.

Example: be, seen, appear, become, prove, look, remain.

**Noun as a word in direct address (vocative)** i.e the word used to address a person directly.

1. Idiot, leave that boy! (Idiot- vocative)
2. Your friends, my girls, are my friends. My girls- (vocative)

**Noun used as an appositive**

An appositive is a noun which renames the same person or object in the subject position, and which immediately follows the noun it renames.

1. Ngozi, the teacher’s daughter, took first position.

(the teacher’s daughter- appositive)

1. Mr Samson, the pharmacist, sold drugs to me. (the pharmacist- an appositive)

**Noun in the objective case**

Here the noun acts as:

1. The direct object of a verb
2. The indirect object of a verb
3. The object of a preposition
4. An appositive

**Noun as the direct object of a verb**

The direct object answers the question- what? or whom?

1. She approved the forms.

What did she approve? – “the forms” (direct object of the verb approved) The forms (receiver of action)- direct object.

1. Death laid his hands on the king. "the king” direct object of the verb “laid”.

**Noun as the indirect object of a verb**

The indirect object is the person for whom or to whom, or the thing for which or to which, an action is performed. This is determined by asking to whom? to what? for whom? after the verb. The indirect object usually comes before the direct object.

1. My brother gave the girl the money.
2. The dancer showed the spectators her talents.

**Noun as object or complement of prepositions**

1. It is lying against the wall. Object of the preposition, “against”
2. The girl is in the classroom. Object of the preposition, “in”.

**Noun as an appositive in the objective case**

1. The girl saw Mrs Nwankwo, the school nurse.
2. The teachers made Nkechi Head girl.

**THE POSSESSIVE CASE (GENITIVE)**

A noun is in the possessive case when it adds the apostrophe to show:

1. Ownership
2. Source of origin
3. Authorship
4. Association and connection
5. Other such relationships.

Uses Examples

Ownership Emeka’s eye, Ike’s food

Source of origin Adam’s apple, mother’s son

Authorship Amina’s book

Association A woman’s work

Connection A year’s work

Note:

1. Words with the following endings are often nouns: -ing, -ment, -tion, -ity, -dom, -ance, -ism, -ette, -hood, -ship, -ary, -try, -ian, -ist, -age, -er, -oral, -ar, -er, -sion, -ness, -ence, -ure.
2. Nouns are usually preceded by function words and pronouns that serve as signals: the, this, a, an.

Function words

Articles the, a, an

Pronoun this, that, those

Possessive my, your, his, her, its, their

**Pronoun**

Definition

It is a word that substitutes for a noun.

Subject of a Sentence

He kicked the ball.

Everybody is present in the class.

Object of a verb

The dog bit him. Direct Object

Our teacher gave me the information.

Complement of subject

That is you in the picture. Complement of that

Who are they? Complement of thief

He regards his master as me.

Complement of a preposition

Ada sent the parcel to him.

We have asked for it.

**Classification of pronouns**

1. **Personal Pronouns**

These are used for definite persons or things. They refer (a) to the person speaking (first person), (b) to the person or spoken to second person to the person or thing spoken to (second person) to the person or thing spoken about (third person). The personal pronouns also have singular and plural forms; and subject and object forms.

**Note**: The third person pronouns change depending on a person’s sex. He is masculine, she is feminine; it is neuter (we use it when sex is absent or when it is not important).

Subject form- When we talk of what the person or thing does.

Person singular plural

First I we

Second you you

Third he, she, it they, they, they

Object form

Person singular plural

First me us

Second you you

Third him, her, it them, them, them

1. **Possessive Pronouns:**

These show possession and have two forms. One form functions as an adjective, and is sometimes referred to as a pronominal adjective; the other is a pure pronoun and functions as such.

1. This is *my* book. (‘My’ functions as an adjective modifying ‘book’.)
2. This book is *mine*. (‘Mine’ is a subject complement.)

Other examples of pronouns in their adjective and pronoun forms include:

Person Singular Singular

Adjective Pronoun

Form Form

First my mine

Second your yours

Third his, her, its his, hers

Person Plural Plural

Adjective Pronoun

Form Form

First our ours

Second your yours

Third their theirs

Reflexive Pronouns

These are pronouns that refer to reflect the subject of the sentence. They have the ending ‘self’ in their singular forms and the ending ‘selves’ in their plural forms.

Example:

The murderer hanged *himself.*

Grammatical Structure

* In the study of grammatical structures, we learn how words combine with other words to form larger units (phrases, clauses or sentences).
* We also learn the rules that govern the changes that occur in word forms.
* With a good knowledge of the grammatical structure in English, mastery of the language is
* achieved through:
* ability to listen to spoken English and read written English with better comprehension; and
* ability to speak and write better English.
* From the point of view of structure, language is made up of five units. Starting from the smallest, the units are:
* The morpheme
* The word
* The phrase
* The clause
* The sentence

A **morpheme** is the simplest meaningful unit or smallest meaningful form of language that does not resemble any other unit or form in sound and meaning *at the same time: e.g Tunde, son, sun, go, play, -er, (*as in *playing,) -s (*as in *boys, plays).*

* *Note:* although *son and sun* resemble each other in sound, they have different meanings*. The man/is black; (that) the book/has a hard cover; who/is black; which/has a hard cover; (since) he/is black; (because) it/has a hard cover.*
* *Observe that as in commands, one word can make a clause: e.g Go (=You, /go!); Run! (=You/ run!)*
* *A* ***sentence*** *consists of one or more clauses e.g. (the clauses are separated by thin strokes)*
* *The man is black,/and has a small stature; I know/that the man is black;*
* *We notice/that the book has a hard cover; Call the man/who is black; She has a book/which has a hard cover; I love the man/because he is black; She likes the book/since it has a hard cover.*