

Managing role-plays

When doing a role-play in class, it's useful to think in terms of three stages:

- *Preparation* – getting learners ready for the role-play
- *Performance* – the role-play itself
- *Feedback* – reflecting on how the role-play went.

In this Teaching Tip, we look at some ideas for managing each of these stages in turn.

Task

Imagine that your learners are going to do these the role-plays below. Their task is to have a conversation for each situation and to come up with a compromise which satisfies both sides.

1 You run a small business together. A – you'd like to employ an assistant. B – you think this would be expensive and unnecessary.

2 You're flatmates. A – you're a keen cyclist and you keep your bike just inside the front door. B – you hate having a dirty bike in your flat.

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Preparation

- 1 Divide the class into two large groups, A and B. Give them the role cards to read through.
- 2 In group A, learners work in pairs and prepare for the part of person A in the role play. What will they say and how will they say it? In the same way, pairs in group B prepare for the part of person B.

Try to give learners some specific goals to work towards in their preparation, for example:

- *Think of five reasons to support your point of view.*
- *Think of five arguments the other person might use, and decide how you'll answer them.*

If one of the aims of the role-play is to practise some specific language from earlier on in the lesson (e.g. some functional expressions), encourage learners to look back at the language and tick or note down particular expressions which they think might come in useful.

Performance

- 3 Now learners are ready to do the role-play itself. Put them in new pairs: a learner from group A with a learner from group B.
- 4 Quickly remind learners of their goal in the role-play (in this example, to reach a compromise which both A and B are happy with). Tell them how long they have, then let them start.
- 5 Remind learners when their time is nearly up, e.g. '*One minute left!*'

Option: get learners to do the role-play again in new pairs. See the Teaching Tip on **Progressive pair and group work**.

Feedback

- 6 Ask learners to go back to their partners from the Preparation stage and report on how their role-plays went. *What did they say? What did the other person say? Did they manage to reach a compromise? If so, what was it?*
- 7 Round off by asking one or two learners to tell the class about the outcomes of their role-plays.