

## Lessons with Sonam

Early on I decided that Literacy would not be sole or even primary focus. Speaking a top priority with emphasis on pronunciation. Despite his having been here for 14 years, his life is lived very much as part of the Tibetan community, so he does not speak English as often as he needs to, in order to make significant progress

I asked him his goals and he said getting into the security industry, both because of Manly hospital's closure, also for career growth and variety

Accordingly, I rang four Security training firms and discussed requirements. They said he could go in anytime and have a free test to give an idea of where he was. He took some time to do it and didn't do well, which I think he found rather discouraging

I chose to have our lessons in the office, both as neutral and professional environment and for access to the resources, this will vary for you and your students' situations and temperaments

I made it an aim to practise all four skills each week, reading, writing, speaking, listening but decided we would not try to follow any particular course or book. I also wanted to be open to things that occurred organically during class

Examples of the things we did every week – that he really enjoyed. I checked regularly to make sure he was enjoying the activities and told him we could stop/change any of them

Spelling tests. Plenty available online. I started off with grad 5-6 but these were too hard and he was getting too many wrong – discouraging and counter-productive, so moved to grade 3. Even these are harder than I expected. Ten words each week, any incorrect repeated with the ten new ones the following week. He very rarely got them wrong a second time. Sometimes I would get him to create sentences, orally or written, incorporating the words

Homophones – similar to above (not every week)

Story on phone. Each week the next chapter or few pages. I read twice, holding the book so that he can see the text, discuss the story between two readings to make sure he understands, go over vocab items, he follows the text and we record on his phone. His homework to listen as many times as possible, next week he reads it back

British Council Rants and Raves. Dialogues recorded on my phone, different voice and accents so good. He listens twice, second time with text, we discuss them, I remove the text and give him another copy of it cut into parts. This was surprisingly difficult for him, organizing them in order

We worked on areas that arose naturally out of the lesson e.g. comparatives and superlative which I realized he had very little command of. Also giving and receiving directions. Some good stuff in the resources, then I would ask him to tell me e.g. the way from Humphreys on the Corso to the hospital. Also pronunciation work that cropped up, e.g. he had a lot of difficulty with words beginning 'cl' so I created a few drills practicing the sound

Some sample websites, but there are many others:

Homophones

<https://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/hilarious-homophones-writing-mistakes-to-avoid/>

Spelling tests

<https://www.k12reader.com/worksheet/3rd-grade-master-spelling-list/view/>

British Council Rants and Raves

As well as the MP3, there are worksheets and teaching ideas

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/rants-raves-reality-tv-0>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/rants-raves-returning-goods-a-shop>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/rants-raves-queuing-0>