

What *not* to say to someone who stammers

Topic

Stammering/stuttering and how best to respond when someone stammers.

Aims

- To help students understand more about stammering and how (not) to respond when someone stammers
- To practise reading for specific information
- To be able to use a range of structures for expressing preference and/or annoyance: would prefer, would sooner, would rather, wish

Age/level

Adults/older teens B1+/B2 (especially useful for FCE)

Time

45 minutes

Materials

Worksheet (3 pages)

Introduction

This lesson was devised to mark International Stammering/Stuttering Awareness Day on 22 October 2018. However, as this is not specifically mentioned, it could be used at any time of year.

The lesson begins with students reading a short text with some key points about stammering. (Note that 'stammering' is the word used in the UK, and 'stuttering' means the same thing but is more commonly used in the USA and Australia.) They then go on to read a first-person account by a person who stammers, about how he would prefer people to respond when he does so. After some discussion about the topic, the lesson goes on to focus on some different grammatical structures to express preference and sometimes annoyance: would rather/sooner, would prefer, wish. There is some practice using sentence transformation (as found in FCE) and then some more personalised practice.

Procedure

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| 1. Lead-in (5 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to read the short text in exercise 1. • Students then discuss in pairs what, if anything, surprised them. They may, for example, be surprised that it is genetic or that it is relatively common. |
| 2. Reading (10–) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discuss the questions in exercise 2 in pairs. Because this can be a |

15 minutes)	<p>sensitive subject, it is probably better not to make this into a whole-class discussion. Students can then decide whether to say to their partner that they have a stammer themselves or have a family member who does, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Joe and ask students to read the text in exercise 3 and compare with their ideas from exercise 2. • Students list the five ways of responding Joe finds unhelpful and what he'd prefer people to do (exercise 4a). Briefly feed back as a class. • In pairs again, students discuss the questions in exercise 4b. Briefly feed back as a class. <p>Suggested answers: People may feel embarrassed, or be wanting to help the person, as well as being unsympathetic. The more people talk openly about stammering and how to respond, the easier it will be for people who stammer, as they will feel more accepted.</p>
3. Grammar focus (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to find and complete the different ways of expressing preference (exercise 5). Once they have done this, ask them what grammatical differences they notice in the structures. Briefly elicit a few examples. • Make sure students understand the difference between bare infinitive (go) and full infinitive (to go). Students then complete the grammar rules (exercise 6a), using the words in the box (they use some words more than once). <p>Key: 1 prefer 2 rather 3 prefer 4 prefer 5 rather 6 rather/sooner 7 sooner /rather 8 rather/sooner 9 sooner/rather 10 rather/sooner 11 rather (not sooner) 12 wish 13 wish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 6b – Ask students to identify which form expresses some annoyance: wish (depending on intonation, the other forms could be used this way as well, but 'wish' always has a feeling of annoyance).
4. Grammar practice (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 7 – Check students understand how to complete the exercise, using the word in capitals. Then ask them to complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Note that these structures are commonly testing in this task in the FCE exam. Let students check and compare their answers in pairs, before checking as a class. <p>Key: 1 I'd rather you didn't shout. 2 I'd sooner he didn't buy me presents all the time. 3 Lucy would prefer to go to the cinema rather than (go to) the theatre. 4 I wish you wouldn't whistle all the time. 5 I'd prefer to eat Chinese food tonight. 6 They wish you wouldn't use your mobile at the dinner table. 7 I'd rather not go out tonight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students then work in pairs to make a list of things another people sometimes do that they find annoying (exercise 8a). They then work together (exercise 8b) to express these ideas using different structures from exercise 6. • Elicit a few examples from the class.

Contributed by

Rachael Roberts