

THE ESL LINK

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How are you preparing for Easter?

Here are some Lenten resources that help with our meditations. Consider using one or more of them for special readings, prayers, reflections and inspirations during this season. They range from scriptures, devotional readings, writings by church fathers, to visual inspirations and action suggestions:

- + [Lent is a Time to Focus on the Cross](#)
- + [By His Wounds the World Is Healed](#)
- + [A Lenten Journey of Confession & Action](#)
- + [Praying Lent](#)
- + [Read Church Fathers for Lent](#)



Searching our Hearts to Prepare for Easter

Kaarina Hsieh

Easter is a wonderful topic for ESL conversation. Many understand this to be a key holiday for the Church as it speaks to the heart of Christian faith. Canadian culture in general also celebrates it with things like bunnies and eggs. The Easter season marks a time of spiritual renewal for everyone and many cultures share the core of faith but celebrate with different traditions. Some attend sunrise services and offer special prayers. In Western Europe, Easter is Egg Sunday where everyone eats eggs! Some cultures make special egg breads and pastries only enjoyed at Easter like the Italian pastry called Zepoli. Many feast; some paint elaborate Easter eggs; some march in crucifixion marches. In North America, the chocolate Easter egg hunt, while not exactly considered a spiritual activity, has marked the day as one of great celebration!

As we look ahead, anticipating spring after a long winter, our senses are awakened by warmer days and bluer skies and we naturally begin to think about this new season. We think, for example, about all the things that need

sorting. Spring cleaning is something that many people consider a tradition. It is a time to go through drawers and dressers to clean out clutter, to discard things we no longer need and make room for new things that we do need! Spring is also naturally a time to engage in some deep soul cleaning as well! This is a metaphor rich with imagery and resonance for both the Christian and for the one who might not yet believe. We echo the Psalmist who says "Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit in me" (Psalm 51:10). Even the one who does not yet have a personal relationship with Christ can engage in a time of self-reflection, evaluating priorities and setting new goals for healthier, more abundant living.

The season of Lent which occurs for forty days before Easter is upon us. It provides us the perfect opportunity to stop and take inventory of our lives, taking time to think and reflect on who we are in Christ and all Jesus has done for us on the Cross. Scripture tells us that "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sins



and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Today we live in the saving light of the cross that gives us hope but one day we will experience the hope of heaven, that place where there will be no more suffering, no more tears and no more sorrow, where everything will be made new again.

This is a season of remembering. Lent helps us to re-focus our hearts on who Christ is – a loving and generous Saviour – giving up His life, so that we will have eternal life with him one day. As we reflect on this joy, we are compelled to be more intentional in the way we spend our time and order our days. The natural dynamics of Lent have to do with fasting and being aware of those things and practices we fill our days with, things that distract us from what's really going on in our lives spiritually. They reveal the reality of how sin keeps us at a distance from God and the deeply patterned behaviors that keep us from living in complete surrender to Christ. We spend time in deeper prayer to uncover the things that have become barriers to living freely, joyfully and fully in our true identities in Christ. We ask ourselves these questions:

What things or practices, distractions or preoccupations are keeping me from living a life of true worship?

What am I doing to keep my soul centred and my heart pure before God?

What might I "give up" as an offering to God in order to bring more balance to my life that will help me give more attention to God?

How will I pray?

What are my true treasures and how will I release them to God?

This is a hope filled season made even more hope filled when we spend time having intentional conversations about our lives in Christ and more quiet time with Him. May you be blessed this Easter!

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Easter ESL Resources

Beginners' level

<http://www.bestofthereader.ca/Ebooks/Holidays-print.pdf> (pp. 14, 15)

http://bogglesworldesl.com/easter_worksheets.htm (an assortment of fun activities like crossword, rhyme, word search)

http://www.eslflow.com/Easter_vocabulary_red.pdf (matching (Christian) Easter vocabulary to pictures)

Conversation questions

<http://iteslj.org/questions/easter.html>

http://teflpedia.com/Easter_conversation_questions

Readings

http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/04/good_friday.html (with lots of accompanying exercises)

http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/04/easter_sunday.html

<http://ciaofromdebbie.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/WhatIsEasterReadingComp.pdf>

Specifically Christian content

[Good Friday, Easter Part 1, Easter Part 2 Lessons \(The Virtues series\)](#)

[ESL Easter Lessons from SOCEM website](#); see also <https://sites.google.com/site/eslministries/Home/esl-bible-study/free-to-use-materials>

http://www.abcteach.com/free/rc_easter_uppermiddle_b.pdf (a reading about the church calendar around Easter)

Free Christian scripts, good for putting on Easter drama: <http://bobsnook.org/>

Video clips from The JESUS Film with discussion questions: <http://www.mentorlink.org/index.php/resources/days-with-jesus/>

Stories that illustrate the meaning of Easter

[350 Push-ups](#)

North American cultural stories to do with Easter (good as warm-ups or lead-ins to Easter story)

[Easter stories... Chicken Soup for the Soul](#)

Others

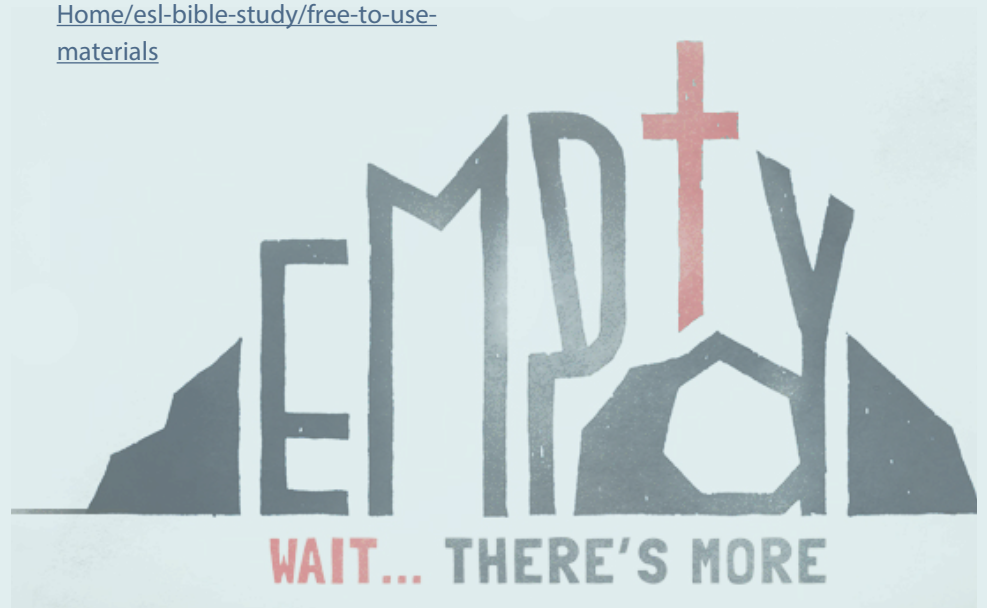
Good Friday handouts:

<http://www.faithfulfriends.org/GoodFriday1.pdf>

<http://www.faithfulfriends.org/GoodFriday2.pdf>

Easter card:

<http://www.faithfulfriends.org/eastercard3.doc>



The Impact of Global English(es)

As companies and businesses become more international, the number of non-native speakers of English in a global business gradually outgrows that of native speakers. American native speakers, for example, find that they are not well understood by their European colleagues. As a result, native speakers are realizing that they have to rethink and recalibrate their use of English for better and more effective communications. Some companies have in-house e-learning courses entitled “English for the Native Speaker”.

But this is a wider phenomenon than what’s happening in companies. Throughout the world, non-native speakers of English are outnumbering native speakers, and English is increasingly becoming a lingua franca. Varieties of English like Chinese English, German English become more and more common and acceptable; there is no longer a “standard” English which everyone has to conform to, but different types of English for different situations. To the native speaker, this often comes as a shock.

The tables seem to be turned. Native speakers of English no longer have the advantage; in fact, they often find themselves in the minority and at a disadvantage in that they have to learn to speak “like the rest”. For instance, at the European Parliament, non-native speakers complain to the Anglophones, “Can’t you just speak English like the rest of us do!” There is a shift in ‘power balance’, as it were, and the native speakers do not come across as well as they think.

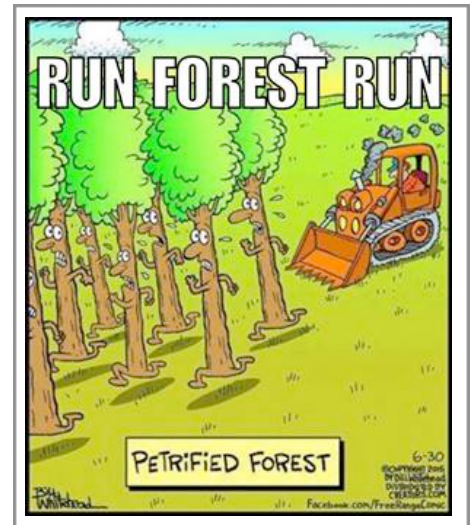
What are some of the ‘blind spots’ native speakers have regarding their use of English, and how can they change to adapt to non-native speakers? One change they can make is to alter the speed: while an average native speaker speaks at 250 words per minute, an average non-native speaker is comfortable speaking at 150 words per minute. Another change they can make is to reduce the use of idioms, especially local ones like “that dog don’t hunt” (a southern American saying meaning ‘that’s not so good an idea’). Sometimes there are cultural references that they might avoid, for example, for Americans, the references to football and baseball. They can also notice their articulation and reduce the use of contractions like “I’ll” or “he can’t”, using “I will” and “he cannot” instead. As well, ‘run-on’ informal speech like “gonna” and “wanna” is also hard for the non-native speaker. Generally, they do well to pause to listen more, and to ask more questions so that the non-native speaker has a chance to speak.

As ESL teachers in North America, we should also be aware of such blind spots. Adapting to be more like and more readily understandable by the non-native speaker, our students, not only shows sensitivity to their needs and struggles, but is also a humbling gesture that speaks of a more collaborative attitude. It also shows an awareness to the global trend and our need to respond to it. How can we balance the need to learn Canadian culture and how English is used here (for example, in movies, on TV, in different kinds of literature) with the freedom to retain the uniqueness in their own varieties of English? Should our goal in teaching be both: (i) helping students to understand Canadian English fully so that they can live a full life; and (ii) bringing to their awareness the global situation and not insisting that they learn only a “standard” “North American English”?

Editor’s Note: The main ideas of this article are summarized from a BBC news article which can be found [here](#). What are your perspectives? Do you agree with the ideas expressed? We would appreciate responses and critiques. Please send them to eslministries@gmail.com.

ESL Library eslibrary.com

is a repository of ready-made, downloadable ESL lessons of different categories including discussion starters, everyday dialogues and holidays and events. Full access is by subscription but you can view a collection of sample lessons [here](#).



'Try to' vs 'try and'

“Let me try and fix it.” “Let me try to fix it.” Have you ever wondered which one is more correct? Which do you use? Is there any difference in meaning? Some interesting discussions on this can be found [here](#) and [here](#) (Merriam-Webster video).



English at Mill Crossing Cambridge

Pam Harrison

The English Class at Mill Crossing Church in Hespeler, Cambridge is a 3-hour class offered twice a month. The primary goal of the class is to provide the students with a good English lesson including lots of speaking practice. The second goal is to introduce them to Christianity. With the numbers growing we are hopeful that this indicates we are meeting the needs of our students.

This English club has been in existence for 5 years and for the past 3 years we have met at Mill Crossing Church. We meet every other Friday as this fits the schedules of the volunteers and the availability of the venue. Pam Harrison has been the leader from the start. She is a retired ESL teacher and is TESL certified. Eva Wallace, a member of Mill Crossing Church, is also TESL certified and is teaching in the Conestoga LINC program. She and Pam team-teach the class. There are three other volunteers who belong to Mill Crossing Church: two support the activities and one looks after the preschoolers so that their moms can join us. We have on average 10 students, most of them from Japan who are spouses of Toyota employees, and the others from Iraq, China, Korea, Brazil and Pakistan.

Since we are advertised as an English Class we feel our first goal must be to give the students the best English lesson we can come up with. Each lesson is designed around a theme and a function or grammar item. The theme is introduced with conversation questions for the first half hour as the students are gathering. Then we present the grammar point and guide the students through practice activities, aiming to be less paper and pencil and more speaking focused. After a break, for which the students take turns bringing treats, we have a communication game or jigsaw activity that develops the theme further. Having four first-language English speakers available to lead groups is a big plus in our program.

Our second goal is to introduce our students to Christianity. We find that Canadian cultural celebrations are the most natural occasions to introduce them to stories from the Bible. On the Fridays near Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's and Easter, we usually spend one portion of the lesson studying a Bible passage followed by discussion questions. Sometimes we use Power Point presentations or invite a speaker to present the passage. This plan to introduce them to the Bible is

announced to the students at the beginning of the year when we outline our program. We feel it is important to always invite them to participate and thank them for allowing us to present the Bible to them.

We have increased our Christian witness this year by gathering as volunteers before class to pray for our students and by adding a Bible verse to the header of the grammar page. During the months when there isn't a festival we insert a 5-minute testimony into the program once in a while, giving the students a glimpse into our lives and a look at why Christianity is important to us in our daily lives.

"That was a great lesson," said a Japanese mom after a class with interesting speaking practice. "That's a beautiful story," said our Iraqi student, reflecting on the story of the Prodigal Son. We pray that as we make their need for English first and foremost in our lessons, the students will recognize our respect for their concerns. Then, when we do share from our Christian experience, our witness may be even more effective.

Check out...

<https://sites.google.com/site/eslministries/Home/esl-lessons/pronunciation-lessons>

on the SOCEM website for a great **Pronunciation resource: Speaking Clearly**. It is the fine work of Pam Cousins and is highly recommended. It is a complete Canadian pronunciation text including Self-Study and Teacher's Guide, Student Book and audio files. SOCEM thanks Pam deeply for her generosity to donate this resource.

Preparing Great Grammar and Pronunciation Lessons

Carol Blake

We all want our teaching to be interesting and effective. I regularly reflect on my teaching practice, and try to consider each of the following aspects of lesson planning*, particularly for grammar and pronunciation lessons. Let me share some tips that help me improve my lessons.

1. Presenting the point

First, remind yourself of the scope of the lesson; know the needs and abilities of your students, and the time frame and focus of your class session. Aim not to overwhelm your class with too much information, but also not to under-interest your students with too little challenge.

Plan to begin by illustrating your main lesson point in context. Give or generate a piece of real language -- oral or written -- to show your focus. Ideally, it will be in a context your students recognize and experience. Then you might present some of the challenging aspects of the point to illustrate why it is the focus of your lesson.

Once you've introduced the point, decide whether you will present the lesson inductively or deductively. Will you give your students carefully selected examples to help them discover a grammatical rule or pronunciation pattern, or will you teach them the rule or pattern first and then show examples of it? Generally, if students are challenged to figure something out themselves, they will remember it much better than if they are told. If we present material in the form of puzzles or challenges, students are more engaged and interested. For example, with a little help, students can often figure out the pronunciation differences of the *+s* or *+ed* suffixes if they are given illustrative examples to sort into columns.

2. Providing focused practice

Once the point has been presented, focused practice requires students to apply the lesson in varying degrees of difficulty to given sets of data. This helps both to reinforce the regular patterns and to introduce some of the challenges where the pattern isn't always as expected. (Yes, all rules have exceptions, and I have discovered that it's best not to over-emphasize them, but also not to ignore them, even when a point is first introduced.)

Typical focused practice activities can include flash cards; various mnemonic activities such as visualization, actions, or sorting; chanting or singing; pencil and paper exercises such as matching, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks (cloze); or even puzzles, such as word searches or picture searches (on topics specifically chosen to highlight the lesson point).

Remember that these activities inherently have different levels of difficulty. For example, in error analysis exercises, finding a correct usage among two or three options (multiple

choice) is easier than finding and correcting incorrect usage. Compare line 1 and line 2 below.

1. *He is a university student.*
He is an university student.
He is university student.
2. *Toronto is largest city in Canada.*

Be sure to start with easier activities to encourage your students. Then increase the challenge to reinforce the learning.

3. Challenging students with communicative exercises

Communicative exercises give students opportunities to use their new skills in less controlled situations: strategically-chosen activities that provide maximized opportunity for practice. Do you have favourite types of communicative activities you frequently or exclusively use? Is it time to try something new?

Potential exercises could focus on conversations; interviews; writing emails; giving advice or opinions; discussing daily tasks or current events; case studies; or games such as board games, bingo, or charades. Again, remember to take care to match the inherent difficulty of an activity to the abilities of the students.

Communicative exercises can be found in many textbooks and on many websites. Often the activities are even sorted by the teaching points they specifically emphasize. Your challenge is not so much to find an activity, but to evaluate its appropriateness for your group of students.

4. Giving feedback

How and *when* are the questions to consider when thinking about how you provide feedback and correction as your students work through the exercises and activities individually or in small groups throughout the lesson.

Some strategies to consider:

- During the focused and communicative activities, you can closely monitor your students and step in to offer correction whenever you feel it's necessary.
- You can roam around the room, pausing at groups of students, available to answer questions or provide advice.
- You can observe types of difficulties in a number of students or groups and then briefly call the class to attention for a lesson reminder given to the whole group.
- At the end of the lesson, you can summarize your observations (both positive and negative) for the class.
- At the end of the lesson and/or the next time your class meets, you can review the main points and field questions.

Which of these do you commonly use? Which do you think are most effective?

Your challenge

Consider each of the aspects presented above. Take at least one point that has made you think, and remember it when preparing your next grammar or pronunciation lesson. You can present lessons your students will enjoy!

** This article grew out of the basic framework for a grammar lesson as presented in Techniques and Resources in Teaching Grammar by Marianne Celce-Murcia and Sharon Hilles, Oxford UP, 1988, pp 27, 28.*

Carol Blake has a Masters degree in Linguistics (University of Toronto). For 30+ years, she has been involved in teaching various aspects of English and language learning in first language, second language, and foreign language situations.

Editor's Note: This article was first published in the TESL Ontario blog on January 13, 2017: <http://blog.teslontario.org/preparing-great-grammar-and-pronunciation-lessons/> Republish with permission.

Interested in ministering to refugees?

The 2016 Special Issue of the *TESL Canada Journal* - Refugees in Canada: ESL for Resilience and Empowerment - is now [available online](#). There are many thought-provoking articles from diverse perspectives.



7 Informal Contractions

WANNA know what GONNA means?
LEMME show you.

Have you seen words like "gonna" or "wanna" and wondered what they mean? Perhaps you have looked in a dictionary and been unable to find them. That's because these words are "informal contractions" or short forms of other words that people use when speaking informally. They are not exactly slang, but they are a little like slang. In fact, if you look in a good (big) dictionary, you will usually find them.

Here are the 7 most common informal contractions, with example sentences:

1. GIMME = give me

Gimme your money.
Don't gimme that rubbish.
Can you gimme a hand?

2. GONNA = going to

Nothing's gonna change my love for you.
I'm not gonna tell you.
What are you gonna do?

3a. GOTTA = (have) got a

I've gotta gun.
I gotta gun.
She hasn't gotta penny
Have you gotta car?

3b. GOTTA = (have) got to

I've gotta go now.
I gotta go now.
We haven't gotta do that.
Have they gotta work?

4. INIT = isn't it

That's smart, init?
Init strange?

5. KINDA = kind of

She's kinda cute.
Are you kinda mad at me?

6. LEMME = let me

Lemme go!
He didn't lemme see it.

7a. WANNA = want to

I wanna go home.
I don't wanna go.
Do you wanna watch TV?

7b. WANNA = want a

I wanna coffee.
I don't wanna thing from you.
Do you wanna beer?

Please remember that these are *informal* contractions. That means that we do not use them in "correct" speech, and we almost never use them in writing. We use them only when speaking fast and informally, for example, with friends. Also, the sentences above may be a little artificial because when we use a contraction like "wanna", we probably also use other contractions in the same sentence, as follows:

Do you want a beer/Bible?
Do you wanna beer/Bible?
D'you wanna beer/Bible?
D'ya wanna beer/Bible?
Ya wanna beer/Bible?
Wanna beer/Bible?

There are more Informal Contractions at:

<http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/contractions-informal.htm>

Free ESL Resources

This Australian website has a wealth of ESL materials (including biblical) that are freely available upon request: <http://www.aussieesl.com/esl-resources/printed-resources/>
Well worth exploring.

