

# ESL shadowing activities: four ready-made lessons

Four 20-minute speaking lessons for English classes, with real lines from talks that open in Sada, a free browser app: students listen, record themselves and compare their take with the speaker. Students need no account.

Revised 12 October 2026 · [sadaspeak.com/en/esl-shadowing-activities/](https://sadaspeak.com/en/esl-shadowing-activities/)

## For teachers: the kit in short

- **In class:** pick a lesson, show its lines on the screen or hand out the PDF, and follow the 20-minute plan (warm-up, practise, share). Students open each line from its link or its QR code on their own phone or computer.
- **Free, with no accounts for students:** they open a link and start. There is no paid plan and no limit on students.
- **Privacy:** recordings and voices stay on the device, and speech recognition runs in the browser. The site keeps ordinary visit records; the privacy section below says exactly what.
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# Lesson 1. Linking sounds

Level (CEFR, estimate): B1–B2 · Time: 20 minutes in class, about 10 minutes of homework

## Objectives

- Learners can hear where a final consonant joins the vowel at the start of the next word (“lift up”, “give up”).
- Learners can say a line of 13 to 15 words without stopping between the words.
- Learners can keep up with a speaker’s pace while speaking at the same time.

**Aim:** Students hear a final consonant run into the next word’s vowel, and say the line without stopping between words.

## The lines



**“face down the bullies, lift up the downtrodden, and never ever give up.”**

William McRaven · 5:23 · Mode: With the speaker

“lift up”, “never ever” and “give up”: each final consonant runs into the next vowel.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/3sK3wJAXGfs?range=323431-327564&mode=shadow](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/3sK3wJAXGfs?range=323431-327564&mode=shadow)



**“I worked and worked, and I got lucky, and worked, and got lucky, and worked.”**

Amy Cuddy · 17:02 · Mode: With the speaker

“worked and” and “and I”: the /t/ and the /d/ join the next word.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/Ks-\\_Mh1QhMc?range=1022643-1026375&mode=shadow](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/Ks-_Mh1QhMc?range=1022643-1026375&mode=shadow)



**“is that everything I thought I knew about that story turned out to be wrong.”**

Malcolm Gladwell · 5:36 · Mode: With the speaker

“thought I”, “knew about” and “turned out”: three joins in one line.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/ziGD7vQ0w18?range=336874-342717&mode=shadow](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/ziGD7vQ0w18?range=336874-342717&mode=shadow)

## A 20-minute class plan

1. Warm-up (5 minutes): write “give it away” on the board and say it as three words, then as one. Ask which one a speaker would say.
2. Practise (10 minutes): each student opens the first line in With the speaker, listens twice with Loop on, and records three takes. Speaking with the speaker makes the joins necessary: a student who stops between words falls behind, and Compare shows the delay.
3. Share (5 minutes): two or three students play “Original, then me” to the class. The class names one join they heard and one they missed.

**Homework:** Record each line three times at home and bring the best take to the next class, on the same phone or computer.

## Lesson 2. -ed endings

Level (CEFR, estimate): A2–B1 · Time: 20 minutes in class, about 10 minutes of homework

### Objectives

- Learners can sort regular past-tense verbs by the sound of -ed: /t/, /d/ or /ɪd/.
- Learners can say the -ed ending clearly in a short line, without dropping it.

**Aim:** Students hear and say the three sounds of -ed, /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/, and stop dropping the ending.

### The lines



**“I was stressed, and I was frustrated.”**

Oprah Winfrey · 6:01 · Mode: After the speaker

/t/ in “stressed” against /ɪd/ in “frustrated”.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/GMWfieBGR7c?range=361610-364910&mode=repeat](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/GMWfieBGR7c?range=361610-364910&mode=repeat)



**“How can you get fired from a company you started?”**

Steve Jobs · 6:09 · Mode: After the speaker

/d/ in “fired” against /ɪd/ in “started”.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/UF8uR6Z6KLc?range=369050-371899&mode=repeat](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/UF8uR6Z6KLc?range=369050-371899&mode=repeat)



**“And I’m always prepared to be amazed, and I'm never disappointed.”**

Celeste Headlee · 11:09 · Mode: After the speaker

/d/ in “prepared” and “amazed”, /ɪd/ in “disappointed”.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/R1vskiVDw14?range=669630-674397&mode=repeat](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/R1vskiVDw14?range=669630-674397&mode=repeat)

### A 20-minute class plan

1. Warm-up (5 minutes): three columns on the board, /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/. Students sort verbs they know (worked, played, wanted) and say why: the sound before -ed decides.
2. Practise (10 minutes): each student records the three lines in After the speaker. On Compare, when a word is shown as not heard, listen to its ending first: was the -ed said?
3. Share (5 minutes): pairs swap devices and listen to each other’s best take beside the original. Each partner names one ending that came through clearly.

**Homework:** Record each line three times at home and bring the best take to the next class, on the same phone or computer.

## Lesson 3. Question intonation

Level (CEFR, estimate): B1 · Time: 20 minutes in class, about 10 minutes of homework

### Objectives

- Learners can tell whether a speaker's voice rises or falls at the end of a question.
- Learners can copy the falling tune of a wh-question and of a tag question that expects agreement.
- Learners can mark the tune of a line with an arrow before they say it.

**Aim:** Students notice where a speaker's voice rises or falls in three kinds of question, and copy it.

### The lines



**“How can we speak powerfully to make change in the world?”**

Julian Treasure · 0:29 · Mode: After the speaker

A wh-question: the usual melody falls at the end. Listen to “world”.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/eIho2S0ZahI?range=29346-33112&mode=repeat](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/eIho2S0ZahI?range=29346-33112&mode=repeat)



**“Would you all like to stand up for a moment?”**

Julian Treasure · 7:49 · Mode: After the speaker

A yes/no question that is also a polite request: these usually rise, but not always. Listen to “moment”.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/eIho2S0ZahI?range=469557-472512&mode=repeat](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/eIho2S0ZahI?range=469557-472512&mode=repeat)



**“There's nothing wrong with a bit of silence in a talk, is there?”**

Julian Treasure · 6:34 · Mode: After the speaker

A tag, “is there?”, where he expects you to agree: such tags usually fall.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/eIho2S0ZahI?range=394555-397695&mode=repeat](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/eIho2S0ZahI?range=394555-397695&mode=repeat)

### A 20-minute class plan

1. Warm-up (5 minutes): say “You’re a teacher.” and “You’re a teacher?” The class raises a hand when the voice goes up.
2. Practise (10 minutes): students play each line two or three times, draw an arrow over its last word (up or down), then record it in After the speaker.
3. Share (5 minutes): students play their take, and the class decides whether the arrow matches the speaker's. Sada does not measure pitch, so this judgement is by ear.

**Homework:** Record each line three times at home and bring the best take to the next class, on the same phone or computer.

## Lesson 4. Dictation, then say it

Level (CEFR, estimate): A2–B1 · Time: 20 minutes in class, about 10 minutes of homework

### Objectives

- Learners can write down a short spoken line word for word.
- Learners can name the words they missed and why: an ending, a small word, or words run together.
- Learners can say the same line after checking it.

**Aim:** Students type what they hear, see which words they missed, then say the same line.

### The lines



#### **“You don't need to speak fast.”**

English Unleashed · 2:20 · Mode: Type it

Six short words, said slowly. A first line for any level.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/-SOVLf-g0ZM?range=140000-142540&mode=type](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/-SOVLf-g0ZM?range=140000-142540&mode=type)



#### **“It gives you a path into the future.”**

Carol Dweck · 0:40 · Mode: Type it

Listen for the ending of “gives” and for the small word “a”: both are short and easy to miss.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/\\_X0mg00SpLU?range=40927-44313&mode=type](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/_X0mg00SpLU?range=40927-44313&mode=type)



#### **“Not missiles, but microbes.”**

Bill Gates · 0:59 · Mode: Type it

Only four words, and the last one is the least everyday word of the four: listen for both of its syllables.

[sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/6Af6b\\_wyiWI?range=59792-63679&mode=type](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/add/6Af6b_wyiWI?range=59792-63679&mode=type)

### A 20-minute class plan

1. Warm-up (5 minutes): read one line from your coursebook once; students write it down and compare with a partner.
2. Practise (10 minutes): students open each line in Type it, listen as often as they need, type it and press Check. They see “5 of 8 words”, the missed words and one tip. Then Record this line.
3. Share (5 minutes): ask which word most of the class missed, and why (an ending, a small word, words running together). Play that line together once more.

**Homework:** Record each line three times at home and bring the best take to the next class, on the same phone or computer.

## Your 5-minute speaking practice

Open this address in the browser on your phone or computer. No app to install and no account:



[sadaspeak.com/app/#/path](https://sadaspeak.com/app/#/path)

1. Tap Start · line 1. Tap Listen and hear the line. Slow it to 0.75× if it is fast.
2. Choose After the speaker (you speak when the speaker stops) or With the speaker (you speak at the same time).
3. Tap Record. Allow the microphone the first time. After 3, 2, 1, say the line. It stops by itself.
4. Tap Compare. Play “Original, then me”. Look at the match score and the words that were not heard.
5. Record again until you like your take, then tap Next path line.

Show your teacher: play “Original, then me” on your own device, and show the days done and lines said on the path. Your recordings stay on your device, so bring the same phone or computer.

**This week: days \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ of the path.**