**TONGUE TWISTERS – by Dr. Seuss**

**YERTLE THE TURTLE**

**Strategy:** Working in small groups of four to a group:

**Lesson Objectives:**

*Note: Building vocabulary is not the main objective of a lesson on Tongue Twisters. The main objective is to get students familiar with the English language so that these silly tongue twisters eventually “roll off” the tongue which will enhance fluency, phraseology, and intonation.*

1. There are three multiple intelligences needed in speaking tongue twisters: Linguistic Intelligence, Logical-Mathematical Intelligence and Musical Intelligence. These multiple intelligences can be developed by the practice of simple tongue twisters.
2. In teaching ESL, tongue twisters are always a fun way for children to learn wordplay and specifically practice elocution: i.e., pronunciation, phraseology, fluency, and intonation of the “new” language.
3. The key to teaching Tongue Twisters is repetition of the same word of sound.
4. Students will be encouraged to memorize a tongue twister, by use of strategies called “read and look up,” and getting “chunks of language” in the brain.
5. Students will build confidence and poise as they recite a tongue twister before the class in pairs or as singles.

**ESL Objectives:**

- **Pronunciation** - result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to the English standard of correctness or acceptability. Pronunciation drills on the following sounds are included: /th/ /l/ /v/ /w/ /short e/
- **Diction** - usually implies a high level of usage; it refers chiefly to the choice of words and their arrangement. This is encouraged when the students make substitutions, vary their tales, or create their own skits. We want to encourage the students to use their English!
- **Vocabulary** - learning new words of a foreign language. This includes idiomatic expressions.
- **Fluency** - able to speak smoothly, easily, gracefully, and readily. All ESL methods seek to increase fluency.
- **Intonation** - the sound pattern of phrases and sentences produced by pitch variation in the voice which distinguishes kinds of sentences of different language cultures. Jazz chants are for the purpose of working on intonation.
- **Confidence** – levels increase the more students speak in front of their classmates, when the students are encouraged to vary their stories and make substitutions, through stating their own arguments and opinions, through skits, and in reciting dialogues.
First Session:

A. Review
1. Previous day’s vocabulary and idiom. Review by going over each vocabulary word from your Word Wall, calling on a student for the definition.
2. Hold up your picture of the idiom. Ask a student what it means.
3. Sing a song, or TPR from a previously taught lesson for reinforcement and for “warm up.”

B. Introduce the students to “Dr. Seuss,” using the following information as background material for the teacher:
1. Name at birth: Theodor Geisel – American author born March 2 1904 Springfield MA,
2. Died Sept 24 1991 La Jolla, CA.
3. Perhaps the most famous author for children, Dr. Seuss wrote and illustrated nearly 50 books of quirky children’s verse during his lifetime.
4. His books were famous for their funny rhymes and whimsical characters. Many of his silly stories address underlying social concerns.
5. He was a graduate of Dartmouth College.

C. The teacher tells the students that today they will practice some silly verses in order to help the students with their rhythm and flow when speaking English.

D. Teach new idiom:
1. Explain that every language has idiomatic expressions and unless you know some of them, it is often hard to understand what someone is saying. An idiom is a phrase, a few words, that says one thing but means quite another.

   Write the following Chinese idiom on the black board:
   It literally means, “one action, two responses.” OR Kill two birds with one stone.”

2. Teach the idiom - “That was a tongue twister!” Use the attached picture to demonstrate the idiom

E. Introduce vocabulary
1. Preview the story and jazz chant. Select words that they may not know the meaning.
2. Write the words on the board.
3. Discuss the meaning and practice the word.

F. Tell the story.
1. Have the students close their student workbooks while you tell the story.
2. Tell the story several times, using pictures from the book. You may want to purchase a cheap copy of this book with good, colored pictures. Take the book apart at the spine, and laminate the pictures that are part of the jazz chant below.

   **Story:** “Yertle is the name of the King turtle of a pond. He thinks his throne is not high enough to view the whole pond. He plans to raise his throne higher by doing so on the backs of 9 other turtles, standing on top of one another. The smallest turtle is on the bottom of the pile. His name is Mack. Mack is angry to be on the bottom. He BURPS so loudly he makes the other turtles fall down, including the King Turtle, named Yertle. They all fell into the muddy pond together. Now all the turtles are equal, and none is higher than the other.”

3. Ask who, what, where, why questions to ascertain if the students understand the story. **Chinese students typically do not volunteer, so plan on calling on particular students when you ask questions.** Another option which is a great technique is to start the story, then ask a student “and then what happened?” Continue in this manner until the story is finished. This will give you a good idea of how much was understood.
SECOND SESSION:
A. Review vocabulary once more. Ask students to open their workbooks.

B. Pronunciation Exercises:
1. For the [th] sound tell the students to put their tongues between their teeth and blow softly for the words “thing” and “throne.” Same tongue position but no blowing for the word “that.”
2. Watch the [l] sound in the word “plain,” “little,” and “lad.” Demonstrate that the tongue hits the roof of the mouth.

        That plain little turtle below in the stack,
        That plain little turtle whose name was just Mack,
        Decided he’d taken enough. And he had.
        And that plain little lad got a little bit mad.
        And that plain little Mack did a plain little thing.
        He Burped!!
        And his burp shook the throne of the King!

C. Teaching a Tongue Twister:
1. Review any words that may be difficult to pronounce.
2. Read the passage to the class at least 3 times
3. Have the assistants say it with you.
4. Have the class echo each line after Assistants and Teacher
5. Once you have gone over this with the entire class numerous times, break the students into groups of 4, each one in the group takes 2 verses, and the group practices the entire selection. Have them work the entire time, memorizing “chunks of language” so that it “rolls off the tongue.” The classroom assistants need to visit each group to make sure they are learning the selection and getting the rhythm of the verse.
6. Repetition is to key!!! Even if the students appear to know it!!

Yertle the Turtle (Condensed)

1. On a far-away Island of Sala-ma-Sond,
Yertle the Turtle was king of the pond.
A nice little pond. It was clean. It was neat.
The water was warm. There was plenty to eat.

2. “I’m ruler, said Yertle, “of all that I see.
But I don’t see enough. That’s the trouble with me.
This throne that I sit on is too, too low down.
It ought to be higher!” he said with a frown.

3. So Yertle, the Turtle King, lifted his hand
And Yertle, the Turtle King, gave a command.
He ordered nine turtles to swim to his stone
And, using these turtles, he built a new throne.

4. He made each turtle stand on each other’s back
And he piled them up in a nine-turtle stack.
And then Yertle climbed up. He sat down on the pile.
What a wonderful view! He could see ‘most a mile!

5. That plain little turtle below in the stack,
That plain little turtle whose name was just Mack,
Decided he’d taken enough. And he had.
And that plain little lad got a little bit mad.

6. And that plain little Mack did a plain little thing.
He Burped!!
And his burp shook the throne of the King!

7. Well, that was the end of the Turtle King’s rule!
For Yertle, the King of all Sala-ma-Sond,
Fell off his high throne and fell Plunk! In the pond!

8. And today the great Yertle, that Marvelous he,
Is King of the Mud. That’s all he can see.
And the turtles, of course….all the turtles are free
As turtles and, maybe, all creatures should be.
THIRD SESSION

A. Students recite the tongue twister in front of the class. *It would be fun to have the students burp at the appropriate time!* *Or, the students can designate who will be lad little Mack and when he should burp.*

1. Ideas for recitation:
   a. Have each group recite the entire selection.
   b. Have each group recite half of the selection, each person in the group does one stanza. The following group will do the second half.
   c. Does any one want to recite this alone?

2. Tips:
   a. The key is to have the students speaking, NOT THE TEACHER! Recitation, no matter in what form you choose, is critical!!
   b. The teacher gives encouraging responses. This helps keep the attention of the other students while some are reciting!!
      ➢ Important Note for Teachers: The students must receive encouragement whenever they speak English in front of their classmates. Always give a very specific, positive comment at the end of each one’s speaking turn.
      ➢ Examples:
        “I like the way Alice pronounced her /v/ sounds.”
        “I like the way Joseph projected his voice.”
        “I like the way Mary put so much feeling into this story.”

G. Discuss the moral of the story:

1. Many of Dr. Seuss’ books make a “social” comment on the culture. Here he is saying that all creatures are free and therefore should not be under a domineering person, dictator, government, etc., which rules only to please himself/itself instead of thinking of the best interests of those he/it rules. With advanced students you may be able to engage in a discussion on this topic. Is Dr. Seuss right? Yes or no, and why?

2. If time, end with the Camp Song, or play a game. You probably will not have any time left. Don’t forget to collect the student workbooks at the end of each lesson. Make name tags for the following day.
What did you say?
(That was a tongue twister!)

What did you mean?
(Those words were hard to say fast!!)
Lesson: Tongue Twisters by Dr. Seuss

Vocabulary:

- island
- turtle
- pond
- ruler
- enough
- ought
- frown
- command
- throne
- pile
- stack
- view
- mile
- plain
- stack
- decide
- lad
- mad
- burp
- plunk
- marvelous

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(Condensed)

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