

Unit 3: Interruptions

SUMMARY

You can use this summary to guide the learning objectives and target setting for your class.

Can-do statements

By the end of this unit, students will be able to say:

- I can use the correct expressions to interrupt in formal and informal settings.
- I can use the correct expressions to deal with interruptions in formal and informal settings.
- I can use the correct intonation to sound polite when I interrupt somebody.
- I can signal that I want to continue talking and get the conversation back to where it was.

Vocabulary

Extended families: *daughter-in-law, stepmother, fiancée*

Communication: *email, Internet, newspaper*

Crime: *escape, prison, rob, bank, steal*

Pronunciation and intonation

Falling intonation for politeness when interrupting

Intonation for moving the conversation along

Function

Interrupting: *Excuse me. / May I interrupt?*

Dealing with interruptions: *I was just getting to that.*

I Hang on a minute.

Getting the conversation back to where it was: *Now, where was I? / So, you were saying?*

CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

You can use some or all of these ideas to check and enhance your students' understanding as they work their way through *Unit 3 of Speaking B1+ Intermediate* in class.

Using Useful tips

Use the *Useful tips* section for a brainstorming activity.

1. Get a few students to read the *Useful tips* aloud and check that all the students understand the ideas of interrupting and getting back to the subject.
2. Ask pairs of students to think of a model phrase for each of the bullet-pointed tips (e.g. *Can I just add ...?, May I interrupt?, Sorry, you were saying?, Excuse me, I haven't finished., Now, what was I saying?, etc.*).
3. Get students to share their examples with the group.

Using Conversations

The variety of short scripted conversations in these units gives students ample opportunity for tightly controlled practice. After completing the *Conversations* section always ask the students to rehearse and perform one of the dialogues for the class. It is a good idea to get them to come to the front to perform rather than letting them talk from their chairs. There are five roles across the two conversations here; you can repeat one scene more than once if you have more students, but there are other opportunities to do so in this unit and others too.

Using Saying it accurately

Saying it accurately Exercise 2 affords the opportunity of controlled practice of the function of interrupting and the new language learned in *Exercise 1*. The classroom environment means that this activity can be done in pairs.

Using Saying it clearly, Saying it appropriately and Language note

1. These exercises provide models for polite intonation while interrupting or signalling that you want to continue talking. You may also want to model the intonation in the *Language note* (with the emphasis on *so, right, anyway, and well* to keep the conversation moving).
2. After doing these exercises you could return to *Saying it accurately Exercise 2*, which will allow the students to practise these functions in a less controlled activity.

Using Get speaking

Get Speaking is a role play that self-study students can do with the CD, but the classroom environment allows you to use it in a different way and extend its scope.

1. Get a student to read the rubric aloud and check that all the students understand the activity.
2. Play the recording and allow students to think of (but not say) their answers.
3. Put the students in groups of three. One student should take the role of the speaker on the recording, one should take the role of the one who interrupts, and one should be the listener.
4. Get the speaker to fully revise their story by reading the transcript, and allow the one interrupting to revise where they should interrupt.
5. The group can then perform the scene without the transcript or notes – it is not important that the speaker says exactly what is in the recording.
6. Circulate and monitor and get the group members to exchange roles as you go.

You can extend this activity by finding any short story or series of facts into which a speaker can insert some errors. Try taking the role of the speaker yourself and getting students to interrupt you:

1. Find a short story or piece of information from the internet and allow the students to read it. For example:

The Great Fire of London took place in September, 1666. It began in a bakery on Pudding Lane. There had been no rain all summer and London was very dry. The east wind spread the flames rapidly. Fire fighting equipment was not very good and it was difficult to get water to the fire. King Charles II and his brother, the Duke of York, took charge of fighting the fire which lasted for 4 days and burned down most of London.

2. Get students to put the information away. Tell the story with four or five errors of fact, perhaps like this:

*The Great Fire of London took place about 350 years ago in **October**, 1666. It started in a bakery on **King Charles Lane**. There was no rain that summer. London was very dry and the **west** wind spread the flames. Fire fighting equipment was not very good and it was difficult to get water to the fire. King Charles II and his brother, the Duke of **Cambridge**, had to take charge of fighting the fire. It lasted for **8** days and burned down most of London.*

3. Tell students to interrupt you when they hear an error. Give points for spotting the error and extra points for interrupting in the correct way.
4. You can also do this activity by getting students to pre-read a playscript or a comic book, look at a series of photos, watch a soap opera, etc. Search for stories, subjects and a method of delivery which fit the students' learning targets and interests.

Using the *Cultural note discussion*

The *Cultural note discussion* handout, below, provides a good opportunity for classroom discussion.

1. Photocopy the *Cultural note discussion* handout so that you have one for each pair of students.
2. Get three students to read out loud each of the three paragraphs of the *Cultural note discussion* handout from the book in turn.
3. If you have a multinational classroom, get students to exchange views about what is considered polite in terms of interruption in their culture, or whether any interruption is permissible at all.
4. Give pairs of students a copy of the *Cultural note discussion* handout and get them to talk together about when interruption is permissible and when it is not. Students may disagree, but encourage them to talk it out and decide. There are no right or wrong answers here.
5. Feed back in general discussion with the whole class.

PHOTOCOPIABLES

Cultural note discussion

	... you can interrupt.	... don't interrupt.
When they have finished what they want to say ...		
When they slow down ...		
When they pause ...		
When they have spoken for ages ...		
When they are emotional ...		
When you want information ...		
When they have a greater status than you ...		
When they have a lower status than you ...		