

# English Language Teacher interview questions

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## What to expect

Interviews for English Language Teacher roles usually combine a conversation about your teaching approach with practical checks on how you plan, assess and manage a classroom. You may be asked to show a sample lesson plan or talk through a recent class.

- **Process and planning:** How you design a lesson sequence, choose materials and align tasks to a syllabus or language framework.
- **Behavioural:** Past experience with mixed ability classes, disengaged students or sensitive student issues.
- **Scenario or judgement:** What you would do when a student's progress stalls, a class activity falls flat or a conflict arises.
- **Technical or pedagogical knowledge:** Grammar, pronunciation, assessment and frameworks such as the Australian Core Skills Framework.
- **Client-facing or cultural:** How you communicate with students from different backgrounds and with program coordinators or host organisations.
- **Online delivery:** How you use Moodle, Zoom or Google Classroom to keep remote students engaged.

The interview usually starts with a general conversation about your teaching background and qualifications, then moves into specific questions about planning, assessment and classroom management. You may be asked to complete a short practical task, such as explaining a grammar point or outlining a lesson for a given level. The panel often includes a coordinator or head teacher, and there is usually time at the end for your questions about the program, class sizes and support available.

## 1. Walk me through how you plan a week of lessons for a mixed ability adult English class.

### Why they ask

This shows whether you can translate a syllabus into a coherent sequence and differentiate for learners at different levels.

### How to structure your answer

A walk-through: start with outcomes, describe the core task, explain how you tier it, then finish with how you check learning.

### Example answer

*"I start with the learning outcomes for the week, usually drawn from the framework the program uses, and then think about the text type or theme that will carry the language. For a mixed ability group, I plan a core task that everyone can access, such as a short listening about renting a flat, and then build tiered tasks around it. Stronger students might write a formal email to a real estate agent, while others practise key questions and vocabulary with a partner. I use formative checks each day, like a quick exit ticket or a spoken summary, so I know who needs more support before I move on. On Friday I review what worked and adjust the following week."*

## 2. Tell me about a time you helped a student who was struggling to make progress.

### Why they ask

This probes your assessment skills, your patience and your ability to adapt materials for an individual learner.

### How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result. Keep the result specific to the student's change in skill or confidence.

#### Example answer

*"A student in an adult migrant class had strong spoken English but could not read forms well enough to apply for jobs. She was becoming withdrawn. I sat with her and we identified that she could read familiar words but froze on unfamiliar ones. I built a set of short, real world reading tasks using job application forms and appointment letters, and we worked on them twice a week for ten minutes before class. I also paired her with a supportive classmate for a reading buddy routine. By the end of term she had filled in a job application on her own and asked me to check it rather than do it for her. She started applying for work."*

## 3. You have planned a speaking activity, but the class is flat and students are reluctant to talk. What do you do?

### Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and your willingness to adapt a lesson in real time.

### How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: pause and assess, adapt the task, bring the group back together, then reflect afterwards.

#### Example answer

*"I would not push through the original plan if the energy is low. I would stop and check what is going on, maybe the topic feels too personal or the task is too open. I might switch to a quick pair activity with a concrete prompt, like 'tell your partner three things you did yesterday', and then bring the class back together for a short report. If the room still feels flat, I would use a game or a physical break. Afterwards I would reflect on whether the topic or grouping needed changing for next time."*

## 4. How do you assess a student's speaking and give feedback that helps them improve?

### Why they ask

This checks your technical knowledge of assessment and whether you can give useful, manageable feedback.

### How to structure your answer

Technical explanation: describe your method, give a concrete example, then explain how you track progress.

#### Example answer

*"I use a mix of planned assessment and ongoing observation. For speaking, I might record a short role play and assess it against criteria like fluency, pronunciation, range of vocabulary and ability to keep the conversation going. I give feedback that focuses on one or two things, not everything at once. For example, if a student is understandable but hesitates a lot, I might work on connected speech and give them a phrase bank to practise. I also ask students to self assess, because adult learners often know where they get stuck. I keep notes so I can show progress over a term."*

## 5. How do you create an inclusive classroom for students from different cultural and language backgrounds?

### Why they ask

This explores your cultural awareness, your classroom values and how you handle sensitive group dynamics.

### How to structure your answer

Values and practice: state your principles, then give specific routines and adjustments you use.

### Example answer

*"I start by learning names and a little about each student's background without making anyone a spokesperson for their culture. I set clear expectations early that mistakes are part of learning and that we listen respectfully. I use materials that reflect a range of experiences, not just Australian stereotypes, and I check that examples are accessible. If a student seems uncomfortable with a topic, I follow up privately and adjust. I also build in pair and small group work so quieter students are not put on the spot in front of the whole class."*

## **6. What tools do you use for online or blended delivery, and how do you keep students engaged?**

### Why they ask

This tests your digital literacy and your ability to run a class when students are not in the same room.

### How to structure your answer

Tool and strategy walk-through: name the platforms, explain how you use them, then give an example of keeping students active.

### Example answer

*"I have used Moodle to host weekly modules with short videos, audio pronunciation drills and quizzes, and Zoom for live classes. In Zoom I keep sessions interactive with breakout rooms, polls and shared documents so students are not just listening. I set one clear task per breakout and visit each room to check progress. For students with low digital literacy, I send a simple one page guide and run a short practice session before the course starts. Between classes I use announcements and discussion forums so students can ask questions. I also record key explanations so people can review them."*