**Scaffolded Listening/Speaking for ESL Beginners**

This works well for students who barely speak and for those who have some conversational skills. It can stand alone as an oral skills activity or it can build a bridge to writing and reading.

Here is the general flow: Good visual 🡪 listen and speak 🡪 write and read. Students become familiar with the sounds of the words first, then connect what they can say to print.

This lesson has the whole-part-whole (WPW) structure: the teacher presents the whole description, then students practice the parts of it as they build up to producing the whole description independently.

**Goal:** All SWBAT (students will be able to) talk about a picture in English.

**Materials needed**

White board, markers, a good picture from the *Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary, Ventures*, Google Images, etc., and a short description that you write ahead of time.

Choose a picture with lots going on, like people walking around downtown or shopping at the market. It’s best to use a scene with at least 7-8 people in it. If possible, project the picture. If you can’t, provide at least one copy for every two students.

**Warm up/intro**

Display the picture and ask students to tell you about it. They may say single words, phrases, or full sentences. If you’re using a picture from a textbook: Cover up the words if possible.

**Presentation**

Ask students to listen while you describe the picture. If you are projecting it on the board, ask ss to come stand in a semicircle at the board. Prepare your description ahead of time, and use a combination of words they already know plus some new words. This description will be like a script that you stick to. It’s very helpful if you can use patterned sentences like “this is a car/this is a woman/this is a bus stop” or “She is walking/he is driving the bus/they are running” to model a grammar point.

*Example script for Basic OPD pp. 72-73, “An Intersection”*

First, explain: This is an intersection in the city. An intersection is where two streets cross each other. This is an intersection downtown.

*Script:*

This is a bus. A man is driving the bus. This is a sidewalk. A woman is walking on the sidewalk. This is a crosswalk. A man is crossing the street. He is carrying a bag. This is a shop. A woman is coming out of the shop. A man is going into the shop. This is a market. A man is buying fruits and vegetables. This is the bus stop. Three people are standing and waiting for the bus. A woman is reading a newspaper. A man is holding a newspaper. A woman is listening to music. This is a sidewalk. A girl and a boy are running on the sidewalk with their dog. A woman is walking on the sidewalk. She is carrying a bag.

**Practice**

Do three rounds of the same sequence of activities.

1. **Things:** This is a bus. This is the sidewalk. This is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. **People:** He is a man. She is a woman. He is a boy. She is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. **Actions:** She is walking on the sidewalk. He is driving the bus. He is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the street.

**Practice round 1: Things**

1. Number 10-12 objects in the picture.
2. Ss listen as you point to each in order and say: This is a bus. This is the sidewalk. This is the crosswalk. This is a \_\_\_\_... and so on.
3. T says each sentence again, ss echo.
4. Repeat echoing if needed.
5. What number? Say, “Look at the picture. Look at the numbers. Listen and tell me what number. This is a bus.” Ss: “number one.” T: “This is the bus stop.” Ss: “number eight.” Continue with all in random order.
6. Ss produce the sentence. Say, “Now, look at the picture. I will say the number. You tell me the sentence. Number one.” Ss: “This is a bus.” Continue with your 10-12 items in order.
7. Ss produce the sentence, but this time you call out numbers in random order.
8. Pairs practice speaking. Put students in high/low pairs. Encourage them to use the numbers as they practice.
9. Switch partners and practice speaking again.
10. Bring group back together and ask for volunteers to say the sentence as you point to the object.

**Practice round 2: People**

1. Number 10-12 people in the picture.
2. Ss listen as you point to each in order and say: He is a man. She is a woman. He is a boy. She is a girl…and so on.
3. For a more advanced class: She is a woman. She is a mother. He is a man. He is the bus driver. He is a man. He is a businessman. Etc.
4. T says each sentence again, ss echo.
5. Repeat echoing if needed.
6. What number? Say, “Look at the picture. Look at the numbers. Listen and tell me what number. She is a woman.” Ss: “number two, four, seven, nine, twelve.” T: “She is a girl.” Ss: “number ten.” Continue with man and boy, students supplying the numbers.
7. Ss produce the sentence. Say, “Now, look at the picture. I will say the number. You tell me about the person. Number one.” Ss: “She is a woman.” Continue with all in order.
8. Ss produce the sentence, but this time you call out numbers in random order.
9. Pairs practice speaking. Put students in high/low pairs. Encourage them to use the numbers as they practice.
10. Switch partners and practice speaking again.
11. Bring group back together and ask for volunteers to say the sentence as you point to the person.

**Practice round 3: Actions**

1. Keep the same numbers on the board for the people.
2. Ss listen as you point to each in order and say: He is driving the bus. She is walking on the sidewalk. He is crossing the street. He is carrying a bag, and so on.
3. T says each sentence again in order, ss echo.
4. Repeat echoing if needed.
5. What number? Say, “Look at the picture. Look at the numbers. Listen and tell me what number. He is crossing the street.” Ss: “number three.” T: “She is listening to music.” Ss: “number nine.” Continue with all in random order.
6. Ss produce the sentence. Say, “Now, look at the picture. I will say the number. You tell me what the person is doing. Number one.” Ss: “She is walking on the sidewalk.” Continue in order.
7. Ss produce the sentence. This time, call out numbers in random order.
8. Pairs practice speaking. Put students in high/low pairs. Encourage them to use the numbers as they practice and to try to say a complete sentence.
9. Switch partners and practice speaking again.
10. Bring group back together and ask for volunteers to say the sentence as you point to the person.

**Production**

Offer the opportunity for individuals to some to the front and describe the picture. You may want to choose a student or two to start off. All efforts are applauded. Encourage but don’t force participation.

For those who didn’t come to the front, sit with them at the table and ask them to talk about the picture while others practice with a new partner or write sentences about the picture.

Note: Higher students may use the complete sentence that you modeled and lower students may just use words or phrases. This is OK. Not all of the ss have to say the sentence exactly. As long as everyone is speaking English, it’s great.

**Extension:** **Writing/Reading**

1. Now, put sentences on the board from your description. You may share the entire script or you may share only parts of it. Students copy and practice reading in pairs.
2. Another option: Use the Language Experience Approach (LEA). Say, “Tell me about the picture” and write the sentences that your students give you. Then they copy and use the text for reading practice. Essentially they are connecting their oral language with the printed words.
3. Create cloze exercises based on the script for more practice.

**Option to add phonics/reading practice**

1. Letter sounds: After speaking practice, or just before pairwork, hold up flash cards of initial sounds (b/bus, w/woman, m/man, sh/shop, etc). Ask for the sound of the letter and for something in the picture that starts with that sound.
2. Word cards: After speaking practice, hold up word cards for some of the words that they listened to and spoke. Guide students in sounding out the word if needed. Ask for a volunteer to put the word next to the object or person in the picture.

**Need more listening practice?**

1. Give students bingo chips and a copy of the picture. They listen and place a chip on the person or object you describe.
2. Listen and circle: Another way to practice at the board is to have students stand around the board. Each student takes a marker. You describe a person/object in random order and one student circles that person/object on the board.