

English Mastery Spring 2021 Guidance and ideas for delivering live lessons

Gaining confidence in the remote classroom

We are all working in challenging circumstances at the moment.

Teaching works best in the classroom and can feel awkward and unnatural online. English, the subject of reading communities, can feel even more stilted than other subjects behind a screen.

Our English Mastery teams have put together some guidance to help you find pedagogical approaches for remote learning that best suit your teaching style and school context.

Firstly, it is ok to focus solely on getting the basics right. Before trying to become a remote learning master, ground yourself in the familiarity and simplicity of the situation. We recommend focusing on these **five key ideas**:

- **Learning is learning...**

...and English teachers are the experts in how to teach great English lessons. Use your excellent classroom practice when planning and teaching online.

- **Keep it simple.**

Teaching and learning online is cognitively challenging for everyone. Ensure you all have time to master the basics of online communication.

- **Think again about pace.**

Some activities will take longer to do online and some will be quicker. Time spent learning and reinforcing new routines in the early lessons is not wasted.

- **Know your text.**

Your knowledge of the text is still the most important feature of a great English lesson.

- **Read aloud.**

One of the most important features of great English teaching is allowing students to access challenging texts that they would be unable to read without support. Read text out loud to your students in live lessons or use an audio recording.

On top of those key ideas, planning for a remote lesson sometimes feels different to planning a live lesson. However, there are a lot of similarities.

Here are **four key lesson planning questions** we think are particularly important for remote teaching:

- How much of this lesson will I be able to deliver live?
- Which activities need to be led and directed by me? Which can students attempt independently?
- When and how shall I check for understanding during this lesson?
- How will I review and give feedback on students' completed work?

We recommend starting with solidifying these basic routines in your remote teaching.

As a next step, we have also prepared more detailed recommendations for teaching English Mastery KS3 Literacy Heritage in a digital classroom.

1. Resources

- Use the **workbook** as your **primary means of planning and delivery**. It will be much easier than moving between the PowerPoint and workbook.
- Make sure students have the **Word version of the workbook** so they can complete it on their computer at home. You will need to model this.
- When using the whole text, make sure you are all working from the **same version of the text** (with the same page numbers).

2. Planning

- Plan with the workbook. Have **two copies** for yourself. Use **one to plan** and complete the answers. Use the **other to live model** to students during the lesson. We only recommend using the PowerPoint during planning when you need to check the green pen answers.
- Look at the **H/W tasks** at the end of the booklet. Use these to stretch students who need a faster pace.

3. Routines

- Time spent on routines and processes is not time wasted. This is even more true in the less familiar digital classroom. For example, students **practising writing answers quickly in the chat feed** or practising deleting the lines in the workbook will be very beneficial.
- **Dissolve the screen** as much as possible. Strong connections and good relationships make learning easier and more enjoyable. Dissolve the screen by narrating the positive; acknowledging contributions and still using student names regularly to **ensure students are "seen"**

4. Checking for understanding

- **Plan to check:** Before the lesson, think deeply about where and how you will check for understanding.
- **Simple is best at the start:** For example, simply training your students to use the chat function appropriately is probably the most important step.
- **Mute/Unmute:** As far as possible, include students' actual voices in the lesson. As early as you can, build the expectation that students unmute themselves on request.
- **Use what you've already got:** The lessons resources include an exit ticket for every lesson and fortnightly quizzes (available on Microsoft Forms too).
- **New formative strategies:** As you and your students become more familiar with online learning, you can vary the ways you check for understanding throughout the lesson, e.g.: give students opportunities to direct the lesson (what do you want me to do next/go over?); polls; (digital) hands up; screen sharing or typing into shared documents.

5. Written assessment

- Protect time for this and **don't rush** at the end of a remote lesson.
- Students could do it **between lessons**.
- **Start a lesson with the extended written task** or spend an entire lesson on extended writing to ensure you know all students are completing it.
- Build in time to **acknowledge students** who have submitted work as requested **by name** and praise significant effort.
- Also make time to **share and discuss good examples** of submitted student work.

6. Live lessons and independent work

- Have a **balance in your lesson** – you don't need to spend all the time on screen.
- Most lessons can be delivered well using the **sandwich model**. Everyone comes together for instruction and reading at start. Students complete 20 minutes independent work in the middle. Everyone comes back together to review answers and complete the exit ticket at the end.