

EAL & NEW ARRIVALS · ALL GRADES

EAL Quick Reference

One page for mainstream teachers

How to use this card

Print, fold, keep on your desk. When you have an EAL child in your class and need a quick reminder of what works, this is a one-page summary of the essentials.

What to do — every day

✓ Pre-teach 3-5 words Before a lesson, identify the 3-5 words that, if missed, would derail comprehension. Pre-teach them in 5 minutes.	✓ Use visuals Pictures, gestures, real objects, written words on the board. The more channels, the more access.
✓ Speak slower (not louder) Simpler vocabulary, shorter sentences, clearer pronunciation. Volume helps no-one.	✓ Use a buddy A kind, patient peer who'll show them what to do. The buddy benefits too — perspective-taking is a skill.

What to do — weekly

✓ Display new vocabulary Put this week's key words on the wall, big. Refer to them constantly. Replace as they're mastered.	✓ Use sentence stems Print and laminate stems they can refer to. 'I think...' / 'Because...' / 'For example...' Give launchpads.
✓ Include in groupwork Don't isolate. Pair with a verbally generous peer. They learn English in interaction, not in worksheets.	✓ Talk to parents A weekly 30-second hello at pickup. Email if needed. Reassure that progress is happening even when invisible.



What to remember

<p>■ Silent period is normal</p> <p>Many EAL learners speak almost nothing for 2-6 weeks. They're absorbing. Don't force speech. Listening is learning.</p>	<p>■ Conversation ≠ academic English</p> <p>A child who chats fluently with friends may still struggle with academic language for years. Both phases need different support.</p>
<p>■ First language is a strength</p> <p>Strong L1 = strong L2. Encourage families to keep L1 alive at home. Don't tell them to 'switch to English'.</p>	<p>■ Errors are not laziness</p> <p>Grammar errors that persist for years are normal and not a sign of poor effort. Pick one to focus on at a time.</p>

What to avoid

<p>✗ Round-robin reading</p> <p>Forcing an EAL child to read aloud to the class makes their gaps public. Use choral or paired reading instead.</p>	<p>✗ 'You should speak English'</p> <p>Don't tell children off for speaking their L1 to a friend. Bilingualism is an asset, not a problem.</p>
<p>✗ Using a child as your interpreter</p> <p>Don't routinely ask a bilingual child to translate for you, especially around emotional topics. It's not their job.</p>	<p>✗ Lowering expectations long-term</p> <p>EAL ≠ low ability. Many EAL learners reach age-expected academic English within 5-7 years. Don't write them off.</p>

If you only remember three things

1. PRE-TEACH the 3-5 hardest words. 2. USE VISUALS for everything. 3. BE PATIENT. They are working harder than anyone in your class. The progress is happening even when you can't see it.

