

Activity Template

- **Title**

Practicing pronunciation in Japanese EFL classroom

- **Author**

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- **Proficiency level**

Beginning Intermediate Advanced

- **Grade level**

University undergraduate

- **Purpose of the activity**

To develop pronunciation skills

- **Type of activity**

Listening and repeating by reading aloud; making sentences and reading them aloud

- **Objective**

To enable Japanese EFL learners to recognize and overcome LI interference in pronunciation

- **Duration**

15 minutes or more depending on the needs and objectives of the class

- **Materials and technology**

A handout of the following pronunciation practice chart

Pronunciation Practice Chart

1 A	2 Au	3 O	4 R	5 R/L	6 S/Sh	7 Th	8 V
1. Apple	1. All	1. On	1. First	1. Cloud	1. See	1. This	1. Very
2. Address	2. Almost	2. Off	2. Burst	2. Crowd	2. Sea	2. That	2. Vote
3. Access	3. Alter	3. Hot	3. Teacher	3. Clown	3. She	3. There	3. Voice
4. Action	4. August	4. Pot	4. Leader	4. Crown	4. Simple	4. These	4. Vocal
5. And	5. Autumn	5. Lot	5. Summer	5. Clash	5. Sell	5. Those	5. Video

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6. Family	6. Australia	6. Box	6. Winter	6. Crash	6. Shell	6. Mother	6. Version
7. Happy	7. Audition	7. Rod	7. Super	7. Right	7. City	7. Father	7. Vacation
8. Harry	8. Audience	8. Nod	8. Slipper	8. Light	8. Scene	8. Brother	8. Vanilla
9. Man	9. Author	9. Mop	9. Better	9. File	9. Seam	9. Thanks	9. Victoria
10. Africa	10. Audit	10. Sock	10. Butter	10. Fire	10. Seem	10. Health	10. Victory
11. Canada	11. Auditor	11. Rob	11. Batter	11. Tile	11. Sore	11. Healthy	11. Volunteer
12. Attack	12. Auction	12. Rot	12. Pitcher	12. Tire	12. Shore	12. Then	12. Vancouver
13. Salad	13. Aurora	13. Soft	13. Singer	13. Lift	13. Silver	13. Than	13. Volleyball
14. Land	14. Authentic	14. Shot	14. Sister	14. Rift	14. Senior	14. Three	14. Universal

- **Activity**

Prerequisite

(Some knowledge of the Japanese language, at least of the katakana system, is essential for the teacher in order to carry out this activity.)

Instructions for the teacher

1. To introduce the activity, write a few sample words from the above Pronunciation Practice Chart on the blackboard. Ask the students to read the words aloud. In a typical class of native Japanese, most students will pronounce the words in a Japanese way. (This would be difficult to recognize for the teacher if he/she is not familiar with the Japanese language. However, the teacher should be able to tell that the students are not pronouncing the words in an English way.)
2. Explain to the students that the Japanese or katakana pronunciation of English words is not the same as their English pronunciation and that in this activity they will learn to practice the English way of pronouncing English words. (The target pronunciation can be American English, British English or any other variety depending on the vernacular background of the teacher. See link 1 below.)
3. Hand out the Pronunciation Practice Chart to the students.
4. Read aloud the words and have students repeat after you. In the beginning, it would be better to work by rows, that is, practicing all 8 words in a given row. Later on, depending on the student level of difficulty and the need to focus on certain sounds, practice may be done by columns such as practicing some or all words in a given column.
5. Explain to the students differences between the English and Japanese pronunciations of the words. Do this by pronouncing the words in both English and Japanese ways and explaining the differences in the sounds between the two.
6. Check student comprehension by pronouncing the words in both English and Japanese ways and asking the students if they can differentiate between the two. If they cannot, repeat step 5.
7. Tell the students that if confused, they can ascertain the English pronunciation of the word by comparing it with its Japanese pronunciation. In other words, if students think that they are pronouncing a certain word in a Japanese way then it will mean that they are not pronouncing it correctly in English. (This step would be difficult to execute if the teacher him/herself is not familiar with the Japanese language. However, for any native Japanese, it is very simple to tell if they are pronouncing a foreign word in a Japanese way.)
8. Tell students to make sentences (of at least ten words) using words from the chart and then practice by reading aloud the entire sentences. This step is critical because it will help the students to practice the word when it appears as a part of the text and not just as a solitary word. Very often,

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students may pronounce the word correctly in English when reading from the chart but then revert back to its Japanese pronunciation when the same word appears as a part of the text. This activity will reinforce the pronunciation learned in the chart and facilitate its application in various textual situations.

9. Assign for homework, one or more lines for pronunciation practice together with sentence making practice and reading aloud practice of the entire sentences.
10. Review the assigned homework in the following class by asking the students to read aloud the words and the sentences either individually or as a group depending on the class size and time availability.

- **Useful links**

1. Online pronunciation guides to 9 varieties of the English language and 9 other languages:
<http://www.fonetiks.org/> (retrieved August 28, 2007)
2. Teaching pronunciation: <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/esl/pronunciation.cfm>
(retrieved August 28, 2007)