

Express Guides Series

100 Essential Expressions for ESL Teachers

Express Guides Series



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Overview of the Booklet

This booklet is a practical guide for TESOL trainees, ESL teachers, language centers, and students. It provides clear and [useful expressions](#) organized into five key themes: General Classroom Instructions, Online and Hybrid Classes, Classroom Management, Teaching Language Skills and Concepts, and Building a Positive Learning Environment. At the end of each theme, a [realistic scenario](#) demonstrates how the expressions can be applied in actual teaching situations. New teachers can build confidence in giving clear instructions, while experienced teachers can refine their communication skills. For students, it helps make classroom language easier to understand, ensuring smoother and less stressful lessons.

This resource is designed primarily for pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate levels, with expressions tailored to these learners. Instructors working with advanced students may need to adjust the complexity of the expressions to suit their proficiency. Simple, effective, and practical, this booklet is ideal for creating engaging and organized ESL classes.

How to Study This Booklet

Before reading the expressions, [think about your previous classes](#) and try to guess what phrases teachers often use for instructions, managing activities, or handling challenges. Then, [read through the list](#) of expressions under each theme carefully. Afterward, [explore the scenario](#) at the end of each theme to see how the expressions are used naturally in a real classroom context. Each scenario also has an accompanying [audio file](#), so you can listen to how the expressions sound in practice. Finally, [practice using a few expressions](#) in your own teaching or learning situations and [reflect](#) on how they can make lessons smoother and more engaging.

Theme 1

General Classroom Instructions



These expressions help teachers give clear directions and keep lessons organized. They guide students through activities, manage time, and encourage participation. Using simple and consistent instructions helps reduce confusion and keeps the class focused, making learning smoother and more effective.

Phrases

1. "Please repeat after me."
2. "Turn to page ____."
3. "Raise your hand if you know the answer."
4. "Let's brainstorm some ideas."
5. "Write this down in your notebooks."
6. "Let's review yesterday's lesson."
7. "Work in pairs/groups."
8. "Read the instructions carefully."
9. "You have 5 minutes to complete this task."
10. "Let's move on to the next activity."
11. "Who wants to share their answer?"
12. "Listen and repeat the sentence."
13. "Take out your homework, please."
14. "Underline the key words in this text."
15. "Turn to your partner and discuss."
16. "Let's summarize what we learned today."
17. "Please clean up your workspace."
18. "Let's watch this short video."
19. "Check your answers with a classmate."
20. "Time's up! Let's stop here."

Scenario



Scan to Listen!



It's a sunny morning in Vancouver, and Ms. Taylor's ESL class is buzzing with energy. Today's lesson is on "Tourism in Canada," a topic perfect for her diverse group of students who recently arrived in the country. With smiles on their faces, the students settle into their seats as Ms. Taylor greets them.

"Good morning, everyone! Let's get started. Please repeat after me: 'tourism.'" The students echo the word, some stumbling slightly over the pronunciation but smiling as they correct themselves.

"Turn to page 22 in your textbook," she continues, pointing to a beautiful spread of Canada's most famous landmarks. The class flips their pages quickly, eyes widening as they see images of Niagara Falls, the CN Tower, and Banff National Park. **"Raise your hand if you recognize any of these places."** Hands shoot up across the room, with a few excited voices calling out, "Niagara Falls!" and "Banff!" Ms. Taylor nods encouragingly and writes the names of the landmarks on the board.

"Let's brainstorm some ideas. What are some tourist activities people enjoy in Canada?" Ms. Taylor asks, holding up her marker. After a short silence, students begin calling out, "Hiking!" "Sightseeing!" "Taking photos!" With each answer, she writes the word on the board, creating a list for the class to see.

"Write this down in your notebooks: 'Popular Tourist Attractions in Canada.'" The scratch of pencils fills the room as students carefully copy the heading into their notebooks. **"Let's review yesterday's lesson quickly. Who remembers what**

we learned about Canadian geography?” A hand goes up. “The provinces and territories,” says one student. “Exactly!” Ms. Taylor responds with a smile.

To keep the momentum going, she announces, **“Work in pairs and discuss: What tourist places would you recommend to a friend visiting Canada?”** The students turn to their partners, chatting excitedly as they share ideas. Ms. Taylor walks around, listening to their conversations and gently correcting mistakes when needed.

Once the discussions settle down, she says, **“Read the instructions carefully for the next activity.”** She points to Exercise 3 in their books, where students must match tourist activities with their descriptions. **“You have 5 minutes to complete this task.”** She sets a small timer on her desk, and the students get to work, focused and determined.

When the timer buzzes, Ms. Taylor claps her hands gently. **“Let’s move on to the next activity.”** She explains that they’ll now take turns sharing their recommendations with the class. **“Who wants to share their answer first?”** A shy student raises her hand and says, “Niagara Falls because it’s very beautiful.” The class nods in agreement, and Ms. Taylor praises her: **“Well done!”**

After a few more students share, Ms. Taylor wraps up the class. **“Let’s summarize what we learned today.** What are some of Canada’s popular tourist attractions?” Students call out their answers: “The CN Tower!” “Banff!” “Whistler!”

“Excellent work, everyone,” Ms. Taylor says warmly. **“Time’s up! Let’s stop here.”** The students smile and gather their books, clearly proud of their efforts. As they leave, she reminds them, “See you next class—don’t forget to think of your favorite tourist destination for tomorrow’s activity!”

Theme 2

Expressions for Online and Hybrid Classes

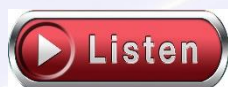


Teaching ESL online or in hybrid settings requires clear communication and effective use of technology to engage students. These expressions help teachers manage virtual classrooms, encourage participation, and maintain a smooth flow of activities. By providing clear instructions, fostering interaction, and troubleshooting issues, teachers ensure that online lessons remain productive and engaging for learners.

Phrases

1. **"Make sure your camera is turned on."**
2. **"Please mute your microphone when not speaking."**
3. **"Type your answers in the chat box."**
4. **"Let's take a quick poll."**
5. **"You have 10 minutes in your breakout rooms."**
6. **"Can you hear me clearly?"**
7. **"I'll share my screen now."**
8. **"Please upload your homework to the LMS."**
9. **"Let's watch this video together."**
10. **"Use the 'raise hand' button if you have a question."**
11. **"Check the discussion forum for updates."**
12. **"Can you write that on the virtual whiteboard?"**
13. **"Please log in 5 minutes early next time."**
14. **"Let's take a quick stretch break."**
15. **"We'll meet at the same link tomorrow."**
16. **"Please save the recording for future review."**
17. **"Does anyone have connection issues?"**
18. **"Turn off your camera during the break."**
19. **"Let's end the class here for today."**
20. **"Thanks for joining today's session!"**

Scenario



Scan to Listen!



Ms. Taylor logs into her virtual ESL class right on time. The lesson today is about **“Canadian Festivals”** for her intermediate-level students who are learning from different parts of the country. She starts the class with a friendly smile.

“Good morning, everyone! Make sure your camera is turned on.” The students’ screens light up with cheerful faces, and Ms. Taylor waves back. **“Can you hear me clearly?”** she asks, ensuring no technical issues are stopping anyone from following the class.

“I’ll share my screen now to show you some pictures of famous Canadian festivals,” she continues, pulling up a vibrant PowerPoint slide of the Calgary Stampede and the Montreal Jazz Festival. **“Type your answers in the chat box: Have you ever been to a festival in Canada? Which one?”** The students eagerly type responses, and Ms. Taylor reads a few out loud: “Oh, Alex went to the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival—that’s a great one!”

After a few minutes of discussion, Ms. Taylor says, **“Let’s take a quick poll. I’ll ask a question, and you can choose your answer. Which festival looks the most exciting to you?”** Using a polling tool, students vote, and the results appear on screen.

“Great choices! Now, **you have 10 minutes in your breakout rooms.** Discuss this question with your group: ‘What makes a festival fun for visitors?’” With a click, Ms. Taylor sends students to breakout rooms. She monitors the groups, joining each room briefly to check progress.

When the breakout time ends, she brings everyone back. **“Let’s watch this video together** about the Calgary Stampede—it’s Canada’s largest outdoor

festival!” She shares her screen again, playing the short video clip. Students watch attentively, scribbling notes. **“Can you write that on the virtual whiteboard?”** Let’s list three key things that make a festival successful.” One student writes “music,” another adds “food,” and a third suggests “cultural performances.” “Well done!” Ms. Taylor praises them.

As the class wraps up, she reminds them, **“Please upload your homework to the LMS by Friday.** Don’t forget to log in on time for our next session. **We’ll meet at the same link tomorrow.”**

“Before we go, **thanks for joining today’s session!** You all did great work.” Smiling, she waves goodbye as students log out, feeling accomplished after another successful online lesson.

Theme 3

Classroom Management



Classroom management expressions help teachers maintain order, encourage respectful behavior, and create a positive learning environment. These phrases ensure that lessons stay on track, students remain focused, and disruptions are minimized. By using clear, calm, and consistent language, teachers can address challenges effectively while keeping the classroom atmosphere supportive and productive.

Phrases

1. **"Please sit properly."**
2. **"Let's quiet down, please."**
3. **"This is your warning."**
4. **"Keep your phones away, please."**
5. **"Eyes on me, please."**
6. **"Follow the classroom rules."**
7. **"Wait for your turn to speak."**
8. **"Inside voices, please."**
9. **"No talking while I'm explaining."**
10. **"Let's stay on task."**
11. **"Raise your hand to ask a question."**
12. **"Settle down before we begin."**
13. **"Stop and listen carefully."**
14. **"Let's use our time wisely."**
15. **"Respect each other's opinions."**
16. **"Be kind to your classmates."**
17. **"Finish your work quietly."**
18. **"Can we stay seated, please?"**
19. **"Let's line up for the next activity."**
20. **"Take a deep breath and relax."**

Scenario



Scan to Listen!



It's a busy afternoon in Ms. Taylor's ESL classroom. Today, students are working on group presentations about **"Famous People from Around the World."** The groups are buzzing with energy, but Ms. Taylor knows she must balance enthusiasm with focus to ensure the lesson runs smoothly.

As the noise level rises, Ms. Taylor claps her hands softly to regain attention. **"Let's quiet down, please."** The chatter fades, and the students look up at her. **"Eyes on me, please.** We need to stay focused so everyone can do their best work."

One student, distractedly checking his phone, catches her eye. **"Keep your phones away, please.** You'll need to use that time to finish your slides," she says calmly but firmly. He nods, tucking his phone into his bag. Ms. Taylor turns to the entire class. **"Follow the classroom rules: work respectfully with your group, and wait for your turn to speak."** She walks around the room, pausing to check on a group where two students are speaking over each other. **"Inside voices, please.** Everyone will get a chance to share their ideas."

At another table, two students seem off-task. **"Let's stay on task.** What part of the presentation are you working on now?" she asks with a smile, redirecting their focus. One student explains, and she nods encouragingly. Seeing a few groups getting restless, she calls out, **"Settle down before we begin the next step.** I'll give you 10 more minutes to finish." She notices a pair of students arguing softly and steps in: **"Respect each other's opinions.** Everyone's ideas are valuable, so let's listen and work together."

When the time is up, Ms. Taylor says, “**Stop and listen carefully.** Here’s what we’ll do next: Each group will line up and take turns presenting.” She gestures to the front of the room. “**Let’s line up for the next activity.** Remember to support your group members and speak confidently.”

Finally, after all groups have presented, Ms. Taylor wraps up with a reassuring tone. “**Take a deep breath and relax.** You all did a fantastic job today.” Smiles spread across the room as the students give each other quiet applause. “**Finish your work quietly,** and make sure your notes are ready for tomorrow’s feedback session,” she adds as students gather their materials and begin to leave.

Theme 4

Teaching Language Skills & Concepts



Expressions for teaching language skills and concepts help teachers guide students through activities that develop their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar skills. These phrases provide clear instructions, encourage participation, and promote deeper understanding of the target language. By using structured and engaging prompts, teachers can create an interactive environment where students practice and refine their skills effectively.

Phrases

1. **"Let's practice pronunciation."**
2. **"Read this passage aloud."**
3. **"Listen for the main idea."**
4. **"Underline the verbs in this sentence."**
5. **"Let's brainstorm ideas for your essay."**
6. **"Check your spelling carefully."**
7. **"Can you summarize this paragraph?"**
8. **"Highlight the key details."**
9. **"Pair up for a role-play activity."**
10. **"Write three sentences using this word."**
11. **"Let's correct this grammar mistake together."**
12. **"Rearrange these sentences in the correct order."**
13. **"Identify the topic sentence."**
14. **"Add more details to your answer."**
15. **"Let's focus on your intonation."**
16. **"Match the words with their definitions."**
17. **"Use complete sentences in your response."**
18. **"Let's check for subject-verb agreement."**
19. **"Read silently and find new vocabulary."**
20. **"Write down the main points from the video."**

Scenario

Scan to Listen!



Mr. Chen is teaching a group of advanced ESL learners in Toronto. Today's lesson focuses on “**Developing Listening Skills**” using famous speeches as examples. The students are eager to practice understanding key ideas and details.

“Good afternoon, everyone,” Mr. Chen begins as the class settles down. “**Let's practice pronunciation** first. Repeat after me: ‘inspiration,’ ‘leadership,’ and ‘perseverance.’” The students repeat the words, focusing on the sounds and rhythm.

Next, Mr. Chen cues up an audio clip. “**Listen for the main idea** of this speech by Martin Luther King Jr. What is the speaker trying to tell us?” The students listen intently as the clip plays, jotting down notes.

When the recording ends, Mr. Chen says, “**Can you summarize this paragraph?** Think of one sentence that explains the overall message of the speech.” A few students share their ideas, and he nods approvingly.

“**Highlight the key details** in this transcript. Focus on the sentences that show the speaker's emotions and goals.” The students use highlighters to mark parts of the text as Mr. Chen circulates to assist them.

“Now, **underline the verbs in this sentence**,” he instructs, pointing to a line on the screen: ‘I have a dream that one day....’ Students quickly underline *have* and *dream*. “Good job!” Mr. Chen encourages them.

To build on the lesson, he says, “**Let’s brainstorm ideas for your essay.** If you were to write about an inspirational leader, who would you choose and why?” Students call out names like Nelson Mandela and Malala Yousafzai.

To change things up, he announces, “**Pair up for a role-play activity.** One of you will play the role of the speaker delivering the speech, and the other will ask questions about its meaning.” The students laugh and eagerly start practicing, mimicking intonation and emotion.

Finally, as the class winds down, Mr. Chen reminds them, “**Write down the main points from the video** for homework. We’ll review them in tomorrow’s class.” He smiles as students finish their notes and pack their bags, excited to learn more about famous speeches.

Theme 5

Miscellaneous Expressions



These expressions help teachers address various classroom situations beyond core instruction. They focus on building trust with students, managing warm-up and wrap-up activities, assessing understanding, and handling difficult situations. By using these phrases effectively, teachers create a positive, engaging, and supportive environment where students feel motivated and understood.

Phrases

Building Trust with Students

1. "Your opinion is important to me."
2. "I believe in your abilities."
3. "Mistakes are part of learning."
4. "You're improving every day."
5. "I'm proud of your effort."

Warm-Up and Wrap-Up Phrases

6. "Let's start with a fun question today."
7. "To wrap up, let's summarize what we learned."
8. "Who remembers what we did last class?"
9. "Let's do a quick review before we finish."
10. "Great job today! See you next time."

Assessment Phrases

11. "Let's see how well you understood this."
12. "This task will help me know your progress."
13. "Take your time and focus on the details."
14. "I'll provide feedback after you submit your work."
15. "Let's go over the answers together."

Managing Difficult Situations

16. "Please take a moment to calm down."
17. "Let's discuss this issue after class."
18. "We need to respect each other's space."
19. "I'll help you, but let's stay focused."
20. "If you need help, let me know privately."

Scenario



Scan to Listen!



Ms. Rivera is teaching a group of beginner ESL students in Calgary. Today's topic is **"Introducing Yourself in English,"** and the lesson focuses on building confidence in speaking. The students look nervous, but Ms. Rivera knows how to create a safe, supportive atmosphere.

"Let's start with a fun question today: What is your favorite hobby?" she asks warmly. The students smile, and a few brave ones share their answers: "Cooking," "Soccer," and "Drawing."

"Your opinion is important to me, and I love hearing your ideas," Ms. Rivera says, nodding encouragingly. "Remember, **mistakes are part of learning,** so don't worry about being perfect." She sees the students relax a little as they prepare for the main activity.

"Now, we're going to practice introducing ourselves," she continues. **"This task will help me know your progress,** so take your time and focus on the details." Students stand up one by one, introducing themselves while Ms. Rivera takes notes.

When Maria stumbles over her words and sits down looking upset, Ms. Rivera gently says, **"I believe in your abilities, Maria. You're improving every day.** Try again when you're ready." Maria nods shyly and smiles.

As the class nears its end, Ms. Rivera announces, “**Let’s do a quick review before we finish.**” Who remembers the three key points for introducing yourself?” Hands shoot up, and students eagerly share: “Say your name,” “Talk about where you’re from,” and “Share a hobby.”

“**I’m proud of your effort today,**” Ms. Rivera says warmly. “**Great job today! See you next time.**” Keep practicing at home, and let me know if you need extra help.”

After the class, she notices a student lingering near the door. Approaching softly, she says, “**If you need help, let me know privately.**” I’m always here to support you.” The student smiles gratefully and leaves the room feeling reassured.

Alphabetical List

Add more details to your answer.
Be kind to your classmates.
Can we stay seated, please?
Can you hear me clearly?
Can you summarize this paragraph?
Can you write that on the virtual whiteboard?
Check the discussion forum for updates.
Check your answers with a classmate.
Check your spelling carefully.
Does anyone have connection issues?
Eyes on me, please.
Finish your work quietly.
Follow the classroom rules.
Great job today! See you next time.
Highlight the key details.
I believe in your abilities.
Identify the topic sentence.
If you need help, let me know privately.
Inside voices, please.
I'll help you, but let's stay focused.
I'll provide feedback after you submit your work.
I'll share my screen now.
I'm proud of your effort.
Keep your phones away, please.
Let's brainstorm ideas for your essay.
Let's brainstorm some ideas.
Let's check for subject-verb agreement.
Let's correct this grammar mistake together.
Let's discuss this issue after class.
Let's do a quick review before we finish.

Mistakes are part of learning.
No talking while I'm explaining.
Pair up for a role-play activity.
Please clean up your workspace.
Please log in 5 minutes early next time.
Please mute your microphone when not speaking.
Please repeat after me.
Please save the recording for future review.
Please sit properly.
Please take a moment to calm down.
Please upload your homework to the LMS.
Raise your hand if you know the answer.
Raise your hand to ask a question.
Read silently and find new vocabulary.
Read the instructions carefully.
Read this passage aloud.
Rearrange these sentences in the correct order.
Respect each other's opinions.
Settle down before we begin.
Stop and listen carefully.
Take a deep breath and relax.
Take out your homework, please.
Take your time and focus on the details.
Thanks for joining today's session!
This is your warning.
This task will help me know your progress.
Time's up! Let's stop here.
To wrap up, let's summarize what we learned.
Turn off your camera during the break.

Let's end the class here for today.
Let's focus on your intonation.
Let's go over the answers together.
Let's line up for the next activity.
Let's move on to the next activity.
Let's practice pronunciation.
Let's quiet down, please.
Let's review yesterday's lesson.
Let's see how well you understood this.
Let's start with a fun question today.
Let's stay on task.
Let's summarize what we learned today.
Let's take a quick poll.
Let's take a quick stretch break.
Let's use our time wisely.
Let's watch this short video.
Let's watch this video together.
Listen and repeat the sentence.
Listen for the main idea.
Make sure your camera is turned on.
Match the words with their definitions.

Turn to page ____.
Turn to your partner and discuss.
Type your answers in the chat box.
Underline the key words in this text.
Underline the verbs in this sentence.
Use complete sentences in your response.
Use the 'raise hand' button if you have a question.
Wait for your turn to speak.
We need to respect each other's space.
Well done!
We'll meet at the same link tomorrow.
Who remembers what we did last class?
Who wants to share their answer?
Work in pairs/groups.
Write down the main points from the video.
Write this down in your notebooks.
Write three sentences using this word.
You have 10 minutes in your breakout rooms.
You have 5 minutes to complete this task.
Your opinion is important to me.



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