

Ideas for large classroom management

English language classrooms with large numbers of Ss are becoming more and more common. The following practical tips can help manage large classes, leading to tasks that work more smoothly, and thus to Ss' learning more efficiently and effectively.

Use organized groupings when doing whole-class speaking tasks

This grouping technique can be used for class interviews, surveys, and grammar Q&As.

- Have Ss gather in groups of five or eight or ten. Two groups form circles, one an inner circle and one an outer circle, facing each other. Ss ask questions of the person facing them, taking turns asking and answering. When finished, those in the inner circle rotate clockwise and face a different S. Ss repeat the interview process.
- To make the rotation go smoothly, you may want to establish a set time for the questioning, depending on the nature of the task, such as 30 seconds or a minute, and then give a signal for Ss to rotate.
- For a variation, instead of having Ss form circles as described above, have Ss stand in two facing lines. Ss facing each other take turns asking and answering questions. On your signal, the S at the front of one line goes to the back of that line, and all the other Ss in that line move one place forward. Ss repeat the interviewing process.

Divide the class for listening activities

If it is not possible for all Ss to hear the audio recording, for example, if there is a lot of distracting noise or the audio equipment is inadequate, divide the class in half. Give one half a task to do individually, in small groups, or in pairs, for example, one of the Extra Activity tasks or homework tasks found in this *Touchstone Second Edition* Teacher's Edition. Have the other half of the class move near the audio equipment and do the listening task. When the task is finished, have the halves switch roles, with the other half doing the listening.

Establish and use signals to facilitate smooth classroom operation

- Establish a simple set of teacher signals to indicate specific classroom commands, for example, be quiet, stop the task you are doing, and time for a task is up. Some suggestions for signals to use include the following: clapping your hands, turning lights on and off, ringing a bell, or knocking on the desk.
- Also establish a set of signals for Ss. Ss can signal that they have finished a task, such as by putting their fists on their desks and raising their thumbs, placing their textbooks in an upright position on their desks, or putting down their pens or pencils.

Consult with other teachers

Find out what techniques other teachers have used successfully to manage their large classes. Sometimes very simple ideas can have a significant impact on improving the practical aspects of classroom learning. Sharing class management issues and solutions with other teachers is an excellent way of learning from others' experience. Your peers are a wonderful resource.