The following are suggested activities for teaching individual sounds as well as other aspects of pronunciation such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Resources on pronunciation are listed under Pronunciation in Classroom Resources, and pronunciation terms can be found in the Pronunciation Glossary at the end of this section.

**Individual Sounds**

**Backward buildup**
Learners practice a sentence or phrase by repeating the last word, then adding another word with each repetition until the whole sentence or phrase has been produced.

**Bingo**
Play bingo using words or pictures that demonstrate a particular sound(s).

**Brainstorming**
Choose a topic and ask learners to think of words containing the sound(s) to be practiced. Follow this with an activity using the words.

**Categorizing**
Learners place words in columns according to the sound(s) being practiced (e.g., *ed* endings).

**Chain stories**
In turn, learners contribute sentences containing words or phrases with the sounds being practiced to make a story.

**Dialogues**
Learners create dialogues using words that contain the sounds being practiced.

**Exaggeration**
Demonstrate a sound by exaggerating the actions and position of the tongue, teeth, lips, and mouth.

**Identification**
Learners select the words or sentences they hear on a worksheet.

**Information gap**
Learners practice target sound(s) by sharing information to complete a task.

**Minimal pairs**
Learners identify which word of a pair has been spoken, indicate whether the two words spoken are the same or different, or which word in a list is different.

**Mirrors**
Learners note the position of their lips and tongue in a mirror when producing a sound.

**Pictures**
- Learners describe a picture using words containing the target sound.
- Create a page containing pictures of objects that contain the sound(s) being practiced. Dictate instructions for learners to follow (e.g., *Circle the skirt, Put an x on the shirt, Check the stocking*).

**Reference words**
Learners associate sounds with words. See Vowel/Consonant Symbols and Keywords chart.

**Rhyming words**
Learners create lists of rhyming words containing the sound being practiced.

**Rules**
Provide learners with rules (e.g., pronunciation and spelling of third person, past tense, and plural endings).

**Sammy diagrams**
Demonstrate the position of tongue, teeth, and lips by using diagrams of a cross-section of a head.

**Spelling equivalencies**
Give examples of different ways of spelling an individual sound (e.g., *we, see, tea, these, piece* for the sound /ɪə/).

**Tongue twisters**
Use sentences that are difficult to pronounce quickly and correctly to practice target sounds (e.g., *She sells seashells by the seashore*).
Techniques for Teaching Pronunciation

**Stress and Rhythm**

**Changing the meaning**
Read words and phrases using contrastive stress and discuss the meanings (e.g., *green house* and *greenhouse*).

**Marking syllables**
Read a list of words or sentences and have learners count syllables and mark which syllables are stressed.

**Exaggeration**
Encourage learners to exaggerate their production of stress and rhythm.

**Nonsense syllables**
Substitute a nonsense syllable such as *da* for word syllables.

**Identification of content and function words**
Learners underline content words in sentences.

**Rules**
Provide rules for dividing words into syllables.

**Limericks**
Use rhyming verses to teach stress and rhythm.

**Tapping**
Tap to indicate rhythm or stress.

**Intonation**

**Changing the meaning**
Read sentences using different stress and intonation to change the meaning.

**Identifying questions, statements, and lists**
- Read a list of sentences that have a declarative word order with yes/no question intonation or as statements. Learners complete sentences on a worksheet with a question mark or period.
- Read lists, sometimes stopping before the end, using rising intonation. Learners indicate whether the list is complete or whether there are more items to come.
- Read aloud a list of tag questions using rising or falling intonation. Learners indicate whether you are asking a question or stating a fact.

**Questionnaires and surveys**
Prepare questions for learners to use in pairs and instruct them to ask the questions politely, and ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going.

**Directions and instructions**
Learners work in pairs or groups and ask for and give directions and instructions.

**Contractions, Reduced Expressions, Linking, and Pausing**

**Dialogues and role-plays**
Learners create their own dialogues or use dialogues provided by the instructor to practice reduced expressions and linking.

**Identification**
Dictate pairs of similar sentences and have learners identify which sentence is being read on a worksheet.

**Dictation**
Learners dictate a list of sentences or a dialogue to a partner.

**Word counting**
Dictate sentences containing reductions and have learners count the number of words.

**Gap fill**
Prepare worksheets containing sentences with blanks for function words or contractions. Learners listen to a dictation of the sentences and fill in the blanks.
Techniques for Teaching Pronunciation

Vowel/Consonant Symbols and Keywords

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Pictorial Representations of Sounds

One way of helping learners produce speech correctly is to use a cross-sectional diagram of a head showing the position of the tongue, teeth, and lips for different sounds. These illustrations are called Sammy diagrams and can be found in many pronunciation reference books (e.g., *Teaching American English Pronunciation*).\(^2\)

Another pronunciation resource is the CALL software, *ELLIS – Master Pronunciation*. The Pronunciation section displays animated graphics of male and female models pronouncing sounds. Learners can choose either vowels or consonants to practice, record, and compare to the computer-generated sound. The Master Tutor section allows learners to choose a sound, see a Sammy diagram, and hear an explanation in different languages of how the sounds are formed.

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Teaching Cultural Aspects of Communication

Effective communication requires not just the mastery of individual sounds and the accompanying aspects of pronunciation such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. It also depends on speaking habits such as gestures, posture, and eye contact. The following is a list of global aspects of speech to consider when helping learners to understand and to be understood. Point out these features to learners and ask questions to encourage awareness of cultural differences.

Questions for Class Discussion

Speech

- **Silence**
  How do people respond to periods of silence in a conversation?

- **Speed**
  What does fast speech indicate? What about steady, evenly paced speech?

- **Volume**
  What is an acceptable level? What do people think if the volume is very soft? Is this the same in all cultures?

Body Language

- **Eye contact**
  What does direct eye contact signify for North Americans? Is the length of eye contact important?

- **Facial Expressions**
  What do facial expressions convey? Are they the same in all cultures? Do they matter?

- **Gestures**
  What gestures are used (e.g., to beckon, greet, wave goodbye, indicate agreement, non-comprehension, etc.)? How do gestures vary from culture to culture? Should we use gestures to communicate? How often should we gesture in conversation? What happens if we don’t use gestures? Do men and women gesture in the same way?

- **Posture**
  What attitudes do different postures communicate?

- **Physical Distance**
  What is an acceptable distance between people in conversation? What if that distance is too far? What if it is too close?

- **Touching**
  What forms of touching are acceptable in North America compared with other countries? Is it acceptable to touch someone when he/she is speaking to another person?

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1 Adapted from Kathryn Brillinger, *Pronunciation Rules: The Accompanying Pragmatics* workshop (Mississauga, ON, June 2001).