

Lesson Plan: AI as a Rehearsal Partner

Using AI for low-stakes practice without losing your own voice — for C1+ students

Level: C1-C2

Time: 50-60 minutes

Focus: Speaking practice, study skills

Requires: A phone or laptop with an AI chat tool

Learning objective

By the end of the lesson, students can use AI tools productively for low-stakes speaking and writing rehearsal, and recognise the specific point where relying on AI output stops building their own fluency.

1. Warmer (5 minutes)

Ask: have you ever used an AI tool to help with English? What for? Discuss briefly, without judgement, most students already do this informally. Ask: did it actually help you improve, or just produce a finished result?

2. Presentation: the rehearsal vs. performance line (10 minutes)

Introduce the core distinction:

Good use: rehearsal. Low-stakes practice, a simulated interview, a discussion topic, a first attempt you can redo instantly without embarrassment. The value is in the repeated, private attempt, not the AI's output.

Risky use: performance. Submitting AI-generated text as your own final work. This produces a polished result but skips the actual skill, producing language under your own effort.

Introduce the test: can you say the sentence again, from memory, in a slightly different context, five minutes later? If not, you copied it rather than produced it.

3. Controlled practice: rehearsal prompts (10 minutes)

Students try one of the following prompts with an AI chat tool, speaking their answer aloud before reading any AI-suggested response:

- *"Ask me three follow-up questions about my job, one at a time, and I'll answer each aloud before you ask the next."*
- *"Play the role of a slightly sceptical client in a negotiation. Push back on my first offer."*
- *"Give me a business email scenario and let me write my own reply before showing me any suggestions."*

4. Freer practice: the five-minute memory test (15 minutes)

In pairs: Student A rehearses a short answer to a discussion question using AI as a partner, away from Student B. After five minutes, Student A puts the device away and repeats the answer to Student B from memory, in a slightly different phrasing than the AI-assisted version. Discuss: how much did they actually retain versus copy?

5. Application: building your own practice material (10 minutes)

Demonstrate asking an AI tool to generate a cloze-deletion (fill-in-the-blank) exercise built around a topic the student actually cares about, rather than a generic textbook topic. Students try this themselves and complete the exercise it produces.

6. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Discuss: AI is genuinely useful for rehearsal and building custom practice material. It's weaker at register judgement, knowing when a technically correct sentence will land badly with a specific real audience, which is

exactly what human feedback still does best. The rehearsal can be AI. The performance has to be yours.

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