

Lesson Plan: Your Own WRAP

A structured plan for exam and meeting nerves, for C1+ students

Level: C1-C2

Time: 50-60 minutes

Focus: Speaking confidence, self-management **Best for:** Exam candidates, professionals facing high-stakes speaking

Learning objective

By the end of the lesson, students can identify their own personal early warning signs of exam or meeting nerves, and build a short, pre-decided response plan they can actually use under real pressure.

1. Warmer (5 minutes)

Ask: think of a moment before a speaking exam, presentation, or important meeting when you felt nervous. What did you notice, physically or mentally, in the minutes before? Discuss briefly, without needing detail, just naming that the sensation exists.

2. Presentation: the WRAP principle (10 minutes)

Introduce the core idea, adapted from a genuine NHS Recovery College tool called a Wellness Recovery Action Plan: decide your response to pressure in advance, while calm, rather than trying to think clearly in the moment itself, when it's hardest to do.

Early warning signs. A specific, personal, recognisable pattern, a thought, a physical sensation, a behaviour, that shows up consistently before you struggle.

A pre-decided response. Not vague advice like "stay calm", but something concrete and repeatable: a breath count, an opening phrase, a physical anchor.

Review and adjust. After a real high-stakes moment, a short check: did the plan help? Does it need adjusting?

3. Controlled practice: naming your own signs (10 minutes)

Individually, students complete the sentence starters below. There's no answer key, this is personal and specific to each student.

- "When I get nervous before speaking English, I usually think..."
- "Physically, I notice..."
- "I tend to..." (a behaviour: *speak faster, avoid eye contact, go quiet*)

4. Freer practice: building the plan (15 minutes)

Individually, students write a short, concrete response plan: one physical action (e.g. three slow breaths), one verbal anchor phrase to use if they blank ("Let me think about that for a moment"), and one thing to remind themselves of. In pairs, share and refine each other's plans, checking: is this specific enough to actually follow under real pressure?

5. Application: mock pressure test (10 minutes)

In pairs or small groups, run a short, mildly pressured speaking task (a rapid-fire discussion question, a 60-second answer with no preparation time). Students try using their own plan live, then briefly reflect: did it help?

6. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Discuss: this isn't about eliminating nerves, they're normal and won't fully disappear. It's about having a plan that doesn't require clear thinking in the moment itself, since that's exactly what pressure takes away first.