

## Relationships

**Topic:** Relationships

**Level:** SfL Entry 2/3 / SQA Access 3/Intermediate 1 / CEFR B1

**Time:** 90-120 mins

### Aims

- To develop students' vocabulary of relationship words
- To develop students' ability to listen for gist and specific information
- To give practice of listening, speaking and writing about relationships
- To develop students' awareness of word stress and linking features in spoken English
- To develop teachers' ability to use dictation as a language learning technique

### Introduction

This lesson is about the relationships students have. The tasks allow for discussion and personalisation and can lead to stronger group cohesion as the students learn more about each others' lives. It provides practice in all four skills.

The lesson uses **dictation** as a technique. Dictation provides a number of benefits, both practical and from a language learning viewpoint. It is easy to use, requires little preparation and allows for differentiation. As a learning tool, students work on decoding spoken English and recoding into written English. This can be both very challenging and motivating. Davis and Rinvulcri (1988: p7) have this to say about the value of dictation, "*Decoding the sounds of [English] and recoding them in writing is a major learning task*". Dictations allow for work on a variety of language features including spelling, grammar and vocabulary in a clear context.

Two types of dictation are used in this lesson:

The **definitions and word stress** dictation (**Task 1**) is used to check students' knowledge of key vocabulary for the listening and other tasks. This helps to engage the students much more than simply pre-teaching the vocabulary, by activating students' prior knowledge. It also ensures all the students have the correct words (and spelling) and understand the meaning of the vocabulary. Further, including word stress in the dictation develops this area of pronunciation, as the students will have to visualise and 'hear' the words as they write.

The **dictogloss** dictation (**Task 4**) develops listening, speaking and writing skills. The text for dictation is listened to more than once. During the first listening students do not write anything. On the second and third listening they write key words from the text. This repeated listening to the text allows the students to build an image of the text in their heads. The writing down of key words gives the students a frame onto which to construct the text. In the post-listening phase, students are put in pairs/groups to work on reconstructing the text. As the students work collaboratively, they can draw on each other's linguistic resources and knowledge of how the language works in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation etc. The use of this listening into writing task also helps the students focus on key features of spoken English such as contractions and weak forms. The final form of the text is negotiated through this group work. Often the students' text can vary from the original text. This discrepancy is fine as the aim is not necessarily to reconstruct the text word for word, but rather to construct an accurate piece of writing. Student texts can become the base for error correction work and focus on specific target language.

## Lesson plan: Relationships dictation

A demonstration of teacher and teacher trainer Jamie Keddie using **dictogloss** as a technique can be accessed here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxI3c1Fm4SE>

For more information on the value of dictation and on different dictation techniques, see the following resources:

- Davis, P. and M. Rinvoluceri. 1988. *Dictation: New methods, new possibilities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-dictation>
- <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Alkire-Dictation.html>

### Materials and preparation

Make enough copies of the **Student worksheets** for each student to have one full set. Make sure you do not give out the worksheet until the feedback stage of **Task 1**.

You will need a visual of a close friend/relative for the warmer. You also need access to equipment to play the audio clips.

This lesson could easily be adapted to your local context by creating your own audio clips with local accents.

A script of the audio is provided as an appendix at the end of this lesson plan. The script can be provided to the students as a model for follow up activities such as personal writing and pronunciation work. (Note that the script is a simplified version of the audio as voiced hesitations such as *er* and *ehm* have been omitted).

It is expected that students already know basic relationship words such as *husband, wife, mother, daughter* etc. It would also be useful if the students had done some preparatory/review work on the use of genitives, e.g. *mother's brother, sister's husband* etc.

### Procedure

#### Warmer (10 mins)

- Display a visual of a person you know well (a member of your family) or the most important person in your life. Get the students to ask you questions about the person. At some point elicit the phrase '*close to someone*'.
- Put the students in pairs. Ask the students to find out about each other's family. As the students work together, monitor and provide any useful vocabulary.
- Take some feedback on anything interesting the students have found out about each other.

#### Differentiation

- This task could be conducted it as a mingling activity. Set a time limit if doing this and provide some guidelines as to how many people each student should talk to.

## Lesson plan: Relationships dictation

### Task 1 – Definition and word stress dictation (15 mins)

Note: this activity is likely to generate lots of discussion on how/which words are used in different languages to describe personal relationships

- Write the numbers 1-10 on the board and tell the students to do the same in their notebooks.
- Say to the students:
  - *We're going to do a dictation. I will give you the definition of each word. I'll also draw the word stress on the board. Write down the word you think is correct. Let's do the first one together as an example.*
- Do the first word together as an example. Put the word stress notation on the board at number 1, highlighting that in this case the students are looking for a two word answer:
  - ● ●
- Read out the definition and elicit the answer:
  - *If you have no brothers and sisters you are an .... (only child)*
- Continue with the dictation, putting the word stress pattern on the board and providing the definition for each word/phrase. Pause between each definition to give the students time to think and write.
  - ● ●
  - 1. *If you have no brothers and sisters you are an .... **only child***
  - ●
  - 2. *This is the word for a woman whose husband has died..... **widow***
  - ● ●
  - 3. *This describes someone you know to say hello to, but you are not friends.....**acquaintance***
  - ● ●
  - 4. *If you marry someone who already has children, they are your.... **step children***
  - ●
  - 5. *If a couple was married but they have split up, they are ..... **divorced***
  - ●
  - 6. *This word is used to describe a person you have a relationship with e.g. you might live with them, but you are not married to them..... **partner***
  - ● ●
  - 7. *If your parents are divorced and your mother or father is married to someone else, the children they have together are your..... **half brothers (or sisters)***
  - ● ● ●
  - 8. *Your husband or wife's father is your.....**father-in-law***
  - ●
  - 9. *Your sister or brother's son is your ..... **nephew***
  - 
  - 10. *When a mother has two babies at the same time, they are ..... **twins***
- Put the students in pairs/small groups to compare answers. Tell the students to say the answers aloud to check if they correspond to the word stress patterns on the board. After a couple of minutes provide the **Student worksheets** and tell students to check their answers against **Task 1**.
- Take feedback from the students, checking the word stress and meaning of each word. At this point, deal with any other pronunciation difficulties e.g. *acquaintance*.
- Elicit words which are related to the vocabulary items, but differ according to gender, relationship etc (e.g. *widow/widower; stepchildren/parents/mother/father* etc).

### Differentiation

- Depending on the level of the group, the students may need the definition repeated, or further clues. Use the word stress to give them further information, e.g. by using sound *DA di DA* etc.

### Task 2 – First listening (20 mins)

- Tell the students they will listen to two women (Jen and Holly) talking about their family and relationships. They should listen for the vocabulary items in **Task 1**. Tell them to put the initial of the person who uses the word beside it. Tell them to make a note of any other relationship words they hear.
- Play part of the first recording. Check the students are completing the task correctly and elicit any other relationship words they hear.
- Play the rest of the recordings without stopping.
- Put the students in pairs to compare their answers, discussing any other relationship words they heard.
- During feedback highlight any new vocabulary on the board. Clarify meaning and check pronunciation.

*Suggested answers: Task 2*

**Jen:** *widow, only child, half brother/sister, acquaintance, (ex)-partner*

**Other words:** *mum, dad, children, sister(s), brother(s), family, daughter, husband, second wife, cousins, best friend, stepfather*

**Holly:** *divorced, twins, half sisters, father-in-law, nephew*

**Other words:** *child/children, father, wife, sons, daughters, sister, friends, husband, family, mother-in-law, stepmother, stepbrother*

### Differentiation

- This task is deliberately open-ended. It is likely that the stronger students will manage to deal with both parts of Task 2 simultaneously. However, you may wish to tell some students to focus on the first part of the task only, i.e. identifying the words from Task 1.

### Task 3 – Second Listening (20 mins)

- Tell the students to look at **Task 3** on their worksheet. Ask them to read through the statements and try to decide if each is true or false before they listen again. They could do this in pairs.
- Play the recordings again, pausing after the first speaker.
- Get the students to compare and discuss their answers together. Remind students they should try to justify their answers.
- Feedback to the whole class, focusing on why each answer is true or false.
- At this point you could ask the students to work out how many siblings (including half/step) Holly has, and if anyone in the group has more!

*Suggested answers: Task 3*

- F** (*but students may not see six children as particularly large*)
- T** (*Her mother is a widow*)
- F** (*Australia, USA, other parts of UK*)
- F** (*She has an ex-partner but no ex-husband*)
- F** (*Her husband has no children*)
- T** (*She is very sociable but she describes many people she knows as acquaintances*)

## Lesson plan: Relationships dictation

7. **T** (Students may want to discuss how usual/unusual this type of family is)
8. **F** (They are divorced and married to other people)
9. **T** (Both her mother and father are remarried)
10. **F** (He presumably still lives in Malaysia)
11. **F** (Her husband's family is...Holly is English – although she doesn't actually say this)
12. **T** (Probably, maybe the nephews are the children of some of Holly's brothers and sisters!)

### Task 4 – Dictogloss (35 mins)

**Notes** – this task can be quite challenging for the students. As the students work together they collaborate to read, write and listen to each other.

- Tell the students they are going to try to write what one of the people has said. Explain that they will hear the audio clip three times. The first time they will just listen, the second time they will write down important words they hear (in the same order they hear them), and the third time they will try to add more words to this. Tell the students not to try to write everything down. Explain that they will work alone during the dictation and then in a group afterwards.
- Play part of Recording 1 - Jen's talk (the second paragraph is used here).
  - *I'm married and I've got a daughter. She's an only child and my husband is her stepfather. We don't have any other children. My husband was married before so I'm his second wife. My ex-partner is my daughter's father and he lives in Greece. I lived there with him when we were together but we never got married. My daughter has a half brother and a half sister as her dad's married to another woman now and they have two young children. She also has a lot of cousins in Scotland, England and around the world.*
- Check the students understand what they have to do next.
- Play the recording for the second time. Wait a minute before playing the recording a third time.
- Put the students in small groups (3 or 4). Tell them that they are going to try to write what Jen said, using the key words they have written to help. Explain that they should choose one person to write while the rest of the group help to complete the text.
- Monitor the groups. If the students are finding the task very difficult, play the recording again. Tell the students to put their pens down while they listen.
- When the groups have completed their text (or as much as they can manage), display the script on the board and play the recording.
- Tell the students to compare their texts with the one on the board. Remind students that their text might not be exactly the same as the one on the board, but nonetheless be an excellent piece of writing.
- Discuss differences between the text on the board and the students' texts, and what difficulties the students had in terms of grammar, spelling etc. Clarify any relevant language items. At this point it is useful to point out issues related to fast spoken speech (e.g. use of weak forms, use of contractions, differences between what they hear and what the person said, how focusing on key words helps to hear the full message).

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### Differentiation

- You can choose to work with more, or less, of the script(s) depending on students' level.
- If your group is multi-level, put the weaker students together. Provide them with a gap-fill of the text so that they only have to write some of the text. You could also give different groups different recordings to work with if you have access to equipment to set up group work.
- The dictation can be adapted in many ways, e.g. It would work as a group dictation, with one student reading the text while the others write; a running dictation could be used; students (in pairs) could be given half the text each and dictate to each other.

### Cooler (10 mins)

- Write your name in the centre of the board. Write some names of people in your family/other relationships around your name, putting those closest to you near your own name, and those less close further away.
- Get the students to guess how these people are related to you and provide them with some information about how close each person is to you/what your relationship is like with that person.
- Tell the students to take a blank piece of paper and put their own name in the centre. They should then write five or six other people around their name, nearer or further from the name depending on how close they are to the person.
- When the students have completed their 'relationship map', put them in small groups (regrouping them so they are working with different people than in the rest of the lesson).
- Tell the students to take turns to describe their map to each other. They can also ask each other questions about the people they have written down. Monitor unobtrusively while the students work together.
- Take feedback from each group, focusing on interesting things the students have found out about each other.
- At this point you could have a quick correction spot focusing on pronunciation difficulties the students had with key vocabulary, use of genitives, or any salient errors you noticed while monitoring.

### Extension activities / Homework

As a homework activity, the students can write about their own relationships. The scripts of the recordings act as a model for the type of language they could use. However, each text will be personalised.

This topic and language could be used for a variety of follow up activities. A selection of ideas are given here:

- Students use a webtool such as Padlet (<http://padlet.com/>) to share information about their families and other relationships. They can write texts and upload pictures. This works as the basis for project work.
- Students prepare short presentations on their families and relationships.
- Students bring photographs of their families to class and this is used as the basis for speaking activities and writing descriptions.
- Students work in groups to compare how they think families in their own countries are different to those in the UK.

## Appendix

### Recording 1 - Jen (2 mins 11 secs)

My name's Jen. My mum and dad had six children and I was in the middle. I've got two older sisters, one older brother and two younger brothers. My mum is a **widow** now but she lives quite near me. I don't see my brothers and sisters very often. My older sisters are in Australia and London, my older brother works in the USA and my younger brothers both live in other cities in the UK. I'm probably closest to my sister who lives in London. We speak to each other all the time on the phone and visit each other as often as we can. Last summer we had a family reunion when all my brothers and sisters came back to Glasgow at the same time.

I'm married and I've got a daughter. She's an only child and my husband is her **stepfather**. We don't have any other children. My husband was married before so I'm his second wife. My **ex-partner** is my daughter's father and he lives in Greece. I lived there with him when we were together but we never got married. My daughter has a **half brother** and a **half sister** as her dad's married to another woman now and they have two young children. She also has a lot of cousins in Scotland, England and around the world.

I am very sociable and make friends easily but I am only close to a few of them. I've known my best friend for more than twenty years now. I know lots of other people of course, but many of them are really just **acquaintances** and I don't consider them my friends.

### Recording 2 – Holly (2 mins 21 secs)

My name's Holly and I'm a middle child. I've got an older brother and an older sister and then I've got two younger brothers, they're **twins**. My parents **divorced** when I was eight years old and they have both remarried now. My father married a woman who already had two sons, so I've also got two **stepbrothers**. My father and my stepmother have two daughters now and they're my **half sisters**. My older sister, I'm probably closest to, we see each other quite often even though she now lives in Wales and I live in Scotland. I am quite close to my **stepbrother** because I lived near him in Malaysia for a while and we got quite close while I was there.

I have a lot of friends but they live all over the world. I have some friends in Brighton that I'm quite close to and I visit them when I visit my father. He also lives in Brighton. My best friend lives in Scotland and I live in Scotland as well. I moved to Scotland because my husband is Scottish and his family live here, and we now have two children, a boy and a girl. My husband's family also live near us. He has just one sister, who's older than him and we have three **nephews**. And my **mother-in-law** and my **father-in-law** also live nearby and we see them quite often.



**Relationships**
**Task 1 – Definition and word stress dictation**

*Check your answers to the dictation.*

1. an only child (●● ●)
2. a widow(●●)
3. an acquaintance (●●●)
4. step children (● ●●)
5. divorced (●●)
6. a partner (●●)
7. half brothers (or sisters) (● ●●)
8. father-in-law (●● ● ●)
9. nephew (●●)
10. twins (●)

**Task 2 – First listening**

- a. *Listen to two women (Jen and Holly) talking about their family and relationships. Which words in Task 1 above do the women use? Put **J** for Jen and **H** next to the words you hear them use.*
- b. *Listen for any other relationship words you hear and write them in the table below:*

Jen	Holly

**Task 3 – Second listening**

- a. *Before you listen again, look at the statements below. Mark the statements T for True or F for False. If you are not sure, you can leave the statement blank.*

**Jen**

1. Jen comes from a small family
2. Her father is no longer alive.
3. Her brothers and sisters all live near each other.
4. Jen has been married more than once.
5. She has two stepchildren.
6. She doesn't have many close friends



**Holly**

7. Holly comes from a big family.
8. Her mother and father are married to each other.
9. Holly has a stepfather and a stepmother
10. Her stepbrother lives near her in Scotland
11. Holly's family is Scottish
12. Her husband's sister has three children.

- b. *Now listen again to check or find the answers.*

- c. *Check your answers with a partner. Discuss why the answers are true or false.*

**Task 4 – Dictogloss**

*Listen and write what you hear.*