Positively English
Teacher's Manual

Contents

Overview

Positively English is an oral communication course aimed at false-beginner level students. False-beginner means that students have an understanding of basic English grammar and vocabulary, but still need help developing their communication skills. The goal of the course is to help students develop speaking fluency.

Positively English is student-centered. The teacher plays the role of facilitator and helper, while the students work in pairs or groups practicing communication skills. Activities are structured so that students can practice independently with occasional assistance from the instructor. This is accomplished through careful scaffolding and clear presentation of lesson tasks.

In addition to providing abundant practice, *Positively English* also teaches important communication skills so that students have the tools to communicate effectively after the course has finished. For example, students learn discourse strategies - expressions that native English speakers often use to make a conversation flow more smoothly, such as "Uh-huh", "And you?" and "Oh, really?" Also, students learn the importance of giving long answers and asking follow-up questions. Finally, students learn how to start a conversation, maintain it, and finish it. These skills are recycled throughout the text and are presented in a straightforward manner.

Positively English is easy to teach. Each lesson follows a predictable pattern with similar activities, so the instructor spends less time explaining and the students spend more time practicing. Each lesson focuses on a popular topic, such as family, routines and experiences, and the grammar in each unit progresses from simple to more advanced.

The approach of *Positively English* is based on the TPR Storytelling Method (TPRS), which provides students with an abundance of comprehensible input, as well as speaking practice through carefully structured questions based on what students listen to. While traditional TPRS is generally teacher-centered with the instructor telling a story and asking questions, *Positively English* is designed so that students provide the comprehensible input and ask the questions. Titled 'Positively Practice", this core lesson activity requires students to think, concentrate and reply in the target language. And because this is done in pairs or groups, with students taking turns assuming the role of the MKO (More Knowledgeable Other), motivation is increased while the affective filter is lowered.

Positively English also encourages students to use English in a realistic, engaging way. Each lesson contains a research task that has students survey their classmates and present a small presentation based on the data gathered. The questions the students ask are based on the unit theme and grammar point.

The course also takes advantage of blended-learning. In order to maximize the time for speaking practice in class, formal listening activities have been placed online at www.positivelyenglish.com where students can practice on their own. You can "encourage" students to do their homework by giving them occasional listening quizzes, which are provided at the teacher website. Finally, you and your students can use components of the text on most smartphones or tablets. Of course, because the text is based on the TPRS method and task-based learning, students will still have plenty of meaningful listening practice in class.

Positively English has 12 units, plus 3 review sections. This provides more than enough material for a 15 lesson course that meets 1.5 hours per week.

Each unit of *Positively English* contains the following sections: Warm-Up, parts 1 & 2; Positively Speaking; Positively Practice; Research Task; Extension; Listening. Below is a description of each section:

Warm-Up, part 1
This activity draws on students own lives and knowledge. Students read 19 statements and check the items that are true for themselves. It's a simple, non-threatening task that provides students with a variety of examples of grammar and vocabulary connected with the unit theme.

Warm-Up, part 2
This section contains 4 conversations that students practice in pairs after listening to the audio and filling in the gaps. As with the previous warm up activity, these conversations illustrate useful expressions based on the unit topic. The conversations are short and can easily be memorized, personalized or adapted by your students. They can be used in a variety of ways, some of which are explained in the lesson procedure section of this teacher's manual. The dialogues also highlight conversation strategies, such as follow-up questions and common discourse strategies.

Positively Speaking
In order to make practice more realistic, Positively Speaking provides a conversation framework for students to practice speaking. Generally conversations between native English speakers have 3 parts: some sort of greeting or comment, more comments or questions, and finally, a closing greeting. The textbook framework mirrors this and is also divided into three parts: **Start**, **Questions** and **Finish**. In other words, students learn how to open a conversation, maintain it, and finally close a conversation like native English speakers do.

The **Questions** section of the conversation has roughly ten questions. Before your students practice the conversation, it's probably a good idea to have them write their answers to the questions first; when they finish, select various students to copy their questions and answers on the board. Check the answers for grammar mistakes and naturalness. For example, if the question is "What do you like to do in your free time?", and a student writes "I like to play baseball in my free time", you might explain that while the answer is grammatically correct, it sounds a bit unnatural. You could add parentheses to illustrate what normally would not be spoken: *I like to play baseball (in my free time)*.

Each time students practice Positively Speaking, you should give them a time limit. In the first unit, you might ask them to speak for 2 minutes, increasing the speaking time by 30 seconds or a minute for each consecutive unit. Once you teach Long Answers and Follow-up Questions in units 3 and 4, it will be easier for students to speak at longer intervals. Timed conversation practice is especially useful if you plan to assess your students using timed speaking tests.

Part 2: Mini Presentation
The mini presentation activity allows students to consolidate the language from the conversation in part 1 and the previous Warm Up sections and write about their own experiences, preferences and opinions.

If you would prefer to devote more time to other activities in the unit, this activity can be skipped.

Positively Practice
The heart of each lesson, this activity is inspired by the TPRS method. Students work in pairs (or groups). One student reads the passage and asks questions to their partner, and upon completion they switch roles. Essentially this is a student-generated comprehensible input task which requires students to think and respond in the target language. The task questions not only relate to the passage, but are also personalized:

Does Jim get up at 7:30?
Do you get up at 7:30?

Positively Practice encourages student autonomy and thus is very motivating for students. The student who reads the passage and asks questions plays the role of the teacher or MKO (More Knowledgeable Other), which instills confidence and a sense of responsibility, and the intense nature of the task keeps their partner engaged.

This task can also be done in groups, or as a teacher-centered activity with the instructor leading and asking the entire class questions.

Research Task
Each unit of *Positively English* has a task-based classroom research activity that allows students to practice the target language in an engaging and informative way. Students survey their peers, use the data to create a pie chart, and finally, present their results to fellow classmates.

Extension
Unless you teach the first four pages of the unit at an extremely brisk pace, there probably won't be enough time for the Extension activity in a 1.5 hour class. However, it could be done later as review. In addition, if you want to give students a break from other activities, then you could substitute the Extension activity.

Listening
The last activity in the unit is a simple pairwork dictation that takes at most 10 minutes. It can be used if time is left at the end of class. The majority of formal listening practice for Positively English is located at www.positivelyenglish.com, which is described in the next section.

eLearning Component
As mentioned earlier, in order to maximize the time for speaking practice, formal listening activities have been placed online where students can practice on their own. Of course, because the textbook is based on the TPRS method, students will still have plenty of meaningful listening practice listening to their partners in class. And you can "encourage" students to do their homework by giving them occasional listening quizzes, which are provided on the teacher website.

There are 4 website listening activities, A, B, C and D, for each unit:

A - Students listen to a conversation based on the unit topic and language and take a short quiz.

B - Students listen to and answer questions orally.

C - Students listen to and review one of the 'Positively Practice' passages.

D - An optional listening activity found at the popular ESL/EFL website *Randall's Cyber Cafe.*

Suggested Lesson Procedure

Here is an example of how you might approach a unit. All units in the textbook follow the same format.

WARM UP, PART 1

Approximate time: 5 minutes

1. Tell students to check the items that are true for themselves.
2. Tell students to use the classroom English on page 99 to ask you if they don't understand any words.
3. In pairs, have students read the items they checked to one another.

OPTION 1: Have students first circle any words they do not understand. Write them on the board and explain the meaning.

WARM UP, PART 2

Approximate time: 10 minutes

1. Play the audio and have students fill in the blanks. Correct as necessary.
2. Put students into pairs. Have them practice conversation 1, once as **A**, and then as **B**. Encourage them to substitute their own information when possible. Also encourage them to make eye contact when practicing.
3. Repeat these steps for conversations 2 - 4.
4. Number pairs of students off 1 - 4, with 1 corresponding to conversation 1, 2 corresponding to conversation 2, and so on. Give students 1 minute to practice and memorize their conversation with their partner.
5. Have students turn their books over and perform their conversation without looking.
6. Choose random pairs of students to perform their conversation.

OPTION 1: As an extension activity have the students combine and extend conversations 1 - 4. They can write their own dialog on a separate sheet of paper and perform it in front of the class.

POSITIVELY SPEAKING

Approximate time: 25 - 30 minutes

1. Refer students to the 3 stages of the conversation: **Start**, **Questions**, **Finish**.
2. Have students write their answers to the questions.
3. Next, choose various students to write their answers on the blackboard. Provide feedback.
4. Point out the Sound Native box next to the questions on the right side of the page.

5. Tell students they should practice the conversation with a partner until you say "Finish". At that time they should close the conversation by using one of the closing greetings in the **Finish** box.
6. Give students a time limit and have them practice the conversation together in pairs. Have students change partners several times. Encourage them to use the 'speaking support' card on page 100.

TIME OPTIONS: It's best to give your students a time limit, particularly if you plan to administer timed speaking tests for your assessment. Depending on the level of your students, you might consider giving students around a minute for units 1 and 2. Once students learn to give long answers and ask follow-up questions in units 3 and 4, you can increase the time.

Part 2: Mini Presentation

Approximate time: 20 minutes
1. Have students write several sentences about the presentation topic. Tell students they can refer to the language in part 1, as well as the language in the Warm Up sections on the previous page.
2. Circulate among the students and check their sentences for errors.
3. In pairs, have students read their presentation to one another. Tell students they should use the "read and look up" technique, trying as much as possible to make eye-contact with their partner. Eventually you can have students turn their books over and perform from memory. Also, teach students to use utterances that show they are listening, such as "Uh-huh", "Hm-mm", "Oh, really?" and "Oh, yeah?".
4. Have students change partners once or twice and repeat step 3.

OPTION 1: Have students write a question about their presentation at the bottom of the page. After they present to their partner, they ask the question.

OPTION 2: Put students in groups of 4. One person does their presentation, and the rest of the group listens. Have students take turns.

OPTION 3: Have students present to the entire class.

OPTION 4: For homework, have students memorize the presentation and present to groups or the entire class the following lesson.

POSITIVELY PRACTICE

Approximate time: 20 - 25 minutes
1. Put students into pairs, **A** and **B**. Have **A** turn to the Positively Practice activity; have **B** turn to page 99 and look at the classroom English.
2. Student A reads the passage and asks the questions to student **B**. Student **B** uses classroom English when they don't understand.
3. When students finish, have them change roles. You may want to write the page numbers on the board ahead of time to make the transition easier.
note: occasionally, you may want to pre-teach people's names or vocabulary that you think the students might have trouble with.

OPTION 1: Have the students make new pairs and practice again, reading each sentence of the passage once instead of twice, and at a faster speed.

OPTION 2: If you have time at the end of class, you could read one of the passages yourself and ask the students questions.

RESEARCH TASK

Approximate time: 20 - 25 minutes
1. The first time you do this activity, refer students to page 97. Be sure to demonstrate each step.
2. If you have more than 29 students in your class, allow more than one question per student.
3. In order to make sure every student chooses a different question (or not too many students choose the same question), write numbers 1 - 29 on the board. Once students have chosen their question, have them come to the board and circle their choice.
4. Have students conduct their survey while mingling with the rest of the class. Afterwards, students tabulate their data and draw a pie chart.
5. Have students present their data in small groups. Make sure they show their pie chart to the other group members while they speak.
6. If time permits, have the class stand up and mingle so that students can present their data to other students.

OPTION 1: For homework, have students practice their presentation and present to the entire class the following lesson.

EXTENSION

Approximate time: various
Each unit has an extension activity that consolidates the students' learning, in the form of a game, information gap or role play. As mentioned in the overview, there probably will not be time to do this in a 1.5 hour class unless you plan to cut another activity in the unit. On the other hand, you could use the extension activity for review in the next lesson.

Because each extension activity has a different format, the instructor should first demonstrate with a student how to do the activity.

LISTENING

Approximate time: 10 minutes
1. Put students into pairs. Have them go to the correct page.
2. **A** reads their sentences to **B**; **B** dictates the sentences.
3. Students change roles.

Note: The first time students do the dictation activity, they might be confused about where to write the sentences. Also, in the case where one of the dictation sentences is a question, students might be unsure of whether to write the question or the question's answer, so make sure to demonstrate beforehand.

Homework and E-learning

HOMEWORK

Approximate time: 20 minutes

1. Have students visit www.positivelyenglish.com. The URL is printed on the back cover of the text, as well as on the first page of each unit. Students can view and do the activities on the website using a PC, tablet or smartphone.
2. Assign A, B, C on the website for the the particular lesson you are teaching.

OPTION 1: Have students also do assignment D. This is an activity from the popular website *Randall's Cyber Cafe*.

OPTION 2: Have students memorize their mini-presentation from the unit and perform it the following class.

OPTION 3: Have students write any new words they learned during the lesson on page 99 of their textbooks.

OPTION 4: Any combination of the above.

HOMEWORK QUIZZES

To make sure students do their homework it's probably a good idea to occasionally give them a quiz. Each lesson of the textbook has a quiz based on the website homework that can be downloaded from the teacher site and printed out for your students. The quizzes are short and take at most 5 minutes, and they are designed so that they can be easily marked by the students.

Assessment

In addition to homework quizzes, you can give your students speaking tests. While oral exams can be a challenge to schedule and set up, especially in large classes, teachers should try to allot time for them, especially since speaking is a core competency of *Positively English*. Another often overlooked factor is that speaking tests provide valuable "washback" effect; that is, if students know their speaking is going to be tested, they will take conversation practice more seriously.

Some ideas:

~ Consider allocating one class per semester just to speaking tests. Students can either sign up for blocks of time, or the entire class can do a writing activity while waiting at the back of the room. A little music from a strategically placed CD player will keep the students from overhearing the test.

~ Adjust the difficulty of the speaking test depending on the level of students. With lower-level learners, you might allow students to write out a dialogue to be memorized beforehand. Or, you may tell the students what questions you plan to ask (or want to be asked). Additionally, you can provide skeleton prompts, such as "Where/live?" to elicit "Where do you live?"

~ For higher level classes you can require students to speak for a set length of time using language and topics from the textbook, without any prompts.

~ Depending on the class size, speaking tests can be done student-to-teacher, student-to-student, or in groups of 3 or 4. If you decide to dedicate one class period to speaking tests, then 5-minute speaking tests are a reasonable length of time and will allow you to test roughly 15 pairs of students in a 1.5 hour class. WIth larger classes, you'll have to either make the speaking test shorter or organize the students into groups of 3 or 4.

~ There are many ways to score speaking tests. You can grade students' grammar accuracy, pronunciation, intonation, attitude, and so on. For your convenience, two speaking test score sheets are available at the teacher website. Version #1 scores only two areas: amount of English spoken, and naturalness of English (i.e., use of discourse strategies). Version #2 is more comprehensive. Both of these score sheets are available as Word documents, so feel free to modify them to suit your grading criteria.

Sample Syllabi

There are a variety of ways to structure your course. Here are some samples to help you get started.

15–CLASS COURSE, WITH TWO CLASSES DEDICATED TO SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

1. Ice Breakers (pages 6 & 7)*
2. Lesson (Unit) 1
3. Lesson 2
4. Lesson 3
5. Review (pages 21 & 22); speaking test practice
6. Speaking test
7. Lesson 4
8. Lesson 5
9. Lesson 6
10. Lesson 7
11. Review (pages 39 & 40); speaking test practice
12. Speaking test
13. Lesson 8
14. Lesson 9
15. Lesson 10

*often students do not purchase their textbook before the first class, so you may want to photocopy these pages for the first class.

15–CLASS COURSE, WITH ONE CLASS DEDICATED TO SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

1. Ice Breakers (pages 6 & 7)
2. Lesson (Unit) 1
3. Lesson 2
4. Lesson 3
5. Review (pages 21 & 22)
6. Lesson 4
7. Lesson 5
8. Lesson 6
9. Lesson 7
10. Review (pages 39 & 40)
11. Lesson 8
12. Lesson 9
13. Lesson 10
14. Speaking test*
15. Review or Lesson 11

* you might consider giving the speaking test on the second from the last class in case some students are absent.

15–CLASS COURSE, (SPEAKING TEST DONE DURING REGULAR CLASSES OR NOT AT ALL)

1. Ice Breakers (pages 6 & 7)
2. Lesson (Unit) 1
3. Lesson 2
4. Lesson 3
5. Review units 1-3
6. Lesson 4
7. Lesson 5
8. Lesson 6
9. Lesson 7
10. Review units 4-7
11. Lesson 8
12. Lesson 9
13. Lesson 10
14. Review units 8-10
15. Lesson 11

Teaching Tips

NAME CARDS
If you don't do so already, I highly recommend that you try using name cards with your students. While they take a bit of prep work at the beginning of each term and might require some out-of-pocket money for the construction paper, there are various advantages that make it worthwhile.

1. Name cards help you remember your students' names.
2. Name cards can be used to take attendance. If you collect students cards at the end of each lesson, you can have students pick them up at the beginning of each class, so you'll quickly know who is absent.
3. Name cards provide an easy way to get student feedback. On the back or inside of each name card, you can photocopy a blank class schedule **(see teacher website for a downloadable template)** and have students write comments about each lesson at the end of class. You can also use them to quickly survey the students. For example, you could ask students a question, such as "How is my speaking speed?", and have them write "too fast", "okay" or "too slow" for that day's lesson.
4. Name cards are excellent for classroom management. When students are absent, you can record it on their cards; when they sleep in class, come late, don't do homework, etc., this can be marked as well. The advantage is that it is a non-confrontational way of letting students know how they're doing, and because the notes are recorded on the card, the students are reminded of their attendance and classroom performance each lesson.
5. Name cards can be used for putting students into groups or pairs.

SEATING STRATEGIES
Being a student-centered oral communication textbook, *Positively English* frequently utilizes pair and group work. With this in mind, it's best to organize your students so that getting into and changing pairs or groups is as easy as possible.

One way is to set up a rotation system, as shown below:
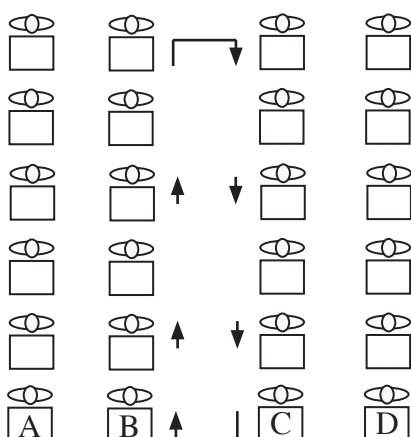
Whenever you want students to change partners, you have rows B and C rotate as shown above. As a result, everyone gets a new partner.

Another option is to have your students sit in groups for the entire class. Assuming the classroom can physically accommodate such an arrangement, students arrange their desks or tables into groups

of 4 at the beginning of every class. In small groups, students will always be ready to switch to pair or group work. An added benefit is that as members of a smaller community students are more inclined to stay on task and help one another.

It's also better if students sit in different seats or groups each class, because over time it allows them to get to know all of their classmates. Plus, it makes each class a bit more interesting. One lively way to create groups is to randomly give students a number from 1-5 (if, for example, you have a class size of 20). Then, say to the class "OK, all the number 1s get together and make a group. All the number 2s get together and make a group", and so on. Here are some further adjustments.

class size of 16 = numbers 1-4 (4 groups of 4 students)
class size of 20 = numbers 1-5 (5 groups of 4 students)
class size of 28 = numbers 1-7 (7 groups of 4 students)
(If the class size is not wholly divisible by 4, make an extra group of 3 or 5.)

It is a good idea to initially draw a diagram on the board to let the students know how to move the desks or tables. In the example below, it's assumed the classroom has tables rather than desks:
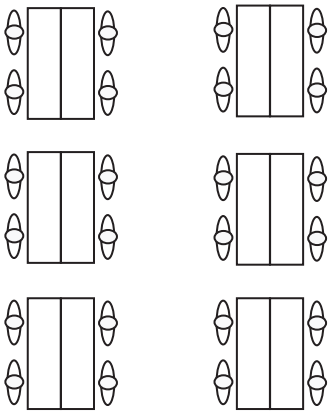
In the above scheme, a student can have as many as 3 different partners in the same group. This set up not only maximizes pair and group work, but it also lends itself to the rotation technique mentioned above, which allows students to move around and work with even more students. For example, in the below scheme, only the inside rows would rotate (For illustrative purposes, it's assumed that the class uses desks instead of tables).