



## WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

**Proficiency Level:** Intermediate

**Lesson Length:** 90 minutes

**Vocabulary and Expressions:** “Can you repeat that?” “I don’t understand (\_\_\_).”

**Lesson Topic:** Asking for clarification

**Language/Culture Point:** What to do when someone repeats and you still don’t understand.

**Objective:** Student will be able to tell customers that they don’t understand and ask them to repeat what they said.

**Materials:** Signal Cards (one set per student), student pages, Workplace Task Cards (from Workplace Essentials, Lesson 13)

**Supplemental Materials to be Created:** Create a list of true/false questions for the Chalk Talk. (Make sure you have enough Workplace Task Cards for this class - you may need to make extra copies.)



### STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	-	- Brainstorming

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask students if they ever have trouble understanding something that a customer says or asks.
2. Ask why it is difficult to understand them.
3. Ask “what do you do or say when you don’t understand? Do you have a coworker who can help you?”

**WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND****STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT**

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	-	- Chalk Talk

**TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. Tell the following story using a Chalk Talk: I was at work yesterday when a customer came in and started speaking to me very quickly. I didn't understand him, so I said, "I'm sorry, I don't understand. Can you speak more slowly, please? I'm still learning English." He repeated himself and slowly said "What time are you open until today?" I told him that we were open until 7:00 pm. He then asked if we are open on Saturdays and I said "Yes we are." He asked another question I didn't understand, so I said, "Can you please repeat that?" He asked, "Would you be able to get me a menu?" so I went and got a menu for him. After that, he ordered some food and thanked me.
2. As you tell the students the phrases you used to show that you didn't understand, write them on the board next to the Chalk Talk (i.e. I'm sorry, I don't understand...Can you speak more slowly, please...Can you please repeat that...)
3. Tell the story a total of three times.

**STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK**

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Signal cards	- Signal cards

**TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. Make true/false statements about the story. Students will use signal cards to indicate true/false/I don't know.

**STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK**

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Student pages, workplace task cards	-

**WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND****TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. Tell students that today we are going to practice letting customers know that we don't understand and asking them to repeat.
2. Direct the students to the partially completed dialogues in the student pages. Read through the first dialogue aloud. Then, complete the dialogue using a Workplace Task Card. With a student volunteer, read the dialogue aloud again.

**STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Teaching Strategies</b>
10 minutes	- Student pages, workplace task cards	-

**TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. Have a student volunteer draw a Workplace Task Card from the pile.
2. Work with the student to complete the second sample dialogue using the Workplace Task Card.
3. Once the dialogue is completed, have the student volunteer and another student read the dialogue aloud to the class.
4. Repeat the process with the third and final sample dialogue.

**STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Teaching Strategies</b>
20 minutes	- Student pages, workplace task cards	-

**TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. Direct students to the second page of dialogues that they will need to complete.



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2. Put students into pairs and provide each pair with a Workplace Task Card for each of the three dialogues. Note: This may mean that you'll have to create multiple copies of the Workplace Task Cards, if you haven't already, so that you have enough for each group.
3. After each pair has completed their dialogues, they should practice each dialogue, being sure to read both parts at least once each.
4. Then, new pairs should be created. Each new pair should practice each dialogue in each student book, practicing a total of six dialogues.
5. If time permits, have each new pair read one of their dialogues aloud to the class once they have finished practicing.

Note: If some students finish early and want more of a challenge, have them create their own dialogue from scratch using the Workplace Task Cards.

### **STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Teaching Strategies</b>
10 minutes	-	-

### **TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. Point out the polite phrases that the students practiced when telling someone that they don't understand. Write the following phrases on the board: Would you be able to \_\_\_? Could you please \_\_\_? Explain that these are polite ways of asking someone to do something for you. For example, someone might ask you, "Would you be able to get more towels?" or "Could you please bring me a hammer?" We also use the base form of a verb to complete the question. For example, we say "Could you please get..." and not "Could you please to get..." Point out that we use the word "please" to make the request even more polite.
2. As a class, generate a list of other polite English phrases. Discuss when they should be used and give examples (i.e. Can you....? Excuse me, would you...? I'm sorry, could you...?).



**WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND**

**STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Teaching Strategies</b>
10 minutes	-	- Exit check

**TEACHING ACTIVITY**

1. As students leave, ask them a question in a way that will be difficult to understand. Students will ask you to repeat.