

# PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

## Lesson 2 – Repeat sentence

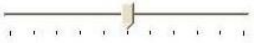
**Time allocated:** 60 minutes

### Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This is a short-answer item type that integrates listening and speaking skills, and requires test takers to understand and remember a sentence, and repeat it using the same wording and pronunciation.

*You will hear a sentence. Please repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.*

Status: Beginning in 3 seconds.

Volume 

**Recorded Answer**

Current Status:  
Beginning in 10 seconds.

### Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

#### Strategy 1

Try to memorize the sentence. To do so, you need to train your short-term memory or working memory.

#### Strategy 2

Pay attention to the sentence structure, e.g., if the sentence starts with *there* or the impersonal *it*, or if the verb is in active or passive voice. Knowledge of the word order of the main sentence structures will help you reconstruct the sentence correctly without omitting words or substituting with the wrong words.

#### Strategy 3

Pronounce all consonants and vowels clearly, and place word and sentence stress correctly. Remember that in English the sentence stress is usually on the last content word or important words.

## Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

### Strategy 1

Explain to your students that short-term memory is a very important cognitive skill that helps us in our daily activities. This skill is also essential for spoken language learning and communication. When test takers try to recall the sentence that they heard a few seconds earlier, they are actually calling on their short-term or working memory. That is why it is important for students to train their working memory.

Explain that utterances will vary in length, and the best way to memorize longer sentences is to break them into manageable chunks of language. Students should also understand the speaker's intended meaning. This task should not be treated as a mechanical repetition of words without meaning.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask your students to read sentences to each other beginning with short ones and gradually increasing the length, complexity and form. For example, *Staff make notes available. Teaching staff make notes available. Teaching staff make their notes available. Most teaching staff make their notes available. Most teaching staff make their lecture notes available. Most teaching staff make their lecture notes available online.*
- During the practice, ask the student who reads the sentences to assess his/her partner's performance by crossing out words that were omitted, inserting words that were added, putting a checkmark next to sentences that were repeated correctly, etc.

### Strategy 2

Remind your students of the basic word order of English: Subject, Verb, Object. Students should be aware that English has a fixed word order, and there are a certain number of sentence structures that they should remember. This will help them reconstruct the sentences correctly without omitting words or substituting with the wrong words.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to list all the sentence types in English and their structures that they are familiar with. Encourage them to use academic vocabulary and topics when they provide the example sentences.
- Ask students to read sentences to each other, beginning with the core parts: the subject and the verb, and gradually increasing the complexity by adding other parts of speech such as objects, adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc. For example, *Adults learn. Most adults learn. Most adults learn best. Most adults learn best when information is presented. Most adults learn best when novel information is presented. Most adults learn best when novel information is presented through a variety of experiences.*
- Repeat the activity with other sentence structures. For example, *There are some structural and behavioral adaptations. It is estimated that 40% of the nation's energy comes from petroleum. The federal government advised people to evacuate their homes. People were advised by the federal government to evacuate their homes.*

### Strategy 3

Explain to your students that pronunciation accuracy is an important aspect of this item type, and they should systematically improve their pronunciation so that they sound not just intelligible, but as natural as possible. There are two areas students should pay attention to: 1) sounds and 2) word and sentence stress.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Identify which sounds your students have difficulty pronouncing. This will depend on their first language. For example, for Chinese learners, pronouncing some diphthongs as in *how/now* or *phone/cone* is a problem. Find some minimal pairs for students to listen to and repeat, e.g., *John* and *Joan*.
- Provide some sentences and have them distinguish between content and function words, and mark the stressed syllables.

- Ask students to identify the sentence stress, i.e., the last content word which usually provides new information. For example, *Learners are actively involved in using language.*
- Ask students to repeat utterances without looking at the written sentences.

## Step 4: Respond to a Repeat Sentence Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. They will have 15 seconds to give their response. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

If possible, seat your students at separate workstations or position them in a way that they will not interfere with each other when speaking. Play the audio [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1]. Have them record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers.

## Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

If students have recorded their responses, ask them to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Play the three sample responses in audio files [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1\_Response\_B1], [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1\_Response\_B2] and [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1\_Response\_C1], and ask students to rank the responses from the weaker to the stronger. Then provide the explanations.

## Item 1: Transcript and Explanations

Transcript:

*There will be a conference here next summer on using the web for academic research.*

**Audio** [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1\_Response\_B1]

There are several hesitations, one repetition and one long pause. The rate of speech is uneven. Incorrect pronunciation of vowels and consonants make several words unclear.

**Audio** [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1\_Response\_B2]

Some words in the sentence are omitted, and some words that are not in the sentence are added. Phrasing is uneven, and there are a few hesitations and one repetition. Incorrect pronunciation of vowels and consonants make several words unclear.

**Audio** [L2\_Repeat\_sentence\_1\_Response\_C1]

Phrasing is somewhat uneven, but the response is spoken at a conversational rate. Minor pronunciation errors do not affect understanding.