

Some key CELTA terminology

Term	Definition
activity	A single task, exercise or game for students to work on, usually set by the teacher.
aims	Things that you hope will be achieved during a lesson or sequence of lessons. Nb some teachers now use the term objectives to refer to lesson goals and reserve the term aims for the long-term goals of a language course or programme.
authentic material	Any material not specifically designed for teaching purposes, e.g. newspaper article, menu, packaging, blurb on back of a novel, poem, song etc
backchaining	A technique for helping students say a difficult sentence by breaking it down into smaller parts and practising saying those pieces, slowly building up again to the complete sentence; for example: 'n't you?' 'aren't you?' 'thirty, aren't you?' 'You're thirty, aren't you?'
clarification	A part of a lesson in which students become clearer about language items e.g. A tense/a structure/a vocabulary item especially how they are formed, what they mean and how they are used.
classroom management	The moment-by moment decisions and actions concerning organisation of the classroom and activities, e.g. Seating and grouping arrangements, starting and stopping activities, dealing with unexpected problems etc
collocation	Words that 'go together' e.g. splitting headache, to make a mistake (not to do) etc
concept	Another word for meaning/use of a language item. E.g. <i>I'm meeting James next Friday.</i> This is an example of the present continuous tense but the concept/meaning in this example is to express a future arrangement. One language item may have more than one concept e.g. bowl = 1) (n.) a receptacle for food 2) (vb.) a way of throwing a ball
concept check questions (CCQs)	Questions that focus on the meaning of a language item, 'Do you understand?' 'So we've all got that then?' are not valid ccqs. Annoyed (adj.) → Is it similar to angry? (y) Is it very angry? (n) A little angry? (y) When do you get annoyed? (...)
context	Language items do not exist independently. They might be found in a text, a piece of classroom conversation, a CD recording, etc. These are the contexts. To help clarify the meaning or use of an item, we can also create imaginary contexts or example 'situations', perhaps using board pictures, in order to provide a context for a language item and give the students an illustration of a way that it would typically be used.
controlled practice	A task where students are given the opportunity to use language they have learnt with little margin for error, typically this involves filling a gap/ correcting a wrong sentence/changing the form of a word. The aim is to build confidence.
detailed reading/listening	Students read/listen to a text to pick out details and gain a deeper understanding of the text content. Typically this is in the form of a true/false task or a set of comprehension questions.
delayed feedback/error correction	When students are practising fluency, the teacher can monitor unobtrusively and note down errors. After conducting whole-class feedback on the content of the task, the T. can then highlight errors noticed, e.g. by writing sentences on the board and asking st.s to correct these.
drill	A common restricted production activity, students repeat a sentence or phrase. Best practice is to check meaning beforehand. Give a clear model, use short commands, drill items chorally before calling on individuals. Avoid drilling from the written form. Drilling helps students with pronunciation and internalising form.
echo	Repetition of what a student has just said. A certain amount is natural and signifies active listening, 'I went to London.' → 'London, really?' It may be as a means to correct: 'She like London' → 'She like? London.' when a teacher echoes each and every student response in feedback for instance, this can have a detrimental effect on the lesson, e.g. T: <i>What's another word for difficult?</i> St: <i>tricky</i> T: <i>Oh tricky, yeah, I like the word tricky, so you might say the task today is tricky, it's a tricky task.</i> Ask yourself who needs the practice?

ESP: EAP, BE	English for Specific Purposes such as English for Academic Purposes and Business English,
EFL v ESOL	English as Foreign Language - teaching students who have come to the UK for a temporary period of time to study the language. When teachers teach abroad they are generally teaching EFL. ESOL is English as a Second Language, and the clients/learners are people living in the UK.
eliciting	A much used-technique for involving students more in lessons. Eliciting means drawing answers from the students (rather than informing them)
exponent	An item that is an example of a particular function. For example, ' <i>could you make me a cup of tea, please?</i> ' is an exponent of the function of 'making polite requests'.
extensive reading/listening	Reading or listening to longer pieces of text without pausing and worrying too much about details, usually for pleasure.
false friend	A word that reminds you of one in your own language and misleads you into thinking it has the same or a similar meaning in the new language (e.g. <i>Ropa</i> in Spanish means clothes not rope).
feedback (f/b)	After peer checking, the teacher gets the whole-class' attention, and goes through the answers to an activity. We also use this term to describe the discussion of a trainee's performance after teaching.
filler	An activity to fill in extra time the teacher may have on his/her hands.
fluency	Speaking naturally without worrying too much about being 100% correct. Taking extended turns in a conversation.
freer practice	This is where students get to practise new language in a more personalised context, they have the option to use the new language but alternatives are acceptable.
function	The purpose for which language is used in a particular situation, e.g. Making a request, asking for directions and many more.
gist reading	This is when students read/listen to a text in order to get the general idea of the content. The teacher should set a task that helps the student to glean this information.
ICQ	Instruction check question. Use these after giving instructions to ensure students know what they are doing.
information gap	One person knows something that the other doesn't. Such gaps of information between people give us a need and desire to communicate.
intensive reading/listening	Careful and detailed reading of/listening to sections of text or speech in order to catch specific items of information or vocabulary.
interaction pattern	How students work in a class: closed pairs, open pairs, teacher to whole class etc..
intonation	The musical patterns of speech. Usually rise ↗ fall ↘ or flat →.
jigsaw reading/listening	A jigsaw activity involves different groups of students (or individuals) reading or listening to different content. When they come back together they report and compare what they have learnt.
key words	The most important content-carrying words in a text. From a whole article, we might be able to pick out a small number of key words that represent the main subject matter and message.
language skills	Listening, reading (receptive skills), writing, speaking (productive skills).
lead-in	The first stage of any lesson which should provide context to the lesson, gauge how much students know, and allow them to 'get into' the lesson.
learner style	Some learners respond best to hearing things, others to seeing them, whilst others learn best when they can touch and feel tangible, physical objects. They can be described as auditory, visual or kinaesthetic learner styles.
lexis / lexical item/ a lexical set	Vocabulary. An item of vocabulary/word. A group of words that are connected in some way e.g. Farm animals.
marker sentence	A sentence that contains the structure you are aiming to teach.
metalinguage	The language used to describe language items, e.g. <i>Modal of obligation, present simple.</i>

modelling	This is when the teacher models/demonstrates language for the students, usually before drilling an item. The teacher must provide accurate and natural models, e.g. using contractions where native speakers do. E.g. <i>T: Listen. He shouldn't've lied. He shouldn't've lied. Repeat!</i>
monitoring	When the students are working on an activity, the teacher moves discreetly around to check students are on task, to be available for clarification, to pick up errors/interesting content for later feedback with the whole class.
PPP	Presentation, Practice, Production. An approach to grammar lessons based on the idea of giving (presenting) small items of language to students, providing them with opportunities to use it in controlled ways (practice) and finally integrating it with other known language in order to communicate (production).
pairwork	Students working with one other student. This may be to discuss something, to check answers or to do a communication activity.
part of speech	Type of word or 'word class' e.g. a table = a noun, to play = a verb, beautiful = an adjective etc.. Some words can be used in more than one way e.g. a walk/to walk.
personal response	After completing a reading text/listening text it is a good idea to ask a couple of questions to make a personal connection between readers/listeners and text content.
phoneme	The basic unit of sound from which we build up words and sentences. For example the word <i>caught</i> has six letters but only three phonemes /k/, /ɔ:/ and /t/.
plenary	Another word for whole class, e.g. a plenary discussion is an open discussion involving the whole class
phonology	The study of phonemes, intonation, word stress, sentence stress, rhythm and aspects of connected speech.
pronunciation	The individual articulation of sounds, how the learner pronounces a word.
practice	Giving students chances to use the language being studied, this can be controlled (restricted) or freer.
pre-teaching	Teaching key items of lexis prior to students reading/listening that will facilitate their fluid practice of the given skill. Some books call this 'unblocking lexis'.
register	This refers to the formality or informality of vocabulary/functional exponents, e.g. <i>Lend us your pen</i> (infml.) vs. <i>Would you be so kind as to lend me your pen?</i> (fml.) <i>Could you lend me your pen?</i> (neutral)
STT	Student talking time. The amount of time that a student gets to talk in class. This should be greater than the teacher talk!
scanning	A fast reading technique that involves moving the eyes quickly over a whole text in order to locate certain information, e.g. finding where someone's telephone number is on a page.
skimming	A fast reading technique that involves brushing the eyes quickly over the page to pick out key words which then give the reader a general idea of the text content/ reading for gist.
structure	A piece of grammar such as <i>should have done, used to do</i> etc
substitution table	A way of writing out grammar information as patterns that can be used for generation of further sentences.
target language	The tense/structure/vocabulary/functional exponent you are aiming to teach, e.g. the present perfect.
TBL	Task-based learning. Classroom work centred around the doing of tasks more than, say, the presentation and practice of selected items of language.
TTT	Teacher Talk Time. The ratio of this should be lower than STT.
test-teach-test	An approach to teaching language commonly used in course books. The learners do a task/practice activity (TEST) this informs the teacher how much the students already know. In feedback to this the teacher provides input where needed about meaning, form and pronunciation (TEACH) Then the learners do a second task (TEST) to check whether they can use the items better than at the outset.
timeline	A diagram that can be used to clarify the meaning of different tenses.
warmer	A game to energise/warm up the class at the start of a lesson.