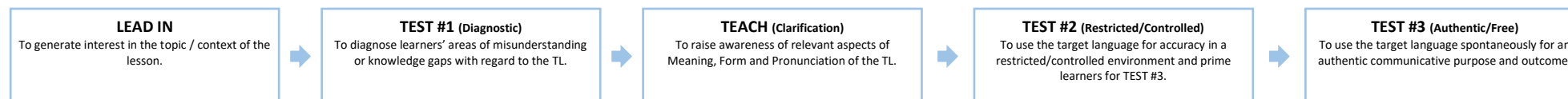


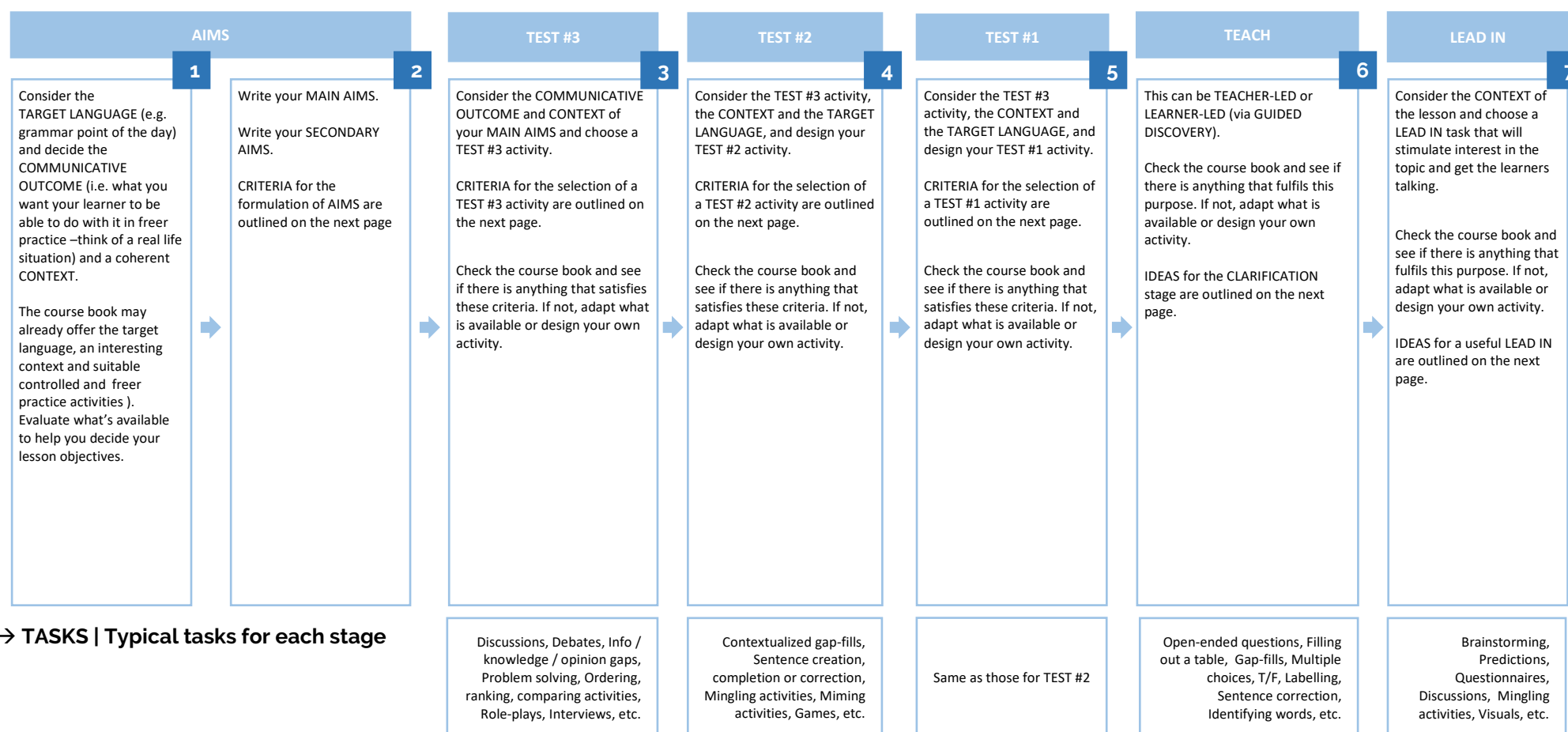
## Planning a SYSTEMS (Grammar, Vocabulary or Functions) lesson using a TEST-TEACH-TEST approach | THE PLANNING PROCESS

A Test-Teach-Test approach to the teaching of language systems is often adopted when the teacher makes the assumption that learners already know something about the target language (TL) but still find some aspects problematic. The teacher gives learners a diagnostic test to find out what areas need clarification. The teacher then conducts a clarification stage in response to the learners' needs, before testing them again and evaluate their progress. The tests don't have to be made of traditional gap-filling or multiple-choice tasks, but they can make use of more communicative activities.

### → LESSON STAGES | Sequence for the delivery



### → LESSON PLANNING STEPS | Recommended sequence for planning



### Step 1 - EVALUATION

Consider the TARGET LANGUAGE (e.g. grammar point, vocabulary set, functional language) and decide the COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME (i.e. what you want your learners to be able to do with it in freer practice –think of a real life situation) and a coherent CONTEXT. The course book may already offer the target language, an interesting context and a suitable freer practice activity. Evaluate what's available to help you decide your lesson objectives.

*Let's imagine that the course book offers a grammar point, a context and a few activities which I have already evaluated...*

### Step 2 - AIMS

Write your MAIN AIMS. Make sure you clearly state the COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME, the CONTEXT and the TARGET LANGUAGE.

*E.g. To better enable learners to have an informal dialogue (COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME) about a past holiday (CONTEXT) using appropriate questions, positive and negative statements using the past simple of regular and irregular verbs (TARGET LANGUAGE).*

Write your SECONDARY AIMS. Consider the nature of the COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME and decide what skill(s) learners will need to be able to produce the desired outcomes.

*E.g. COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME > INFORMAL DIALOGUE*

*SKILL(s) needed > SPEAKING SKILLS such as choosing topics and keeping the conversation going (limit this to a few sub-skills).*

### Step 3 – TEST #3 (Authentic / Free practice)

Consider the COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME and CONTEXT of your MAIN AIMS and choose a TEST #3 activity. A useful TEST #3 (Authentic / Free practice) activity should (1) create the need to use the target language spontaneously, (2) be focused on the communicative outcome and (3) place the emphasis on communicative effectiveness. This tends to be a stage focused on FLUENCY. Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies all these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

*E.g. The course book offers an activity in which learners engage in a dialogue about a past holiday. The context is suitable but the task is too vague. I need to adapt it. In the PRODUCTION stage, I'll have learners engage in an informal dialogue in which they will have to ask /answer at least 5 questions related to different holiday topics (the TASK needs to be sufficiently SPECIFIC – 5 questions / different topics – and directly related to the MAIN AIM) and keep the conversation going by asking at least 1 follow up question after each answer (this TASK also needs to be SPECIFIC – 1 question – and ideally related to the SECONDARY AIM). Learners will have to decide which holiday activity sounded the most fun.*

### Step 4 – TEST #2 (Restricted / Controlled practice)

Consider the FREER PRACTICE activity, the CONTEXT and the TARGET LANGUAGE, and design your TEST #2 activity. A good TEST #2 (Restricted / Controlled practice) should (1) allow learners to CONSOLIDATE their mastery of the TARGET LANGUAGE, (2) encourage learners to use the TARGET LANGUAGE ACCURATELY but MEANINGFULLY and (3) PRIME them for TEST #3. Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies all these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

*E.g. The course book offers an activity in which learners complete a gap-fill. The sentence are out of context and don't provide any scaffolding for TEST #3. I need to design my own activity. In TEST #2 learners will write 6 questions about a past holiday they want to ask their classmates (3 using regular verbs and 3 using irregular verbs). Learners will also write the answers to their own questions.*

*[As learners are required to work on a dialogue in TEST #3, it makes more sense to create some scaffolding by encouraging them to think of possible questions and answers they may want to ask their classmates. In this stage, learners can think more carefully of WHAT to say and HOW to say it. This will make them generate ideas coherent with the CONTEXT and COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME, and will make them focus on the accuracy of the TARGET LANGUAGE. By letting learners choose their questions and answers, the task becomes more personalized.]*

### Step 5 – TEST #1 (Diagnostic practice)

Consider the TEST #3 activity, the CONTEXT and the TARGET LANGUAGE, and choose a TEST #1 activity. A useful TEST #1 (Diagnostic practice) activity should (1) allow learners to TEST their use of the TARGET LANGUAGE, (2) encourage learners to use the TARGET LANGUAGE ACCURATELY but MEANINGFULLY and (3) give useful LANGUAGE DATA to the teacher on the needs of the learners. Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies all these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

*E.g. FREER PRACTICE > INFORMAL DIALOGUE*

*CONTEXT > A PAST HOLIDAY*

*TARGET LANGUAGE > SIMPLE PAST (all forms)*

*The course book offers a reading text of someone recounting his past holiday. This matches the CONTEXT but it's not a test (learners are not required to use the TL) and it only contains samples of the affirmative form of the TARGET LANGUAGE. I need to adapt it. I can use the ideas in the reading text, but I will turn it into a gapped dialogue. In the dialogue, I will create some gaps that learners will have to fill with appropriate (1) auxiliary verbs for questions in the past, (2) regular and irregular verbs in the past and (3) auxiliary verbs for negative statements in the past. I will provide the infinitive form of the regular and irregular verbs in a box to make it more manageable. I will also plant some language in the dialogue that can be used to change topic and keep the conversation going (SECONDARY AIM). Learners may notice it.*

### Step 6 – TEACH (Clarification)

Plan a CLARIFICATION stage. Choose one the following options.

#### Guided discovery (Teacher-led)

If you decide to conduct the CLARIFICATION in a more teacher-centered way, design a set of questions to direct the learners' attention to aspects of MEANING/USE, FORM and PRONUNCIATION of the TL, and promote LANGUAGE DISCOVERY in such a way that will enable learners to draw conclusions about these aspects. Check the course book and see if there is anything that fulfils this purpose. If there is, you may want to consider using what's available in the course book and conduct a learner-centered clarification (see next section). If there isn't anything available, design your own questions.

*E.g. The course doesn't offer any LANGUAGE DISCOVERY tasks. I need to design my own questions. I'll have the learners focus on the samples of TL highlighted in the previous stage (and recorded on the board) and ask the following questions: Are we talking about the present, the past or the future? (Elicit the answer and draw a timeline on the board) (MEANING); How does the main verb change? Is it the same for all verbs? (Elicit the answer and underline –ED endings of regular verbs and examples of irregular verbs) (FORM); What do we use to create negative sentence? Is it the same for all verbs? (Elicit the answer, circle 'didn't' and write 'bare infinitive' under each verb) (FORM); What do we use to create questions? Is it the same for all verbs (Elicit the answer, circle 'did' and write 'bare infinitive' under each verb) (FORM). I will then write sounds /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/ under the –ED endings of regular verbs and conduct a pronunciation drill.*

#### Guided discovery (Learner-led)

If you decide to conduct the CLARIFICATION in a more learner-centered way, choose a task that will direct the learners' attention to the TARGET LANGUAGE and promote LANGUAGE DISCOVERY in such a way that will enable learners to draw conclusions about MEANING and FORM (and PRONUNCIATION if using a spoken text). Check the course book and see if there is anything that fulfils this purpose. If not, adapt what is available or write your own task.

*E.g. The course doesn't offer any LANGUAGE DISCOVERY tasks. I need to design one. I'll have the learners read the text again and answer these questions on a worksheet. Learner can work collaboratively. Are the speakers talking about finished or unfinished actions? (MEANING); Find a few examples of regular verbs in the past. How do we form them? Infinitive + \_\_\_\_\_ (FORM); Is the same grammar rule valid for irregular verbs? How do we form irregular verbs in the past? (FORM); Is the negative form of the simple past always formed using DIDN'T + Infinitive? (FORM); Are questions always formed using DID + Subj. + Infinitive? (FORM)*

Make sure that in feedback you also raise awareness of features of PRONUNCIATION. This can be done in a more teacher-centered way as described in the previous section.

**Whatever OPTION you decide to choose, it is important that you adapt your TEACH (Clarification) stage during the delivery to the learners' response to TEST #1. If learners seemed perfectly accurate with the FORM of the past tense in TEST #1, for example, you can discard the questions related to FORM. The same is valid for any other aspects of the TARGET LANGUAGE.**

**In a TEST-TEACH-TEST lesson, you should plan a thorough CLARIFICATION of the TARGET LANGUAGE, but be ready to ignore aspects that learners demonstrate to be familiar and accurate with.**

### Step 7 – LEAD IN

Consider the CONTEXT of the lesson and choose a LEAD IN task that will stimulate interest in the topic and get the learners talking. Check the course book and see if there is anything that fulfils this purpose. If not, adapt what is available or design your own task.

*E.g. The course book offers a suitable LEAD IN. I will use it as it is, i.e. I'll have learners discuss this question: What do you like to do on holiday?*

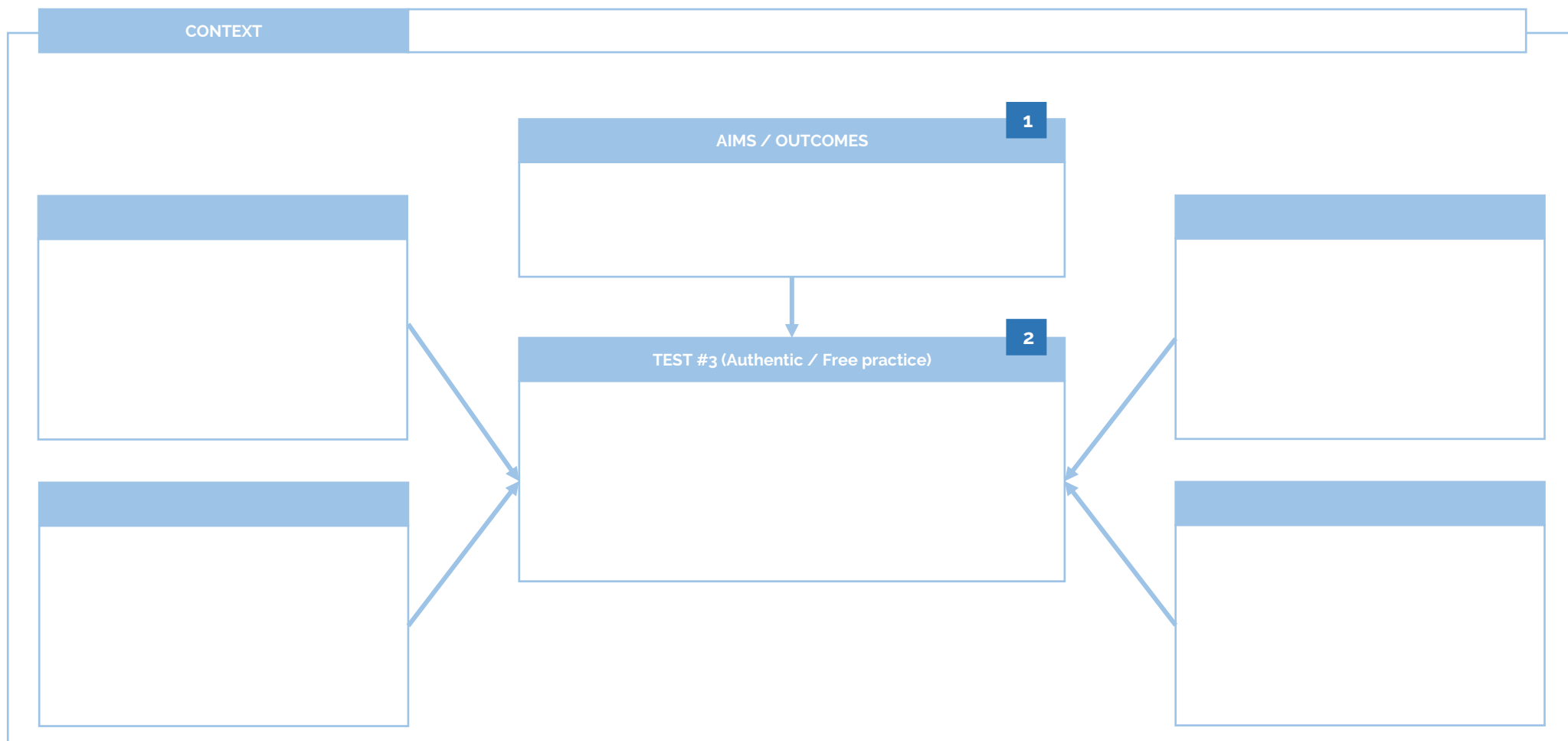
**This is the end of the process.** By planning 'backwards' from the last activity to the first, we ensure that all the stages support each other in a coherent way towards a final objective. However, although we planned backwards, **the delivery will follow the recommended framework sequence: LEAD IN > TEST #1 > TEACH > TEST #2 > FREER PRACTICE.**

**This is the end of the process.** By starting our planning process with the formulation of aims and the TEST #3 activity, we ensure that all other activities are coherent with and focused on the production of the intended OUTCOMES. However, **the DELIVERY will follow the recommended framework sequence: LEAD IN > TEST #1 > TEACH > TEST #2 > TEST #3.**

**THIS PROCESS is a RECOMMENDATION.** As long as you start your plan with the MAIN AIMS and the TEST #3 activity, you can follow ANY SEQUENCE. The important is not to lose sight of the lesson CONTEXT, OBJECTIVE(S) and OUTCOME(S) and build all the activities in such a way that they purposefully and coherently support each other.

## TEST-TEACH-TEST | LESSON SKETCH

**PLANNING PROCESS:** start with AIMS, OUTCOMES & CONTEXT and the TEST #3 activity. Plan the other activities in relation to these. Add/remove stages as needed.



## DELIVERY SEQUENCE

