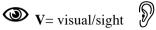# Language models and the senses

These are techniques help students use different senses to work with different language forms. I usually introduce them one at a time, after learners already know what they will be doing in a particular task. The letters (V-A-H) indicates the main sense(s) used:

V= visual/sight   **A**= auditory/hearing   = Haptic
(also called "kinesthetic/touch")

• **Listen & Repeat**. Say each sentence. Students pause a few seconds and think about what they heard. Cue them say it. (Note - this is traditional so it's an easy way to introduce sensory work.) (A-H)

• **Silent L & R** (*Listen & Repeat*) Say each sentence. Students pause and then repeat it without making any sound. They pay attention to their lips, teeth, tongue, etc. and think about pronunciation. (H-A)

• **Rubber band rhythm**. Get very large rubber bands. Each student gets one. They stretch the rubber band with the stressed words in the target sentences as they say them. (H, A)

• **Nonsense syllables.** Read the target sentences. Students repeat using nonsense syllables (*LA la LAlala*), matching the stress/rhythm (H-A).

• **Look at the words.** Students close their eyes. Say each sentence. Students imagine the words and notice how they are written. Typed or by hand? What color are the words? They can mentally change the color of words, underline key grammar items, etc. (V-A)

• **Whose voice?** Students close their eyes. Say each sentence. Students repeat it in their minds. Ask students to think about the voice they heard when they repeated it. Was it yours or their own? They repeat it in their own voice. (A)

• **Which accent?** Like *Whose voice?* but students think about the accent.
Did they hear it with native or non-native accent? They imagine it with a very strong non-native accent. Then they imagine it with a native-like accent. Finally, they imagine it in their own voice, with a native-like accent. (A)

• **Plug your ears.** Our voices sound different when recorded. To simulate this, students plug they ears as they speak an notice the sound. (A)

• **Picture this**. Students close their eyes. Say the sentences. Students image a scene that shows the meaning of the sentence. Then they imagine the sentence next to the picture. Then they mentally repeat the sentence. (V-A)

• **Pictures and words**. (Use this when the forms/sentences involve a particular theme such as shopping, a sports event, etc.) This is similar to *Picture this*. Students imagine themselves in the picture. Then they mentally write the sentence next to the picture. To review, give them a key word from each sentence. They think of the picture and try to remember the sentence. (V-A)

• **Write now**. Say each sentence. Students "write" with their fingers on their other hand or some rough surface. Some students will want to close their eyes as they do this. Others will want to say the words, mentally or aloud as they do it. (H-with options,V-A)

• **Writing in the air**. (Use this when you have several example sentences, a language map, etc.) Students work in pairs. One chooses a key sentence and writes it with a finger in the air (or on the partner's back or hand). The partner watches (or feels) and guesses the sentence. (H-V)

• **That makes sense.** This involves all the senses. Students close their eyes. Say each sentence. Students imagine themselves saying the sentence. As they do, they imagine each sentence appearing next to the picture of themselves. They listen to the voice as well. (V-A-H)

• **Pronunciation Pattycake.** In pairs, students clap/slap hands in the rhythm of the kids' game *pattycake*. They repeat/say the sentences in the language model, clapping/ slapping on the stressed words. (H)

• **Drum machine.** Find a "drum machine" online. These are rhythm machines rappers use. Students repeat the language model in rhythm. Alt: use a metronome. (A, H).