Level: A1, A2

Teaching Point: Pronunciation – past tense endings

Theme: Mystery

Activity: Pronunciation drill

NIGHTMARE HOTEL

PROCEDURE

1. Read out the poem (or play the audio track of the poem or the song) and ask the students to listen. As a task, ask them to suggest how the story will continue after the end of the poem. (suggested answer: it will repeat all over again – each new person who arrives at the hotel is trapped and never leaves – a truly claustrophobic nightmare!).

2. Notice that the poem is full of regular verbs in the simple past, so you can now use it to focus on how these are pronounced. Ask students to listen again to the poem and notice these verbs.

3. Point out that the letter *e* in *ed* is often silent. For example, in *walked, ed* is pronounced as just /t/.

4. Use a backchaining drill (or use the Nightmare Hotel pronunciation audio) to give your students pronunciation practice. Backchaining is a form of drill where you ask students to repeat segments of a sentence, starting from the end and getting bigger:
   a. the hill
   b. up the hill
   c. tup the hill
   d. walk tup the hill
   e. I walked up the hill

   Use this procedure for each line of the poem which contains a verb in the simple past. (Notice that in step c, we get the nonsense word *tup*. This is because the *ed* of *walked* is pronounced /t/, and it sounds as if it is part of the following word, *up*. Your students will find this strange to begin with, but then they will realise that this is exactly how it is pronounced in the poem.)

5. Finally, play the poem or song one or more times. Students can recite or sing the words at the same time. Even if they prefer not to, it will help them to 'fix' the pronunciation of the lyric in their head.

NIGHTMARE HOTEL

I **walked** up the **hill**
To the **Night**mare Hotel
I **stopped** at the **door**
But I **could**n't see the **bell**

I **knocked** and I **wait**ed
In the **cold** and windy **night**
I **looked** in the **win**dow
But there **was**n't any **light**

That's when I **not**iced
The **door** was open **wide**
Then it started **rain**ing
So I **walked** in**side**

The **door** closed be**hind** me
I **asked** 'Who's **there**?'
That's when I **not**iced
The **rats** on the **stairs**

I **turned** round to **leave**
But I **could**n't see the **door**
That's when I **not**iced
The **bod**y on the **floor**

Then the body **moved**
The **wom**an wasn't **dead**
She **told** me her **stor**y
This is what she **said**:

I also walked up
To the Nightmare Hotel…