

HOW TO PLAN A LESSON

Whether you use published ESL resources or plan your lesson from scratch, you will need a basic structure. With some experience, you may only need to jot down a quick list of topics and activities and then gather your materials together, but especially for new teachers, it's usually helpful to write a complete lesson plan. Consider the following framework.

GOALS/PURPOSE -

Decide which communication skills you wish to develop. Will you focus on reading? writing? listening? speaking/pronunciation? a combination of these? In what context? Consider a useful application for the language you will practice, things such as taking phone messages, using the post office, or interviewing for a job. These types of specific skills are sometimes referred to as "competencies." Seemingly non-interactive themes like gardening or holidays are fair game, as long as you integrate communicative activities.

BEGINNING -

It's often a good idea to begin with some kind of warm-up activity to help the learners focus on English and block out the distractions of daily life. This doesn't necessarily need to be connected thematically to the rest of the lesson, but it's nice if it is. Warm-ups usually take 5-15 minutes and practice material the learners already know. Avoid new material in a warm-up because the goal of a warm-up is to diffuse inhibitions and help students transition into English thinking and speaking. A game-like atmosphere can help capture student interest, or you may choose a quick review of the last lesson or homework. When reviewing, ask learners what they remember and then fill in missing pieces rather than simply summarizing the last lesson for them.

MIDDLE -

Most of your meeting time will probably be spent focused on one or two themes. Present new material and give learners a chance to practice it thoroughly. You may want to include pair or group work, silent reading/writing, games, or conversational discussion. Your lessons will be more interesting if you use real-life materials to support the text. For example, if the lesson theme is telling time, bring in a large clock with adjustable hands to demonstrate with. Show a video of a job interview, bring in a rental application, play a recorded clip from the radio, share photos of your family. Try to incorporate something outside of the textbook or printed lesson every time you meet.

END -

Especially if the lesson content has been challenging, end by reviewing what was covered as well as what the learners already know. By finishing with something familiar, learners will leave with the impression that English isn't too difficult after all.

WAYS TO GIVE SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION:

- Use activities/tasks that bring the 'real world' into the classroom
- Give plenty of opportunity for discussion
- Give clear and complete criteria
- Demonstrate all new concepts/tasks

- Use props and visual aids

HOW DO GOOD WRITING SKILLS DEVELOP?

The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Encouraging student participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills, requires a certain pragmatic approach. The teacher should be clear on what skills he/she is trying to develop. Next, the teacher needs to decide on which means (or type of exercise) can facilitate learning of the target area. Once the target skill areas and means of implementation are defined, the teacher can then proceed to focus on what topic can be employed to ensure student participation.

WHY IS THE SPEAKING SKILL DIFFICULT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

Because speaking deals with having the confidence to say what is on your mind in another language, it can sometimes be difficult for students to talk during class. However by following a few techniques the students should be more comfortable speaking.

WHAT AFFECT ON TEENAGERS DO CULTURE AND SOCIETY HAVE AND HOW DOES THIS INFLUENCE HOW THEY DEAL WITH PUBERTY?

Psychological Change: The hormonal changes encountered by teenagers along with the physical and sexual development they are witnessing in their bodies all serve to affect the way in which they view themselves, and the world around them. This in turn also affects the way they relate to others and the relationships they form.

1. A conflict within themselves
2. A conflict between their strive for independence and their dependence on their families
3. A conflict between their childish traits and their strive for manliness or femininity
4. A conflict between their desires and the social norms of the society surrounding them
5. A conflict between the cultural and social ideals set by their generation and the dictations made by generations past.

Teenagers seek independence.

AS A TUTOR HOW CAN YOU ACCOMMODATE STUDENT DIFFERENCES IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

Be patient if problems develop. One should respond slowly and carefully in cross-cultural exchanges, not jumping to the conclusion that you know what is being thought and said. For heated conflicts is to stop, listen, and think, when the situation gets tense. Withdraw from the situation, step back, and reflect on what is going on before you act. When things seem to be going badly, stop or slow down and think. What could be going on here? Is it possible I misinterpreted what they said, or they misinterpreted me? Often misinterpretation is the source of the problem. Active listening can sometimes be used to check this out—by repeating what one thinks he or she heard, one can confirm that one understands the communication accurately. If words are used differently between languages or cultural groups, however, even active listening can overlook misunderstandings. Often intermediaries who are familiar with both cultures can be helpful in cross-cultural communication situations. They can translate both the substance and the manner of what is said. They can also adjust the timing of what is said and done.

HOW CAN A TUTOR KEEP THEIR STUDENTS THINKING?

Self-directed learning. By being involved in this process, the learner makes meaningful connections with the world outside the classroom and what they are learning inside the classroom. They do not rely on the teacher to do the thinking for them. They take responsibility for thinking and learning themselves. Learning becomes more than the rote memorization or series of facts and information.

WHAT SIMILARITIES MAY EXIST BETWEEN LEARNING A FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE? (HELPFUL TIP: DO A SEARCH ON THE INTERNET USING THE WORDS "L1 L2 SIMILARITIES")

It should be pointed out that there is no simple or universally accepted answer to the question, 'Are first and second language acquisition similar?'

There are several issues that need to be taken into consideration when attempting to compare first and second language acquisition.

Here, it will be the case that the grammar of one language (L1) somehow feeds the emerging grammar of the other language (L2). This influence is generally called 'transfer' as in adult L2 acquisition, although interesting claims are made as for the differences between child and adult L2 acquisition in types of transfer. In this respect, Schwartz (2003) proposes the Domain by Age Model which states that child L2 acquisition will be like child L1 acquisition in the domain of inflectional morphology, and like adult L2 acquisition in the domain of syntax. Consequently, it is only in the latter domain that transfer from the L1 is expected.

Experiments indeed showed that L2 learners acquired things in a sequence resembling L1 acquisition. Like L1 children (Cromer, 1970), L2 users first confused the difference between John is easy to please and John is eager to please and sorted it out comparatively late (Cook, 1973) – plateau stages with transitions – despite having no clear way of deriving the structure from the speech that they encounter. The importance of stagnation depends on whether you accept that the route is important rather than the process or the target. I can walk to work, or go by bicycle or by car, with slight variations according to one-way streets and pedestrian areas etc, but does it matter what I do so long as I get there?

Exposure to the second or subsequent language and continuous practice to use that language are highly essential, however. When we first hear another language it all sounds gibberish. When we listen to the utterances several times, we slowly begin to recognize at least some of the sound combinations or structure to some extent. In this process we match the sounds we hear with those sounds we are familiar with in our first language or in the languages we are comfortable with.

The implication is that while L2 readers bring their L1 content and formal schema to L2 situations, they need to develop L2 language schema from the beginning.

The answer to the question is far from settled. While there are many similarities between L1 and L2 learning, the variation in situation and other factors also produces many differences. One difficulty is filtering out differences that are accidental rather than inevitable. L1 children mostly acquire language in different settings with different exposure to language than L2 learners and they are at different stages of mental and social maturity (Cook 1969). It may be inherently impossible to compare equivalent L1 and L2 learners.

In second language acquisition there are five internationally recognized language levels. Each level description depicts students' abilities as they progress from Beginner through to the Advanced level.

The following pages contain descriptions of the expectations for each level.

Tips:

- Expectations of students' abilities at each level may vary slightly from country to country.
- A student may demonstrate different levels of achievement in each of the four language skills.
- Use these level descriptions as a guide but always take into account the level assessment system used at the educational institution you are working in and the abilities of individual students.
- Different educational institutes in varying countries may add additional sublevels to the recognized five TESOL levels.
- Different educational institutes in varying countries may also use alternative names for the different levels.

BEGINNER LEVEL

Beginner level description:

- May not know English alphabet
- May not know numbers
- Little or no sight word recognition
- Relies on body language to communicate
- Cannot read or write in English
- Mentally fatigued from unfamiliar environment
- Tries to distinguish one word from another in spoken English
- Silently observes surroundings

Topics to teach Beginner level:

- ✓ The Alphabet
- ✓ Numbers
- ✓ Nouns: body parts, family members, animals, classroom items...
- ✓ Verbs: present tense only: standing, running, sitting, swimming...
- ✓ Greetings and manners: hello, goodbye, thank you, yes, no...
- ✓ Colours: red, blue, green, yellow...
- ✓ Calendar: days of the week, months of the year, seasons...
- ✓ Time: hours, minutes...

UPPER BEGINNER LEVEL

Upper Beginner level description:

- Uses and relies on body language to comprehend and communicate: gestures, facial expressions, pointing...
- Relies on background and prior knowledge, both cultural and personal ('schema')
- Initiates communication for personal needs
- Repeats utterances and words
- Unaware of errors made
- Can recognize alphabet and read a few words
- Can produce minimal speech related to familiar topics and personal information i.e. name, age, address, hobbies...
- Can write alphabet and a few familiar words

- Speaks in simple words or simple sentences
- Uses mostly present tense words
- Often omits words or parts of words
- Has a limited vocabulary
- Understands more than they can say
- Requires visual aids and repetition
- Comprehends single words and short phrases

Topics to teach upper beginner level:

- ✓ More nouns
- ✓ More verbs: simple past tense, simple future tense
- ✓ Pronouns
- ✓ Adjectives
- ✓ Simple three to five word sentences about familiar topics
- ✓ Prepositions

A summary of the two Beginner levels:

Beginner level students speak English a little and can read most of the English alphabet. They may have limited ability to phonetically decode words but would not necessarily understand the meanings of these words.

Upper Beginner students have some speaking ability but are usually constrained to topics of personal information. They have a tendency to repeat phrases they have just heard rather than responding (either physically or verbally).

Teaching Strategies & Activities for Beginner and Upper Beginner levels:

- ✓ Modeling language: flashcards
- ✓ Songs
- ✓ Selecting and comparing items or objects
- ✓ Object labeling
- ✓ Mimicking and role-play
- ✓ Repetition and drills
- ✓ Drawing and crafts
- ✓ Word banks or lists
- ✓ Pictionary
- ✓ Choral Reading
- ✓ Pair work
- ✓ Echo reading
- ✓ Total Physical Response (TPR), Rassias Method, 'Simon Says'

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Intermediate level description:

- Uses more complex sentence patterns
- Aware of some mistakes made, correction needs help and guidance
- Understands more than speaks
- Can use simple past/present/future tenses though not fluently

- Can determine some key words in spoken and written English
- Listening ability better than speaking ability
- Initiates communication more readily
- Understands classroom discussions with visual aids and / repetition
- Self-conscious about using the new language in front of class
- Reads aloud familiar passages only
- Struggles with written English pronunciation and spelling
- Gets confused and frustrated without clearly defined instructions for activities and tests
- Topics to teach Intermediate level:
- More nouns
- More verbs: continuous tenses
- Simple punctuation
- Conjunctions
- Adverbs
- Simple idioms
- Contractions
- Dialogues

UPPER INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Upper Intermediate level description:

- Broader vocabulary, both receptive and expressive
- Confused by idioms and local expressions
- Has gaps in knowledge of language and culture
- Expresses opinions and needs more easily
- Writes complex sentences and compositions with numerous errors
- More comfortable in social setting
- Conversational English more proficient than academic English
- Relies on prior knowledge of English as well as increased understanding of new culture
- Has an increased understanding of the English grammar system
- Can initiate and maintain a conversation.
- Can follow basic verbal instructions without help.
- Topics to teach Upper Intermediate level:
- Punctuation
- Adverbs regular and irregular
- Idioms
- Colloquialisms
- Modal verbs
- Phrasal verbs
- Gerunds
- Academic texts

A summary of the two Intermediate levels:

Intermediate level students are comfortable using the present tense but lose fluency and their speech becomes fragmented when using past or future tenses. Listening ability has improved to the extent that students are able to listen for key words and phrases and respond appropriately.

Upper intermediate students are able to effectively communicate in past, present and future tenses, although there are still times when they will flounder and search for the correct vocabulary and syntax. Listening ability is such that students at this level can follow basic instructions and answer questions at a normal pace.

Teaching Strategies & Activities for Intermediate and Upper Intermediate level:

- ✓ Retelling Stories
- ✓ Verbal role-play
- ✓ Writing journals in simple English
- ✓ Writing process and short essays
- ✓ Discussions and dialogues
- ✓ Think-pair-share
- ✓ Editing and correction with guidance
- ✓ Simplify vocabulary in note taking
- ✓ Describe and define
- ✓ Explain grammar as needed
- ✓ Summarise

ADVANCED LEVEL

Advanced level description:

- Uses more complex sentence patterns
- Aware of mistakes made
- Self-corrects with little guidance
- Very broad vocabulary, both receptive and expressive
- Understands classroom discussions with little trouble
- Initiates communication
- Continues to have some gaps in knowledge of language and culture
- Less self-conscious about using the new language in front of class
- Expresses opinions and needs easily
- Writes complex sentences and compositions with few errors
- Reads aloud with relative ease
- Comfortable in most social settings
- Conversational English and academic English about same proficiency
- Relies on prior knowledge of English as well as increased understanding of new culture
- Has a good grasp of the English grammar system

Topics to teach Advanced level:

At the advanced level, base your teaching content on your students (their needs and English language goals). Teach your students based on their strengths and weaknesses. Teach students the materials that they want/need to know. Give real materials (newspapers, magazines, video clips of news and current affairs, movies, etc.) and teach them the content that they don't know. Have ample discussion opportunities on global issues, current affairs, local events, local issues, cultural points, etc.

A summary of the Advanced level:

Advanced level students speak confidently and competently most of the time. Limitations may occur with regard to understanding idiomatic speech and unfamiliar jargon. Listening ability is such that provided the student is familiar with the topic being discussed they can easily paraphrase and respond as a native speaker would.

Teaching Strategies & Activities for Advanced level:

- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Keeping a Journal
- ✓ Analyzing
- ✓ Debates
- ✓ Discussions and dialogues
- ✓ Writing process
- ✓ Summarizing
- ✓ Think-pair-share
- ✓ Justify and defend
- ✓ Critique
- ✓ Editing
- ✓ Note taking

SELECTING APPROPRIATE MATERIAL FOR YOUR LESSONS

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

TESOL teachers teach in a wide variety of cultural and socio-economic situations. Consequently we need to consider the cultural suitability of material that we present to our students. Frequently TESOL material reflects a middle-class western lifestyle and while it is true that many of our students are interested in finding out about life in English-speaking countries, it is also important that we present material that is supportive of our students' values.

Some religious and cultural groups do not believe in listening to music, dancing or gambling; activities which are presented in many TESOL texts. Also, when depicting clothing styles or discussing pop music or movie cultures, it is important to respect your students' cultural values. Using local realia in these situations is a great way to teach the language skills you need to teach, whilst ensuring that the material used by the students is appropriate.

TOPICS

TESOL teachers must consider the relevancy of the material presented in lesson plans. Is the material relevant, varied and interesting for your students? Does it meet your students learning needs? Is it age appropriate? Topics should be selected carefully to ensure that they are age, level and interest appropriate, and that they will help the students to achieve the set lesson objectives.

LEVEL

You need to be careful the material is neither too difficult nor too easy for your students. With all material you present to your students you need to ask yourself, "Is the level of language right for my students? Do I and activities cover the right language points for the level? Is the material attractive and easy to use? Will the students feel comfortable with this material? Is it user friendly?"

LANGUAGE FUNCTION

The language functions chosen must be appropriate to the students' needs and language level.

METHODOLOGY

Does the methodology fit comfortably with your students? Is there a good balance between the four Language skills?

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

When teaching a language it is important to teach your students *functional* language as an aid to communicative competence.

PERSONAL = Clarifying or arranging one's ideas, expressing one's thoughts or feelings of love, joy, pleasure, happiness, surprise, likes, satisfaction, dislikes, disappointment, distress, pain, anger, anguish, fear, anxiety, sorrow, frustration, annoyance at missed opportunities, moral, intellectual and social concerns; and the everyday feelings of hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleepiness, cold, or warmth.

INTERPERSONAL = Enabling us to establish and maintain desirable social and working relationships:

- Greetings and leave takings
- Introducing people to others
- Identifying oneself to others
- Expressing joy at another's success
- Expressing concern for other people's welfare
- Extending and accepting invitations
- Refusing invitations politely or making alternative arrangements
- Making appointments for meetings
- Breaking appointments politely and arranging another mutually
- Convenient time
- Apologizing
- Excusing oneself and accepting excuses for not meeting
- Commitments
- Indicating agreement or disagreement
- Interrupting another speaker politely
- Changing an embarrassing subject
- Receiving visitors and paying visits to others
- Offering food or drinks and accepting or declining politely
- Sharing wishes, hopes, desires, problems
- Making promises and committing oneself to some action
- Complimenting someone
- Making excuses
- Expressing and acknowledging gratitude

DIRECTIVE = Attempting to influence the actions of others, accepting or refusing direction:

- Making suggestions in which the speaker is included
- Making requests; making suggestions
- Refusing to accept a suggestion or a request but offering an alternative
- Persuading someone to change their point of view
- Requesting and granting permission
- Asking for help and responding to a plea for help

- Forbidding someone to do something; issuing a command
- Giving and responding to instructions warning someone
- Discouraging someone from pursuing a course of action
- Establishing guidelines and deadlines for the completion of actions
- Asking for directions or instructions

REFERENTIAL = talking or reporting about things, actions, events, or people in the environment in the past or in the future; talking *about* language (what is termed *metalinguistics*):

- Identifying items or people in the classroom, the school, the home, the community
- Asking for a description of someone or something
- Defining something or a language item or asking for a definition
- Paraphrasing, summarizing, or translating (L1 to L2 or vice versa)
- Explaining or asking for explanations of how something works
- Comparing or contrasting things
- Discussing possibilities, probabilities, or capabilities of doing something
- Requesting or reporting facts about events or actions
- Evaluating the results of an action or event

IMAGINATIVE = Discussions involving elements of creativity and artistic expression:

- Discussing a poem, a story, a piece of music, a play, a painting, a film, a TV program, etc.
- Expanding ideas suggested by others, or by a piece of literature or reading material
- Creating rhymes, poetry, stories or plays
- Recombining familiar dialogues or passages creatively
- Suggesting original beginnings or endings to dialogues or stories
- Solving problems or mysteries