



## Beginner English Lesson Plan: First Day of Class

Note to teachers: With beginners, mime and movement are essential. Don't worry if students cannot understand everything you say, speak slowly and use lots of body language to convey instructions. For beginners, understanding and conveying basic meaning is much more important than using perfect grammar. Encourage students to use any English they have available to get their point across. Remember, learning a language is not a linear process.

**Level: Beginner with some prior English** Time: 1.25 hours

**Materials:** Bring some everyday objects to class (preferably one for each student) choose a few things from different categories, like clothing, food, and household items. Also bring paper and pens and pictures from home (if available).

**Objective:** Review basic vocabulary and sentence structures, assess students' skill levels and prior knowledge, and get to know your students on the first day.

**Activity 1: Introductions** (5 minutes).

As students enter the classroom walk around and say "hello." Introduce yourself using the phrase "hi, my name is..." and ask "what is your name?" Try to elicit responses and make students feel at ease.

**Activity 2: Warm up circle toss** (5 minutes).

Form a standing circle and practice as a group, the phrases "hi my name is..." and "what's your name?" If you have writing materials available, write the phrase and question in a place that all students can see it and use it as a reference. Then choose one of the objects that can be easily tossed around. Start the circle toss by saying the phrase, "hi, my name is..." then toss the object and ask "what is your name?" Students must then mimic your example until everyone has had at least one turn.

**Activity 3: Vocabulary** (10 minutes).

Have students sit, but stay in a circle. Gather the objects that you have brought and show them to the students. Start by asking "what is this?" and see if anyone knows the answer. Hold one object up and repeat the name of the object slowly, using the phrase "this is a..." Pass the object to your left and ask "what is this?" The student to the left should respond with "this is a..." and then ask "what is this?" and pass it to the left. Continue this activity until all items have been passed around the circle. This may seem repetitive, but it is important that students are comfortable with the activities and feel successful, especially on the first day. If it seems too easy for the students you can make the game more challenging by having several items circulating at once or by asking students to close their eyes and see if they can recognize items by touch.

**Activity 4: Categories** (15-20 minutes).

Give each student one of the objects and have them find other students with objects of the same category. You can demonstrate this by showing two like items and nodding your head then show two unlike items and shaking your head.

Once students are organized into groups, try to elicit the name of their category such as "food". Each group is then responsible for coming up with 5 other items that belong in their category and presenting those words to the other groups.

Have students draw pictures or mime other items for their category, if they don't know the English word encourage them to ask you "what is this in English?" and then give them the word, making sure that it is repeated by every member of the group. Once the groups are confident with the new words, have different students from each group teach their new words to the rest of the class. Ask one student to hold up a picture and ask "what is this?" If no one knows the answer then the student with the picture can drill the class, saying the word and having the other students repeat it back. Do this with each group until all the new words have been practiced.

Note: If students seem very comfortable with the vocabulary, introduce new categories for each group before starting the activity and have students think of as many words as they can. Some suggestions are: Animals, Professions, Family Members, or Things You Like to Do.

**Activity 5:** *Get to know your neighbor* (20 minutes).

This activity is meant for you to better assess the skill levels in the class. For this activity you are the observer, only prompt students if they seem stuck. Take mental notes of the grammar structures and the vocabulary that they use. If some students are much stronger than others remember them, you can use them for demonstrations and have them help others.

For this activity put students in pairs. Have them ask and answer simple questions about themselves and their partners, let them ask any questions they can. Students are to get to know something about their partner. Next, have them find new partners. Student A will tell the new partner something about student B and visa versa; then everyone swaps partners and repeats the activity.

Choose one of the more confident students to demonstrate a dialogue. Any photos or props you have available would be useful for this exercise. Introduce yourself and ask the student to do the same. Ask a simple question that the student will probably know or that you can mime for meaning. For example "Do you like ...?" and hold up one of the food items. You can mime "I like" and "I don't like" if the student doesn't understand. Then grab another student and say "This is Nola, she likes ...". Follow with "Do you like...?" Put Nola with the other student and have Nola ask the second student another question. For example "How old are you?" Demonstrate this a few times by guiding students to ask and answer question then switching them with other students. Emphasize that they can ask any question. Once they get the idea. Give them 15 minutes to talk to as many students as they can. Walk around and listen to what students come up with, but don't correct them. If a pair is totally lost then give them some questions and practice them with them, otherwise just observe.

**Activity 6:** *Wrap up* (10 minutes).

Have students stay in the pairs that they are in. Tell them to tell you something about their partner. Be encouraging and don't insist on correct grammar as long as the basic structure is there, for example Nola might say "This is Sam, he like swimming." Instead of correcting the student, just repeat the phrase back using the correct grammar by saying something like, "oh, Sam likes swimming. I like swimming too." If there are common mistakes among students you can use that as a focus for your next lesson.

**Ending the class:** End the class by saying goodbye repeating the names of students and shaking their hands. Try to remember their names and something unique about them. For example, "it was nice to meet you Sam, have fun swimming."