

TWELVE TOPICS FOR ESL BEGINNERS

Teacher Guide

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ISBN-10 0-9842813-2-0
ISBN-13 978-0-9842813-2-9

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TEACHER PREFACE

New Student Information

When you start with a new student, it is important to obtain and keep a record of their name, address, phone number, and email address. Most ESL programs have a Personal Information Form of some sort to accomplish this. If you are teaching outside of an organized program, you will need to create a form for this purpose. Getting an accurate phone number and email address, and providing your own phone number and email address will allow communication if schedule changes are needed. An email address also allows you to remind students of the class and keep them coming.

Student Oral Proficiency Rating and Placement

Although not covered in this book, proper rating of the student's oral proficiency, and proper placement into a class of the correct level is very important; however, if a student feels that he/she has been placed in the wrong level, you need to respond by discussing the original decision, and, if necessary, moving that student into a different class.

Cultural Issues

One very important issue when working with ESL Beginners is that they are not stupid just because they do not know English. Do not treat adult students as children. Do not use materials with an adult if the materials were made for children. Do not talk down to them.

In many cultures, pride and honor are critical parts of an individual's life to a greater extent than with Americans. Also, the most important things in life for them may be their relationships with family and friends. In America, we tend to ask new acquaintances what they do, what is their job. In many cultures, work is not an issue; family, including ancestors, are the most important issues and form the basis for relationships.

Language Needs for ESL Beginners

The first of many things a new international needs to be able to communicate is the information included in their Personal Information Form, plus greetings: their name address, phone number and email address, and how we say "Hello, how are you today?" Beyond that, they must be able to speak about basic needs such as food and how to shop for it, dates and times, body

parts, pain and medical information. They must learn how to respond to emergencies, contact various government offices such as the police, fire departments, hospitals, and their own embassy. This book is designed to provide you with material you can use to create lessons for your students in most of these areas.

Topics, Not Lessons

Each topic contains a selection of content and practice material. To create lessons, you must pick and choose material from different parts of a topic based on the specific needs of your students.

How to Create and Use Lessons

Although the book is designed to cover most of the areas mentioned in the previous paragraphs, it is not divided into lessons. As the teacher you must pick and choose from the material and create lessons based on the specific needs of your students.

Each topic contains enough material for several lessons. For example, most topics contain many vocabulary words, but a beginning student can only learn seven to twelve words in a given lesson; and those words must be repeated many, many times in the lesson, and then repeated many times again in review sessions in the following three or four lessons.

In a single lesson, select appropriate words from the Vocabulary section or other words from your own knowledge of the student's needs. Do not teach vocabulary as single words and their definition; instead, teach phrases that will be useful and that are related to the vocabulary word.

Expand the lesson to include one or two items found in the *Reading and Speaking Exercise* sections, or other verses or chants that you create. And with most students, you will want to include writing practice that fits in with the other content of the lesson.

Teacher and Student Books

The teacher book and the student book are the same except that the Preface and Teacher Notes are only in the Teacher version of the books. The student book does not contain a preface at all, and contains only Student Goals and a blank page for notes and practice writing. (these keep the page numbers the same in both books.)

In all lessons, the real keys are:

1. The student must do a lot of talking. Never lecture where you talk and the students just listen. Instead, get them involved in everything you do. Again, teach phrases or sound units and use the Rule of Five:
 - 1) *You say something five times*
 - 2) *You have the student say it with you five times*
 - 3) *Have the student say it without you five times*
 - 4) *You listen and make corrections*
 - 5) *Have the student say it five times more.*
2. Repeat the last two steps as many times as needed. Most phrases will require a student to repeat the phrase thirty to fifty times before it sounds like you. As a native speaker, you are the gold standard so you want your student to sound like you. Use the phrase, “Sound like me. I want you to sound like me.”
3. Remember, it’s not just pronunciation. It’s also the rhythm of the language, the volume, the pitch, and the stamina to actually say the entire phrase all the way to the end and not let the ending get truncated or drop out. Americans speak louder than many cultures and with a lower pitch. Your students need to sound like Americans.
4. Remember:
 - 1) *Repetition—Use the rule of five*
 - 2) *Make the students do the talking*
 - 3) *Teach sound units and phrases instead of single words*
 - 4) *It’s more than pronunciation: teach rhythm, volume, pitch, and stamina*
 - 5) *You are the gold standard—your students need to sound like you.*

