



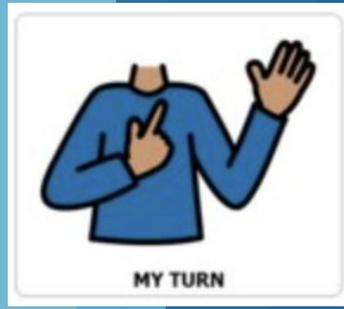
Practical ESOL Strategies for Beginners

March 13, 2026 - Danny Stone, ESOL Instructor
Everett Public Schools

Hello! Answer the 6 questions on your card.

- ▶ 1. Where are you from? (**country**)
- ▶ 2. Where do you live? (**city, state**)
- ▶ 3. In what month is your birthday?
- ▶ 4. What's the weather like today?
- ▶ 5. What colors are you wearing?
- ▶ 6. What food do you like? (**2 things**)

My name is **D**anny.



Danny...

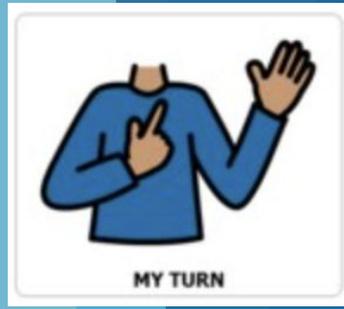
D as in door

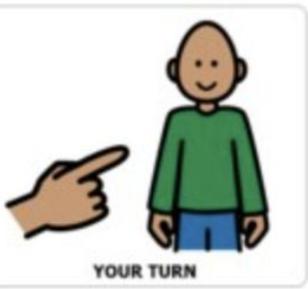
A as in 

N as in nis 

N as in nis 

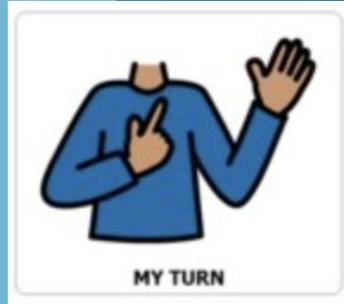
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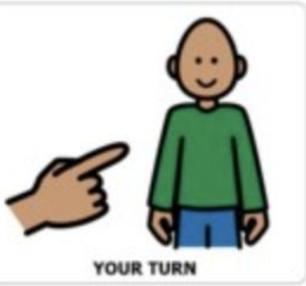




What's your name?

My name is Danny.





Ask Me!

How do you spell it?

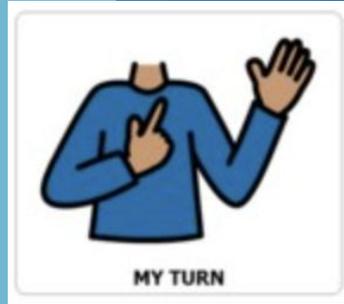
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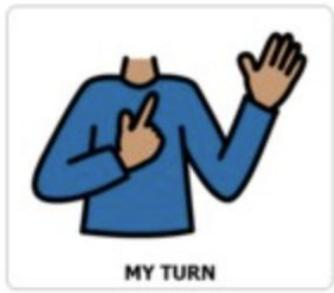
A as in 

N as in nis 

N as in nis 

Y as in yes



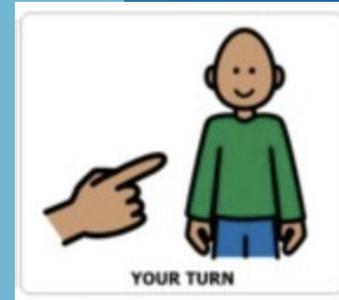
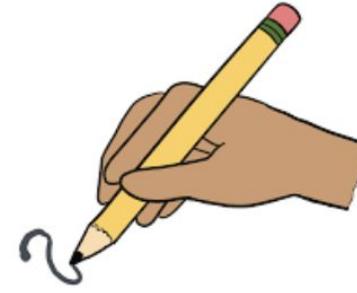


What's your name?

How do you spell it?

My name is _____.

_____ as in _____



Do you like
kitfo?



Yes.



No.



I don't know.



Reflect on the activity.

What opportunities did students have to:

- listen
- speak
- read
- write



...reflection continued

How did the activity allow students to gain:

- linguistic skills
- practical skills
- confidence using English
- sociocultural competence** (the ability to understand and navigate the customs, values, beliefs, and behaviors of a culture to allow for effective and appropriate interaction)



...reflection continued

What didn't go according to plan?

-a lot of people didn't know what kitfo was

-people were shier than expected

-one student thought this was way too easy and seemed bored -

mental note: add complexity by adding a “why” question instead of just “yes/no” question to prompt a more developed answer

-one student wasn't sure how to use a pencil; it turns out he isn't literate in his native language and seems embarrassed by this -

mental note: pre-fill out index card to reduce cognitive load so he's only practicing speaking or writing, not both at the same time

Do you like
pizza?



Yes.



No.



I don't know.



Zooming out to consider our (very extensive!) ESOL teacher toolkit...



Keep a list of go-to resources:

ESOL Websites

ESOL Websites

Keywords	Website
Literacy Minnesota Hub for all things ESL & Adult Basic Education	Educator Resources Literacy Minnesota
grammar	Understanding and using English grammar / Betty Schramper Azar
vocabulary	http://englishexplosion.pbworks.com/w/page/92322528/Vocabulary
grammar	http://englishexplosion.pbworks.com/w/page/92324178/Grammar
reading	http://englishexplosion.pbworks.com/w/page/92726235/Reading
speaking	http://englishexplosion.pbworks.com/w/page/92725848/Speaking
worksheets	bogglesworldesl.com
current events, news, reading, listening, vocabulary, exercises, Sean Banville	breakingnewsenglish.com
kids, phonics, printables, games, PowerPoints	english-4kids.com
Kids, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, quizzes	englishmedialab.com
grades 6-12 reading worksheets, resources, and activities	ereadingworksheets.com/
kids, all subjects	esl-galaxy.com

printables, interactive grammar, pronunciation, vocab	esltower.com
grammar, games	esolhelp.com/grammar-games.html
biographies, reading, listening, vocabulary, exercises, Sean Banville	famouspeoplelessons.com/index.html
games and quizzes online	getkahoot.com/
free photos that can be used in worksheets, quizzes, etc.	imagebase.net/index.php
kids, phonics, basic technology tutorials	internet4classrooms.com
videos, games, worksheets	kizschool.com/
current events, news, reading, critical thinking	learning.blogs.nytimes.com/
phonics, free workbook	learningquestinfo.com/freepages.php
reading, general interest	listverse.com/
kids, printable worksheets, phonics	mes-english.com
web literacy, research skills	novemberlearning.com/resources/information-literacy-resources/
K-12, worksheets, handwriting practice, flashcards	onestopenglish.com
writing, academic, research, grammar	owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
projects, film, Contact America	peaceoneday.org/resources/
worksheets, reading, grammar, vocabulary	penguinreaders.com/prteachers/index.html

games using Microsoft Office programs	people.uncw.edu/ertzberger/ppt_games.html#BigBoard
resource for famous poems	poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMD/19605
crossword puzzle maker	puzzle-maker.com/crossword_FreePuzzle
reading, writing, lesson plans, interactives, printables	readwritethink.org
listening, culture	savvytraveler.publicradio.org/show/culture/index.shtml
research tool (currently only logging research in computer science)	scholar.ly/
British, worksheets, reading, listening, games, speaking, video	skillsworkshop.org/
K-12, worksheets, handwriting practice, flashcards	studenthandouts.com/tesol-esl-el-teaching-english-language.htm
teacher resources, IELTS, academic, reading, listening, writing, speaking	teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts
spelling, worksheets, Powerpoints	thespellingblog.blogspot.com
writing, prompts, K-12, discussion forum	writingfix.com/index.htm
writing, grammar, usage, research	writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/grammar.htm
alphabet worksheets, handwriting	writingwizard.longcountdown.com/alphabet_worksheets.html

Where to begin???



A great place to start: Literacy Minnesota Hub for all things ESL and Adult Basic Education

literacymn.org/educator-resources

Translate Search...

Literacy Minnesota

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Your hub for all things ESL and Adult Basic Education.

Search resources by keyword

FILTER BY: AUDIENCE TOPIC FORMAT LEVEL

SEARCH NOW

SORT BY: A to Z Most Recent Title Desc Date Asc

FEATURED RESOURCES

- HANDOUT**
TUTOR TIP
VIDEO
A guide to disability accommodations for learners in Minnesota Adult Education
FREE
Audience: Adults, Staff
Topic:
- CURRICULUM**
LESSON PLAN
Adult Ed Math Courses
FREE
Audience: Adults
Topic: Math
- VIDEO**
Classroom Videos
Classroom Activities for Adult ESL Learners
FREE
Audience: Adults
Topic: ESL
Level: Beginning, Pre-Beginning
- CURRICULUM**
INSTRUCTIONAL KIT
English Unlocked Phonics Workbooks
For Beginning ESL Students
PURCHASE
Audience: Adults
Topic: Alphabetics, One-to-One Tutoring, Phonics, Reading, Spelling, Writing
Level: Pre-Beginning
- ACTIVITY**
INSTRUCTIONAL KIT
ESL Instructional Support Kits
FREE
Audience: Adults
Topic: ESL
Level: Advanced, Beginning, Intermediate, Pre-Beginning

Micros

First Literacy Professional Development Workshop

How to navigate the 'ESL Story Bank'

Below is a table listing possible unit themes for adult ESL and corresponding stories. Some stories have both a pre-beginning (low literacy) version as well as a beginning (CASAS/SPL level 2-3) version. Where you see blue hyperlinks, you can click on the story title to jump directly to that story corresponding worksheets. All pre-beginning stories are in the *Pre-Beginning ESL Story Bank* and all beginning level stories are in the *Beginning ESL Story Bank*.

In the table, under the title of each story, there are suggestions for phonics instruction on individual phonemes or spelling patterns. For more information, see the sample [story of the week lesson plan](#) at the end of document.

Unit/Themes	Pre-Beginning	Beginning
Looking for Work Work History On-the-job instructions Work safety	Max Has a Job Word Family: -an (man, can, ran, fan)	
	Max's Many Jobs Word Family: -ook (look, took, book, cook) Word Family: -uck (truck, buck, luck, stuck) Target Letter/Sound: T or /k/ -multiple spellings (c, k, -ck) with exceptions <i>school</i> and <i>office</i>	Max Works Hard Target Phonemes: let
	Did you Clock In? Target Letter/Sound: D	Did You Clock Out?
Talking on the Phone Health Family	My Daughter is Sick Target Letters/Sounds: L	My Daughter is Sick
Health Body parts Going to the clinic	Mr. White is Sick Word family: -ick (sick, lick, quick, pick) Target Letters/Sounds: H or S	

My Daughter is Sick



The little girl wakes up in the morning.
She has a headache.
She has a stomachache.
Her mom takes her temperature.



The little girl is sick.
She has a fever.
She needs to stay in bed all day.



The little girl goes to Utica Elementary School.
She is in third grade.
Today she can't go to school.



Her mother calls the school to leave a message.
She listens, then pushes button number 1.



My name is Lora Smith. I am calling about my daughter.

The mother waits for the beep.
Then she says her name.
She says that she is calling about her daughter.



She is in third grade. Her teacher is Mrs. Lee.

The mother says her daughter's grade.
She says her daughter's teacher.



Her name is Kate Smith. It is spelled K-A-T-E

My phone number is (651)397-2296. Thank you.

The mother says her phone number.
She says thank you, and hangs up the phone.
The school office will tell the teacher that Kate Smith is sick today.

Answer the questions about the story.

1. What is the daughter's name? _____
2. What is the mother's phone number? _____
3. Where does Kate go to school? _____
4. What is her teacher's name? _____
5. Why will Kate stay home today? _____
6. Do you think it's good for parents to call their child's school? _____
Why? _____

Adapted from Andrea Echelberger, MLC, 2012

A note about role-plays...

What's the matter?

I have a headache.



You should take medicine.

I don't have medicine.

You should see the doctor.

Where is the doctor?

The doctor is at the hospital.

I have a fever too.



Do you feel hot?

Yes.

You should go home. Rest and drink water.

OK, thank you.

Act out twice so each in pair gets to read. After acting, give students a chance to rewrite the script, e.g. with a gap-fill.

Challenge: Students write their own new (tweaked) scripts to be acted out in the same genre. Talk about cultural differences around rules and etiquette.

_____ matter?

I have a _____.



You should take _____.

I _____ medicine.

_____ the doctor.

_____ the doctor?

The doctor is _____.

_____ a fever too.

_____ hot?

Yes.



You should go _____. Rest and _____.

OK, _____

Before we dive into more material, let's back up to look at an ESL classroom...



Students are engaged!

Everyone is smiling!

Big windows, lots of natural light!

Plenty of space!

Nice clean tables!

Learning English feels achievable!

How pleasant.

How lovely. 😊

A more realistic snapshot...



Students are engaged and everyone is working, *but...*

People are tired – many are here after juggling kids and full-time jobs.

It's frustrating because English feels so hard.

The two men in the back aren't sure what we're supposed to be doing right now and the teacher can see this but is all the way up front and helping someone else right now.

The windowless basement and harsh fluorescent lights don't help.

As teachers, how can we ease the stress of learning a new language, in a new city, in a new country, surrounded by classmates from different cultures and completely different backgrounds inside a windowless classroom with harsh lighting at 8 o'clock at night for students who might be coming to us after a full day's work?





Embrace the mantra of life-long learning. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

Learning (and teaching) is exhausting but rewarding!

Pictured left to right: Alem, a refugee from Eritrea and a regular student in my ESOL class; Yanina, a refugee from Ukraine who has just passed her U.S. citizenship test; me (the teacher); Alice, a literacy volunteer in my classroom

Now back to planning a successful lesson...

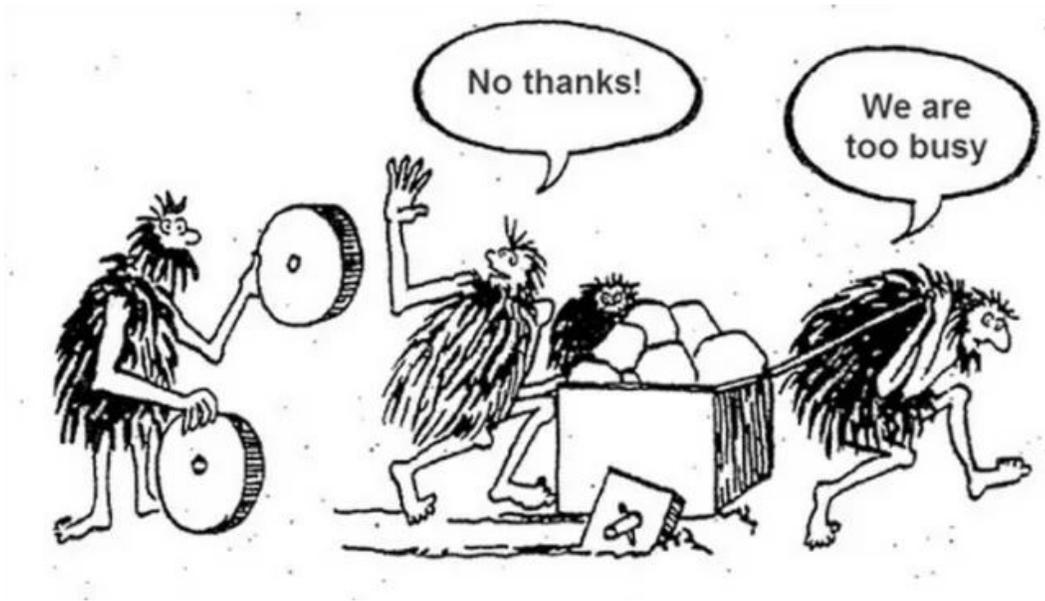
- ▶ Have a clear plan
- ▶ Use SWBAT learning objectives (not too many)
- ▶ List materials needed (slides, visuals, realia)
- ▶ Have a “Do Now” activity upon entering
- ▶ Teach but don’t over-teach. Leave plenty of time for students to practice new skill.
- ▶ Include an assessment (formal or informal) – could be a simple **exit ticket**
- ▶ Reflect & make pivots & tweaks

ENGLISH LESSON PLAN

Class: 4	Subject: English	Date: 15.06.2022
Topic: Nouns		Lesson: Grammar
Learning Objectives: Student will be able to- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Common and Proper Nouns in sentences. 2. Write sentences using nouns. 3. Speak sentences using Nouns. 		
Teaching Aids: Worksheet, Nouns Flash Cards, Video	Materials Needed: Cut-outs of pictures of objects, glue.	
Structure / Activity:		
Teaching Point	Student-Teacher Interaction	Activities
1. Common Noun	Show flash cards of a boy, girl, child.	Students will separate pictures of Common and Proper Noun and paste it under the right heading on worksheet.
2. Proper Noun	Show flash cards of Taj Mahal, Statue of Liberty, Sachin Tendulkar	
Recapitulation: A short game of Name, Place, Animal, Things.		
Assessment: Teacher will ask students to form a sentence using the object in flash cards.		
Reflection & Follow Up: Discuss with students if a sentence can be written without using Nouns.		

To alleviate stress for yourself and your students, use predictable routines and recurring activities that build on themselves.

Don't reinvent the wheel every single day.



Some ideas...

Have a 5-minute routine when students enter classroom. This is a “Do Now” activity because students *do it now*. It should require no instruction after teaching it once.



-this or that?

(write or show pictures of 2 things on board - “coffee or tea?” / “bus or train?” / “ocean or lake?” - students pick one and write / draw / explain their preference on index card then circulate & share)

-daily slip of paper to practice name, date, weather, etc.

-naming and counting U.S. currency (new amount daily)

-daily image projected on screen (students say and write what they see)

As a student, I know what to do when I enter the classroom, and I can do it independently. I feel calm and confident. 😊

Money		Name	Amount
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____

Find someone you haven't spoken much with today. Share more ideas for a 5-minute "Do Now" activity that would work well in your class.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Saturday	Sunday			

What day is **today**?

What day is **tomorrow**?

What day was **yesterday**?

Money

		Name	Amount
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____

More routines: You could pick a day of the week to practice a specific question word – *“Question Mondays”*

- who (ask about people)
- what (ask about things)
- when (ask about time)
- why (ask about reasons)
- where (ask about places)
- how (ask about ways of doing things)
- will (ask about the future)
- should/shouldn't (ask about right and wrong)
- how much (ask about quantity - uncountable nouns)
- how many (ask about quantity - countable nouns)

As a student, I can see that if this is a 10-week course, I will learn all of these question words week by week. The clarity is comforting, and I know what I'll miss if I'm absent that day. 😊

Recurring “state of the day” to learn U.S. states and geography (~10 mins)

U.S. States and Geography slides:

The 7th state: Maryland

Maryland
at pppst.com

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Use to practice:

- writing / spelling
- ordinal numbers / dates
- pronunciation
- capitalization
- cardinal directions
- talking about climate
- talking about travel
- civics / geography
- U.S. history / citizenship prep

As a student, I feel like I'm learning about my new country and its history. I feel more connected to this place and feel like maybe I can belong here. 😊

Example:

- ▶ **State Name: Maryland**
- ▶ **7th state: 4/28/1788**
- ▶ **Capital City: Annapolis**
- ▶ **Motto: The Old Line State**
- ▶ **Fun fact: Maryland had the first umbrella factory in the U.S. in 1928.**



...more civics and U.S. citizenship prep – could easily be a full class once a week

- ▶ Citizenship test prep curriculum for beginner ESOL adults (includes N-400 interview classroom practice, lesson plans by topic, resources for teachers)

64. There were 13 original states. Name three.

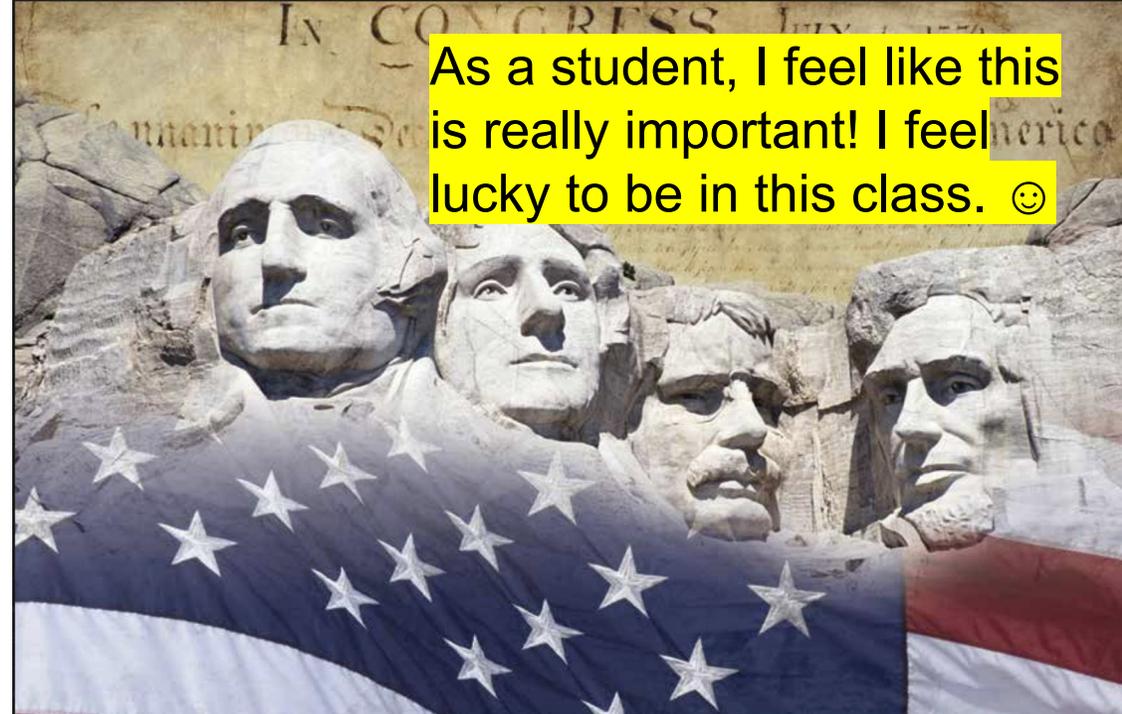
- New Hampshire
- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island
- Connecticut
- New York
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- Maryland
- Virginia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia

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62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

- (Thomas) Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He was a very important political leader and thinker. Some of the most important ideas about the American government are found in the Declaration of Independence, such as the idea that all people are created equal. Another important idea is that people are born with certain rights including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Jefferson was the third president of the United States, serving from 1801 to 1809. Before becoming president, Jefferson was governor of Virginia and the first U.S. secretary of state. He strongly supported individual rights, especially freedom of religion. Jefferson wanted to protect these rights. For this reason, he did not want a strong national government.



As a student, I feel like this is really important! I feel lucky to be in this class. 😊

Learn About the United States Quick Civics Lessons for the Naturalization Test



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Volunteer to take the U.S. citizenship test right now in front of everyone? 😊

(Warning: some of the N-400 interview questions are invasive - you won't be forced to answer in this demo if you prefer not to answer)



Learn About the United States Quick Civics Lessons for the Naturalization Test

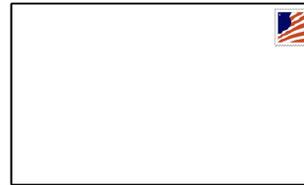


Dedicate one class per week to practicing a “survival skill.”

- ▶ How to address an envelope
- ▶ Doctor’s visit / filling out a medical history form
- ▶ Paying rent / bills
- ▶ Reading calendars
- ▶ Shopping
- ▶ Navigating MBTA
- ▶ Banks (checking / savings)
- ▶ Workplace norms
- ▶ Emergencies
- ▶ Prescriptions and pharmacy
- ▶ Signs and public notices
- ▶ Phones and technology

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This is an envelope. This is a stamp.



As a student, I feel like my teacher understands how difficult it is to live in a new place where EVERYTHING is different, not just language. I’m not embarrassed to ask questions about things that probably seem obvious to Americans. 😊

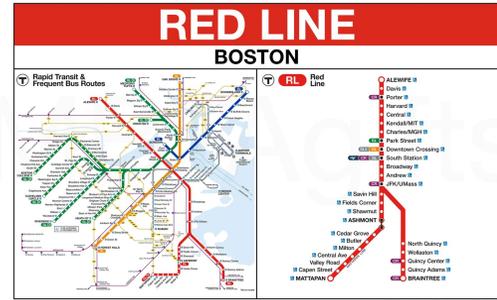
My address: _____
Medications you are now taking _____



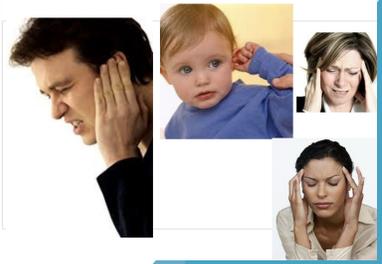
Asthma



Depression / Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



Earache and headache



A.I. can help you!

- ▶ Go to *chatgpt.com* (free)
- ▶ Make your prompt extremely clear and specific to your needs
- ▶ Adapt output to meet needs of your students

ChatGPT Log in Sign up for free ?

Design a lesson to practice time, dates, and schedules in a beginner esol class for adults. Include a fill-in-the-blank activity for true beginners.

Here is a complete, ready-to-teach 75-minute beginner ESOL lesson for adult learners.

Lesson Plan: Time, Dates & Schedules

Level:
Beginning ESOL (low literacy friendly)

Objectives
Students will be able to:

- Say and write today's date
- Ask and answer "What time is it?"
- Say times (o'clock and :30)
- Read a simple weekly schedule

Materials

- Large teaching clock (real or paper)
- Monthly calendar
- Whiteboard
- Printed simple schedule (included below)
- Fill-in-the-blank worksheet (included below)

1. Warm-Up: Today's Date (10–15 minutes)

Write on the board:

Today is _____.
The date is _____.

Elicit:

- Day of the week
- Month
- Number

Ask anything

Attach Search Study Create image Voice

Example topic: Money

One topic can be a springboard to touch on a variety of skills. (see slides)



We have reached the end!

Questions or comments?

Any other wisdom to share with one another while we're all together?

Anything you're excited to try out?



Thank you!

We want your feedback. Please be sure to complete the evaluation.

Learn more about upcoming First Literacy Professional Development Workshops at www.firstliteracy.org/professional-development-workshops/

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