

# The Bantu in Our Midst: A Resource for ELT Classrooms



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Photos used in this publication were taken by Spring Institute staff member Rich Wildau during a November 2002 visit to Kakuma refugee camp.

## Forward

Adult literacy level learners come to the classroom with a wide variety of backgrounds. We use terms like pre-literate and non-Roman alphabet literate to try to get a handle on what students bring to the classroom, but in fact there are a whole host of factors, including previous education, age, gender, social status, religion that inform what students bring to the learning experience.

This publication focuses on adults who do not read or write in any language and have not lived in a society which relies heavily on literacy, in other words, true beginners.

The first section of the publication provides some background information and has been reprinted from a publication from Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts, "Somali Bantu Cultural Guide for Agencies and Organizations". This publication was funded by a grant to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement Grant #90 RP 0024, May 2003.

The second section of this resource is a hands-on guide to practical strategies for the classroom.

The last section offers some helpful guidelines to assessing the performance of non-literate learners. This material comes from the Arlington Education and Employment Program; Clarendon Education Center, 2801 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 218, Arlington, Virginia 22201, Phone: (703) 228-4200 Fax: (703) 527-6966 E-mail: [sgrant@arlington.k12.va.us](mailto:sgrant@arlington.k12.va.us)



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### **Brief History of Somalia**

Somalia is located on the east coast of Africa between the countries of Kenya and Ethiopia, the Gulf of Aden to the north, and the Indian Ocean to the east, in a geographic area known as the Horn of Africa. There are five major clans (Daarood, Dir, Hawiye, Digil, and Mirifle) and many minority groups that comprise this agricultural/pastoral (farmer/herder) society.

Early history links the development of the Somali people to an Arab sultanate, which was founded in the seventh century A. D. by Koreishite immigrants from Yemen. It is believed that early ancestors of the Somali community crossed the Red Sea into present day Somalia. During the 15th and 16th centuries, Portuguese traders, under the guidance of Vasco da Gama, landed in the present Somali territory and ruled several coastal towns and their environs. The Omani sultan of Zanzibar subsequently took control of these towns and their environs.

Contrary to the above account, some scholars believe that the Arab factor is less important to understanding the Somali history. Conventional wisdom once held that early Somali migrations to the Horn of Africa followed a north-to-south route; however, the reverse appears to be true. Physical anthropologists recognize that the Somalis formed a subgroup called Sam. Members of the proto-Sam who came to occupy the Somali Peninsula were known as Samaale, or Somaal. This is a clear reference to the father figure of the main Somali clan families. His name gave rise to the term Somali.

The Samaale moved further north from Omo-Tana Rivers in present-day northern Kenya to the Indian Ocean coast in search of pasture lands.

In the late 19th century, various European powers established trading routes in the area. The British East India Company's desire for unrestricted harbor facilities led to treaties with the sultan of Tajura, in present Djibouti, which was part of greater Somalia. It was not until 1886, however, that the British acquired control over northern Somalia through treaties with various Somali clan elders, who were guaranteed British protection. British interests centered on safeguarding trade links to the east and securing local sources of food and provisions for their military garrison stationed in Aden, Yemen.

In 1885, Italy obtained agreements with the sultans of Obbia and Caluula in eastern Somalia, who placed their territories under Italy's protection. By the late 1920s, Italy took over control of southern and central Somalia. In 1935, Italian forces launched an offensive that led to the capture of Addis Ababa and the Italian annexation of Ethiopia in 1936. After Italy declared war on Britain in 1940, Italian forces overran British Somaliland in the north and drove out the British garrison. British forces began operations in 1941 against the Italian East African Empire and quickly brought the greater part of the Italian Somaliland under British control. As part of the decolonization of African societies who were under European colonial administrations, the two Somali regions (north and south) that were under Italian and British control gained independence on June 26 and July 1, 1960 respectively. On July first, the two regions were united under the name of the Somali Republic. The country's first president was Aden Abdulle Osman. Abdirashid Ali Sharma'arke, who hoped to unite the warring clan factions into a unified nation, succeeded Osman.

In 1969, President Sharma'arke was assassinated and replaced by army General Mohamed Siad Barre who seized power through a bloodless military coup. Barre adopted socialism from the then Soviet Union and attempted to restructure the country through a variety of economic, political, legal and social reforms. Initially he hoped to weaken the entrenched clan structure, while he gained a more powerful foothold in the country. After the failed coup in 1978, Barre resorted to reinstate clan favoritism by posting his Marehan clan members in senior government posts.

The military regime led by General Barre outlawed all democratic institutions and ruled the country with an iron hand. In 1974, Somalia and the Soviet Union concluded a treaty of friendship and cooperation, but the USSR was expelled after General Barre discovered that the Soviets were helping Ethiopia, Somalia's arch rival in the Horn of Africa.

General Barre's oppressive policies culminated in the emergence of armed opposition groups in the country. The first faction, named Somali Salvation and Democratic Front (SSDF) led by Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was established in neighboring Ethiopia in 1978. Other armed clan-based groups followed suit until large-scale civil war commenced in the north in 1988. This war marked the beginning of a massive internal and external displacement of 3.15 million people.

From 1982 to the end of the Cold War (1989) the United States viewed Somalia as a partner in defense. Somali officers of the National Armed Forces were trained in US military schools. Within Somalia, Siad Barre's regime was increasingly a victim of insurgencies in the northeast and northwest. By 1988 aircraft of the Somali National Air Force bombed the cities in the northwest province, attacking civilian as well as insurgent targets. Economic crisis, brought on by the impact of the anti-insurgency operations undertaken by the regime, caused further hardship as Siad Barre and his followers looted the national treasury.

In 1989 a demonstration in the capital of Mogadishu ended in the deaths of 450 people. The Council for National Reconstruction and Salvation (CNRS) was formed. The following year, CNRS published a manifesto calling for the president's resignation. Barre's regime was toppled in January 1991 and the United Somali Congress (USC) established a provisional government. However, the new government was immediately thrown in to turmoil as various clans vied for regional control. To make matters worse, a drought, affecting the people of central and southern Somalia, caused a tremendous famine that led to the death of 300,000 Somalis, particularly in the Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Hiiraan, Middle Juba and Lower Juba regions.

As the situation in Somalia escalated the United Nations and United States stepped in to provide relief in the form of food and emergency medical supplies. This task proved most difficult as armed bandits patrolled the countryside preventing distribution of the supplies. During this time, approximately 45% of the population either fled the country or was internally displaced.

By 1990 little remained of the Somali Republic. The rebellion in the northwest was largely successful. The army dissolved into competing armed groups loyal to former commanders or to clan-tribal leaders. The economy plummeted and hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled their homes. In 1991 Siad Barre and forces loyal to him fled the capital; he died in exile in Nigeria.

In 1992 responding to the political chaos and deaths in Somalia, the United States and other nations launched Operation Restore Hope. Led by the

Unified Task Force (UNITAF) of the United Nations, the operation was designed to create an environment in which relief assistance could be delivered to Somalis suffering from the effect of dual catastrophes; war and famine. UNITAF was followed by the United Nations Operation in the Somalia. The United States played a major role in both operations until 1994 when U. S. forces withdrew after a pitched gun battle with Somali gunmen that left 18 U. S. servicemen killed and hundred of Somalis dead or wounded.

At this moment in history, there is no national government of Somalia.

## **History of Somali Bantus**

First and foremost, one fundamental question in the history of this group is how the name 'Bantu' was attached to them given that Bantu languages are not spoken in Somalia? As the word implies, Somali Bantus have ethnic connections to Eastern and Southern Africa where Bantu languages are spoken. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bantu-speaking peoples migrated from west and central parts of the African continent to the east and then trekked to the south. They settled in the present day Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

With the advent of Arab slavers in southern Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries, many Bantu-speaking peoples were captured, forced to slavery, and shipped via Zanzibar's (now part of Tanzania) slave trade market to the Middle East and Persian Gulf. One of the prominent 19th century Arab slavers in East Africa, known as Said Berkash (also called Sayyid Said), who controlled most coastal territories in the east and southern Africa (from Mozambique to Somalia), shipped the ancestors of Somali Bantus to southern Somalia. Prior to their transfer to Somalia, Bantus were promised a better life, but were forced to enslavement and the drudgery of agricultural work after their arrival in Somalia. The Bantu ancestors, who were brought to Lower and Middle Juba regions in southern Somalia, represented six southeast African tribes names Ziqua, Zaramo, Yao, Makua, Nyanja, and Ngidono.

Somali Bantus were eventually emancipated from slavery during the colonial period of the 20th century, but continued to be coerced into farm labor by the Italian colonists, who owned large agricultural plantations in the Lower

Juba, Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions of Somalia. After Somalia gained independence in 1960, the Somali Bantus obtained complete freedom from being forced to work on someone else's farm. However, they continued to be treated as second-class citizens.

Like other minority clans in Somalia, the Bantus faced discrimination in the government services. Throughout the three governments - two democratic administrations (1960-1969) and the last authoritarian regime (1969-1991) - that ruled Somalia, Bantu citizens did not hold senior governmental posts (i.e., cabinet and military leadership positions). Nevertheless, some of their members entered important professions including teaching, medicine, law, and engineering.

The plight of Somali Bantus deteriorated during the civil war, which started in southern Somalia in December 1990. Because the Somali Bantus were a minority clan, they lacked a majority clan protection and were frequent targets of violence by the warring factions. Their fertile agricultural land became the focus of Somalia's civil war as powerful Somali clans began fighting for the control of the productive riverine regions including Lower Juba, Middle Juba, Lower Shabelle, and Middle Shabelle provinces, which are populated by the Somali Bantus. As a result of continuous fighting in their native villages, Somali Bantus suffered from untold atrocities such as rape, murder, and massive confiscation of properties. Many of their villages were entirely burned by armed tribal militia. To escape from further destructions and persecution, they fled to Kenya and have languished in refugee camps for 12 years - from 1992 to the present. The civil war continues to this day and there is no way that they can voluntarily go back to their native villages due to persecution, which culminated in their first flight to Kenya twelve years ago. After recognizing this fact, the U. S. Government, in 1999, designated 12,000 Somali Bantus as high priority status (Priority Two) for resettlement to the United States.

## **Extension of Violence to Refugee Camps**

Despite the fact that Somali Bantus have been safe from the large-scale level of hostilities they faced in Somalia before their flight to Kenya, violence against them became an ever-present phenomenon in the refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya. According to a report published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2002, Somali Bantu women in Dadaab were targets for sexual assault and rape. These crimes were possibly committed by other refugees and local residents living around the camps. Although sexual violence in the refugee camps has been common to all refugee women, the Somali Bantu women were more vulnerable because of their ethnic minority status.



The social discrimination against Somali Bantus was carried over from Somalia to Dadaab refugee camps in northeastern Kenya. Other non-Bantu Somalis continued to despise and treat them as second citizens. Addressing to a UNHCR official in Dadaab, one Bantu refugee elder reflected the continuation of their plight in the camps and said, "This is a bad place. It is dangerous. Even if we cannot go the United States, get us out of here." (UNHCR REFUGEES Magazine, Issue Number 128, 2002. Page 18) Furthermore, UNHCR reported that the hatred of other Somalis toward the Somali Bantus increase in the camps after the U. S. Government accepted their resettlement to the United States.

In the summer 2002, the 12,000 Somali Bantus approved for resettlement to the United States were moved to another refugee camp (called Kakuma) in northwestern Kenya near the border with Sudan.

## **Somali Bantu Culture**

### **Geographic Region**

The majority of Somali Bantus reside in the valleys of the Juba and Shabelle Rivers of Somalia. Some also live in the southern urban areas of the Lower Juba, Middle Juba, Lower and Middle Shabelle regions. Their main livelihood depends on irrigated crop production and they grow both cash and subsistence crops: sesame, maize, tobacco, peas, vegetables, and fruits. The Somali Bantus have a sense of community and cohesion and live together in permanent agricultural villages. They differ from other Somali clans since they are a sedentary population as opposed to the pastoralists (herders) of other non-Bantu Somalis who live in rural areas.

### **Muslim Religion**

Like other Somali clans, Somali Bantus are predominantly Sunni Muslims. They are moderate Muslims. They have their own small mosques in the villages where they pray and read Qur'an. Muslim beliefs include: existence of only on god (Allah), prophet Muhammad as Allah's messenger, the Muslim Holy Book (Qur'an), existence of angels, praying five times a day, fasting during the 9th month (Ramadan) of the Muslim Year, attending the pilgrimage in Mecca, belief in reincarnation, Resurrection Day, and prophets Issa (Jesus), Mussa (Moses), Ibrahim (Abraham), Ya'quub (Jacob), Yusef (Joseph).

## **Work**

In most cases, men go out and earn a living for their families in Somalia while wives stay home and take care of the children and household chores. In some families husbands and wives go out and work on the farm. Men make the economic decision for the family. Unmarried children participate in the farm work and contribute to the family income. Depending upon the availability of additional labor and family needs for additional income, Somali Bantu family members work as wage laborers on other farms.

## **Marriage**

Like other Somalis, Somali Bantus practice polygamy; men marry up to four wives at a time according to Islamic faith. Divorce initiated by men, is common. Clan or tribe membership is determined by patrilineage (father's family). A typical Somali Bantu family tends to maintain close inter-family relations among extended kin.

Early marriage among young Bantus is common. Young adults marry at 15 years of age for both males and females. In some cases, girls get married at 14 years, but boys never marry until they are 15 years or older. If a grown-up child marries and his/her family does not earn enough income, they get transitional support from their parents.

Compared to other Somalis, male Somali Bantu children end total dependency on their parents and start to take care of their own lives by 15 years of age. A portion of the family's land is allocated to the adult male child and he produces his own food.

## **Dress Patterns**

Despite the fact that it is one of the cultural norms for women in Somalia to completely cover their bodies including their hair, veil use is not common. Somali Bantus perform agricultural work and it is not practical to use a veil under the hot tropical sun.

## **Diet**

The traditional diet of Somali Bantus consists of maize, peas, and vegetables. Chicken is occasionally consumed as a source of protein. They also eat fish. Traditionally, Somali Bantus believe that the 'soup' of the river fish prevents malaria and thus they eat a lot of river fish which supplies

additional protein. Maize, which is the major subsistence crop, is stored in underground pits called “bakarr”.

Like other Somalis, Somali Bantus eat halaal meat, which is meat that comes from animals slaughtered by a Muslim in the name of Allah while the animal is facing to the Ka’aba in Mecca. The Islamic religion does not permit Muslims to eat pigs and mammals with upper front teeth (horse). In addition, drinking alcohol is prohibited.

## **Music**

Somali Bantus are avid musicians. They love to listen and play music. In addition, they have traditional dances and songs which they perform during festivals such as harvest events.

## **Refugee processing**

In all 12,000 Somali Bantus will become new residents of the United States in approximately 45 cities. Before entry to this country, each person will have to undergo several identity and security clearances as well as a health screening. Then each person will be assigned to one of the nine national voluntary agencies\* (volags) and their affiliates in the United States that processes refugees for resettlement.

## **The Difference between Refugees and Immigrants**

It is important to distinguish between the status of refugee and immigrant. An immigrant chooses to leave his/her country of origin, when to leave, where to go, whom to travel with, and what possessions to take. A refugee has not choices. A refugee flees. To remain in his/her country of origin means almost certain death. A refugee’s future is uncertain at best.

A refugee brings with him or her a way of knowing and interacting with a community. A refugee belongs to a past that no longer makes sense in a new place. A refugee carries cultural knowledge, religion, family ties, and economic system, education, important festivals and local events, a home, a village, memories, and ancestors.

\*The nine national voluntary agencies are: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), Lutheran

Immigration and Refugees Services (LIRS), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), United States Catholic Conference (USCC), Immigration and Refugee Services of America (IRSA), Iowa Department of Human Services, and Church World Service (CWS).

## **Life in a Refugee Camp**

Somali Bantus fled to the refugee camps in northeastern Kenya in 1991. The UNHCR supports the refugee camps, which are located near the borders with Somalia and Sudan. Refugees are confined to their camps because they are not legally allowed to enter other parts of Kenya.

- Refugee families live in housing units such as huts or tents, which are in close proximity.
- The major source of livelihood is limited to relief food supplies donated by the international community through the UNHCR and World Food Program (WFP).
- In most cases, refugees are not legally allowed by asylum countries to travel freely from the camps to nearby cities.
- Refugees living in camps have limited access to official work permits in the asylum countries. They lack self-sufficiency and means for an income.
- Health care services in most camps are limited.
- Quality of education offered to refugee children is inadequate and substandard to one offered to the native children of the host country.
- Host communities perceive refugees as a burden on local economies. Sometimes the UNHCR allocates part of its funds for the development of host communities to lessen hostility toward the refugees.
- Refugee girls and women suffer from additional abuses such as rape. This kind of abuse routinely takes place in camps located in insecure areas, such as the Somali refugee camps in northeastern Kenya.
- Refugee children who are born in camps and live in them for extended periods of time lose their traditional indigenous culture.
- When refugees from different countries and cultures live together in the same camps, limited social interaction takes place among them and tensions increase. Tensions also arise in camps among refugees who are from different clan/ethnic/cultural backgrounds and nationalities.
- The typical daily schedule in a refugee camp includes boredom and waiting in lines for: food, water, health care, paper work, medical care, and more.

## **United States Refugee Resettlement Program**

Demonstrating the best humanitarian traditions of the American people, the United States Government supports protection and life-sustaining relief and development programs for millions of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) uprooted by international and civil wars around the globe. The U. S. Government also admits tens of thousands of refugees annually for permanent resettlement in the United States.

In tandem with the UNHCR, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) of the State Department coordinates U. S. international population policy and promotes its goals through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The PRM works closely with the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which administers U. S. international development programs.

After international refugee crisis unfold, the UNHCR, which has an international mandate to protect refugees in conjunction with the 1951 Geneva Convention, liaises with host countries and establishes camps for the protection of refugees. To prevent protracted refugee situations, the UNHCR seeks to find a durable solution for refugees in three ways: repatriation of refugees to their home countries, local integration in the host country, and resettlement in third countries. If repatriation and local integration options are not feasible, then the third option - resettlement- is pursued to locate a durable solution for refugees. The United States Government is a major partner of UNHCR in the resettlement of refugees for whom neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration opportunities are possible.

To manage admissions of refugees to the United States for permanent resettlement, the PRM works closely with the UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Department of Health and Human Services while refugees are still abroad. All U. S. bound refugees have to pass strict immigration, security, and health check ups before they get travel clearance to the United States. In addition, refugees are given cultural orientation towards American ways of life before their departure from overseas.

The PRM staff, as part of their commitment to strengthening the effectiveness of U. S., refugee assistance and admissions programs, travel to various regions around the world to assess resettlement needs of refugees.

## **United States Commitment to Refugee Resettlement**

Our government provides many benefits to help refugees with the resettlement process. These are:

- no interest travel loan to the United States
- 8 months Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)
- food stamps
- housing assistance, furnishing, food and clothing
- social security card

- school registration for children
- referral for medical appointments and other support services
- employment services
- case management through community based non-profit organizations
- adjustment of status from refugee to legal permanent resident (green card)

## Cultural Festivals and Ceremonies

Somalis celebrate four major holidays and several important life cycle rituals. The yearly calendar is lunar. The major holidays are:

- **Idul-fitri**
- **Idul-adha**
- **Mowliid**
- **Debshidka**

**Idul-fitri** happens on the first day of Soonfur, and is celebrated at the end of the Ramadan. During this day, children and adults put on their new clothing and perfumes, give Zakatul-fitri (five scoops of grains paid on behalf of each family member) to the needy, go to the mosque or other designated praying places for the day, and perform Salat-ul-idul-fitri (Idd prayers). Fasting is prohibited during the Idul-fitri day. Families prepare festival meals including lots of goat meat, camel milk, spaghetti and rice. It is the first daytime meal that adults are allowed to eat after fasting 30 days for Ramadan. There are many family visits to loved ones. Happiness is shared during the joyful Idul-Mubarak day. Women and children are the ones who make most of the visits to their relatives and parents during the Idul-Fitri day.

**Idul-adha**, which happens on the tenth day of Iid-Sagaalaad (the Hajj month), is celebrated to honor the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). During this day, all people wear new clothes go to the mosque or other places designated for mass prayers, and perform the Idul-adha prayers. After people come back from prayers, families slaughter animals, particularly goats or sheep, and enjoy meals with other relatives and friends. Fasting is prohibited during this day. Like the Idul-fitri, family members visit their loved ones during this day.

**Mowliid** is prophet Muhammad's birthday and is celebrated on the 12th day of Mowliid. People chant slogans and prayers in the mosques to praise and commemorate prophet Muhammad and his birthday. Large meals are prepared and people eat together.

All the above days are national holidays and people do not go to work.

**Debshidka** (A New Year) is celebrated on the 1st of Zako, which is the first month of the Muslim year. Agricultural communities in the south, including Somali Bantus, especially celebrate this day. Urban and pastoral (herding) communities do not observe. Debshidka events. People perform traditional dances, build bonfires during the night, and recite prayers to ask Allah to make the New Year a prosperous one with peace and good harvests. In some large community gatherings, the Debshidka ceremony is performed while people beat themselves with soft traditional sticks that are collected from the bush. This ritual, locally known as *istun*, is practiced in Afgoi district of Lower Shabelle region. Observers believe that there will be no good harvest for their agrarian communities in the New Year if they do not carry out the beating ceremony.

In addition to yearly major events, other important celebrations observed in Somalia include:

## Engagement

The potential bride and groom meet, discuss marriage, and agree to marry each other. The groom informs his family, particularly his father, paternal uncles, or elder brother, about the marriage agreement that he has reached with his future wife. The groom's family meets with the bride's family and presents their official request for marriage between their son and the young woman. If the bride's family and presents their official request for marriage between their son and the young woman. If the bride's family agrees, a schedule is fixed for an engagement. During the engagement day, the groom's family provides a dowry (*harad iyo gabaati*), which is paid either in cash or kind (cows or camels), to the bride's family. A religious sheikh is invited and he performs the engagement ceremony, based on Islamic religion in the presence of at least two male witnesses (*shuhuud*), and the bride's father or uncle and the groom. During the engagement, the sheikh asks the bride, through her father or uncle, about her *meher* (her engagement fee which is to be paid by the groom at a later time) and the groom agrees to pay the *meher*.

## Wedding

Wedding ceremonies are held soon after the engagement. The groom's family takes the first initiative and announces a day for the wedding. Both families participate equally. Livestock (goats, cows, and sometimes camels) are slaughtered and numerous meals are prepared for invited guests and extended family members. Among the important invitees are religious



sheikhs, who read chapters of the holy Qur'an to seek Allah's blessing for the new family.

In the late afternoon or early evening of the wedding day the groom, accompanied by his friends and close family members, goes to the bride's family house. Members of both families escort the new couple to their house. When the new couple arrives at their new home, they proceed to their sitting room accompanied by one man and one woman (cohort). The others remain outside and perform traditional dances. Dancing continues until late evening. After the dancing ceremony is terminated, all the visitors go inside the house and shake hands with the couple and their companions. All guests, including the two cohorts, leave the homestead for the night, but continue daytime visits for seven days.

### **Honoring a Newborn Baby**

Close extended family members come together at the house of a married couple who have just given birth. On this occasion goats or sheep (maximum two) are slaughtered. The father names the new baby.

### **Honoring of Deceased Grandparents and important Religious Sheikhs**

Somali communities, particularly those who live in the central and southern parts of the country, remember their ancestors and important religious saints known as 'owliyo'. They organize events (siyaaro) once a year. Extended family members and religious congregations (xer) gather at the gravesite of the deceased person to honor the person, slaughter livestock (goats, sheep, cows and camels), and read Qur'an and dkri (blessing) for the deceased. Many prayers are performed to solicit Allah's forgiveness for their ancestors and religious leaders.

### **Birthdays**

Somalis do not record the date of birth of their children: therefore, they do not celebrate birthday. However, some urban residents do record the date.

### **Masaweey or Kabeebeey**

This is a traditional dance which is very common among Somali Bantu communities. Men and women wear dried local banana leaves around their waists, metal bracelets on their hands, and metal anklets on their feet to

make rhythmic noises. Dancers swing their bodies, particularly the lower parts, while singing traditional songs.

## **Shulay**

This is another type of dance used by Somali Bantus to commemorate dancing competitions between villages. Each village sends its best dancers (usually unmarried men and women) to the ceremony to ensure it wins the competition. Performers use locally made musical instruments.

## **Anyakow**

This is an important traditional dance festival which is common among Somali Bantu communities. This ceremony, which is usually held at night in the forest, is participated in by both men and women. This type of dance recognizes a person in the community, such as someone who is getting married and has requested it for his/her wedding.

## **Comparison of Parental Involvement in Somali and American Schools**

As with other areas of American and Somali cultures, practices and perspectives differ because of dissimilar belief systems, historical reasons, and current procedures. It is important to take this information into consideration and not assume that Somali parents know what is expected in their roles as parents of school children. The following will illuminate some of these assumed behaviors and beliefs on the part of Somali Bantu parents and American educators.

### **American Parents**

- Parents expect to be involved in their children's schooling. They are actively recruited to join the PTA, assist in classroom activities and field trips.
- Parents attend parent-teacher conferences. They ask questions. They seek specific information about their child's work and classroom standing.
- Parents monitor homework.
- Parents assist with assignments.
- Parents give additional financial support for field trips, school items, and educational material.
- Parents support male-female study groups and may encourage male-female friendships.

- Generally, schoolwork takes precedence over other activities, including family time and religious dealings.
- Parents encourage children to do well in school in order to attend college. They may motivate children with monetary or other rewards for high grades.

## **Somali Parents**

- Parents do not expect to participate in school activities.
- Parents only attend school if they have been invited to visit by a headmaster or teacher. This event occurs if their child is not performing as expected.
- Parents do not have routinely scheduled parent-teacher conferences.
- The majority of the parents are not educated and are not able to monitor their child's home work.
- Somali parents provide financial assistance to their children by buying books, giving pocket money for refreshments and paying transportation to and from school.
- Parents encourage early participation in Qur'anic studies. (religious education) This begins at the age of 4 years.
- Parents discourage friendships between male and female students. Dating is prohibited.
- Some parents give rewards of clothing, shoes, and other material items to keep children motivated to learn.

## **Comparison of Expected Classroom Behavior**

Somali children and American children are expected to behave in appropriate ways in the classroom. This includes how to speak with the teacher, interact with classmates, and perform as a student. The two systems of behavior are not similar. It is important to take these differences into consideration when interacting with the Somali Bantu students.

## **American Classroom**

- Teachers foster independent behavior.
- Teachers encourage independent thought.
- Teachers facilitate sharing of ideas among students.
- Teacher praise students who ask questions.
- Teachers urge students to contribute to discussions.
- Teacher promote participation in all activities by children.
- Eye contact between students and teachers is a sign of forthrightness, honesty, and attention.

- Self-esteem is built by applauding students' efforts and work.
- Humiliating students is not an acceptable teaching method.
- Physical punishment by teachers toward underachieving, unruly, or disruptive students is not permitted.

## **Somali Classroom**

- Teachers do not foster independent behavior.
- Teachers do not encourage independent thought.
- Discussion and difference of opinion are not tolerated.
- Memorization of subject matter is required.
- Teachers accept students who ask questions or for clarification.
- Interaction between teachers and students is limited to the function of teaching.
- Female students are not encouraged to participate in classroom activities.
- Eye contact is a sign of attention to subject matter.
- Self-esteem is not a concern in the elementary and middle school classroom.
- Minor humiliation is used in private to motivate unproductive students.
- Physical punishment is an acceptable form of discipline.

## **Web Sites**

The following web sites contain information about Somalia, Somali Bantus, and refugee information.

### ***Somalia***

[www.hiiraan.com](http://www.hiiraan.com)  
<http://www.somaliawatch.com/>  
<http://www.puntlandpost.com/>  
<http://www.somaliuk.com/>  
<http://www.unsomalia.org/>  
<http://www.culturalorientation.net/somali/index.html>  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sotoc.html/>  
<http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Horn of Africa & Select Country=Somalia>

### ***Somalia Bantus***

<http://www.culturalorientation.net.bantu/>  
<http://www.unhcr.org/>  
<http://www.cal.org/>

***Refugee Information***

<http://www.culturalorientation.net/>

<http://www.refugees.org/pub/somaliland.cfm>

<http://www.refugees.org>

<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/>

<http://www.unhcr.org>

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr>

<http://www.hias.org/splash.html>

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24300.pdf>



## **FROM THE VERY BEGINNING**

*Getting Started in the ESL Classroom  
with Pre-literate and Non-Literate Learners*

**By Shirley Brod**



**FROM THE VERY BEGINNING**  
*Getting Started in the ESL Classroom*  
*with Pre-literate and Non-Literate Learners*  
**By Shirley Brod**

**Time:** early 21st century  
**Setting:** a classroom (or church basement, community center, etc.)  
**Characters:** *Teacher:* new or experienced; ESL-trained or volunteer; K-12 or Adult Ed. *Learners:* pre-literates\* or non-literates\*\*  
**Action:** *Teacher:* walks into room, smiles and says "Hello" to class.  
*Learners:* smile or nod heads, may respond "Hello" or "Hello, teacher."

THEN WHAT?.....

Where do you begin if your students can't read or write? How do you present material? How can you tell if students comprehend?

This article will take a look at some of the ways pre-literates\* and non-literates\*\* learn and give some ideas on getting started with a beginning class, using the learning techniques students are already familiar with. As you continue, a good textbook will be a valuable tool, especially if you are a novice teacher, because it can give you an overview of what learners need to know as well as determine the order in which material can be presented.

*\*Pre-literate learners* come from areas where there is no written language, or where learners have not been exposed to it, such as newly-arrived Hmong from Laos or Bantu from Somalia. *\*\*Non-literates* can neither read nor write their own language. These terms used here refer to non-speakers of English. (Other beginning level ESL learners may not be familiar with a roman alphabet and cannot read or write in English but are literate in their own languages. They can usually handle regular beginning level materials and instruction.)

### **Learning Modes**

Pre-literates and non-literates frequently learn by using the following modes: a) by observation, leading to mimicry (learning how to greet elders); b) by listening, leading to repetition (learning to speak one's own language); C) through hands-on activities (planting a seed or repairing an engine); and d) through multi-sensory approaches (recognizing poisonous plants by their color and odor). If we utilize these learning modes in the materials we present in early classes, students will be more comfortable in the learning environment and will learn faster.

Students will need to do lots of listening and repetition before they are ready to produce language independently. You will want to begin each day with oral exercises, probably including review of previous classes, then moving to reading and writing.

Word cards are used here from the first day to give the students an idea of which piece of the language stream they hear is a word. Handling sight words and learning word order from the very beginning increases students' confidence in their ability to learn to read, and to do so in English.

## **Getting started**

The beginning lessons cover a) greetings, giving one's name, recognizing, reading, and writing one's first and last names - something students need constantly and are interested in learning; and numbers, as they also are used constantly (addresses, phone numbers, date of birth, age, etc.) and are easy to learn. As students work with these simple materials, they are also learning simple classroom commands and directions and how to learn in an English classroom. This gives you and your students a basis for more complex materials.

Here are possible lesson plans for the first three days/six hours or so with your beginners. The timing on the activities is approximate. You will need to adjust times to fit the size of your class, the learning experience of your students, and the hours per week you meet. As a rule of thumb with beginners, each activity should be limited to approximately 20 minutes, and the activities mixed to allow some time for learners to move about and learn from each other.

In general, you will find suggestions that students work in pairs to practice early language, and later as they tackle the first worksheets. This allows them to learn from each other and work in a supportive environment.

You may have students in your class who have had some exposure to English. You can give those who finish early *and correctly* re-usable "Teacher's helper" name tags and have them help groups of 1-3 less experienced students.

The materials you need to gather or make ahead of time are listed together at the beginning of the lesson for each hour. Sample worksheets for the first pencil-and-paper activities are included at the end.



# Sample Lesson Plans

## ***Day One: first hour***

Performance objective: Students can respond to greetings and introduce themselves.

Materials:

*Activity 1:* Name tag for each student and for the teacher with first name in red, last name in blue.

### **Activity 1: Greetings (T = teacher; S = student)**

Configuration: Full class

Learning mode: Listen and repeat

Give each student the correct name tag.

T: *Hello.* (Repeat, motioning for class to respond. Do this two or three times until most of the class is responding.)

T: *Hello.* (Do not repeat. Motion for class to respond.)

Ss: Hello.

Walk to the desk of a student who is participating. Say "Hello." Wait (or motion) for student to respond. Then motion for student to walk to another desk and say "Hello", continuing until most of the class has had a chance to "perform" alone.

If the class is large, break it into groups of four or five and have them practice.

### **Activity 2: Introducing oneself, giving first and last names.**

Configuration: Full class, then pairs

Learning mode: Listen and repeat

T: *Hello. My name is (Sarah Jones).* (Point to own name tag)

Ss repeat.

Walk to desk of first student, motioning for him to repeat: *My name is (Rashid Abdullah).* Repeat until student repeats with you, then says the sentence alone. Walk around the class, having each student say the sentence with his or her first and last name aloud in the same way.

If the class is very large, practice with a few students, then let them practice in groups while you work with the rest of the class.

Then have students practice in pairs.

### **Activity 3: Mixer**

Configuration: Full class

Learning mode: Practice

Have students walk around the room, saying "Hello" and introducing themselves to each other for several minutes while you monitor their accuracy.

### **Break**

### **Day One: second hour**

Performance objective: Students will be able to "read" a five-word sentence.

Materials:

1. A set of the following word cards for each student.

(Be aware of capitals, period, and color. Use them again and again to help students become aware of English grammar and sentence structure without all the terminology: black for pronouns, purple for nouns, green for verbs, red and blue for target vocabulary, orange for punctuation - or any color system you prefer, as long as you are consistent.

It helps with classroom management if you clip the cards together in sentences, place a rubber band around each set, or keep card sets in envelopes.)

My	name	is	Mohammad_	Abdullahi	.
(black)	(purple)	(green)	(red)	(blue)	(orange)

2. One set of word cards like the above, using your own first and last names, with cards large enough for students to read when you place the cards in order on the blackboard tray.

### **Activity 1: Word order**

Learning modes: Observe and mimic.  
Hands-on activity (kinesthetic learning)  
Multi-sensory: using color to reinforce word order

Configuration: Full class, then groups, then individuals

Take your large set of word cards and place them in order on the blackboard tray, or mount them on the wall or to a poster board with a glue stick or teacher's putty.

Point to each word as you read: My name is [Sarah Jones]. Repeat this several times as you point.

Give each student his or her own set of word cards. Have students work together in pairs or small groups to try to put their own cards in the same order as your model. They can work on desk or table tops or on the floor.

Circulate to help, pointing to the model as you point to their cards. They may need help getting the cards right side up. If necessary, take a student's cards to the board and match them to the model. Use color matching to help them see the order of their first and last names: your first name is written in red and goes before the name in blue. *Demonstrate, but do not try to explain!!*

When students are successful, have a few take their sets of word cards to the board and make their own sentences, then "read" the result. The class can monitor their progress and help if necessary.

Have students pick up their cards and shuffle them, then repeat the process, "reading" their sentences to each other.

Have students assemble their cards with the clips or rubber bands and return them to you for use the second day.

You may let students take their packets home to practice "reading" for their families. If so, you'll need to have extra materials on the second day to replace packets some students forget to bring back.

## ***Day Two: first hour***

Performance Objectives: counting and using number symbols 0-5

Materials:

*Activity 2:* (optional) two large pictures of people, preferably of different genders

*Activity 4:* Worksheet #1. (Hint: Make extra copies for later review.) If the class is large, it would be helpful to make a transparency of the worksheet and use it with an overhead projector.

### **Activity 1: Chain game: Greetings and introductions**

Learning mode: Review

Configuration: Whole class (If class is large, do this activity in groups of 4 or 5.)

T: Hello. My name is (Sarah Jones).

S1: Hello. My name is (Maryam \_ \_ \_ \_ \_).

S2, S3, etc.: etc.

### **Activity 2: Spiralling, adding new information.**

Learning modes: Observe and mimic.

Listen and repeat.

Configuration: Whole class, then pairs

Draw two stick figures on the board, or hold up one large picture in each hand. Each stick figure or picture becomes a character in the dialogue.

Point to one figure or hold up one large picture and say:

*My name is (John Brown.) What is your name?*

Point to the other figure or hold up the second picture and say:

*My name is (Maryam \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.)*

Repeat several times and have students repeat after you.

Model the first utterance, pointing to the first figure or holding up the first picture. Point to the second figure or hold up the second picture and have students respond. Then reverse, pointing to the first figure and having students in unison give the first utterance while you give the response.

Model the first utterance and have a volunteer give the response. Then reverse roles.

Model the dialog with a student volunteer, using your actual names. Repeat with another student.

Have students practice in pairs, using their own names, while you circulate to help.

### **Activity 3: Counting 0-5**

Learning modes: Listen and repeat.

Observe and mimic.

Hands-on (kinesthetic)

Configuration: Whole class, then pairs

Using your hands, hold up one finger and say "one", adding fingers as you count to five. Repeat several times.

Hold up one finger, say "one", and have students repeat. Continue adding one finger at a time while students repeat after you, counting to five.

Silently hold up fingers, having students count.

Hold up three fingers and motion for students to respond. (Model if they do not understand.) Repeat with different numbers of fingers. Have students hold up numbers of fingers while you respond.

Have students practice in pairs.

#### **Activity 4: Reading number symbols 0-5**

Learning modes: Observe and mimic.

Listen and repeat.

Write (hands-on, tracing - kinesthetic)

Configuration: Whole class, then pairs

Give each student a copy of Worksheet #1. Hold up the worksheet, pointing to each picture and number and having students point and repeat.

Point to the pictures in random order and have students point and repeat.

Write the numbers in order in a line on the board without the pictures. Point to each as you say it and have students repeat. Point to the numbers in order and have students tell you the words.

Point to the numbers in random order and have students give you the words.

Point to a number and have a volunteer name it. Repeat several times with different students.

Erase a number from the line. Have students tell you what it is, then write the number in its place. Repeat with other numbers at random until most students can handle this.

Have students practice in pairs with their worksheets, pointing and saying the words. As they begin tracing the numbers, some students may need help in holding the pencil correctly. You may need to model the missing number activity at the end of the page until students understand what is expected.

## Break

### ***Day Two: second hour***

Performance objective: Learning to distinguish first and last names

Materials:

*Activity 5:*

1. Packets of sentence cards from day one, including teacher's large packet for the blackboard tray;
2. Two additional cards per student, plus large cards for yourself: **first** written in red, **last** written in blue;
3. Worksheet #2, one for each student. Print his or her own first and last names on the first line for tracing and copying.

(Hints: a) Make several photocopies of each worksheet, as students will need varying degrees of additional practice. These can be used later as fillers at the end of a class, as homework, or as class review activities while you work with those students who have been absent or are having problems; b) If the whole class or some members have had some experience with English, you may move to Worksheet #2, where students move to actually printing their names without tracing.)

Activity 8: Worksheets

#### **Activity 5: Arranging word cards in correct sentence order.**

Learning mode: Review

Configuration: Individual

Place the large word cards on the blackboard tray. Read the words, pointing to each.

Give students their packets of cards. Have them work in pairs or small groups to put their sentences in order and "read" them to each other. Move about the room to monitor progress or give help.

#### **Activity 6: Spiralling with new information**

Learning mode: Hands-on (kinesthetic)

Configuration: Individual

Re-order the word cards on the chalk tray, being sure the class watches as you remove your last name, to read:

**My first name is (Sarah).**

Point to the cards as you read them to the students.  
Give students in pairs each their “first” word card and have them copy the sentence using their own names. Monitor progress. If students are having problems with first/last distinction, point to the matching colors in “first” and their first names.

Have volunteers say their new sentences for the class.

Repeat the process to introduce last.

### **Activity 7. Dialog**

Learning mode: Listen and repeat.

Configuration: Whole class and pairs

Using stick figures or pictures as in Activity 1 above, introduce the dialog:

A: What is your first name?

B: My first name is (Sarah).

A: What is your last name?

B: My last name is (Jones).

Have students repeat each sentence after you.

Then take A’s part and have them take B’s. Reverse roles.

Have volunteers take the part of A, saying the dialog with you.

Have a volunteer take part A and say the dialog, giving their own first and last names. Have students practice the dialog in pairs as you monitor, then reverse roles and repeat the activity.

### **Activity 8: Writing first and last names, Worksheet #2.**

Give one worksheet to each student, with their own names printed on the first line. Show them how to trace their names. More experienced students may use Worksheet #2, beginning to draw the letters on their own. Other students may “graduate” to this sheet as their writing improves.

## **Day Three: first hour**

Performance objectives: Practice numbers 1-10

Materials:

Activity 2: Worksheet #3 for each student, plus extras to use for practice and review.

Activity 3: Worksheet #4 for each student, plus extras to use for practice and review.

Concentration: Make a set of cards with the numbers 0 -10. Cut up Worksheets with hands showing 0-10 fingers and make a card with each "hand". You will need to make a set of 20 cards for each group of 2-4 students.

### **Activity 1: Review numbers 0-5, answer "How many?"**

Learning mode: Listen and repeat.  
Observe and mimic.  
Hands-on (kinesthetic)

Configuration: Whole class, then pairs

Using your hands, hold up one finger and say "one", adding fingers as you count to five. Have students repeat.

Hold up three fingers and ask students, "How many?" If there is no response, give the number.

Repeat with random numbers of fingers, asking "How many?" each time until most students can answer easily. Have students hold up fingers and ask you, "How many?"

Have students practice in pairs.

### **Activity 2: Circle the number**

Learning mode: Observe and mimic.  
Configuration: Whole class, then single students or pairs

Draw two sticks on the board. Under them, write 1 2 3 4. Point to the sticks and ask, "How many?" When students respond, circle the 2, saying, "Circle" as you do it.

Repeat several times, using different numbers of sticks. Write four numbers under each and have volunteers come to the board and circle the correct number.

Give each student a copy of Worksheet #3. Have them complete the exercise in pairs.

### **Activity 2: Reading number symbols 0-10**

Learning modes: Observe and mimic.  
Listen and repeat.

Give a copy of Worksheet #4 to each student. Hold up your worksheet, pointing to each picture and number and having students point and repeat.



Point to the pictures in random order and have students point and repeat. Write the numbers in order on the board without the pictures. Point and have students repeat. Point to the numbers in random order and have students repeat.

Point to a number and have a volunteer name it. Repeat several times.

Erase a number. Have students tell you what it is. Write it in the blank. Repeat with other numbers in random order until most students can handle this.

Have students practice in pairs with their worksheets. Circulate to help.

Write large numbers from 0 to 10 at the top of the board. As students finish their worksheets, have them come to the board and dictate numbers to each other.

### **Activity 3: Concentration**

If time remains, play Concentration, a good way to reinforce visual and aural number recognition. Make one set of number cards 1-10, and cut apart one set of pictures of fingers, 1-10, from the worksheets. Place the cards face down in rows on a table top. Students take turns turning two cards over, saying the number aloud. If the picture and the number match, the student keeps them and takes another turn. If they do not match, they are placed face down in their original positions and another student plays. The game is over when all the cards have been paired. The student with the largest number of pairs is the winner.

This game can be used often when time permits as review and reinforcement. You can upgrade the game by creating cards with new material as it is learned.

### **Break**

### **Day Three: second hour**

Performance objectives: Interviews with greetings and  
Responses, giving names  
Filling out the first form

Materials:

*Activity 3:* Table and two chairs, Worksheet #6.

*Activity 3. Dialog*

Learning Modes: *Listen and repeat.*  
*Observe and mimic. Write (hands-on-tracing)*

Configuration: Whole class, then pairs

On the blackboard, draw a table with chairs on each side, a stick figure in each chair. Introduce the following dialog, pointing to each stick figures as you say it:

A: Hello. How are you?

B: Fine, thank you. How are you?

A: I'm fine. My name is Mary Green.

What is your name?

B: My name is \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

Repeat the dialog two or three times, having students repeat each line after you.

Say the first line. Have students repeat.

Do the same with the second line.

Say the first line. Have students say the second line. Help them if necessary. Repeat this several times until most of the class can join in.

Then have the class take A's first line and you take B's first line.

Have volunteers take the part of B, saying the first two lines of the dialog with you.

Have volunteers take parts A and B and say the first two lines.

Add a line at a time, practicing the whole dialog including the new line. Practice as above.

Continue adding lines until students can say the entire dialog.

Then ask a student to come to the front and sit down. Sit down opposite him and practice the dialog. Let the "audience" help as needed.

Have two students take the two chairs and give the dialog for the class.

Have students practice the dialog in pairs as you monitor, then reverse roles and repeat the activity.

#### **Activity 4: Form language**

Configuration: Whole class, then pairs.

Learning mode: Listen and repeat. Write.

Review first and last names. Say, My name is Sam Jones. My first name is Sam. My last name is Jones.

Go to a strong student. Ask, What is your name? When they respond, ask, What is your first name? After their response, ask for their last name. Repeat this with several students.

Have students practice in pairs, each person asking for and giving both first and last names.

Reproduce the first form on Worksheet #6 on the board. Read First name, and write your own first name on the board. Do the same for Last name.

Give students Worksheet #6. Help them write their first and last names in the blanks. If they are having problems, help them refer to their word cards for reinforcement. The three forms ask for the same information but in a different way. Students may need help making this transfer of information.

As students learn more personal information in later lessons (telephone number, date of birth, address, etc.) make forms which include previously learned material plus the new information. Students new to this country need a great deal of practice in filling out forms.

#### **Sample Worksheet #1**

Listen. Point. Say.



0



1



2



**3**



**4**



**5**

*Trace. Copy.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of four sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for tracing and copying practice.

My name is

My name is

M \_ n \_ me is

\_ \_ y na \_ e is

My n \_ me \_ s

# Sample Worksheet #3

Circle.



2 3 4 5



1 3 2 5



5 4 2 3



3 5 4 0



1 2 4 3

Write.

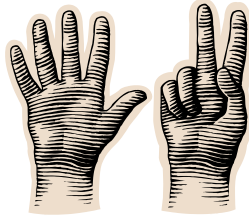
_____	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	_____	<b>5</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	_____	<b>3</b>	_____	_____
<b>0</b>	_____	<b>2</b>	_____	_____	<b>5</b>
<b>0</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Sample Worksheet #4

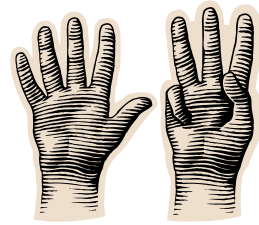
*Listen. Point. Say.*



6



7



8



9



10

*Trace. Copy.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line for tracing.

## Sample Worksheet #5

*Trace. Copy.*

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Write.*

0	1	2	___	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	___	5	6	___	8	9	10
___	1	___	3	4	5	___	7	8	___	10
0	___	2	___	4	___	6	7	___	9	___
0	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___



## Sample Worksheet #6

*Write.*

1.

**XYZ Company**

## Application Form:

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

2.

### Hospital Registration:

**First Name**

***Last Name***

3.

# Social Services Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

## Other Sample Lesson Plans

Total Physical Response (TPR) – Parts of the Body

Applications

Civics by the Calendar

Hands-On English – Homework Ideas for Beginning Students

<b>Topic</b>	Parts of the body
<b>Level</b>	SPL 0 – 2
<b>Activity</b>	Total Physical Response (TPR), listen and do
<b>Objective</b>	Students will be able to identify 6 body parts: head, nose, chin, face, teeth, mouth; and Touch your
<b>Materials</b>	None
<b>Procedure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice your first lesson in front of a mirror! Remember that, during the lesson, you will not be able to explain what you want your students to do. This is a low level class. So practice pantomiming the following. Make your actions explain what you want the students to do: <b>Watch. Listen. Do not speak.</b> <p>One verb or verb phrase constitutes a complete new unit of information, whereas nouns may be introduced in groups of up to three at a time.</p> </li> <li>Deliver your first three imperatives three times pointing as you do it each time. Maintain a consistent tone and speed. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You say, for example: <p>“Touch your head. Touch your hair. Touch your neck.”  “Touch your head. Touch your hair. Touch your neck.”  “Touch your head. Touch your hair. Touch your neck.”</p> </li> <li>You pantomime. Pantomime that you want the students to copy you by pointing as you speak. You may have to run around the first time to show students how to point, but after that they are usually very happy to find that they just have to listen, copy your actions, and not speak.</li> <li>Randomize the imperatives. Instead of saying, <p>“Touch your head. Touch your hair. Touch your neck.”</p> <p>Say, “Touch your nose. Touch your nose.” (deliberate repetition)  “Touch your head. Touch your hair. Touch your neck.”</p> <p>When you break the pattern of predictability, you are asking the students to differentiate among the sounds they are hearing. This is a test and the student responses give the teacher information about student uncertainties. Review and re-teach where uncertainty is apparent.</p> </li> </ol> </li> <li>Individual response at random/evaluation: Check for individual competence/confidence. Start with your strongest student and work your way around the class (but DO NOT say student names). Give each student 4 or 5 imperatives in random order. Leave each student on a “success.” <b>Do not allow an individual student to fail at any stage.</b> Help immediately if necessary when you see a student hesitate by guiding through the required action. Start the next student with the last “success” the class heard.</li> </ol>

## **Parts of the body**

<b>Verbs</b>		<b>Nouns</b>	
Touch your		Hair	Neck
		Eye	Chin
		Mouth	Teeth
		Back	Stomach
	Left	Arm	Thumb
Hold your		Shoulder	Hip
	Right	Leg	Ear
		Wrist	Ankle
Open your		Mouth	Eyes

## **Variation - Clothing**

<b>Verbs</b>		<b>Nouns</b>	
Point to the		Hat	Gloves
		Shirt	Slip
		Shoes	Sandals
		Socks	Shirt
		Jeans	skirt

## **Variation – U.S. Mail**

<b>Verbs</b>		<b>Nouns</b>	
Point to the	Envelope	Letter	Package
	Letter Carrier	Return Address	Mailing Address
	Stamp/Postage	Postmark	Postcard

*Source: Total Physical Response (TPR), A Curriculum for Adults, English Language and Literacy Center, St. Louis, Missouri 63105. The complete document is available through Spring Institute, contact Burna L. Dunn, ELT/TA Project Director, 1610 Emerson Street, Denver, Colorado 80218, (303) 863-0188, or email [elt@springinstitute.org](mailto:elt@springinstitute.org).*

<b>Topic</b>	Applications
<b>Level</b>	Low Level to Multi-Level
<b>Activity</b>	Reading words, linking pictures (or examples) and words
<b>Objective</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will recognize vocabulary by matching pictures/examples and words.</li> <li>2. Students will fill out simple application forms completely and correctly.</li> <li>3. Students will work with in pairs or small groups to negotiate and come to agreement in matching application language with meanings.</li> </ol>
<b>Materials</b>	Picture and word cards, simple personal information and application forms
<b>Procedure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show large pictures of items that relate to personal information, transparencies on an overhead projector, or realia to the class. Have students verbalize the meaning of each item orally. For example, a picture of a phone with a blank space on the front should elicit <i>phone number</i>. If your students can read numbers, 977-3245 should also elicit <i>phone number</i>. (Sources of ideas for pictures or examples: <u>Chalk Talks</u> in the “Basic Facts-Vital Statistics” section of the book and <u>Basic English for Adult Competency</u> do a nice job of illustrating personal information concepts. See attached examples.) The initial list of words might include <i>SS#, address, name, country, zip code, telephone number, city, state</i>.</li> <li>2. Write the word for each item or concept on a the board. Read the words aloud and hold up the pictures (or examples) that correspond. Pass out the pictures. Have students come up to the board to match the large picture with the appropriate word. Gradually add to this list so that key application words such as <i>first name, last name, residence, social security number, date available, felony conviction</i>, etc. are very familiar to the students.</li> <li>3. Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Provide each group with six to ten pairs of picture and word cards. Put the pictures on cards of one color and the words on cards of another color. Have students work together to match the cards. Increase the number of cards or difficulty of vocabulary for more advanced students or as students learn more words. You can give small groups a set of application language picture and word cards to match, even on the first day of class. It gives people a chance to work together and can be used as a diagnostic activity to show what they do and do not know.</li> <li>4. If your students are illiterate, work on the formation of numbers and letters to write the words and numbers they will need for application forms. Have all students practice writing personal information. Start with their own names, add the city and state, then their address and phone number.</li> <li>5. Give students simplified forms which ask for information in a different order, which utilize different formats such as boxes, and which are written in capital letters, italics, or in other scripts. Have them write their own personal information in the appropriate blanks (See attached examples).</li> </ol> <p>Gradually move to more complex forms. Add words they may not know but can begin to guess because of their position or placement on a form (such as <i>residence</i> for <i>address</i>, <i>family name</i> for <i>last name</i>, etc.). The principle is to move from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex.</p>

Source: SCANS Plans Portfolio, Spring Institute, ETL 1997-98 Technical Assistance Project

**Name**

**Address**

**Zip Code**

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**Phone  
Number**

**Social  
Security  
Number**

**Country**

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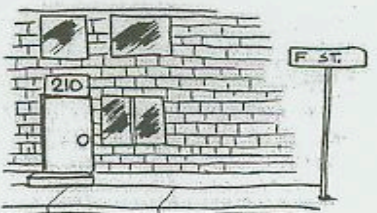
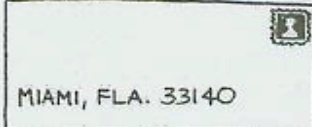
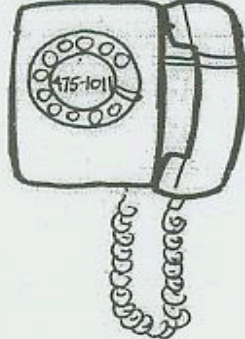





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**Date of  
Birth**

**Marital  
Status**

**Occupation**

## PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

<p>1.</p> 	<p>2.</p> 	<p>3.</p> 
<p>4.</p> 	<p>5.</p> 	<p>6.</p> 
<p>7.</p> 	<p>8.</p> 	<p>9.</p> 

Source: *Basic English for Adult Competency*, Prentice Hall Regents, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_



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First Name

---

Middle Name

---

Last Name

---

Address

---

**City**

*Social Security  
Number*

---

Full Name

First Name

***Middle Name***

*Last Name*

---

Address

Address

City

State

Zip Code

---

Emergency Phone No.

*Age*

---

Telephone No.

Social Security  
Number

---

Name

*Last*

***First***

Middle

---

Address

Address

***City***

State

Zip

---

Social Security No.

---

*Telephone No.*

<b>Topic</b>	Civics by the Calendar
<b>Level</b>	Beginning SPL 1-2
<b>Activity</b>	Variety
<b>Objective</b>	1. Interpret information about community resources. 2. Express a need or opinion about a current issue.
<b>Materials</b>	Clipart cut sheets for major holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve
<b>Procedure</b>	Each holiday has its own target vocabulary and symbols; see the attached list of holidays and their symbols. Consider the learner's home cultures and background when choosing a symbol. Certain American symbols (witch, skulls, etc.) may be offensive to some people.

National holidays (e.g. Independence Day or the Fourth of July)  
 Acknowledged but not Federal holidays (e.g. Halloween)  
 "Special" days typically known in American culture (e.g. April 15)

Target Vocabulary: (e.g., Independence Day or the Fourth of July) fireworks, parade, picnic, independence, revolution, barbecue, declaration (e.g., Halloween) witch, goblin, trick-or-treat, costume, black cat, broom (e.g., April 15) taxes, refund, deadline, IRS, owe, postmark

Brainstorm: Ask learners what they know about the upcoming holiday or event, or ask them to respond to pictures of holiday or event symbols. Write key words that students mention on the board.

Match: Students (Ss) match target vocabulary words with pictures.· Match: Using a worksheet with words and pictures, learners draw lines to link them.·

Focused Listening: Ss look at a worksheet with words or pictures of symbols; e.g., fireworks, parade. Ss listen to sentences; e.g., "The fireworks are beautiful." "There goes the parade." Ss mark the appropriate word.

Listen and Point: While looking at a worksheet which has examples of target vocabulary--e.g., witch, costume, broom, black cat--Ss listen to the statement and then point to the broom, the witch, a costume, etc.

Fill in a Form: Complete an IRS tax form. The exercise may be best for a higher level group, but targets the April 15 "special day". Stand Out, book #4, pp. 147-149

*Source: An EL/Civics State Leadership Project funded through P.L. 105-220 (Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Section 222(a)(2) and 223) by the Colorado Department of Education, Center for At-Risk Education (CARE), Adult Education and Family Literacy, FY2002. Project developed by Spring Institute, Denver, Colorado.*

**CIVICS BY THE  
CALENDAR**

**CLIP ART CUT SHEETS FOR MAJOR HOLIDAYS:  
THANKSGIVING**



turkey



family dinner



football



the Mayflower



cornucopia



harvest



the Pilgrims



pumpkin pie



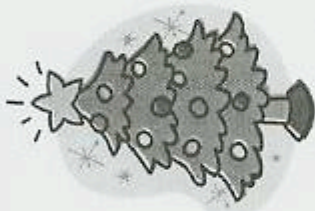
Native Americans

**CIVICS BY THE  
CALENDAR**

**CLIP ART CUT SHEETS FOR MAJOR HOLIDAYS:  
CHRISTMAS**



candy  
cane



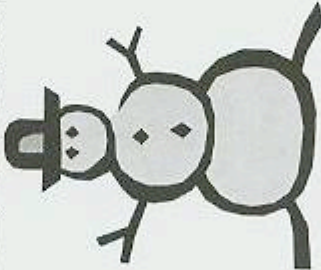
Christmas  
tree



wreath



Christmas cookies



snowman



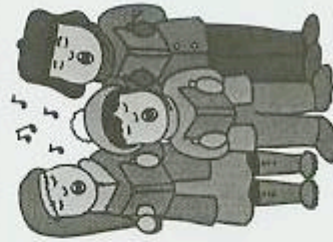
Santa  
Claus



stocking



presents or gifts



carolers



**CIVICS BY THE  
CALENDAR**

**CLIP ART CUT SHEETS FOR MAJOR HOLIDAYS:  
NEW YEAR'S EVE**



champagne



fireworks



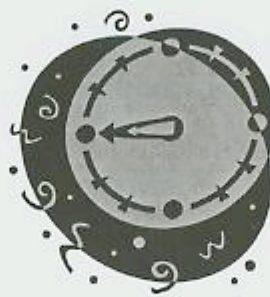
toast



Baby New Year



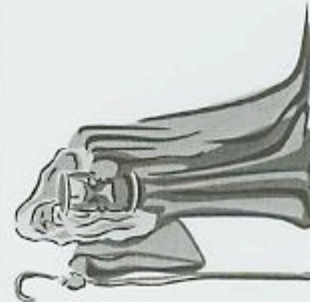
noisemaker



midnight  
countdown



party hats  
&  
balloons



Old Father Time



New Year's  
kiss

## Homework Ideas for Beginning Students

What kind of homework assignments can you give your beginning level students, particularly literacy-level students? Here are some suggestions that provided limited, do-able tasks for them. The ideas are mostly fun, and they should help bring your students in closer contact with the things going on all around them, as well as giving them focused language practice.

You can adapt these ideas to suit your class. Many of the TV ideas would be easy to adapt to a newspaper activity, which you could even do in class. And it would not be hard to make the assignments below more challenging for your intermediate or advanced students by increasing the number of things they can have to look for, for instance.

Write a list of items in your refrigerator.

Write the name of 3 streets that are near the street where you live.

Write the names of 4 TV stations.

Write the names of 2 radio stations (Hint: these names usually have letters and numbers).

There are many different kinds of soda pop, like Coca-Cola. Go to a grocery store and see how many names of soft drinks you can find.

Find out what days and what hours the library is open. Also, tell us how you found out.

Find out what days and what hours the post office is open. Also, tell us how you found out.

Find out 5 American names (first names) and how to spell them.

Find the names of 2 cars you like. Find the name of one car you do not like

Find the name of 2 supermarkets. Which one do you like better?

Find the name of 2 banks. Which one is closest to your home?

Write the name of a TV show you like. Write the name of a TV show you do not like.

Write the names of 10 items in your home.

Ask 3 neighbors (or co-workers) to tell you where they were born.

Find out the names of 3 movies.

Find 2 ads for shoes. How much do they cost?

*Source: Hands-on English, Volume 7, Number 4, November/December 1997 and Volume 11, Number 1, May/June 2001; <http://www.handsonenglish.com>*

## **Additional Resources**

### **On Parenting**

Parents as Educational Partners Curriculum

LEP Parent Involvement Project:  
A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools

Two Videos on Parenting

The ***Parents as Educational Partners Curriculum*** was developed and field-tested during a three-year family English literacy Title VII project funded by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs. The Parents as Educational Partners (PEP) Project increased parent involvement and improved English language skills of language minority parents within school communities.

## COMPONENTS OF THE PEP PROJECT

The PEP Project was developed on the premise that *parent involvement is a process, not an event* (Davis, 1989). *Process* refers to the concept of building parent involvement through ongoing adult ESL education and interactive activities rather than through sporadically scheduled parent meetings or workshops. The PEP Project was designed to take language minority parents from the role of learners to the role of decision makers and advocates in their children's education through the following program components:

- ESL/Bilingual Classes for Parents (using the PEP Curriculum)
- Parent/Child Activities
- Parenting Workshops
- In-services on Parent Involvement for District School Teachers

**ESL/Bilingual Classes for Parents** focused on the content-based PEP Curriculum. The curriculum's school-related content helped parents understand their children's school experiences, as well as the schools' expectations of parents' roles. Participation in the classes also increased parents' communication skills in English, leading to greater school involvement. Participatory teaching techniques provided parents the opportunity to bring relevant educational issues into the ESL classroom for clarification or resolution. In the PEP classroom parents were not told what to do; instead they gained relevant information and explored the impact of their decisions. The PEP classroom, then, became a vehicle for fostering parents' involvement in their children's education.

Children services provided children 4-12 years old with homework assistance, learning activities, and supervised playtime while their parents attended the parent ESL/bilingual classes. The children services contributed to a strong, comprehensive family education program.

**Parent/Child Activities** supported the parents' in their role as educational partners. Parent/child activities were developed and carried out within a family strengths model which recognizes that all families bring positive characteristics to joint learning situations. These activities encouraged families to build on their healthy family traits while being actively engaged in learning activities. Positive family interaction during the learning process was stressed and supported. Parents were prepared in advance to take an instructional role in the parent/child activities.



In addition to parent/child activities, family social nights were held to help build a community of parents. Decision-making and advocacy are accomplished more effectively through a community of parents than through individual efforts. Participation in social nights helped language minority parents feel less socially isolated from the other families in their children's schools.

**Parenting workshops** were designed to provide parents with additional support and information to strengthen their parental roles. The workshop topics were identified and prioritized by the parents and school personnel. Workshop topics included drugs, discipline, gangs, car/home safety, and family counseling.

**In-services on Parent Involvement for District School Teachers** facilitated the involvement of language minority parents by bringing their children's teachers into the process. Teachers attended a three-part in-service on parent involvement, which introduced them to different types of parent involvement activities and provided them with technical assistance as they developed activities supporting the involvement of their students' families.

PEP Project activities were held twice a week for two hours per evening. There were approximately 40 evenings offered each year. The ESL/Bilingual classes were the most frequently held activities offered on a less frequent basis; the parent/child activities were held twice a month and two or three parenting workshops were delivered each year.

Language and cultural differences, combined with school-home communication problems, can distance language minority parents from their children's schools. The PEP project provided the support such parents need to feel comfortable participating in school activities and their children's educational experiences. For these parents, the PEP Project was successful in bringing about change within their families and school communities.

*For more information about the PEP Project model and related training, contact Laura Bercovitz at the Adult Learning Resource Center, 1855 Mt. Prospect Road, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018, or call (847) 803-3535.*

## **LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools**

This guide is a set of materials developed for use in adult education settings such as English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes, community-based organizations, and parent groups for the purpose of helping immigrant parents see themselves as active participants in their children's learning.

These materials are intended to meet the following goals:

- To build on what people already know from their experience as parents and caretakers in their own countries
- To help parents restore their vision of themselves as first and primary teachers (something often lost in the immigration process)
- To create opportunities for parents to explore similarities and differences between their new and native countries and to build bridges to link the two experiences
- To encourage parents to define and keep values and traditions which are meaningful parts of their culture

This guide is divided into the following six modules: Bridging Cultures; Schools Are Part of the Culture; Parents and Teachers; Discipline; Life at School; and Families. A User's Guide is also included.

*For more information, contact the author/creator: Diane Peacoraro, Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, 1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, MN 55113-4266. Tel: 651-582-8002, <http://cfl.state.mn.us>.*

## **Amharic, Arabic, English, Hmong, Nuer, Oromo, Russian, Somali, and Spanish**

Two videos available in 9 languages

### **You Can Talk to Your Child's School**

This educational video is designed for schools, teachers, community groups, etc., as a tool for encouraging refugee and immigrant parents to communicate with their children's school. The video focuses on the willingness of school personnel to meet with parents to discuss their child's education needs. The video includes sample conversations between parents and school staff.

*13 minutes, color VHS with subtitles, \$2.00 each*

Amharic	Stock No. 4-21
Arabic	Stock No. 4-4
English	Stock No. 4-1
Hmong	Stock No. 4-2
Nuer	Stock No. 4-12
Oromo	Stock No. 4-10
Russian	Stock No. 4-6
Somali	Stock No. 4-7
Spanish	Stock No. 4-3

### **You Can Help Your Child in School**

This instructional video is designed for schools, teachers, community groups, etc., as a tool for use in communicating to refugee and immigrant parents. The video serves as a brief overview of the many facets of school which might be new or different for refugee and immigrant parents, including suggestions for what parents might do at home to support school learning.

*9 minutes, color VHS with subtitles, \$2.00 each*

Amharic	Stock No. 4-22
Arabic	Stock No. 4-31
English	Stock No. 4-8
Hmong	Stock No. 4-9
Nuer	Stock No. 4-28
Oromo	Stock No. 4-37
Russian	Stock No. 4-13
Somali	Stock No. 4-14
Spanish	Stock No. 4-11

Order from: Minnesota's Bookstore  
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St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 297-3000  
1-800-657-3757 (toll free)  
(651) 215-5733 (fax)  
(651) 282-5077 or 800-657-3706 (TTY)

## **Assessing Pre-Literate and Non-Literate Learners**



## Designing Effective Assessment Activities

Evaluation of the performance objectives should be "criterion-referenced", i.e. learners are evaluated on whether or not they can use language to perform the specified task within the conditions and criteria established by the objective.

Students are evaluated on their ability to use the language and lifeskill to complete a task in a novel situation, without assistance from the teacher or classmates. Good evaluation activities should:

- \* simulate real life tasks
- \* measure what has actually been taught and learned
- \* be practical in terms of administration time and necessary resources
- \* be reliable; someone else rating the learner should make the same decision as to the success/failure learner's performance, and
- \* be acceptable to learners as a valid activity.

In addition, the type of evaluation activity needs to match the language skill taught. The reading and writing development objectives and life skills objectives that require written language production can be evaluated individually with paper and pencil tasks (e.g. answering comprehension questions, writing essays, completing forms, writing checks or taking messages).

Tasks which require oral communication (i.e. oral life skills objectives) must be evaluated orally. However, individual assessment may not always be feasible given time constraints. Pair, small group and even whole group activities can sometimes be preferable in terms of usefulness as well as practicality.

## Assessing Lifeskill Performance Objectives

Performance objectives provide the context within which students learn, practice, and are evaluated using language. Performance objectives:

- \* identify the task to be accomplished
- \* specify the conditions of the performance situation
- \* describe the language needed to perform the objective, and
- \* provide the criteria by which to judge success

Students should be evaluated on their ability to use the language and structures taught while completing the tasks stated in the performance objectives. The following chart describes how language is evaluated through performance objectives. Using this methodology along with the level descriptions helps the teacher to determine whether a student is making gains in his/her language performance.

#### Performance Objectives

COMPONENT PARTS CONDITION	DEFINITION give context required	EXAMPLE given a diagram of a supermarket and shelves
PERFORMANCE	name the action to be demonstrated	ask and answer questions
CRITERIA	describe the requirement for success	about the location of five items
LANGUAGE	language needed to complete the objective	vocabulary: food  structures: simple present tense, wh-questions,  preposition of location

#### EVALUATION TOOLS CHART

This tools chart provides suggested activities for evaluating individual learner achievement of oral performance objectives. All of the activities are teaching activities as well as/and should not be used for evaluation until learners are familiar with the technique. Most of the activities can be adapted for use at any level and with multi-level classes. These techniques are particularly

effective in large classes where evaluation of individual achievement is challenging.

The tools are listed in the first column of the tools chart. Samples of the linked tools can be found in the learner needs assessment appendices or the techniques/or plans appendices. The technique column describes the technique. The logistics column describes how to set up the activity as an evaluation activity. The example column provides suggestions on appropriate lifeskills contexts.

LIFESKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES CHART			
TOOL	TECHNIQUE	LOGISTICS	EXAMPLES
<b>ROLE PLAY</b>	In an unrehearsed situation, learners take roles and perform them using practiced language.	<p>Several learners may be given roles in the situation if all roles have been practiced. Students not involved in the role play can complete a checklist analyzing their classmates' performances. Students can generate the checklist themselves.</p> <p>Several pairs can perform simultaneously. Teacher circulates, observes, and evaluates individual learners.</p>	<p>telephone conversations</p> <p>ask/answer questions about a housing ad</p> <p>job interview</p> <p>small talk</p>

<b>SIMULATION</b>	A role play in which the classroom set-up replicates a specific location.	See role play.	grocery store aisles  lost and found  post office
<b>INFORMATION GAP</b>	Each learner is given different information and must communicate with others to get all necessary information in order to complete a task.	Teacher observes individual pairs while the whole group moves through the activity. Students may be seated back to back or with a manila folder placed between them so that they can not see each others information.	maps  schedules  floor plans (house, store)
<b>LINE DIALOGUE</b>	Two lines face each other. In one line, each person stays stationary with a cue card and asks an appropriate question. In the other line, each person responds and then moves on.	Teacher stands at one end of the lineup and observes individual pairs while the whole group moves through the activity. One line could also be seated while second line rotates, eg. telephones.	prices  health/housing problems  returning merchandise  personal ID
<b>LEARNER TO LEARNER INTERVIEWS</b>	Learners ask each other questions necessary to fill out	Many interviews can happen simultaneously	personal identification



	grid, or questionnaire. Appropriate when students have practiced both asking and answering questions.	teacher observes different pairs. Teacher may take one of the roles and circulate along with the students.	occupations  likes/dislikes  opinions
<b>CONTACT ASSIGNMENT</b>	Learners are given an assignment to accomplish outside of classroom/school environment. Learners must show proof of accomplishment.	Activity needs to be carefully structured so that it is clear who has/has not accomplished the task.	leave a message  buy a fare card/token  call a recorded message to get information  obtain a library card
<b>DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE</b>	Learners perform tasks according to directions. Tasks are not context-dependent. Total Physical Response (TPR) tests receptive skills.	Learners may be organized into small groups or teams with one person performing at a time. In practice rounds, team members act as coaches. In final rounds, no assistance is allowed.	follow instructions from doctor/supervisor  produce correct change  take a telephone message
<b>APPROPRIATE RESPONSE</b>	Given short situations or social formulae, learners produce appropriate responses.	The same situations may be given to several learners and each must produce	You are leaving class early. What do you say?  Your co-worker looks sick. What do you say?

		response. All learners may be asked to stand and once they have given an appropriate response, they may sit down.	
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