

Class Planning and Teaching Tips

- Focus on a few specific sentence patterns and a variety of vocab which can be substituted into them.
- Start with affirmative declarations and move to questions and negatives.
- 1-3 sentence patterns and 5-20 vocab words (depending on the students' level) should suffice for an hour class. Between introducing the pattern and vocab, running a game, and then reviewing, 10-15 minutes per game is usually good, though really run any activity just as long as it is still entertaining. Thus, choose 4-6 games for an hour class, even if 1 ends up being good enough.
- Be careful: many textbooks are arranged backwards; they often put dialogues first and sentence patterns and vocab afterwards. Teach the other way: introduce patterns/vocab and read dialogues after the students have been properly prepared.
- Don't let students just say yes, no, or even just single words. Make them speak in full sentences. This is especially important when exciting games make them easily distracted.
- Alternate between letting kids recite in groups and speaking as an individual. Very often, it may appear that the whole class can say a pattern, but not a single individual can say it alone.
- If you don't have relevant flashcards, have the kids help you make them.
- Give the students as much responsibility as possible. Don't do or write anything that the students can do themselves. In the best classes, you can just sit in the back of the class and delegate responsibilities.
- In the beginning, you will usually have to ask the questions which students answer, but try to get to a point where you can just choose students who ask other students the relevant questions.
- Encourage the students to help one another. Let them tell each other the answers, to a degree, when needed. They listen to each other more than us.
- One theory of language learning says students should proceed from listening to speaking to reading to writing. In practice, this means try to have your initial activities focus on listening/speaking and move to reading/writing the same patterns/vocab by the end of class.

- However, boarded sentences also make good visual cues. So move from letting students read patterns off the board, to saying them without visual cues. Reading is not remembering.

- Just as well, it's also good to put any necessary bookwork in the middle of a class. Let the students know that you can play more games after the boring bookwork is completed.