

Lesson Planning

Tutors are expected to prepare 2 hour lessons. There are several keys to successful ESL lessons. These include

Consistent Structure — Students appreciate consistency. When they know more or less what to expect, they can relax and concentrate on learning. This consistency also helps students who are only able to attend sporadically to settle into the class. And of course, it makes planning easier. In addition, a consistent structure will ensure that you complete the learning cycle, moving from pre-teaching to presentation to practice to application.

Variety – Students learn best when they are offered a variety of activities to reinforce new material. Not only does this make lessons lively and interesting, but it also ensures that different learning styles are accommodated and that students have several opportunities to practice new material in different ways and contexts.

Cover all 4 Language Skills—Students need opportunities to practice Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in each lesson. While one or another skill may be the primary focus of your teaching, it is important to reinforce that skill with each of the others. For example, beginners may not be ready to work on extended reading or writing, but they can work on filling out forms, reading signs, etc. You can use flash cards when you introduce new vocabulary so that they are exposed to the written form of key words, even if you are not going to be doing much reading.

Practice, practice, practice—When you introduce new material and students repeat after you, it is easy to assume they have “learned” it. It is easy to forget that this is just the very first step. Students need lots of opportunities to practice, with ever decreasing levels of teacher support, before they will be ready to use what they have learned in their everyday lives. Make sure to provide many opportunities to review what you have covered in previous lessons. For example, if you introduced the structure, “I am going to _____,” in one lesson, then in the following lesson, you might use that construction in your dictation and also as part of the wrap up activity by asking, “What are you going to do this week?”

Connect to Everyday Life—Students learn best when what they learn is meaningful and useful to them. Many students will need you to help them figure out how to practice what they have learned. Make it a habit to give concrete examples of where and how students can use what they have learned in their everyday lives, for example through role play or problem solving. You might practice a dialog with a doctor. Give them small concrete assignments, for example, to listen for a particular word or phrase and report back on where they heard it, to ask three people something, etc.

Have Something up Your Sleeve—Sometimes an activity that you have planned will go much more quickly than you anticipated. Nothing is more painful as a teacher than to run out of material in the middle of the class. It is useful, therefore, to plan for a little more than you think you will cover, or to have an extra activity or two planned in case you need them.

Sample Lesson Planning Outline

PARTS OF LESSON	TIME	PURPOSE	SAMPLE ACTIVITIES
1 Warm Up Activity	10 min	Bring the class together and get people ready to learn, accommodate latecomers. May also be used to introduce topic.	“How was your week”, Calendar, Songs, Games, Stretching, Group introductions, Stand up, TPR
2 Review Material from Previous Lesson	15 min	Review material you have introduced previously. The aim is to get students to use what they have learned, not for you to teach it, though occasionally that might be necessary.	Guided conversation, dialogue/ role play, review games, etc.
3 Introduce and Practice New Material	30 min	Provide students with exposure to new vocabulary and structures and an opportunity to successfully practice using them	
• Pre teaching Activity		10 min —Set up the situation for learning, provide comprehensible input and context, provide motivation	Pictures, video clips, conversation, realia
• Work on New Material		10 min— Introduce new material, model new learning and check understanding	Experience, reading, role play, dialog etc.
• Structured Practice		5 min— Give students a structured opportunity to practice the material which has been introduced	Pair work, gaps and grids, writing, worksheets, practice dialogs
• Application		5 min— Give students an opportunity to reflect on HOW they will use what they have learned, to ask questions and to evaluate the session	Conversation, games, assignments
4 BREAK	15 min	Refresh students, provide space for new learning to settle	
5 Dialog Journals	15 min	Provide opportunity to practice successfully reading and writing in English. This is also an excellent time for the tutor to record observations about the class or make plans for future lessons.	Dialog Journals
6 Listening, Speaking and Reading Skills: Review	25 min	Provide students with an opportunity to practice their listening and speaking skills, work on pronunciation, review grammar structure and vocabulary introduced previously and/or to work on reading.	Dictation, , TPR, Simon Says games, Tapes and jazz chants, True stories, etc.
7 Wrap up Activity	5 min	End by helping students to bridge the lesson and their everyday lives with a final activity that reminds students about what they learned in the main lesson, suggests appropriate practice (homework) and finishes the class on a lively note.	Round robin, quick review