

Self-introduction Lesson Plan for ESL Students

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Teachers who have recently arrived and are employed in the public school system quite often find that they're expected to prepare a lesson plan that introduces them -- and their native country -- to their new students. Given the added pressures of jet lag, culture shock, and the language barrier, this may seem intimidating! It doesn't have to be. Below, I've put together a simple lesson plan that I've used successfully with my students.

Information to Share

In addition to giving students some information about you, the self-introductory lesson provides an excellent opportunity to teach (or review) language functions like greetings or the use of state verbs with adjectives. I use my self-introductory lesson as an opportunity to teach/review "Hello. My name is (X). Nice to meet you." to my new students. Having supplies and material such as a world map, photographs or pictures of your country, your country's flag, stamps, stickers, and origami paper or small sheets of paper allows you to present the information in a clear, creative manner.

Start off the lesson with a friendly greeting (good-morning or good-afternoon depending on the day) and then introduce yourself. I say "My name is Stefan." I clap out the two syllables in my first name. (The students enjoy this and have a chuckle over it.) I circulate around the classroom introducing myself to several students. I return to the front of the class and introduce my country. I tell my students, "I am from Canada." I clap out the three syllables in Ca-na-da. I then say "This is (students' country)." I talk about Canada, show them the Canadian flag, and photographs and pictures of Canada's landscapes.

Drill Activity

I model the target language with the classroom teacher (C.T.):

- Stefan: Hello.
- C.T: Hello.
- Stefan: My name is Stefan. What's your name?
- C.T.: My name is [classroom teacher's name].
- Stefan: Nice to meet you.
- C.T.: Nice to meet you too.

After the interchange is completed, we shake hands. We model the target language several times for the students.

I then divide the class into two equal groups, an A and B group. I have them say "My name is A", if they are in the A group, and "My name is B" if they are in the B group. We practice the dialogue. We alternate the dialogue between the two groups. We then practice the dialogue in pairs. I circulate around the room helping the two groups.

Testing of the Target Language with a Practical Practice

I hand out sheets of origami paper or small sheets of paper to the students. I draw a rectangle on the blackboard with four squares. I demonstrate and tell the students to fold their sheet of origami paper in half and then to fold it again in half. I point to the rectangle with four squares on the board and tell them that their sheet of origami paper should look like this.

I draw a caricature of myself in each square. I usually draw myself with a very, very long nose and then print my name, Stephan, under my picture. The students get a laugh out of my picture, too. I have the students draw a quick self-portrait in each square and

print their names under their pictures. If the students haven't learned to print their names in the Roman alphabet, they can write it in their native language or leave it out.

With the classroom teacher, I demonstrate playing a hand gesture game called Paper, Rock and Scissors to see who will go first in doing the self-introduction. (If you're not familiar with this game, students choose one of three hand gestures and the superiority of the gesture -- rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper, and paper beats rock -- determines who the winner is.) The student who loses has to give up one of his/her business cards to the winner and begin the self-introduction. The students with the most business cards win. The winners receive a stamp. I have the students first play with their neighbours before getting out of their seats and circulating around the room playing the business card game. They enjoy the opportunity to circulate amongst their classmates.

For Elementary Students

For younger students (such as elementary school children), I usually sit them in a circle. I point to myself and say my name "My name is Stefan." We then go around the circle with each child introducing himself/herself. I have a ball going around as each child does the self-introduction. I go around the circle helping and encouraging the children along.

For Advanced Students

For advanced students, I also play a verbal quiz game. I make up questions based on my introduction. I divide the class into two equal teams. I have a member of each team play Paper, Rock and Scissors to determine which team goes first. The team has about 10 seconds to pick an answer. If the team fails to answer correctly, they lose their turn. The other team gets to answer the questions.

Some questions you might use include:

- [Teacher's name] is from...?
 - a) Canada
 - b) Japan
 - c) Australia
 - d) The USA
- [Classroom Teacher's name] is from...?
 - a) China
 - b) Canada
 - c) South Korea
 - d) Japan
- What are the colours of the Canadian flag?
 - a) red, white, and blue
 - b) red and white
 - c) blue and white
 - d) red, blue and green
- The symbol on the Canadian flag is...?
 - a) a sun
 - b) a moon
 - c) a maple leaf
 - d) a star

I hope this lesson plan sparks ideas for preparing your own self-introductory lesson. Good luck.