

Bronx Zoo Lesson Plan for Adult ESL Students

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The lesson plan focuses on familiarizing beginning adult ESOL students in New York City with the Bronx Zoo for a class trip to the zoo the following day. It can be adapted for different levels of ESL and ages easily. It is intended for a three hour class.

Introduction

This is a lesson plan for beginning level adult ESL students in New York City. It can be easily adapted to places outside of New York City either by using a local zoo or by not having a trip to the zoo and using the Bronx Zoo's online resources. Because of the varying difficulty of language in discussing animals and zoos, this lesson can be adapted to more difficult levels by having longer and more difficult text and questions. Different age groups can also benefit from these activities. Children may appreciate being able to draw their own pictures of animals and then presenting their pictures and their animal information to the group.

Lesson Goals

This lesson will familiarize the students with the exhibits and layout of the Bronx Zoo. Students will practice conversation skills using real and adapted resources from www.bronxzoo.com.

Materials

For Each Student:

- A Bronx Zoo map
- A description of a zoo exhibit

For the Teacher<:

- Chart paper and markers
- Tape

Advance Preparation

- Download maps from the Bronx Zoo website.
- Learn about different animal that are at the zoo.
- Copy the descriptions of different zoo exhibits from the zoo's website. Each description should have pictures downloaded from the zoo's website on it to contextualize the message. Adapt the descriptions so they can be understood by beginners. Write questions for the students to answer from reading the descriptions.
- Determine the groups for the jigsaw activity in order to have a good mix of English ability in each group.
- Have an idea of the logistics of the trip (what train to take, how long the train ride will take, whether or not you want the students to bring guests, et cetera) to facilitate class discussion.

Introduction (15 Minutes)

- Ask the students what they remember about yesterday's lesson on zoo animals.
- Continue the discussion by asking what are their favorite and least favorite animals, what animals they think are scary, et cetera.

First Half of Jigsaw Activity (15 Minutes)

- Give each student a description of one of four different exhibits at the zoo: Jungle World, World of Reptiles, Congo Gorilla Forest, and the African Plains.
- Explain to the students that there are four different exhibits and each student will read and answer questions about one exhibit. Later, each student will tell the students in his/her group about his/her exhibit.
- Explain to students that they need to read about their exhibit to answer the questions.
- Some students will finish early. Instruct these students to help other students who have the same exhibit and are not finished.

Second Half of Cooperative Learning Jigsaw Activity (20 Minutes)

- Using a predetermined grouping system, have the students form groups of four so that each group has four different exhibits. One system is to draw stars of different colors on the back of the exhibit descriptions and have all the green stars in one group, blue in another, and so on.
- Have the students tell their groups about their exhibits. Explain that they are teaching the other students in their group who read about different exhibits.
- The jigsaw method works well because students can learn about many different exhibits from each other. Reading and answering questions about every exhibit is just not as stimulating and does not develop listening and speaking skills.

Whole Class Discussion (15 Minutes)

- Ask the students what they have learned about each exhibit.
- Write the name of each exhibit and a brief description on chart paper.
- Post this in the classroom.

Pairwork (15 Minutes)

- Pass out one zoo map to each pair.
- Ask the students to find the Jungle World, African Plains, World of Reptiles, and Congo Gorilla Forest on the map.
- Encourage the students to look over the map to find places that might interest them.

Share (5 Minutes)

- Review with the whole class to confirm that everyone has found the four exhibits.

Pairwork and Whole Class Share (Thirty Minutes)

- Explain to the students that they will need to find how to get to one location from another in the next activity.
- Model sentences on the board:
 - Walk past _____.
 - Turn right. Turn left.
 - Go straight.
 - Look for _____.

- Have the students write the directions.
- Write the beginning and ending location points on the board.
- When a pair says they have found a way, check it over and discuss it with the class.
- Be sure to explain to the students that there are many ways to get to the same place. There is more than one correct answer.

Whole Class Discussion (15 Minutes)

- Ask the students how they think we should get to the zoo.
- Discuss which train they will take, how long the trip on the train will be, when they will leave and when they should come back. Now is a good time to review class procedures for students getting lost (very important if minors are involved) and any other questions the students might have.
- Write these questions on the board: Which train will we take to the zoo? How long will the train ride be? When will we leave? When will we come back? May our friends and family come to the zoo with us? Where should we go if we get lost? Et cetera.

Pairwork (20 Minutes)

- Instruct the students to write the answers to the questions on the board in pairs.
- Ask students with correctly written answers to write their answers on the board.
- Instruct the students to check their work with what is on the board.
- This functions both to practice the future simple and to review information about the next day's trip.
- When each pair has finished writing and checking their answers, they should ask and answer the questions out loud with each other.

Games (Final 15-20 minutes)

- Reinforce vocabulary learned by having the students play charades or pictionary utilizing the zoo animal and exhibit names.
- Can be done in groups or as a whole class depending on the size of the class and space available.

Extensions

- Take pictures at the zoo the next day. Later, use the pictures as flashcards and ask the students to name the people, animals, and objects in the pictures. Also ask about the actions.
- Have the students do individual studies on their favorite animal at the zoo.
- Have the students research the history and development of the Bronx Zoo.
- Show the scene from the movie Terminator that is set in the World of Reptiles.
- Post pictures from the zoo on a class website.