

ROUTINES FOR EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

All students need multiple opportunities to practice English in the classroom, but providing opportunities to practice is especially important for beginner-level students who need to grow their confidence with the language. Incorporating a few simple, interactive activities into your daily lessons can help your beginner-level students to learn and use essential basic language structures and vocabulary.

DISCUSSING DAYS AND DATES WITH A DAILY CALENDAR ACTIVITY

Understanding and communicating information related to dates and days of the week are important basic language skills. A classroom calendar can be used to teach these concepts as well as provide an opportunity for students to interact with the information at the beginning of each school day or class meeting.

Educational supply stores often sell calendars, or you can make one yourself. For information about materials to create your own calendar, see [Using a Daily Routine for Language Practice](#) from the September 2016 Teacher’s Corner. Additionally, posters that show the months of the year and days of the week can help students interact with and remember this information. Below are ideas for how to utilize the calendar and accompanying posters.

Concept/Vocabulary	Items Used	Actions
Months of the year	Poster listing months of the year, calendar, song/chant	Teacher or student leader points to the months as students chant the names. (Search YouTube for many songs or chants that can be adapted for any age.)
Days of the week	Poster listing days of the week, calendar, song/chant	Teacher or student leader points to the days as students chant the names.
Discussing the date and days of the week	Calendar, sentence frames: The date is [month] [day], [year]. Today is [day of the week]. Yesterday was [day of the week]. Tomorrow will be [day of the week].	Teacher or student leader adds the number for the current date to the calendar grid. Teacher or student leader can call on students to complete the sentence frames using the calendar. Then, class can repeat the sentences together to practice the structures.

Discussing important events or holidays	Calendar, sentence frame: [Event/holiday] will be on [day of the week], [month] [day], [year].	As important events or holidays approach, they can be noted on the calendar, and a sentence frame can be added to tell when the event will occur. The teacher or student leader can include this frame in the daily recitation leading up to the event.
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At the beginning of the course, the teacher can lead the routine activities around dates and calendars in order to model the procedures for students. Once the class becomes more comfortable with the routines, a student leader can be designated to lead the daily calendar routine each day. One easy way to choose a student leader is to display a list of students' names with a moveable clip, such as a paper clip or clothespin, which can be easily moved down the list to designate the daily leader. Having students lead requires some practice, but once they become comfortable, learners will feel more confident using English to discuss the concepts they are learning.

PRACTICING GREETINGS, GOODBYES, AND BASIC QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES WITH A DAILY MINGLE

A daily mingle activity is a great way to let beginners practice using greetings, closings, and basic vocabulary. Once students understand the basic procedure for the mingle, you can easily adapt the content to what you want learners to practice. Depending on your students, you may have them practice the same greeting or concept for one or two weeks at a time. Then, you can add more content or change the content to newer material.

Time: About 10 minutes at the beginning or end of class (including teacher modeling and the mingle itself)

Goals: To provide students interactive practice with greetings, closings, basic vocabulary, and questions/answers. To give students a chance to practice speaking and listening.

Materials: Sentence frames or a list of vocabulary words (these can be displayed on the board), music (optional)

Preparation: Decide what greetings, vocabulary, and questions and responses you would like students to practice. If helpful, you can create a calendar with the language structures you would like students to practice. It is recommended that the mingle also be used to practice vocabulary that students are

learning. For example, if teaching the names of fruits and vegetables, you can create a question such as “What are your three favorite vegetables or fruits?” and students can use the new vocabulary to respond.

Procedure:

1. Begin by explaining to students that the purpose of the daily mingle is to practice ways to say hello and goodbye and to ask and answer questions in English. Tell students that you will write the targeted language structures on the board and model what to say before each mingle.
2. For demonstration purposes, write the following on the board:
 - Greetings: *Hello* and *Hi*
 - Question and response: *How are you? –I am fine.*
3. Explain that you will play music and students should walk around until the music stops. When it stops, they should find a partner to practice the greetings with. Choose a student to model the greetings and question and response with you.
4. Once students understand how to interact with a partner, ask two additional students to come up and join you. Play (or mimic) music to show how students should move around and find a new partner each time the music stops.
5. Allow time for any questions from your students. Then, practice the procedure with the whole class by having everyone get out of their seats and move around. Play music and stop it periodically so that students can mingle with several different classmates to practice the language structures. Provide guidance or corrections as needed.
6. Once students are familiar with the procedures for the daily mingle, you can change the content based on what you would like the class to practice. You can also use a mingle as a closing activity to give students a chance to review specific information from a lesson or to practice saying goodbye, etc. Below are some ideas for content to practice during the daily mingle.

Topic/Concept	Example Vocabulary	Example Questions	Example Responses
Greetings	<i>Hello, hi, hey, good morning, good afternoon, good evening, etc.</i>	How are you? How are things? How's it going?	I am fine/I am doing well. Things are good/okay. It's going well/fine.
Closings	<i>Goodbye, bye, see you later, take care, talk to you soon, see you on [day], etc.</i>	N/A	N/A

Talking about oneself	Birthdays, ages, nationalities, languages, other personal attributes, etc.	When is your birthday? How old are you? Where are you from? What language(s) do you speak?	My birthday is _____. I am ___ years old. I am from _____. I speak _____.
Talking about your family	Family members such as mom/mother, dad/father, brothers, sisters, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, cousin, etc.	How many people are in your family? Do you have any brothers or sisters? How old is your _____? What is your _____'s name?	My family has _____ people. I have ___ brothers and ___ sisters. My _____ is ___ years old. My _____'s name is _____.
Likes/dislikes or favorites	Foods, colors, animals, sports, activities, movies, TV shows, music, etc.	Do you like _____? Do you like to _____? What/Who is your favorite _____?	Yes, I like _____. No, I do not like _____. Yes, I like to _____. No, I do not like to _____. My favorite _____ is _____.

Using structured daily activities such as the two presented here can help beginner-level students feel successful using English. Because the activities are familiar and highly predictable, they help beginners relax and be more willing to take risks with the language to practice what they are learning. Additionally, as learners progress over time, you can make these activities more complex to help support their growing English skills.