

# Family Resource Night

For more resources: [www.icwelcome.org](http://www.icwelcome.org)

## **Goal of the program:**

To help newcomer families in three core areas: 1. Supporting academic success for students, 2. Conversational English for parents, and 3. Awareness of community resources for both; to partner with local schools and help EL students have additional academic resources outside of the regular school hours; to give community resource providers a key point of contact in order for them to share their services and resources with immigrant and refugee families.

## **Why is this a need:**

Many immigrant parents would like to improve their English proficiency. However, many cultures are unwilling to seek childcare and leave their children with another caregiver in order for the parent to go to ESL classes. Likewise, many immigrant and refugee students have limited or interrupted formal education and need extra academic help outside of normal school hours in order to catch up academically on missed content and foundational core content areas. Family Resource Nights allow the whole family to come together to a program in which the parents receive experience with conversational English and the students receive homework help, as well as extra learning related to literacy and math facts. Part of Family Resource Nights are also providing awareness of various school and community resources.

## **Basics to launch a Family Resource Night:**

- 4-7 volunteers (more can be used)
- Basic conversational English resources (see sample lessons)
- "Micro-library" with books to help with literacy
- Flash cards for math facts
- Partnership with local school system and community resource and service providers

## **Program Summary:**

A Family Resource Night is usually held 1 evening per week for 1.5 – 2 hours. It can be done with as few as 2-3 immigrant families to as many as 10-12 immigrant families. We have found that its best to create multiple nights or help another site launch a program once 12 families are reached.

Depending on the capacity of volunteers, there usually needs to be a program coordinator, 1-2 volunteers to run the conversational English component for the parents (more can be used if you use a conversation café model [usually a ratio of 1 volunteer to 1-2 parents works best in the café model, whereas the teaching model can have 1 volunteer for the whole parent group) and 2-3 volunteers for the students (depending on the number and grade level breakdown, an ideal ratio is 1 volunteer per 2-5 students).

If you do not already have connections with immigrant and/or refugee families in your community, a great place to start is to connect with the ELL (English Language Learner) Coordinator or similar position in your local school system. Many times, the local school system is grateful to partner with a Family Resource Night and can help invite newcomer families that may benefit from such a program. Local school systems also have been known to help with curriculum development for the students and/or have educators and administrators who serve as volunteers in such a program.

While not necessary, many Family Resource Nights start with a shared meal where everyone eats together. After the meal, parents and students go to separate spaces. The parents receive conversational English experience. These usually start with a simple curriculum (see sample lessons provided). Over time, as parents become engaged, rather than simply participating, they are empowered to take the conversational English classes in the direction they most desire (sometimes this means helping with English related to their employment or job interviews or ordering in restaurants or going to the doctor, etc). We have found that the more parents can be empowered to shape the conversational English program, the more beneficial it is to them and the more engaged they are. If no one is able to create and implement basic conversational English lessons, a conversational café can be done during this time. Within a conversational café model, small groups of 1 native English speaker with 1-2 parents can form and talk through basic prompts (how was your week, what is your favorite meal, what is an activity you enjoy doing, etc).

While parents are receiving conversational English, students are receiving homework help. Many times, students can be divided by grade level (all elementary students at one table, all junior high at another, and high schoolers at another) or by subject area (all math at one table, all language arts at another, etc). If students do not need help with homework, basic literary and math fact work can be done. We have found that having a shelf or shelves of books at various reading levels is helpful. Many Family Resource Night sites develop these “micro-libraries” by asking individuals in the community or the schools to donate books. It is also necessary to buy or create a set of flash cards with basic math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division). The largest help for many newcomer students is having extra time outside of school to work on both literacy and math – so when homework is finished, working individually or in groups in these two core content areas is crucial.

The final part of a Family Resource Night program is bringing the full family back together. One option for this time is to model the homework help and other instructional learning. One goal for this program is strengthening immigrant families' capacity to support academic achievement by increasing their awareness of instructional programs and ways they can support their own child's learning. The other option for the closing session together is to have various community service and resource providers come and share with the group. Many times, immigrant and refugee families do not know the resources and services which are available in their communities while at the same time many service and resource providers want to find ways to reach out to immigrant and refugee families; the Family Resource Night helps give a time and place for this connection to occur.

Finally, it should be noted that most Family Resource Night programs either are ongoing throughout the school year (until they grow to 12 families and split to launch another night) or run with set on-ramps and off-ramps (sometimes a session can last for a 6-9 week period). If run with on-ramps and off-ramps, usually a set number of new families is invited and go through a full session together. When the session is done, a new set of families goes through the program. This is ideal if Family Resource Programs can be a springboard to other educational programs that already exist in a community such as tutoring programs or adult learning programs.

# Practical ESL

## Lesson Plan #1: English Job Interview Skills

As businesses around the world are becoming more globally-minded, English is becoming more important than ever. English language proficiency is an important skill to list on any resume. Many adult ESL students need to practice or learn English to keep their current jobs or to apply for new ones.

This lesson plan aims to help with just that.

**Aim:** To prepare adult students for a job interview

**Skills:** Speaking, listening, comprehension

**Materials:** Blackboard, worksheet for students

**Level:** Intermediate to advanced

**Time:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

### Part 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

Introduce the topic to the students. Talk about job interviews and why they're important. Ask the students the following questions to spark general conversation about the topic:

1. Have you ever had a job interview before? What was it like?
2. What's important during a job interview?
3. How did you dress for your job interview?
4. Do your skills and personality matter for job interviews?
3. What questions do employers ask during an interview?

### Part 2: Activity (20 minutes)

Hand out the worksheet given above. Explain the differences between the **employer** and the **applicant**.

Go over the first two questions in each section for practice. Write a sample answer on the blackboard for the students to see and copy down. Then, have the students finish the worksheet, working in pairs.

### Part 3: Role Play (20 minutes)

Once the class finishes the worksheet in pairs, have each pair split up.

One student from each pair will be an employer and the other will be an applicant. Have all the employers remain seated and have them create their own company names (one company per person seated).

The applicants should all stand up. Once all the company names have been created, have the students go around to each employer to find out more information about their companies. The company will then ask each applicant questions as well.

### Part 4: Review (5-10 minutes)

Which one was the students' favorite company? Who had the best interview? Have the applicants and students share some of their interview highlights.

**Further practice suggestions**

For homework, have your students create or update their resumes in English. Have them bring these resumes into class, share some highlights and edit them using their peers' feedback.

## Job Interview Worksheet

During a job interview, there are questions that should be asked by both the employer and the applicant.

The **employer** is the company or person from the company who is holding the interview. The **applicant** is the person who is applying for the job.

### The Employer's Questions

**Write an answer for each of the employer's questions:**

- Tell me about yourself. (Introduce yourself.)
- Why would you like to work for this company?
- What did you study in school?
- What salary do you expect?
- What skills do you have?
- Do you work well with others?
- Do you speak other languages?

**Write 3 more questions that an employer would ask:**

1.

2.

3.

### **The Applicant's Questions**

**Write an answer that the employer would give to each of the applicant's questions:**

- Tell me about your company.
- Where are you located?
- What is the salary?
- What are the benefits?
- What does a typical day look like?
- Do you offer any vacation or holiday time?

**Write 3 more questions that an applicant would ask:**

1.

2.

3.

# Practical ESL

## Lesson Plan #2: At the Grocery Store

Going to the grocery store or supermarket is a regular task in any country or language. Whether your students will be traveling or living abroad, this lesson is great for teaching food and shopping vocabulary.

**Aim:** To teach students about the supermarket and shopping

**Skills:** Speaking, listening, comprehension

**Materials:** Blackboard, handout for students

**Level:** Easy to intermediate

**Time:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

### Part 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

Introduce the topic to the students. Talk about unusual things you can buy in your grocery store. Have students think and discuss scenarios when they must speak or read in the grocery store in their native language. Discuss how students can do the following in English:

1. Ask to have produce weighed. How to understand the price.
2. Ask the butcher about the price of meat and how much you want to buy.
3. Learn how grocery stores are organized (e.g. produce, processed foods, international food, candy, soft drinks, etc.)

### Part 2: Activity (20 minutes)

Hand out the worksheet provided above.

Explain the differences between the **customer** and **clerk**. Assign the students their roles in their pairs. Let each pair plan each role play scenario with the help of the worksheet. Make sure they understand that they need to improvise a lot of the role play on their own.

Have them write information and phrases down before they get started so they have something to guide them during the role play.

Get the students to do a quick practice role play session with a partner. Walk around to see if anyone needs help. Talk about how to do better role plays as a group.

### Part 3: Role Play (20 minutes)

Once each pair finishes their practice role play, have each customer find a new clerk. Have all the clerks remain seated and get the customers to rotate around the classroom.

Once everyone has a new partner, have the customers initiate one of the role play scenarios and act it out with the new clerk. The clerk must respond to the new customer's questions.

This time the students should try to perform the role play without notes.

### Part 4: Review (5-10 minutes)

Did anyone buy something unusual? Which grocery store was the most expensive? Which one was the cheapest? Did you understand where things were in the grocery store? Did any store not have what you were looking for?

**Further practice suggestions**

Have students film an exchange at a grocery store with an English speaking clerk. If you're not located in an English-speaking country, or if they aren't comfortable asking strangers to be on camera, have students get creative and make short videos showing themselves at the grocery store using the vocabulary they learned in this module.

## Grocery Store Worksheet

There are many opportunities to speak and practice your English in grocery stores. Lots of the vocabulary you use speaking with employees in a grocery store can be used in other places too. You need to know numbers, polite language and how to ask for help or directions. In this lesson one of you will be a grocery store **clerk** and the other will be the **customer**. Below are some situations for you to use. Be creative, be imaginative and use your sense of humor! Be prepared to discuss your role-play with the teacher and class. Always speak politely to the clerk and to the customer!

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Customer:</b> You need to buy a vegetable and a fruit. The type and quantity is up to you. Find out where they are and get them weighed. Be sure to ask how much they cost.</p>   | <p><b>Clerk:</b> You decide how much your fruit and vegetables cost. Weigh the fruit and vegetables and be sure to tell the customer how much it costs. How much is it per kilogram? Per pound?</p>                                   |
| <p><b>Customer:</b> You don't know where to find a key ingredient (you decide what) that you need for dinner tonight. Ask the clerk for directions to find it. Repeat the directions back to the clerk after he or she gives them to you.</p> | <p><b>Clerk:</b> Think about where the ingredient might be in your market. What is it near? Be sure to tell the client to go straight, or right or left. Tell them what to look for that's located near the ingredient they want.</p> |
| <p><b>Customer:</b> You want to buy 2kg of meat. Speak with the clerk about how much it costs, where it comes from (foreign/domestic?) and what kind of cut you need.</p>   | <p><b>Clerk:</b> Try to sell the customer on the finest and most expensive meat you have. Try to really be a salesperson and make it sound delicious!</p>   |
| <p><b>Customer:</b> You are checking out. The clerk is a little bit chatty and nosy. Try being polite. Talk to the clerk about why you are buying the ingredients you are buying.</p>   | <p><b>Clerk:</b> Start a conversation with the customer. Why are they buying this or that? You can make up what they are buying. For example: "Oh I see you have wine. Are you having a party?" Be nosy. Be funny.</p>                |

# Practical ESL

## Lesson Plan #3: Around Town

We all have things we need to do around town: shop, meet friends, run errands, eat at a restaurant, find some entertainment. That makes this lesson super practical. You'll also be teaching students how to discuss options, make plans and give directions.

**Aim:** To teach students how to make plans with friends

**Skills:** Speaking, listening, comprehension

**Materials:** Blackboard, worksheet for students

**Level:** Easy to intermediate

**Time:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

### Part 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

Introduce the topic to the students. Discuss activities you can do in the town you live. Have students think about the last time they met a friend in town and what they did. Ask students the following questions to spark a classroom discussion.

1. What are common things you do with their friends?
2. How do you get there?
3. How much does it cost?

### Part 2: Activity (20 minutes)

Hand out the Around Town worksheet. Have each pair plan their day out with each other by first answering the who, what, when, where, why and how questions. Once completed, discuss some of their plans as a class.

### Part 3: Role Play (20 minutes)

Once each pair finishes discussing their role play information, have them write out a script following some of the cues in the given role play script. Walk around and help students fill in gaps that they're struggling with. If there's time, have students find a new partner and make up new conversations on the spot. They can use their scripts for reference and try to ad-lib parts of the conversation that need to be modified based on their new partner's responses.

### Part 4: Review (10 minutes)

Have students read their scripts out loud with their first partner. Have other students summarize their plans out loud or on paper.

### Further practice suggestions

Have students make plans with their classmate, either in pairs or small groups. Then have them make a short 2-3 minute video recording or PowerPoint presentation documenting their day with pictures, video and audio.

## Around Town Worksheet

Going out around the town takes some coordination and planning. In this exercise you will be expected to come up with plans with your partner. You should decide what you are going to do, where you are going to go, how you are going to get there, when you are going to leave, in what order you will do things and when you must return home.

Take a minute to think about what you are going to do by thinking of all aspects of the conversation. Plan your outing by filling out the table and following the prompts below.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Who</b><br>Who will you go with?  |  |
| <b>What</b><br>What will you do? Think of 5 things.  |  |
| <b>When</b><br>When will you do these things? What time will you return home?              |  |
| <b>Where</b><br>Where will you meet? Where will you do the things you want to do?          |  |
| <b>Why</b><br>Why are you picking one place instead of another?                            |  |
| <b>How</b><br>How will you accomplish what you are doing? Transportation, directions, etc. |  |

## Making Plans Around Town

**A:** Hi, \_\_\_\_\_.

**B:** Hey, \_\_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_\_.

**A:** Do you have any plans \_\_\_\_\_? Would you like to \_\_\_\_\_?

**B:** That sounds good. I also wanted to \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

What do you think?

**A:** I think \_\_\_\_\_. I am also interested in \_\_\_\_\_ if we have time.

**B:** Great. When and where should we meet? How about \_\_\_\_\_?

**A:** That doesn't work for me. Let's meet at \_\_\_\_\_.

From there we can \_\_\_\_\_.

**B:** Perfect. That is close to \_\_\_\_\_.

**A:** Great! See you \_\_\_\_\_.

**B:** See you \_\_\_\_\_.

# 5 Ways to Find ESL Teaching Materials on a Budget

## 1. Talk to Other ESL Teachers

Your fellow teachers can be wonderful resources, both online and off. Even if you've been teaching for a while, coming up with new techniques and ideas can be hard sometimes. Why not network with others who know what you're dealing with?

### Forums

An ESL teaching forum is an excellent place to find resources and materials that are freely available. Sometimes, people will offer their own lesson plans for free, or they might link to materials online. Even if you come away with nothing but new ideas, it's well worth getting involved on a forum or two. Dave's ESL Cafe forum and Waygook, which is primarily used by ESL teachers in South Korea, are two great active forums to start with.

### Teacher Exchanges

Exchanges, swaps or whatever you want to call them let teachers mix it up a little. Bring along the lesson plans or books that you have but don't need anymore and swap them for something more exciting. These exchanges can also be held online, so keep an eye out. You'll probably hear about online exchanges on teaching forums first, but don't be afraid to take initiative and start one near you!

## 2. Take Advantage of the Internet

The Internet will quickly become your best friend when you need a new lesson plan. There are so many useful sites that you can work with in class, and most of them are free or very low cost.

### YouTube, FluentU and Other Video Sites

Videos are a valuable resource if you're trying to give your students a broad range of listening activities. For shorter clips, YouTube is a good resource. You'll find everything from television shows to nature videos and everything in between. To save you from hours of YouTube browsing and for more effective video clips, **a fantastic resource is FluentU**. FluentU takes real-world videos—like music videos, movie trailers, news and inspiring talks—and turns them into personalized English learning lessons. Every word comes with an in-context definition, image and multiple example sentences. You can even click on a word to see how it's used in other videos across the site. Perhaps the most interesting part of FluentU is its "learn mode," which takes the student's learning history into account when presenting questions related to videos. FluentU's algorithm sets students up for success by teaching them based on what they know.

Apart from YouTube and FluentU, you can watch videos on Amazon, Hulu or Netflix if you have an account, which are all great options for movies and full length TV shows. With access to such a wide variety of clips, it is very simple to find something that is appropriate for your classroom.

## **Teaching Resource Websites**

Check out sites like [education.com](http://education.com) or Teachers Pay Teachers to find plenty of options for your classroom. Some of the materials are offered free, but even if you choose the materials that require payment, the price is usually fairly low. You can stock up on excellent resources for cheap. Online printables are widely available and work well for those times when you want your students to practice reading or writing. However, there are also entire sites dedicated to games and activities that you can do with your students. Take advantage of the myriad of ideas and never get bored teaching your class.

## **3. Check Out the Discards**

You'd be surprised at how much great stuff gets thrown out or given away. What other people want to get rid of could be the perfect teaching tool for an ESL teacher. Think of all the magazines that get tossed when people are done with them. What could your students do with those discarded magazines?

### **Library Sales**

Libraries routinely get rid of old books that have either been damaged or are simply not used. Depending on the library, a sale each year allows the general public to get their hands on dirt cheap books. Check with your local library to see when they are having a sale, or take a look at [BookSaleFinder](http://BookSaleFinder.com) to find library sales near your area, if you are in the United States.

### **School Book Sales**

Schools also sell off their old textbooks, which can be very helpful if you have higher level ESL students. For English teachers, readers are some of the best options. They come in all grade levels and offer a large number of writing styles in one book. It's worth picking up a few to keep on hand for those times when you need some extra activities. Reading is something that every ESL student needs to do well, so having extra books for your class to read can be useful. Keep an eye out for spelling books, unused workbooks and storybooks to use in class.

### **End-of-the-year School Discards**

Check your local schools just before the end of the school year, to see if you can browse what teachers throw in the trash and recycle as they clean out their classrooms. You could also get in touch with local schools/teachers at any point during the year to inquire about any old or unused materials. Tell them you'd love to be contacted whenever they're getting rid of materials, perhaps when someone retires or any time throughout the year.

### **Thrift Stores**

Take a regular tour of nearby thrift stores and watch for items that could be used in your classroom. Children's books are often found for under a dollar. Sometimes, games like Scrabble or other teaching games will pop up and can be had for a nice, low price. Just check for missing pieces before purchasing such a game.

### **eBay**

eBay and similar auction sites contain a wealth of materials for ESL teachers. Do a search for ESL teaching materials, or simply check for English supplies. You'll find books, used flashcards and spelling/grammar games, usually for a very good price. Even better, they'll ship right to your doorstep, though shipping can be a little much if you live overseas. One man's junk is

another man's treasure, as they say, and this is particularly true when it comes to teaching materials.

#### **4. Use Everyday Items**

You probably already have quite a few things that you can use in your ESL classroom. If you don't, consider having students bring in the necessary items.

**Newspapers/Magazines:** Grab a daily paper on the way to school and you have everything you need for a fact-filled lesson that day. Even better, have each student bring in a newspaper or English language magazine to read from.

**Children's Books:** Picture books are very handy for teaching reading. Beginners will find simple books easier to work with, but you can move up to more advanced books as your students gain vocabulary.

**Recipes:** Even if you don't have a cookbook, recipes can be found online and printed out. Students can bring in their own recipes and translate them as well. If you have access to a kitchen, cooking can be a fun way to test vocabulary; if they don't read carefully, the cake won't turn out!

**Board Games:** Playing nearly any game can be an English lesson, provided students only speak English while playing. However, spelling or word games are even better, so bring in your old Scrabble or Boggle games.

#### **5. DIY ESL Teaching Materials**

Of course, you can always come up with your own teaching materials. You may even want to share these with other ESL teachers, either for free or for a fee.

##### **Create Your Own Worksheets**

All you need is a word processor and a printer to come up with your own worksheets. For teachers who have been doing their own lessons all along, this is a good way to come up with a test, as well.

##### **Make an Audio Clip**

Can't find a great audio clip anywhere? Make your own! It's very simple to record a voice file to your computer or a simple recorder. In fact, you don't have to do it yourself, you can recruit friends. Get a couple of people to hold a simple conversation while you record them, and then use that with your students.

##### **Have Students Bring Clippings**

While not exactly something you do yourself, having students bring in interesting articles that they have read can be hassle free. Have them write or talk about the article and reach each other's clippings and discuss the issues involved. Teaching materials don't have to be crazy expensive. Look for used ones, find lesson plans that are already made up and don't be afraid to get creative with the items you have around you!