

Anatomy of a Level 1 Lesson

By Rick Kappra | City College of San Francisco | 2017

Aim: Students will be able to say and spell their name and country and ask clarification questions “Can you spell that?” and “Can you repeat that?”

Preparation:

- Write each letter of the alphabet individually on a large card or 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper (cardstock works best for reuse).
- Prepare a pair dictation with letters (10 for each pair) – available in *Out and About Teacher Resource Book*.
- Prepare a mingle handout with two columns – “Name” and “Country” – you can also supply key language (see below).

Rick’s Personal Suggestion:

Plan to keep and reuse the alphabet. I invest in card stock and markers. If you have access to a laminating machine, you can laminate the letters. You’ll get lots of use out of them. You can use “What letter is this?” activity (#2) the next day as a warm-up.

1. Introduce/Review Alphabet

Write each letter on a sheet of 8 1/2 x 11 paper (preferably card stock).
Show letter and ask, “What letter is this?” (they don’t need to be in order)
Clarify as needed. Note problems.

2. What Letter is This?

Distribute letters, one to each student. If you have fewer than 26 students, be sure to hand out the ones that are problematic and keep the easier ones.
Students mingle and ask, “What letter is this?”, change cards and ask another partner. Be sure to model your instructions. Monitor and note problems.

3. Line Up

If you have 26 students (or 25, you can join) – give one letter to each of your students. Instruct them to line up and help as needed. Each student says his or her letter. Check for problems. Model as needed.

4. Dictation

Dictate 10 letters, paying special attention to ones that were problematic in the earlier stages of the lesson.
Students check with a partner.
Call on students and have them tell you the letters. “What’s number 1?”
Write letters on board as students dictate to you.

5. Pair dictation

Prepare a pair dictation (available in Out and About Teacher Resource Book).
Give 10 letters to each partner. Students dictate to one another and check when finished. Check as a class.

6. Mingle

Prepare a mingle sheet with two columns – Name and Country. I usually provide 10-12 spaces, depending on the size of my class. The number is up to you. I also like to give students the language they'll be practicing, so somewhere on the sheet, I'll write the questions:

What's your name?

Where are you from?

How do you spell that?

Provide as much language as you think students will need.
(see my example)

Model the activity.

Have students walk around and talk to their classmates.

Check by calling on students to answer.

What's Your Name?

A: Hi. What's your name?
B: My name is Rick.
A: How do you spell that?
B: Rick.
A: Where are you from?
B: I'm from the United States.

What's your name? How do you spell that?
Are you from the USA? What's the answer?

Name	Country
Rick	USA

How do you spell your name?
Name is Rick Rick Rick

Can you spell that please?

Can you repeat that please?

Tip: If I have a few minutes left at the end of the class that I don't know what to do with, I'll stand at the door and ask each student a question as he or she leaves. They love it! You can ask, "What's your name? How do you spell that?" or "Where are you from?" As the semester progresses, you can do this with more questions based on what you've taught them.

Review

The next class session it is important to review the content and some of the activities. Reviewing activities helps to build routines so that eventually, students can focus on the language and not have to think about the routine. Reviewing the content of the lesson is equally important because we all know it takes much reuse and recycling for language to actually stick. Here's how I'd start the class the next day. Notice the first activity is a **Teacherless Activity**.

1. What letter is this?

Model the activity as a reminder for students who did it before and as a quick instruction for any new students (if you have open enrollment). Have students walk around, show their letter to a partner and ask, "What letter is this?" – change cards and find a new partner.

2. Dictation

Dictate ten letters. I choose the letters students have trouble distinguishing or pronouncing. Each class is different, but if you listen, you'll be able to hear where the problems are. Have students say letters back to you to check the dictation.

3. Pair dictation

For reinforcement of both the activity and the content, it's good to do another pair dictation with single letters of the alphabet (10 each). Students dictate to each other and then say the letters back to you to check. If you still notice problems, you can continue to use these activities for a day or two more until students become more competent with the alphabet.

Stay tuned for our next segment where I'll introduce one of my favorite teacher-fronted activities for level 1 – A Spelling Dictation, along with some more ***Teacherless Activities!***