

Step 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Is this your own established class, a brand new class, or an established class you have taken over from another teacher?</p> <p>This is important, because student age, level and personality mix are all factors that need to be considered as part of formulating both general session plans and daily lesson plans. If this is a continuing class that you have had for a period of time, you will need to consider important language areas and pronunciation issues they have had particular success or difficulty with in the past. Is it possible to mix these elements into the next session's material? If it is a brand new class, then the session will be on a very experimental level. If it is a class "inherited" from another teacher, it is important to talk to that teacher and find out students' strengths and deficiencies (both individually and as a class) and to get an idea of what has worked in the classroom and what has not.</p>
Step 2	<p style="text-align: center;">What is the pre-set test for this class for this month? What is to be assessed and how?</p> <p>Testing, while often misunderstood and mismanaged in terms of how it can encourage improvement as well as check and quantify students' progress, is a standard feature of most language programs. If you are conducting more "academic" orientated lessons with predetermined objectives clearly set out by your institution, you will need to familiarize yourself with both the overall testing system as well as the specific test applicable to the session's teaching. In many cases, the institution will establish your worth and value as a teacher based on the progress and test results of your students. A teacher is a facilitator above and beyond anything else, so if there is a clear set of progress indicators at the end of the session in the form of a pre-set test, you have a moral obligation to assist the students in preparing for that test. Depending on just how "important" the test results are regarded to be, you should orientate your session plan around building the necessary skill, knowledge and confidence to achieve a good result on the end of session test. On a slightly different note, you should also be constantly evaluating the pre-set tests in terms of their fairness, difficulty level and overall effectiveness (and how relevant they are to the session's study material) so that you can provide professional feedback to your institution. Tests often need to be adapted or reformatted, and a professional institution will appreciate and act on your feedback.</p>
Step 3	<p style="text-align: center;">What are the general <u>communicative</u> objectives of the session?</p> <p>What are the general <u>communicative</u> objectives of the textbook (or units) being studied, as a <u>whole</u>? As part of a session's instruction, you will likely cover several language areas - do these fit together to form an overall "theme"? For instance, beginners' lessons will focus on introductions and "getting-to-know" language. This stage of planning basically involves deciding what exactly you want the students to be able to do by the conclusion of the session - and what sort of "situational" communication that involves. Establishing a big picture at this stage allows you to identify how the different lessons precede, follow and flow into each other to create some kind of overall communicative ability. If your lessons (individually) consist of weather, seasons, days, clothing and general activities, then your overall communicative objectives will be to facilitate students' ability to understand and engage in conversations where people are talking about the weather, how weather relates to seasons, allocating specific weather on a given day, and linking/associating weather with what one wears and does as a result. Other examples include classroom items and activities, where the overall objective will be to enable the students to describe and indicate the objects in their classroom and the kinds of activities students do or are doing in a classroom environment. Occasionally, usually as a result of poor textbook or curriculum design, you will find yourself trying to teach material that doesn't seem to have some kind of overall "communicative" objective. Your own selectiveness and creativity will need to come into play here. Focus on the language areas that can be brought together into an overall communicative theme, and touch briefly on the language that doesn't seem to "fit the mold", or at least adapt it in some way that allows you to keep the general theme flowing. In some cases, you may need to focus on two to three general "communicative" themes - the challenge then being how you will make those themes flow on from each other.</p>
Step 4	<p style="text-align: center;">What are the particular Key Language Items and Language Areas?</p> <p>What <u>precisely</u> are the particular Key Language Items that will be introduced to facilitate the objectives mentioned above? In terms of your partner teacher(s), which of these items in particular will be yours to teach and which will be the responsibility of your partner teacher(s)? You should try to establish an idea of <u>all</u> the lessons in the textbook, irrespective of whether you or your partner teacher(s) will teach them. The kinds of grammar and vocabulary involved with each key language item should also be established at this point. It is a good idea to have a meeting with your team/partner teachers to discuss what will be happening over the course of the session, to compare the notes about the class and language that you have already gathered, and to set some general teaching objectives as a team.</p>
Step 5	<p style="text-align: center;">Which of these Key Language areas could present difficulties for <u>you</u>?</p> <p>Which of these Key Language areas could present difficulties for <u>you</u>, the teacher? Are you totally sure you understand the relevance and communicative usefulness of the language? Will you need to get some advice from other teachers? This is a key consideration for all teachers, and often a stumbling block for native speaking teachers, as many tend to assume that just because they can use and produce the language with no difficulty whatsoever, they are therefore prepared and qualified to convey this to students. This is all about the difficulty the teacher might or is likely to have in getting across to students the syntactical form in combination with situational and communicative relevance of the language to be learned. Identifying now the difficulties that might occur gives a teacher that more time and awareness to do something about it - <u>before</u> one walks into the classroom. The best teachers are great and ongoing learners themselves - not automatic experts in what it is they are supposed to be teaching. Many teachers who are fresh out of ideas or have an incomplete awareness of how the language can be taught to greatest effect often revert to engaging the students in repetitive rote-learning, and in some cases it is to protect their own egos! Such teachers are not really giving students their best efforts, and are dangerously close to being a person that "helps the book teach the students"... Having identified any personal difficulties or problems with the material, what is a self-respecting and responsible teacher to do? Ask other teachers, search through some methodology books, or check out the internet (where in many cases you can actually post a message asking for help from the "international" teaching community). The main point here is that if you are doing some general planning and preparation prior to starting the session, you are allowing yourself more time to gather advice and help relative to language areas you are not entirely comfortable or confident in teaching.</p>

Step 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Which of these Key Language areas might pose particular difficulties for the students?</p> <p>Which of these Key Language areas might pose particular difficulties for your students in particular (age, level and "personality" all feature here), and in general tend to be difficult for students of the particular nationality you are teaching? Which Key Language areas from the previous session need more work and could be incorporated into this session's instruction? Talk to current partner teachers and/or previous teachers for this class. To strengthen your own knowledge and competence as a teacher, it is worthwhile to note in an ongoing fashion the kinds of errors and problems your students exhibit. If you also note the way you attempted to overcome these problems, what worked well and what didn't, you are much more prepared both in attempting to teach this language again to other students, and in introducing new language to students you know well.</p>
Step 7	<p style="text-align: center;">How will you prioritize the various Key Language areas?</p> <p>Based on the overview you have developed through stages 1-6 above, it is useful to begin <u>prioritizing</u> the Key Language areas. Should you be allocating more or less time to certain language areas? Which of the Key Language items are commonly the most useful in terms of the communicative objectives you identified in stage 3? If you are using a pre-set test, which language areas feature more prominently in the test? Some language areas have a more general application than others, and are more useful in terms of facilitating other language areas that are directly or indirectly related, or follow a similar syntactic model. As an example of this, learning correct intonation and use of language like "What do you see?" will lead to easier retention of (usually later) language forms such as "What do you want?", "What do you like?" and "How do you feel?". If the structure is solid in the students, it is simply a matter of adapting the conceptual meaning and use of single words within sentences rather than the entire utterance. By giving more priority to more generally applicable language forms, you are providing students with a better ability to handle later language.</p>
Step 8	<p style="text-align: center;">Which of the Key Language areas will need some recycling and ongoing revision?</p> <p>Try to predict which Key Language areas will need some recycling and/or ongoing revision. This is very much a matter of going back over the areas of possible difficulty you identified in stage 6, and keeping in mind the language areas you prioritized in stage 7. Once you have selected language areas that you would like to attempt to recycle and review, you can try to involve them in the stage that follows.</p>
Step 9	<p style="text-align: center;">How can various areas of Key Language be <u>combined</u>?</p> <p>How can various areas of Key Language be combined? This includes your own lessons and the lessons of your partner teacher. For example, can language areas learned in isolation be combined to encourage production of longer, more intricate sentences? Can one area of language be used as a "follow up" to another? (For example: "What is this? Where is it? Whose is it? Is it big or small?"). Another way key language areas can be combined is to use Yes/No Questions as a build up to a guess at or verification of the response involved in an Information Question. Combining language areas is crucial in demonstrating to students the relevance of individual utterances within broader communicative frameworks. Natural conversations almost never involve repetition of a single language form - one question or response tends to lead the way to other questions and information requiring different structures, albeit within a general "situational" setting. In learning a new area of language, previously learned areas of language that are relevant to the communicative theme should be employed to either build up to the new language or follow it up and expand on it.</p>
Step 10	<p style="text-align: center;">What (if any) are your Phonics/Pronunciation priorities for the session?</p> <p>It is time to decide what your priorities are in the area of phonics/pronunciation for the session. This may have already been decided for you by the curriculum and/or textbook (?), or you may consider it to be your responsibility to select pronunciation areas and decide on how they should be both taught and tested. They may arise out of the key language itself (for instance, the variation in pronunciation [t]/[d]/[ad] required for regular past tense endings). Having identified any Phonics or Pronunciation objectives, you could follow a procedure similar to that listed above.</p>
Step 11	<p style="text-align: center;">How can the Phonics/Pronunciation and Key Language areas be combined?</p> <p>It is important to attempt to figure out ways in which phonics/pronunciation issues can be combined with the session's Key Language areas. Any key language areas involving identification of things or guessing lend themselves well to combination with sounds and sound identification. This increases the amount of practice the students have with sounds and sound combinations, and often makes it seem more meaningful and natural. You can also incorporate Pronunciation objectives into key language by focusing on problematic sounds and employing them within utterances in the form of "sound-alike" words or minimal pairs. It is important that students realize that pronouncing sounds within words is as crucial as getting the right words out in the right order, as it can have a major impact on the meaning of the word and the focus of the sentence.</p>
Step 12	<p style="text-align: center;">What learning strategies and classroom management issues will need to be considered?</p> <p>To help the students "cope" and thrive with the language they are about to learn that session, it is a good idea to brain-storm some of the learning strategies that can be introduced to give students access to "short cuts" in the learning process or to make apparently difficult/complicated language forms actually appear easy. The students can be taught to focus on certain elements and to take them apart and re-build them in ways that will help them use the language more efficiently. They will also need to be encouraged to review and to know what areas of their learning to focus on and turn weaknesses into strengths. In terms of classroom management, if you have discussed the class with partner/previous teachers, you can have some valuable insights on what to expect from various students. This allows a teacher to walk into the classroom with some management strategies already pre-planned, and gives them the automatic upper hand in terms of managing the classroom quickly and efficiently.</p>